

Pedigree

by C.H. Spurgeon

C.H. Spurgeon teaches that true Israelites are not defined by physical descent but by spiritual election, covenant relationship, and perseverance in faith, exemplified by Jacob's life and Israel's history.

Scripture: Romans 9:13, John 6:37, Romans 9:16, Genesis 25:29-34, Genesis 28:10-22, Genesis 32:22-32, Exodus 12:13

Topics: "Covenant Relationship", "Christian Perseverance"

Description

In this profound sermon, C.H. Spurgeon explores the true meaning of being an Israelite, emphasizing spiritual election over physical descent. Using the life of Jacob and the history of Israel as illustrations, Spurgeon teaches that true believers are chosen by God's sovereign grace, enter into covenant with Him, and persevere through trials by faith and prayer. This message encourages Christians to embrace their identity in Christ and to find assurance in God's promises and power.

Transcript

"Are they Israelites? So am I." 2 Corinthians 11:22.

PAUL was proud of his extraction as a Jew. Taking this expression in its literal sense, I feel that he had much to be proud of. Judah's banner must not rank second among the nations. The nation of Israel is most ancient and most honorable. When as yet Greece and Rome were not known, God had brought forth His people out of Egypt "with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm," and had cast out Amorite and Perizzite to make room for the vine which He had brought out of Egypt. Poets, statesmen, philosophers, divines had all come to ripeness and the fullness of strength in Judah's land, while as yet the other nations were sunken in barbarism. When our little island of the sea was just a mass of forests, with here and there, perhaps, a naked savage wandering through it, David was praising God on a ten-stringed instrument! We talk of Norman blood, but what is it compared with Jewish blood? We speak of the dignity of peers and nobles of our infant monarchy, but this ancient nation stretches its parents of nobility far back—right up to the days of "the Friend of God," when he stood under the oak at Mamre!

The people of Israel were famous because of God's election. As a nation they deserve honor, but as the elect of God they must stand high in our esteem. One little stream of pure love and truth went wandering amidst the arid wastes of human depravity. The election of Grace fell mainly—I might almost say entirely—within the 12 tribes that sprang from the loins of Jacob in those early days. They were the conservators of the lamp of the Truth of God. Theirs were the oracles and grandest and best of all of them, "as concerning the flesh, Christ came." Never despise the Jew when you remember that while our Savior

was a Man, yet He was a Man of that peculiar type. Let us think of the Jew, Jehovah-Tsidkenu, the Son of Mary, and feel a sympathy forever with His flesh and blood.

Besides, the Jewish race has a history yet to come, marvelous and strange history whose lines are intertwined with all the threads of the history of other nations. I am not about to amuse you by any prophesying. This is not the place to desecrate the Sabbath with whimsical interpretations of Daniel, Ezekiel and the Revelation! But still, it is plain upon the very surface of Scripture that Israel shall yet be restored to grandeur as a nation, that the King of the Jews shall reign and that in all the splendors of the millennial age, the Jew, ingathered with the fullness of the Gentile, shall have his full share. This much we know and in this much even we, the Gentiles, do unfeignedly rejoice. For the Son of David is He who has made both one and broken down the middle wall of separation between us—and henceforth there is neither Jew nor Gentile, bond nor free—but we are all one in Christ Jesus. However, were I here tonight as a convert to the Christian faith with Jewish blood within my veins, I would speak with no bated breath concerning it, nor wish to hide my pedigree, but count it the highest of all honors which could come to me after the flesh, that I sprang from the loins of Abraham, "the Friend of God." I do not marvel that Paul was so jealous of it, or that he says, "Are they Israelites? So am I." He was no bigot—remember, he was the Apostle of the Gentiles—it was he who constantly disclaimed all confidence in circumcision. It was he who withstood Peter to the face because he was to be blamed in this matter. It was he who, as with a battle-axe, was continually breaking down the barriers which divided Jew and Gentile. But yet, for all that, as a man, he was not ashamed to say, "Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they the seed of Abraham?"

So am I."

I propose now, however, to take the text in another light. In a spiritual sense, all the Lord's people are Israelites. "They are not all Israel, which are of Israel" after a carnal lineage, but all God's people are the true Israel, the spiritual seed in whom the promises made to Abraham are this day fulfilled. I hope we can say, some of us, with a loud and

emphatic utterance—and others with a humble whisper, "Are they Israelites? So am I," thus putting in our claim to the privileges which belong to the people of God.

Let us accordingly spend a few minutes, first, in describing a peculiar people—Israelites. And then, secondly, in asserting a personal claim, saying, "So am I."

I. This PECULIAR PEOPLE, called Israelites, I will describe in two ways. The Israelites of God are like their father, like Israel. And they are like their ancestors, like Israel.

First of all, they are like their father. All the Israel of God are in some respects like Jacob, who was surnamed Israel.

[Mr. Spurgeon preached many Sermons on Jacob, among them being the following—#239, Volume 5—JACOB AND ESAU; #401, Volume 7—JACOB'S WAKING EXCLAMATION; #1401, Volume 24—JACOB WORSHIPPING ON HIS STAFF; #1544, Volume 26—MAHANAIM—OR, HOSTS OF ANGELS; #2116, Volume 35—THE UNCHANGING GOD CHEERING JACOB IN HIS CHANGE OF DWELLING PLACE; #2817, Volume 49—JACOB'S FEAR AND FAITH and #3010, Volume 52—JACOB'S MODEL PRAYER]

They are so, for one reason, because of their election. What says the Scripture? "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." "The children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand," it was said, "The elder shall serve the younger." Jacob was God's chosen one. He had set His love upon him and, before he was born, He had distinguished him as His elect one. Now that is a deep mystery and there are many who quibble at and question it. I am not here to answer them. The Book says so—let them quibble with the Book, not with me! That Doctrine, I know, is often used to discourage seeking souls and the great Truth of predestination is set in contrast with the other Truth of free agency, as though the one contradicted the other. But, believe me, it is only our ignorance that makes us think the two things contradictory! "Him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out," is just as true as Christ's later declaration, "No man can come to Me, except the Father which has sent Me draws him." It still stands true that "whoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved," though it is written, "I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion" and, "It is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy." Let this be recognized as a Truth of God, then, by every true Israelite—that he is so by reason of the choice of God. We cannot say it was our choice—we dare not attribute our separation from the rest of mankind to anything in us by nature. We must lay our crown at the feet of Divine Sovereignty and bless that distinguishing, discriminating Grace which has made us differ from the rest of mankind! We are Israelites by election.

And you will observe that, very early in Jacob's life, he, too, made an election. "Chosen of God before time began," he chose his God's inheritance in return. There stood the mess of pottage and there, unseen, was the birthright, the inheritance according to promise. Esau, hungry and profane, said, "I shall die of hunger, and then what good will this birthright do unto me?" And for a mess of pottage, which he chose, he rejects the heavenly heritage! Not so Jacob—what Esau sold, Jacob bought. He bought at a dearer price, however. Think, oh, think of that greater inheritance than a mere mess of lentils! At any rate, you have now before you a picture of what every true Israelite becomes by the work of God's Grace in the heart. If you choose this world and neglect the world to come, you are Esau. You may be a child according to the flesh, but you are not a child according to promise. But if you from your heart can say, "I count the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt and for the love I bear His name, what was my gain I count my LOSS" then, dear Friend, this election, which you make, is a proof that God has made an election of you and that you are of the seed of Israel whom God has blessed. They turn from the pottage to take the portion—they leave earth to seek Heaven.

Then comes one feature in Jacob's history which is common to all true Israelites. No sooner had Esau got his pottage and Jacob the blessing, than Esau sought to slay Jacob. There must be a hatred between the child of the flesh and the child of the Spirit. They slept together in the same womb, but they could not live together on the same earth without animosity against each other. Jacob must flee. He must leave his father's house. He must go outside the camp. And this is your lot if you are an Israelite. The world will soon find you out and you will be a speckled bird—and the birds round about you will be against you. If any man suffers as a Christian, let him rejoice! And if you are a Christian, you will have to suffer as a Christian for Christ's sake. You must bear reproach. And in obeying your Master's Laws, you will come into conflict with the world's customs and, consequently, will lose the world's favor. So there are Israelites and you are among them—and for the Truth of God's sake you become an alien to your mother's brethren.

Jacob, in leaving his father's house, however, received a great blessing in which he is typical of all Israelites—namely, the manifested Covenant made with himself personally. He slept with a stone for his pillow, the hedges for his curtains, the heavens for his canopy—and as he slept, he dreamed that he saw

a ladder, the foot thereof stood on the

earth, but the top reached to Heaven. And at the top of it was the God of the Covenant who made a Covenant with His servant which He established and made fast forever. Beloved, if you are of God's Israel, you have had some insight into the Covenant of Grace—you have seen it in the Person of Jesus Christ whose Humanity, like the ladder's foot, stands here on earth, but whose Deity, like the ladder's top, is lost amidst the blaze of God! You have seen, by the eyes of faith, the God who makes and keeps the promise in the Person of Jesus Christ, speaking to you and saying, "Certainly I will be with you, and I will bless you." You must have had some such Revelation of God in Christ Jesus, or else I would have to question whether you are one of the Israelites at all—for they who know the Lord, know Him as their Covenant God and know him as David did when he said, "Although my house is not so with God, yet He has made with me an Everlasting Covenant, ordered in all things, and sure."

To complete our little outline of Jacob's history in which all the Israelites must follow him, I introduce you to Jacob at the brook of Jabbok. It was there that Jacob became Israel—the supplanter became a prevailing prince! Oh, it was a noble sight which the stars alone saw, when Jacob grasped the Angel! Bold hands, that of mortal that can grasp the Angel of God! And oh, it was nobler still when, having grasped Him, he was not content with using hands alone in that blessed struggle, but came to use feet and knees, and every bone and nerve and muscle! It was a matchless wrestling, then, when the Angel would have thrown the man, but the man would gladly throw the Angel! He played the man, indeed, then, when he said unto God, "I will not let You go except You bless me." "I will not." O God, can Your creature thus address You? Yes, when You have given us faith enough to utter such a word as that, You have given us full permission to speak even as we will unto You and, each one of us to say, "I will not let You go except You bless me."

Now, if we are Israelites, we know something of wrestling and prevailing prayer. You are no Christian if you do not pray. A prayerless soul is a Christless soul. You have no inheritance among the people of God if you have never struggled with that Covenant Angel and come off the conqueror. Prayer is the indispensable mark of the true child of God. I know what you will tell me—you will tell me that you are so weak and feeble. Ah, Brother, in this you are like Jacob, who went from Peniel, halting on his thigh. It is not given to mortals to be altogether strong. You must feel your weakness. You may be mighty with God and yet He may make you weak with men. You may be too strong for the Angel and yet one touch of this Angel's finger may cause your sinew to shrink so that you go halting to your grave. Ah, some of us have not merely had one sinew shrunk, but very many—and whenever we try to run the heavenly race, we feel these shrunken sinews much injure our running. But still we are pursuing, and though lame, we shall yet take the prey. So, you see, in election, in the choosing of the inheritance rather than the pottage, in being hated by his brother, in being separated from his father's house, in entering into Covenant with God, in wrestling and even in weakness, Israel becomes the type of the true Israelite! And I hope, as I have been going over the history, some of you have said, "Are there any such persons in the world that are Israelites? Even so am I." I hope you have seen your own portrait, here, and have said, "The preacher has photographed my history—so am I."

Now we are going to give you another portrait of the Israelite, this time not taking the single man, Israel, but taking the race Israel in their early history. When Israel ceases to be a family and becomes a nation, we find it in the house of bondage, in what is very significantly called, "the iron furnace"—iron for strength and a furnace for heat! So is it with every Israelite. Every child of God is originally found in the bondage of sin. It gives us no effort to remember when we were the slaves of Satan. The scars of his whip are scarcely healed. When we see others sinning, we are glad to say, "Such were some of us, but we are

washed. Oh, how lately did these arms wear the fetters and were these feet hampered with the chains! We are free now, but once we were slaves!"

Israel in due time was delivered—delivered in two ways—delivered by blood and by power. So is it with every child of God—delivered by blood. The blood of the lamb was sprinkled on the lintel and on the side posts, and while the Destroying Angel, swift to slay, went through the whole of Egypt and slew the first-born, He spared the first-born of Israel—not one of them fell dead. Oh yes, and we, too, through the precious blood of Jesus, which has been sprinkled upon us, we too are saved! Our Passover Lamb is slain for us—the sprinkling of His blood has made us safe—it speaks better things than the blood of Abel, for it speaks peace to us and gives us safety and deliverance. And, my Brothers and Sisters, we have been brought out with power, too! Power as great as that which worked plagues on the fields of Egypt and made Pharaoh's haughty heart yield! The might of the Holy Spirit, which has set us free, is as great as that which divided the Red Sea and made its waters stand "upright as a heap." Let Moses sing, but we will sing too! Let Miriam dash her joyous fingers against the timbrel and we will emulate her! We will sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, "for He has triumphed gloriously in our cause. He has set us free and brought us up out of the house of bondage, breaking the iron yoke from our necks." Thus we are like Israel.

Israel went into the wilderness and, I suppose we have all been there, at least all of us who are God's people find this world to be a wilderness to us. In the wilderness they were all covered by the pillar of cloud by day, and they were enlightened by the pillar of fire by night. And Divine Providence is our daily protection and our constant comfort. They went out daily to gather manna. Brothers and Sisters, I suppose you find that you have need of daily Grace and that you cannot live upon bread alone, but you must have the Word which proceeds out of the mouth of God. You have learned to eat angels' food! The meat that drops from the skies is necessary to your life. The corn that grows in the furrow cannot feed your soul. Your body leans on that staff of life, but your soul needs more spiritual food such as Jesus Christ alone can give. Beloved, the children of Israel in the wilderness all looked to the same Tabernacle and there they saw one ministering priest offering incense and sacrifice by blood. And we stand tonight all looking to the same Savior, hoping—no, KNOWING—that we are all washed in the same precious blood! And as we see the smoke of His Sacrifice going up to God, we, as one undivided Israel, praise and bless His name!

You remember, too, that all Israel under Joshua crossed the Jordan to the land of Canaan and won their heritage. Each tribe had its portion and everyone was settled in his proper place. We are, so it were, standing upon Jordan's brink. Since last we met, some of our Beloved ones have crossed the stream, "and we are to the margin come." Nor does it trouble us, for Jordan is dry. The Ark of the Covenant stands in the middle of that river and makes it so dry that every child of God shall go through it dry shod! The trumpet sounds which bids us march to victory! The land that flows with milk and honey is before us—we have a portion fair in that blessed land. Let us go to Pisgah's top tonight if we cannot cross the Jordan just yet and, with Moses, "view the landscape over." There are the glittering lights of the habitations of the blessed. There are the groves of immortality where they wander. There are the rivers of joy at which they sit and the oceans of glory in which they bathe! Listen to their songs! Catch you not the strains that come from the celestial harps? Know you nothing of the harmonies? Have you never perceived their gracious melodies? Here is your portion, Beloved! All Israel came to the promised land and so shall we! And we shall then forever reign with Jesus, our blessed Jesus, who leads us in to possess the land!

So much, then, concerning Israel from the second picture. I trust some of us have been saying, while we have seen the picture and heard the history of Israel described, "Are they Israelites? So am I." I too was in

Egypt. I too have had the blood sprinkled on me. I too have eaten of the Paschal Lamb. With loins girt about I have passed into the wilderness of separation, wandering my forty years up and down these arid plains of earth. I am looking for my heritage. I look to my great Leader, and I follow Him to victory and to peace!"

Having thus described the peculiar people, we stop a moment and notice A PERSONAL CLAIM— "So am I." This is a claim that needs proof. The Apostle knew that his claim was indisputable, but there are a great many persons who say, "So am I," when they have no right to say it. When others come to the Lord's Table, they come there. When Believers in Christ are baptized, they are baptized, too, and they virtually say, "Whatever saints may be, such are we." Ah, it is one thing to pretend to be a noble in Christ's court, and another thing to really be a peer in Heaven's realm! Your patent of spiritual nobility will serve your turn here among poor men who cannot investigate it, but remember! Remember! You will all be tried before you will be permitted to enter Heaven! See you not those scales in mysterious vision? I see them before my eyes—massive scales—and the weights of the sanctuary are put into one scale and each one of us must, before long, take our place in the other scale. Will it turn with us? Shall we be found good weight, or shall we leap into the air while the voice shall say, "Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin—you are weighed in the balances, and are found wanting; your claims are disproved and your hopes destroyed forever"?

Beloved, let us not claim to be Christians if we are not! I warn any of you who make a profession of religion, especially if you are members of this Church, if your hearts are not right with God, shake off your profession as Paul shook off the viper from his hands! Nothing can be more detrimental to you, at the last, than to have had a name to live while you have been dead! Far better to honestly confess yourself a stranger from the commonwealth of Israel than to be an interloper among the saints of God, partaking of the children's bread while you are not a child and entering into the sanctuary of God where you have no right to stand! If we dare to say, "So am I," let us only say it after having searched

ourselves as in the Presence of the great God and having said to Him, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

Supposing that we have given good proof, I can only say that the claim in the text is one which will yield us great joy. When God's people are rejoicing most, what a satisfaction it is to me if I can say, "So am I!" Here stands one of the Lord's people and he cries, "My sins are forgiven through His precious blood. I am a pardoned sinner!" "So am I." "I am covered with Christ's righteousness, a garment all Divine bedecks me and I am accepted in the Beloved!" "So am I." "He has taken me into union with Himself and made me a member of His body. I am a member of Christ's mystical body!" Oh, can you say, "So am I"? Surely these three words will be enough to make Heaven begin below if, when the saints rejoice most in their standing and position before the Lord, you can say, "So am I." And you can certainly do so, dear Friend, in all the fullness of joy, if you can say with me—

"A debtor to mercy alone, Of Covenant Mercy I sing! Nor fear with Christ's righteousness on, My person and offering to bring. The terrors of Law, and of God, With me can have nothing to do— My Savior's obedience and blood Hide all my transgressions from view!" "This is the reason I trust Him wholly, trust Him only, trust Him simply, trust Him now and trust Him always." Oh, if you can say, "So do I," then all the position which the saints of God hold belongs to you! All their enjoyments are your possessions! You may say, "Such am I."

Now I want to introduce you to a few little scenes, one after the other. I will suppose that we are all talking together about the happiness of God's people. One quotes the text, "Happy are you, O Israel. Who is like unto you, O people saved by the Lord?" and he expatiates thus, "God's people are a happy people, they find that godliness has the blessing of this life and of that which is to come. We can praise God all day and even in the night He is still with us, and we make the night watches vocal with His praise. We are a happy people." I hear a voice up in the corner of the room where we are sitting. Someone says faintly, "And so am I." Let us go and look. Why, here is a poor old woman who has been bedridden. "How long, Sister?" "Thirteen years." "Have you much to comfort you?" "Oh, very much! I have my Savior's Presence." "Have you had a good nurse and kind attendants, with plenty of temporal comforts?" "No, I have had none of those things. I am a poor pensioner of the parish. I have sometimes scarcely enough bread to eat." "Have you many pains?" "Yes, I am full of disease, racked from head to foot with sickness." "I thought you said just now, 'So am I! I am happy.'" "Oh, yes! I did say that and I will say it again, for, notwithstanding all my tribulations, my consolations abound through Jesus Christ and I can say—

"Sweet affliction, sweet affliction For it brings my Savior near"— "notwithstanding all my sufferings and my pains, and my having tossed to and fro till my bones have come through my skin, yet, if you say you are happy, 'So am I.'"

We are talking together again about the riches of God's people. I have been giving out a hymn in the little parlor, and we have been singing—

"How vast the treasure we possess! How rich Your bounty, King of Grace! This world is ours, and worlds to come— Earth is our lodge, and Heaven our home. I would not change my blest estate For all that earth calls good or great! And while my faith can keep her hold, I envy not the sinner's gold!"

And I say, "We are rich and increased in goods, we have all we need, and we are thankful for it." And I hear a voice say, "So am I." Come here and show yourself! "I don't like to show myself in such respectable company as this." "Never

mind, come here." "No," he says, "my clothes are too much out of repair for me to come before this present company. I have toiled and worked very hard, but now in my old age I cannot work much and the garb of poverty is the only one that I can wear. I eat my bread with my own tears and with much of the sweat of my brow—and I have nothing in the world I can call my own—and I never expect to own anything except that spot of ground in which my ashes shall be buried by charity. But if you say God's people are rich, so am I. I have got here the title-deeds of a mansion fair and of a heritage so rich that I would not barter it for the throne of the Caesar's or all the kingdoms of the earth."

While we are thus communing with one another, we turn from the happiness and the riches of God's people to speak about their safety. "All those who trust in Jesus Christ are saved. Their sins are all forgiven. They can never be condemned. Their feet are upon the rock. They shall be with Christ in Glory—they are saved!" And I hear a voice come from somewhere up there, "So am I." Now, whose voice is it? I think I remember hearing it before. It sounds like the voice of a dying man, like the voice of a man in pain—a rough voice, too, as if it belonged to some very uncouth body— who is it? It is the dying thief and he says, "You were singing about me just now—

"The dying thief rejoiced to see That fountain in his day And there have I, though vile as he, Washed all my sins away!"

"I am a dying thief, but I am saved! It is only a few minutes ago since I believed in Jesus, but I am saved! He who has served the Lord for 70 years cannot say more than that. He can say, after 70 years of service, 'I am a saved man,' and I can say, though Jesus only now turned His eyes upon me and said that He would remember me, I too am a saved man." So, you see, there are some things in which the very youngest Believer is placed on an equal footing with the very oldest— they are alike saved if they can each say, "So am I."

There may be somebody in this chapel, perhaps, who cannot read. Such people are getting scarce in London and if we use a long Latinized word in the sermon, that poor body says, "I cannot make out what he is talking about." But if I begin to talk about Jesus Christ and say, "All your children shall be taught of the Lord." If I begin to speak about experimental vital godliness within the heart and about union to Jesus Christ. If I say that all the Lord's people know something about His love—they are all taught in His Grace—I know you, my Friend, would say, "So am I. So am I. If there is any man here who says that he is a debtor to God's Grace, so am I. If there is any man who says that he owes more than others, so do I. If there is anyone here who claims to have had much sin forgiven and, therefore, to be much in debt to God's Grace, so am I. And if there is any man here who vows, when he gets to Heaven, that he will sing the Lord's praises with all his might, for he feels himself to be a very deep debtor to God, so am I. Dear Friend, I am not inclined to yield to you when it comes to the question of claiming the privilege of God's Israel, the privilege of nearness to His heart, of access with boldness in Christ Jesus, the privilege of prayer, the privilege of suffering, the privilege of service. If you say, 'I am entitled to these things,' I will put in my claim, and say, 'So am I.'"

And I do hope there are some poor trembling saints here who will be so tenacious of their privileges that though they are the very least in Israel, "less than the least of all saints," yet, since the mercies of God belong to the saints, as saints, and not as full-grown saints, or advanced saints, or well-taught saints, they will put in their plea and each one say, "So am I. So am I."

I was thinking, as I came here tonight, whether I would not even defy the very angels of God about this matter. There are spirits before the Throne of God—bright spirits that walk in white and sing His praises—and they are very happy, and they are full of joy. So am I! They wear white robes, they are clad in pure white linen. So am I! They stand secure in Jesus' love. And so am I! They sing of their election by His Grace. And so will I! They are there, and they see His face and sing His praise. And so will I! They know themselves to be loved by Him. So do I! And they drink of the river of His pleasures as they think of Him. So will I! Beloved Christian, in some respects you are on a par with the glorified spirit. You are as much pardoned as they are. You are as much justified as they are. You are as much one with Christ as they are. You are as much chosen of God as they are and you are, in one respect, as safe as they are—no, in some things you have the advantage! There are works which perfect saints above all holy angels cannot do, so let no one stop you in your glorying in Christ Jesus. But when they speak the most, say of yourselves through Grace, "So am I."

Oh, what a different tale we might have told tonight! Think of what a different story the preacher might have had to tell tonight. Oh, think—think—think—dear Hearer! There might have been heard the wailing of lost souls, gnashing

their teeth and crying, "We are lost—lost—lost forever!" And you and I might have been saying, "And so am I." There might have come up a dolorous cry from the depths of Hell, "We are banished from God's Presence! The light of His love shines not on us! We are in the blackness of darkness forever!" You and I

might have said, "So am I." But instead of that, He has plucked us from the miry Pit and set our feet upon a Rock, and made us sing His praise tonight and, with the brightest spirits, say, "So am I." Oh, how we ought to love Him! Now, tomorrow, if you go out into the world and you see a Christian badly beaten, and hear men jeeringly say, "There is a Christian"—step forward and say, "So am I." Tomorrow the devil will be tempting some of the Lord's people and you may, if you like, turn tail and run away. But come boldly forward and say, "So am I." Take your share with them! Some of us are workers for Christ. I wish you could each one say, "So am I." There are some who give their talent, their time, their substance, their whole heart to Jesus. I wish we could each one say, "So do I." Standing here, we have sometimes said that if Jesus Christ would tread on us. If He could make Himself one inch more lofty, we would be glad to be trodden as the mire in the street, for we have given ourselves unto Him as a burnt-offering, living and dying. May every Christian here feel, "So am I." Oh, prove your gratitude by your devotion and live as those who, having claimed privileges, are willing to take the responsibility connected with it!

Is there a lost and ruined sinner here? "Yes," says one, "I am." Jesus Christ came to save sinners. I am hanging on Him and trusting Him. I would that each one of you could say, "So am I." Sinner, you have no hope but in Jesus. Trusting Him, His saints are safe. Will you trust Him? God help you to trust Him at this very moment! Cast yourself where millions have cast themselves before—upon the covenanted mercy of God in Christ—and as they leap up and cry, "We are saved," you, too, may stand up and say, "So am I." May the Lord bless us! May we be numbered with His Israel in the day when He comes to make up His jewels, for His name's sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: PSALM 81.

Verse 1. Sing aloud unto God our strength: make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob In these days, the Psalms would have to be altered if they are to suit the dogmas of modern thought, for "the God of Jacob" is altogether rejected by those wondrous thinkers who think they know so much! The God of the New Testament, they say, is a very different Being from the God of the Old Testament. According to them, the Old Testament God is too stern—the New Testament God is far softer, quite effeminate, indeed, if they rightly describe Him. But we do not hesitate to say, over and over again that the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob—the Immutable and Unchangeable One—the God of Sinai, is as much our God as the God of Calvary! And so we delight "to make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob."

2-6. Take a Psalm, and bring here the timbrel, the pleasant harp with the Psaltery Blow up the trumpet in the New Moon, in the time appointed on our solemn feast day. For this was a statute for Israel, and a Law of the God of Jacob. This He ordained in Joseph for a testimony, when He went out through the land of Egypt: where I heard a language that I understood not I removed his shoulder from the burden: his hands were delivered from the pots. Child of God, have you forgotten the time of your deliverance? God has not and here He reminds His people Israel of their deliverance out of Egypt. So He says concerning you, "I removed his shoulder from the burden: his hands were delivered from the pots." Do you not remember the joy of that glad moment when the burden of sin was taken away from you and the pots of your own self-salvation lay broken at your feet? Glory be to Him who brought us out from that terrible house of bondage!

7. You called in trouble, and I delivered you; I answered you in the secret place of thunder: I proved you at the waters of Meribah. Selah. But how sadly did they stand the test! You and I, too, have not only received much mercy at the hands of God, but we also have had our testing times. We can look back to the waters of strife with deep regret that there we failed so sadly.

8-10. Hear, O My people, and I will testify unto you: O Israel, if you will hearken unto Me; there shall no strange god be in you; neither shall you worship any strange god. I am the LORD your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt: open your mouth wide, and I will fill it. What a wonderful verse this is! We have been so accustomed to hear the expression, "I am the Lord your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt," followed by the Law. But here it is followed by a gracious encouragement to us to pray—"Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it." Whatever force the Law derived from that preface, this exhortation derives the same force and no child of God ought to forget that. He who delivered you from the burden of sin bids you open your mouth wide and He will fill it! And after your deliverance from guilt, do you not feel that you may well ask great things of such a gracious God?

11-15. But My people would not hearken to My voice; and Israel would none of Me. So I gave them up unto their own heart lust: and they walked in their own counsels. Oh that My people had hearkened unto Me, and Israel had walked in My ways! I should soon have subdued the enemies, and turned My hands against their adversaries. The haters of the LORD should have submitted themselves unto Him: and their time should have endured forever Alas, poor Israel! Through what sufferings and captivities did you go because you would not trust in the Lord? And how often some of God's children have had to go through years of sorrow and spiritual captivity because of their lack of close walking with their God and complete obedience to Him! May we learn from the sins of others and be helped to walk closely with our Master!

16. He would have fed them also with the finest of the wheat: and with honey out of the rock should I have satisfied you. If the Word of God does not seem to feed us as once it did, it will surely be because we have not hearkened to our Lord, or walked in His ways. May He give us Grace to render complete obedience to His holy will!—

"So shall Your choicest gifts, O Lord,
Your faithful people bless,
For them shall earth its stores afford
And Heaven its happiness."

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