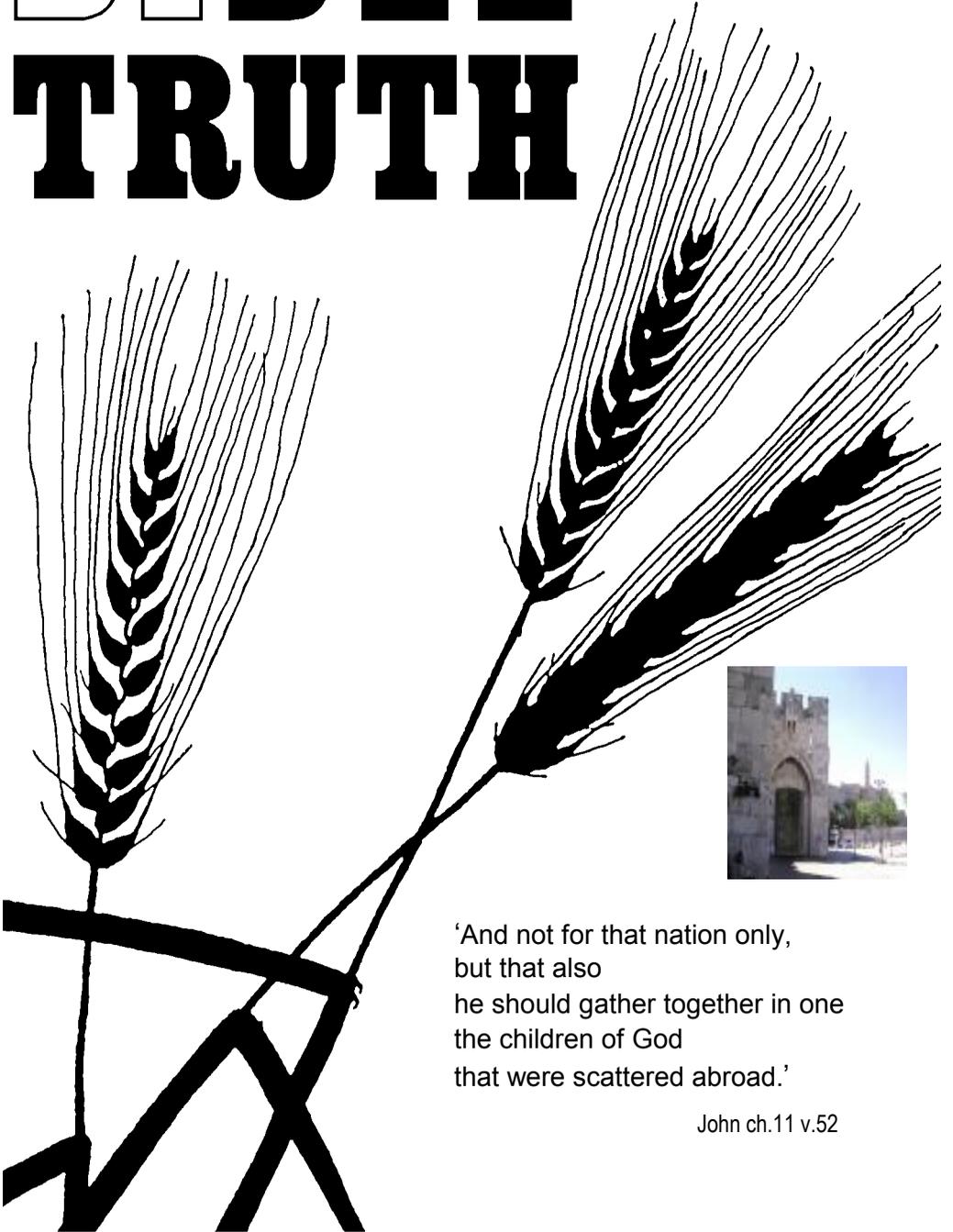


BIBLE TRUTH

No. 263
July/September 2011



'And not for that nation only,
but that also
he should gather together in one
the children of God
that were scattered abroad.'

John ch.11 v.52

Taking His Name in Vain

by Rev. Kenneth C. Kemble, Uvalde, Texas.

When God gave Moses the Law on Mount Sinai, the third commandment given was 'Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; ...'. Most of us understand this commandment to mean that we should not use or invoke the name of God lightly, but only with the greatest respect, reverence and veneration.

How many Christians today are guilty of violating this law! Whether it be exclamatory comments such as 'O my God!', or 'dear Lord!', or piously declaring 'God said ...', when He said nothing at all. The Name of the Lord is to be venerated and worshipped and praised, not tossed about in casual conversation.

But there is also, I believe, a deeper truth to be found in this commandment of God: The Lord calls His people His bride, and He calls Himself the Bridegroom (Isaiah ch.62 v.5, John ch.3 v.29 & Revelation chs 21 vv.2,9 & 22 v.17).

There is an ancient tradition which requires a woman, when she marries, to drop her maiden name and take the name of her husband. This practice has come under criticism in recent years with the rise of feminism, but it will always be the practice of the godly.

In this ancient tradition we discover a deeper understanding into the meaning of the third commandment, and I believe we actually discover the reason for this ancient tradition.

Our physical, temporal marriages are a Bible type of the union between Christ and His bride.

When we commit our lives to Christ, we become His and we take His Name. We leave home (our old lives), and are joined to our bridegroom (Christ). Once we are His, and have taken His Name, we are thereafter never to allow ourselves to be found unfaithful to Him, but are to keep ourselves only to Him as long as we live, and abide by His Law.

God's directive to wives now becomes not only the duty of every wife to her husband, but also the duty of every Christian to Christ.

'Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.

Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. ... and the wife see that she reverence her husband.

Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: ...'

Ephesians ch.5 vv 22-24, 33 & 1 Peter ch.3 v.6

If we, having taken the name of Christ, are found to be unfaithful to Him, and turn away from Him, we have most assuredly taken His name in vain. By our actions we declare that we regard not our bridegroom with reverence but with contempt, and we violate this third commandment most grievously.

The Bible says we are to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, strength and mind (Mark ch.12 v.30 & Luke ch.10 v.27). This is reminiscent of a young woman deeply in love, whose mind and energies are fixed on the young man to whom she has just given herself in holy matrimony. She begins to busily make a home for their life together, and is constantly seeking to bring her husband happiness. This should be comparable to our devotion to Christ.

How happy a marriage is when the husband and wife are deeply in love and are seeking each other's joy and happiness; it has been called 'the closest thing to heaven on earth'. But how miserable a marriage can be when one of them is unfaithful. It has become tarnished with the grievous transgression of infidelity, and has been called 'the closest thing to hell on earth'.

We know that God will never be unfaithful to us, His people. We have His pledge of faithfulness, His marriage vow, if you will.

'... I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee' (Hebrews ch.13 v.5). But are you faithful to Him? If you have given yourself to Christ, you too have made a commitment to Him, and you are going to be held to it.

As the marriage vows state, let us each reaffirm to Christ this day with all soberness and resolve that we will love, honour and obey Him — for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, no matter what the circumstance, until our dying breath.

Let all Christians everywhere take heed that we violate not this third commandment, but that we, forsaking all others, will live our lives completely devoted to Him and Him alone,

'... for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain'.

Exodus ch.20 v.7
