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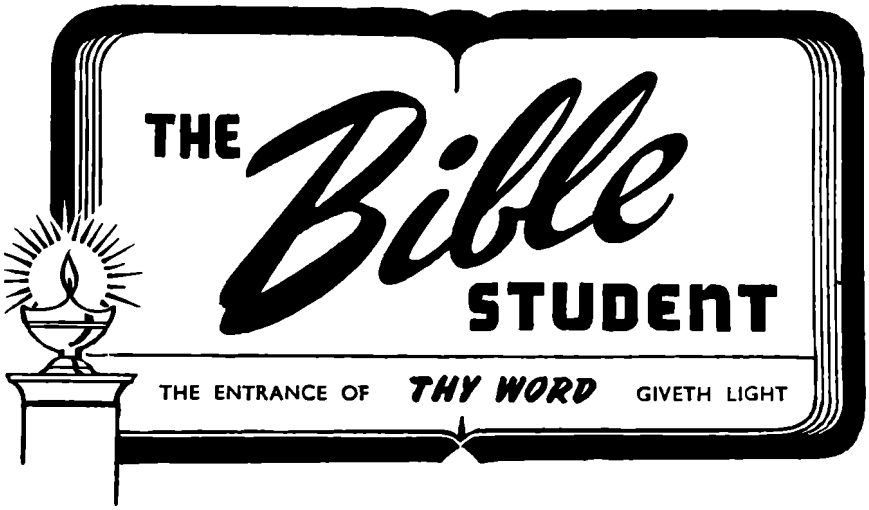
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Editor: A. McDONALD REDWOOD

NEW TESTAMENT WORD STUDIES

W. WILCOX

'Of what manner, or sort' (*Potapos*)

Grim-Thayer describes this word as meaning 'from what region, country or race'; and then, 'of what sort or quality.' Soutter adds: 'practically implies "how great", as in 1 John 3:1.' It is interesting to trace out the ways in which it is used in the Gospel of John and the epistles of Peter and John.

1. *The Greatness of His Incarnation* as One born of a Virgin (Luke 1:29). Mary 'cast in her mind *what manner* of salutation this might be'. It was not the kind of salutation she might have expected, even from an angel: it was something foreign to her station in life and hence she wonders why such words should be addressed to her. She little understood that He who was to be conceived in her was One from 'another sphere', One who, while being her Son would no less be her Lord. Well was she highly favoured, and how much would she need to realize that the Lord was 'with' her! For here is one of the great fundamentals of the Christian faith, that, 'the Word became flesh, and dwelt amongst us'; that 'God sent His Son in the likeness of human flesh'; and that He 'was born of the Virgin Mary'.

Important issues flow from this fact, and therefore, the doctrine of the Virgin Birth must be safeguarded against every assault of the enemy. It is to be expected that those to whom such truths remain 'foreign' will not have that understanding which would render them able to comprehend them. It is only as enlightened by the Spirit 'Who searcheth all things, even the deep things of God', that these things will be understood by the human mind and heart.

2. *The Greatness of His Person* seen in His exacting obedience from the stormy elements, (Matt. 8:27). '*What manner of man* is this that even the winds and the waves obey Him?' As the disciples view the marvels of the wind and waves yielding their obedience to His spoken command, they give expression to the feeling that surely this man must be of a different sort, of another world. Little did they realize at that time, that such was the truth, that they spoke a truth which they did not understand.

We do not need to see physical powers abating their force at His command in order that we may recognize the wonder of His Person, but rather as we behold Him, know the spiritual power He releases, and become inspired by His Spirit, shall we be enabled to appreciate more fully the greatness of Him whom we gladly own as our Lord. This Jesus is truly more than the carpenter of Nazareth, the itinerant preacher of Palestine, or a prophet newly come upon the scene. He is the Son of God and as such is possessed of such powers never possessed by the sons of men. We wonder and adore!

3. *The Greatness of His Grace* in dealing with a poor fallen woman. (Luke 7:39). 'This man if he were a prophet, would have perceived who and *what manner* of woman this is which touched him, that she is a sinner'. This self-righteous Pharisee looked upon One Who would allow a sinful woman to touch Him, or to anoint His feet after having washed them with her tears, as being of a different order, or of another world. He could not understand the Lord's tenderness with one who was known as a sinner. Do we not often adopt the attitude of the Pharisee, and in our self-righteousness condemn and harshly turn away from us those overcome by temptation instead of seeking to win them back to the paths of rectitude? It is not a question of condemning sin, but of acting in grace towards the sinner. His grace amazes us, His loving tenderness fills us with admiration, and His goodness calls forth our praise. Should we not learn to follow in His steps?

The gracious reception of her offering, the well-chosen illustration of both His attitude and hers, and the loving words of forgiveness are all characteristic of Him Who knew the hearts and actions of men, and yet loved them greatly.

4. *The Greatness of His Temple* in its structure and beauty (Mark 13:1). 'Behold *what manner* of stones and *what manner* of buildings'!

By calling the Lord's attention to the stones of the Temple the disciples regarded them as entirely out of the ordinary, as if having been brought from some foreign land. Likewise, spiritually, the 'living stones' which go to make up the 'habitation of God', 'fitly framed together', are 'foreign' to the world's architects and builders who cannot understand the spiritual meaning of God's handiwork in human lives. They may well exclaim as they view a broken lives restored in the beauty of holiness, 'what

manner of stones and buildings are these?' Taken from earth's grim quarries and sin-polluted surroundings they are shaped and disciplined into that which is beautiful for God and His habitation.

5. *The Greatness of His redeemed people* is revealed in their holy lives and godliness. 'What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy living and godliness!' (2 Pet. 3: 11). Such is the exclamation of the apostle as he looks on to the end of all things. He urges upon his readers therefore, that they should take to heart the exhortations he addresses to them.

He puts before them a standard of holiness and godly living such as the world knows not, for lives possessed of such ideals appear as 'other worldly' to those who know not the secret of the Lord. Men may taunt those who strive after such holy ideals as being 'foreign', but the believer will not be moved by such taunts: he has been taught to become a 'pilgrim and a sojourner' in passing through this world. 'Be ye holy for I am holy' is the Lord's word.

Holiness involves separation—separateness from all that is evil or antagonistic to the divine order. Godliness is allied with God-likeness, and this will involve unlikeness to the world. In so far as we live lives to which these characteristics truly belong, so far will our lives appear to others as 'not being conformed to this world', as being 'of heaven, heavenly'.

6. *The Greatness of His love* reaching out to us in Fatherly relationship. (1 John 3:1). 'Behold *what manner* of love the Father has bestowed upon us that we should be called children of God'. One has said, 'It is an exotic love, for it is foreign to the heart of the believer, and is native to the heart of God. An exotic plant growing on foreign soil must be carefully nurtured and tended, so this exotic love must be carefully nurtured by the saint'.

(a) It is a *love* which is other-worldly. No love like this has ever been known, the love of a holy God for sinful men, a love which not merely secures the release of men from the guilt of sin but which brings the pardoned one into family relationship with full status of children and sons. No barriers are placed between Him and those to whom He has given this status. Holy intimacy, gracious sufficiency, divine beneficency are lovingly accorded them; the only obstacles to this enjoyment being such attitudes or acts as would mar their holy character.

(b) It is a *bestowal* which is other-worldly. Peoples of this world only bestow their love on those whom they deem worthy, but God poured out His love upon us when we were unworthy. Such a bestowal fills us with wonder for we can never understand by the natural sense how it was that God should so love us. It was all of grace and nothing of merit; and so we praise the God that bestows.

(c) It is a *status* which is other-worldly, to bring us into the position of children, to the partaking of the children's portion, and to the plenitude of the Father's provision. It is a status to be enjoyed *now*, although its fulness and greatness will not be fully known till we are home in the Father's house. In that day our position will be fully manifested to the wonderment of all onlookers. At the present time it should be known in the measure in which we are recognized as those who look for another city, a better, whose builder and maker is God.

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