

Prayers IV and More

Compiled and Adapted
From the
Authorized King James Version
Of the Holy Bible

By

Mary Craig

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INTRODUCTION

Prayers IV and More continues the Prayer book series, going deeper into the Christian life. Through it, you will be encouraged to see the Scripture as a research tool for your prayers and petitions as you intercede. Prayers IV has more, for I have included certain articles and sermons dealing with deeper issues of spiritual warfare and healing. I trust that these will be to your benefit as you seek to grow in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the mercy of our God be with you.

Mary J. Craig, D. P. M.
July 1, 2002

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A PRAYER OF SALVATION

DEAR LORD JESUS,

I know that I am a sinner and by nature a child of wrath. I confess my sinful condition and acknowledge my need of a Savior. I know that You are God, that You lived a life without sin and died to pay the penalty for sin and rose again from the dead.

I am willing to turn from my sin, to repent and change my mind, and to follow You. I receive You as my own personal Savior and Lord and Master. You are Prophet, Priest, and King.

I surrender myself, my life, to You. I ask You to forgive my sin and to give me the Holy Spirit.

I receive the free gift of eternal life and ask You to fill me with Your redemption, Your peace, Your joy, Your life. For this I give You praise, and I give You glory.

I confess with my mouth that You are LORD and believe in my heart that God has raised You, Jesus, from the dead. I submit myself to the righteousness of God.

I thank You, Jesus, for saving me by grace this day as I have placed my trust and confidence in You alone for my salvation. Grant me assurance of salvation and peace.

AMEN.

;

A PRAYER TO OVERCOME GREED

Heavenly Father,

It is my desire to be a follower of God and walk in love, as Christ also has loved me, and has given Himself for me an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savor, but fornication and all uncleanness, or covetousness (greed), it is not to be once named among us, as becomes saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient; but rather giving of thanks. For I know that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous person, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. (Ephesians 5.1-5)

Jesus said that hypocrites clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion (greed) and excess. I desire to be cleansed of my blindness and to have You cleanse that which is within the cup and platter so that the outside may be clean also. (Matthew 23.25, 26) For from within, out of the heart of people, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornication, murders, thefts, covetousness (greed), wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: all these evil things come from within, and defile the person. (Mark 7.21-23) I desire to be cleansed within from greed and from iniquity. Jesus said that the Pharisees were full of ravening (greed) and wickedness inside and exhorted them to give alms of such things as they had; and, behold, all things are clean unto you. They tithed in the little things and passed over judgment and the love of God. They were like unmarked graves. (From Luke 11.37-44) Let me have a heart to give and not exploit.

Father, I desire to mortify my members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness (greed), which is idolatry, for which things' sake the wrath of God comes on the children of disobedience. I have walked in such, but now I want to put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of my mouth, and not lie, but put on the new which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created me. (Colossians 3.5-10) I desire to put on, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any one have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave me, so may I do.

And above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfectness. Let the peace of God rule in my heart, to the which I am called in one body, and let me be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in me richly in all wisdom. Let me sing with grace in my heart to the Lord. And whatsoever I do in word or deed, let me do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him. (Colossians 3.10-17)

Let not my exhortation be of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile. As I have been entrusted with the gospel, let me speak, not as pleasing men, but God, which tries my heart. Let me not use flattering words nor a cloak of greed. God is witness. Let me not seek glory of men nor be burdensome, but gentle, desirous to impart not only the gospel of God but also my own soul to others. (1 Thessalonians 2.3-8)

I confess that lusts war in my members. I lust and have not. I kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain. I fight and war, yet have not because I ask not. I ask and receive not because I ask amiss, that I may consume it upon my lusts. I am an adulterer, for friendship of the world is enmity with God. Indeed, the spirit that dwells in us lusts to envy. (James 4.1-5) Therefore, I ask for grace. I humble myself under Your mighty hand. I submit myself to You, God. I resist the devil that he may flee from me. I draw nigh to You, God, that You will draw nigh to me. I cleanse my hands, as I am a sinner, and purify my heart, as I am double-souled. I am afflicted and mourn and weep. My laughter is turned to mourning and my joy to heaviness. I humble myself in the sight of the Lord, and You shall lift me up. (James 4.6-10)

I confess that my ways have been pernicious. I have spoken evil of the way of truth. Through greed I have with feigned words made merchandise of others. (2 Peter 2.2, 3) I confess walking after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, despising government, being presumptuous and self-willed. I speak evil of things that I understand not. I have eyes full of adultery and cannot cease from sin; a beguiling and unstable soul with a heart exercised with greedy practices like a cursed child, forsaking the right way and going astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness. I am like a well without water, a cloud carried with a tempest. I speak great swelling words of vanity. I allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness. I promise liberty but I am a servant of corruption, in bondage. (From 2 Peter 2.10-19) Rather, let me be found of You in peace, without spot, and blameless. Let me not be led away with the error of the wicked or fall from my own steadfastness, but let me grow in grace and in the knowledge of my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and forever. Amen. (2 Peter 3.14-18)

The one who is greedy of gain troubles his own house. (Proverbs 15.27) A greedy person with a proud heart stirs up strife, but the one that puts his trust in the Lord shall be made fat. (Proverbs 29.25) Proverbs 29.4 tells me that the king by judgment establishes the land, but the one that is greedy for bribes and receives gifts overthrows it. The greedy seek gain and deal falsely. (Jeremiah 6.13; 8.10) Their hearts are greedy for unjust gain. (Ezekiel 33.31) The greedy are like the grave, never satisfied. (Habakkuk 2.5)

Let me purge out the old leaven and be a new lump, as I am unleavened, for even Christ my Passover is sacrificed for me. Let me keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. Separate me from greed. (1 Corinthians 5.7, 8) I know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God. I am not deceived, for neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor greedy people, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And of such was I, but I am washed, but I am sanctified, but I am justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of my God. (1 Corinthians 6.9-11)

Let me feed the flock of God which is among us, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, greedy for money, but of a ready mind; neither as being a lord over God's heritage, but being an example to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, I shall receive a crown of glory that does not fade away. (1 Peter 5.2-4) For the love of money is a root of all evil; which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. So let me be of God, and flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Let me fight the good fight of faith and lay hold on eternal life, whereunto I am also called and have professed a good profession before many witnesses. Let me not be high-minded or trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who gives to me richly all things to enjoy. Let me do good and be ready to distribute, willing to communicate, laying up in store for myself a good foundation against the time to come, that I may lay hold on eternal life. (1 Timothy 6.10-12; 17-19)

Father, help me to overcome greed. Cleanse me within. Keep me from perverseness, from evil desires, from seeking unjust gain, from exploiting others, from taking instead of giving, from deceit, from the fraudulent behavior of a "con." Rather, let me love, for the end of the commandment is love from a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned. (1 Timothy 1.5) For this is the commandment, that

we should believe on the name of Your Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as He gave us commandment. And the one that keeps His commandment dwells in Him, and He in that one. And hereby I know that He abides in me, by the Spirit which He has given me. (1 John 4.23, 24) Let me not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. (1 John 3.18)

Holy Father, let me be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. (2 Timothy 2.1) Now are we the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. And every one that has this hope in him/her purifies himself/herself, even as He is pure. (1 John 3.2, 3) Purify me and cleanse me of greed.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

E

A PRAYER OF JOY: CALLING NATIONS TO RESURRECTION

Heavenly Father,

Jesus said, "When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory; and before Him shall be gathered all nations; and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats; and He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave Me meat. I was thirsty, and you gave Me drink. I was a stranger, and you took me in; naked, and you clothed me. I was sick, and you visited Me. I was in prison, and you came unto Me. (Matthew 25.31-36)

Then shall the righteous answer Him, saying, Lord, when did we see You hungry, and fed You, or thirsty, and gave You drink? When did we see You a stranger, and take You in, or naked, and clothed You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and came unto You? (Matthew 25.37-39)

And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, you have done it unto Me. Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from Me you cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry, and you gave Me no meat. I was thirsty, and you gave Me no drink. I was a stranger, and you did not take me in, naked, and you clothed Me not; sick, and in prison, and you visited Me not. (Matthew 25.40-43)

Then shall they also answer Him, saying, Lord, when did we see You hungry, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto You? Then shall He answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to Me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal. (Matthew 25.44-46)

Father, I have heard the message from the beginning, that we should love one another and that I should not marvel if the world hates me. You have said that we know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren. The one that loves not his brother abides in death, and whosoever hates his brother is a murderer. And I know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. I perceive the love of God because He laid down His life for me, and I ought to lay down my life for the brethren. (1 John 3.11-16)

But whoso has this world's good, and sees his brother have need, and shuts up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwells the love of God in him? Father, let me not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. Hereby I know that I am of the truth, and shall assure my heart before You. Let me keep Your commandments. Abide in me by the Spirit which You have given me. (1 John 3.17-19, 24)

Father, You sent Jesus the Son to be the Savior of the world. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwells in that one and that one in God. We have known and believed the love that God has to us. God is love, and the one that dwells in love, dwells in God, and God in that one. Perfect my love and let there be no fear. Your Word says that I love You because You first loved me. (1 John 4.14-19)

If someone says, I love God, and hates his or her brother, that one is a liar, for the one that loves not his brother whom he has seen, how can that one love God whom he has not seen? And this commandment have we from Him, that the one who loves God love his brother also. (1 John 4.20, 21)

Father, Christ died for my sins according to the Scriptures. He was buried and rose again the third day according to the Scriptures. He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve. After that He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that He was seen of James, then of all the apostles. And last of all He was seen of Paul also, as of one born out of due time. (1 Corinthians 15.3-8)

If Christ be not risen, then our preaching is vain, and our faith is also vain. Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ; whom He raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised. And if Christ be not raised, our faith is vain, and we are yet in our sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. (1 Corinthians 15.14-18)

If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by Man came also the resurrection out from among the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every one in his own order: Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming. Then comes the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign, till He has put all enemies under His feet. (1 Corinthians 15.19-25)

The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For He has put all things under His feet, but when He says all things are put under Him, it is manifest that He is accepted, which did put all things under Him. And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also

Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all. (1 Corinthians 15.26-28)

I die daily. I awake to righteousness, and sin not. That which I sow is not quickened except it die. And that which I sow, I sow not that body that shall be, but grain. God gives it a body as it has pleased Him, and to every seed its own body. As to the resurrection of the dead, it is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. (From 1 Corinthians 15.31-44)

The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening Spirit. The first man is of the earth, earthy. The Second Man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy. And as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as I have borne the image of the earthy, I shall also bear the image of the heavenly. (1 Corinthians 15.45-49)

Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither does corruption inherit incorruption. It is a mystery that we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump. For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. (1 Corinthians 15.50-54)

O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which gives me the victory through my Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Corinthians 15.55-57)

Therefore, by Your grace, Father, I shall be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as I know that my labor is not in vain in the Lord. (1 Corinthians 15.58)

Father, I do not faint, but though my outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while I look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal. (2 Corinthians 4.16-18) If my earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, I have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. I groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with my house which is from heaven. If so be that being clothed, I shall not be found naked. In this tabernacle I groan, being burdened, not for that I would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. God has given me the earnest of the Spirit. I walk by faith. I labor, that whether present or

absent, I may be accepted of Him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in the body, according to that he/she has done, whether it be good or bad. (2 Corinthians 5.1-10)

I cleanse myself from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. (2 Corinthians 7.1) If I sow to the flesh, I shall of the flesh reap corruption, but if I sow to the Spirit, I shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. Father, I sow to the Spirit. Let me not be weary in well doing, for in due season I shall reap, if I faint not. As I have therefore opportunity, let me do good unto all people, especially unto them who are of the household of faith. (Galatians 6.8-10)

I am a new creature, a new creation in Christ Jesus. (2 Corinthians 5.17) I am sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of my inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of Your glory. (Ephesians 1.13, 14) I am created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before ordained that I should walk in them. (Ephesians 2.10) I am buried with Christ by baptism into death that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so I also should walk in newness of life. I have been planted together in the likeness of His death, and so shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection. My old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed and that henceforth I should not serve sin. Dead, I am freed from sin. Dead with Christ, I believe that I shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dies no more. Death has no more dominion over Him, for in that He died, He dies unto sin once, but in that He lives, He lives unto God. I reckon myself to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ my Lord. (Romans 6.1-11)

I yield myself unto God as one alive from the dead, and my members as instruments of righteousness unto God, for sin shall not have dominion over me. I am not under the Law, but under grace. I obey righteousness. I am a servant of righteousness. I yield my members servants to righteousness unto holiness. I am now being made free from sin, and become a servant to God, having my fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ my Lord. (From Romans 6.12-23)

I am dead to the Law by the body of Christ that I should be married to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead, that I should bring forth fruit unto God. Jesus Christ delivers me from the body of this death. I walk after the Spirit, for the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. I am in the Spirit as the Spirit of God dwells in me. If Christ be in me, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in me, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken my mortal body by His

Spirit that dwells in me. I am not a debtor to the flesh, for then I shall die, but through the Spirit I do mortify the deeds of the body and live. (From Romans 7 and 8.1-13)

I am led by the Spirit of God. I am a son of God. I have received the Spirit of adoption whereby I cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit bears witness to my spirit that I am the child of God, and if a child, then an heir of God and joint-heir with Christ, if so be that I suffer with Him, that I may be also glorified together. I await the redemption of my body, for I am saved by hope. Nothing can separate me from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus. (From Romans 8)

Father, give unto me that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. Grant me grace and power to overcome that I may inherit all things. Then You will be my God, and I shall be your son. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death. (Revelation 21.6-8) Even so, Come, Lord Jesus.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with me and with the nations. Amen.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

A

DEFEATING BELIAL IN THE MIDST

My Heavenly Father,

The nature of Belial has come to my attention, and it is my desire to defeat Belial in my midst. I desire to be separated from Belial that I might serve Jesus Christ. Beli means “without, negated, wearing out.” Yaal means “help; be of use, profit, advantage.”

Of Belial, Father, Your Word says:

“If you hear someone in one of your cities, which the LORD your God gives you to dwell in, saying, ‘Men, Sons of Beli Yaal, have gone out from among you and enticed the inhabitants of their city, saying, “Let us go and serve other gods” –which you have not known—“then you shall inquire, search out, and ask diligently. And if it is indeed true and certain that such an abomination was committed among you, you shall surely strike the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword, utterly destroying it, all that is in it, and its livestock—with the edge of the sword. And you shall gather all its plunder into the middle of the street, and completely burn with fire the city and all its plunder, for the LORD your God. It shall be a heap forever; it shall not be built again. So none of the accursed things shall remain in your hand, that the LORD may turn from the fierceness of His anger and show you mercy, have compassion on you and multiply you, just as He swore to your fathers, because you have listened to the voice of the LORD your God, to keep all His commandments which I command you today, to do what is right in the eyes of the LORD your God.” (Deuteronomy 13.12-18)

Beware lest there be a word in your heart of Beli Yaal, saying, ‘The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand,’ and your eye be evil against your poor brother and you give him nothing, and he cry out to the LORD against you, and it become sin among you. You shall surely give to him, and your heart should not be grieved when you give to him because for this thing the LORD your God will bless you in all your works and in all to which you put your hand. (Deuteronomy 15.9, 10) [See also Deuteronomy 17]

Father, grant me wisdom to conduct due diligence concerning a Belial spirit that would cause a rumor saying someone is enticing others away from worshiping You, truly entice others away from You, bring murderous accusation, devise a plot to bring true believers to hopeless ruin and destruction. Father, search my heart for words of Belial that would turn my eye to be evil toward my brethren, especially the poor and

oppressed. Jesus said that where the treasure is, there is the heart also, so grant me grace to handle wealth and finances as You would have me do so as not to fall prey to Belial. Let me value and hold worthy the words and things of Christ.

Father, I understand that during the time when there was no king in Israel, blatant sin, rape, violence and bloodshed resulted. (Judges 17, 18) The disregard for divine authority led to perversion, homosexuality, gang rape, and war. (Judges 17-21) Children of Belial instigated violence, riot, rape and carnage. A Levite went after his concubine, who had gone from him to her father's house. After some days, he returned with his concubine, lodging in Gibeah, with a man of Ephraim. Gibeah was of Benjamin.

"Now as they were making their hearts merry, behold the men of the city, certain sons of Beli Yaal, beset the house round about, and beat at the door, and spoke to the master of the house, the old man, saying, Bring forth the man that came into your house, that we may know him." (Judges 19.22) The local and cultural law of hospitality overruled the law of God, and the host delivered up the women of the house.

Holy Father, when children of Belial come with perversion and twisted truth, let me not exalt culture and local customs over the law of God so as to do what is right in my own eyes. Let Jesus be King and Lord over my life and my decisions. Let me not succumb to the spirit of the age. Let me stand for righteousness in the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

Instigating the gang rape of an innocent girl resulted in the death of some 65,000 people. (Judges 20.21-35)

"Count not your handmaid as at the face of a daughter of Beli Yaal, for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I spoken [worded] hitherto." (1 Samuel 1.16) So said Hannah to Eli. However, it is of Eli's sons that Scripture says, "Now the sons of Eli were sons of Beli Yaal; they knew not the LORD." (1 Samuel 2.12) Eli thought Hannah was drunk, but instead she was filled with the Holy Spirit. Eli's sons, however, did not know the LORD. They took the best meat for themselves. They did not obey God in the ministry of the priesthood. They were guilty of sexual immorality. They made God's people transgress. They sinned against the Lord. God desired to kill them because they went beyond His tolerance. Eli honored his sons more than God. (1 Samuel 2)

Holy Father, let me walk circumspectly, not as a fool but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Let me not be unwise but understand what the will of the Lord is. Let me not be drunk with wine

in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in my heart to the Lord. (Ephesians 5.15-19) Let me not be deceived by empty words, understanding that the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Let me not be partakers with them, i.e., no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, for such have no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. (Ephesians 5.3-7)

The prophet Samuel anointed Saul king, for the people rejected God, who Himself saved them from all their adversities and their tribulations. (1 Samuel 10.19) Samuel explained to the people the behavior of royalty and wrote it in a book and laid it up before the Lord. And Saul went home to Gibeah, and valiant men went with him, whose hearts God had touched. "But some men of Beli Yaal said, 'How can this man save us?' So they despised him, and brought him no presents. But he held his peace." (1 Samuel 10.27)

Holy Father, let me recognize what You are doing and recognize the anointed in my midst that I not doubt, criticize, despise, and/or withhold gifts. Let me bless what You bless.

Nabal, whose name means "fool," slandered and reviled David as though a slave running from his master. David had provided Nabal's men with protection and were good to them while they were keeping their sheep. Nabal, however, would not give to David's men. Thus, one went to Abigail, Nabal's wife, with this report: "Look, David sent messengers from the wilderness to greet our master; and he reviled them. But the men were very good to us, as we were not hurt, nor did we miss anything as long as we accompanied them, when we were in the fields. They were a wall to us both by night and day, all the time we were with them keeping the sheep. Now therefore, know and consider what you will do, for harm is determined against our master and against all his household. For he is such a son of Beli Yaal that one cannot speak to him." (1 Samuel 25.14-17)

Wisely, Abigail intervened, recognizing the kingly anointing on David. "Please, let not my lord regard this son of Beli Yaal Nabal. For as his name is, so is he. Nabal is his name, and folly is with him!" (1 Samuel 25.25) Father, let me not withhold blessing that is in my power to do.

David found these sons of Belial confronting the kingly and apostolic anointing. "Then all the wicked and worthless [men of Beli Yaal] men of those who went with David answered and said, 'Because they did not go with us, we will not give them any of the spoil that we have recovered, except for every man's wife and children, that they may lead them away and depart. Then said David, Ye shall not do so, my brethren, with that

which the LORD has given us, who has preserved us, and delivered the company that came against us into our hand. For who will hearken unto you in this matter? But as his part is that goes down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarries by the stuff: they shall part alike.” (1 Samuel 30.22-24)

Father, let me not give heed to the words of Belial in my midst. Grant me discernment of good and evil, for You, Lord, are good. Let me have regard for Your goodness. Let me not hoard, be selfish, or judge according to my own prescribed standards.

“And he cast stones at David, and at all the servants of king David: and all the people and all the mighty men were on his right hand and on his left. And thus said Shimei when he cursed, “Come out, come out, thou bloody man, and thou man of Beli Yaal.” (2 Samuel 16.6, 7) Shimei, of the house of Saul, the formerly anointed, blamed David for Saul’s death. Cursing David, Shimei called David a man of Belial. The man had his reasons, presented as truth, yet he cursed the new order. He miscalculated the move of God, where the glory now was.

David responded: “Let him alone, and let him curse; for so the LORD has ordered him. It may be that the LORD will look on my affliction, and that the LORD will repay me with good for his cursing this day.” (2 Samuel 16.11, 12) David wearied of the cursing and had to refresh himself. (2 Samuel 16.14) Later, when David crossed the Jordan, Shimei fell down before him, pleading for mercy. Others wanted David to put Shimei to death because “he cursed the Lord’s anointed.” But David said, “Shall any man be put to death today in Israel? For do I not know that today I am king over Israel?” (2 Samuel 19.22) Shimei was spared by the king.

Father, let me keep in step with the Holy Spirit and the move of God. Let me follow the glory and walk in truth and in love. Let me extend mercy to those who curse me.

Sheba, a Benjamite, again opposed David’s kingship. “And there happened to be there a man of Beli Yaal, whose name was Sheba, the son of Bichri, a Benjamite: and he blew a trumpet, and said, We have no part in David, neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: every man to his tents, O Israel.” (2 Samuel 20.1)

Belial wants nothing to do with the anointed or the kingly anointing. It rejects and withdraws. In so doing, those with a spirit of Belial lose their inheritance. They will not submit to apostolic authority and receive their blessing.

Father, grant me grace to submit to authority and receive those You have anointed.

“But the sons of Beli Yaal shall be all of them as thorns thrust away, because they cannot be taken by hands: But the man that shall touch them must be fenced with iron and the staff of a spear; and they shall be utterly burned with fire in the same place.” (2 Samuel 23.6, 7)

Belial does not give and so does not receive. Opposed to the law of God, their way is the only way. Destruction comes. Father, I loose the Spirit of Burning and Judgment against the spirit of Belial to burn it out by the Fire of God. I thrust away what is of Belial as thorns. Fence me with iron and the staff of a spear. I appeal to Jesus, who rules justly.

“The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spoke to me [David]: ‘He who rules over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God. And he shall be like the light of the morning when the sun rises, a morning without clouds, like the tender grass springing out of the earth, by clear shining after rain.’ (2 Samuel 23.3, 4)

Jezebel allied with sons of Belial to bear witness against Naboth, a righteous man who understood that his vineyard was his inheritance. King Ahab wanted this vineyard. Working the law, partnering with false accusers, Jezebel gets that vineyard for Ahab and Naboth ends up dead. (1 Kings 21) Murderous accusations designed to bring hopeless ruin and loss of inheritance came from the sons of Belial against the righteous.

Father, Belial is a liar who comes to steal and destroy. I sever demonic alliances and loose the Spirit of Burning and Judgment into my circumstances that judgment may be executed upon the spirit of Belial according to Your Word.

“And there are gathered unto him vain men, the children of Beli Yaal, and have strengthened themselves against Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, when Rehoboam was young and tenderhearted, and could not withstand them.” (2 Chronicles 13.7)

Holy Father, let me grow in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. Let me not be naïve, softhearted, and weak when discerning and dealing with Belial. Let no one take from me my crown.

Father, Psalm 41 applies to Belial, and I bring this psalm before You now. (Declare out Psalm 41.) Verse 8 is literally, “A word of Belial clings to his soul, and now that he lies down, he will rise up no more.”

Father, I also bring Psalm 101 before You at this time. I will set nothing wicked or worthless, things of Belial, before my eyes; I hate the work of those who fall away; it shall not cling to me. A perverse heart shall depart from me; I will not know wickedness.

Proverbs 6.12-19 declares:

A worthless person (one of Beli Yaal), a wicked man, walks with a perverse mouth; he winks with his eyes, he shuffles his feet, he points with his fingers; perversity is in his heart, he devises evil continually, he sows discord. Therefore his calamity shall come suddenly; suddenly he shall be broken without remedy. These six things the LORD hates, yes, seven are an abomination to Him: A proud look, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that are swift in running to evil, a false witness who speaks lies, and one who sows discord among brethren.

Deliver me from Belial. I bring before Your throne Nahum chapter one, from which You have said, "Behold, on the mountains the feet of him who brings good tidings, who proclaims peace! O Judah, keep your appointed feasts, perform your vows. For the one of Beli Yaal shall no more pass through you; he is utterly cut off." (Nahum 1.15)

Holy Father, let me see the spirit of Belial as this spirit opposed the true King of Israel and Messiah, Jesus Christ. (e.g., Luke 19.11-26; John 8) Jesus knew His anointing and His authority. Grant me grace to defeat Belial in my life and family and church.

Let me not receive the grace of God in vain. Let me give no offense in anything that our ministry may not be blamed. Let me commend myself as a minister of God as did Paul in 2 Corinthians 6. Let me not be restricted by my own affections. Your Word says:

Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers, for what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: *"I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people."* Therefore *"Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the LORD Almighty."* Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. (2 Corinthians 6.14-18; cf. Ezekiel 36)

Father, let no one take my crown. Let me be on guard against fornication and perversion, greed, and things that would defile Your temple. Let me turn from useless things (Acts 14.15) and take out the precious from the vile, not returning to them (Jeremiah 15.19). Let me no longer trust in lying words which cannot profit (Jeremiah 7.8).

Father, lift up my eyes to see You, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit, that You might work in me a change that will burn off the words of Belial clinging to my soul. Fill up my hope. Open my heart to hear and receive You and Your Word.

Thank You, that my relationship with You, Holy Father, is based upon the necessary and sufficient sacrifice of Jesus Christ the Lamb of God. Thank You that Jesus removes every stone of stumbling, every thorn, opens blind eyes, causes me to rise and walk, and sets me free. Thank You that I am never alone. I abide in Christ and He in me. I am His temple, His Body, His Bride. I am no longer a slave but a son and heir of the Most High, an inheritance for my profit, my security, my prosperity. (Galatians 4)

I am not a son of darkness under the prince of the power of the air, but I am a child of light, of the Kingdom of God. (Revelation 3.7-13) Separate me from lawlessness, from unrighteousness, from perversion, from lies, from worthlessness and worthless words, from all that defiles flesh and spirit. Cleanse me. I am a child of God, a child of the resurrection, a child of the covenant of grace.

The word of God gives me life. It is worthy and does not return to You void, empty of power. Open my eyes to what is truly worthy, valuable, honorable, true, trustworthy, holy. (Philippians 4) Let me think on these things. Open what no one can shut and shut what no one can open. Break the barriers to the true riches of my inheritance in Christ with your rod of iron. Remove the thorns.

I run for the prize and fight for the crown. (1 Corinthians 9.23-27) The crown of pride I trample underfoot. (Isaiah 28.1) Blessings crown the head (Proverbs 10.6). The Lord of hosts will be for a crown of glory and a diadem of beauty to the remnant of His people, for a spirit of justice to him who sits in judgment, and for strength to those who turn back the battle at the gate. (Isaiah 28.5, 6) As I have loved His appearing, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day. (2 Timothy 4.8)

Blessed is the one who endures temptation: for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. (James 1.12) The simple inherit folly, but the

prudent are crowned with knowledge. The evil will bow before the good, and the wicked at the gates of the righteous. (Proverbs 14.18, 19) What is my hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not the brethren in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? For they are my glory and joy. (1 Thessalonians 2.19, 20) You meet me with the blessings of goodness; you set a crown of pure gold upon my head. (Psalm 21.3) [Pray entire Psalm 21 if possible.]

Let me be faithful unto death, that You may give me the crown of life. (Revelation 2.10) Let me shepherd the flock of God which is among my midst, serving not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to me, but being examples to the flock; and when the Chief Shepherd appears, I will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away. (1 Peter 5.2-4)

Lord Jesus, to You be glory and honor and dominion and praise. You are crowned with many crowns, King of kings and Lord of lords. I command the glory of the Lord to be revealed. I command the sons of Belial and the spirit of Belial to manifest and go where Jesus Christ tells it to go. I command light to shine into the darkness.

I declare that I am a son of God, clothed with the glory and honor and blessing of the Lord, clothed with the righteousness of Christ, clothed with humility. I am clothed with the garment of praise. My garment carries the fragrance of myrrh, aloes, and cassia. (Psalm 45) I carry the scepter of Jesus Christ, who rules with a rod of iron.

In the authority and in the anointing of a son of God by virtue of the Blood of Jesus Christ, His life and righteousness, I execute the judgment of the Word of God upon Belial. I command and declare Belial defeated in and around me, my life, my service to the Lord, my destiny in Christ, my relationships, my finances, my inheritance. Wherever Belial, its spirit or its sons, stand in the way of the blessing of God, I command you to remove yourself in Jesus' Name and release the blessings being held up, robbed, hindered, or otherwise barred. Give them up. Do not hold back.

Father, loose my inheritance and deliver me from any blindness, from words of worthlessness, hopeless ruin, outlandish accusations, murderous accusations, etc.

Grant me grace to hold fast what I have, that no one may take my crown. (Revelation 3.11)

I join in the new song of heaven: *You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made*

us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth...Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing!...Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb, forever and ever! (Revelation 5.9, 10; 12,13)

In Jesus' Name, Amen and Amen.

(See also Hosea 10; Job 30.8; Psalm 4; Psalm 36; Nahum 1; Jeremiah 12.13.)

J

PRAYING FOR THE PERSECUTED

Heavenly Father,

I come to You as Your servant on behalf of those who are being persecuted for their faith in Jesus Christ around the world. I desire to intercede for those who are too weak or too oppressed to pray for themselves. I lift these up to You as those who have been bought with the precious Blood of Jesus Christ. I appeal to You on behalf of the New and Everlasting Covenant of grace. I come boldly to Your throne of grace to obtain mercy and to find grace and favor for the persecuted in the Body of Christ. It is my trust and confidence that Jesus as High Priest also intercedes and that the Holy Spirit will help me make this appeal.

Jesus said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you, when men shall revile and persecute and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." (Matthew 5.3-12)

Holy Father, let these as strangers and pilgrims abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul, having their conversation honest among the Gentiles, that, whereas they speak against them as evildoers, they may by their good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation. Let these submit themselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether it be to the king, as supreme, or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well-doing these may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men, as free, and not using their liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. Let these honor all men, love the brotherhood, fear God, and honor the king. (1 Peter 2.11-17) Your Word says that this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. "For what glory is it, if, when you be buffeted for your faults, you shall take it patiently? But if, when you do well, and suffer for it, you take it patiently, this is acceptable with God." (1 Peter 2.19, 20)

Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow His steps; who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth, who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judges righteously, who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes we were healed. (1 Peter 2.21-24)

Let these be all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be merciful, courteous, not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing, but contrariwise, blessing; knowing that we are thereunto called, that we should inherit a blessing. Who is the one that will harm us, if we be followers of that which is good? But and if we suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are we, and not afraid of their terror, neither troubled, but sanctifying the Lord God in our hearts, and ready always to give an answer to every one that asks a reason of the hope that is in us with meekness and fear, having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of us, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse our good conversation in Christ. "For it is better if the will of God be so, that you suffer for well doing, than for evil doing. For Christ also has once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit." (1 Peter 3.8, 9, 13-18)

Let these not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try them and us, as though some strange thing happened: but rejoice inasmuch as we are partakers of Christ's suffering; that, when His glory shall be revealed, we may be glad also, with exceeding joy. If we be reproached for the name of Christ, we are happy, for the spirit of glory and of God rests upon us, on their part He is evil spoken of, but on our part He is glorified. But let none of us suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. Yet if any one suffer as a Christian, let that one not be ashamed, but let that one glorify God on this behalf. Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to Him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator. (1 Peter 4.12-16, 19)

Let these for whom I pray humble themselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt them in due time, casting all their care upon Him, for He cares for them. Let them be sober and vigilant, because the adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking whom he may devour; whom resist, You say, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in the brethren that are in the world. But the God of all grace, who has called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that we have suffered a while, make

us perfect, establish, strengthen, settle us. To Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. (1 Peter 5.8-11)

Father, persecutions, afflictions, come. Cause the persecuted to endure, for all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. (2 Timothy 3.11, 12) Let the Lord stand with these persecuted and strengthen them that by them the preaching might be fully known and that all the Gentiles might hear. Deliver them out of the mouth of the lion, deliver them from every evil work and preserve them unto Your heavenly kingdom to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen. (2 Timothy 4.17, 18)

Father, I pray that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified and that those suffering persecution might be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men, for all have not faith, but the Lord is faithful, who shall establish them and keep them from evil. (2 Thessalonians 3.1-3)

Father, believers can do all things through Christ which strengthens them. (Philippians 4.13) This shall turn to their salvation through our prayers, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. Let them not be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also let Christ be magnified in their body, whether it be by life, or by death, for to live is Christ, and to die is gain. (Philippians 1.19-21)

Let these for whom I pray give no offense in any thing that the ministry be not blamed, but in all things approving themselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in watchings, in fastings; by pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, by honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, they live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things. (2 Corinthians 6.3-10)

This treasure is in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we who live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. So then death works in us, but life in others. We believe,

and therefore speak, knowing that He which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with the brethren that the abundant grace might, through the thanksgiving of many, redound to the glory of God. For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal. (2 Corinthians 4.7-18)

Of these it is true that they are pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that they despair even of life; but they have the sentence of death in themselves, that they should not trust in themselves, but in God, which raises the dead: who delivers them from so great a death, and does deliver, in whom we trust that He will yet deliver. (2 Corinthians 1.8-11)

You have said: Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another; not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality. Bless those who persecute you: bless, and curse not. Rejoice with them that rejoice, and weep with them that weep. Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits. Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lies in you, live peaceably with all men....Avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is Mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if your enemy hungers, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing you shall heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good. (Romans 12.9-21)

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

P. S. I also lift up to You, Heavenly Father, the following Psalms: 10, 35, 56, 64, 69, 91, 109, 124, and Psalms 140-150. Please guide me to any other portions of Your Word that You want me to bring before You that You might do all Your good pleasure according to Your heart, mind, and will. I am Your servant. I give You this vessel that You might intercede according to all Your desire.

CRY OF THE COVENANT

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. All that God created, He called “good.” He created man, male and female, in His own image. His plan was and is relationship, covenant relationship, with His creation. He sought and seeks for loyalty, and so, God covenanted with Adam in what we now call a covenant of works. It was, as it were, a loyalty test, for in it Adam had an obedience to keep. If Adam trusted and believed God, he would demonstrate that by doing what God said and not doing what God said not to do. Adam came to believe a lie, another word, and so disobey God.

That action plunged humanity into an “estate of sin and misery.” But God is just, and biblical justice means more than mere conformity to legal norms and a system of laws. God in His justice shows Himself merciful, kind, full of lovingkindness, and faithful to His covenantal promises, despite His people’s sins.

To demonstrate the nature of His character, God first gave the promise of a Savior (**Genesis 3.15**) and then an enfolding of what we call the covenant of grace. All along, whether it be Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, or the new covenant in Christ, God desires justice, i.e., loyalty or faithfulness to the relationships of the created order. He desires men and women to be rightly related to Him as Creator/Redeemer and rightly related to each other and to the creation.

Thus, the just are those who wait for God, hope in Him, seek after Him, trust in Him, know and fear Him, love His name, and cry out to Him. (**Isaiah 33.2; Psalm 69; Psalm 52; Psalm 103**, e.g.) They are to see themselves as oppressed and needy with the LORD as their sole refuge. (**Psalm 140**) God is after those who bow before His decisions, or judgments, acknowledge their sin, and offer Him a broken spirit and contrite heart. (**Psalms 32, 51, 94, 118**)

The one who has faith in God is just in the sight of God. (**Habakkuk 2.4**) Likewise, the just shall live by faith. So, in demonstrating relationship with God, God’s people were and are to have dominion over the creation, not domination. They are to nourish, build, replenish, exercise kindness and compassion over all creation, not mistreat, oppress, exploit, rob, or devour. (**Exodus 22, Deuteronomy 10 and 23, Psalm 76, Psalm 112**, e.g.) Justice cannot be separated from mercy, care for the afflicted and the poor. So, biblical justice consists in hope and trust in God in the

vertical relationship and in deeds of compassion and alms-giving and mercy in the horizontal relationship.

The people, however, only demonstrated their faithlessness in both dimensions of covenant relationship. The prophets championed social justice issues and argued that the people had forgotten the stories of the mighty redemptive acts of God in their history. The people had a continual bent toward idolatry and greed.

God manifested His heart in the cry of the covenant. “I will be your God, and you will be My people.” If you listen or ask Him, you can hear the cry of God’s heart for a people with whom and in whom He might dwell. Since before the foundations of the world, it was God’s plan that man might be His dwelling place. In **Leviticus 26.12**, we read, “I will walk among you and be your God, and you shall be My people.” God’s people were to serve Him as evidence of their worship.

Likewise, Israel was given a king, whose chief function was to rule, or judge, to execute decisions. The king administered justice especially by coming to the aid of the oppressed. “This is what the LORD says: Do what is just and right. Rescue from the hand of his oppressor the one who has been robbed. Do no wrong or violence to the alien, the fatherless or the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place.” (**Jeremiah 22.3**) God’s covenant with David meant much to the people of Israel, for the prosperity of Israel was bound up with their king. (**2 Samuel 20.1; 2 Samuel 24; Psalm 89**)

A perfect king would mean all the blessings of God would be bestowed upon the people in full measure. **Psalm 72** shows us that this would mean intangible gifts of peace and security as well as material gifts of supply and fertility, i.e., life in its fullness. It was Israel’s hope to have a Messiah, an Anointed One, a ruler who would restore to them all of the goodness of the creation. (**Psalm 72, Isaiah 42.1-7, Jeremiah 23.5, 6**)

Hosea exemplifies God’s holy heart. Israel is unfaithful and begets violence and treachery. They have forsaken the LORD, so God will render His decision and execute it. Yet His mercy triumphs, for though His heart churns within Him, His solaces yearn together. Get this:

My people are prone to apostasy: though they called them to the most High, none at all should exalt Him. How shall I give you up, Ephraim? How shall I buckler you, Israel? How shall I give you as Admah? How shall I set you as Zeboim? My heart is turned within Me, my solaces yearn together.

I will not execute the fierceness (fuming) of My wrath, I will not return to destroy (ruin) Ephraim: for I am God, and not man; the Holy One in the midst of you: and I will not enter into the city... (Hosea 11.7-9)

God is after relationship. So He will lay a fresh foundation: righteousness, justice, mercy, faithfulness, steadfast love. Why? “And you shall know the Lord.” (**Hosea 2.20**)

The cry of the covenant leads us to Jesus Christ, Messiah and Savior, King and Suffering Servant. God had to come because only God can save and only God can make good on His promises. Over and over God had intervened into human history. In Jesus Christ, God came incarnate, Immanuel “God with us.” Jesus took our human nature in order to do for us what we could never do for ourselves. He obeyed perfectly, personally, and perpetually. That means all the time, in thought, word, and deed. How’s your life going so far as to meriting eternal life? (Probably a lot like mine!)

Out of His justice, with its mercy built into the system, God sent Jesus to fulfill both sides of the covenant. Jesus is both Lord and Servant. As the Lord, He claims His people for God, and as the Servant, He claims God for His people. Now as Jesus kept God’s law perfectly, there is righteousness for everyone and anyone who believes. (**Romans 10.4**) God is just and the justifier of the one who believes in Jesus. (**Romans 3.26**)

In Jesus, the heart of God found fulfillment. God’s desire has been and is to make His abode within the heart of every believer. (**John 14.17, 23**) “Here I will dwell; for I have desired it.” (**Psalms 132.14**) In the OT God inhabited the praises of His people (**Psalms 22.3**), but something happened on the cross of Calvary to change everything so that under the new covenant, God inhabits His people. (**Ephesians 2.19-22**)

Jesus demonstrated a reign of justice contrary to human justice. His is not a justice that gives people what they deserve, but rather a justice in which God’s determination and commitment to come to the aid of all who are oppressed is realized. (**Acts 10.38**) It is God’s justice expressed in mercy, a justice bringing salvation to those who sit on the ash heap of human misery. Though He lived within the veil, Jesus died without the camp.

Don’t ever doubt God’s love for you. **2 Corinthians 5.21** says, “He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” At some point, God the Father, in a sense, turned His back upon the Son. God is too pure to look upon iniquity. (**Hab. 1.13**) We hear Christ’s spiritual pain in the cry of abandonment: “My God, My God, why have You forsaken me?”

Jesus quotes **Psalm 22**. Read it in its entirety. Pray to get a grasp on the cry of the covenant, for the Father's desire to love, to inhabit a people, to be their God and for them to be His people, sent the obedient Jesus to the cross. "He was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed." (**Isaiah 53.5**)

He took the penalty of divine wrath, the curse, all the way back from the Garden. Jesus received different kinds of wounds in His body as He suffered and died. He was smitten with a rod upon the cheek. (**Micah 5.1; Matthew 26.67; John 18.22**) This is the contused wound produced by a sharp instrument. Romans used the cat-of-nine tails to scourge criminals, i.e., nine pieces of leather to which were attached sharp ivory or metal balls with protruding nails. The whip tore out pieces of flesh, lacerations produced by a tearing instrument. (**Psalm 129.3; Isaiah 50.6; Matthew 27.20; John 19.1**) Plucking His beard, beating Him with their fists, mutilated Him. (**Isaiah 50.6; Matthew 26.67; Matthew 27.30**)

The crown of thorns pressed upon the head of Jesus would have caused penetrating wounds, deep wounds caused by a sharp, pointed instrument. (**Matthew 27.29; John 19.5**) This, however, did not satisfy the blood lust of the crowd. So they took Him out to crucify Him. As the stake lay upon His lacerated, bleeding back, Jesus stumbled and fell. His body received even more bruises and sores. (**John 19, Luke 23**)

They pierced His hands and His feet. (**Psalm 22.16; Zechariah 13.6**) Along with this perforating wound, Jesus suffered the incised wound. One of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. (**John 19.34; Zech. 12.10**)

Jesus' heart is believed to have burst. Psalm 22.14 says, "I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted within me." His back, His hands, His feet, His head, His heart all delivered over to the suffering of the cross. Why? Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sin. (**Leviticus 17.11, 14**) It is the blood that makes atonement for the soul. (**Hebrews 9.22**)

The blood of righteous Abel cried out for justice, but it was a justice of vengeance. Jesus surpassed the law, coming in grace and truth. His Blood cries out for mercy on the judgment seat over the law. It cries out triumphantly in its victory over devils, disease, and death. **To many, the Blood is offensive. They won't hear of it, speak of it, preach it or teach it. But the truth is that the Blood of Jesus Christ accomplished salvation for those who believe.**

Through the Blood, every believer receives:

- 1) forgiveness of sins according to the riches of God's grace (**Ephesians 1.7**)
- 2) redemption (**1 Peter 1.18, 19; Acts 20.28**)
- 3) cleansing of all unrighteousness and loosing from our sins (**1 John 1.7; Revelation 1.5**)
- 4) justification and propitiation so as to be saved from wrath (**Romans 5.9; Romans 3.24, 25**)
- 5) peace with God (**Colossians 1.20**) overcoming alienation
- 6) access to enter the holiest boldly (**Hebrews 10.19, 20**)
- 7) divine healing (**Isaiah 53.5; 1 Peter 2.24**)
- 8) victory over the devil (**Revelation 12.11**)
- 9) sanctification (**Hebrews 13.12**)
- 10) purging of the conscience from dead works to serve the living God (**Hebrews 9.14**)
- 11) eternal glory as God shall dwell among His people (**Revelation 7.14-17**)

Will you respond to the cry of God's holy heart? Will you listen to the cry of the covenant calling you to faith in Jesus Christ? Are you willing to acknowledge and honor the Blood of Christ shed as the Lamb of God for the remission of sins that you might live in the promise of the covenant? This is how it all ends:

*And I saw a new heaven and a new earth...and I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem,...and I heard a loud voice from the throne say, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He shall dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be among them, and He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes, and there shall no longer be any death; there shall no longer be any mourning, or crying or pain; the first things have passed away."... "He who overcomes shall inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son." (from **Revelation 21.1-7**)*

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

PRAYING THE COVENANT

Heavenly Father,

Jesus was made a surety, a guarantee of a better covenant. Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them. (Hebrews 7.22, 25) Jesus' Blood is the blood of the everlasting covenant. (Exodus 24.8; Hebrews 9.20; 1 Corinthians 11.25; Matthew 26.28; Hebrews 10.29; Hebrews 13.20) Jesus is the mediator of the new covenant, that by means of death for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. (Hebrews 9.15)

By the blood of Jesus, my heart is sprinkled from an evil conscience (Hebrews 10.22) and the blood of Christ cleanses my conscience (Hebrews 9.14; Revelation 1.5). Father, You promised to cleanse me from all my filthiness, to cause me to walk in Your statutes, to be my God as I am of Your people. You said You will take the children of Israel from among the heathen and gather them on every side and bring them into their own land, that You will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel, and one king shall be king to them all, that they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all, neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgression. But You will save them out of all their dwelling places, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them, so shall they be Your people, and You will be their God. And David Your servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd. They shall also walk in Your judgments and observe Your statutes, and do them. They shall dwell in the land that You have given unto Jacob Your servant, wherein our fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children's children forever, and Your servant David shall be their prince for ever. (Ezekiel 37.22-25)

Moreover, You said, "I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set My sanctuary in the midst of them forevermore. My tabernacle also shall be with them. Yea, I will be their God, and they shall be My people. And the heathen shall know that I the LORD do sanctify Israel, when My sanctuary shall be in the midst of them forevermore." (Ezekiel 37.26-28)

You said that what You do is not for our sakes, but for Your holy Name's sake, which we have profaned among the heathen, whither we went. You said, "I will sanctify My great Name, which was profaned among the heathen, which you have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am the LORD, saith the Lord God, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes. For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean. From all your filthiness and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you shall keep My judgments, and do them. And you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and you shall be My people, and I will be your God. I will also save you from all your uncleanness, and I will call for the corn, and will increase it, and lay no famine upon you. And I will multiply the fruit of the tree, and the increase of the field, that you shall receive no more reproach of famine among the heathen." (Ezekiel 36.22-30)

So let us remember our own evil ways, and our doings that were not good, and loathe ourselves in our own sight for our iniquities and for our abominations. Let us be ashamed and confounded for our own ways. (Ezekiel 36.31, 32) For thus saith the Lord God; "In the day that I shall have cleansed you from all your iniquities I will also cause you to dwell in the cities, and the wastes shall be built. And the desolate land shall be tilled, whereas it lay desolate in the sight of all that passed by. And they shall say, this land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are become fenced, and are inhabited." (Ezekiel 36.33-35) You Lord build the ruined places and plant that which was desolate. You said, "I the LORD have spoken it, and I will do it." You said, "I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them; I will increase them with men like a flock. As the holy flock, as the flock of Jerusalem in her solemn feasts; so shall the waste cities be filled with flocks of men: and they shall know that I am the LORD." (Ezekiel 36.36-38)

You spoke of the new covenant you make with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. You said, "After those days, saith the LORD, I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be My people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying Know the Lord: for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." (Jeremiah 31.33, 34)

Father, You promised: “Behold, I will gather them out of all countries, whither I have driven them in Mine anger, and in My fury, and in great wrath; and I will bring them again unto this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely. And they shall be My people, and I will be their God. And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear Me forever, for the good of them, and of their children after them: and I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put My fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from Me. Yes, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly with My whole heart and with My whole soul.” (Jeremiah 32.37-41) “The voice of joy, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the voice of them that shall say, Praise the Lord of hosts, for the Lord is good; for His mercy endures forever: and of them that shall bring the sacrifice of praise into the house of the Lord. For I will cause to return the captivity of the land, as at the first, says the Lord.” (Jeremiah 33.11)

I enter into the covenant to seek the Lord God of my fathers with all my heart, and all my soul (2 Chronicles 15.12; 34.31; 2 Kings 23.3) for the Lord my God will circumcise my heart, and the heart of my seed, to love the Lord my God with all my heart, and with all my soul. (Deuteronomy 30.6)

Father, Your Word says in Deuteronomy 7.9, 10: “Know therefore that the Lord your God, He is God, the faithful God, which keeps covenant and mercy with them that love Him and keep His commandments to a thousand generations; and repays them that hate Him to their face, to destroy them: He will not be slack to the one that hates Him, He will repay him to his face.”

You are a covenant-keeping God. You established Your covenant with Noah, his descendants, and with every living creature going out of the ark, to every beast of the earth, promising that neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth, and You gave the rainbow as a token. (Genesis 9)

You promised Abram that You would make of him a great nation, and You would bless him, and make his name great, and he would be a blessing. You said, “And I will bless them that bless you, and curse him that curses you, and in you shall all families of the earth be blessed.” (Genesis 12.2, 3)

You told Abram that You were his shield and his exceeding great reward. (Genesis 15.1) You told him to look toward heaven and if he

could number the stars, so shall his seed be. And Abram believed in You and You counted it to him for righteousness. You promised to give him the land of Canaan to inherit it and covenanted with him saying, "Unto your seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates..." (Genesis 15)

Your covenant was with Abraham and you told him he would be a father of many nations and changed his name to Abraham. You said, "And I will make you exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come out of you. And I will establish my covenant between Me and you and your seed after you in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto you, and to your seed after you. And I will give unto you, and to your seed after you, the land wherein you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God. You shall keep My covenant therefore, you, and your seed after you in their generations." And You gave circumcision as the sign of the covenant. (Genesis 17)

You gave the covenant to Moses, the Law and the Book of the covenant. You gave the blood of the covenant You made. (Exodus 24) You commanded the sabbath to be kept as a sign between You and Your people throughout the generations that we may know that You are the Lord that sanctifies us. You established it as a sign forever, for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed. (Exodus 31.12-18) You set forth the blessings and the curses of the covenant (Deuteronomy 28).

You remember the covenant and do not break it. (Judges 2.1) You promised David a house and a kingdom and a throne established forever. (2 Samuel 7) You said, My covenant with him will never fail. (Psalm 89)

Father, remember this, that the enemy has reproached, O Lord, and that the foolish people have blasphemed Your name. O deliver not the soul of Your turtledove unto the multitude of the wicked. Forget not the congregation of Your poor forever. Have respect unto the covenant, for the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty. O let not the oppressed return ashamed. Let the poor and needy praise Your name. Arise, O God, plead Your own cause. Remember how the foolish man reproaches You daily. Forget not the voice of Your enemies, the tumult of those that rise up against You increases continually. (Psalm 74.18-23)

You are the Lord our God. Your judgments are in all the earth. You have remembered Your covenant forever, the Word which You commanded to a thousand generations, which covenant You made with Abraham, and Your oath unto Isaac; and confirmed the same unto Jacob

for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant: saying, unto you will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance. (Psalm 105.7-11)
Save us, O Lord our God, and gather us from among the heathen, to give thanks unto Your holy name, and to triumph in Your praise. (Psalm 106.47)

I declare to You Psalm 111 now. You gave Jesus Your Servant to be a covenant for the people (Isaiah 42.6, 49.8). You said, "For I the Lord love judgment, I hate robbery for burnt offering; and I will direct their work in truth, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. And their seed shall be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the people. All that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which the Lord has blessed." (Isaiah 61.8, 9)

"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He has visited and redeemed His people, and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David; as He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets, which have been since the world began: that we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us; to perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember His holy covenant; the oath which He swore to our father Abraham, that He would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of our life." (Luke 1.68-75)

Jesus offered Himself, His Body and His Blood. He is the mediator of a new covenant, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance...and almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. (from Hebrews 9)

Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin You would not, neither had pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; then said He [Jesus], Lo, I come to do Your will, O God. He takes away the first, that He may establish the second, by the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. (Hebrews 10)

In faith, I surrender to accept and experience what grace will do in my life by the Holy Spirit. I desire to trust in Your mighty working in me. I desire to be taught and led by the Spirit of God. I desire holiness. I desire truth in my inward parts. I desire to know the end of the commandment, which is love out from a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned. (1 Timothy 1.5) I trust the Lord to keep and preserve me.

Thus, Father, we have boldness to enter into the holiest by the Blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He has consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh, and so I draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having my heart sprinkled from an evil conscience, and my body washed with pure water. (Hebrews 10.19-22) The just shall live by faith. (Romans 1.17, Galatians 3.11, Hebrews 10.38)

Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make me perfect in every good work to do His will, working in me that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen. (Hebrews 13.20, 21)

The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign forever and ever. And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshiped God, saying, We give thanks, O Lord God Almighty, who is, and was, and is to come, because You have taken to You Your great power, and have reigned. And the nations were angry, and Your wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that You should give reward unto Your servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear Your Name, small and great; and should destroy them which destroy the earth. And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in His temple the ark of His covenant, and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail. (Revelation 11.15-19)

I am the child of promise and stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made me free. (Galatians 4.28; 5.1) I live in the Spirit (Galatians 5.25). The Spirit gives life. Sanctify me through the truth. (John 17.17, 19; Romans 1.7; 1 Corinthians 1.2; 2 Thessalonians 2.13, 3.13, 5.23-24; 1 Peter 1.2) What the law demands, grace supplies.

Jesus said, "It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto the one that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. The one that overcomes shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son." (Revelation 21.6, 7)

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

GRAFTED INTO THE BODY

Grafting is a process, a joining of the cut surfaces of plants under circumstances that will allow physiological union. The supporting plant is called the stock. The plant part that is grafted to it is called the scion. The scion may be a twig, stem, bud, or other part of a plant. The ability of the cut surface to heal depends on intimate contact between the cambium layers of the scion and the stock. The cambium layer, a ring of reproductive tissue around the stem, produces callus tissue. In a successful graft, callus tissue differentiates to form food-conducting vessels, water-conducting vessels, and a cambium layer, which connect the corresponding tissues of scion and stock. (Microsoft Encarta 96 Encyclopedia, Microsoft Corporation, 1993-1995)

Romans 6.5, 6 says *“For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection: knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.”*

The stock, or supporting plant, must be wounded to receive the scion. Grafting requires wounding, both of the support plant and the scion. In a relationship of wound to wound, access is obtained to the fellowship of the sap and life of the stronger stem.

Believers are planted into the likeness of Christ’s death, wound to wound, partaking of the life and the power that are in Him. In Christ’s open wounds a place is prepared where we might be grafted in. In our woundedness and brokenness, a place is prepared that we might be grafted in. As we are torn away and cut off from where we grew by nature, we are cut and conformed to the place prepared for us in the wounded stock. Grafted into the Body of Christ, crucified with Christ and abiding in Him, we live in the power of His endless life. We draw life from the Vine.

“Abide in the wounds of Jesus; there is the place of union, and life, and growth. There you shall see how His heart was opened to receive you; how His flesh was rent that the way might be opened for your being made one with Him, and having access to all the blessings flowing from His divine nature.” (Andrew Murray)

The Holy Spirit fits us for fellowship. Think about this the next time that you receive communion. Discern the Lord’s Body. Think about how this changes our perspective on the sufferings of the present day.

“For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” **Romans 8.18**

K

BUYING FROM JEHOVAH

Heavenly Father,

I come to you in Jesus' Name to buy the truth and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding. (Proverbs 23.23) I am thirsty, and come to the waters, [Holy Spirit] as one who has no money. I come to buy and eat, yes, I come to buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do I spend money for that which is not bread, and labor for that which does not satisfy? Let me hearken diligently unto You, O God, and eat that which is good, and let my soul delight itself in fatness. Let me incline my ear and come to You and hear that my soul shall live; and You will make an everlasting covenant with me, even the sure mercies of David. (Isaiah 55.1-3)

I call unto You, and You will answer me, and show me great and mighty things, which I know not. (Jeremiah 33.3)

Let us go to now, we that say, "Today or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: whereas we know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is our life? It is even a vapor, that appears for a little time, and then vanishes away. We ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that. Let us not rejoice in our boastings. All such rejoicing is evil. For to the one that knows to do good, and does it not, to that one it is sin. (James 4.13-17) Let me be patient and establish my heart, for the coming of the Lord draws nigh. (James 5.8)

I do not say that I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing. I know that I am wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. I receive the counsel of Jesus and come to buy of Him gold tried in the fire, that I may be rich; and white raiment, that I may be clothed, and that the shame of my nakedness not appear; and I anoint my eyes with eye salve, that I may see. I repent. I hear Your voice, Lord Jesus, as You stand at the door and knock. I open the door that You will come in to me, and sup with me, and me with You. Grant me grace to overcome that I may sit with You in Your throne, even as You also overcame, and are set down with Your Father in His throne. Let me hear what the Spirit says to the churches. (Revelation 3.17-22)

The wise woman considers a field and buys it. (Proverbs 31.16). The kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field. When a man finds it, he hides, and for joy thereof goes and sells all that he has, and buys that field. It is like a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls, who when he

had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it. (Matthew 13.44-46)

Jesus went into the temple and began to cast out them that sold therein, and them that bought; saying unto them, *It is written, My house is the house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves.* (Luke 19.45, 46)

I am joined unto the Lord and one spirit with Him. My body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in me, which I have of God, and I am not my own. I am bought with a price. Therefore I glorify God in my body and in my spirit, which are God's. (1 Corinthians 6.17-20) I am bought with a price. I am not the servant of men. Let me abide with God wherein I am called. (1 Corinthians 7.23, 24) False teachers bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. (2 Peter 2.1) Let me not be such.

Let me not sell myself (1 Kings 21.25) to work wickedness, nor sell my brethren (Nehemiah 5.8). Oh, Lord, do not sell me or my sons and daughters to the enemy (Judges 4.9, Joel 3.8). Forgive me for taking what is yours. Grant me grace to sell what I have and give to the poor, to give alms, to distribute to the poor, that I have treasure in heaven. (Luke 18.22, Matthew 19.21, Mark 10.21)

All of Psalm 44--- Revelation 18, 19

Let me bear the brandmark of Jesus Christ. Let me not bear the mark of the beast, not in my forehead, nor in my right hand. You are Alpha and Omega, the first and the last. You give to him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. Grant me grace to overcome that I may inherit all things. Then you say, "*I will be his God, and he shall be My son.*" (Revelation 21.6, 7) Let me do Your commandments that I may have right [exousia; jurisdiction; authority] to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. (Revelation 22.14)

Let the kingdoms of this world become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ. Let Your kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven. Let the kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of God, come in me and me in it. Let me have my place in the kingdom of God, in the kingdom of Christ, in the Father. Let me be in the world but not of the world.

I come into agreement with Jesus' prayer in John 17. Glorify Your Name.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

LOOSING THE BONDS OF SHAME

...looking unto Jesus...who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame...Hebrews 12.2

SHAME. It binds us by the intensity of its destructive power exerted in our lives. It rules us like an addiction, causing us to cover it with arrogance, masks of respectability, lies, and deceit. **Proverbs 11.2** states: *When pride comes, then comes shame; but with the humble is wisdom.*

Shame came upon humanity with Adam's sin. Adam and Eve were both naked and not ashamed (**Genesis 2.25**). Then, with guidance from the serpent, looking for more birthed dissatisfaction with themselves in their created state. Wanting to be more, failing to accept essential limitations, Adam and Eve breached the boundaries of the covenant with their Creator. Their actions at that point forever shattered a relationship of naked truth and the honesty of walking humbly with their God. Their actions plunged themselves and their posterity into an estate of sin and misery. The covering of shame, the consequence of true guilt, stripped their souls of inherent dignity and marred their being. Secrecy and hiding resulted. (**Genesis 3.7-10**)

Shame comes as we do evil in the sight of God. *For shame has devoured the labor of our fathers from our youth—their flocks and their herds, their sons and their daughters. We lie down in our shame, and our reproach covers us. For we have sinned against the Lord our God, we and our fathers, from our youth even to this day, and have not obeyed the voice of the Lord our God. (Jeremiah 3.24, 25)* Shame covers us.

We enter this world flawed, depraved, having hearts bent toward evil. Thus shame covers the very core of our being, infusing its poison into our souls, carrying us ever into darkness, wickedness, lawlessness, and falsehood. In his book, Shame: The Power of Caring, Gershen Kaufman provides us with the results of shame as seen by secular professionals.

Shame is the affect which is the source of many complex and disturbing inner states: depression, alienation, self-doubt, isolating loneliness, paranoid and schizoid phenomena, compulsive disorders, splitting of the self, perfectionism, a deep sense of inferiority,

inadequacy or failure, the so-called borderline conditions and disorders of narcissism.

It is difficult to accept the reality of who we are. We want to be more powerful, more than human, more in control. As the whole world lies under the sway of the evil one, we enter into the system of the world as we seek “more” through violence, wealth, and knowledge. We exploit, lie, cheat, steal, murder, deceive, feign humility and goodness, all to get “more.” In accepting the lies of that “other word” from Satan, in refusing right relationship with our Creator, in exalting ourselves, in asserting our wills against the will of God, we exercise the false beliefs, the loyalty to lies, that result in hopelessness, poverty, and ultimate destruction.

Enter Jesus Christ.

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved...This is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil...(John 3.16-19)

Jesus Christ living in relationship with His Father demonstrates the way, the truth, and the life. Walking in the vulnerability of needing but having a heavenly Father, living in the security and trust of an interpersonal bond with His Father as Primary Caretaker, Jesus grew in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man. He did not do things “his way.” He lived with a strong sense of “we.” He said, “I and My Father are one.” (**John 10.30**) About His Father’s business, He lived and walked and worked the works of the One who sent Him in the mirroring eyes of His Source and Sustainer. His Father honored Him (**John 8.54**), and He honored His Father (**John 8.49**).

Jesus was committed to reality. His judgments were not made on appearances. He knew what was in the hearts of men, their thoughts, and what proceeded from the heart of man. He knew Himself, His purpose in the Incarnation, His mission, and the necessity of finishing and living out His destiny.

Then came the shame, as prophesied. *I gave My back to those who struck Me, and My cheeks to those who plucked out the beard; I did not hide My face from shame and spitting. (Isaiah 50.6)* With the promise of the Father before Him, with His inheritance at stake, with the plan for the redemption of the elect moving to the crisis, the crux of the cross,

Jesus came to that place, the place of the skull, and to that experience we call abandonment, alienation, separation.

Abandonment causes the internalization of shame as mirroring by the primary caretaker is lost. To know who we are, we need, as it were, reflective mirrors. We become what we behold. For a healthy identity, we need a parent figure, and especially a father figure, that can impart the confidence, the continuity, the sameness that comes from the eyes of another seeing us as we see ourselves. With disparity, the weaker will come to believe the judgment of the greater.

As Jesus took on the sins of the world in our place and stead, He was forsaken by the Father. What came in that experience? Poverty of supply? Vulnerability to abuse? Loss of trust? A shattering of self in the wake of alienation? The intense despair of isolation? *And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" which is translated, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"* **(Mark 15.34)**

We say to ourselves: I am a mistake. No one could possibly love or accept me as I am. Therefore, I need something outside to make myself acceptable and lovable. Therefore, I am driven to meet this need to remove somehow in my own efforts the covering of shame incurred by guilt. I feel ashamed. I am guilt-ridden.

Deep down in the inner core, were we honest, we would admit that God only is good, that our guilt comes as we break God's laws and abandon His value system for that of another, that the consequence of actions flowing from a heart bent toward evil since "the fall" brings upon us the covering of shame because it is the reality of the Word of God. Nevertheless, the Word of God is truth with the power to expose error and set us free.

I believe shame can be overcome by considering and employing the following strategy:

1. Name it for what it is.
2. Refuse to be the victim of shame, satan, and separation from God.
3. Look at yourself in the eyes of God as revealed in His Word.
4. Allow the truth of God's Word and the Holy Spirit to reveal who He is really and who you are really.
5. Be willing to come out of hiding, move from the miseries of your sins, iniquities, and transgressions, and embrace the pain of aligning with what the Word says.
6. Take courage in confessing imperfection, corruption, sin, rebellion, lawlessness, and falling short of the glory of God.

7. Take life less somberly and more seriously.
8. Lighten the load of guilt by receiving the revelation of the atonement for sin provided by and through the Suffering Servant Jesus Christ. **(Isaiah 53)**
9. Repent (change your mind), receive Jesus Christ as Sovereign Savior, and receive the gift of eternal life. **(Ephesians 2)**
10. Receive the forgiveness of sins, removal of alienation, cancellation of debt and liability, deliverance from the bondage of shame and guilt. **(Colossians 1, 2)**
11. Receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. **(Luke 11, Acts 1.8)**
12. Allow the Holy Spirit to apply the Blood of Jesus and to cleanse your evil conscience. **(Hebrews 9.14, Hebrews 10.22, 1 John 1.9)**
13. In entering the Kingdom of God, purpose to live in vital spiritual union with the Godhead, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
14. Connect with God in covenant, with His love, His goodness, His mercy, His truth, His light, His peace, His life, His grace.
15. Love as you are loved: openly, graciously, honestly, freely, eternally, without harm, without limit, without exploitation, without shame.
16. Believe God, behold God, become all that God wants you to be.

How to be Free of Shame

I. Biblical Meaning of Shame

Shame is an inward experience, a response, a feeling with an outward effect. The word we translate “shame” comes from *entropo*. *Entropo* means to turn about. It is a word which can actually mean both respect and shame.

This word *entropo* carries with it the idea of turning one in upon himself so as to produce a feeling of shame. Shame can be a wholesome feeling which produces a change of conduct. Sometimes, shame is appropriate.

- 1 Cor. 4.14 shame vs. admonishing
- 1 Cor. 6.5 I say this to your shame
- 2 Thes. 5.14 not to associate...put to shame
- Titus 2.8 opponents put to shame

So we see that when we are confronted or admonished with truth and feel shame appropriately, it will lead to repentance and cleansing. In the light of truth and moral correctness, we perceive our failings, feel shame coming out of true guilt. This is designed to lead us to repent, to change our conduct.

In Matthew 21.37...they will respect my son...we see this word *entropo* used to mean respect or reverence. In the face of holiness, we bow in respect. We humble ourselves, seeing again how we fall short of the glory of God, of God's perfection.

When we are "ashamed," we bring dishonor upon ourselves. We say, "Oh, I am so ashamed of myself." A feeling of shame arises from failure. Phil. 1.20 A feeling of shame can be coupled with a feeling of fear so as to prevent action. Luke 16.3

Other words are similar...humiliation, disgrace, reproach, regret, feeling guilty, falling into disfavor, experiencing the pain of failure. (Isaiah 61.7, 54.4, Romans 6.21)

Some action or attitude brings about feelings of shame. Romans 6.21. Impurity and lawlessness cause us to feel shame. We break a rule. We break the Law of God. We feel shame. In Psalm 129.5 those who hate Zion are put to shame. The attitude of hatred, of active prejudice brought shame. In Numbers 12.14 a father spits in a girl's face. She must bear her shame for 7 days. In Proverbs 12.4 a wife shames her husband as rottenness in the bones when she commits immorality.

When shame enters the picture, the reaction is to hide. 2 Corinthians 4.2. This has been going on since the Garden. Things are hidden out of shame instead of renounced. We act this way because we really don't believe that God is good and ready to forgive. We think we are going to be punished and we get afraid. 1 John tells us all about it.

What results is that we are unable to separate criticism from rejection. 1 Cor. 4.14. When God admonishes us, it is not to do us evil, but to do us good, to cause us to amend our ways so that He can bless us or so that we can be healed. The trouble is, we have a difficult time separating types of shame.

1 Cor. 6.5 Here Paul sets out to shame, but his eye is to restore.

1 Peter 4.16 Here we are not to be ashamed of Christian suffering.

Romans 1.16 Here we are not to be ashamed of the gospel.

II. God's answer to shame:

The opposite of shame is GLORY 2 Thes 1.12, 2.14 and FAVOR Luke 4.18, 19.

Shame is turned into rejoicing. Isaiah 65.13. The hungry eat, the thirsty drink, the ones with shame rejoice. In Zephaniah 3.19 God turns shame into praise and renown.

Christ bore your shame in 3 ways:

1. He bore the inherent shame of the cross itself. Heb 12.2. He endured the cross, despising the shame. 1 Cor. 1.18 The cross was foolishness.
2. Christ bore the curse, the total humiliation. Dt. 28; Gal. 3.13
3. Christ died outside the camp, rejected, alienated, suffering the shame of abandonment from His Father.

Are you seeing that shame is a falling from grace, as it were? A falling from favor? A falling short of the glory of God? Jesus became sin for us that we through His shame might receive the favor, the glory of God.

Jesus Christ is not ashamed to be our brother. Heb 2.11 God is not ashamed to be our Father. Heb 11.16 God will not put to shame those who wait for Him with hope. Isaiah 49.23 God offers us a way to remove shame by removing guilt and liability that comes as a result of breaking the law of God.

Name it for what it is: shame You are feeling shame because you have done something that has put you in a position of guilt. You broke someone's rule, maybe even your own. You broke the law. You did something "bad." You thought something out of order with right attitudes. Maybe your shame is correct and maybe you feel ashamed because you never questioned the rules. Maybe the shame and guilt is false.

Either way the strategy is the same for removing shame and guilt: Name it. Face it. Confess to God how you feel and what you did that was so wrong either in your eyes or in another's eyes or in God's eyes. Know that God is love. God is good. God doesn't harm. God has no evil thoughts toward you. God only wants your good and to bless you, to favor you. Picture Jesus bearing your shame. He went to the humiliation of the cross taking the curse outside the camp. He took your reproach, the rejection of God....Ask that the Blood of Jesus wash away all shame. If you think you have been the victim of evil, where evil was called good, where you were judged bad under a pretense of love that threw you into confusion about right and wrong, then you may consider counseling by a Christian professional to help you sort everything out.

TREADING ON SERPENTS AND SCORPIONS

In Luke 10.19, Jesus says, *“I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy; nothing shall by any means harm you.”*

The backdrop for this verse is this:

Jesus had sent out the Twelve, but now he sends out 70 or 72 on a mission. He had asked that prayer be given to the Lord of the harvest for workers to go out into the harvest, and then He says to these, “Go!” He is sending them as lambs among wolves. There will be danger and hostility, as wolves often represent those who consume their enemy.

They are to travel light, stay focused, and keep their mission a priority. They are to rest in the knowledge that God will provide for them. They are to stay in one place and offer a blessing of peace, but if unwelcomed, the blessing will recede from that house. Their main responsibility is to heal the sick and declare the arrival of God’s kingdom.

Jesus is bringing in a new era. God’s ruling power in deliverance is coming. The message precedes the Man. The mission announces the arrival of the KOG. The rule of God through Jesus Christ has begun. The power to deliver from Satan’s power has started to work itself out in history and among humanity. Evil forces and the presence of death cannot resist Jesus’ authority.

Jesus’ coming also brings judgment, for the Anointed One is in the midst. Will you recognize Him? Will you receive Him? Will you repent and follow Him?

In verse 17 the 70, or 72, depending on which manuscript evidence you accept, return from this mission with joy. The disciples return filled with excitement at the power they saw manifest when demons submitted to them in Jesus’ name. Wow! “Lord, even the demons submit to us in Your Name.”

Okay, when we see the power of God manifesting, we can get carried away with ourselves, as if by our power or piety this healing was taking place. But no, later Peter will say in Acts 3.12 when the lame man was healed at the Gate Beautiful, “You men of Israel, why do you marvel at

this? Or why do you look so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?" (Dunamis)

So, Jesus, replies, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven." The allusion is to imagery from Isaiah 14.12. Satan's end comes with Messiah. Later, in Luke 11.20-23, Jesus describes His own activity as being the stronger one coming to plunder Satan's domain. And now our verse:

Behold, I have given unto you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy. Nothing shall by any means harm you.

Behold. Look here. Pay attention. This is primo. Listen up. First and foremost, it is Jesus who gives the authority. Jesus Christ is the Incarnate Word. He is God in flesh. He is the Creator come to be Savior. He is far above principalities and powers and rulers of darkness. He has pre-eminence in all things. All things were created by Him and for Him.

And He gives this authority. We don't usurp it. It is delegated authority. The Greek here is *exousia*. It means: the domain or sphere over which one has authority to control or rule, jurisdiction; authority to rule or govern; authority and responsibility for something; the power to do something.

And what is this authority? To do what? It is to tread, to tread on serpents and scorpions and to tread on all the power of the enemy.

Before we look at what it is to tread, we will look at the focus of our treading. It is serpents and scorpions, first. Serpents and scorpions symbolize Satan and demons. The serpent is craft, deceiving. It glides and slithers and darts. It coils and is venomous. Serpents swallow their prey to devour them. They crush so as to make one an empty vessel (Jeremiah 51.33, 34). They do violence to one's flesh. (Jeremiah 51.35) Serpents bite.

Serpents have sharp tongues (Psalm 140.3), snake tongue. Dust will be the serpent's food (Isaiah 65.25) when it can no longer harm nor destroy. If serpents are cunning and poisonous, (Dt. 32.33; Job 20.14; 20.16) scorpions sting.

The sting of death is sin. The strength of sin is the law. (1 Corinthians 15.56) but death and the grave have no victory, because God gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Our labor in the Lord is not in vain.

Part of that labor is to tread. Jesus Christ has given us the right to tread on serpents and scorpions.

What is it to tread? It is to trample, to push down, to walk on, to step on, to conquer. It implies that the serpents and scorpions are under your feet. It is to conquer and keep under subjection by trampling. It can mean to subdue by force, to plunder, to treat contemptuously, as in Luke 21.24 where it speaks of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Gentiles.

Both sides in this war tread. The enemy tramples us and seeks to keep us downtrodden, to plunder us, to trample us, to trample and make common the holy things of God.

Treading implies a beating down by walking on something. We are to tread on all the power of the enemy.

We are given the right to do this treading over all the power, the dynamis of the enemy, i.e., the enemy's ability or power or supernatural power.

An enemy can be personal, national, and/or God's enemy. Here I think it refers to the enemy opposing Jesus Christ, to Satan and his minions. The enemy comes with reproach to oppress, blaspheme, revile, cast iniquity upon, to hate.

Right now our greatest enemy is sin. It is the sting of death. We are to tread it down in our lives. We are to rise up out of the graves and get sin and Satan under our feet and trample the enemy down. Enemies seek your life to destroy you. The enemy of your soul is out to devour you. You are given the right to tread the enemy down. You are not to walk with the enemy or talk with the enemy or take the enemy in. You are to walk on the enemy, tread the enemy down, under your feet. You are to conquer that which seeks to destroy you and devour you.

To tread you must have a clearly defined enemy. You must see what is the enemy to your soul and to Christ. You have the right to tread on His enemies, on everything that opposes Jesus Christ and life in Him. Sin, Satan, and the pride of life, Leviathan.

And as you do this, Jesus promises that nothing...no thing... shall by any means harm you. The Greek here is *ou me*, absolutely not, no thing by no means. Nothing shall by no means harm you.

But don't get carried away like you have so much power over the devil and demons. Jesus says, "Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the

spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.”

Don't get sidetracked and big on yourself because demons are cast out and sin is trampled underfoot. Rejoice in your salvation. Rejoice because in the cosmic battle between good and evil, between those who are God's and those who are not, Jesus Christ has a Body of believers whose names are written in heaven.

Rejoice because if you are downtrodden and have been trampled upon and devoured by the enemy of your soul, you can come to Jesus Christ and find forgiveness for your sins and power over the very sin and demons that have sought to destroy you. Rejoice because the KOG has come, Messiah has come, access to the very Throne of the Father is possible because Jesus has come and died and His Blood sits there on the mercy seat in the heavenly sanctuary over the Law crying out and pleading for you, for mercy, for grace, for you. Satan can't defile that sanctuary. Satan can't destroy the life that is in Jesus' Blood. Satan can't touch the One who has the power of an endless life, the great Apostle and High Priest of our confession of faith. And you can be in Christ. You can be seated in the heavenly places in Christ far above principalities and powers. You can tread on the high places and rejoice.

V

TREADING ON SERPENTS AND SCORPIONS

Heavenly Father,

You are Jehovah Nissi and Your banner over me is love. I have heard with my ears, O God, our fathers have told us, what work You did in their days, in the times of old. How You drove out the heathen with Your hand, and planted them; how You afflicted the people and cast them out. For they did not get the land in possession by their own sword. Neither did their own arm save them. But Your right hand and Your arm and the light of Your countenance, because You favored them. (Psalm 44.1-3)

You are my King, O God. Command deliverance for Jacob. Through You we will push down our enemies. Through Your name we will tread them under that rise up against us. For I will not trust in my bow, neither shall my sword save me. But You have saved us from our enemies, and have put them to shame that hated us. In God we boast all the day long, and praise Your name forever. (Psalm 44.4-8)

Give us help from trouble: for vain is the help of man. Through God we shall do valiantly; for He it is that shall tread down our enemies. (Psalm 60.11, 12)

I dwell in the secret place of the Most High. I abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in Him will I trust. Surely You shall deliver me from the snare of the fowler and from the noisome pestilence. You shall cover me with Your feathers and under Your wings I shall trust. Your truth shall be my shield and buckler. (Psalm 91.1-4)

I shall not be afraid for the terror by night, nor for the arrow that flies by day; nor for the pestilence that walks in darkness, nor for the destruction that wastes at noonday. A thousand shall fall at my side and ten thousand at my right hand; but it shall not come nigh me. Only with my eyes shall I behold and see the reward of the wicked. Because I have made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the most High, my habitation. There shall no evil befall me, neither shall any plague come near my dwelling. For You, God, shall give Your angels charge over me, to keep me in all my ways. They shall bear me up in their hands, lest I dash my foot against a stone. (Psalm 91.5-12)

I shall tread upon the lion and cobra: the young lion and the serpent I shall trample underfoot. Because I have set my love upon You, therefore You will deliver me. You will set me on high, because I have known Your

name. I shall call upon You, and You will answer me. You will be with me in trouble; You will deliver me, and honor me. With long life You will satisfy me, and show me Your salvation. (Psalm 91.13-16)

Unto me that fears Your name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings; and I shall go forth and grow up as a calf of the stall. And I shall tread down the wicked, for they shall be ashes under the soles of my feet in the day that You shall do this, for You said, the Lord of hosts. (Malachi 4.2, 3)

Jesus said, "Behold, I give unto you the authority to tread on serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you." (Luke 10.19)

Your right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power: Your right hand, O Lord, dashes in pieces the enemy. (Exodus 15.6) The eternal God is my refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms; and He shall thrust out the enemy from before me; and shall say, Destroy! (Deuteronomy 33.27) Deliver me from my strong enemy, and from them that hate me; for they are too strong for me (2 Samuel 22.18).

I trust in Your mercy. My heart rejoices in Your salvation. I will sing unto the Lord, because He has dealt bountifully with me. (Psalm 13.5, 6) You are a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy. (Psalm 61.3) You save me from the hand of the one that hates me, and redeem me from the hand of the enemy. (Psalm 106.10).

The enemy has persecuted my soul; he has crushed my life to the ground; he has made me dwell in darkness, like those who have long been dead. (Psalm 143.3) They shall bear the name of the Lord from the west, and His glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him. And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord. You have said, "As for Me, this is My covenant with them, saith the Lord; My Spirit that is upon you, and My words which I have put in your mouth, shall not depart out of your mouth, nor out of the mouth of your seed, nor out of the mouth of your seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and forever." (Isaiah 59.19-21)

O your happiness, O Israel! Who is like you? A people saved by Jehovah, the shield of your help. And He who is the sword of your excellency: and your enemies are subdued for you, and you tread down their high places. (Deuteronomy 33.29)

The righteous shall be glad in the Lord, and shall trust in Him; and all the upright in heart shall glory. (Psalm 64.10)

Wherefore I lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; and make straight paths for my feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed. I follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no one shall see the Lord. (Hebrews 12.12-14) Wherefore, I am receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved. Let me have grace, whereby I may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: for our God is a consuming fire. (Hebrews 12.28, 29)

Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make me perfect in every good work to do His will, working in me that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen. (Hebrews 13.20, 21)

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

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BREAKING INTO THE GLORY OF GOD

Breaking into the glory of God comes when you just cannot contain within your heart all that God is revealing about Himself. This, we will see, happened to Paul, and to Jude. Reflect upon three doxologies, following, and make them your prayer.

Our first text comes from Romans 16.25. Paul is finishing his letter “to all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints.” (1.7) In that letter, you may recall, Paul spoke of the Gentiles’ need of righteousness, that sin must be punished because of the standard of God’s law. None have obeyed God’s law. All have fallen short of the glory of God and thus cannot be justified by the keeping of the Law. But there is a way of salvation and justification, or right standing before God. It comes by way of faith, by way of the promise of the covenant of grace, by way of the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul contrasts Christ and Adam. He presents the doctrine of grace, that it is all of God, all of grace, all to the glory of God. Released from the Law, we are to consider ourselves dead to sin and alive to righteousness because there is now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.

Righteousness comes by faith. God isn’t finished with Israel. “All Israel shall be saved.” (11.26) Paul gives exhortations to present our bodies a living sacrifice, which is our spiritual worship, and tells us to be subject to authorities, which all derive their power from God. He speaks of the Christian’s liberty, which is not to be used for personal gain, but for love to others. We all need mercy and grace. We are to edify one another and abound in hope, preaching the gospel of grace.

Paul says,

“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen. Now unto Him that is able to establish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith: To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen.”

That’s a mouthful, typical of Paul. God is able to establish you in this gospel Paul sets forth, the gospel of grace. He will establish you according to the gospel. God will establish you according to the revelation of the mystery which was previously hidden but was not being

made manifest. That mystery is not a whodunit type thing. It is a truth that was hidden by God in times past and is now revealed to those who are in His family. It was always there in the Word of God, but hidden, and now God is bringing it out into the light for His people to see, to understand and apprehend.

The mystery was that peace with God through Jesus Christ extended also to the Gentiles, who are grafted into the vine of God's chosen people.

God is able to establish you according to the commandment. He is the everlasting God and has made His commandment known to all nations for the obedience of faith. The grace of the gospel is given that we might obey through faith working by love. God gave external Law as a standard. As we look at it, we see that we fall short, that we need some way back to the glory that was ours before the Fall of Adam in the Garden. The Law is not bad. The Father gave the commandment out of love so that in keeping it we might live. But no one keeps it. No one really wants to.

The heart must change. God in His grace regenerates the heart, which then desires Him and desires to obey His Word. God wants the obedience of faith. You obey what you believe. You believe what you obey. If you truly believe in Jesus and believe Jesus, you will do what He says. You will desire Him, desire to please Him, desire to glorify Him, desire to honor Him as your Creator and Redeemer.

And so to the one who establishes you according to the gospel of grace, according to the revelation of the mystery, according to the commandment made known for the obedience of faith, to God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen.

Our next text is from Ephesians 3.20, 21. Paul sees in the cross a manifestation of the wisdom of God and God's awesome power to reconcile the seemingly irreconcilable. He sees God's plan from all eternity. He sees God's love in Christ displayed in the formation of the Church, the Body of Christ, the Bride of Christ, the Building or temple of Christ. He prays that we might comprehend and apprehend the love that God has for us in Christ that we might be satisfied with all that God is to us in Christ. He cannot contain himself and breaks out into a study of the glory. He says,

“Now to Him who is able to do infinitely more than all we ask or imagine, according to the power that is at work within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.”

God can grant far more than we ask in prayer. God is able to do all we ask Him to do. God is able to do all that we dare not ask but merely imagine. God can do more than this. God can do far more than this. God can do very far more than this. God can do all, above all, abundantly above all, exceeding abundantly above all.

There is a vastness about God's power as found in Jesus Christ. The power is so great that Jesus rose from the dead and ascended far above all. God's power is so great that in the cross God reconciled Jews and Gentiles to each other and to God and God is building a temple to His eternal glory.

This power, the power of the Holy Spirit, this power and love beyond human comprehension, is right there, in us. The Holy Spirit has dunamis power, a mighty power. He has energy. The Holy Spirit releases the resurrection power of Jesus Christ into our lives. The Holy Spirit releases this power to glorify Christ throughout all ages, all the generations, forever.

We are to honor God because of the splendor of His power, wisdom, mercy, love, grace. The all of God will expel the all of sin. We are to cooperate with the program. We are to yield to the power of the Holy Spirit and His desire and aim to glorify Christ, to conform us to the image of Christ. The Holy Spirit unveils Jesus. Jesus unveils the Father. The glory is the manifest presence that unveils who God is. The glory comes as you yield and give place to Him.

Ours is an exchanged life. God fills us to the degree we give up ourselves—our will, our way, our wants, our walk, and our worship. The Holy Spirit must be all in you. He must have all, for He is God. Christ has come to restore the all of God, and it is the Holy Spirit that is given to reveal the all of Christ within you. The Father wants His rightful place. Jesus knows that He is Lord. The Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

We are implored. Let the love of God conquer you. Let the love of Christ constrain you. Let the love of the Holy Spirit comfort and encourage you. Let your life be all to the glory of God. You glorify God by enjoying Him forever, by being satisfied with all that God has for you in Jesus.

And so we come to Jude. Jude writes of false teachers and apostates, serious apostasy. Jude urges believers to earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. He exhorts believers to keep themselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. Do not separate yourself to the idols you have set up in your heart (Ezekiel 14), but separate yourself to God. While

you're out doing the work of evangelism and being ambassadors for Christ, keep a watch on your own life, that you not be led astray into idolatry.

But now Jude breaks into a study of the glory of God, for God is able to preserve you and enable you to persevere. Listen.

“Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.”

God is able to keep you from falling. He preserves you in His grace. He will present you faultless before His glory. It is His joy to do so. And for His wisdom, for this salvation, He deserves the glory and majesty, dominion and power. He has the glory. He has the majesty. He has the dominion. He has the power. And He deserves to have it.

God is able, to establish you in the gospel of grace, to do all the plan of salvation in you, to keep you and preserve you, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. God justifies you. He sanctifies you, and He glorifies you, that you might break into the study of the glory of God yourself.



**SPIRITUAL STRONGHOLDS: THINGS
THAT BLOCK THE BLESSINGS OF GOD
(Or, Call the Plumber. My pipeline is clogged!)**

2 Corinthians 10.3-5 says: For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds; casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

A stronghold is a defensive spiritual fortress behind which one hides and is protected. A stronghold is a fortified dwelling used as a means of protection from a perceived enemy. A stronghold is a powerful, vigorously protected spiritual reality. A demonic stronghold is any type of thing that exalts itself above the knowledge of God.

Deuteronomy 28 makes it clear that diligent obedience to the voice of God brings blessings. Blessings overtake us as we choose life. But curses can also overtake us as we choose death. We obey what we believe, and so the seed of all sin is unbelief.

Unbelief, embracing and swallowing lies, roots and grows into spiritual strongholds that block the blessings of God. Adam and Eve's belief in a lie, in a twisted perversion of truth, brought them into disfavor with God and under the curse which we now call "original sin."

You cannot have your blessings and keep your sins. God's promises are appropriated through obedience. God grants repentance because of His goodness (Romans 2.4; 2 Timothy 2.25, 26). God grants grace to obey through faith working by love. (Ephesians 1, 2) God grants even the faith to believe. (Ephesians 2.8, 9) God grants the repentance that leads to life.

I want to talk about three overarching spiritual strongholds that block the blessings of God. **I want to talk about separation, sorrows, and source of satisfaction.**

The blessings of God come to us as the outflow of the covenant of grace which God sovereignly administrated with those who have come to be called the people of God. He gave the Law to a redeemed people, a people brought out of the land of Egypt. He provided a way of atonement for sin. Why is that so important?

God desires to bless. He gave the Law, His voice, so that people could obey and be blessed. But unbelief led to sin which leads to separation.

Isaiah 59.1-3: *Behold the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear. For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue has muttered perversity.*

It's not a nice picture. Unbelief leading to sin corrupted the system. Corruption perverted the heart, which became desperately wicked. Iniquity in the heart means that the heart is bent toward evil. If it could, it would kill the Creator and take His place. Left unrestrained by the common grace and the giving of the commandments of God, there is no telling what evil the heart of humanity could devise.

Separation is a spiritual stronghold. Sin and iniquity, both our own and in our family line (Exodus 20.5, Nehemiah 9, Daniel 9, Leviticus 26), result in separation: from God, from self, from others. Sin alienates us from God and brings us into enmity with Him. Sin separates us from ourselves because of its guilt and shame. Sin shatters and scatters our soul. It tears and defiles and mars and strips the soul of dignity. Sin wounds the spirit and puts it into slumber, dwarfing its potential. Sin separates us from one another, as fears, anxiety, stress, abandonment and trust issues arise.

Another area is that of **sorrows**. Grief, loss, and failures become strongholds of rock breaking the spirit. Proverbs 15.13 says, *A merry heart makes a cheerful countenance, but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken.* Proverbs 17.22 says, *A merry heart does good like medicine, but a broken spirit dries the bones.*

Sorrows bring us to the grave. They lead to anger and bitterness, doubt and questioning of the goodness of God. Sorrows come from disappointments and frustration because we are not God and we don't like the way God is so sovereign, the way He orders events. We would do things differently, perhaps better than God. So our heart tells us.

And then there is the matter of **source of satisfaction**. God gives grace to the humble, and resists the proud. Proud people take satisfaction in themselves, in their accomplishments, in their good works. Job had the thing he greatly feared come upon him (Job 3.25) because of his self-righteousness. Job 40.1 says, *Moreover the LORD answered Job, and said: "Shall the one who contends with the Almighty correct Him? He who*

rebukes God, let him answer it.” Job forgot about iniquity. He had within a sleeping serpent, Leviathan, king over the children of pride, an enemy which only God Himself could draw out and conquer.

Source of satisfaction. We turn to another source when we don't believe that God is good. We think, like Eve, that God may be holding out on us something that would benefit us. We lust for more. Greed in our hearts leads us to turn to other gods, other elohim, other sources for satisfaction. It could be most anything which we perceive might bring us comfort, safety, security, full bellies. Greed is idolatry because it says that God the Creator/Redeemer is not enough and other gods are necessary. God is insufficient to satisfy. We get angry, bring issues of “rights” to God, tell Him why we need this or that for life. We want our bellies full of all we see around us.

God would have us to be satisfied with all that He is for us in Jesus Christ. God sent Jesus into the cosmos to correct the corruption problem that entered the system. Through His life and death and resurrection, Jesus atoned for the sin and iniquity of first Adam humanity. The offering up of His body and blood accomplished all that is necessary and sufficient for us to receive God's blessings and have God's curse removed.

God the Father accepts Jesus as the sacrifice for sin so that we can be forgiven and our sins remitted, sent away. In this way Jesus overcame guilt and shame. Our debt and liability are canceled.

Through the blood of Christ comes peace with God. We are reconciled and alienation is overcome.

We overcome bondage because of redemption. We have been bought with a price, and so our lives are not our own. We have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. His blood was the cost of our redemption, a buying back from the dominion of sin of death.

Jesus became the propitiation for sin. He bore the wrath of God and satisfied the requirements of divine justice. Sin leads to death. The soul that sins will surely die. The wages of sin is death. Every time you sin, there is a little death. There is appointed unto man once to die and after this the judgment. The Law demands death. But the Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus sets us free from the Law of Sin and Death. Jesus died in our place. He took the penalty, carried out the sentence of God. J. I. Packer says that we can think of God's wrath as wounded love.

Not believing God who is true, good, pure, and holy is to betray Him, to commit spiritual adultery, to seek another lover for your soul, another provider, another protector, another wisdom.

Separation, sorrows, alternate sources of satisfaction clog your pipeline. And basically, you need to call the Plumber!

When Jesus Christ comes into your life, God declares you clean, holy, righteous and above reproach. Then the Holy Spirit comes and makes the declaration of God so. What starts is a process called sanctification.

We start removing the blocks to blessing as we return to God. We say we have perverted His ways and it has not profited us, and now we want to return, to Him and to His ways.

God renews a right spirit within you. (Psalm 51, Ephesians 4) The Holy Spirit witnesses to your spirit that you are a child of God. The Holy Spirit begins cleansing you of all that defiles flesh and spirit, removing all the fiery darts and wounds to the spirit. He puts truth in the inward parts. You will be strong in spirit to the extent that God's Word, which is truth, is in your spirit. That which is born of Spirit is spirit.

God restores your soul. The Law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul (Psalm 19.1). He starts putting back together all that was shattered and scattered. The words of Belial, words of worthlessness and lawlessness, unrighteousness, that cling to the soul, God shakes off. He carries away the sorrows. He draws you to Himself. He loves you and gives you peace.

God brings redemption to the mortal body. You prosper as your soul prospers. Your soul prospers as your spirit prospers. Sin should no longer have the rule over your mortal body, for death lost its dominion over Christ. (Romans 6.9, 12) So we are not to offer the members of our bodies to serve those things that lead to death or to devils, but to God. We are to offer ourselves in spiritual worship to serve the Lord, which worship is His by virtue of His being our Creator/Redeemer. And "if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you." (Romans 8.11)

Proverbs 26.2 says, *Like a flitting sparrow, like a flying swallow, so a curse without cause shall not alight.* Curses come through open doors that become gates of hell because of sin, either our own or our ancestors'. Yes, there are parameters of protection, but we must not only believe in Jesus. We must believe Jesus.

The word of truth sanctifies. Truth unclogs the pipeline as we embrace it. As a child of the covenant of grace, you can expect to receive the blessings of God. Mark 11. 22-26 and Mark 6.14, 15 tell us, however, that the Father forgives us as we forgive others. He wasn't your Father before you got saved. He was just your Creator. But as your Redeemer, God becomes your heavenly Father. He is the Source of your life and all blessings. He takes your sorrows and separates you now unto Himself.

God's grace sustains (2 Corinthians 12.9) and God can grant greater grace to enable you to walk in power. We are not perfected, but we are declared perfect. **Every believer can break spiritual strongholds blocking the blessings of God by receiving the following gifts of God's grace:**

1. Perfect love. God's perfect love casts out the fear that has torment. 1 (John 4.18)
2. Perfect peace. God gives perfect peace as one's mind is stayed upon Him. (Isaiah 26.3)
3. Perfect strength. God's grace is sufficient for us and His strength is made perfect in weakness. (2 Corinthians 12.9)
4. Perfect in forgiveness. We can be like our heavenly Father who forgives and remits sins as we think about His mercy and His heart that gives even to the evil and unthankful (Matthew 6.43-48; Luke 6.36-38). We forgive because God forgives us. (Ephesians 4.32)
5. Perfect faith. We are crucified with Christ, nevertheless we live, but it is not we who live, but Christ lives in us. And the life which we now live in this flesh, we live by the faith of Jesus who loved us and gave Himself for us. (Galatians 2.20)
6. Perfect oneness. You are in Christ and He is in you. God the Father is in Jesus, and Jesus is one with the Father. The Holy Spirit dwells within you. Your union in Christ with God is a perfect oneness. (John 17.20-26; Colossians 3.14)
7. Perfect holiness. Though you won't come to its fullness in this life, it must be your aim to be perfect, to become complete (2 Corinthians 13.11). We have great promises, and so we are to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. (2 Corinthians 7.1). The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. (Proverbs 9.10) Seek to know as you are known (1 Corinthians 13.12). Meet God according to His Word (Isaiah 29.13).

The Law could never make those who approached God perfect (Hebrews 10.1). Bulls and goats couldn't take away the sins and atone for those things that block the blessings of God. *But this Man*, Hebrews 10.12 says, *this Man Christ Jesus, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, from that time waiting till His*

enemies are made His footstool. For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified. (Hebrews 10.12-14)

In the believers new covenant, God puts His laws into your heart, your new heart, and writes them in your mind, your renewed mind. And your sins and lawless deeds, your iniquities, He promises that He will remember no more. So draw near to Him with a true heart in full assurance of faith. Have your hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and your body washed with pure water. Hold fast the confession of your hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. And let's stir up one another in love and good works as we gather together here in this place, for the Day is approaching, the Bridegroom comes.

To grow in your prayer life with God, look up the verses mentioned above as gifts of God's grace and pray them back to God, asking Him to make His word "so" in your life!



A PRAYER OF REJOICING

Heavenly Father,

This is the day the LORD has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it.
(Psalm 118.24)

You have told us to rejoice. Psalm 19 tells me that the law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether...Cleanse me from secret faults and keep Your servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me. Then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression. (Psalm 19.7-9, 12, 13)

I rejoice at Your word as one who finds great treasure. (Psalm 119.162) I praise You for Your goodness, and for Your wonderful works to the children of men! Let me sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare Your works with rejoicing. (Psalm 107. 21, 22) The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tents of the righteous; the right hand of the LORD does valiantly. (Psalm 118.15)

Your testimonies I have taken as a heritage forever, for they are the rejoicing of my heart. (Psalm 119.111) I will be glad and rejoice forever in what You create; for behold, You create Jerusalem as a rejoicing, and her people a joy. (Isaiah 65.18) Your words were found, and I ate them, and Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart; for I am called by Your name, O LORD God of hosts. (Jeremiah 15.16)

I will bless the LORD, who has given me counsel. My reins also instruct me in the night seasons. I have set the LORD always before me. Because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices. My flesh also shall rest in hope. For You will not

leave my soul in hell; neither will You suffer Your Holy One to see corruption. You will show me the path of life. In Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand there are pleasures forevermore. (Psalm 16.7-11)

You LORD are my strength and my shield. My heart trusts in You, and I am helped. Therefore my heart greatly rejoices, and with my song I will praise You. (Psalm 28.7)

Let me rejoice in all to which I have put my hand, me and my household, in all in which You have blessed us, and at the place where You choose to make Your name abide. Bless us in all our produce and in all the work of our hands, so that we will rejoice. Let us rejoice in every good thing which You have given to me and my house. (Deuteronomy 12.18; 16.11, 15; 26.11)

I give thanks unto You, call upon Your name, and make known Your deeds among the people. I sing unto You, sing psalms unto You, and talk of all Your wondrous works. I glory in Your holy name. Let the heart of them rejoice that seek the LORD. I seek the LORD and Your strength, seek Your face continually. I remember Your marvelous works, Your wonders, and Your judgments. I am mindful always of Your covenant, the word which You commanded to a thousand generations. The LORD reigns. (from 1 Chronicles 16.7-36)

I rejoice as I put my trust in You. Let me ever shout for joy, because You defend me. Let those also who love Your name be joyful in You. (Psalm 5.11) We will rejoice in your salvation, and in the name of our God we will set up our banners! May the LORD fulfill all our petitions. (Psalm 20.5)

I will be glad and rejoice in Your mercy, for You have considered my trouble. You have known my soul in adversities. (Psalm 31.7) Let all those who seek You rejoice and be glad in You. Let such as love Your salvation say continually, "The LORD be magnified!" (Psalm 40.16) Make me hear joy and gladness, that the bones You have broken may rejoice. (Psalm 51.8) Because You have been my help, therefore in the shadow of Your wings I will rejoice. (Psalm 63.7)

I will greatly rejoice in the LORD. My soul shall be joyful in my God, for He has clothed me with the garments of salvation. He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. (Isaiah 61.10) When people revile me and persecute me and shall say all manner of evil against me falsely for Jesus' sake, I am blessed and rejoice, and I am

exceedingly glad: for great is my reward in heaven, for so persecuted they the prophets which were before me. (Matthew 5.11, 12) I rejoice that my name is written in heaven. (Luke 10.20)

I have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also I have access by faith into this grace wherein I stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. I also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom I have now received the atonement. (Romans 5.2, 11) If I am being poured out as a drink offering on the sacrifice and service of others' faith, I am glad and rejoice with them. (Philippians 2.17) I rejoice in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh. (Philippians 3.3)

I rejoice in the Lord always. (Philippians 4.4) I bless the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy has begotten me again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fades not away, reserved in heaven for me, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time, wherein I greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, I am in heaviness through manifold temptations, that the trial of my faith, being much more precious than of gold that perishes, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory of the appearing of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen, I love; in whom, though now I see Him not, yet believing, I rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, receiving the end of my faith, even the salvation of my soul. (1 Peter 1.3-9)

I rejoice inasmuch as I am partaker of Christ's sufferings; that, when His glory shall be revealed, I may be glad also with exceeding joy. If I be reproached for the name of Christ, I am happy, for the spirit of glory and of God rests upon me. (1 Peter 4.13, 14)

The LORD my God in my midst, the Mighty One, Mighty Hero who saves, will save. You will rejoice over me with gladness. You will quiet me with Your love. You will rejoice over me with singing. (Zephaniah 3.17)

Thank You, Holy Father.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.



PRAYING ALWAYS

Heavenly Father,

May these words ever be before You according to Your Word:

Give the king Your judgments, O God, and Your righteousness unto the king's son...And he shall live, and to him shall be given of the gold of Sheba: prayer also shall be made for him continually, and daily shall he be praised. (Psalm 72.1, 15) [Pray whole psalm.]

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee. Peace be within your walls, and prosperity within your palaces. For my brethren and companions' sakes, I will now say, Peace be within you. Because of the house of the LORD our God I will seek your good. (Psalm 122.6-9)

Put on the whole armor of God...Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints. (Ephesians 6.10, 18)

And He spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint... (Luke 18.1) We will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word. (Acts 6.4)

Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4.6, 7)

We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which you have to all the saints. (Colossians 1.3, 4)

Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Quench not the Spirit. (1 Thessalonians 5.16-18)

And all things, whatsoever you shall ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive. (Matthew 21.22)

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

SEATED, SEALED, AND SINGING A NEW SONG

Believers are those who have been redeemed by the grace of God, resurrected out from the grave in order to enter once again the presence of God, the Father of Glory. Believers move into a new place in God, "in Christ," that where He is they may be also. Therefore, they are able to sing a new song. **You can, too.**

In **Ephesians 2** we learn that, all to the praise of God's glorious grace, the Father of Glory, who is rich in mercy and who has loved us with a great love, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. (**Ephesians 2.4-6**) Think about it. We are seated in the heavenly places in Christ.

Not only that, but the Holy Spirit of God has sealed us for the day of redemption, and therefore, we are not to grieve the Holy Spirit. (**Ephesians 4.30**) **2 Corinthians 1.21, 22** tells us that it is God who establishes the apostles and ambassadors and preachers of the gospel and that the One who has anointed us is God. It is God who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.

In **Revelation 3.21, 22** we have to the overcomer a promise of dominion with Christ.

I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My Throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His Throne.

Christ has entered upon His kingdom (**Col. 1.13**). He has disarmed principalities and powers, making a public spectacle of them and triumphing over them (**Colossians 2.15**). We are seated with Christ in heavenly places and sealed in this new covenant in Christ's blood. (**Ephesians**) We are kings and priests with Christ already (**Revelation**

1.6). As He conquered, so also are we to go forth, conquering in His name. He reigns now (**Acts 2.29-36**) above all creation (**Ephesians 1.20-22**), with all power in heaven and on earth (**Matthew 18.18-20**). His enemies will become His footstool (**1 Corinthians 15.25**), and the whole earth will be filled with the glory of the Lord. Jesus summons us to be conformed to His image, as prophet, priest, and king.

The **Revelation** takes the form of a suzerainty treaty, a covenantal treaty. It has a preamble, historical prologue, ethical stipulations, sanctions, and succession arrangements. **Revelation 4-7** declares the ethical stipulations, i.e., the foundation of our actions and thinking. **Central to our relationship with the Father is His Sanctuary, His dwelling place, His Throne.**

In **Deuteronomy 12** we see God establish the place where He will establish His name and dwell and where worshippers will come. In **Deuteronomy** the Law of the Covenant was the sign of God's covenantal lordship. God's signature day was the Sabbath. He signed His Name on the covenant with the Sabbath rest.

First, the sanctuary-judicial aspect of the covenant is central to warfare. Except to the Amalekites, an offer of peace was first made to enemy nations. Those refusing to make peace were then judged by the Covenant Lord. We offer the scepter of peace with God through Jesus Christ as His ambassadors. We wear His robe of righteousness over our linen garments, a righteousness we did not earn or deserve, but which we receive by God's grace as the Blood of Christ atones for our sin. Those who reject Christ find God's holy and just judgment released.

Secondly, there is the idea of appearing at the sacred feasts in the central Sanctuary, like Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles. In **Revelation 5** we see Passover. In **Revelation 6** we see Pentecost, and in **Revelation 7.15-17** we see Tabernacles.

John ascends to God's throne, the place where God's judgments that are bound on earth were first bound in heaven. With John we are invited to come up to the Throne in the Spirit. We are to be caught up into the heavenly Holy of Holies, the inner Sanctuary of the true Temple, to the Throne of Glory. And note: first John hears. Then he turns to see the voice speaking to him. He sees. Then he will become what he beholds as God brings him to glory.

In **Revelation 4** the worship focuses on God as Creator.

On the throne is God the Father. The word, "throne," is used 14 times, 46 times in **Revelation**. In **5.6** the Son approaches the throne. In **4.5** the

Spirit is before the throne. John speaks of jasper, which is clear, perhaps a diamond; and of sardius, which is blood red; and of emerald, whose color green stands for mercy.

Around the throne vertically is a rainbow. Judgment is about to fall, but God remembers mercy in His wrath. (**Hab. 3.2**) I also think of God's multi-colored wisdom when I think of the rainbow, His multi-colored iridescent wisdom (**Ephesians 3**). Also around the throne horizontally are elders and living creatures. These elders are overcomers with white robes and palm branches. The living creatures symbolize God's creation and parallel **Genesis 9.10**, i.e., Noah (man), fowl (eagle), cattle (calf), beasts (lion). They signify the wisdom of God (full of eyes) and proclaim His holiness. God has a covenant with creation and rules from His throne.

Out of the throne come storm signals. **Romans 5.21** tells us that grace reigns through righteousness. It is through judgment that deliverance comes.

Before the throne are seven lamps of fire burning, which are the seven Spirits of God, and also a sea of glass, like crystal. There is a great worship, a giving glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne and who lives forever. The elders cast their crowns to acknowledge that their authority and dominion derive from Him who sits on the throne. The worship is corporate, responsive, orderly.

Let's look at the songs:

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!

You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power, for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created.

Heaven acknowledges and praises the Creator. Praise to God as Creator is the first step toward trusting the redeemer (**Acts 14, 17**). This takes grace, because in our fallen condition, we want to worship and serve the creature, the creation in our rebellion (**Romans 1.25**). We are not thankful, and we don't like the sovereignty of God. We have polluted and exploited the creation instead of caring for it. Creation groans (**Romans 8.22**), but it will become glorious (**Revelation 8.18-24**).

In **Revelation 5.1-14** we turn to the Redeemer. There's a book sealed with seven seals with writing on the front and back. It reminds us of the two tablets of the testimony (**Exodus 32.15**). But no one in the creation was worthy to open the seals of this testament, to guarantee this new covenant, but One. And this One is Jesus Christ. We worship Him:

Because of who He is (5.5-7). He is the Lion of Judah, the Lamb of God. Jesus Christ is God, the Creator and Man, making Him a perfect Mediator/Redeemer.

The lion symbolizes dignity, sovereignty, courage, victory. The Root of David speaks of the Ancient of Days, that Jesus is both David's Lord, preceding him, and David's son, of his lineage. He is the Lamb, used 28 times in Revelation. God's wrath is the wrath of the Lamb (**Rev. 6.16**). We are cleansed by the Blood of the Lamb (**Rev. 7.14**). We are the Bride of the Lamb (**Rev. 19.7, 21.9**). The Lamb speaks of sacrifice, an offering up unto God. In **Genesis 22.7** Isaac asks, "Where is the lamb for the sacrifice?" The name of God, Jehovah Jireh, is revealed, i.e., that God will provide Himself a sacrifice. Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (**John 1.29**). Jesus is the Lamb and He is worthy.

"Seven horns" speaks of perfect power. "Seven eyes" speaks of perfect wisdom. "Seven spirits" speaks of His presence. We have, in short, omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence, the incommunicable attributes of God. Jesus is fully God, just as He is fully man.

Because of where He is, we worship. He is exalted in heaven in the center of all, at the throne. Jesus is the living, reigning Lamb of God in the midst of all in heaven.

Because of what He does, we worship. The Lamb opens the scroll. Cf. **Daniel 7.13, 14, Psalm 141.2, Luke 1.10**. Praise and prayer unite, as praise leads to worship, and worship to prayer, a dialogue of extolling the worth of the One who loves us. The Spirit sheds His love abroad in our hearts, and we express the worth of the Lamb slain that we might enter the glory of His presence. To worship in spirit and in truth is to worship as the Spirit of God extols the love of the Father of Glory according to the truth of the Word and our knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Because of what He has, we worship. (**11-14**). He has all power, all the riches of heaven and earth, all wisdom (**1 Cor. 1.24, Col. 2.3**), all strength, all honor, all glory, all blessing.

And what is this new song? There has been an event, a mighty act of God in creation, in redemption. After the event comes revelation from the Spirit of God, and out of that comes a new song, a new level of worship and common union with God.

In the new song the elders and living creatures say,

You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals.

Then the elders say,

For You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation

Then the living creatures say,

And have made them kings and priests to our God

And the elders say,

And we shall reign on the earth.

This new song:

1. **ascribes worth.** To ascribe worth is the definition of worship. The elders and living creatures proclaim the kingdom treaty.
2. **affirms the gospel,** especially the cross and the Blood, proclaiming a redemption by means of One being violently slain. (In **Genesis 22** we have a ram for one, Isaac. In **Exodus 12** we have a lamb for a household. In **Isaiah 53** we have Messiah dying for the nation of Israel, cf. **John 11.49-52**. In **John 1.29** we have the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.)
3. **applauds the redemption of sinners.** Sinners have been redeemed to God by the Blood of the Lamb, a lamb without spot or blemish, a perfect sacrifice.
4. **acknowledges the position of believers** as kings and priests (**Genesis 14.17, Hebrews 7, 1 Peter 2.5-10**). This has to do with nationhood.
5. **announces dominion.** The redeemed will reign on the earth. As Jesus is, so are we in this world (**1 John 4.17**).

The new song here celebrates the making of the Covenant and foretells the coming of Christ to bring salvation to the nations and victory to the godly in Christ Jesus. God brings forth the new song whenever humanity reaches a new stage in redemptive history, e.g., the Exodus and the inauguration of the theocratic kingdom.

Revelation follows events. Redemptive judgments deliver God's people from the power of the adversary. New revelation requires a new song, a response to God's acts and deeds in worship.

The One who was and is and is to come will fulfill God's plan from all eternity. The goal of history is the universal recognition of Christ's Lordship and the eternal glory of God through Jesus Christ.

We are seated, sealed, and singing a new song. The New Covenant has come and this is the Third Day, the Day of the Lord, the Day of the visitation of the Holy Spirit. Let's ascribe worth, affirm the gospel, applaud the redemption of sinners, acknowledge our position as kings and priests unto God, and announce that we will reign on the earth in dominion in Christ.

Some references to a “new song” in scripture include:

Psalm 33.3: Sing to Him a new song; play skillfully with a shout of joy.

Psalm 40.3: He has put a new song in my mouth—praise to our God; many will see and fear, and will trust in the Lord.

Psalm 96.1-3: Oh, sing to the Lord a new song! Sing to the Lord all the earth. Sing to the Lord, bless His name; proclaim the good news of His salvation from day to day. Declare His glory among the nations, His wonders among all peoples.

Psalm 98.1-3: Oh, sing to the Lord a new song! For He has done marvelous things; His right hand and His holy arm have gained Him the victory.

Psalm 144.9: I will sing a new song to You, O God; on a harp of ten strings I will sing praises to You.

Psalm 149.1: Praise the Lord. Sing to the Lord a new song, and His praise in the assembly of saints.

Isaiah 42.10-13: Sing to the Lord a new song. And His praise from the ends of the earth, you who go down to the sea, and all that is in it. You coastlands and you inhabitants of them! Let the wilderness and its cities lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar inhabits. Let the inhabitants of Sela sing. Let them shout from the top of the mountains. Let them give glory to the Lord and declare His praise in the coastlands. The Lord shall go forth like a mighty man; He shall stir up His zeal like a man of war. He shall cry out, yes, shout aloud; He shall prevail against His enemies.

To God be the Glory

A PRAYER TO DEPART FROM INIQUITY

Heavenly Father,

It is my desire to depart from iniquity, because Your Word says: “Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.” (2 Timothy 2.19) Also, Jesus said in Luke 13.27, “But He will say, ‘I tell you I do not know you, where you are from. Depart from Me, all you workers of iniquity.’”

Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of Your tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done evil in Your sight: that You might be justified when You speak, and be clear when You judge. Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me. Behold, you desire truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part You shall make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. (Psalm 51.1-7) [Pray the entire psalm if you can.]

Withhold not Your tender mercies from me, O Lord. Let Your lovingkindness and Your truth continually preserve me. For innumerable evils have compassed me about. My iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up. They are more than the hairs of my head. Therefore my heart fails me. Be pleased, O Lord, to deliver me. O Lord, make haste to help me. (Psalm 40.11-13)

Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am in trouble. My eye is consumed with grief, yes, my soul and my belly. For my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing. My strength fails because of my iniquity, and my

bones are consumed. (Psalm 31.9, 10) Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputes not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile...I acknowledged my sin unto You, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and You forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah. (Psalm 32.1-5)

O Lord, rebuke me not in Your wrath; neither chasten me in Your hot displeasure. For Your arrows stick fast in me, and Your hand presses me sore. There is no soundness in my flesh because of Your anger; neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sin. For mine iniquities are gone over my head. As a heavy burden, they are too heavy for me...For I will declare my iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin...Forsake me not, O Lord. O my God, be not far from me. Make haste to help me, O Lord my salvation. (from Psalm 38) [Pray entire psalm if you can.]

If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me. (Psalm 66.18) [Read Leviticus 16.] You have said, "If they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, with their trespass which they trespassed against Me, and that also they have walked contrary unto Me; and that I also have walked contrary unto them, and have brought them into the land of their enemies; if then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity: then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember; and I will remember the land." (Leviticus 26.40-42)

You have said, "Call unto Me, and I will answer you; and show you great and mighty things, which you know not...Behold, I will bring it [Jerusalem] health and cure, and I will cure them, and will reveal unto them the abundance of peace and truth. And I will cause the captivity of Judah and the captivity of Israel to return, and will build them, as at the first. And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against Me. And I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against Me." (Jeremiah 33.3-8)

Let my prayer be set forth before You as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice. Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips. [cf. James 3.6] Incline not my heart to any evil thing, to practice wicked works with me that work iniquity. And let me not eat of their dainties...My eyes are unto You, O God the Lord. In You is my trust. Leave not my soul destitute. (Psalm 141.3, 4, 8)

You sent Your Son Jesus to bless me in turning me away from my iniquities. (Acts 3.26) Surely, He has borne our griefs, and carried our

sorrows. Yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. (Isaiah 53.4-6)

Thank You, Holy Father, for the new covenant in Christ Jesus. "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put My laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people. And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know Me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." (Hebrews 8.10-12; cf Hebrews 10) Thank You, Father, for this better covenant with better promises and the better sacrifice, Jesus Christ.

Do not let me be poisoned by bitterness or bound by iniquity. (Acts 8.23) Rather, let me walk in truth and in the light. Let the Blood of Jesus Christ Your Son cleanse me from all sin. I do not say that I have no sin, for if I say that, I deceive myself and the truth is not in me. I confess my sins, and so You are faithful and just to forgive me my sins, and to cleanse me from all unrighteousness. I will not lie in saying I have not sinned. (based on 1 John 6-10)

Love does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth. (1 Corinthians 13.6) Grant me repentance that I might determine to declare and demonstrate the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Forgive me for tempting You to do evil and for tempting others to do evil. Forgive me for not loving, for if I truly loved You, I would keep Your commandments. (2 John 6; John 14.15, 21; John 15.10; 1 John 2.5) If I say, I love God, and hate my brother, I am a liar. For the one that loves not his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? (1 John 4.20) So, Father, keep me from lying.

Love works no ill to his neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. Let me therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let me put on the armor of light. Let me walk honestly, as in the day, and put on the Lord Jesus Christ, making no provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof. (from Romans 13.10-14) Now the end, the result and purpose, of the commandment is love out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned. (1 Timothy 1.5)

Grant me grace to love You and to keep Your commandments. “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments.” (1 John 5.3) Let me be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. (2 Timothy 2.2)

In Jesus’ Name, Amen.

a Grace be with you all. Amen. **a**