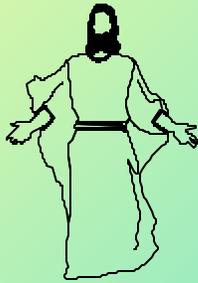


From Disobedience



to Self-Oppression

Rev. D. Williams

From Disobedience to Self Oppression

Reverend Delbert Williams

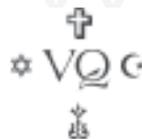
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Preface

I first met Reverend Delvert (Del to his friends) Williams in 1993 when we were both employed by Doghouse Publishing in Louisville, Kentucky. Del was short of stature, full of the Holy Spirit and very outgoing and I was always at ease talking with him. We developed an almost instant friendship. It didn't take very long before Del told the rest of the employees at Doghouse something fishy was going on and therefore he quit.

It was the trial of Mr. Fred Kennedy, owner of Doghouse Publishing, that brought Del and I together once again. Del was very accurate in his observation the previous year. Mr. Kennedy was a con man and we were all his pawns in a game of fraud that took much from a group of people. Along the way Mr. Kennedy managed to convince the State of Kentucky to advance him one million dollars to start a business in one of the depressed counties of our Commonwealth. The state's money, our time, our pay, the investments of potential customers and even a thriving printing company were all taken advantage of by Mr. Kennedy. But God works in strange ways!

Del and I began a running dialog between us concerning interpretations and applications of God's Word. Why were we able to speak to one another and understand each other when many others professed hatred for God, hatred for the race of the other party in our friendship and a complete lack of understanding God's Word? We would talk for hours between Louisville and Nashville, later between Louisville and LaGrange and even later between LaGrange and Bardstown, Kentucky. It seemed God moved both of us physically and on His schedule toward our individual writings.

In many of those conversations facts were disclosed with each other concerning our previous lifetime journey and where our own path had led us. I learned of Del's membership in a band, the night club temptations and the results it impacted upon his life. I also learned about the guidance of Dr. Walter Malone at Canaan Christian Church in Louisville, Kentucky and the encouragement for Del to attend American Baptist Seminary in Nashville, Tennessee.

I can tell you honestly that the Reverend in this book is Delvert Williams. He basically says so in his introduction as well as where he introduces the student he calls: Reverend. I can tell you one other thing about Del. He knew God and freely praised God. Del's health was deteriorating and he left his written books with me, with the specific instruction to get this one presented to his people: African-Americans. His people may not want to hear from me, I was just Del's friend, who happens to be Caucasian. But, I assure you Del and I both understood that God only made one blood for mankind: human blood. There isn't a different blood type for each race, only the one type for the whole human race!

Read Del's book! It is concise in the fact that it takes a journey from sin and self oppression across the major points of understanding who God and Jesus really are. It demonstrates how anyone may find the simple truth of God and His plan for mankind's salvation through His Son Jesus. Salvation, Redemption, Sanctification, Justification and Everlasting Life are all recorded within the words of God and presented here by Reverend Delvert William.

Del, may you live in God's grace throughout eternity. I thank God that you were my friend and I had the pleasure of knowing you.

Reverend Charles E. Darnell, PhD



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Introduction

This book is based upon personal experiences of the author, so while reading it or after reading it, do not say you are too far gone and cannot return. I did not think I could come back, however, I never gave up hope. Life without Christ is not life at all, it is merely an existence. That was not good enough. I could never be satisfied without possessing the full rich life of serving my Savior and enjoying his saving grace. I knew there was a better life only because at one time I had it and I wanted it back.

Prayerfully, I hope you will know what to do, and how to remain obedient when you have read this book, or at least you can recognize your disobedience and repent before you reach a severe level of self-oppression and deprivation. The key word is prayer. Before going into disobedience, we become less prayerful. We must learn to be more and more thankful everyday, regardless of our situations.

The importance of spiritual benefits through thanksgiving in our prayer life cannot be overemphasized. Allow me to name a couple reasons: First, we should be thankful for God's creation of the world, including humans. David reminds us in Psalm 100 concerning the area of thanksgiving. The apostle John tells us throughout all eternity we will thank God for His work in Creation. In Revelation 4:11, we are given this song of praise: "*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.*"

Second, John informs us that our second song in heaven will feature thanksgiving for God's work in redemption: Revelation 5:9, "*And they sang a new song, saying, '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.'*" When one walks the trail of thanklessness, one also begins the trail of pride, disobedience, and separation from God, that finally leads to deprivation and self-oppression. Presuming of course, that same individual loves the Lord.

I commend, or send, the journey of obedience to you, not because it is full of fun and quick success, but because it is what God through Scripture calls us to, and because we have little choice as servants except to obey the will of the Father. This does not mean that it is not worth the going. What I have found on the way answers the deepest hungers of my heart. Nothing compares to living every day reconciled with God and filled with His presence. It is a walk of joy and glory far exceeding any other adventure you and I will ever find. Don't believe me! Try Him for yourself.



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Chapter 1

Disobedience is Sin

Titus 3:3-8, 10-11, *For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men. . . . Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition, knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned.*

At some point in the Christian walk we all become disobedient, foolish, and deceived by people and pleasures of this world. The Apostle Paul advises us of our past and informs us therefore, that because of the love, grace and mercy of God, He has made us heirs of His kingdom. However, disobedience is still a large part of the Christian life. The Apostle further advises us how to warn others of the sin of disobedience. God has the foreknowledge of the fact that if there is continuous contact with sinners, sooner or later, there will be contamination. It is my hope and prayer, as well as the will of God, this book will serve as a warning and a source of encouragement for you to continue your service and obedience to God.

During the winter of 1991 to the fall of 1992, I knew a student (we will call him *Reverend*) that allowed himself to be deceived for the lust of privacy and material items. In this deception he became disobedient. Reverend did not intentionally arrive at foolish deceptions, he just did not remember God was the source of all his rich blessings. Reverend became so happy with things that his prayer life was reduced from continuing or continual prayer to only a few times per week, and his Scripture reading, having been daily, became weekly, and then weakly.

Reverend became so infused with the items with which he had asked God to bless him, that he allowed them to push God slowly out of his daily life. Oh sure, he still went to Church every Sunday, Bible Study on Wednesday evenings and even thought nothing had changed.

God brought the difference to his attention one Sunday morning during a sermon he preached. Reverend was so disappointed in the sermon because it had no power, and he did not feel the presence of the Holy Spirit, so he began searching for answers. Reverend searched for weeks and asked some of his classmates if they had experienced similar situations. They all said, “Do not worry about it, it is something that happens to all of us

at one time or another.” However, it had never happened to him before, so he was not satisfied with their answers. Finally, he began to pray and ask God why. Reverend received no answers.

It still amazes me that when we have problems we are willing to look everywhere but to self. Three weeks later, Reverend was blessed to preach again and he experienced the same, no power, no filling of the Holy Spirit. It caused him to question his spiritual life, and in doing so, he was brought face to face with his disobedience. However, he refused to believe it.

Disobedience is not just something one hears of or reads about, it is a reality. Disobedience is a troubled and burdensome experience which Christians have personally encountered and some more than others. I personally have always been a person who had to question the validity and the essence of all my experiences, rather than just accepting them. Some of course, were accomplished my way. I have spent many hours debating with the Lord. In the end I learned that only The Lord’s way will work!

I am certain there are others like myself who find it necessary to blaze your own trail in your Christian life. Even to the extreme sometime of becoming disobedient. Simply stated, disobedience is sin! Romans 5:12-19, *Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned—(For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many. And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned. For the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification. For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.) Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous.* Disobedience is an unwillingness to comply with the guidance of authority, especially a neglect of God’s will.

Knowing disobedience is rebellion against God and His authority, we should also be aware of at least three sources of disobedience:

Satan’s Temptations: Genesis 3:1-13, *Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, “Has God indeed said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?’”*

And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.’”

Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings. And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.

Then the Lord God called to Adam and said to him, "Where are you?"

So he said, "I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself."

And He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?"

Then the man said, "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate."

Lust: *Numbers 20:10-24, And Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together before the rock; and he said to them, "Hear now, you rebels! Must we bring water for you out of this rock?" Then Moses lifted his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod; and water came out abundantly, and the congregation and their animals drank.*

Then the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not believe Me, to hallow Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them." This was the water of Meribah, because the children of Israel contended with the Lord, and He was hallowed among them.

Now Moses sent messengers from Kadesh to the king of Edom. "Thus says your brother Israel: 'You know all the hardship that has befallen us, how our fathers went down to Egypt, and we dwelt in Egypt a long time, and the Egyptians afflicted us and our fathers. When we cried out to the Lord, He heard our voice and sent the Angel and brought us up out of Egypt; now here we are in Kadesh, a city on the edge of your border. Please let us pass through your country. We will not pass through fields or vineyards, nor will we drink water from wells; we will go along the King's Highway; we will not turn aside to the right hand or to the left until we have passed through your territory.'"

Then Edom said to him, "You shall not pass through my land, lest I come out against you with the sword."

So the children of Israel said to him, "We will go by the Highway, and if I or my livestock drink any of your water, then I will pay for it; let me only pass through on foot, nothing more."

Then he said, "You shall not pass through." So Edom came out against them with many men and with a strong hand. Thus Edom refused to give Israel passage through his territory; so Israel turned away from him.

Then the children of Israel, the whole congregation, journeyed from Kadesh and came to Mount Hor. And the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron in Mount Hor by the border of the land of Edom, saying: "Aaron shall be gathered to his people, for he shall not enter the land which I have given to the children of Israel, because you rebelled against My word at the water of Meribah."

Rebellion: *1 Samuel 15:16-23, Then Samuel said to Saul, "Be quiet! And I will tell you what the Lord said to me last night."*

And he said to him, "Speak on."

So Samuel said, "When you were little in your own eyes, were you not head of the tribes of Israel? And did not the Lord anoint you king over Israel? Now the Lord sent you on a mission, and said, 'Go, and utterly destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are consumed.' Why then did you not obey the voice of the Lord? Why did you swoop down on the spoil, and do evil in the sight of the Lord?"

And Saul said to Samuel, "But I have obeyed the voice of the Lord, and gone on the mission on which the Lord sent me, and brought back Agag king of Amalek; I have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. But the people took of the plunder, sheep and oxen, the best of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice to the Lord your God in Gilgal."

So Samuel said: "Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He also has rejected you from being king."

Most of us are always willing to blame our disobedience on Satan. Satan can only tempt us, he cannot make us sin: *1 Corinthians 10:13, No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.* Most of the time the reason for disobedience is our own personal desires, which are not the desires or the will of God.

Reverend, made chaos of the plan God had originally designed for him. God sent him to the seminary to become better equipped for service to Him and His people. During the latter part of his Junior year, he decided to move off campus. In moving off campus, he had to obtain full-time and part-time employment and get an apartment. That of course, led him toward the direction of further financial obligations, due to the need of, or better still, the lust of, material things.

God had blessed him with such an abundant life, that somehow he failed to remember from whence cometh his help and success. Due to declining health, he thought he was left with no choice but to drop out of school, and work full-time to survive the financial grave he had dug for himself.

Trying to do it on his own without God, he buried himself deeper into self-oppression. In his disobedience, he began to lose faith, and became separated from God,

and had forgotten the fact that God had blessed him so richly. In the midst of all this, God decided that Reverend needed His help, whether Reverend thought he did or not. Early one Saturday morning as Reverend was looking out his living-room window, he heard a familiar voice that called him by name, “Reverend, are you listening?”

“Yes Lord,” he replied. At that moment he began to weep at the knowledge God brought forth of his disobedience. After acknowledgment of his sins and repentance, he was given again, the peace and joy he had lost during his period of disobedience and separation from God. Since that morning, the trip back to his original status with God has been a long, arduous, and continuous valley experience.

Folks asked him daily how he was doing, and he would tell them, “God is teaching me how to live in the valley.” Reverend did not think they understood what he was saying. With God, the valley experience should not be a complaint, but a praise.

Since that morning (Praise God), Reverend’s life with Christ has been much closer. Again, he can sing the song, “*He walks with me and He talks with me, and He tells me I am His very own, and the joy we share as we tarry there, none other has ever known.*”¹ Reverend knew as his days continued, the Lord would help him draw closer.

Today, like Reverend, I too can recognize as David did the fact: Psalms 91:1-2, *He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, “He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust.”* I can also hear God saying: Psalms 91:14-16, “*Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him on high, because he has known My name. He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honor him. With long life I will satisfy him, and show him My salvation.*” Praise God!

Like Reverend and many other Christians, I, too, know the true meaning of suffering through self-oppression, so much so, the Lord inspired me to write this book. Self-oppression of this type, is only brought on those who love the Lord. In people who do not know or love God, disobedience is a part of their everyday life, without the desire to repent. Therefore, self-oppression, due to guilt of sin, is something the world does not experience.

Any time those of us who love the Lord continually sin, and do not repent and ask forgiveness, we begin to feel dejected, depressed, disheartened, dispirited, and alone because the guilt and anguish becomes so severe. Self-oppression, puts undue hardships upon one’s-self. Especially knowing that Jesus said: Matthew 11:28-30, “*Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.*”

The problem however, is one can be so oppressed, that he or she cannot absolve him or herself. Therefore, they cannot go to the Lord and ask forgiveness to return to the

¹In *The Garden*, Charles Austin Miles, 1868-1946, published 1913, ©Public Domain.

grace of God. Since one cannot forgive oneself, it becomes almost impossible to ask God for forgiveness. Due to the guilt and anguish felt within, one cannot stand to face God, they are too ashamed of what they have done. Just like a child, when something is done that they know would hurt their parents, it hurts the child to tell them. This is self-oppression. Romans 7:8-19, *But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all manner of evil desire. For apart from the law sin was dead. I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died. And the commandment, which was to bring life, I found to bring death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed me. Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good.*

Has then what is good become death to me? Certainly not! But sin, that it might appear sin, was producing death in me through what is good, so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful. For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin. For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do. If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good. But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. Disobedience is sin, sin is an evilness, and evilness is a force that opposes God and His work of righteousness in the world.

Such intense fear and bitterness is there during the oppression. Bitterness is to a point of almost hatred, and sometimes there is hatred: hatred of God, family, friends, and self. Reverend stated he hated himself for what he had allowed himself to believe and do, but because of self-oppression or not being able to forgive himself, he could not face God.

Yes, we could have blamed Satan because of our temptations, but God holds us accountable and has given us an escape in **all** temptations: 1 Corinthians 10:13, *No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.*

The question however that comes to mind—if we have an escape, why do we not use it? Only individually can we each answer that question. I personally believe we, through our human nature, feel the need to sometimes remove ourselves from life's drudgery, and sometimes that includes our Christian life. In other words, to rebel against that which we feel we believe has caused us to become imprisoned, or discouraged.

Through Christ, what we have is not a prison or confinement, nor is it a discouragement, but a freedom of true expression. However, sometimes we feel the human need to break away and do something else or something wrong for a while. We tell ourselves that we are only human and can only accept so much of what life offers.

It is so easy to say we are **only human**. The problem with that answer of course, is that God is Divine. Therefore, since we are part of Him and have the Holy Spirit living within us, we too are part Divine. Peter said: 2 Peter 1:3-4, *As His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*

Chapter 2

Disobedience

Romans 5:19, *For as by one man's disobedience (Adam) many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience (Jesus) many will be made righteous.*

The first act of disobedience was committed when Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit. The Bible does not speak of it, but can you imagine the self-oppression and depression Adam and Eve felt when they were evicted from the Garden of Eden, especially knowing the pains of life to follow? Their disobedience set the desire of the flesh above the will of God and set the stage for all human disobedience. Because of this, we have all become sons and daughters of disobedience. Ephesians. 2:2-3, *In which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.*

Christians have little choice but to engage in spiritual warfare against their own natural tendency to disobey God. 2 Corinthians 10:5-6, *Casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.* We should aim to be as obedient as Christ was when He became obedient to the point of death. Philippians 2:8, *And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.*

I read a story in the July 1992 issue of the *Our Daily Bread Campus Journal*, and decided to print it in its entirety. It compares our following of Christ to that of a symphony following a conductor:

What Does it Take to Follow Christ?

As the auditorium lights dimmed and the curtain began to rise, the concert-goers ended their conversations and turned their attention to center stage. The conductor strode to the podium and bowed in response to enthusiastic applause.

Then the conductor turned to face the orchestra. He raised his baton and began the concert with a dramatic gesture. What followed was one of the strangest concerts imaginable.

After a harmonious first few minutes, only a few musicians continued to follow the conductor's lead. The others seemed to play only when they felt like it, or played a completely different composition. A violinist sauntered out in front and tried to perform

a piece he had written himself. A trombonist broke into a jazz number. Chaos reigned. The audience sat for several minutes in stunned silence, then walked out in disbelief.

Fortunately, the scene described above is fictitious. Skilled musicians who agree to play in a symphony orchestra simply do not behave that way. They sign on with the agreement they will follow the conductor's lead. They are part of a symphony, not soloists who all just happened to be playing at the same time.

Unfortunately, we who have declared ourselves to be followers of Christ sometimes behave as members of that imaginary orchestra. We may not like to think so, but we all have a tendency to want to direct our own lives. Our goals take on greater importance and urgency than God's goals for us. We act as though God is supposedly to help us get what we want in life.

Although we are thankful for what Christ did for us on the cross, and we gladly accepted His offer of forgiveness, we may have gotten distracted. We may have forgotten as part of His symphony, we are to submit to His direction in our lives. He is the Conductor, the Head, the King whom we serve. Doing what He wants us to do is what our new life is all about. He longs to lead us through a life that will demonstrate to a watching audience, the unbelieving world, that we know what it means to be His people. He wants us to demonstrate the validity of our profession of faith by walking with Him in obedience.

A life that follows the Conductor's lead has four elements: (1) dependence, (2) risk, (3) loyalty, and (4) imitation. We will depend on Christ as a vine does on the branch, trust Him, remain true to Him, and become, as near as possible, like Him in everything we do.

James, the brother of Christ said: James 4:6, . . . *“God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”* Perhaps you are thinking, how does one become humble? Being thankful does it! What Paul told the Philippians is also conducive for Christians today. He said: Philippians 4:6-7, *Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God: and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*

In the first chapter, only three sources of disobedience was mentioned, now I shall mention some of the consequences of disobedience. They are death, exclusion from the promise land, the defeat of Israel and doom.

Death: Romans 5:12-19, *Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned—(For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many. And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned. For the judgment*

which came from one offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification. For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.) Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous.

Exclusion From the Promise Land: Numbers 14:26-39, *“Because all these men who have seen My glory and the signs which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have put Me to the test now these ten times, and have not heeded My voice, they certainly shall not see the land of which I swore to their fathers, nor shall any of those who rejected Me see it. But My servant Caleb, because he has a different spirit in him and has followed Me fully, I will bring into the land where he went, and his descendants shall inherit it. Now the Amalekites and the Canaanites dwell in the valley; tomorrow turn and move out into the wilderness by the Way of the Red Sea.”*

And the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, “How long shall I bear with this evil congregation who complain against Me? I have heard the complaints which the children of Israel make against Me. Say to them, ‘As I live,’ says the Lord, ‘just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will do to you: The carcasses of you who have complained against Me shall fall in this wilderness, all of you who were numbered, according to your entire number, from twenty years old and above. Except for Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun, you shall by no means enter the land which I swore I would make you dwell in. But your little ones, whom you said would be victims, I will bring in, and they shall know the land which you have despised. But as for you, your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness. And your sons shall be shepherds in the wilderness forty years, and bear the brunt of your infidelity, until your carcasses are consumed in the wilderness. According to the number of the days in which you spied out the land, forty days, for each day you shall bear your guilt one year, namely forty years, and you shall know My rejection. I the Lord have spoken this; I will surely do so to all this evil congregation who are gathered together against Me. In this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die.’” Now the men whom Moses sent to spy out the land, who returned and made all the congregation complain against him by bringing a bad report of the land, those very men who brought the evil report about the land, died by the plague before the Lord. But Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh remained alive, of the men who went to spy out the land.

Then Moses told these words to all the children of Israel, and the people mourned greatly.

A priceless privilege has been offered, refused, and lost in verses 22-23. The **offer** was the glory of all lands. Canaan, the gift of their Father, who redeemed them from Egypt and He delivered them to a region of milk and honey (liberty and rest). The initial report of the spies was true enough, but it represented skepticism and fears that soon infected the congregation. Their anxiety created panic! However, God's proposal is still before them.

The proposal was **refused**. It was late evening when the spies gave their report and by morning there was a dissenting reaction, a powerful reaction, but not a contrition of heart. Through prayer, why could they not realize what was insurmountable yesterday is applicable today? The quarrel of the devoted Caleb and Joshua was ineffectual. The parish was ready to indict Moses and slay the faithful two, Caleb and Joshua. The multitude deliberately refused the proposal of the Promise Land. Just like today, sinners would believe a lie rather than the truth. They would rather be mistaken in their reasoning and revolt against God, the One whom they know has been their help in a time of need—the only true God.

God decided to defend His two dedicated witnesses and servants, and proclaimed a lethal sentence upon the rest. However, Moses intervened, but he could not shield them or himself from possible loss. We as Christians must realize there are indeed boundaries to our intercessory prayer. Jeremiah 15:1, *Then the Lord said to me, "Even if Moses and Samuel stood before Me, My mind would not be favorable toward this people. Cast them out of My sight, and let them go forth."* 1 John 5:16-17, *If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin which does not lead to death, he will ask, and He will give him life for those who commit sin not leading to death. There is sin leading to death. I do not say that he should pray about that. All unrighteousness is sin, and there is sin not leading to death.* The proposal God made to the children of Israel was lost to that generation. Why? Only because of the lack of faith, which is disobedience.

The offer was lost because of fear and non-belief, which induced disobedience and brought **death and exclusion from the Promise Land**.

The Defeat of Israel Because of the Desertion of Their Faith: The nature of deserting God is renouncing God. All sins begin here, because while we live near to Him it is impossible for us to love and follow evil. The remorse of deserting God is great because it involves: disobedience, thanklessness, and the fall from the Highest to the lowest quests. **The causes of desertion of faith are:** substandard learning, a state of ease and comfort, endurance of a corrupt and immoral life, and the natural enticements of the lower order.

Doom: Ezekiel 7:7, 13, *Doom has come to you, you who dwell in the land; the time has come, a day of trouble is near, and not of rejoicing in the mountains. . . . For the seller shall not return to what has been sold, though he may still be alive; for the vision concerns*

the whole multitude, and it shall not turn back; no one will strengthen himself who lives in iniquity. Never yet in the history of men has God failed to vindicate His righteousness. Never yet has the transgressor escaped, and he or she never will. Assuredly as the sun shines, vengeance of God will come to the disobedient. Disobedience is sin. Therefore sin and punishment are one and the same thing. Retribution is simply full-grown sin. So sin in its very nature is destructive, and can lead to nothing but destruction and doom. Obedience through love cements and unites, disobedience is transgression, which dissolves and separates. Separation from God is ruin. Where God is, there is life, and where God is not, there is death (doom). Where God is, there is Heaven, and where God is not, there is the blackest hell.

Do not continue in disobedience. God is calling all of us to repentance now! Come now while God is waiting, do not continue waiting until death comes. The choice is yours: joy and peace, or doom!

Chapter 3

Revelation

Amos 4:13, *For behold, He who forms mountains, and creates the wind, who declares to man what his thought is, and makes the morning darkness, who treads the high places of the earth—the Lord God of hosts is His name.*

Revelation is a revealing of God to people concerning Himself, His moral standards, and His plan of salvation. As we continue, we will review His modes and ways of revelations. Learn from the following:

Psalms 19:1-6, *To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David. The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork. Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night reveals knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. Their line has gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them He has set a tabernacle for the sun, which is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoices like a strong man to run its race. Its rising is from one end of heaven, and its circuit to the other end; and there is nothing hidden from its heat.*

Psalms 19 shows us God has made Himself known to all mankind through the marvels of nature and in the human conscience. This is proven by our ability to distinguish right from wrong. This knowledge is universal and continuous, simply because God has displayed His glory for everyone to see.

Many Christians believe they are the only ones who can see God's revelation in and through nature. However, unbelievers also know the truth about God. Paul said: Romans 1:18-19, *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them.* Paul's words imply that the unrighteous must have the truth in order to suppress it. Paul goes further and wrote: Romans 1:20, *For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.* Continuing with his thought Paul wrote: Romans 1:21, *Because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.* In verse 25 Paul spoke of the unrighteous: Romans 1:25, *Who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.* Paul's continues: Romans 1:28-31, *And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient*

to parents, undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, and unmerciful. Paul concludes his statement concerning the unrighteous in the thirty-second verse saying unbelievers knowing the righteous judgment (moral law) of God, disobey it. Romans 1:32, *Who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.*

Paul's final word on this subject is: Romans 2:1, *Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things.* The reason the ungodly are inexcusable before God's righteous judgment is they possessed but rejected the truth that God gave them.

Can we know God through nature? Yes! We saw that in Romans 1:20, *For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.* God's universal revelation is clear that God exists, and that God, the Creator of the mountains, oceans, vegetation, animals, and mankind, is wise: Psalms 104:24, *O Lord, how manifold are Your works! In wisdom You have made them all. The earth is full of Your possessions.* He is powerful: Psalm 29:4, *The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is full of majesty.* Romans 2:12-16, *For as many as have sinned without law will also perish without law, and as many as have sinned in the law will be judged by the law (for not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified; for when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them) in the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel.* Paul provides proof to us that we are aware of our own moral responsibility. We all know the difference between right and wrong conduct and have a sense of guilt when we do wrong. Our guilt reflects the requirements of God through the Ten Commandments (Law) that is written in our hearts.

Is there a result of divine revelation in nature? Again, I say yes! If people lived up to the knowledge of loving and obeying God every day of their lives, they would be right with God and would not need salvation. If we would only follow the one command given by Jesus all would be right because everything would fall into its proper place. John 13:34, *A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.* However, no one loves God with their whole being and their neighbors as themselves. We have been given by God an inert desire to worship Him.

However, of this inert desire to worship something or someone Paul informs us that people worship and serve things and other people in creation rather than the Creator. Romans 1:24-25, *Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their*

hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. Paul goes further to tell us the problem does not lie with the revelation, which like the Law is holy, just, and good, the problem is with the sinfulness of human lives. The most admirable human being (other than Jesus Christ), falls short of the uprightness God requires. View the following scripture for the proof: Romans 7:12, *Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good.* And Romans 8:3-4, *For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.*

When we as Christians defend justice, honesty, and decency in our schools, homes, neighborhoods, businesses, and governments, we do not impose our special beliefs upon others. Paul also states that most of us merely point to universal principles that all sinners know, but suppress in their unrighteousness. Romans 1:18-19, *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them.* Justice, honesty, decency and fair and equal treatment in the world today is not enough. They must be completed and complimented by the good news of God's mercy and His gracious gift of perfect righteousness.

In John we learned the full and final revelation of God has occurred in Jesus Christ. John 1:18, *No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.* Christ has declared God to us personally. At the cross Jesus supremely revealed God's self-giving love. We learned that He died: the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. 1 Peter 3:18, *For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit.* However, that was just part of the good news, and it is not complete until we hear that He rose again triumphantly over sin, Satan, and the grave, and is alive forevermore. Praise God!

It is in 2nd Peter that we see the content of God's special revelation concerning salvation, given to specially gifted spokespersons (the Apostles). We find it supremely revealed in Christ. 2 Peter 3:2, *That you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior.*

You the reader, now prayerfully understand the revelation of God, and because of this knowledge should have gained the strength which will keep you from self-oppression through disobedience, and now begin the walk of obedience. We as a people of God can no longer say: I did not know.

May God continue to bless and strengthen you, not only for yourself, but for others as well.

Chapter 4

Justification

Romans 3:24, *Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.*

Justification through Grace is the only way by which we as sinners are made acceptable to a holy God. Paul instructs us in the verse above that Christianity teaches justification by grace. Justification is God's declaration that the demands of His Law have been fulfilled in the righteousness of His Son. The basis for this justification is the death of Christ.

The writer of Hebrews says: Hebrews 10:10, *And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.* God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them. This reconciliation covers all sin: Hebrews 10:14, *For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.* Paul uses the faith of Abraham to teach us that justification, then, is based on the work of Christ, accomplished through His blood, and informs us that Jesus brought redemption to His people through His resurrection. Romans 4:23-25, *Now it was not written for his sake alone (Abraham) that it was imputed to him, but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification.*

We are taught that when God justifies us, our sins are charged to Christ and God credits the righteousness of Jesus to us. 2 Corinthians 5:21, *For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.* Thus, through Jesus' righteous act, the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. Romans 5:18, *Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life.* Because this righteousness is the righteousness of God which is apart from the law and freely given to all who believe by faith in Jesus. Romans 3:21-22, *But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe.* God is just because His holy standard of perfect righteousness has been fulfilled in Christ. Acts 13:38-39 NIV, *"Therefore, my brothers, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. Through him everyone who believes is justified from everything you could not be justified from by the law of Moses."* God is the justifier, because this righteousness is freely given to the believer. Romans 3:25-26, . . . *God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.*

Justification by and Through Faith

Although the Lord Jesus has paid the price for our justification, it is through our faith and not the lack of faith that He is received and His righteousness is experienced and enjoyed. We clearly see this in Paul's teaching in Romans 3:21-31, *But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.*

Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law. Or is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also, since there is one God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith. Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law. Paul and John both tell us that faith in Christ is considered righteousness, not as the work of man, but as the gift and work of God. Review the following:

Romans 4:3, 5, and 9, *For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." . . . But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness, . . . Does this blessedness then come upon the circumcised only, or upon the uncircumcised also? For we say that faith was accounted to Abraham for righteousness.*

Philippians 1:28-29, *And not in any way terrified by your adversaries, which is to them a proof of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that from God. For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake.*

John 6:28-29, *Then they said to Him, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?"*

Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent."

The New Testament sometimes seems to speak of justification by works. For example Jesus spoke of justification (and condemnation) by your words. Matthew 12:37, *"For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."* Paul said: the doers of the law will be justified. Romans 2:13, *For not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified.* James concluded:

a man is justified by works, and not by faith only. James 2:24, *You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.* These statements seem to conflict with Paul's warnings in Romans 3:20, *Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.* Galatians 5:4, *You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.*

Galatians informs us the solution to this problem lies in the distinction between the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit. Galatians 5:16-25, *I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.* Not only is Christ's righteousness legally accounted to the believer, but Christ also dwells in the believer through the Holy Spirit. Romans 8:10, *And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.* With the Holy Spirit's help the believer creates works of faith. Ephesians 2:10, *For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.* Certainly God's works may be declared righteous. Isaiah 26:12, *Lord, You will establish peace for us, For You have also done all our works in us.* This being true, then Paul explains to the Ephesians that the order of events in justification is: grace, faith, and works, or, in other words, by grace, through faith, resulting in works. Ephesians 2:8-10, *For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.*

The Influence of Exoneration

By our exoneration (vindication, freedom from guilt or blame) from sin we are saved from the wrath of God: Romans 5:9, *Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.* The positive influence of being saved is that we are justified and gloried through Christ. Romans 8:30, *Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.* Paul especially notes that peace with God and access

to God's grace are positive benefits. Romans 5:1-4, *Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope.*

Paul further states that we, as believers in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, may look to the future to the redemption of His body and an eternal inheritance. Romans 8:16-17, 23, *The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together. . . . Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.* Peter offers us additional proof: 1 Peter 1:3-5, *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*

Chapter 5 Innocence

2 Corinthians 5:21, *For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*

When we speak of innocence, it is sometimes confused with a good life, perhaps even an absence from God or what perfection means. I heard an elderly Christian lady say one night in Bible study, “She is innocent as a new born baby because she had never sinned.” She stated she was born and reared on a farm by Christian parents and never did any wrong. Therefore, she was innocent of sin. She was confused over the difference between innocence and perfection. Of course, the pastor explained that none of us are perfect with the exception of Jesus Christ. Romans 3:23, *For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*

Innocence, or blamelessness is freedom from iniquity and shame, and only Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior can bring that to mankind. In Genesis 3 we learn Adam and Eve originated disobedience causing all mankind thereafter to be in a condition of sin. A diligent search of scripture will show that there were a few that God called innocent (blameless). One such person was Job. Here is what the Bible says about Job: Job 1:1 KJV, *There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil.* Compare this with the NKJV version: Job 1:1 NKJV, *There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was blameless and upright, and one who feared God and shunned evil.*

Another person we can look at is Noah: Genesis 6:9 NKJV, *Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations.* Compare this with the NIV: Genesis 6:9 NIV, *Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God.* There are two others that we could say were blameless even though the Bible does not record this outright. The two are Enoch and Elijah! We find Enoch in Genesis and here is the verse we need: Genesis 5:24, *And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.* We find the statement concerning Elijah in 2nd Kings: 2 Kings 2:11, *Then it happened, as they continued on and talked, that suddenly a chariot of fire appeared with horses of fire, and separated the two of them; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.* Surely, God found these two men to be blameless before Him.

The reality of the spiritual condition of mankind is that no one except Jesus has been totally sinless and blameless, i.e. innocent. Innocence today is only because one may be forgiven of sin and been declared a new creation through faith in Christ.

Paul records the act of disobedience and the means to correct that condition in his letter to the Romans. Romans 5:12, 15, *Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the*

world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned. . . . But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many.

There are basically four different types of innocence:

1 Absolute: 2 Corinthians 5:21, *For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*

1 Legal: Luke 23:4, *So Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowd, "I find no fault in this Man."*

1 Moral: Joshua 22:10-34, *And when they came to the region of the Jordan which is in the land of Canaan, the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh built an altar there by the Jordan—a great, impressive altar. Now the children of Israel heard someone say, "Behold, the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh have built an altar on the frontier of the land of Canaan, in the region of the Jordan—on the children of Israel's side." And when the children of Israel heard of it, the whole congregation of the children of Israel gathered together at Shiloh to go to war against them.*

Then the children of Israel sent Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest to the children of Reuben, to the children of Gad, and to half the tribe of Manasseh, into the land of Gilead, and with him ten rulers, one ruler each from the chief house of every tribe of Israel; and each one was the head of the house of his father among the divisions of Israel. Then they came to the children of Reuben, to the children of Gad, and to half the tribe of Manasseh, to the land of Gilead, and they spoke with them, saying, "Thus says the whole congregation of the Lord: 'What treachery is this that you have committed against the God of Israel, to turn away this day from following the Lord, in that you have built for yourselves an altar, that you might rebel this day against the Lord? Is the iniquity of Peor not enough for us, from which we are not cleansed until this day, although there was a plague in the congregation of the Lord, but that you must turn away this day from following the Lord? And it shall be, if you rebel today against the Lord, that tomorrow He will be angry with the whole congregation of Israel. Nevertheless, if the land of your possession is unclean, then cross over to the land of the possession of the Lord, where the Lord's tabernacle stands, and take possession among us; but do not rebel against the Lord, nor rebel against us, by building yourselves an altar besides the altar of the Lord our God. Did not Achan the son of Zerah commit a trespass in the accursed thing, and wrath fell on all the congregation of Israel? And that man did not perish alone in his iniquity.'"

Then the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh answered and said to the heads of the divisions of Israel: "The Lord God of gods, the Lord God of gods, He knows, and let Israel itself know—if it is in rebellion, or if in treachery against the Lord, do not save us this day. If we have built ourselves an altar to

turn from following the Lord, or if to offer on it burnt offerings or grain offerings, or if to offer peace offerings on it, let the Lord Himself require an account. But in fact we have done it for fear, for a reason, saying, In time to come your descendants may speak to our descendants, saying, “What have you to do with the Lord God of Israel? For the Lord has made the Jordan a border between you and us, you children of Reuben and children of Gad. You have no part in the Lord.” So your descendants would make our descendants cease fearing the Lord.”

Therefore we said, “Let us now prepare to build ourselves an altar, not for burnt offering nor for sacrifice, but that it may be a witness between you and us and our generations after us, that we may perform the service of the Lord before Him with our burnt offerings, with our sacrifices, and with our peace offerings; that your descendants may not say to our descendants in time to come, You have no part in the Lord.” Therefore we said that it will be, when they say this to us or to our generations in time to come, that we may say, “Here is the replica of the altar of the Lord which our fathers made, though not for burnt offerings nor for sacrifices; but it is a witness between you and us. Far be it from us that we should rebel against the Lord, and turn from following the Lord this day, to build an altar for burnt offerings, for grain offerings, or for sacrifices, besides the altar of the Lord our God which is before His tabernacle.”

Now when Phinehas the priest and the rulers of the congregation, the heads of the divisions of Israel who were with him, heard the words that the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and the children of Manasseh spoke, it pleased them. Then Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest said to the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and the children of Manasseh, “This day we perceive that the Lord is among us, because you have not committed this treachery against the Lord. Now you have delivered the children of Israel out of the hand of the Lord.”

And Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest, and the rulers, returned from the children of Reuben and the children of Gad, from the land of Gilead to the land of Canaan, to the children of Israel, and brought back word to them. So the thing pleased the children of Israel, and the children of Israel blessed God; they spoke no more of going against them in battle, to destroy the land where the children of Reuben and Gad dwell. The children of Reuben and the children of Gad called the altar, Witness, “For it is a witness between us that the Lord is God.”

1 Spiritual: 2 Peter 3:14, *Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless.*

Paul made a correlation that runs between the cause of sin and death by the first Adam and of righteousness and life by the second Adam, Jesus Christ. This not only characterizes the veracity he expressed, but concludes with the acclaiming of the love of God and the solace of the hearts of true believers. In revealing the reconciliation between God and man, we find a more immense power in the second Adam (Jesus Christ) to make us happy, than there was in the first (Adam) to make us woeful. Praise God!



Disobedience Through Idolatry



While disobedience seems to be the predominate cause for mankind's condition of unrighteousness before God there is another means that God becomes upset with His creation. Idolatry is a form of disobedience and its practices cause God to turn against His people. We can find text in the Bible were God gives a divorce to Israel, places Judah into bondage in Babylon and even casts Israel out of the promised land because of idolatry. While in the wilderness Israel worshiped an idol, but look at what is recorded in Psalms.

Psalms 106:34-45, *They did not destroy the peoples, concerning whom the Lord had commanded them, but they mingled with the Gentiles and learned their works; they served their idols, which became a snare to them. They even sacrificed their sons and their daughters to demons, and shed innocent blood, the blood of their sons and daughters, whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan; and the land was polluted with blood. Thus they were defiled by their own works, and played the harlot by their own deeds. Therefore the wrath of the Lord was kindled against His people, so that He abhorred His own inheritance. And He gave them into the hand of the Gentiles, and those who hated them ruled over them. Their enemies also oppressed them, and they were brought into subjection under their hand. Many times He delivered them; but they rebelled in their counsel, and were brought low for their iniquity. Nevertheless He regarded their affliction, when He heard their cry; and for their sake He remembered His covenant, and relented according to the multitude of His mercies.*

Idolatry is, of course, another sin of disobedience. Israel, once comfortably settled in Palestine, with adequate room for its numbers did not carry out the Divine command to annihilate the Canaanite nations, but was comfortable in sharing the land with them. Today we are content to live in disobedience if it is someone or something we enjoy.

It was not compassion that restrained them from casting out the Canaanite nations, but love of ease, comfort, and idleness. This was one of the seven deadly sins. The results were those described in Psalm 106:35 NIV, *“But they mingled with the nations and adopted their customs.”* This was the effect of the continuous contact. Wicked connections contaminated good behaviors.

The instruction to eradicate, today, may seem terribly brutal and almost vicious. However, it was based upon God's foreknowledge of the fact, otherwise, there would be contact, and if contact, then contamination.



The idol they worshiped was Baal primarily, along with the nature god and goddess, sometimes even the sun and moon. We today may worship drugs, alcohol, self, our automobiles, money, houses, our children or spouses, our hobbies, anything and everyone but God. We know the Scripture tells us, Matthew 6:21 NIV, *“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”* Knowing the scripture should impact our behavior, decisions, thoughts, etc.

This verse taken from Matthew is a portion of the *Sermon on the Mount* and we need to define what is meant by this word treasure. We need a few more verses to help us understand. Matthew 5:19-34 NIV, *“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!

No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.

Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life ?

And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”

What Jesus is instructing in this passage is that your deeds and actions on the earth now will prove if you are storing up treasure on the earth, or in heaven! In other words if your whole life is constructed in working, partying and other general pursuits, and is focused on materialism, and attaining riches, then you are guilty of storing up treasures on the earth. At the end of the day these things are meaningless because they can be destroyed, taken from you, or will mean nothing when you are dead!

On the other hand if your life is spent unselfishly with your focus on spiritual matters of getting to know God better, worshiping Him and His Son and your words and actions reflect treating your neighbor as yourself, then you will be storing up treasures in Heaven and these things will be eternal.

Surely, we know if Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior is our treasure, there will not be a greater reward than to receive the glorious crown one day in heaven. There is no greater treasure.

Chapter 6

Our Adversaries

1 Corinthians 16:9 NIV, *Because a great door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many who oppose me.*

In the Bible, the word adversary is often used to identify Satan, the adversary of God and His plan of righteousness and redemption in the world. Since his fall, Satan has opposed God's plan to establish His kingdom on earth. He tricked Eve in order to use man to establish his kingdom on earth rather than God's. Satan later opposed Jesus by questioning His identity as the Messiah and by tempting Him to misuse His powers as God's Son. Matthew 4:1-11, *Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry. Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread."*

But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'"

Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: 'He shall give His angels charge over you,' and, 'in their hands they shall bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone.'"

Jesus said to him, "It is written again, 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God.'"

Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to Him, "All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me."

Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.'" Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him.

The Apostle Paul told us in 1 Corinthians 16:9 NKJV, . . . *there are many adversaries.* Therefore, we know Satan is not the only adversary we must face. One of the biggest adversaries is **self**. There are other adversaries, such as, slander, secret and purposeful misrepresentation, hindrances, hatred, open hostility, and violence just to name a few. All of these help in our disobedience.

However, some of the obstacles (adversaries) serve to test the quality of our labor and to bring out courage, resolution and patience where such qualities are required. Some always answer a valuable purpose in testing the sincerity of the converts. Times of adversaries, could also be times of testing. For Paul, these testings called forth and employed his many and remarkable powers. It enabled him to realize his fellowship with

God, and it promised great results of spiritual good. In short, the meaning of verse nine is: Christians, enter in at every door and are to be fearless of adversaries.

In the face of all of our adversaries, we should be able to keep the faith and stand. He who can help us in the small problems of life, can also help us in the large. Standing against a difficult adversary does not mean to turn and run. God did not think a difficult position meant a position to be abandoned as quickly as possible.

Some of us are always running away from the task at hand. These runners are always seeking rest, but they are never finding rest. There is no rest off of and away from the path of duty and responsibility to God. Where the adversary is strongest, the loyal soldier should be strongest. God never said our lives would be a bed of roses. On the other side of the coin God never said that life on earth would be a bed of rotten tomatoes. As I grew older I discovered that life contained trials, struggles and pains that we all have to learn to either live with or overcome. We hope someone will always be there to save us from our own failures. Along the way I realized that no one can really pick me up and save me except my belief in Jesus and all He taught pertaining to God the Father. By God's grace and my two hands I have learned to deal with difficulties in life and understand this is a skill that needs to be mastered in order to survive.

Paul for example had (1) his own frail health, (2) the difficulties and dangers of traveling, (3) the willfulness sometimes shown by his traveling companions, (4) the sudden and unexpected claims of the Churches altering his plans, (5) the persistent and watchful opposition of his Jewish enemies, and (6) sometimes strange and trying limitations put upon him by the Holy Spirit. Is this what Paul is telling us: 2 Corinthians 12:7-10, *And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.* This was evidently true of Paul, which is the common experience of God's servants, and we must accept the conditions, and win virtue out of the limitations.

Some of us Christians believe since God has opened doors for us, we enter with great hopes and expectations, knowing if God opened the door, the path within **must** be unswerving, untarnished and effortless. This we find is not always true, for God's foresight is also ever making barriers for future faith and strength.

If we only reflect, how often do we see those very difficult times of our life as but lessons that increased our faith, strength and ability to get through, cope with, or survive life's hard times such as death of a loved one, accidents, sicknesses, losses, etc.

We must fully accept the fact that, here on earth, God has put open doors and hindrances together, that the combination might nurture and develop the noblest qualities

in us. If we can pass the test, we have eluded the disobedience, therefore, the self-oppression.

In the face of hindrances and adversaries, we must always pray for wisdom, fortitude and never give up, but give over to God. Always use the words of the Bible for guidance, strength and courage. Remember if God is for us who can be against us. Review 2 Chronicles 32:7-8 NIV, *“Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or discouraged because of the king of Assyria and the vast army with him, for there is a greater power with us than with him. With him is only the arm of flesh, but with us is the Lord our God to help us and to fight our battles.”* And the people gained confidence from what Hezekiah the king of Judah said.

Let us stand in faith just as Paul wrote to Timothy: 1 Timothy 6:12 NIV, *Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses.* One day all Christians want to be able to stand in the presence of God and say: 2 Timothy 4:7-8 NIV, *I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.*

Let us pray: Our God and our Father, forgive us of our sins and give us the strength to stand and permit You to fight our battles and adversaries, and do not let us grow weak and faint, therefore, giving up and becoming disobedient by failing and refusing to carry on the blood stained banner. We thank you for the opened doors in our lives, as well as the adversaries. We thank You for Your Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It is in the name of Jesus that we thank You in advance for the blessings presently and to come. Amen.

Chapter 7

Satan

1 Peter 5:8, *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.*

Satan is God's greatest opponent, or adversary, as well as man's. The name Satan is one of the names for the fallen angel Lucifer. This chapter is related to the previous one, however, more emphasis will be given to Satan himself.

There are many who deny the existence of Satan. They claim what we call Satan is only a principle of evil. This evil is a sort of malaria, an intangible thing like disease germs that float about in the atmosphere and attacks people's spirit (heart) under certain conditions. They are willing to go so far as to say if God is ALL GOOD there cannot be the existence of a devil (Satan). The existence of Satan cannot be determined by the opinions of men. The only known reliable source of information on Satan is the Bible. That is the reason Satan tries to discredit the Word of God. He is not a principle of evil, he is a created person. 1 Peter 5:8, "*Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.*"

He walks about, and is to be chained. Revelation 20:1-3, *Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while.* These could not be said of a principle of evil. Our adversary has many names or aliases: Satan; Devil; Beelzebub; Belial; Adversary; Dragon; and Serpent. He is mentioned by one or the other of these names a total of 174 times in the Bible (depending upon which translation you use).

He is a great Celestial Potentate.

He is: ***The Prince of the Power of the Air.***

Ephesians 2:2, *In which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience.*

He is also

The God of this World (Age).

2 Corinthians 4:4, *Whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.*

Devil, is another common name for Satan in the New Testament meaning slanderer or false accuser. Other titles by which Satan is identified in the New Testament include:

1 The tempter: 1 Thessalonians 3:5, *For this reason, when I could no longer endure it, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter had tempted you, and our labor might be in vain.*

1 Beelzebub: Matthew 12:24, *Now when the Pharisees heard it they said, "This fellow does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons."*

1 The wicked one: Matthew 13:19, *When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside.*

1 The ruler of this world: John 12:31, *Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.*

1 The god of this age: 2 Corinthians 4:4, *Whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.*

1 Belial: 2 Corinthians 6:15, *And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever?*

1 The prince of the power of the air: Ephesians 2:2, *In which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience.*

1 The accuser of our brethren: Revelation 12:10, *Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down."*

1 Abaddon or Apollyon: Revelation 9:11, *And they had as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, but in Greek he has the name Apollyon.*

Isaiah and Ezekiel help provide a picture of Satan's original position and the reasons for his loss of that capacity. They tell of an celestial being, one of God's creatures, who became too ambitious and proud. His desire was to take over the throne of God. But God threw him and his followers (one third of the angels) out, therefore, removing him from his position of dignity and honor. Isaiah 14:12-15, *"How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.' Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, to the lowest depths of the Pit."* Ezekiel 28:11-19, *Moreover the word of the Lord came to me, saying, "Son of man, take up a lamentation for the king of Tyre, and say to him, 'Thus says the Lord God: "You were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden*

of God; every precious stone was your covering: the sardius, topaz, and diamond, beryl, onyx, and jasper, sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold. The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes was prepared for you on the day you were created. You were the anointed cherub who covers; I established you; you were on the holy mountain of God; you walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones. You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity was found in you. By the abundance of your trading you became filled with violence within, and you sinned; therefore I cast you as a profane thing out of the mountain of God; and I destroyed you, O covering cherub, from the midst of the fiery stones. Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor; I cast you to the ground, I laid you before kings, that they might gaze at you. You defiled your sanctuaries by the multitude of your iniquities, by the iniquity of your trading; therefore I brought fire from your midst; it devoured you, and I turned you to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all who saw you. All who knew you among the peoples are astonished at you; you have become a horror, and shall be no more forever.’”

Building upon this foundation, Revelation 12 sketches the further stages in Satan’s work of evil. In his fall from God’s favor, Revelation 12 tells us Satan influenced a third of the angels to follow him in his rebellion. Throughout the time of the Old Testament period Satan tried to destroy the line of Jesus, and when the Messiah became a person, Satan tried to eliminate Him. Revelation 12:1-5, *Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars. Then being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth. And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born. She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne.*

Verses 7-12 of Revelation chapter 12 inform us that during the future period of the Great Tribulation and before Jesus’ second coming, Satan will be thrown out of the heavenly sphere. Revelation 12:7-12, *And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, “Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death. Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the*

earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time.” However, that will not be the end of Satan, verses 13-17 of this chapter informs us then he will direct his wrath toward Jesus’ followers. Revelation 12:13-17, *Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male Child. But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent. So the serpent spewed water out of his mouth like a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood. But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed up the flood which the dragon had spewed out of his mouth. And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.*

Revelation 20 provides details of the final phases of Satan’s work, and in verses two and ten we learn he will be constrained for a thousand years and finally cast into the lake of fire. Revelation 20:2, 10, *He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years . . . The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.*

When we study the characteristics of Satan we will learn as a result of his original status and authority, he has great power and dignity. Jude tells us so great is his strength, Michael the archangel viewed him as a foe too powerful to oppose. Jude 9, *Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, “The Lord rebuke you!”*

We have learned by Satan’s various titles his influence in worldly affairs. The Bible even goes so far as to state the following: 1 John 5:18-20, *We know that whoever is born of God does not sin; but he who has been born of God keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch him. We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one. And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.*

Satan exercises his evil power through demons, his angels, and rulers and principalities of darkness.

Matthew 12:24, *Now when the Pharisees heard it they said, “This fellow does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons.”*

Matthew 25:41, *Then He will also say to those on the left hand, “Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.”*

Revelations 12:7, 9, *And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought . . . So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.*

Daniel 10:12-13, *Then he said to me, “Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard; and I have come because of your words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia.”*

Ephesians 6:12, *For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.*

Without going into all the details we should already know that Satan’s powers are subject to God’s limitations. Satan had to ask God for permission to test Job. We also know that God protects His people and Satan has to ask permission to test them but he is not allowed to conquer them.

Satan’s objective and ambition is to replace God and to have God’s people worship him. God has baffled this aspiration and Satan became God’s exact opposite. Text has shown us that one of Satan’s titles is the wicked one, while, at the same time, God is the Holy One!

We know that Satan is very malicious in his endeavors of combating God, God’s people, and his methods are untiring. He is forever opposed to the follower’s of Christ and their best interests. In Genesis Satan introduced sin into the human family, through which he gained the power of death. However, we know that this power was broken by Jesus, through His death on the cross and His resurrection from the grave.

Satan uses various methods in carrying out his evil work. None of his methods is more characteristic than that of temptation. Satan influences people into iniquity by diverse methods. He sometimes uses explicit exhortation, as with:

Judas Iscariot : John 13: 2, 27, *And supper being ended, the devil having already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon’s son, to betray Him . . . As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him.*

Through his agents who disguise themselves as messengers of God: 2 Thessalonians 2:9, *The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders.* 1 John 4:1, *Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.*

Through our own weaknesses: 1 Corinthians 7:5, *Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.*

He tempts us directly as he did Christ: Luke 4:5-8, *Then the devil, taking Him up on a high mountain, showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said to Him, “All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. Therefore, if You will worship before me, all will be Yours.”*

And Jesus answered and said to him, "Get behind Me, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.'"

Satan also delights in deception. Satan's untruthful characteristics are in prominent dissimilarity to the gospel for which Christ stands. He uses so frequently a great falsehood, that he tempts us to believe good can be attained by doing wrong. I am certain by now you the reader, know and understand Satan is the greatest deceiver of all time, he is also the master at falsifying the truth.

I read a sign several years ago stating: If Satan reminds you of where you are in sin, remind him of where he's going because of sin. Jesus' death and resurrection was the magnificent apex to a sinless life during which Jesus conquered the adversary repeatedly. When Jesus returns at His second coming Satan will be bound for one thousand years and mankind will be lead in truth by Christ for those one thousand years., that will be the final victory and the time when Satan will be cast into the lake of fire.

We have already won the victory through the death of Christ, and we have the perfect assurance that the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet. But you must know however, that we can only have such personal victory if we resist Satan's temptations.

To help you, myself, and other Christians to win this battle we know that God has furnished the power of Christ's blood. We have the continuing prayer of Christ in heaven for us the believer. We also have the leading of the Holy Spirit. Finally, we learn God has provided us with various weapons for spiritual warfare. Therefore, we have no excuse for failing and no excuse for giving up. Do you realize excuses are only choices we make? Consider this thought the next time you make an excuse for not being obedient to God.

I am utterly amazed how some people, even Christians, refuse to believe Satan is a reality. For whatever reason, some people have trouble admitting the existence of such an enemy. They can believe in the Boogie Man, but not Satan. I have already explained in prior paragraphs the Bible makes it plain Satan is alive and his life is to dispute the precepts of God in the concerns of man.

Perhaps you, as I, have wondered why God would allow Satan to exist in His creation. I have never found an answer that fulfilled my inquisitiveness. Since God is an all wise, all knowing God, perhaps He allows it to show us there is evil and good, and without temptations and test, how would or could we know the true fulfillments of life?

Life would indeed be a bore without challenges and obstacles, and if heaven were not worth fighting for—I am not sure I would want it. Anything worth having, is worth fighting for. Nothing in this life worth having comes easy. Sin is the easy route toward all we may ever want. Sometimes we try so hard but still fail. However, anything worth having is worth fighting for. What you put in is what you get out. We grow from obstacles, test and pain. No pain, no gain!

As you continue to read, it is my prayer you are developing a positive attitude from scripture after scripture, prayer after prayer and page after page. If you have attained the level of self-oppression through disobedience, I further pray you are beginning to see the

light. Which means you are beginning to pray and ask for forgiveness and repenting of your sins. If so, then I also know a great burden has been lifted from you by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Praise our Father in heaven!

Theodore Roosevelt once said:

Nothing in the world is worth having or worth doing unless it means effort, pain, difficulty . . . I have never in my life envied a human being who led an easy life. I have envied a great many people who led difficult lives and led them well.

Pray this prayer:

Our Father and our God. I thank You for the privilege of coming to the throne of grace, as well as for Your love, mercy and forgiving heart. Only You, Father, can help me through this burden and pain of self-oppression. I know You are patiently awaiting for me to come into Your presence with a contrite heart and humble spirit. Forgive me now, oh Lord, as only You can, for I have sinned. Cleanse me as white as the driven snow, so I may again have Your peace that the world did not give me and cannot take away. Cleanse me Father, so I again may become the temple of the Holy Spirit. It is in the sweet name of my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ I ask for these bountiful blessings. Amen.

Chapter 8

Temptation

Matthew 26:41, *“Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”*

Temptation is an enticement or invitation to sin, with the implied promise of greater good to be derived. This follows the way of disobedience. In this sense, God does not tempt man, nor can He Himself as the holy God be tempted. James 1:13, *Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.* God cannot be influenced to deny Himself. 2 Timothy 2:13, *If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself.* The supreme tempter is Satan. 1 Thessalonians 3:5, *For this reason, when I could no longer endure it, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter had tempted you, and our labor might be in vain.* Satan who plays upon the weakness of corrupted human nature. James 1:14, *But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed.* Satan is the one who leads people to destruction. James 1:15, *Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.*

The gospel of Jesus directs man to resist temptation, promising a blessing to those who do. James 1:12, *Blessed is the man 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.* The gospel also directs us to pray, as in the Lord’s Prayer, for deliverance from exposure to temptation. Matthew 6:13, *“And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.”* The Lord will not allow His people to encounter temptation beyond their Spirit-given ability to resist. 1 Corinthians 10:13, *No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.*

In the Old Testament, temptation can best be understood as testing or proving. The context is the covenant relationship of mutual love and faithfulness between God and His people. The Lord tests Israel to prove the true nature of her faithfulness to Him. Deuteronomy 8:2, *And you shall remember that the Lord your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not.* His purpose is not to induce His people to sin but to confirm their faith. James 1:2-4, *My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.*

As in the case of Job, Satan the tempter can serve the Lord's purpose. Satan's temptation of Adam in the Garden of Eden was also the Lord's testing of Adam's faith.

The nation of Israel also tempts, or tests, the Lord by calling into question the Lord's unswerving loyalty to His people. Exodus 17:2, *Therefore the people contended with Moses, and said, "Give us water, that we may drink." And Moses said to them, "Why do you contend with me? Why do you tempt the Lord?"* God has promised to preserve Israel as His own everlasting possession, but His righteousness requires that He destroy a rebellious nation. His people's disobedience tempts the Lord to break His promise to be their God.

In the temptation of Jesus, Satan enticed the Son of God to forsake His messianic commitment. Jesus, however, did not prove to be a disloyal Son. He did not put the Lord to the test, or tempt God, like Israel of old. He lives *by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God*. Matthew 4:4, *But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'"* Having resisted satanic temptation Himself, Christ is able to comfort and aid His followers who are tempted in similar fashion. Hebrews 2:14-15, 18, *Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. . . . For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.*

Chapter 9

Sin

1 John 3:4, *Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness.*

Sin is transgression of God's will, either by omitting to do what God's law requires or by doing what it forbids. The transgression can occur in:

Thought: 1 John 3:15, *Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.*

Word: Matthew 5:22, *“But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, ‘Raca!’ shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, ‘You fool!’ shall be in danger of hell fire.”*

Deed: Romans 1:32, *Who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.*

Mankind was created without sin, morally upright and inclined to do good. Ecclesiastes 7:29, *“Truly, this only I have found: that God made man upright, but they have sought out many schemes.”* But sin entered into the human experience when Adam and Eve violated the direct command of God by partaking the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden. Genesis 3:6, *So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.* Because Adam was the head and representative of the whole human race, his sin affected all future generations. Romans 5:12-21, *Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned—(For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many. And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned. For the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification. For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.) Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous.*

Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more, so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Associated with this guilt is a corrupted nature passed from Adam to all his descendants. Out of this perverted nature arise all the sins that people commit. Matthew 15:19, *“For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.”* No person is free from involvement in sin. Romans 3:23, *For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*

God is holy and cannot sin. James 1:13, *Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am tempted by God;” for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.* Jesus Christ, the Son of God who came to earth in human form, is also sinless. His perfection arises from His divine nature, as well as His human nature. 1 Peter 2:22, *“Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth.”* Although the story of the Bible focuses on the sin of mankind and God’s provision for our redemption, the angels are also described as capable of sinning. Some have fallen away from God’s service. Jude 6, *And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day.* But animals are not morally responsible creatures, therefore they cannot sin.

Mankind originally fell into sin at the temptation of Satan. As the tempter, he continues to lure people into sin. 1 Peter 5:8, *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.* Nevertheless, people remain fully responsible for what they do. God is not the author of sin, but His plan for world redemption does include His dealing with the reality of sin. 1 Timothy 2:3-5 NIV, *This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.* This truth is dramatically witnessed in the death of Jesus Christ. The crucifixion happened according to God’s will, but at the same time, it was the worst crime of human history. Acts 2:22-24, *“Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know—Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.”*

Sin is not represented in the Bible as the absence of good, or as an illusion that stems from our human limitations. Sin is portrayed as a real and harmful evil. Sin is more than unwise, inexpedient, calamitous behavior that produces sorrow and distress. It is rebellion against God’s law, the standard of righteousness. Psalms 119:160, *The entirety of Your word is truth, and every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever.*

Since God demands righteousness, sin must be defined in terms of mankind’s relation to God. Sin is thus the faithless rebellion of the created against the just authority

of his Creator. For this reason, breaking God's law at any point involves transgression at every point. James 2:10, *For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.*

Violation of the law of God in thought, word, and deed shows the sinfulness of the human heart. Sin is actually a contradiction to the holiness of God, whose image mankind bears. This depraved condition is called original sin because it comes from Adam and characterizes all persons from the moment of their birth.

The moral depravity of mankind is complete in that: Romans 8:7, *Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.* Apart from Christ, all who believe in Him are: Ephesians 2:1-2, . . . *Made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience.* But this does not mean that people can behave as wickedly as they might, for God restrains the outworking of the sinful heart. At times, He even helps sinners do things that conform to the law. Genesis 20:6, *And God said to him in a dream, "Yes, I know that you did this in the integrity of your heart. For I also withheld you from sinning against Me; therefore I did not let you touch her."* The corruption of sin is not developed or expressed to the same degree in every person; neither is it expressed in the same way in any person at all times.

Sin involves the denial of the living God from whom human beings draw their life and existence. Acts 17:28, *For in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, "For we are also His offspring."* The consequence of this revolt is death and the torment of hell (oppression). Death is the ultimate penalty imposed by God for sin. Romans 6:23, *For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Against this dark background of sin and its reality, the gospel comes as the good news of the deliverance that God has provided through His Son. Jesus bears the penalty of sin in place of His people. Mark 10:45, *"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."* He also redeems us from lawlessness and makes us long for good works in service to God and others. Titus 2:14, *Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.*

Chapter 10

Prayer

1 Thessalonians 5:17 NIV, “*Pray continually.*”

Colossians 4:2 NIV, “*Devote yourself to prayer, being watchful and thankful.*”

Prayer is communication with God and/or our way of talking to God. The communication with God should be serious, sincere and from the heart. In our communication, we must also allow the Holy Spirit to enter and not attempt to communicate with Him alone. We must pray in the Spirit. More of this will be discussed further in this chapter.

Because God is personal, all people can offer prayers. However, sinners who have not trusted Jesus Christ for their salvation remain alienated from God. So while unbelievers may pray, they do not have the basis for a rewarding fellowship with God. They have not met the conditions laid down in the Bible for effectiveness in prayer.

Christians recognize their dependence upon their Creator. They have every reason to express gratitude for God’s blessings. But they have far more reason to respond to God than this. They respond to the love of God for them. God’s love is revealed through the marvelous incarnation and life of Christ, His atoning provision at the Cross, His resurrection, as well as His continuing presence through the Holy Spirit.

Prayer cannot be replaced by devout good works in a needy world. Important as service to others is, at times we must turn away from it and toward God, who is distinct from all things and over all things. Neither should prayer be thought of as a mystical experience in which people lose their identity in the infinite reality. Effective prayer must be a scripturally informed response of persons saved by grace to the living God who can hear and answer on the basis of Christ’s payment of the penalty which sinners deserved. As such, prayer involves several important aspects.

Faith

The most meaningful prayer comes from a heart that places its trust in the God who has acted and spoken through the Jesus of history and the teachings of the Bible. God speaks to us through the Bible, and we in turn speak to Him in trustful, believing prayer. Assured by the Scripture that God is personal, living, active, all-knowing, all-wise, and all-powerful, we know God can hear and help us. A confident prayer life is built on the cornerstone of Christ’s work and words as shown by the prophets and apostles in the Spirit inspired writings of the Bible.

Worship

In worship we recognize what is of highest worth: not ourselves, others, or our work, but God. The Highest divine being deserves our highest respect. Guided by Scripture, we set our values in accord with God's will and perfect standards. Before God, angels hide their faces and cry: Isaiah 6:3, *And one cried to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory!"*

Confession

Awareness of God's holiness leads to consciousness of our own sinfulness. Like the prophet Isaiah, we exclaim: Isaiah 6:5, *"Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts."* By sinning, we hurt ourselves and those closest to us, but first of all, and worst of all, sin is against God. Psalms 51:4, *Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight—that You may be found just when You speak, and blameless when You judge.* We must confess our sins to God to get right with Him. We need not confess them to another being. But we should confess them directly to God, who promises to forgive us of all our unrighteousness. 1 John 1:9, *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

Adoration

God is love, and He has demonstrated His love in the gift of His Son. The greatest desire of God is that we love Him with our whole being. Matthew 22:37, *Jesus said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind."* Our love should be expressed, as His has been expressed, in both deeds and words. People sometimes find it difficult to say to others and to God, I love you. But when love for God fills our lives, we will express our love in prayer to the one who is ultimately responsible for all that we are.

Praise

The natural outgrowth of faith, worship, confession, and adoration is praise. We speak well of one whom we highly esteem and love. The one whom we respect and love above all others naturally receives our highest commendation. We praise Him for His mighty acts. Psalms 150:2, *Praise Him for His mighty acts; praise Him according to His excellent greatness!* And praise Him for His righteous judgments. Psalms 119:164, *Seven times a day I praise You, because of Your righteous judgments.* For God Himself, for His works, and for His words, His people give sincere praise.

Thanksgiving

Are we thankless because we think we have not received what we deserve? But if we got what we deserved, we would be condemned because of our guilt. As sinners, we are not people of God by nature. We have no claim upon His mercy or grace. Nevertheless, He has forgiven our sins, granted us acceptance as His people, and given us His righteous standing and a new heart and life. Ingratitude marks the ungodly. Romans 1:21, *Because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.* Believers, in contrast, live thankfully. God has been at work on our behalf in countless ways. So in everything, even for the discipline that is unpleasant, we give thanks. Colossians 3:17, *And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.* And in 1 Thessalonians 5:18, *In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.*

Dedicated Action

Christ's example does not require us to withdraw from society, but to render service to the needy in a spirit of prayer. He wept over Jerusalem in compassionate prayer, and then He went into the city to give His life a ransom for many. Authentic prayer will be the source of courage and productivity, as it was for the prophets and apostles.

Request

Prayer is not only response to God's grace as brought to us in the life and work of Jesus and the teaching of Scripture, it is also a request for our needs and the needs of others.

For good reasons God's holy and wise purpose does not permit Him to grant every petition as it is asked. Several hindrances to answered prayer are mentioned in the Bible:

Iniquity in the heart, Psalms 66:18, *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear.*

Refusal to hear God's law, Proverbs 28:9, *One who turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer is an abomination.*

An estranged heart, Isaiah 29:13, *Therefore the Lord said: "Inasmuch as these people draw near with their mouths and honor Me with their lips, but have removed their hearts far from Me, and their fear toward Me is taught by the commandment of men.*

Sinful separation from God, Isaiah 59:2, *But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear.*

Waywardness, Jeremiah 14:10-12, *Thus says the Lord to this people: "Thus they have loved to wander; they have not restrained their feet. Therefore the Lord does not accept them; He will remember their iniquity now, and punish their sins."*

Then the Lord said to me, "Do not pray for this people, for their good. When they fast, I will not hear their cry; and when they offer burnt offering and grain offering, I will not accept them. But I will consume them by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence."

Offering unworthy sacrifices, Malachi 1:7-9, "You offer defiled food on My altar. But say, 'In what way have we defiled You?' By saying, 'The table of the Lord is contemptible.' And when you offer the blind as a sacrifice, is it not evil? And when you offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? Offer it then to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you favorably?" Says the Lord of hosts. "But now entreat God's favor, that He may be gracious to us. While this is being done by your hands, will He accept you favorably?" Says the Lord of hosts.

Praying to be seen of men, Matthew 6:5-6, "And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly."

Pride in fasting and tithing, Luke 18:11-14, "I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.' And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

Lack of faith, Hebrews 11:6, But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

Doubting or double-mindedness, James 4:3, You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.

More positively, God has promised to answer our requests when we:

Start helping the hungry and afflicted, Isaiah 58:9-10, "Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry, and He will say, 'Here I am.' If you take away the yoke from your midst, the pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness, if you extend your soul to the hungry and satisfy the afflicted soul, then your light shall dawn in the darkness, and your darkness shall be as the noonday."

When we believe we will receive what we ask, Mark 11:22-24, So Jesus answered and said to them, "Have faith in God. For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them."

When we forgive others, Mark 11:25-26, *“And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses.”*

When we ask in Christ’s name, John 14:13-14, *“And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.”*

When we abide in Christ and His words, John 15:7, *“If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.”*

Pray in the Spirit, Ephesians 6:8, *Knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free.*

Obey the Lord’s commandments, 1 John 3:22, *And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.*

Ask according to His will, 1 John 5:14-15, *Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.*

Until we have properly responded to God and His Word, He cannot entrust us with His powerful resources.

Prayer is request to a personal Lord who answers as He knows best. We should not think we will always have success in obtaining the things for which we ask. In His wisdom, God hears and answers in the way that is best. God meets our need, just not always in the manner we expect.

Effectiveness

Prayer has power over everything. God can intelligently act in any part of the universe or human history. Although some people think prayer is a waste of time, the Bible declares: James 5:16, *Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.*

One who prays will receive:

Freedom from fear, Psalms 118:5-6, *I called on the Lord in distress; the Lord answered me and set me in a broad place. The Lord is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me?*

Strength of soul, Psalms 138:3, *In the day when I cried out, You answered me, and made me bold with strength in my soul.*

Guidance and satisfaction, Isaiah 58:9-11 NIV, *Then you will call, and the Lord will answer; you will cry for help, and He will say: “Here am I. If you do away with the yoke of oppression, with the pointing finger and malicious talk, and if you spend yourselves*

in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday. The Lord will guide you always; He will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail.”

Wisdom and understanding, Daniel 9:20-27, Now while I was speaking, praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God for the holy mountain of my God, yes, while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, reached me about the time of the evening offering. And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, “O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you skill to understand. At the beginning of your supplications the command went out, and I have come to tell you, for you are greatly beloved; therefore consider the matter, and understand the vision: seventy weeks are determined for your people and for your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times. And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; and the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, and till the end of the war desolations are determined. Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; but in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, even until the consummation, which is determined, is poured out on the desolate.”

Deliverance from harm, Joel 2:32, And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance, as the Lord has said, among the remnant whom the Lord calls.

Reward, Matthew 6:6, But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.

Good gifts, Luke 11:13, “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!”

Fullness of joy, John 16:23-24, And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you. Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.

Peace, Philippians 4:6-8, Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.

Freedom from anxiety, 1 Peter 5:7, *Casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.*

Is prayer effective only in the inner lives of those who pray? No, prayer can make a difference in the lives of others. Biblical writers believed prayer for others could result in:

Greater wisdom and power, Ephesians 1:18-19, *The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power.*

Inward strength, knowledge of Christ's love, and filling with God's fullness, Ephesians 3:16-19, *That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.*

Discernment, approval of what is excellent, and filling with the fruits of righteousness, Philippians 1:9-11, *And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.*

Knowledge of God's will, spiritual understanding, a life pleasing to God, fruitfulness, endurance, patience, and joy, Colossians 1:9-12, *For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy; giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light.*

A quiet, peaceable life, 1 Timothy 2:1-2, *Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.*

Love for one another and all people, and holiness before God, 1 Thessalonians 3:10-13, *Night and day praying exceedingly that we may see your face and perfect what*

is lacking in your faith? Now may our God and Father Himself, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way to you. And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we do to you, so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.

Comfort and establishment in every good word and work, 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17, *Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and Father, who has loved us and given us everlasting consolation and good hope by grace, comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work.*

Love for God, and steadfastness in Christ, 2 Thessalonians 3:5, *Now may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ.*

The sharing of one's faith, and promotion of the knowledge of all that is good, Philemon 6, *That the sharing of your faith may become effective by the acknowledgment of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus.*

Equipment for every good work that is pleasing to God, Hebrews 13:20-21, *Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.*

Some people who think prayer can affect others question the ability of God to change His usual patterns in the physical world. But some prayers in the Bible changed nature and physical bodies:

Jabez prayed for enlarged borders and protection from harm, 1 Chronicles 4:10, *And Jabez called on the God of Israel saying, "Oh, that You would bless me indeed, and enlarge my territory, that Your hand would be with me, and that You would keep me from evil, that I may not cause pain!" So God granted him what he requested.*

Other people in the Bible prayed for deliverance from trouble, Psalms 34:15-22, *The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their cry. The face of the Lord is against those who do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth. The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears, and delivers them out of all their troubles. The Lord is near to those who have a broken heart, and saves such as have a contrite spirit. Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all. He guards all his bones; not one of them is broken. Evil shall slay the wicked, and those who hate the righteous shall be condemned. The Lord redeems the soul of His servants, and none of those who trust in Him shall be condemned.*

Deliverance from both poverty and riches, Proverbs 30:7-9, *Two things I request of You (Deprive me not before I die): Remove falsehood and lies far from me; give me neither poverty nor riches—feed me with the food allotted to me; lest I be full and deny You, and say, "Who is the Lord?" Or lest I be poor and steal, and profane the name of my God.*

Deliverance from the belly of a great fish, Jonah 2:6-10, *“I went down to the moorings of the mountains; the earth with its bars closed behind me forever; yet You have brought up my life from the pit, O Lord, my God. When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the Lord; and my prayer went up to You, into Your holy temple. Those who regard worthless idols forsake their own Mercy. But I will sacrifice to You with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay what I have vowed. Salvation is of the Lord.”* So the Lord spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land.

Daily bread, Matthew 6:11, *“Give us this day our daily bread.”*

Preservation and sanctification of spirit, soul, and body, 1 Thessalonians 5:23, *Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Healing of the sick, James 5:14-15, *Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.*

Ending of the rain and its beginning again, James 5:17-18, *Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.*

When the disciples prayed, the building around them shook, Acts 4:31, *And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.*

An earthquake opened the doors of their prison, Acts 16:25-26, *But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were loosed.*

Our prayers do make a difference in how God acts in the world!

Chapter 11

Holy Spirit

Acts 1:8 NIV, “*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*”

The third person of the trinity exercises the power of the Father and the Son in creation and redemption. Because the Holy Spirit is the power by which believers come to Christ and see with new eyes of faith, He is closer to us than we are to ourselves. Like the eyes of the body through which we see physical things, He is seldom in focus to be seen directly, because He is the One through whom all else is seen in a new light. This explains why the relationship of the Father and the Son is more prominent in the gospels, because it is through the eyes of the Holy Spirit that the Father-Son relationship is viewed.

The Holy Spirit appears in the Gospel of John as the power by which Christians are brought to faith and helped to understand their walk with God. He brings a person to new birth: John 3:6, “*That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*” And to newness of life: John 6:63, “*It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.*”

The Holy Spirit is the Counselor, or Helper, whom Jesus promised to the disciples after His ascension. The triune family of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are unified in ministering to believers. John 14:16, 26, “*And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever. . . . But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.*” It is through the Helper that Father and Son abide with the disciples.

This unified ministry of the trinity is also seen as the Spirit brings the world under conviction of sin, righteousness, and judgment. He guides believers into all truth with that which He hears from the Father and Son. John 15:26, “*But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me.*” It is a remarkable fact that each of the persons of the Trinitarian family serves the others as all defer to one another: The Son says what He hears from the Father. John 12:49-50, “*For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak. And I know that His command is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak.*” The Father witnesses to and glorifies the Son. John 8:16-18, 50, 54, “*And yet if I do judge, My judgment is true; for I am not alone, but I am with the Father who sent Me. It is also written in your law that the testimony of two men is true. I am One who bears witness of Myself, and the Father who sent Me bears witness of*

Me.” . . . “*And I do not seek My own glory; there is One who seeks and judges.*” . . . *Jesus answered, “If I honor Myself, My honor is nothing. It is My Father who honors Me, of whom you say that He is your God.”* The Father and Son honor the Holy Spirit by commissioning Him to speak in their name. John 14:26; John 15:26, “*But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.*” . . . “*But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me.*” The Holy Spirit honors the Father and Son by helping the community of believers.

Like Father and Son, the Holy Spirit is at the disposal of the other persons of the triune family, and all three are one in graciously being at the disposal of the redeemed family of believers. The Holy Spirit’s attitude and ministry are marked by generosity. His chief function is to illumine Jesus’ teaching, to glorify His person, and to work in the life of the individual believer and the church.

This quality of generosity is prominent in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, where the Holy Spirit prepares the way for the births of John the Baptist and Jesus the Son: Matthew 1:20, *But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.”* And Luke 1:15, 35, 41, *For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother’s womb. . . . The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.” . . . “And it happened, when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, that the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.”*

At the baptism of Jesus, the Spirit of God is present in the form of a dove. This completes the presence of the triune family at the inauguration of the Son’s ministry:

Matthew 3:16-17, *When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”*

Mark 1:9-11, *It came to pass in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And immediately, coming up from the water, He saw the heavens parting and the Spirit descending upon Him like a dove. Then a voice came from heaven, “You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”*

Luke 3:21-22, *When all the people were baptized, it came to pass that Jesus also was baptized; and while He prayed, the heaven was opened. And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven which said, “You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased.”*

John 1:33, *“I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’”*

Jesus is also filled with the Holy Spirit as He is led into the wilderness to be tempted. Luke 4:1, *Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness.* Jesus claims to be anointed by the Spirit of the Lord in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. Isaiah 61:1, *“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because the Lord has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound.”* And the fulfillment: Luke 4:18-19, *“The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.”*

During His ministry, Jesus refers to the Spirit of God as the power by which He is casting out demons, thereby invading the stronghold of Beelzebub and freeing those held captive. Matthew 12:28-29, *“But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you. Or how can one enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house.”* And: Luke 11:20, *“But if I cast out demons with the finger of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you.”* Accordingly, the Spirit works with the Father and Son in realizing the redeeming power of the kingdom of God. God's kingdom is not only the reign of the Son but also the reign of the Spirit, as all share in the reign of the Father.

The person and ministry of the Holy Spirit in the Gospels is confirmed by His work in the early church. The baptism with the Holy Spirit is the pouring out of the Spirit's power in missions and evangelism. Acts 1:5, 8, *“For John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now. . . . But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”* This prophecy of Jesus begins on Pentecost. Acts 2:1-18, *When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language. Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, “Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born? Parthians and

Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God.”

So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “Whatever could this mean?”

Others mocking said, “They are full of new wine.”

But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, “Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words. For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: ‘And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams. And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; and they shall prophesy.’” Many of those who hear of the finished work of God in Jesus’ death and resurrection repent of their sins. Acts 2:32-39, “This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear.”

“For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: The Lord said to my Lord, ‘Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool.’”

“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?”

Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.” In this act of repentance, they received the gift of the Holy Spirit and become witnesses of God’s grace through the Holy Spirit.

*Paul’s teaching about the Holy Spirit harmonizes with the accounts of the Spirit’s activity in the gospels and Acts. According to Paul, it is by the Holy Spirit one confesses Jesus is Lord. 1 Corinthians 12:3, *Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed, and no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit.* Through the same Spirit varieties of gifts are given to the body of Christ to ensure its richness and unity. 1 Corinthians 12:4-27, *There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another faith by**

the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.

For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. For in fact the body is not one member but many. If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body,” is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body,” is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling? But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased. And if they were all one member, where would the body be? But now indeed there are many members, yet one body. And the eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you;” nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.” No, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary. And those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor; and our unpresentable parts have greater modesty, but our presentable parts have no need. But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that part which lacks it, that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.

The Holy Spirit is the way to Jesus Christ the Son and to the Father. Romans 8:14-15, *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.”* He is the person who bears witness to us that we are children of God. **Romans 8:16-17, *The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.*** He makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. **Romans 8:26-27, *Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.***

The Holy Spirit also reveals to Christians the deep things of God. 1 Corinthians 2:10-12, *But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.*

The Holy Spirit also reveals the mystery of Christ. Ephesians 3:3-5, *How that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets.* The Holy Spirit acts with God and Christ as the pledge or guarantee by which believers are sealed for the day of salvation. 2 Corinthians 1:21-22, *Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.*

The Holy Spirit also influences how believers walk and live. Romans 8:3-6, *For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.*

Believers abound in hope with power. Romans 15:13, *Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.* Against the lust and enmity of the flesh Paul contrasts the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Galatians 5:22-23, *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.*

Since the Holy Spirit is the expressed power of the triune family, it is imperative one not grieve the Spirit, since no further appeal to the Father and the Son on the day of redemption is available. Ephesians 4:30, *And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.* Jesus made this clear in His dispute with the religious authorities, who attributed His ministry to Satan rather than the Spirit and committed the unforgivable sin. Matthew 12:22-32, *Then one was brought to Him who was demon-possessed, blind and mute; and He healed him, so that the blind and mute man both spoke and saw. And all the multitudes were amazed and said, "Could this be the Son of David?"*

Now when the Pharisees heard it they said, "This fellow does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons."

"But Jesus knew their thoughts, and said to them: "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand. If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? And if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges. But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you. Or how can one enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his

house. *He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad.*”

“Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men. Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come.”

In Paul’s letters Christian liberty stems from the work of the Holy Spirit: 2 Corinthians 3:17, *Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.* This is a process of beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, and being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord. 2 Corinthians 3:18, *And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.* The personal work of the Holy Spirit is accordingly one with that of the Father and the Son, so Paul can relate the grace, love, and communion of the triune family in a trinitarian benediction: 2 Corinthians 13:14, *The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.*

Among the other New Testament writings the Spirit’s ministry is evident in the profound teaching of Hebrews, which shows the relationship of God, Christ, and the eternal Spirit. Hebrews 9:14, *How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?* The Holy Spirit’s work in the Old Testament in preparation for the coming of Christ is explained in this and other passages. Hebrews 3:7, *Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: “Today, if you will hear His voice.”* Hebrews 9:8, *The Holy Spirit indicating this, that the way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was still standing.* Hebrews 10:15-17, *But the Holy Spirit also witnesses to us; for after He had said before, “This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them,” then He adds, “Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.”*

This leads us to consider the working of the Spirit in the Old Testament in light of His ministry in the New Testament. The Spirit is the energy of God in creation. Genesis 1:2, *The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.* God endows man with personal life by breathing into his nostrils the breath of life. Genesis 2:7, *And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.* The Spirit strives with fallen man. Genesis 6:3, *And the Lord said, “My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.”* The Spirit comes upon certain judges and warriors with charismatic power, i.e.

Joshua, Numbers 27:18, *And the Lord said to Moses: “Take Joshua the son of Nun with you, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him.”*

Othniel, Judges 3:10, *The Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he judged Israel. He went out to war, and the Lord delivered Cushan-Rishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand; and his hand prevailed over Cushan-Rishathaim.*

Gideon, Judges 6:34, *But the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon; then he blew the trumpet, and the Abiezrites gathered behind him.*

Samson, Judges 13:25, *And the Spirit of the Lord began to move upon him at Mahaneh Dan between Zorah and Eshtaol.*

However, the Spirit departs from Saul because of his disobedience. 1 Samuel 16:14, *But the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and a distressing spirit from the Lord troubled him.*

In the long span of Old Testament prophecy, the Spirit plays a prominent role:

David declared, 2 Samuel 23:2, *“The Spirit of the Lord spoke by me, and His word was on my tongue.”*

Ezekiel claimed, Ezekiel 2:2, *Then the Spirit entered me when He spoke to me, and set me on my feet; and I heard Him who spoke to me.*

The Spirit inspired holiness in the Old Testament believer. Psalms 143:10, *Teach me to do Your will, for You are my God; Your Spirit is good. Lead me in the land of uprightness.*

The Spirit also promised to give a new heart to God’s people, Ezekiel 36:27, *I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.*

This anticipates the crucial work of the Spirit in the ministry of the Messiah. One prophecy of Isaiah is a trinitarian preview of the working of the Father, the Spirit, and the Son, who is the branch of Jesse Isaiah 11:1-5, *There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots. The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord. His delight is in the fear of the Lord, and He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes, nor decide by the hearing of His ears; but with righteousness He shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins, and faithfulness the belt of His waist.* Looking forward to the ministry of Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit caused Isaiah to prophesy as the Spirit inspired him. Isaiah 11:2, *The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.*

The Holy Spirit inspired Jesus with wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge, fear of the Lord, righteousness, and faithfulness. Thus we come full cycle to the New Testament where Jesus claims the fulfillment of this prophecy in Himself. Luke 4:18-19, *“The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the*

captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.”

Isaiah summarized the redeeming work of the Father, Son, and Spirit in the salvation of the lost, as God spoke through the prophet: Isaiah 42:1-9, *“Behold! My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul delights! I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles. He will not cry out, nor raise His voice, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed He will not break, and smoking flax He will not quench; He will bring forth justice for truth. He will not fail nor be discouraged, till He has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands shall wait for His law.”*

Thus says God the Lord, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread forth the earth and that which comes from it, who gives breath to the people on it, and spirit to those who walk on it: “I, the Lord, have called You in righteousness, and will hold Your hand; I will keep You and give You as a covenant to the people, as a light to the Gentiles, to open blind eyes, to bring out prisoners from the prison, those who sit in darkness from the prison house. I am the Lord, that is My name; and My glory I will not give to another, nor My praise to carved images. Behold, the former things have come to pass, and new things I declare; before they spring forth I tell you of them.”

No clearer reflection of the intimate interworking of the triune family and the Spirit’s powerful role can be found in the Old Testament than in this prophecy. It ties God’s grace in Old and New Testaments together in remarkable harmony.

Chapter 12

Suffering

Romans 5:3-4 NIV, *“Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope.”*

Suffering has been part of the human experience since man’s fall into sin. The Psalms, one-third of which are laments, include graphic descriptions of suffering, e.g., Psalms 22. The theme of the Book of Job is the problem of suffering and why God permits the righteous to suffer.

Suffering is sometimes a test. It’s a test of our faith, our character, our values and our love for God. It’s a test that can make us bitter or better. It can make us bitter if we jump to the wrong conclusions about why God has allowed our pain. It can make us better if our eyes are opened to the wonder, power, wisdom, goodness, and love of God.

Job went into the fire a good and godly man. He came out better for his trouble. I pray you will come to a deeper appreciation not only of Job but of the God he learned to trust as never before.

The Bible makes it clear some suffering is the result of evil action or sin in the world. This type of suffering came upon man after the FALL in the Garden of Eden. Genesis. 3:16-19, *To the woman He said: “I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; in pain you shall bring forth children; your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.”*

Then to Adam He said, “Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat of it:’ Cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return.” But some suffering is not related to the past. It is forward-looking in that it serves to shape and refine God’s children. 1 Peter 1:6-7; 5:10, *In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ. . . . But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.* The Book of Hebrews declares Jesus learned obedience by the things that He suffered. Hebrews 5:8, *Though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.* Jesus was perfected through suffering. Hebrews 2:10, *For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing*

many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. Suffering has the potential of showing God's power. 2 Corinthians 12:7, And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. Those who suffer are in a position to comfort others. 2 Corinthians 1:3-6, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds through Christ. Now if we are afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effective for enduring the same sufferings which we also suffer. Or if we are comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation.

Suffering also helps believers to identify with Christ, which is more than suffering for Christ. Through persecution and tortures, people have suffered for the sake of Christ and His kingdom. Philippians 1:29-30, *For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake, having the same conflict which you saw in me and now hear is in me.* To suffer with Christ, however, is another matter. Paul speaks of the fellowship of His (Christ's) sufferings. Philippians 3:10, *That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death.* Believers share in the suffering of Christ in the sense that through suffering they identify with Christ. To be a disciple involves suffering like the Master. Christ as Lord and His believers as disciples are bonded even further through the experience of suffering.

Another type of suffering is that endured for the sake of others. The prophet Isaiah portrayed the Suffering Servant as sin-bearer when he declared: Isaiah 53:5, *But He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.* Jesus announced that His suffering was His mission. Matthew 17:12, *“But I say to you that Elijah has come already, and they did not know him but did to him whatever they wished. Likewise the Son of Man is also about to suffer at their hands.”* Looking back to the cross, Peter explained: 1 Peter 3:18, *For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit.*

How Do We Respond to Suffering?

Some of us complain: How could God do this to me? When the telephone brings us bad news, or when the doctor's quiet voice says the words we dread to hear, how do we respond?

Emotionally: Do we become saddened, or angry?

Mentally: Do we become detached, or philosophic?

Spiritually: Are we hurt, or puzzled? Do we ponder our situation in the light of what we have been taught about the goodness and fairness of God?

In all probability, we will question why this is happening to us. After all, we have been led to believe God is a God of love. We have been told again and again He treats His people right. We have heard God wants us healthy and prosperous. So why are we getting all this bad news now? Why is He hammering us with blow after blow? We may begin to ask:

- How could God do this to me?
- Why couldn't He have waited a few more years?
- The world is full of people worse than I. Why couldn't He afflict one of them?
- I have been faithful to God. Why is He treating me like this?

These are not unusual responses. In fact, Job asked similar questions. Let us look at two of the wrong answers people give for suffering. Why does God allow suffering? What kind of God lets terrible affliction strike good people while He lets bad people off the hook?

Here are some popular explanations that express various points of view:

God Must Be Down on Me. When suffering and trouble come, some people feel they must have done something to make God mad at them. A woman who gets bad news about cancer, for example, may say to herself, My failures as a mother are finally catching up with me. Others may feel they are taking it on the chin because God is angry at someone close to them. Or a teenage boy or girl may think, God gave my dad a heart attack because of something I did.

God Doesn't Care. These people react to suffering by thinking God doesn't care about them. They transfer their low view of themselves to God, feeling they are not worthy of His attention. They believe if He really is concerned about mankind, He is giving His attention to more important people. If He cared, He would answer their pleas and heal them of their disease or take away their sorrow.

God Isn't in Control. Other people believe the circumstances of life are out of God's reach. They are convinced even though He can control many things, God cannot keep the harmful effects of our world from reaching us. He may rule heaven, but He cannot rule earth. Their view of God's power is limited.

God Doesn't Stop Satan. People who hold this view conclude since Satan is the prince of the power of the air and the god of this age God is only in control of heaven. Because of that, Satan can do whatever he wants with us. Knowing we are God's children, Satan focuses his attention on us. These people sometimes say Satan doesn't pay much attention to us as long as we are not serving God. But if we begin to overcome sin aggressively, or if we start to have success in leading others to Christ, then Satan sends some affliction to us like he did to Job. He wants to discourage us and stop our spiritual growth.

God Isn't Fair. Some people honestly believe they are suffering because God is not treating them fairly. They are convinced He has shortchanged them, while giving others more than they deserve. Such people are wrapped in human comparisons. They determine who deserves what on purely human terms. Why me, they ask? Why do I always have to get the short end of the stick?

In so doing, they are accusing God of being both unjust and unfair. They are echoing the cry of the prophet Habakkuk: Habakkuk 1:13, *You are of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on wickedness. Why do You look on those who deal treacherously, and hold Your tongue when the wicked devours a person more righteous than he?*

Job could have responded to his suffering in any one of these ways. In fact, at times each of these thoughts may have crossed his mind. But in the end, Job had learned to trust God while enduring the worst kinds of suffering. This should help us in our times of trouble as well.

Chapter 13

Condemnation

Romans 5:16 NIV, *“Again, the gift of God is not like the result of the one man’s sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification.”*

Romans 8:1-2 NIV, *“Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.”*

To declare a person guilty and worthy of punishment is condemnation! Condemn and condemnation are judicial terms, the opposite of JUSTIFY and JUSTIFICATION. Matthew 12:37, *“For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”* God alone is the judge of men; in His demand for righteousness, sin leads invariably to condemnation and death, and if continued without repentance, it will lead to self-oppression and further separation from God.

The mission of Jesus was not to condemn the world but to save it by bearing, on the cross, the sins of the people. John 3:17-18, *“For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”* There is no condemnation for sinners who repent and believe in Him. Jesus not only bore the consequences of sin, but also condemned (*destroyed*) sin itself so believers are released from its power. Romans 8:1-3, *There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh.* Since they have experienced a gracious pardon, believers are directed to practice forgiveness and to avoid vindictiveness: Luke 6:37, *“Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.”*

Chapter 14

Imputation (Accusation)

Philemon 18 NIV, *“If he has done you any wrong or owes you anything, charge it to me.”*

Impute - to lay the responsibility or blame for an often false or unjustified charge upon someone else. Thusly, Imputation is charging or reckoning something to a person's account. Paul says any wrong or debt caused by the runaway slave, Onesimus, should be put on my account. Three distinct theological truths in the Bible are directly related to the concept of imputation:

1. The Imputation of Adam's Sin to His Descendants. Paul declares God imputes the guilt of Adam's sin to all other members of the human race: Romans 5:12-19, *Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned. (For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many. And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned. For the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification. For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.) Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous.* This concept, also called original sin, is touched on as well in 1st Corinthians. 1 Corinthians 15:21-22, *For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.*

2. The Imputation of the Believer's Sin to Christ. In addition to guilt imputed from Adam's sin, each individual is also charged with guilt for his personal sin. This Paul describes as imputing their trespasses to them. 2 Corinthians 5:19, *That is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.* The Lord Jesus, whose supernatural conception and birth freed Him from guilt from Adam's sin and who committed no personal sin, had

no sin counted against Him. But when He died as our substitute, God made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us. 2 Corinthians 5:21, *For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.* Therefore, Jesus bore our sins in His own body on the tree. 1 Peter 2:24, *Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed.* This is made perfectly clear in the Book of Isaiah, where the prophet says of the Lord Jesus: Isaiah 53:6, *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.*

3. The Imputation of Christ's Righteousness to the Believer:

1 Corinthians 1:30, *But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God--and righteousness and sanctification and redemption.*

2 Corinthians 5:21, *For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*

Philippians 3:9, *And be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith.*

Jesus became the Holy and Just One. Acts 3:14, *But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you.* Jesus fulfilled His perfect obedience to God's Law. Romans 5:19, *For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous.* These qualities are imputed in turn to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead. Romans 4:24, *But also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead.* Because of this the believer will appear before God faultless. Jude 24, *Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.* We can stand in God's presence because Jesus has imputed His righteousness and holiness to us through His sacrificial death on the Cross.

Chapter 15

Punishment

2 Peter 2:9 NIV, *“The Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment.”*

Punishment of sin is one of the basic truths of the Old Testament. Mosaic Law spelled out the proper punishments for each crime. The punishments generally took the form of retribution, eye for eye and other punishment in kind being the most memorable. Exodus 21:24, *Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.* Retribution such as this was only a small part of the ideas of compensation and restitution of value emphasized under the Old Testament law. Exodus 21:18-36, *“If men contend with each other, and one strikes the other with a stone or with his fist, and he does not die but is confined to his bed, if he rises again and walks about outside with his staff, then he who struck him shall be acquitted. He shall only pay for the loss of his time, and shall provide for him to be thoroughly healed.*

And if a man beats his male or female servant with a rod, so that he dies under his hand, he shall surely be punished. Notwithstanding, if he remains alive a day or two, he shall not be punished; for he is his property.

If men fight, and hurt a woman with child, so that she gives birth prematurely, yet no harm follows, he shall surely be punished accordingly as the woman’s husband imposes on him; and he shall pay as the judges determine. But if any harm follows, then you shall give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe. If a man strikes the eye of his male or female servant, and destroys it, he shall let him go free for the sake of his eye. And if he knocks out the tooth of his male or female servant, he shall let him go free for the sake of his tooth.

If an ox gores a man or a woman to death, then the ox shall surely be stoned, and its flesh shall not be eaten; but the owner of the ox shall be acquitted. But if the ox tended to thrust with its horn in times past, and it has been made known to his owner, and he has not kept it confined, so that it has killed a man or a woman, the ox shall be stoned and its owner also shall be put to death. If there is imposed on him a sum of money, then he shall pay to redeem his life, whatever is imposed on him. Whether it has gored a son or gored a daughter, according to this judgment it shall be done to him. If the ox gores a male or female servant, he shall give to their master thirty shekels of silver, and the ox shall be stoned.

And if a man opens a pit, or if a man digs a pit and does not cover it, and an ox or a donkey falls in it, the owner of the pit shall make it good; he shall give money to their owner, but the dead animal shall be his.

If one man's ox hurts another's, so that it dies, then they shall sell the live ox and divide the money from it; and the dead ox they shall also divide. Or if it was known that the ox tended to thrust in time past, and its owner has not kept it confined, he shall surely pay ox for ox, and the dead animal shall be his own." For example, if one person injured another in a fight, he was required to repay the victim for any time lost from his job because of the injury. In the case of disfigurement, the person committing the crime might also suffer the same violence as a punishment handed down by the court.

Since punishment was tied so closely to crime and sin, it was only natural that this concept should extend from the temporal world into the spiritual world. God meted out His own punishment to those who broke His moral law, notably against Sodom and Gomorrah. Genesis 19:12-29, *Then the men said to Lot, "Have you anyone else here? Son-in-law, your sons, your daughters, and whomever you have in the city—take them out of this place! For we will destroy this place, because the outcry against them has grown great before the face of the Lord, and the Lord has sent us to destroy it."*

So Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who had married his daughters, and said, "Get up, get out of this place; for the Lord will destroy this city!" But to his sons-in-law he seemed to be joking.

When the morning dawned, the angels urged Lot to hurry, saying, "Arise, take your wife and your two daughters who are here, lest you be consumed in the punishment of the city." And while he lingered, the men took hold of his hand, his wife's hand, and the hands of his two daughters, the Lord being merciful to him, and they brought him out and set him outside the city. So it came to pass, when they had brought them outside, that he said, "Escape for your life! Do not look behind you nor stay anywhere in the plain. Escape to the mountains, lest you be destroyed."

Then Lot said to them, "Please, no, my lords! Indeed now, your servant has found favor in your sight, and you have increased your mercy which you have shown me by saving my life; but I cannot escape to the mountains, lest some evil overtake me and I die. See now, this city is near enough to flee to, and it is a little one; please let me escape there (is it not a little one?) and my soul shall live."

And he said to him, "See, I have favored you concerning this thing also, in that I will not overthrow this city for which you have spoken. Hurry, escape there. For I cannot do anything until you arrive there." Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar.

The sun had risen upon the earth when Lot entered Zoar. Then the Lord rained brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah, from the Lord out of the heavens. So He overthrew those cities, all the plain, all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground. But his wife looked back behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.

And Abraham went early in the morning to the place where he had stood before the Lord. Then he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain; and he saw, and behold, the smoke of the land which went up like the smoke of a furnace.

And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when He overthrew the cities in which Lot had dwelt. Another period of punishment was the wandering of the Hebrew people in the wilderness. Numbers 14:26-35, And the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, “How long shall I bear with this evil congregation who complain against Me? I have heard the complaints which the children of Israel make against Me. Say to them, ‘As I live,’ says the Lord, ‘just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will do to you: The carcasses of you who have complained against Me shall fall in this wilderness, all of you who were numbered, according to your entire number, from twenty years old and above. Except for Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun, you shall by no means enter the land which I swore I would make you dwell in. But your little ones, whom you said would be victims, I will bring in, and they shall know the land which you have despised. But as for you, your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness. And your sons shall be shepherds in the wilderness forty years, and bear the brunt of your infidelity, until your carcasses are consumed in the wilderness. According to the number of the days in which you spied out the land, forty days, for each day you shall bear your guilt one year, namely forty years, and you shall know My rejection. I the Lord have spoken this; I will surely do so to all this evil congregation who are gathered together against Me. In this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die.’”

In the New Testament, the concern with temporal punishment became secondary to Christ’s message of redemption. An eternal spiritual punishment falls upon those who refuse to accept God’s message.

Chapter 16

Death

Romans 6:23 NIV, “For *the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*”

Death for the human being is not the end of life. The Bible teaches man is more than a physical creature, he is also a spiritual being. For man, therefore, physical death does not mean the end of existence but the end of life as we know it and the transition to another dimension in which our conscious existence continues.

The Bible speaks of death in a threefold way: physical, spiritual, and eternal. The first physical death of a human being recorded in the Bible is that of Abel, who was murdered by his brother Cain. Genesis 4:8, *Now Cain talked with Abel his brother; and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him.* However, death itself, in both the physical and spiritual sense, is first mentioned by God Himself. Genesis 2:17, “*But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.*”

In the Genesis account of the FALL into sin both physical and spiritual death come as a result of sin. Romans 5:12-21, *Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned. (For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many. And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned. For the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification. For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.) Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous. Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more, so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Various attitudes toward death are expressed in the Bible, from dread to anticipation. The ancient Hebrews regarded death as entrance into SHEOL, where they were cut off

from everything dear in life, including God and loved ones. But God revealed to the psalmist that the Redeemer God is both in heaven and in Sheol. Psalms 139:7-8, *Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend into heaven, You are there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there.* God is capable of bringing a person out of Sheol (the grave). 1 Samuel 2:6, *"The Lord kills and makes alive; He brings down to the grave and brings up."*

Because all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, all men are spiritually dead, or separated from God who is the Source of spiritual life. Romans 3:23, *For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.* Sin makes a person hate the light and despise the truth; it causes one to break God's laws and to become insensitive to holy things. Everyone who has not been redeemed by Christ is spiritually dead. Ephesians 2:1-3, *And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.*

The Bible also speaks of the second death, which is an eternal death, the everlasting separation from God in HELL. Revelation 2:11; 20:14; 21:8, *"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death." . . . Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. . . . "But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."*

The apostle Paul speaks of death as an enemy: 1 Corinthians 15:26, *The last enemy that will be destroyed is death.* In His resurrection, Jesus conquered death: physical, spiritual, and eternal. Through fear of death, men are subject to bondage. Hebrews 2:15, *And release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.* Jesus has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. 2 Timothy 1:10, *But has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.*

Chapter 17

The Dead

Ephesians 2:1 NIV, “*As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins.*”

The Bible speaks of two types of death: physical and spiritual. Those outside of Christ are alive physically, but they are spiritually dead.

God created man to live forever, both physically and spiritually. By man’s disobedience, however, death became his fate. Romans 5:12, *Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned.* The day Adam partook of the forbidden tree, he died, he did not die physically but lived on and reached the age of 930 years. Genesis 5:5, *So all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years; and he died.* However, with that act of disobedience he died spiritually and was separated from God’s fellowship. Genesis 3:24, *So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life.* When the breath leaves the body, the body is dead. When man sins, he is separated from God and he becomes dead spiritually.

All those who are in their sins, are dead in sins: yes, in trespasses and sins, which may signify all sorts of sins, habitual and actual, sins of heart and of life. Sin is the death of the soul. Wherever sin prevails there is a void of all spiritual life. Sinners are dead in state, being destitute of the principles, and powers of spiritual life; and of course, cut off from God, the fountain of life. They are dead in law, as a condemned sinner is said to be a dead man.

The Bible also speaks of eternal, or everlasting, death. Those who persist in their unbelief remain forever in spiritual death— eternal separation from God— which Scripture calls the second death, as explained in the previous chapter.

Perhaps one may find it strange that death applies to the living. However, there are certain suggestive points of similarity between natural and spiritual death:

1. The dead have all the organs of sense, but no sensibility. As the psalmist said of the idols of the heathen, so are the dead: Psalms 115:5-6, *They have mouths, but they do not speak; eyes they have, but they do not see; they have ears, but they do not hear; noses they have, but they do not smell.* So the spiritually dead have no susceptibility in regard to the things of God; they see not the beauties of holiness, they do not see God or Christ.

2. The dead have all the machinery of motion, but the machine is at rest. So the spiritual dead have all the natural faculties of life—judgment, memory, imagination, feeling conscience—but they are unable to renew themselves into spiritual life. The inability is

not natural, but moral, and therefore sinners are responsible for it. **They cannot, because they will not.** John 5:40, *“But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.”*

3. The dead are cold to the touch. The living body retains its heat very much in the same manner as a fire retains its heat, and, in a very true sense, we are all literally burning out like the fuel that is consumed in our fires. The dead are cold as the grave that covers them. So are the spiritually dead, they have no warmth of Christian love going out either to God or man. Though intellectually alive to all purely worldly interests, they are coldly indifferent, or even hostile, to the interest of the kingdom of grace.

4. The dead go onward to corruption. The process of corruption may be arrested for a time by the skill of man, but it will prevail in the end, and man returns to the dust from whence he came, as the spirit has returned to the God who gave it. So the spiritually dead are corrupt, constitutionally, in virtue of the sin of Adam, and they are still more corrupt through temptation to actual transgression. The absence of the love of God interposes no check to the progress of corruption in a human heart.

We see our dead surrounded successively by the shroud, the coffin, the hearse, the grave. So likewise the spiritually dead are surrounded by trespasses and sins. These two expressive terms indicate, not simply the cause of death, but its conditions and circumstances. The term **trespasses**, is exceedingly expressive as embodying what is involved in the original term.

First, it suggests the idea of a landmark fixed by God, which He has commanded us not to pass. Yet who can say he has not passed the landmark? Who can say he has not trespassed upon God’s sacred places?

Second, the word suggests the further idea of a barrier God has placed in our way, and told us we are not to force it or pass it. There is the barrier of his Law, which he has strengthened by terrible penalties, and upon which he has inscribed his own fearful curse. Galatians 3:10, *“For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.”* Yet who can say he has not passed this barrier, though God’s curse was inscribed upon it? There is the barrier of conscience God has built up strongly in every man and woman. Who can say he has not again and again passed this barrier, often bringing the artillery of worldly advantage or pleasure to bear against it and break it down?

The term **sin** points to the sinful movements of the soul—sins of thought and purpose, as trespasses seem to point to the various developments of a sinful nature. Sins are the fruit of a moral corruption that has its seat in the heart, and radiates thence to every department of human conduct. The principle of sin is not merely negative, for it is a positive negation of the Divine will, putting something else in its place.

The term **sins** would, more exactly than the other, include sins of omission, which are necessarily much more numerous than sins of commission. It is a solemn thought that

men and women are dead in sin by every duty they omit, by every opportunity they neglect, by every blessing they despise, as well as by every positive transgression of the Divine Law.

The radical significance of both terms implies a real hostility to God, and painful collision with the pure Law of God. This dark picture of the sinner's state suggests that:

- We should mourn for the dead, as we mourn for our dear ones who are carried forth to torment.

- We should pray for the dead, that God may grant them a reviving to life together with Christ.

- We should warn the dead should they die in their trespasses and sins, they will be buried in their trespasses and sins, forever!

Chapter 18

Obedience

Exodus 19:5 NIV, *Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine.*

1 Samuel 15:22 NIV, *So Samuel said: “Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams.”*

Obedience is carrying out the word and will of another person, especially the will of God. In both the Old and New Testaments the word obey is related to the idea of hearing. Obedience is a positive, active response to what a person hears. God summons people to active obedience to His revelation. Man’s failure to obey God results in judgment. In the Old Testament covenant between God and man, obedience was the basis for knowing God’s blessing and favor. Deuteronomy 28:1-14, *“Now it shall come to pass, if you diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God, to observe carefully all His commandments which I command you today, that the Lord your God will set you high above all nations of the earth. And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, because you obey the voice of the Lord your God: blessed shall you be in the city, and blessed shall you be in the country. Blessed shall be the fruit of your body, the produce of your ground and the increase of your herds, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flocks. Blessed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl. Blessed shall you be when you come in, and blessed shall you be when you go out.*

The Lord will cause your enemies who rise against you to be defeated before your face; they shall come out against you one way and flee before you seven ways. The Lord will command the blessing on you in your storehouses and in all to which you set your hand, and He will bless you in the land which the Lord your God is giving you.

The Lord will establish you as a holy people to Himself, just as He has sworn to you, if you keep the commandments of the Lord your God and walk in His ways. Then all peoples of the earth shall see that you are called by the name of the Lord, and they shall be afraid of you. And the Lord will grant you plenty of goods, in the fruit of your body, in the increase of your livestock, and in the produce of your ground, in the land of which the Lord swore to your fathers to give you.

The Lord will open to you His good treasure, the heavens, to give the rain to your land in its season, and to bless all the work of your hand. You shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow. And the Lord will make you the head and not the tail; you shall be above only, and not be beneath, if you heed the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you today, and are careful to observe them. So you shall not turn aside from any of the words which I command you this day, to the right or the left, to go after

other gods to serve them.” Samuel emphasized that God’s pleasure was not in sacrifice but in obedience. Even the promise of a new covenant emphasized obedience as God’s gift. Jeremiah 31:33, But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

In the New Testament, the obedience of Christ stands in contrast to the disobedience of Adam. The disobedience of Adam brought death, but the perfect obedience of Christ brought grace, righteousness, and life. Romans 5:12-21, *Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned. (For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many. And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned. For the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification. For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.) Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous. Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more, so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Chapter 19

Atonement

Leviticus 17:11 NIV, *For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life.*

Atonement is the act by which God restores a relationship of harmony and unity between Himself and human beings. The word can be broken into three parts which express this great truth in simple but profound terms: a-tone-ment. Through God's atoning grace and forgiveness, we are reinstated to a relationship of at-one-ment with God, in spite of our sin.

Human Need

Because of Adam's sin and our own personal sin, no person is worthy of a relationship with a Holy God. Ecclesiastes 7:20, *For there is not a just man on earth who does good and does not sin.* A New Testament reference is: Romans 3:23, *For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.* We are helpless to correct this situation. Proverbs 20:9, *Who can say, "I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?"* We can do nothing to hide our sins from God. Hebrews 4:13, *And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.* We all stand condemned by sin. Romans 3:19, *Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.* It is human nature (our sinfulness) and God's nature (His holy wrath against sin) that makes us enemies. Romans 5:10, *For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.*

God's Gift: Atonement

God's gracious response to the helplessness of His chosen people, the nation of Israel, was to give them a means of RECONCILIATION through Old Testament covenant Law. This came in the sacrificial system where the death, or blood of the animal was accepted by God as a substitute for the death that the sinner deserved: Ezekiel 18:20, *The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself.*

The Law required that the sacrificial victims must be free from defect, and buying them always involved some cost to the sinner. But an animal's death did not automatically make people right with God in some simple, mechanical way. The hostility between God and man because of sin is a personal matter. God for His part personally gave the means of atonement in the sacrificial system, men and women for their part personally are expected to recognize the seriousness of their sin. Leviticus 16:29-30, *"This shall be a statute forever for you: in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, whether a native of your own country or a stranger who dwells among you. For on that day the priest shall make atonement for you, to cleanse you, that you may be clean from all your sins before the Lord."* They must also identify themselves personally with the victim that dies. Leviticus 1:4, *Then he shall put his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it will be accepted on his behalf to make atonement for him.*

In the Old Testament, God Himself brought about atonement by graciously providing the appointed sacrifices. The priests represented Him in the atonement ritual, and the sinner received the benefits of being reconciled to God in forgiveness and harmony.

Although Old Testament believers were truly forgiven and received genuine atonement through animal sacrifice, the New Testament clearly states during the Old Testament period God's justice was not served. Hebrews 10:4, *For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.* Atonement was possible because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed. Romans 3:24-26, *Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.* However, God's justice was served in the death of Jesus Christ as a substitute for our sins. Hebrews 9:12, *Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.* For this reason Jesus is the Mediator of the new covenant. Hebrews 9:15, *And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.*

Our Response

The Lord Jesus came according to God's will to give His life a ransom for many or for all. 1 Timothy 2:5-6, *For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.* Though God laid on Jesus the iniquity of us all He has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God. Ephesians 5:2, *And walk in love, as Christ also has*

loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma. Jesus did this so that those who believe in Him might receive atonement and be saved from (God's) wrath. Romans 5:9, *Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.*

No believer, who truly understands the awesome holiness of God's wrath and the terrible hopelessness that comes from personal sin, can fail to be overwhelmed by the deep love Jesus has for each of us. God's gracious gift of eternal atonement through the cross of Christ is available to everyone. Through the blood of Jesus, God will accept us faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. Jude 24, *Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.*

Chapter 20

Salvation

Matthew 1:21, “*And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.*”

John 12:47, *And if anyone hears My words and does not believe, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world.*

Romans 5:9, *Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.*

The spiritual meaning of salvation is the redemption and deliverance from the power of sin. In the Old Testament, the word salvation sometimes referred to:

Deliverance from danger, Jeremiah 15:20, “*And I will make you to this people a fortified bronze wall; and they will fight against you, but they shall not prevail against you; for I am with you to save you and deliver you,*” says the Lord.

Deliverance of the weak from an oppressor, Psalms 35:9-10, *And my soul shall be joyful in the Lord; it shall rejoice in His salvation. All my bones shall say, “Lord, who is like You, delivering the poor from him who is too strong for him, yes, the poor and the needy from him who plunders him?”*

Healing of sickness, Isaiah 38:20, “*The Lord was ready to save me; therefore we will sing my songs with stringed instruments all the days of our life, in the house of the Lord.*”

Deliverance from blood guilt and its consequences, Psalms 51:14, *Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God, the God of my salvation, and my tongue shall sing aloud of Your righteousness.*

National deliverance from military threat, Exodus 14:13, *And Moses said to the people, “Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will accomplish for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall see again no more forever.”*

Release from captivity, Psalms 14:7, *Oh, that the salvation of Israel would come out of Zion! When the Lord brings back the captivity of His people, let Jacob rejoice and Israel be glad.*

But salvation finds its deepest meaning in the spiritual realm of life. Man’s universal need for salvation is one of the clearest teachings of the Bible.

The need for salvation goes back to man’s removal from the Garden of Eden. After the Fall, man’s life was marked by strife and difficulty. Increasingly, corruption and violence dominated his world. Genesis 6:11-13, *The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. So God looked upon the earth, and indeed it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth. And God said to Noah, “The*

end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth. When God destroyed the world with the flood, He also performed the first act of salvation by saving Noah and his family. These eight people became the basis of another chance for mankind. The salvation of Noah and his family was viewed by the apostle Peter as a pattern of full salvation that we receive in Christ. 1 Peter 3:18-22, *For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit, by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison, who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water. There is also an antitype which now saves us--baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him.*

The central Old Testament experience of salvation is the Exodus. Exodus 12:40-14:31 (Text not inserted). Much of Israel's worship of God was a renewal of this mighty experience that brought them from tyranny in Egypt to freedom in the Promised Land. Exodus 13:3-16, *And Moses said to the people: "Remember this day in which you went out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand the Lord brought you out of this place. No leavened bread shall be eaten. On this day you are going out, in the month Abib. And it shall be, when the Lord brings you into the land of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, which He swore to your fathers to give you, a land flowing with milk and honey, that you shall keep this service in this month. Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there shall be a feast to the Lord. Unleavened bread shall be eaten seven days. And no leavened bread shall be seen among you, nor shall leaven be seen among you in all your quarters. And you shall tell your son in that day, saying, 'This is done because of what the Lord did for me when I came up from Egypt.' It shall be as a sign to you on your hand and as a memorial between your eyes, that the Lord's law may be in your mouth; for with a strong hand the Lord has brought you out of Egypt. You shall therefore keep this ordinance in its season from year to year.*

"And it shall be, when the Lord brings you into the land of the Canaanites, as He swore to you and your fathers, and gives it to you, that you shall set apart to the Lord all that open the womb, that is, every firstborn that comes from an animal which you have; the males shall be the Lord's. But every firstborn of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb; and if you will not redeem it, then you shall break its neck. And all the firstborn of man among your sons you shall redeem. So it shall be, when your son asks you in time to come, saying, 'What is this?' that you shall say to him, 'By strength of hand the Lord brought us out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. And it came to pass, when Pharaoh was stubborn about letting us go, that the Lord killed all the firstborn in the land of

Egypt, both the firstborn of man and the firstborn of beast. Therefore I sacrifice to the Lord all males that open the womb, but all the firstborn of my sons I redeem.' It shall be as a sign on your hand and as frontlets between your eyes, for by strength of hand the Lord brought us out of Egypt."

The mighty saving power of God was demonstrated dramatically as the Israelites formed a holy nation of priestly servants of the Lord. Exodus 19:4-6, *"You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself. Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel."* The Exodus became a pattern of salvation by which God's future deeds of redemption could be understood.

The Exodus symbolized all Israel's salvation as a nation, however, this salvation as a nation did not last. The book of Judges identifies several periods that Israel was again in bondage. The greatest returns to bondage occurred after the split of the nation into two kingdoms: Israel, the northern kingdom, and Judah, the southern kingdom. God divorced Israel for their wickedness and cast them out of the Promised Land at the hands of the Assyrians. Their return to the Promised Land will not occur until Jesus' return. To this day Israel remains in an outcast condition away from the Promised Land and not knowing who they are as a people.

On the other hand, the captivity of Judah in Babylon was a disastrous return to bondage for them also. The people responded to this plight with expectations of a new and better Exodus in which God would forgive their sins and restore their hearts to faithfulness. Jeremiah 31:31-34, *"Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah—not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the Lord. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."*

This hope for a new Exodus merged with expectation of a full realization of the rule of God. Ezekiel 36:22-38, *Therefore say to the house of Israel, "Thus says the Lord God: I do not do this for your sake, O house of Israel, but for My holy name's sake, which you have profaned among the nations wherever you went. And I will sanctify My great name, which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst; and the nations shall know that I am the Lord," says the Lord God, "when I am hallowed in you before their eyes. For I will take you from among the nations, gather you*

out of all countries, and bring you into your own land. Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them. Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God. I will deliver you from all your uncleannesses. I will call for the grain and multiply it, and bring no famine upon you. And I will multiply the fruit of your trees and the increase of your fields, so that you need never again bear the reproach of famine among the nations. Then you will remember your evil ways and your deeds that were not good; and you will loathe yourselves in your own sight, for your iniquities and your abominations. Not for your sake do I do this,” says the Lord God, “let it be known to you. Be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel!”

Thus says the Lord God: “On the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities, I will also enable you to dwell in the cities, and the ruins shall be rebuilt. The desolate land shall be tilled instead of lying desolate in the sight of all who pass by. So they will say, ‘This land that was desolate has become like the garden of Eden; and the wasted, desolate, and ruined cities are now fortified and inhabited.’ Then the nations which are left all around you shall know that I, the Lord, have rebuilt the ruined places and planted what was desolate. I, the Lord, have spoken it, and I will do it.”

Thus says the Lord God: “I will also let the house of Israel inquire of Me to do this for them: I will increase their men like a flock. Like a flock offered as holy sacrifices, like the flock at Jerusalem on its feast days, so shall the ruined cities be filled with flocks of men. Then they shall know that I am the Lord.” We must quickly clear up one thing. Jeremiah was a prophet to Judah and had little to say about Israel. Ezekiel was a Prophet to Israel and had little to say about Judah. Both the house of Israel and the house of Judah make up God’s people. Since God was Lord and had shown Himself to be righteous and faithful, He must one day overpower His enemies and perfect the life of His people.

This hope of restoration is expressed through the concept of the day of the Lord as described by the Old Testament prophets. Joel 2:1-11, *Blow the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in My holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble; for the day of the Lord is coming, for it is at hand: a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, like the morning clouds spread over the mountains. A people come, great and strong, the like of whom has never been; nor will there ever be any such after them, even for many successive generations. A fire devours before them, and behind them a flame burns; the land is like the Garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness; surely nothing shall escape them. Their appearance is like the appearance of horses; and like swift steeds, so they run. With a noise like chariots over mountaintops they leap, like the noise of a flaming fire that devours the stubble, like a strong people set in battle array. Before them the people writhe in pain; all faces are*

drained of color. They run like mighty men, they climb the wall like men of war; every one marches in formation, and they do not break ranks. They do not push one another; every one marches in his own column. Though they lunge between the weapons, they are not cut down. They run to and fro in the city, they run on the wall; they climb into the houses, they enter at the windows like a thief. The earth quakes before them, the heavens tremble; the sun and moon grow dark, and the stars diminish their brightness. The Lord gives voice before His army, for His camp is very great; for strong is the One who executes His word. For the day of the Lord is great and very terrible; who can endure it? Amos 9:11-15, "On that day I will raise up the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down, and repair its damages; I will raise up its ruins, and rebuild it as in the days of old; that they may possess the remnant of Edom, and all the Gentiles who are called by My name," says the Lord who does this thing. "Behold, the days are coming," says the Lord, "when the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him who sows seed; the mountains shall drip with sweet wine, and all the hills shall flow with it. I will bring back the captives of My people Israel; they shall build the waste cities and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and drink wine from them; they shall also make gardens and eat fruit from them. I will plant them in their land, and no longer shall they be pulled up from the land I have given them," says the Lord your God.

But this hope also focused on the role of the Anointed King and the coming of the Messiah. Psalm 2:1-12, *Why do the nations rage, and the people plot a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against His Anointed, saying, "Let us break Their bonds in pieces and cast away Their cords from us." He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall hold them in derision. Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, and distress them in His deep displeasure: "Yet I have set My King On My holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the Lord has said to Me, 'You are My Son, today I have begotten You. Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations for Your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for Your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel.'"*

Now therefore, be wise, O kings; be instructed, you judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish in the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him.

Even Judah's return from the captivity in Babylon failed to fulfill all their hopes. Haggai 2:3, *Who is left among you who saw this temple in its former glory? And how do you see it now? In comparison with it, is this not in your eyes as nothing? So a new understanding arose: the full realization of God's purpose of salvation would involve the coming of a completely new age. Isaiah 65:17- 25, "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered or come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem as a rejoicing, and*

her people a joy. I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in My people; the voice of weeping shall no longer be heard in her, nor the voice of crying.”

“No more shall an infant from there live but a few days, nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days; for the child shall die one hundred years old, but the sinner being one hundred years old shall be accursed. They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for as the days of a tree, so shall be the days of My people, and My elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labor in vain, nor bring forth children for trouble; for they shall be the descendants of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them.”

“It shall come to pass that before they call, I will answer; and while they are still speaking, I will hear. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and dust shall be the serpent’s food. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain,” says the Lord. This doctrine of salvation reached its fulfillment in the death of Christ on our behalf. Jesus’ mission was to save the world from sin and the wrath of God. Romans 5:9, *Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.* During His earthly ministry, salvation was brought by His presence and the power of faith. Luke 19:9-10, *And Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham; for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”* Now, our salvation is based on His death and resurrection. Mark 10:29-31, *So Jesus answered and said, “Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel’s, who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time—houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions—and in the age to come, eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last first.”*

The salvation coming through Christ may be described in three tenses: past, present, and future. When a person believes in Christ, he is saved. Acts 16:31, *So they said, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.”* But we are also in the process of being saved from the power of sin. Romans 8:13, *For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.* Finally, we shall be saved from the very presence of sin. Romans 13:11, *And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.* God releases into our lives today the power of Christ’s resurrection. Romans 6:4, *Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.* God allows us a foretaste of our future life as His children. 2 Corinthians 1:22, *Who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.* Our experience of salvation will be complete when Christ returns. Hebrews 9:27-28, *And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment,*

so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation. Upon that day, when Christ returns, the kingdom of God will be fully revealed. Matthew 13:41-43, *“The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!”*

Have you accepted Jesus as your Lord and Savior? If not do you understand the wrath to come? Do you know how to break this chain of sin that you wear? Jesus is the answer and the only way to get to His Father’s house! It is a simple matter to ask Jesus to forgive you and to save you from the wrath to come. The answer is given in Romans.

Romans 10:8-13, *But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith which we preach): that **if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.** For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture says, “Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.” For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. For “whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”*

Appendix A

Finding Help In Special Circumstances

Being a friend

Proverbs 17:17; Luke 10:25-37
John 15:11-17; Romans 16:1,2

Caring for the aged & widowed

Genesis 47:1-12; Ruth 1;
Proverbs 23:22; 1 Timothy 5:3-8

Celebrating a graduation

Psalm 119:105,106; Proverbs 9:
10-12; Galatians 5:16-26;
Philippians 4:4-9

Celebrate wedding anniversary

Psalm 100:1; 1 Corinthians 13

Controlling your tongue

Psalm 12; 19:14; Proverbs 11:13
Proverbs 26:20; James 3:1-12

Encountering a cult

Matthew 7:15-20; 2 Peter 2;
1 John 4:1-6; Jude

Entering college

Proverbs 2:1-8; 3:1-18; 4:1-27;
23:12; Romans 8:1-17;

Experience death of love one

Job 19:25-27; John 11:25-27;
14:1-7; Romans 8:31-39; 14:7-9
1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

Being a leader

Isaiah 11:1-9; 32:1-8;
1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9
2 Timothy 2:14-26

Celebrating child birth/adoption

Psalm 100; Proverbs 22:6;
Luke 18:15-17; John 16:16-22

Celebrating a marriage

Genesis 2:18-24; Song of Songs 8:6-7
Ephesians 5:21-33; Colossians 2:6,7

Controlling your temper

Proverbs 14:17,29; 15:18; 19:11; 29:22
Ecclesiastes 7:9; Galatians 5:16-26

Discovering God's will

Psalm 15; Micah 6:6-8; Matthew 5:14-16
Luke 9:21-27; Romans 13:8-14;
2 Peter 1:3-9; 1 John 4:7-21

Encountering peer pressure

Proverbs 1:7-19; Romans 12:1-2;
Galatians 6:1-5; Ephesians 5:1-20

Entering military service

2 Samuel 22:2-51; Psalm 91;
Ephesians 6:10-20; 2 Timothy 2:1-13

Experiencing illness

Psalm 23; Mark 1:29-34; 6:53-56;
James 5:14-16

Suffering and persecution

Psalm 109; 119:153-160;
Matthew 5:3-12; John 15:18; 16:4;
Romans 8:18-30; 2 Corinthians
4:1-15; Hebrews 12:1-11;
1 Peter 4:12-19

Facing a divorce

Psalm 25; Matthew 19:1-9;
Philippians 3:1-11

Facing imprisonment

Lamentations 3:34-36;
Matthew 25:31-46; Luke 4:16-21

Facing a natural disaster

Genesis 8:1-9,17; Job 36:22-37;
Job 13; Psalms 29, 124;
Psalm 36:5-9; Jeremiah 31:35-37;
Romans 8:31-39; 1 Peter 1:3-12

Losing your job

Jeremiah 29:10-14; Luke 16:1-13;
Philippians 4:10-13

Managing your time

Proverbs 12:11; 28:19; Mark
37; Luke 21:34-36;
1 Timothy 4:11-16; Titus 3:8-14

Overcoming addiction

Psalm 40:1-5, 11-17; 116:1-7
Proverbs 23:29-35; Ephesians 4:
22-24; 2 Corinthians 5:16-21

Overcoming prejudice

Matthew 7:1-5; Acts 10:34-36
Galatians 3:26-29; Ephesians 2:
11-22; Colossians 3:5-11;
James 2:1-13

Facing a difficult decision

1 Kings 3; Esther 4-7; Psalm 139;
Daniel 2:14-23; Colossians 3:12-17

Facing homelessness

Psalm 90:1-2; Isaiah 65:17-25;
Lamentations 3:19-24; Luke 9:57-62;
Revelations 21:1-4

Facing life alone

1 Corinthians 7:25-38; 1 Corinthians
12:1-31

Facing a trial or lawsuit

Psalm 26; Isaiah 50:4-11;
Luke 18:1-8

Losing your property or possessions

Job 1:13-22; 42: 7-17; Isaiah 30:19-26;
41:17-20; Romans 8:18-39

Moving into a new home

Psalm 127:1-2; Proverbs 24:3-4; John 13:32-
14:1-7; Ephesians 3:14-21; Revelation
3:20-21

Overcoming a grudge

Leviticus 19:17-18; Matthew 5:23-26
Luke 6:27-36; Ephesians 4:25-32

Overcoming pride

Psalm 131; Mark 9:33-37; Luke 14:7-11
18:9-14; 22:24-27; Romans 12:14-16;
1 Corinthians 1:18-31; 2 Corinthians 12:
1-10

Overcoming procrastination

Matthew 22:1-14; 25:1-13
2 Corinthians 6:1-2

Respecting civil authorities

Mark 12:13-17; Romans 13:1-7
Titus 3:1-2; 1 Peter 2:13-17

Retiring from your job

Numbers 6:24-26; Psalm 145;
Matthew 25:31-46; Romans 12:1-2;
Philippians 3: 12-21;
2 Peter 1:2

Seeking God's help

Psalms 5; 57; 86; 121; 130;
Psalm 119:169-176; Matthew 7:
7-12

Seeking salvation

John 3:1-21; Romans 1:16-17
Romans 3:21-31; 5:1-11; 10:5-13
Ephesians 1:3-14; 2:1-10

Seeking truth

Psalm 119:153-160;
John 14:6-14; 16:4b-15;
1 Timothy 2:1-7
John 8:31-47

Start a new job

Proverbs 11:3; 22:29; Romans
12:3-11; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-18
2 Thessalonians 3:6-13;
1 Peter 4:7-11

Raising children

Proverbs 22:6; Ephesians 6:4
Colossians 3:21

Respecting parents

Exodus 20:12; Proverbs 23:22
Ephesians 6:1-3; Colossians 3:20

Seeking forgiveness

Psalm 32:1-5; 51; Proverbs 28:13;
Joel 2:12-17; Matthew 6:14-15; Luke 15;
Philemon; Hebrews 4:14-16;
1 John 1:5-10

Seeking justice

Psalms 10; 17; 75; 94; Isaiah 42:
1-7; 61:1-9; Amos 5:21-24;
Habakkuk 1:1-2:4

Seeking strength

Psalms 46; 138; Isaiah 40:27-31
Isaiah 51:12-16; Ephesians 6:10-20
2 Thessalonians 2:16-17

Sharing your gifts

Exodus 35:20-29; Malachi 3:6-12
Luke 21:1-4; Acts 2:43-47; 4:32-37
Romans 12:9-13; 1 Corinthians 16:1-4
2 Corinthians 8:1-15; 9:6-15

Understanding your relationship with God

Deuteronomy 5:1-22; Psalm 139;
John 15:1-17; Romans 5:1-11; 8:1-17

**Understanding your relationship
with others**

Deuteronomy 5:16-21; Proverbs
3:27-35; Matthew 18:15-17, 21-35;
Romans 14:13-23; 15:1-6; Galatians
6:1-10; Colossians 3:12-17;
1 John 4:7-12

Worrying about growing old

Psalm 37:23-29; Isaiah 46:3-4

Worrying about the future

Isaiah 35; 60; Jeremiah 29:10-14
1 Peter 1:3-5; Revelations 21:1-8

Worry about money

Proverbs 11:7; Ecclesiastes 5:10-20
Matthew 6:24-34; Luke 12:13-21;
1 Timothy 6:6-10

Appendix B

What The Bible Says About God's Forgiveness

Every person is separated from God because of sin.

Isaiah 59:1-15
Romans 3:9-20
Romans 5:12-21
Ecclesiastes 7:20
Romans 7:14-25

God has always sought to form a close relationship with people.

Exodus 19:3b-8
Jeremiah 31:31-34
Isaiah 54:1-10
1 Peter 1:1-10
1 John 3:1-10

God has reached out to people in a personal way by sending Jesus Christ.

Colossians 1:15-23
Romans 5:1-11
1 Peter 2:10-25
John 3:1-21
2 Timothy 1:3-10
Ephesians 2:1-10

God's forgiveness through Jesus Christ is available to every person.

Psalm 51:1-17
1 John 1:5-10
Romans 10:5-13
Psalm 32:1-11
Romans 8:31-39
Romans 3:21-26

New life in Christ calls a person to live in a Christ-like way.

Romans 6:1-14

Matthew 20:20-28

Ephesians 4:17-32

Galatians 5:16-26

1 John 4:7-21

Romans 12:1-21

Appendix C

Experiencing Troublesome Feelings

Afraid?

Psalms 27; 91; Isaiah 41:5-13;
Mark 4:35-41; Hebrews 13:5,6;
1 John 4:13-18

Angry?

Proverbs 15:1; Matthew 5:21-24;
Romans 12:17-21; James 1:19-21
Ephesians 4:26-32

Depressed?

Psalms 16; 43; 130; John 3:14-17
Isaiah 61:1-4; Jeremiah 15:10-20
Lamentations 3:55-57;
Ephesians 3:14-21

Discouraged?

Psalms 34; Isaiah 12:1-6;
Romans 15:13; Hebrews 6:9-12;
2 Corinthians 4:16-18;
Philippians 4:10-13;
Colossians 1:9-14

Frustrated?

Job 21:1-16; 24:1-17; 36:1-26;
Matthew 7:13,14

Insecure? Lacking confidence?

Deuteronomy 31:1-8;
Psalm 73:21-26; 108;
Philippians 4:10-20; 1 John 3:19-24

Lonely?

Psalms 22; 42; John 14:15-31a

Afraid of death?

Psalms 23; 63:1-8; John 6:35-40;
Romans 8:18-39; 1 Corinthians 15:35-57;
2 Corinthians 5:1-10; 2 Timothy 1:8-10

Anxious? Worried?

Psalms 25; Matthew 6:24-34; 10:26-31
1 Peter 1:3-5; 5:7

Disappointed? Let down?

Psalms 55; 62:1-8; Jeremiah 20:7-18

Doubting your faith in God?

Psalms 8; 146; Proverbs 30:5;
Matthew 7:7-12; Luke 17:5,6;
John 20:24-31; 1 John 5:13-15;
Hebrews 11; Romans 4:13-25

Impatient?

Psalms 13; 37:1-7; 40:1-5; James 5:7-11
Ecclesiastes 3:1-15;
Lamentations 3:25-33; Hebrews 6:13-20

Jealous?

Psalms 49; Proverbs 23:17; James 3:13-18

Overwhelmed? Experiencing stress?

Isaiah 55:1-9; Matthew 11:25-30;
John 4:1-30; 2 Corinthians 6:3-10;
Revelations 22:17

Rejected?

Psalm 38; Isaiah 52:13-53:12;
Luke 4:16-30; John 15:18-16:4;
Ephesians 1:13-14;
1 Peter 2:1-10

Tempted by sex?

2 Samuel 11:1-12:25;
1 Corinthians 6:12-20;
Galatians 5:16-26

Feeling useless? Inferior?

Isaiah 6:1-8; Jeremiah 1:4-10;
Galatians 1:11-24;
Ephesians 4:1-16; 1 Peter 2:4-10

Tempted?

Psalm 19:12-14; 141; Luke 4:1-13;
Hebrews 2:11-18; Hebrews 4:14-16;
James 1:12-18

Tired? Weary?

Psalms 3:5-6; 4:4-8; Isaiah 35:1-10;
Matthew 11:25-30; 2 Thessalonians 3:16;
Hebrews 4:1-11

Vengeful?

Matthew 5:38-42; Romans 12:17-21



VQP C



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