

Your Life In Christ

Volume I **The Way Of Enoch**

by
Thomas M. Mitchell

Your Life In Christ – The Way of Enoch Volume I
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Walk With God Ministries adopted these Chinese characters that are part of a course created by Pastor Archie Parish as a symbol of the message that is at the heart of our vision. Over the years these characters have been used by many believers to introduce the Gospel.

2500 years before the birth of Christ and 2100 years before the first recorded crucifixion, the Chinese language gave us the secret of how to live forever... *the secret to eternal life.*

Cross The first character depicted is a cross.



Man Next is a man placed on a cross... a great man dying.



Two Men Two men are crucified along side of this great man. The full character depicts Jesus dying on the cross with the two thieves crucified alongside Him. One thief rejected Him (Luke 23:39) and the other one believed Him (Luke 23:40-42). This is the character Lai, which means *Come*.

Mouth



The second character begins with a man's word coming out of his mouth.

Standing



This character represents a man standing by his word. Combined this is the character Xin, which means *Believe*.

Lai Xin



When these two characters are taken together they represent *Come and Believe*. The circle surrounding them represents eternity.

2500 years before the birth of Jesus the Chinese language clearly stated the Gospel message and depicted the only road to eternal life... Jesus. Come to Jesus and Believe that He died for your sins, that you might have eternal life. Here we are some 4,500 years later and His Word is still true:

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life.

The opportunity is before you and all that you need to do is visit <http://www.walkwithgod.org/the-first-step/> and learn *How to Take the First Step*.

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INTRODUCTION

All of us have a God-shaped vacuum, which only He can fill.

St. Augustine

Most of the people in the world deny this in their desire to control their own lives... it's called pride. They continually look for a way to do things in their own way, time and power. Like Paul said in his letter to the Romans (*Rom 1:25*) *rather than worshipping the Creator, they worship the creation*. In the end it only creates a greater hunger in the heart to fill the spiritual emptiness. *Psalm 42* depicts a soul that is thirsty for God. Its opening verse has always touched a deep part of me:

Ps 42:1-3 As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for you, O God. 2. My soul thirsts for God, for the living god. When shall I come and appear before God? 3. My tears have been my food day and night, while they continually say to me, where is your God?

Psalm 61 speaks to that thirst with a cry from the heart:

Ps 61:12 Hear my cry, O God; attend to my prayer. From the end of the earth I will cry to you, when my heart is overwhelmed; lead me to the rock that is higher than I.

This series was developed to help in finding that Water Brook, that Rock. The only way we will ever walk through this life with a heart set in peace and abounding in joy is to stand on The Rock (Jesus) and drink from His Living Water. But to stand on The Rock, sure of its foundation, requires a great deal of trust. The establishment of that trust is what this series is all about.

Jesus has but one desire for our relationship with Him, to trust and love Him like He trusts and loves us. We need to know Him in order to develop that relationship, which requires an investment on our part, TIME. If it's a valuable possession then it's worth working for. An abiding relationship with Jesus is the most valuable possession we can ever have. It pales everything this world attempts to compare to it and promises a hope that will be there long after this world is gone.

To know Jesus in this way entails a wonderful journey that will take you through every human emotion and stretch your character until you think you can't stretch anymore. In between the times of stretching, however, are wonderful interludes filled with His presence and love in ways you never imagined.

The price is one that is dear to each of us and one we are not easily convinced to pay. But what of the price He paid for us, the one He did not have to pay? He asks each of us to give ourselves up and release all that we are to Him. He asks us to allow Him to rebuild us from the ground up according to the blueprints (our individual ones) the Father drew before creation. Our Price—trusting Him so far that we abandon all of our fears to Him, release all of our cares to Him, relinquish all of our plans and preconceived ideas regarding our lives to Him, and wait in patient obedience for the sound of His voice.

The journey for each of us is totally different as we are uniquely and wonderfully made. There are, however, many

common truths in His Word that will help us along the way by challenging our minds and hearts. Over the years my Bible has filled with notes from many sources and I wish to thank those whose teachings are reflected here. You will find many of their thoughts woven into the thoughts presented, but most of all I want to thank the Holy Spirit for being there with me as I walk and grow every day. His teachings, like our Lord's mercies, are fresh every morning.

This journey will shake the very foundations of any belief systems you may have established on your own because there will always be a tearing down of those incorrect beliefs before the rebuilding begins. I have lived through this process many times and have come to realize that there is always a part of my foundation that is in need of repair. Just when we think it's solid and we start to build on it the added pressure causes a little crack somewhere. When those times come, stop and ask God what He is trying to say to you. Be patient, wait for His answer and act in obedience to His Word. If you press on without correcting that little crack it is only going to get bigger and weaken your foundation.

God did not design us to take on more than He intended and the construction of our foundation, walls, and roof must take place on His schedule. I pray these teachings will challenge you and cause you to pause and reflect on your relationship with Him. Remember, your walk with Jesus continues in both the good times and the bad times. He is always there waiting on you, and you only need to reach out to His open arms.

This series was developed with but one goal in mind. As the bride of Christ (true believers in Jesus) we need to move out of the Holy Place, the place of salvation. We cannot remain at the foot of the Cross. That is where we came as we left the Outer Court of the

lost, where we stepped into the salvation Jesus purchased for us. But we must move on because He has so much more for us if we will follow the Holy Spirit and let Him lead us into the Holiest Place, the Holy of Holies. This is where we will find the Rest of Christ, the abundant and victorious Spirit-filled life.

The days ahead for the world are going to get harder and harder, but Jesus has provided provision and protection from the storm for His bride if she will submit to Him and abide with Him in the Holiest Place. This is her time of sanctification, the betrothal period of the Jewish bride. This is her time to get to know, trust, love her bridegroom, and prepare herself for His coming. Like her, we need to be ready for His soon coming return, ready without blemish, spot, or wrinkle.

Let us, as His precious bride, spend our days working on our wedding dress, our outward righteousness. He has already paid for and given us our inward righteousness and that is secure, our hope for the future. But we have the responsibility to work on our outward righteousness, becoming all that He created us to be. We are responsible for the calling and gifts He has given us. These are the “talents” that we will be held accountable for. On that day at His Judgment Seat we will be judged and rewarded based upon what we did with what He gave us. Therefore let us all labor in His strength, power, grace, and mercy to become all that we were created to be. He knows exactly who we are, exactly where we are, and exactly what we need. I promise you, the closer you get the closer you will want to be.

In His Service

Pastor Thomas M. Mitchell

Notes:

I have used bold font in certain verses to highlight the key points being referenced in the discussion. All scripture is from the King James Version.

You will also note that I have capitalized the word Cross. My intent is not to honor the Cross in some way, but to reinforce the fact that it was on the Cross that Jesus paid the ultimate price for each of us. The Cross represents the moment in time when God turned His back on Jesus because of my sin.

CHAPTER 1

THE WAY OF ENOCH

God's Word has been handed down to us by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, but the interpretation and teaching of the Word by man has often been another story. Sometimes that interpretation is by the Holy Spirit and sometimes by man's spirit. Therefore we are to be mindful that what may seem to be a valid revelation of God's Word needs to always be tested. The Lord admonishes us to test what we hear by the Spirit before we receive it, and the Holy Spirit can always be trusted to lead us down the path of truth if we will listen to His voice.

*1 John 4:1 Beloved, **believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God:** because many false prophets are gone out into the world*

Within these pages I have tried to be faithful to what the Holy Spirit has shown me over the years. It is my heart's desire that the lessons I have learned—many painfully—will be of value to you in your walk with the Lord. I have tried to make clear those areas in which a point was made based upon my personal thoughts or life's experience. Let me challenge you to test everything you read in this series with the Word of God and by the Holy Spirit. With that

in mind let's look at a man whose walk through life was indeed pleasing to God.

When we consider what it means to Walk With God there are as many concepts as minds to ponder the subject. In an effort to provide some focus I have taken our example from at least one man who walked with God. While not very much is known about him we can at least make some very strong inferences about his life and his lifestyle. If you will allow me some liberty in drawing my conclusions it will help to set the tone for our studies to come—*The Way of Enoch*.

The Enoch we are concerned with was the son of Jared and the father of Methuselah. He fathered Methuselah when he was 65 years old and then lived another 300 years before vanishing off the face of the earth without a trace. When we consider that Enoch was just the 7th generation of humans on this earth, counting Adam, we get the idea that he was a long way down the line in time from Adam, but that isn't really true in light of *Genesis 5*. Without getting too deep into the subject we need to look at just where he fits into the lineage of man:

Adam	0 – 930
Seth	130 – 1042
Enos	235 – 1147
Cainan	325 – 1235
Mahalaleel	395 – 1290
Jared	460 – 1417
Enoch	640 – 1005

When Enoch was born his great-great-great-great grandfather, Adam, was 640 years old—about 70 percent through his life. And while Enoch was growing up, Adam lived until Enoch was 290 years old. If you take this one step further you can see that Enoch

left this earth just 75 years after Adam. At that point in time, all of the others were still alive: Seth, Enos, Cainan, Mahalaleel, and Jared. Now with these facts from the Bible let's examine a couple of possibilities.

Enoch grew up knowing the first man God created. Can you imagine the discussions they must have had? Enoch was able to talk with the man who walked in the cool of the evening with God. I can just hear Adam telling him how it used to be before the fall and how everything had changed thereafter. It must have really touched Enoch's heart and kindled a desire within him to do what would seem impossible, to know the God of Adam in a personal way.

He must have spent hours thinking of what might have been if there had been no sin in the garden. I am sure he wondered what God meant when He said: *and I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel (Gen 3:15)*. How he must have hungered to have what Adam had in the Garden of Eden; how he must have sought after God. How do we know he sought after God? Look at what the Bible has to say.

*Gen 5:22-23 And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah **three hundred years**, and begat sons and daughters: 23. and all the days of Enoch were **three hundred sixty and five years**:*

In the entire list of his ancestors, Enoch is the only one who is described as walking with God. Not only did he walk with God, he walked with Him for 300 years. What a relationship! I'm sure the others (Adam through Jared) must have thought he was nuts... *don't you know that you can't do that?* They were probably quick

to remind him that that kind of relationship ended in the Garden and it was all different now. Funny how that works isn't it, those who miss the boat always seem to find fault with those who don't. Here is Enoch walking down the path and they cry out, *hey Enoch, what are you doing?* He just smiles and replies *oh, just walking with God.* We can be sure there was a great deal of head shaking going on. *That's not the way it's done! Doesn't the boy get it? God's not here anymore He's off up there somewhere. We're just supposed to make sacrifices to Him so He will provide for us. If He does come down here it's in the Garden and we can't go in there!* But the Word of God seems to be pretty clear and indicates to us that Enoch did "get it." Let's look a little deeper.

I am very confident that God must have spoken to Enoch many times during those 300 years. He had to have gotten direction from the Lord to do what he did. Look at what Jude has to say regarding Enoch:

Jude 14-16 And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him. These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage.

Reread these 2 verses in the Living Translation:

*Enoch, who lived seven generations after Adam, knew about these men **and said this about them:** "See, the Lord is coming with millions of his holy ones. He will bring the people of the*

world before him in judgment, to receive just punishment and to prove the terrible things they have done in rebellion against God, revealing all they have said against him.” These men are constant gripers, never satisfied, doing whatever evil they feel like; they are loud-mouthed “show-offs,” and when they show respect for others, it is only to get something from them in return.

I call your attention to the fact that Jude made this as a “quote” from Enoch. Most scholars believe that it comes from the *Apocryphal Book of Enoch* and the following is a direct translation of that passage: *Behold he comes with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon them, and to destroy the wicked, and to strive (at law) with all the carnal for everything which the sinful and ungodly have done and committed against him.*

Some suggest that this book was not available to Jude and that God revealed it to him. Whatever the choice, I believe it validates who Enoch was and what he was doing. He was preaching against those who opposed God and worshipped idols. Is it possible that he was referring to some of his immediate ancestors, those listed in *Genesis 5*? Could that be why they might have questioned him? What we see is a fairly clear picture indicating that Enoch was a prophet of God.

For the better part of his life he preached to the unbelieving world that the answer to life was the certainty of God’s coming and the resurrection of the dead. His message applied to the coming flood as well as God’s final judgment at the end of this age. Many equate Enoch’s *millions of His holy ones* with those who are the raptured church that return with Him at His second coming.

1 Thess 4:17: Then we, which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

The inference to Enoch's prophecy is that the Jews, like Noah in the flood, will be saved during the tribulation. The true church—the bride of Christ—like Enoch will be caught up before the tribulation (*2 Cor 4:14, 1 Thess 5:9, and Luke 21:28, 35-36*).

Remember, just because Adam and Eve had been tossed out of the garden it didn't mean that man had forgotten who God was; the book of *Genesis* tells us about the sacrifices made by Cain and Able. So there was Enoch, warning the ungodly of the ungodly deeds they had committed and of all the words they spoke against God. Somehow, in the midst of a world that wasn't communicating with God, Enoch had gotten through.

It seems logical to me that the God I know (the one who is the same yesterday, today, and forever) must have been looking for somebody who cared enough to pursue Him and desired to spend time with Him. We know that Abel had a pleasing sacrifice to God and Cain did not, but how did they really interact with God? Did Adam ever try to reestablish a close relationship with God? Enoch did because his heart longed to have what Adam had in the Garden, a personal relationship with his Creator; Adam was a friend of God!

I imagine that Enoch did a lot of preaching and prophesying during the 300 years he walked with God. I also believe he told the people exactly what he heard God say; how He longed for His people to desire Him and turn from their wicked ways. Does that sound like others we know: Noah, Moses, Elijah, Isaiah, and Jeremiah? Whatever it was that Enoch did during those 300 years we are certain of one thing, he pleased God. In fact, as we noted

earlier, he pleased God so much that instead of dying like all those around him he was just “taken up to heaven” to be with God. He was “translated” (*metatithemi*; *exchanged, changed sides, transferred, carried over, changed*).

*Gen 5:24 And **Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.***

*Heb 11:5 **By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.***

In *Gen 5:24* we are told that Enoch *walked with God*. In doing so he set a wonderful example for us to follow. We can see in *Gen 6:9* that Noah must have followed in his footsteps.

*Gen 6:9 These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and **Noah walked with God.***

Note that in both instances it is different than “walking before God” (*Gen 17:1, 24:40*) or “walking after God” (*Deut 13:4*). The only other place we see the expression “walk with God” used is in *Mal 2:6* in reference to Levi. There it refers to the conduct of the Levites who were the priests and stood in a close relationship with Jehovah. They were the ones permitted to enter into the Holy Place and serve God directly. This seems to be the kind of relationship that Enoch had with God and the end result, like that of Elijah, was incredible.

The Hebrew word that Moses used in *Gen 5:24* for “took” (*laaqach*) is only used in two places where death is not its

meaning: in *Gen 5:24* and in reference to Elijah in *2 Kings 2:3, 5*. It means a taking away by extraordinary means, and to take away to oneself like a wife.

So there was Enoch, about half way between Adam and the flood (987 years after the creation of Adam) just walking with God one minute and the next he was gone. No death, no body, no dust... just gone! We see the reason for it in *Heb 11:5: he pleased God*. How did he please him?

The first words in verse 5 answer the question, *by faith*. Enoch's faith in the God of Adam was what pleased Him, and I am sure that in walking every day, by faith, he endeared himself to God. While all those around him exercised little or no faith, Enoch simply said that there is a God, He created me, I love Him for it, and I want to know Him. He exercised his faith and stepped out to find God. Guess who was waiting for him in the cool of the day?

We should also note that verse 5 tells us: *he had this testimony*. You don't have much of a testimony if there is no one to testify to. There were witnesses to his Walk With God and that is why we read about it in God's Word. His record stands for itself, his faith created a close personal relationship with God. Without that faith there was no basis for a relationship. Look at Enoch's great-grandson Noah, he exercised his faith in God and built an Ark when the very idea was sheer lunacy. But we have his testimony that he also *walked with God*.

I believe with all my heart that Jesus is just waiting for all the Enoch's in this world to step out in faith and say, *Jesus, I want to know you more*. How His heart must soar when one of bride sets out on the journey to discover who He is. Each one of us can experience the same walk Enoch had with God. We can enjoy Him to the fullest, every minute of the day if, like Enoch, we ignore the unbelief of those around us and look up to the God of Enoch,

Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, you, and me. Just remember that *without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb 11:6)*. Sounds too simple doesn't it? But it is the foundation of our walk with the Lord; if we want to make God happy we need to walk in faith.

Is it possible for us to be translated like Enoch? Why not? Many believe that what happened to Enoch is a foreshadowing of the rapture or snatching out of the church before the last days. I will go out on a limb and suggest that God does not change and it is certainly possible for any one of us to be taken home like Enoch, if not like Elijah (what a hearse he had). So why haven't we seen it happen in our time?

The hunger we have toward God gets clouded and covered up by all of the pressures and struggles of this world. We get so focused on ourselves that we overlook the reason that we were put here in the first place; *for thy pleasure they are and were created (Rev 4:11, Ps 147:11; 149:4, Luke 12:32, Eph 1:5, 9, Phil 2:13)*. We need to take time and just reach out to our bridegroom with a hungry heart. That is all it takes to set His heart leaping with joy. Did you know that God has joy (*Isa 65:18-19*); "we" are His joy, and every time we take time away from our selfish interests to pursue Him it brings Him great joy.

This series is all about discovering that joy and experiencing the real, living, true, One and only God; the One who created us, nurtures us, loves us, watches out for us, listens for us, and gave His Son for us. It takes a look at Who we are and Whose we are by exploring what God has revealed to us in His Word. We need to spend time with the Holy Spirit so He can reveal the real Jesus to us. We need to be just like Enoch and hunger to find out who Jesus is and what He is like, and the only way to do that is to walk with Him. Unlike Enoch, however, we have a number of things going for us that he didn't:

- We have a personal Saviour who gives us a bridge back to God.
- We have an assurance of eternal life in Jesus.
- We have the forgiveness of sin initiated in our life by faith.
- We have the Holy Spirit to teach us about God and lead us to Him.
- We have His written Word to reveal who He is through His Son.

In his series I have attempted to open the door to a solid study foundation by looking at our Walk With God in eight volumes. Each one takes a look at a key fundamental part of our walk. They were written with the goal of challenging the bride of Christ to firm up her foundation and step into the Spirit-filled, victorious, and abundant life that Jesus has for her. And to accomplish that we need to draw near to Him through the leading of the Holy Spirit. Our Christian life should be spent with Jesus where He is now, in the Holiest Place. It's there that we will find His mercy and grace in the power of His blood.

I trust that in some small way these books will help you overcome the challenges that the enemy has placed in your path that are keeping you from a victorious relationship with Jesus. As you study these different elements, let the Holy Spirit speak to your heart with the very special message that He specifically has for you. Allow your heart to absorb His teaching, and as He uses something to stir your spirit, I encourage you to take time and let Him take you deeper into the Word.

Volume 1 *Your Life In Christ*

Volume 2 *The Spirit-Filled Christian*

Volume 3 *The Foundations of Faith*

- Volume 4 *The Word of God*
- Volume 5 *Principles of Prayer*
- Volume 6 *Authority of the Believer*
- Volume 7 *Walk The Walk*
- Volume 8 *The Obedient Lifestyle*

Let's begin building a foundation with Jesus as the Chief Cornerstone. It is an exciting opportunity to get to know the Creator of the universe, the one who knew you before you were formed in your mother's womb. It only takes desire on your part and a willingness to spend time with Him. The Holy Spirit will accomplish all the rest in God's time and on His schedule. He will show you things you never dreamed of and allow you to experience the fullness of life as He intended it to be.

Our primary goal in life should be to have the testimony that we pleased God, to leave this life just as full of Him as we can be. We can all get there, each one in his or her own way and time. We can all have a full and wonderful life if we just reach out with a hungry and repentant heart and let the Creator love on His creation. Let's step into the Holiest Place where we as the bride of Christ can all experience... *The Way of Enoch*.

CHAPTER 2

WHO IS GOD?

According to Christian doctrine, God alone is eternal. The system or systems of the material universe as well as matter itself and all spiritual beings, except God, had a beginning. They were absolutely created, made “out of nothing,” by the power of God’s almighty will. The first sentence of the Apostles’ Creed should be taken in its broadest and deepest sense: *I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.*

*Exodus 20:11 For in six days **the LORD made heaven and earth**, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.*

*Ne 9:6 Thou, even thou, art **LORD alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens**, with all their host, **the earth, and all things that are therein**, the seas, and all that is therein, and thou preserveth them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee.*

In starting a new study of God’s Word it’s good to set the groundwork to understand how we are going to approach the subject and what authority we are going to follow. It has always been an easy first step for me to simply say out loud the first four

words of the Bible: *In the beginning God*. If we will set our framework based upon the foundational fact that it was God who was there before creation, our mind will be adjusted to the correct starting place. Everything in God's Word is based upon the fact that He was there before anything else was, and His Word created everything that followed.

So, as we begin here in Volume I, I think the best place to start is to go back into the Old Testament and look at God's relationship with His wife, Israel. There is a reverence and awe in the names that Israel gave to God, a reverence that has perhaps been forgotten today. As we look at each of these names I am confident that we will find a direct application for the bride of Christ. And the first name, God gave Himself.

JEHOVAH YAHWEH — I AM

The Hebrew Tetragrammaton (YHWH), traditionally pronounced Jehovah (The Lord; Yahweh [yah-way]); I am to be, to come into being; He causes to be or exist. Yahweh is a name that is unique to Israel and has not been verified as the name of any deity outside Israel.

*Exodus 3:14 And God said unto Moses, **I AM THAT I AM** and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, **I AM** hath sent me unto you.*

This is who God told Moses to tell the people He was because up to that time they had no name for Him. The Hebrews called him the God of no name and referred to Him as *El Shaddi* (God Almighty). It was important for them to know His name because it expressed His nature, which they expected to be manifested in the way He operated. In responding, God made it very clear that He is

the absolute God; unchanging and eternal. He was the God of their forefathers; Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The Moffatt Bible translates Yahweh as: *I Will Be What I Will Be*. For Moses and Israel this meant that He would reveal Himself throughout history by His prophets until the day He was revealed as the Messiah. I like this quote from one of my favorite teachers, Oswald Chambers: *God's revelation of Himself to me is determined by my character, not by God's character.*

JEHOVAH JIREH — THE LORD WILL PROVIDE

*Gen 22:14 And Abraham called the name of that place **Jehovah Jireh**: as it is said to this day, in the mount of the LORD it shall be seen.*

Jehovah Jireh (jī-rah) is the name given to God by Abraham on Mount Mariah, where the angel of the Lord appeared to him and not only prevented the sacrifice of Isaac but provided a ram in his place. We often hear this name used in church today; God Is My Provider. Another translation of this name is Jehovah See, referring to His seeing our needs. In this case we observe that God both “saw” what Abraham required and “provided” it in the form of a ram to replace Isaac as the sacrifice. It has always seemed so profound to me that right there on Mount Moriah, where God saw and provided a sacrificial ram for Abraham, He would later provide the Lamb of God to suffer for us all (*2 Chr 3:1*)—Mount Moriah is also called Golgotha. We should remember that where God sees and provides for us, like Abraham we should build an altar. But instead of lifting stones to build the altar we lift our voices in praise and worship to Jehovah Jireh.

JEHOVAH NISSI — THE LORD IS MY BANNER

Jehovah Nissi (knee-see) is the name given by Moses to God at the altar he erected upon the hill where he sat with uplifted hands during the successful battle against the Amalekites.

Ex 17:15 And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovah Nissi.

Jehovah Nissi is the true banner under which victory is always certain. This altar was built after the long battle with the Amalekites during which Moses needed Aaron and Hur to hold up his arms. As long as his arms remained raised, Joshua and the Israelites prevailed, but the moment he lowered them the battle turned against them. Moses' arms were symbolic of the banners that soldiers carry into battle indicating which government or country they represent. The Israelites fought under His direction and in His strength to attain the victory. Jehovah Nissi is no less our banner today when we fight the good fight of faith in His name and under His leadership.

JEHOVAH SHALOM — THE LORD IS MY PEACE

When God met Gideon at Ophrah, He gave him the commission to deliver Israel from the Midianites, which He confirmed by miracles and a message of peace (*Judg. 6:24*). As it was a time of backsliding in Israel, Gideon built an altar as a result of his surprise and gratitude as a monument to Jehovah Shalom (sha-loam); The Lord Is My Peace/God of Peace.

*Judges 6:23 And the LORD said unto him, **Peace be unto thee;** fear not: thou shalt not die. 24 Then Gideon built an altar there*

*unto the LORD, and called it **Jehovah Shalom**: unto this day it is yet in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.*

The promise of peace to Gideon was given because he recognized that he had seen the face of God and would surely die. This is an example of what is termed a theophany or direct/visual manifestation of the presence of God in the Old Testament. It is commonly believed that these were appearances of Jesus before He came in the flesh. Another example is the meeting between God and Abraham in *Genesis 18*. In both cases neither Gideon nor Abraham actually saw the face of God because, according to *Exodus 33:20*, it was an impossibility because sin cannot stand in the presence of God. What they saw was The Angel of the Lord who appeared in perfect human form; Jesus. For Gideon, it was the confirmation of a promise that He could still deliver, and for Abraham it was the seal of the covenant God had made with him. Aren't there both of these times in our lives; when we need peace in times of testing and His presence in our walk? We need the reminder of His promises. The difference for us is that in both cases the manifestation of God's presence is the Holy Spirit. He is the One who ushers in Jehovah Shalom; my peace.

JEHOVAH SHAMMAH —THE LORD IS THERE

Jehovah Shammah (sha-mah; The Lord Is There) is the symbolic name given to God by Ezekiel in a vision of the millennial Jerusalem. The expression signifies that Jehovah will once again turn His favor to Jerusalem, which will enjoy great prosperity as the capital of the earth in the Kingdom age.

*Ezek 48:35 It was round about eighteen thousand measures: and the name of the city from that day shall be, **The LORD is there.***

Ezekiel saw New Jerusalem, a city in which the presence of God was centered in the temple. It is significant that the meaning is not in the city but in the temple. The Lord Is There means that He dwells in the temple from which He extends His mercy and grace as well as His rule to the city. Note that He is not doing it from far off but from within, and so Ezekiel used the name Jehovah Shammah to indicate that God is there.

There is a corollary for us in the present age in which we live to the temple in the New Jerusalem. Jehovah Shammah is within His temple here and now in the form of His Holy Spirit. From that temple He desires to extend His mercy and grace to the city. Since we are the Temple of God (*1 Cor 3:16*), Jehovah Shammah is within us and He desires to minister to the “city” (people) around us. How wonderful it would be if the city could look at the bride of Christ (we as individual temples) and exclaim, The Lord Is There! What a testimony that would be.

JEHOVAH TSEBAOTH —THE LORD OF HOSTS

Jehovah Tsebaoth (saw-bah-oath; The LORD of Hosts) was used in the days of David and the prophets as a witness to God the Saviour, who is surrounded by His hosts of heavenly power.

*1 Sam 1:3 And this man went up out of his city yearly to worship and to sacrifice unto **the LORD of hosts** in Shiloh. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, the priests of the LORD, were there.*

This name for God envisions Him as ruler over the heavenly hosts: the angels (*Gen 32:2*); the stars (*Isa 40:26*); and the armies of Jehovah (*Ps 103:21; 148:2*). He is the God of the universe and rules over all, both the seen and the unseen. Hannah recognized this in verse 11 when she made her vow to Jehovah Tsebaoth.

1 Sam 1:11 And she vowed a vow, and said, O Lord of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head.

This name was also the banner under which the prophets led Israel to establish their monarchy. Rather than a man sitting in authority as the rest of the world, Israel's king was to be the earthly connection between Jehovah Tsebaoth and man; the manifestation of God's rule here on earth. Once again we see the parallel for us as leaders in God's kingdom here on earth. Men, it all starts with being the ruler of your own home as God's earthly representative. We are to rule and govern our homes under God's direction in the same way He rules over the heavenly hosts. He has even taken one additional step to help us accomplish this; He gave us His Word and His Spirit.

JEHOVAH ELOHE ISRAEL —THE GOD OF ISRAEL

Jehovah Elohe Israel (el-oh-hee; LORD God of Israel) appears in Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the Psalms. Other names similar to this are Netsah Israel (net-suh; The Strength of Israel; *1 Sam 15:29*) and Abir Yisrael (aah-beer-Israel; The Mighty One of Israel; *Isa 1:24*).

*Jer 33:4 For thus saith the LORD, the **God of Israel**, concerning the houses of this city, and concerning the houses of the kings of Judah, which are thrown down by the mounts, and by the sword;*

*Ps 41:13 Blessed be the LORD **God of Israel** from everlasting, and to everlasting. Amen and Amen.*

We see this name used by Jacob when he made the altar to God at Shechem (*Gen 33:20*), where he referred to Jehovah as The Mighty God of Israel. He did this after God had performed mightily on his behalf during his reunion with Esau. In *Gen 28:20-22* he told God he would serve Him if God would deliver him safely back to his father's house in peace. When he built that altar he established Israel. Remember in *Genesis 32* that Jacob had his struggle with God at Peniel after which God changed his name to Israel. Jacob, in building the altar in Palestine at Shechem, was testifying to the mighty hand of his God—Jehovah Elohe Israel—and through the sacrifice of Jesus He is also our God.

JEHOVAH NETSAH ISRAEL —THE STRENGTH OF ISRAEL

*1 Sam 15:29 And also the **Strength of Israel** will not lie nor repent: for he is not a man that he should repent.*

Jehovah Netsah Israel (net-suh) —Jehovah the unchangeable. The Hebrew word *netsah* means always, constantly, ever more, strength, or victory. In other words, God is not like man; He is constant and need not repent or change. The key lies in the fact that God “does not” lie and therefore “does not need to repent.” He can be counted on and is Israel's strength. For the bride of Christ He is

also Jehovah Netsah because our strength is founded in the fact that He will not change and that He is the same yesterday, today, and forever (*Heb 13:8*).

JEHOVAH ABIR ISRAEL —THE MIGHTY ONE OF ISRAEL

*Isa 1:24 Therefore saith the Lord, the LORD of hosts, **the mighty one of Israel**, Ah, I will ease me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies:*

As Jehovah Abir Israel (aah-beer-Israel), the Mighty One or Strong One of Israel, God has the power to make good on what He says and has all the hosts of heaven at His command to carry out His purpose. Here we see that His power is ready to be used against the enemies of Israel and is ready for use against our adversaries —Satan and his minions.

JEHOVAH TSIDKENU — THE LORD OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

Jeremiah named the coming Messianic figure the “Branch of righteousness” who will descend from David and be raised up to reign as King to execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. Christians see in this linkage a prophecy about God the Son taking on human flesh to serve as righteous King.

Jer 23:5-6 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. 6 In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell

*safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, **LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.***

This doesn't need a great deal of discussion as that Branch of Righteousness is Jesus, and as our Jehovah Tsidkenu (sid-canoë) He lives today.

EL SHADDAI — GOD ALMIGHTY (THE GOD OF MORE THAN ENOUGH)

El Shaddai (shad-eye) denotes the particular character in which God revealed Himself to the patriarchs in the Old Testament (*Gen. 17:1; 28:3; 35:11; 43:14; 48:3*). The name is consistently translated as God Almighty. God appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as El Shaddai because He was not known to them by the name Jehovah.

*Ex 6:3 And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of **God Almighty**, but by my name **JEHOVAH** was I not known to them.*

El Shaddai was the name by which they knew Him before God revealed His name; I AM. Our God is a strong and powerful God who, by His very nature, is more than enough to meet all of our needs. He is almighty and powerful and continues to display His power on behalf of and through His people. God is always more than enough power to overcome any obstacle the enemy may place in our path. Just like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob learned to trust in His power, so it is incumbent upon us to follow their footsteps.

EL OHIYM —THE TRIUNE GOD (SUPREME GOD)

El Ohiym (oh-heem) is sometimes used in the ordinary sense of gods, whether true or false (*Ex 12:12, 32:4*), including Jehovah (*Ps. 76:7; Ex 18:11*). W. Henry Green summarized the principles regulating the use of Elohim and Jehovah in the Old Testament:

1. Jehovah represents God in His special relation to Israel, also revealing Himself to them as their guardian and the object of their worship; Elohiym represents God in His relation to the world at large, as Creator, ruler in the affairs of men and controlling nature.
2. El Ohiym is used when Gentiles speak or are spoken to or spoken about, unless there is a specific reference to Jehovah, the God of Israel.
3. El Ohiym is used when God is contrasted with men or things.

Gen 1:1-3 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. 2 And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. 3 And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

We see in this verse that before there was a heaven and earth God was. If we jump to the New Testament for a moment in *John 1:1* we find that the second person of the trinity, Jesus, was there: *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God* (we will find out later in this chapter that Jesus is identified as the Word of God). Now come back to *Genesis* and

the second verse and we see the third person of the trinity at work; the Holy Spirit.

The name El Ohiym carries with it the plural sense and indicates the presence of all three members of the trinity at the same time; El Ohiym is a plural noun (God) with a singular verb (created). Let's look at some other scriptures that support this understanding:

*Prov 8:27 **When he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth:***

*Eph 3:9 **And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:***

*Heb 1:2 **Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;***

The Jewish rabbi, Simeon ben Joachi, in his comment on the sixth section of Leviticus, has these remarkable words:

“Come and see the mystery of the word El Ohiym; there are three degrees, and each degree by itself alone, and yet notwithstanding they are all one, and joined together in one, and are not divided from each other.

What a wonderful revelation that the Godhead was fully at work in the creation of the heavens, the earth, and all that exists in them. As we move through our study we are going to see the constant interaction between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. They are collectively active in our individual lives every moment of

every hour of every day. How loudly the profound words of Paul should ring in our ears: *if God be for us who can be against us*

JEHOVAH ROYI — MY SHEPHERD

Ps 23:1 The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

The last name I want to look at symbolizes the foundation of our relationship with Jesus. David seemed to capture the whole essence of Walking With God when he wrote the 23rd Psalm. He was so on target when he called God, Jehovah Royi (row-hee); the Lord is My Shepherd. As we read the rest of this psalm we really begin to see how David looked upon God and the role model he set for us. Jesus is our shepherd, the good shepherd who watches over His flock. As you read the 23rd Psalm think about your coming in and going out all day long, your times of darkness and your times of light. The essence of our walk with God is contained in this beautiful psalm. David knew from personal experience the meaning of the name Jehovah Royi. Before we conclude this section take time to slowly read the entire psalm and let each vivid picture sink into your soul. Jesus really is the good shepherd.

Now re-read these names of God in the section above and each time you see the word “Israel” substitute your name because these names also apply to the bride of Christ because we have been “grafted” into the olive branch; into Israel because we are the spiritual seed of Abraham by faith. And if you have made Jesus your Saviour and the Lord of our life you are His bride, the True Church.

GOD IS SOVEREIGN

Sovereignty is a term that expresses the supreme rule of God. It is not an attribute of God but a prerogative based upon His perfection. This is clearly seen in both the Old and New Testaments (*Ps 50:1; 66:7; 93:1; Isa. 40:15, 17; 1 Tim 6:15; Rev 11:17*). The sovereignty of God is absolute as He is under no external restraint whatsoever, and all forms of existence are within the scope of His dominion. And yet He has seen fit to create beings with the power of choice between good and evil, however He rules over them in justice, wisdom, and grace.

*Ps 24:7-10 Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the **King of glory** shall come in. 8 Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, **the LORD mighty** in battle. 9 Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. 10 Who is this King of glory? **The LORD of hosts**, he is the King of glory. Selah.*

The concept of sovereignty is complicated for many because they believe that God uses His sovereign status to control our lives. This completely ignores the fact that He has given each of us a “free will.” What we need to understand is that no matter what free will decisions we make, God is constant in His responses to our choices. He is the judge who never makes a wrong decision and never violates the laws He has perfectly established. Let’s look at a verse that will help us understand this:

*Col 3:25 But **he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong, which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.***

The moral decisions a man makes will ultimately be judged in light of God's sovereignty. He is the One who will make the ultimate determination of punishment or reward based upon His position as the sole arbitrator of the universe. Like a bond slave (*dulos*; a slave who is free to leave but elects to stay with his master) we are to serve our master and leave the wrongs committed against us in his hands. Our master is the Sovereign God of all creation who always remains true to His Word.

What is very important to gather from this verse is contained in the last part; and there is no respect of persons. God looks at all of us with the same eye and the same heart. He is faithful to judge each of us according to the same standards and He does not esteem or despise any man because of his outward condition or circumstances. Every man is equal in God's eyes. The supreme ruler, who is perfect in all His decisions, judges us all because He is God. Paul summed it up well in *Romans 2:6* when he spoke of God's judgment of man referring to *Prov 24:12*; who will render to every man according to his deeds. How often we forget that He is still in control and He has not stepped off His throne.

Prov 21:1 The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.

GOD IS SPIRIT

Spirit is a word with three distinct meanings in the Bible; here are some comments from Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary:

1. The word is used as a general reference in the New Testament to the human (*Matt 5:3; Rom 8:16; Heb 4:12*). Jesus made several specific references to His spirit in a human sense (*Mark 2:8; John 11:33*), as did Paul (*Acts*

17:16; 2 Cor. 2:13). Paul sometimes referred to the spirits of those to whom he wrote (*Gal. 6:18; 2 Tim. 4:22*).

2. A second common usage of the word is in reference to good and evil spirits; meaning beings other than God and humans. An example of a good spirit is an angel (*Ps 104:4*). The Bible also contains many references to evil spirits (*Mark 9:25; Acts 19:12-17; Rev 18:2*).
3. The word spirit also refers to the Spirit of God and the Holy Spirit. In the Old Testament the Spirit occasionally came upon people to give them power to do God's will or to enable them to serve God in a special way. For example, the Spirit of the Lord enabled Samson to kill a lion with his bare hands (*Judg 14:5-6*). Earlier the Spirit of God had given Bezaleel wisdom and skill to build the tabernacle (*Ex 31:3*). The Spirit of the Lord also enabled the judges to lead Israel to military victory (*Judg 3:10; 11:29*) and the prophets to prophesy (*Num 24:2; Ezek 11:5*).

*John 4:24 **God is a Spirit:** and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.*

The Holy Spirit is a person (the third person of the trinity) and is God resident within us. He is the embodiment of Jesus Christ (the Spirit of Jesus) here on earth and is described by Jesus as the comforter or helper; *parakleet*—one who comes along side, an advocate. He has one duty to perform and that is to draw us to, teach us about, and lead us into a deeper relationship with Jesus. One of the ways in which He accomplishes this is through worship, and the only way to accomplish that is by our spirit.

In verse 24 the truth is the Word of God and we come into it through the relationship of our spirit to His Spirit. We can't

worship God by our natural affections or desires. He is a spirit and the only way to communicate with Him is by our spirit. This, therefore, requires that we exercise the most fundamental element in our walk with Him; faith.

We can't see God because He is invisible and not at all like the other gods of this world that are made of wood, stone, and things tangible; TV, radio, the Internet, sports, possessions, man, etc. Man worships the visible idols he has created to satisfy his natural instincts, but the saint worships the unseen God by holy and spiritual worship: *the offering up of his soul rather than the formal offering of the body, the homage of the heart rather than that of the lips* (Barnes' Notes).

GOD IS ETERNAL

Eternity refers to God's relation to time. Past, present, and future are known equally to Him (*2 Pet. 3:8; Rev 1:8*). Time is like a parade that man sees only a part at a time, but God sees it in its entirety.

Rev 1:8 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

This always reminds me of a small child standing between his father's legs while a parade is passing by. All that the child can see is what is right in front of him but his father, because of his added height, is able to see much more and tells his son what is coming. I wonder, do we really understand *Rev 1:8*. Can we really grasp the full meaning of Alpha and Omega (A to Z)? I suspect not, but we should find great comfort in the fact that our Father in heaven not only was the beginning and is now but will be forever. And we will

see, it was our Saviour Jesus by and for whom the Father created everything.

Jesus said that He is everything the entire language was meant to be; which is the expression of truth in the Word of God. He was there in the beginning when all things were created because all things began in Him and He will be there in the end when all things are consummated in Him. Time began with Jesus and it will end with Jesus because God is eternal: *which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty...* absolute and universal sovereign; omnipotent.

GOD IS OMNIPOTENT

Omnipotent is a theological term that refers to the all encompassing power of God. He expects human beings to obey Him and He holds them responsible for their thoughts and actions. Nevertheless, He is the all-powerful Lord who has created all things and sustains them by the Word of His power (*Gen 1:1-3; Heb 1:3*). The Bible reveals that He is all-powerful and in the final sense the ruler of nature and history.

*Isa 40:15 Behold, **the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing.***

Yet He has so created us that in His grace He appeals to each of us to return to Him. He is all-powerful yet He fully extends His grace to us out of a love we can't fully understand. It is by the power of His Word (Jesus) that He sustains all things; Jesus the Chief Cornerstone to all that we are. If we had all that power would we be so quick to shower others with that kind of love (the God kind) and grace (unmerited favor)?

Gen 18:14 Is anything too hard for the LORD? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.

In *Genesis 18* we have the account of the Lord meeting with Abraham during which He reiterated His promise of Isaac. Sarah was well past the childbearing age and she doubted God's ability to bring to pass what He has promised. When she laughed to herself in doubt at the Lord's statement He asked: *is anything too hard (impossible) for the Lord?* Don't we do the same thing today when God has made a promise that seems absolutely impossible for us to attain? Aren't we just like Abraham and Sarah? It often takes a miracle of God to accomplish the promise He has made to us as well, and the same holds true for us as it did for them; faith in the Word of God. Jesus had the answer:

*Mt 19:26 But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but **with God all things are possible.***

In this scripture Jesus described salvation and the fact that man can't attain it apart from God. So it is with anything concerning God. Only He can take the love of this world out of a man's heart and replace it with His Spirit. The rich man in *Mark 10* is an example of man putting the things of this world in front of God. It is impossible for man to save himself, but God, irrespective of the circumstances, can save him. All the created power of man is nothing when compared to God's omnipotence. When man's finite power is at a loss God's is not because His is infinite.

Isn't it comforting when we run into the end of our strength that He is always there with whatever is required? It would be so much easier for us if we would just remember that fact the next

time we're tempted to take things into our own hands. How many times have we balked at what God asked us to do because it seemed totally impossible? Well, we have part of it correct; it is impossible for us in our limited power. Since we will always come to the end of ourselves shouldn't we just get out of the way in the first place? God isn't limited in His ability to help us because He is busy helping someone else. With Him there are no lines because He is omnipresent, He is with each of us—always.

GOD IS OMNIPRESENT

God's omnipresence refers to His unlimited nature or His ability to be everywhere at all times. He is not like the idols of pagan cultures that were limited to one altar or temple area, He is the Lord who is everywhere. He was present at the moment of creation and He is present in our innermost thoughts. He was there when we were formed in the womb and He knows all the days of our life. He is the God who sees in secret and rewards in secret (*Matt 6:1-18*).

Jer 23:24 Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? Saith the LORD. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the LORD.

The Lord stated pretty clearly through Jeremiah that He is a God at hand and not far off. If He fills the heaven and earth then He is here now. No matter where a man may go He is going to find God is already there; by His Spirit He is everywhere at the same time. That is a very hard concept for us to understand but when we consider that His Holy Spirit is resident in each of us it makes a little more sense. Through His Spirit both the Father and Son have residence within us:

*John 17:23 **I in them, and thou in me**, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.*

*2 Cor 6:16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, **I will dwell in them**, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.*

The psalmist covered just about all the possible places we could think of to hide from Him.

*Ps 139:7-12 Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or **whither shall I flee from thy presence?** 8 If I ascend up into **heaven**, thou art there: if I make my bed in **hell**, behold, thou art there. 9 If I take **the wings of the morning**, and dwell in the **utmost parts of the sea**; 10 Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. 11 If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. 12 Yea, **the darkness hideth not from thee**; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.*

The Father is always with us through His Spirit. That new life we have is His life, given to us in His very presence. Did you ever think of it that way? If Jesus is your Saviour, the Lord of your life, then the very life of God is breathing and living within you right now. That same breath that brought life to Adam and raised Jesus from the dead is in each one of us at the same time. I don't understand it but I praise Him for it as well as for His wisdom, His Omniscience.

GOD IS OMNISCIENT

Omniscience refers to God's superior knowledge and wisdom, His power to know all things. He is acquainted with all our ways and even knows our words before they're on our tongues (*Ps 139:1-6; 13-16*). God is the all knowing Lord who prophesies the events of the future, including the death of His Son (*Isa 53*) and the return of Christ at the end of this age when death will be finally overcome (*Rom 8:18-39; 1 Cor 15:51-57*).

Rom 11:33-36 O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! 34 For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counselor? 35 Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? 36 For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen.

The word omniscient doesn't occur in scripture but it is associated with words such as eye and ear or seeing and hearing. We see it in both the Old and New Testaments.

*Pro 5:21: For **the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD**, and he pondereth all his goings,*

*Pro 15:3: **The eyes of the LORD are in every place**, beholding the evil and the good.*

*Matt 6:8: Be not ye therefore like unto them: for **your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him***

*Matt 10:30: But **the very hairs of your head are all numbered.***

We all have a deep-seated desire for knowledge about who and what we are. Be honest, haven't you asked this question in some form: *Why am I here?* God placed that desire within us as part of the original package. He further provided us the means to satisfy that desire in the form of His wisdom. The Holy Spirit provides it when we ask in faith believing we will receive it.

*Psalm 51:6: Behold, **thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.***

*Jas 1:5: **If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.***

That's pretty awesome. The omniscient God of the universe is waiting for us to ask and He is always ready with the answer.

GOD IS UNCHANGING

*Jas 1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, **with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.***

Haven't we all just wanted someone in our life that wouldn't let us down? Someone we could absolutely depend upon all the time. Well, so goes the Father, so goes the Son. Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever. The word variableness (*parallage*) means change and as used here means that God doesn't change. Neither is there *no hint or shadow of change (tropes aposkiasma)*; any shadow of turning like we see in the heavenly bodies. There is a play on words here as God is called the Father of lights (Creator of the sun), however, unlike the created sun the Creator does not

turn but remains fixed and constant, no matter the season or time of year He remains the same.

Our God is completely consistent in all that He does; He never changes on us in the middle of the stream. The sun would be like God if it stopped moving at high noon as the earth rotates and didn't cast a shadow. This truth alone, when applied to His Word, gives us a solid foundation to stand on. Aren't you glad God doesn't have the word "oops" in His vocabulary?

GOD IS HOLY/SEPARATE

Nelson's Bible Dictionary says that holiness is: *moral and ethical wholeness or perfection; freedom from moral evil*. It is one of the essential elements of God's nature and He requires it of His people. Holiness can also be rendered "sanctification" or "godliness." The word denotes that which is "sanctified" or "set apart" for divine service; growing into God's likeness and being consecrated for His use. Like Jesus, the apostles taught that sanctification—true holiness—expressed itself in patient and loving service while awaiting the Lord's return.

*Isa 6:1-3 In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. 2 Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. 3 And one cried unto another, and said, **Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.***

The Lord is the only One who is Holy but we, by our relationship with Jesus, have become Holy to Him. Think about what that gift includes. To become holy is to reflect His holiness in

our character. As we become more like Him we begin to express His holiness more and more in our lives. Our character becomes more holy (separate) the more it reflects the One on the inside. On the other hand, without the Lord dwelling within him, man's character reflects the opposite.

1 Peter 1:15 But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;

Peter told us in his letter to the Christians suffering in the Roman Empire that we are to pattern ourselves after the One who is holy. The word conversation (*anastrophe*) is very interesting because it comes from two words: "to turn" and "up." It lends the meaning to turn around in place and relates to our behavior. In other words, we are to turn about and model our behavior (manner of life) after the One whose behavior is perfect. If God is holy and we profess to be Christians then we ought to be holy. But how do we do that?

One of the key concepts in the discussion of holiness is sanctification. By definition it means to be "set apart for divine service." We have been set apart "In Christ" (sanctified) for His service, and that service is simply becoming more like Him. Sanctification is a life-long process of working out something we get when we are born again. It is a separation from the world and its system for God's purpose. Another way of looking at it is in the context of holiness.

In the Old Testament man was consecrated for holy purposes by ritual and ceremony. David prayed for purification:

Ps 51:7-10 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.⁸ Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may

rejoice. 9 Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. 10 Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.

In the New Testament, however, it's not the ceremony that purifies us but the blood of Jesus. His atonement for our sins has opened the way for us to become saints (sanctified ones). This doesn't mean that we are morally perfect but rather that we belong to Christ, the One who is morally perfect. Paul used this term many times; *Acts 20:32; 26:18; 1 Cor 6:11*.

Sanctification is a process whereby we look at Jesus (our model) through the eyes of the Spirit and the Word of God. With each passing day we should be growing more and more like Him until that day we see Him face to face and are like Him—holy. Every day we are bringing to the outside more and more of the righteousness that He set in our spirit the moment we became His. This is the process of our betrothal.

GOD IS RIGHTEOUS

Righteousness (*dikaisoune*) is holy and upright living in accordance with God's standard. The word comes from a root word that means "straightness." From God's perspective it is a moral concept defined by His character (*Gen 18:25; Deut 32:4; Rom 9:14*). Therefore, our righteousness is defined in terms of His righteousness. For example, Adam and Eve would have acted righteously in their relationship with God if they had obeyed Him. The Ten Commandments and related laws defined Israel's relationship with God and obeying those laws was to act righteously, which Israel did not do. Today God accounts or transfers the righteousness of Christ to those who trust in Him

(Rom. 4:3-22; Gal. 3:6; Phil. 3:9). We don't become righteous because of our inherent goodness; we become righteous because of our identification by faith with our bridegroom.

*Dt 32:4 He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a **God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.***

A rock... what a vivid picture to describe God's righteousness; His moral standard and His character. We can picture nothing more stable in our minds than a big piece of granite rising up out of the ground to a height of thousands of feet. As a young boy growing up in Colorado Springs I stood in awe of Pikes Peak every time I came out our front door. There it was, day after day, rising to its full 14,110 feet, totally dependable. It represented total stability in light of my instability, total certainty in light of my uncertainty, and total confidence in light of my doubt. We need to view Jesus in that way, He is our rock and there is no unrighteousness in Him (*Ps 92:15*).

Through the sacrifice of Christ we have been given righteousness in God's eyes. When we accept Him as our Lord and Saviour we have "right standing" with our heavenly Father. Our righteousness after the fall of Adam was outside (external ceremony) but with the death and resurrection of Jesus it is now on the inside (*Phil 3:9*). We are once again in a right relationship with God. The righteousness of Jesus is seen in His holiness, justice, and faithfulness, which we receive by faith in Him.

*1 Cor 1:30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and **righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:***

*2 Cor 5:21 For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made **the righteousness of God in him.***

It is now defined in terms of the righteousness of God because He is the One who has set the standard for “straightness” or holy and upright living. The bottom line, God sees us as righteous because of Jesus, not because of anything we have or can do to attain it.

We have to realize that we cannot earn or win anything from God; we must either receive it as a gift or do without it. The greatest blessing spiritually is the knowledge that we are destitute; until we get there our Lord is powerless. He can do nothing for us if we think we are sufficient of ourselves.

Oswald Chambers

GOD IS OUR REDEEMER

A redeemer is one who frees or delivers another from difficulty, danger, or bondage, usually by the payment of a ransom price. In the Old Testament the redeemer could function in several ways. He could buy back property (even enslaved people) that had been sold under duress (*Lev 25:23-32*). He (usually as owner, not as a relative) often redeemed from the Lord dedicated property and firstborn livestock (*Lev 27:1-33; Ex.21:28-30*). He could, as the legal avenger, take the life of one who had murdered his relative as a blood price (*Num 35:12-28*). In the New Testament, Christ is viewed as the ultimate redeemer. Although the Greek word for redeemer is not used, Jesus gave His life as “a ransom for many”

(*Mk 10:45*). Paul spoke of believers as having redemption in his letters:

Eph 1:7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

Rom 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

Redemption is the process by which God made us righteous and sanctified. He paid a ransom price to free us from our bondage (*Mk 10:45*). Here Paul told us that when we appropriate His righteousness through faith we become “The Just” or those who are justified before the Father by the blood of the Son. And when we are redeemed we begin the renewing process of making something, which was once new—that has become old—new again. Our spirit is redeemed (renewed) by Jesus’ sacrifice, but it’s our job to renew our mind through the teaching and work of the Holy Spirit (*2 Cor 5:17; Ps 51:10; Rom 12:2*). When Adam fell, our spiritual relationship with God died. We became separated from fellowship with Him but in Jesus it is renewed once again and we have a new life.

Rom 3:24-26 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: 25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; 26 To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

GOD IS LOVE

*Jer 31:3 The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, **I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee.***

*Eph 5:2 And **walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour.***

The love spoken of by Jeremiah has several meanings. First God loved Jeremiah as a friend, and then with a deeper more affectionate love He called him, and finally He loved him with kindness and mercy. In *Eph 5:2* Paul uses *agape* for love; the God kind of love—unconditional love. This is what the Holy Spirit desires to shed abroad in our hearts. *Agape* is the reflection of God's nature and it expresses His personality; He "is" the definition of love. The object of His love is His son Jesus, and through Jesus He loves those who believe in Him (*John 17:24*). This is the kind of love that Jesus included in the first and second most important commandments of the New Covenant, and it is a love that we must develop through the Holy Spirit.

*Matt 22:37-39 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt **love the Lord thy God** with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.³⁸ This is the first and great commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt **love thy neighbor** as thyself.*

GOD IS WISE

*1 Tim 1:17 Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, **the only wise God**, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.*

The reference to God as being wise in this verse is repeated in *Rom16:27*. In both cases the word *sophos* denotes a practical wisdom applied in a general way.

This comes in with great propriety. He alone who is the fountain of wisdom and knowledge, had all this mystery in himself; and he alone who knew the times, places, persons, and circumstances, could reveal the whole; and he has revealed all in such a way as not only to manifest his unsearchable wisdom, but also his infinite goodness: therefore, to him be glory for his wisdom in devising this most admirable plan; and his goodness in sending Christ Jesus to execute it; to Him, through Christ Jesus, be glory forever! Because this plan is to last forever; and is to have no issue but in eternal glory.

Adam Clarke

Perfect wisdom is an attribute that belongs only to God.

*Jude 25: To **the only wise God our Saviour**, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.*

God alone is infinitely wise and there is not an idol made with man's hands that can even compare with Him. While man's idols are temporal, mortal, and visible, our Lord is eternal, immortal, and invisible. The idols worshiped by man have mouths that can't speak let alone bring forth wisdom. God on the other hand has spoken to us by His wisdom; Jesus Christ.

GOD IS THE BRIDGE BUILDER

*John 15:13 Greater love hath no man than this that **a man lay down his life for his friends.***

Gal 2:20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

Heb 2:16-18 For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham.¹⁷ Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.¹⁸ For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted.

“In all things” means in everything. He was tempted (tried, tested, examined) and yet was without sin. We must never think that He doesn’t know how we feel in any given situation. Today the popular phrase “been there, done that” could well be modified to say: “He has been there but didn’t do that.”

Who could be more qualified to build a bridge for us than the One that has an intimate knowledge of what we need to make the trip across the gulf between God and man? The material used to construct that bridge was everything natural and spiritual that Jesus had to give. He gave all of Himself that we might walk across the gulf into the waiting arms of our Father. What’s awesome is that we start on our side soiled by sin and end up on God’s side washed as white as snow. All our sins are washed away in the blood that built that bridge. He was with the architect that designed it but he had to become one of us and come down here to build it.

Those words mean the breaking of my independence with my own hand and surrendering to the supremacy of the Lord

Jesus. No one can do this for me, I must do it myself—the individuality remains, but the mainspring, the ruling disposition, is altered. The same body remains, but the old satanic right to myself is destroyed.

Oswald Chambers

All of Jesus went into that bridge for you and me, all of His love. And the bridge He built was made from the wood of the Cross. With that in mind let's next take a look at what God is doing today in the world of here and now.

CHAPTER 3

WHAT DOES GOD DO?

GOD CREATES TODAY

*2 Cor 5:17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, **he is a new creature**: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*

*Ps 51:10 **Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.***

Both of these verses require a submitted and obedient spirit, without which we are just going through the motions on our own initiative and in our own power. As we will see later, that power is totally insufficient to accomplish what God has set before each and every one of us. We are truly a new creature when we cross over the “bridge” and make Jesus Lord and Saviour. Our spirit has a brand new relationship with God and the old things are passed away.

Their former prejudices, opinions, habits, attachments pass away. Their supreme love of self passes away. Their love of sins passes away. Their love of the world passes away.

Their supreme attachment to their earthly friends rather than God passes away. Their love of sin, their sensuality, pride, vanity, levity, ambition, passes away. There is a deep and radical change on all these subjects—a change which commences at the new birth; which is carried on by progressive sanctification; and which is consummated at death and in heaven.

Albert Barnes

They have now become new in our mind's eye. Our understanding is changed and our hearts are turned from the world to God. He creates a new creature in each one that believes in Him. New clean hearts are created every minute of every day and the angels rejoice each and every time (*Luke 15:7*).

The Hebrew word for clean (*Ps 51:10*) is *tahowr* and it reflects “a purging of the heart” or a “reflection of moral pureness.” Only God can create purity, but it is up to us to ask for and submit to His work to attain it, and submitting is the hard part since it always involves change on our part. Look what happened to David when he cried out to God for a clean heart and a renewed spirit. Out of David's sin (adultery and murder) came not only forgiveness but also the most richly blessed of Israel's kings, Solomon. God wants the world to realize that He is still in the creating business today. He hasn't closed up shop yet but one day in the very near future He will.

GOD WILL CREATE IN THE FUTURE

Isa 65:17 For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind

The entire creation groans for the Second Coming of our Lord (*Romans 8:19-23*). When Adam and Eve sinned in The Garden, all creation was required to pay the price; the curse. From that moment on all of creation has been waiting for us to get it together and prepare the way for the Second Coming of Jesus. At that time creation, like us, *shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God (Rom 8:21)*. It's an awesome thought that the animals, trees, flowers, rivers, grass, etc. are all anxiously waiting for His coming just like us, and when that occurs none of us will remember the old.

Isa 65:17... by making joy its perpetual state, its appointed condition of life both inwardly and outwardly. Nor is it joy on the part of the church only, but on the part of its God as well (Deut 30:9). When the church thus rejoices in God, and God in the church, so that the light of the two commingle, and each is reflected in the other; then will no sobbing of weepings, no sound of lamentation, be heard any more in Jerusalem.

Keil & Delitzsch

His death on the Cross was the price required for the new creation, for the joy of all of creation.

GOD IMMERSSES HIMSELF IN YOU

He Knows You

Psalms 139:1-6 O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me. 2 Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. 3 Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. 4 For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, thou

knowest it altogether. 5 *Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me.* 6 ***Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it.***

This is not just analytical knowledge but the relational knowledge that comes from intimacy. He doesn't just "know" what we think; He "understands" what we think and knows every hidden motive behind our thoughts. In the Hebrew the connotation is: *to winnow or spread out that which has been threshed and expose it to the current of wind—to search out to the very bottom.* He knows every path, every stop, and every detour of every day. He knows us better than we know ourselves. No wonder David said in verse 6: *Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it.* Now add to that the thought that He knew it all before you were formed in your mother's womb (*Jer 1:5*) and He has numbered the hairs on your head (*Luke 12:7*). Yet in light of all that He knows about us He loves us anyway. That's a great definition of *agape*!

He Loves You

*1 John 4:9 In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. 10 Herein is love, **not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.***

In the Greek, loved is the aorist tense; it is completed. His love doesn't depend upon anything we did or could ever do. He "has given" it to us without condition in the form of His Son. It has nothing to do with our loving Him first. On the contrary, it has everything to do with Him loving us first. The expression of that

love for us is in the “propitiation” (appeasement or substitution) of His Son for our sins before we even knew Him. In the Old Testament the blood of lambs and goats only covered the sins of the people, the blood of Jesus, however, was a once and for all “atonement” for our sins.

We need to remember that even though Jesus’ atonement for man was universal, salvation is not universally accepted. The offer of salvation is universal but to obtain it requires a specific and individual act of faith by man. Note the word “toward” in verse 9 as it carries the idea of “presented to.” Just like the angels spoke on the night Jesus was born, *peace on earth, good will toward men* (Luke 2:14).

I like to think of it as being in a dark room with a single door going outside. The outside is bathed in bright sunlight but the inside is totally dark. God provided the sunlight for everyone but I will never enjoy it unless I step through that door, out of the dark room into the light. Have you ever seen the famous painting by Holman Hunt of Jesus standing outside the door with the inscription *behold I stand at the door and knock* (Rev 3:20)? Look closely at the picture and you will discover that the door doesn’t have a handle on the outside. It can only be opened from the inside. But when we do open the door and step into “the light” it’s like opening all our bills and finding them marked *Paid In Full*.

You Are His Family

John 1:12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

This is an interesting verse. To everyone who receives Jesus, God has given the power to become the sons of God. The word “son” used here is *teknon* and means a child that is produced by seed; a natural born child of God. Jesus was the only “natural” *teknon* of God, everyone else is adopted into His family. Note the word power in verse 12 (*exousia*), which means “jurisdiction.” We have the “right” to become His child but not of ourselves; by His Spirit. We are Children of God (*teknon*) by a spiritual new birth, which makes us children of God. However, becoming a Son of God by resemblance (*huios*) is a result of our action.

*Romans 8:14-21 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the **sons of God (huios)**.¹⁵ For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.¹⁶ The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the **children of God (teknon)**:¹⁷ And if **children, (teknon)** then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.¹⁸ For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. ¹⁹ For the earnest expectation of the creature wanteth for the manifestation of the **sons of God (huios)**.²⁰ For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, ²¹ Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the **children of God (teknon)**.*

In verse 14 those who follow His Spirit are called the Sons of God (*huios*) because they resemble Him (become like Him in character), and in verse 16 they are called the Children of God (*teknon*) because they are born of the Spirit. It’s like a little child

(*teknon*) who doesn't begin to resemble his father until he begins to mature (*huios*) and take on the character of his father. We see this all the time as children begin to grow and spend time with their parents. The more they relate to them the more they resemble them in their beliefs, actions, and appearance. And as I grow older that reflection in the mirror looking back at me has become more like my father.

This is what all creation is waiting for, our maturity from *teknon* to *huios*. Re-read verse 19 very carefully and note that “all creation” is waiting for us to manifest as the Sons of God (*huios*) in full maturity at His Second Coming. We have a lot to do with the maturing process and we need to grow from the milk of the Word (*1 Pet 2:2*) to the meat of the Word whereby we will resemble Him more as we become *huios*. We will not be fully like Him until we see Him face-to-face, but we can by the work of the Holy Spirit come very close. That's the work of our betrothal to the King of Kings.

GOD JUDGES

White Throne Judgment—For Those Unsaved

*Rev 20:11-12 And I saw a **great white throne** and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. 12 **And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.***

As the bride of Christ we who believe in Him are not in “the books” but in “the book”, the Lamb's Book of Life (*Luke 10:20*).

The “books” are the judgment records of those who don’t belong to Him. The Great White Throne Judgment is the universal judgment of non-believers. Here are some thoughts on *Rev 20:11-12* from Matthew Henry:

The utter destruction of the devil's kingdom very properly leads to an account of the day of judgment, which will determine every man's everlasting state; and we may be assured there will be a judgment when we see the prince of this world is judged:

- *The Judge is the Lord Jesus Christ. The heavens flee from his face and there is no place found for them; there is a dissolution of the whole frame of nature, (2 Pet. 3:10).*
- *The persons to be judged: None are so mean but they have some talents to account for and one so great as to avoid the jurisdiction of this court.*
- *The books were opened. The books of God's omniscience. There is a book of remembrance with him both for good and bad and the book of the sinner's conscience, which, though formerly secret, will now be opened. And another book shall be opened—the book containing the law, the touchstone by which the hearts and lives of men are to be tried. This book determines matter of right; the other books give evidence of matters of fact.*
- *What is to be tried? The works of men, what they have done and whether it is good or evil will be judged. By their works men shall be justified or condemned.*

- *All those who have made a covenant with death, and an agreement with hell, shall then be condemned with their infernal confederates, cast with them into the lake of fire, as not being entitled to eternal life, according to the rules of life laid down in the scripture. Those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life shall then be justified and acquitted by the Judge, and shall enter into eternal life.*

Let it be our great concern to see on what terms we stand with our Bibles, whether they justify us or condemn us now; for the Judge of all will proceed by that rule. Christ shall judge the secrets of all men according to the gospel. Happy are those who have so ordered and stated their cause according to the gospel as to know beforehand that they shall be justified in the great day of the Lord!

If we are not found written in the Lamb's Book of Life then our book will be opened and we will be judged out of it in relation to God's laws. No man will be judged other than by his own book and the only question to be asked will be: What did you do about Jesus? It is not a matter of sin because Jesus paid the price for the sins of all men. The only pertinent issue is Jesus. If you have not made Him your personal Saviour then everything in your book will prove that you haven't. On the other hand, if you have made that decision then you are not even brought before the White Throne because your name has been recorded in the most important book, the Lamb's Book of Life. As believer in Jesus Christ you are judged in a totally different place and in a totally different way; the Judgment Seat of Christ is for His bride.

Judgment Seat of Christ—For Jesus' Bride

2 Cor 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every man receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

The bride of Christ is the true church and we must each account for what we did in His body. He is not going to judge us according to sin (that issue was taken care of on the Cross) but rather what we did with the callings and gifts He gave us. Our rewards are also going to be based upon what we did with what He gave us. We each have a special path in life that was designed before we were born, and God has fully equipped us for every possible need along our journey up that path. The judging of the bride by Christ is to bestow upon her rewards for what she accomplished with what He gave her. She is not judged one against another but individually against what was expected. Just like the unbelievers, the individual members of the bride also have a record of everything they have done in their life; good or bad. Once again Matthew Henry:

What further quickening motives they had to excite their diligence, from the consideration of the judgment to come. There are many things relating to this great matter that should awe the best of men into the utmost care and diligence in religion; for example, the certainty of this judgment, for we must appear; the universality of it, for we must all appear; the great Judge before whose judgment-seat we must appear, the Lord Jesus Christ, who himself will appear in flaming fire; the recompense to be then received, for things done in the body, which will be very particular (unto every), and very just, according to what we have done, whether good or bad.

The English word “appear” isn’t strong enough here because *fanerootheenai* means to be “made manifest.” In other words, we are to be revealed as we are. The judgment seat described here is also called the *beematos* or throne of Christ. It’s here that each believer will “take away” his individual reward for the things done here on earth in His body, or as Tyndale says: *the works of this body*.

However, it isn’t the works “of the body” but the works done “through the body” that form the substance of the reward. It is the heart of the bride that is being judged for all the deeds done in the body before physical death. These deeds incorporate all of our thoughts, plans, purposes, words, and actions. They will all be reviewed and rewarded according to His grace.

Now one very important final thought. This “is not” a judgment as to a believer’s salvation. That was decided the moment he or she accepted Jesus as his or her Saviour. This only has to do with the rewards for what was or was not accomplished during our time here on earth. This judging by Christ will be seen by all as totally impartial and just. We were put here on probation so to speak and this is the time at which our results are to be revealed: *that each may receive to himself, into his own hand, his own reward and his own wages* (Adam Clarke).

This is not about partaking “in” Christ, which is our salvation. Salvation is totally dependent upon His faithfulness and therefore cannot be lost. Our rewards are based upon our partaking “of” Christ. This refers to what we did with what we were given and our reward is dependent solely on us and therefore it can be lost. The bride of Christ has a critical decision to make: will she stay in the Holy Place, the place of the Cross, the place of her salvation; or will she step into the Holiest Place, the place of abiding in Christ,

the place of the abundant and victorious Spirit-filled life? That is the question, that is the decision to be made, that is working out the salvation we have been given, that is sanctification. This removes any impact of what life may or may not have done to us, it only considers what we did or didn't do.

So what is going to be pleasing to Jesus as our life is opened up at His Judgment Seat? We'll look at that next as we explore what is required of us.

CHAPTER 4

WHAT DOES GOD REQUIRE OF US?

THAT WE KNOW HIM

Ps 46:10 Be still, AND know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.

We will never hear the still, small voice without being still. Being still in Hebrew (*raapaah*) means relaxed or with slackened hands. We are not to put forth any effort or have any anxiety but rather leave everything to God, but without being still we can't reflect on that which only He could have accomplished. How will we know He is God if we don't stop, reflect, and listen? We need to spend much more time listening to God than we do talking to Him; using our spiritual ears and not our natural ones, not listening with our mind but with our heart.

I am reminded of my first stereo and one knob in particular. When I found the FM station I wanted the next step was to be sure it was tuned in clearly and then I selected the AFC (Automatic Frequency Control). The set then knew to continue tracking that particular signal to insure the best reception at all times. We need

to do the same thing with the Lord, but for us it isn't automatic. Our AFC is more like Active Faith Control. We should always be listening and when the signal grows weak we need to make an adjustment. One thing is for certain, the problem is "always" on the receiving end. The sender has the most powerful transmitter in the universe and His signal carrier, the Holy Spirit, always delivers the message on the proper frequency; *KHIS*. The receiver, however, is another story and is always in need of adjustment and to accomplish that we need to "relax."

When we relax we are in a much better position to know (understand or comprehend) that He is Elohiym (Triune God); the God of all power, wisdom, justice, goodness, and truth. In our stillness we will see Him exalted in the unbelieving world around us in some small way each and every day. We just need to be faithful "receivers" and "listen" with our hearts to the voice that reveals Him to us.

*Mt 6:33 But seek ye **first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness**; and all these things shall be added unto you.*

For God it all hangs on the *Seek Ye First*, but we so frequently hang it on *All These Things*. Seeking Him first is all about having a relationship rather than coming to Him when we want and/or need something. Corrie Ten Boom asked the question, "Is your prayer life your steering wheel or your spare tire?" Do you steer your life every moment in communion with the Lord or do you just call out when you have a flat?

If we are walking with Him on a daily basis we can be confident that He knows our needs because He puts a higher value on them than we do. If our focus is on His Righteousness then we can rest assured that His eye is on our needs. Jesus, in His Sermon

on the Mount, enjoined us to put God before our earthly needs. The entire sixth chapter is one of my favorites for it puts our lives in clear perspective. We are to “be still” and in our “knowing” we are to seek after the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom is here and now and resting within each and every believer. In fact it is the entire subject of *Matthew 6*. During a very difficult time in my life the Lord kept me in that chapter for 18 months, and at the end He had instilled in me that the only way to live this life is to constantly listen for His voice and to do that we have to learn to live “one day at a time.” That, I have learned, is the key to a successful walk with Jesus.

The only glimpse of the Kingdom that some may see could be your life. What view of it will they get? Worry and struggle for the cares of this world or a peaceful spirit resulting from a total dependence upon God for every need? I have experienced both and there is no substitute for the peace that passes all understanding (*Phil 4:7*). It comes when we seek His “Kingdom” and His “Righteousness.” Look at a wonderful example of this when Solomon’s heart was clearly fixed on God’s priorities:

*2 Chr 1:11-12 And God said to Solomon, Because this was in thine heart, and **thou hast not asked riches, wealth, or honor, nor the life of thine enemies, neither yet hast asked long life;** but hast asked wisdom and knowledge for thyself, that thou mayest judge my people, over whom I have made thee king: Wisdom and knowledge is granted unto thee; and I will give thee riches, and wealth, and honor, such as n of the kings have had that have been before thee, neither shall there any after thee have the like.*

How do we get God's wisdom?

*Rom 12:2 And be **not conformed to this world**: but be ye transformed **by the renewing of your mind**, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

And that means staying away from the world's system and not letting it conform or fashion you. Its pollution will hinder the renewing of your mind and the knowing of His will. We are "in" the world but are required not to be "of" the world and its system. It's our job to let our light shine and the best way to brighten our flame is to renew our mind through the washing of the Word. We are responsible for the renewing process, but that won't happen without spending time in the Word, being taught by His Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the oil that fuels our lamp. Look at this verse in The Living Translation:

*Rom 12:2 **Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but be a new and different person with a fresh newness in all you do and think.** Then you will learn from your own experience how his ways will really satisfy you.*

Remember, we are warned to Fear (reverence) God by walking in love, thereby serving Him.

*Deut 10:12-13 And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to **fear the LORD thy God**, to **walk** in all his ways and to **love him**, and to **serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul**, 13 To keep the commandments of the LORD, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good?*

Notice in that it is not a halfway proposition; *with all thy heart and all thy soul*. Fear and love go hand in hand and are complementary as well as inseparable. Listen to what Moses told Israel that God required:

- *Fear The Lord Your God*—We must adore his majesty, acknowledge his authority, stand in awe of his power, and dread his wrath.
- *Love Him*—Be pleased that He is ours, delight in Him, contemplate Him, and have communion with Him.
- *Walk In His Ways*—Walk in the ways He has appointed for us.
- *Serve Him*—Devote ourselves to His honor, advance His kingdom, and be zealous in all that we do for Him.
- *Keep His Commandments*—We must be obedient to His revealed will for our lives, holding on to the belief that it is for our benefit.

For the natural man this is impossible but for the bride of Christ, who has received the precious gift of salvation, it should be the natural response. Our fear of the Lord comes when we recognize that next to His holiness we are unholy. When we comprehend His mercy it stirs up that love within us that becomes evident in our loving and serving Him with all our heart and soul. And with that attitude comes the desire to keep His commandments, the very commandments that are meant for our own good.

*Ps 100:4 Enter into his gates **with thanksgiving**, and into his courts **with praise**: be **thankful unto him**, and **bless his name**.*

Enter with an “attitude of gratitude.” As we first go through the gates we are focused on how thankful we are but by the time we have entered into His court we are ready to praise Him and turn our thanksgiving into blessing His name. Take some time just now and read *Exodus 3*.

When Jesus was crucified God rent the veil of the temple from top to bottom (from heaven to earth) revealing the Holy of Holies; the Holiest Place. That was the part of the temple where the Ark of the Covenant (the presence of God) was kept and only the high priest was allowed to enter two times on the Day of Atonement each year (once for himself and once for the people). But because of the sacrifice of Jesus we are able to take off our shoes and enter into that Holiest Place at anytime. In fact, He has told us come in “boldly.” And our entrance should be no different than that of Israel’s high priest; with thanksgiving, praise, and blessing.

*Heb 6:1-2 Therefore **leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ**, let us go on unto perfection; **not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God**, 2 **Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment**.*

Look at the Living Translation:

*Heb 6:1-2 Let us **stop going over the same old ground again and again**, always teaching those first lessons about Christ. Let us go on instead to other things and become mature in our*

understanding, as strong Christians ought to be. Surely we don't need to speak further about the foolishness of trying to be saved by being good, or about the necessity of faith in God;

It is all about faith

Heb 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

We show our love (*agape*) for Him by the faith we build through hearing and responding to His Word. This brings about growth and that always involves and requires change in us. If we are to fulfill God's purpose in our life we need to move on from the Cross (the basics of salvation; the Holy Place) and begin to walk with Him in victory (spiritual maturity) by entering into the Rest of Christ (the Holiest Place). It doesn't mean that we forget the principles of salvation but that we build upon them every day as we mature in Christ. To emphasize these points allow me to share with you a vision that the Lord gave me in 1993.

It began with a picture of Diane and me climbing up a very steep hill with large heavy packs on our backs. They were the large packs often used by mountain climbers who are transporting a lot of equipment that seem to be twice as big as they are. The burden was so heavy that all we could do was keep our heads down and make one difficult step after another. After a tremendous effort we reached a flat area somewhere along our climb and we were face-to-face with a large post in the ground.

As we contemplated the surrounding area in three directions it fell off into steep canyons that seemed bottomless. The fourth direction was a continuation of our climb and the top was covered

in clouds. All at once we both looked up from the bottom of the post and looked into the eyes of Jesus hanging on the Cross. Without speaking we knew the only direction was to continue our climb. We both looked into His eyes knowing full well that anything else was unacceptable.

We turned to continue our climb and Jesus spoke to us: *Leave them.* We looked again into His eyes and He said, *the burdens are no longer yours, they are mine. Leave them here at the foot of the Cross and continue your climb.* As we dropped the packs the freedom was incredible and we just looked at each other with a peace and joy that was unexplainable. It felt so good to just stand there in His presence and enjoy the freedom of those burdens being off our backs. We stayed there for what seemed an eternity basking in the glow of our newfound freedom until we became aware of a still small voice. It was barely audible in the midst of our joy but as we paused to listen it became louder.

You can't stay here, it said in a tone that was peaceful yet urgent: *There is much to do on the road that lies ahead and there is not much time.* So we picked up our packs, took hold of each other's hand and set off on the path that led to the clouds. As we struggled and got a little higher we turned and looked back down with startled amazement. There at the foot of the Cross were untold thousands who had not heard the still small voice.

Some were struggling on behind us carrying the same burdens they had refused to drop at the Cross. Others were standing there, as we had been, enrapt in the joy of the moment while many were on their way back down the mountain having chosen the wrong direction. Some were without burdens, some had the same ones they struggled uphill with, and some had larger ones. In all cases it was harder going down than coming up because they now knew

there was another choice; the heavy burdens pushed them down the hill.

As I took in this vision the Holy Spirit spoke to me about choices. How many refuse to release their burdens no matter what they are? They may be health, family, personal possessions, bad habits, hidden sin, being in control, or anger to name a few. These are the ones who go back down the mountain with a heavier burden than when they arrived at the Cross. They saw the answer but were afraid to continue the climb. While the burdens may be heavy they just couldn't give them to someone else. To give up control seemed to be too big a price to pay.

The next group were those who were just standing at the foot of the Cross, unaware that there was a much higher and loftier path to travel. Some were there as little children, totally unaware of the challenge to move on. Others wanted to continue the climb but couldn't seem to get the burdens off their backs. They knew they didn't want to go back down but letting go of the burdens was a big stumbling block. Some of them were just like us?

As we looked at each other we realized that we had not left our burdens at the Cross. Oh we had dropped them all right but when we realized we needed to move on beyond the Cross we picked them up. That is when we noticed those around us going up the hill with their heads up and no packs on their backs. The climb for them was always upward but they had no burden to carry.

I don't know how much time had gone by when we looked at each other and knew that we needed to go back down to the Cross and leave our burdens. The moment we thought it we were instantly back at the Cross and the burdens were lying at Jesus feet. He smiled and we heard that still small voice gently rush into our hearts: *Whenever you find a burden on your back just turn and I will be there to take it from you.* We turned and began the climb up

the path into the clouds with a newfound freedom. Peace and joy walked with us as we entered the mist of the high clouds. We didn't know what burdens we might pick up along the way but we knew that Jesus was there to take them from us. Our task was to follow the path ever upward, through times in the cloudy mist and times in the bright sunshine.

Our hearts were at once filled with joy and yet saddened in contemplation of those that still stood at the Cross, or those that had gone back down the mountain. In our hearts we knew that any we would meet still carrying their burdens had to be told—there is another and better way!

I have thought about this vision many times and it speaks volumes to me about our walk with Jesus. How we long to have the relationship but don't seem to want to pay the price. Some of our burdens we are eager to unload but others seem to be prize possessions that we just don't want to part with. Our walk is one of moving from *teknon* to *huios*; from infancy to maturity, from milk to meat. So it is with the things that we learn along the way. When the Holy Spirit gives us revelation in a certain area we need to let it shine on that part of our life that He desires to see changed.

As we move from personal “revelation-to-revelation”—“glory-to-glory”—we are going to find other burdens we didn't even know we had. Just like in the vision, when we recognize a burden we need to turn and hand it to Jesus. We don't have to go all the way back to the Cross because He is with us wherever we are.

If we follow the Holy Spirit's leading He will always show us those things that stand in-between Jesus and ourselves. It is our responsibility to listen and be obedient to what He tells us to do. It always requires that we first acknowledge the burden and then immediately give it to Jesus. If we don't they will begin to pile up until we are so weighed down that our walk becomes a grinding

crawl and is in peril of coming to a halt. We can't stay at the foot of the Cross. If we do we will miss out on all the exciting adventures God has in store for us along the pathway. We must move of past the foot of the Cross—the Holy Place—and enter into His presence—the Holiest Place—and abide in His grace. His way is always ascending, but if we will take up His yoke and limit our burden to His it will always be light and the pathway easy.

THAT WE KEEP PURE

*Matt 5:8 Blessed are **the pure in heart**: for they shall see God.*

We all need to seek spiritual purity in our lives and doing so is a life long struggle. It is reflected in our minds, motives, desires, and actions, and one of the greatest hindrances to the process is the very world we live in.

*James 1:27 **Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this**, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.*

Pure religion as used by James in this verse is not “religious” worship but rather the correct “spirit” of worship, which leads to a lifestyle resulting in *visiting the fatherless and widows*. This is an invitation to be like the Father: *a father of the fatherless and a judge of the widows is God in his holy habitation (Ps 68:5)*. The world on the other hand is just the opposite and represents everything opposed or alien to God. Acts of love and kindness evident in our lives make the case that we have the true “Spirit” of religion within us. They represent the purity of our Father, which is not contaminated with impurities; it's pure as gold.

Purity has always existed in God but within us it comes about through a process like the refining of gold. It takes heat for the impurities to rise to the top where they can be drawn off. I once had an engineer ask me if I knew what pure gold looked like. I told him that it was deep rich yellow in color and very soft. I was surprised when he said that 24-carat gold is not, in fact pure. When continually heated until all the impurities are burned off gold becomes transparent. You can see right through it because there is nothing left to cloud it with color. That gave me pause for thought. Remember John's description of heaven in *Rev 21:18, 21*?

If we are obedient to the Spirit of God and allow Him free reign to lead us into God's perfect will for our lives we can be the refiner of men (*Mal 3:1-3*). Unfortunately the bride has often concentrated on the outside when true purity comes from within, and the level of purity we attain in our life is the direct reflection of our appetites. Appetites can become "spots" (disgraces) and "blemishes" (flaws) in our wedding dress. They will present themselves but we have the power to refrain from satisfying them whereby they will eventually starve and die. Remember that trash won't jump out of the dump and get on you; you have to get down and roll in it to pick up the stink and stains. Protect your spirit by watching your body (*Rom 6:12*) and watching your tongue (*Jas 3:2-8*).

Just because we are delivered from the bondage of sin doesn't mean we are exempt from its effects. Mixture, pollution, or other foreign elements certainly describe the world and its system. The enemy uses them all too effectively against the bride. The devil doesn't change his plan of attack because it has always worked in the past and it will work in the future until Jesus returns.

Look how God warned the Israelites about the world just after they were delivered from the bondage in Egypt:

Ex 34:12-14 Take heed to thyself, lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land whither thou goest, lest it be

for a snare in the midst of thee: 13 But ye shall destroy their altars, break their images, and cut down their grove: 14 For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God:

- Purity is affected by:
 - Purpose – *Dan 1:8*
 - Environment – *Pro 23:29-31*
 - Distractions – *Luke 21:34*
- Purity is protected:
 - Putting on Jesus – *Rom 13:14*
 - Walking in the Spirit – *Gal 5:16*
 - Abstaining from Lust – *1 Ptr 2:11-12*
 - Following His Will – *1 Ptr 4:1-6*

THAT WE DIE-TO-SELF

*Ps 51:15-17 O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise. 16 For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering. 17 **The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.***

God will show us daily those parts of our old fleshly nature that He wants to remove through the refining process; a process that never ends. It is repeated over and over as we mature under the love and guidance of the Holy Spirit because we are quite incapable of completing the process by ourselves. Our part is to submit to the refining, maintain a contrite (repentant) heart, and a submitted spirit. Without the Holy Spirit it is quite impossible to make the changes that dying-to-self requires. While there are many things we can do and control during the process, the Holy Spirit

has to bring about the change. Too often, however, we respond by going through some outward process of our own design, albeit with a heart toward change. But the result is always superficial and short-lived at best.

Taking on the task of changing in our own power and strength is a guaranteed recipe for failure, and the worst part comes after we fail when the enemy brings all the guilt and self-doubt associated with our failure. His job is to convince us that it is useless and we can't change. Guess what? He's right. We can't change by ourselves because we don't have the strength and power that is required. So how do we die-to-self?

*Zech 4:6 Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but **by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.***

The Lord wants us to first acknowledge that what He is showing us needs to be changed in our life, and the first step in that process is to hear His voice. This requires both desiring to hear it and actually spending time listening for it. When our heart is submitted in this way He is always faithful to show us those areas that He wants to change. The next step involves agreeing with Him and submitting to that change. Those two steps are the keys to the process of dying-to-self; *agreement* and *submission*.

The Lord wants us to admit that we need to change, that we are incapable of changing by ourselves, and that we are willing to let the Holy Spirit change us by His might and His power. This requires us to follow His leading and that will ultimately require action on our part. The reason we so often fight this action is because it is usually uncomfortable and painful. Remember, meaningful change always comes with a personal cost, but that

cost brings us ever closer to Jesus. The more readily we agree to pay the price the faster and easier change becomes. But how do we count or value our personal cost in light of the price He paid for us?

David was right on target when he counted the cost of personal growth. A broken spirit and a broken and contrite heart lifted up to God in praise are the sacrifices He requires. Our Father cherishes them when we, His children, offer them up in response to the leading of His Spirit. David offered these up in the temple and we offer them up within our heart, for it is there that the temple resides today (*1 Cor 3:16*).

THAT WE FLEE TEMPTATION

1 Cor 10:13 There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

We can never complain that “the devil made me do it” in light of this scripture, because Jesus has made it possible for us to resist the devil.

Jas 4:7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

When we read what James wrote, the path is very clear: *submit*, *resist*, and then he will *flee*. Only when we are submitted to Him can we appropriate His strength to resist, and with that strength comes the ability to choose another course of action or a different

path (a way to escape). The action, however, remains ours to take because “free will” is always a part of the program (*Mk 14:38*).

I like to use the example of the deliveryman that comes to the door with a package for you, one which you didn't order. At that moment you have a choice to either accept it or reject it. If you accept it you know it will eventually have to be paid for. So it is with our thoughts or temptations. We only have to pay for them when we accept them, and we certainly will sooner or later. This wouldn't be as bad if the devil only accepted cash but he is a master of offering instant credit. In other words, our thoughts are not sin, but they become sin when we invite them in and entertain them.

Verse 13 tells us that Jesus, the One who was tempted in “all ways,” is faithful to see that we always have a way out. No matter how attractive the “free” package may appear to be, we always have the option of saying “no.” It's the same way He used in the wilderness when Satan tempted Him at His weakest moment; the Word of God.

We have the Holy Spirit within us to bring to our remembrance the Word we need at the very moment it's required. But, you can't bring up what you don't have. We are responsible for putting the Word inside so it's there to be drawn upon when the temptation comes—*Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh (Matt 12:34)*. If all we have inside is the “world” then we won't stand much of a chance when the doorbell rings. A heart full of television programming is certainly no match for the most devious being in the universe. On the other hand, the Word of God, spoken and acted upon in a time of temptation, results in joyous victory for the Lord. Speak the truth and watch him flee—speak the truth and escape.

THAT WE WORSHIP HIM

*Ps 95:1-8 O come, let us sing unto the Lord: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. 2 **Let us come before his presence** with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms. 3 **For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods.** 4 **In his hand are the deep places of the earth: the strength of the hills is his also.** 5 **The sea is his, and he made it: and his hands formed the dry land.** 6. O come let us **worship and bow down: let us kneel** before the LORD our maker. 7 **For he is our God;** and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. Today if ye will hear his voice, 8 **Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and is in the day of temptation in the wilderness***

Worship means "reverent devotion," our allegiance pledged to God, and the way in which we express it. Worship comes from the Old English words "worth" and "ship," denoting the worthiness of the one receiving the honor. It is characterized by joy and thanksgiving and is the expression of our love relationship with Jesus. Here are some thoughts from Adam Clarke:

- *Let us worship* – prostrate ourselves; the highest act of adoration by which we acknowledge the supremacy of God.
- *Let us bow down* – crouch or cower down, bending the legs under like a dog in the presence of his master, which unselfishly waits to receive his commands.
- *Let us kneel* – put our knees to the ground and put ourselves in the posture of those who pray. And let us consider that

all this should be done in the presence of HIM who is Yahweh our Creator.

Picture if you will, the view painted by David in *Psalms 95*. The congregation of Israel was called to proceed toward the temple in verses 1 and 2. The reason is described in verses 3, 4, and 5 as David honored God. Now in verse 6 we see the call for the congregation to worship the Lord because of who He is; their God (verse 7). What an excellent pattern this is for us to follow in our quiet time with the Lord. Take a few minutes and reread and meditate on these seven verses.

Worshiping the Lord should be one of our most joyful privileges. It's a time when we forget about our individual needs and problems by sacrificing them to Him. This is part of what Paul inferred when he said that I die daily (*1 Cor 15:31*). We need to put our old soulish nature under submission (*Rom 6:19; Gal 2:20; 1 Cor 9:27*) to our spirit and worship the One who is "worthy to be praised" (*2 Sam 22:4*).

In some churches believers stand, in others they bow down, kneel, sit, raise their hands, or in some combination. But the physical act isn't the issue because, as in all things with God, it's an issue of the heart. It's the act of acknowledging the One who is worthy to be worshiped with our heart; a reverential attitude of mind and body representing our loving obedience and service. We are free to worship in His presence with awe and adoration for who He is and what He has done for us. We worship by singing, playing instruments, dancing, and praying as they all bring honor and glory to our Lord, when they come from a broken and cleansed heart and repentant spirit.

If you don't actively participate when the bride worships the Lord you are missing one of the greatest blessings in all of

creation. I assure you that if you don't learn the joy of worship down here you will learn in heaven, because that is the number one, prime time event!

It isn't always easy for us to set aside all the pressures and cares of this life and enter into worship, but I speak from experience when I tell you that there is no greater way to defeat those cares than laying them on the altar with praise. That is why it's called the sacrifice of praise (*Jer 33:11; Heb 13:15*).

When we sacrifice our personal concerns in order to focus on Jesus, something indescribable happens. As we begin to minister to Him He responds and ministers to us. Before we realize it, the Holy Spirit begins to lift up our spirit into the heavenlies with Him. As the worship hymn says: *Cast your eyes upon Jesus, look in His wonderful face, and the things of this world will grow strangely dim in the light of His mercy and grace.*

When our sole focus becomes the heart of Jesus, our heart is opened to receive His love. So unselfish is His love for us that when we reach out to Him, He responds by reaching out to us in our need. It is just the opposite with Satan, who desires the worship of the world for himself at the expense of those who worship him.

I find no better salve for a hurt than to release it to Jesus in praise and worship. He never fails to reach down and minister to my hurt in love with a peace that only He can give. Do I always get an answer? Does my hurt always go away? No, but He is always there to reach out and take me in His arms and let me know He understands. Many times just the "shelter of His wings" is all we need.

If you haven't experienced His love then perhaps it's because you haven't been able to open up and receive it. Too often worship is just viewed as singing before the collection and the sermon. May I suggest that you make a point of offering yourself on the altar

and turn your thoughts upward instead of inward? In whatever way you feel comfortable, just enter into worship. Let the music and singing become more than entertainment. Let them usher you into His presence where I promise you there is fullness of joy.

As I wrote in a piece one time; Worship is not the first recess tardy bell. It's not the signal to begin bringing our conversation in the foyer to a close. If you're standing out there and worship has begun, I'm pretty sure you aren't where the Holy Spirit is.

THAT WE CLAIM HIS WISDOM

Perfect wisdom comes from God. It represents what we are to do with the knowledge and understanding we have obtained. It's like the college graduates who have spent a great deal of time getting prepared for a professional career. They have the "head knowledge" but lack the wisdom to apply that knowledge in a meaningful way. Knowledge is attained by work and is always limited unless it can be utilized wisely.

The apostle Paul declared that the message of the Cross is foolishness to the Greeks and a stumbling block to the Jews, but to those who believe this "foolishness of God" it is "the wisdom of God" (*1 Cor 1:18-25*). Against the wisdom of God Paul contrasted the wisdom of this world (*1 Cor 1:20; 3:19*), human wisdom (*1 Cor 2:4*), the wisdom of men (*1 Cor 2:5*), the wisdom of this age (*1 Cor 2:6*), and man's wisdom (*1 Cor 2:13*).

Jas 1:5 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

One of the key elements in James' statement is that we must "ask." If we don't ask God we are saying that we don't need His

spiritual wisdom (*sophia*). There is an old Greek saying that loosely translated says: *the knowledge of ignorance is the beginning of knowledge*. There is so much freedom in admitting that we don't know the answer, while the saddest part of trying to bluff our way through is that we never get the answer we need.

James used an interesting word when he said liberally (*haplos; simply, bountifully*). When we ask, Jesus gives us all that we need. If you read the previous verses (1-4) you see that he was referring to trials. So in response, he told us to ask God for wisdom to deal with those trials and assured us that God would give it to us. But, lest we leave this thought here, we need to read on.

*James 1:6 But let him **ask in faith, nothing wavering**. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.*

We can't hope to obtain any favor from God if we ask without faith. *Nothing wavering* means doubting or hesitating as to nothing, or in no respect. We are to come to Him in total confidence and assurance that He will respond to His Word. One scripture that has always stood out in my mind relates to this:

*Isaiah 55:11: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: **it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.***

If we ask in faith without wavering, based upon His Word, He will be faithful to provide us with the wisdom we need. But does He give us wisdom in all things?

*1 King 3:9 Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, **that I may discern between good and bad:** for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?*

Moses had knowledge and understanding of the Law but he asked God for the wisdom to apply it. We can also be certain that He will give us wisdom in all things pertaining to His perfect will. And more than that, He will give us wisdom as we seek His perfect will. But once again, we need to remember that it is an issue of the heart. Why do we seek wisdom? Is it for our own selfish purposes or for the advancement of His coming Kingdom? It's a wise man that knows and admits his limitations and calls upon God to meet his needs, but when he calls he needs to be prepared for the answer.

THAT WE RULE CREATION ON HIS BEHALF

*Gen 1:26-28 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and **let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth:** 27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. 28 And **God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.***

God created man in His image (His moral disposition; His character) to subdue (tread upon) the earth and to follow His plan of filling it with people. Man was originally designed to live and

move upon the earth in a kingly fashion. It is interesting that in everything He did in creating the world, God commanded it to be done with His Word: *let there be light... let the land bring forth grass... etc.* But here, in the case of man, He said *let "us" make man*. Rather than just speaking His Word God took an active part in the creation of man, therefore the creation of man is associated with God and not with creation itself.

We will look at the creation of man in God's image and likeness in more detail later, but for now just note that we were given dominion because we were made like the One who has total dominion. His desire was for man to be His representative in looking after all that had been created. In verse 26 God set out what they (us; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) were going to do, and then in verses 27 and 28 they accomplished it. His intent is clear and there can be no question of the position that man was to assume by divine declaration.

Pascal said, *man is neither angel nor beast*. We are far from being on a par with the beasts and yet, unlike angels, we were placed here on earth under God but above creation to order and direct it as He desires. From the very beginning God put us to work in the most responsible position we could ever imagine. How sad that we chose not to follow God's direction and order.

The relation of man to the creature is now stated. It is that of sovereignty. Those capacities of right thinking, right willing, and right acting, or of knowledge, holiness, and righteousness, in which man resembles God, qualify him for dominion, and constitute him lord of all creatures that are destitute of intellectual and moral endowments.

Albert Barnes

However, as the bride of Christ we have the opportunity and responsibility to once again assume the role of God's representatives here on earth. We have been created and equipped for the task through His Word and by the power of His Holy Spirit.

THAT WE SEEK HIS FACE (IN SPIRIT)

Without doubt the mightiest thought the mind can entertain is the thought of God.

A.W. Tozer

*1 Chr 28:9 And thou, Solomon my son, **know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind:** for the LORD searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: **if thou seek him, he will be found of thee;** but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever.*

David instructed his son to know his God, the God that he served. In *Psalm 36:10* David used the same meaning for the word "know;" to have a religious trust in God. The only way to know God in this manner is to love and serve Him. To serve with a "perfect" heart is the Hebrew word *shalem*; complete, full, quiet, and peaceable. But by itself a peaceable heart isn't enough, you must have a willing mind. How often we forget that the control of our will belongs to us. In the end we need to realize that we can't fake it with God because He knows our heart in the first place. If our heart is right then our mind will become right, but only if we are willing and obedient to His Word. God put it in pretty straightforward terms:

Amos 5:4 For thus saith the LORD unto the house of Israel, Seek ye me, and ye shall live.

How do we seek Him? By faith!

Pro 3:5-6 Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. 6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

Solomon was admonished to serve God with a willing heart because that required submission. It's the same for us, a simple willingness to put Him first. Just thinking about God can be simple submission if our heart is in the proper place. If our heart is committed to God in faith then we are leaning fully on Him, which precludes leaning on our own understanding. This is how you build a relationship, by time spent in His presence. Our heart is the center of our spiritual strength, and to love God with all of it is to concentrate all that we have in the process. It takes all our heart in all our ways.

God made us intelligent creatures that were designed to be dependent upon Him. In that dependent state He has promised to communicate to us all that we need. It's in this relationship that we are to acknowledge Him in all of our ways. There isn't a single part of our life that God is not deeply interested in. The Hebrews looked upon the heart as not just the seat of all emotions but rather the center of intellect and will. In this verse that meaning translates to committing your whole inner self to God. In so doing He will direct your paths or make your paths straight. If we focus all of our trust in Him then all of our anxieties and fears will be lifted because we are not trusting in ourselves to deal with them.

In these past few sections we have looked at who God is. Part of our study has involved the second person of the Trinity, the Son

of God. We have seen some of His relationship with the Father and the Holy Spirit, but let's get to know Him as our Lord and Saviour.

CHAPTER 5

WHO IS JESUS?

JESUS IS DEITY

Jesus

Hebrew: *Yehoshua* (Jehovah is Salvation)

Greek: *Lesous*

Christ

Hebrew: *Mashiach* (The Anointed; the Messiah)

Greek: *Christos*

We often refer to Jesus as if His last name was Christ. Let's look at the two names and see where they came from. The first refers to Jesus' deity as God; Jehovah is Salvation. It was the name given to Mary by the angel Gabriel (*Luke 1:31*). It comes from the transliteration of the Hebrew name Joshua and is used throughout the New Testament. Jesus was His earthly name, His name in His humanity. Jesus Christ, on the other hand, is only used in *Matt 1:1,18; Mk 1:1; John 1:17; 17:3* where Christ is added referring to His anointing, the anointing of God or God's Anointed One. We find this quite often in *Psalms* and in the *Book of Acts*:

*Acts 10:38 How God **anointed** Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.*

Peter was very clear in this verse, pointing out where Jesus' anointing came from, what He did with it, and why. God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and power (*dunamis; miracle working power*). Power was what the Jews expected would accompany the Messiah and Peter carefully pointed out that Jesus had that miracle working power and used it: *doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil*. He then provided the perfect proof that Jesus was the Messiah by stating that God was with Him, the seal of approval and validation.

As we study the Word of God we find a transition from Jehovah of the Old Testament to Jesus of the New Testament.

John 1:1: ***In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.***

If we skip down to verse 14—And **the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us**, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth—we see that Jesus is human but yet He is God. The question then is who is He?

JESUS IS THE IMAGE OF GOD

*Gen 1:26, 27 And God said, **Let us make man in our image, after our likeness...** 27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.*

Image and likeness come from the Hebrew words, *tseum* (image) and *demuwth* (likeness). Image is a resemblance and likeness is a model or representation. Jesus is the perfect image of God Himself for us to see. But God didn't stop there; He created us to resemble Him and to be modeled after Him. Let's look at what Webster has to say about these two concepts.

Resemblance is *a point of likeness; a representative image; characteristic in appearance; or a likeness*. If someone looked at God and looked at us as He created us we would be a likeness of Him? Model, on the other hand, means *a miniature representation of something, a pattern of something made, an example for imitation or emulation*. Now consider that both image and likeness are referring to God's moral character. That is how He created us—to resemble Him—but do people see the character of God when they look at us? Think about that for a moment.

God wants us to resemble Him so that we will be an example of His glory for others. That is a pretty heavy responsibility, but God gave us two examples to follow; His Word and His Son. And we all eventually learn that without the molding and shaping of the Holy Spirit, we will never resemble or model our heavenly Father. We discover that the key to becoming all that He originally created us to be is to spend time with the One who can form and shape us into God's own image. God's Word and the life of Jesus are perfect, harmonious models of God's image (His character) and the Holy Spirit will lead us to both.

JESUS IS THE IMAGE OF THE INVISIBLE GOD

Col 1:15-17 Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: 16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and

*invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: **all things were created by him, and for him**: 17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. 18 And **he is the head of the body, the church**: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.*

What a beautiful description of Jesus, the tangible image of the invisible God. These verses paint an incredible picture of Jesus by describing who and what He is. Here are some comments from Matthew Henry on these verses that highlight what Paul expressed:

- *He is the image of the invisible God.* Not as man was made in the image of God (*Gen 1:27*), in his natural faculties and dominion over the creatures: He is the express image of His person (*Heb 1:3*).
- *He is the first-born of every creature.* Not that He is Himself a creature. It signifies His dominion over all things, as the first-born in a family is heir and lord of all, so He is the heir of all things (*Heb 1:2*).
- *He is so far from being himself a creature that he is the Creator.* For by Him were all things created, which are in heaven and earth, both visible and invisible. He made all things out of nothing, the highest angel in heaven, as well as men upon earth. He made the world, the upper and lower world, with all the inhabitants of both. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made which was made (*John 1:3*).
- *He was before all things.* He had a being before the world was made, before the beginning of time, and therefore in

the beginning and from all eternity the Word was with God and was God (*John 1:1*).

- *By Him all things consist.* They not only subsist in their beings, but also consist in their order and dependencies. He not only created them all at first, but it is by the word of his power that they are still upheld (*Heb 1:3*).
- *He is the head of the body the church.* He is not only a head of government and direction, He is also a head of vital influence, as the head in the natural body: for all grace and strength are derived from him: and the church is his body, the fullness of him who filleth all in all (*Eph 1:22-23*).
- *He is the beginning, the first-born from the dead.* He is the principle of our resurrection as well as the first-born Himself. All our hopes and joys take their rise from him who is the author of our salvation. (*Col 1:18*).
- *He hath in all things the pre-eminence.* It was the will of the Father that he should have all power in heaven and earth, that he might be preferred above angels and all the powers in heaven (*Heb 1:4*).
- *All fullness dwells in Him.* It pleased the Father to do so, not only a fullness of abundance just for Himself. (*Col 1:19*).
- *God by him reconciled all things to himself.* He is the Mediator of reconciliation, who procures peace as well as pardon for sinners, who brings them into a state of friendship and favor at present, and will bring all holy creatures, angels as well as men, into glorious and blessed

society at last: things in earth, or things in heaven (*Eph 1:10*).

Jesus represents to man the perfection that is God: His power, His eternal existence, and His right to the entire universe, all of which fully dwell in Jesus. He is presented to us as an express image of the living God—He is God revealed in the flesh.

JESUS IS THE EXPRESS IMAGE OF HIS PERSON

Heb 1:3a Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person...

What we see in the physical Jesus is the manifestation of the character and nature of the Father. He represents the perfect image of the Father, the very image of God's nature. Matthew Henry defined this brightness as: *the resplendent outbeaming of the essential glory of God*; the same brilliance as the splendor of the sun.

This express image is like a wax seal on a document. When the seal was placed into the soft wax a full impression of the seal was left behind. Here Paul (I believe Him to be the author of the *Book of Hebrews*) said that Jesus is: The same splendor as the Father; the essence or nature of the Father; a distinct person from the Father; and eternal in nature like the Father. He made it clear to his Jewish audience that Jesus and the Father are one and that Jesus is their Messiah.

Throughout history God revealed Himself to His people (Israel) by His prophets, and now, in Jesus, He has made His final revelation for us all. All that was previously revealed will not be added to but brought to fulfillment in Jesus. When we see Him face-to-face it will be the fullness of the Father revealed in His

glory. What the disciples saw on the Mount of Transfiguration (*Matt 17:1-5*) is the believer's hope in Christ. What they saw in Jesus will be ours one day when we see Him. However, between now and then the process of conforming to that *image* is a gradual one; one that requires us to submit to the work of the Holy Spirit so that it can be accomplished. It should be our personal desire to be as close to that image as we can get before we look into Jesus' eyes. That's the goal of the bride of Christ during her betrothal. Somehow I think Jesus had that in mind in the parable of the talents when He said:

Matt 25:21 Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

I want Jesus to see a lot of His character in me, and I know the only way to accomplish that is to spend time with Him. There is an old adage that goes something like this: *I can tell who your friends are by who you are.* It's true, we become like those we spend our time with, and if we will spend time with Jesus we will become more like Him.

JESUS IS GOD

Heb 1:8 But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever: a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of thy kingdom.

Here we have David's statement about the Messiah who would be his son, rule as the eternal king; but not the Solomon as some would suppose (*Ps 45:6-7*). This is clearly a statement by the Father to the Son. David specifically spoke to the Son and he

called Him God. The word used for God in the Greek is *theos* or supreme divinity, and it refers to Jesus in the Hebrew context of Elohiym. Remember, David was not referring to the Messiah (Jesus) as the god of the earth, that is the title Satan has assumed. He referred to Him as God of the universe (*John 1:1; Isa 9:6; 1 John 5:20; Phil 2:6*). If Jesus doesn't have a divine nature then David couldn't have referred to Him as Elohiym.

The fact that He is God is further seen in the statement that His throne *is forever and ever*. His kingdom is to be a righteous one and His scepter (staff) will be equitable and just for all. Kings have always had scepters as their symbol of authority and power. We need to see the scepter of Jesus as the shepherd's staff, for He is the shepherd of God's people (*Isa 11:1-5*). Jesus Himself spoke of His divine position:

Matthew 28:18 (And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

John 17:5 (And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was).

JESUS IS THE CREATOR

John 1:3 All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.

John and Paul both made the case that there is no question that Jesus existed in His deity before He took on humanity. He was there to administer all of creation for the Father. It's important to note in verse 3 that John made it very clear that He was not God's agent or subordinate in creation but was God's co-agent. He was

very specific to point out the converse of that statement by saying: *without Him nothing was made*. Go back and read the first two verses of *John 1* and note that God created with His Word. Jesus is His Word, and therefore Jesus was with Him in the beginning. In other words, all things came into being by Him and through Him; the Word—Jesus.

“All things” refers to every infinite detail of creation, not just the creation itself. It means much more than just the world. We know for instance that the angels were created before the world because of the relationship of Lucifer with God before the world was created. Without Jesus not one single thing was made. The mystery that God hid in Jesus was that Jesus created all things and was Himself to become the reconciliation of all that was lost.

*Eph 3:8-9 Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles **the unsearchable riches of Christ**; 9 And to make all men see what is **the fellowship of the mystery**, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, **who created all things by Jesus Christ**:*

Paul rejoiced in being chosen to *make all men* (Jews and Gentiles) *see the unsearchable riches of Christ* (8), the mystery of which he now reveals; the gospel is for all men. *The fellowship of the mystery* means that it is revealed to be common to all believers whatever their background. There is no separation for the select few who are to be blessed in some special way by the gospel. Our Father formed this plan with Jesus from the beginning and kept it hidden until now. The revelation of the mystery then is that Jesus not only “is” the plan of salvation but that He was involved in creating and carrying it out.

Allow me some freedom for a minute to put words in Paul's mouth. It seems to me that in chapter 3 of his letter to the Ephesians he said that in the beginning God created the plan of salvation (the gospel) with Jesus and has kept the gospel a mystery to the Jews from then until now. The mystery is that the gospel is for all men and not just the Jews. The mystery is that God's plan all along was to create a bride for His Son that would serve and glorify Him now and forever; an eternal reminder of the glory and the grace of God.

When I reflect on this mystery and when it was conceived, the impact staggers me. The Father asked the Son to create and be part of a plan to redeem me before the world was and created. Jesus, the creator, designed a plan that called for Him to give His life for me. *John 1:3* tells me He was involved in every detail of the suffering He chose to endure, for a world that would reject him. All because He knew there would be you and me!

JESUS IS UNCHANGEABLE/ETERNAL

Heb 13:8 Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever.

Paul pointed to the numerous characteristics of Jesus that he had previously discussed throughout His letter. The way he used Jesus Christ is translated "Jesus is the Christ," the Messiah. He asked the question: What more could you want? The reality is that what Jesus was in the creation yesterday, He is today, and will be for eternity. I like the Moffatt translation of this verse: *Jesus Christ is eternally "the same" and the revelation of God in him is final and never to be superseded or supplemented.*

Jesus (reality) doesn't change, so we need to keep following Him and not our changing circumstances (unreality). I have a favorite saying about circumstance that I use to remind myself all the time: *they are always subject to change*. When we focus on the message of the One who is unchanging then our life becomes much more stable and isn't affected by change induced from the world's erroneous teachings or doctrines.

We see this in *James 1:17*—there is *no variation or shadow or turning*. God is immutable (unchanging) and since in Christ He upholds all things by His word (*Heb 1:3*), it will not change today or tomorrow but remain as it was previously. The sun will change its position from moment to moment from our perspective on earth but God will not.

Rev 1:8 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

Jesus is *Genesis, Revelation*, and everything in between. He was there before man, when man fell from God, when man was reconciled to God, and will be there when this world is ended. He is Jehovah Tsebaoth, the Lord of Hosts who commands all the powers in heaven and earth just as He has in the past and will in the future. But in the midst of all eternity He chose to step into time and become one of us. And here's the incredible part. If there had been only you, He would still have become a man!

JESUS BECAME HUMANITY

He Is the Son of Man – The Man

*Acts 7:56... Behold, I see the heavens opened, and **the Son of man** standing on the right hand of God.*

Stephen saw the fully mature Son of God (*huios*) and he was the only one who ever called Him the Son of Man. This title means “The Man” and is one of Jesus’ favorites for referring to Himself (*Matt 26:64; Luke 7:33-34, 9:58; Mark 8:31; 9:12; 14:21; 14:49*). Jesus acts as a representative of man and Stephen recognized the position Jesus has taken as our advocate before the Father. He saw his representative standing at the right hand (place of authority) of the Father.

*Luke 12:8 Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess me before men, him **shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God:***

Jesus Got Tired

*John 4:6 Now Jacob's well was there Jesus therefore, being **wearied** with his journey, **sat thus on the well:** and it was about the sixth hour.*

Jesus was wearied with his journey, and yet He had performed but half His day's journey. It was the sixth hour, the hottest time of the day. He was a true man, and as such He was subject to the common infirmities of our human nature. Being tired He sat down on the well, which was an uncomfortable, cold, hard place to rest. He used what was at hand, teaching us to be content with the things that we've been given for the moment.

We should be comforted in the fact that Jesus experienced everything in life that we ever will. Something as simple as being tired can be overlooked in the grand scheme of things, but it wasn't by our Lord. When we're weary and our minds and bodies aren't operating at full strength, He knows and understands how we feel. He knows the impact this has on our spiritual walk, having become tired in the example above and in the wilderness (*Matt 4*). And when He was tired, it was then that He experienced the devil's attack. Satan waited until He was physically weak. But Jesus set before us a wonderful example of how to deal with those times when we are tired and the enemy comes to challenge us. And as we move to verse 7 we also see that He was thirsty.

Jesus Was Thirsty

*John 4:7 There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water:
Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink.*

Notice how Jesus, in His need to quench His thirst, used the opportunity to draw the woman into deeper conversation. He reached across the racial barriers between the Jew and the Samaritan by humbly asking for her help. Little did she know what her response was going to do for her, and the whole town. How many times have we failed to take advantage of the many common, ordinary circumstances in our lives to offer ourselves to others? The little opportunities to offer a cup in the natural that will lead to the spiritual cup. We hold the same Living Water that Jesus gave to her (*John 4:10*) and we need to stand ready to freely share in our "woman of Samaria" opportunities

Jesus Had Emotions

John 11:35 Jesus wept.

This is the shortest and perhaps one of the most powerful verses in the Bible. It gives us a glimpse into Jesus' humanity. Here we find Jesus weeping at the tomb of Lazarus and, while this certainly shows his human side, we should note why He was crying. Most of the people there believed He was weeping for the death of His friend, but for Jesus it represented a missed opportunity for peace and healing in His rejection; just like it was for Jerusalem. Jesus grieved because of the blindness the people had toward the truth of who He is and why He has come.

In our personal relationship with Jesus we need to open ourselves to a little more emotion and allow His feelings and emotions to become part of us. If we aren't willing to feel the hurt of the lows, we will never experience the fullness of the highs. So many want to be resurrected with Him but they don't want to die with Him. Our walk with Jesus is an adventure of the fullest measure, and we are the only ones that can limit our fully experiencing it. Men, learning to cry may be the biggest step you ever take toward Jesus. You can't imagine the walls that brings down; walls between you and Jesus, your mate, your family, your friends, and strangers.

When I began to draw closer to the Lord I noticed a very strange thing beginning to occur in my life. I found myself becoming very sensitive to everything around me. I would watch something on television and the next thing I knew there were tears coming down my cheeks. I thought I was getting near to losing it and it scared me. I was supposed to be in control and not acting like this!

One day in prayer the Holy Spirit turned on the light and it all began to make sense. The more submitted we become to Jesus the

more we become like Him. A part of the process we don't think about is that He begins to give us His heart. With that come His feelings about the people and events surrounding us, which I have discovered are very different from my own. I thought I had a good "Christian" heart and was sensitive to the needs of those around me... not even close!

When Jesus sees hurt and pain in us He feels it. When we see pain in others we often put up walls so the pain doesn't get inside and become a part of us. It's sort of like, I know what you're going through and I feel sorry for you but, better you than me. When we're walking with Jesus and our heart's desire is to know Him, we better be ready to know "all" of Him. It's only through His eyes that life begins to take on new meaning.

I have discovered that when He shows me someone's pain, the only way to ease it is to do something about it. That may involve saying or doing something or maybe just being there. But a certainty is that it always involves prayer. We can't hope to experience His joy if we won't experience His suffering. The suffering of the people in this world is His. The question for us... *is it ours?* He doesn't look the other way... *do we?*

Jesus Was Tempted

Matt 4:1 Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

*Heb 4:15 For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was **in all points tempted like as we are**, yet without sin.*

Jesus taught us that sin is not "thoughts," it's what springs from those thoughts. The thoughts themselves (temptations) are not sin;

it's what we do with them that defines them. Like we noted earlier, the deliveryman knocks at the door and delivers, we receive and ultimately pay the price. Just because he shows up at our door with something is no reason for us to accept it; it's our choice. How about the example of David?

*2 Sam 11:2-4: And it came to pass **in an evening tide**, that **David arose from off his bed**, and walked upon the roof of the king's house: and from the roof **he saw a woman washing herself**; and the woman was very beautiful to look upon. 3 And **David sent and inquired after the woman**. And one said, **Is not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?** 4 And **David sent messengers, and took her**; and she came in unto him, and he lay with her; for she was purified from her uncleanness: and she returned unto her house.*

This is a very familiar story, but I want to focus on what I think is the real message in these four verses. First, note in verse 1 that David got up from His bed when it was time to go to bed. He had just sent off his men to battle and he was lying around the palace, sleeping during the day when as the king he should have been leading his army. It would seem he had already set himself up for the enemy.

Now in the second part of verse 2 we see the deliveryman come to his door: *he saw a woman washing herself; and the woman was very beautiful to look upon*. From our previous discussion you can see that he should have said, "I didn't order it and I'm not paying for it." But what did he do? He took the thought and began to make it his own: *David sent and inquired after the woman*. He hadn't sinned at this point but he was headed in that direction.

When we begin to hold the sinful thought in our mind and contemplate it, whatever it may be, we are thinking about accepting the package. In this case David asked the deliveryman if he could see the package before he signed for it, but even having gone that far the Lord still tried to warn him.

Here was the voice of, we presume, one of his servants who simply asks, *Isn't that Uriah's wife?* It's the Holy Spirit saying to us, *don't look into that package, it's not for you.* Perhaps it's leaving the TV on the wrong channel rather than recognizing you need to move on, or not letting your anger and hurt over something become a root of bitterness.

But now look at the result of contemplating the thought. David succumbed to the thought and signed for the package by bringing Bathsheba to his palace with but one thought on his mind. We have a real lesson here in the way the enemy works. First David was in a place he shouldn't have been. If he had been in battle with his men, seeing Bathsheba taking the bath wouldn't have even been an issue. Secondly he didn't stop when the warning bell was sounded, and he moved right on past the warning into sin.

That is so often how the devil works in us. It always starts with a little thought, and if we begin to ponder it, it becomes progressive. When he has planted the seed he'll water and cultivate it unless we dig it up and get rid of it. Just like it can take a long time for a seed to germinate, sometimes it takes a long time for the thought to become action. But, if we hold on to it, sooner or later it will. We need to be vigilant, because the Word tells us that Satan is like a roaring lion, roaming about to see who he can devour (*1 Pet 5:8*). Sometimes he tries to take a big bite, but most often he just nips, nips, and nips until all of a sudden we realize a big chunk is missing!

Contrast this example with that of Jesus in the wilderness and the way becomes crystal clear—He didn't compromise at all. He answered the door, recognized the deliveryman and the package, spoke the Word, and closed the door! If David had done that, just think about all the people who wouldn't have subsequently been hurt. I have had several of these instances in my life and I wish I had spoken the Word and closed the door.

Jesus—the man—showed us the way. He did not sin for two very significant reasons: 1) He was totally submitted to the Father, and 2) He spoke nothing but what He heard the Father say. How much easier life would be if we just did those two things?

He was tempted in every way but He never took delivery of an evil thought, yet He signed for ours and paid the tab. This is a wonderful definition of atonement; He charged His account for our goods. Think of all the temptations we face every day. He experienced them as well and never allowed one of them to turn into sin. He knew that we could never do that on our own, so He shed His Blood “for” us and gave His Spirit “to” us. I like the way Oswald Chambers put it:

Temptation means the test by an alien power of the possessions held by a personality. This makes the temptation of our Lord explainable. After Jesus in His baptism had accepted the vocation of bearing away the sin of the world, He was immediately put by God's Spirit into the testing machine of the devil, but He did not tire, He went through the temptation “without sin,” and He retained the possessions of His personality intact.

I smiled when a friend of mine when he told me that every time the “sin man” comes knocking at the door with a delivery he just slowly says the name of Jesus seven times. I tried it, and by the

second or third utterance of His wonderful name, my mind was turning upward to Him and the temptation began to fade. Let the Holy Spirit be for us like David's faithful servant was for him; *is not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?*

Jesus Suffered

*Heb 2:10 For **it became him**, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to **make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.***

Suffering is the Greek word *pathema*, which means hardship, pain, or affliction. Only the One for whom all things were made and the One who made all things could choose to suffer and atone for our sins. It was “fitting” (*became Him*) for Jesus to suffer as a man so that the purchase price for our salvation would be paid in full.

This subjection to his humble condition, and to his many woes, made him such a Saviour as man needed, and qualified him fully for his work. There was a propriety that he who should redeem the suffering and the lost should partake of their nature; identify himself with them; and share their woes, and the consequences of their sins.

Albert Barnes

Look back at the first part of this verse; *it became Him*. This was not an obligation on His part as a result of some set of circumstances. It was “suitable” for the divine purpose of the Father to make Jesus a sacrifice so that many would come into His

glory. But His sacrifice was not without real physical and spiritual suffering. Just like the lambs that were sacrificed on the altar, Jesus had to be completely consumed to qualify as the *captain of our salvation*; the “author” of our salvation.

But Christ, the great Prince of mercy and life, graciously interposed, that He might deliver those miserable captives of Satan—mankind in general, and the dark and idolatrous Gentiles in particular, who, through fear of death, were, or justly might have been, all their lifetime, obnoxious to bondage; having nothing to expect in consequence of it, if they rightly understood their state, but future misery; whereas now, changing their lord, they have happily changed their condition, and are, as many as have believed in Him, the heirs of eternal life."

Adam Clarke

In the military a captain is a leader as well as a follower. Jesus led the captives to salvation while following His Father. He continues to do so today for all who will follow; He is our forerunner into the Holiest Place (*Heb 6:20*). Jesus accomplished it in suffering as a man, and those of us that follow Him into life must be prepared to suffer and die to our own selfish interests. There are many that want the glory of the resurrection but not the suffering that goes with dying-to-self. You can't have one without the other; the old and the new can't walk hand-in-hand with Jesus.

JESUS IS THE ONLY BEGOTTEN SON

*Heb 1:5 For unto which of the angels said he at any time, **Thou art my Son**, this day have **I begotten thee**? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?*

*Acts 13:32 And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, 33 God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that **he hath raised up Jesus again**; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, **this day have I begotten thee.***

*John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave **his only begotten Son**, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

There are many pages that have been written about these verses, but let's limit ourselves to two facts in *John 3:16*. First, that the Father clearly identified Jesus as His son. Jesus is the only One who God ever referred to as His *only begotten* (His only born). The word Son used here is our old friend *huios*; fully mature son.

In *Heb 1:5* Paul quoted *Ps 2:7*, confirming that Jesus is the Son of God in as much as He had begotten Him: *to which angel did He say you are my son?* The obvious answer is “none,” but the second part of the verse elevated the statement to a whole new level. It referred to Jesus’ death and resurrection.

God asked a second question when He said, not to the angels but to Jesus, *and again I will be to him a Father and he shall be to me a Son*. God had one Son and He was not an angel, He was a Son begotten by God. Can we not imagine the tremendous pain and suffering of both the Father and the Son at the Cross? I believe we only have to look at Jesus on the Cross to see the moment in time when the Father turned His back on Him. When Jesus hung there, covered with all of mans' sin—*My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? (Matt 27:46)*—He died a spiritual death so we would never have to.

Many have taken the *and again* in verse 5 and *this day* in *Acts 13:32* to mean that when Jesus died the Father would make Him once again His Son (upon His resurrection). No matter how one looks at it, the truth cannot be denied; Jesus was the only begotten Son of God.

Imagine at that moment on the that Cross Jesus holding onto that promise: *this day* (the appointed day of His death and resurrection) *I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son*. The Father promised that Jesus would be His Son after the resurrection. Jesus stated His personal faith in that promise several times such as in *John 16:28: I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father*. Look at Luke's writings in *Acts 13:33*, and Paul's in *Rom 1:4* and *Col 1:18*, as well as John's in *Rev 1:5*. God only made that promise to Jesus, but through Him it was made to us.

Secondly, we need to remember that the overlooked words—*He gave*—are critically important because they remind us that Jesus' life "was not" taken from Him. God freely gave His only born Son and Jesus freely gave His own life as our sacrifice. This was an act that only the Father and Son could have accomplished for us, we could never have forced them to do it. By the same token, they will never force any of their creation to accept the sacrifice.

Whether we accept the sacrifice or not is of no consequence to the fact that *He gave his only begotten Son (John 3:16)* and the *Son gave up His life while we were yet sinners (Rom 5:8)*. These two facts stand outside our existence and require no action on our part for validation, only our acceptance to give them life and meaning for each of us as individuals. Our salvation is secure for eternity because it doesn't depend upon our faithfulness. It depends only upon Jesus' faithfulness to the Father.

JESUS IS THE WORD/WISDOM

*John 1:1 In the beginning was the **Word**, and the **Word** was with God, and the **Word** was God.*

*John 1:14 And the **Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.***

*1 Cor 1:24 But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, **Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.***

*1 Cor 1:30 But of him are ye in **Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption***

*Pro 3:19 The **LORD by wisdom** hath founded the earth; by **understanding** hath he established the heavens.*

Let's consider the concepts of wisdom and understanding for a moment. These scriptures clearly show that Jesus is both the Word and Wisdom of God. As a preparation for the following discussion take a moment and read *Job 28*. This will be a long trip to our destination, but it's an excellent example of the breadth and depth of our God.

Think about who Job was and what he was going through; he had everything and had it all taken away amid great suffering. There are a number of messages in this chapter but I want to point out just three to make my point.

Job outlined the promise of the Messiah in his search for the wisdom of God; *the hidden path*. Consider these verses from *Job 28*:

1. *Surely there is a vein for the silver, and a place for gold where they fine it.*
2. *Iron is taken out of the earth, and brass is molten out of the stone.*
7. *There is a path which no fowl knoweth, and which the vulture's eye hath not seen:*
8. *The lion's whelps have not trodden it, nor the fierce lion passed by it.*
10. *He cutteth out rivers among the rocks; and his eye seeth every precious thing.*
11. *He bindeth the floods from overflowing; and the thing that is hid bringeth he forth to light.*
12. *But where shall wisdom be found? and where is the place of understanding?*²⁰. *Whence then cometh wisdom? and where is the place of understanding?*
21. *Seeing it is hid from the eyes of all living, and kept close from the fowls of the air.*
22. *Destruction and death say, We have heard the fame thereof with our ears.*
23. *God understandeth the way thereof, and he knoweth the place thereof.*
28. *And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.*

Verse 1 speaks of the place where *silver is found* and *gold is refined*. Verse 7 talks about *the path, which no fowl knoweth, which the vulture's eye hath not seen*. Verse 8 says that *the lion's whelps have not trodden it*. Consider for a moment that verses 1, 7 and 8 are revealing the path of salvation, the path of the Messiah.

It's a path to something precious that no *fowl knoweth* or *vulture's eye has seen*; the evil spirit doesn't know it. The *lion's whelps* (man) have not gone on this path because it's hidden. Job was describing God's path for man, which was to be revealed by God; the pathway to salvation for all men to be revealed in Jesus.

Now look at verse 10 and note that *His eye sees every precious thing*. Who is God's eye that can see everything? The Holy Spirit, because God is omnipresent; present in all places at the same time. Job then brought it into focus in verses 11 and 12.

Verse 11 tells us that the thing (the path), which is hid, *bringeth He forth to light*; no evil spirit knows and no man has walked down it. That is the path to salvation in Jesus. Now in verse 12 he reveals what is being brought to light; wisdom. He asks, where can it be found and where is the understanding?

The Hebrew word for understanding (*binyinah*) is the same one used in *Isa 11:2* for the *spirit of understanding*. In *Isa 11:1-2* the Messiah (Jesus) is foretold and He is described as having the *spirit of understanding* resting upon him. Now let's pull this together in verse 13.

Job said that man does not know the price of wisdom and that it cannot be found in the land of the living. Let me suggest something to think about. *Wisdom* (Jesus) is the hidden path to salvation, and the only way to find it is through *Understanding* (Holy Spirit). Man cannot gain Wisdom on his own in the natural because it is spiritual and comes only from God by the revelation of His Spirit. Look at the closing verses of the chapter and listen to

how Job summed it up. When you see the word Wisdom, substitute Jesus, and when you see the word Understanding, substitute Holy Spirit and I think the message will become clear:

- 20: When comes *Jesus* and where is the *Holy Spirit*
- 21: Natural eyes will not find *Jesus*
- 22: Satan knows of *Jesus* and the *Holy Spirit*
- 23: The Father knows *His Son* and *His Spirit*
- 24-27: They were both there when He created the heavens and the earth

Finally verse 28. The reverence of God the Father is Jesus (Wisdom), and to turn from evil toward Jesus (Wisdom) is to follow the Holy Spirit (Understanding). In other words, wisdom (Jesus) is revealed by Understanding (Holy Spirit) as we respond and turn from evil toward God. Job was trying to find the wisdom of God in his circumstances, and he knew only that it was God alone who knew and understood the reason.

The parallel I have drawn here in Job's discourse with Jesus and the path of salvation can be seen in many places in the Old Testament: Noah and the flood, Jonah and the whale, Joseph and his brothers, etc. The entire Bible has but one purpose and that is to show man God's love for mankind and the plan of redemption He offers in His Son.

Is what I have described here some new and unseen revelation. Rest assured that it is not. Rather it is just a revelation of God's truth to me by the Holy Spirit... because the Scripture is brought alive to all those that seek Him with a hungry heart.

As you see Wisdom used in the scriptures, consider the 28th chapter of Job and let the Spirit of Understanding speak revelation to you. God says that if we lack Wisdom we are to ask for it and

He will give it liberally. Just remember the caveat contained in verse 6:

James 1:5-6 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. 6 But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.

CHAPTER 6

WHY DID JESUS BECOME MAN?

In this chapter I want us to look at a few of the foundational reasons why Jesus stepped down from heaven and assumed our humanity. I covered this subject in much greater detail in my book *Wake Up and Rest - The Bride Sleeps at Her Own Peril*, but for our purposes here there are some foundational principles that, as His bride, we need to be sure we have securely locked in our heart.

With that in mind, a good place to begin is to reflect on just a few of the over 300 prophecies that have been put forth concerning Jesus.

<u>Prophecy</u>	<u>Date (BC)</u>	<u>Prophecy</u>	<u>Fulfilled</u>
Birthplace	700	<i>Mic 5:2</i>	<i>Mt 2:1</i>
Virgin Birth	700	<i>Isa 7:14</i>	<i>Mt 1:18</i>
Triumphant Entry	500	<i>Zec9:9</i>	<i>Jn 12:13-15</i>
Betrayed By A Friend	1000	<i>Ps 41:9</i>	<i>Mk 14:10</i>
Persecuted	700	<i>Isa 53:3</i>	<i>Jn 1:11</i>
Crucified With Sinners	700	<i>Isa 53:12</i>	<i>Mt 27:38</i>
Hands/Feet Pierced	1000	<i>Ps 22:16</i>	<i>Jn20:27</i>
Resurrection	1000	<i>Ps 16:10</i>	<i>Act 3:15</i>
Ascension	1000	<i>Ps 68:18</i>	<i>Act 1:9</i>

And here in the 21st century we have many prophetic promises to look forward to that seem to be very close to fulfillment. As the

signs of the times grow stronger and clearer, and as the "pains of birth" increase, we need to be ever vigilant and watch for His soon coming return. There are no requirements left to be met. As His bride we must be ready to meet Him at any moment and therefore we need to be about the business of "working out our salvation." But that doesn't mean working "to" gain our salvation (that has already been received). It means living "out" our salvation by serving our Lord and Master (our bridegroom) through a loving relationship that grows and deepens over time as we draw closer to Him (see Volume 2 -The Spirit-filled Christian). And since the best place to begin is always at the beginning, let's revisit the foundation that we stand on to make sure were building upon a solid one.

JESUS' PURPOSE

To Make Atonement

Atonement is the act by which God restored a relationship of harmony and unity between Himself and man. Through God's atoning grace and forgiveness we are reinstated to a relationship of *oneness* with Him, in spite of our sin. This is a restored relationship and not a newly created one. It's a restoration of what Adam lost in The Garden that Enoch found. It's a restoration that was paid for by Jesus' atonement.

We were meant to be at one with God from before the beginning, and to walk with Him in the cool of the evening as did Adam. And while Adam lost that "oneness," Jesus has made it possible once again through His atoning blood.

*1 John 4:14 And we have seen and do testify that **the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.***

*John 1:29 The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold **the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.***

*Romans 5:6 For when we were yet without strength, in due time **Christ died for the ungodly.***

But Jesus' sacrifice didn't just cover our sins like the blood of lambs and goats, it "took away" our sins (*John 1:29*). John referred to the words of Isaiah:

*Isa 53:7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: **he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.***

The lamb that Isaiah spoke of was Jesus, the One whom the Old Testament's sacrifices foreshadowed.

*Ex 29:38 Now **this is that which thou shalt offer upon the altar;** two lambs of the first year day by day continually.³⁹ **The lamb thou shalt offer in the morning; and the other lamb thou shalt offer at even:***

Notice that the sacrifice was to be given continually, every morning and every evening because it only "covered" Israel's sins. However, Jesus was the final and last sacrifice because His blood "atoned" for all sins. Man had presented all the previous lambs to God but the Father presented Jesus, The Lamb of God. The other lambs covered the sins of Israel but this lamb carried away the sins of the world. It was forever the perfect sacrifice. No wonder John

the Baptist stood in awe of being the one chosen by God to baptize His sacrificial lamb.

I preached a sermon one time on the Passover lamb and the picture it painted of the sacrifice of Jesus. One of the key points dealt with the manner in which the Passover lamb was to be chosen.

*Ex 12:3-6 Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man **a lamb**, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house: 4 And if the household be too little for **the lamb**, let him and his neighbor next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb. 5 **Your lamb** shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats: 6 And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening.*

The people were told to take **A** lamb into their house on the tenth day. They were told to share **THE** lamb with their neighbor if their neighbor's house was too small. Then they were told that **YOUR** lamb was to be without blemish and be separated from the others. They were to examine it for 4 days and on the last day they were to kill it and eat it.

Now think about that little lamb, which had gone from **A** lamb, to **THE** lamb, and finally to **YOUR** lamb. For four days you have this cute little lamb around your house with your children playing with it. It isn't running with the rest, it's separate so that you can examine it to be sure it is without blemish. Your whole family has enjoyed it and has become very attached to this little guy, but now you must kill it and eat it.

That is exactly what the Father had to do with His Son. His perfect lamb. The One He loved dearly had to be killed to atone for our sins. This was The lamb that had been in His house forever. The One without blemish that was perfect had to shed its blood and give its life for us. Do we really know and appreciate what God has done for us and the tears He must have shed? Certainly the Hebrews of that time could because they had to repeat this ritual every year.

Could God have chosen anything more helpless than a little lamb to touch the very core of who we are? Only a very callous heart can ignore God's lamb, and yet the Holy Spirit can soften even that one. Like *Job 28*, this is another example of God revealing His plan of redemption in the Old Testament, a foreshadowing of things to come.

To Intercede—God-to-Man and Man-to-God

Romans 8:34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

We hold our unique position with the Father because we are identified with Jesus in two ways: 1) *it is Christ that died*; and 2) *is risen again*. In His death He paid the price and in His resurrection He was acquitted of all the charges against Him, and therefore against all those who have died with Him. He is sitting at the right hand of God (the seat of authority) and constantly pleads our case by His blood that was sprinkled on the altar. Who is he that is condemning us asked Paul? Who has the right other than Jesus to condemn, because He is the One who died and rose again to save us, not to condemn us. Because He is interceding for us with the Father, we can rest assured that He isn't condemning us.

Look at *Rom 8:26* and we can see that it is the Holy Spirit who intercedes for each one of us individually. In *Heb 7:25* we see that this is one of the reasons why Jesus ascended into heaven, to make intercession for us. Picture the blood of Jesus interceding on behalf of His bride as a whole, and the Holy Spirit interceding for each of us individually.

What a way to go into court, with our defense attorney and the district attorney in total agreement as to our innocence before the judge. The judge looks down and never even sees us, He just sees Jesus standing there with the Holy Spirit on our behalf, and Jesus simply states, *here is one of those you have given me, washed in my blood and forgiven (John 17:11-12)*.

If you want to get a picture of just what this intercession encompasses read the *Genesis 18* and see how our spiritual father, Abraham, interceded on behalf of Sodom, or Moses interceded on behalf of Israel in *Ex 15:25*. Finally, look at the ultimate in intercession of Jesus on the Cross (*Luke 23:34*). We need to put this kind of intercession to work here and now when the Lord sets someone in front of us and asks us to pray.

To Reconcile—Man-to-God and Man-to-Man

2 Cor 5:21 For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

If by faith in Jesus' sacrifice we have been given the righteous nature of God, then we also have that righteous nature for our fellow man. We are without any excuse if we fail to follow His example and reconcile any differences we may have with our brothers and sisters.

Let us then, in view of this whole chapter (2 Cor 5) seek to be reconciled to God. Let us lay aside all our opposition to him. Let us embrace his plans. Let us be willing to submit to him, and to become his ETERNAL FRIENDS. Let us seek to heaven to which he would raise us; and though our earthly house of this tabernacle must be dissolved, let us be prepared, as we may be, for that eternal habitation which he has prepared for all who love him in the heavens.

Albert Barnes

*Eph 2:14 For he is our peace, **who hath made both one**, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;*

Jesus hasn't only reconciled us to Himself individually, He has made reconciliation available for the whole world. The barrier (wall of partition) of sin has been removed (*John 1:29; 2 Cor 5:18-19*). Notice in *Eph 2:14* and *Rom 5:1* that peace has been provided for the entire world, but that peace only becomes a reality through the new birth. In his epistle, Luke didn't quote God as saying Peace "to" men, He said Peace "toward" men (*Luke 2:14*). It's by our choice that we accept the offer and make Jesus our peace.

The reference to Jesus as our peace calls attention to the "ministry of reconciliation" referred to in *2 Cor 5:17-18*. God has reconciled us to Himself by Jesus and has given us the same ministry for others. We are called to minister reconciliation with God to those whom the Holy Spirit has prepared and brought into our life. He does the preparing and we minister the Gospel. The phrase in verse 14—*both one*—refers to God and man and Jew and Gentile because, all races are now one in Christ. The "partition" was removed in one act of reconciliation; Jesus' death on the Cross.

To Redeem

Heb 9:11-12 But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; 12 Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

We have been redeemed (*lutrosis*) or, more appropriately, ransomed by Jesus. His death and resurrection have replaced the Jewish Day of Atonement (*Lev 16:3, 11*). The price was paid for all as an *eternal redemption*. The word eternal carries with it the implication of past, present, and future. As the high priest, He entered into the Holy of Holies to make His sacrifice. Not in the tabernacle made with man's hands but in the temple in heaven that was made with God's hands, the one in God's very presence.

The Jewish high priest would enter the tabernacle once each year, once to offer a blood sacrifice for himself (bullock) and once for all Israel (goat). He was the only one allowed by God to enter into the earthly Holy of Holies and his sacrifices only covered his sins and the sins of Israel, they could not remove them. Jesus, as our High Priest, entered into the heavenly Holy of Holies (*2 Cor 5:1*) with a blood sacrifice not for Himself but for all mankind. He poured His blood on the "heavenly mercy seat;" not the blood of an animal—and He did it only once. Why only once? Because His sacrifice was sufficient for all of eternity. He didn't just cover our sins until the next time, He redeemed us from sin for "all time." He removed our sins so far from us that it is just as if they never existed. Louis Evans, in his commentary on the book of *Hebrews*, beautifully and fully described eternal redemption:

He did not bring the blood of any bull or goat, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all. The author emphasizes the singularity of this offering in contrast to the continual offering of the earthly priests. ONCE, never before, never again, ONCE, at the completion of the age Christ offered His own blood in an act of eternal and sensitive love. That is how much He and the one who sent Him loved us. No price was too much, so He paid the maximum; never could there be any doubt or question about the sufficiency of the payment.

Let me draw a picture for you to illustrate the foreshadowing of Jesus in the Levitical sacrifice. On the Day of Atonement the high priest would enter into the Holy of Holies and first offer the blood of a bullock for his own sins. Next he would offer the blood of a goat for the people. What followed was the use of a second goat over which he confessed the sins of Israel. This “scapegoat” or “sin bearer” was then led out of the city gates into the wilderness as a symbol that the sins of the people had been transferred and put out of sight.

The first goat (dead) represents the death of Jesus and the second goat (living) represents His resurrection. It is interesting that Jesus was crucified outside the city gates in an area considered to be unclean. As the symbolic second goat, He carried our sins far from sight. Jesus as our redeemer made a sacrifice for us that satisfied the legal requirements under God's law and cleansed our consciences (*Heb 10:1; Gal 3:13*). In God's eyes we were cleansed internally as well as being outwardly delivered from the bondage of sin. Our soul has been sanctified or purified by His blood. The covenant that God made with Moses involved the blood of animals

but in the blood of Jesus we have a new and better covenant (*Heb 8:1-6*).

To Teach the Kingdom of God

The Kingdom of God pertains to whatever concerns the doctrine, discipline, and establishment of the church.

*Acts 1:3 To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and **speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:***

Jesus appeared to His disciples on at least ten occasions during the 40 days after His death and resurrection. During that time He continued revealing to them the things that pertained to the kingdom. One of the reasons for His teaching was to show them that the kingdom He alluded to previously, He was about to usher in with the Holy Spirit. His teaching was to prepare them to receive the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Grace who would continue to reveal the kingdom of God. This was the fulfillment of the kingdom seen by Daniel in his vision.

*Dan 7:13-14 I saw in the night visions, and, behold, **one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.14 And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.***

What Jesus taught was that the militant kingdom of judgment the Jews expected was not His. His kingdom was one of repentance, salvation, and purity. The bride of Christ is to be the earthly representative of the heavenly kingdom to come in which Jesus will rule and reign in perfection. Jesus said many times during His earthly ministry that *the kingdom of God is at hand* (*Matt 4:17; 10:7; Mark 1:15; Luke 21:31*). The bride, the true church, is the kingdom in spirit that He has ushered in, which will be fully realized at His Second Coming.

To Teach the Way of the Kingdom

Matt 22:37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. 38 This is the first and great commandment. 39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. 40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

This was the way of the kingdom that Jesus had shown them during His earthly ministry. After His resurrection He was preparing them to receive the Holy Spirit who would make it possible for them to follow these two commandments. Without the Holy Spirit within it is impossible to love with the “active” love of God (*agape*). We explore the ministry of the Holy Spirit in Volume 2 of this series, but suffice it to say here that up until this point the disciples had never been capable of *agape* because the Holy Spirit had not yet come. Here in Matthew, Jesus told them how they were expected to live in His kingdom under the New Covenant; it's the same message for us today.

Under the New Covenant (New Testament) we are to first love God (*Deut 6:5*) and secondly to love our neighbor (*Lev 19:18*), just

as under the Old Covenant (Old Testament). We are told to obey these two commandments *with all thy soul and with all thy mind*, because in so doing we fulfill all the law of the Old Covenant. This we all know by experience is impossible to accomplish in the natural; in our old nature. Jesus knew it would be impossible and so He sent His Spirit to teach us the Way of the kingdom. The question is, are we listening and paying attention?

To Be Lord of All

*Phil 2:8-11 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. 9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: 10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; 11 And that every tongue should confess that **Jesus Christ is Lord**, to the glory of God the Father.*

Here is the paradox the world sees in the Christian Gospel: *the last becomes the first and the humble are exalted (Matt 5:3-11)*. The servant becomes Lord and the poor become rich. Jesus lived what He taught as an example for all His disciples, both then and now. The Greek word Lord used here is *kurios* or supreme in authority. Jesus Christ is Lord, the Anointed One, the Messiah who is the supreme authority (*Rom 10:9; 1 Cor 12:3*), yet in this position He humbled Himself by setting aside all His deity and glory to become human and suffer death. The result was the Father exalting Him above all:

Eph 1:20-23 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the

*heavenly places, 21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: 22 And **hath put all things under his feet**, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, 23 Which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all.*

In verse 21 we see that He is exalted *above every name that is named*, now and in the future. Verse 22 carries the same theme as *Psalms 110* that the Messiah was appointed by God as the Supreme Ruler of the universe. In other words, Jesus is *Lord over all* and His authority is carried out through His bride. We who believe, as His bride, are the fullness of Jesus here on earth. He has given us dominion over all things by the authority given to Him by the Father (*Luke 10:19*). This is what John the Baptist meant when he proclaimed: *and of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace (John 1:16)*. He has the full authority to invest this in His bride because the Father made Him the absolute governor over all creation: *every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that He is Lord (Rom 14:11)*.

TO GIVE HIS LIFE FOR MAN

He Prophesied His Death

Matt 16:21 From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.

Here we find Jesus about six months before His crucifixion. It was time to prepare the disciples for His death and resurrection. Up

to this point the Lord had only spoken of His death in generalities (*Matt 12:40*), but here in verse 21 we see the prediction of both His death resurrection. How like Jesus to withhold this information to prevent them from suffering any sooner than absolutely necessary. But He perceived that they were ready in light of Peter's statement:

*Matt 6:16 And Simon Peter answered and said, **Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.***

Most of us want to share the bad news and then find some immediate comfort from others, but Jesus had only the preparation of His disciples in mind.

His Death Was Voluntary

*John 10:17-18 Therefore doth my Father love me, because **I lay down my life, that I might take it again.** 18 **No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself.** I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.*

*Mark 10:45 For even **the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.***

It is crucial for us to understand that Jesus laid down His life by His own direction. Nobody took his life from Him—not the high priest, not Pontius Pilot, and not the soldiers who nailed Him to the Cross. Where would we be today if Jesus had not made the choice to obey His Father's commandment (*John 3:14; Matt 16:21*)? He was willing to give up something that no man could

ever take from Him; His right to choose. This is the ransom price we talked about earlier, and how big a price it was.

We must never forget that Jesus could have failed. Just like Adam, in His humanity he had a free will and He could have quit on us. But He didn't, and when the time came He freely gave up His life for the sins of this world, your sins and mine, the sins He had no part in or responsibility for. He knew that in choosing to lay down His life for us He would receive it again from the Father. In *Mark 10:45* the words *a ransom for many* are translated to mean "instead of" not "on behalf of." Jesus didn't just step in and die on our behalf, He took our sin upon Himself and stood in our place being charged and found guilty. Jesus never quit on us. How many times have we quit on Him, only to be forgiven and restored by that very life so freely given?

TO BE RESURRECTED

*Luke 24:36-37 And as they thus spake, **Jesus himself stood in the midst of them**, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. 37 But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit.*

*Act 13:32-33 And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, 33 God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that **he hath raised up Jesus again**; as it is also written in the second psalm, **Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.***

*Rom 8:29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be **the firstborn among many brethren.***

*Heb 1:5 For unto which of the angels said he at any time, **Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?** And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?*

We can identify with His being the only begotten Son of God in Mary's womb, but the subtleness of this with respect to the resurrection may not be as evident.

*Ps 2:7-8 I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, **Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.** Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.*

In *Psalm 2* David was clearly speaking of the second birth of Christ. Jesus was the *first born among many brethren* (*Rom 8:29*). Because of His resurrection from the dead—His second birth—we who follow have had the road to salvation opened to us. We see in *Heb 1:5* a direct quote from *Psalm 2*, and again in *Acts 13:33*. Jesus was proven innocent by His resurrection and ascension, which showed the power of God. Paul was writing to Hebrew Christians in this letter and Jesus' resurrection was a divine testimony to His being their long awaited Messiah. He quoted *2 Sam 7:14* to make the point that God identified Jesus as His Son; *I will be his father, and he shall be my son*. He made it plain that Jesus, and not Solomon, was the seed from David who would sit upon his throne.

We need to remember that we, too, rise with Him. But that means we must first share in His death. Consider that to share these two also means that we will share in His suffering. It comes back to the issue of *dying-to-self*. Jesus paid for our sins one time, but the renewing of our mind and the maturing of our spirit (being conformed into His image; *Rom 12:2*) takes an entire lifetime.

Only when we see Him face-to-face will we be like the finished product; our character matching the image of the ascended Christ. How far along are we going to be just before that happens? I know that we can come very close to the finished product if we let the Holy Spirit have His way. And to accomplish that we need to spend our time abiding with Him in the Holiest Place. Wouldn't it be great if Jesus didn't have a lot left to finish in us when we arrive? That should be our goal!

To Ascend To Heaven

When Jesus ascended to heaven in His glorified body it was for the benefit of His disciples. It was the fulfillment of His earthly ministry (*Phil 2:5-11*), the seal of His resurrection, the promise of eternal life (*Rom 6:9*), and it ushered in His intercession on behalf of the church at the right hand of the Father (*1 Cor 15:20-28*). He will continue there as our advocate at the throne of God until His Second Coming (*Acts 3:20-21*).

The result of His ascension is manifested in our peace, hope, and joy because it triggered the ushering in of the Holy Spirit (*Acts 2:1-4*), who has now become resident in each and every believer; the omnipresence of God. To better grasp the fullness of His ascension let's examine two important aspects of it.

Jesus Foretold It

John 14:28-29 Ye have heard how I said unto you, **I go away, and come again unto you.** If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, **I go unto the Father:** for my Father is greater than I. 29 And now **I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe.**

Jesus spoke clearly of His death, resurrection, and ascension. He told His disciples that He would *go away* and *come again*, which can be construed in two ways: 1) His death and resurrection or, 2) His ascension and the coming of the Holy Spirit. I prefer the second view and I believe part b of verse 28 gives us the answer: *I go unto the Father*—and to get there required His ascension.

His glorious withdrawal as to His bodily presence, from the earth, and entrance, as Unger's Bible Dictionary the God-man and mediatorial King, into heaven.

His coming again to them was in the presence of the Holy Spirit. Some attach to this His Second Coming but I believe He means the Holy Spirit because His purpose in telling them is to encourage them and build up their faith. That being the case, then His coming again would be much more eminent and be an occasion to validate His prophetic statement here in verses 28-29.

These verses fulfill the Old Testament prophecy regarding the Messiah in *Ps 68:18*. Jesus also foretold His ascension on several other occasions (*John 6:62; 20:17*) and it was certified by the disciples after the fact (*Mark 16:19; Luke 24:50-51; Acts 1:9-11*).

It Was Witnessed

*Acts 1:9-11 And when he had spoken these things, **while they beheld, he was taken up**; and a cloud received him out of their sight. 10 And while **they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up**, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; 11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same **Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven**, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.*

The disciples didn't witness His resurrection but they witnessed His ascension. Note that as He went up they watched "steadfastly" (*atenizo; set their eyes earnestly, strained, intently gazed upon, or beheld earnestly.*) This word has intensity attached to it as in stretching or straining. There can be no misunderstanding what they saw and reported as fact; Jesus slowly ascended to heaven in their sight. This was the finishing of His redemptive work here on earth, and now He "is" the Christ of the living and the dead. The disciples witnessed this closure of His work on earth and the beginning of His eternal work in heaven.

No wonder two angels stood beside them at that moment to assure them that He would come again just as He left. Here they spoke of Jesus Himself at His Second Coming (*this same Jesus ... in like manner*) and not the Holy Spirit. As we will see in Volume 2, the Holy Spirit is the promise we hold here and now for His Second Coming and our new glorified bodies (*1 John 3:2*).

It was imperative for them—and it is for us—that He should leave, but I can imagine the thought of it was tragic at that moment. All that they had and everything to which they had attached their hope was apparently being taken away. No wonder they resisted the thought of His death. Here was the Messiah, God's promise to His people for centuries, and at the height of His ministry He was leaving them. It must have been unthinkable to them and so His words were intended to reassure them that He was, indeed, the Messiah (*John 14:28-29*).

I want to relate a story told by Chuck Smith (Senior Pastor of Calvary Chapel) whose visual impact stopped me cold in my tracks. It really made me think about what Jesus gave up for me and how monumental a sacrifice it was.

As the Father was looking into the telescope of His future plans He called Jesus to His side and asked Him to peer into the lens and

describe what He saw. *I see a small blue dot. Look closer. I see the planet that we created. Look very close.* Jesus said, *I see something moving on the surface, they look like dogs. They all seem to be fighting and quarreling with each other. They're snarling and biting each other constantly.* He turned to the Father and noted with sadness that it was a shame the dogs were feasting on each other rather than enjoying the beautiful place where they lived. The Father asked Jesus if He would help the dogs by bringing them His message of love for them. Jesus quickly responded that He would gladly do that. But the Father paused, *to do so you must first become one of them, a dog. When you go you must leave all that you now have here with me and be as they are.* Jesus said that He would gladly do that.

Yes, but when you deliver my message they will not receive it or accept the fact that I sent you. In fact they will turn on you, tearing you to pieces trying to kill you. They will be ruthless but they will not succeed in their attempts to take your life. Jesus looked into His eyes with sadness; *then what purpose will my going serve?*

The Father placed His hand on His Son's shoulder... *if you choose to give up your life for them it will make a way for them to change and return to me. The choice is yours to make for none of them can take your life from you; it is only yours to give. I will go and tell them of your love for them Father if it will bring them back to you.*

Then the Father told Jesus of His plan to give Him back His life in return for giving it up for them. He sadly told Jesus that not all of them, however, would return. Only a few would believe in His message, most would never believe that the Father would raise Him up from the dead and receive Him back to heaven as a sacrifice in their place.

Jesus smiled, *I know Father, but even if only a few come back it is worth it. I will gladly do what you ask and give up what I have with you now in exchange for their salvation. I will be sad to be separated from you and to suffer death but I will rejoice in my return.* As the Father gazed into the heavens He thought about all He was asking Jesus to leave behind and as He turned back there was a tear in His eye.

My Son, I have asked you to leave what you have here with Me and sacrifice your life for theirs. But you must know one final thing. When you become one of them you will forever be one of them. I will return you to all the glory you have now and more. I will make you ruler of everything that we have created, but you will forever be as one of them. Jesus wiped the tear from His Father's cheek and smiled.

Yes Father I understand, but if only one of them means that much to you then I will gladly go, knowing that the return of even that one will bring you joy. I will go and freely give what they have no power to take. I will return and bring as many as will hear and respond to my voice back with me. Don't be saddened Father, for what you ask me to give I consider but a small price to pay that you might be glorified there on earth as you are here in heaven. In fact, I do not consider it a sacrifice to remain one of them because I know you love each one just as much as you love me. Yes Father, I will go with joy in my heart at the thought of pleasing you.

I wonder? Do we in any small way comprehend the depth of the love God has for us and the extent to which He has gone to redeem us? He paid the ultimate price for our salvation. If we can trust Him for our eternal life then we should be able to trust Him with every aspect of our earthly life. If we do, we will also be witnesses to His ascension every time we see His hand in our life or in the lives of others. Yes, Jesus will forever be one of us

because He gave up a part of Himself that nobody could take. When we get to heaven we will see Him, Lord of the universe, in the same form He took on when He walked among us, fully God and fully man. Oh yes, it will be a wonderful glorified body, but the body of a man just the same. And like Thomas, we will see the nail marks in His wrists and His feet and the scar in His side.

CHAPTER 7

WHAT ARE WE TO DO ABOUT JESUS?

ASK FOR FORGIVENESS AND REPENT

Asking for forgiveness of our sins carries with it some responsibility on our part. The Word says that we are also to repent of our sins. True repentance requires a change. We can't just be sorry that we were caught, we need to see sin the way Jesus does and repent from it (turn away; flee).

Repentance is a turning away from sin, disobedience, or rebellion, and a turning back to God (*Matt 9:13; Luke 5:32*). In a more general sense it means a change of mind (*Gen 6:6-7*), a feeling of remorse, or regret for past conduct (*Matt 27:3*). True repentance is a "godly sorrow" for sin, an act of turning around and going in the opposite direction. This type of repentance leads to a fundamental change in a person's relationship to God. It is God's will and pleasure (*Luke 15:7-10; 2 Pet. 3:9*) as well as His command (*Mark 6:12; Acts 17:30*).

Acts 3:19 Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;

It's interesting that this verse comes in the middle of Peter's discourse on faith. Our salvation not only requires asking for forgiveness for our sins but we must also repent or change. *Be converted* means "to turn" or "return" to the path from which we have gone astray. It's a whole and complete turning to God, or as one translation put it: *repent and turn that your sins may be blotted out*. The bottom line is that sin can't be pardoned apart from true repentance.

Too often today we have those who have asked for forgiveness without repenting, and I question whether they are in fact forgiven. Have they fallen short of salvation while believing they're saved? I once heard it called "greasy grace"—slip up to the altar, get it, and slip out. There is a price to be paid, listen to Jesus:

Luke 14:27-28: And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. 28 For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?

Without a change of heart there can be no forgiveness

Mark 1:15 And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.

Acts 3:19 clearly indicates that repentance is part of salvation because it's a condition to it: *that your sins may be blotted out*. The command to repent goes hand-in-hand with believe (*repent ye and believe the gospel*).

Repentance is deeply tied to faith and is dependent upon the work of the Holy Spirit. We look at this in more detail in Volume 3—*The Foundations of Faith*. But for now, consider that repentance precedes conversion and results in your sins being blotted out. It should always cause us to turn and go in another direction and that direction should always lead back to the place from which we turned away; to God.

I believe the reason God called David a man after His own heart (*Acts 13:22*) was because David was quick to repent and why Saul wasn't (*1 Sam 13:14*). It's the same for you and me. We repent when we're first saved, and from that moment forward we need to continue to repent each time we fall. It's a lifelong process of growing and changing. If we're in a close relationship with Jesus we'll hear that still small voice tugging at our heart when we're headed the wrong way. And when we hear it, we need to respond and repent immediately. The enemy loves nothing more than to keep us walking down a path that we know is wrong. My guess is that he even deceives us into using *1 John 1:9* to keep us headed in the wrong direction.

To ask for forgiveness for our sins and continue down that same path is like saying I'm sorry you caught me but I'm not going to change, you'll just have to keep forgiving me each time you catch me. We get away with that with each other because we don't always get caught, but it won't work with the Holy Spirit because He knows our hearts intent before we do.

The further we go down that path (rebellious against God) without repenting (turning around), the harder it is to come back. Yes, Jesus is there to forgive us instantly (*1 John 1:9*), but we still have to walk back through the mess our sin has gotten us into. That is why so many call upon the Lord to forgive them but won't make the changes required. They don't want to face the consequences of

their sin. David's sins left him with some messy consequences to walk through, but his repentant heart brought God alongside to walk back with him. Asking for forgiveness without repenting is admitting the wrong without accepting the correction. We forget that with the pain of repentance comes the balm of forgiveness. It comes from the very One who enables us to change.

What a wonderful thought to carry. He is there the moment we turn from our sin and reach out with a repentant heart, but with that repentant heart there also needs to be a meek spirit.

BE MEEK

Meekness is an attitude of humility toward God and of gentleness toward man that comes from recognizing that God is in control. Although weakness and meekness may look similar, they aren't the same. Weakness is due to negative circumstances, such as lack of strength or lack of courage, but meekness is due to a person's conscious choice. It is strength and courage under control, coupled with kindness. Meekness is a virtue practiced and commended by our Lord Jesus (*Matt. 5:5; 11:29*).

*2 Cor 10:1 Now I Paul myself beseech you by **the meekness and gentleness** of Christ, who in presence am base among you, but being absent am bold toward you:*

The world will judge our meekness as weakness unless the Spirit is bold within us, bringing forth a confidence of character. Being meek doesn't imply that we never feel impatience or anger, it means that we keep those feelings under control. The Spirit brings strength to our humility.

Our picture of meekness makes it more of a vice than a virtue. As Christ used it in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5:5), and as Paul used it (2 Cor 10:1), it is descriptive of controlled anger. I recall a time when we had a beautiful riding horse named Gus. He was large and strong and spirited, but I could put a bridle on him and a small child could control him. Gus was the epitome of an animal under control, but there were times when it was obvious he was responding under duress.

Ken Chafin

An attitude of meekness indicates a spirit of willingness and obedience, carrying with it some wonderful promises from God:

- To the meek are promised special blessings (*Ps 22:26*).
- They shall eat and be satisfied (*Ps 25:9*).
- They will be guided in justice and taught His way (*Ps 37:11*).
- They will inherit the land (*Ps 147:6*).
- He will uphold them (*Ps 149:4*).
- He will beautify them with salvation (*Isa 61:1*).

Finally, remember that meekness is one of the fruits of the Spirit (*Gal 5:23*), and that Jesus spoke of Himself as being *meek and lowly of heart* (*Mt 11:29*). The lowliness of heart speaks of His humble nature, esteeming others higher than Himself (*Phil 2:3*). He is our model and we need to be more like Him.

IMITATE HIM

*1 Cor 11:1 **Be ye followers** of me, even as I also am of Christ.*

It's our human nature to follow (*mimētai; imitate*) those we admire. As little children we imitate our heroes and as we grow

older some of us never stop. They fail to become the fullness of what God intended for them, unique and not some carbon copy of a worldly collection of abilities. Someone once said, never admire “the man” but always recognize “Godlike qualities in the man.”

Paul made it very clear whom he admired and followed. This verse is better read as a closing to Chapter 10 than the opening of Chapter 11. If you read it that way you get a feel for the impact of what Paul said: *I follow Christ and ask you to follow me as I do so.*

Paul walked what he preached and led the sort of life one could follow and imitate because it was an imitation of the life of Jesus. He, like Jesus, lived a life that was founded on denying self. What Paul invoked here was his desire for the Corinthians to follow him in that which is like Jesus, not just following him in blind faith. They should see in him a witness of what Jesus taught and exemplified. *I am following Jesus, follow me as I do so and you will not be following me you will be following Him.*

We need to heed that principal today and follow our teacher, the Holy Spirit. We are to follow man only so long as he follows and exemplifies Jesus, and in order to be able to do that requires a close relationship with Him.

PUT HIM ON

*Romans 13:14 But **put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ**, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof.*

This is putting on the armor of God (*Eph 6*). We should arm ourselves with the resources of Jesus: His teaching, His expectations, and His divine power. We need to put on the Gospel of Christ and take up His mind. The Greeks had an expression—to be clothed with a person. That meant to assume the interests of

another; closely follow or imitate. This is very similar in concept to Paul “putting on Jesus.”

The second part of the verse—*make not provision for the flesh*— simply means to stay clear of those areas in which we’re weak. Someone guilty of drunken behavior in the past isn’t helping himself if he continues to keep his bar stocked and regularly throws parties for his old friends. If we ignore our fleshly appetites we won’t be making any provision to fulfill their lusts (desires). The whole foundation of the world’s system is to satisfy our appetites, and the only defense a Christian has is to Put on Jesus and follow in His footsteps... every minute of every day.

FOLLOW IN HIS STEPS

*1 Pet 2:21-22 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that **ye should follow his steps**: 22 Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth*

Follow His steps means to step where He has already been. We so often forget that we’re supposed to be following Jesus and not leading Him. He shows us the correct path by His footsteps, and He makes sure we see them by the Holy Spirit. He has already walked out any personal temptation and trial we face in total victory.

Once again, if we are to follow in Jesus’ steps we need to follow in His suffering. It means that we are required to die-to-self on a daily basis. Let me say it again, many people want to rise with Christ without dying and suffering with Him.

In verse 22 Peter quoted from *Isa 53:9* to show us the example Jesus (the Messiah) set before us. Jesus doesn’t expect us to lead any life other than the one He lived, which can be one that we live

in Him. He set for us a *hupogrammon*, a written copy for a child or a sketch for a painter. And believers who walk in Jesus' steps can't expect to be treated any better than He was.

We are able to follow and imitate Him because we have His Spirit to lead and guide us. Look at these two verses again in the New Living Translation:

*1 Peter 2:21-22 For God called you to do good, even if it means suffering, just as Christ suffered for you. He is your example, and **you must follow in his steps**. 22 He never sinned, nor ever deceived anyone.*

And if we are going to follow in His footsteps then we need to understand our identification with Him in baptism.

BE BAPTIZED

*Acts 1:5 For John truly **baptized with water**; but ye shall **be baptized with the Holy Ghost** not many days hence.*

Baptism in water is an outward display (evidence) of an inner action (change). It can be compared to Old Testament circumcision in that it represents a *circumcision of the heart*. Look up *Acts 2:38*, *Rom 6:3*, and *Col 2:12* for a little more background.

John the Baptist recognized that there was to be a baptism of both water and the Spirit (*Matt 3:11*). We'll take a look at the baptism "of" the Holy Spirit in Volume 2.

Water was the baptism of John and it involved a total immersion, identifying with the death of Christ, and a rising out of the water identifying with His resurrection. The following section examines some of the Old Testament history behind baptism and

what the New Testament has to say about its application to the believer.

Covenantal View

Deut 10:16 Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiff necked.

Ezek 44:7 In that ye have brought into my sanctuary strangers, uncircumcised in heart, and uncircumcised in flesh, to be in my sanctuary, to pollute it, even my house, when ye offer my bread, the fat and the blood, and they have broken my covenant because of all your abominations.

Acts 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Repenting precedes receiving the Holy Spirit, and receiving the Holy Spirit is a result of salvation.

Titus 3:5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Spiritual renewal:

Rom 6:4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. Linked together:

Col 2:11-12 In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the

sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: 12 Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

Believer's Baptism

This is based upon the fact that there must be exercised faith to receive salvation. Look at the simple progression of salvation:

- Call of the Holy Spirit
- Exercising of faith
- Repentance
- Forgiveness
- Salvation
- Water baptism

Therefore those who are candidates for water baptism are the ones who have already experienced the new birth and desire to make a public confession of that decision.

*Acts 2:37-38 Now when they heard this, **they were pricked in their heart**, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, **what shall we do?** 38 Then Peter said unto them, **Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.***

Faith is the underpinning action required in verse 38. Here are several more verses regarding baptism.

*Acts 8:12 But **when they believed** Philip preaching **the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ,***

they were baptized, both men and women. That which is preached and believed is the Gospel.

*Acts 10:47 Can any man forbid water, **that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost** as well as we? Here we have a clear instance of baptism after being born again and receiving the Holy Spirit.*

*Acts 18:8 And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and **many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized.***

*Matt 28:19 Go ye therefore, and **teach all nations, baptizing them** in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:*

It's an Obligation

*Matt 28:19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, **baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:***

*Mark 16:16 **He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved;** but he that believeth not shall be damned.*

*Acts 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and **be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.***

*Rom 6:3 Know ye not, that so **many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?***

Col 2:12 Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

Gal 3:27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

Who Should Be Baptized

*Matt 28:19 Go ye therefore, and teach **all nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:*

*Acts 2:41 **Then they that gladly received his word** were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.*

*Acts 2:37-38 Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? 38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized **every one of you** in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*

*Acts 8:12 But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, **they were baptized, both men and women.***

*Acts 18:8 And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and **many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized.***

Baptism is performed in many forms today inside and outside the body of Christ. Some immerse, some sprinkle, and some anoint, but the outward ceremony itself is not what is important. The act of baptism means one thing only and that is the public confession of a Christian's belief in Jesus Christ as his or her personal Saviour. Within many churches today baptism is looked upon as the ceremony that brings about salvation and I can find no scriptural evidence that this view is valid. Salvation comes only by grace through faith in Jesus Christ (*John 3:16; Rev 3:20*).

In reviewing the scriptures above you can clearly see that the ceremony of baptism is an event that follows conversion (belief). Now that is not to say that many of us were baptized at a time in our life before we were born again. Does that mean we should or should not be baptized again? Let me just share with you my own experience in this area and it mirrors that of many I know within the bride of Christ.

I was baptized (sprinkled) in the Methodist Church as a very young child, long before I made Jesus my personal Lord and Saviour. Many years later I began attending a Baptist Church and as I began to read and study the Word in more detail I was taught the real meaning of salvation and baptism. It was at that time I was baptized with immersion in water as a public testimony of my commitment to Jesus. After Diane and I were married she began to grow in her relationship with the Lord and decided that she wanted to be baptized. Our relationship with each other and the Lord was beginning to blossom at that time, and I really wanted to be baptized with her but I thought *you've been baptized twice already!*

I made the decision to be baptized again with Diane as a personal witness to what God was doing in our lives. I must say the peace that overtook me at that moment was incredible. Not only

did we both feel cleansed but there was also a special bond between us from that day forward. I can only describe it as a mutual commitment to the Lord and a dedication of our life together to Him. I am not a theologian or a scholar but I do know how Jesus works in my life. He doesn't want me standing on religion or ceremony in my relationship with Him. He wants me to walk with Him by the leading of the Holy Spirit.

There is something very real and wonderful that occurs when you are baptized by immersion. You not only identify with Jesus' death and resurrection you also do it the same way He did. It was special for us and I suggest that was or will be for you. Having said that, however, let me restate the obvious. It is not the form of the baptism but the condition of the heart being baptized that Jesus looks at. It is the public acknowledgement of that personal decision we made to accept the sacrifice He made for us and honor Him as Lord and Saviour. The Hebrews cut their foreskins as an outward sign that they were Jehovah's chosen people. Today we are baptized to signify that we are Christ's chosen people... His witnesses.

BE A WITNESS

Acts 1:8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

The Greek word for witness is *martus*, from which we get our word "martyr." Are we prepared to take that miracle working power (*dunamis*) of the Holy Spirit and die for Him if need be? Could it be that as a *witness* we may be asked to die-to-ourselves, die to our selfish interests or to our self-righteousness?

What is spoken of here is receiving the Holy Spirit by the disciples after Jesus' ascension. This was the first in filling of the Holy Spirit by members of the new church, the bride of Christ. This was when the disciples received their empowerment to be a witness. It is the baptism of the Holy Spirit spoken of in verse 5. Today it's different in that we receive the Holy Spirit the moment we put our faith in Jesus Christ as our Saviour. The Holy Spirit doesn't come at some later time in some other way. As we noted earlier, what is called the Baptism of the Holy Spirit today is really a yielding of the believer to His authority and power, which are already resident within us.

The second part of this verse told them what they were to do with this newfound power as witnesses. Wycliffe tells us that where they were to go gives us an outline of the remaining chapters of the Book of Acts: In Jerusalem (1-7); in all Judea, and in Samaria (8:1 to 11:18); and unto the uttermost part of the earth (11:19 to the end of the book). They were to go into the land as witnesses "unto" (of) Him.

One manifestation of receiving the Holy Spirit both then and now is a new boldness to proclaim the Gospel. *Dunamis* is potential power—like dynamite—but it requires something to set it in motion like lighting the fuse on a stick of dynamite. The Holy Spirit is our key to unlocking this potential power. Without Him we are just like a stick of dynamite sitting on the shelf, lots of potential but without a lit fuse it's useless.

Another way of looking at today's Baptism of the Holy Spirit is to see ourselves lighting that fuse in our yielding to His control of our lives. Being born again and having the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is just the beginning. As we start our walk with Jesus we will discover who we really are.

CHAPTER 8

WHO IS CHRIST IN ME?

These scriptures are just a partial list of all those in the Bible that tell us who we are in Jesus. As you read them, continually ask yourself, is this who He in me?

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.

The word forgive (*aphiemi*) means to abandon, forsake, lay aside, or leave behind. God not only forgives our sin, He forgets it altogether. I remember a story about an elderly lady who came to her pastor and told him that God told her to encourage him to be more open about himself to the congregation. Well the pastor just smiled at her and promptly forgot about it. A few weeks later the lady returned with a little more insistence and told him that God said he was still not being open about himself with his flock. Well the pastor got a little put off and politely suggested that maybe the lady hadn't really heard God's voice. After all, HE was the pastor and God would most likely have talked to him about this matter and not her. However, not wanting to offend her, he suggested that the next time God spoke to her she should ask Him what was the sin the pastor was not being honest about. Another few weeks went

by and the pastor caught the little lady after service and asked her if God had spoken to her lately. She nodded and said that God had spoken with her last night. The pastor smiled and asked what did He say my sin was? She looked a little sheepishly and said, “He said he couldn’t remember.”

I find it interesting to note that God told the lady that He “couldn’t” remember. He didn’t forget: Let me see, I’ll remember in a minute. He “chose” not to remember. We need to remember that the next time we come before Him confessing a sin for which He has already forgiven us. The enemy is very good at bringing up old forgiven sins and throwing them in our faces, but thank God we have a merciful Father who doesn’t. However, this does not, as some seem to think, allow us to continue to sin with impunity. There is a big difference between the devil trying to drag up something from our past and our willfully continuing to sin against God. This goes back to the issue of repentance and the misuse of *1John 1:9... In me He is forgiveness and cleansing.*

*Rom 10:8-9 But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, **the word of faith**, which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, **thou shalt be saved.***

Unless the word of faith is in our heart, it can’t truly be in our mouth. We must confess with faith that Jesus is Lord and that what God has spoken of Him is true, whereby we are saved. The word of faith in verse 8 is simply that Jesus died for our sins so that salvation is ours to be received by faith (believing)... ***In me He is salvation.***

*Heb 4:14-15 seeing then that **we have a great high priest**, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. 15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.*

Dr. Louis Evans summed up this verse well:

Our Priest is not so lofty or separated that He is incapable of understanding our human situation. Rather He is the One who is totally familiar with it, having been tempted at every turn of the road just as we have been.

Have you ever been in such a low state that you felt completely alone and were certain that nobody could understand what you were going through, only to run into somebody who had been through the same thing? What a lift it is to know that, even though it is miserable at the moment, someone has actually lived through what we're going through. The next time we get into that place we need to remember that Jesus came down here and lived through the same stuff we do. He understands our every situation through firsthand knowledge. He has been there and He promised to comfort us and help us through it... ***In me He is One who understands.***

*1 John 3:1-2 Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that **we should be called the sons of God**: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. 2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*

*Rom 8:14-17 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are **the sons of God**. 16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are **the children of God**: 17 And if children, then **heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ**; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.*

Behold (*eido*) is a strong word meaning to consider, look on, be sure, and understand. John told us to “consider and be certain that we understand” what kind of love the Father has bestowed (committed, delivered, and ministered) upon us. The word used for love is *agape*, which we know means the love of God or the God kind of love; the unconditional love He expressed on the Cross. In other words, God loved us so much with His love that He chose to bestow His name upon us and call us His sons (our old friend *teknon*).

But we shouldn't be surprised that the world doesn't know us. How can it because it doesn't know God. Verse 2 contains the exciting part for me. When Jesus comes back we will be just like Him; *huios* (attaining the character of the father; a mature son or daughter). The expression “Sons of God” used here means the “Mature Sons of God.” This, once again, indicates that maturity is required on our part to receive the leading of God. We need to continually grow in Him, not stopping at any given level. Then when He comes back (*1 John 3:1*) we will be like him and will no longer see through that glass dimly, we'll look Him full in the face and see Him as He is... ***In me He is the fully mature Son of God.***

*Acts 17:28 For **in him we live, and move, and have our being**; as certain also of your own poets have said, **For we are also his offspring.***

*John 15:5-7 I am the vine, ye are the branches: **He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit:** for without me ye can do nothing. 6 If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. 7 **If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be d unto you.***

In *Acts 17:28* Paul gave us a total summation of what we have in Jesus; everything. We live in Him, move in Him, and exist in Him. We continue to be because He continues to be. We have a natural dependence upon Him just like the stream has upon the spring to feed it (*John 4:10*). We can see this more fully in *John 15:5-7*.

Read the key verse (*John 15:7*) slowly: *if ye abide in me and my words abide in you*. The Greek word abide (*meno*) means to stay in a given place or relation, continue, dwell, or endure. But we often do our asking without the if and the and, which are the keys to abiding. It takes action on our part to abide in Jesus, we can't just sit and wait for Him to abide in us. Without abiding we won't bring forth any fruit because we are operating in our own power not His. While we are everything in Him we will be nothing with Him unless we choose to abide in Him... ***In me He is the abiding vine of life.***

*2 Cor 5:17 Therefore **if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature:** old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*

To be “in” Christ is being grafted into the vine and a “new creature” is a new spiritual creation. “Old things” are our previous

moral and spiritual condition. “New” is our newborn spiritual and moral condition.

If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: It is vain for a man to profess affinity to Christ according to the flesh, while he is unchanged in his heart and life, and dead in trespasses and sins; for he that is in Christ, that is, a genuine Christian, having Christ dwelling in his heart by faith, is a new creature; his old state is changed: he was a child of Satan, he is now a child of God; he was a slave of sin, and his works were death; he is now made free from sin, and has his fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. He was before full of pride and wrath; he is now meek and humble. He formerly had his portion in this life, and lived for this world alone; he now has God for his portion, and he looks not at the things, which are seen, but at the things, which are eternal. Therefore, old things are passed away.

Adam Clarke

... ***In me He is creation.***

Eph 2:10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Workmanship is the Greek word *poema*, from which we get our word poem. Think about that for a moment. Paul said that we are each a poem, created in Jesus. We are a special creation from God’s heart and He considers us each of us to be His masterpiece. Therefore, how can we view others and ourselves negatively as we so often do? We go the art gallery to view a masterpiece and, while we may not personally like it, we admire the workmanship of the master who created it.

It seems that we have often forgotten this verse because we act like we are our own work. He saved us so that He could display His virtues through the performance of His good works in us for His glory. Verse 10b tells us that God created us in Christ so that we might walk in Him. It is His plan that we accomplish it by His spirit... ***In me He is God's poet.***

*2 Cor 5:21 For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be **made the righteousness of God in him.***

To *be made* means *to become*, which indicates that something has to happen before we can become? Jesus took away our sin that we might become righteous before God. He was, in fact, made to be our sin. As a result we have a right standing (righteousness) with the Father because Jesus became sin for us... ***In me He is God's righteousness.***

*Rom 8:1-2 There is therefore now **no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus**, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.*

No condemnation means that we are not guilty and are not required to serve a sentence. We are placed beyond the reach of condemnation. We will never be condemned and nothing will separate us from the love of God because of the Jesus' sacrifice. But note that Paul also indicated that we are to walk after the Spirit and not after the flesh. Because we walk after Jesus we are no longer subject to or under the law of sin and death. We are free and therefore we should walk out our lives as if we believed it. The secret to that is following the Holy Spirit, whose presence is a

constant reminder that Jesus has made us free... ***In me He is the Spirit of freedom.***

1 Cor 1:30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:

Because of Jesus, the Father has granted everything to us. He is our wisdom, He has purchased our righteousness and sanctification (holiness), and He authored our redemption. Conversely, without Jesus we do not have wisdom, are not righteous, are not sanctified (set apart for God's service), and are not redeemed (ransomed)... ***In me He is the fullness of the Father's blessings.***

Rom 5:17 For if by one man's offense death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.

So, if we died because of Adam we live because of Christ. Consider this point, those who perish do not perish because of the sin of Adam or because no provision has been made for them. They perish because they will not receive the mercy God offers them in Jesus. One of the key words in the verse is *receive* and it refers to *grace* and *righteousness*, showing us that the action of receiving God's abundant grace and righteousness allows us to reign with Jesus... ***In me He is mercy.***

Col 1:13-14 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: 14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:

We have been delivered from the confusion of darkness but we still spend too much time being confused by being pre-occupied with what we ought to be and do. It shows up in the passions we pursue and how often we change them. It results in wasting our energy by focusing on our efforts rather than releasing ourselves to be empowered by the Spirit within us. Look at verse 13 again and note the word *hath* is past tense. Let's take a moment and look at what has already been done for us by Jesus:

- *We have come out of darkness into light:* We can now see things as they are and are able to perceive the real from the false. In addition, we now have direction in our lives and know where we're going.
- *We aren't slaves anymore:* The Greek word for redemption (*apolutrosis*) is the word for ransom or deliverance; buying back something that was lost. There are many things in our lives from which we need to be freed—the things that put us in bondage. We don't have to look very far to locate the chains of our own personal bondage—the chains which Jesus removed that can once again bind us if we don't constantly remember that we are free.
- *We've had our condemnation forgiven:* *Rom 8:1* tells us that the price has been paid. That price was once and for all enough.
- *Satan no longer has power over us:* Look above at verse 13 again. We have been translated (*methistemi; removed or carried away*) into *the kingdom of His dear son*. Satan can only have the power to control us that we give him. It is up to us to continually say no to Satan and yes to Jesus

... *In me He is redemption.*

Eph 1:17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:

In verse 16 Paul said that that he constantly gave thanks to God for them and asked God to give them His Spirit of wisdom. Here in verse 17 he said that it's by His Spirit of Wisdom that He reveals His will for them; the knowledge of Jesus. The word knowledge (*epignosis*) means full discernment or acknowledgment of Jesus. We get wisdom as the Holy Spirit reveals Jesus to us... *In me He is the Spirit of revelation.*

1 Pet 2:24 Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

Mt 8:17 This fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, "He took our sicknesses and bore our diseases."

The first thing that catches my eye in verse 24 is the word “bare” (*anaphero*), which means to take up or offer up. Many people look at this as if Jesus had our sins imputed to Him as if they had been His own. Clearly make the distinction that they were our sins, yours and mine, not His. The next part—*that we being dead to sins*—means that we are freed from sin or delivered out from under it. Therefore, righteousness should now be our master as it has replaced sin. Jesus has “taken up” our sins; it was by His stripes, the lashes He “took” upon His back, that we “were” healed. The blood that He shed paid the price for our righteousness. The

price was paid for our healing and we shouldn't let the enemy tell us otherwise.

*Isa 53:4-5 Surely he hath **borne our griefs**, and **carried our sorrows**: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. 5 But he was **wounded for our transgressions**, he was **bruised for our iniquities**: the **chastisement of our peace was upon him**; and **with his stripes we are healed**.*

The suffering that Isaiah described was truly physical. In looking at his prophetic revelation of Jesus on the Cross we can see that He was hardly recognizable as a human being. His afflictions were like Job's pains and sicknesses (*Job 2:7-8; 16:6-7; 19:17-22*). But note that healing and forgiveness in verses 4-5 don't apply to Him, they apply to us; Jesus has already paid the price for our healing. It's of no use to ask how this is possible or how it works because we don't know. We simply need to receive it by exercising faith in the One who paid the price; who took these stripes for us. Martin Luther wrote: *When I consider my crosses, tribulations, and temptations, I shame myself almost to death thinking what are they in comparison to the sufferings of my Blessed Saviour Christ Jesus... **In me He is healing**.*

*Jas 4:7 **Submit yourselves** therefore to God. **Resist the devil**, and **he will flee** from you.*

Everyone likes to quote 7b but many forget that it follows 7a; fleeing follows submission. We must submit ourselves, or as the amplified Bible says, "be subject to" God first. We must begin our relationship by submitting to Him, walking with Him, and continuing to submit to Him day-by-day (*Luke 9:23*). Submitting

isn't cold and irrational; it's a relationship of love, trust, grace, and openness.

If we aren't submitted to Jesus, the devil isn't going to listen to us at all. But speak under submission to Jesus and watch the power of God cause the evil one to flee (Volume 6—*Authority of the Believer*). Another way to insure that the devil will flee from you is to praise God in all things. In *Psalms 149* we're told that our Praises to God are the execution of judgment on the enemy. Think about that! Praise God and punish the devil... ***In me He is strength.***

1 John 4:3-4 And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. 4 Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.

He that is in you means He that lives in you, the Holy Spirit. Whom have we already overcome? Look at verse 3, it tells you who "them" in verse 4 refers to. The Moffatt translation calls them "the spirit of the antichrist." Isn't it comforting that the residence of the Holy Spirit within us is a constant reminder that they have already been overcome. Today we face this in any teaching that denies the full humanity and full deity of Jesus. The enemy doesn't always come as a roaring lion; he also comes as the cunning serpent in many disguises. To recognize him we must know the Word, stand on the Word and live by the Word not forgetting that Jesus "is" the Word... ***In me He is the greater One - The Word of God.***

Rom 8:37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

Look at this in context with verse 35.

Rom 8:35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

We are triumphant over all these things by the grace and power of the One who redeemed us. Charles Hodge, in his study of the book of Romans, said of verse 37:

So far from these afflictions separating us from the love of Christ, they are more than conquered. That is, they are not only deprived of all power to do us harm, they minister to our good, they swell the glory of our victory.

It reminds us that many times the Lord will turn what the enemy means for evil into our good (*Rom 8:28*). Times spent in apparent separation have given each of us the opportunity to draw even closer and build a much stronger relationship with Jesus. When all is said and done we, by our choice, have the opportunity to come out “more than conquerors.” We have not only overcome but we have subdued the enemy and achieved the victory... ***In me He is the conqueror.***

Ph 4:13, 19 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me... 19 But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

When you consider verses 13 and 19 together you are faced with some powerful thoughts. Jesus is the bedrock of our gospel and we need Him to accomplish everything in our lives that will bring glory to God. Verse 19 tells us that it is, in fact, God Himself

that supplies all we need to accomplish it through Jesus. How much easier life becomes when we understand these simple truths.

Today is all we have, today is all we need, and today is all we can handle. Without Jesus we don't have enough for today and are incapable of handling what little we do have. When God calls us to action to carry out His will we don't need to wonder if we will have what is required to complete the task. So it is with our spiritual maturity: *He who began a good work in you will be faithful to complete it (Phil 1:6)...* ***In me He is all I need.***

*Gal 2:20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and **the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.***

When we were born again, the Spirit of Jesus (the Holy Spirit) came to live inside us. Our body didn't change but our spirit did, and therefore we live as a new creature in this old fleshly body, this tabernacle we tote along with us through our journey in the wilderness we call "the world." The problem comes when our soul wants its old ways and often convinces the mind to go along. So to live this life in the flesh we need to focus our faith on the One who loved us enough to die for us. Our job is to submit to the Holy Spirit who is the only one who can lead us to the One who gave Himself for us. We live because He lives within us (gives us life) and gives us the faith we need to overcome our old nature. The key to living your life in this world by faith is Jesus' love for you. Recognize it, acknowledge it, receive it, and share it... ***In me He is faith.***

Col 1:26-27 Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:

*27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; **which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:***

And there it is; the mystery that was hidden for thousands of years is now seen (made manifest) in us, His saints. What is that mystery? That God designed from the very beginning that the Gentiles were to have the same privileges as the Jews (*Eph 3:3-6*). What you have inside you is the Indwelling Christ (the anointed One of God; the Messiah) who is the hope of this world, The Hope of Glory. That is the wonderful mystery that Paul so eloquently preached to the entire Gentile world. He taught that the veil which was over Moses face (the Jews ignorance of what the law pointed to) was now done away with in Jesus Christ (*2 Cor 3:14*)... ***In me He is the Messiah, Christ the hope of glory.***

*Eph 1:3-8 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath **blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:** 4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that **we should be holy and without blame before him in love:** 5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, 6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein **he hath made us accepted in the beloved.** 7 **In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;** 8 Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;*

To get the whole context, take a moment and read verses 3-13 since they are one sentence in the original Greek. Now look at the tense in verses 3-8: hath blessed, hath chosen, having

predestinated, hath made, have redemption, and hath abounded. All of these things were done “in Jesus” before the foundation of the earth. Why did He do it before we were around? So we wouldn’t have any part in it or any claim in having done it. And more importantly, so we couldn’t mess it up.

In reading verse 5, don’t get hung up on the word predestination. In the Greek it is the word *poorzo* and means pre-design, not foreordination. God does not have your life planned out for you without giving you a free will to make choices. He pre-ordained that all who are saved will *be conformed into the image of Jesus*; into His character. But sadly, not all will choose to accept His mercy. It’s His desire that all should be saved and not even one be lost (*2 Ptr 3:9*), but free will is the part of the equation that makes it variable. Choice, it’s always about our choice... ***In me He is the Spirit of adoption,***

SOME FINAL THOUGHTS

In this book we have attempted to gain an understanding of who God is and how we can relate to Him. We have seen his creative power throughout His Word, through His prophets, apostles, disciples, and most importantly His Son. God created us for His pleasure and as such He showered us with all His blessings through His Son’s sacrifice. He has gone above and beyond to provide us with every opportunity to acknowledge His acts of grace and mercy on our behalf. Not only has He once and for all resolved the issue of sin, He has provided us the way to be free from its grip on our lives. All of this He holds together with a love for us that is, in itself, beyond measure; Jesus.

Only the Holy Spirit is able to open our hearts to the depths of God’s love for us. It was this love (*agape*) that the disciples could

not grasp or attain until the day of Pentecost. Only after receiving the Holy Spirit were they able to experience the love that Jesus had for them and begin to understand it. With the presence of that love (the Holy Spirit) now inside each believer we, like the disciples on that day, can turn the world upside down.

If we have learned one thing about the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, it's the concept of unconditional Love. Our total relationship with them is founded and based upon *agape* being alive within us. Jesus taught us that the two greatest commandments in the church age (now) are to love the Lord our God with all our heart and love our neighbor as ourselves. Truly the New Testament attests to this at every turn with example after example of Jesus' love for the Father and His fellowman.

As you move forward in this series, let me share with you the most exciting secret I have discovered in the last 70 years—Jesus really does love me just as I am. In addition to that, He loves me so much that He doesn't want to see me stay where I am. Unless and until you really grasp that truth you will never really have the opportunity to love yourself or anyone else with the true love of God. When you finish this book please read the *Song of Solomon* and see how much Jesus loves His bride. See yourself through His eyes and you will never look at yourself the same way again. I cover this in great detail in the *Wake Up And Rest Series* available at Amazon.com.

When I began to see myself as Jesus sees me my entire world started to change. I realized that He authored the changes I so desperately desired in my life. He is the One who *gave me the desires of my heart (Ps 37:4)*. It was then that I began to see that it is impossible for me to achieve any meaningful change in my life apart from Him. He plants the desires, continually nourishes them, and gives me everything I need to see them fulfilled. For this

reason He gave me His Spirit to lead, guide, and teach me to draw near to Him, and I learned that the secret to having a relationship with Jesus is simply founded on trusting Him. Here are seven suggestions to take with you as you move on to Volume 2 - *The Spirit-Filled Christian*:

1. Trust Him and have faith that what He says is truth.
2. Allow Him to love you and show you what real love is.
3. Learn to listen for His still small voice within you. It always edifies and builds up your relationship with Him, never condemning or tearing down. It will point to those areas that He desires to change to improve your life.
4. Let the Spirit change you and resist the temptation to try and change by yourself. Your own effort is a guaranteed set-up for failure from the outset. Just change as the Holy Spirit reveals and empowers.
5. When you stumble, be like David and recognize that God is there to forgive you and to minister your repentant heart. Remember, if He can forgive you, you can forgive yourself.
6. As the Holy Spirit begins to show you those areas in your life that are separating you from Jesus, endure the pain that accompanies change. When the light is shown in your dark corners stand still and let Him heal you. Too often we fall back from the light when it strikes the areas of our weakness. He is illuminating those areas because He wants to heal you, give you victory, and set you free.

7. Jesus will honor your decision to pull away but He is faithful to bring you back to that same place again and again, until you move through it. Growth always requires the change that builds character.

We will be looking at many aspects of our walk with Jesus in the remaining books in this series. They are all a part of understanding the relationship He desires to have with us. He is never changing and therefore it is incumbent upon us to change and conform. After all, the Word tells us over and over that we are to put on His character in exchange for our old—from *Teknon* to *Huios*. Whether we do or not is our choice—it was, is, and will continue to be our free will.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Pastor Tom Mitchell has spent the better part of his ministry years exhorting, challenging, and encouraging the bride of Christ to move ever deeper into her relationship with her bridegroom. Over the past 30 years through Walk With God Ministries he has authored 13 books, written numerous articles, and has taught the Word of God from the pulpit, in the classroom, and through his weekly blog at: <http://WalkWithGod.org>.

His published works include *Wake Up And Rest – The Bride of Christ Sleeps at Her Own Peril*, along with its four companion books, *The Doorway to Rest*; *The Pathway to Rest*; *The Dangers to Rest*; and *The Battle For Rest* that challenge Jesus' bride to wake up and fulfill the role He has given her in preparing the way for His Kingdom. By anyone's clock, the time until His return is growing very short. *Wake Up And Rest* is a timely challenge the bride can ill afford to ignore, for if she does she does so at her own peril. This series reflects the urgency of the message the Lord has impressed upon Tom for His bride, to wake up and remember to whom she has committed herself and make herself ready for His soon return. The hour grows short and there is much at stake, both here and now and for all eternity. The question is... *will she wake up?*

His most recent work is the eight volume series, *The Way of Enoch*, that explores the foundation and sound scriptural doctrine that underlies God's plan for our lives. It is a journey that begins with learning who God really is and culminates in discovering how we are to walk out a loving and obedient relationship with our bridegroom. *The Way of Enoch* is a great resource for both the

bride of Christ and for those who have just begun their walk with Jesus. Each book is solidly based on the Word of God, looking at how it to be applied in the Christian life. The message is presented in a straightforward look at eight key areas of our Walk With God.

Volume 1—Your Life In Christ

Volume 2—The Spirit-Filled Christian

Volume 3—Foundations of Faith

Volume 4—The Word of God

Volume 5—Principles of Prayer

Volume 6—Authority of the Bride of Christ

Volume 7—Walk The Walk

Volume 8—The Obedient Lifestyle

OTHER BOOKS BY THOMAS M. MITCHELL

www.WalkWithGod.org

Wake Up and Rest Series

The Bride of Christ Sleeps at Her Own Peril... This book is a wakeup call to those who have made their personal commitment to their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. They are the ones who hold the key to survival the world is looking for and they cannot fail to share it. But to do so they have to overcome their human side and allow their spirit to take charge and lead them through this “wilderness” we find ourselves in. And the key to that is to stop and take a long hard look at their relationship with the One to whom they’re engaged to be married. Do we really know Him? What is He expecting of us? How can we find the answers? These questions and many more have to be answered if we’re going to be able to step up and become all that He created us to be. *Wake Up and Rest* is a guidepost to a fruitful walk with our bridegroom as we prepare ourselves for our wedding day.

The Doorway To Rest—The Brides’ Invitation... When we consider Solomon’s Song we can easily see the relationship between Christ and His bride portrayed in many ways. Think of the “sun’s” relationship with the moon being like our relationship with the “Son.” This book is a detailed, verse-by-verse study of the *Song of Solomon*, revealing the true view of bride of Christ through

His eyes and a life changing view of the bridegroom through the eyes of the bride as she opens *The Doorway to Rest*.

The Pathway To Rest—The Brides’ Purpose... As we looked at the message of the *Song of Solomon* we were given a clear picture of not only who our bridegroom is, but equally important how He sees us and how we should see Him. His invitation opened the doorway to His Rest and now, as we walk out the days of our *ketubah*—our betrothal—we need to find out what that means and what it entails along *The Pathway To Rest*. For that we turn to the book of *Hebrews*, where we learn through each verse what sewing our wedding dress means and how important it is for us to be ready and watching for His soon return as we move up the path to spiritual maturity.

The Dangers To Rest—The Brides’ Warning... We have been inundated with not the shout of triumph but the incessant worldly scream of pending disaster. The country’s economics have been turned upside down and fear and panic have grabbed the headlines as the Middle East falls into chaos. The news is full of rampant pandemics, meteorological disasters, hopeless individuals committing tragic acts and families destroyed. And sadly, the majority of the bride of Christ is not prepared for His return. We have allowed the world and its supreme ruler to distract us from the path the lies in front of us. Now He has finally released me to write this verse-by-verse study—*The Dangers To Rest*—out of the book of *Revelation* that He put on my heart 18 years ago concerning His letters that not only deal with why He is coming back but also what we, His bride, are supposed to be doing and not doing as we wait and watch.

The Battle For Rest—The Brides’ Armor... Spiritual warfare is a war between the forces of God and the forces of rebellion led by Satan. And the bride is engaged in this spiritual war between light

and darkness, good and evil, heaven and hell and Christ and Satan. But sadly, many aren't even aware of the fact that they are in a spiritual battle every day of their life. As believing Christians we're in a grim conflict and we're not on a worldly cruise ship or a showboat; it's a battleship. It's a fight to the finish with no holds barred and we can't be neutral and we can't call a truce. This war is a personal one; very personal. In *The Battle For Rest* I have taken a detailed verse-by-verse study of the part of the book of *Ephesians* that deals with the enemy, his strategies and his goals and most importantly the battle orders we have been given to ensure victory over those personal strongholds.