

# THE GOOD NEWS OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

" For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "BUT THE RIGHTEOUS SHALL LIVE BY FAITH." For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. " (Romans 1:16-19)

THE DANGER - SIN	3
THE FUTILITY - DEATH	21
THE SAFETY - GRACE	37
THE CALL - FAITH	82
OUR RESPONSE	102
THE DAY OF THE LORD - HOPE	125

# THE DANGER - SIN

The Sin Nature	4
God Knows	9
God Is A Consuming Fire	13
The Day Of Judgement	17

# The Sin Nature

We have all fallen short of the glory of God; we have missed the mark; as it is written, "None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one." (Romans 3:10-18) (And many other such testimonies as these: Isaiah 59:1-13, Isaiah 64:6-7, Psalms 5:9, Psalms 53:1-3, Psalms 36:1-4, Micah 7:2-3, Ezekiel 22:6-12) And even if we were to decide to do better today, we couldn't cover our past faults; and even if we declared, "I will change", it would only take us as far as our human strength will go; and aren't we becoming weaker and weaker day by day? For the weakness of death is at work in all of us. Besides, if our nature is evil, how can we reform ourselves? Wouldn't trying make us even worse? Can a dirty rag cleanse? Can filthy water make someone clean? What we need does not come from ourselves, nor is it within ourselves; as it says, "I know, O LORD, that a man's way is not in himself, Nor is it in a man who walks to direct his steps." (Jeremiah 10:23) We know a lot about a thing by looking to its beginning: how do we measure up in the beginning? How were we as newborns? We were all once infants and how we were born is how we will be; if a donkey is born a donkey, it cannot later become a horse, can he? Of course not! So we are born human; but what kind of a human? If we were good, then we wouldn't need to be taught to do good, for we would just be good; however, we needed to be taught good from an early age; if we were already good, then we wouldn't need to be taught, because we would already be. We were all pure and innocent from an early age, for God has made us perfect; for as a child we were innocent because we did not know right from wrong; but the time arrived when the commandment came and sin became alive and we died; and sin lived in our stead. We became its prisoner, its hostage — we were sold as its servant; for just as there is not a man who does not come from woman, so there is not a man on earth who continually does good and never sins. And this is according to what we see and experience, isn't it? We all do that evil in which we know by nature; we all know evil naturally and without any effort do it: it is like blinking to us, it is as automatic as breathing. It takes all our effort to resist sin, and it takes even more effort to do good. We eat up iniquity; we drink down falsehood; we dwell in the tents of wickedness.

And does not God testify the same thing? As the LORD God says, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin Or the leopard his spots? Then you also can do good Who are accustomed to doing evil." (Jeremiah 13:23, Jeremiah 4:22) For we do not have any knowledge of God; if we knew God from the womb, perhaps we would be good, but we are born into ignorance, without any knowledge of God. One may say, "If I know evil, then I must know good." Yes, but even if it is so, we have not the power to execute the good that we know, for sin is always present with us; and the goodness that we will to do is not of ourselves — it is of God; and He is contrary to our nature: for we walk by sight, but He is unseen. If the knowledge of God brings righteousness, how much more does the power to execute it? So therefore, it is through the knowledge of God that we may obtain righteousness; as the LORD God says, " Did not your father eat and drink

and do justice and righteousness? Then it was well with him. He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then it was well. Is this not what it means to know me?" (Jeremiah 22:15-16) And then it says, "Beloved, do not imitate evil but imitate good. Whoever does good is from God; whoever does evil has not seen God." (3 John 1:11) For without God, it's impossible to do good; as it says, "Without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him." (Hebrews 11:6) "And those who are in the flesh cannot please God." (Romans 8:8) "For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not." (Romans 7:18) For we have all inherited wickedness from one man, Adam; we've inherited our evil nature from the first man. In the Garden, he sinned against God, eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which was against the commandment of the LORD; and so since one man sinned, all became sinners, for all come from him; and as a result of sin, we die, even they who do not sin in the likeness of Adam's transgression. But someone might say, "Injustice! For if I were in the Garden, I would have obeyed." But such thinking is not wise, because it does not change a thing.

Do we need further testimony about our sinful nature? If we were good, then why does self-discipline exist? Is it against the law to love so much? Or against the command which says, "Do not do so much good"? But rather discipline is needed for mastering over evil thoughts, and murders, and adulteries, and fornications, and thefts, and false witnesses, and slanders; it is for these evils self-discipline exists, for these need to be controlled by ourselves; otherwise, if we cannot control ourselves, we will be controlled by others. That is why prisons exist. For what is a prison besides control from an institution? But you may say, "For sinners like them prisons exist, but not for me." However, the only difference between a prisoner and you, is that, you weren't caught — for you know you've done things worthy of imprisonment. As it says, "Like a city that is broken into and without walls is a man who has no control over his spirit." (Proverbs 25:28) For this is our nature: evil. It's effortless for us to do bad and takes all our energy to do good. We love wickedness and eat it up like bread; it's a delicacy to us, but yet it turns into venom within us; nevertheless, we eat it up, and sleep in it, and drink from its cup. We do not have self-discipline; we do not know the way to its door, so that we may knock and ask for it. We build up our own laws and our own rules as a safeguard around us, but we look at them and despise them. What is wrong with us? Only what I've been testifying to from the beginning: we are all subjected to the power of sin. But is it only I who testify to this? When we grow old, reaching a certain age, and we are not taught good, our parents are blamed. But why? People say, "I blame the parents for their child's behavior." Or they say, "Why didn't his parents teach him what is right?" But if we were born good, why would we need to be taught? So, we testify to ourselves about the nature we belong to: an evil one. For why would our parents be blamed if we were born righteous? In that case, our actions would be on our own heads! Even more we say, "I am only human." So we testify to ourselves and to others that we belong to a nature that is fallen and broken. This is our nature; just as it's an eagle's nature to fly or a penguin's nature not to fly; so it is our nature to be sinful; and we are incapable of changing ourselves or reforming ourselves by our own human effort.

If anyone claims they are not sinful, they show how utterly sinful sin really is, for they lie in regard to an obvious fact; as David said in the Psalm, " Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me. Surely you desire truth in the inner parts; you teach me wisdom in the inmost place. Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. " (Psalms 51:5-7) And if that comes from King David, a man after God's own heart, how much more does it apply to us? But he cries out to God, "Cleanse me with hyssop and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow." For we must be washed by God for cleansing; we cannot cleanse ourselves. For we are filthy, how can we cleanse ourselves? As it says, "Who can make the clean out of the unclean? No one!" (Job 14:4) "'So is this people. And so is this nation before Me,' declares the LORD, 'and so is every work of their hands; and what they offer there is unclean.'" (Haggai 2:14) We may think we are better than others by comparing ourselves with ourselves or measuring ourselves by ourselves, but we are without understanding. We think, "I am not in prison; I haven't killed anybody." Or even someone might say, "I would never do such a thing!" But you who condemn thieves, have you pirated movies? You who judge murderers, have you been angry and struck someone? " Therefore you have no excuse, everyone of you who passes judgment, for in that which you judge another, you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things. And we know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things. But do you suppose this, O man, when you pass judgment on those who practice such things and do the same yourself, that you will escape the judgment of God? " (Romans 2:1-3) What then? Are we any better than the worse? Not at all, for we are all under the power of sin; and the one who breaks one law has broken them all; as it says, " For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all. For He who said, "DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY," also said, "DO NOT COMMIT MURDER." Now if you do not commit adultery, but do commit murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. So speak and so act as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty. " (James 2:10-12)

So sin is a living power within us, and it causes death — it's what makes us die in the end. It has its effect on all creation, for everything wastes away because of it. When people think about sin, they think about an instance of disobedience; which is true, but it's also a power and a nature and a law. It's what causes us to be weak, it's what causes our muscles to ache with agony, it's what causes everything to decay and wear out. We see what sin looks like by seeing death: it's gross, repugnant, a horrid stench, defiling anything it touches, corrupting much that is good. God shows us a tangible result of sin: death. If sin looks like this to our eyes, how much worse is it in the eyes of a holy and living God? And it's living within us! It's a cancer that does not submit to the control of the body — it spreads uncontrollably. It is without law; it does not obey anyone; it's a hazard. This thing which is causing death within us needs to be put to death, for it is killing us. It masters over us and never submits to our will; it enslaves us, making us its servant; we follow behind sin in bonds; it is hostile towards God; it's acts are prompts of war against God, provoking Him to anger; all it's thoughts: wicked; it girds up it's loins to haste after evil; it never submitted to the law of

God, for it is not able to — and will never be able to. It does not submit to our direction; it is an unruly animal within us. But surely, the desire to do good is in our minds, but in our bodies, we don't do what we intend to do. We see it every new year: we make a new year's resolution and say, "This year will be nothing like the last, I am going to do this and do that!" And we do "this and that" very well for the first few months, but the time comes when we inevitably go back to our old ways. We desire good in our minds, but we have not the strength in our flesh to carry it out; in our mind we want to do good, but in our flesh, we don't do the good we intend to do; we have good intentions, but the power of sin carries us away. If we did everything we wanted to do every new year, as time went on, we would be made more and more perfect, but in fact, we become more and more sinful, storing up wrongs and being wronged as a result; we sin, piling up more and more transgression into our accounts, which is a debt against us, storing up God's wrath for the day of wrath. For the more we toil, the more we sin; the harder we work, the more abominable we are; as the LORD God says, "The more they multiplied, the more they sinned against Me; I will change their glory into shame." (Hosea 4:7) And who is omitted from such a thing? As it says, "Who can say, "I have cleansed my heart, I am pure from my sin"? " (Proverbs 20:9) For "Indeed, there is not a righteous man on earth who continually does good and who never sins." (Ecclesiastes 7:20) As it says, "What is man, that he should be pure, or he who is born of a woman, that he should be righteous? Behold, He puts no trust in His holy ones, and the heavens are not pure in His sight; how much less one who is detestable and corrupt, man, who drinks iniquity like water!" (Job 15:14-16, Job 25:3-6) And then it says, "If You, LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with You, That You may be feared." (Psalms 130:4-5) And, "Do not enter into judgment with Your servant, For in Your sight no man living is righteous." (Psalms 143:2)

But someone may still say, "I am the product of my environment." But isn't righteousness stronger than wickedness, just as the right hand is stronger than the left? So if you are righteous, surely you could deliver yourself from your evil environment! Furthermore, God created the world, and afterwards, "God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good." (Genesis 1:31) But in regard to humans it says, "Behold, I have found only this, that God made men upright, but they have sought out many devices." (Ecclesiastes 7:29) So God has created the world good and man upright, but mankind sought out evil. So the problem is with us. Yet someone may argue, "I am righteous, despite my unrighteousness. Is not God faithful to forgive?" However it says, "Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness." (Hebrews 9:22) And another may say, "I am good always." But what does the law say? "If the thief is caught while breaking in and is struck so that he dies, there will be no bloodguiltiness on his account. But if the sun has risen on him, there will be bloodguiltiness on his account." (Exodus 22:2-3) For the thief tried to hide his crime under the cover of darkness, so his punishment is more severe. Is that not what you do when you say, "I have not sinned"? You thief! Saying to yourself, "I have peace though I walk in the stubbornness of my heart in order to destroy the watered with the dry." (Deuteronomy 29:19) Will that person, even if hidden from the eyes of man for a time, escape the light of the day of the coming of the Lord Almighty? The moon sets

and the sun rises bringing forth the day, when he is caught, it is worse for that person than he who sins in the day and does not cover his transgression (for the light of God's Word declares everyone guilty); as the Lord says, " (the Pharisees) who devour widows' houses, and for appearance's sake offer long prayers; these will receive greater condemnation. " (Matthew 23:14, Mark 12:40, Luke 20:47) For they sought to deceive, appearing righteous before men, but God knew their heart. So we should quit trying to justify ourselves with our mouths. For we certainly cannot justify ourselves with our words, can we? As it says, "When there are many words, transgression is unavoidable, But he who restrains his lips is wise." (Proverbs 10:19) "For though I were right, I could not answer; I would have to implore the mercy of my judge." (Job 9:15) The cloak we cover ourselves with is too short; our lies cannot deceive the living God, can they? "For He knows false men, And He sees iniquity without investigating." (Job 11:11) So who can we rightfully blame? As it says, "The trouble is not with the law, for it is spiritual and good. The trouble is with me, for I am all too human, a slave to sin. " (Romans 7:14-24) For the trouble is with me, and there is no iniquity with God. I am the problem. There is sin living within me! "Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God; because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin." (Romans 3:19-20)

# God Knows

The LORD God is the creator of all living things. He sees the thoughts and the intentions of the human heart; He is Spirit and sees not what man sees; He sees spiritual things; as He says, " You foolish ones, did not He who made the outside make the inside also? " (Luke 11:40) So He sees the human heart, for it is spirit, even though it is carnal. When we ourselves do not know our motives and intentions of the heart, He knows them. We may think, "My motives are right; I will stand before Him and He will agree." Are our thoughts God's thoughts? Are our ways God's ways? As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are God's ways higher than our ways, and His thoughts higher than our thoughts. What we think can never be, unless we think with the mind of God according to the Word of God; we can't even begin to think how He thinks, unless we know His Words, which are His revealed thoughts. The heart of us is deceitfully wicked — who can understand it? Will it not even trick us saying, "I can understand myself"? Our hearts are constantly flattering ourselves; as it says, " Transgression speaks to the ungodly within his heart; There is no fear of God before his eyes. For it flatters him in his own eyes concerning the discovery of his iniquity and the hatred of it. " (Psalms 36:2) So if we're led by our own thoughts or our own understandings, we're in darkness; for our heart is deceitful, filled with iniquity, darkened by the ignorance which is in us; and where there is deceit, there is no truth; where there is no truth, no light. Our hearts are not trustworthy servants; even the apostle says, " I do not even judge myself. For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me. " (1 Corinthians 4:3-5) But rather it is well to say, " I have borne chastisement; I will not offend anymore; Teach me what I do not see; If I have done iniquity, I will not do it again. " (Job 34:31-32)

But we do see that God's Word brings light; as it says, "The unfolding of Your words gives light; It gives understanding to the simple." (Psalms 119:130) And, "The words of the LORD are pure words; As silver tried in a furnace on the earth, refined seven times." (Psalms 12:6) So His Word also purifies and sanctifies. As the LORD declares, "Is not My word like fire? And like a hammer which shatters a rock?" (Jeremiah 23:29) For God's Word is powerful and sharp, a double edged sword. He speaks powerfully while afar so that when He comes, He will not have to be powerful in deed and truth. For just as a sword slices, disclosing our hidden guts, sinews, and organs, by it's division of the flesh, so God's Word " is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account. " (Hebrews 4:12-13) For we're all an open scroll to God; He knows our words before we speak them; He knows our going up and our sitting down; nothing is hidden from His sight. "If I say, 'Surely the darkness will overwhelm me, And the light around me will be night,' Even the darkness is not dark to You, And the night is as bright as the day. Darkness and light are alike to You." (Psalms 139:11-12) "Your eyes have seen my unformed substance; And in Your book were all written The days that

were ordained for me, When as yet there was not one of them.” (Psalms 139:16) So our thoughts are on display; they are put on the big screen! Your secret thoughts proclaimed abroad, publicized for all to see — the things you think, on public display! You're afraid of a camera, which can only see in the light; if it's dark, you must first shine a light to capture a shot. A camera can only see the outside of a man — if you want to see the inside, you must swallow it. From afar, what is it? Up close, what could it be? But it is not so with the eyes of the Father: darkness is as light to Him, darkness and the light are the same. He who created the outside, made the inside as well. He is near, yet He is far away; He is seated in the heights and nothing escapes His notice. When you want to get a shot of the city, you must go high — but who is higher than the Most High? What is outside of His panorama? What can He not zoom into? A hair falling from the head, He sees; all the stars in the skies are numbered, and He gives them a name. What can you truly disclose from Him? Everything hidden in you is public to Him. What is your secret that He doesn't already know? He who created the eye of a falcon, are His eyes not greater? The falcon can see even from great heights, yet He created their eye. He who created the owl to see in the dark, can He not see likewise? He who made it possible for x-rays to see the inside of man, can He not see even to your inmost spirit, having created it? He is not seen, yet He sees all. He created you, and He cares for you. As it says, “What is man that You take thought of him, And the son of man that You care for him?” (Psalms 8:4)

Is there any place on earth that you can hide from God? Is there any place where He isn't? If we make our hiding place in the depths of the earth, He is there; if we make our home in the West, even in the East, He is there. Does He not fill all things everywhere? Aren't His eyes everywhere? He is Creator of every eye of every beast, of every man and of every angel. When you think you're alone, looking out through your eyes, He is there. As you are reading this — behold! His mighty Cherubim are under His throne; they are covered with eyes on their wings, inside and out. God sends His angels out and calls them “Watchers,” for they watch. He sees all, but He is not seen by any. Yet it says of Him, “Your eyes are too pure to approve evil, And You can not look on wickedness with favor.” (Habakkuk 1:13) For God seen what was happening below on Mount Sinai while His people were building a golden calf and worshiping it; He seen before Moses ever did, He seen before Moses even heard the sound of a party in the camp. God seen where Jonah went to get away from Him. He saw Saul hiding among the baggage. He hears the cries of the humble on earth, and He Himself is the Avenger; He seeks for those who seek Him. “He who planted the ear, does he not hear? He who formed the eye, does he not see? He who disciplines the nations, does he not rebuke? He who teaches man knowledge — the LORD — knows the thoughts of man, that they are but a breath.” (Psalms 94:9-11) God's sovereignty can be a great comfort to us, but it could also be a great discomfort; for it is a most fearful thing if we're in sin. But still: He sees it all, yet you're still alive! I consider this as God's grace. Who are we that He is mindful of us? As the man of God in his distress says, “What is man that You magnify him, And that You are concerned about him, That You examine him every morning And try him every moment? Will You never turn Your gaze away from me, Nor let me alone until I swallow my spittle?” (Job 7:17-19)

So God does not look at man as mankind looks, that is, according to outward appearance. Our eyes see natural things, but God sees spiritual things, for He Himself is Spirit; everything spiritual is unseen, and the spiritual is what God sees. Everything hidden will be brought to the light; all things concealed will be revealed and made known to all. What He sees will be seen by all; no-one sees Him now, but then He will be seen by all. The dead will rise and behold their Maker; and our hearts, which men do not see, will be revealed to all at His visitation; and that which is secret and silent will be known and proclaimed throughout; and that which is invisible and covered will be clear and exposed. The things we presently see are passing away, but the things unseen remain forever; and God's judgment is eternal; the judgment of the LORD is from inward to outward, from the heart to the flesh; and in the end, only the spirit will remain and all that can withstand the fire. So knowing the fear of the Lord, we warn others, and hope for the mercy and lovingkindness of God, by which only we can stand before Him. For it is clear by our works, no man is justified before God. For if a man gives to the poor, but for a pretense, to receive praise of men, will it be well with him? Does God not see the heart? Or the innocent man who is beaten under false accusation, will not God see that he is truly innocent, although by human sight he is condemned? Is this not what the apostle means when he says, " He who is physically uncircumcised, if he keeps the law, will he not judge you who though having the letter and circumcision are a transgressor of the law? " (Romans 3:27) For "He is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God." (Romans 2:29)

God's judgment is righteousness and just, and in that day, He will bring all into judgment — the living and the dead. The Lord's judgment is not short of being executed today either; as it says, " If the righteous will be rewarded in the earth, How much more the wicked and the sinner! " (Proverbs 11:31) All of His judgements which happened beforehand were written down for our admonishment today, that we wouldn't follow their examples of disobedience; as it explicitly says, " Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. " (1 Corinthians 10:6-11) And they who God punished were God's own people whom He redeemed; so He is not partial to anyone. So how much more is His judgement upon the rest of the world? For He judged the whole world in times past with a flood in the days of Noah; and this is what God saw when He judged the earth: "The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the LORD regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to His heart." (Genesis 6:5-6) So we see that God saw their heart and their thoughts and their intentions, judging them by them. And if their mind was sinful, how much more their actions? For the mind governs all the members of the body. So if the mind is sinful, then the entire body is also given over to wickedness. Likewise it is said over and over that the kings of Israel, which are the heads of Israel, made Israel to sin (1 Kings 14:16, 1 Kings 15:26, 1 Kings 16:2, 1 Kings 21:22). For the king is head of Israel and Israel is the body. So if the head is wicked, then so is the body. If we were honest with ourselves, we would see that our thoughts are no better than them in the days of Noah; and it is no laughing matter, for the LORD God does not laugh at sin, but He abhors it.

It says, "The devising of folly is sin, And the scoffer is an abomination to men."  
(Proverbs 24:9) So even the planning of foolishness is sin; how much more is the act?

## God Is A Consuming Fire

We are in a great debt, and God's anger burns against sin, for it corrupts what He has created; as it says, " God is a just judge, And God is angry with the wicked every day. " (Psalms 7:11) And " The LORD tests the righteous and the wicked, And the one who loves violence His soul hates. " (Psalms 11:5) And "The boastful shall not stand before Your eyes; You hate all who do iniquity. You destroy those who speak falsehood; The LORD abhors the man of bloodshed and deceit." (Psalms 5:5-6) " For our God is a consuming fire. " (Hebrews 12:29) As Israel seen with their own eyes; as it says, " To the eyes of the sons of Israel the appearance of the glory of the LORD was like a consuming fire on the mountain top. " (Exodus 24:17) But someone might say, "Isn't the devil fire, but not God?" But it is the devil that masquerades himself as an angel of light, himself truly being darkness; but God, being fire and light, shrouds Himself in a dark cloud lest man see Him and die, for no one can see Him and live. The devil doesn't rule over hell, but God prepared hell for the devil and his angels. And He has prepared a place for us, a heavenly place, provided we do not follow demons, but God; for who we follow, we will receive the same's end: demons unto hell, or God unto Paradise. For who-ever we follow, we follow to a place, to an end, to a destination; and who we follow, we do the same of him who we follow. But someone might say, "I only follow, but they are deceiving me." But " **A blind man cannot guide a blind man, can he?** " (Luke 6:39) And furthermore, it says, "They will bear the punishment of their iniquity; as the iniquity of the inquirer is, so the iniquity of the [false] prophet will be." (Ezekiel 14:10) So the judgement is the same for both, the false leader and the follower; and all sin must be punished. For God is just, He cannot let sin go unpunished. But you still might say, "Sin in me causes me to do wrong, but I myself want to do good. How is God just in punishing me?" Sin is inseparable from the sinner; we are the ones to allow sin, inclining our hearts toward sin rather than to God, being led astray by our sinful desires; and we error out of the way. But yet, " If you say, "See, we did not know this," Does He not consider it who weighs the hearts? And does He not know it who keeps your soul? And will He not render to man according to his work? " (Proverbs 24:12) For God knows the heart of man, He is kind and compassionate towards those who act in ignorance. All sin is against God, for sin is transgression against God's law, the written and the unwritten code. The law is written on the heart of man, and He knows what we know. Yet, this one thing I know: the Most High dwells with the lowly and contrite of heart; He is rich, but He dwells with the poor; He is Most High, but He dwells with the low; as He says through Isaiah, the prophet, " On this one will I look: On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, And who trembles at My Word. " (Isaiah 66:2) And then it says, " The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise. " (Psalms 51:17)

So do not lie against the truth, but rather acknowledge your sin; humble yourself in the sight of the LORD, be poor and lowly and mourn and weep; tremble before a holy God. For God loves truth, justice, and righteousness, and He hates evil, sin, and wrong-doing. He gives us His commands so that we would know what is good, and to

walk in His ways — His directives surely direct us. God never changes: He is, was, and will be. He fills all, yet in all, nothing compares to Him; however there is one in all which He is like: namely, a consuming fire. This is the fear of the LORD: abhor evil. If you love life, fear the LORD. If you want wisdom, Solomon in His wisdom says, " The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom. " (Proverbs 1:7) This is how we obtain wisdom, and this is how we perfect wisdom: by fearing God. The more we fear Him, the wiser we become. If wisdom starts by the fear of the Lord, how much more is it perfected by the fear of the Lord? The wisest thing we can do is fear God; and the wisest thing to do: get wisdom. Revere Him like you would a Father and a King, for He is the Father of fathers and the King of kings; He is the Ancient one, who establishes kingdoms and overthrows them. And the one who does not fear God is foolish, for only a fool destroys himself. The left hand is the weaker of the two hands, so strive for what is right; as light is better than darkness, so wisdom is better than folly. The one who is wise has eyes in his head; he sees and walks in the day-time; a man who walks in darkness, does not know where he is going; such a one does not know his way back to the city, for the eye of his understanding is darkened. Therefore, fear not the devil, nor demons, nor principalities, nor powers — instead fear God. For all things come from the Lord — the good and the bad; as it says, " Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity? " (Job 2:10) For "Who is there who speaks and it comes to pass, Unless the Lord has commanded it? Is it not from the mouth of the Most High That both good and ill go forth? Why should any living mortal, or any man, Offer complaint in view of his sins? Let us examine and probe our ways, And let us return to the LORD." (Lamentations 3:37-40)

The LORD God is the First and the Last; He has no beginning nor end; but He is the Beginning and the End; He lives from everlasting to everlasting; all things He has created. He alone has power to take up the sword and destroy, yet He gives life and relents in destruction; He is patient with the wicked everyday. He sets all things upright and gives every living thing a habitation to live; He gives fish to the sea, birds to the air, and animals to the land. He created them and gives them their food; He doesn't create so they would be in want, but everything He established so that everything would be nurtured by Him and dependent on Him, so that nothing would exist independent from Him. If He does this with the animals, how much more we humans? Are we not more precious than many animals? Can anything breathe without Him? As it says, "If He should determine to do so, If He should gather to Himself His spirit and His breath, All flesh would perish together, And man would return to dust." (Job 34:14-15) He created once by wisdom, and all things have been established through wisdom, yet all things we presently see are passing away; and they will eventually come to an end. The end has been mentioned from the beginning; all ages have spoken about the end in times past; and yet it is delayed even to this day. However, " The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance. " (2 Peter 3:9) So God has shown us grace; He has given us time that we would repent: and His goodness leads us to repentance.

For God is not taught good, He is Good; God is not taught love, He is Love; God is not taught anything, for He knows all things and all things come into being through

Him. He is served by no-one, as if He needed anything; He gives life and breath to all. He has power and authority; and He does what He pleases, yet He chooses good. He is Good, and outside of Him there is no goodness at all; and in Him there is the fullness of all goodness. Love abounds in Him, for He alone is Love. With love is jealousy; and God's jealousy is a fire; as it says, " You shall worship no other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God. " (Exodus 34:14) And it says, " The Lord your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God. " (Deuteronomy 4:24) The LORD God shows us love in truth, and through truth, we find love; He does not love in word alone, but in deed and truth; as it says, " Love is as strong as death, Jealousy is as severe as Sheol; Its flashes are flashes of fire, The very flame of the LORD. Many waters cannot quench love, Nor will rivers overflow it; If a man were to give all the riches of his house for love, It would be utterly despised. " (Song of Solomon 8:6) And He is jealous for us, His creation; as it says, " Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: "He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us"? " (James 4:5) For His jealousy is for those who are unreconciled, for He desires the spirit of all flesh to be reconciled to Himself in love.

If a husband loves his wife and his wife cheats with another man, he is going to have two strong emotions: anger and jealousy. Are these emotions evil? They can be, but are they evil in this case? They are powerful emotions; they come from the man's love for his wife. If he did not love his wife, there would be no reason to be angry or jealous; but since he loves his wife, it says, " Jealousy enrages a husband, and he will show no mercy in the day of vengeance. He will not be appeased by any ransom, or persuaded by lavish gifts. " (Proverbs 6:34-35) For, " Wrath is fierce and anger is a flood, But who can stand before jealousy? " (Proverbs 27:4) Using another human example: a father has a child and if the child continually plays with dangerous things like snakes and knives; the father will discipline his child and start to hate the snakes and knives which cause his child's harm. Is the discipline done because the father hates his child? Of course not! In fact, the discipline is proof that he loves his child and the father considers him his own. If the father did not discipline his child, then he would be considered illegitimate. Does not discipline purge to even the inmost folly? As it says, " Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; The rod of discipline will remove it far from him. " (Proverbs 22:15) Discipline will not kill a child, but an undisciplined life will; as it says, "Do not hold back discipline from the child, Although you strike him with the rod, he will not die. You shall strike him with the rod And rescue his soul from Sheol." (Proverbs 23:13-14) So every loving father disciplines his child, and the father's hatred comes from his love for his child. In a similar way, the LORD God, the Creator of us all, hates sin because He loves us, for sin harms us. What shall we say then, "Does God love me by hating me?" By no means! He is the First and the Last, so He has our end in mind — and we only see what's immediately before us. As it says, "When we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord so that we will not be condemned along with the world." (1 Corinthians 11:32) So rather, be afraid if you are not disciplined by Him; as He says, " **Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent.** " (Revelation 3:19) Similarly, one who loves children will hate abortion; and a man who loves truth hates lies. And the LORD God is Jealous; if we put anything else first in our lives above Him: then tremble. Is anything greater than Him? Even if we

esteem something highly, isn't He higher still? "Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? We are not stronger than He, are we?" (1 Corinthians 10:22) For He is the creator of all things. Aren't all things given from His hand? Will we love the things created more than the Creator? For He loves us greatly; and can't it be terrifying? As He says, " They have made Me jealous with what is not God; They have provoked Me to anger with their idols. So I will make them jealous with those who are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation. " (Deuteronomy 32:21)

For the LORD God smote the Israelites in His jealousy when they committed adultery with Baal, a god which is no god at all; and it was said of Phinehas, " Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, has turned away My wrath from the sons of Israel in that he was jealous with My jealousy among them, so that I did not destroy the sons of Israel in My jealousy." (Numbers 25:11) Furthermore, Jehu destroyed these false gods in the land of Israel with the jealousy of the Most High and with the zeal of God, for he was God's chosen instrument for this very purpose (2 Kings 9-10). So without question, these men were used by God to execute His fierce jealousy. Therefore, fear the LORD! For does not a man fear fire? He respects its power, not feeding it too much wood, not getting too close. How much more should we fear God who is Creator of all, a consuming fire? He is creator of the burning fire of the sun, Himself being a consuming fire! How much less should we stoke the fire of God's fierce jealousy with idolatry? How much more should we stand at a distance and make petitions from afar, hearing Him and speaking to Him through another? As it says, " All the people perceived the thunder and the lightning flashes and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw, they trembled and stood at a distance. Then they said to Moses, "Speak to us yourself and we will listen; but let not God speak to us, or we will die." " (Exodus 20:18-20) If they feared death while hearing Him, and no-one can see Him and live, shouldn't we fear the whisper of another who speaks in His name? If we may lose our eyes looking at the light of the sun, what do you suppose would happen if we beheld Him who dwells in unapproachable Light? As God says, "You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live!" (Exodus 33:20) If they who looked into the ark of the LORD which His Spirit rested above and were struck, how much more severer a fate do you think if we beheld Him with our natural eyes? As it says about this: " He struck down some of the men of Beth-shemesh because they had looked into the ark of the LORD. He struck down of all the people, 50,070 men, and the people mourned because the LORD had struck the people with a great slaughter. " (1 Samuel 6:19) However in these last days, the true way to see God is being revealed: that is, to see Him through faith. This faith is sight by hearing, seeing Him with the eye of our understanding. All who see Him through faith will live and not die, but the one who sees Him naturally dies. Thus we see why faith is necessary: because He is Holy. But through this faith, we are washed, we are sanctified, and we are justified. And this faith is in God.

# The Day Of Judgement

Just as there was a world-wide judgment in Noah's day, so there will be a judgement at the end of time. If that judgment came with water, then how will it be in the end except with fire? For it will be like the time of Lot in Sodom, when the Lord will come from the heavens; it will be like the days of Noah, when His judgement is revealed to the world; as the apostle Peter says, "The heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly." (2 Peter 3:3-9) In that day, everything done in the body will be accounted for. God is just; and He is just such that He cannot let anyone go unpunished. Evil cannot persist, not even a single lie; as it says, "Truthful lips will be established forever, But a lying tongue is only for a moment." (Proverbs 12:19) Every evil thing will be made right through judgment; as the LORD God says, "I will discipline you, but with justice; I cannot let you go unpunished." (Jeremiah 46:28) And He said this to His own people, so how much more is it applicable to the rest of the nations? If He doesn't spare His own people, what is the fate of the rest of the world that do not know Him? If He let just one sin go unpunished, He wouldn't be good and just. It is a good thing to judge evil and a lie: for that's justice. When justice is not upheld, people riot; for it is evil not to judge wrongdoing, but it is right to render justice. It is good to do justice and show no partiality; as it says, "Because the sentence against an evil deed is not executed quickly, therefore the hearts of the sons of men among them are given fully to do evil." (Ecclesiastes 8:11)

The Lord God is Judge. And He will make all to rise from their grave, the living and the dead, and they will stand before Him on that great and terrible day; as it says about that day: "A day of wrath is that day, A day of trouble and distress, A day of destruction and desolation, A day of darkness and gloom, A day of clouds and thick darkness, A day of trumpet and battle cry Against the fortified cities And the high corner towers. I will bring distress on men So that they will walk like the blind, Because they have sinned against the LORD; And their blood will be poured out like dust And their flesh like dung. Neither their silver nor their gold Will be able to deliver them On the day of the LORD'S wrath; And all the earth will be devoured In the fire of His jealousy, For He will make a complete end, Indeed a terrifying one, Of all the inhabitants of the earth." (Zephaniah 1:15-18) And it says about that day: "Alas, you who are longing for the day of the LORD, For what purpose will the day of the LORD be to you? It will be darkness and not light; As when a man flees from a lion And a bear meets him, Or goes home, leans his hand against the wall And a snake bites him. Will not the day of the LORD be darkness instead of light, Even gloom with no brightness in it?" (Amos 5:18-20) For the dead who lived in death, it says, "The dead will not live, the departed spirits will not rise; Therefore You have punished and destroyed them, And You have wiped out all remembrance of them." (Isaiah 26:14) But for the dead who

lived in life, which is truly life, it says, "Your dead will live; Their corpses will rise. You who lie in the dust, awake and shout for joy, For your dew is as the dew of the dawn, And the earth will give birth to the departed spirits." (Isaiah 26:19) So God will cause both the righteous and the wicked to rise, but only the righteous will arise to life. For all evil and all lies will be made right, and it is made right through judgment; all wickedness will be put into its proper place and judged as wrong; and righteousness will be exalted and rewarded in that day. When evil is reprimanded, reproved, and rebuked, it is made good through the correction; and our God is a God of justice and righteousness. Right now is the time to receive correction and forgiveness, but in that day, a time for judgment and wrath, for condemnation or reward.

Judgement is not merely in word, but in action too; the result of judgment is either condemnation or praise; to compress the lips is to allow evil to pass, to allow injustice to persist; but God will reveal His righteous judgement in that day. If sin goes uncorrected, it is allowed to live a little longer; in its persistence, it corrupts much that is good; but nevertheless, all sin has an end. Do we not bury that which is unclean? We don't expose our uncleanness, do we? Our bodies have waste to it; and we put that waste in dark places, for it is good to be not seen; we gather it together and put it into a pit and burn it with fire or cover it with dirt. And don't we bury our dead? So what do you suppose God will do with the moral filth of the world when He sends forth His angels? Won't everything unclean be cosigned to its proper place and burned with fire? If we do these things with that which is unclean to our eyes, how much more will God with that which is abhorrent to His eyes? For men riot when justice is not upheld: when someone who is supposed to be punished gets off free, men go out and riot against the judge and police; and they say, "The police are no good! We want justice!" So we know it's good to render justice, for we ourselves want justice; however, when it comes to our wrongs, we want mercy; that is why it says, "So speak and so act as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty. For judgment will be merciless to one who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment." (James 2:12-13) And God's righteous judgment rewards all according to their works: to the one who judges, they will be judged, and to the one who shows mercy, they will be shown mercy. As it says, "For the day of the LORD draws near on all the nations. As you have done, it will be done to you. Your dealings will return on your own head. Because just as you drank on My holy mountain, All the nations will drink continually. They will drink and swallow And become as if they had never existed." (Obadiah 1:15-16) And this drink is the chalice of God's fierce wrath which is drained to the dregs (Isaiah 51:17-22).

God is not like any judge on earth: for He is perfect. He will reward all with righteous judgment in that day when the judgment of God is revealed through the One He has appointed; He will reward those who by persistence seek immortality, life and peace, looking for the hope of everlasting life; "But to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation." (Romans 2:8) Even the righteous will be scarcely saved; "For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? AND IF IT IS WITH DIFFICULTY THAT THE RIGHTEOUS IS SAVED, WHAT WILL BECOME OF THE GODLESS MAN AND THE

SINNER?" (1 Peter 4:17-18) Someone might say, "Stop judging me!" Or, "Only God can judge me." If we cannot withstand the judgment of mere mortals, how can we withstand the judgment of the Almighty God? Is it not a terrifying thing? As He says, "Behold, the day of the LORD is coming, Cruel, with fury and burning anger, To make the land a desolation; And He will exterminate its sinners from it. For the stars of heaven and their constellations Will not flash forth their light; The sun will be dark when it rises And the moon will not shed its light. Thus I will punish the world for its evil And the wicked for their iniquity; I will also put an end to the arrogance of the proud And abase the haughtiness of the ruthless. I will make mortal man scarcer than pure gold And mankind than the gold of Ophir. Therefore I will make the heavens tremble, And the earth will be shaken from its place At the fury of the LORD of hosts In the day of His burning anger." (Isaiah 13:9-13)

So then, I ask, if we are sinful and God sees and hears everything, and He will not let anyone go unpunished, then how can anyone be saved? As the Scriptures say, "Few will be saved." But how is there few? Shouldn't there be none? As He says, "Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few. " (Matthew 7:13,14) But then He says, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible. " (Matthew 19:23-30) If there is no hope, then "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." (Isaiah 22:13) Isn't the danger so evident? For we are evil and God is Holy. What must we do to be saved from the wrath which is to come! "Wretched and miserable man that I am! Who will free me from this body of sin and death?" (Romans 7:24) Does someone need to send a rocket into space to find the cure and bring it down to us? Or does someone need to dig into the center of the earth to reveal the mystery? Where is the knowledge of salvation? In whom does it exist? As Moses wrote in the Book of the law, "It (The command) is not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will ascend to heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?' Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, 'Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?' But the word is very near you. It is in your mouth and in your heart, so that you can do it." (Deuteronomy 30:12-14) As it says, "So that you can do it," for the things which seem impossible to us are possible to God, so that we can do. As He says, "Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh; is anything too difficult for Me?" (Jeremiah 32:27) Then He says, "If it is too difficult in the sight of the remnant of this people in those days, will it also be too difficult in My sight?" (Zechariah 8:6) For who has ascended? Or who has descended? Salvation is not far away from any one of us; as it says, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, Humble, and mounted on a donkey, Even on a colt, the foal of a donkey." (Zechariah 9:9) For it is God who descended, and it is He who ascended. It is He who came! For man surely cannot save himself; as He says, "Do you have an arm like God, And can you thunder with a voice like His?" (Job 40:9) If so, "Then I will also confess to you, That your own right hand can save you." (Job 40:14) So surely we need a savior; surely we need a rock. Or can wealth save us? Can we gather up enough food for

ourselves to withstand the evil day? Which gun can shoot against spirits? Or which sword can fight against the unseen? Surely, our best efforts are useless.

# THE FUTILITY - DEATH

The Love Of Pleasure	22
Work And Toil	26
The Love Of Wealth	29
The Day Of Death	33

# The Love Of Pleasure

Alcohol and food, which are wholesome in themselves, which are given to us by God for our enjoyment, but are often perverted into drunkenness and gluttony, and drugs, which are often used for an escape from reality, which are a false refuge, which are often corrupted for one's own enjoyment rather than medicine, and the excessive love of pleasure, which is dissipation, which is folly and waste, and any other corrupt desire which come from our lust, which wages war against our soul, these will never sustain us — they only mask our deeply rooted issues for a little while and make life bearable for a short time. They come quickly and vanish quickly, for the same way they come, the same way they go. Is life so terrible that we need these? We all have our share in these during some time in our life. But where is the light of life? For the way we feel, living in such things, surely it is not life. We are calloused, without feeling, so we have given ourselves over to sensuality, to the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness, for that is what we can feel; we are hardened by the unbelief of the world, and stimulated by the lust which is in the world. Isn't life supposed to be good? Isn't death bad? Yet our lives are not joyous, but they are like death. We don't know what life truly is — if we seen it walk by, we would say, "What was that?" Living for pleasure is not life; our trouble may be gone for a moment, but it is not gone forever; living for pleasure is like hitting the snooze button on an alarm clock — we may feel better now, but we will have to deal with our problems later, but they has gotten worse. Even if we feel satisfied or fulfilled with these things, it is never enough; we are feeding a beast within us, the more we feed it, the bigger it gets; and the bigger it gets, the more we must feed it; it is never satisfied; we are the ones who make it stronger, and we are subdued by it. A dog growls when its not fed, how much more sin living within us which is a hound from hell? And sin is deathly, living in the sons of men; we are living, but sin is working death within us. We want to flee, but it's inside of us; we cover our eyes, but it lives in the darkness.

It is written, "He enlarges his appetite like Sheol, And he is like death, never satisfied." (Habakkuk 2:5) And like death we are constantly seeking food — and we are not content; like Sheol we are always seeking drink, and we are not quenched; we eat and we are hungry again later; we drink and we are thirsty again; as it says, " All a man's labor is for his mouth and yet the appetite is not satisfied. " (Ecclesiastes 6:7) And these, being for our enjoyment and nourishment, are corrupted into something it was never intended for. Food for the body, but God forbid for gluttony; drink to make the heart merry, but God forbid for drunkenness; sex for reproduction, but God forbid for immorality. God made everything good and upright, but we have twisted that which is straight. It is lust which corrupts our given necessities into dissipation and waste: for over-eating is not of hunger, and drunkenness is not of thirst, and immorality is not of reproduction; all of these are of pleasure; and from wisdom it does not come; as it says, " The mind of the wise is in the house of mourning, while the mind of fools is in the house of pleasure. " (Ecclesiastes 7:4) So pleasure is not of wisdom; and seeking for pleasure is fleeting, for it lasts only for a short while; however prudence makes the

most of her time, and looks to the future. No matter how much the eye sees, it is not enough; no matter how much the ear hears, it is not content. If these things truly make us happy, why wouldn't we express it outwardly? If we are truly happy, shouldn't our happiness resemble a child's happiness? Children are overcome with laughter and express joyfulness and run around expressing their happiness, jumping for joy. If these things truly make us happy, why don't we show it? Most often we are chained by such things: we are miserable inwardly, but outwardly we become less miserable, for these only mask our misery for a short while. In the beginning, we used to be happy, when sin wasn't alive, in the innocence of our childhood, but later, sin came alive and we died; sin put us to death, and it lives in our stead; we are dead in our sins, the whole lot of us. All of us have become enslaved to our own desires which corrupt, for lust corrupts and twists and perverts what is good.

And who is exempt from this? None of us. We are all under the power of sin. Which of us does not stoop to defecate? Who is born without a mother? We are led by the hand of this world into a cycle of dependence upon material things; we think we need these things to keep us in check; we say, "I don't feel normal without them." I testify about myself that I've been chained by many sins and pleasures and vices for many years of my life, and looking back, surely it was not life. Whatever a person is overcome by, that he is also enslaved. And how weak are we when something inanimate enslaves us! "I serve this and that, and I can't stop!" Whatever we offer ourselves to as obedient servants, to that, we are enslaved. And I was enslaved to everything a man could be enslaved by: food, alcohol, drugs, money, sex, and many other things. These things were not alive, but somehow I was enslaved to them as if they were; they are not gods at all, so why should I serve them? I must do for them, but what are they doing for me? I wouldn't call myself a man, for I can't get out. I want out, but I can't escape; I am surely in a prison cell. I want to stop sinning, but I can't; I want to be released, but I can't redeem myself. I am without power; hope, I have none. "Where is real pleasure and satisfaction?" And worse yet, I don't know how to utter it; for perhaps if I could tell someone, they could help. But instead, guilt and shame kept me from sharing, as if I were the only one dealing with such things, and there is no-one to relate; just as Solomon, who had great wisdom from God, writes, "All things are full of weariness; a man cannot utter it; the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing." (Ecclesiastes 1:8) And so it is with me, I am full of weariness and I couldn't utter it. If only I could say, "I have sinned and perverted what is right, And it is not proper for me." (Job 33:27) So then I could say, "He has redeemed my soul from going to the pit, And my life shall see the light." (Job 33:28) However I am mute; I am unable to speak.

Solomon, still using his wisdom, searched out pleasure, and said: "I said in my heart, 'Come now, I will test you with pleasure; enjoy yourself.'" But behold, this also was vanity. I said of laughter, "It is mad," and of pleasure, "What use is it?" I searched with my heart how to cheer my body with wine—my heart still guiding me with wisdom—and how to lay hold on folly, till I might see what was good for the children of man to do under heaven during the few days of their life. (...) And whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them. I kept my heart from no pleasure, for my heart found pleasure

in all my toil, and this was my reward for all my toil. Then I considered all that my hands had done and the toil I had expended in doing it, and behold, all was vanity and a striving after wind, and there was nothing to be gained under the sun. " (Ecclesiastes 2:1-11) As Solomon said, "My heart still guiding me with wisdom", for wisdom guided him into all these things; and he spoke all these things so that we would not need to pierce ourselves with these same sorrows. Solomon's words are surely insightful. Wisdom originates from God; but every sinful habit originates with lust; and lust entices the eyes. As he says, "And whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them." All sin begins here. And the end: as it says, "Behold, all was vanity and a striving after wind." So by the things of this world, no man will be satisfied. Even by images, which are copies, men have tried to find satisfaction. But if we aren't satisfied with the real thing, then why would we be satisfied with an image? For an image is a copy. But rather, images stimulate more lust, for an image makes itself greater than reality which it is portraying. And how computers stimulate desire through pictures! It is satisfying while on it, but afterwards it's like waking from a sleep. We live in an age where media screens are everywhere: it started with televisions in the living room, then escalated to monitors in the pocket. Surely these feed our eyes. This is what I meant when I said, "We are led by the hand of this world," for who creates advertisements? Who makes ready the fulfillment of our lusts? But still, the desire belongs to us, and we will be the ones who suffer for indulging it. We should not long for the things of the world, but the One who gives all good things is God.

Do you want further proof that we are dissatisfied and do not know it? A computer can create entire simulations for living a new life inside. If life were so good, then why does this exist? If we were satisfied with our lives, why would we seek another? Can a copy ever be as good as the real? Which do you like better: name brand goods or knock offs? Yes, knock offs are cheaper and require less of us, but they are not better, even in the slightest. In the same way, these simulations are cheaper: you can sit on the couch and be at a sports game! But it is certainly not better. So lust shows itself as something great, but it is less; it corrupts the natural into something seemingly greater and fulfills the desire with reality, not with what it is portraying. Desire is like an advertisement image: and does the image ever portray true reality? The artist makes the image better than reality by skill, but it is not the true norm. And these images are fantasy, imagination, from one's own mind — and so is lust. Lustful desire is not reality; for when something is desired, it is made great in one's mind, but it remains the same in reality. On the television screen men can put their imaginations so that you can say, "It must be, for I have seen it!" But it is not, it is trickery. It is merely an image someone made in their mind, in their imagination, making it visible for you to see; for it is what they want you to see and what they don't want you to see; and these images, which are from imaginations, entice lustful desire in those who see them. For why would someone make an image unless it is to be gazed at? (Covetousness is called idolatry; and covetousness is lust. And covetousness is condemned by the law.)

And without question: lust pertains to the eyes. The natural use is better than the unnatural, the real is better than the copy, good is better than evil; even if, in the

meantime, you think, "Ah! Yet it feels so good!" In the end you will not be saying that! Everything we sow, we will also reap. A person does not sow an apple and get an orange tree, does he? Neither does a person breed pigs and get cows. So why do you think, "I will sow corruption and get life?" Lust sowed reaps corruption; righteousness sowed reaps blessing; and lust conceived gives birth to sin. All sin is dysfunctional; and a dysfunction is useless. And that which is useless is put into a pit and awaits burning. A new sofa becomes fettered, a new car becomes a tin of rust, even our bodies are becoming old and gray and worn out: it will be soon in the grave. Evil will inherit evil and goodness will inherit goodness in the end. This is true, even if in the meantime we see the wicked prospering and the righteous suffering; as wisdom says, " I have seen everything during my lifetime of futility; there is a righteous man who perishes in his righteousness and there is a wicked man who prolongs his life in his wickedness. " (Ecclesiastes 7:15) And it says, " There are righteous men to whom it happens according to the deeds of the wicked. On the other hand, there are evil men to whom it happens according to the deeds of the righteous. I say that this too is futility. " (Ecclesiastes 8:14) But it also says, " I said to myself, "God will judge both the righteous man and the wicked man," for a time for every matter and for every deed is there. " (Ecclesiastes 3:17) So everyone will get what their deeds deserve in the end because God will cause His righteous judgment to be upheld. So take heed! As it says, " She who lives in pleasure is dead while she lives. " (1 Timothy 5:6) So if we live for pleasure, our life is a waste, which is dissipation. What good comes from waste? When you burn garbage it is not even useful for the fire, for it pollutes the air and burns too quickly. Instead, fear God! Enjoy what God has given you without grumbling or complaining; as it says, " So I commended pleasure, for there is nothing good for a man under the sun except to eat and to drink and to be merry, and this will stand by him in his toils throughout the days of his life which God has given him under the sun. " (Ecclesiastes 8:15) And then it says, " I know that there is nothing better for them than to rejoice and to do good in one's lifetime; moreover, that every man who eats and drinks sees good in all his labor — it is the gift of God. " (Ecclesiastes 3:12-13)

# Work And Toil

Our lives are filled with work and toil: we work then rest, and do it all over again the next day. The days do not cease, they do not lag behind for anybody; they are short, yet we spend them in much pain and agony because of our labors. The days are short because of our human weakness; each one is fit for the strength of a man. And what drives our inner strength? For what reason do we toil so much? As it says, " I have seen that every labor and every skill which is done is the result of rivalry between a man and his neighbor. This too is vanity and striving after wind. " (Ecclesiastes 4:4) As it says, "Every labor is the result of rivalry", which does not matter in the future; we work for the sake of man who perishes, as we too are perishing; we work for objectives that are not ours, for fruit that we will not eat; for we leave the fruit of our labors to another who comes after us. As it is written, "We have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either." (1 Timothy 6:7) The things we do now will not matter years from now, it will become old and outdated. In the future, people will look back and say, "Who were they?" As it is today, for we presently do not care who lived in the past; and it will be the same in the future: they will not care for us; even if we think, "I do care," what does our boasting accomplish? No-one can bring back a day which has been spent. We are constantly striving in labor, yet we don't receive our due wages; he who does little work, harvests much, and we are dumb-founded; we do much work for little harvest; we work hard for the holes in our pockets; we plant, and the locusts eat; we plant much, but gather very little. As it says, "You have sown much, but harvest little; you eat, but there is not enough to be satisfied; you drink, but there is not enough to become drunk; you put on clothing, but no one is warm enough; and he who earns, earns wages to put into a purse with holes." (Haggai 1:6) It is a grievous task which has been given to us! As it says, " I set my mind to seek and explore by wisdom concerning all that has been done under heaven. It is a grievous task which God has given to the sons of men to be afflicted with. I have seen all the works which have been done under the sun, and behold, all is vanity and striving after wind. " (Ecclesiastes 1:13-14) And furthermore it says, " There was a certain man without a dependent, having neither a son nor a brother, yet there was no end to all his labor. (...) This too is vanity and it is a grievous task. " (Ecclesiastes 4:8)

So surely we are born into travail, born for trouble; as it says, "For man is born for trouble, As sparks fly upward." (Job 5:7) All our days are struck with evil. We don't know where we are going, and we don't remember where we came from; we aren't fully aware of even today; we're in a box without the ability to look out. And even if we had 1000 lives of 1000 years a piece, we wouldn't be able to discover all that is set before us; how much less the things we don't see? As it says, "For all our days have declined in Your fury; We have finished our years like a sigh. As for the days of our life, they contain seventy years, Or if due to strength, eighty years, Yet their pride is but labor and sorrow; For soon it is gone and we fly away." (Psalms 90:9-10) We chase after things we think will satisfy us, but we catch them and see that they are empty; we are chasing after the wind; as it says, "For they sow the wind And they reap the

whirlwind. The standing grain has no heads; It yields no grain. Should it yield, strangers would swallow it up.” (Hosea 8:7) We are born into a miserable existence! So are we even better off than the animals? For they come in futility and they leave in futility just as it is with us; as it says, " For what happens to the sons of men also happens to animals; one thing befalls them: as one dies, so dies the other. Surely, they all have one breath; man has no advantage over animals, for all is vanity. " (Ecclesiastes 3:19) All living creatures die; what lives forever? Everything we strive and labor for, we do not keep; we strive for beauty, but it is fading away. Our possessions become the possessions of another. Even our own lives are borrowed, for we will return to the dust. Listen to what the King of Israel wrote toward the end of his life: " I hated all my toil in which I toil under the sun, seeing that I must leave it to the man who will come after me, and who knows whether he will be wise or a fool? Yet he will be master of all for which I toiled and used my wisdom under the sun. This also is vanity. So I turned about and gave my heart up to despair over all the toil of my labors under the sun, because sometimes a person who has toiled with wisdom and knowledge and skill must leave everything to be enjoyed by someone who did not toil for it. This also is vanity and a great evil. What has a man from all the toil and striving of heart with which he toils beneath the sun? For all his days are full of sorrow, and his work is a vexation. Even in the night his heart does not rest. This also is vanity. " (Ecclesiastes 2:18-23) But what is vanity? Futility is worthlessness, emptiness, aimlessness, not having a point or direction, wandering about in blackest darkness. It does not see; it is always doing much, but it is accomplishing little; it is speaking much, but getting nothing done; it is dreaming, but living as a passing shadow. What then, do we despair? But isn't that vain as well, a work of the wind? Why should we despair when there is hope.

Life is short, yet it feels long. In life, we despair, without it, there is no hope either. We spend our lives wasting on things that will pass away. We are passing away. In the place of the dead, in which we are going, there is nothing: no toil, no labor, no speech, no sight, nothing. We have inherited this life, not because we asked for it, for we did not even ask to be born, but because of the sin of Adam in the Garden, we have been given this kind of life. All people on earth come from him and we inherit sin and death from him; he transgressed the commandment, and judgment was pronounced on the earth because of him; as the curse pronounced says, " Cursed is the ground because of you; In toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; And you will eat the plants of the field; By the sweat of your face You will eat bread, Till you return to the ground, Because from it you were taken; For you are dust, And to dust you shall return. " (Genesis 3:18-20) So our toil is a curse from God because of the sin of Adam; the curse came from God because of sin; as the LORD God Himself says, " See now that I, I am He, And there is no god besides Me; It is I who put to death and give life. I have wounded and it is I who heal, And there is no one who can deliver from My hand. " (Deuteronomy 33:39-42) And then He says, " I am the LORD, and there is no other; Besides Me there is no God. (...) The One forming light and creating darkness, Causing well-being and creating calamity; I am the LORD who does all these. " (Isaiah 45:5-7) And it also says, "Is it not indeed from the LORD of hosts That peoples toil for fire, And nations grow weary for nothing?" (Habakkuk 2:13) But who are we to quarrel with our Maker? If we dare speak to Him, will He be

compelled to answer? But if He calls to us, we must answer Him. As it says, "But the LORD is in His holy temple. Let all the earth be silent before Him." (Habakkuk 2:20) For who can take God to court? Or who can accuse Him?

But rather, it says, " There is nothing better for a man than to eat and drink and tell himself that his labor is good. This also I have seen that it is from the hand of God. For who can eat and who can have enjoyment without Him? For to a person who is good in His sight He has given wisdom and knowledge and joy, while to the sinner He has given the task of gathering and collecting so that he may give to one who is good in God's sight. This too is vanity and striving after wind. " (Ecclesiastes 2:24-26) Also it says, " One hand full of rest is better than two fists full of labor and striving after wind. " (Ecclesiastes 4:6) Therefore it is better to accept your lot in life and be happy with it. Search and seek for the LORD God; acknowledge your futility and search and seek for fullness in God, not in the things of the world. For if the things of the world were pleasing to us, then we wouldn't be seeking for anything more. Will that which has no breath satisfy us? And if we think the living will satisfy us, won't it one day cease? But much greater is God who gives all things by which all things came into being! He lives and does not cease living. And the Lord has promised, " You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart. " (Jeremiah 29:13) As it says, "seek Me with all your heart", for He knows your heart and how much heart you have, for He has given your heart; He seen beforetime when the widow gave all her income (Mark 12:42-43), and He seen when Ananias kept back some of the money from the field which he sold (Acts 5:1-4). He knows the amount He has allotted. So if we have little heart, with all our little heart, therein seek; or if we have great heart, with all our great heart therein seek. He knows when we hold back, for He knows the measure which He has measured out. Therefore be unhappy with your futility and search for answers. Do not follow the example of the disobedient who love their futility. See how the disobedient try to resist God, trying to reverse the curses which God has pronounced on the earth: thinking their life is forever, they fall into error; thinking their home is forever, they believe a lie. See how the world tries to reverse things: for God gave woman pain in child-bearing, but they give numbing shots; for God made woman desire for her husband, yet he rules over her, but they start feminist movements; for God cursed the ground so that in toil it will produce its fruit, but they create technology that works at the push of a button; for God makes man to return to the dust in old age, but they have beauty products and wrinkling agents and plastic surgery; but whatever we try to do, we cannot reverse death: all of us will return to Him in the end, slave and free, rich and poor. So you see, our lives are set this way by God to lead us to Himself, for by the things of the world He sees to it that no man shall see the light of life.

## The Love Of Wealth

There was a man who went into a pub with everything he owned. He sat down at the table to gamble. At first, he bets only a little of what he has. He rolls the dice and a miracle happens! All the dice line up. The man yells, "Today is my lucky day. I will bet more next time!" So he rolls again, but this time with more on the table. A miracle happens again! All the dice line up. The man continues this over and over and every time he wins; then eventually, everything he owns is on the table, even the shirt off his back. He thought to himself, "Surely I have rolled these dice over and over and they haven't failed me yet." However, the dealer seen the man and thought to himself, "You fool! One day these dice will not line up and everything you own will be mine, for I have worked a long time in this pub and I see it every time: the dice will one day not line up, and everything you own will be mine." Sure enough, what the dealer said came true and the day came, and everything on the table was taken from him. And because the man didn't have enough money for even a beer, he was cast out of the pub into darkness where he wept because everything he owned was gone. And so it is with every man who trusts in this life and loves his possessions; for everyday is a miracle, but even though we have many days of life, there is a day of death; as it is written, "For he sees that even wise men die; The stupid and the senseless alike perish And leave their wealth to others." (Psalms 49:10) Then it says, " When he dies he will carry nothing away; His glory will not descend after him. Though while he lives he congratulates himself—And though men praise you when you do well for yourself— He shall go to the generation of his fathers; They will never see the light. " (Psalms 49:17-19) For riches do not descend after us; and the praise of man is a snare and a trap; our lives are not worthy to be trusted, for we have no assurance of tomorrow. " Man in his pomp, yet without understanding, Is like the beasts that perish. " (Psalms 49:20)

And furthermore it says, " There is an evil which I have seen under the sun and it is prevalent among men— a man to whom God has given riches and wealth and honor so that his soul lacks nothing of all that he desires; yet God has not empowered him to eat from them, for a foreigner enjoys them. This is vanity and a severe affliction. " (Ecclesiastes 6:1-2) So if we don't enjoy our wealth on earth, how can we in the grave? If we aren't happy with riches while they're in our hands, how will we be satisfied when they grow wings and fly away? Is the millionaire ever satisfied with one million? Doesn't he chase after two? As it says, " He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves wealth with his income; this also is vanity. " (Ecclesiastes 5:10) And all of this toil and striving for what? Is there anything we can take with us when we die? Not even our bodies go with us, for the body goes back to the dust from which it came, for God created man from the dust; as it says, " The LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being. " (Genesis 2:7) Then it says, " The dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it. " (Ecclesiastes 12:7) For " As he came from his mother's womb he shall go

again, naked as he came, and shall take nothing for his toil that he may carry away in his hand. This also is a grievous evil: just as he came, so shall he go, and what gain is there to him who toils for the wind? " (Ecclesiastes 5:15-17)

Everything we think we have, we don't have: we leave it to someone who comes after us; we leave it to him who did not work nor toil for it. So what do any of us really own? But rather it says, " The earth is the LORD's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein. " (Psalms 24:1) Are these things according to word only? Aren't they also according to experience? Or are we making things up? Ask the ancestors, those who were before us, for they died and in their death they still speak. We are merely stewards of what God has entrusted to us. And if we cannot be trusted with earthly things, who will trust us with heavenly things? If we hold tightly to dust which is borrowed, who will give unto us refined gold? (Luke 16:10-12) Riches do not deliver on the day of wrath; as it says about that day, "They will fling their silver into the streets and their gold will become an abhorrent thing; their silver and their gold will not be able to deliver them in the day of the wrath of the LORD." (Ezekiel 7:19) For not all silver and gold and costly stones can forgive even a single sin; as it says, " No man can by any means redeem his brother Or give to God a ransom for him — For the redemption of his soul is costly, And he should cease trying forever — That he should live on eternally, That he should not undergo decay. " (Psalms 49:7-9) As he says, "He should cease trying forever", for that which is costly is freely given by God, humiliating the rich. For God is gracious, even giving freely what is most costly; He who owns everything and gives to everyone, breath and life and all things, also continues in His giving with the most precious, which is beyond price. So God gives freely to the praise of His glory, and the rich hold fast to the pain of his own flesh, for amassing riches brings pain onto oneself; and trusting in them is a futile attempt for safety. Or can a dead image of a king on a coin or an inscription on a bill deliver? If you put a torch to it, it can't even save itself! And when the king was alive, he couldn't save himself from death, otherwise he wouldn't have died; how much less can his picture save when he is in the realm of the dead?

So what good comes from riches? There is much in every way, for "Wealth adds many friends, But a poor man is separated from his friend." (Proverbs 19:4) But then it says, "When good things increase, those who consume them increase. So what is the advantage to their owners except to look on?" (Ecclesiastes 5:11) So wealth is good to make friends, but it is not a trustworthy servant and it is not worthy of our affections. For many pierce themselves with many sins and sorrows by chasing after wealth in the love of money; as it says, " There is a grievous evil that I have seen under the sun: riches were kept by their owner to his hurt, and those riches were lost in a bad venture. " (Ecclesiastes 1:12) For the love of money is a snare among us, a trap which springs and captures and does not release except by the love of the truth; as it says, " The love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. " (1 Timothy 6:9-10) They "Who suppose that godliness is a means of gain." (1 Timothy 6:5) For why do men do evil, except for the love of things? As it says, "You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You

do not have because you do not ask.” (James 4:2) But here is the nature of God: He does not store up for Himself, but in His riches and kindness He gives freely to everyone who asks, and He is generous to all, even the disobedient and unthankful (Luke 6:35); He dwells in heaven, but all that is on earth is given to the sons of men; even so, He does not withhold that which is most precious, which is eternal, which is stored up in heaven; and this is evident in that He causes the rain to pour down from heaven onto all flesh, the unjust and the just alike. And if it is so with rain, how much more with spiritual blessings? As it says, "It is time to seek the LORD Until He comes to rain righteousness on you." (Hosea 10:12) So who do we really hurt by being rich towards ourselves? If we give, it is to the benefit of others; if we withhold, it is to the hurt of others; as it says, "If you have sinned, what do you accomplish against Him? And if your transgressions are many, what do you do to Him? If you are righteous, what do you give to Him, Or what does He receive from your hand? Your wickedness is for a man like yourself, And your righteousness is for a son of man." (Job 35:6-8) But even so, if we are rich towards ourselves only, and defraud and wrong our neighbors for the sake of money, we hurry along the judgment of God; as it says, " You have lived on the earth in luxury and in self-indulgence. You have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter. " (James 5:3-5) For all covetousness is idolatry, and God's wrath is against idolatry, for in it is the worship of the things of the world (Ephesians 5:5, Colossians 3:5). All such worship and service is not toward the one true God, but toward that which is by nature no god. An idolater bows down and serves a statue, which is merely a created thing; how is that any different from a man who serves money?

But rather, be rich toward God. Do not be like the man that says to himself, "Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry." " But God said to him, "Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?" **So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.** " (Luke 12:15-21) For when an animal offering was made, the fat of the offering was burnt up to God; so the fat is the LORD's. And what we have in excess is fat. Judge for yourselves: is it good to see the poor suffering while indulging yourself? See this parable and fear: " A poor man named Lazarus was laid at his gate, covered with sores, and longing to be fed with the crumbs which were falling from the rich man's table; besides, even the dogs were coming and licking his sores. Now the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to Abraham's bosom; and the rich man also died and was buried. In Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and saw Abraham far away and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried out and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue, for I am in agony in this flame.' But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony. And besides all this, between us and you there is a great chasm fixed, so that those who wish to come over from here to you will not be able, and that none may cross over from there to us.' And he said, 'Then I beg you, father, that you send him to my father's house— for I have five brothers—in order that he may warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.' But Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.' But he said, 'No, father Abraham, but if someone goes

to them from the dead, they will repent!' But he said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.' " (Luke 16:20-31)

What do you think God is asking from you? That you be hard pressed and another be eased? Of course not! But rather in view of the graciousness of God: if you have more than enough, give to the one who lacks, and so by doing you will store up for yourselves " Treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. " (Matthew 6:20-21) Seek the gift of God, which is the reward of righteousness; as it says, " As for every man to whom God has given riches and wealth, He has also empowered him to eat from them and to receive his reward and rejoice in his labor; this is the gift of God. For he will not often consider the years of his life, because God keeps him occupied with the gladness of his heart. " (Ecclesiastes 5:19-20) So "Do not weary yourself to gain wealth, Cease from your consideration of it. When you set your eyes on it, it is gone. For wealth certainly makes itself wings Like an eagle that flies toward the heavens." (Proverbs 23:4-5)

# The Day Of Death

There was a man who lived in a tent. All his days were spent in agony because his tent was not comfortable; for the flies bit, the sun beamed, and the moon stuck. Nevertheless, he hoped forward to his permanent home which was far away in a distant land being prepared for him. Night and day he longed for it and thought about it, even dreaming of it in his sleep. After many years, his home was ready; at the perfect time he went away to his home in which he hoped for. The tent was destroyed, the man went to his home, and he rejoiced and spent the rest of his days in it forever more. As it says, " For man goes to his eternal home while mourners go about in the street. " (Ecclesiastes 12:5) For we have this present life, but it is not ours to keep; if our life was forever, then we wouldn't have to die, but because we die one day, we know this isn't our home; it is our temporary residence, the tent we live in; our lives are entrusted to us for only a little while. So since we know we will die, we look forward to our next life, our permanent home. If we reject our permanent home, we will try to make our home here on earth eternal; as it says, " Their inner thought is that their houses will last forever, Their dwelling places to all generations; They call their lands after their own names. " (Psalms 49:11) But who of us can prevent the day of our death? No one! Everyone will go to an eternal dwelling, whether good or bad, as decreed by God. In the state we finish, it will determine where we spend eternity. The time in the tent is a time of testing, and we always have two choices: good or evil. If there were only one choice, we wouldn't have free will, since we would be forced into choosing the only choice, but there are two choices.

We will reap what we sow, we gain what we have put in, we will be recompensed according to what we have done in our body. There is life after life, which is eternal, and there is death after death, which is the second death; the second death is hell, the lake of fire, a fire that is not quenched, for the wood is not consumed. Anyone whose name is not written in the Book of Life will die the second death in eternal shame and torment. Paradise is the Kingdom of God, the new Jerusalem, Mount Zion, the new heaven and the new earth, where righteousness dwells. The present heaven and earth are subjected to evil and violence, but it is passing away with everything in it, as we ourselves are passing away. The new heaven and the new earth will never pass away; for it is an eternal home which cannot be shaken. The LORD God will judge both the living and the dead according to their deeds, and recompense all according to what they have done in the body; as God says, "Now the end is upon you, and I will send My anger against you; I will judge you according to your ways and bring all your abominations upon you." (Ezekiel 7:3-4) So He judges us based on our own works. And from the judgement, each will go to their permanent home as decreed by the judgement of God; and God's judgment will be based on righteousness and justice; so who can argue with the verdict? He will reward all who do good for the good done and repay harm for the harm done. But certainly, God has sown everlasting life in the human heart so that we would covet life; as it says, " He has made everything appropriate in its time. **He has also set eternity in their heart**, yet so that man will not

find out the work which God has done from the beginning even to the end." (Ecclesiastes 3:11) For we don't want to die; we covet life, but we are without knowledge of the way of life; we know we should do good, but we have not the goodness within ourselves.

Nevertheless, if a sinful man dies in his sins, he will be raised a sinful man, and he will be judged for his sins; but if a righteous man dies in his righteousness, he will be raised a righteous man, and be rewarded for his righteousness. The LORD shows us through sleep what death is like: we sleep and hours pass without us knowing about it. In sleep, we've accomplished nothing, we've done nothing, but rest; those who belong to the LORD, He teaches them in their sleep; while they dream in the night, He ministers to them in parables; but in the place of the dead, there is nothing, no dreams, no plans — nothing. While we live, there is hope for repentance, but in the place of the dead, there is no hope for anything; as it says, " The hearts of the children of man are full of evil, and madness is in their hearts while they live, and after that they go to the dead. But he who is joined with all the living has hope, for a living dog is better than a dead lion. For the living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing, and they have no more reward, for the memory of them is forgotten. Their love and their hate and their envy have already perished, and forever they have no more share in all that is done under the sun. " (Ecclesiastes 9:3-10) For generations of our descendants grow up before our eyes, but yet at the fullness of life, we leave and fly away. Not one of us chose our family, no-one chose the body in which they would be born, not one chose the country they would live, yea, no one even asked to be born! We are all given what we have without a say, and it is all taken away without our gesture. A plate is set before us, and before we are finished eating, the waiter takes it away; as it says, " No man has authority to restrain the wind with the wind, or authority over the day of death; and there is no discharge in the time of war, and evil will not deliver those who practice it. " (Ecclesiastes 8:8) " Moreover, man does not know his time: like fish caught in a treacherous net and birds trapped in a snare, so the sons of men are ensnared at an evil time when it suddenly falls on them. " (Ecclesiastes 9:12)

So we have all been dealt cards, and the dealer will gather them back up; the end will declare whether we have played our cards right. No-one can take their cards back to the dealer; they are dealt out according to his will. For our lives have been dealt out to us by God; if we don't like them, do we dare quarrel with our Maker? "Woe to him who strives with Him who formed him, a pot among earthen pots! Does the clay say to him who forms it, 'What are you making?' or 'Your work has no handles'? Woe to him who says to a father, 'What are you begetting?' or to a woman, 'With what are you in labor?'" (Isaiah 45:9-10) But rather this is the righteous response: " LORD, make me to know my end And what is the extent of my days; Let me know how transient I am. Behold, You have made my days as handbreadths, And my lifetime as nothing in Your sight; Surely every man at his best is a mere breath. " (Psalms 39:4-6) And it says, " Teach us to number our days, that we may present to You a heart of wisdom. " (Psalms 90:12) So therefore "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might, for there is no work or thought or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol, to which you are going." (Ecclesiastes 9:10) For "I have seen that nothing is better than that man

should be happy in his activities, for that is his lot. For who will bring him to see what will occur after him?" (Ecclesiastes 3:22)

So God has given us many days of life, but there is a day of death; He has given us many days of grace, but there is one day of judgement. The many is not like the one; but while we live in the many, we ought to consider the one. For from the One, they both come. "For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil." (Ecclesiastes 12:14) So in our days of pride, we ought to consider from where we came, and we should consider where we are going. When we consider ourselves more than what we really are, we should remember we are no different from beasts that perish; as it says, " I concluded that God is testing us, to show us that we are no better than animals. After all, the same fate awaits human beings and animals alike. One dies just like the other. They are both the same kind of creature. A human being is no better off than an animal, because life has no meaning for either. They are both going to the same place — the dust. They both came from it; they will both go back to it. How can anyone be sure that the human spirit goes upwards while an animal's spirit goes down into the ground? " (Ecclesiastes 3:18-21) For surely we are no better off than animals. Furthermore, we are no better off than the foolish, for the wise die like the fool, and both are forgotten; as wisdom sees and says, " Then I said to myself, "As is the fate of the fool, it will also befall me. Why then have I been extremely wise?" So I said to myself, "This too is vanity." For there is no lasting remembrance of the wise man as with the fool, inasmuch as in the coming days all will be forgotten. And how the wise man and the fool alike die! " (Ecclesiastes 2:15-16)

And because of these things, the Psalmist says, "Surely in vain I have kept my heart pure And washed my hands in innocence; For I have been stricken all day long And chastened every morning." (Psalms 73:13-14) And about the wicked he says, "There are no pains in their death, And their body is fat. They are not in trouble as other men, Nor are they plagued like mankind." (Psalms 73:4-5) But then he says, "Until I came into the sanctuary of God; Then I perceived their end." (Psalms 73:17) When he says, "Then I perceived their end." He was not looking at their death, for the wicked died with no pains. For death isn't the final end; God will give new breath to the living and the dead, the earth will give up its dead and the depths its slain. It is God's grace that gave life, and His grace is revealed in the resurrection of the dead, for He will give new life; "Inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment." (Hebrews 9:27) At that time, the throne of grace will be taken down, and judgement will be upheld. But He says, " **Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.** " (Matthew 5:7) Judgement will be according to what we have received from God, what we have done with this grace of life; judgement will be based on our works. But there is not a single man on earth who has not soiled his garments. Haven't we all already ruined this good thing of life? So if we have ruined our cards, can we take them back? Knowing where they come from, can we take them back as goods bought in a store? Can we have a do-over in this life or trade our cards for someone else's? Surely God is just. Wouldn't He show us the way of redemption from sin and forgiveness of sins? Does He not know that we are wayward, and in need of a Shepherd? Surely one

day we will return our cards to the Dealer, for our hand is only for a little while. Will we be able to ask Him at that time? Certainly it will be too late for questions. For He will question us and we are the ones who must answer. So shall we go all in for something that is nothing? Of course not! Rather how much more shall we go all in for what is everlasting! But where is the everlasting path? Where is the ancient road? Will someone show us the way of life? If there was a way, surely God would reveal it, wouldn't He?

The world thinks the truth is hidden: in the depths of the ocean, in outer space, in the center of the earth. They spend countless billions of dollars to explore where no man has gone before, searching for the truth. Yet, God is widely known and everyone knows His name; for no-one needs to ask, "Who has ascended into heaven and descended? Who has gathered the wind in His fists? Who has wrapped the waters in His garment? Who has established all the ends of the earth? What is His name or His son's name? Surely you know!" (Proverbs 30:4) For He has made Himself renown to all His creation. We can discern the signs of the sky, but we cannot discern the truth? Whose name is constantly blasphemed? Yes, we all know Him, but we choose not to honor Him as God. And whose symbol is the cross, which is put on buildings, hung around necks, pierced on the skin, and marked on grave stones? Did we forget that it was once a device of death? (For Jesus was put on that cross, turning what the enemy meant for evil into good.) Whose coming split our calendar in half? Or who makes a week seven days? Who is it that hallows the seventh day? The same writings that declare a seven day week and a restful day on the seventh, tells of Him; the same writings that quote wisdom, that we have all come to agree upon, even quoting it without knowing its original source, also speak of the truth. Who is it that lived a great while ago, but yet died, and is proclaimed as resurrected from the dead? That which once was a sect, a heresy, a false teaching, which was fought against, has now become world-wide good news. For who can fight against God and succeed? If this thing is not of God, it wouldn't have withstood. And yet we shoot rockets into the heavens to reach God, just as they tried in times past at the Tower of Babel, by their own might to make a name for themselves, but they failed; for God sees to it that no-one can come near Him by their own self-will or effort, so that no-one will be able to boast in His Presence; but rather, through the word of faith, through the word of truth, which says, "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. It is just as the Scripture says: "Anyone who believes in Him will never be put to shame." For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. " (Romans 10:8-13) For the way of life is through the knowledge of God in the face of the Lord Jesus Christ; and He is the living Grace, the living Truth; He has descended to us and He has ascended; and He sends forth the Spirit of Truth; and He will come again with the clouds in the heavens, for He is always and forever! Every question is answered in a single saying: "THANK GOD! THE ANSWER IS IN JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD." (Romans 7:25)

# THE SAFETY - GRACE

The Servant Of God	38
The Bronze Serpent	46
The Victor	50
The Lamb Of God	53
The Lion	57
The Scapegoat	62
True Food And True Drink	66
The Door Of Eternal Salvation	70
The Rock Of Our Salvation	74
The Son Of God	77

## The Servant Of God

Jesus came into the world to do the will of God; God's will was that He would go to the cross to justify many by His blood. He was buried in a tomb for three days, God rose Him up from the dead on the third day, for it was the will of man to put Him to death, but it was God's will to raise Him from the grave. He appeared to His disciples, over 500 of them, showing unto them many signs and proofs that He was alive from the dead. Afterwards, He ascended to heaven to the Father's right hand where He is now exalted above every dominion and power and ruler and principality. He will return on the last day to reign and rule with His holy people until His enemies are made a footstool for His feet; His kingdom is everlasting and His rule is eternal.

So when we were deserving of punishment and wrath, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, having appeared in the likeness of human flesh, He came to put to death sin in the flesh. He died for sin, but not His own as with a criminal, but He died as an innocent Man. They put him to trial, trying Him, but they found no fault in Him; Pontius Pilate determined to release Him, but the Jews wanted Him to be crucified; He was perfect, yet He was reckoned with the transgressors; but this was all according to the foreknowledge and predetermined plan of God. When He was crucified, He had this written charge against Him: "THE KING OF THE JEWS". For this is the charge they had against Him, that He said He is the Son of God. Showing His divinity in birth, He was born of a virgin; as a newborn He put the king to fright that the king slew all children from two years old and under (Matthew 2:1-22); so if He instilled fear in the king at the time, even as a newborn, how much more as a full grown? For He was instilling fear into all where ever He went; while He walked demons shrieked at the sight of Him, He worked fearful miracles, He walked on the water, and silenced the tumultuous waves with a word; His followers walked behind Him trembling in fear (Mark 10:32); with His death came darkness and a great earthquake (Matthew 27:52); with His resurrection came the appearing of angels, and godly men awoke from their tombs. He was a man, but He was no man: God in the flesh. The Son of God was sent into the world to die, and the death He died was for us; for we must die, but He who never dies died to redeem us from death. He was sent by the Father God bearing the message of His death, for He prophesied about His death many times, foretelling even how He would die. For just as Uriah, the Hittite, was sent by David, bearing in-hand the letter of his death, even so, he was innocent of wrong, so Christ was sent into the world with the message of His own death; Uriah bore in his hand bad news, but it is impossible for Christ to bear bad news, only good, for the Father is in Him; so this message has become good news to us who believe, although it meant for His death, that we may be joined to Another, namely God, our Father, who sent Him unto us to be Redeemer and Savior. For our sins have separated us from God, our iniquities caused Him to hide His face from us, but God has reconciled us to Himself through the body of Jesus Christ. For David could only marry Bathsheba if she were to be released by the law of her husband by death, so David sent her husband Uriah to die; and so we are made to die to the law through the body of Jesus Christ that we may be joined to Him

who was raised from the dead (Romans 7:1-4). And He has become to us the Mediator of a new covenant; as promised through the prophet Jeremiah, as he says, "'Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares the LORD. " (Jeremiah 31:31-32) As it says, "Not like the covenant which I made with their fathers," for the new covenant is not like the old; but "Through the Law I died to the Law, so that I might live to God." (Galatians 2:19)

God's strength is not inhibited even when worked through things which bring weakness and death; and His goodness is not stifled by that which is evil, but through it, He makes His glory shine ever-so brighter. [As the apostle Paul even uses Abraham sin to speak allegorically of the two covenants: one of slavery and the other of freedom in Christ (Galatians 4:21-31). And without question Abraham erred by trying to fulfill the promise of God by human effort. So even Paul is seen using a man's fault as a testimony to Christ.] For without question, David sinned by sending Uriah to die. And the cross of Christ is a device of death, but through it, salvation is preached. So God uses human error and sin, even things which bring weakness and death, to make His righteousness and glory shine ever-so brighter. For now we see Jesus who appeared in the flesh and never sinned, yet He bore the transgression of us all upon Himself on a cross. He is righteous; and He is so righteous that He was not stifled from doing right even in His death, for He died for our sins — doing good in that He loved us to die for us. And by the power of God, He was raised from the dead. And so, He is so righteous that He makes many right even by faith in His name. For He does not need to be present to do righteously; for He is absent, but yet His saving Word is declared. He does not even need to be present in body to convert us; for even by the testimony of Him, He converts the damned soul into a blessed one! And He is exceedingly righteous to do so. For even the testimony of Him converts, even the testimony of Him from another; and how insufficient are we for such a task? If the testimony of Him changes lives while He is absent, how much more when He appears from heaven? For we who believe will be changed at His coming. But it's not as though He isn't present with us now, for His Spirit is made to dwell in us who believe. Furthermore He works miracles and powers in those who believe through the power and working of His name; for He is exceedingly righteous to make men whole even by faith in His name, even through such a one who believes in Him. [As the apostle of the Lord Jesus healed a man and said, "Men of Israel, why are you amazed at this, or why do you gaze at us, as if by our own power or piety we had made him walk?" (Acts 3:12) And this was after the Lord Jesus was exalted to heaven.] For Jesus is the Righteous God who came down from heaven to work salvation to everyone who believes; and the same One who came down from heaven has been exalted above the heavens; and His great and righteous name is given for all men to believe upon. So everyone who wills to receive Him must do so by faith. And who could have foreknown this? Yet God has not left us without witness; as the prophet Isaiah says, " And as for His generation, who considered That He was cut off out of the land of the living For the transgression of my people, to whom the stroke was due? " (Isaiah 53:8) For those that He died for wagged their head at Him

and reviled Him while on the cross; they did not consider His innocence, they did not consider their guilt; and yet, "He Himself bore the sin of many, And interceded for the transgressors." (Isaiah 53:12) For He cried out to God for them, saying, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." (Luke 23:34) For they were fulfilling Scripture, which they knew and read every Sabbath; but they did not know they were accomplishing God's purpose; and they did not know it was for their sins He was perishing. But was it for them only and not us today? It is for anyone who will come, both now and forever, for He died for the sins of the whole world. And He is exceedingly righteous to do so. For the sin we do secretly, He died for openly; for He had no chance to hide, as one does with shame, but He was brought out to the open; He was lifted up for all to see, even for the whole earth to behold; as He says, "**And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.**" (John 12:32) For He died openly for us so that we would renounce shameful and hidden ways. He endured such opposition from sinners, enduring through it, looking forward to us being made right with God.

For God sent His Son into the world beforehand, before that great and terrible day of God's wrath, to make peace before the time; not because His hosts are insufficient for war, but He desires that none should perish, but all come to repentance; He has made a covenant of peace with us before the time in His own blood. For the time will come, and He will return to execute judgment upon all of His enemies, even His enemies He died for; since they refuse to come to Him for reconciliation, He will come to them in wrath; for there is a time for everything; as it says, "A time to love and a time to hate; A time for war and a time for peace." (Ecclesiastes 3:8) For they hate Him without cause and repay His goodness with evil, and they see His kindness as weakness; however, in that day He will prove that He is not weak, for to us who believe, the cross is the power of God unto salvation, but to His enemies who refuse to believe, who delight in wickedness, His power is unto them for destruction. For everyone who wars against God destroys his own soul; for " Who knows the power of Your anger? For as the fear of You, so is Your wrath. " (Psalms 90:11) But yet the vastness of the mercy and lovingkindness of Him — which is beyond the heights of the heavens — for He is patient and long suffering and forbearing, wishing for all to come to the saving knowledge of the truth; He is merciful to all; and especially merciful to us who believe. Through the enemies of the cross, He shows forth more and more of His mercy to the objects of His mercy; for through His enemies, He exemplifies the riches of His mercy even more so; for He is long suffering and forbearing even towards the unbelieving and ungrateful. For mercy triumphs over judgment; and God has shown us mercy through the judgment of our sins through Another — His own Son; and who is worthy of such a thing? We who have been chosen for mercy have received mercy, the forgiveness of our sins, and will receive mercy from God on that great and terrible day; for mercy is shown to those who are merciful. How great is the fear of Him; for God hates sin, and there is no wrong in Him, and yet He sent His Son into the world to condemn sin in His own flesh, so that sin might lose its power in us who believe. He died for all, for His love is for all, so much so that He shows forth His great love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us; great is His hatred towards sin, and much greater is His love towards us, who for the sake of our sins, endured our sins. If

sin ends in death, how much more does His righteousness lead to life? How great is His wrath toward sin; how much greater is His lovingkindness toward us in that He endured the penalty for our sins, having died for us. He pacified God's wrath through the cross; and through His life He leads many to righteousness by faith in His name; for He put on our sin and shame, bearing our wrongs, suffering with us and for us; for this end: that we would put off sin and put on Him like new clothes. How much more should we hate our sins for the sake of Him who loved us; for He loved us more than His hatred of the sins of even the whole world. "For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:39)

Beforetime I said, "Sin might lose its power in us who believe," and this is what I mean. I will use an allegory to explain this: Jonathan, the son of Saul, became accused by his father when he ate some honey which was against his father's oath (1 Samuel 14:24-45); for his father Saul made a foolish oath that no-one should eat until he had vengeance on his enemies. So Saul, in his zeal for his oath, sought to put even his own son to death for the sake of the oath of his curse (1 Samuel 14:39, 1 Samuel 14:44), for Jonathan tasted a little bit of honey unaware of his father's oath. But Jonathan did not die, rather he bore the curse and lived on account of another oath, the oath of life; and even yet, the people who ate meat with the blood, which is contrary to the law of Moses (Leviticus 17:12-14), were not cut off (1 Samuel 14:32-34). And even though Saul sinned by making these foolish oaths and the people sinned by eating with the blood, it was Jonathan who was determined by lot, which is determined by God, to have sinned, and the rest were free'd; even though Jonathan did no wrong, only he ate a little bit of honey; despite these things, and despite the fact that Jonathan worked with God to bring about a great deliverance for Israel that day, he was still chosen by lot to die; but still yet, he lived thereafter; as it says about him, "Must Jonathan die, who has brought about this great deliverance in Israel? Far from it! As the LORD lives, not one hair of his head shall fall to the ground, for he has worked with God this day." So the people rescued Jonathan and he did not die. " (1 Samuel 14:45) And these things pertain to Christ, who worked with God to bring about a great deliverance, witnessed today; for it says, " Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree"— so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith. " (Galatians 3:13-14) For the curse of the law stands even if it be in regard to God's own Son. Nevertheless He was found with no wrong; we are the ones who are rightfully under the curse of the law, which says, "Cursed is he who does not confirm the words of this law by doing them." (Deuteronomy 27:26) For we do not do what the law says. But Christ was chosen by God on our behalf to be our Substitute, and we are released from the curse; but it was impossible for death to hold Him, for He walked in the ways of life and was raised to life; He went through no decay, by the foreknowledge of God and the power of an indestructible life. And He has become unto us Savior from our sins, Savior from the curse of the law, Savior from death, for He tasted death for everyone to bring about this present blessing and deliverance; [as it says of Him, " Jesus, because

of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone. " (Hebrews 2:9) ] By Him who tasted death for us, we who have tasted sin might be released from our fear of death. For we have tasted sin and we have gained nothing from it — for "What benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death." (Romans 6:21) So although evil is sweet in the mouth, "Yet his food in his stomach is changed To the venom of cobras within him." (Job 20:14) And this venom is what Christ takes away. We are the ones who have tasted sin, but Christ came to taste death which is due to us, to release us from the snare of sin and death. We should have been chosen by lot to die, and rightfully so; but God determined for Christ to die on our behalf, and unrightfully so. For He is innocent; and we are guilty. But God determined beforehand what Christ was to do. Thanks be to God who releases us from the power of sin and death in Christ Jesus, our Lord! So since He died for us, we consider ourselves to be dead to sin, having died to the law, for sin has its power in the law. ([See more about Jonathan](#))

Our Lord disarmed the rulers and authorities through the cross, for they have their power in the law, for in the law sin has its strength; however Christ Jesus justifies us apart from our works of the law, through faith in His name, rendering our works ineffective for justification; as the apostle affirms, " Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes." (Romans 10:4) For the law could never justify, it only condemns the law-breaker; through the law comes the knowledge of sin, but in Christ Jesus comes the knowledge of God, the knowledge of His righteousness. And by His work He grants to us overwhelming victory through His name; and in His name, we obtain the victory, for only in the refuge of Him we are safe from the wrath of God. So it's by His work on the cross and our work of faith in Him that we may please God; for faith is reckoned as righteousness, and through it we have entrance into His grace. And if it's by faith, then it's apart from works and credited as grace. But someone may ask, "How is it that we do no work and believe, but yet we are justified?" By using a human example: yes, you do no work, you believe and you win justification in Christ. In a similar way, you watch a sports game, yet you do nothing, you watch and believe your team to win. You cheer for your favorite team without doing a single thing: except you believe in your team to win. You sit and watch on the sofa, hoping your team would win, while they, by their sweat and their tears, do the work. When they score, you rejoice; when they are overcome, you lose heart. When they win, you celebrate with them, and when they lose, you suffer defeat as well. If it is this way when you believe in your team, how much more with Christ? (For a sports game is like war — it is not war in itself, but it mimics war. In a real war, two foes oppose each other and fight. The loser dies, and the winner lives.) If we knew beforehand who would win and who would lose, we would choose the winning side, so that we may never suffer defeat. Now this I say: the war that Christ fought on the cross was for the whole world. And the battle which He fought was spiritual; it was for spirit and body. In a physical war, it is for body — but Jesus fought for the soul and body of mankind. Just as David fought Goliath, and David, as one man, obtained the victory for the whole nation of Israel, so Christ fought as One man and obtained victory for the whole world. And we who put our faith in Him share in His victory; for He is our trustworthy Savior, who wins

and never loses, and even in His defeat is victorious — for even in His weakness, He is strong! And even in His defeat gains the victory! For "The weakness of God is stronger than men." (1 Corinthians 1:25) I say that He was defeated, but it's not so, it only appeared that way to the world. Is one defeated when He is alive from the dead and exalted? For God rose Him up. " For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. " (1 John 5:4) So it is by faith we enter into victory with Christ, according to the righteousness of God, not according to our own works of righteousness that we have done; for our good works are sin, and our best works are abominable: the common people chanted for Jesus to be crucified, and the most righteous Pharisees plotted to kill Him; they handed the Lord of glory to death; as the prophet says, "The best of them is like a briar, The most upright like a thorn hedge." (Micah 7:4) "For all of us have become like one who is unclean, And all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment." (Isaiah 64:6) [Furthermore, wisdom says, "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination, How much more when he brings it with evil intent!" (Proverbs 21:27, Proverbs 15:8) And, "He who turns away his ear from listening to the law, Even his prayer is an abomination." (Proverbs 28:9) For God is the God of the spirits of all flesh; and when the wicked seek to deceive Him with righteousness, it is worse for them than the wicked who do wickedly.] But thanks be to God who purifies our hearts by faith in the gospel of Christ that we may produce good fruit to God! So through the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith.

So through the cross Jesus made a public spectacle of the powers and authorities that govern this world; for He disarmed them and triumphed over them through the cross. He took the written debt of sin which was stored up against us along with the written ordinances, and He nailed them to the cross, paying for our transgressions and rescuing us from the elementary spiritual principles of this world, and the rudimentary commands such as "Do not touch" and "Do not handle", to serve God in the new way of the Spirit and life; and for those who will in their mind to do good, but do not have the power in their flesh to do that good: God gives them the power to do good. For Christ Jesus was clean, but became dirty to make us clean: for the bathwater is made dirty since it takes upon itself the filth of the one it cleanses. The dirty goes into the water and he comes out clean — not without the cost of the water becoming dirty. Dirty water cannot cleanse anyone; only pure water can cleanse. And Christ has become unto us pure water to cleanse us from dead works by faith in His name. For He became dirty by taking upon our filth in order to make us clean; and as a result, we are made clean by Him. And this sanctification is of God, of the Son, and of the Spirit, of the Word of Truth; for it is done through the washing of the water of the Word; for He purifies our conscience from dead works so we may serve the living God. As it is written in the law concerning the Sabbath day: " You shall surely observe My sabbaths; for this is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the LORD who sanctifies you. " (Exodus 31:13) For on the sabbath, the Israelites did no work according to the law of Moses and they were justified by God according to the ordinance; and they entered into the sabbath rest that they may know it's not by their own works that they are sanctified. So if sanctification is not by our works, then it's by the work of God; as it says, "That you may know that I am the LORD

who sanctifies you." And so it is today for us who enter into God's rest through Christ Jesus, for us who do no work, but trust in God to justify the ungodly. And this is the great stumbling stone, an offensive thing to the unbelieving; as it says, "BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE, AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED." (Romans 9:33)

So now, through faith we can fulfill the law of God — for neither circumcision nor uncircumcision matters, but faith expressing itself through love; and love does no wrong to a neighbor. And this is the fruit of faith: love. Only through faith in Jesus can we establish the law; when trying to obtain righteousness through the law by works, righteousness becomes impossible; for righteousness does not come by the law, but with the law comes the knowledge of sin. "If righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly." (Galatians 2:21) If we are led by the Spirit of God, we are no longer under the law, for the fruit of the Spirit are all good things, and there is no law against anything good. But if you are carnally minded, watch out! The law still reigns over your members, for the law is for the carnally minded; but rather " Sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace. " (Romans 6:14) And in grace, sin has lost its power. But you may say, "If sin has lost its power and I sin, what does it mean?" Surely sin has been rendered powerless through the cross, but you have yielded to it; you have offered yourself as an obedient servant to serve sin: you have sold yourself to it. But Christ has bought you, and you belong to Him. Therefore, offer yourself as a slave to righteousness, a bondsman of Christ. So if you obey sin, offering yourself as a slave to it, then watch out! In its growth: death. But Christ Jesus came to set us free from the power of sin and death, so that we would not be conformed to our old way of thinking, but that we would be made new through the renewing of our mind by the Holy Spirit. Christ has nullified the power of sin, stripping it of its power, for sin has its power through the law, but He justifies us apart from the law by grace — this justification is the gift of God so that no one may boast. And the Spirit of Him comes by faith, for everything that is from faith is also from the Spirit; for faith is spiritual, and everything spiritual is unseen; as Christ says, " **It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.** " (John 6:63)

So faith is contrary to the law, which states, " The person who does these things will live by them. " (Romans 10:5) But the word of faith says, " THE WORD IS NEAR YOU, IN YOUR MOUTH AND IN YOUR HEART. " (Romans 10:8-13) Thus the law strengthens sin, but faith strengthens the Spirit; in the Spirit there is freedom, but anyone who sins is a slave to sin. Christ has called us to freedom! Your freedom was not free. We who are children of faith are fathered by Abraham, the man of faith. For we are the descendants of faithful Abraham, the father of faith, considering we have faith like Abraham; as it says, "So shall your descendants be." (Genesis 15:5) And as the saying says, "Like father, like son"; so the sons of Abraham are like the father Abraham, and he was a man of faith. It was not according to the flesh that his descendants were counted, for Abraham had many other sons and they did not all receive the inheritance; however it was Isaac, the son of grace and the son of the promise, who received the blessing; for if it is by faith, then it is apart from works and counted as grace. So God

has granted to us the same promise which He promised to Abraham: as it says, "I will give it to you and to your descendants forever." (Genesis 13:15) And later it says, "In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice." (Genesis 22:18) And this Seed is Christ. So if we are His descendants, we have the promise; and if we have the promise, we know that He is trustworthy who promised, and He will grant to us what's promised in that day. He has promised to us a land flowing with milk and honey, an eternal kingdom; and if an eternal kingdom, everlasting life, considering we endure in His grace until the end.

The Father God has testified to us in many ways concerning His Son; we may believe man's testimony, but how much more ought we to believe the testimony of God concerning His Son? The Psalms and the prophets which speak of Christ's sufferings are many (Isaiah 53, Psalms 22, Psalms 35, Psalms 89); and the Scriptures of His betrayal are likewise (Psalms 109, Psalms 69, Psalms 41, Psalms 55); for it was according to God's predetermined plan that Christ would suffer for us, and there-after be exalted. And time would fail if I began to tell about Joseph, who was betrayed by his brethren, and exalted to Pharaoh's right hand; or Job, who was righteous and yet smitten by God, but he was restored twofold; or Samson, who was mocked by a great assembly of his enemies, and in his death, killed many of his enemies; or Mordecai, who was predetermined to die on a stake, but he was exalted second highest in all of Persia; or the prophets, who being sent by God, being disregarded, being rejected by their own, beaten and some killed, but obtained a better hope and a better resurrection. Among these, there are many other types found in the Scriptures which bring about conviction of the faith; as Paul said, " It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified. " (Galatians 3:1) And he said this to men who lived long after Jesus' crucifixion. For the eyes which he speaks about are the eyes of faith.

## The Bronze Serpent

God sent fiery serpents against His people in the wilderness, then He gave them a provision through His grace so that they would be rescued from the sting of death (Numbers 21:6-8); God did not remove the serpents as the people asked, but He opened up a way by grace through which the people could believe and look upon the bronze serpent in faith and be saved. It's "in faith" since they had to look at the serpent and believe that by so doing, they would be saved; and faith is contrary to sight, for by sight, "How can a dead image save?" We know medicine can heal, but how can gazing upon a bronze serpent? So faith is contrary to sight; for they were hoping for what they did not yet have, namely salvation, since they were dying from the sting of the serpents. And so God saved the Israelites who looked upon the serpent through a bronze image of that same serpent; the image of the serpent was dead, for it was only an image, but they had to hope and believe that it would give life, although being dead. The living serpents stung to death, but the dead serpent brought forth life and deliverance from death. The serpents which were alive stung to death, but the bronze serpent which was dead, healed to life, even from the peril of death. So the death in them was purged by the dead image of the serpent, but they had to believe that dead image would give life; and by God's promise and provision of grace, it saved everyone who looked upon it — not merely with eyes of flesh, but with eyes of faith, for the looking upon the image did not save, but believing in God's promise did. For the Israelites who came in later generations looked upon this image of life to death, for they considered the image more than God who saved through the image; as it says, " Until those days the sons of Israel burned incense to it; and it was called Nehushtan. " (2 Kings 18:4) So it is: those that burned incense to the image of the serpent, did not believe in God and transgressed; but those who beheld the serpent in faith lived; thus looking upon the image itself did not save — it is God who saves through faith. As Jesus says about this: " **Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, the Son of Man must also be lifted up. So that everyone who believes can have eternal life in him.** " (John 3:14-15) Thus by looking upon Christ lifted up on the cross, we are saved (for an image is dead, and Christ died for us). So we are saved by His resurrection from the dead. For if Christ remains dead, we would be no better off than mediums who consult the dead, or an idolater who worships a dead image; as it says, " Should not a people inquire of their God? Why consult the dead on behalf of the living? " (Isaiah 8:19-20) But we inquire of God through Christ. And so it is today: for we may be prone to worship a symbol of a cross, or a picture, or any other dead thing, more than God who gives life from the dead, even giving life through death; for He elects to give life through Jesus Christ's death: He who died, who is now alive, by whom we consult God through; and He is our Lord and Master, He is worthy of praise and honor and worship! For " **I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death.** " (Revelation 1:18)

Furthermore God commanded the people not to make an image and worship it; but here, God commanded Moses to make an image of a fiery serpent; but the making

of an image is not sin, it is only counted as sin if it is worshiped; for in the days of Solomon, Solomon made bronze oxen and lions, but the people did not worship them and it was not counted as sin; it was commanded of God through David to make the oxen (as for the lions, I do not know if it was a command or not). An image is never the same as what it represents, for whenever an image is made the life is taken away from it; and the image is made by the skill of man where-as God creates all things, even the skill of man; thus when we create a copy of God's creation, we take the life from it when recreating it; and this is the nature of all images created by man: they are dead. So the image of the serpent that Moses created is dead; but Christ is the visible image of God, and He existed from the beginning; He was not created by man, but by Him all things came into being. Yet He died for three days, and He lives forevermore. So He is not like the images of man, but He is the visible image of God; and man is also created in the image of God, for we are created by God in His own image; as it says, "God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them." (Genesis 1:27) So not all images are dead, only the ones man creates. But I say this: God uses these testimonies as pictures and parables that point to Christ. And these pictures and images are surely dead, for they exist in the mind; so it is: through these dead pictures, as looking dimly through a mirror, we may see the living Christ. These testimonies are not Christ in themselves, but they are only images, pictures, parables given about Christ; and through these testimonies of Christ, we can see Christ: that is, with the eye of our understanding. So although images are dead, it is through these parables that give us conviction and assurance of the faith; as Christ often spoke in parables and once said, " **How shall we picture the kingdom of God, or by what parable shall we present it?** " (Mark 4:30) So we are saved by Jesus through parables, similitudes, concealed truths, through the testimonies given to us by God concerning His Son, for these further the faith; and so the parable of the bronze serpent in itself is not Christ — it is a picture to Christ; and the same thing goes for all the testimonies found in the book of the law concerning God's Son: they're dead, but they point to the living Christ. So this is why the serpent in the wilderness was a bronze image: God is showing us that through images, parables, and pictures found in His Word, we may be built up in the faith to Christ; not that any physical picture can promote faith, but specifically I am talking about parables through hearing God's Word. And these all point to Jesus Christ that we may be encouraged to come to Him; these images are not the Son of God in themselves, for these are dead images, but Christ is living; these are images of the mind made possible by the Word of God; these point us to Christ so that we may come to Him for salvation; as He says, " **You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me; and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life.** " (John 5:39-40) He was sent to be a Ransom for whoever will look upon Him, looking upon Him with the eyes of the heart: which is faith. He emptied Himself to take on the form of man, which is made in the image of God, to rescue us who are made in the image of God; as it says, " Since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives. " (Hebrews 2:14-15) For Jesus became man to rescue mankind, and He died a death to rescue from death. For the bronze image was a

serpent to save from the serpent, and the image was dead to save from the peril of death.

And yes, the representation on the stick which Moses lifted up was a serpent. So the one who has been rendered powerless by the cross is satan, the serpent, that ancient dragon of old. For although Christ was lifted up on the cross, He did not suffer defeat by the cross; it was the serpent who was defeated, for Christ was raised to new life, and He never dies again; it was the serpent who suffered the head wound, and Christ's heel was bruised (Genesis 3:15). So this is why we see a serpent lifted up during the time of Israel's wanderings in the desert; for Christ was glorified through the cross, and satan was defeated by the cross. We may be full of fear looking upon Christ on the cross because of our great sin and God's wrath toward sin, but we must look and trust that if we look upon Jesus Christ and Him crucified, we will be saved — we will surely have life. "I want to look away: I see my failings, I see my faults, I see death; I see the burden of my sin, the punishment for my sin; but the more I look, the more I see, and I see that Jesus is for me; I see the great love of His kindness; I see the deliverance from my sin; He has made me right in His sight, and now I can truly see!" We will all die one day, but those who die in the Lord will sleep and awake on the last day. Everyone dies, but He who looks upon Christ crucified, through the eyes of faith, when he dies, he sleeps — for he is alive to God through faith, having loved Him although not seeing Him. The one who loves God is known by Him; and the one known by Him is His child; such a one will be raised up on the last day to eternal life by the Holy Spirit that raised Christ from the dead. The eyes of faith are sharpened through hearing God's Word; and our faith in Him who is unseen should be as strong as if we have seen Him; as Paul said to the Galatians (New Living Translation), " For the meaning of Jesus Christ's death was made as clear to you as if you had seen a picture of his death on the cross." (Galatians 3:1) For faith is the conviction of things unseen and the assurance of things hoped for. Don't be led astray by seeking for images, thinking that is faith — it is not. For faith comes from hearing and hearing the Word of God. We walk by faith, not by sight, and so, faith and sight are opposites. Faith is from hearing God's Word, and if God is gracious to us, perhaps we may see a miracle; however it's unbelieving to seek for such miracles and signs, for everything we need is already given. There is a great blessing to us who believe without seeing; as Christ says, " **Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.**" (John 20:29) ([See more about Spiritual Sight](#))

We should not be distressed or angry with ourselves on account of Christ's death because it was according to God's predetermined plan that He died for us; also He was raised from the dead and He no longer suffers death. Rather we should fear God, knowing the penalty for our sins that He Himself bore; we should hate sin which crushed Him, for when we sinned, He was bruised; He did this on account of His great love towards us to rescue us from bondage to sin. And we see this in Joseph, the son of Jacob, who prophesied to Christ with his life, for he was sold into slavery to Egypt by his own brothers; before these things occurred, God gave Joseph a dream of his brothers bowing down to him; at that time, the meaning of the dream was hidden from his eyes, for it was a parable; in the same way, God has hidden parables throughout

His Word which testify to the truth; they have always been there, but their meaning has been concealed. So we see Joseph; and through the words of Joseph he testified that it was God's good plan to send him to Egypt to preserve life, not to destroy it; as Joseph said to his brothers, " Do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life. For the famine has been in the land these two years, and there are yet five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest. **And God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. So it was not you who sent me here, but God.**" (Genesis 45:4-5) And so likewise, Christ was betrayed by His own brothers, the Jews, and they sold Him over to the Gentiles to be crucified — and all this was foretold by God beforehand, but the meaning was hidden from them. It was God's predetermined plan for good, having testified beforehand by the Psalms and the Prophets, by the acts of men of old, for prophets also performed acts before the people (The prophets Ezekiel, Hosea, and Zechariah). As one of the prophets, Isaiah, says, " The LORD was pleased To crush Him, putting [Him] to grief; If He would render Himself [as] a guilt offering, He will see [His] offspring, He will prolong [His] days, And the good pleasure of the LORD will prosper in His hand. " (Isaiah 53:10) As it says, "The LORD was pleased to crush Him", for it was God's good plan to send Christ into the world to die for us. And so, God sent Jesus into the world for our good, to save life rather than destroy it. He left witness for us to receive Him by faith in these latter days; and these are preserved through the writings. He also preserved the testimonies of the apostles who seen the risen Lord firsthand. So although when we come to love Christ, we also come to hate ourselves because of our many sins, namely what they have done to Christ; but we find power in that Christ is alive from the dead, seated at the right hand of Power on High, and that it was according to God's good plan for Jesus to die for us. Even if our eyes may be veiled for a time, they become unveiled when we turn to the Lord. Therefore, unveil your eyes by turning to Him and see that your Brother is now alive, second in command, mediator between us and God, that He is very much alive and your guilt has been removed; for Joseph's brothers had guilt as long as they thought Joseph was dead, but the moment they seen Joseph alive, their guilt was removed and their hands cleansed from his blood. See now, Jesus is for you, and He does not seek revenge because of your transgressions that He bore, but He even intercedes on your behalf before the Father. So prove yourself innocent in the matter by fleeing to Christ for refuge in the heavenly places where He is now seated, setting your mind on the things above, not on the things below. ([See more about Joseph](#))

## The Victor

God raised up Samson to be a judge for Israel. He was a mighty judge in the land of Israel, killing many of their enemies. Before he was born, His parents were given the command not to eat anything from the grapevine and have no razor put to his head, for his strength came from his Head, that is to say, Christ. He killed many of the Philistines, even once with the jawbone of a donkey, striking down a thousand men. But later, He was deceived and tricked by the one he loved, the one he ate bread with, and she shaved off the seven locks of his head, and the LORD, who gave him his strength, left him; then he was subdued by his enemies, they gouged out his eyes and put him into prison, where his hair began to grow again. Then the time came when the Philistines, merry with wine, called for Samson to make a public spectacle of him since he was their enemy; but Samson prayed to the Lord, " O Lord God, remember me, I pray! Strengthen me, I pray, just this once, O God, that I may with one blow take vengeance on the Philistines for my two eyes! " (Judges 16:28) "And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars which supported the temple, and he braced himself against them, one on his right and the other on his left." (Judges 16:29) "Then Samson said, "Let me die with the Philistines!" And he pushed with all his might, and the temple fell on the lords and all the people who were in it. So the dead that he killed at his death were more than he had killed in his life." (Judges 16:30) So Samson made a spectacle of them in that he destroyed them in his death; and he died with the uncircumcised Philistines.

These things point to Jesus, who, having removed many demons from people who were oppressed, subduing them, freeing them who were held captive by satan, was sent by God to be Judge, to be a Deliverer; but at the end of His life, He was betrayed by Judas, His beloved disciple, and He was turned over to the Gentiles for mockery; just as it was written in the prophet's Psalm, " Even my close friend in whom I trusted, Who ate my bread, Has lifted up his heel against me. " (Psalms 41:9) For He was cut off from His head: God; for on the cross He said, " **MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?** " (Mark 15:34) And He was crucified; He was made a public spectacle of by the Romans; they called a legion of soldiers to formation and mocked Him publicly and beat Him; then they lifted Him up for all to see; and the written charge they had against Him: "JESUS, KING OF THE JEWS". But it was in Jesus' death that He disarmed more of the enemies of the rulers and principalities of this world than He did in His life; for He defeated them and rendered them powerless through the cross. For the power of a lion is in its mouth, for it has sharp and powerful teeth; likewise the power of satan is in his mouth, namely his lies; but we have been set free by the Truth: Jesus Christ crucified. (And in Him there is no condemnation; for if we walk according to the Spirit, we are not under the law, but under grace; and under Him and in Him, there is no sin; so while in Him, we are free from the power of sin, for where the Spirit of the Lord is there is freedom.)

So while the rulers of this world thought they were destroying Him, they were being destroyed; and while they were mocking Him, they were being mocked; and while they put Him on display, they were put on display. For when the rulers of this world made a public display of Him, He made a public display of them; as the apostle Paul says, " When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through the cross. " (Colossians 2:13-14) For in His death, they were put to death; as it says, "His grave was assigned with wicked men." (Isaiah 53:9) For He died for them. Jesus satisfied the just requirement of the law by dying for our sins, rendering the law ineffective; and He established a law of faith "so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus." (Romans 3:26) So that He may turn us from the power of satan unto Himself through the gospel of God. For the accuser has lost his strength, for in Him we have the forgiveness of our sins; and where there is forgiveness, there is no longer any remembrance; as it says, "I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more." (Jeremiah 31:34) "For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified." (Hebrews 10:14) It is Christ Jesus who fought the battle for us — we enter into His victory; for our God is for us, doing on our behalf, fighting for us. Just as the Israelites entered into the Promised Land by the mighty hand of God, so it is with us: we enter in by His powerful arm, following Him and obeying Him. Other gods require that you do something for them: stand them up, feed them, dust them off, but they are no gods at all; but the one and only God does on our behalf, waging war for us and defeating our foes. He defeated them through the cross, and we enter into His victory through faith. ([See more about Righteous Warfare](#))

In a different testimony, Haman, an enemy of the Jews, sought to kill the innocent Mordecai and with him, the Jewish nation. He payed money to the king to establish a decree: on a certain day, all Jews would be killed. Furthermore, he had set up a pole by his home to impale Mordecai on it. But what was preventing him? He needed the permission of the king. But Mordecai was righteous and innocent: for he even saved the same king from being killed by spies. So while Haman went to go ask the king for permission to impale Mordecai, the king discovered from the book of the Chronicles that Mordecai saved him; so the king asked Haman, "What should be done to the one whom the king is pleased?" (Ester 6:6) And Haman, thinking the good was for himself, gave a favorable answer. The king then told him to do all he said to Mordecai, the Jew, which was Haman's enemy. **So the good Haman intended for himself went to Mordecai.** And later at a banquet, Queen Ester who was a Jew, and the niece to Mordecai, spoke of Haman's decree to kill the Jews, which was approved by the king in ignorance; for he did not know the Queen was a Jew, for she kept her nationality hidden. And the king was furious because Haman sought to kill the Queen, and he had Haman instead killed; he was impaled on the pole which he set up for Mordecai, for it was told the king of Haman's plan. **So the evil Haman intended for Mordecai was poured out on his own head.** Then another decree was setup that allowed for the irrevocable decree previously made to be fought against: namely, on the day the Jews were to be slaughtered they could defend themselves. And to this day, the Jewish nation celebrates this as the Day of Purim as a testimony, which means "lots", because it was by lot the day was chosen.

Now, concerning Christ, He looked to be defeated on the cross, but He was made weak willingly; moments before His crucifixion He testified, " **Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels? But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?** " (Matthew 26:52-53) Also He said, " **The reason the Father loves Me is that I lay down My life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of My own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again.** " (John 10:17-18) If the rulers of this world would have known what they were doing, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory — but their minds were darkened. The rulers wanted for themselves the inheritance, the kingdom of Israel (as with the parable of the vineyard written about in Matthew 21:33-46); so they sought to kill Him, but by the cross, Christ suffered only a wound to His heel, and Satan to his head (for we wrestle not against flesh and blood). For Christ did not remain in the grave forever, only three days; and the judgment upon the ruler of this world has been pronounced and has been executed. For who was defeated by the cross? If Satan was judged at the fall, and was made to grovel on his belly, how much more is he weakened through the cross of Christ? As Christ says, " **Concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.** " (John 16:11)

So therefore, **the good the enemy intended for himself was given to Christ; and the evil the enemy intended for Christ was poured out upon his own head.** So it was the devil who was defeated by the cross. The devil's final end is decreed in the Book. Thus the glory and honor which the enemy wanted for himself went to Christ Jesus — the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords! The judgement which the enemy intended for Christ was poured out upon his own head; as Jesus said, " **Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself.** " (John 12:31-32) The devil now has no hold on you who believe, and his lies have no power in you who belong to Christ Jesus; fight against him with the Sword of the Word of God; your defense of armor is from the Lord, and your offensive weapon is from the Lord; and you, O warrior in the kingdom of God — fight! For He has fought for us. He gives us the law of the Spirit and life that we may defend ourselves against the law of sin and death. ([See more about the Two Laws Waging War](#)) " Does it mean he no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or hungry, or destitute, or in danger, or threatened with death? (As the Scriptures say, "For your sake we are killed every day; we are being slaughtered like sheep.") No, despite all these things, **overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us.**" (Romans 8:35-37) ([See more about Mordecai](#))

## The Lamb Of God

Under the Old Covenant, the Israelites obtained atonement from God for their unintentional sins by sacrificing an animal; when they sinned, blood needed to be shed and applied to the horns of the altar for atonement; the animal had to be perfect (no defects, blemishes, etc), a clean animal, and it had to be innocent of all wrong (like goring, etc). For with sin comes death, sin and death are on friendly terms; man trails behind sin in its path, and the end of its way is death; so death is needed for freedom, blood needs to be shed for forgiveness. When the substitute sacrifice of an animal occurred, the one offering was covered of his fault; afterwards, it was like the fault never occurred, for it was forgiven and the wrong was offset. The blood does nothing if it's still within the animal; the animal needed to be slain and dealt with according to the law. God established these laws for Israel so they may be forgiven. The Israelites could only give a sacrifice for unintentional sins: that is, sins that were done in ignorance. There was no sacrifice under the law for intentional sins; these sins were expiated in another way: either excommunication (being cut off from Israel), or punishment, or even death. Rebellion was also not forgiven, for this is the nature of rebellion: you know what is right, but you don't do it, or you know what is wrong, but you do it anyway; as it says in the Old Covenant, " Behold, I am going to send an angel before you to guard you along the way and to bring you into the place which I have prepared. Be on your guard before Him and obey His voice; do not be rebellious toward Him, for He will not pardon your transgression since My name is in Him. " (Exodus 23:20-21) And that angel is Christ. For it is the same in the New Covenant (Hebrews 10:26-27). For all rebellion is willful — such sins are punished through chastisement; but, " When we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord so that we will not be condemned along with the world. " (1 Corinthians 11:30-32) For the apostles are also on record saying, "We are ready to punish all disobedience, whenever your obedience is complete." (2 Corinthians 10:6) For the apostles also disciplined in the name of the Lord.

So therefore, the Israelites had to sacrifice a perfect lamb or which-ever clean animal prescribed by the law for forgiveness of unintentional sins; it is like this: the clean animal cleansed them from their filth, and the unblemished beast took away their blemish. The sacrifice did not cleanse the offerer's conscience though, because the guilt remained, for an innocent animal had to die in their place; the sacrifice did not take away their sin, but only covered their sin temporarily according to the physical requirement; as it says in the book of Hebrews, "In those (sacrifices) there is a reminder of sins year by year. For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins." (Hebrews 10:3-4) For a goat is not equivalent to a human, so it cannot be substituted for a human; but rather, " Life shall be for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot. " (Deuteronomy 19:21) Certain sin offerings were brought into the Holy Place when the congregation as a whole sinned; the bodies of those animals were burned outside the camp and not eaten by the priest; as it says, " Although the high priest brings the blood of animals into the Holy Place as a sacrifice for sin, the bodies are burned outside the camp. " (Hebrews 13:11) All these

testify to Jesus; and of Him it is said, " Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! " (John 1:29) "Jesus also suffered outside the city gate, to sanctify the people by His own blood. Therefore let us go to Him outside the camp, bearing the disgrace He bore. For here we do not have a permanent city, but we are looking for the city that is to come." (Hebrews 13:12-14) He was sacrificed on our behalf as our substitute, for the forgiveness of sins — not a sacrifice that needed to be offered over and over, but once for all; and He was the sin offering for the whole world, not only for the congregation of Israel. But how is one for all? As it is written, "He who was least was equal to a hundred and the greatest to a thousand." (1 Chronicles 12:14) And it says of David, "You are worth ten thousand of us." (2 Samuel 18:3) If David is as ten thousand, and the greatest of Gad a thousand, how do you suppose Christ is reckoned, being the Son of God, but as the whole world, both the living and the dead? So He is one, yet for all, being God's own Son. Those sin offerings in the Old Covenant for the whole congregation of Israel were not eaten; but yet " We have an altar from which those who serve the tent have no right to eat. " (Hebrews 13:10) And the blood of all offerings in the Old Covenant were never eaten, but He has given us a reminder of His grace towards us in Communion (Matthew 26:26-28): eating His flesh and drinking His blood.

Furthermore, we don't have guilt in that our sins have caused Christ to die, for He lives on, and even forevermore; for He is seated in the heavens; and so He is contrary to the law in that He was raised, for the animals sacrificed in the Old Covenant did not rise, and sorrow and guilt remained with the offerer. So God raised Christ from the dead and by His resurrection, we have justification with God. It is His act of obedience that matters in the sight of God, and God's work in raising Him from the dead, united with our work of faith. God shows us the way of atonement through the law: there is no forgiveness without the shedding of blood. These laws came not from man, although they were spoken by the mouth of Moses, they came from God; and this is God's way. Everything Moses spoke, God spoke to him to speak to the people. These things he spoke were also written down by the commandment of the LORD. And by reading these things, we may believe through Moses, for they point to Christ; for faith comes by hearing and hearing the Word of Christ. So it's by faith, which is contrary to works; and if it's contrary to work, then it's accounted as grace, for grace is a gift; and on the contrary, if it's work, then grace is no longer grace, but due wages; for those who work deserve wages, but he who receives a gift has done no work for it. So Christ was sacrificed apart from our works by the grace of God to be received by faith. And He, being the faithful High Priest, brought an offering to God, offering Himself to sanctify for-ever those who are being saved. And thereafter, having been raised, He has been exalted as Lord of all, especially to those who believe. The work of the obedience of Christ forgives, making many that believe righteous and justifying the many by His one act. And He proves to us these facts through the testimonies of the Psalms and the Prophets, the book of the law, which were all written beforehand, foretelling God's plan, which is now revealed in Christ; as Christ says, " **O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?** " (Luke 24:13-35) Also, we have the testimonies of the Apostles, who seen the risen Lord, testifying to what

they seen and heard, namely, Jesus appointed by God to be the Savior of the world; so now, we may have confidence to approach the living God through His Way, by the blood of Christ; as it says, " Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer any offering for sin. Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. " (Hebrews 10:18-22) For this is God's Way, and there is no other; as Jesus testified and His testimony is true; as He says, " **I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.** " (John 14:6)

In another testimony in the law, when the Israelites were in slavery in Egypt, the Israelites had to sacrifice a lamb and paint the doorpost of their house with its blood. The angel of death sent by God came through the city and slayed the firstborn of every house whose doorpost was not marked with the lamb's blood; and the death angel was commanded to pass over the house marked with blood and not harm anyone inside. This is remembered now by the Israelites, even to this day as the Passover. For seven days after the Passover, they cleaned out all leaven from their homes; and even to this day they celebrate the Festival of Unleavened Bread. And the apostle Paul says about this: " Indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. " (1 Corinthians 5:7-8) And so, we have been rescued from our slavery to Egypt by the Passover Lamb; which is to say: we have been redeemed from our slavery to sin by the blood of Jesus Christ. By His cross, we have been crucified to the world and the world crucified to us. Israel crossed through the sea on dry ground while their enemies perished. So in Christ, the world and everything it esteems, is brought to nought through the cross; for "God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are." (1 Corinthians 1:27-28)

So if anyone who has the love of this world in them, the love of the Father is not in them; for how can we love what God hates? As the prophet asks, "Should you help the wicked and love those who hate the LORD and so bring wrath on yourself from the LORD?" (2 Chronicles 19:2) So everything that is of the world is contrary to God, and everything men value is detestable in the sight of God (Luke 16:15). But we who love the Father have been rescued from this world. This is the sacrifice that God desires: not of bulls, or goats, or lambs, but of setting apart our sins for destruction, crucifying the misdeeds of the body by devoting them to death, so that we may not be destroyed with them; this is the sacrifice of death that we may live, which is initiated by God's Sacrifice of Atonement for us, even the Passover; for even if we purge out every crumb of leaven in our lives, if we do not have the blood, our work is in vain. This is the thing Solomon seen when he prayed after the completion of the permanent temple of God; instead of praying, asking for the LORD God to forgive the people according to the

ordinances of sacrifice even though they were written according to the law; he says, " If they return to You with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their captivity, where they have been taken captive, and pray toward their land which You have given to their fathers and the city which You have chosen, and toward the house which I have built for Your name, then hear from heaven, from Your dwelling place, their prayer and supplications, and maintain their cause and forgive Your people who have sinned against You. " (2 Chronicles 6:46-49) As it says, "If they return to You with all their heart and with all their soul and pray." It does not say, "If they sacrifice an offering according to the law." For " Has the LORD as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices As in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams. " (1 Samuel 15:22) (And there are many other such things written in the Scriptures as these: Hosea 6:6, Micah 6:7-8, Psalms 40:6-8, Jeremiah 7:21-23, Psalms 50:8-15, Psalms 51:16-17) Christ is the Sacrifice; God desires not a sacrifice, but He gave the Sacrifice. And the sacrifices of man are loyalty and obedience, the knowledge of God, giving heed to His Word, doing loving-kindness and justice, and walking humbly with God; with these things God will not despise.

# The Lion

Someone may ask, "What is the testimony of Samson and the lion doing in the Scriptures?" (Judges 14:5-9, 14:12-14) A lion is strong and powerful — no doubt about that. No-one certainly takes a lion into their home for their children to play — no, they don't! A lion is dangerous; a lion isn't sweet; it won't let you pet it, and it won't give you any kisses — not without taking off some of your flesh first! In a similar way, Jesus Christ is mighty and powerful; He is the Son of God, with the exact likeness of God, with the name which is above every other name; and one of His names is the Lion from the Tribe of Judah; as it says about Him, " See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. " (Revelation 5:5) Jesus walked in power while on earth; He healed many, He spoke with authority; by His Word the devils cried out, and they were driven out by His word; the people trembled behind Him as they followed Him; when they came to arrest Him, "He said to them, "I am He," they drew back and fell to the ground." (John 18:6) He was a fearful Man among us. Although He was not a criminal and there was no fault in Him, He laid down His life according to the will of the Father; His life was not taken from Him, but He went to the cross willingly; as He said before His arrest, " **Or do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels? How then will the Scriptures be fulfilled, which say that it must happen this way?** " (Matthew 26:53-54)

So although He is powerful, He became weak willingly for our sakes. His power is manifest in many ways, for He did many mighty miracles: He was walking on water, He hushed the wind and waves, and many other fearful things. But as Samson's riddle says, "From the Strong came something sweet." And from Christ, the Strong, comes something sweet: the sweetness of the Gospel. Bees which have a stinger produce honey in all its sweetness; for God created the bee with its stinger, and He created the bee to make honey. In the testimony of Samson, the bees made their honey in the carcass of a lion; the bees did not sting the lion, for the lion was dead; instead, the bees made their honey in the lion's carcass. Likewise, Jesus is the Lion who died for us to remove the sting of death. For, "The sting of death is sin." (1 Corinthians 15:56) But the sting of death only applies when one is living, but to the dead, the sting holds no power; and Christ has died for us, removing the sting of death from us that we may have the sweetness of life. The power of death did not hold Christ, for He was raised from the dead and He never dies again; if He had not come, He would've never had to die, but He came for this very purpose; and by the One's death, "One died for all, therefore all died;" (2 Corinthians 5:14) So that He "might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives," (Hebrews 2:15) "So that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone." (Hebrews 2:9) And from His death, He brings forth a substance of sweetness through the wisdom and the power of God; for God makes His wisdom and power salvation unto us who believe; as it says, "The word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God." (1 Corinthians 1:18) And He says, "I WILL DESTROY THE WISDOM

OF THE WISE, AND THE CLEVERNESS OF THE CLEVER I WILL SET ASIDE." (1 Corinthians 1:19)

So God's wisdom is spoken through spiritual words explained by the Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:12-15). But to those who are carnal, the message is foolishness; as a result, His power is against them; but to us who believe, His power is for us, not against us; as it was with Daniel's enemies in the lion's den (Daniel 6:7-28); His power preserved him so that the lions did not destroy him, but He opened the lion's mouths to tear his enemies. As the LORD God says, "I will be like a lion to Ephraim And like a young lion to the house of Judah. I, even I, will tear to pieces and go away, I will carry away, and there will be none to deliver. I will go away and return to My place Until they acknowledge their guilt and seek My face; In their affliction they will earnestly seek Me." (Hosea 5:14-15) Thus God shows to us His incredible strength by His Son's death on the cross; for through His weakness He has shown His mighty power unto us who believe; for Jesus gains victory for us even by death — not by many bouts of strength, but a single bout of weakness — for He was defeated in death, but overcame death, rising from the dead by the power of the Holy Spirit; and not for a single nation only, but for the whole world, both the living and the dead. So His great strength is made manifest in weakness. How strong then do you suppose His strength? The rulers had not known this power, otherwise they would have not crucified Him, for they did not consider God could save the world through the death of His Son. For the life of Christ was a torment to the rulers, that's why they sought to put Him to death. So it is, through death the sting of death is removed so that the sweetness of the gospel may come. For even nature testifies that the precious is hidden and guarded: gems are found covered in soil, gold is found in dark places, and in this testimony, honey is guarded by the pain of a stinger. And so likewise, the sweetness of the Gospel is protected by death, that only through death may someone find the sweetness of life. For who can be saved unless they behold Christ crucified? So the most preciousness of the Gospel is guarded and treasured by the fear of the LORD, judgement, sin and death. [The wisdom of God is also protected by the fear of the LORD. As it says, "Where then does wisdom come from? And where is the place of understanding? Thus it is hidden from the eyes of all living And concealed from the birds of the sky." (Job 28:20-21)]

Then in the latter part of the riddle, it says, "Out of the eater came something to eat". For whenever a sacrifice was given to the LORD, He consumed it, He consumed it with fire, for He is a consuming fire. All sacrifices were burnt on the altar to God as a soothing aroma; those sacrifices were food to Him; as it says, "The priest shall offer them up in smoke on the altar as food." (Leviticus 3:16) These were offered to God, but out of the Eater of sacrifices came a Sacrifice; or in the words of the riddle, "Out of the eater came something to eat." For men usually give sacrifices to God, but God gave a sacrifice for the people, the sacrifice of His own Son, so that we may offer righteous sacrifices to God, namely, our lives for Him — this is acceptable in God's sight, for He has purchased us. From Christ's sacrifice comes forgiveness of sins and justification with God, the seal of the Holy Spirit and the sanctification of the Spirit, and everlasting life to come. So although Jesus is powerful as a lion, He also is meek and lowly as a

lamb; Jesus is the Great Shepherd of the flock, and He is also the Lamb of God. Although God is the Eater of sacrifices, He doesn't need us to eat, nor does He need our service; for He needs not anything from our hands, but He gives all things; as the LORD God says in the Psalms, " I shall take no young bull out of your house Nor male goats out of your folds. For every beast of the forest is Mine, The cattle on a thousand hills. I know every bird of the mountains, And everything that moves in the field is Mine. **If I were hungry I would not tell you, For the world is Mine, and all it contains. Shall I eat the flesh of bulls Or drink the blood of male goats?** Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving And pay your vows to the Most High; Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I shall rescue you, and you will honor Me. " (Psalms 50:7-15)

Is this not according to nature? For we did not create ourselves, but God gave us our lives; we did not invent the growth of food; and we don't call to the weather man for rain from the sky — God gives all these things. We wouldn't know what a family is unless God gave us a family; we wouldn't know life unless God gave us life. For our mother did not spin, nor weave, nor labor so much to create us, did she? Our father did not work so hard to desire a woman, did he? Did not God make man cling to his wife? Was it not God who knit us together in our mother's womb? Certainly we did not create ourselves, did we? That is why I say, "God gave us our life," because our mother did not work hard to create us, nor did our father, nor did we. As it is written, "Just as you do not know the path of the wind and how bones are formed in the womb of the pregnant woman, so you do not know the activity of God who makes all things." (Ecclesiastes 11:5) God works all things for us and He also worked a sacrifice for us — He needs nothing from our hands, but He gives us all things — even justification and sanctification through Jesus Christ. He created us at the first by grace; so in accordance with nature, the new life also comes by grace. And so: God, the Father, is the consumer of sacrifices, and He gave a Sacrifice, which is Christ; and these are eaten; as He says, " **Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves.** " (John 6:53) ([See more about the Riddle](#))

Although God is greatly kind towards us in Christ, we do not neglect the fear of Him; His kindness is not an excuse to be sluggish or lazy, lacking behind in zeal. For He is powerful, but He became weak for our sakes; therefore, we ought not to see His kindness as weakness, as some do, for He is mighty in His dealing with us, specifically for our building up, not for our tearing down. If we neglect His cloak of righteousness for a cloak of maliciousness, certainly He won't treat us any differently than heathens. For He shows no partiality. When I was in the military, we had drill instructors and officers. The officers were not like the drill instructors, for the drill instructors screamed at us, spitting saliva and speaking crazy; they were not afraid to get in our face. They would lay hands on us; often times disciplining us with intense training. But the officers were kind and spoke tenderly to us. But one time, we were sitting in class, learning from an officer. We began to slouch in our seats, some of us began to sleep because of the officers kindness. But then, yelling more ferociously than any drill instructor we have ever heard, he shouted, "Do not take my kindness for weakness!" All of us sat up straight in our seats, our spirits reviving within us; those sleeping were shocked with a

jolt of fear. Beforetime, he would call for readers, and there would be hesitation — by obligation, one person would stand up; but now, a handful of volunteers stood up and battled for a chance to read. For we seen he was kind, but he was even more powerful than a drill instructor. And as a result of the fear of Christ, it says, “Your people will volunteer freely in the day of Your power; In holy array, from the womb of the dawn, Your youth are to You as the dew.” (Psalms 110:2-3) Therefore, fear Him! For how can you come to Him without reverence?

And in reference to the Tribe of Judah, Israel had twelve sons, and each son became a branch of Israel. And Jesus, as far as His human nature is concerned, came from the tribe of Judah. In Egypt, Judah offered himself in the place of his younger brother, Benjamin; as he said, "Now please let your servant stay here as my lord's slave in place of the boy. Let him return with his brothers. For how can I go back to my father without the boy? I could not bear to see the misery that would overwhelm him." (Genesis 44:18-34) But Judah never did end up giving his life for his brother. However, now we see Jesus, and His substitution for his brethren that He made willingly; and we are His brothers and sisters if we do what He says — for He interceded and did what no-one else could do: He stepped down from heaven. Judah did not give up his life, nor was Isaac sacrificed, nor was Mordecai impaled on the pole, Joseph was not slain by his brothers; but now we see Jesus, chosen by God for the sins of the world, and thereafter live. For Reuben was firstborn of Israel, but he was rejected; but in regard to Judah, it says, "Judah shall go up first." (Judges 20:18) (And other such things as these: Numbers 2:9, Judges 1:1-2.) But Judah is not the firstborn of Israel; however he was chosen as first by the LORD. So in this, there has not been a true firstborn to receive the right as firstborn; for Reuben was rejected, but the blessing was given to another. Just as it was with Esau, who was the firstborn, but he was hated; the blessing was given to Jacob; as God says, "Israel is My son, My firstborn." (Exodus 4:22) And Reuben was the firstborn of the unloved, yet the birth right was given to Ephraim, the firstborn of the firstborn of the loved; as God says, "Ephraim is My firstborn." (Jeremiah 31:9) And Jacob seeing this, that the last is the first, blessed Ephraim over Manasseh, the younger over the older. So now we see Jesus, who is the true firstborn; He is the firstborn among many brethren, the firstborn from the dead, He is the beginning — for He became last by suffering death in obedience to the Father; and as a result, He was exalted as first in heaven and on earth that He may be supreme in everything. And the same to us, for " **Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.** " (Matthew 18:4)

Judah was chosen by God to be first, and he was chosen as the place where His temple would dwell; as it says, “He also rejected the tent of Joseph, And did not choose the tribe of Ephraim, But chose the tribe of Judah, Mount Zion which He loved.” (Psalms 78:67-68) As a result, the branch of Judah remained during Israel's rebellion, for they were kept by God's grace, by God's promise to David; although the kings of Judah were unfaithful to the LORD (2 Kings 8:19, 2 Chronicles 21:7). So God by His gracious choice preserved Judah throughout the rebellion of Israel for David's sake whom He also picked from Judah. “In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to God's gracious choice.” (Romans 11:5)

For those from Judah represent those who trust in God's mercy and keep faith with God. For God chooses to show favor to the lowly and the weak and the humble of the earth; as it says of God's choice of Israel, " The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples. " (Deuteronomy 7:7) And as it says, " It is not for your righteousness or for the uprightness of your heart that you are going to possess their land, but it is because of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD your God is driving them out before you, in order to confirm the oath which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. " (Deuteronomy 9:5) So God continues to show His purpose of grace in Christ Jesus, for the sake of the covenants of promise which He swore on oath to keep, provided we remain humble in accordance with faith. ([See More about Jesus through Judah and Isaac](#))

## The Scapegoat

At the appointed time on the day of Atonement, the high priest confessed the people's sins on to a goat and laid his hands on the goat's head. That goat was to carry the sins far away to a remote place in the wilderness and die, bearing the sins of the people upon itself as an ordinance given by God. This didn't happen whenever they wanted, but at the appointed time, according to the set time given by God. And likewise, "While we were still helpless, at the right time"; as it says, " For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. " (Romans 5:6-11) For God has cast away our sins to a remote place in Christ Jesus; as the Psalmist says, "**As far as the east is from the west**, So far has He removed our transgressions from us. " (Psalms 103:10-13) And it says, " He will again have compassion on us; He will tread our iniquities under foot. Yes, You will cast all their sins Into the depths of the sea. " (Micah 7:19) For Jesus is the Scapegoat; He took upon Himself our blame as an offering for guilt; so we are not made to bear our guilt ourselves; just as the prophet Isaiah, foreseeing by the Spirit of God, said, " If He would render Himself as a guilt offering, He will see His offspring, He will prolong His days, And the good pleasure of the LORD will prosper in His hand. " (Isaiah 53:10) For on the day of atonement, the high priest worked and the rest of the people did no work, but yet they were commanded to afflict themselves; signifying that it's God's work to remit sins and our work is to humble ourselves. For what is less than doing nothing at all? Is it not afflicting yourself? Thus God commanded the Israelites: on the day of atonement to use their own strength against themselves through fasting, weeping, mourning, and making lamentations — hating themselves for their many sins. Likewise on the holy days and sabbaths no work was to be done, and during the festival of Unleavened Bread, they ate "the bread of affliction" (Deuteronomy 16:3) to remind them of their slavery in Egypt; for if we do any work, our strength should be used against ourselves to humble ourselves, making ourselves weak for the power of God to work in us. For God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble. This is why they ate the bread of affliction and afflicted themselves on the day of atonement; and other than this, they were commanded to do nothing on the holy days. As it says, "You shall surely observe My sabbaths; for this is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the LORD who sanctifies you." (Exodus 31:13) So it's God's work to sanctify and cleanse, and we enter into His rest through affliction and lowliness and humility of mind. For in weakness God's grace is perfected to the effect that we may, by His goodness be filled with all goodness, for there is none good but God; and we have free access into His great goodness through faith. The depths of the mercy and grace of the Almighty God, who loved us by the death of His Son and continues to love us through the life of His Son; may it never be said or thought of again, "God doesn't love me." How He demonstrated His great love for us on the cross at Calvary! He didn't merely say, "I love you", but He proved His love in the greatest way possible by giving up His own life in the Man of His Presence, choosing us unto adoption as sons. Oh that we would fear God, so that we would stay away from all appearances of evil and never depart from Him; that we would know what is good for us, for the fear of

the Lord is to depart from iniquity; as it says, " By lovingkindness and truth iniquity is atoned for, And by the fear of the LORD one keeps away from evil. " (Proverbs 16:6)

So when the animal was brought into the temple, the Israelites confessed their error, for they brought the beast and spoke to the priest, telling them what it was for: either a sin offering or a guilt offering. And by laying their hands on its head, they acknowledged the animal was for them. So there are two confessions: one of sin and another of atonement; as it is written by the apostle John, who seen the risen Lord and rested at His bosom; he says, " If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. " (1 John 1:8) For this is how we abide in the truth, and this is how we remain in the light: confession of our sins. It is possible to deceive ourselves, but these things are written so that we would not deceive ourselves. When we claim we have not sinned, there is no forgiveness since we do not own our sin, even though we have truly sinned. For what could we be forgiven of in that case, if we affirm we have not sinned? How can we be forgiven of sin that we reject as ours? Let us be truthful and confess our sins, remaining in the light, so that we may be forgiven and cleansed from our sins, for with sin comes darkness and death, and in darkness we are not able to see clearly. Everyone has been declared guilty by the law, but Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes; He grants to us the righteousness which is by faith. For, "We all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit." (2 Corinthians 3:18) In Christ or without, no-one can be declared righteous by the law, for the law declares everyone as sinners; but in Christ, even apart from the law, He makes many righteous through faith by His obedient act, for by His righteousness do we know what is right. What is it then, are we righteous sinners? Of course not! The law gives sin its power, but Christ justifies us apart from the law, therefore sin has lost its strength; as the apostle proclaims, "The power of sin is the law; but thanks to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Corinthians 15:56-57) So while we abide in the grace of God, which is through faith, we have no obligation to serve sin which has been rendered powerless by the cross; we have been set free from sin in Christ Jesus, and our freedom depends on us abiding in Christ; if we slip or fall into sin, we confess it; for we know our sins will be forgiven if we confess, for He will cleanse our guilty conscience. We will know we have been forgiven because our guilt will be removed and our heart will no longer condemn us.

Our Scapegoat took our burdens, our guilt and our shame, so that we would not have to carry them ourselves; therefore, confess! If we do not confess our sin, we abide in our sin. God has promised, and it is impossible for Him to lie: if we confess, He will forgive. His promises are a sure foundation to build upon. So let us not walk around with our burdens, but instead freely give them to Him. Let us not walk with a hunch because of our burdens, but let us walk uprightly being freed from our burden; do not be loaded down by guilt; who do we hurt by not confessing? I bring about by way of reminder, the Psalmist, who had great anguish because he did not confess his iniquity; as he says, " When I kept silent [about my sin,] my body wasted away Through

my groaning all day long. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; My vitality was drained away [as] with the fever heat of summer. Selah. I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I did not hide; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD"; And You forgave the guilt of my sin. " (Psalms 32:3-5) And he says in another place, " O LORD, rebuke me not in Your wrath, And chasten me not in Your burning anger. For Your arrows have sunk deep into me, And Your hand has pressed down on me. There is no soundness in my flesh because of Your indignation; There is no health in my bones because of my sin. For my iniquities are gone over my head; As a heavy burden they weigh too much for me. My wounds grow foul [and] fester Because of my folly. I am bent over and greatly bowed down; I go mourning all day long. For my loins are filled with burning, And there is no soundness in my flesh. I am benumbed [deprived of sensation] and badly crushed; I groan because of the agitation of my heart. Lord, all my desire is before You; And my sighing is not hidden from You. My heart throbs, my strength fails me; And the light of my eyes, even that has gone from me. My loved ones and my friends stand aloof from my plague; And my kinsmen stand afar off. Those who seek my life lay snares [for me;] And those who seek to injure me have threatened destruction, And they devise treachery all day long. But I, like a deaf man, do not hear; And [I am] like a mute man who does not open his mouth. Yes, I am like a man who does not hear, And in whose mouth are no arguments. For I hope in You, O LORD; You will answer, O Lord my God. For I said, "May they not rejoice over me, [Who,] when my foot slips, would magnify themselves against me." For I am ready to fall, And my sorrow is continually before me. For I confess my iniquity; I am full of anxiety because of my sin. But my enemies are vigorous [and] strong, And many are those who hate me wrongfully. And those who repay evil for good, They oppose me, because I follow what is good. Do not forsake me, O LORD; O my God, do not be far from me! Make haste to help me, O Lord, my salvation! " (Psalms 38:1-22) ([See more about Confessing](#))

The Lord Jesus is one, and what He did was for many; and the scapegoat for Israel was one goat, but was for the whole nation of Israel. And likewise the LORD God, Most High, was pleased with one man, Noah, the man of righteousness, and blessed the whole world on account of him because of his one act; as it says, " And the LORD smelled a soothing aroma (of Noah's sacrifice). Then the LORD said in His heart, "I will never again curse the ground for man's sake, although the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; nor will I again destroy every living thing as I have done." " (Genesis 8:21) Again, He was pleased with another man and blessed the whole world on account of him because of a single act: namely Abraham, the man of faith; as it says of him, " In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice. " (Genesis 22:18) And who can speak against it if I mention the man of zeal, Phinehas? As a type of Christ, for as one man, zealous for God, in his act of zeal obtained favor for his descendants forever (Numbers 25:7-13); as it says in the Psalms, " Then Phinehas stood up and interposed, And so the plague was stayed. And it was reckoned to him for righteousness, To all generations forever. " (Psalms 106:30-31) And in regard to Christ, it says, "For zeal for Your house has consumed Me, And the reproaches of those who reproach You have fallen on Me." (Psalms 69:9) And who can forget David, a man after God's own heart? He was given a

promise and covenant by God concerning His descendants forever; for in his freewill he looked for a dwelling place for the LORD God of Israel. So by one act, he obtained a promise for his descendants forever. And Jesus Christ, being the fulfillment of all these men, is the One who fulfills all things; He, having obeyed God one time at the cross brings salvation to many, un-doing the one act of the one man, Adam, who sinned in the beginning, and brings salvation to the whole world, to whoever-so is ordained to eternal life through faith. (Hear what Paul was saying about Adam and Christ: Romans 5:12-20, 1 Corinthians 15:21-22) And so by one Man, Jesus Christ, blessing has also come to all the nations — not Jews only, but also Gentiles. The promise which was given to Abraham was to him and His Seed, which is Christ; and the covenant given to David was to him and his Descendant, which is the King to come, Jesus. And we are the descendants of David, the descendants of Abraham, if we are like them; for as the father is, so is the son. And this is not according to ancestry or genealogy or according to the flesh, but according to the spirit in truth. So all who are like faithful Abraham or willing and pure-hearted David, all who are like the Son of God, for they prophesied to Christ, are indeed sons of God, made sons by the Spirit of the Son; as it says, “You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.” (Galatians 3:26) And “All who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.” (Romans 8:14) So in Christ Jesus the eternal blessing of the Jews is brought to the Gentiles; and this is made possible by His obedient act and the irrevocable covenants of God. For what is acceptable in God's sight is serving Him in faith, as faithful Abraham, and serving Him with a pure conscience, as pure-hearted David, in which these men of old served God and received covenants of friendship with God. And we enter into these promises and covenants through faith in Jesus Christ.

## True Food And True Drink

The food we eat goes into our mouths, into the stomach and out into the sewer; and yet, we constantly strive for such food, although we are never fully satisfied. The spiritual food we eat goes in through the eyes and ears, into the heart and out of the mouth: a kind of spiritual digestive system. Jesus says, " **The eye is the lamp of the body; so then if your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!** " (Matthew 6:22-23) So just as what we eat resides in the flesh, what we see resides in the spirit. Similarly, it says, " Does not the ear test words, As the palate tastes its food? " (Job 12:11) For as the taste buds are to the tongue, so discernment is to the ear; and Christ says, " **The things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man.** " (Matthew 15:17-20) So what goes into the mouth does not defile a person, but what comes out of the mouth. If we want good to come out of us, we must fill ourselves with the goodness of God through the word of Christ; if we want good worked out of us, we must have God work in us. Therefore, abide in God; abide in Him for life, filling up with His Word about His Son, so that through His Word He would abide in us; He has given us assurance, saying, " **Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither [can] you unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.** " (John 15:3-5) And He says, " **If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.** " (John 8:31-32)

When we eat food, it fills us up and gives us strength for a short while; but God's grace is our strength, our food, it is for our spirit, strengthening us now and forever. But when does food work best? When you are full or when you are empty? When you are hungry a piece of bread is like a steak! So it says, " A satisfied soul loathes the honeycomb, But to a hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet. " (Proverbs 27:7) And similarly the Spirit of Christ said to Paul, " **My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.**" (2 Corinthians 12) So it is: when we are empty, or hungry, God's Word is perfected in us, but God opposes the proud, or the full; for God gives grace to the humble. When one is proud, he is full of himself, and God's grace is not useful to a proud soul, for he tramples over it, even though it is a honeycomb; however, if the proud empties his soul in humility, God's grace works well in him; a humble man is filled up, not with the air of himself, but with the grace of Christ; as the writer of Hebrews says, " Do not be carried away by varied and strange teachings; for it is good for the heart to be **strengthened by grace, not by foods, through which those who were so occupied were not benefited.** We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat. " (Hebrews 13:9-10) For God's grace is truly our food, and the table of His altar is the cross. As athletes say, "I eat and drink the gym," meaning, "That's all I do." If an athlete competes, training in such a way for a crown that perishes, how much more should we "eat and drink Christ" for an eternal

crown of life that never perishes? As Christ says in the testimony, " **Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him.** " (John 6:53-56)

So when an animal is sacrificed on the altar, the priest ate the meat of the sacrifice and gained strength for a short while, living by the strength of the meat; how much more do you suppose the new covenant priests live, who eat the Sacrifice of God, and the grace thereof, who eat the Lamb who has been slain, rather the Lamb who has been raised? If we know a person by their works, or a tree by its fruit, what type of tree do you discern Jesus Christ resembles by His fruit, except the Tree of Life? As Moses prayed, " I pray You, if I have found favor in Your sight, let me know Your ways that I may know You, so that I may find favor in Your sight. " (Exodus 33:13) For he prayed he may know God by His works and find favor; and so by the fruit of Jesus Christ, that is, by His work on the cross, we have been saved through the knowledge of Him, our God and our Savior, who is unto us the Tree of Life, which yields food imperishable to everlasting life; he who knows the fruit knows the Tree and finds favor with God to life. And He is unto us the River of Living Water, which is His Spirit, which is living drink that we may never thirst again. They who eat and drink the things of this world, eat and drink death; but we who eat and drink Christ, eat and drink life. They who live by the things which are seen, which are wasting away, likewise waste away, as we are all wasting away, for everything which is seen is perishing; but we who live by Him, who is not seen, will live forever by the things which never die. While we are wasting away, we are being renewed by the Spirit day by day, to be made more like Him, to be made worthy of eternal life which is to be revealed when He is revealed to the whole world. So therefore, seek and search for Him, the living Life, dwelling above the heavens, and He will let you find Him. We who sow to the Spirit reap life, and the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace; so set your minds on the things above where Christ dwells. ([See more on the Living Bread](#))

For how is it that Moses fasted for 40 days and 40 nights without food nor water? He had nourishment from the Father, a nourishment that we know nothing about; for when we eat food in this world, we eat something that has died: a plant that has been plucked, an animal that has been slain, or a piece of fruit that has been harvested. Everything that is cut off from its life undergoes death; then the food begins to rot and grow hairs of mold, being consumed slowly within and without, since it is plucked from its life and it is not consumed by the living before its time; however it doesn't perish while it is on the tree or in the ground or has the breath of life, for life preserves it. So if we live for a little while by eating the death of a thing, how much more do you suppose we live by eating the life? For Jesus Christ is the true food and the true drink, He is the author of life; He has given Himself as food. Everyone who eats on earth, eats death; but we who come heaven-ward for food, eat life. And He gives unto us the righteousness by which we who hunger are truly satisfied; as He says, " **Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.** " (Matthew 5:6) And the righteousness of God is contrary to food which

cannot satisfy, which says, "All a man's labor is for his mouth and yet the appetite is not satisfied." (Ecclesiastes 6:7) And, "He enlarges his appetite like Sheol, And he is like death, never satisfied." (Habakkuk 2:5) So our appetites are never satisfied, but we are made full by God's righteousness, which He feeds us through Christ. Therefore, the Spirit and the Bride says, "Come!" All come! As it says, "Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. Incline your ear, and come to me; hear, that your soul may live; and I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David." (Isaiah 55:1-3) So it says, "If a man were to give all the riches of his house for love, It would be utterly despised." (Song of Solomon 8:7) For God gives everlasting springs and everlasting bread free of cost, which lasts for all eternity; something so precious, not all the money in the world can buy, and God gives it freely: for grace is a free gift from God. No longer are we under the bonds of futility, working for food which does not last, for our labor in the Lord is not in vain! For the will of the Lord is our bread; and our work in the Lord is the work of faith. Therefore, run the race of faith, believing in the Son of God; as our Lord says, " **Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you, for on Him the Father, God, has set His seal. (...) This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent. (...) For the bread of God is that which comes down out of heaven, and gives life to the world. (...) I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst.** " (John 6:27-35) ([See more on Christ as Food](#))

See a tremendous thing: God has given us a tangible act of communion with Him in which we eat bread and drink wine; here is where food and grace meet again. And we are commanded to do communion — on a set day? No! As often as we like, so that we do not forget His gracious work on the cross; for we have come to know the truth through understanding, it would be to our shame if we forget, for forgetfulness renders knowledge void. The festivals and holy days prescribed by the law were commanded on set days; but these were all fulfilled in Christ. Christ Jesus has set up another day under the new Covenant which is "as often as you like"; so it is not on a certain day, like the law, but as often as we like. For the law given by Moses was binding by compulsion, but the law of Christ is set forth — not as binding, but freeing — in free willingness, that we may serve Him with a willing heart. For the apostles called themselves "bond-servants," meaning willing servants of Jesus Christ. The holy days in the law offered as reminders at the anniversary of the event, but communion is not given on a set day, but any day; likewise it says, "Today if you hear His voice..." (Hebrews 3:15) And it says, " **AT THE ACCEPTABLE TIME I LISTENED TO YOU, AND ON THE DAY OF SALVATION I HELPED YOU.**" Behold, now is "THE ACCEPTABLE TIME," behold, now is "THE DAY OF SALVATION." (2 Corinthians 6:2) For His favor is open for us everyday to abide in; as the lamenter says, "The LORD'S lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, For His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness." (Lamentations 3:22-23) So we rest in His kindness, and abide therein everyday, for God is good; the time of waiting for

Him has ceased. We should fear lest we harden ourselves toward God by being ignorant of His ways, erring in the heart, and departing out of the way. Remember His ways, declare His works. Remember Christ Jesus, He is the Way. This is the key to remaining: remembering. And the key to abiding: meditation. God's grace is a gift to us, but to the Father, costly. He gave up His Son, He lost Him for a short while, He gained Him back forever. Do not receive God's grace in vain by forgetting these wonderful truths, but treat them as precious and hold fast to them. "When faced with death, I will not shake; I know Him that makes the earth-quake." Hold fast dearly beloved, hold fast; for in vain it does not say, " You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin. " (Hebrews 12:4) And, " They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death. " (Revelation 12:11)

## The Door Of Eternal Salvation

The world was judged before by water, a massive flood; historians know that the world went through some catastrophic change, but their speculations vary. But the Truth is found in the Word of Truth: God repented that He created man and He was sorry that He created them; so He warned Noah and commanded him to build an ark; Noah's actions testified to the people of the coming destruction: with the hammering, he preached, "Repent"; with the laying up of wood, "Judgement." God was going to send a flood of water! Which was something never seen before, for water never came from the sky, but mists came up from the ground to water the earth (Genesis 2:6). The people presumed, "Something like this has never happened ever-since the beginning of the days of our life, ever-since the days of old, water has come up from the earth and everything has gone on as it should." However, despite what they believed in their hearts, water came from the sky and God released the water from inside the earth to flood all the land, to destroy all with the breath of life. However, all who entered in through the door of the ark were saved, which was Noah and his family, eight in all, and two of every kind of animal with some extra animals for sacrifice; for animals were not afraid of man in those days because they were not killed by man for food. And all these point to the present time: for whoever enters in through the Door, that is to say, through Christ, will be saved from the flood of God's wrath which is yet to come, which is coming upon the earth, which is a judgment not of water, but of fire; [this is why it says, "For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, **for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.**" (Ephesians 5:5-6) And, "Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. **For it is because of these things that the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience,** and in them you also once walked, when you were living in them." (Colossians 3:5-7)]

But Christ has become unto us who believe a refuge, a shelter, a protection from God's wrath; through God's provision of grace, by His Son, He spares many who believe and trust in Him; and He is more trustworthy than wood, for He is our Rock; for according to wood on the sea, it says, "There are three things which are too wonderful for me, Four which I do not understand: The way of an eagle in the sky, The way of a serpent on a rock, **The way of a ship in the middle of the sea,** And the way of a man with a maid." (Proverbs 30:18-19) But there is no surprise that our Rock is a Shelter; for men make their homes on the rock; and even, "The hyraxes are not mighty people, Yet they make their houses in the rocks." (Proverbs 30:26) For God has given us His Son as a Shelter for salvation and declares in Him safety; and the entrance into Him is by faith. Noah was spared for a short while from flood waters, but later died; those who enter into Christ will be saved eternally by the life of Christ. And Noah inherited a new earth, purged from evil by water; how much greater do you suppose the inheritance of God, the new heaven and the new earth, for those who love God, which is purified not

by water, but by raging fire? For only that which can withstand the fire endures, being made pure by refinement; and the rest which cannot withstand is burned up; and the city of God is said to be of pure gold. So then, if we go on living as one with this world, we are surely not safe from the wrath which is to come — as it says, only those who entered into the ark were saved; and it says of our Refuge, " You know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin. No one who abides in Him sins; no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him. " (1 John 3:5-6) But who believing these things does not flee to Christ for safety? As the admonishment says, "Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues." (Revelation 18:4) As it says, "Come out of her," which is this world; we come out of the world through repentance, and come to Christ through faith, and remain in Him through perseverance.

After the great flood, God made a covenant with Noah; as God says, " This is the sign of the covenant which I am making between Me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all successive generations; I set My bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a sign of a covenant between Me and the earth. It shall come about, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow will be seen in the cloud, and I will remember My covenant, which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and never again shall the water become a flood to destroy all flesh. When the bow is in the cloud, then I will look upon it, to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth. " (Genesis 9:12-17) During the flood, water was used to punish the world, but Noah was saved through water; likewise it is said about the end, "Many will be purged, purified and refined, but the wicked will act wickedly; and none of the wicked will understand, but those who have insight will understand." (Daniel 12:10) For the testimony will condemn the unbelieving, but the testimony will save the believing. For the end will come will a flood, and the righteous will be saved through fire, for the fire refines and purifies; but the same fire will destroy the wicked. But after the flood of water, God put the rainbow in the sky; and He caused the rain to pour down on the righteous and the wicked alike, showing grace to everyone despite their wickedness; so with the covenant of grace, peace came from God to the whole world; and this pertains to this very time, as God says through Isaiah the prophet: " For this is like the days of Noah to Me, When I swore that the waters of Noah Would not flood the earth again; So I have sworn that I will not be angry with you Nor will I rebuke you. For the mountains may be removed and the hills may shake, But My lovingkindness will not be removed from you, And My covenant of peace will not be shaken. " (Isaiah 54:9-10) And so much so, Paul closes his letters with the phrase, "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." For this is the result of the covenant: peace. Likewise He says, "Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person." (Colossians 4:6) And salt by the covenant of salt which God has made with us, one of peace: of forgiving our sins through Christ's blood, of His grace so that we would be reconciled to Him in love, for He has made peace with us through His grace.

But take heed! I admonish you: after the flood, those who knew of God's lovingkindness and forbearance by making a covenant with every living creature, and those who knew of His wrath in flooding the world with water, but sinned blatantly despite knowing these things — as it was with Sodom, as it was with Gomorrah — God judged, not with water, but with fire and brimstone, raining it down from the sky — as it is with water — as a warning in these latter times of the judgment of fire to those who refuse to obey the truth, living ungodly lives thereafter; He will judge them with fire, a lake of fire — as it is with water — and fire, raining it down — as it is with water — and fire to drink — as it is with water. "Oh, but today we have never seen the water as fire, ever since the beginning of the world these things have always been the same! The fire we can see in the heavens, but it never comes down to the earth." But with the revelation of the grace of God comes the revelation of the wrath of God; for Christ was the first to preach openly about Gehenna; He was also the first to reveal the Good News. The world as we know it is passing away and anyone found of it in the end will be found deserving judgment with it; but God calls us out ahead of time, calling us to come to Christ for refuge. He wills that none should perish, but all come to the knowledge of God, to repentance to everlasting life; and He has proved this, so much so in that He has made peace with us ahead of the time through Jesus, our Savior; as the LORD declares, " I will make an everlasting covenant with them that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; and I will put the fear of Me in their hearts so that they will not turn away from Me. " (Jeremiah 32:40) And this is the fear of the LORD.

Greater is the Spirit in us than the spirit in the world; and He has overcome the world; therefore, we have strength in Christ to flee the world and its lusts and pride. Those who entered into the ark floated above the destruction of the earth by water; so it will be for those who enter into Christ; we will be caught up with Jesus when He returns; as it says, " Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. " (1 Thessalonians 4:17) (I put only parts of Holy Scripture in here, but I encourage you to read the whole of them for yourself.) Furthermore, Jesus testifies that He is the door into the sheepfold and the Good Shepherd; as He says, " **Truly, truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before Me were thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate. If anyone enters through Me, he will be saved. He will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I have come that they may have life, and have it in all its fullness. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.** " (John 10:1-18) And again God spoke of Christ through the prophet Ezekiel saying, " For thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out. As a shepherd cares for his herd in the day when he is among his scattered sheep, so I will care for My sheep and will deliver them from all the places to which they were scattered on a cloudy and gloomy day. I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries and bring them to their own land; and I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the streams, and in all the inhabited places of the land. I will feed them in a good pasture, and their grazing ground will be on the mountain heights of Israel. There they will lie down on good grazing ground and feed in rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. I will feed My flock and I will lead them to rest,"

declares the Lord GOD. "I will seek the lost, bring back the scattered, bind up the broken and strengthen the sick; but the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them with judgment." (...) Then I will set over them one shepherd, My servant David, and he will feed them; he will feed them himself and be their shepherd. And I, the LORD, will be their God, and My servant David will be prince among them; I the LORD have spoken. I will make a covenant of peace with them and eliminate harmful beasts from the land so that they may live securely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods. " (Ezekiel 34:11-31) Therefore, as Jesus says, " **I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, it will be opened.** " (Luke 11:9-10) For Jesus is the Way, the Door, and the Refuge. He is the Good Shepherd.

## The Rock Of Our Salvation

Israel, who God delivered out of Egypt with a powerful arm and a mighty hand, had stony hearts, and were constantly disbelieving in Him; they had just been redeemed from Egypt by Moses, and then wanted to stone Moses who rescued them; as it is written of them, " They said, "Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to make us and our children and livestock die of thirst?" Then Moses cried out to the Lord, "What am I to do with these people? They are almost ready to stone me." " (Exodus 17:3-7) So in the people's stony hearts is revealed the content of their stony hearts by wanting to physically stone Moses. Their anger, unbelief, and hardness of heart was toward Moses, for they wanted to stone him with stones; as the proverb says, "Out of the wicked comes forth wickedness." (1 Samuel 24:13) Moses was God's representative, he spoke on behalf of God, so the people's anger was actually directed toward God — they were actually angry with Him; as Moses says, " The LORD hears your grumbings which you grumble against Him. And what are we? Your grumbings are not against us but against the LORD. " (Exodus 16:6-8) So God could have rightfully given the people what they deserved, since they repaid Him evil for good; but instead of striking the rock of the people's stony heart and wounding them, God struck a different Rock through Moses, a spiritual Rock that traveled with them, which was Christ (1 Corinthians 10:4); and out of that Rock came spiritual water for the people to drink. This is spiritual water because water doesn't flow from a rock, and everything abnormal is spiritual; everything contrary to nature is supernatural — the supernatural is from the spirit — whether good or bad; for the supernatural comes not from the physical, but the spiritual. So by God's grace, the people were not smitten, but the Rock was struck instead; a spiritual drink came from the Rock, and it is spiritual because water doesn't normally flow from rocks — no. Water doesn't come from rocks, but from springs; and Jesus didn't come from earth, but from heaven; He who descends from heaven is spiritual, but we are from below, earthly. The water He gives is His Spirit, the water from above, which He gives, becoming a well of water inside those who believe, springing up to everlasting life; for our confession of Christ is salvation unto us who believe; and by this Living Water, we never thirst again; this is the heavenly water which God separated from the beginning which is above the expanse. They who drank the water from the Rock later died, but we who drink of God's Spirit will never die. As He commands us, "I, the LORD, am your God, Who brought you up from the land of Egypt; Open your mouth wide and I will fill it." (Psalms 81:10)

As Moses spent 40 days and nights on a mountain with God, drinking no food nor water, so he was the first to taste of the Living Water of Christ; on that mount he received tablets of the covenant, the Words of God written on stone. But to the people whose hearts were stone, the covenant had no effect on them, for it was made ineffective because of the flesh; however by Christ it says, "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh." (Ezekiel 36:26) And, "This is the covenant which I will make

with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD, "I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people." (Jeremiah 31:33) For the new heart and the new spirit is made possible through Christ, who was struck by God in our stead, and by His going to the Father. It was God's good plan, and that, to preserve life rather than destroying it; as the prophecy in the Gospel of John says, " You know nothing at all! You do not realize that it is better for you that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish. " (John 11:49-52) So Christ died to save us; and His cross has become unto us who believe, the death of the sinful nature. For the staff of God which Moses had in his hand is a piece of wood; and by the wood, Moses worked many miracles with it. And by the cross, which is wood, Christ saves. A staff is no weapon at all, but God is powerful and He works wonders by that which is no weapon at all to show His great power towards us who believe. God commanded Moses, "Take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile", and so it is the cross which opens up a way for us out of the captivity of this world to God; as Paul says, " May it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. " (Galatians 6:14) And where the people resided was a wilderness with no water and no food. There they received a better water, a better food, both from heaven, from the spiritual. So likewise, apart from the world, God has much better things for us in Christ Jesus.

At another time, Moses struck the rock again when God told him to speak to the Rock to bring forth water (Numbers 20:1-13). Moses disobeyed; being angry with the people, he struck the rock twice instead; as a result he was banished from entering into the land promised because he did not honor God in front of the people and sanctify the miracle before them. And this is a warning for us today: Christ was sacrificed once. If we struggle against sin, let us pray to the Rock and get deliverance through the cross, instead of striking again by continuing in willful sin. Let us not be comfortable in sin, especially now that Jesus saves us from sin; He has set us free to be free, and sin is not anything to coddle; for it is deadly and repugnant — and it is the danger. Sin has lost its power, and it has been rendered powerless by the grace of God in Christ Jesus; so therefore if we continue in sin after receiving the knowledge of the truth, it's because, " The light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than the light: for their works were evil. " (John 3:19) There is no sacrifice for willful sins, but a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation which will consume the adversaries of God (Hebrews 10:26-30). So take heed! That which is powerless shall not master over you, for you are no longer under law, but under grace. Sin can only be our master if we willingly submit to it; but rather, obey righteousness, obey Christ. Test yourselves. Do you love the light of life? For Christ gives us the grace to do the good we want to do: that is, saying, "No" to sin, and "Yes" to God. The following warning ought to keep us from sin in the fear of the Lord, as the writer of Hebrews states, " For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, and [then] have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame. For ground that drinks the rain which often falls on it and brings

forth vegetation useful to those for whose sake it is also tilled, receives a blessing from God; but if it yields thorns and thistles, it is worthless and close to being cursed, and it ends up being burned. **But, beloved, we are convinced of better things concerning you, and things that accompany salvation, though we are speaking in this way.**" (Hebrews 6:4-9) For Jesus is the Rock of our refuge, a city of refuge, in which one flees for protection from the onslaught of the enemy. Just as a man in the time of war after being defeated flees back to his stronghold, so Christ is our safety from our enemies, from the powers of wickedness, from the wolves — whose power is in their mouth, that is, in their lies. As it says, " And none of those who take refuge in Him will be condemned. " (Psalms 34:22) And, " Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. " (Romans 8:1) As the LORD God declares concerning this very time: " If anyone fiercely assails you it will not be from Me. Whoever assails you will fall because of you. Behold, I Myself have created the smith who blows the fire of coals And brings out a weapon for its work; And I have created the destroyer to ruin. No weapon that is formed against you will prosper; And every tongue that accuses you in judgment you will condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, And their vindication is from Me. " (Isaiah 54:15-17) For just as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, so the shelter of the Most High is a protection against the striking of the sun under the shadow of His wing; as it says, " The sun will not smite you by day, nor the moon by night. The LORD will protect you from all evil; He will keep your soul. " (Psalms 121:5-8) For when the seasons change and the trees lose foliage, the grass withers and dies, but the Rock remains unchanged forever; as it says, " Those who trust in the LORD are as Mount Zion, which cannot be moved but abides forever. " (Psalms 125:1) And, " It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in man. It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in princes. " (Psalms 118:8-9) Or again, " Do not trust in princes, in mortal man, in whom there is no salvation. " (Psalms 146:3-6) For, "There is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12) For He is our defense, our shield, our shelter against the fiery darts of the enemy; He is the protector of our lives, the tower of eternal salvation. He girds us with the whole armor of Himself so that we would withstand the enemy in the day of evil; He is a refuge of salvation to everyone who flees to Him. He is our Defense and our Offense, our weapon for battle, that we may take up the Word of Him, that we may fight against the enemy by Him; "Blessed be the LORD, my rock, Who trains my hands for war, And my fingers for battle; My lovingkindness and my fortress, My stronghold and my deliverer, My shield and He in whom I take refuge, Who subdues my people under me." (Psalms 144:1-2) He is a precious corner stone to the believing, but a stumbling block to the disobedient; " For this is contained in Scripture: "BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A CHOICE STONE, A PRECIOUS CORNER stone, AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED." This precious value, then, is for you who believe; but for those who disbelieve, "THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE VERY CORNER stone," and, "A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE"; for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this doom they were also appointed. " (1 Peter 2:6-8)

# The Son Of God

Jesus is the Son of God; He is God in the flesh; as it says, "The Son is the visible image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation." (Colossians 1:15) But someone may ask, "What does that mean?" We have a proverb that says, "Like mother like daughter; like father like son." So it is with Jesus, the Son of God: He is like the Father God, and perfectly so, and so much so, He says, "Whoever has seen Me has seen the Father. How can you say, "Show us the Father"? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me? The words I speak are not My own, but My Father who lives in Me does His work through Me." (John 14:9) And who is it that is called Everlasting Father? "For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace." (Isaiah 9:6) As it says, "A child will be born to us", but it also says, "His name will be called Eternal Father." And what was the work the Father did in Christ? "In Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us [apostles] the message of reconciliation." (2 Corinthians 5:18) He demonstrated His love for us on the cross, not while we were good people, but while we were yet sinners. "For He is gracious to the ungrateful and the evil." (Luke 6:35) "For He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust." (Matthew 5:45) If this is how God treats His enemies, how much more kindly does He deal with those who have been reconciled to Himself? For we are made friends of God through the cross of Christ; "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life." (Romans 5:10) Therefore, by the mercies of Him, go to Him! For negligence will be wrath in the end.

Pointing to Christ, Abraham offered His son Isaac on the altar to God, which was by God's own command, not that this thought came from God, but the enemy planted it; as God says through Jeremiah, the prophet, "They have built the high places of Baal to burn their sons in the fire as burnt offerings to Baal, which I did not command or decree, nor did it come into My mind." (Jeremiah 19:5) So such thoughts do not come from God; all such thoughts come from the enemy, for God is good, and nothing evil ever crosses His mind. So although the command to offer Isaac on the altar came from God, the thought couldn't have come from God; but when Abraham offered His son Isaac on the altar, God used it to test Abraham and point to Christ Jesus to come; as God promised, "In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice." (Genesis 22:18) When it says, "in your Seed", it does not say, "seeds", as with many, but one, that is Christ; so because of the obedience of one man, comes the blessing to the whole world; and that blessing which was promised is in Christ, the Seed to come; and Christ, being one, blesses the whole world by His one act of obedience. Furthermore, when Abraham was going to sacrifice his son, God provided another sacrifice in place of his son: a ram caught in the thicket; so Abraham received his son back from the dead; as it says, "He [Abraham]

considered that God is able to raise people even from the dead, from which he also received him [Isaac] back as a type. " (Hebrews 11:19) And Abraham, being a prophet, saw this was going to happen beforehand and said things like: "God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering." (Genesis 22:8) And, " Stay here with the donkey, and I and the lad will go over there; and we will worship and return to you. " (Genesis 22:5) And thereafter, he was looking in the future to Christ; as it says, " Abraham called the name of that place The LORD Will Provide, as it is said to this day, "In the mount of the LORD it will be provided." " (Genesis 22:14) So then, "Shall I present my firstborn for my rebellious acts, The fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" (Micah 6:7) No! But rather God provides the Sacrifice. For Isaac, Abraham's son, submitted to his father's will, and by so doing, points to Christ who laid down His life willingly; for no-one took His life from Him, but He laid it down as commanded by the Father. And it is not unrighteousness on God's behalf, for Christ was handed over to death for our sakes, once for all, as the propitiation for our sins. Everything Christ did, the Father was doing in Him; for Christ does the commands of the Father perfectly, resembling His exact likeness. When we have sons, our sons resemble us in a way, or two, or three, and he resembles his mother in other ways; but how much more do you suppose Christ resembles God, as the perfect son of God? He does not resemble the Father in a way or two, but in His exact likeness; for Jesus resembles the Father God perfectly.

In another instance, Jacob, who came from Isaac, who came from Abraham, also gave up his only son, but he had many other sons; he had one and only son from his beloved wife Rachel: that is Benjamin. Jacob had two sons from Rachel, but to him, Joseph was dead, although he was only in Egypt; for he believed Joseph was dead. So Jacob let Benjamin, his only beloved son, go into the hands of his brothers to save his family from the famine, for they were going to Egypt to buy food. So Jacob gave up his one and only son, Benjamin, and gained him back from the dead, along with another, Joseph who he received back from the dead; and likewise, the Father God gave up His Son, Jesus, to receive Him back again from the dead, and gained many other descendants through Him; as it says, " If He would render Himself as a guilt offering, **He will see His offspring**, He will prolong His days, And the good pleasure of the LORD will prosper in His hand. " (Isaiah 53:10) But Christ died without children, so these offspring mentioned are sons of God after His own likeness, being the Son of God Himself; as it says, " Behold, I and the children whom the LORD has given me are for signs and wonders in Israel from the LORD of hosts, who dwells on Mount Zion. " (Isaiah 8:18, Hebrews 2:13) For we who believe have been made sons of God through faith in Jesus Christ, being made alive together with Him by faith; just as the apostle says, " Even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ by grace you have been saved. " (Ephesians 2:5) And then it says, " When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions. " (Colossians 2:13-14) So we are made alive with Christ through faith. Furthermore, Jacob considered Joseph's two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, his own sons; they were considered like Reuben and Simeon to him (Genesis 48:5); and likewise God sent His Son into the world and gained back many more descendants through Him, even

descendants among many nations of the world, even to the offspring of His offspring — these are them who are begotten by the Word of Truth; as it says, "As for Me, this is My covenant with them," says the LORD: "My Spirit which is upon you, and My words which I have put in your mouth shall not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your offspring, nor from the mouth of your offspring's offspring," says the LORD, "from now and forever". (Isaiah 59:21) ([See more about Benjamin and Isaac](#))

The Father grafts us, even Gentiles, into God's household, the body of Christ, through faith in Jesus; He makes us sons of God by the Spirit of His Son, conforming us into His likeness; as it says, "For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren;" (Romans 8:29) And then it says, "We all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit." (2 Corinthians 3:18) Now, the body performs the acts of the mind, and Christ is our Head; a member that goes astray has lost connection with the Head; as it says, "inflated without cause by his fleshly mind, and not holding fast to the head." (Colossians 2:18-19) For it's either knowledge or life, as it was in the beginning. So then we see our victory is won for us by Christ; we enter into this victory by setting our minds on Him. For if we set our minds on spiritual things, the members of our bodies will likewise conform to the message of our head. And we set our minds on our Head, that is to say, Christ. For our hand does what the mind says, and our foot does what the mind says, even to every finger and every toe. So if we set our mind on spiritual things, namely Christ, He will give us the strength to present our members as servants to righteousness (Romans 8:5-8, Philippians 4:8, Colossians 3:2). This is the way of faith: setting our minds on Jesus Christ. As it says about the mind of the flesh: "The day when you post your watchmen, Your punishment will come. Then their confusion will occur." (Micah 7:4) But then, it says about the mind of the Spirit: "As for me, I will watch expectantly for the LORD; I will wait for the God of my salvation. My God will hear me." (Micah 7:7) For the mind set on the flesh is set on punishment and wrath, but the mind set on the Spirit is set on the LORD, the God of salvation. ([See more about the Father and the Son, the Son and the Church](#))

Now, a son conforms himself to the pattern of the father, for a son does the things that the father does; as it says, "By this we may know that we are in him: whoever says he abides in Him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked." (1 John 2:5-6) So do not be deceived: if we walk after devils, we show ourselves as sons of the devil; but if we pattern ourselves after God, we show ourselves truly as sons of God (John 8:30-47). This proves us and gives us confidence on the day of Salvation, and we are to watch ourselves constantly in many watchings and prayer. We really are sons of God if we have believed, and true sons pattern themselves after the Father, and by this we may know that we believe; because we have been begotten of God by the eternal Word of truth when we believed. When a son does not act like the father, the father says, "You are no son of mine," although in truth, the son is still a son; but what they are really saying is: "You were raised better; you're not acting as you've been taught," that is, you're not acting like your father. A son can rebel against the father and go his own way (Luke 15:11-32), but the son can never stop being a son; but in such a

case, the son is dead to the father, and the father to the son. We are really sons of God; as Paul says to unbelievers, "For in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we also are His children.'" (Acts 17:28-29) So he affirms the truth in the saying: 'We also are His children'; but many of us, although being sons of God have turned to our own way, resembling unruly beasts more than God; as it says, "God has surely tested them in order for them to see that they are but beasts." (Ecclesiastes 3:18) So although we are sons of God, many of us do not pattern ourselves after God, for we have not seen God. Children imitate their fathers by sight: they do what they see their father doing. They do not need to be told what to do, but they do what they see. Even if they are told what to do, they do not listen, for they do what they see. If they see the father saying and not doing, they will do likewise. So in the same way, we do what we see in Christ; and Christ reflects God; as it says, "No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him." (John 1:18) And we are made to see God through faith in Jesus Christ; as Jesus cried out, " **He who believes in Me, does not believe in Me but in Him who sent Me.** " (John 12:44) "For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God." (Romans 8:14) For children follow after their parents, namely by what they see; and we follow after Christ by faith in what we see in Him; just as Christ follows God, as Christ often said, "**Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner.**" (John 5:19) For the Spirit of God does the leading, and as obedient children we follow; "**Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.**" (Matthew 18:3)

But do you not know, beloved, God first rescued His firstborn Israel from Egypt by a mighty hand, but later, when they hardened their necks and kicked against Him and rebelled against Him for many years; then God handed them over to the Babylonians and the Assyrians, even defiling His own temple on their account? And they were sons of Israel, God's chosen people, saved by grace; but they were rejected by God because they rejected Him. For they were constantly forgetting God, and they were closing their ears and not believing in Him. The LORD God set up testimonies for them and their children so that they would not forget Him; but, as it says in the Psalms, "They forgot His deeds And His miracles that He had shown them." (Psalms 78:11) And "They quickly forgot His works; They did not wait for His counsel." (Psalms 106:13) And "They did not believe in God And did not trust in His salvation." (Psalms 78:22) And as a result, "They even sacrificed their sons and their daughters to the demons, And shed innocent blood, The blood of their sons and their daughters, Whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan; And the land was polluted with the blood." (Psalms 106:37-38) So why would we imitate the ancestors who imitated devils, and not God? For Jesus is our example, and Jesus is the Way; Jesus has loved us, even more than Himself. Do devils love you more than God? Of course not! Devils desire the sacrifice of devils, but God desires righteous sacrifices, and He provides the Sacrifice; so therefore, " As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, "YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY." If you

address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth; knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ. " (1 Peter 1:14-19) ([See more about Sons and Slaves](#))

Finally: Christ gave the good testimony before Pontius Pilate even though he had power to crucify Him, and power to let Him go; however Christ stood for the truth and testified to the truth — no one takes His life, but He laid it down willingly. He said to the people numerous times, "I came from the Father", and "the Father and I are One". And when the time came, the very hour which He came for, He confirmed His testimony, even with His own blood; they tried Him, but they had nothing against Him; as prophesied by Job, who confirmed his own innocence; as he says, "And the indictment which my adversary has written, surely I would carry it on my shoulder, I would bind it to myself like a crown." (Job 31:35-36) For Jesus was blameless, but the indictment which the adversary had written against Him states: "JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS." (John 19:19) And even though the accusation meant bearing the cross on His shoulder, and wearing the crown of thorns on His head, He went to the cross and confirmed His testimony in His own blood. This is what it means when it says, "This is the one who came by water and blood." (1 John 5:6-9) He was blameless, even Pilate could not find fault in Him, and he was determined to release Him; but the accusation they had written against Him, Jesus did not deny, but He affirmed it, even though it meant death. He testified not by word only, but by deed and truth: by carrying the cross and wearing the crown of thorns. By the cross, and the humiliation that He underwent, He confirmed to everyone what He said was true — He did not deny, He confirmed. If anyone speaks lies, before the end of their life, they confess them, or if their life depends on it, they would put a stop to their lies; but Christ did not shrink back even when faced with death, but He testified to the truth; as Paul says, "Christ Jesus, who testified the good confession before Pontius Pilate." (1 Timothy 6:13) It was for the end of His life that He came; and by the cross, He affirms to all that He is the Son of God, confirming by His own blood; and it stands today as a witness to all, that Christ is the Son of God; He transformed the cross, a device of torture, into a signal of salvation. For what was once an object of horror, has become a sign and symbol of redemption: it is now hung around necks and pierced on ear lobes; it is now carried on the shoulders; it is now put on tops of buildings and set up as markers for graves. Are the sons of men so sick that they put tortuous symbols on themselves? No! But rather God is so good that He has turned the detestable thing into a glorious sign of redemption and salvation. No-one can do such a thing, except God, who turns the corrupt into the believing, the detestable into the gracious, the abominable into the saint. Christ did so, so that we would not lose heart or grow faint: therefore, believe in the Son! Worship the Lord your God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who is living in the heavens, exalted for you.

# THE CALL - FAITH

The Race Of Faith	83
A Clear Conscience	86
Abide In Him	90
A New Heart	94
Born Again	97

# The Race Of Faith

The map is God's Word, the runner's shoes is the Gospel of peace, the destination is heavenward, the prize is eternal life. And how we start is how we end: from faith to faith; this is no triathlon, where a man starts on his feet and ends up on a bike, and then in the sea — no! As the apostle Paul says, “Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?” (Galatians 3:3) And then he says, “You were running a good race. Who cut in on you to keep you from obeying the truth?” (Galatians 5:7) And concerning the Gospel he says, 'For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "BUT THE RIGHTEOUS man SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.'" (Romans 1:17) So it is: we start by faith and end by faith, from start to finish, it is by faith in the Son of God who loves us. For everything we do stems from the root; if the branches bear fruit, it is because of the root; for, "It is not you who supports the root, but the root supports you." (Romans 11:18) You are only a branch; we are being supported by the foundation, that is to say, Christ — we cannot stand without. For Christ makes us to stand and to walk uprightly, so when He makes our paths straight — run! The world wants to draw us away from Christ to be busy and rushing in the world; but where are we rushing to? Out of the context of a race, we are running in vain, rushing to our death; and what's more vain than death? Do not run in vain; as Paul says, "I wanted to be sure I was not running and had not been running my race in vain." (Galatians 2:2) Running implies you have a place to go — and quickly; and in the context of a race: the place to go is the finish line. It also implies hard work, for running is by no means walking; although our faith is also called a walk; "For we walk by faith, not by sight." (2 Corinthians 5:7) But running is likened to diligence; as we are commanded, "not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord;" (Romans 12:11) And this is the work of the Lord: the "work of faith and labor of love." (1 Thessalonians 1:3) Therefore, run in zeal, being "zealous for good deeds." (Titus 2:14) For what is the fruit of this world? As the Lord says, "As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful." (Matthew 13:22) For the world is full of thorns and thorns choke out the growth of good fruit. But if we run the race of faith in Jesus Christ, we run to life eternal. So run! And to win! The race of faith is the good fight; for we fight with words of truth told by the Spirit, who is our Sword, with words seasoned with salt, preserving the truth of God's grace. ([See more about the Race of Faith](#))

No one runs a race for a prize without first training, and they who run, certainly run to win; they strip off every weight that slows them down; they do so for the prize; they learn the rules and know exactly what they can and cannot do; runners are disciplined in what goes into their body, and they have strict schedules for training; they find the perfect shoes for running long distances. No one runs a race to get second place, but they run to get first place; otherwise all the training and running would be in vain. "Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. So I do not run aimlessly; I do not

box as one beating the air. But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified. " (1 Corinthians 9:25-27) And this is the race we run: the true race by living a life of faith in Jesus Christ; as the writer of Hebrews says, " Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. " (Hebrews 12:2) As it says, "Fixing our eyes on Jesus", but Jesus is unseen, so it is, we fix our eyes on Jesus by faith; as it says about Moses, "He endured, as seeing Him who is unseen." (Hebrews 11:27) For it is by faith that he seen Him who is unseen. And this is the race we run: the race of faith. For messengers often ran to the one who they were sent; and we carry the Word of Christ.

Disciple means "disciplined one," and we are called disciples of Christ; self-discipline is a fruit of the Holy Spirit, and discipline is needed for running the race. Any discipline that does not come from the Holy Spirit is not truly self-discipline. When I was in the military, they told me I would have self-discipline, but what I found was the military disciplined me, and my discipline did not come from myself; therefore, it was not self-discipline. In fact, when I got out of the military, I did all the things I could not do while I was in the military, but to a greater degree. For I desired to do them while in, but I couldn't — and this is yet another form of slavery. I didn't do according to my desires, but I willed to do so. Is this any different from willing to do good, but not having the ability? In both cases, the willing is present but the doing is not — but still, sin is slavery regardless. So I found that the discipline they tried to inflict upon me, actually made me worse; for the things they tried to inflict upon me was according to the strength of human flesh, and it had a reverse effect upon me — for it strengthened my sinful flesh. But thank God, He gives us the Holy Spirit that we may overcome ourselves, that is, our flesh! As the warning to Abel says, " If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it." (Genesis 4:7) ([See more about true discipline](#))

We run the race of faith not for a perishable crown, but for an indestructible, that of life; as Paul says, "Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it." (1 Corinthians 9:24) And at the end of his life, he said, " I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness. " (2 Timothy 4:8) Many will try to enter the kingdom, but will be forbidden; many will run the race, but only one wins the prize. We must know for certain that not everyone will enter by their own will; as Christ says, " **Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.** " (Matthew 7:21) "Similarly, anyone who competes as an athlete does not receive the victor's crown except by competing according to the rules." (2 Timothy 2:5) So it is by doing the will of the Father; and it is the Father who works in us both to will and to work; as it says, "for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure." (Philippians 2:13) Furthermore, Paul says, "So then it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy." (Romans

9:16) So human strength does not accomplish God's will, but the work of faith accompanied by God's grace. I say again, the race of faith is not physical; all physical effort produces sweat, and sweat is a result of the curse. For God cursed the ground, and by the sweat of our brow, we eat its bread. But what does the law say concerning the land? "Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard and gather in its crop, but during the seventh year the land shall have a sabbath rest, a sabbath to the LORD; you shall not sow your field nor prune your vineyard." (Leviticus 25:3-4) The man who wills and runs according to human strength says, "What are we going to eat on the seventh year if we do not sow or gather in our crops?" (Leviticus 25:20) But God says, "I will so order My blessing for you in the sixth year that it will bring forth the crop for three years. When you are sowing the eighth year, you can still eat old things from the crop, eating the old until the ninth year when its crop comes in." (Leviticus 25:21-22) So the men were to rest in the Seventh year, and God worked a blessing for them for three years thereafter. In the times of Haggai and Zechariah, the prophets, during the rebuilding of the temple, the people worked the land by the sweat of their own brow; and the fruit of their labors were eaten up, but not by them; as it says, "You have sown much, but harvest little; you eat, but there is not enough to be satisfied; you drink, but there is not enough to become drunk; you put on clothing, but no one is warm enough; and he who earns, earns wages to put into a purse with holes." (Haggai 1:6) But when the Word of faith came through Haggai, the prophet, they believed God; as it says, "Then they obeyed the voice of the LORD their God and the words of Haggai the prophet, as the LORD their God had sent him. And the people showed reverence for the LORD." (Haggai 1:12) And the LORD stirred up their spirits; and the LORD their God was with them. So they went from sowing and harvesting the land to rebuilding the temple of the LORD. They worked the work of faith, and ran the race of faith; and by whose strength? As it is written through Zechariah, "'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the LORD of hosts." (Zechariah 4:6) For the Holy Spirit comes by hearing with faith; and this is the message which you have heard.

## A Clear Conscience

Our conscience was dead when we lived according to the lusts of this world; it had been corrupted because of sin, seared as with a hot iron, calloused and devoid of any conviction. By the message of the truth, He purified our conscience from dead works to serve the living God. He set us free from the law for righteousness and has made us right with God by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The law stood to condemn us: the longer we lived, the more we sinned, the greater our debt. However, through Christ Jesus, God freely forgave our ticket of debt, which is our transgression, which is hostile to us, but He nailed it to the cross, having cleansed our defiled conscience by the sprinkling of His blood. Through His body, all rules and regulations of the law were put to death, the hostility, the enmity, the pride, for Christ justifies us freely by His grace; thus "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes." (Romans 10:4) The law could never justify, "Because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin." (Romans 3:20) Albeit the law was given by God, and the law is just and holy and good, it could never accomplish righteousness in us who are in the flesh; so if the law could never justify, since it was weakened by the human flesh, then how could man-made regulations or rules ever justify anyone? As the apostle affirms, "If you have died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world, why, as if you were living in the world, do you submit yourself to decrees, such as, "Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch!" (which all refer to things destined to perish with use)—in accordance with the commandments and teachings of men? These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, but are of no value against fleshly indulgence." (Colossians 2:20-23) No-one can obey the law perfectly, no-one always does right and never sins, for we all have erred. Jesus Christ is our righteousness through faith, for the righteous will live by faith; He obeyed the law perfectly and became the new law Giver, that of the law of Christ, which is a law of faith in His name. He was the first to preach the Gospel, the Good News; as it says, "This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard Him." (Hebrews 2:3) For He healed many people, not because they obeyed any law or rule, but because of their profession of faith, namely, they confessed He is the Seed of David, the Prophet to come; and with a change of law, there is also a change of temple, a change of priesthood, of sacrifice, of worship. For such things are spoken concerning the new covenant: concerning the change of temple, it says, "Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God." (1 Corinthians 6:19) Or even, "You have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem." (Hebrews 12:22) And concerning the change of high priest, it says, "Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come." (Hebrews 9:11) And concerning the change of sacrifice, it says, "He offered one sacrifice for sins for all time." (Hebrews 10:12) And concerning the change of worship, it says, "God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." (John 4:24) ([See more about the law of Christ](#))

The law of Christ is weightier than the law of God, and if we fulfill the law of Christ, we fulfill the law of God; for the Spirit always confirms the letter, and the letter confirms the Spirit, for the Word comes from the Spirit. We have died to the law and all its demands, and we who believe are grafted into the law of Christ, which is a law of faith. The rationale to every commandment of Jesus Christ is Jesus Christ: He is Why, He is the Rationale, He is the Answer. Love fulfills the entirety of the law, and the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit. Faith is the new covenant, the new testament; inaugurated by a new High Priest, Christ Jesus, with a better sacrifice, His own Self, confirmed by the apostles and prophets and founded on better promises — eternal, not temporal — which are assured unto us by the promised Holy Spirit, by Whom we are newly born, by Whom we come to worship in the heavenly Jerusalem where Christ entered to make atonement for us. Jesus will return again, and the blessed will partake in a better resurrection; He will make us to stand before Him in judgment; and all who partake in the first resurrection, the second death holds no power over them — so judgment in the resurrection is for reward. So hold fast! "The old has passed away; behold, the new has come." (2 Corinthians 5:17) And it is the new which remains forever; it is the new which inherits the new heaven and the new earth. "For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation." (Galatians 6:15) Christ Jesus takes away the old and sets up the new, superseding the law of God and inaugurating a law of faith; for He was saying, "You have heard that it was said." (the law of God) Then He was saying, "But I say to you." (the law of Christ) (As written in Matthew 5:17-48); and so the former is the law of God, the latter is the law of faith; the former is the physical requirement, and the latter is the spiritual; for the physical comes first, then the spiritual. The former cleansed the flesh, but the latter the conscience (Hebrews 9:13-14). The law was given so that the disobedient would be revealed as disobedient, but Christ has revealed God: He was sent to forgive transgressors of their transgressions; "For God has shut up all in disobedience so that He may show mercy to all." (Romans 11:32) He has shut up all in disobedience to the law, so that He may show mercy to us in Christ. Nevertheless, although faith is exemplified, we do not reject the law of God, for faith is weightier than the law of God — if we fulfill the law of faith, we fulfill the law of God — for God the Father puts a new heart and a new spirit in us, so that, through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, we may be presented to Him as holy and blameless before His coming. ([See again more about the law of Christ](#))

So thus, we are not bound by the law of God if we follow the law of the Spirit and life, for the fruit of the Spirit are all good things, and there is no law against good. The law acted as a guardian until the time of Christ was revealed: for we are under our parent's supervision until the age of 18. But when we turn 18, we are set free from our guardianship. Likewise, we have been locked up and chained under the power and supervision of these elemental spiritual forces of the world until the fullness of time, that is, when God shone the light of the gospel in our hearts. When we believed, we were made free; we were made new by the Spirit of God and set free from the law at faith; for in the law sin has its power, and sin reigns in death. Do we then neglect the law of God by faith? No! But rather, through faith we uphold the law — for faith fulfills the law of God through carrying each other's burdens. Who then is the law of God for?

As it says, " But we know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully, knowing this: that the law is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and insubordinate, for the ungodly and for sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine, according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God which was committed to my trust. " (1 Timothy 1:8-11) So if we are born anew of the Spirit, following after the Spirit, we are not subject to the law; if we are of the old nature, sin still has its power, for the old nature is subject to the law of God. The deeds of the flesh are obvious and the fruit of the Spirit is clear, so we may discern which we are operating in; " So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the flesh craves what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are opposed to each other, so that you do not do what you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity, and debauchery; idolatry and sorcery; hatred, discord, jealousy, and rage; rivalries, divisions, factions, and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law. " (Galatians 5:16-22)

Therefore, since we who follow the Spirit are free from the law of God (and where there is an absence of law, no transgression is counted; for sin is only counted when there is law), we can serve God in the freedom of grace. We have died to the law when we were united in the death of Jesus Christ through faith, into a baptism of faith; and those who have died are freed from the law (Romans 7:1-6; Galatians 2:19-20; Philippians 3:7-11; Ephesians 2:14-16). Christ died for us so that we wouldn't have to taste death ourselves; He died that we may be reconciled to the Father by faith, apart from the law; for the law chained us and we could never keep it. So we are no longer under law, but grace; and sin is no longer our master, but Christ. If we sin, we offer ourselves as obedient servants to it, and get entangled once again in slavery — and the last state becomes worse than the first. Christ has set us free so we would be free. Therefore, deny the earthly within you! Daily strive to maintain a clear conscience before God and man; for from the conscience we have not been freed — for the law of God is written on our heart. Look heavenward to Jesus Christ who cleansed us from our defilement, and you will fulfill the righteous requirement of the law through love: set your mind on Him; for if the mind is set, then the members which are governed by the mind are likewise. Faith and a clear conscience go hand-in-hand, for they are friends — do not separate those who are friends. The conscience is the spiritual law written on our heart; do not go against conscience, for it is according to faith; as Paul says, " But whoever has doubts is condemned if he eats, because the eating is not from faith. For whatever does not proceed from faith is sin." (Romans 14:23) All unrighteousness is sin; and faith never says, "Go and submit to sin." We remember that Abraham was justified by faith, but how about David who was chosen because of his heart? He received the testimony of God, which said, "a man after My own heart"; for he lived his life not for the sight of man, as man pleasing, but he lived for the sight of God, pleasing Him and maintaining a good heart before Him; and he was chosen by God as king over

His people. Now this is faith: knowing that God sees the heart, and striving for purity before Him; God does not see flesh as man sees, for everything that is hidden, God sees; and the hidden parts where no man sees, God sees; God sees all things, especially the hidden things; as Christ, preaching faith, said, " **But when you give to the poor, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving will be in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you. (...) But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you. (...) But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face so that your fasting will not be noticed by men, but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.** " (Matthew 6:3-18) For the hidden is seen, so we strive to please God rather than men; similarly, a virgin keeps herself pure, and her beauty is maintained for the sake of her husband; her beauty is hidden from all men, but it is revealed only to her lover. She sees her own beauty, but she belongs to her husband, and her husband belongs to her.

The unbelieving never says, "I will work hard to keep an upright heart before God." For the unbeliever doesn't believe in God, so he does not care about what's secret; however he might care what man thinks and present his outward members as comely before them. The adulteress shows off her beauty to everyone; there is nothing secret about her; she figures, "What point is it that my beauty is hidden?" And so she pleases many men in public, rather than pleasing one husband in private. So this is what I mean: we were once filthy, but God in Christ cleanses us: He washes us through the washing of the water of His Word to present us unto Himself as a pure bride, unblemished and chaste. And so, having been totally washed, we maintain our purity before Him, that is, a clear conscience; for our "praise is not from men, but from God." (Romans 2:29) As the Proverb says, "Watch over your heart with all diligence, For from it flow the springs of life." (Proverbs 4:23) "Does a fountain send out from the same opening both fresh and bitter water?" (James 3:11) Of course not! But from a pure heart comes forth goodly words and deeds. And so, keeping ourselves pure before God in watchings and prayer, we bring forth works pleasing to Him, doing the will of God from the heart. Therefore strive to be like king David, a true descendant of him, maintaining a pure heart before God. We all know David is a man of God. But how so? According to stature or appearance? No! But rather according to the heart, revealed by the testimony of God who knows the heart. When the heart is pure, what comes from the heart is pure as well. For everything a man does and says comes from his heart. Faith pertains to the heart. And this is how you fulfill the law of Christ: maintaining a pure heart before God and working out your faith. For it is possible to hide light within, and we can hide words within; but we are commanded to work out what God works in us. "Do not quench the Spirit;" (1 Thessalonians 5:19) For the law of God pertains to the flesh and the law of Christ pertains to the heart; the heart is greater than the flesh; if you are made new in the heart, you will obey in the flesh as well. ([See more about the Stumbling Block of Lawlessness](#))

## Abide In Him

God gave food guidelines to His people under the Old Covenant, that is, eat only animals that split the hoof and chew the cud, and fish with fins and scales, and so on. These are considered clean by God. But later, after Christ, all food is considered clean and good for food. Why so? "For it is sanctified by means of the word of God and prayer." (1 Timothy 4:5) "Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." (1 Corinthians 10:31) But through the law, God teaches us to discern between the clean and the unclean; for we are to separate from any so-called believer who is immoral, or greedy, or covetous; for bad company corrupts good character. (a little bit of sin destroys much that is good, a little bit of leaven leavens the whole lump, and a single dead fly causes the perfume to stink.) Or do you not know that we partake of words into the heart? As it says, "The ear tests words as the palate tastes food." (Job 34:3) So we ought to stay away from false teachings which can ruin, for falsehood is trickery; it doesn't proclaim itself as false, but as the truth; if it proclaimed itself as false, then no-one would believe it! Do you not know that there was one commandment, and satan beguiled Adam and Eve to do the very thing they were not supposed to do? And so it is, these false teachings promote the very things God commands us not to do, and discourage the very things we ought to do. But the pure milk is the gospel of God in all its purity. The gospel is not watered down, becoming impure; nor is it like skim milk, which is adulterated, or chocolate milk, which is processed; but the true milk of the Word is first of all pure, unadulterated, and holy; and we are made to drink through faith in the word of the Promise. Just as a child rests in the bosom of his mother, so it is said of the Promised Land, "Be joyful with Jerusalem and rejoice for her, all you who love her; Be exceedingly glad with her, all you who mourn over her, That you may nurse and be satisfied with her comforting breasts, That you may suck and be delighted with her bountiful bosom." (Isaiah 66:10-11) For she is called a land flowing with milk and honey, which you have come to partake. And the honey is the sweetness of wisdom; as it says, "My son, eat honey, for it is good, Yes, the honey from the comb is sweet to your taste; Know that wisdom is thus for your soul; If you find it, then there will be a future, And your hope will not be cut off." (Proverbs 24:13-14)

The Word of God is our food; we do not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God; and we consume His Word through faith. We eat the Word of the Lord and drink the Spirit of God, which is truly abiding; if we are living in Him, we are where He is; and He is seated in the heavenly places; as Paul says, "Seated with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus." (Ephesians 2:6) Our life comes from Him and in Him we remain in the life; this is how we find true life, for it is found in the Author of life; as it says, "And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life." (1 John 5:11-12) And in Him there is no sin; as it says, "You know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin. No one who abides in Him sins; no one who sins has seen Him or

knows Him." (1 John 3:5-6) And in Him is all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Colossians 2:3); and in Him we are made complete, for He is the fullness of the Deity in bodily form (Colossians 2:9-10). And in Him there is no condemnation (Romans 8:1). Therefore, come to Him and abide in Him! And separate from the unclean; for there is a season for everything, a time for milk and a time for solid food; but, " As for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him." (1 John 2:27) ([See more on Abiding in Christ](#))

What we abide in will come out of us; yes, the filling of the heart will pour out of the mouth; what we set our mind upon will reside in the heart; as Christ says, " **The eye is the lamp of the body; so then if your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light.** " (Matthew 6:22) Notice it says, "the eye", and it does not say, "the eyes"; so it's the eye of the mind which He is talking about. People can see with their eyes, but they perceive different things; for instance, a man can see and interpret something quite differently than a child. A man whose eye is healthy looks at a dumpster and throws garbage into it; a man with an unhealthy eye dives into it and eats from it. There is an intended use and an unintended use — what is natural and what is unnatural. God created everything and saw that it was good; but the things which were created good are perverted into something sinful by an evil eye. For Lot in Sodom looked at the strangers and he was hospitable to them, but the men of Sodom looked and perceived immorality in their hearts; Lot and the people of Sodom had healthy eyes, for they could see just fine, but the men of Sodom had an evil eye. Lot's eye was generous, but their eye was immoral. The problem is not with the eyes, but the eye; when the eye is set on things above, it is healthy; when it is set on the things below, it is unhealthy; this is why it says, "To the pure, all things are pure; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled." (Titus 1:15) For the pure are clean and the defiled are unclean. So by this we can discern between the clean and the unclean, and separate ourselves from the unclean that we may be holy. We ought to be watchful in what we consume as God teaches through the Old Covenant in regard to food. The same who live as unclean animals eat unclean things; for the things they eat are unclean, which are false teachings; and they bring them where-ever they go. For what is eaten abides in the flesh, what is consumed spiritually abides in the heart; and these come out of us; as Jesus says, " **For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of. A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him.** " (Matthew 12:33-35) If we walk closely in fellowship with an unbeliever, we will learn his ways; this is why it says, " Do not associate with a man given to anger; Or go with a hot-tempered man, Or you will learn his ways And find a snare for yourself. " (Proverbs 22:24-25) God warns us about false teachers and teaches us through food guidelines to discern between the clean and the unclean. If we are born of Him, we will listen to His voice and not the voice of a stranger (John 10:1-18). We are to reprove such things, not believe in them or be tricked by them. Therefore, abide in Him; and if we abide in the Son, we abide in the Father. Everything we need is in Him. If we abide in Him, we will be able to discern between the clean and

the unclean, for He teaches us all things; and we will not be led astray from Him. Words can lead you to God or they can counsel rebellion against God (Jeremiah 28:16, Deuteronomy 13:5); if we trust in His Word alone and discern properly between the clean and the unclean, we will remain in God. ([See more on Biblical Separation](#))

Jesus is the Word of God; it is He who we eat and drink; as He says, " **Very truly I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in them. Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Your ancestors ate manna and died, but whoever feeds on this bread will live forever.** " (John 6:53-59) During communion, we remember Him by eating bread, which represents His broken body for us; and we remember Him by drinking the blood of grapes, which represents His poured out blood for us. There are statutes the Lord has given us where the physical and the spiritual overlap (Baptism is also like this). When we partake in communion, we proclaim the Lord's death until He comes; we proclaim our unity with all of God's children who partake in the same spiritual food and spiritual drink. We are all one in Christ — just as the one loaf is broken and consumed by many who partake; and the one loaf is inside many, just as the one Spirit is inside many; we are His Body, and His Body was broken for us. Adam's bride was taken from his body, so Christ's bride is taken from Him; and we are "bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh." For He died for us that we would be united to Him. The old man was taken from the ground, but the new man is taken from Christ; the old man is of dust, but the new man is of God; and if we are from Him, then we are of Him. If we abide in Him, we have His promise: He will abide in us. And if He abides in us, we will bear much fruit, proving we are truly His disciples (John 15:4-10). For it is not our own ways we follow, it is not our own words we speak, it is not our own strength we live by. If that were so, then it would be us doing the work that we may boast; but if we abide in Him, He works in us and through us; as Paul said, "yet not I, but the grace of God with me." (1 Corinthians 15:10) If we follow His Way, then it's His steps we follow; if we speak His Word, then it's by His Spirit in us; as it says, "The one who believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself." (1 John 5:10) We can do nothing by ourselves, but we fellowship with God who works in us and with us. He will not deviate from His path to walk in our way, but if we deviate from our way to follow Him, then there He is! As the prophet says, "The LORD is with you when you are with Him. And if you seek Him, He will let you find Him; but if you forsake Him, He will forsake you." (2 Chronicles 15:2) So we are not only strengthened by food in the flesh, but by every Word that comes from the mouth of God: namely, by the word of His grace. His grace is our strength: just as food works best when hungry, God's grace works best in weakness; we are strengthened in our hearts by His grace — it's grace that matters in a graceless world. This is the key to abiding: remaining firmly planted in the Word of truth which has the power to save, living and walking in Him. For if our roots grow downward into Christ, our fruit will bear upward to God. That which is underneath the soil is hidden for a time; what we do in secret will be manifested abroad. Remember Him; for communion is given in order for

us to remember Christ. Abide in His love. The Holy Spirit will bring all things into our remembrance; but the one who sleeps, who treats the Word of God with contempt by lacking in watchfulness and prayer, he becomes disobedient to the Holy Spirit's leading by shutting his eyes; the one who sleeps in watchfulness is careless about the implanted Word entrusted to Him; for instead of being watchful and guarding what is precious, he sleeps, being careless, lacking in the fear of God. The weapon God has given us against temptation is prayer; and the weapon against slumber, watchfulness. Yes, abiding is humility; trusting in God is humbling. Faith is child-like; and afflicting oneself is humiliating. The reward is Christ in you. He wants three works from us, and four to remain: do nothing, afflict yourself, come, and abide. The greatest of these is abide.

People who live under a home are sheltered by that home, for a home is a covering, a roof over the head; and we eat and drink and sleep at home; no-one can live without food, drink and rest. So also, in Christ there is rest for our souls. As the Psalmist calls the Lord, "My Refuge", so Christ has become our refuge in these last times; He is our food and our drink, and He is our rest. God alone is holy; and the Seventh day being hallowed by God is also called a holy day of rest. So whoever enters into His rest, rests from His labors as God did from His; for when there is completion of work, there is rest, and when there is rest, there is perfection and holiness (Hebrews 4:8-11). And we have come to rest in the completed work of Christ by the sanctification of His blood; for "We have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." (Hebrews 10:10) The unclean cannot make clean; as it says, "Who can make the clean out of the unclean? No one!" (Job 14:4) "But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God." (1 Corinthians 6:9-11) And in Christ, by His completed and perfect work, we enter into His rest, that we may be holy as He is holy, that we may be righteous as He is righteous, that we may have power where power resides, and share in His glory. And we enter into Him, into His rest through baptism, not of the washing of the flesh, but of the washing of the water of His teachings; for obedience to His commands is faith perfected; as He says, " **If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.** " (John 15:10) And furthermore, the apostle says, " The one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. We know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us. " (1 John 3:24, 1 John 4:13) And concerning these commandments, it says, "This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us." (1 John 3:23) For "No one has seen God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us." (1 John 4:12) If we do as He commands, then we will pray to the Father and He will answer us (1 John 3:21-22); and we will have great confidence in the day of salvation (1 John 2:28, 1 John 4:17). Therefore, abide! As the LORD God says, "It is I who answer and look after you. I am like a luxuriant cypress; From Me comes your fruit." (Hosea 14:8)

## A New Heart

" What then shall we say? That the Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have obtained it, a righteousness that is by faith; but the people of Israel, who pursued the law as the way of righteousness, have not attained their goal. Why not? Because they pursued it not by faith but as if it were by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone. As it is written: "See, I lay in Zion a stone that causes people to stumble and a rock that makes them fall, and the one who believes in him will never be put to shame." " (Romans 9:30-33) It's an offense, a stumbling block, to say: those who work hard to attain righteousness do not receive it; but those who do no work to attain righteousness do receive it. The work that does not obtain righteousness is our own work; but the work that does obtain righteousness is the work of faith. Our work is a work of the flesh by the sweat of our brow, but the work of faith is a work of the Spirit. Our toil was given to us as a punishment from God at the fall at the Garden; our toil and labor produces sweat, but the work of faith does not. As it is written, "Linen turbans shall be on their heads and linen undergarments shall be on their loins; they shall not gird themselves with anything which makes them sweat." (Ezekiel 44:18) And the priests of the Old Covenant wore linen clothes when they ministered in the tabernacle; so the Holy Spirit is signifying that the work of God is not burdensome. Regarding the work of the law, it says, "Why do you put God to the test by placing upon the neck of the disciples a yoke which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear?" (Acts 15:10) But regarding the work of faith, it says, "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome." (1 John 5:3) Human flesh accomplishes nothing, it never pleased God and never will. But the work that pleases God is faith; faith is a work of the spirit by believing in Jesus Christ. So then, where is our boasting? Is it certainly not in the flesh. But rather our boast is in God; as it says, " Let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the LORD. " (Jeremiah 9:24) "For we are the true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh." (Philippians 3:3)

What then do we do, if we have faith within, but nothing is worked out? For our works make our faith complete. Faith without works is dead; it is not faith at all, but sincere faith is living, for it is doing. That which is dead, does nothing; and that which is dead cannot save anyone; can a mute idol save? Who but the living God can raise the dead? Who can deliver but God? A sincere faith is like breathing — we do it naturally. We don't have to try or toil so hard to breathe, we just do it. That's the same with sincere faith: we don't try so hard, but it comes naturally. We believe and so act. So be a child in regard to faith — simply believe. What about blinking? You certainly don't strive hard to blink! It happens naturally. If you want to lose weight, you can run a marathon or eat nothing; which is easier? If you want to stay afloat, strive hard and kick or be at peace and float; which is less stress? Even if you can exert enough strength to remain afloat for an hour, certainly you cannot for a lifetime! Faith is for a lifetime, but

human strength is only for a moment; as it says, "For His anger is but for a moment, His favor is for a lifetime; Weeping may last for the night, But a shout of joy comes in the morning." (Psalms 30:5) For the work of the flesh brings forth wrath, but those who believe obtain favor with God. Those who exert strength for eternal life do not obtain life, but those who rest in Christ find the mercy of God. So strive to keep your faith sincere; this is a most important thing. Do not try to make faith by simulating faith with works; but rather, have authentic faith which produces works. A simulator is not actually the thing it is simulating; it is only a fake, a robot. If a robot mimics a human, does that make it a human? Of course not! If you simulate being a Christian by doing what Christians do, that doesn't make you a Christian; that's not really faith, and that won't get you into Paradise — for the Lord sees your heart. When I was young, I wanted to get out of school; I simulated a cold to trick my mom to let me stay home; certainly I was able to fool her. I didn't actually have a cold, I was only simulating one: I put the tissues on my nose, I put the heat on my forehead, I disfigured my face. I knew the truth and God knew the truth; but I first needed to deceive myself in order to deceive my mom; I had to lie to myself before I lied to another. I can fool myself, but will simulating faith fool the living God on Judgment Day? That is why it says, "The faith which you have, have as your own conviction before God." (Romans 14:22) So strive for faith of your own in Christ; if you do not believe, pray that you may believe; seek and He will graciously let you find Him; the Father will lead you to the Son, then you will naturally do the things which are fruits of faith. I must have faith of my own, namely that, the eternal Father was in Christ and died for me, that He has great love towards me in Christ; I must have my own faith in that He loved me to give me life and He loved me to give me new life. With faith, I experience a change of heart: the hardness cut away. My life is changed forever; the Lord changes me from within. Know the nature of unbelief; as it says, "The one who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has given concerning His Son." (1 John 5:10) But, "It is impossible for God to lie." (Hebrews 6:18) "He who has received His testimony has set his seal to this, that God is true." (John 3:33)

From the beginning of time, God hid by mystery in His Word the way to be made right with Himself, which is now revealed in Christ: a righteousness which is by faith. Jesus came down from heaven and healed men of their sickness and did good wherever He went; the people who received healing were those who had faith in His name. They were not healed because of their obedience to the law of Moses or any good work they had done; but rather, they were healed because of their faith; as it says, " **Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease.** " (Mark 5:34) And another time, " **Recover your sight; your faith has made you well.** " (Luke 18:42) And there are many other such things He said (Luke 7:50, Mark 10:52, Luke 17:19, Matthew 8:13, Matthew 15:28). Abraham was reckoned righteous by believing in God's promise given by God's generosity. And it is no different for us today: we are made right with God by believing the testimony about His Son. He is the fulfillment of the promise to Abraham; God has given us right standing with Himself and eternal life in His Son. After Abraham was counted righteous by God, He gave Abraham a sign of the covenant which is the circumcision of all males in the flesh. And today, we have the same sign, but it's a spiritual circumcision, made without hands, a

spiritual procedure of putting away the body of sins by removing the heart of stone; as it says, " And I will give them one heart, and a new spirit I will put within them. I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh. " (Ezekiel 11:19) And then it says, " In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ. " (Colossians 2:11) It is Christ who puts away the flesh of the body and takes away the hardness of heart. For the only good flesh is the heart of flesh! Jesus is the Physician, and He does the procedure; it happens at the moment we believe the Testimony. And the second part of the procedure is the uniting of the Holy Spirit with our spirit; for God writes on our new circumcised hearts His law, by His Spirit; as it says, " For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. " (Jeremiah 31:33) "For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation." (Galatians 6:15)

## Born Again

The Holy Spirit has many names and titles: the Helper, the Spirit of Truth, the Spirit of Grace, the Spirit of Holiness. He unites with our spirit, making our bodies into Temples filled with God's Presence: He makes us holy by His glorious Presence. The Holy Spirit leads us into all truth and searches out the deep mysteries of God, hidden in the Scriptures, so that we may know all that is ours freely in Christ Jesus. Those taught by God come to Christ; for it is only the Father that can reveal Christ to us; as Christ told Peter, " **Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.** " (Matthew 16:16) The Holy Spirit testifies to Jesus Christ; and He convicts the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment; as Christ said, " **The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify of it, that its deeds are evil.** " (John 7:7) The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Jesus and the Spirit of the Father. If we have fellowship with the Son, our fellowship is with the Father as well. For the Son abides in the Father and the Father in the Son. We abide in the Son. And we have fellowship with the Son and with the Father through the Spirit; so if we wish to remain in fellowship, we must remain in the light; we remain in the light by confessing our sins; all sin is darkness; if we wish to remain in the light, we must not sin; if we do sin, we confess our sins; for if we confess our sins and do not lie, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all our sins. Forgiveness is not just once at faith, but it is continual through faith; and this is how we are forgiven: by our confession. For we believe God exists and sees the unseen, so we confess our sins to Him. On God's part, we are forgiven by His grace, but on our part, by remaining in the light. Know that the Lord God sees the darkness as light — so how vain it is to try to hide from Him! So therefore, remain in the light. Christ Jesus has been exalted to the right hand of the Father, and He no longer walks with man; however, He has sent forth His Spirit; many followed Christ while He walked on earth, but today, we follow Christ by the inward compulsion of the Spirit — for He lives in us who believe. For the Holy Spirit comes when we believe; as the apostle says, " And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the Gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, Who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of His glory. " (Ephesians 1:13-14) ([See more on John 16](#))

If we are born of God, we do not need to be taught the truth because the Holy Spirit testifies to us what is true, for He is the Spirit of Truth; so we may instinctively know the difference between truth and lies because of the anointing we have received from Him. In His grace, He has also given to us teachers and evangelists and prophets and apostles. Know for certain: He will cause us to obey the truth. The Holy Spirit will lead us out of the world to be a set apart vessel for God's service. To say the same thing in another way: the Holy Spirit makes us holy. Do not be deceived, but test the spirits to see if they come from God. There is one Spirit and one Gospel; if you have believed, you know certainly that the Gospel is from God. He speaks with us to lead us

and guide us; for He was with us, but now He is away from us — yet He is among us. Jesus is our Teacher; and the Spirit of our Teacher is within us who believe; The Spirit speaks the Word of God and He causes the Word of God to come into our remembrance; as it says, " He, your Teacher will no longer hide Himself, but your eyes will behold your Teacher. Your ears will hear a word behind you, "This is the way, walk in it," whenever you turn to the right or to the left. " (Isaiah 30:20-21) And speaking of the teachings, it says, " When you walk about, they will guide you; When you sleep, they will watch over you; And when you awake, they will talk to you. " (Proverbs 6:22) So we are not left as orphans, even though He is not with us in body; He has been exalted to heaven, and He is with us in Spirit.

The Word of Truth is united in us by faith, and we are born anew by the eternal Word implanted; as the apostle says, " Having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever, because "All flesh is as grass, And all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, And its flower falls away, But the word of the LORD endures forever." Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you. " (1 Peter 1:22-25) The Word of Truth comes from the Spirit of Truth, and those who have God's Spirit speak the Words of Him, for they have the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:16). If we are not born of Him, we do not belong to Him and we are not truly His children (Romans 8:9). It is necessary for our heart and body to be washed — and our body and spirit is washed with the pure water of the Word. The Holy Spirit of God cannot abide in an unclean vessel. That's why water usually precedes the Spirit — but not always. But this I know: the Spirit of Purity cannot dwell with impurity. But we have been washed and converted through faith in the Son of God who loves us. There are different times when people received the Spirit (either before water baptism or after water baptism). But to tell with the words of the apostle, as he says, " There is one God who will justify the circumcised **by** faith and the uncircumcised **through** faith. " (Romans 3:28,29) So the Jews and God-fearing Gentiles, received the Spirit at an instance of faith, but the Gentiles worked through faith to obedience. And so it is: the Word of God leads us to sanctification either by faith or through faith (Acts 26:18); but nevertheless, it is faith. That is why before Jesus' exaltation the Lord commanded His disciples to teach and observe all that He commanded, baptizing in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19-20). For it is the Word of God which sanctifies — not by hearing alone, but by hearing with faith. The baptism into Christ is a baptism into His teaching — an immersion into His Word by a washing of the water of the Word. Through God's Word, we can repent and believe. For we believe by God's Word, and we repent by God's Word, for we believe in God's Son. Those who believe His Word obey His Word; and those who obey Him are born of Him; as it says, "We are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him." (Acts 5:32) Faith is obedience; for this is the commandment of God: to believe in the Son (John 6:29). As John, the apostle, says, "This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us." (1 John 3:23) For "Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and whoever loves the Father loves the child born of Him." (1 John 5:1) "For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith." (1

John 5:4) God is love, and God alone is righteous. Everyone who is born of the Father resembles Him; for children resemble their father; as it says, "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God." (1 John 4:7) "If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him." (1 John 2:29)

If your desire is eternal life, you must be born of water and the Spirit; as Jesus says, " **Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.** " (John 3:5-7) It was John who was the first to preach a baptism of repentance, which is a baptism of water; this is what it means to be "Born of water". It is a baptism of repentance into water. John baptized with a baptism in his own name, but he pointed to the Messiah to come (Acts 19:4); I say, "In his own name", but that is only because the Messiah had not yet been revealed; and since there was no other name to go by, the baptism was called "John's baptism" (Acts 19:3). But when the Messiah came, men were baptized into Him; and His name is revealed as Jesus, "For He will save His people from their sins." (Matthew 1:21) But Jesus did not baptize anyone in water, for His disciples did (John 4:2). So you could say: John was the first disciple of Christ. For he was teaching that men should repent and he pointed them to Christ who was to come. But when John knew the Messiah, he confessed, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" (John 1:29) So there isn't much of a difference between John and a disciple, except that John first preached without knowing the Messiah. And He prepared the way for His coming. For John was preaching that men might believe through him; as it says of him, "He came as a witness, to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through him." (John 1:7) And Jesus praying for His disciples, said, " I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word. " (John 17:20) So we see that John and a disciple of Christ preach that men might believe through them; so they are the same in that way, for we point not to ourselves, but to Christ; as the apostle Paul says, "We do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake." (2 Corinthians 4:5) And as John also said, "He must increase, but I must decrease." (John 3:30) And furthermore, John was sent to preach repentance and a baptism in water; as it says of him, "He who sent me to baptize in water..." (John 1:33) And likewise Christ's disciples are sent into the world to preach and baptize; as Jesus said, " **Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.** " (Mark 16:15-16) So the ministry of the disciples is to preach and baptize — and the ministry was first given to John then to the disciples. And furthermore, before John was sent, he was filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb (Luke 1:15); and Christ's disciples waited in Jerusalem until power from heaven came (Acts 1:4-5). So again, both John and the disciples of Christ had power from on high for the work of the ministry; for the Spirit is sent for the work of the ministry. So who can say, "John was not a disciple of Christ"? For he exemplified a disciple perfectly, and more than a disciple: for he preached that men should repent, and he baptized in water, and he pointed to Christ. This is what it means to be "born of water", that is: repentance towards God and baptism into Christ; and this is the work of

His disciples. So John first preached a baptism of repentance, but no-one could turn to Christ when John first preached, because they did not know who the Christ was. For how can you turn to someone that you don't know? Nevertheless, John told them to believe in Him who was to come. But when Jesus was revealed to Israel, they turned to Him and followed Him. So when Christ was revealed, the baptism changed from a baptism of repentance to a baptism of faith in Jesus. For repentance is "turning from" and faith is "turning to"; and no-one can ever "turn to" without first "turning from". So therefore, repentance precedes faith. And both repentance and faith come from hearing the Word of Christ. For repentance is a change of mind; how can anyone change their mind except through words? As food is for the belly, so words are for the mind; so likewise it says of faith, "Faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ." (Romans 10:17) So if anyone truly has faith, it is because they have first repented. And everything which is true has evidence as being true. There is no such thing as faith without repentance. Or can you face two directions at once?

No-one can turn to Christ without first turning from devils. The way of Christ and the way of devils are two opposite ways; they are diametrically opposed and do not overlap even in the slightest. If anyone has disagreement, I ask: if you cannot withstand water, how can you withstand fire? For I mentioned Christ did not baptize anyone in water, as John was saying, "As for me, I baptize you with water; but One is coming who is mightier than I, and I am not fit to untie the thong of His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire." (Luke 3:16) Just as it is written in the law, "Everything that can stand the fire, you shall pass through the fire, and it shall be clean, but it shall be purified with water for impurity. But whatever cannot stand the fire you shall pass through the water." (Numbers 31:23) And the sacrifices given on the altar were first washed with water, both the entrails and the legs, then burned with fire. And Christ said while He was washing the disciple's feet, " **He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you.** " (John 13:10) And later He said, " **You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.** " (John 15:3) Then He says, " **For everyone shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt.** " (Mark 9:49) (The apostle Paul was saying such things as these too, namely that, we are a sacrifice to God: Philippians 2:17, Romans 12:1) And furthermore, Israel was led to cross over through water into the desert; as the apostle says, "All were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea;" (1 Corinthians 10:2) So water is first for purifying, then fire — water first then the Spirit. Water is first for cleansing, then comes the Spirit for sanctifying. As the Psalmist says about this: "We went through fire and through water, Yet You brought us out into a place of abundance." (Psalms 66:12) So they were led out of Egypt by the pillar of God through water; and they were led to wander in the wilderness by the Spirit, where they were tested. So it is, beloved: we who were formerly unclean, have been washed and cleansed by God's Word — and through Him, He has turned our hearts unto Himself. And we, if we are being led by Him, are led into a great wilderness as nomads for the testing of our faith.

Although the Scriptures speak this way about being baptized into water and fire, it may sound quite fearful, but listen to the promise of God, and know that if you follow

Him, He will be with you: as He says, "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; And through the rivers, they will not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be scorched, Nor will the flame burn you." (Isaiah 43:2) If the old life were sufficient, there would be no need for a new one. But "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." (1 Peter 1:3) For just as Elisha raised the dead, even from his tomb, for a corpse was thrown into his tomb and the body of that corpse stood up (1 Kings 13:21)! And so we are buried with Him through baptism. For we who have been taught, have been taught to turn to Christ, to pass from death to life, and to be immersed into His teachings. For we who have tasted, have tasted the good word of God and have become partakers of it. For the Word of God is powerful and able to revive us through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. As the LORD God commands: "I, the LORD, am your God, Who brought you up from the land of Egypt; Open your mouth wide and I will fill it." (Psalms 81:10) And as the apostle says, " For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free persons, and all were made to drink one Spirit." (1 Corinthians 12:13) ([See more on Baptisms](#))

I urge you then, by the mercies of God, to humbly accept the Word of God implanted which has the power to save. Believe through me, and if you find any fault in me, I point to the faultless one — Christ Jesus — that you may believe in Him; for your sakes I have made these many writings, for I wish for you to be converted. I am not the light, but I testify to the Light — for the lesser light in the darkness points to the great Light of the day. We are living in the day of darkness; the day of His light is coming. I urge you then, by the mercies of God: to be reconciled to God (2 Corinthians 5:20), for He has reconciled you (2 Corinthians 5:19); and repent and be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38), for He has forgiven you (1 Corinthians 15:3); and reckon yourself to be dead to sin (Romans 6:11), for He has died for you (2 Corinthians 5:14); you were crucified with Him (Galatians 2:20), so crucify the flesh with its passions and desires (Galatians 5:24); and save yourself from this wicked generation (Acts 2:40), for He has saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done (Titus 3:5); and belong to Him (2 Corinthians 5:15), for He has purchased you (1 Corinthians 6:20). Draw near unto Him (James 4:8), for He has drawn near to you (1 Timothy 1:15). And humble yourself (James 4:10), for He has come down from heaven (Philippians 2:5-8). And offer yourself as a living sacrifice to God (Romans 12:1), for Jesus Christ was Sacrificed for you (1 Corinthians 5:7). And walk as His obedient children (1 Peter 1:14), for you are born of Him (1 John 5:1).

# OUR RESPONSE

Repentence Toward God	103
Buried In Baptism	106
Believe In God	109
Obedience To Holiness	112
Live Worthy	115
Perseverance By Remembrance	118
Call Upon The Lord	121

## Repentance Toward God

I know, by your faith, you will be prompted to do all good things by the new nature, without ever being told. In the old nature and by that nature we commonly worked works of death, but in God by the nature of God we are led to bear fruit of life; however, I write these things to you that you may know. Everyone born of God does good; and anyone who does evil has not seen God at any time. Therefore I write these things. Everyone who believes asks, "What then should I do?" And the sincerity of your faith will prompt you to do. To prove you, I will write them out to test the sincerity of your faith. For these things prove our faith and make our faith known. The apostle Paul often gave room for sincerity to work first before obligation (2 Corinthians 8:8, Philemon 1:8-11); thus the goal of the gospel is sincerity; as it says, "The goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith." (1 Timothy 1:5) Without these being true in us, will we ever see life? But if they are true in us, for what reason are they true? Is it not because of the love of God?

Sin is contrary to the will of God; for the will of God is good; there is no sin in God; where-ever our lives are not conformed to His will, it is sin; His will is for us to believe in Christ and to love our neighbor as ourselves; and so whatever is not from faith is sin; faith will never say, "Go rob, kill, and steal." It's God's will that we love one another just as Christ has loved us. When we love, we obey the commandments of God, for the entirety of the law is summed up in this one command: love your neighbor as yourself. All sin is selfishness, but love is not self-seeking; love is self-sacrificing, serving, and long-suffering. We know love because we know God. God is love. Everyone who abides in love abides in God; and love does no wrong to a neighbor; as it says about love: " Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends. " (1 Corinthians 13:4-13) Therefore, we ought to love one another just as Christ loved us. And so, by faith and love we establish the law; as it says, "Do we then nullify the Law through faith? May it never be! On the contrary, we establish the Law." (Romans 3:31) Our faith will lead us away from worldliness and carnality, and bring us closer to a holy and righteous God; for we love Him and come to Him through Christ. The Spirit leads us away from the dead to the living, from the power of Satan to God. Sin in full growth is death, but the fruit of righteousness is life and peace. Without leaving sin, we cannot come near to a living God, for this world and God's Kingdom are on opposite spectrums; in this world there is sin, but in God there is righteousness. One can't face both the South and the North at the same time, can he? Nor can we face God and sin at the same time. We have one face and one back; we cannot come to God without first putting our back to sin. To say otherwise is to say, "I have two faces," or to say, "God and sin are friends". This is not how you have come to learn the truth. Repentance is turning from sin, believing is turning to God. We turn our back to sin to face God in faith, and He reveals His face to us. Does not the earth see light while it

faces the Sun? While it is not facing the Sun, it is night-time. So God's face shines upon us when we face Him. Sin is set for God's wrath; so if we hold onto sin, we hold onto God's wrath; even the thinking of folly is sin; as it says, "The devising of folly is sin, And the scoffer is an abomination to men." (Proverbs 24:9) So set your mind on Christ Jesus in the heavens as you have already been doing; when the mind is set on the things above, so will the members of the body. Repentance means, "Change of mind"; and if we change our mind, the members of the body will likewise follow. Repentance comes from the Word of God, for a change of mind happens through words. If anyone believes the Word, they have repented. But anyone who says, "I am in Him," and remains in sin is a liar; they show by their actions they're not in Him. "They profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed." (Titus 1:16) Do not be deceived: actions speak louder than words. Where the mind is set so are the members of the body: it is either we set our minds on earthly things, and we live carnally, or we set our minds on heavenly things, and we live godly. So repentance comes by setting our mind on Christ (Romans 8:5-8, Philipians 4:8, Colossians 3:2).

In love there is life, but in sin there is death; to abide in sin is to abide in death; to abide in righteousness is to abide in life. In the Son there is life. If you want to know what sin looks like, see death. We must die to what is deathly within us; if we hang onto sin, death will reign in us. Christ has set us free to be free; and we have died to sin through the body of Jesus Christ. Sin shall not rule over us any longer. For we are not under the law, but grace. So God no longer holds our sins against us because of the work of Christ Jesus. So put to death what is deathly within you through the cross, turning to Christ for life; as it says, " I have been crucified with Christ. " (Galatians 2:20-21) And then it says, " Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. " (Galatians 5:24-26) "Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?" (Romans 6:1-2) Christ called us in our sins to freedom from sin — by coming to Him and remaining in Him; we cannot stop sinning on our own; we must come to Jesus: in Him there is no sin. This is how we produce fruit to God: in keeping with repentance (Matthew 3:8). And the word of God is able to change our mind. We see what it means to love ourselves by losing our lives for the sake of His will (John 12:25, Matthew 16:25). This is love for ourselves and for God: to lose our lives for the sake of the gospel. For those who love their lives will lose them. Beware of those who say, "Certainly you don't have to repent, do you?" For repentance was preached before Christ by John; and when Christ came, He began by preaching repentance; and Peter, after being filled with the Holy Spirit, testified, " Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. **For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself.**" (Acts 2:38-39) So therefore, repent. But know for certain: if we repent of even squashing a fly, if we believe enough to remove mountains, but do not have the grace of Christ, our repentance and our faith is nothing. Keep steadfast in Christ Jesus and leave no provision for the flesh. Do not feed it even a crumble of sin; if you starve it, it will grow weaker and weaker. "Therefore

do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness." (Romans 6:12-13)

Furthermore, how can one have faith without repentance? These are good friends, do not separate those who are good friends; for they walk together and talk together and agree with one another. We love Him because He first loved us; we have not seen Him at anytime, but Jesus has revealed Him to us; "and though you have not seen Him, you love Him," (1 Peter 1:8) for we have seen Him if we have believed in Him. If we love the Father, we will love His Son; and if we love the Son, we will obey Him; and if we obey His commandments, we are known by Him; and if we are known by Him, He will never say to us, " **I never knew you. Away from Me, you evildoers!** " (Matthew 7:23) As Paul said, "If anyone loves God, he is known by Him" (1 Corinthians 8:3). In the end, it won't matter what we know, but who we know; and not merely who we know, but who knows us. For no-one will enter into the Kingdom because of what they know, but what they do; as He says, " **Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'**" (Matthew 7:21-23) For the one who confesses Him in spirit and truth, he it is who will be saved; as He says, " **Why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?** " (Luke 6:46) Therefore, know for certain, you must repent. Love the Lord Jesus with an undying love, and repent; do not love Him in word and tongue only, but in deed and truth. How can you love the Lord while staying in your sins? He died for your sins, and your sins were His pain. Do you love Him by hurting Him? Love Him with a sincere love, in repentance and obedience. Humble yourself; for He humbled Himself to death for your sake. Do not be deceived: God is not mocked. Each man will reap what he sows. " **Or do you suppose that those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them were worse culprits than all the men who live in Jerusalem? I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.** " (Luke 13:4-5) But then you may ask, how should I repent? [Do justice and righteousness (Jeremiah 22:3, Proverbs 21:3)] See the examples in the Scriptures, how men repented (Luke 3:10-14; Luke 19:8; Acts 19:18-19). We all know the sin in our lives. So I charge you to read the epistles of the apostles; for they show to us what it means to obey the truth. Thanks be to God who grants unto us repentance through the knowledge of the truth. ([See more on Repentance](#))

## Buried In Baptism

Our conscience was polluted by sin, but we have been washed, we have been sanctified, we have been cleansed by the washing of the water of the Word. And so baptism is the answer of a clear conscience toward God; as Peter says, " There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism, not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. " (1 Peter 3:21) It's the heart that matters; and Christ purifies our conscience so that we may serve Him in the new way of the Spirit. Baptism is the bridge from the old life to the new; everything of the old is washed away and the new begins. So we're only eligible for baptism when we know we are dead. Do people bury the living, or do they bury the dead? Baptism is burial, and only the dead are buried. As it says, " Therefore we have been buried with him through baptism into death, in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so also we may live a new way of life. " (Romans 6:4) And we have been made to die through the body of Jesus Christ — for He died to sin once for all; so we are dead. Furthermore, Peter said to them, "**Repent and be baptized**, each one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. " (Acts 2:28) For repentance and confession proceeds baptism, even as it was in John's days; they came to him confessing their sins, and were baptized. And so, we are buried into Jesus' death, and His death was to sin, He had no sin. And since He died for our sins, we ought to die in the likeness of His death, that is, to our sins, reckoning ourselves as dead to sin. In truth, He died for us, so we reckon ourselves to be dead. The one who has died is released from the law, for the law only applies when one is living. When a married woman dies she is free from the law which binds her to her husband (Romans 7:1-6). And so likewise, we have died to the law through the body of Jesus Christ, so that we may be joined to Him who was raised from the dead; and since we have died to the law, we have died to sin. So we are baptized into the body of Jesus as members of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13). And God gives to us new life by Him who was raised from the dead, for we put on Christ like new clothes in baptism (Galatians 3:27). As it says in Hosea, "He will revive us after two days; He will raise us up on the third day, That we may live before Him." (Hosea 6:2)

In the Old Covenant, priests were not allowed to touch a dead body, otherwise they would defile themselves — so others buried the dead. However in the New Covenant, priests (and we are a royal priesthood) bury the dead, that is, in baptism; as Christ says, " **Allow the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim everywhere the kingdom of God.** " (Luke 9:60) And with preaching the Gospel comes baptizing the dead; and the dead are baptized into Christ Jesus, buried with Him. And Christ's tomb is a living tomb, as it was with Elisha's bones; as it says, " Once while some Israelites were burying a man, suddenly they saw a band of raiders; so they threw the man's body into Elisha's tomb. When the body touched Elisha's bones, the man came to life and stood up on his feet. " (2 Kings 13:32) So the tomb which was supposed to inhabit death, brought forth life; and so through the way of death, life is

established; as Paul says, " For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. " (2 Corinthians 4:11) The law was made as a fertile womb, but it brought forth children to death; yes, a tomb is made by men to inhabit death. But Christ's tomb brings forth children to life; for anyone baptized into Christ are baptized into death and raised to new life. For Christ has been raised, and we are made alive to God through faith in Him. Therefore, after you have believed, be baptized, calling upon the name of the Lord. " And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord. " (Acts 22:16)

Look to the man on the cross next to Jesus as an example (Luke 23:39-43); the thief on the cross was baptized more than anyone of us who are baptized in water; for baptism is being united with Christ in His death, and the thief on the cross was united with Christ in His death more so than anyone of us dipped into water! He was baptized into Him as he believed and confessed His guilt on the cross. Similarly, there were Jews who did not ceremonially cleanse themselves for the Passover, and were still allowed to eat because they're hearts were sanctified by faith; so they are a type of those who are saved although they do not cleanse themselves according to the physical requirement (2 Chronicles 30:18-19). And they were pardoned by God when Hezekiah, the king at the time, prayed for them. We ought to have faith before baptism; for why would anyone be baptized into Christ without any faith? Why not take a bath in that case! It is Christ who saves and you are entering into salvation through Him. So don't be deceived into thinking, "I don't have faith, but I'll be baptized anyway." As if it's the water that saves you; instead: believe the Gospel. Nothing inanimate saves: not money, nor technology, not a home, nor a bunker, nor a mansion, not water, nor bread, nor wine, not parent, nor ancestor. Be sanctified; for without holiness no-one will see the Lord. As it says, "The day of death better than the day of birth." (Ecclesiastes 7:1) For the old must die, and with the death of the old comes the new; the old is temporary and passing away, but the end brings forth the new, which is everlasting. We enter into the new life through the death of the old.

God gave us tangible reminders of spiritual truths: baptism reminds us of our death and burial, bread and wine reminds us of the Lord's body and blood (and not to mention all the parables, they describe spiritual truths using physical things). Baptism is effective because of the resurrection of Christ; as Peter says, "Baptism now saves you through the resurrection of Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 3:21) And so we are justified by faith in that God raised Christ from the dead; as Paul says, "Believe in your heart that God **raised Him from the dead.** (...) For with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness." (Romans 10:9) Therefore, faith justifies because of the resurrection from the dead; as Paul says, "If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain." (1 Corinthians 15:14) Furthermore, Jesus rose from the dead — and so our guilt is removed. For Joseph's brothers who betrayed him had guilt as long as they believed Joseph was dead; however when he was found to be alive, they didn't have guilt. But afterwards they did fear punishment, for love had not been perfected in them. ["There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love." (1 John 4:18)] For they

thought after their father died, Joseph would take revenge; but it was not so, as Joseph said, " As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive. " (Genesis 50:20) Also, when the offerer in the temple sacrificed an innocent lamb, he still had guilt because the innocent lamb was slain on his behalf (I hope the LORD God gives you insight into all these things). So concerning baptism, if there is no resurrection, then baptism should cease. For John died, and we no longer see men being baptized into him. But we do see men being baptized into Christ, for He lives on. If there is no resurrection, why are we baptized for the dead? As the apostle Paul says, " If these things (the resurrection from the dead) are not so, what will those do who are baptized for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized for them? " (1 Corinthians 15:29) So therefore, baptism is effective because of the resurrection. And He is Lord; "For to this end Christ died and lived again, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living." (Romans 14:9) Many people have gods made of wood and stone, but we, a living God, Jesus Christ, who needs not anything from our hands, but gives us all things, even His life, that we may live by Him. If He had not been raised, how are we any different from those who worship mute idols? "Do not be deceived: "Bad company corrupts good morals." Become sober-minded as you ought, and stop sinning." (1 Corinthians 15:33-34) For Jesus Christ is Lord and alive from the dead; He lives forevermore.

## Believe In God

After we have died and been buried, united with Christ, it is necessary for us to be alive to something else. By default, we all want to gravitate back towards what we already know: which is sin; but we have died to sin, so how can we live in it any longer? Therefore, we move forward to faith in God, leaving behind what is dead and moving to the life which is truly life. We are not called to repent and then turn to obedience to the law, which consists of 613 commandments, a yoke too burdensome for us to bear. But rather, we are called to repent and *believe*; as He says, " **The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.** " (Mark 1:15) Since faith is emphasized, does that mean we don't keep the law? No! On the contrary, it's only when we have faith do we truly observe the law. The whole of the law is summed up in one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Galatians 5:14). And we love others when we abide in Christ's love. How can we give love when we have none ourselves? So our obedience lies in staying rooted in Christ, abiding in Him through faith, trusting in His kindness; otherwise, we will be cut off (Romans 11:22). He gives us love to love Him and our fellow brother; He blesses us to bless others (Genesis 12:2); He shines light on us to be illuminated and a light (Ephesians 5:8-13). Without Him first loving us, we cannot love a stranger; as it says, "We love because He first loved us." (1 John 4:19) Whatever we are lacking, the answer is always found in Christ Jesus our Lord; for He freely gives us the riches of knowledge and wisdom and revelation of His grace, fully equipping us for every good work — and no work for the Lord is ever in vain! So you see, the truth sets us free; and Jesus is the Truth; and Truth is worked in us, and out of us through the power and inward working of His love; " For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love. " (Galatians 5:6) As the Lord says, " **A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.** " (John 13:34-35) For through faith, the old becomes new. And through the truth, He makes us free. The truth saves; as Paul says, " Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will **save both yourself and those who hear you.**" (1 Timothy 4:16) And we are born again by faith in the truth; and if we continue in the truth until the end, we will have a sure reward. Let no-one defraud you of the prize.

For Christ Jesus died and was buried and rose from the dead, giving us right standing with God the Father, having reconciled us to God, restoring fellowship with Him through His earthly body; He gave unto us freely by His grace right standing with Himself. And we have come to receive this wonderful gift of grace through faith. And He opened the eyes of our mind to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and cut away the hardness of our hearts with a circumcision made not by human hands. He did this when we believed; and if when we believed, we were changed, how then shall we persevere? Is it not through continually observing Jesus Christ until the end of this age or death? Hence, we walk continually in faith, from start to finish. Faith is always; it's

how we start and how we end. As Paul says, "From faith to faith" (Romans 1:17). And he says, "A law of faith," (Romans 3:27) and speaking of Jesus, he says He is "The author and finisher of our faith." For Christ is the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End. As He said, " **Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me.** " (John 14:1) Faith is the tunnel into God's grace just as Jesus is the Mediator between us and God: He is the Son of Man and the Son of God. And He will perfect us in Himself unto the day of His coming, for He makes us blameless and acceptable in His sight. As an example for us, the Psalmists constantly did faithful things; and these are written about in the Psalms: for they prayed and gave thanks to God, and confessed Him in the assembly; they meditated on His law and spoke truth to their neighbors; they were continually praising Him; they gave heed to His Word. These are all works of the Spirit, a work of faith. When our hearts are pure, we will produce good fruits. When the inside is clean, then the outside will be clean too (Matthew 23:26).

The rationale for every command is Jesus Christ. The apostles gave commands in their letters, oftentimes with three things: a prohibition, a remedy, and a rationale. The prohibition is what we should not do, the remedy is what we should do instead, and the rationale is the reason why. The reason why for every command is Christ; and this is also the way of faith: everything brings us back to Christ, for He is the Way. So whatever you do to others, you do unto yourself (2 Corinthians 5:10); and whatever you do to the least of these, you do unto Christ (Matthew 25:31-46); if you sin against a brother, you sin against Him (1 Corinthians 8:12). If you do evil, you will reap it (Colossians 3:25); if you do good, God will repay it (Ephesians 6:8). So then why not do good? If you do good unto others, it will come back unto you. Not only one person is benefited, but two — he and you! And God is glorified. Jesus is the example for us to follow; so as obedient children, imitate Him and learn from Him. We shouldn't be led astray by mere human commands, which have to be sure an appearance of wisdom in promoting severe treatment of the body and asceticism, but are of no use in stopping the indulgence of the flesh (Colossians 2:23); these are not the way, but a dead end. " Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, **just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us**, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma. (...) Husbands, love your wives, **just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her.** (...) for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, **just as Christ also does the church**, because we are members of His body. " (Ephesians 5:1-33) So we do because of what He has done; for our faith is by the knowledge of God through the face of Jesus Christ, His Son. He is the only one who has seen God, and He has revealed Him to us. And we see the Father through the Son; and we see the Son through faith. In the Son there is the knowledge of God; and by the knowledge of Him, we become imitators; as it says, " "He pled the cause of the afflicted and needy; then it was well. **Is not that what it means to know Me?**" Declares the LORD. " (Jeremiah 22:15,16) And the LORD God says, "I delight in loyalty rather than sacrifice, And in the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings." (Hosea 6:6) So by the knowledge of God through the face of Jesus, we have life. For I ask, "What have you come to believe, except the testimony about God?" And without question, God's actions speak louder than words; for in Christ, He

remained silent until this present time so that forgiveness may be preached. Even before His accusers, He demonstrated His love apart from words, for He remained silent. But nevertheless, He, by His grace, even preserved for us His words. And I thank God for that! Therefore, seek the knowledge of God. Or, as it says, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." (Hosea 4:6) But we who have believed, have been saved through the knowledge of God; as Christ says, " **This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.** " (John 17:3) For God desires that "all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." (1 Timothy 2:4) And faith is simple — a child can do it. Believing is following - just as a son follows his father and imitates what he sees his father doing; so likewise, those of us who have seen God, imitate Him — that's what it means to know Him, to be a son of God, and to be born of Him. A man is a hypocrite when he is godless in heart; although appearing godly outwardly, he's godless inwardly. A hypocrite is only an actor, a contradiction; but God knows the truth, for He sees man as he is; and "The Lord knows those who are His." (2 Timothy 2:19)

## Obedience To Holiness

Without question: it's God's presence with us that sets us apart from the rest of the world. Or do you think it's merely the oil which consecrates? But what do the Scriptures say? As Moses said to God, " How then can it be known that I have found favor in Your sight, I and Your people? Is it not by Your going with us, so that we, I and Your people, **may be distinguished from all the other people who are upon the face of the earth?**" (Exodus 33:15-16) And as the LORD God says, " I will also meet with the Israelites there, and that place will be consecrated by My glory." (Exodus 29:43) So it is: God's presence sets us apart from everyone else. Just as Balaam, the son of Beor, seen and testified, saying, "As I see him from the top of the rocks, And I look at him from the hills; Behold, a people who dwells apart, And will not be reckoned among the nations." (Numbers 23:9) And furthermore, the Gentiles seen that God was with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and sought their favor. As the Scriptures say, " God is with you in all that you do;" (Genesis 21:22) And they said to Isaac, " We have certainly seen that the LORD is with you, " (Genesis 26:28) And they sought covenants of peace with them, and the patriarchs did not deny them. So it is: God alone is holy; and He alone sanctifies. He alone is God, and He calls us to godliness. So therefore, " As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, You shall be holy, for I am holy. " (1 Peter 1:14)

So the oil of consecration is only a symbol of the consecration which comes from God. As the apostle says, " You have an anointing from the Holy One, and you all know." (1 John 2:20) In the law, blood was first applied to the people and the objects used in worship; for just as water cleanses the body, so the blood cleanses the spirit. Then oil is applied to those things to set them apart for ministering to the Lord. And likewise, we are first cleansed by the blood, and Christ sanctifies us by His presence; He sets us apart by the Holy Spirit for service; and it's God's Spirit who sanctifies. As it says, " So that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable, **sanctified by the Holy Spirit.**" (Romans 15:16) For "He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, **by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit.**" (Titus 3:5) Anyone who does not have the Spirit of the Lord cannot speak the Word of the Lord, or even understand it, for it is spiritually discerned. The Spirit of Truth speaks spiritual words of truth — and by the truth we are sanctified. As Jesus says, "**Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be sanctified in truth.**" (John 17:17-19) And as the apostle says, " Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, **so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word.**" (Ephesians 5:25-27) But if we do not believe the Word of God, then the truth is not united in us; for without faith, sanctification is impossible. As Jesus says, " **That they may receive forgiveness of sins and an**

**inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.**" (Acts 26:18) And as the apostle says, " God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation **through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth.**" (2 Thessalonians 2:13) But what have we come to believe in? What is the knowledge? What is the message? As it says, " Jesus also, that He might **sanctify** the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate. " (Hebrews 13:12) For "By His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, **and righteousness and sanctification,** and redemption, so that, just as it is written, "LET HIM WHO BOASTS, BOAST IN THE LORD." (1 Corinthians 1:30-31) For it is the Lord's work to sanctify us; and it is our work to believe.

If we obey God, it will lead to holiness; and we will be holy like Him, for He alone is holy. Those who wish to be used honorably of Him must themselves be holy. Unholy talk is that which is commonly seen in the world: meaningless chatter, myths, fables, anything that doesn't tell of the blessed God and Savior. No-one can tell of Christ except by the Holy Spirit, which is the spirit of prophecy. The Spirit which is from above is holy, which you have received if you have received the Word of Truth. If we purify ourselves from the world and its filth, we will be set apart for holy use; as it says, " If anyone cleanses himself from the latter (common articles), he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work. " (2 Timothy 2:21) Obedience leads to holiness, righteousness leads to sanctification; and with holiness comes salvation. As it says, "Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord." (Hebrews 12:14) Consecration is moving from what is earthly to what is heavenly, from what is bad to what is good. We do not belong to ourselves, but we belong to God. We were bought with a price. Our life does not belong to us, for everything belongs to the LORD; and how much more so now that He bought us? For when we were slaves of sin, we were constantly serving sin. But now, God calls us to be obedient from the heart. We ought to willingly submit ourselves to Him as bond-servants, putting our ear to the awl (Exodus 21:5-6), saying, "I love my master, my wife and my children; I will not go out as a free man." (Exodus 21:5) Or saying, as the Psalmist says, "My life is continually in my hand, Yet I do not forget Your law." (Psalms 119:109) For we were released from our captivity to the law, and now use our freedom in Christ to serve God in righteousness. For the law of God either binds the disobedient or grants freedom to the obedient. As James calls the law, "The perfect law, the law of liberty." (James 1:25) But the apostle Paul calls the law, "The ministry of death," (2 Corinthians 3:7) and "The ministry of condemnation." (2 Corinthians 3:9) So if we fulfill the law, we live in the freedom, and rest in life of God; but if we disobey, we lie in the depths of slavery, toil, and death in sin. ([See More on Submission to Authority](#))

I wrote beforehand concerning holiness of the heart, but it works outwardly to the body as well. But I ask, "What is more true: the body or the spirit?" Surely the spiritual is more true — but if anything be true in spirit, it will be manifested physically too. As the apostle Paul commands in the name of the Lord Jesus, " It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control your own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in

passionate lust like the pagans, who do not know God; and that in this matter no one should wrong or take advantage of a brother or sister. The Lord will punish all those who commit such sins, as we told you and warned you before. For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life. Therefore, anyone who rejects this instruction does not reject a human being but God, the very God who gives you his Holy Spirit. " (1 Thessalonians 4:3-8) " Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a man can commit is outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore glorify God with your body. " (1 Corinthians 6:18-20) Everyone who believes the Word corrects themselves to it. So obey the truth. "Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls." (James 1:21) For obedience shows that we love God. As the Lord Jesus says, " **If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.** " (John 14:15) And, " **If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.** " (John 15:10) ([See More on Sanctification](#))

## Live Worthy

We have been forgiven of our sins which were a debt against us, stored up into our accounts, stored up because of our transgressions under the former covenant; but now, having been reconciled to God in Jesus, the Lord has credited to us a lumpsum, a positive balance to our accounts: to some He gives a talent, to others two talents, even to others still five talents; the credit represents the gifts of the Spirit given to us according to how He sees fit, according to our abilities. For we were born into this world with natural abilities, and we had no say in them; likewise we are born into Christ without say in our gifts, in our supernatural abilities given to us by the Spirit. In the last day, Jesus will return to settle accounts, to collect what we have earned with what was entrusted to us (Matthew 25:14-30). So we see, because of our gifts, we have an obligation to barter and invest to earn more: we are in debt to produce, even after we have been forgiven of our debts. Remember the parable of the four soils? Only one soil was good and fertile, producing a crop — thirty, sixty, or even a hundred times more than what was planted (Matthew 13:3-9). A sign of maturity in Christ is reproduction; as the Scriptures say, "Be fruitful and multiply," (Genesis 1:22) and so we also are fruitful by multiplying with the same seed-bearing fruit. Only when the fruit is mature on a tree, it is harvested; and only when a man reaches a certain age, he is eligible for children. So only the mature in Christ can lead another to Christ; you must be first harvested to life to give life to others. You can only produce in others after your own kind; if your kind is a hypocrite, will those that listen to you be sincere? If you are easily angered, will those who are taught by you be temperate? Of course, if they stop listening to you first! Fruit is good for multiplying; and we bear fruit by abiding in Christ, the true Vine; for our roots grow downward into Christ and produce fruit upward unto God. By His fruit in us many will be edified. If you are from God, certainly as you cast seed, it will resemble you as you resemble God when it comes to maturity — that is, as long as the soil is fertile and your seed is good. Therefore: abide in the Root and bear fruit to God!

Strive to enter through the narrow gate for wide is the way that leads to destruction and many are on it. Many will fight to enter the kingdom, but will not enter. Surely there will be few who inherit the kingdom of God: for there were only eight, Noah and his family, who were saved during the flood when the ancient world perished with water; and only righteous Lot and his two daughters escaped from Sodom which was burned by raining sulfur and fire; and Caleb and Joshua were the only two from 600,000 men who were allowed to enter into the promised land; and even Moses and Aaron who led the people out of Egypt were forbidden to enter the land. [But not all of them who perished in the wilderness won't be eternally saved, for Moses did not enter the promised land, yet he appeared with the Lord during His transfiguration (Mark 9:2-4)] So these are examples unto us, so that we wouldn't follow their bad example of disobedience and unbelief. And it also shows unto us that few will make it into the kingdom of God. [Just as the apostle mentions in his letter to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 10), and the writer of Hebrews also says in his letter to the believers (Hebrews 3)] So we know that these things pertain to us today and admonish us to not

be disobedient and sinful as they were, and perished. For the way is truly narrow, and He is holy who we serve. As Jesus says, " **Many are called, but few are chosen.** " (Matthew 22:14) And concerning the end of time, He says, " **When the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?** " (Luke 18:8)

So therefore, as the apostle says, " My beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure. " (Philippians 2:12-13) We are not even worthy to be a slave and untie the strap of Christ's sandal; as Abigail said to David, "Here is your maidservant, a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord." (1 Samuel 25:41) How much less are we worthy to serve even the disciples of Christ? Yet God gives us opportunity with much carefulness and fear and trembling (Ephesians 6:5). And the Lord Jesus is our example; for He washed the feet of His disciples and gave His life as a ransom to many. Truly we are not worthy of such an honor; as it says, "What is man that You magnify him, And that You are concerned about him." (Job 7:17) But we are called to live worthy, proving ourselves worthy of the high calling of God. Yea, we can prove ourselves worthy of such a high calling. For the gift was given aside from our merit, but having received the gift, we ought to seek the perfection which is from above; as the apostle of the Lord says, " As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. " (Ephesians 4:1) And as the Lord Himself says, " **He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.** " (Matthew 10:37-38) And by the grace of God, He makes us worthy through suffering; He allows for us to suffer for His name's sake. As the apostle says in his letter, "I have written to you briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it!" (1 Peter 5:12) And in his exhortation he says, "After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you." (1 Peter 5:10) For through fire, you are refined and purified and made pure (1 Peter 1:7) "so that you will be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which indeed you are suffering." (2 Thessalonians 1:5) Not that this suffering would be great cause of sorrow unto you, but that you may be filled with the joy of the Spirit of God; as Christ says, " **Be glad in that day and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven. For in the same way their fathers used to treat the prophets.** " (Luke 6:23)

So do not be deceived, for the Scriptures clearly state those who will enter the Kingdom and those who will not enter. For nothing unclean will enter into the Kingdom of heaven. As the Scriptures say, " Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. " (1 Corinthians 6:9-10) " There must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed. Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk, or crude joking, which are out of character, but rather thanksgiving. For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure,

or greedy person (that is, an idolater), has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. " (Ephesians 5:3-5) " The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity, and debauchery; idolatry and sorcery; hatred, discord, jealousy, and rage; rivalries, divisions, factions, and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. " (Galatians 5:19-21) For " The cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death. " (Revelation 21:8) This ought to make us cling to our God and Father and the Lord Jesus Christ even the more, holding fast to the message of the Gospel firmly unto the end: strengthening our grip and being strengthened.

" Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. " (1 Corinthians 15:50) So it is evident: only the new nature will inherit the kingdom of heaven. As it says, " Sinners in Zion are terrified; Trembling has seized the godless. Who among us can live with the consuming fire? Who among us can live with continual burning? He who walks righteously and speaks with sincerity, He who rejects unjust gain And shakes his hands so that they hold no bribe; He who stops his ears from hearing about bloodshed And shuts his eyes from looking upon evil; He will dwell on the heights, His refuge will be the impregnable rock; His bread will be given him, His water will be sure. " (Isaiah 33:14-16) " Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD? And who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, Who has not lifted up his soul to falsehood And has not sworn deceitfully. He shall receive a blessing from the LORD And righteousness from the God of his salvation. This is the generation of those who seek Him, Who seek Your face—even Jacob. Selah. " (Psalms 24:2-6) " O LORD, who may abide in Your tent? Who may dwell on Your holy hill? He who walks with integrity, and works righteousness, And speaks truth in his heart. He does not slander with his tongue, Nor does evil to his neighbor, Nor takes up a reproach against his friend; In whose eyes a reprobate is despised, But who honors those who fear the LORD; He swears to his own hurt and does not change; He does not put out his money at interest, Nor does he take a bribe against the innocent. **He who does these things will never be shaken.**" (Psalms 15:1-5) As it says, "He who does these things will never be shaken," so then the apostle Peter says, "As long as you practice these things, you will never stumble"; as he says, " Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge, and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness, and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins. Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; **for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble;** for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you. " (2 Peter 1:5-11)

## Perseverance By Remembrance

Humans are forgetful, not some of us, but all of us. Do you want proof? Look at all the libraries filled with books — for we write things down so that we don't forget. What enters into our minds soon leaves it, unless it is constantly remembered, acted upon, and sharpened; likewise we have truth within us that requires constant remembering so that we don't forget. If we leave this earth, forgetting what we first heard, then we have believed in vain, and received God's grace in vain, because we did not hold fast the testimony until the end. It is one thing to hold fast, and another thing to continually grow in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, and building upon Him, our foundation. We ought not be the one who forgets the Gospel, the one who has to keep being reminded of the elementary fundamentals of God's Word over and over, having become dull of hearing, sluggish or indifferent. Instead, we should constantly remember by the use of the truth, confessing the word in deed and in truth. As the apostle James says, " Be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does. " (James 1:22-25) So we remember who we are in Christ by acting upon the Word. There is a stark warning in the letter of Hebrews, as it says, " For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. " (Hebrews 5:12-14)

The Psalms of Asaph (Psalms chapters 73 to 83) show us the importance of remembering the Lord's deeds. In fact the Israelites fell into sin because they forgot the LORD's deeds when He rescued them out of Egypt. The Israelites remembered the Lord's works through annual festivals like the Passover which God ordained as testimonies to them; as the prophet Samuel said, " Only fear the LORD and serve Him in truth with all your heart; **for consider what great things He has done for you.**" (1 Samuel 12:24) Today, we have the Lord's Supper or Communion to remember what Jesus has done for us on the cross, breaking His body and pouring out His life for us; this is not given on a set day, but any day we like — that we may meditate upon the Lord and His work for us. These Psalms show us the importance of not forgetting what we heard at first. I charge you in the Lord to read the Book of Hebrews which calls all believers to hold fast the confession and the hope of Christ, persevering in the Lord until the end. Also read the Psalms of Asaph. We remember the Lord and what He has done for us through the confession of our lips, proclaiming His deeds to our neighbors, to our household through the testimony He has given us of His grace. For we did not discover the mystery of the gospel ourselves, but we have come to the understanding

of it through others. So thus we ought to be always growing in love, speaking the truth to one another; as the Psalmists says, "I have not hidden Your righteousness within my heart; I have spoken of Your faithfulness and Your salvation; I have not concealed Your lovingkindness and Your truth from the great congregation." (Psalms 40:10) Do good works unto all people, especially those in the household of faith; for if we grow in these ways, we will not be ineffective in our knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ as we await for His coming. We have many great examples of patience and perseverance; as the apostle James provides examples, for he says, " See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop, patiently waiting for the autumn and spring rains. You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near. Don't grumble against one another, brothers and sisters, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door! Brothers and sisters, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. **As you know, we count as blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.**" (James 5:7-11) And the apostle Paul was constantly reminding the church of the gospel in his letters, as he says in one place, " Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. " (1 Corinthians 15:1-8) Then he says in another place, "My brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things again is no trouble to me, and it is a safeguard for you." (Philippians 3:1) And the apostle Peter says, "I will always be ready to remind you of these things, even though you already know them, and have been established in the truth which is present with you. I consider it right, as long as I am in this earthly dwelling, to stir you up by way of reminder." (2 Peter 1:12-13)

Remember then, it is not how we start the race, but how we finish. The one who starts strong, but does not finish, does not win; and the one who starts weak, but finishes first, certainly will win the prize. And do not the Scriptures say the same thing? Was not the thief on the cross counted righteous, even at the end of His life, and received the promise of Paradise? What about the prophecy in Ezekiel; as it says, " If the wicked man turns from all his sins which he has committed and observes all My statutes and practices justice and righteousness, he shall surely live; he shall not die. All his transgressions which he has committed will not be remembered against him; because of his righteousness which he has practiced, he will live. Do I have any pleasure in the death of the wicked," declares the Lord GOD, "rather than that he should turn from his ways and live? But when a righteous man turns away from his righteousness, commits iniquity and does according to all the abominations that a wicked man does, will he live? All his righteous deeds which he has done will not be remembered for his treachery which he has committed and his sin which he has committed; for them he will die. " (Ezekiel 18:21-24) So if the wicked turns to righteousness, his wickedness will be forgotten; and if the righteous turns to sin, his righteousness will likewise be forgotten. The race is from start to finish by faith; it is no triathlon where you switch between biking, swimming, and running — no! How we begin is how we finish — if we start the race by faith and we received the Spirit by

faith, then we finish in the Spirit by faith. Therefore, let no-one deceive you: how we die is how we will be raised. And it is through constant remembrance of the fact of the truth that we persevere. If we are born of God, He will keep us; but I ask, "How do you know you are born of God?" Aren't you proven by keeping His Word until the end? As it says, "They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us." (1 John 2:19) But don't you remember these exhortations in the Scriptures? As the apostle John says, "No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." (1 John 3:9) For "The Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one." (2 Thessalonians 3:3) And as the Lord says, "I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand." (John 10:28-29) And concerning the new covenant it says, "I will make an everlasting covenant with them that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; and I will put the fear of Me in their hearts so that they will not turn away from Me." (Jeremiah 32:40) For the fear of the LORD is to preserve us in Himself unto the end; as Moses says, "Do not be afraid; for God has come in order to test you, and in order that the fear of Him may remain with you, so that you may not sin." (Exodus 20:20) Furthermore it says, "If his sons forsake My law And do not walk in My judgments, If they violate My statutes And do not keep My commandments, Then I will punish their transgression with the rod And their iniquity with stripes. But I will not break off My lovingkindness from him, Nor deal falsely in My faithfulness." (Psalms 89:30-33) For I am convinced that even if our head be destroyed, and the functioning of our brain grows dim, and our bodies utterly perish in fire, we who believe with the heart won't be utterly crushed nor destroyed — for our faith in the heart will not be taken away. For the enemy may destroy the body, but can do nothing more thereafter: for the body of flesh belongs to the ground, but the body of the spirit belongs to God. "Though He slay me, I will hope in Him." (Job 13:15)

## Call Upon The Lord

Jeremiah says, "Pour out Your wrath on the nations that do not know You And on the families that do not call Your name." (Jeremiah 10:25) For wrath is against the unbelieving who do not call, but salvation is for the believing who, by the knowledge of God, call. For everything we have, we obtain from the Lord by grace, so much so even our earthly lives were given to us by God as a gift. Or did you work so hard to create yourself? And it is the same with the heavenly life: it is given to us from heaven; as John says, "A man can receive nothing unless it has been given him from heaven." (John 3:27) And as Paul was saying, "What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?" (1 Corinthians 4:7) Thus "You do not have because you do not ask." (James 4:2-3) So much so, we even receive the gift of God by asking with faith; as the Lord Jesus says, " **If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?** " (Luke 11:13) And He gives not because of a lump-some of money or any good work we do, lest it be contrary to the gospel of God; as Peter rebuked a man, saying, "May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money!" (Acts 8:20-23) So that everything would be in accordance with grace, which is in line with the gospel of God by which every good thing is given through faith; for if we call upon Him, asking in prayer and believing to receive, the Lord says, " All things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive. " (Matthew 21:22, Mark 11:24, James 1:6-8) And then He says, " **Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.** " (Matthew 7:7-8)

The Lord, preaching faith in God, namely that He is the Giver of all good things, says, " **Give, and it will be given to you. They will pour into your lap a good measure—pressed down, shaken together, and running over. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return.** " (Luke 6:38) And, " **Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father who is in heaven will also forgive you your transgressions. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father who is in heaven forgive your transgressions.** " (Mark 11:25-26) For who believing the promises of God, that He is gracious, is not gracious in his giving? And who believing the Lord is forgiving, is not merciful in forgiving others? None! The believer gives, believing He will receive, and he forgives, believing he will be forgiven; for that is of faith, and certainly, as it is impossible for God to lie: He will give and He will forgive. Therefore, ask and believe! The Holy Spirit is given to those who believe, and He is the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:16); He knows how to pray according to the will of God, and God, searching the hearts of men for the mind of the Spirit (Romans 8:26-27), gives according to grace. And we pray through Christ; as the LORD God declares, " **Their leader shall be one of them, And their ruler shall come forth from their midst; And I will bring him near and he shall approach Me; For who would dare to risk**

**his life to approach Me?** " (Jeremiah 30:21) For our leader is Christ "in whom we have boldness and confident access through faith in Him." (Ephesians 3:12)

Since we have been reconciled to God through faith in the Word, we clearly see the power of words, especially the Word of God, which has the power to save; as the Proverb says, "Death and life are in the power of the tongue, And those who love it will eat its fruit." (Proverbs 18:21) So, " Having the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, "I BELIEVED, THEREFORE I SPOKE," we also believe, therefore we also speak. " (2 Corinthians 4:13) And then it says, " Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect. " (1 Peter 3:15) " As Scripture says, "Anyone who believes in Him will never be put to shame." For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile — the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for, 'Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.' " (Romans 10:11-13) Christ pours into us His Spirit, creating in us a bubbling brook, a spring of life, whose outpouring is the testimony of Jesus. He planted in us His good Word, so that we would bear good fruit of righteousness which becomes a tree of life in those who eat; as it says, "The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, And he who is wise wins souls." (Proverbs 11:30) We feed and give drink, having ourselves first eaten and drunk, pointing to Him who saves: Christ Jesus, who is the living water and the tree of life. Therefore, let us bear the name of God without reproach, bearing His reproach, walking blamelessly, free from hypocrisy, confessing His name in sincerity, and speaking of His righteous works. As Christ called us according to His grace, we call in the streets, in the byways, in the highways; for wisdom calls out in the streets (Proverbs 1:20-23, Proverbs 9:3-6). And He is not ashamed to call us His brothers, and we are not ashamed to call Him Lord; as it says, " Both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one Father; for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, "I WILL PROCLAIM YOUR NAME TO MY BRETHREN, IN THE MIDST OF THE CONGREGATION I WILL SING YOUR PRAISE." " (Hebrews 2:11-12)

And furthermore Christ says, " **I tell you, whoever publicly acknowledges Me before others, the Son of Man will also acknowledge before the angels of God. But whoever disowns Me before others will be disowned before the angels of God.** " (Luke 12:8-9) Here is the fruit of salvation: confess the Lord! If we even ask, "Must I confess?" What is preventing you? No-one can confess the Lord Jesus except by the Holy Spirit, and I also believe that the Holy Spirit will prevent us from confessing if we are living in hypocrisy. It's not they who confess "Jesus is Lord" that are saved, but it is they who confess, and live as "Jesus is Lord" that are saved; ["Why do you call Me Lord and not do what I say?" (Luke 6:46) and "Not everyone who says to Me "Lord, Lord" will enter." (Matthew 7:21)] Know for certain salvation lives here: obey and confess Christ! For we have been justified by His blood and we are saved by His life; therefore, confess Him publicly, uncover your head and circumcise your heart. See the thirsty land and give drink; do not withhold your bread, nor your water from the poor; open up your lid and pour from your vessel. See the fruit of your labors and rejoice; and see salvation at work within you and others. ([See More on Justification and Salvation](#))

Be ready and looking forward to give reason for your hope in Christ. The world always tells about places to eat and movies and games: how much more we with such a great news? When we sell a car, we do so by telling the truth: the sweet and the bitter about the car; otherwise, when they see the car and it is not what we made it out to be, they will not do business with us for the sake of our dishonesty. Likewise, we sell Christ, though Christ isn't sold, but freely given to all; anyone who receives Him, it will cost them; but they will gain tenfold, not to mention eternal life to come. By telling the truth, we show that our faith is true and living; a faith that is not living is dead — a lie; in fact, a belief that has no merit in reality is a delusion. When we do not speak, when the Lord puts a word on our tongue, it's stifling the Spirit; we shrink back in disbelief when we do so; and we don't love our neighbor as we should. God gives us a good example of the order of events we ought to follow in regard to walking and speaking in integrity: first study the Word, then obey it, then teach others. A hypocrite is an actor: someone who puts on a mask to play a different part in a different scene; such a person loses his identity through deception, deceiving himself in order to play a part (1 John 1:8, James 1:22, James 1:26). All actors have to first deceive themselves to play a part; they lie to themselves, saying, "I am such and such." They do this so that they would be convincing to others when they act. Likewise we do the same when we're not truly obeying the Word of God. This is a counterfeit faith, a false bill, a crossed coin. Our heart and actions should never contradict each other lest we be found a hypocrite. When we contradict, we are being hypocritical. But let us follow the example of Ezra, the scribe; as it is said of him, "Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the Lord, and to do it and to teach his statutes and rules in Israel." (Ezra 7:10) And Paul, not wishing for his speech to contradict his life, says, "For if I do wish to boast I will not be foolish, for I will be speaking the truth; but I refrain, so that no one will credit me with more than he sees in me or hears from me." (2 Corinthians 12:6)

The one who believes the Message will come to Jesus for salvation. Salvation comes by the forgiveness of our sins; as it says, "To give to His people the knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of their sins." (Luke 1:77) But "Without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness." (Hebrews 9:22) However Jesus is the propitiation for our sins. So by going to Him and abiding in Him through faith, we are saved, for salvation is in Him; as it says, "There is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12) Salvation is made possible by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead; for how can you go to Him and be saved if He is not? And what Word do we preach, but Christ risen from the dead? As it says, "And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; you are still in your sins." (1 Corinthians 15:17) So it is through faith that we abide in Him, through understanding with our hearts and turning to Him to be saved, for this is true understanding; as it says, "UNDERSTAND WITH THEIR HEART AND RETURN, AND I WOULD HEAL THEM." (Acts 28:27) Furthermore, when we come to Him, we must remain in Him. If we leave our Refuge and do not remain in Him, we've left our safety, and are caught outside the city of Refuge, and still yet in danger. So by abiding in Christ, He abides in us; if we confess Him, we know we abide in Him; as it says, "Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God." (1 John 4:15) As the psalmists says, "As for me, the nearness of God is my good; I

have made the Lord GOD my refuge, That I may tell of all Your works. " (Psalms 73:28) For "No one can say, 'Jesus is Lord,' except by the Holy Spirit." (1 Corinthians 12:3) For He abides in us through the Spirit. Therefore "If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved;" (Romans 10:9) So the way to salvation is to come to Him for forgiveness, which is faith, and to abide in Him for confession, which is salvation. Therefore, come to Him and remain in Him!

# THE DAY OF THE LORD - HOPE

The Resurrection Of Life	126
New Spiritual Bodies	130
Eternal Reward	134
Everlasting Life	137
The New Heaven And The New Earth	140

## The Resurrection Of Life

Before the coming of the Lord, the antichrist will be revealed, the man of lawlessness; he will work many false signs and wonders to deceive those who love the world, who acknowledge not God, so God will hand them over to him who is not at all god, that they may fill up the full measure of their error, and be found fit for the coming destruction. They will be given over to a great delusion because they did not receive the love of the truth, but delighted in wickedness and falsehood. The antichrist will even be allowed to trample the hosts of heaven and slay God's saints; he will be victorious in all that he does, but his time is not forever — for the Lord Jesus will come with a shout, at the last trumpet, with the voice of an archangel, slaying him with the appearing of His coming and the breath of His mouth. Then the dead in Christ will be raised and caught up with the Lord and be forevermore with the Lord. The antichrist's reign is only for a moment, but the glory of the reign of the kingdom of God is forever and ever; the antichrist's reign is finite, it is given a number, 42 months, 1,260 days (time, times, and half), but the reign of Christ and the saints is given no such number. The horn will cast truth to the ground during this time and he will trample under foot God's saints. As it says, "I kept looking, and that horn was waging war with the saints and overpowering them." (Daniel 7:21) And, "It grew up to the host of heaven and caused some of the host and some of the stars to fall to the earth, and it trampled them down. It even magnified itself to be equal with the Commander of the host; and it removed the regular sacrifice from Him, and the place of His sanctuary was thrown down. And on account of transgression the host will be given over to the horn along with the regular sacrifice; and it will fling truth to the ground and perform its will and prosper." (Daniel 8:10-12) These things are spoken about in further detail by the apostle Paul in the letter to the Thessalonians (2 Thessalonians 2:3-12). So we cannot stop these things from occurring, for they are ordained to occur; and we, as God's saints, are destined for affliction; as the apostle affirms, see to it that "no one would be disturbed by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we have been destined for this." (1 Thessalonians 3:3) This affliction does not come from God, but from the spiritual rulers of wickedness, whose ruler is the evil one. "But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one." (2 Thessalonians 3:3) For "God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep, we will live together with Him." (1 Thessalonians 5:9-10) The wrath of the devil is great, but his time is short; as it says, "Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has only a short time." (Revelation 12:12) And the works of devils and antichrists are already at work in the world; as it says, "For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work." (2 Thessalonians 2:7) Then it says, "It is the last hour, and just as you have heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have arisen, by which we know that it is the last hour." (1 John 2:18) And "The spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world." (1 John 4:3) These are granted abilities to work false signs and miracles and wonders, even preaching false doctrines and gospels; as it says, "The

Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons.” (1 Timothy 4:1) But as we cling to God, He is faithful to protect us from lying deceit.

For “By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist.” (1 John 4:3) This antichrist spirit was the very spirit at work in the leaders who crucified Christ; for they said to the keepers of the tomb, "You are to say, 'His disciples came by night and stole Him away while we were asleep.'" (Matthew 28:12-13) (Not to mention, they crucified Him!) And by this we know which spirits are at play, for spirits manifest themselves; they have not bodies, you cannot see them, but they speak. So by the confession of the lips we know the spirit; as it says, "I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus is accursed"; and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.” (1 Corinthians 12:3) And this is the Holy Spirit who revealed Jesus Christ to us; as Christ says, " **Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.** " (Matthew 16:17) Then He says, " **No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day. It is written in the prophets, 'AND THEY SHALL ALL BE TAUGHT OF GOD.'** **Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father, comes to Me.** " (John 6:44-45) And by the Spirit of God, He will raise us up on the last day. As it is said, " **If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.** " (Romans 8:11) This is “the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago.” (Titus 1:2) “This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil.” (Hebrews 6:19) So therefore “Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.” (Hebrews 10:23) “And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.” (1 John 3:3)

So we have great confidence in the day of the Lord — provided that we share in the sufferings of Christ. For the promise of everlasting life has a condition, and that condition is faith; as it says, "If indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together. " (Romans 8:17) And "If we died with Him, we will live with Him. If we endure, we shall also reign with Him. " (2 Timothy 2:11) For the death He died was to sin, and in His death He suffered for us; “For **If** we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection.” (Romans 6:5) And "If by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.” (Romans 8:13) ([See more about the work of Christ and our work of faith](#))

And Christ was saying things such as, " **I always do the things that are pleasing to Him.** " (John 8:29) And, " **For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.** " (John 6:38) The apostle John affirms the life of Christ is for us to imitate today; as he says, " By this we know that we are in Him: the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He

walked. " (1 John 2:5-6) This is the goal. This is the pursuit. All the apostles affirm the same: as the apostle Peter says, " Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because he who has suffered in his body is done with sin. As a result, he does not live the rest of his earthly life for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God. " (1 Peter 4:1) And as the apostle John says, "The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever." (1 John 2:17) And as the apostle Paul says, " For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised." (2 Corinthians 5:14-15) It's not that God's will is grievous or causes suffering to us; but it's that God's will is contrary to the will of this world and the desires of our flesh. So this world will begin to hate us. They hated Him before us; but He says, " **Take courage; I have overcome the world.** " (John 16:33) "For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, who COMMITTED NO SIN, NOR WAS ANY DECEIT FOUND IN HIS MOUTH; and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously; and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed." (1 Peter 2:21-24)

Therefore, strive for blamelessness in all matters that we may be able to stand before the Son of Man, that we may be perfect before the Father, being made complete in all the fullness of the Spirit and the maturity of Christ. For the old nature has been crucified on the cross and done away with, but we fight temptation from this world actively every day, picking up our cross daily, and putting on the full armor of God, standing firm against the wiles of the evil one, and fleeing from immorality, idolatry, and youthful lusts, so that when we die, we don't remain as one dead, but as though asleep, who wakes up to eternal life. For you know what happens to them who sleep — they wake up! So it is with us who die in the Lord, we awake to life and we are forever-more with the Lord — for even while asleep, we are alive to the Lord. " Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed— in an instant, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must be clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come to pass: "Death has been swallowed up in victory." "Where, O Death, is your victory? Where, O Death, is your sting?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ! " (1 Corinthians 15:12-57) And as Christ says, " **But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.** " (Matthew 22:29-32)

So although our bodies may perish and our feet may slip, although our struggle is in the world, we look forward to the fulfillment of the promise of the new bodies

which are beyond decay, the freedom from our bodies of sin, and the new heaven and the new earth, in hope and against hope, believing that just as God has promised, He is able to do. And this is the great hope we hold onto. "For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience." (Romans 8:24-25) "Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see." (Hebrews 11:1) And this confidence and this assurance comes from the Word of God, the promises, from the prophecies of the prophets, and from the foretelling of the Psalms. Just as what was previously promised has been fulfilled, so these promises will be fulfilled at their appointed time. The coming of the Lord is nearer now than it once was, so do not slack behind in diligence, having thought we've already obtained salvation (Philippians 3:12-14); no, but rather as we wait eagerly for it from above, we do so patiently. And as for the Day of the Lord, it will be day unto us who are children of the day, but night to those who walk in darkness (1 Thessalonians 5:1-11). So therefore, be on the alert! His coming is as a thief in the night. So watch and pray (Luke 21:36). ([See more about the Children of the Light](#))

## New Spiritual Bodies

The promise of the inheritance is contingent on our present sufferings with Christ; the fellowship of His sufferings, sharing in His afflictions. Since Christ suffered and gave Himself up for us, not living for His own will, but for the will of God; He followed God's will perfectly, even to death, even death on a cross; so we also pick up our cross, suffering for the sake of Christ: bearing His reproach and living not for our own will, but for the will of God; and so, we do not depend on our own strength for life, although death is at work in us, but we trust in the power of His life and grace. For we are to obey Christ in this way, following His example, for He is the Way; and His every directive very much direct us to everlasting life, so therefore they are not burdensome — they're for our good. Everything He commands us to do, our Commander and Chief has done; and we are His soldiers in His heavenly legion with weapons of warfare for good, fighting the righteous warfare with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and the left, striving for the faith, tearing down every stronghold of the enemy and every lofty imagination which exalts itself against the knowledge of the truth. And He trains our hands for battle, for we suffer for a cause not of our own, but for the one who enlisted us. We constantly hand ourselves over to death so that the life of Jesus may be expressed in our mortal body. So then we see that the newness of creation is not just something to be partaken of in the future, but it is also partaken of in the present: for the more we die, the more Christ lives in us. "For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may be revealed in our mortal body." (2 Corinthians 4:11) Therefore "Bear fruit in keeping with repentance." (Matthew 3:8) For in truth, this is death. As Paul said, "I affirm, brethren, by the boasting in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily." (1 Corinthians 15:31) As the Lord said, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me." (Luke 9:23) For this is the goal and the prize: to be filled with the fullness of the Spirit and to grow into the full maturity of Christ, to be in the like resemblance of perfection and holiness of the Father, to be in unity with the body of Christ with one mind and one purpose, loving one another in truth, keeping in step with all of God's saints. Growing up in the likeness of the Lord just as we're called to grow. For "though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day." (2 Corinthians 4:16)

So mortification of the former body, and the fruitless deeds of it, is needed if we want any hope of an eternal heavenly life; "for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live." (Romans 8:13) So, "I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified." (1 Corinthians 9:27) And so, "I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. **For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things** and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith." (Philippians 3:7-11) For the

unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God, neither can flesh and blood inherit the spiritual kingdom, nor the impure, the sexually immoral, or the covetous, who is an idolater. But we who have put off the misdeeds of the flesh will put on this new spiritual body at the coming of the Lord in the air. And in regard to these glorious bodies, the apostle says, " What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. And what you sow is not the body that is to be, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body. For not all flesh is the same, but there is one kind for humans, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish. There are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is of one kind, and the glory of the earthly is of another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory. So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. Thus it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual. The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven. " (1 Corinthians 15:35-48) And, " For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself. " (Philippians 3:20-21)

So then our spirits are growing into the likeness of Christ day by day and in the future we will be like Christ in spirit and body. As it is written, "Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is." (1 John 3:2) The things we presently see are perishing, but our hope, which is unseen, is in Christ. He has promised us an imperishable body, free from sin and decay. And if we have the promise, we have what is promised, for God is faithful. For this reason we count ourselves to be saved although the fulfillment of eternal salvation has not yet come; as the writer of Hebrews says, "Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, **will appear a second time for salvation** without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him." (Hebrews 9:28) So when He comes, He will bring along this eternal deliverance with Him. As it also says, " Behold, the LORD has proclaimed to the end of the earth, Say to the daughter of Zion, "Lo, your salvation comes; Behold His reward is with Him, and His recompense before Him." " (Isaiah 62:11) So our salvation has not yet come, even though we experience it on earth within us. As the apostle Paul says, "Not that I have already obtained it (the resurrection from the dead) or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus." (Philippians 3:12-15) Then he says to the Corinthians, "You are already filled, you have already become rich, you have become kings without us; and indeed, I wish that you had become kings so that we also might reign with you." (1

Corinthians 4:8) So it is clear, we patiently wait for what was promised by God; and this hope we do not yet have; "For who hopes for what he already sees?" (Romans 8:24) But we know if we have the promise, we have what was promised, considering we continue in faith and love, with holiness with self control, until the day of His coming. For Abraham believing the promise of God said, "O Lord GOD, how may I know that I will possess it?" (Genesis 15:8) And God affirmed the promise and made a covenant with Abraham, and said, "To your descendants I have given this land." (Genesis 15:18) And when He says, "I have given it," it does not say, "I will give it." And even at that time, Abraham was one hundred years old and his wife Sarah was ninety years old, and he had no descendants, and he was still a foreigner in the land. But yet it says, "I have given." Even yet when Isaac was born, the descendants did not receive the land for another 400 years! But God said, "To your descendants I have given this land." (Genesis 15:18) And this shows us that God's promise is sure, as if what He has promised has already been fulfilled; for who can contradict God? So it is: God has given us eternal salvation in Jesus Christ, our Lord. And we are saved by faith in His name. So therefore, hold fast to the truth committed to you!

For the new creation has already begun! It starts with our minds being renewed, then when Christ comes, He will bring with Him these new heavenly bodies — and we will be changed. The new creation will never die; they who are raised up in the first resurrection will live forever. We who have been born again through the eternal word of the gospel will be glorified with Christ; and our spiritual bodies will differ in glory; as it says, " Those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever. " (Daniel 12:3) God put these heavenly bodies in the sky which differ in glory, showing unto us the future glory of the heavenly life. For heavenly things hang in the sky of heaven or fly in the heavens. Even the cherubim under God's throne have wings for flying, and these are spiritual beings. I am not saying all angels have wings to fly, but they do inhabit the heavens. And God shows us examples of these on earth, for God has created creatures which fly through the heavens, showing unto us how spirits operate in the unseen world. For earthly bodies walk on the ground, for they are from the dust; whereas spiritual bodies fly in the heaven, for they are from heaven. But the things that fly do not remain in the air, because they also have their home on earth; so we see by this, the heavenly is not independent from the earthly. For example: the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus like a dove (Mark 1:10), and the Spirit of God fluttered over the waters in the beginning (Genesis 1:2). And unclean spirits are called unclean birds (Revelation 18:2), and Paul called the devil the prince of the power of the air (Ephesians 2:2). Also it says, " In your bedchamber do not curse a king, and in your sleeping rooms do not curse a rich man, for a bird of the heavens will carry the sound and the winged creature will make the matter known. " (Ecclesiastes 10:20) ([See more about the Two Resurrections](#))

Speaking further of the resurrection: there are certain creatures in nature which have their home on earth and die, transforming to a heavenly life. For example, the butterfly: she was a caterpillar, moving on her belly, eating the herbs of the ground. When her time came, she hardened herself into a cacoon and broke forth into a

butterfly. Her home is no longer among the earthly, but it is in the heavens. A dragonfly is similar, except he lives in the water, in the depths of the water; he crawls up a leaf and becomes hard by the sun, breaking forth into a flying creature. These have not their home in their former estate, nor can they go back if they want to, but they live in the sky of heaven. They do not think to themselves, "How I wish I were still a worm." No! They do not even consider their old estate, for their new one is much better. And these are found in nature, for they are created by God as teachers unto us. For He has created nothing in vain. Creation cannot open its mouth and teach us, but God teaches us by His Spirit through His creation. Just as Paul used the example of sowing and reaping to explain the new body, so we see that nature testifies. Furthermore, all the living herbs and plants die in the winter and come back to life in the spring. These things relate to our new heavenly life, our spiritual bodies, the resurrection. It is at work now, but it is not seen; when we see Him, we will become as He is. For Jesus is the firstfruits from the dead. And He ate food in his spiritual body, He had evidence of His former wounds, He went to the disciples behind locked doors. A spirit without a body is a ghost, but we will not be ghosts; we will have spiritual bodies for our spirits to inhabit. Right now we have physical bodies for our spirits. In our new bodies, we will not be subject to mortality; for our strength will not be physical, it will be spiritual. Our strength will not wax old nor fade away as human strength does. So all of these things ought to be a great encouragement to us! So "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord." (1 Corinthians 15:58)

## Eternal Reward

In Christ Jesus we have been forgiven of our sins, the debt that was in our account which testified against us, stored up under the former covenant when we walked according to the flesh; we were by nature children of wrath, born in trouble and for trouble; but now, having been cleared, God credits into our accounts gifts of the Spirit so that we would profit, being profitable through wisdom unto salvation through the knowledge of the will of the Lord. And this is the stewardship we have: to build up and to edify the church, and also bartering, trading and winning more, sharpening and being sharpened. Paul, being a master builder, never built on another man's foundation, but laid his own so that he may know for sure what kind the foundation is. Let us beware that we not build on any foundation other than the one that has been already laid: Jesus Christ, the Rock of our salvation, the firm foundation, and the Chief cornerstone. As it says, " If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, their work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person's work. If what has been built survives, the builder will receive a reward. If it is burned up, the builder will suffer loss but yet will be saved — even though only as one escaping through the flames. " (1 Corinthians 3:12-15) So know for certain: if we partake in the resurrection from the dead, the true one, the first one, then the second death holds no power over us. That means, we will not be raised to punishment, but to reward, for punishment holds no power to those who are perfected in love; as it says, " By this, love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love. " (1 John 4:17-18) So therefore we can have confidence in that day and great assurance in the faith if we do; as it says, "For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus." (1 Timothy 3:13) And then it says, "Little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming." (1 John 2:28) Faith is not shaky, but confident; when we prove ourselves, we gain confidence. So prove yourselves. Prove yourself that you belong to Christ Jesus, always showing love to all people, especially to the household of believers.

If we are faithful with a little, we will be faithful with much; and to the faithful, Christ Jesus will put in charge of the nations (Matthew 25:14-30). For this is good stewardship. So take good care of what He has entrusted to you. In order to be profitable, you must "gamble". For those who play the slot machine spend some in order to win more. No-one plays to lose, but they play to win. I say, "Gamble" because not all machines are winners. You don't hit the jackpot every time, do you? Is all soil good and fertile? Of course not! And if the soil is bad, the seed casted on the soil is wasted, although there is nothing wrong with the seed. Likewise, if we don't profit, the money is wasted; but if it produces a yield, we have hit the jackpot! A single coin can

produce hundreds of dollar bills; a single seed can produce a hundred times at harvest. Do we know beforehand whether the soil is going to be good or bad? Surely if it produces thorns and thistles, we have a good idea. So " **Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine, or they will trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.** " (Matthew 7:6) God is sovereign in all areas — and much of His will is revealed in chance. He makes the lot fall, and He makes the soil fertile, He gives the seed its growth. We trust in Him as we operate in this dark world — for He is our Light. So take heed: if we refuse to build up our brother, and instead waste our seed, how are we any better than Onan, who fell into condemnation; as it says of him, " Onan knew that the offspring would not be his; so when he went in to his brother's wife, he wasted his seed on the ground in order not to give offspring to his brother. But what he did was displeasing in the sight of the LORD; so He took his life also. " (Genesis 38:9-10) For he deliberately wasted his seed and did not build up his brother's house. As it says, "If anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever." (1 Timothy 5:8)

So therefore cast the good seed which the Lord God has given you. For your own seed is not good enough. Can anything be better than what God has provided? There is a bad seed which is called a lie, a false confession, a polluted spring. I ask: does a salesman attempting to sell a car speak dishonestly in an ad? Maybe it's so; but the buyer will eventually come to see the car, and he will hate you, because you lied to him; he will be angry with you because you wasted his time. He will not believe anything you say afterwards, even though you make many promises; he will scrutinize your company; He will think badly of all car salesmen because of you. He will say to himself, "Those car salesmen are no good! That company is dishonest, I can't trust any of them." Therefore, we should never make someone gamble when believing through us, but we ought to pour forth the truth in sincerity, casting forth our seed with tears that we may reap in joy. And we sell Christ — not that we sell Him who was freely given — but convincing others and telling them of Christ in truth — namely that He gave Himself for us so that we would no longer live for ourselves, but for Him who purchased us; for Christ Jesus was freely given for us to buy us back; we have all sold ourselves to sin, but God has purchased us by Christ. So if we sell Christ in this way, we will be fruitful. But if we do not tell of the cost of following Christ, we lie. If we tell of the cost and not about the grace of Christ, we likewise lie. Christ did so that we would do; and this is obedience to the truth. I ask: where is grace? And where is the power to do? Is it not in Christ? How can anyone do anything profitable without Christ? Therefore, we obey the truth in which we have believed. But I ask: how can anyone obey what they do not believe? Christ gave Himself for us, that we would be His possession, and that we would no longer live for ourselves, but live for Him who bought us. He has loved us and came down from heaven to redeem us. Our Master loves and cares for His servants, for His servants are part of His own body; and He has made the mind of His Spirit to dwell in us to remind us of His Word.

And so our reward is based on our overcoming, on our doing; for we will be rewarded based on what we do; as the Lord says, "**To him who overcomes I will give**

to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God. (...) **He who overcomes** shall not be hurt by the second death. (...) **To him who overcomes** I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it. (...) **And he who overcomes**, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations— ‘He shall rule them with a rod of iron; They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter’s vessels’ — as I also have received from My Father; and I will give him the morning star. (...) **He who overcomes** shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels. (...) **He who overcomes**, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name. (...) **To him that overcomes** will I grant to sit with me in my throne, **even as I also overcame** and am set down with my Father in his throne. (...) **He who overcomes will inherit these things** (the new heavens and the new earth), and I will be his God and he will be My son. " (Revelation 2:1-3:22) But beware! The one who did not do anything with his talent was cast into outer darkness (Matthew 25:24-30). And the one who did not feed the hungry or clothe the poor or visit the prisoner did not receive the inheritance (Matthew 25:41-46); but the ones who did these things entered into life. Likewise David the Psalmist said, “The LORD has rewarded me according to my righteousness; According to the cleanness of my hands He has recompensed me. For I have kept the ways of the LORD, And have not wickedly departed from my God. For all His ordinances were before me, And I did not put away His statutes from me. I was also blameless with Him, And I kept myself from my iniquity. Therefore the LORD has recompensed me according to my righteousness, According to the cleanness of my hands in His eyes.” (Psalms 18:20-24) And in another place he says, “The LORD judges the peoples; Vindicate me, O LORD, according to my righteousness and my integrity that is in me.” (Psalms 7:8) So the reward is granted unto us, not merely by what we believe, but by what we do. For just as at harvest time, the harvesters seek not leaves, but for fruit; for at the harvest, only fruit matters. And so, if we want to be rewarded by the Lord, today and forever, we must be obedient to His call; as the Lord promises, " **Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or farms, for My sake and for the gospel's sake, but that he will receive a hundred times as much now in the present age, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and farms, along with persecutions; and in the age to come, eternal life.** " (Mark 10:29-30)

## Everlasting Life

We look forward to our permanent home and eternal life which God, who does not lie, has promised us in Christ Jesus. The tabernacle we now dwell in is not our permanent home, but our tent is temporary; it will be taken down one day; so it is with our bodies, but we look forward to our heavenly home and the eternal life to come. When we are unclothed, we will not remain unclothed, but we will be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, with our heavenly body. For this present life is not our home, we are only passing through as a foreigner. We have received the truth and have come to know the truth, and having known the truth, we look forward to an everlasting dwelling which is beyond corruption and decay, which is new and will remain forever. And this is the hope we profess, which causes us to stick out; nevertheless as the One who called us is holy, we are to be holy; and this is holiness: being different, and special, and set apart. The world also has a term for this: weird. And they say it derogatorily. But we are as aliens or foreigners to them, a strange and peculiar people; as it says in Hebrews about the ancestors, " All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, **and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.** For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own. And indeed if they had been thinking of that country from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them. " (Hebrews 11:13-15) Then as Peter says, " Beloved, **I urge you as aliens and strangers** to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul. " (1 Peter 2:11) So since we are not of this world, we abstain from the lusts of the world and covet the things of God. For there are many paths in this world, but not all lead to a goodly end. Indeed, only one leads to eternal life. The paths of the world are not eternal and do not go on forever — for they are dead ends. However, there is a Way which is eternal, which is narrow, which is Jesus Christ, who has gone before us as the first fruits of the resurrection. He gives us assurance that if we live as He lived in this world, we will also inherit the same life He lives; and we follow Him to receive the same reward, the same good result; in the same way, those who follow demons, follow them to perdition; as it says, " **Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels.'**" (Matthew 25:41) For those who follow, follow their leader, and they go where ever the leader goes. For we who believe in Jesus, trust in Him and follow Him where ever He goes. Those who follow Him, do as He does; and those who do as He does, receive the reward as He did. Christ is the Gate, the Door, the Way to life. And furthermore in Him is the life; there is one life and the life is in the Son; for " The gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. " (Romans 6:23) If we are in the Son, then we have the life; if we are without the Son, we do not have the life. Therefore, remain in God!

Our race is a race of faith, but there is also a walk, a walk after the Spirit, following Him as He goes ahead of us — surely, the Spirit goes on ahead and we

follow. Christ, firstly, was the forerunner, racing the race perfectly before us. So we don't make up our own way for ourselves, because we know He is the Way; and we do not need to be afraid since Christ went on ahead of us and paved the way for us; and we know His goodly end. For just as the Israelites had a pillar of fire by night and a pillar of cloud by day to lead them, the same God who said to them has also said to us, " Behold, I send an angel before you to guard you on the way **and to bring you to the place that I have prepared.**" (Exodus 23:20) And that angel is the angel of the LORD, Christ; for Christ says, " **In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.**" (John 14:2-3) For " In all their affliction He was afflicted, And the angel of His presence saved them; In His love and in His mercy He redeemed them, And He lifted them and carried them all the days of old. " (Isaiah 63:9) So we know Christ's end: glorification, exaltation, and eternal life. So we know as we follow Him, our Way is not dead, but living, resulting in eternal life. There are many other ways that are not the Way, which all end in death; but our Way is living, seated in heaven, exalted and everlasting, heavenward not downward, to life, not to death. We don't walk to walk to reach a dead end, wasting ourselves; no! But if our way is His Way, we walk to life, gaining fruit to everlasting life; " Whoever is wise, let him understand these things; Whoever is discerning, let him know them. **For the ways of the LORD are right, And the righteous will walk in them,** But transgressors will stumble in them. " (Hosea 14:9) We know of Christ's exaltation; and we also know of Christ's sufferings: even the cross. His sufferings were here on earth; and our sufferings which we will undergo are here as well; as Jesus said, " **Remember the word that I said to you, 'A slave is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also.** " (John 15:20) But what we may go through cannot compare with the glory which will be revealed in the end; "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us." (Romans 8:18)

So this walk in life is spoken of in many ways; as it says, "Walk in the Spirit," "Walk in love," "Walk by faith," "Walk in the light," and "Walk in the truth". If we walk in the Spirit we have no obligation to the flesh, gratifying its lusts and desires; but these both, the flesh and the Spirit, are contrary to one another; they are constantly waging war within us, so that we are not free to carry out our good intentions. But we must rule over the flesh and subdue it, making it work for us; as it says in one place, " A worker's appetite works for him, For his hunger urges him on. " (Proverbs 16:26) If we wish to master over sin, we must abide in the truth; as Jesus testifies, " **If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.** " (John 8:32) Faith is a walk, but that does not imply that it will be easy — it implies a lifestyle. The way of faith is also called a run; for "We run the race of faith, keeping our eyes on Jesus". For "This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil, where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek." (Hebrews 6:19-20) So when we walk, we see Him who has gone before

us; and when we walk, our feet are on His trails. He is not far from anyone of us; for He is on this journey with us; although He has gone before us, He is with us. There is a time for running, there is a time for walking; a time to make haste, and a time to be at ease; there is a time for milk, and a time for solid food. Milk is good when young, but when mature, you move onto solid food. The mature run, after first learning how to walk; and the mature eat solid food, after first learning how to chew. As children, we first learn how to walk, then as adults we learn how to run; so we learn to walk, then as we walk in the light, gaining confidence with our feet, we begin to run. Walking may be easy, but when you're running, you're surely exerting a lot more effort. Walking may seem unfruitful, but we must walk before we run. For "If you have run with footmen and they have tired you out, Then how can you compete with horses? If you fall down in a land of peace, How will you do in the thicket of the Jordan?" (Jeremiah 12:5)

How hard it is to be saved, but how great is the reward! As it says, " It is time for judgment to begin with the family of God; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who disobey the gospel of God? And, If it is hard for the righteous to be saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner? " (1 Peter 4:17-18) As the disciples asked the Lord Jesus, "Who then can be saved?" And Jesus answered, " **With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.** " (Matthew 19:26) Likewise the apostle says, " I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. " (Philippians 4:13) For through God, all things are made possible. I believe when the time of perfection comes, we will be put to shame, if we have complained even a complaint in this life, because of the surpassing greatness of the heavenly life. This life is replaced by the next life, but the next life is replaced by nothing. I believe this is what Solomon meant in his wisdom when he said, " The end of a thing is better than its beginning; The patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit. " (Ecclesiastes: 7:8) Because the end is forever, for it is replaced by nothing, but the beginning is replaced by the end. The patient in spirit wait for the eternal to come, but the proud in spirit hastily take what's here and now. Now is not the time to receive; as Elisha the prophet asks, "Is it a time to receive money and to receive clothes and olive groves and vineyards and sheep and oxen and male and female servants?" (2 Kings 5:26) And as Jesus said, " **Woe to you who are rich, for you are receiving your comfort in full. Woe to you who are well-fed now, for you shall be hungry. Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep.** " (Luke 6:24-25) For the saying which says, "Better is a bird in the hand, than two in the bush" is more weightier than the promises of God to the unbelieving and hopeless. For they want what they can see now, but we with patience forsake these to inherit the far better which God has promised. For even looking upon the promises of God with hope is far better; and how much more their fulfillment?

# The New Heaven And The New Earth

We have been created anew in Christ Jesus: He has given us a new Spirit and cut away our old nature with a circumcision not done by human hands, building us up into a holy temple, made not by human hands, in which He dwells. And God is preparing a new heaven and a new earth for His body, the church, where righteousness dwells. The present heaven and present earth, God created in six days, with all humanity and all flesh. He will also create the new heaven and the new earth, which He has promised, making all things new; for these present heavens and this present earth are corrupt, for everything in them rots and decays with time; they are not permanent because of the dysfunction of the fallen human nature and the death which follows. The new heavens and the new earth will be a place that does not rot nor decay or wear out like a garment — it is permanent and forever. As it says, " Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying: "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man, and He will dwell with them. They will be His people, and God Himself will be with them as their God. 'He will wipe away every tear from their eyes,' and there will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the former things have passed away." And the One seated on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." Then He said, "Write this down, for these words are faithful and true." " (Revelation 21:1-5) For the present world is predominantly evil, for the world belongs to satan, but the world to come belongs to the Father God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Just as God did away with the ancient world with a flood, and thereafter only righteous Noah and his family survived, so it be after His coming. God will preserve the righteous and they will inherit the new earth. Just as Noah went into the ark and came out of the ark, and the world was as new, for it was washed with water, so it will be after His coming burns the heavens and earth; it will be totally refined by fire. The present earth underwent a flood and wiped away the wicked, but Noah was caught up, floating above the water in the ark, and only Noah and his family were saved; and thereafter, only the righteous were on the earth at that time; although only for a short while, for sin began to reign quickly thereafter. The world was made new after the flood and Noah inherited it, but it was only washed with water. This is a picture of the end, but the end will come with fire; but the end will be replaced by a better beginning, that is, a beginning which has no end. As the LORD God says, " For behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; for I will create Jerusalem to be a joy and its people to be a delight. I will rejoice in Jerusalem and take delight in My people. The sounds of weeping and crying will no longer be heard in her. " (Isaiah 65:17-19) But before the coming of these things, the saints will reign with Christ for one thousand years until His enemies are made a footstool for His feet. So thus, by the things which happened in the past we can see the future, for the ways of

God do not change; as it says, "Let them bring forth and show us what will happen; Let them show the former things, what they were, That we may consider them, And know the latter end of them; Or declare to us things to come. " (Isaiah 41:22) And as Christ said, "And just as it happened in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: they were eating, they were drinking, they were marrying, they were being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. " (Luke 17:26-27) Then He says, "It was the same as it happened in the days of Lot: they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building; but on the day that Lot went out from Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. " (Luke 17:28-29) ([See more on the Snare of His Coming](#))

No one can serve two masters: you'll end up hating the one and loving the other. If we have love for the world in us, the love of the Father is not in us (1 John 2:15); and if we are a friend of this world, we make ourselves enemies of God (James 4:4). As Jesus said, "I have come to cast fire upon the earth; and how I wish it were already kindled! " (Luke 12:49) Then He says, "What men value highly is detestable in God's sight. " (Luke 16:15) So how can we enter into God's kingdom, if we still have love for the kingdom of this world in us? Do you not remember the beast out of the water which is written about, which has blasphemous names against God written on its head (Revelation 13)? He is a symbol of the antichrist who is to appear at the end of the world, who will have power given him from satan, the ruler of this world. So the kingdom of darkness has nothing in common with the Kingdom of Light. In fact, it hates God. So you see, no one can serve two masters, especially when they have nothing in common. All the things of this world, the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life, come not from the Father but from this world (1 John 2:16). As Jesus says, " No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money. " (Matthew 6:24) Everything sown by the world prevents fruit for the kingdom: for they are thorns. This is the world whose will is contrary to the will of God. Whose spirit says, "Keep your opinions to yourself," and "Faith is good, only if it's kept in your bosom," and "Do not deviate from the rest of us!" But we ought to die to the world and its passions and lusts to serve God in truth. Forsake the world. "Remember Lot's wife. " (Luke 17:32) For the Living God purchased us with His own Son, so save yourself from this perverse and wicked generation. Don't look back. As Jesus says, " No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God. " (Luke 9:62) We will be held to the standard of truth we have received. As an example: Elisha, the man of God, did not look back when he received Elijah's cloak (1 Kings 19:20-21).

Jesus is the first of the new creation and last of the old. Everything of the old is passing away and only the work of the new will remain. Those created anew in Christ Jesus will inherit all new things. For in the beginning, God created everything by His Word, and now He creates the new by the same Word which He has made to abide in us; this new creation begins in the hearts of men; as the apostle said, " For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give

the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. " (2 Corinthians 4:6) For the former creation points to the new creation, which starts in the hearts of men and finishes with the new heavens and the new earth. If the old were perfect, there would be no reason for a new; but the old is imperfect, and God finds fault with it; as it says, "Even the moon has no brightness And the stars are not pure in His sight." (Job 25:5) And then it says, "Behold, He puts no trust in His holy ones, And the heavens are not pure in His sight." (Job 15:15) We know that the earth is fallen, but even the heavens have fault, even though heaven is God's abode; so God is not pleased with it; for it is subjected with violence; as the apostle mentions the " Spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. " (Ephesians 6:12) And Jesus says, " **From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.** " (Matthew 11:12) So it is necessary that the heavens be destroyed too, so that all may be made new. These which come later are by no means lesser, but the greater comes last. Just as John first preached, then Jesus came thereafter; and Jesus is greater, just as the one who is elder is greater than the younger; as John testified, "After me comes a Man who has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me." (John 1:30) So likewise the lesser makes way for the greater; the physical comes first then the spiritual; first comes the temporal, then the eternal; first the Jerusalem which is below, then the Jerusalem from above. For " The Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all. " (Galatians 4:26) And we are God's house, God's building. We are being built up and edified as living stones, being made into a spiritual house where God dwells; as Peter says about the church, " You also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. " (1 Peter 2:4-5) The church will be a dwelling in the new Jerusalem, where God and the Lamb will be. As it says, "The city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb." (Revelation 21:23) And, "I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple." (Revelation 21:22) And, "There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him." (Revelation 22:3)

In the book of Revelation, the wall of the city of the new Jerusalem has twelve foundation stones, precious stones; and written on them are the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. And there are also gates in the city, and on the gates are written the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel. And He has promised to give those who overcome a white stone, written on it a new name that no one knows except the one who receives it. I do not know for sure, but these stones could be used in the building of the wall of the new Jerusalem. For the names of those who inherit eternal life are written in the Lamb's book of life, and the apostle's names are written in the architecture of the city. And God writes His name on the foreheads of His people; as it says, "They will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads." (Revelation 22:4) Then it says, " **I will write on him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God, and My new name.** " (Revelation 3:12) Finally, I leave you with this hopeful Scripture: "The anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it,

in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.”  
(Romans 8:19-23)