

Daily Meditations on the Glory of Jesus
A 30 day devotional
VOLUME I

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Preface

In the Psalms, David says,

"One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to diligently inspect/look at [Him] in His temple." [Psa 27:4]

It is David's chief desire, to behold God's glory, which I also believe deserves our utmost attention and devotion. Through The Holy Spirit, we are granted the ability to acquire *"the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."* [2 Cor 4:6] It is through the study and meditation, and the beholding of Jesus' glory wherein God is pleased to conform us into that very image to which our eyes and hearts are fixed. Paul tells us, earlier in His letter to the Corinthians,

"But we all, with open face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the LORD." [2 Cor 3:18]

As we gaze upon Jesus' glory as revealed to us in the scriptures, we shall be changed of God into that very image. For those who love Christ, who love who He is, this is a most blessed truth; and the understanding of it shall no doubt provoke them to inquire and search out these things as gold, silver, rubies, and all manner of treasure.

The precious and grand truths of God's character, as perfectly revealed in Christ, which we find in the

scripture, are priceless and provide us with grace; they are a treasure. This grace is something we should set our hope in; as Peter said, "*Wherefore, having girded up the loins of your mind, being sober, fully set your hope on the grace being brought to you in revelation of Jesus Christ.*" [1 Pe 1:13] Through the revelation of Jesus Christ, we are given grace; that is, through the revealing of His character, His glory: for Jesus being "*The Word of God,*" [Rev 19:13] we see that The Bible reveals to us of Christ, who He is and what He is like, even as Jesus Himself says through the Psalms, "*in the volume of the book it is written of me.*" [Heb 10:7]

More could be said and written; there is no searching the depths which are Jesus' glory. In heaven, "*in his temple[,] doth every one speak of his glory.*" [Psa 29:9] There, in that heavenly and purely delightful realm, where God is central and supreme, there is one overriding conversation: God's glory. Not one person or angel there can come to speak of anything else; they are constrained to speak of His glory. So let us do the same; let us talk of it and study it, let us take seriously the exhortation in Hebrews, "*look away from all else to behold Jesus the Author and Finisher of faith,*" [Heb 12:2] and let us gaze upon Him; for He says, "*Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.*" [Isa 45:22]

Day 1, Exceedingly Near

Psalms 22:1 – My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?

These words, written by David many thousands of years ago, were not just his words. They were, in fact, the words of Jesus, who would utter them from His cross as He died for our sins. Matthew writes, “*And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*” [Mat 27:46] Jesus cries out to God upon the cross the very truth of the situation: God had indeed forsaken Him. For us, as mere men and women, we may wrongly interpret the heart and reality of God, but not Jesus who was God’s Son and who, as Hebrews says, is and was, “*the express image of [The Father’s] substance.*” [Heb 1:3] For example, in the Psalms, the Psalmist cries out, among other things, “*Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will he be favourable no more?...Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath He in anger shut up His tender mercies? Selah,*” to which He then concludes, “*this is my infirmity: but I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High.*” [Psa 77:7, 9-10] And so we see that when Jesus uttered these famous words from the cross, it was not just His thoughts or his “*infirmity*” as the Psalmist; the cry was justified, a truthful picture of the situation: God The Father had indeed utterly cast off and forsaken His Son. See then the severity of the statement in the word “*so*”: for Jesus says “*why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words*

of my roaring.” [Psa 22:1] God was not just far off, but so far off; The Father was not just unwilling to help or hear Jesus our Christ, but was so unwilling. He was removed to the furthest degree: as Jesus said, “*so far.*”

Now consider the stark contrast between this truthful statement by our Lord Jesus, the only man to ever live a completely righteous life, and what is promised to us in Psalms 46:1, which gloriously promises, “*God is our refuge and strength, an exceedingly near help in distress.*” It is completely opposite and different than what one would expect. This promise is deservedly Christ’s, and yet it is given to us freely if we are in Him, “*For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.*” [2 Cor 1:20] It is because Jesus went through utter separation from The Father, a complete forsaking, that we can claim and enjoy this promise, or any other which is of the same substance.

For Christ, there was not one single iota of a chance of help from The Father, not one chance in all the universe that The Father would aid Jesus in any way upon that cross. As Jesus rightly said, God was “*so far from helping*” Him. And yet for us, it is promised that in our distress/trouble, The Father is “*exceedingly near.*”

Reflect upon another promise from the Psalms, which may comfort us eternally, and which proclaims, “*as far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us.*” [Psa 103:12] That separation of sin was fulfilled for us in Christ, who was “*made...sin for us.*” [2 Cor 5:21] Jesus was literally separated from God as far as the east is from the west so that our sins might be; for when Jesus was on that cross, He was sin for us, and He, as Paul says, “*condemned sin in the flesh.*” [Rom 8:3]

Thanks be to our God and King, our Shepherd and Groom, who according to His abundant mercy and overflowing grace, has offered us such a promise, that we might be able to cling to it and find strength in our time of need; who, because of His unfathomable sacrifice, has opened to us not just this but also every other promise in scripture. Yes, blessed be His name.

Day 2, The Overflowing Grace of Christ

1 Chronicles 22:16 – Of the gold, the silver, and the brass, and the iron, there is no number. Arise therefore, and be doing, and the LORD be with thee.

When it entered David's heart to build God a house to dwell in, (for he said, *'Lo, I dwell in an house of cedars, but the ark of the covenant of the LORD remaineth under curtains.'*), Nathan presumptuously said, *"Do all that is in thine heart; for God is with thee."* [1 Ch 17:1-2] But he misspoke: for *"it came to pass the same night, that the word of God came to Nathan, saying, Go and tell David my servant, Thus saith the LORD, Thou shalt not build me an house to dwell in."* [1 Ch 17:3-4] And so, for various reasons, The LORD would not have David to build the temple; but God promised instead that Solomon his son would build the temple. The LORD told David, *"I will raise up thy seed after thee, which shall be of thy sons; and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build me an house, and I will stablish his throne for ever."* [1 Ch 17:12]

Because David was not allowed to build the temple, he decided to prepare for it. It being for The LORD, David desired the temple to *"be exceeding magnificent, [and to be] of fame and of glory throughout all countries,"* and so as it is written, *"David prepared abundantly [for the temple] before his death."* [1 Ch 22:5]

As all of our lives have a specified time when they will end, as is set by God, (for in His hand “*is the soul of every thing, and the breath of all mankind*,” [Job 12:10]), eventually, so too David’s time to be gathered to his father’s came. But before he died, spoke with his son Solomon, saying,

“Now, behold, in my trouble I have prepared for the house of the LORD an hundred thousand talents of gold, and a thousand thousand talents of silver; and of brass and iron without weight; for it is in abundance: timber also and stone have I prepared; and thou mayest add thereto. Moreover there are workmen with thee in abundance, hewers and workers of stone and timber, and all manner of cunning men for every manner of work. Of the gold, the silver, and the brass, and the iron, there is no number. Arise therefore, and be doing, and the LORD be with thee. David also commanded all the princes of Israel to help Solomon his son...” [1 Ch 22:14-17a]

We see in this exhortation and admonition a wonderful example of Christ, David himself being a picture of Jesus in many ways. Notice that David prepared everything needed for the temple in order that it would be fashioned according to the pattern he received by The Holy Spirit. For after this, it is written that “*David gave to Solomon...the pattern of all that he had by the Spirit*,” and David said to him, “*the LORD made me understand in writing by his hand upon me, even all the works of this pattern.*” [1 Ch 28:11-12, 19] We see, then, that the materials acquired in preparation for the construction were ordained of God, them being gathered to accomplish that specific pattern from God, which like the tabernacle, would be a “*shadow of heavenly things.*” [Heb 8:5] The encouragement and strength from this is

clearly seen and enjoyed when we place Christ dead center and remember it is Jesus who has “*prepared abundantly*” for us, giving us not only His Spirit but also an immeasurable source of heavenly grace; for “*of his fulness have all we received, and grace upon grace,*” [John 1:16] and, “*the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.*” [1 Tim 1:14] And this grace is available to us through Jesus our High Priest. So, as Hebrews exhorts, “*Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in the opportune time.*” [Heb 4:16]

As the materials David provided were so abundant, they were beyond counting, so too the grace offered through Jesus. No matter what is required, Jesus has the grace necessary. There is no lack with Jesus, and since we are His there is none with us either; for it is written, “*The LORD is my shepherd; I am not lacking.*” [Psa 23:1] He is God; all belongs to Him, and He holds all at His disposal; for He said, “*All authority is given unto me in heaven and in earth.*” [Mat 28:18] There is nothing too hard for Him; as Jeremiah said, “*Ah Lord GOD! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee.*” [Jer 32:17]

Whatever is required, Christ has it. There is no lack with our Savior. He has abundantly prepared all that is required, so that we might, as the temple, be built up into that image God has provided. And that pattern in heaven which is for our example is Christ Himself. Just as The LORD gave Moses and David a pattern of things in heaven as a model for building, so too we have a pattern; Christ Jesus is our model, and God has “*predestinate[d]*

[us] to be conformed to the image of His Son,” and so, “He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?” [Rom 8:29; 32] Therefore, because there is no limit to the grace available to us in God through Jesus our Savior, let us follow the same admonition that David gave to Solomon: “Arise therefore, and be doing, and the LORD be with thee.” And again, “Be strong and of good courage, and do it: fear not, nor be dismayed: for the LORD God, even my God, will be with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee, until thou hast finished all the work for the service of the house of the LORD.” [1 Ch 22:16; 28:20]

Day 3, Transformed by God's Glory

1 Peter 1:18 – And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with Him in the holy mount.

Jesus, whom The Spirit calls, “*the radiance of [The Father’s] glory*,” [Heb 1:3] is the very material presence of God’s glory: the complete and full manifestation of God The Father’s supreme glory. All of that majesty “*wherewith [The LORD] hath girded Himself*” [Psa 93:1] is present and existing in Jesus; His character, His life, and His very substance, accurately represent The Father in full for He is “*the exact representation of [The Father’s] substance*.” [Heb 1:3]

Regarding Peter and those with him, it says in Luke that “*when they were awake, they saw His glory, and the two men that stood with Him*.” [Lk 9:32] Those dear men saw the beauty of God through the person of Jesus, as He became exceeding bright and shining. Matthew records that Jesus’ “*face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light*,” [Matt 17:2] And Mark, that “*His raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow*.” [Mk 9:3] Truly it must have been a sight to behold. But notice too how the mountain is spoken of. In Luke, we read,

“*And it came to pass about an eight days after these sayings, He took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray.*”
[Lk 9:28]

Each gospel writer refers to the mountain with an indefinite article and in a generic way. But notice how

Peter refers to it in His epistle, saying, "*the holy mount.*" The mountain is no longer just an ordinary mountain: Peter uses the word "*the.*" It is a specific mountain, one marked out from the rest, for now it is no longer just "*an high mountain*" [Matt 17:1] but "*the holy mount.*" The mountain has been sanctified: it is now holy. This is because of Jesus. That regular, old mountain became holy when Jesus stood upon it in glory, in all of The Father's excellent glory.

A similar thing is present in The Old Testament as well. The LORD told Moses in his day the tabernacle would be set apart by God's glory. It says in Exodus, "*And there I will meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle shall be sanctified by my glory.*" [Ex 29:43] And later in Exodus we read, "...*So Moses finished the work. Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of The LORD filled the tabernacle.*" [Ex 40:33-34] When God's glory descended upon and filled the tabernacle, it was sanctified; that is, it was set apart. No longer was it just a regular, old tent: *it was where God was*. It was holy, it was sanctified, and that so because of God's glory. And now, we see the exact same logic in the New Testament. Jesus appeared in glory upon that mountain, and it was sanctified, it was transformed from what it was before into "*the holy mount.*"

This same logic can be used of us also. We now, through Christ, are sanctified by His glory just as the mount and the tabernacle. For He, who is "*the radiance of [The Father's] glory,*" has come to " *dwell in [our] hearts by faith.*" [Eph 3:17] And God "*hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*" [2 Cor 4:6] Just as the tabernacle and that mountain were touched by God's glory and set

apart, made holy for Him, so too our hearts and bodies and lives: for God has come to dwell in us and has set His glory upon us through Jesus who prayed, “*and the glory which thou gavest me I have given them...*” [Jn 17:22]

We are now, as the tabernacle and temple were, dwelling places for God. Like Paul wrote, “*What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?*” [1 Cor 6:19] And as it is written of that future, heavenly city, so too it is true of us presently:

“Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.” [Isa 60:1-3]

And,

“... The LORD shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory.” [Isa 60:19]

Just as New Jerusalem will be set apart from all cities, God Himself dwelling within it and His glory shining out from the midst of it, so too are we now. For Jesus Christ through The Holy Spirit dwells in us, making us His temple, and we are made beacons of glorious light through which we draw men to Him.

Praise be to God who has sanctified us by His glory. We are no longer just regular people, but we have been set apart by the King Himself for He now dwells within us. So therefore let us live in a way that brings Him honor.

Day 4, Always Seen and Never Alone

Mark 6:48 – And he saw them being tormented in rowing; for the wind was against them: and about the fourth watch of the night he cometh unto them, walking upon the sea, and was intending to pass by them.

Sometimes it can appear to us that Jesus is far away. It can feel as though He has forgotten about us or doesn't care, that perhaps He is too busy. Sometimes it may appear as though God is a God who is far off and not near. But in fact, our feelings in these times betray us; for they are not true. Jesus is never far off, but near; though we see Him not, yet He is near. In Jeremiah, God says,

"Am I a God at hand, saith the LORD, and not a God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the LORD. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the LORD." [Jer 23:23-24]

God is near. Remember what David wrote, when he asked rhetorically, "*Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?*" [Psa 139:7] The answer, of course, is nowhere; for God is near. Even as David says again, "*thou art near, O LORD...*" [Psa 119:151]

In the gospels, after Jesus had fed many people with a miracle of bread, Mark writes, "*And straightway he constrained his disciples to get into the ship, and to go to the other side before unto Bethsaida, while he sent away the people.*" [Mk 6:45] Jesus urged his disciples to leave

while He, the next verse says, “*departed into a mountain to pray.*” [Mk 6:46] This was the occasion where as John says “*the sea arose by reason of a great wind that blew*” [Jn 6:18] and where “*the ship was in the midst of the sea, and [Jesus] alone on the land.*” [Mk 6:47] The disciples, by Jesus’ own command, were thrust suddenly into a storm during the night, while Jesus was seemingly nowhere to be found.

I am sure we have all felt, or will feel, as the disciples did in this moment. No doubt they were fearful, wondering where Jesus was or what would become of them. But though the disciples may have felt this way, Mark gives us insight which they did not have: that Jesus “*saw them being tormented in rowing.*” [Mk 6:48] Even though they felt alone, struggling against the wind, trying with all their might to travel the direction given to them by Jesus, Christ saw them upon that mountain, His watchful eye being always over them, even like The LORD proclaims to Jerusalem in Isaiah, “*behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands: thy walls are continually before me.*” [Isa 49:16] Truly, our God who guards us “*through faith unto salvation*” is a God who “*shall neither slumber nor sleep.*” [1 Pe 1:5, Psa 121:4] Though we may at times think He sleeps, He does not. Though we during such a storm as the disciples may feel Jesus’ presence afar off; yet, He is near altogether, watching us and praying for us. The Psalms encourage us this way, saying, “*I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy: for thou hast considered my trouble; thou hast known my soul in adversities.*” [Psa 31:7]

In addition to Jesus always having oversight over what we are going through, He is also praying for us and our troubles, even as Mark told us that Jesus “*departed into a*

mountain to pray.” [Mk 6:46] For in Hebrews we are promised,

“Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.” [Heb 7:25]

Just as Jesus upon that mount prayed for the disciples, seeing their torments; so too now, Jesus in the mount of God, seated at The Father’s right hand as our High Priest, continually prays for us, seeing our adversity and having compassion upon us, even as a father for his child or a groom for his bride.

Though we may feel at times distant and lost, let us remember,

"God is our refuge and strength, an exceedingly near help in distress. Therefore will not we fear... Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled." [Psa 46:1, 2a, 3a]

As The Psalmist responded to his doubts, “*Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will he be favourable no more?*,” the answer is clear when we begin to feel as if Jesus has left us or is no longer interested: “*And I said, This is my infirmity: but I will remember the years of the right hand of the most High. I will remember the works of the LORD: surely I will remember thy wonders of old.*” [Psa 77:7-11] Jesus is indeed intimately involved with our affairs, being very near in trouble, and always praying for us.

Day 5, A Holy Attitude

Psalms 22:3 – But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.

Regarding when Jesus was suffering at the hands of men, Isaiah says, “*As many were put to silence at thee; His appearance was disfigured beyond that of a man, and the outline of His body beyond the sons of men.*” [Isa 52:14] The LORD tells us here that Jesus’ appearance was so badly marred by men that He ceased to look like a human being. And all that was *before* He got to the cross; this does not take into account the period of which Jesus says through David,

“I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death. For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet.” [Psa 22:14-16]

During Jesus’ “*passion*,” [Acts 1:3] which He endured “*for the joy that was set before Him*,” [Heb 12:2] through which Jesus was afflicted beyond measure, there was yet one more thing which pleased The Father to put upon His Son. In addition to the physical mutilation, Christ also had to be forsaken by God His Father. He had to taste that spiritual death for us. As Jesus cried out in Psalms and upon the cross, “*My God, my God, why hast*

thou forsaken me?" [Psa 22:1] Yes, Jesus was utterly cast off from The Father. Forsaken. Jesus goes on, saying,

"...why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? O my God, I cry in the day time, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent." [Psa 22:1-2]

In His greatest time of distress, when Jesus, as a man who had to endure all of our temptations in like manner yet without sin [Heb 4:15], was afflicted and crushed as the grape upon the press, there was none to help Him. As the curse of the law, of which Jesus was made into [Gal 3:13] says, *"thy heaven that is over thy head shall be brass, and the earth that is under thee shall be iron."* [Deut 28:23] Jesus was not heard in His cries. God was far from helping Him, and so too was man. Though Jesus cried out, yet according to the Psalms' words, God did not hear and His words met a heaven of brass.

And though we see that Jesus was heavily tormented, forsaken, and cast off by God, none of His words reaching heaven's ears, yet in all that distress, Jesus still trusted and hoped in God. For as our verse today says, quoting Christ, *"But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel."* [Psa 22:3] Jesus' attitude was, in all of this, that God was perfectly holy. Jesus refused to give up hope; He refused to sin, to lose faith in His Father. Still, no matter the pain, Jesus said, *"but thou art Holy."* Thanks be to our God, to Christ our King, who prevailed and has overcome. For because of His righteous life and victory, we too shall overcome. Through Jesus' example here we see that we too can have a good attitude in all distress; for *"The LORD is righteous in all His ways, and holy in all His works."* [Psa 145:17]

Day 6, Full of Life

Matthew 12:10-13 – And, behold, there was a man which had his hand withered. And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath days? that they might accuse him. And he said unto them, What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days. Then saith he to the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it forth; and it was restored whole, like as the other.

In a certain place, Jesus entered a synagogue on the sabbath day. At that time, there was a man which “*had his hand withered.*” [Mt 12:10] The word withered means that the hand was deprived of its natural fluids; it was shrunken, wasted, or withered. Furthermore, the man, no doubt, was placed there intentionally by the hypocritical Pharisees who wished to catch Jesus in wrongdoing. Mark records that “*they watched Him, whether He would heal him on the sabbath day; that they might accuse Him.*” [Mk 3:2] However, Luke tells us that Jesus “*knew their thoughts.*” [Lk 6:8] Jesus was not ignorant of their plans, and as He always did and still does, would surely defeat their lying in wait and deliver that miserable man from His affliction and dryness, even as Proverbs says, “*the words of the wicked are to lie in wait for blood: but the mouth of the upright shall deliver them.*” [Prov 12:6]

There is a blessing here for us in this story beyond just the plain account. And it is, that when we forsake God, when we look to other sources of life, other sources of moisture or richness, we will become dry; but through Christ that dryness, that withered nature, can be utterly restored and transformed into richness, making our souls “as a watered garden.” [Jer 31:12] As it says also in Isaiah,

*“And the LORD shall guide thee continually,
and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy
bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden,
and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.”*
[Isa 58:11]

The LORD warns us in Jeremiah, saying, “*all that forsake thee shall be ashamed, and they that depart from me shall be written in the earth, because they have forsaken the Lord, the fountain of living waters.*” [Jer 17:13] The word “*ashamed*” in this passage is the same word translated “*dry*” in Hosea thirteen, wherein Hosea says that on account of Israel’s iniquity, their “*spring shall become dry, and his fountain shall be dried up.*” [Hos 13:15] Israel’s chief sin in this context was their insistence in idolatry - they refused The LORD and went after other sources of life, that is, false gods and other nations. And because they did this, because they sought sources of life other than God, their “*fountain [would] be dried up*” and they would be “*ashamed/dry.*” They would become dry and lifeless just like the gods they pursued.

Those who refuse Jesus Christ for life will become dry. Inside they will be dusty and dry, a fountain with no water, because the source they draw from is limited and weak. In fact, we see clearly that apart from Christ there is no life, no satisfaction of the soul, for Jesus Himself

plainly said, "*I Am... The Life.*" [Jn 14:6] And again, "*because I live, ye shall live also.*" [Jn 14:19]

Jesus offers Himself and this rich life and satisfaction to whomever will accept. Those who view the vastness of His mercy, faithfulness, righteousness, judgments, and lovingkindness, and choose to place their trust under the shadow of His wings, "*shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of [His] house; and [they] shalt [be made to] drink of the river of [His] pleasures;*" [Psa 36:5-8] they will in fact lay hold of this promised life. But those who reject Him will not.

The Lord offers this complete satisfaction without cost. He urges us, "*Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price...let your soul delight itself in fatness.*" [Isa 55:1-2]

We must come to The Father through Jesus in simple, sincere faith and He will take our dryness and reverse it. God is able to take the dry lands of our heart or mind or life and make them fruitful and gorgeous. He promises, "*For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour out my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring: and they shall spring up as the grass, as willows by the water courses.*" [Isa 44:3-4] Do notice here, though, that this promise is for those who are "*thirsty*," even as Jesus said "*I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.*" [Mk 2:17] Those who are not thirsty, who do not want Christ; those who do not believe they are in urgent need of repentance nor of Jesus' life: the offer does not include them; for they, through their self-sufficiency and pride,

exclude themselves. For it is written that the sinners and the meek are those to whom God teaches “*in the way*” and will “*guide in judgment*,” [Psa 25:8-9] but no such promise exists to the man or woman which are not thirsty nor realize they are in need of what Jesus has to offer.

We conclude quite gloriously that just like Jesus restored the withered hand, so too can He restore us! No matter if we are saved or not, Jesus has life for us. Those areas of dryness, of lack, Jesus can surely fill. He is willing; so let us seek Him in humility and submit ourselves to Him, and lay hold on that which He is kind to offer.

Day 7, Humility of Justification

Luke 18:13-14 – And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

In Luke, Jesus tells a parable of two men praying; it was directed toward “*certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others.*” [Lk 18:9] In the parable there was a Pharisee, a religious elite; he, praying not to God but in reality only to himself, exalted himself in prayer and despised another man praying near to him. The other man in the parable, the one despised of the Pharisee, a tax collector, would not even look up to God but beat his chest and cried out in desperation to heaven, “*God be merciful to me a sinner.*” [Lk 18:10-13] Jesus tells us that it was “*this man [who] went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.*” [Lk 18:14]

Truly, for us, this is a wonderful thing. For it is the man who realized he was a sinner who was justified and forgiven. It was not the man who thought he was in no particular need for such a thing. The man who thought everything was okay and that he was in perfectly fine shape did not go home justified; on the contrary, he went home condemned: that man, though in the temple, was

not even heard by God for he “*prayed...with himself*.” [Lk 18:11] And such a truth should comfort us, if we have indeed seen that we are sinful; for that is the very attitude that God has respect for and looks down upon with mercy and love. This is one of our Father’s greatest blessings, that He is not looking for perfection but honesty and humility; He is not looking for a perfectly righteous man, but one who sees his unrighteousness and calls out to God for mercy.

And praise to our God who is so plentiful in mercy and ready to forgive to those who look to Him for it. For it is written, “*for thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.*” [Psa 86:5] And again, “*but thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth.*” [Psa 86:15] Our Father is “*ready to forgive*” and He is full of mercy toward those who call on Him.

But there is another piece to this passage. Notice the word “*merciful*” in the tax collector’s prayer. This is a word that is only used twice in the New Testament. Once here and once in Hebrews 2:17. The word means to “extend propitiation.” Propitiation is atonement for a wrongdoing that appeases the wrath and gains the favor of the offended party. The man does not simply just cry out for “mercy” as we would commonly know the word to be; but specifically, in the parable, the man cries out for *propitiation*.

In Hebrews we see the word used again. See it in bold letters. The writer says that because we “*are partakers of flesh and blood,*”

*“He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that has the power of death, that is, the devil... Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to **make reconciliation** for the sins of the people.” [Heb 2:14; 17]*

Jesus, through death, atoned for our sins, thus reconciling us to God and granting us that glorious favor of God which is due Christ but imparted to us for His sake.

The man who recognizes his sinfulness and in humility cries out to God for the propitious blood of Christ to cover his wrong, is the man who is justified in God's sight. It is not the high and lofty man who never sins who is justified, but the one who when He sins, is honest with God, both of his sin and his inability to fix the problem and so cries out for Christ again. Let us always be found at the cross of Christ in humility, looking to God for mercy and acceptance, for it is there that we are accepted in His sight; because it is written that we who are saved are *“accepted in the beloved.”* [Eph 1:6]

Day 8, Restored by His Glory

Isaiah 35:1-2 – The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and thy desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of The LORD, and the excellency of our God.

The wilderness: a region lacking community- a place unwelcoming and harsh; the solitary place: a lonely destination, one filled with self-obsession and sorrow; and the desert: lifeless and lacking refreshment. All of these places alike “*shall be glad for them.*” The them, if we track backwards into Isaiah 34 to where this phrase refers, are seen to be “*the pelican...the hedgehog...the crane (or bittern)...and the raven.*” [Isa 34:11] These are symbolic references to demonic activity, for God speaks here of these creatures inhabiting Edom after The LORD Himself by “*the sword of The LORD...[has] a great slaughter in the land of Idumea...and the land thereof shall become burning pitch...from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it for ever and ever.*” [Isa 34:6, 9, 10] From the passage we see great destruction; and no wonder, for this passage speaks of “*the day of The LORD’s vengeance, and the year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion.*” [Isa 34:8] God speaks quite frankly of the destructive wrath which He intends to pour upon Edom (Idumea), and afterwards no man shall inhabit the land evermore, it shall be given to demonic activity.

But why then, as we see here, are the wilderness, solitary place, and desert “*glad for them*”? Is this not a terrible sight to behold? One of great fear and anger and evil? Ah, but remember the words of Christ when He spoke of demons, who after they leave a man, “*[they] walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none.*” [Mt 12:43] And remember that it was in the wilderness where Christ was tempted of satan. We may frankly suppose that the very places spoken of here in Isaiah 35 are none other than a places which formerly, until this pronounced and yet future destruction, were inhabited by these demonic creatures.

And so, with this thought, let us consider again what The LORD speaks to us. He says, “*The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.*” [Isa 35:1] Yes, they will be glad for them, but not as if these places are happy for these creatures’ new home; no, but because these creatures *are gone*! They have been eradicated from the wilderness, from the solitary place, and from the desert. They no longer dwell there and have been imprisoned to another awful domain; and this is very similar to the destruction of Babylon, after which The Spirit of God tells us,

“it shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation...but wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there....I will also make it a possession for the bittern...and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction, saith The LORD of Hosts.” [Isa 13:20-21; 14:23]

We see then, great parade because these evil influences have been removed. The desert shall even “*blossom as the rose*” when this happens; yea, as God says, “*it shall blossom abundantly.*” [Isa 35:2] And notice most importantly, “*they shall see the glory of The LORD, and the excellency of our God.*” [Isa 35:2] No longer will they see evil and the darkness of satan’s kingdom, but instead they shall behold the beauty of God and all His glory; for this speaks of when Christ comes back to earth in all His glory.

Spiritually we can see great encouragement here; for this gives us a picture of what meditating upon and seeking out the glory of Jesus can do in our life. Are there any places in our lives, hearts, or minds, which are lonely? Or perhaps dry and lifeless; or maybe even unfamiliar and harsh? These are places which when the glory of Christ is introduced, may become blossoming fields of roses and satisfied with God’s peaceful river. When we delve into the scriptures and seek to study and know Jesus’ character, His glory; when we discover more of God’s blessed nature and love, this begins to transform us and the places which formerly were untouched by His gentle hands.

Jesus alone holds this power. For if we read of Him, if we taste and see that He indeed is good, and from thence go to Him, we shall experience this life and refreshment which is promised to the desert and wilderness. In the Psalms, look at the state of the man who sees God’s character and love and thus comes to dwell beneath His wings and in His house:

“Thy mercy, O LORD, is in the heavens; and thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds. Thy

righteousness is like the great mountains; thy judgments are a great deep: O LORD, thou preservest man and beast. How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings. They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures. For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light.” [Psa 36:5-9]

Day 9, Our Enemy's Powerless Intentions

2 Samuel 21:16-17a – And Ishbibenob, which was of the sons of the giant, the weight of whose spear weighed three hundred shekels of brass in weight, he being girded with a new sword, thought to have slain David. But Abishai the son of Zeruiah succoured him, and smote the Philistine, and killed him...

In the passage above, we see that Abishai rescued David from death, killing a giant named Ishbibenob. I think there is some further insight here which The Lord would have for us, which He has concealed, and if we, like the king described in Proverbs, would “*search out a matter*,” [Prov 25:2] we shall find some wonderful truth of Christ. There is here, I believe, a parallel that gives God glory. Abishai's name means "Father of [the] gift" and Ishbibenob's name means either "his" or "my" "seat is at Nob;" and if we replace the names with their meanings, we could paraphrase this passage in 2 Samuel by saying "The Father of [the] gift" slew he whose "seat is at Nob." This is interesting because Isaiah speaks of a future time in chapter ten regarding the Antichrist, or The Assyrian. Near the end of the chapter, Isaiah speaks about his journey towards and attempted conquest of Jerusalem. Notice how he gets close to Jerusalem, right about the Mount of Olives, in Nob. We read,

"As yet shall he remain at Nob that day: he shall shake his hand against the mount of the daughter of Zion, the hill of Jerusalem. Behold, The Lord, The LORD of Hosts, shall lop the

bough with terror: and the high ones of stature shall be hewn down, and the haughty shall be humbled. And He shall cut down the thickets of the forest with iron, and Lebanon shall fall by a mighty one." [Isa 10:32-34]

And notice also, though he nears Jerusalem, the only thing he can do is "*shake his hand*." He can't destroy Jerusalem nor the people in it. He is powerless against The LORD, who comes to bring him down once and for all and to destroy him. All the Wicked One can do is "*shake his hand*." Likewise, all the giant in 2 Samuel can do is to think of slaying David. He "*thought to have slain David*." But it never mentions him trying or attempting it, just thinking it. The giant thinks and plans but is powerless, because "The Father of [the] gift" slays him and rescues David.

So too it is with us. Sin taunts and raves at us, but it is powerless. Satan, the world, and our flesh all boast of great things; even as The Antichrist will have "*a mouth speaking great things*." [Dan 7:8] Our enemies can shake their hands, say mean things, put us in fear - but at the end of the day, our Father is on our side, Jesus Christ Himself is on our side, and He will rescue us; The Scriptures tell us, "*behold God is the one who is helping me*." [Psa 54:4] God shall indeed help us. When the enemy rears his head, Christ will not hide in a tent like David's brethren and Israel, but He shall proclaim to us, "*let no man's heart fail because of him*;" for it is written, "*When I cry unto thee, then shall mine enemies turn back: this I know; for God is for me*." [1 Sam 17:32, Psa 56:9] We are safe in our Savior's hands, and nothing may infiltrate "the city" of our lives, as it were, except by our

Father's permission; for God promises us, "*thy walls are continually before me.*" [Isa 49:16]

Day 10, No Longer Separated by Fear

Exodus 19:16, 18 – And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled...And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because The LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly.

There are many glorious differences between the Old Covenant and the New. Take one, for example, which we can see when we contrast what happened the third day in Exodus chapter nineteen, versus the third day in the New Testament, which was when Jesus arose from out from among the grave. On the third day with Moses, at Mount Sinai, the Israelites saw the power and judgment and fear of God. Exodus says, “*and it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud.*” [Ex 19:16] The people during that time saw the holiness of The LORD to an extreme; they experienced just how set apart God was and how difficult and fearful it was to approach him. Everyone who tried to touch the mountain or look upon The LORD would be killed. The LORD had said, “*there shall not an hand touch it, but he shall surely be stoned, or shot through; whether it be beast or man, it shall not live...*” [Ex 19:13] No one, except a very select few, could approach God upon the mount; there was a great amount of fear surrounding

everything this day, and especially for those who thought to approach the dreadful mountain to get a glimpse of God. And so we see that on the third day at Mount Sinai there were storms and much fear.

However, in the new covenant with Jesus, on the third day there is joy and victory, for Jesus is risen! We read in Matthew,

“And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you. And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word. And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him. Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid...” [Mt 28:5-10a]

On the third day the women came to find Jesus risen. There at the tomb, the angel which met them comforted them, saying "*fear not ye.*" Then, Jesus Himself met them and also said, "*be not afraid.*" There is no fear to be found here! As the angel said, "*come, see the place where the Lord lay.*" Come and see the empty tomb; come and see that He is no longer dead but has risen, never to die again. Come see where He used to lay, but where He lies no longer. Come, see that death has been conquered by

The Lord Jesus. Come and draw near, do not be afraid, do not hesitate to come.

For us, this is a very comforting contrast. In the New Covenant, because of Jesus' blood, we may "*draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith;*" [Heb 10:22] we may draw near without worry because in Christ we are accepted by God our Father, and peace has been restored between us and Him. Praise God; for it is Jesus who has, "*reconciled [us] in the body of His flesh through death, to present [us] holy and unblameable and unproveable in [The Father's] sight: if ye continue in the faith...*" [Col 1:21b-23a] Yes, and praise God again, for as The Spirit tells us,

"Ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest... But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels... to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant..." [Heb 12:18, 22, 23, 24]

Therefore, let us draw near to our God without delay and enjoy this new and wonderful fellowship in Christ Jesus His Son; for we have not been barred from drawing near to Him, but we have been "*called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.*" [1 Cor 1:9]

Day 11, The Free Gift of God's Glory

John 13:31-32 – Therefore, when he was gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God be glorified in Him, God shall also glorify Him in Himself, and shall immediately glorify Him.

These verses say something quite incredible regarding Jesus' life. After it was revealed through the taking of the dipped bread that Judas was the betrayer, and after Judas went out into the night, Jesus proclaimed that now He was glorified. Everything had come to a climax, and now Jesus was glorified. The verb is in the Aorist tense which indicates a complete action. Though Jesus, in time, had not yet been crucified and resurrected, Jesus was fixed in mind and His course of action here-on-out was determined - it was as if it had already happened; for His heart was perfect and steadfast in doing God's will; as He said through Isaiah, "*...therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed.*" [Isa 50:7b] And as it says in Romans, God is a God who "*calleth those things which be not as though they were.*" [Rom 4:17b]

See too Jesus' confidence that what would happen would glorify The Father also, for He said, "*and God is glorified in Him.*" And further Jesus concludes that if God has in fact been glorified, then God will glorify Jesus in Himself and will immediately glorify Jesus. This statement boldly shows Jesus' confidence of His own righteousness and goodness; so much so that Jesus here claims to have equal

glory, or honor, to The Father. See that Jesus says in effect, "because I have perfectly honored my Father at all points, even up until now, therefore I know that The Father will magnify me in Himself; my Father will magnify me and shall immediately do it because I have perfectly represented and lifted Him up in all my actions. There is no distinction between my glory and The Father's."

This is a remarkable thing for Jesus to say. Imagine hearing these words as one of His disciples. And again, a few moments later Jesus would plainly say that He and The Father were indistinguishable in character, in glory: *"If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him...he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?"* [Jn 14:7, 9b] Jesus was so confident of this that He prayed out loud, *"I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was."* [Jn 17:4-5]

In Romans it says, *"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."* [Rom 3:23] Here we see a plain definition of sin: to fall short. But to fall short of what? To fall short of God's glory. Plainly stated, sin is anything that does not perfectly represent God's character. Glory literally means to be heavy; that is, honor, renown, glory, majesty. Glory refers to the intrinsic worth, to the character or reputation (name) of a person; in this case, God. When God promises to show Moses His glory, along with the accompanying brightness, God tells Moses who He is. He tells Him His character/attributes [Ex 33:18-34:7]. Therefore, when we say that to sin is to fall short of

God's glory; we do not mean to say, that sinning is not to shine brightly; nor that to sin is to not be exalted. But we mean to say that sin is anything which is not perfectly representative (equal) to God's character. That which is not like God is sin.

Now combine these two truths: mainly that one; Jesus claimed to, and did in fact, glorify The Father perfectly and was a perfect image of Him in word, thought, and deed, and two; that anything which does not perfectly reflect God's character is sin. We see from Jesus' words, "*God shall also glorify Him in Himself, and shall immediately glorify Him,*" that Jesus so perfectly and always glorified The Father that the glory of either one of them was indistinguishable and equal; and that because of Jesus' life, He would forever be exalted and raised up, being given a name (glory) above all others just as Philippians says [Phil 2:9-10].

When we meditate upon this truth of Jesus' glory it becomes exceedingly humbling to hear Jesus' words from His prayer, when He said, "*And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one.*" [Jn 17:22] This very same glory that Jesus earned from His own innate goodness and righteousness, which was equal to The Father, He has given to us. He has given this to us as a free gift because surely, as Romans says, we have all fallen desperately short and there is none that doeth good, no not one. Truly, we have an awesome God; truly, we have a beautiful and precious Christ who would do these things.

Day 12, Boasting In Salvation

Psalms 21:5 – His glory is great in thy salvation: honour and majesty hast thou laid upon him.

Speaking of “*the king*,” David writes that “*His glory is great in [The LORD’s] salvation: honour and majesty hast thou laid upon him.*” This is quite remarkable, given that David had many earthly and fleshly things to glory of. If he wanted to boast about something of worldly value, he had no lack of material. He was “*of a beautiful countenance...cunning in playing [the harp]...[was] a mighty [and] valiant man, and a man of war, and prudent in matters...and the LORD [was] with him.*” [1 Sam 16:12, 18] This is very similar to Paul, who said, “*If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee...*” [Phil 3:4-5] And similarly to the king’s boasting/glory here in Psalms, so too Paul responded to these earthly things, proclaiming,

“But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the

righteousness which is of God by faith." [Phil 3:7-9]

In both cases the response is the same, though spoken differently, and the sum of it is well said of Paul: "*But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.*" [Gal 6:14] As Christians, we have not one thing to boast of outside of Jesus. For without Him we are nothing, for it is said, "*we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God*" and again, "*For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.*" [Gal 6:3] We find our value and our strength in Jesus' salvation, The LORD's salvation; and if we shall boast, it will be of the glorious salvation wrought by our God. It shall not be of our own strength, for we have none in-and-of ourselves, but any boasting shall be of His strength and His salvation; and as Paul again states, "*If I must needs boast, I will boast of the things which concern mine weaknesses.*" [2 Cor 11:30]

If we boast (glory), let it be in Jesus' cross/our God's salvation, as the king in Psalms gives us example; yes, let any boasting be in the fact that we were lost sinners destined for Hell but our great God pulled us up out of that "*horrible pit*" "*wherein is no water*" and from "*out of the miry clay*" and has from thence graciously and mercifully "*set [our] feet upon [the] Rock*" of Jesus Christ "*and established [our] goings*" in Him, granting us that wonderful and "*unspeakable gift*" of everlasting life which has been given to us from God's "*abundant mercy*" and which exhibited grace that is "*exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.*" [Psa 40:2, Zech 9:11, 2 Cor 9:15, 1 Pe 1:3, 1 Tim 1:14]

God receives glory when it is seen that we are weak and He is strong; that despite our weaknesses, He is still able to work through us, save us, sanctify us, and use us. It gives God no glory when we are self-sufficient and never in need of His help; but it gives God much glory when we are put to the test and see our need, when we cry out for His mercy, when in our weakness His strength and grace are perfected.

Day 13, The Tender King's Glorious Response

Genesis 45:5 – Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life.

In Genesis, one of the main accounts given is that of Joseph, who was a son of Jacob, and is a major tribe of Israel. Joseph was the first child born of Rachel after being barren for some time; it is written regarding her, that “*God remembered Rachel, and God hearkened to her [prayers], and opened her womb.*” [Gen 30:22] Rachel being the first wife that Jacob desired, for whom he served Laban fourteen total years, and Joseph being the firstborn from her, it so happened that “*Israel, [who is also Jacob], loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat without seam.*” [Gen 37:3]

Joseph was the favored child, and because of this, and perhaps also that Joseph “*brought unto his father [the] evil report*” of his brethren, his brethren “*hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him.*” [Gen 37:2, 4] Therefore they began to plot against their brother and when the opportunity arose, they sold him into slavery and lied to their father, convincing him that Joseph was killed by wild beasts. Eventually, after some time, Joseph, who had been transported to Egypt by the slave traders, was elevated to great stature and became very powerful. Genesis tells us,

“And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck; And he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried before him, Bow the knee: and he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt.” [Gen 41:42-43]

Joseph was given such a degree of authority that Pharaoh said to him, *“without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt.”* [Gen 41:44]

Now it came to pass, The LORD tells us, that *“seven years of dearth began to come, according as Joseph had said [to Pharaoh],”* [Gen 41:54] which were so severe that it is said *“the famine was over all the face of the earth...and all countries came into Egypt to Joseph for to buy corn; because that the famine was so sore in all lands,”* and because that Joseph through God's wisdom had so prepared for the famine which was predetermined and prophesied of God. [Gen 41:56-57]

Eventually, Joseph's brethren who were with their father came to Egypt to buy food, and it came to pass that Joseph *“made himself known unto his brethren.”* [Gen 45:1] But rightfully so, his brethren, upon seeing this, *“were troubled at his presence,”* [Gen 45:3] however, Joseph did not chastise nor argue with his brethren; neither did he condemn them nor treat them harshly, but said to them, *“I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life...And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance.”* [Gen 45:4-5, 7] There is

much more to the account given in Genesis, but from this small portion, we are able to see a glorious picture of Christ.

Just as Joseph was delivered up by his very own brethren and suffered for sins he did not commit, so too Jesus suffered for us; for just as Joseph was betrayed, so too Jesus by Judas his friend and the Jews His brethren. Moreover, not only by them, but also us, those whom He has now turned His face toward with love, mercy, and grace. And just as Joseph suffered, was cast into prison, and was eventually raised to great heights of power through suffering, so too Jesus. For Jesus suffered for us in great measure, taking upon Himself the fulness of our sins and punishments; and because of His valiant action, Philippians tells us,

“God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” [Phil 2:9-11]

And just as Joseph’s reaction was full of mercy and forgiveness toward His brethren, not condemning them for their betrayal, so too is Jesus’ toward us, toward those who have betrayed Him, whose sins had adhered him to the cross with thick nails and whose rebellions had caused Him to be subjected to God’s vehement wrath. For we see that Just as Joseph’s word to His brethren was *“be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves,”* so too are Jesus’ words toward us; for we are told, *“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus,*

who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit;” and, “...*neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the LORD is your strength.*” [Rom 8:1, Neh 8:10]

We see here such a glorious picture of Christ in Joseph’s reaction. What a comforting and encouraging thing that Jesus is not bitter or angry or upset with us for our many sins, but is rather pleased that we are now in His company forever by way of salvation. And think too regarding this picture, how glorious it is to us, to whom this account is not only reality (as it was for Joseph’s brethren), but a much more severe reality. For the suffering Jesus endured on our behalf was far greater than Joseph endured, and far greater than any other man; and the sins committed toward Jesus, The King of Glory, are far more grievous than anything Joseph’s brethren did. It was because of each of our sins individually that Christ died and suffered God’s most terrible wrath and that His body was utterly broken, being mutilated beyond the appearance of a human being. [Isa 52:14] And though our sins against Christ were so much greater, and His suffering so much more intense, yet Christ speaks even more softly and mercifully to us, to those of us who have chosen to receive Him into our hearts and believe on His name. Praise God for His unspeakable gift; this is the King we shall forever serve, who unlike Joseph will never die and who is perfect in all His ways.

Day 14, A Mountain of Love

Psalms 36:6a – Thy righteousness is like the great mountains...

Imagine a single mountain towering past the international space station, a mountain whose peak extends over two million feet, over 900,000 meters into the sky into the exosphere of the earth. It would be quite a sight to see, an absolutely massive and powerful presence no doubt. Even some of the smaller mountains on earth are impressive to view or to stand by. There is something about a mountain which speaks of power and of majesty, of stability and strength, and if such a mountain were to exist, it would be almost unfathomable. If we combined the top 120 mountains together into one, giant, towering behemoth, it would be just what is described here. This fictional mountain would extend 564 miles into the sky, or 909,000 meters.

Now compare this thought to our verse in Psalms, which states that God's righteousness "*is like the great mountains.*" First, we must remember that in Corinthians Paul says we are in "*Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us...righteousness...*" [1 Cor 1:30] and also that in Jeremiah, we are told the "*Righteous Branch*" who is Christ, shall be called, "*THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.*" [Jer 23:5-6] We see, then, from these passages that Jesus is our righteousness and He in fact is the righteousness of God; for it is written that we are "*made the righteousness of God in Him.*" [2 Cor 5:21] So then, we see that the righteousness of Jesus, who is

“the radiance of [The Father’s] glory, and the express image of His person,” [Heb 1:3] is indeed *“like the great mountains.”* And now let us consider the righteousness of Christ, which is displayed to us in His life on earth.

With this verse in mind, consider the righteousness of Jesus, who while on earth, fulfilled every part of the law without flaw, who unlike us, did not fall short of God’s glory, but through His life perfectly displayed it, being perfectly obedient to every statute of God and every form of His character. This is to us a great mountain of righteousness. It towers so incredibly past any known object on earth, past any man ever to live, that even the height of the furthest star in the deep expanse of space falls short in comparison.

Jesus, in every millisecond of His life on earth, perfectly loved. He in fact was love; for it is written, *“God is love.”* [1 Jn 4:8] Yes, for every living and breathing second of Jesus’ existence, He perfectly represented The Father’s love in every imaginable aspect: in thought, word, emotion, and deed. But to truly see the height of this majesty, we must look at 1 Corinthians 13.

In this passage, we are given a description of love. But we would be careful to notice that all the descriptive words of love in verses four through eight are present verbs. They are not adjectives, as it sometimes seems, but verbs; and present verbs at that. In Greek, the present verb represents a continuous action, an action which is not just once, neither is it past, but it is present and ongoing: that is, continuous. And notice another thing: not only is love all these verbs, but love is all these verbs at the same moment. Meaning, love is not in one instance longsuffering (but not hopeful); neither is love kind

(albeit thinking evil); no, in no case! Love at every moment is continually doing all these things at once. We therefore read that love,

“...is suffering long, and is being usefully kind; love is not envying; love is not boasting of itself, is not being puffed up, not behaving improperly/indecently, is not seeking itself, is not being easily provoked, is not keeping account of wrongdoing; is not rejoicing in iniquity, but is rejoicing in the truth; is bearing up [with] all things, is believing all things, is hoping [through] all things, is enduring all things. Love is never failing...” [1 Cor 13:4-8a]

Most of us, if we are honest, see that we fall short of even one descriptor of love. But Jesus, who lived over thirty years upon earth, for not one second ever failed at any moment to display each and every aspect of love in perfect union and execution. This is a massive and glorious mountain of righteousness. Truly, as it says, His *“righteousness is like the great mountains.”*

For us, this is a most rewarding thought. For it is Jesus’ righteousness that is accredited to us. It is through faith that we are gifted this righteousness. Praise God for His beautiful Son, Jesus; for He climbed a mountain none of us could ever have climbed. And praise God again, for because of all Jesus’ stunning righteousness, He was condemned as though He never did a righteous act in His life, and He did this all for us who believe on Him, for those whom He loved, for it is on the cross, that though Jesus was righteous and *“knew no sin,”* yet Paul tells us that He was *“made...sin for us”* and was condemned for

us “*that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.*” [2 Cor 5:21]

Day 15, Fragrant Worship Magnifies Jesus

Luke 7:37-38 – And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, And stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment.

On a certain day, “*one of the Pharisees, [whose name was Simon], desired [Jesus] that He would eat with him,*” and so Jesus “*went into the Pharisee’s house and sat down to meat.*” [Lk 7:36] It was here that a certain woman, “*which was a sinner,*” came, “*when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee’s house.*” [Lk 7:37] She, though unnamed, lives on forever, having been recorded in God’s word. Her worship and love toward Christ, which we shall read of, is made eternal, having been written of The Holy Spirit, whose words are “*living and abiding for ever.*” [1 Pe 1:23] Even though this woman was a sinner, she had the boldness few righteous men have; for she entered into a place where she was not welcomed to seek out Jesus and when there, in the Pharisee’s house, she poured out her worship upon Him unabashedly.

The account tells us that the woman “*brought an alabaster box of ointment,*” which was very expensive, and began to weep, washing Jesus’ “*feet with [her] tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed*

His feet, and anointed them with the ointment.” [Lk 7:38] This was something, Jesus points out, which the Pharisee did not do nor even consider. Jesus says,

“And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.”
[Lk 7:44-47]

Notice three things here. One, that Jesus “*turned to the woman*” and not to Simon; and two, that the woman’s sins, “*which [were] many,*” were forgiven but Simons’ apparently were not; and three, that the woman, though a sinner and looked down upon and though poorer than Simon no doubt, “*loved much,*” but Simon did not show any love at all toward Jesus.

What a marvelous account of love and worship; this woman, a sinner much like us, in spite of the perhaps dirty looks and dirty thoughts of those around, came unannounced before Christ, and with much tears began to pour out perhaps all the wealth she had upon His feet, as the room became engulfed with the precious odor, a sweet-smelling sacrifice to God. Much like Jesus poured out His life for us, having “*given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling fragrance,*”

[Eph 5:2] so too did this woman. And after all was said and done, Jesus said to her, "... *Thy sins are forgiven... Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.*" [Lk 7:48, 50]

Let us think carefully about the ointment; for it was very fragrant and very expensive (as we learn from other accounts of this ointment being used). And notice in particular how afterward the woman and Jesus would have smelled the same. Through the act of worship, the scent of the ointment filled the room, covering Christ and covering her. Just as the priests in olden times went into the holy place and came out bearing the fragrance of God from the holy incense, so too the woman entered into the very presence of God, Jesus Christ, and left with a beautiful fragrance upon her. The same is true of those who, like the woman, enter Jesus' presence to pour out worship upon Him. And those who act as the woman did will no doubt receive the same encouragement, "*thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.*"

Truly what this woman did is an encouragement and admonition to us all, speaking of the importance of love and forgiveness and humility; but I think what is most staggering is not this woman's love, but the one whom she loved. This account, though it reveals to us an example of genuine worship, reveals to us also our Savior's love. The worship of this woman shows us the value of Jesus; it shows us how marvelous He must be to provoke such an act, how grand His value and character and glory must be, which would stir up such an act of boldness and love. It reminds us that though she paid a high price to pour out precious perfume, yet we are redeemed "*with the precious blood of Christ, as of a*

Lamb without blemish and without spot,” [1 Pe 1:19b]
which is of far greater value.

Do we see a great act of faith or of love? Do we revel in the valorous acts of those men of old whom we call our heroes? Yes, we may; but if we study the great walls of Zion, as it were, if we “*mark...well her bulwarks,*” then let us be careful not to conclude that men are great; no, but that, as the Psalm says, “*this God is our God for ever and ever: He will be our guide even unto death.*” [Psa 48:12-14] Yes, let us conclude that though the faith or worship of men and women touched by God’s grace hold much beauty, yet the beauty of Christ is far greater still. For God has “*provided some better thing for us;*” that is, the faith of Christ; so then let us, “*look away from all else to gaze upon Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*” [Heb 11:40-12:2]

If this woman’s act of worship recorded in Luke seems valiant or courageous or sweet; then well, for so it is. But let us reach further to the real conclusion: that the God she poured out love on is so worthy as to provoke such an act; and that the God she worshipped, Jesus Christ, is our God even today, and that He is still worthy, even doubly worthy, of such an act today.

Day 16, His Precious Possession

Numbers 3:12 – I have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel instead of all the firstborn that openeth the matrix among the children of Israel: therefore the Levites shall be mine.

In Exodus, The LORD says that because “*by strength of hand The LORD brought [Israel] out from Egypt, from the house of bondage*” they were to “*set apart unto The LORD all that openeth the matrix, and every firstling that cometh of a beast...the males shall be The LORD’s.*” [Ex 13:12, 14] Though there was an option to not redeem an animal and instead “*break his neck,*” that option was not available for men, and instead God commanded, “*all the firstborn of man among thy children shalt thou redeem.*” [Ex 13:13] Here in Numbers, God is modifying this command. He says that instead of having to redeem your firstborn male, The LORD has taken every Levite which is born to Himself. The LORD says plainly, “*therefore the Levites shall be mine,*” and again, later in the chapter, “*thou shalt take the Levites for me: I am the LORD...the Levites shall be mine: I am The LORD.*” [Num 3:41, 45] So all the firstborn males in Israel were loosed from the original command in Exodus, it being made optional, and God instead would take every Levite unto Himself.

To apply this to ourselves, we begin in Peter, where we are told regarding our position in Christ, “*ye are...a royal priesthood,*” and again in Revelation, “*[Jesus] hast made*

us unto our God kings and priests..." [1 Pe 2:9, Rev 5:10] We, as Christians, are inaugurated into the priesthood of Christ. Much like there were priests in the Levitical days, underneath the high priest, so too it is today; we, as "*living stones*" cut from Christ, who is *The Rock*, abide as priests under Jesus, who is "*called of God an High Priest after the order of Melchisedec.*" [1 Pe 2:5, Mt 21:44, Heb 5:10] As the priests of God, we too are taken of God to Himself. Just as He did for the Levites, so too God does for us, calling us His own and taking us to Himself as His own inheritance.

In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul prays for them (and for us), "*that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints [is].*" [Eph 1:18] Here we see a very glorious truth: that we are indeed Jesus' inheritance! We have been gifted unto Christ by His Father, the giver and source of "*every good gift and every perfect gift,*" for Jesus prayed to The Father, "*I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world...*" [Jam 1:17, Jn 17:6] Just as Abraham sent out His servant, Eliezer, whose name means "God is help," in search of a wife for his son Isaac, so too The LORD has sent forth His Holy Spirit who has found and brought us to Christ and made us His bride. And so, as it is written in the Proverbs, "*House and riches are the inheritance of fathers: and a prudent wife is from the LORD,*" [Prov 19:14] so too it is here, that we, as Christ's bride, are also His inheritance, given to Him of God. But we also see this proof in the Old Testament.

In the law, God revealed to Israel that they too were His inheritance. He says to them, "*but The LORD hath taken you, and brought you forth out of the iron furnace,*

even out of Egypt, to be unto Him a people of inheritance, as ye are this day." [Deut 4:20] And again, *"for The LORD's portion is His people; Jacob is the lot of His inheritance."* [Deut 32:9] These truths are also applicable to us, the "*Israel of God*," who have been "*grafted in*" to the Olive Tree of Israel. [Gal 6:16, Rom 11:17-22] For just as God purchased Israel out of slavery in Egypt, so too God has purchased us by Jesus' blood out of the clutches of Satan, the world, and from slavery to sin.

This is a precious truth: that we are Jesus' inheritance. We are His, and He is ours. He has purchased us, and we have been given to Him, and He does never intend to loose us from His loving grasp. And see too, that we are doubly His; even triply His. For He created us, He chose us, and He purchased us. From each person of the glorious Godhead we are chosen and secure.

Day 17, Gazing Upon His Beauty

John 1:14 – And The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we gazed upon His glory as of the only begotten of The Father,) full of grace and truth.

In the New Covenant, the beholding of God's glory is a privilege we get to enjoy. It is something that is possible through Jesus. Paul tells us, speaking about how the Children of Israel are veiled from the reality of Christ in the Old Testament scriptures, "*nevertheless, when a man shall turn to The Lord, the veil shall be taken away.*" [2 Cor 3:16] The veil that prevents Israel in large part from seeing Christ, is a spiritual veil; a veil which is taken away when one turns to God (and not to the law!). Paul then says later, in contrast to Israel, "*but we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of The Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of The LORD.*" [2 Cor 3:18] It is through this unveiling of the heart, this illumination of the heart, that we can see God's glory in the face of Jesus Christ. For Paul says again, "*because it is God having said, from out of darkness light will shine, who hath shined in our hearts, to give illumination of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*" [2 Cor 4:6] We see then that it is through God's illumination, through The Spirit of God entering our hearts, (for "*where The Spirit of The Lord is, there is liberty*" [2 Cor 3:17]), that we are unveiled and thus free to view God's glory in Jesus Christ.

This reality is distinctly different from the Old Covenant, even as Paul points out in the context of the above-referenced verses. Remember what The LORD commanded in Exodus by Mount Sinai. It is written, “*and The LORD said unto Moses, go down, charge the people, lest they break through unto The LORD to gaze, and many of them perish.*” [Ex 19:21] In the Old Covenant, when God appeared on the mount, it was forbidden except by those elected, mainly Moses, from approaching God and gazing upon Him. This was strictly forbidden. Though Israel had seen, and would see, the cloud of God’s glory and the fire of His glory, yet there was still limits, and no one could freely approach God in this glorious form without dying. For it was said that, “*if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart.*” [Heb 12:20] Compare this with our verse for today, where John bears witness regarding His own, and the other Apostles interactions with Jesus, when he says, “*we gazed upon His glory.*” Yes, they gazed upon the very glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, and we may do the same.

This privilege is given to those who are under the New Covenant. That veil is removed, and we are given the special ability to gaze upon God’s glory. And in stark contrast to the Old Covenant, we are not forbidden; no, but on the contrary, we are encouraged. For Jesus prays to The Father, “*Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.*” [Jn 17:24] Jesus desires us to do this; it is something that God wants us to do!

So then, with such beauty to behold, let us gaze upon His glory by searching it out in the scriptures; for it is through the life of Jesus on earth and the reality of Jesus' character revealed therein, where we see God's glory as in a mirror as Paul said. Like David, may our desire be that we "*may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of [our] life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to look upon [Him] in his temple.*" [Psa 27:4]

Day 18, Our Savior's Courage

Galatians 4:4-5 – But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

God tells us that when the fulness of the time was come, Jesus was sent forth to earth in order that He might save us. The word “*fulness*” in the above passage means to be complete, to be filled up; that is, the completion of the time. We see obviously from this passage that there was no other time for Him to arrive; the exact time Jesus came into the world was the only sufficient time for such an event. It should not have happened earlier, nor later, but right when it did, so that the moment when Jesus came forth is described as “*the fulness of the time*.”

In God's perfect timing, and in coordination with all of the Godhead, Jesus' coming forth took place, who's origin, as Micah says, was “*from of old, from everlasting*.” [Mic 5:2] It should come as no surprise to us that God had preordained the exact time. Certainly, He had many reasons to do so. But one in particular shows us very particularly God's awesome character.

Jesus was born at such a moment in history when Rome essentially ruled most of the world, including Israel. This being the case, recognize that Jesus was born and grew up at a time when the most severe of capital punishments was crucifixion. This was no mistake. For many, many

years prior, even before crucifixion existed as the people in Jesus' time knew it, David and Isaiah had written regarding the Messiah's death in drastic detail, speaking of how He would die such a death. [Psa 22, Isa 53] It is stunning to come to the realization that this was planned. No doubt God could have planned for Jesus to appear at any point in history. The choice was His; for it is written, "*...he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?*" [Dan 4:35] And The Lord Jesus, knowing He must die for our sins, did not choose to come at a time when a less brutal form of punishment was more common. No, but our Glorious King, came when the most brutal of capital punishments existed, having been perfected by the Romans. Jesus could have avoided much pain; He could have died a less brutal death to pay for our sins; but He did not. No, but Jesus, The King of Glory and Bishop of our Souls, waited until crucifixion would certainly be used for His sacrificial death, which was "*a sweetsmelling fragrance [to God].*" [Eph 5:2]

Indeed, we have for our Savior a strong and courageous man, without fear and without compromise, whose character and integrity is beyond the strength of diamond; and not just a man, but God Himself. Yes, let us think deeply upon this and drink from this well, for Jesus is one of great strength and great glory, a God very much worthy of all our adoration and devotion; a God who cares for us and who died for our sins in the most brutal of fashions.

Day 19, Faithful Even When We're Not

Psalms 73:22-26 – So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as a beast before thee. Nevertheless I am continually with thee: thou hast holden me by my right hand. Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.

The passage for today shows us a marvelous attribute of God: His faithfulness. Even though the Psalmist thinks back upon a certain time when he was not faithful to God, having concluded, “*I was as a beast before [Him],*” he can still confidently say to God, “*nevertheless I am continually with thee: thou hast holden me by my right hand.*” What a comfortable attribute of God to meditate on. Truly something that gives life to the soul and refreshment to the mind. For we are all unfaithful at times. Even the most devoted Christian, if he is humble enough, will admit that his faithfulness to God is lacking, and certainly never reaches the degree to which Jesus trusted in The Father. And yet, even though this is true, we see here in the Psalm what Paul tells us, “*if we believe not, yet He abideth faithful: He cannot deny Himself.*” [2 Tim 2:13]

Though we are unfaithful and do not believe in God as we should all the time; yet, in those times God still abides faithful, for He will not deny Himself. Because The

Father sees us as Christ Jesus His Son, and cannot deny His Son, having denied Him already on the cross for our sakes and having received Him to eternal Glory, therefore we too cannot be denied of God if we truly believe. Since we are of Jesus' body and have The Eternal Spirit dwelling in us always, again we see that He cannot deny us. For God's word says, "...as [Christ] is, so are we in this world." [1 Jn 4:17b]

See too that even in these times we are upheld of God. The Psalmist says, "*thou hast holden me by my right hand;*" and again, "*blessed be The Lord, who daily bears us up, even the God of our salvation. Selah.*" [Psa 73:23; 68:19] Even though we act in the flesh, like an animal, a beast, yet God abides faithful and looks after us. He is unfathomably faithful; for there is no man who would do these things. But because His attributes are holy, because He is not like man, He can show such mercy; for He tells us, "*My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.*" [Isa 55:8] God is faithful to us, to uphold us and to never forsake us. He tells us plainly "*I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*" [Heb 13:5b] But God does even more than this; we see that God also hears us in our unbelief.

In another place David also writes, "*Blessed be The LORD: for He hath shewed me His marvelous kindness in a strong city. For I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes: nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplications when I cried unto thee.*" [Psa 31:21-22] See here that David hastily and wrongly assumed that God had left him, that he was cut off from before God's eyes. But David's conclusion was not the truth, for God says to Zion and all those who belong to Him, "*Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls*

are continually before me." [Isa 49:16] And here again we see that even though there was unbelief, God still *"heardest the voice of [David's] supplications."*

Unfortunately, we know this type of unbelief all too often, much like the Israelites, and much like the man who cried out to Jesus, *"Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief."* [Mk 9:24b] But even though this is true, we can exult alongside Asaph, *"my flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever."* [Psa 73:26] Thanks be to God that we are not our own strength, but it is God who is our strength and upon whom our life stands and holds together, because it is through Jesus that *"all things hold together."* [Col 1:17b]

Day 20, Objects of God's Glorious Grace

Luke 1:28, 30-31 – And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favored, The Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women...And the angel said unto her, fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call His name JESUS.

The phrase “*highly favored*” in our passage for today has a unique meaning, which is very encouraging for those of us who are found in Christ Jesus. The single Greek word used for these two words is only found in one other place in the New Testament, and it means “to be an object of grace or to be supplied/endowed/furnished with grace.” Endowed itself means “to be supported with a permanent fund/source.” And so, we see that this wonderful word means in context that Mary, to whom the angel speaks, has been supplied with a permanent source of grace from her Father in Heaven.

The true encouragement in this verse comes not totally from what the angel says to Mary, but from the other usage of the Greek word mentioned above. In Ephesians it says regarding all believers, not just Mary, that God has “*predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved [Son].*” [Eph 1:5b-6] The underlined word, “*accepted*” is the same Greek

word used for “*highly favored*” in Luke. The same thing spoken of Mary is spoken of all believers.

For us, this is a blessed thing. It may not be so blessed for the institution of Catholicism, which raises Mary to an unholy status, making her nearly a god, but it surely is a blessed revelation for those true children of God in Christ Jesus. We are also highly favored of God, with whom “*there is no respect of persons;*” [Rom 2:11] yes, moreover, we are permanently supplied with grace through Jesus Christ, for “*And of his fulness have all we received, and grace upon grace.*” [Jn 1:16]

Praise to God that we have received such grace. What a beautiful thing that in a very similar way to Mary, we too shall bear Christ. Not as she did, giving birth, but spiritually, for Christ Jesus dwells in our hearts by faith [Eph 3:17] and through our dying to self, His life “*might be made manifest in our [bodies].*” [2 Cor 4:10-11] And in another way, similar to how the angel told Mary, “*blessed art thou among women,*” it is true of us that we are blessed among all nations. In Psalms it says, “*blessed is...the people whom He hath chosen for His own inheritance;*” and again, “*happy is that people, whose God is The LORD.*” [Psa 33:12; 144:15]

Blessed be our God, who does not show partiality, but who blesses us and chooses to use us just as He did Mary.

Day 21, Our Perfect Representative

1 John 2:1 – My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with The Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

The word advocate means a legal assistant, an intercessor, a comforter. Literally, this Greek word found in 1 John 2:1 signifies someone who is “close beside” and who from that position “calls or summons;” in a legal sense, it is one that pleads the cause of another. In a general sense, it is one who defends, vindicates, or embraces/takes to one’s self a cause. This word describes not only The Holy Spirit as our comforter [Jn 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7], but also Jesus as our advocate with The Father [1 Jn 2:1] as we see here. For each of us individually, Jesus is our advocate, one who pleads for us, who takes up our cause as His own and presents it before the Father; one who represents us before The Father completely. This is a wonderful truth for us to believe and hold on to; for through it we can approach God with confidence.

Notice also that John does not say only Jesus Christ, but He says a fuller title: Jesus Christ The Righteous One. It is Jesus Christ, “*The LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS*,” [Jer 23:6] who stands before The Father day and night on our behalf for our advocacy. Jesus, who “*ever liveth to make intercession for [us]*” and who is in “*heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us*,” [Heb 7:25; 9:24] stands before The Father, representing us! And as Aaron the first High Priest had on his crown,

“HOLINESS TO THE LORD...that [the Children of Israel would] be accepted before the LORD,” so too it is for Jesus our *“merciful and faithful high priest”* who presents us before The Father as, *“holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in His sight.”* [Ex 28:36-38, Heb 2:17, Col 1:22]

Yes, we see that Jesus Christ represents us: He, who is our true and real and eternal representative in heaven. The Father looks at Jesus, our representative, our advocate, and based on Jesus' merit, righteousness, and faith, imputes to us the very same qualities that are present in Him. Truly, though not in living reality but in status and position, we are seen as equal to Jesus in God's sight, for we are one in Him and He in us, and it is has been written for our encouragement and faith, *"herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as He is, so are we in this world."* [1 Jn 5:17]

So praise be to God who has predestinated us to become adopted as true sons and daughters in Jesus; and praise to Jesus who has chosen us and has died and risen again for us; and finally, praise be to The Holy Spirit who has drawn us and who indwells us, keeping us secure in Christ. For through our trifold God we are beautifully accepted and loved, seen by God through the lens of our perfect Savior, Jesus.

Day 22, Blessed Forgiveness

Psalms 34:22 – The LORD redeemeth the soul of his servants: and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate.

Seeing that The Bible tells us “*all scripture is God-breathed,*” [2 Tim 3:16] and that “*the word of the Lord endureth for ever,*” [1 Pe 1:25] we would do well to pay close attention to what each word says. In this particular verse, Psalms 34:22, there is a precious jewel for us to find which is hidden beneath the KJV word “*desolate.*” The Hebrew word behind this English translation in the King James Bible does not mean barren or empty, as we would normally think desolate to mean; rather, the word means “to bear one’s guilt [for wrongdoing]; to suffer punishment due [for wrongdoing].”

This is a beautiful word and verse. The forgiveness of God is unsurpassable; Yes, “*who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?*” [Ex 15:11] None can compare to our great God; “*there is none holy as The LORD: for there is none beside thee: neither is there any Rock like our God.*” [1 Sam 2:2] We see here that not one single person who trusts in Jesus Christ shall ever suffer the punishment due for their sins. They shall never bear the guilt of their sins, for we see also in Hebrews that through the application of Jesus’ blood by faith, God has “*purge[d] [our] conscience[s] from dead works to serve the living God.*” [Heb 9:14] Again, Paul

tells us in Romans, quoting Psalms, “*Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.*” [Rom 4:8] Yes, blessed indeed is that man to whom The LORD shall never accredit any sin. What glorious forgiveness God shows us. In reality, it is a fearful thing; for like the servant in the parable Jesus told, we owe our master ten thousand talents but for His compassion we have been loosed from our debt. In Psalms we read, “*If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.*” [Psa 130:3-4]

It is a fearful and wonderful thing, an awe-inspiring thing, that God has forgiven us in such a manner that we shall never bear punishment or guilt for our sins, and this is solely because Jesus Christ bore the punishment and guilt. For all of our wrongdoing, Jesus bore the punishment. And through faith in His blood forgiveness for such is obtained. What an incredible God we serve, who so willingly and freely and lovingly offers us this atonement. And because He has shown us such a degree of mercy and grace, we ought also to impart the same to those around us, even to those who have wronged us severely.

Day 23, Christ's Eternal Scars

Revelation 5:6 – And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.

Before Jesus came to be a man, before He “*emptied Himself*,” as The Spirit says, [Phil 2:7] I am sure He had a most glorious body. It can only be supposed how good and how majestic a form our Lord dwelt with before He was made “*in the likeness of sinful flesh*.” [Rom 8:3] In Ezekiel we see a dim reflection of His image when the prophet attempts to capture into language a vision of God's throne, which may hint to us of what He possessed before coming to earth.

“...And upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it. And I saw as the colour of amber, as the appearance of fire round about within it, from the appearance of his loins even upward, and from the appearance of his loins even downward, I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and it had brightness round about. As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD.” [Ezek 1:26b-28a]

We see a vision of many varied and beautiful lights, of fire, and of great brightness. This was the form of our Lord before He took upon Himself a lowly, human body, subject to the same weaknesses that we face from day-to-day.

The body that Jesus partook of, though similar in every aspect to ours, (*“for we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our weaknesses...”* [Heb 4:15]), was without beauty. Isaiah tells us of the Messiah that *“he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.”* [Isa 53:2] It is an exceedingly humble thing for Jesus to step down into humanity, without pomp or parade, to take upon Himself a body without show or dazzle or beauty of any kind. He was a normal-looking fellow; so much so, that Judas had to point out to the mob exactly who Jesus was, amidst His disciples on the night He was betrayed.

This is still not the only body that Jesus received. For after His resurrection, as we shall too, Jesus received a resurrected and glorified body. However, unlike most men would be inclined to think, Jesus’ new body had something remarkable: it still retained the scars of His crucifixion. This is an incredible thought to ponder, and truly shows us the majesty of our Lord. We can see that Jesus retained His scars through a number of passages; mainly, in John and above, in Revelation. Notice when Jesus appears to Thomas after His resurrection, and says, *“Thomas, reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.”* [Jn 20:27] The scars were still there, even in Jesus’ resurrected body, for Thomas to feel and to see. Again, in Revelation, when John sees the

resurrected Christ ready to redeem earth from the grasp of Satan and from the curse of sin, He writes having seen “*a Lamb as it had been slain.*” [Rev 5:6]

This fact concerning Jesus’ body was revealed far before these verses were written. In Zechariah, God says,

“Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou, and thy fellows that sit before thee: for they are men wondered at: for, behold, I will bring forth my servant the BRANCH. For behold the stone that I have laid before Joshua; upon one stone shall be seven eyes: behold, I will engrave the graving thereof, saith the LORD of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day.” [Zech 3:8-9]

The BRANCH and the stone are Christ. Notice in particular God’s use of a stone, how that The LORD says, “*I will engrave the graving thereof, saith The LORD of Hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day.*” Through the engraving of The LORD into this stone, all sin will be completely removed in one day. Certainly, this speaks to us of Christ, who was crushed by The Father for our sins. When a stone is engraved, the effect is nearly permanent. There is no eraser for stones as there is for paper, the engraving of stone is far more durable. In the same way, the scars which were given to Jesus by The Father for the removal of our sins are permanent. They are retained even by Jesus’ resurrected body. As it always is with God, this is not without purpose.

In Isaiah, The LORD says, “*Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me.*” [Isa 49:16] Here we see that The LORD,

YHWH, has engraved Israel upon His hands; He has put them ever before Himself and will not forget them nor forsake them. This pictures very plainly for us, Christ, who is “*The Everlasting Father*,” [Isa 9:6] and who was engraved for our sakes. As we saw from John, those scars upon Jesus’ hands were permanent; even today, as Jesus sits upon The Father’s right hand, His scars remain. They are engraved upon His hands. And every time Jesus sees those scars He is reminded again of His passion, which was done for each of us individually – for He died for us and rose again that we each might live unto Him.

What a glorious and precious truth. It is no wonder that the writer in Hebrews admonishes us to “*look away from all else unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of faith...for consider Him that endured such hostility of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your souls.*” [Heb 12:2-3] What strength this might bring to us who dwell upon it daily: that Christ Jesus would retain His scars for us; that He would ever remember His work for us; that we should ever be upon His heart and mind; and that He would humble Himself to such degrees, as to accomplish our salvation and love us to the very end. May He ever receive our praise for such things.

Day 24, A Precious Attitude

Acts 10:39-41 – And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly; Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead.

In this passage, there is something simple yet beautiful regarding Jesus' character. When Jesus rose from the dead, He only ever appeared to those who loved Him and desired to fellowship with Him. Jesus did not appear to His enemies, nor those who hated Him, nor those who were neutral toward Him; but Jesus appeared to His friends and disciples, to those "*who did eat and drink with Him after He rose from the dead.*" It is a simple thought, but a powerful one, for it shows us the glory of Christ. Jesus did not appear to His enemies to say, "told you so!" He did not appear to them to scorn them, or prove Himself to them, but He left them alone. For us, this is a most striking fact.

When the flesh receives opportunity, often it loves to say, "told you so!" to those who hurt it or offended it; often the flesh desires to prove itself to those who formerly disbelieved or mocked it. However, this is not the attitude that Jesus shows us. So then, let us be like Christ, let us be meek and withhold ourselves from this type of retaliation.

Day 25, An Ever-Faithful Savior

Deuteronomy 7:9a – Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God...

The LORD is The Faithful God. If one were to ask what type of God we serve, we could most certainly reply, ‘a faithful God.’ Yes, but He is so much more than that; not just a faithful God but *The Faithful God*. There is not another God like Him; there is not one that can compare. David writes, “*there is none holy as The LORD: for there is none beside thee: neither is there any Rock like our God.*” [1 Sam 2:2] And again he says, “*among the gods there is none like unto thee, O Lord; neither are there any works like unto thy works.*” [Psa 86:8] Together as a unified whole, The LORD, our Father and God; His Son who is the Christ; and The Holy Spirit, are The Faithful God – it is His character, and His character alone to possess. For again we read that Jesus, who is the exact image of all that God is, is “*the Author and Originator of faith.*” [Heb 12:2]

Similarly, if one were to ask what God we serve, we could declare: The Faithful God! It is a name that marks out which God we serve. We do not serve Baal, nor Alah, nor the false Mormon Christ; no, but we serve The Faithful God. Faithful is what He is and who He is.

In one sense, faithfulness is who our God is. He is faithful to all that He has promised, all that He has said, and all

that He has revealed Himself to be. We know the main attribute of our God is love, because John tells us, "*God is love.*" [1 Jn 4:8] We see, then, that God is faithful to be love. He shall always be love, and He will never falter from that. This logic could be applied to any attribute of God or to any promise He has blessed us with. For our God is The Faithful God.

Another blessed revelation of this truth is that *He* is the Faithful One. Yes, it is God and not ourselves. Though we must exercise faith, yet it is God who is the faithful one, even to the end of the ages. Paul tells us the faith we have is a gift from Christ. "*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.*" [Eph 2:8] And so, with great joy, we see that our salvation and our standing with God is not based on our faithfulness but His. Truly, it is Jesus' faithfulness that we put our hope and trust in, not our own. For He is The Faithful God.

Moreover, see how little and how weak of a faith God is willing to supplement and to answer. What I mean to say, is that The Lord is not surveying our hearts for the grandest of faiths, not for some high and excellent thing before He chooses to help or to work, but He is looking for even the slightest of faith. Our God will take any excuse to grant us a mighty victory or to uphold us in our temptations, for He delights in salvation and He delights in those men which belong to Him. Remember for a moment the disciples, who having been stranded in the Sea of Galilee for some time, upon seeing Christ, "*supposed [He] had been a spirit, and cried out;*" and then remember too Christ, who upon hearing their feeble yelp, "*immediately...talked with them, and saith unto them, Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid.*" [Mk 6:49-50]

Notice in particular the immediate response of Jesus to a cry which was far from perfect. The disciples did not even recognize Jesus; they thought He was a ghost and they cried out for fear. But Jesus, in all His glorious faithfulness, did not take great lengths to analyze their faith, but immediately spoke with them. And then there is Peter, who got out of the boat and walked upon water; who, when He began to sink because "*he saw the wind boisterous...cried, saying Lord, save me,*" and Jesus "*immediately...stretched forth His hand, and caught Him.*" [Mt 14:29-31] For us, this is a beautiful truth, because we see that Jesus immediately helped upon the faintest cry. Though Peter and the disciples were not utterly faithful and in fact doubted, yet Jesus saved them. So too it shall be with us; and we may likewise take comfort from the other stories in the holy scriptures because, "*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.*" [Heb 13:8]

Day 26, God's Indestructible Word

Luke 16:17 – And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail.

The amount of positive energy in the universe is immense. Even the energy contained in just a single grain of rice is very large; if it were possible to convert the entirety of its mass into pure energy, it would come to around an equivalent of 1,500 tons of TNT. No doubt, in our physical universe, there is an incredible amount of mass and energy, and the amount of energy it would take to cause all of it to be destroyed would be even more vastly incomprehensible. To annihilate all of the trillions upon trillions of lightyears of space, stars, nebula, and planets – even without considering the incredible mountains and depths of ocean and life found just here on earth – would require something supernatural. And though the power necessary to affect such destruction is so vast, yet Jesus proclaims this is easy in comparison to nullifying even the smallest point of God's word. He says,

“And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail.” [Lk 16:17]

We know the heavens and earth will indeed pass away, they will be destroyed; Jesus tells us later in Luke, *“heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.”* [Lk 21:33] This will occur at *“The Day of The Lord...in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat...”*

[2 Pe 3:10] The only one who holds the power to destroy all of creation, is the same one who created it: that is, God.

On that dreadful day, in His own good timing, God will accomplish these things; however, even all of the destructive force which will be unleashed upon earth by God, which will go so far as to melt the elements, will pale in comparison to the power it would conceivably take to make void even one accent or one Yodh (י) in God's law.

This is an extremely important and encouraging point regarding God's word, for within it are contained "*exceeding great and precious promises*," [2 Pe 1:4] which are for our benefit and which affect every aspect of our lives, both now and eternally. God's word is thusly seen to be enormously strong. It will never fail us, nor shall it ever be taken away. God's word to us is sure and steadfast, and much like Christ our hope (who is called The Word of God), it is "*an anchor of the soul*." [Heb 6:19] Praise be to God, it being "*impossible for [Him] to lie*," [Heb 6:18] who has given us such assurance that we might live our lives seeking Him out in His word and submitting to it in humble obedience. There is not another book like this great law; truly, what Moses said of Israel could also be said of us, who are "*an holy nation*," – "*what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day*?" [1 Pe 2:9, Deut 4:8]

Day 27, The King Shall Prevail

John 18:10-11 – Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus. Then said Jesus unto Peter, 'Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?'

Hundreds of years before Jesus "*emptied Himself, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men,*" [Phil 2:7] He spoke through the prophet Isaiah and said,

"I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting. For The Lord GOD will help me; therefore shall I not be put to shame: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed." [Isa 50:6-7]

Jesus was at all points unwilling to depart from The Father's will. He had set His face like a flint toward the cross, and for our sakes, determined to accomplish The Father's glorious salvation for which He had come, would not back down. Jesus said to Peter, "*the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?*" [Jn 18:11] Jesus was zealous to drink that cup, no matter how foul it may have seemed to the flesh. According as He had said earlier in John, proclaiming His steadfastness, "*Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from*

this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name." [Jn 12:27-28] The attitude that Jesus had before the garden was not changed by the immediacy of the situation; the hour indeed had come and was staring Him in the face, and yet, in zealous pursuit of God's glory and our salvation, to Peter He said,

"Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?" [Mt 26:52-54]

Indeed, we have a glorious Savior, who does not shrink back. But though our Dear Savior's faithfulness is for us an everlasting encouragement, we might focus on another aspect of this passage also and find grace in time of need.

We see in Peter's heart, as well as the other disciples, a strong desire for the kingdom to be established. Even after Jesus' resurrection, the disciples asked Him, "*Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?*" [Acts 1:6] And even before this, the truth that Christ had to first suffer and die before the kingdom would come was "*hid from them, that they perceived it not...*" [Lk 9:45, c.f., Mk 9:9-10, 31-32, Lk 18:31-34] Peter especially, because after hearing "*how that [Jesus] must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things...and be killed, and be raised again the third day...took Him, and began to rebuke Him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.*" [Mt 16:21-22] And so here again, in John, we see Peter's zeal flare up, and ignorance of what was necessary to happen, when he cut off

Malchus' right ear; but Jesus, with compassion, "*touched his ear, and healed him.*" [Lk 22:51]

What's interesting here is the meaning of Malchus' name. It means "king" or "kingdom." This provokes one to thought; why would The Holy Spirit want us to know the name of the servant? To what purpose is his name? I see here a picture; in the same way that Jesus would be "*cut off,*" [Isa 53:8] and eventually "*raised again the third day,*" [Mt 16:21] to eventually establish the kingdom, so too here Malchus', whose name means kingdom, had his right ear cut off and then later restored.

Remember that when Peter rebuked Jesus for speaking of His eventual death, Jesus said sternly, "*Get thee behind me, Satan,*" [Mt 16:23] and how in Corinthians we are told, "*the princes of this world...crucified the Lord of Glory.*" [1 Cor 2:8] See then, that just as Satan, in a furious rage, cut off Christ, only to provoke His rising again and own destruction; so too here, Peter, in the spirit of Satan, and in a fury, sought to cut off the ear of Malchus (the kingdom), only to provoke Christ to restore it to perfect health once again. And in this we are reminded of the futility of evil and sin: though sin and evil rage and fight against what is good, yet Christ will have the last say, having been raised up, and who will come again and restore the kingdom, even as He restored Malchus' ear.

Day 28, An Everlasting Remembrance

Psalms 102:12 – But Thou, O LORD, shalt endure for ever, and Thy remembrance unto all generations.

David speaks of the life of a man in another Psalm, saying, “*man is like to vanity: his days are as a shadow that passeth away.*” [Psa 144:4] He also said in Chronicles, in a prayer to God, “*for we are strangers before thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers: our days on earth are as a shadow and there is none abiding.*” [1 Ch 29:15] It is a common saying among wise men, that the life of a man is like a shadow; for Solomon also said, perhaps influenced by David his father, that the life of a man is likened to vapor and is that “*which he spendeth as a shadow.*” [Eccl 6:12] This is a truth we must all inevitably come to agree with; and it is far better to acknowledge it early rather than later. As Moses, who lived to one hundred and twenty years declared, “*so teach us to number our days, that we may acquire a heart of wisdom.*” [Psa 90:12]

But though our lives are as a shadow which is seemingly here today and gone tomorrow, yet there is still hope and joy in the thought. For while we look at ourselves and at others, and see both quickly fading away as time trudges onward, it should be to us a constant reminder that we serve an eternal God and an everlasting Christ who is far unlike us, but who, in all the ways we fail, gloriously completes us: for Paul says, “*ye are complete in Him.*” [Col 2:10] We read in the Psalms, “*my days are like a*

shadow that declineth; and I am withered away like grass. But thou, O LORD, shalt endure for ever, and thy remembrance unto all generations.” [Psa 102:11-12]

There is great comfort in this, “*for such an high priest [as Jesus] is fitting for us,*” who is so enduring from age to age and who often proclaims to our feeble hearts, “*I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.*” [Heb 7:26, Rev 1:8] Although we as men and women are sinners, yet our Glorious Priest and God, Jesus Christ, is “*separate from sinners*” and “*did no sin*” and “*knew no sin;*” [Heb 7:26, 1 Pe 2:22, 2 Cor 5:21] yes, and although we are weak and filthy yet He “*is holy, harmless, [and] undefiled;*” [Heb 7:26] and though we are mortal and feeble, quickly perishing, yet our strong Christ and Rock is, “*from everlasting to everlasting.*” [Psa 90:2]

Is it not an encouragement to us that no matter what area we fail in or are naturally weak in, Jesus is overwhelmingly strong in? Is it not such an exceeding comfort for us, that He who is eternal, “*whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting,*” [Mic 5:2] is our King and our Savior? And that though our lives on earth are short, yet His life is eternal? And moreover, that though our lives upon earth are brief, yet we are gloriously promised of Jesus that He shall “*raise [us] up again at the last day,*” and again, “*whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die?*” [Jn 6:39; 11:26] Those who have been regenerated by His Spirit must conclude with a victorious ‘Yes!’ for through Jesus we have an “*everlasting encouragement and good hope through grace.*” [2 Th 2:16]

It is a glorious truth that God is eternal, that His remembrance shall endure to every generation. Though

we all die and will be forgotten and, “*that which now is in the days to come shall all be forgotten*,” [Eccl 2:16] yet, there will never be a generation or day where Jesus will be forgotten. No, in no wise, for there will never in the history of all mankind, even after this earth is destroyed, no matter how many billions of years may elapse, where the glorious and high name of Jesus will not be remembered. Just as the flame of the lampstand was “*to burn always*,” [Ex 27:20] so too the flame of Christ shall never be snuffed, but shall endure for all eternity. Praise be to God.

Day 29, Our King, Mighty in Battle

1 Samuel 17:32, 36-37 – And David said to Saul, Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine...Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God. David said moreover, The LORD that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said unto David, Go, and the LORD be with thee.

In Psalms, David asks a rhetorical question. He says, “*who is this king of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, The LORD mighty in battle.*” [Psa 24:8] It is that phrase, “*The LORD mighty in battle,*” to which we turn our gaze today. In Exodus it says, “*The LORD is a man of war: The LORD is His Name.*” [Ex 15:3] Our God is a God of war, The King of Glory, who is mighty in battle. And truly this is no matter, for it says in Proverbs, “*the horse is prepared against the day of battle: but victory is of The LORD;*” [Prov 21:31] and we, who belong to Jesus, are “*soldier[s] of Jesus Christ,*” having been enlisted by Him to fight for His glorious kingdom. [2 Tim 2:3-4] Our God is The “*King of kings*” and though David is a type of Christ, the true Christ, Jesus, unlike David who “*at the time when kings go forth to battle*” stayed home, Jesus stayed not in His Father’s house when it was “*the fulness of the time,*” but instead He, in glorious fashion, “*put on*

righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloke” and He came to earth “*to save sinners.*” [2 Sam 11:1, Gal 4:4, Isa 59:17, 1 Tim 1:15]

What a beautiful God we have who does not back down or shrink back, but who in perfect form and faithfulness came to earth to save us from the dark clutches of Satan’s grasp. And so, because Jesus was so mighty in battle as the Psalm says, we can take David’s words in Samuel typologically for Christ’s, when he said to Saul, “*let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine.*” [1 Sam 17:32] Truly we do not need to fear; because Paul comforts us, confirming in his epistle what was long ago promised, that the Seed, the future Christ to come, would “*bruise [Satan’s] head,*” when he wrote, “*the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.*” [Gen 3:15, Rom 16:20] So then, let us walk boldly in Jesus’ strong victory, for “*greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world,*” [1 Jn 4:4] and, we “*shall not die, but live.*” [Psa 118:17] Through Jesus, and solely because of Jesus, we can experience victory in our lives over any attack of Satan, over any temptation of the flesh, over any persecution in the world, and over any condemnation from the law. Yes, again, through Jesus alone this victory is found, and just as David said so too we can take to heart, as it says in Isaiah,

“Fear not... For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of [the heavenly] Armies is His name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall He be called.” [Isa 54:4, 5]

Just as Jesus came and “*spoiled principalities and powers*” and “*made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in [His cross],*” so too Jesus will defeat Satan, or any other enemy, who like David says, are nothing greater than “*uncircumcised Philistine[s].*” [Col 2:15, 1 Sam 17:36] Let us not fear; let us take great courage as the Spirit exhorts us, “*be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD.*” [Psa 27:14] We can take our stand behind Christ, as Israel stood behind David, for He our King of Old is our Commander and our Chief who, “*shall thrust out the enemy from before [us]; and shall say, Destroy[!]*” [Deut 33:27] There is no enemy that can stand before Jesus, so let us stand behind Him and His word, because just as David has, so too Jesus has “*cut off [the] head*” of our enemy so that hell’s “*champion [is] dead.*” [1 Sam 17:51] And let us go forth with confidence, not afraid of the world’s reviling nor of its leader and king, Satan; nor of the flesh’s temptations; nor of the law’s condemnations; and let us, as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, allow Him to fill us with His Spirit so that we might be used to save others and live for Him “*without fear, in holiness and righteousness...all the days of our life.*” [Lk 1:74-75]

Day 30, Christ, Our Everlasting Light

Isaiah 24:23 – Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the LORD of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously.

When The LORD of Hosts, that is, of the heavenly armies, reigns in Jerusalem upon the throne of David and before His blessed saints in all His glory, then, as Isaiah proclaims, “*the moon shall be ashamed, and the sun [shall also be] ashamed.*” [Isa 24:23] Those two “*great lights,*” which were created of old by God, and which were also created “*through [Jesus],*” are prophesied here in Isaiah to ultimately come to shame. [Gen 1:16, Col 1:16] Those wonderful bodies which have risen into the sky and sunk back down beyond the horizon again and again for thousands of years, which were created to “*rule the day*” and also to “*rule the night,*” yes, these are the bodies which will one day come to be ashamed. And why will they be ashamed? The LORD tells us through the voice of the prophet; because He, “*The LORD of Hosts[,] shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before His ancients gloriously.*” From other passages of God’s holy writ, we know that the One spoken of who shall reign in Zion, The LORD of Hosts, is indeed Christ Jesus.

Christ is the one who shall reign upon the throne; for even at His birth, it was told to Mary by the Angel Gabriel, “*He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and The Lord God shall give unto Him the*

throne of His father David." [Lk 1:32] And in the prophets it is written, "*of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end;*" [Isa 9:7] and again, "*behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper.*" [Jer 23:5]

With these facts, we come now to the conclusion that when Christ returns to earth, "*and His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives...and [He] shall be king over all the earth,*" that the sun and moon shall be ashamed. But why is it that they shall be ashamed? It is for the brightness of the king. For it is written again in Isaiah,

"The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the LORD shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the LORD shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended." [Isa 60:19-20]

In context, God is speaking to "*the city of the LORD, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel.*" [Isa 60:14] And so it is shown to us by God's Holy Spirit, (for, "*the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*" [2 Pe 1:21]), that New Jerusalem, the city of God, will, for the exceeding brightness of Christ shining from its midst, not need the light of the sun nor the moon; for it is written again, "*and the City had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.*" [Rev 21:23] Truly,

it will be a wonderful and majestic sight to behold, when Jesus reigns upon the throne, shining in all His glory. But what makes this fact all the more precious is when we take into account another verse, which reveals to us the magnitude to which Christ's glory shines. In Isaiah we are told,

"Moreover the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the LORD bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound."
[Isa 30:26]

In the day when God through Jesus, "*raise[s] up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close[s] up the breaches thereof; and...raise[s] up his ruins, and...build[s] it as in the days of old,*" [Amo 9:11] the sun will shine as seven suns: emitting light equal to seven times its present luminosity. Even the moon will not be exempt from the influence of Jesus' reign upon earth, and from His restoration of creation during the Millennial reign; for we are told that it too shall shine more brightly, even as brightly as today's sun.

Let us consider these facts together, for they show us an encouraging truth. The Spirit reveals to us that Jesus, who is "*the brightness of [The Father's] glory,*" [Heb 1:3] will shine so magnificently, He will put the sun, which will be shining seven times brighter than at present, to shame. This is an extraordinary fact to behold; it is as comparing a small candle to an industrial spotlight – the light gained from the candle is shameful compared to the greater light; in comparison, it is as nothing. The same is true, yea, and exceedingly more-so; for Jesus will shine so

brightly in all His splendor and majesty, “*wherewith He hath girded Himself*,” [Psa 93:1] that He shall utterly put to shame even a star which shines seven times more brightly than our present sun.

My dear brethren, let this fact comfort and uplift your souls; let it reach down into the pit from whence you have fallen and pull you upward, setting you upon the Rock of Christ. For there is hardly a more beautiful thought regarding our future reign with Christ. And may it be always so even today, that in our hearts, from the midst of which Christ now dwells and shines, we are so overcome and filled with the sight and remembrance of His glory, that we, like The City, have no need of the sun, no need of the world's light; for as Jesus says, “*I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.*” [Jn 8:12]

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