

GLENNA SALSBUURY

*More*  
*Heavenly*  
*Treasures*

*Sovereign Grace*



*Experiencing the  
Transformational  
Truth of God's  
Sovereign Grace  
and Eternal  
Purpose*

# *More Heavenly Treasures*

*Experiencing the  
Transformational  
Truth of God's  
Sovereign Grace  
and Eternal  
Purpose*

GLENN A SALS BURY



**WinePressPublishing**  
Great Books, Defined.

© 2011 by Glenna Salisbury. All rights reserved.

WinePress Publishing (PO Box 428, Enumclaw, WA 98022) functions only as book publisher. As such, the ultimate design, content, editorial accuracy, and views expressed or implied in this work are those of the author.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any way by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or otherwise—without the prior permission of the copyright holder, except as provided by USA copyright law.

Unless otherwise noted, all Scriptures are taken from *The Companion Bible, King James Version*, Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1990.

Scripture references marked NLT are taken from the *New Living Translation*, Tyndale House Publishers, Carol Stream, Illinois, 1996.

Scripture references marked NKJV are taken from *The MacArthur Study Bible, New King James Version*, Thomas Nelson, Nashville, Tennessee, 1997.

Scripture references marked ANT are taken from the *Amplified New Testament*, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1958.

Scripture references marked NIV are taken from the *New International Version*, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1998.

Scripture references marked ESV are taken from *English Standard Version*, Crossway Bibles, Wheaton, Illinois, 2008.

Scripture references marked AMP are taken from *The Amplified Bible*, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1965.

Scripture references marked NASB are taken from the *New American Standard Bible*, Creation House, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois, 1960.

ISBN 13: 978-1-4141-2054-6

ISBN 10: 1-4141-2054-0

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 2011923325

To the faithfulness of God's Spirit in anointing His Word to my heart and life.

To the unfailing love of Jesus Christ, Who continually draws me to Himself.

To the sovereign purpose of the Father, Who sent the Son into the world to seek those whom He loved; I am grateful to be one of those recipients of unconditional, electing grace.

And to my family, all of whom have been called into His family, and whose unconditional love remains the joy of my earthly experience.

# Preface



So, then, faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

—Romans 10:17

**H**OW OFTEN WE long to have greater faith! Yet I find it easy to forget that the only Source of power is the living Word of God. Christ Himself is alive to us in His Word. We cannot hear Truth unless the Spirit anoints our ears to hear. And the only Truth in the universe is the Word of God.

As the world scene continues to grow darker, I believe our greatest comfort rests in hiding God's Word in our hearts and lives. But the *earth dwellers*, those who do not know Christ (though they may be religious), struggle desperately and in vain to find human, earthly solutions to their dire situations (Revelation 13:12–14). The Lord Himself described the days of worldwide turmoil and *distress* that will precede His return to earth: "For there shall be great *distress* in the land...and upon the earth *distress* of nations, with perplexity...Men's hearts failing

## *More Heavenly Treasures*

them for fear...” (Luke 21:23, 25, 26, emphasis mine). King David, in the midst of his circumstances wrote, “In my distress I called upon the Lord, And cried unto my God: He heard my voice out of His temple...” (Psalm 18:6). Believers know the One Solution to dire situations!

The Word of God reveals the character of the Lord to us. We discover His unconditional love, the riches of His grace, His sovereign power, and His continual faithfulness. The Lord draws us to Himself through His Word. We learn to trust Him; we begin to *hear* His voice.

Yet there are very few believers who are discovering or hearing the foundational, doctrinal truths that produce transformational living in Christ. The Word of God is often overshadowed by programs and worldly enticements to gain a crowd. *Nothing* has the power to produce faith and a joy-filled life except the Word of God. Christ Alone, the living Word of God, is “the Author and Finisher” of faith (Hebrews 12:2).

The greatest gift the Lord can give us is the revelation of Who He is. Therein lies salvation. Yet He is infinite; He is God. He has revealed Himself in His fullness in the written Word. And it is this Truth that sustains us.

I have written this second book of “treasures” because God has given me a passion to share the riches of His Book. I continue to be lifted above my own distresses, earthly preoccupations, and personal challenges by the transforming truths that are hidden in that Book.

May your own heart and life be enriched beyond measure as you meditate on the pages that follow.

Resting in His Grace,  
Glenna

# Contents

1. Heart Surgery .....	3
2. For I Know.....	6
3. God's Mercy and God's Grace.....	9
4. The Supremacy of God .....	12
5. The Outworking of God's Mercy .....	15
6. The Election of Grace .....	18
7. Reckon Yourself to be Dead .....	21
8. The Great Supplier.....	24
9. The Father's Incredible Gift to His Son.....	27
10. Christ Will Draw All .....	30
11. The Sovereignty of God .....	33
12. Delivered and Translated.....	37
13. The Sound of His Voice.....	40
14. Reconciliation: Reunited with God .....	42
15. Born From Above.....	45
16. High, Holy, and Heavenly! .....	49
17. The Unspeakable Gift .....	51
18. Have You Received Christ Jesus? .....	54
19. God's Mysterious Plans .....	57
20. God's Everlasting Agreement.....	60
21. The Operation of God .....	63
22. God Justifies the Ungodly! .....	66
23. Revelation: A Sovereign Gift .....	69
24. Ancient Grace .....	72
25. It Shall Be Well With You.....	75
26. The Throne Room of Grace .....	78
27. Ordained Steps.....	81
28. Nevertheless! .....	84
29. God's Inheritance .....	87

Section One

*Sovereign Grace*

*As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh,  
that He should give eternal life to as many as  
Thou hast given Him.*

—John 17:2





## Chapter 1

# Heart Surgery



And I will give them an heart to know Me...

—Jeremiah 24:7a

THE BIBLE HAS much to say about the heart. The prophet Jeremiah describes the heart of the natural man. He says, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked...” (Jeremiah 17:9). The literal Hebrew translation reads, “The heart is sick unto death,” meaning it is incurable. Romans 3:11 describes the natural man or woman as an enemy of God: “There is none that seeketh after God.” And Romans 8:7 says, “The carnal mind is enmity against God.”

The Hebrew word for “heart” is *labe*. It references the feelings, the will, and the intellect of a person. The first time this word appears in the Bible is in Genesis 6:5, which says, “And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil

## *More Heavenly Treasures*

continually.” The heart of man has been corrupted ever since the sin of Adam in the garden.

Yet the fact is that to have faith in the Lord, to know Him, to love Him, requires that a person *believe* with his or her heart. Romans 10:9–10 states, “...if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and *believe* in your *heart* that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the *heart* one believes unto righteousness...” (NKJV, emphasis mine). So we must ask this question: How does a person get a heart that believes “that God has raised [Jesus] from the dead”? Paul says that it is the result of “the *word of faith*” that takes root in our hearts (Romans 10:8).

Romans 10:17 says, “...*faith* cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” Again, a question comes: *How* does the Word of God bring *faith*? The clearest answer to this question is given in the account describing Lydia, the seller of purple, as she became a believer. The apostle Paul was preaching the Word, the truth of the resurrected Christ, and Lydia *heard*. Then we read that the Lord opened her heart and “she attended unto the things which were spoken by Paul” (Acts 16:14). In other words, the fact is that the Lord Himself must give us a new heart. He alone brings faith to us (Hebrews 12:2). This faith that creates a new heart is a gift from Him (Ephesians 2:8, 9).

Jeremiah understood this reality because the Lord personally explained this to him! The Lord told Jeremiah what He would do to restore the people of Israel to authentic faith in Him: “I will set Mine eyes upon them for good, and I will bring them again to this land; and I will build them...I will plant them... And I will give them an heart to know Me...and they shall be

## *Heart Surgery*

My People, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto Me with their whole *heart*” (Jeremiah 24:6–7, emphasis mine).

Consider how many times in Scripture the Lord says “I will” and “I shall” and “they shall.” God is sovereign over hearts. If we have confessed Jesus as Lord, it is the result of the grace of God. He has performed heart surgery upon those who are believers. It is He alone who opens hearts.

*Father, this is such a mystery. Our only response is heartfelt praise to You for Your doing Your work of grace in us, bringing us the Word of Faith, and giving us new hearts.*

## Chapter 2

# For I Know...



For I know Whom I have believed...

—2 Timothy 1:12

**H**AVE YOU EVER wondered how it was that the apostle Paul was so *certain* about so many aspects of his faith? He wrote to Timothy and explained that even in the midst of persecution and constant suffering his faith remained solid. He said, “For I know Whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.”

The Greek word for “know” in this passage is *oida*. It means to *understand*, to know intuitively. This is the same Greek word Paul used when he wrote to the Romans, saying, “And we *know* that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called...” (Romans 8:28, emphasis mine). Paul was completely confident that in spite of negative

## *For I Know...*

circumstance and difficult situations, he was in the center of the Lord's *appointed* plans for him.

How about us? Are we that certain in light of our own current life circumstances? Do we really *know*, confidently, that the Lord is keeping us and protecting us against that day when He returns? Are we persuaded that He is working *all* things in our lives for good?

It seems that at least two factors in Paul's life gave him such clear knowledge, such solid faith in the faithfulness of the Lord in the lives of His chosen saints. Paul knew the Word of God, and he believed it to be absolute truth. As a Pharisee, he even had memorized the story of Joseph in the book of Genesis.

You will recall that Joseph was sold into slavery by his brothers and carried off to Egypt. Many years later, his brothers came to Egypt from Canaan to get grain because there was a famine in the land. By then, Joseph was reigning as Pharaoh's right-hand man and was in charge of all of the grain in Egypt.

Joseph eventually revealed who he was to his brothers, who, in turn, thought Joseph would kill them because of their sins against him. Instead, Joseph proclaimed, "But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good..." (Genesis 50:20). Joseph clearly grasped the sovereign grace of God in his life. He additionally explained to his brothers, "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 to save your lives by a great deliverance" (Genesis 45:5, 7b).

The apostle Paul believed the written Word of God. He understood from the Old Testament truths that God can use even evil for the good of His own elect. Paul was aware that Joseph's brothers are a picture of rebellious sinners and Joseph

## *More Heavenly Treasures*

is a foreshadowing of Christ Himself. We as lost sheep sin against God; we are His enemies. Yet He came into the world (Egypt is a picture of the world) to “preserve our lives by a great deliverance,” His death on the cross.

Not only did Paul have confidence in the Word of God, but also he had confidence in his own *experience* with the Lord. Paul himself had been at enmity with God, seeking to murder the Christians. Yet in the very midst of his sin and rebellion, the Lord came to Paul and saved him on the road to Damascus. Paul never forgot for a moment what it was like to experience such unconditional love. He knew himself to be “chief of sinners” (1 Tim. 1:15), and yet he became the recipient of the Lord’s undeserved grace and forgiveness. “And [to] 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” (Philippians 3:9).

It seems evident in the Word that the Lord wants us to be confident in His very character, to know and understand that He is *for* us, never against us, and that He has designed every detail in our lives as part of His eternal plan for our highest and best. “Being confident of this very thing, that He Which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ” (Philippians 1:6).

*Oh, Holy Spirit, our Teacher, please guide us more fully into the reality of God’s love and care for us personally, in spite of how our outward circumstances may appear.*

## Chapter 3

# God's Mercy and God's Grace



I...will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy.

—Exodus 33:19

**I**N HIS BOOK *The Attributes of God*, A.W. Pink provides some marvelous insights into the distinctions between the grace of God and the mercy of God. He says, “Divine grace is the sovereign and saving favour of God exercised in the bestowment of blessing upon those who have no merit *in* them and for which no compensation is demanded *from* them.”<sup>1</sup> He describes mercy as that which springs from “Divine goodness” and “presupposes sin.”<sup>2</sup> These great truths can serve to enlighten and enhance our deep appreciation for the very heart of our Lord.

Moses describes the Lord as merciful, gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in *goodness* and truth (Exodus 34:6). How wonderful to know that God is *abundant* in His *goodness*! And it is fascinating to focus on the shades of meaning and application

## *More Heavenly Treasures*

of this abundant *goodness* of God, for it is out of His goodness that His mercy and grace flow.

The Lord never extended *mercy* to the angels. The fallen angels are destined for and appointed to hell. They never will receive God's mercy (Matthew 25:41). And He never will need to extend *mercy* to the *unfallen* angels because they never have sinned, nor have they ever been under the curse of earth's creation. The unfallen angels are actually objects of God's sovereign *grace*. Why? Because God *elect*ed them out of the entire angelic race (1 Timothy 5:21). God also extended grace to these angels by *preserving* them from apostasy when Satan rebelled and took one-third of the celestial host with him (Revelation 12:4). In addition, God's grace was given to these unfallen angels by His making Christ to be their *Head* (Colossians 2:10). As a result, they are *eternally secure* in the condition in which they were created. And they have, by God's grace, been assigned an *exalted position* in heaven. They will live forever in the presence of God (Daniel 7:10).

On the other hand, it is the *mercy* of God that has been extended to those sinners who are the elect of God. Unto us, who were at enmity with God, He is "the Father of mercies" (2 Corinthians 1:3). Also, the elect are called "vessels of mercy." Romans 9:22–24 says, "What if God...endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: And that He might make known the riches of His glory on the *vessels of mercy*...Even us, whom He hath called..." (emphasis mine).

God exercises His sovereign mercy based upon nothing else than His own sovereign will and pleasure. Romans 9:15, 18 says, "...I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy...Therefore hath He mercy on whom He will have mercy and whom He will He hardeneth."



## *God's Mercy and God's Grace*

The apostle Paul again and again underscores the fact that God gave His *mercy* to us as sinners: We were “dead in trespasses and sins” (Ephesians 2:1). We were enemies of God, without any strength, ungodly human beings (Romans 5:6, 8, 10). “But God, who is rich in mercy,” because of His great love for us... quickened us when we were still dead in our sins (Ephesians 2:4, 5). Paul never tired of rejoicing over this incredible *mercy* of God towards us as sinners. He wrote these words to Titus: “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His *mercy* He saved us...” (Titus 3:5a, emphasis mine).

As God extended *grace* to the unfallen angels, electing them, preserving them from apostasy, serving as their Head, and exalting them to a heavenly calling, so also has His extended *mercy* accomplished these same benefits for those He came to save (Luke 19:10).

God has given us an incredible promise. We are told that His “goodness and mercy shall follow” us all the days of our lives and we “will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever” (Psalm 23:6). We will join the elect angels in praising Him for both His grace and His mercy forever.

*Father of mercies, receive our praise and thanksgiving. We love You and rejoice in Your unending goodness.*

## Chapter 4

# *The Supremacy of God*



There is no wisdom nor understanding Nor counsel against  
the LORD.

—Proverbs 21:30

*I*N ONE OF his letters to Erasmus, a philosophical humanist, Martin Luther said, “Your thoughts of God are too human.”<sup>1</sup> God Himself complained to apostate (but religious) Israel, “Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself...” (Psalm 50:21). In other words, one of the signs of a departure from the Word of God is when people begin to measure God by their own human ideas and thoughts. They begin to believe and preach and teach that, for example, the gospel is an “offer” that sinners may accept or reject as they please. This concept, along with a myriad of others, denies the supremacy of God.

However, the Word of God proclaims that no one can come to Christ unless the Father draws him, and this gift of salvation

## *The Supremacy of God*

is sovereignly bestowed on those whom the Father gives to the Son as a gift (John 6:44, 65). “But *he* is in one mind, and who can turn Him? and *what* His soul desireth, even that He doeth” (Job 23:13). “But our God is in the heavens: He hath done whatsoever He hath pleased” (Psalm 115:3).

There is much discussion among “religious” people today about man’s free will—man’s ability to make decisions and act independently from God’s will. But the Word of God clearly teaches that God works *all* things after the counsel of *His own will* (Ephesians 1:11). Proverbs 21:1 says, “The king’s heart is in the hand of the Lord...He turneth it whithersoever He will.” And Daniel 4:35 says, “All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and He doeth His will in...heaven and...earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, ‘What doest Thou?’”

Why, some often ask, is it so important to focus on this issue of God’s sovereign supremacy? Well, first of all, to deny this truth is to deny the Word of God. In addition, the secure hope of a believer ultimately rests upon his or her grasp of God’s unchanging plan. David, the psalmist, wrote, “My times are in Thy hand” (Psalm 31:15). And because he knew his life was fully in God’s hands, he could urge us to: “Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him” (Psalm 37:7).

The wisest of men, King Solomon, tells us that “A man’s heart devises his way: But the Lord directeth his steps” (Proverbs 16:9). Do we believe this? Do we believe that the Lord overrides our will or our decisions? Do we believe that our every step is ordained? Does this include our sin and failure? Apparently so, if He is directing our steps! God’s hand was on the life of Jonah in his disobedience and in charge of Peter’s denial of Christ and in the evil acts of Joseph’s brothers when they sold him into slavery (Jonah 4:11; Luke 22:31, 32; Genesis 50:20).

## *More Heavenly Treasures*

Human beings may boast that they are free agents, with a will independent of God, free to do as they please, but Scripture says to us as we make our plans, "...ye ought to say, "If the Lord will..." (James 4:15). Oh, really? The apostle James knew that all that unfolds in our lives happens *if* the Lord wills it to unfold. In fact, every day of our lives as human beings already has been written in God's book by God Himself (Psalm 139:16 NLT). The Lord leads us, protects us, and assigns a guardian angel to each of His heirs (Hebrews 1:14). He counts the hairs on our heads. And He keeps us from falling (Jude 24).

The philosophy of the world, even the religious world, lifts up the will of man. The focus in today's environment is on man's freedom to act without boundaries, as if God is not in control of all that unfolds. This flies in the face of biblical truth and steals the deep comfort and joy provided by His Truth.

The Lord wants us as believers to know that He is at work in our lives, "both *to will* and *to do*, of His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13, emphasis mine).

*Oh, Lord, save us from our own human wisdom and understanding. Open our eyes to Your Word. Your counsel shall stand, and You will do all Your pleasure (Isaiah 46:10). Teach us to trust Your supremacy in all things.*

## Chapter 5

# The Outworking of God's Mercy



Through the tender mercy of our God... the Dayspring from  
on high hath visited us.

—Luke 1:78

LUKE, THE PHYSICIAN, tells us that Christ's appearance on earth, "the Dayspring from on high," was a result, an outward display, of the mercy of God. And we learn that the *purpose* behind God's act of mercy was to give us spiritual light and to "guide our feet into the way of peace" (Luke 1:79). God's mercy is the reason He sent His Son to die for the elect.

An act of mercy occurs when a person *does not* receive the condemnation or the punishment he or she deserves. The Father sacrificed His only Son in order to extend His mercy to His people, those whom He foreknew before the world began (Ephesians 1:4). Now, there is a *general mercy* of God that extends to all human beings, believers and unbelievers. Psalm 145:9

## *More Heavenly Treasures*

says, “His tender mercies are over all His works.” And Matthew 5:45 states that the rain falls “on the just and on the unjust.” However, the mercies that God extends on unbelievers are only *temporal* in nature, confined strictly to this present life on earth. In speaking of the unbelievers, the prophet Isaiah tells us that God Who has made them “will *not* have mercy on them, and He That formed them will show them *no* favor” (Isaiah 27:11, emphasis mine).

God never can cease to be merciful; it is His very nature. Psalm 116:5 says, “Yea, our God is merciful.” However, as A.W. Pink states in *The Attributes of God*, “The exercise of God’s mercy is regulated by His sovereign will.”<sup>1</sup> And in Romans we read, “I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy” (Romans 9:15).

But God is *not influenced* by things outside of Himself. He acts freely and sovereignly at all times. It is “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us” (Titus 3:5). *Mercy* never is given because a person *deserves* it. Rather, mercy flows to the elect solely out of God’s sovereign pleasure, for reasons known only to Himself.

There is a sense in which God’s mercy is displayed even in the condemnation of unbelievers to the Lake of Fire. From the standpoint of God’s elect, it would be horrible if the present evil world continued forever. It would be terrible to be forced to live in the presence of the children of the Enemy forever. Heaven would not be heaven if those who are at enmity with God were there (Romans 5:10). Even David prayed, “And of Thy *mercy* cut off mine enemies, And destroy all them that afflict my soul: For I am Thy servant” (Psalm 143:12, emphasis mine). And in Psalm 136:15 we read that God “overthrew Pharaoh and his

## *The Outworking of God's Mercy*

host... For His *mercy* endureth for ever.” In His *mercy*, God saved the Israelites by destroying Pharaoh and his army.

The very breath of every human being on the planet is a display of the outworking of God's mercy. He patiently endures sinners and preserves their lives on earth when they deserve instant death. “He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things” (Acts 17:25). He alone is the Sustainer of Life in every person for as long as he or she exists.

Jesus Christ is the spiritual *mercy-seat* of God (Hebrews 9:5; Romans 3:25). When we come to the Father through the Son, it is a result of the outworking of His mercy in His own, the sheep He came to seek and to save (Luke 19:10).

*Lord, “as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is” Your mercy toward those of us whom You have redeemed with Your blood (Psalm 103:11). We stand before You amazed and eternally grateful.*

## Chapter 6

# *The Election of Grace*



There is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace.

—Romans 11:5, 6

THE APOSTLE PAUL had a deep love for his people, the Israelites. He was encouraged by the scriptural fact that God had not forgotten Israel, even though Paul knew that the time of the Gentiles had come. He realized that, even though most of Israel had forsaken the Lord, God in His mercy had elected a handful to be saved in the future.

Paul was quick to point out that God's ways are "past finding out" and that His judgments are "unsearchable" (Romans 11:33). The truth that triggered these statements by Paul was the fact that God in His mercy is going to save a small group of Jews who are guilty of unbelief. It is important to grasp the fact that the apostle Paul never tries to *explain* why God has



## *The Election of Grace*

sovereignly chosen those whom He will save. Paul simply states the truth of election again and again and ascribes it to God's sovereign grace and mercy.

The Greek word for "election" is *ekloge* and means *to be selected, to be chosen out*. Those whom God has elected are the ones who hear His call. Paul describes the elect as those whom the Lord knew intimately *before the world began* (Romans 8:29; Ephesians 1:4).

In writing to the Thessalonian Christians, Paul says, "But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you...because God hath from the beginning *chosen* you to salvation" (2 Thessalonians 2:13, emphasis mine). The apostle also states that the *process* of their salvation was through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, which resulted in the belief of the truth of the gospel (2 Thessalonians 2:13). In Acts we read that as a result of Paul's preaching, "as many as were ordained to eternal life believed" (Acts 13:48). In his letter to the Jewish Christians, Peter described them as the "elect" who have come to faith "through sanctification of the Spirit" (1 Peter 1:2). The saints in Ephesus were those who "had believed through grace" (Acts 18:27).

The mystery of the election of grace was consistently on Paul's mind. He took delight in reminding the saints of the incredible gift of election. He described himself as "an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect" (Titus 1:1). He recognized faith as the gift by which the elect are called. Paul reminded the Colossian Christians that they were "the elect of God" (Colossians 3:12). He assured the Roman Christians that no one could lay anything "to the charge of God's elect." Rather, God Himself has justified His elect, freely giving us all things. (Romans 8:32,33)

## *More Heavenly Treasures*

Furthermore, Paul explained that God has a predestinated plan for His elect, those whom He has chosen. He has predestined these saints “to be conformed to the image of His Son” (Romans 8:29). Again, the Greek word for “predestine” is *proorizo*, and it means *to determine beforehand*. The Lord has determined that all those who know Him will be conformed into the image of Jesus Christ, counted as sinless and perfect. The Greek word for “conformed” means *to be fashioned in the same manner*.

We can be encouraged again and again by the promise God has made to those of us who have been “elected by His grace.” The Scriptures assure us that our election was totally the sovereign work of the Holy Spirit, a work of grace based upon nothing in us (Ephesians 2:8, 9). Further, the Word assures us that the same sanctifying work that saved us from hell will bring us into obedience, transforming us into the image of Jesus Christ Himself. And we are free to rejoice in these realities even while we are unable to explain God’s ways in His election of grace!

Our assurance of salvation and eternal life rest in the fact of God’s electing grace. May we treasure this mystery afresh!

*Oh God, Maker of heaven and earth, enhance our capacity  
to grasp the miracle of Your grace in election.*

## Chapter 7

# Reckon Yourself to be Dead



Likewise reckon . . . also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin,  
but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

—Romans 6:11

**H**AVE YOU EVER *tried* to be *dead* to sin? So many times the Christian world seems to urge us to *do* something in order not to be guilty of sinning. This usually results in our self-effort at living disciplined lives, trying to be more spiritual, and exerting serious mind control. Does this sound familiar?

The apostle Paul gives us an entirely different route for living out our daily walk in Christ. He says we are to *count on* an incredible fact: We *are* dead to sin. Sin has *no power* over us because of who we are in Christ. The Greek word for “reckon” is *logizomai*, and it means *to be counted on as a fact*. It is the same word that appears in Romans 4:3: “Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.” Abraham’s faith (a gift from God) “is counted for righteousness” (Romans 4:5).

## *More Heavenly Treasures*

In other words, it is a *fact* that Abraham was *reckoned* to be righteous, without sin, by faith.

Again, in Romans 4:6, we read that David understood the blessedness of those “unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works.” The Greek word for “imputeth” is also *logizomai*. The believer is *counted* as righteous, without any works on his or her part.

So, Paul says that the key to living above the *experience* of sin in our daily lives is to understand the fact that the Lord counts you as sinless. In other words, reckon on, count on, what is true about you!

The way we come to know this fact is by revelation. Paul explains that the key to not continuing in the *experience* of sin is to *know* “that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed” (Romans 6:6). The Greek word for “know” that is used here is *ginosko*—to know as a result of *experience*, personal revelation by the Holy Spirit, an *intimate* understanding.

Interestingly, the Greek word for “destroyed” is *katargeo* and means to be *annulled*, reckoned to be nonexistent. In other words, we rise above the pull of sin as we increasingly *know* that we are *free* from sin. We are to reckon ourselves to be “alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 6:11). We are to *know* that we are not only free from sin, but also we are eternally alive in Christ.

The joy and freedom of our daily Christian living is in direct proportion to our understanding, our *knowing* these truths. Rather than seeking to bring about this crucifixion ourselves, we are called to believe the good news of who we are in Christ. We are *not* exhorted to beg God for victory over sin. We are

## *Reckon Yourself to be Dead*

exhorted to believe the truth by faith. Satan's great device is to drive us back to begging God for what He tells us already has been done.

Unfortunately, Christendom has instilled in us the idea that we can become worthy of heaven *gradually*, worthy of being called saints. So we begin focusing on our own strength to fight against sin. The opposite is the reality. We are righteous—*now*. We are free from sin—*now*. We are eternally alive—*now*. And He who has begun this work in us will continue to perform it until the day of Jesus Christ (Philippians 1:6).

*Lord, by Your Holy Spirit, would you please reveal more fully these amazing realities to us. Our desire is to experience greater freedom and increased joy as we worship You for Your finished work on our behalf.*

## Chapter 8

# *The Great Supplier*



He...gave the loaves to His disciples, and the disciples to the multitude. And they did all eat...

—Matthew 14:19b, 20a

*M*OST OF US are familiar with the account of Jesus feeding the five thousand men, plus women and children. And we are stunned by His power and this miracle of the multiplication of a meager five loaves and two fishes. However, it seems that the Lord was demonstrating to His disciples and us (His future disciples) a very subtle but powerful truth. Notice that the disciples suggested that Jesus disperse the crowd because it was dinner time. They said, “Send the multitude away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves victuals” (Matthew 14:15).

“But Jesus said unto them, “They need not depart; give ye them to eat” (Matthew 14:16). Jesus *commanded* the disciples to feed the multitude!

## *The Great Supplier*

Of course, the disciples responded in helplessness. “We have here but five loaves and two fishes.”

Jesus then gave them a second *command*: “Bring them hither to Me” (Matthew 14:17, 18). He then *commanded* the multitude to sit down, blessed the food, broke the bread, and *gave* the supply to the disciples, who in turn fulfilled the first command: “Give ye them to eat.” The Lord supplied the means by which they carried out His commands!

The apostle John gives us further insight into this event. In John 6:5, 6 we learn that the Lord arranged this entire conversational exchange between Himself and the disciples as a test, “For He Himself knew what He would do.” The Lord already had planned what He was going to do to feed the multitude. This was an *ordained* work of His, designed to teach the disciples that He Himself supplies what is needed to fulfill what He commands.

Saint Augustine wrote, “God gives us commands that we cannot perform in order that we might know what to ask of Him.” A great example of this is when the disciples asked the Lord what they should do to “work the works of God.” Jesus answered, “This is the work of God, that you believe on Him Whom He hath sent” (John 6:28, 29). Believing is a result of *faith*. Faith is a gift that only Christ can supply (Hebrews 12:2).

In Ephesians 2:10 we read that believers are the Lord’s own special masterpieces, created *in* Christ Jesus for the purpose of accomplishing “good works.” And these good works have been “before ordained.” We as believers *will* walk in the works that have been ordained for us individually. It is the Lord Himself who works in us “both to will and to do” the works He has ordained, for His own good pleasure (Philippians 2:13). And as a

*More Heavenly Treasures*

result, He will receive all of the glory, and we will have the joy of participating with Him in what He is doing. What a calling!

*Lord, open our eyes to see that Your very commands are designed to drive us to You. Without You and Your supply, we can do nothing.*



Chapter 9

*The Father's Incredible  
Gift to His Son*



All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me...

—John 6:37

**G**OD THE FATHER has *given you* as a gift to His Son, Jesus Christ. If you are alive in Christ, it is because you belonged to God before the world began and He gave you to His Son.

Think about this truth. If God wanted to gift His only begotten Son with the ultimate expression of His love for His Son, what would God select as a gift? The staggering answer to this question appears again and again in the gospel of John. Open your Bible to chapter seventeen of John, and see for yourself what the Bible actually says about *you* as a “born from above” believer. (The Scriptures say that we must be *born again* to be allowed into heaven. The Greek words literally read “begotten by Divine Power from above” [John 3:3].)

*More Heavenly Treasures*

Reading from the beginning of John chapter seventeen, we discover that Jesus is talking to the Father. First He states that the Father has given Him power over all flesh for *one purpose*: “That He [the Son] should *give* eternal life to as many as Thou [the Father] hast given Him” (John 17:2, emphasis mine).

Look carefully at those words of Jesus Christ. He was given the power to give eternal life to a select group of people. *Who* are these people? Answer: the specific human beings *who belonged to the Father* first. Does this truth make your mind scramble for understanding? Well, continue to read in John, chapter seventeen. Christ is the speaker in each of the statements below:

I have manifested Thy name unto the men which Thou gavest Me...Thine they were and Thou gavest them [to] Me.

—John 17:6

I pray *not* for the world, but for them which Thou hast given Me; for they are Thine.

—John 17:9, emphasis mine

Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given Me.

—John 17:11

Those that Thou gavest Me I have kept...

—John 17:12

Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am...

—John 17:24

## *The Father's Incredible Gift to His Son*

Imagine that! If you have received the gift of eternal life from the Son, it is because you are a gift from the Father to the Son. You belonged to God first. The Son was given the power to give eternal life to the Father's children. John 17:3 says, "And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom Thou hast sent."

And then we read that *all* of the children who belonged to the Father (and who were then given to the Son) *shall* come to know Jesus Christ (John 6:37). Not one of these "little ones" shall perish (i.e., be destroyed—see Matthew 18:10, 11, 14). In fact, every one of us who belonged to the Father before the world began were assigned a guardian angel to keep us safe until we received the gift of eternal life. (Read Hebrews 1:14 and Matthew 18:10.)

May we meditate on this staggering mystery hidden in the gospel: *You* are the Father's gift to the Son if you have been begotten from above and know the Son. And because of that, you have been given the gift of eternal life, to know the Father and the Son.

*Hallelujah, Lord! What a Father You are! What a Savior!  
What a miracle!*

*Chapter 10*

*Christ Will Draw All*



And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.

—John 12:32

**T**HIS CAN BE a perplexing verse, unless we see the complete picture of scriptural truth. We certainly know that not all human beings will come to Christ. The Lord often condemned those who did not believe in Him. For example, He said to a group of Jewish leaders who rejected Him, “Ye are of your father the devil...And because I tell you the truth, ye believe Me not...ye are not of God” (John 8:44, 45, 47b).

So, what is the Lord saying in John 12:32? The literal Greek in this passage does not include the word “men.” The verse actually reads, “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all unto me.” The question we have to ask is: Who is Christ referring to when He speaks of the “all” whom He will draw to Himself?

## *Christ Will Draw All*

The apostle John gives us the answer to this question earlier in his gospel. He quotes Jesus: “All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me” (John 6:37). The “all” who will come are those whom the Father has given to Christ as love gifts! The Lord underscores this truth in this same passage. John 6:39 says, “And this is the Father’s will Which hath sent Me, that of all which He hath given me I should lose nothing...” The Father’s will is that none of His gifts to the Son will be lost. And His will shall be done.

In addition, we learn the means by which we are drawn to Christ: “No man can come to Me, except the Father...draw him” (John 6:44). Believers, *all* who will come, are inexorably drawn to Christ by the Father. He has *willed* that we be drawn to Christ.

Jesus explained who the “all” are who are taught of God. He said, “Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto Me” (John 6:45). He told those who were not believing in Him, “He that is of God heareth God’s words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God... ye cannot hear My Word” (John 8:47, 43b). *All* who are drawn to Christ are drawn by the Father, Who causes them to *hear*.

The prophet Isaiah tells us who will believe, describing the “all” who will come, those for whom Christ was lifted up on the cross. He says, “Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?” (Isaiah 53:1). Isaiah explains that it is the “all” to whom the Father has revealed His Son. Others “could not believe” because God “hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart” (John 12:37–40).

When we understand the “all” of John 12:32, we are able to understand other New Testament passages. In John 10:11,

## *More Heavenly Treasures*

Jesus tells us that He laid down His life for the sheep. And “all” of His sheep will come. The Father is not willing that one sheep should perish (Matthew 18:11, 14). Christ, in His prayer to the Father, explained that He did not pray for the world but for those the Father had given Him. Not one of those would be lost (John 17:11–15).

Paul wrote to Timothy and explained that God, our Savior, “will have all men to be saved,” for He “gave Himself a ransom for all” (1 Timothy 2:4, 6). So, who are the “all” God wills to be saved? Who are the “all” for whom Christ was a ransom? The “all” are those who have been given to Christ by the Father, given ears to hear, and who are the sheep whom Christ came to “seek and to save” (Luke 19:10).

*Oh, Lord, open our eyes afresh to see this truth clearly: You will draw all You have ordained to believe. We praise Your Name and rejoice in the Spirit-given revelation that tells us Who You are. We rejoice in Your sovereign gift of faith (Hebrews 12:2).*

## Chapter 11

# *The Sovereignty of God*



Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.

—Zechariah 4:6

THE SCRIPTURES MAKE it very clear that God, the Creator of heaven and earth, is the Sovereign Ruler over His entire creation. Webster's Dictionary defines the word "sovereign" for us: "one who is sovereign exercises supreme power." A similar definition is: "one who has supreme and independent authority." For example, we read in Proverbs 16:9, "A man's heart deviseth his way: But the Lord directeth his steps." The prophet Jeremiah writes, "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jeremiah 10:23).

The Christian world often falls prey to the philosophical concept of the world that says man has a free will. Webster's definition of "free" is: "not under the control of some other

## *More Heavenly Treasures*

person or arbitrary power; able to act or think without restriction.” So, if the actual definition of “free” is used to describe man’s will, is it an accurate description? Is a person free to choose to heal himself or herself? Is a person free not to die in a plane doomed to crash? If our will really was free, we could choose our lot in life and have the power to achieve all of our choices. We could choose not to die and thereby live forever... if we had the power.

We do have a will, and we do make decisions, choosing between alternatives and options, and these choices are from within ourselves. We make choices based on our own natural inclinations and preferences. Yet, we may choose to be healthy and not have the power to make that a reality due to an accident that produced paralysis or a family history of cancer. We are free to plan but not free to accomplish our desires.

What do the Scriptures tell us about our spiritual inclinations or natural preferences?

There is none that seeketh after God.

—Romans 3:11

There is none that doeth good, no not one.

—Romans 3:12

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked...

—Jeremiah 17:9

Do we believe the Word of God as we read these verses? The Scriptures say that with our own natural will we are not free to



## *The Sovereignty of God*

choose to seek God because we have no natural desire to seek Him! Thus, Jesus explained to the disciples, “Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you” (John 15:16).

As humans, we are “dead in trespasses and sins” (Ephesians 2:1). Dead people do not respond to a call or an invitation of any kind. Therefore, the Lord says the Holy Spirit must give us a new heart, a new will. Then, and only then, will we hear the Shepherd’s call and experience choosing Christ. God’s sovereign work of grace, causing us to become “a new creation,” “born from above,” is the means by which we become believers. It is not by the “might” or “power” of man, but by His Spirit (John 3:3–8). In Psalm 110:3 we read, “Thy People shall be willing in the day of Thy power.”

Paul anticipated and warned against our preoccupation with human philosophy and human wisdom and against reliance on human will power. He warned the Colossians not to be beguiled by those who are “vainly puffed up” by their fleshly minds, who have a reputation for human wisdom based on will worship (Colossians 2:18–23).

The reality of God’s sovereignty is a powerfully comforting truth for those who have been drawn willingly to Christ by the Holy Spirit. (“No man can come to Me, except the Father...draw him” [John 6:44].) The Lord’s character is Love. First John 4:8 says, “God is love.” The gift of faith (Ephesians 2:8, 9) allows us to embrace the reality that God is sovereign over our very steps and that His sovereign power issues from His heart of love. Our natural inability to embrace this reflects the fact that God has “made foolish the wisdom of this world...for God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound” those who think they are wise (1 Corinthians 1:20, 27).

## *More Heavenly Treasures*

In the Old Testament we read the story of Joseph (with the coat of many colors), whose own brothers hated him. They willed to harm Joseph, to get rid of him by selling him into slavery. Yet, the Lord, in His sovereign power, directed the events that resulted in Joseph's reigning in Egypt and feeding his brothers in the midst of a famine. As Joseph said, "Ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good" (Genesis 50:20).

Martin Luther wrote an incredible treatise entitled *The Bondage of the Will*. In it he described the focus on the philosophy of "free" will as springing from the very root of human pride. The powerful grace of God alone offers us deliverance from this myth that is based on man's faulty thinking.

The truth is that the Lord works all things in the universe after the counsel of His own will (Ephesians 1:11; Daniel 4:35). And for those of us whom He has called to Himself, He sovereignly works all things together for our highest good (Romans 8:28). It is not by our might or our power that our lives unfold; it is by His reigning Spirit.

*Oh, Lord, give us Your wisdom and Your grace to confess these things to be true...for You have spoken them in Your Word.*

## Chapter 12

# *Delivered and Translated*



Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son.

—Colossians 1:13

OH, THAT WE might grasp the eternal, omnipotent, sovereign grace of God to us in Christ Jesus. Oh, that we could see that all that is ours in Christ is a result of His marvelous work on our behalf! The apostle Paul longed for believers to grasp the truth of this mystery, for which Paul was called to be a minister (Colossians 1:23–27). The literal reading of Colossians 1:13 in the Greek text is: “who delivered us from the power of the darkness and translated us into the kingdom of the Son.” Paul was reciting what the Father has done for the saints—those called to know Christ before the foundation of the world (Romans 8:30; Ephesians 1:4). This delivering work is a completed act that was done by God alone.

## *More Heavenly Treasures*

In his words to the Colossians, Paul reminded them of the multiple manifestations of the love of the Father for them. Colossians 1:12 says, “Giving thanks unto the Father, Which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light” (The literal Greek reads: “giving thanks to the Father Who enabled us to be partakers in the portion of the saints in the light.”) We have been enabled, made fit, to participate with the saints in light, and we have been delivered out of the darkness. (The Greek word for “delivered” actually means to be rescued.) And we have been translated into the Son’s kingdom. The word “translated” means that we have been removed from the darkness and set apart for His kingdom.

All of these action verbs reflect what God the Father has done for us. We are the recipients of these sovereign acts of God’s grace. And the enormity of this grace is revealed in verse after verse of the first chapter of Paul’s letter to the Colossians. He began by giving thanks to God for the Colossians’ faith in Christ, for the love that they had for other believers, and for the hope they were experiencing regarding their heavenly future. Paul wasn’t praising the saints for their faith, love, and hope. Rather, he was praising the Father because Paul knew the Source of all good gifts (Colossians 1:3–5).

Paul then went on to say that the Word of Truth, the gospel, had come to them, and it was this Word of Truth that had brought forth fruit in these saints (Colossians 1:5, 6). Once again, the believers were recipients of the gospel, and it was the Word of Truth that produced the fruit, not the self-effort of the saints.

Paul continued, “We...do not cease to pray for you...that ye might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom

## *Delivered and Translated*

and spiritual understanding” (Colossians 1:9). Paul was asking the Lord to reveal His will and His wisdom as gifts of grace to these believers. Paul then explained why he was praying for these gifts for these believers: “That ye might walk worthy of the Lord...being fruitful in every good work...increasing in the knowledge of God...Strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power...unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness” (Colossians 1:10, 11). There was no doubt in Paul’s mind; he knew that the only means by which we as believers can walk worthy of the Lord or be fruitful or know God more fully or experience power and patience is by His graceful supply to us.

We are completely dependent upon God’s sovereign extension of grace to us for any good to be manifested in our lives. This reigning richness of grace alone was the mystery revealed to Paul, and only to Paul. Colossians 1:25, 26 says, “The dispensation of God which is given to me for you...the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to His saints...”

*Sovereign Lord, we praise You as our Deliverer, the Source of all good gifts, including our experience of wisdom, fruit, and any worthy works unfolding in our lives.*

## Chapter 13

# *The Sound of His Voice*



And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day.

—Genesis 3:8

**I**SN'T IT AMAZING how often you recognize the voice of a loved one? Each individual's voice is unique. In fact, science has discovered that voice patterns are as unique to an individual as DNA. It even is possible to record the visible pattern of an audible voice and graph that one-of-a-kind pattern.

And the Scriptures seem to teach this same truth. Jesus said of Himself as the Good Shepherd, "And the sheep hear his voice... and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice" (John 10:3, 4). The Greek word for "voice" is *phone*, which means sound. The Hebrew word is *qol*, which also means sound. And in the parable of the sheep, Jesus is teaching that the sheep follow the familiar sound, the voice they recognize. The apostle Paul tells us in Romans 10:17 that "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." John 1:1, 14 tells us that Jesus is the

## *The Sound of His Voice*

Word of God. So when the Word calls to the “lost sheep,” they recognize His voice and follow Him; they have faith in Him as the Shepherd.

In addition, the Shepherd calls His sheep by name (John 10:3). Not only do the sheep know His voice, but also He knows their individual names. Even in the garden of Eden, we read, “And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, “Where art thou?” (Genesis 3:9). And when He appeared to Saul of Tarsus, we read that Saul “heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?” (Acts 9:4).

The Lord had a powerful interchange when He appeared before Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor of Jerusalem. Pilate was quizzing the Lord about Who He really is. Jesus said, “. . .for this cause came I unto the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth My voice” (John 18:37).

Pilate’s response proved that Pilate was not “of the truth.” He said, “What is truth?” (John 18:38).

Earlier Jesus had taught the disciples, saying, “I am . . .the truth” (John 14:6).

Those who are “of the truth” know the sound, the voice of the Truth. So, have we heard His voice? Are we “of the Truth”? Do we know Christ to be the *only* Truth? Do we hear His voice, His sound, day by day? Adam and Eve knew they were sinners; yet they recognized the Lord’s voice and answered His call to them, even in the midst of their failure.

*Today, and every day, the voice calls to us—even when we are in our own wilderness experience. “Today if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts” (Hebrews 3:15).*

## Chapter 14

# Reconciliation: Reunited with God



And you that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouable in His sight.

—Colossians 1:21, 22

**N**OW THERE IS a bit of theology worth wrestling with in order to grasp the true meaning of the word “reconciliation”!

Let’s begin by looking at the Greek word for “reconciliation.” In this passage, the word is *apokatallasso*. The prefix *apo* intensifies the meaning of *katallasso*, which means *to be reunited with or reconnected* to God. A vital union has been restored. Placing the prefix *apo* in front of this word emphasizes the perfection of the reconnection. And God has done the reconciling work Himself, totally, completely, and perfectly.



## *Reconciliation: Reunited with God*

Paul sheds further light on this when he says, “For when we were yet without strength...Christ died for the ungodly...God commendeth His love toward us...while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us...we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son...being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life” (Romans 5:6, 8, 10).

It becomes quite clear that God views man as lost, wicked, ungodly, and sinful. There is a broken relationship that has occurred. God, perfect by definition, sinless in His very being, will not look upon wickedness or receive sinners who are in their sinful state; these are His enemies. They deserve death because of sin. Yet God so loved...that He found a way to reconnect us, those whom He chose before the world began, with Himself and to reunite us with His family (Ephesians 1:3–5).

The word *katallasso* has a two-part meaning that helps us to understand reconciliation. *Allasso* means *to change* or *to make other (allos) than it is*. For example, Paul says that we who are alive when the Lord comes “shall all be changed [*allos*], In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye...For this corruptible must put on incorruption” (1 Corinthians 15:51–53). We will be changed to something other than what we are now! Then the word *kata* implies “from above.” So *katallasso* is an action that proceeds from above and produces an arbitrary change. *Katallasso* is translated into English as “reconciliation.” “So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God—all because of what our Lord Jesus Christ has done for us in making us friends of God” (Romans 5:11 NLT).

Look back again at the verses from Colossians 1:21, 22. Paul explains that we who are saints (believers in Christ) were once enemies of God, alienated from Him. But God reconciled us

## *More Heavenly Treasures*

through Christ's work for one purpose: "to present you holy and unblameable and unreprovable in His sight." He called us and He reconciled (reconnected) us so that we can be viewed as free from sin as Christ Himself—unblameable! That is what reconciliation has done for believers.

*Lord, when we were "without strength" to act on our own behalf, You re-connected us to Yourself by placing us in Christ, holy, counted as sinless (Romans 5:6). What mercy! What grace!*

## Chapter 15

# *Born From Above*



And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts...

—Galatians 4:6

**T**HE TERM “BORN again” often is used in a derogatory way. The general population will sometimes refer to the “born againers” to describe those perceived to be religious fanatics or narrow thinkers. And the great Deceiver, Satan himself feeds this kind of propaganda.

However, Christ made it very clear that a second birth is essential for attaining citizenship in heaven. In speaking with the chief rabbi in Jerusalem (a very religious, God-fearing, praying, law-keeping, Bible-reading man), Jesus said, “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3). The literal Greek reads, “Unless a person is born from above, he is not able to enter into the kingdom of God.”

## *More Heavenly Treasures*

The apostle Peter clearly understood this amazing truth. First Peter 1:3 (NLT) says, "...for it is by his boundless mercy that God has given us the privilege of being born again." Peter even describes the process of being born again. He says, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible..." (1 Peter 1:23). This same verse in the New Living Translation reads, "For you have been born again. Your new life did not come from your earthly parents because the life they gave you will end in death. But this new life will last forever because it comes from the eternal, living word of God."

The Greek word for seed is *spora*, which can also be translated "sperm." Our natural birth is produced by the earthly, corruptible male sperm. But the second birth, being born again, is a result of the incorruptible, eternal *spora*, the living Word of God. As mysterious as earthly conception is (the miracle of an invisible sperm, one among millions, fertilizing an egg—a process hidden to the naked eye), so much more so is the mystery of the second birth. This conception occurs when the living *spora*, the invisible Word of God, produces eternal life inside a human being. The Spirit of God literally takes up residence within us, transforming our very beings.

Our earthly DNA can be analyzed. We can identify our mother and our father as a result of DNA family samples. The apostle Paul says that those who have been born again have a heavenly mother! "But Sarah, the free woman, represents the heavenly Jerusalem. And she is our mother...For the woman who could bear no children now has more than all the other women...born of the Holy Spirit" (Galatians 4:26–28 NLT).

Paul's analogy here is difficult to grasp if we do not have a Jewish background or an in-depth understanding of Old

## *Born From Above*

Testament history. He is making the point that Abraham and Sarah, the earthly ancestors of the twelve tribes of Israel, were not able to conceive. Abraham was old and impotent. Sarah was barren. Yet God Himself produced life in Sarah's womb. And He accomplished this through the miraculous birth process called "faith." Romans 10:17 says, "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" And Romans 4:20–22 (NLT) states, "Abraham never wavered in believing God's promise... He was absolutely convinced that God was able to do anything he promised. And because of Abraham's faith, God declared him to be righteous."

Paul is telling us that all who are born again actually are born from above; we are citizens of the heavenly city, the New Jerusalem. The apostle John grasped this mysterious concept also. He said, "And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven like a beautiful bride prepared for her husband...only those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life" are allowed to dwell in this Heavenly City (Revelation 21:2, 27 NLT).

The apostle James also talks of this amazing, miraculous second birth. James 1:18 (NLT) states, "In his goodness he [God] chose to make us His own children by giving us his true word. And we, out of all creation, became his choice possession." Notice that James understands that God gives us His Word and that faith springs up in those who are chosen in Him. This is the glorious miracle of being born again.

*Lord, let us boldly embrace the privilege, the gift, of being born again. "God saved you by his special favor when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from*

## *More Heavenly Treasures*

*God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done...we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus so that we can do the good things he planned for us long ago" (Ephesians 2:8-10 NLT).*

## Chapter 16

# *High, Holy, and Heavenly!*



I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

—Philippians 3:14

THE SCRIPTURES GIVE great emphasis to the fact that believers are called by God Himself. The Shepherd calls us, His sheep, by name, and we follow Him. The Greek word for “calling” is *klesis* and refers to an invitation that incites a response in the one called.

Paul describes our calling as a high calling. The Greek word for high is *ano* and means from above. When Christ was speaking to the Pharisees, He said, “Ye are from beneath [of the earth]; I am from above [the heavens] (John 8:23). Our calling has its source in heaven. That is what a high calling is—a call to you and to me that has come to us from heaven.

Paul wrote to Timothy and said that God “saved us, and called us with an holy calling” (2 Timothy 1:9). Notice that God

## *More Heavenly Treasures*

saved us first when Christ went to the cross on our behalf. Then He called those He saved. “Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called” (Roman 8:30). And His call was a holy calling. The Greek word for holy is *hagios*, a setting apart. God has called us from above and set us apart “according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began” (2 Timothy 1:9). We were called and set apart for the purpose ordained for us “before age time” (literal Greek)!

The author of Hebrews says that we are “partakers of the heavenly calling” (Hebrews 3:1). The Greek word for “heavenly” is *epouranios* and is here used as an adjective to describe that to which we are called. We are called to heaven. We not only have received a call *from* heaven (a high calling, from on high), but also we have been called *to* heaven for the purpose God has for us in eternity. And we have been set apart (a holy calling), even during the time we are here on earth.

In Roman 11:29 Paul writes words of assurance to the Christians in Rome: “God’s gifts and his call are irrevocable” (NIV). In other words, the Lord’s high, holy, heavenly calling of His saints is for His eternal purpose, based upon His sovereign grace, and will stand forever. He will never change His mind or “revoke” His call!

*Lord, expand our hearts and minds to grasp what it means to have received Your call from heaven to heaven.*



Chapter 17

*The Unspeakable Gift*



Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift.

—2 Corinthians 9:15

ISN'T THAT A strange word? “Unspeakable”? As gifted a communicator as the apostle Paul was, it seems he still found his speech inadequate to describe God’s great gift to us. The Greek word for “unspeakable” is *anekdiegetos*, and it means “that which cannot be fully declared.” Paul is simply saying that the gift of God is so indescribable that human language cannot begin to communicate the elements of this miraculous gift.

And what is this gift? The gift of God’s Son to us, of course. “God so loved...that He gave His only begotten Son...” (John 3:16). Paul is telling us that within the Gift, within Christ Himself, reside infinite giftings, the elements hidden within the gift of the Son.

For example, in Ephesians 2:8 we read, “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of

## *More Heavenly Treasures*

God.” The grammar of that verse in the Greek shows that both the grace that saved and the faith we experienced are “the gift of God.” Salvation is the ultimate gift, but even the means of our salvation, grace and faith, have their source in the gift of the Son. Again, we discover that our very righteousness, our right standing (viewed as sinless by God Himself), is a result of Christ’s faith, given to us as believers. According to Philippians 3:9, we are “...found in Him, not having mine own righteousness...but that which is through the faith of Christ...” (literally, Christ’s faith).

In Romans, Paul says that “they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by One, Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:17). Inherent in the gift of the Son is life eternal (Romans 6:23). But have we really grasped what this gift is to us? We have received the miraculous ability to live forever, age upon age, in the future. And we have been given an assignment, a unique purpose, hidden within the gifting of eternal life. God has ordained “that in the coming ages [of eternity] he might show the incomparable riches of his grace” through our very existence there with Him (Ephesians 2:6, 7 NIV).

Because God has given us His Son, He has gifted us with the indwelling Holy Spirit, the power of God Himself at work in us (Acts 2:38). And because of the gift of the Spirit, we have been blessed with unique, individual gifts: hospitality, healing, teaching, miracles, mercy, apostleship, etc. And we are told that “each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others...” (1 Peter 4:10 NIV).

The Gift of God, His Son, is rather like the Russian nesting dolls, the wooden matryoshka dolls. Each time you open one,

## *The Unspeakable Gift*

another appears, hidden inside. The Lord's unveiling of His hidden gifts for us is an infinite process.

*Lord, may we gain a fresh hunger to gain greater understanding of Your "unspeakable gift" to us in Jesus Christ.*

*Chapter 18*

*Have You Received  
Christ Jesus?*



As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord...

—Colossians 2:6

**T**HE FACT THAT we as believers have received Christ is a thought-provoking reality. The concept of receiving Christ actually means to take possession of or to receive a gift. He Himself has been gifted to us if we believe in Him; He is ours, individually and personally. The Scriptures say that Christ is in us. Colossians 1:27 says, “Christ in you, the hope of glory.” And 2 Corinthians 4:7 states that we have this treasure (Christ) in earthen vessels, our very bodies.

Imagine the thrill of the blind man who had been blind since birth when Christ healed him, as described in John, chapter 9. The Lord anointed the man’s eyes with clay and then told him to go wash in the pool of Siloam. Immediately the man received his sight. He said, “I went and washed, and I received sight” (John 9:11).

## *Have You Received Christ Jesus?*

So, did the blind man have anything to do with his going from blindness to sight? No, he received the gift of sight. Yet some will say, “But the blind man had faith in Christ, and that is why the Lord healed him.” Therein lies a huge error regarding biblical truth. Faith itself is a gift (Ephesians 2:8, 9). Galatians 2:16 says, “Man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ...justified by the faith of Christ.” Faith is given to us by His Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:9). Thus it is true: The man had faith and his very faith was a gift and the means by which he was healed.

Charles Spurgeon spoke often of how it is that we receive Christ Jesus. He wrote, “Jesus is not received among the sons of men except where, by His supernatural power and grace, He makes the heart anew...when men receive the gospel it is a sure indication that there is a secret work going on in the soul, and that God has chosen them to eternal life...His own power is working within you, making you willing.”<sup>1</sup>

When the Lord sent the disciples out to preach of the kingdom of heaven, He said, “Freely ye have received, freely give” (Matthew 10:8). Christ was underscoring the connection between *receiving* freely and *giving* freely. When we as believers begin to see that knowing Christ is a work He sovereignly accomplishes within our hearts and lives, we, out of utter gratitude for His mercy and grace, freely extend grace and mercy to those around us.

David, the psalmist, wrote, “In Thy light shall we see light” (Psalm 36:9). The Spirit of God gives us light to see the Light of the World. When Peter confessed that Jesus Christ was indeed the Messiah, the Anointed One, God in the flesh, the Lord said,

*More Heavenly Treasures*

“Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father Which is in heaven” has revealed this (Matthew 16:17).

If we confess Christ as Lord, we receive heavenly sight; the ultimate seeing is to see that Christ is God, the only Truth. And seeing is, indeed, believing.

*Lord, may we live in Your Light more fully, seeing more of You each day.*

*Chapter 19*

*God's Mysterious Plans*



For I know the plans I have for you...They are plans for good...to give you a future and a hope.

—Jeremiah 29:11 NLT

*D*O YOU SOMETIMES feel as if the Lord has forgotten you? Perhaps your circumstances are very difficult or your lifelong hopes or dreams never have materialized. Maybe living seems to have lost its sparkle. In your heart you may feel a lack of purpose or direction. Or maybe you just feel dull.

The Word of God has thrilling, life-giving answers for us when we experience these negative, even morbid, thoughts and feelings. Picture, for example, the life experiences of Moses, a Hebrew born in Egypt at a time when the Pharaoh was killing all of the male Israelite babies. His mother, in an attempt to save his life, put him in the river in a wicker basket. And, of course, through a miraculous set of circumstances,

## *More Heavenly Treasures*

he was found by the daughter of the king of Egypt. He spent forty years living in the palace as the grandson of the Pharaoh!

Then one day Moses happened to see an Egyptian abusing a Hebrew slave. Moses, in anger, killed the Egyptian. The news traveled to the Pharaoh, and Moses had to run for his life. He ended up on the backside of the desert in the land of the Midianites. He spent the next forty years of his life as a shepherd in a foreign land. Surely Moses must have felt the Lord had forgotten him, that his life was useless, without real purpose. And perhaps he lived with terrible regret over his act of murder that produced this life as an outcast. But the Lord was training Moses during those forty years in the desert.

When he was eighty years old, the Lord spoke to him from a burning bush! God said, “Come now...and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth My People the children of Israel out of Egypt” (Exodus 3:10). And we know the rest of the story. Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt, received the Ten Commandments, and served for forty years in the wilderness as the leader of the Israelite people, bringing them to the very edge of the Promised Land.

Moses’ life is a grand illustration of the reality that God is always at work, mysteriously and with purpose. In fact, several truths are being given to us in this biblical account of his life. First, the Lord is with us in all of our circumstances. He never leaves or forsakes those who know Him. Second, He is always at work in the tiniest details that are unfolding in our lives. Nothing in life occurs without His sovereign hand orchestrating it. He works “all things after the counsel of His own will” (Ephesians 1:11). And third, He is carefully preparing us for both small and large assignments. Then when He is ready, He creates the



## *God's Mysterious Plans*

circumstances designed to accomplish His will. He knows where to find us, and He determines when the next door will open in our lives.

So what is the Lord doing in your life? Are you living in the awareness of His powerful plan unfolding, knowing that He is at work, moment by moment, and accomplishing His plans in and through you? Are you living with the peace that through all of your circumstances, His hand of love is upon you?

*Lord, give us fresh eyes to see and hearts to believe that You have plans for us, to give us a future filled with Your purpose and Your presence...for Your glory.*

## Chapter 20

# God's Everlasting Agreement



Yes, he has made an everlasting covenant with me. His agreement is eternal, final, sealed. He will constantly look after my safety and success.

—2 Samuel 23:5 NLT

IT IS TRULY impossible for us as mortals to fully grasp what the words “everlasting” and “eternal” encompass. The Hebrew word *olam* (everlasting) includes the sense of always...no beginning and no ending. The Greek word for “eternal” is *aiionios* and also means perpetual, without beginning or end.

We live within an age, an eon, in which time is a factor of our reality. But the Lord exists beyond this earthly realm. Time is not a confining factor in His realm. The Lord said of Himself, “I am the Alpha and the Omega—the beginning and the end...I am the one who is, who always was, and who is still to come...” (Revelation 1:8 NLT).

## *God's Everlasting Agreement*

Furthermore, the Lord always has been and always will be true to His own character and faithful to His eternal plans. He never changes His mind or His character. First Samuel 15:29 says, “And he who is the Glory of Israel will not lie, nor will he change his mind, for he is not human that he should change his mind” (NLT). Hebrews 13:8 states, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever” (NLT).

So what does this mean for those of us who know the Lord? For one thing, it means that the commitment He has to His own, to those who know Him as God, is a commitment He made before time began. His agreement, His plan, to seek, save, and raise us up to reign with Him in eternity has been His eternal intention. We are experiencing what He had planned for us before the world began!

The Lord tells us that He has loved us “with an everlasting love” (Jeremiah 31:3). He has loved us always; we have been in His heart always. He entered the world for one purpose: to seek and to save His own sheep (John 10:11, 15). We were chosen in Him before the foundation of the world was created (Ephesians 1:4). As Charles Spurgeon wrote, “From all eternity His delights were with the sons of men. His thoughts rolled onward to the time when His elect should be born into the world.”<sup>1</sup> David, the psalmist, wrote, “You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed” (Psalm 139:16 NLT). Just think what this means to us in terms of experiencing God’s personal love and commitment each day!

Spurgeon wrote, “How must we adore the grace of God when we realize that all our folly and ignorance was foreknown by God...yet He has been pleased to deal with us in mercy. Think of

*More Heavenly Treasures*

the price that was paid for us when Christ knew what we would be...unbelieving, cold of heart, careless..."<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, He has loved us always, perpetually, continually...unchanging in His commitment. We can say with the saints of old, "The Lord is My God. He has loved me forever; in my greatest sins and failures He continues to love me. And He shall love me when the heavens and earth are no more."

*Lord, by your Holy Spirit, give us an expanded capacity to grasp the love and mercy that You have had for us, eternally.*

*Chapter 21*

*The Operation of God*



Ye are risen with Him through...the operation of God Who hath raised Him from the dead.

—Colossians 2:12

SURELY IT IS only by God-given faith that we even can begin to grasp the concept that we as believers are resurrected beings here and now. Yet the biblical secret to a joy-filled Christian life is our ability to grasp this heavenly reality. When we see who we are and what God has done, our entire life experience is revolutionized.

Paul wrote to the saints in Colosse and described for their edification how this resurrected condition came to be a reality. He said, “When you came to Christ, you were circumcised, but not by a physical procedure. It was a spiritual procedure—the cutting away of your sinful nature” (Colossians 2:11 NLT). Paul is saying that God performed an operation on us when the Holy Spirit revealed to us the person and work of Jesus Christ.

## *More Heavenly Treasures*

In the physical work of circumcision, the flesh, the foreskin, is cut away and thrown away. It is dead flesh, separated forever from the body. In Israel, circumcision was the sign that the Israelites had been chosen, separated from, cut off from, all of the other peoples of the world. They walked in that awareness every day.

Paul went on to explain that we were circumcised by the removal of “the sins of the flesh” through being buried with Christ. Our flesh died, was thrown away, when Christ died on the cross. We were separated from our “old man,” the human nature that was once ours (Colossians 2:12; Romans 6:3, 4). This miraculous feat was accomplished by Christ Himself. This was “the operation of God.”

Paul continued to explain this work of God: “You were dead because of your sins...” But God cut away your sinful nature and “made you alive [risen] with Christ” (Colossians 2:13 NLT). This resurrection life in Christ is the result of the operation of God in us, “a circumcision made without hands,” by the circumcision of Christ (Colossians 2:11). The Greek word for “operation” in this passage is *energeia*, and it means “the inner working or power” of God.

Do we believe that we have had our old self cut away and disposed of forever? Do we believe that we never will die again? The flesh in which we reside is dead flesh. We will leave it behind; the resurrected you will pass directly into the presence of the Lord at His coming...or upon your exit from the planet. Paul told the Galatians this same good news when he described his own condition. He said, “I died...I have been crucified with Christ. I myself no longer live, but Christ lives in me. So I live

## *The Operation of God*

my life in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God...”  
(Galatians 2:19, 20 NLT).

*Lord, thank You for operating on us. Through the revelation of Your Spirit in us, let us live our lives by trusting what You have said to be true. We are dead to sin and alive to You.*

Chapter 22

*God Justifies the Ungodly!*



...in due time, Christ died for the ungodly.

—Romans 5:6

**D**O YOU EVER have the feeling that the Christian life (and God Himself) is beyond our comprehension? Well, that is absolutely true. Paul the apostle describes the wisdom of God as hidden wisdom, mysterious. God ordained this wisdom before the world began for our benefit (1 Corinthians 2:7). And even though it seems that we continue to try to make God's actions logical, "the foolishness of God" is wiser than we ever will be (1 Corinthians 1:25). So, what might happen if we actually took Him at His word, even when we couldn't make sense of it all?

Paul devotes much of his letter to the Roman Christians to an explanation of the mystery of God's wisdom. He states that God counts us as just, as righteous before Him, based on our faith, not on our works (Romans 4:1–4). And then Paul writes, "But



## *God Justifies the Ungodly!*

to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness” (Romans 4:5).

Wait a minute! Did God “justify the ungodly” sinner before or after he or she had faith? Our human logic still tends to think that the Lord forgives us based on our faith in Him. Thus, *our* faith would appear to be the basis for His forgiveness. But this is not the case. Faith is a gift, and *God gifts* with faith those for whom He died.

Let’s examine what else Paul says about this mind-boggling truth. He writes, “God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8). Paul explains to believers that the Lord died for our sins before we experienced faith. It happened while we still were sinners, counted as ungodly. Furthermore, Paul explains that “when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God...” (Romans 5:10). Again, he says that “when we were yet without strength...Christ died for the ungodly” (Romans 5:6). Do we even begin to grasp the magnitude of the grace of God that Paul is describing? He longed for the saints to see that the Lord paid for our sins while we were still lost in sin. And then He gifted us with faith and opened our eyes to see what a miracle has transpired in our lives.

The Greek word for “faith” is *pistis*, and it means “a living, divinely implanted gift.” In the Old Testament, Ezekiel describes the faith process. According to Ezekiel 36:25–27, the Lord says, “I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean...A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you...and cause you to...keep My judgments.” Notice that God is active, and the sinner is the recipient of all of God’s grace-filled actions. That is the faith process.

## *More Heavenly Treasures*

How should this knowledge transform us as believers today? When we truly see that God justified us while we still were sinners, we should give Him all the glory. When we see that He counted us as ungodly and yet gifted us with faith that we might be counted among the godly, we should begin to grasp grace.

*Help us, Lord, to embrace Your Truth without attempting to add our human logic. May we worship You and simply embrace Your grace.*

## Chapter 23

# Revelation: A Sovereign Gift



...no one really knows the Father except...those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

—Matthew 11:27 NLT

**I**F YOU KNOW who Christ is, you are the recipient of rare revelation. God Himself has removed scales from your eyes and shown you the secret of the ages in the person of His Son. Those of us who share this knowledge have reason to fall on our knees in praise and thanksgiving every day of our lives.

The Lord, for reasons only He knows, has *hidden* the reality of Who He is. And the Son actually thanked the Father for this. He prayed, “O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, thank you for hiding the truth from those who think themselves so wise and clever...it pleased you to do it this way” (Matthew 11:25, 26 NLT). And then the Son goes on to say, “My Father has given me authority over everything...no one really knows the Father

## *More Heavenly Treasures*

except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him” (Matthew 11:27 NLT).

When Jesus was teaching these truths to the crowds He said, “For it is my Father’s will that all who see the Son and believe in him should have eternal life—that I should raise them up at the last day” (John 6:40 NLT). He then went on to say, “It is the Spirit who gives eternal life. Human effort accomplishes nothing... people can’t come to me unless the Father brings them to me” (John 6:63, 65 NLT).

Often we have the mistaken idea that anyone can “choose to believe” in the Lord through his or her own personal choice. Yet again and again the Scriptures remind us that *believing* is a sovereign work of the Holy Spirit. It is a *miracle* to be born of God, to be made a new creation. First Corinthians 12:3 says, “No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.” And John 1:12–13 states that “...the sons of God...were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”

The Greek word translated as “reveal” is *apokalupto*. It is the same as our English word *apocalypse* and actually means *to take off the cover* or *to disclose*. This word often is used to describe the events of the end of the world. The fact is that the *apokalupto* is the *unveiling*, the revelation, of God in Christ. The entire world will receive *revelation* at the end of time. Yet it will be too late for salvation. The Lord will be coming in judgment, to pour out His wrath. But if we have received this *revelation*, we are among those who will escape the wrath of God. We are among those whom the Father has given as a gift to the Son (John 17:2).

“No one has ever seen God. But his only Son, who is himself God...he has told us about him” (John 1:18 NLT). If we grasp the

*Revelation: A Sovereign Gift*

magnitude of this sovereign gift of God's revelation in our lives, we have reason to praise and thank the Lord day after day.

*Father, we praise You for Your grace to us, and we give You all the glory. Grant us the capacity to increasingly receive Your Truth.*

## Chapter 24

# Ancient Grace



His own...grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.

—2 Timothy 1:9

*P*AUL, THE APOSTLE, revealed truths that God alone could author. These revelations are so staggering that we often dismiss them as beyond our comprehension. Yet Paul taught these realities to first century believers with the expectation that the saints would believe them, relish them, and rejoice in them!

This passage in Paul's second letter to Timothy contains several awe-inspiring, life-changing truths. In 2 Timothy 1:9 Paul reminds the believers that God "saved us, and called us." The Greek word for "saved" is *sozo*, and it means to be delivered. Do we realize or even begin to grasp just what it is that we have been delivered from? Paul tells us in Colossians 1:13 that we have been delivered "from the power of the darkness" and

translated into the kingdom of Jesus Christ. What a Savior! We were incapable of escaping from the captivity of Satan's kingdom, but God came and delivered us. Have we fallen on our knees to praise Him for this grace?

Paul reveals another amazing truth in 2 Timothy 1:9. He states that first God saved us and then He called us. Paul states this in a similar way in Romans 8:29, 30: Those whom the Lord knew intimately before the world began, the ones He predestined to come to Him, those "He also called." Think about what this means. The Lord knew His own sheep before we entered the world; we were predestined by His grace eventually to hear His voice and answer His call. Paul heard his name called on the road to Damascus. When did *you* hear His call? John 10:27 states, "My sheep hear My voice...and they follow Me."

Paul also explains in 2 Timothy 1:9 that this "holy calling" was not based on anything good in us, "not according to our works." Rather, God called us "according to His own purpose." The Greek word for "purpose" is *prothesis*, which means an intention. God intentionally saved and called those whom He knew before the world began. And He did this for His own reasons.

Next we read that God's purpose was a grace-filled purpose, "...according to His own purpose and grace." And Paul reveals that this grace of God "was given us in Christ Jesus" before time began.

What does this really mean? Paul makes similar statements in his letter to the Ephesians. He explains there that God *chose us in Christ* before the world began (Ephesians 1:4). God predestinated us to be His, "according to the good pleasure of His will" and for "the praise of the glory of His grace," by making

## *More Heavenly Treasures*

us “accepted in the Beloved” (Ephesians 1:5, 6). In other words, Paul is saying that God’s grace placed us in His Son, hidden in Christ, before time began. And those who are in the Son, based on God’s grace alone, are those who are being called to know Christ in time and space. For example, Luke states that when Paul preached in Antioch of Pisidia, “as many as were ordained to eternal life believed” (Acts 13:48).

Let’s meditate on this incredible ancient grace. This grace, this grace of God that existed before the world was created, was given to us by the Ancient of Days Himself...before He began the process of creating the world and time itself. This is the grace of God that makes us “accepted in Christ,” counted as righteous, free from sin, and covered by His blood and His righteousness.

*Oh, Lord, we are staggered by the revelation of who we are in Your Son. Open our hearts and minds to grasp the magnificence of your ancient, eternal grace given to us in Your Beloved.*



Chapter 25

*It Shall Be Well With  
You*



Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him.

—Isaiah 3:10

*O*H, WHAT A promise from God's word to our hearts. He guarantees that *it will be well, all* will be well, in the lives of "*the righteous.*" And what a title we have been given, *the righteous ones!*

There are only two kinds of people in the world, according to Scripture. There are *the righteous* and *the wicked*. We learn in Romans 3:9, 10 that there is not one human being that is counted *righteous* by God. "They are all under sin; As it is written, "There is none righteous, no, not one." In our natural condition as human beings we are in a state of *wickedness*. As Romans 3:23 states, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."

How then does one qualify to be counted among *the righteous*? Paul explains that our being made righteous is a

## *More Heavenly Treasures*

sovereign work of God Himself. In Romans he writes, “When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us...while we were still sinners. And since we have been made right in God’s sight by the blood of Christ he will certainly save us...” (Romans 5:6, 8, 9 NLT). He also says, “We have been made right in God’s sight by faith...” (Romans 5:1 NLT).

It is important to remember that *faith* is a gift of God. As human beings, we do not have faith in our natural state. And without faith no one will see God, because “whatsoever is not of faith is sin” (Romans 14:23). God in His grace brings the gift of faith to those whom He has called to Himself (Ephesians 2:8, 9). These are *the righteous*, having been *made righteous* through a sovereign work of God.

The Lord’s promises to those of us who are *the righteous* are amazing. For example: “The righteous shall be glad in the Lord” (Psalm 64:10). “There is a reward for the righteous” (Psalm 58:11). “The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance. He shall not be afraid of evil tidings. His heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord” (Psalm 112:6, 7).

The apostle Peter was comforted by the promises the Lord gave the psalmist. Peter quoted Psalm 34 and confidently wrote, “For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ears are open unto their prayers” (1 Peter 3:12). What comforting words these are to each of us: The Lord’s eyes always are watching over us. His ears always are hearing our prayers.

The Lord explained to the disciples what will happen when He returns, at His second coming. These words also can encourage us. He said that the Son of Man will send His angels and they will gather out the wicked and cast them into a furnace

*It Shall Be Well With You*

of fire. And “then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father” (Matthew 13:38–43).

It is critical to understand how we became counted among the righteous. This standing is the result of God’s work on our behalf through the shed blood of Christ. *Righteousness* is a gift we have received. The way we can be certain that we are counted among the righteous is to confess that Jesus Christ died for our sins and rose again on the third day. “Once we, too, were... slaves to many wicked desires... But then God our Savior... saved us, not because of the good things we did, but because of his mercy” (Titus 3:3–5 NLT). The Lord promises that “whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Romans 10:13) and that “every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God” (1 John 4:2).

*Lord God, give us boldness to believe that all will be well with us because we have been counted among the righteous.*

*Chapter 26*

*The Throne Room of  
Grace*



Come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

—Hebrews 4:16

THE AUTHOR OF the book of Hebrews had a very special appreciation for the throne from which the Lord reigns over heaven and earth. The writer opens the book by describing the Son, having completed His sacrificial death, being seated “on the right hand of the Majesty on high” (Hebrews 1:3). He goes on to say that this throne is “for ever and ever,” to the ages of the ages (Hebrews 1:8).

Do you have a picture of an earthly king’s throne room? We have seen representations of the glory, the sumptuousness, of a palace, the seat of power of earthly majesty. Magnify this picture infinitely, and we might begin to grasp the beauty and the magnificence of heaven’s throne room.

## *The Throne Room of Grace*

The apostle John was lifted up into heaven, and he saw the throne and the One who sat upon it (Revelation 4:1). He tried to describe what he saw, and he found it difficult to capture in earthly words: “He Who sat there appeared like [the crystalline brightness of] jasper and [the fiery] sardius, and encircling the throne there was a halo that looked like [a rainbow of] emerald...Out from the throne came flashes of lightning and rumblings and peals of thunder...and in front from the throne there was also what looks like a transparent glassy sea, as if of crystal” (Revelation 4:3, 5, 6 ANT). That is the throne of grace! That is the Majesty into whose presence we are invited to come boldly. The word “throne” in the Greek is *thronos*; it means a seat of power. And this King’s power is expressed, delivered to us, as grace—free, undeserved favor. This King reigns over the kingdom of grace. The message He delivers from the throne room is “the gospel of the grace of God” (Acts 20:24).

Each time the apostle Paul brought greetings to the saints, he underscored the message God was sending to the saints from His throne room: “Grace be to you...from God the Father...” (Galatians 1:3). “Grace be to you...from God our Father” (Ephesians 1:2). “Grace be unto you...from God our Father...” (Colossians 1:2). Again and again this is the word of the Lord to us.

Paul also reminded the Galatians that they were “called... into the grace of Christ” (Galatians 1:6). His closing prayer in his letter to the Galatians was that “the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit” (Galatians 6:18). And Paul had firsthand knowledge of the magnitude of God’s grace. He wrote, “God Who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by His grace” (Galatians 1:15).

## *More Heavenly Treasures*

It was Paul who taught the Thessalonians that the name of the Lord Jesus Christ would be glorified in them “according to the grace of our God...” (2 Thessalonians 1:12). He further explained to them that God “loved us and gave us everlasting consolation and encouragement and well-founded hope through [His] grace (unmerited favor)” (2 Thessalonians 2:16 ANT).

No wonder we can come boldly into the Lord’s Throne Room! Everything He has done for us in the past and all that He is going to do for us in the future flows from His heart full of grace towards His saints. He is calling us into the place where the Majesty dwells for a specific reason—so that we may obtain [be the recipients of] His mercy and find [discover the supply of] grace to help us in all our needs, time after time.

Mercy and grace are the reasons the Lord is inviting us to come to His throne room boldly and often. The King of Grace wants us to experience living in the kingdom of grace.

*Lord, open our ears and our hearts to Your incredible invitation to each of us. May we enter into Your Throne Room of Grace day after day, hour by hour.*

Chapter 27

*Ordained Steps*



Then Pharaoh's daughter went down to the Nile to bathe...

—Exodus 2:5 NIV

*H*OW OFTEN HAVE you heard the statement, “Well, I just don’t believe God is involved in the little things of our lives. He doesn’t care when you decide to go on vacation or make a trip to the grocery store”? Humanistic philosophy places human beings at the center of their own self-determined universe. But nothing could be further from biblical truth.

There was a critical moment in time when Pharaoh’s daughter “decided” “to go down to the Nile to bathe.” It was just at that very moment that a reed basket was floating down the river and passed the very spot where this young woman was preparing to bathe. Most of us know the rest of the story. A crying baby was found in the basket. His name was Moses, the man God had ordained to lead the enslaved Israelites out of Egypt.

## *More Heavenly Treasures*

Again, the world wants to assign such an amazing moment to coincidence, luck, or “the universe bringing things into alignment.” However, the Word of God tells us that the Lord directs the very *steps* of every person in the world (Proverbs 16:9). He is at work in every detail of every day that unfolds in the entire universe. He has “the very hairs of your head... all numbered” (Matthew 10:30). Not one sparrow falls to “the ground without your Father” (Matthew 10:29).

What does this truth about God’s involvement and direction in the minutia of life mean to us as believers? And how are we to understand this reality in the face of tragedies, “accidents,” and daily disappointments? The critical answer to these questions rests in grasping, by faith, the *character* of God.

The apostle John sums up the character of God in one statement: *God is love* (1 John 4:8). The Greek word used here for “love” is *agape*—spontaneous, unconditional love. The word *agape* is never used in the Scriptures to describe *man’s* love for God. Rather, God alone is the Source of authentic, unconditional, spontaneous love towards us.

When the Spirit of God causes us to grasp this fact about the character of God, we can begin to experience “the peace ...which passeth all understanding” (Philippians 4:7). We can rejoice in the Lord’s *presence* at the car wash, in church, while cleaning the floor, or on the way to work. We can praise Him for every single blessing of the day—food to eat, a warm blanket, a cool breeze, or a walk around the block. And we can dare to *trust* Him and His heart of love in our pain, losses, confusion, and failures. *He* is at work for our highest good in every element of our life experiences.



## *Ordained Steps*

Moses was raised in the palace of the Pharaoh amidst the “treasures in Egypt” (Hebrews 11:26), and the world was impacted eternally by Moses’ life and leadership. What was the *basis* for his influence? The fact that Pharaoh’s daughter happened “to go down to the Nile to bathe”! And *why* did she go at this time? Because God directs even footsteps to accomplish His purposes...and His motive is always love.

*Give us eyes to see You as You are, Lord. Let us embrace Your sovereign reign over all.*

Chapter 28

*Nevertheless!*



Nevertheless, I am continually with Thee.

—Psalm 73:23

*R*ING DAVID WAS overwhelmed with the *grace* of God in his life. In spite of his failures, his foolishness, and his lapses into serious sin, David experienced being “continually with” the Lord. He understood and trusted in the faithfulness of His Lord.

Charles Spurgeon commented on this very verse, saying, “Notwithstanding all the foolishness and ignorance which David had just been confessing to God, not one atom the less was it true and certain that David was saved and accepted, and that the blessing of being constantly in God’s presence was undoubtedly his.”<sup>1</sup>

Are we as aware as David was of the Lord’s continual love and presence in our lives? Do we *know* that His love for each of

*Nevertheless!*

us is an eternal, everlasting, unchanging love (Jeremiah 31:3)? Do we believe that there is “no variableness, neither shadow of turning” in our Father (James 1:17)? By His own will, His own choice, He fathered us; we are born of Him, flesh of His flesh, bone of His bone. He has engraved each of our names on the palm of His hand (Isaiah 49:16).

How often do we *feel* as if the Lord has forgotten us or, at least, He is annoyed or disappointed with us? Yet the Lord’s Words to us are, “They may forget, yet will I not forget thee” (Isaiah 49:15). And we read this promise in Hebrews 13:5: “For He hath said, I will *never* leave thee, nor *forsake* thee.” Perhaps we need to hold this great promise *close* to our hearts in the face of all of our failures. Spurgeon called this “Surprising grace!” He said of the Lord, “Thou seest me in Christ, and though in myself abhorred, Thou beholdest me as wearing Christ’s garments, and washed in His blood...I am thus continually in Thy favor.”<sup>2</sup>

We see such a wonderful picture of the Lord’s sustained love for us in the parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11–32). When the son returns home from the far country, he is repeatedly confessing his sin. Yet his father never even discusses the son’s sin, nor does he reprimand him. Instead, he dresses him in the finest robe and throws a huge party in his honor!

God’s grace truly is greater than all our sin. He died for us “while we were yet sinners” (Romans 5:8). When we were His enemies, He reconciled us to Himself (Romans 5:10). The Lord knew all about us and still saved us for Himself because He is in love with us! This is grace greater than our minds can grasp.

We are “saved by His life,” not by any effort we can put forth in our lives (Romans 5:10). We have “*received* the atonement”; we are fully, eternally restored in oneness with our heavenly

*More Heavenly Treasures*

Father (Romans 5:11). Therefore, grace reigns over us through Christ's righteousness. His banner over us is *love* (Song of Solomon 2:4)!

*Oh, Lord, give us the grace to embrace Your grace. Let us remember that "nevertheless, [we are] continually with You!"*

## Chapter 29

# God's Inheritance



For the Lord will not cast off His People; neither will He forsake His inheritance.

—Psalm 94:14

THE PSALMIST REVEALS an amazing truth to us: He equates God's people with His inheritance. In this specific verse, he is saying that Israel (God's people) never will be cast away because they are the Lord's own reward (inheritance) to Himself!

The apostle Paul underscores this reality in Romans 11:2. He writes, "God hath not cast away His people which He foreknew." The Greek word for "foreknew" is *proginosko*. It means that God had an intimate relationship (*ginosko*) with His people in the eternal past. And this relationship is one of intimate love, never to be cast off or destroyed. God is faithful to His own children.

In John 17 we learn that all believers, not just Israel, are the Lord's reward to Himself, the inheritance that He will accede

## *More Heavenly Treasures*

to when He comes again. Christ spoke at length to the Father about those who belonged to the Father who were given as a gift, an inheritance, to the Son. Jesus said, “All Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine; and I am glorified in them... Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given me... I pray... that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil” (John 17:10, 11, 15). So we are being kept for the Lord Himself!

Also, we have been given Christ’s own glory. John 17:22 says, “And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them.” We have been called by the gospel of grace for this purpose: “To the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Thessalonians 2:14). The Lord is gifting Himself with the joy of seeing the glory of His own grace manifested in His elect! We have been “predestinated... according to the good pleasure of His will to the praise of the glory of His grace” (Ephesians 1:5, 6). This is the inheritance we have obtained “being predestinated according to the purpose of Him Who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will: that we should be to the praise of His glory...” (Ephesians 1:11, 12).

In Colossians 1:12 Paul tells us that the Father made us fit “to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.” Our inheritance, our great honor and glory, is to be His inheritance! Think of it! The Lord, out of the pure pleasure of His own will, has gifted Himself by giving His glory to sinners who were lost in a dark world. He “delivered us from the power of darkness and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son” for His own good pleasure (Colossians 1:13). No wonder the psalmist was certain that the Lord never will forsake His people! We are His joy, and we are bearers of His glory. We are His inheritance!

## *God's Inheritance*

Surely the Lord's ways are beyond our wildest dreams. His plans exceed our greatest attempts at comprehension. Yet we hear and see His amazing love and commitment to us in the midst of these incomprehensible realities.

Jesus is in love with us; we are His Beloved; He has dressed us in His glory; and He is keeping us, guarding us, and protecting us. He wants us for Himself alone, and therefore, He never will forsake us. What a divine romance!

*Lord, open our hearts to grasp Your love and Your eternal commitment to us whom you have predestined to be to the praise of Your glory.*

# Endnotes

## Chapter 3

1. A.W. Pink, *The Attributes of God* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1970), 60.
2. Ibid., 65.

## Chapter 4

1. Martin Luther, *On The Bondage of The Will* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Associated Publishers and Authors, 1971), 22.

## Chapter 5

1. A.W. Pink, *The Attributes of God* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1970), 66.

## Chapter 18

1. Charles N. Spurgeon, *Morning and Evening* (Hendrickson Publishers, 1991), 627.

## Chapter 20

1. Charles N. Spurgeon, *Morning and Evening* (Hendrickson Publishers, 1991), 704.
2. Ibid., 703.

## Chapter 28

1. Charles N. Spurgeon, *Morning and Evening* (Hendrickson Publishers, 1991), 422.
2. Ibid., 422.



Feel free to contact Glenna for more information or  
to speak at your event, retreat or conference.

Phone: 480-483-7731

Email: [ISpeak4U@aol.com](mailto:ISpeak4U@aol.com)

Website: [www.glennasalsbury.com](http://www.glennasalsbury.com)