



THE SUPREME TRANSACTION

GRACE: We give our sins to the sinless Son of God and he pays the penalty required by God - death with his blood shed in our place, so that God is then able to justly declare a verdict of 'not guilty'.

FAITH: Those who know they need to be redeemed, who gladly receive Jesus Christ as their Saviour, Lord and King, who seek to serve him in obedience, will be clothed by God in his Son's perfect righteousness.

LIFE:Those whose names are written in the 'Lamb's Book of Life' are citizens of the eternal kingdom of heaven, and the adopted children of God the Father because they loved, honoured and trusted in the finished work of God the Son to save them.

EPHESIANS 2, 4 - **9**:But God, who is rich in mercy, because of his great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ and raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.

By divine grace and power God converts sin, lawlessness, rebellion and enmity into righteousness, faithfulness, obedience and love – and this transformation is accomplished by God's grace. When the desire is to be right with God, to be in the light not the darkness, to be among the living not the dead, then the one acceptable way that God has provided becomes apparent and truly unmistakable.

ear Scripture's word of truth, receive it, believe it, and be fundamentally changed forever! When we cease arguing with God, and agree that his verdict on us is just and true, enlightenment has begun! We really are extraordinarily self-centred; and the human heart is by nature indeed, 'deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, who can know it'?

he Son of God came into the world and lived as a human being, Jesus of Nazareth – yet he never sinned against God or man. Nevertheless, he chose to be the recipient of God's full wrath and anger against human sin. His death on a Roman cross was in our place; we were due the punishment he took for us – thus allowing God to declare us judicially 'not guilty', price paid. We gave Christ our 'death' he gave us his perfect righteousness. Those who believe in him are 'free', their names written in the 'Book of Life' in the holy blood of God the Son himself.



SCRIPTURAL TRUTH: AN OVERVIEW OF THE ORACLES OF GOD

t should surely be of no surprise to us that the 'good news' of God's saving grace to Mankind must require us to actually participate in the 'transaction'! Firstly to 'own' our sins, transgressions, lawlessness and rebellion against his will, and then to want to turn away from them (repent) if we expect to enjoy his favour. Those who don't see its value, who love their carnal lifestyle, or even who believe they're good enough to make it on their own without divine help, cannot truly expect the Most High, who is 'Holy, Holy, Holy', to change his nature to accommodate them – can they?

he revealed word of God (the Holy Bible) tells us rather clearly in various passages what is not acceptable to him, and that he will punish; and that which pleases him so that he chooses to bless with the gift of eternal life. It's really just the same old choice on our part: chase after worldly experiences, grab the gusto, live for the 'flesh', OR 'seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.' Amazingly, by God's grace, those who live to truly repent of the first will find themselves recipients of the second!

THE FOOL HAS SAID IN HIS HEART, *"THERE IS* NO GOD"

This is from the first verse of Psalms 14. Through the prophet Ezekiel, chapters 18 & 33, God has this to say:

ast away from you all the transgressions which you have committed, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit. For why should you die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of one who dies," says the Lord GOD. "Therefore turn and live!"

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J _ ay to them: 'As I live,' says the Lord GOD, 'I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways! For why should you die, O house of Israel?' Therefore you, O son of man, say to the children of your people: 'The righteousness of the righteous man shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression; as for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall because of it in the day that he turns from his wickedness; nor shall the righteous be able to live because of his righteousness in the day that he sins.' When I say to the righteous that he shall surely live, but he trusts in his own righteousness and commits iniquity, none of his righteous works shall be remembered; but because of the iniquity that he has committed, he shall die.

Again, when I say to the wicked, 'You shall surely die,' if he turns from his sin and does what is lawful and right, *if* the wicked restores the pledge, gives back what he has stolen, and walks in the statutes of life without committing iniquity, he shall surely live; he shall not die. None of his sins which he has committed shall be remembered against him; he has done what is lawful and right; he shall surely live."

od *is* jealous, and the LORD avenges; the LORD avenges and *is* furious. The LORD will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserves *wrath* for his enemies; the LORD *is* slow to anger and great in power, and will not at all acquit *the wicked*. The LORD has his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds *are* the dust of his feet. The mountains quake before him, the hills melt, and the earth heaves at his presence, yes, the world and all who dwell in it. Who can stand before his indignation? And who can endure the fierceness of his anger? His fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him.

The LORD *is* good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and he knows those who trust in him. But with an overflowing flood he will make an utter end of its place, and darkness will pursue his enemies. What do you conspire against the LORD? He will make an utter end *of it*. Affliction will not rise up a second time. (Nahum, chapter 1).

our words have been harsh against me," says the LORD, "yet you say, 'What have we spoken against you?' You have said, 'It is useless to serve God; what profit *is it* that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked as mourners before the LORD of hosts? So now we call the proud blessed, for those who do wickedness are raised up; they even tempt God and go free.'"

Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, and the LORD listened and heard *them*; so a book of remembrance was written before him for those who fear the LORD and who meditate on his name. "They shall be mine," says the LORD of hosts, "on the day that 1 make them my jewels. And 1 will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him." Then you shall again discern between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve him. "For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, and all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble. And the day which is coming shall burn them up," says the LORD of hosts, "that will leave them neither root nor branch." (Malachi, chapters 3 & 4).

oe to those who draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as if with a cart rope; that say, "Let him [God] make speed *and* hasten his work, that we may see *it*; and let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw near and come, that we may know *it*." We to those who call evil good, and good evil; who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe to *those who are* wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!

Woe to men mighty at drinking wine, woe to men valiant for mixing intoxicating drink, who justify the wicked for a bribe, and take away justice from the righteous man! Therefore, as the fire devours the stubble, and the flame consumes the chaff, *so* their root will be as rottenness, and their blossom will ascend like dust; because they have rejected the law of the LORD of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel. (Isaiah, chapter 5).

hen the Pharisees and Sadducees [religious leaders] came, and testing him [Jesus Christ] asked that he would show them a sign from heaven. He answered and said to them, "When it is evening you say, '*It will be* fair weather, for the sky is red'; and in the morning, '*It will be* foul weather today, for the sky is red and threatening.' Hypocrites! You know how to discern the face of the sky, but you cannot *discern* the signs of the times. A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign shall be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah." [Jonah was 'dead' for 3 days before being resurrected by God – as Christ would be after his crucifixion for the sins of the world]. (Matthew, chapter 16). o you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you [the church in Corinth]. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

And God both raised up the Lord and will also raise Aus up by his power. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall 1 then take the members of Christ and make *them* members of a harlot? Certainly not! Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body *with her*? For "the two," he says, "shall become one flesh." But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit *with him*.

Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body [male or female] is the temple of the Holy Spirit *who is* in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price [Christ's blood poured out to the death in our place]; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's. (1 Corinthians, chapter 6). ow the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told *you* in time past, that those who practise such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those *who are* Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. For each one shall bear his own load. Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches.

Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. [Galatians, chapters 5 & 6]. his I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles [pagans] walk, in the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. But you have not so learned Christ, if indeed you have heard him and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness. Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

ut fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not be partakers with them. [Ephesians, chapters 4 & 5]. or the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown *it* to them. For since the creation of the world his invisible *attributes* are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify *him* as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.

Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and fourfooted animals and creeping things. [1 think it was Voltaire who commented, 'God said, "Let us make man in our image," – so Man returned the compliment!'] Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonour their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

herefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practise the same things. But we know that the judgement of God is according to truth against those who practise such things. And do you think this, O man, you who judge those practising such things, and doing the same, that you will escape the judgement of God? Or do you despise the riches of his goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?

But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgement of God, who "will render to each one according to his deeds": eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honour, and immortality; but to those who are selfseeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness—indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek [Gentile]; but glory, honour, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For there is no partiality with God. [Romans, chapters 1 & 2].

here do wars and fights *come* from among you? Do *they* not *come* from your *desires for* pleasure that war in your members? You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend *it* on your pleasures. Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. [James, chapter 4]. o not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that *is* in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever. Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but *they went out* that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.

have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth. Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son. Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also.

e who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of his Son. And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. [1 John, chapters 2 & 5]. fter these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory. And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, "Babylon the great [the world's final economic, cultural, religious, political, educational, philosophical system and centre] is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird! For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed [spiritual] fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury."

And I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues. For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities. Render to her just as she rendered to you, and repay her double according to her works; in the cup which she has mixed, mix double for her. In the measure that she glorified herself and lived luxuriously, in the same measure give her torment and sorrow; for she says in her heart, 'I sit *as* queen, and am no widow, and will not see sorrow.'

ow I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And he who sat on him *was* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. His eyes *were* like a flame of fire, and on his head *were* many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed him on white horses. Now out of his mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it he should strike the nations. And he himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he has on *his* robe and on his thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. [Revelation, chapters 18 & 19].

nd I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. "He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be my son. But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death. I am the Alpha and the Omega, *the* Beginning and *the* End, the First and the Last."

lessed *are* those who do his commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. But outside *are* dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practises a lie. "I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star." [Revelation, chapters 20 – 22]. ut know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: for men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! [11 Timothy, chapter 3].

eloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder), that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Saviour, knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, "Where is the promise of his [Christ's] coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation." For this they wilfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water. But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgement and perdition of ungodly men. But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. [11 Peter, chapter 3].

he fundamental 'truth' that we seem to find it really difficult to grasp is that the eternal God and Creator is infinitely more holy and righteously angry against our sin than we give him credit for. Meanwhile, we – the whole of humanity – have a real problem accepting the fact that we are far more unrighteous and casually dismissive of our sins than we should be. One fatal flaw is that we routinely compare ourselves to 'other people' rather than to the holiness of God.

f course, since Adam our 'progenitor' made his decision to disobey the LORD and believe that serpent of old, the Devil and Satan; (*Revelation 20: 2*), the whole race has been, and remains, in bondage to the 'usurper' who we put into power.

God said it in the Garden clearly and categorically, the moment you make your choice against me [Genesis, 2: 17], "you shall surely die." Being spiritually 'dead' to God we have no means of our own to purchase or earn redemption in order to 'get right' with God by our own efforts.

his is how the very best of us rate on God's 'scale' of holiness, righteousness and justice: 'But we are all like an unclean *thing*, and all our righteousnesses *are* like filthy rags; we all fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away. And *there is* no one who calls on your name, who stirs himself up to take hold of you; for you have hidden your face from us, and have consumed us because of our iniquities.' [Isaiah, 64: 6 & 7]. In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of his *robe* filled the temple.

Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew.

And one cried to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy *is* the LORD of hosts; the whole earth *is* full of his glory!"

[lsaiah, chapter 6]

nd God spoke all these words, saying: "You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness *of anything* that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For 1, the LORD your God, *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth *generations* of those who hate me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love me and keep my commandments. You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold *him* guiltless who takes his name in vain." [Exodus, chapter 20].

nd Hannah prayed and said: "No one is holy like the LORD, for *there is* none besides you, nor *is there* any rock like our God. Talk no more so very proudly; let no arrogance come from your mouth, for the LORD *is* the God of knowledge; and by him actions are weighed. The LORD kills and makes alive; he brings down to the grave and brings up. For the pillars of the earth *are* the LORD'S, and he has set the world upon them. He will guard the feet of his saints, but the wicked shall be silent in darkness. For by strength no man shall prevail. The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken in pieces; from heaven he will thunder against them. The LORD will judge the ends of the earth. He will give strength to his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed." [1 Samuel, chapter 2].

ing to the LORD, all the earth; proclaim the good news of his salvation from day to day. Declare his glory among the nations, his wonders among all peoples. For the LORD *is* great and greatly to be praised; he *is* also to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the peoples *are* idols, but the LORD made the heavens. Honour and majesty *are* before him; strength and gladness are in his place.

Give to the LORD, O families of the peoples, give to the LORD glory and strength. Give to the LORD the glory *due* his name; bring an offering, and come before him. Oh, worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness! Tremble before him, all the earth. The world also is firmly established, it shall not be moved.

Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; and let them say among the nations, "The LORD reigns." Let the sea roar, and all its fullness; let the field rejoice, and all that *is* in it. Then the trees of the woods shall rejoice before the LORD, for he is coming to judge the earth. Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for *he is* good! For his mercy *endures* forever.

ours, O LORD, *is* the greatness, the power and the glory, the victory and the majesty; for all *that is* in heaven and in earth *is yours*; yours *is* the kingdom, O LORD, and you are exalted as head over all. Both riches and honour *come* from you, and you reign over all. In your hand *is* power and might; in your hand *it is* to make great and to give strength to all." [1 Chronicles, chapters 16 & 29].

n oracle within my heart concerning the transgression of the wicked: *There is* no fear of God before his eyes. For he flatters himself in his own eyes, when he finds out his iniquity *and* when he hates. The words of his mouth *are* wickedness and deceit; he has ceased to be wise *and* to do good. He devises wickedness on his bed; he sets himself in a way *that is* not good; he does not abhor evil.

our mercy, O LORD, *is* in the heavens; your reaches to the faithfulness clouds. Your righteousness *is* like the great mountains; your judgements are a great deep; O LORD, y7ou preserve man and beast. How precious is your loving-kindness, O God! Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of your wings. They are abundantly satisfied with the fullness of your house, and you give them drink from the river of your pleasures. For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light. Oh, continue your loving-kindness to those who know you, and your righteousness to the upright in heart.

ur God shall come, and shall not keep silent; a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous all around him. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people: "Gather my saints together to me, those who have made a covenant with me by sacrifice." Let the heavens declare his righteousness, for God himself *is* Judge. [Psalms, chapters 36 & 50]. estore us, O God of our salvation, and cause your anger toward us to cease. Will you be angry with us forever? Will you prolong your anger to all generations? Will you not revive us again, that your people may rejoice in you? Show us your mercy, LORD, and grant us your salvation. I will hear what God the LORD will speak, for he will speak peace to his people and to his saints; but let them not turn back to folly.

Surely his salvation *is* near to those who fear him, that glory may dwell in our land. Mercy and truth have met together; righteousness and peace have kissed. Truth shall spring out of the earth, and righteousness shall look down from heaven. Yes, the LORD will give *what is* good; and our land will yield its increase. Righteousness will go before him, and shall make his footsteps *our* pathway.

h, worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness! Tremble before him, all the earth. Say among the nations, "The LORD reigns; the world also is firmly established, it shall not be moved; he shall judge the peoples righteously."

et the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; Let the sea roar, and all its fullness; let the field be joyful, and all that *is* in it. Then all the trees of the woods will rejoice before the LORD. For he is coming, for he is coming to judge the earth. He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with his truth. [Psalms, chapters 85 & 96]. he LORD executes righteousness and justice for all who are oppressed. The LORD *is* merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in mercy. He will not always strive *with us*, nor will he keep *his anger* forever. He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor punished us according to our iniquities.

For as the heavens are high above the earth, *so* great is his mercy toward those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, *so* far has he removed our transgressions from us. As a father pities *his* children, *so* the LORD pities those who fear him.

For he knows our frame; he remembers that we *are* dust. *As for* man, his days *are* like grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourishes. For the wind passes over it, and it is gone, and its place remembers it no more. But the mercy of the LORD *is* from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear him, and his righteousness to children's children, to such as keep his covenant, and to those who remember his commandments to do them.

The LORD has established his throne in heaven, and his kingdom rules over all. Bless the LORD, you his angels, who excel in strength, who do his word, heeding the voice of his word. Bless the LORD, all *you* his hosts, *you* ministers of his, who do his pleasure. Bless the LORD, all his works, in all places of his dominion. Bless the LORD, O my soul! [Psalms, chapter 103]. our word *is* a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. Your testimonies are wonderful; therefore my soul keeps them. The entrance of your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple. I opened my mouth and panted, for I longed for your commandments. Look upon me and be merciful to me, as your custom *is* toward those who love your name.

Direct my steps by your word, and let no iniquity have dominion over me. Redeem me from the oppression of man, that I may keep your precepts. Make your face shine upon your servant, and teach me your statutes. Rivers of water run down from my eyes, because *men* do not keep your law.

Righteous *are* you, O LORD, and upright *are* your judgements. Your testimonies, *which* you have commanded, *are* righteous and very faithful. My zeal has consumed me, because my enemies have forgotten your words. Your word *is* very pure; therefore your servant loves it. 1 *am* small and despised, *yet* 1 do not forget your precepts.

Your righteousness *is* an everlasting righteousness, and your law *is* truth. Trouble and anguish have overtaken me, *yet* your commandments *are* my delights. The righteousness of your testimonies *is* everlasting; give me understanding, and I shall live. My tongue shall speak of your word, for all your commandments *are* righteousness. [Psalms, chapter 119]. he LORD *is* gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and great in mercy. The LORD *is* good to all, and his tender mercies *are* over all his works. Your kingdom *is* an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion *endures* throughout all generations. The eyes of all look expectantly to you, and you give them their food in due season. You open your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing.

The LORD *is* righteous in all his ways, gracious in all his works. The LORD *is* near to all who call upon him, to all who call upon him in truth. He will fulfil the desire of those who fear him; he also will hear their cry and save them. The LORD preserves all who love him, but all the wicked he will destroy. My mouth shall speak the praise of the LORD, and all flesh shall bless his holy name forever and ever. Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD, O my soul! While I live I will praise the LORD; I will sing praises to my God while I have my being.

Do not put your trust in princes, *nor* in a son of man, in whom *there is* no help. His spirit departs, he returns to his earth; in that very day his plans perish. Happy *is he* who *has* the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope *is* in the LORD his God, who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that *is* in them; who keeps truth forever, who executes justice for the oppressed, who gives food to the hungry. The LORD gives freedom to the [spiritual] prisoners. [Psalms, chapters 145 & 146]. e who walks in his uprightness fears the LORD, but *he who is* perverse in his ways despises him. In the mouth of a fool *is* a rod of pride, but the lips of the wise will preserve them. A scoffer seeks wisdom and does not *find it*, but knowledge *is* easy to him who understands. The wisdom of the prudent *is* to understand his way, but the folly of fools *is* deceit. Fools mock at sin, but among the upright *there is* favour. There is a way *that seems* right to a man, but its end *is* the way of death.

n the fear of the LORD *there is* strong confidence, and his children will have a place of refuge. The fear of the LORD *is* a fountain of life, to turn *one* away from the snares of death. Wisdom rests in the heart of him who has understanding, but *what is* in the heart of fools is made known. Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin *is* a reproach to *any* people. The way of the wicked *is* an abomination to the LORD, but he loves him who follows righteousness.

The thoughts of the wicked *are* an abomination to the LORD, but the words of the pure *are* pleasant. The LORD *is* far from the wicked, but he hears the prayer of the righteous. The fear of the LORD *is* the instruction of wisdom, and before honour *is* humility.

The preparations of the heart *belong* to man, but the answer of the tongue *is* from the LORD. All the ways of a man *are* pure in his own eyes, but the LORD weighs the spirits. [Proverbs, chapters 14 - 16]. ehold! My Servant [Messiah, Christ] whom 1 uphold, my Elect One *in whom* my soul delights! I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the Gentiles. He will not cry out, nor raise *his voice*, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed he will not break, and smoking flax he will not quench; he will bring forth justice for truth. He will not fail nor be discouraged, till he has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands shall wait for His law."

Thus says God the LORD, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread forth the earth and that which comes from it, who gives breath to the people on it, and spirit to those who walk on it: "I, the LORD, have called you in righteousness, and will hold your hand; I will keep you and give you as a covenant to the people, as a light to the Gentiles, to open blind eyes, to bring out prisoners from the prison, those who sit in darkness from the prison house. I *am* the LORD, that *is* my name; and my glory I will not give to another, nor my praise to carved images. Behold, the former things have come to pass, and new things I declare; before they spring forth I tell you of them." [Isaiah, chapter 42].

isten to me, O Jacob, and Israel, my called: 1 *am* he, 1 *am* the First, 1 *am* also the Last. Indeed my hand has laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand has stretched out the heavens; *when* 1 call to them, they stand up together. Come near to me, hear this: 1 have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, 1 *was* there. And now the Lord GOD and his Spirit have sent me [Messiah, Christ]."

11

Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: "I am the LORD your God, who teaches you to profit, who leads you by the way you should go. Oh, that you had heeded my commandments! Then your peace would have been like a river, and your righteousness like the waves of the sea. Your descendants also would have been like the sand, and the offspring of your body like the grains of sand; his name would not have been cut off nor destroyed from before me." [Isaiah, chapter 48].

isten to me, my people; and give ear to me, O my nation: for law will proceed from me, and I will make my justice rest as a light of the peoples. My righteousness *is* near, my salvation has gone forth, and my arms will judge the peoples; the coastlands will wait upon me, and on my arm they will trust.

ift up your eyes to the heavens, and look on the Jearth beneath. For the heavens will vanish away like smoke, the earth will grow old like a garment, and those who dwell in it will die in like manner; but my salvation will be forever, and my righteousness will not abolished. Listen me, you who be to know righteousness, you people in whose heart is my law: do not fear the reproach of men, nor be afraid of their insults. For the moth will eat them up like a garment, and the worm will eat them like wool; but my righteousness will be forever, and my salvation from generation to generation." [Isaiah, chapter 51].

hus says the LORD: "Heaven *is* my throne, and earth *is* my footstool. Where *is* the house that you will build me? And where *is* the place of my rest? For all those *things* my hand has made, and all those *things* exist," says the LORD. "But on this *one* will I look: on *him who is* poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at my word.

Rejoice with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all you who love her; rejoice for joy with her, all you who mourn for her; that you may feed and be satisfied with the consolation of her bosom, that you may drink deeply and be delighted with the abundance of her glory."

For thus says the LORD: "Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream. Then you shall feed; on *her* sides shall you be carried, and be dandled on *her* knees. As one whom his mother comforts, so I will comfort you; and you shall be comforted in Jerusalem."

When you see *this*, your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like grass; the hand of the LORD shall be known to his servants, and *his* indignation to his enemies. For behold, the LORD will come with fire and with his chariots, like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by his sword the LORD will judge all flesh; and the slain of the LORD shall be many." [Isaiah, chapter 66]. or 1 know your manifold transgressions and your mighty sins: afflicting the just *and* taking bribes; diverting the poor *from justice* at the gate. Therefore the prudent keep silent at that time, for it *is* an evil time. Seek good and not evil, that you may live; so the LORD God of hosts will be with you, as you have spoken. Hate evil, love good; establish justice in the gate. It may be that the LORD God of hosts will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph.

Woe to you who desire the day of the LORD! For what good *is* the day of the LORD to you? It *will be* darkness, and not light. *Is* not the day of the LORD darkness, and not light? *Is it not* very dark, with no brightness in it? "I hate, I despise your feast days, and I do not savour your sacred assemblies. Though you offer me burnt offerings and your grain offerings, I will not accept *them*, nor will I regard your fattened peace offerings. Take away from me the noise of your songs, for I will not hear the melody of your stringed instruments. But let justice run down like water, and righteousness like a mighty stream." [Amos, chapter 5].

hus says the LORD: "Let not the wise *man* glory in his wisdom, Let not the mighty *man* glory in his might, nor let the rich *man* glory in his riches; but let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows me, that 1 *am* the LORD, exercising lovingkindness, judgement, and righteousness in the earth. For in these 1 delight," says the LORD. Behold, the days are coming," says the LORD, "that I will punish all *who are* circumcised [Jews] with the uncircumcised [Gentiles] — Egypt, Judah, Edom, the people of Ammon, Moab, and all *who are* in the farthest corners, who dwell in the wilderness. For all *these* nations *are* uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel *are* uncircumcised in the heart."

ear the word which the LORD speaks to you, O house of Israel. Thus says the LORD: "Do not learn the way of the Gentiles; do not be dismayed at the signs of heaven, for the Gentiles are dismayed at them. For the customs of the peoples *are* futile; for *one* cuts a tree from the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the axe. They decorate it with silver and gold; they fasten it with nails and hammers so that it will not topple. They *are* upright, like a palm tree, and they cannot speak; they must be carried, because they cannot go *by themselves*. Do not be afraid of them, for they cannot do evil, nor can they do any good."

nasmuch as *there is* none like you, O LORD (you *are* great, and your name *is* great in might), who would not fear you, O King of the nations? For this is your rightful due. For among all the wise *men* of the nations, and in all their kingdoms, *there is* none like you. But they are altogether dull-hearted and foolish; a wooden idol *is* a worthless doctrine. Silver is beaten into plates; it is brought from Tarshish, and gold from Uphaz, the work of the craftsman and of the hands of the metal-smith; blue and purple *are* their clothing; they *are* all the work of skilful *men*.

But the LORD *is* the true God; he *is* the living God and the everlasting King. At his wrath the earth will tremble, and the nations will not be able to endure his indignation. Thus you shall say to them: "The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth shall perish from the earth and from under these heavens." He has made the earth by his power, he has established the world by his wisdom, and has stretched out the heavens at his discretion [The 'Theory of Evolution' just went down the 'pan'!].

When he utters his voice, *there is* a multitude of waters in the heavens: "And he causes the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth. He makes lightning for the rain, he brings the wind out of his treasuries." Everyone is dull-hearted, without knowledge; every metal-smith is put to shame by an image; for his moulded image *is* falsehood, and *there is* no breath in them. They *are* futile, a work of errors; in the time of their punishment they shall perish. [Jeremiah, chapters 9 & 10].

or from the rising of the sun, even to its going down, my name *shall be* great among the Gentiles; in every place incense *shall be* offered to my name, and a pure offering; for my name shall be great among the nations," says the LORD of hosts. But you profane it, in that you say, 'The table of the LORD is defiled; and its fruit, its food, *is* contemptible.' You also say, 'Oh, what a weariness!' And you sneer at it," says the LORD of hosts.

11-

And you bring the stolen, the lame, and the sick; Athus you bring an offering! Should 1 accept this from your hand?" Says the LORD. "But cursed *be* the deceiver who has in his flock a male, and takes a vow, but sacrifices to the Lord what is blemished—for 1 *am* a great King," says the LORD of hosts, "and my name *is to be* feared among the nations.

nd now, O priests [of the Levitical priesthood], this commandment is for you. If you will not hear, and if you will not take *it* to heart, to give glory to my name," says the LORD of hosts, "I will send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings. Yes, I have cursed them already, because you do not take it to heart. Behold, 1 will rebuke your descendants and spread refuse on your faces, the refuse of your solemn feasts; and one will take you away with it. Then you shall know that I have sent this commandment to you, that my covenant with Levi may continue," says the LORD of hosts. My covenant was with him, one of life and peace, and 1 gave them to him that he might fear me; so he feared me and was reverent before my name. The law of truth was in his mouth, and injustice was not found on his lips. He walked with me in peace and equity, and turned many away from iniquity. For the lips of a priest should keep knowledge, and *people* should seek the law from his mouth; for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts. But you have departed from the way; you have caused many to stumble at the law. You have corrupted the covenant of Levi," says the LORD of hosts. [Malachi, chapters 1 & 2].

hen Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone desires to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever desires to save his life [in this world] will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man will come in the glory of his Father with his angels, and then he will reward each according to his works."

Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; and he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with him. Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, let us make here three tabernacles: one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear him!" [Matthew, chapters 16 & 17].

hen the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides *his* sheep from the goats." [Matthew, chapter 25]. hen he went down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and was teaching them on the Sabbaths. And they were astonished at his teaching, for his word was with authority. Now in the synagogue there was a man who had a spirit of an unclean demon. And he cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Let *us* alone! What have we to do with you, Jesus of Nazareth? Did you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!" But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be quiet, and come out of him!" And when the demon had thrown him in *their* midst, it came out of him and did not hurt him. Then they were all amazed and spoke among themselves, saying, "What a word this *is*! For with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits, and they come out." [Luke, chapter 4].

n the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him nothing was made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world. P e was in the world [Emmanuel – With Us God], and the world was made through him, and the world did not know him. He came to his own [as the man Jesus of Nazareth], and his own did not receive him. But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in his name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. [John, chapter 1].

esus spoke these words, lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son also may glorify you, as you have given him authority over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I have glorified you on the earth. I have finished the work which you have given me to do. And now, O Father, glorify me together with yourself, with the glory which I had with you before the world was.

pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. And all mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to you. Holy Father, keep through your name those whom you have given me, that they may be one as we *are*." [John, chapter 17]. s it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none who understands; there is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; they have together become unprofitable; there is none who does good, no, not one." "There is no fear of God before their eyes."

Now we know that whatever the law [that God gave to Moses] says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in his sight, for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin.

Dut now the righteousness of God apart from the Dlaw is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by his blood, through faith, to righteousness, because demonstrate his his in forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time his righteousness, that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. [Romans, chapter 4].

rethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God. For Christ *is* the end of the law for [self] righteousness to everyone who believes.

For Moses writes about the righteousness which is of the law, "The man who does those things shall live by them." But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way, "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?'"(that is, to bring Christ down *from above*) or, "'Who will descend into the abyss?'"(that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith which we preach): that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes on him will not be put to shame." For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek [Gentile], for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon him. For "whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved." [Romans, chapter 10]. ut God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption—that, as it is written, "He who glories, let him glory in the LORD."

For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. I [the Apostle Paul] was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching *were* not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

owever, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden *wisdom* which God ordained before the ages for our glory, which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love him." [1 Corinthians, chapters 1 & 2]. herefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal. For we know that if our earthly house, this tent [our mortal body], is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens [a resurrection body]. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked. For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life.

Now he who has prepared us for this very thing *is* God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. So *we are* always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. For we walk by faith, not by sight. We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord. Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to him. For we must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things *done* in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. [11 Corinthians, chapters 4 & 5].

od, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by *his* Son, whom he has appointed heir of all things, through whom also he made the worlds; who being the brightness of *his* glory and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become so much better than the angels, as he has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

For to which of the angels did he ever say: "You are my Son, today I have begotten you"? And again: "I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son"? But when he again brings the firstborn into the world, he says: "Let all the angels of God worship him." And of the angels he says: "Who makes his angels spirits and his ministers a flame of fire." But to the Son *he says*: "Your throne, O God, *is* forever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness *is* the sceptre of your Kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness more than your companions."

And: "You, LORD, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you remain; and they will all grow old like a garment; like a cloak you will fold them up, and they will be changed. But you are the same, and your years will not fail." [Hebrews, chapter 1]. et this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man [literally in the form of a man – that is he was truly 'human'], he humbled himself and became obedient to *the point of* death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted him and given him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father. [Philippians, chapter 2].

n this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins. If we love one another, God abides in us, and his love has been perfected in us. By this we know that we abide in him, and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit.

And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son *as* Saviour of the world. He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of his Son. And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. [1 John, chapters 4 & 5].



od gave Israel the sacrificial system so that by it they, and the Gentile nations, would understand that a holy God will not tolerate or overlook human sin. Indeed it is abhorrent and an abomination to him such that, 'the wages of sin is death'.

hy the sacrificial system? Leviticus, chapter 17 states: 'For the life of the flesh *is* in the blood, and 1 have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it *is* the blood *that* makes atonement for the soul.'

or a holy and just God to forgive human sin the blood of an innocent 'substitute' must be shed – again and again and again, since people keep on sinning against God, again and again and again! Thus, to deflect God's wrath from punishing our incessant transgressions, rebellion, disobedience and open defiance required myriad upon myriad animal sacrifices. Until the LORD stepped into the chaos of human behaviour to provide the one perfect, holy, sinless sacrifice able to satisfy and fulfil the requirements of God's holy Law.

nly one sacrifice is acceptable to God the Father as being able to provide atonement for all the sins and transgressions of the whole human race – the blood of Jesus his incarnate Son, the 'Lamb of God', poured out to the death in an act of foreordained sacrificial substitution. The 'sacred transaction': punishment for all human sins poured out onto him (although he had no sin of his own); in return his perfect righteousness given to all who accept God's gift of salvation by grace. ot with the blood of goats and calves, but with his own blood he entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

And for this reason he is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission. For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, *which are* copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; not that he should offer himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another—he then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, he has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgement, so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. [Hebrews, chapter 9]. urely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he *was* wounded for our transgressions, *he was* bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace *was* upon him, and by his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

e was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgement, and who will declare his generation? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgressions of my people he was stricken. And they made his grave with the wicked but with the rich at his death, because he had done no violence, nor *was any* deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he has put *him* to grief. When you make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see *his* seed, he shall prolong *his* days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.

He shall see the labour of his soul, and be satisfied. By his knowledge my righteous Servant shall justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore I will divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul unto death, and he was numbered with the transgressors, and he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors. [Isaiah, chapter 53]. nd every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But this man [Jesus of Nazareth], after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever [himself], sat down at the right hand of God, from that time waiting till his enemies are made his footstool. For by one offering he has perfected forever those who are being sanctified. But the Holy Spirit also witnesses to us; for after he had said before, "This *is* the covenant that 1 will make with them after those days, says the LORD: 1 will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds 1 will write them," *then he adds*, "Their sins and their lawless deeds 1 will remember no more."

Now where there is remission of these, *there is* no longer an offering for sin. Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which he consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, his flesh, and *having* a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of *our* hope without wavering, for he who promised [God] *is* faithful.

ow may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you complete in every good work to do his will, working in you what is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom *be* glory forever and ever. Amen. [Hebrews, chapters 10 & 13]. or if we sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgement, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on *the testimony of* two or three witnesses. Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know him who said, "Vengeance is mine, 1 will repay," says the Lord. And again, "The LORD will judge his people." It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

ow faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a *good* testimony. By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible. By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks. By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, "and was not found, because God had taken him"; for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God.

But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*, for he who comes to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him. [Hebrews, chapters 10 & 11]. how me your ways, O LORD; teach me your paths. Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you *are* the God of my salvation; on you I wait all the day. Remember, O LORD, your tender mercies and your loving-kindnesses, for they *are* from of old. Do not remember the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions; according to your mercy remember me, for your goodness' sake, O LORD. For your name's sake, O LORD, pardon my iniquity, for it *is* great.

Who *is* the man that fears the LORD? Him shall he teach in the way he chooses. He himself shall dwell in prosperity, and his descendants shall inherit the earth. The secret of the LORD *is* with those who fear him, and he will show them his covenant. My eyes *are* ever toward the LORD, for he shall pluck my feet out of the net. Turn yourself to me, and have mercy on me, for 1 *am* desolate and afflicted. The troubles of my heart have enlarged; bring me out of my distresses! Look on my affliction and my pain, and forgive all my sins. [Psalms, chapter 25].

ord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, you *are* God. You turn man to destruction, and say, "Return, O children of men." For a thousand years in your sight *are* like yesterday when it is past, and *like* a watch in the night. You carry them away *like* a flood; *they are* like a sleep.

n the morning they are like grass *which* grows up: in the morning it flourishes and grows up; in the evening it is cut down and withers. For we have been consumed by your anger, and by your wrath we are terrified. You have set our iniquities before you, our secret sins in the light of your countenance. For all our days have passed away in your wrath; we finish our years like a sigh. The days of our lives are seventy years; and if by reason of strength they are eighty years, yet their boast is only labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away. Who knows the power of your anger? For as the fear of you, so is your wrath. So teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom. Return, O LORD! How long? And have compassion on your servants. [Psalms, chapter 90].

he LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in mercy. He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor punished us according to our iniquities. For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. For he knows our frame; he remembers that we are dust. As for man, his days are like grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourishes. For the wind passes over it, and it is gone, and its place remembers it no more. But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear him, and his righteousness to children's children, to such as keep his covenant, and to those who remember his commandments to do them. [Psalms, chapter 103].

o what purpose *is* the multitude of your sacrifices to me?" says the LORD. "I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed cattle. I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs or goats. Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; put away the evil of your doings from before my eyes. Cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, rebuke the oppressor; defend the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together," says the LORD, "though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land; but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be devoured by the sword"; for the mouth of the LORD has spoken. [Isaiah, chapter 1].

ehold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor his ear heavy, that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear. No one calls for justice, nor does any plead for truth. They trust in empty words and speak lies; they conceive evil and bring forth iniquity. For our transgressions are multiplied before you, and our sins testify against us; for our transgressions are with us, and as for our iniquities, we know them: in transgressing and lying against the LORD, and departing from our God, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood. Justice is turned back, and righteousness stands afar off; for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter. [Isaiah, chapter 59].

hen he [Jesus] had come to the other side, to the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two demon-possessed *men*, coming out of the tombs, exceedingly fierce, so that no one could pass that way. And suddenly they cried out, saying, "What have we to do with you, Jesus, you Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time?" So the demons begged him, saying, "If you cast us out, permit us to go away into the herd of swine." And he said to them, "Go." So when they had come out, they went into the herd of swine. Then those who kept *them* fled; and they went away into the city and told everything, including what *had happened* to the demon-possessed *men*. And behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus. And when they saw him, they begged *him* to depart from their region.

o he got into a boat, crossed over, and came to his own city. Then behold, they brought to him a paralytic lying on a bed. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you." And at once some of the scribes said within themselves, "This man blasphemes [because only God can forgive sins]!" But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, "Why do you think evil in your hearts? For which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins" —then he said to the paralytic, "Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house." And he arose and departed to his house. [Matthew, chapters 8 & 9].

lessed is the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people, and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David, as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets, who have been since the world began, that we should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us, to perform the mercy promised to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant, the oath which he swore to our father Abraham: to grant us that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life. And you, child, John the Baptist] will be called the prophet of the Highest; for you will go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways, to give knowledge of salvation to his people by the remission of their sins, through the tender mercy of our God, with which the Dayspring from on high has visited us; to give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace."

nd it came to pass in those days *that* a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city. Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child. So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. [Luke, chapters 1 & 2]. ow behold, two of them [disciples] were travelling that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was seven miles from Jerusalem. And they talked together of all these things which had happened. So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know him. And he said to them, "What kind of conversation is this that you have with one another as you walk and are sad?" Then the one whose name was Cleopas answered and said to him, "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem, and have you not known the things which happened there in these days?" And he said to them, "What things?" So they said to him, "The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and crucified him. But we were hoping that it was he who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, today is the third day since these things happened. Yes, and certain women of our company, who arrived at the tomb early, astonished us. When they did not find his body, they came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said he was alive."

Then he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into his glory?" And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, he expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. [Luke, chapter 24]. nd they said to one another, "Did not our heart burn within us while he talked with us on the road, and while he opened the Scriptures to us?" And they told about the things *that had happened* on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of bread.

Now as they said these things, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and said to them, "Peace to you." But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit. And he said to them, "Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts? Behold my [nail-pierced] hands and my [nail-pierced] feet, that it is I myself. Handle me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet.

Then he said to them, "These *are* the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and *the* Prophets and *the* Psalms concerning me." And he opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.

Then he said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And you are witnesses of these things. Behold, I send the Promise of my Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high." [Luke, chapter 24]. nd he [Jesus] said to them [the religious leaders], "You are from beneath; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am *he*, you will die in your sins." Then Jesus said to them, "When you lift up the Son of Man [on a Roman cross], then you will know that I am *he*, and *that* I do nothing of myself; but as my Father taught me, I speak these things. And he who sent me is with me. The Father has not left me alone, for I always do those things that please him."

Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed him, "If you abide in my word, you are my disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Jesus answered them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed. I know that you are Abraham's descendants, but you seek to kill me, because my word has no place in you. I speak what I have seen with my Father, and you do what you have seen with your father. Why do you not understand my speech? Because you are not able to listen to my word.

You are of *your* father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *resources*, for he is a liar and the father of it. But because I tell the truth, you do not believe me." [John, chapter 8].

—he God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified his Servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go. But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, and killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses. Yet now, brethren, I know that you did it in ignorance, as did also your rulers. But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all his prophets, that the Christ would suffer, he has thus fulfilled. Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began. [Acts, chapter 3].

hen Peter [the Apostle] opened his mouth and said: "In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. But in every nation whoever fears him and works righteousness is accepted by him. The word which God sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ—he is Lord of all—that word you know, which was proclaimed throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee after the baptism which John preached: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. And we are witnesses of all things which He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem, whom they killed by hanging on a tree.

Him God raised up on the third day, and showed him openly, not to all the people, but to witnesses chosen before by God, *even* to us who ate and drank with him after he arose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is he who was ordained by God *to be* Judge of the living and the dead. To him all the prophets witness that, through his name, whoever believes in him will receive remission of sins." [Acts, chapter 10].

nd we declare to you glad tidings—that promise which was made to the fathers. God has fulfilled this for us their children, in that he has raised up Jesus. As it is also written in the second Psalm: 'You are my Son, today I have begotten you.' And that he raised him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, he has spoken thus: 'I will give you the sure mercies of David.' Therefore he also says in another *Psalm*: 'You will not allow your Holy One to see corruption.'

Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through this man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins; and by him everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses. Beware therefore, lest what has been spoken in the prophets come upon you: 'Behold, you despisers, marvel and perish! For I work a work in your days, a work which you will by no means believe, though one were to declare it to you.''' So when the Jews went out of the synagogue, the Gentiles begged that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath. On the next Sabbath almost the whole city came together to hear the word of God. [Acts, chapter 13]. he Son of Man indeed goes just as it is written of him [in the Scriptures], but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born." Then Judas [Iscariot], who was betraying him [to the Jewish religious leaders], answered and said, "Rabbi, is it 1?" He said to him, "You have said it." And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke *it*, and gave *it* to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." Then he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave *it* to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. For this is my blood of the new covenant [of grace not Law], which is shed for many for the remission of sins." [Matthew, chapter 26].

When the hour had come, he [Jesus] sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. Then he said to them, "With *fervent* desire 1 have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." Then he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, "Take this and divide *it* among yourselves; for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." And he took bread, gave thanks and broke *it*, and gave *it* to them, saying, "This is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me." Likewise he also *took* the cup after supper, saying, "This cup *is* the new covenant in my blood, which is shed for you. And truly the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom he is betrayed!" [Luke, chapter 22]. ost assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself, and has given him authority to execute judgement also, because he is the Son of Man. Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear his voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.

or 1 have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me. This is the will of the Father who sent me, that of all he has given me 1 should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. And this is the will of him who sent me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him may have everlasting life; and 1 will raise him up at the last day.

Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in me has everlasting life. I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is my flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world." [John, chapters 5 & 6]. And see, now 1 [the Apostle Paul] go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me. But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.

And indeed, now I know that you all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, will see my face no more. Therefore I testify to you this day that I *am* innocent of the blood of all *men*. For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God. Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which he purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears."

And when he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all. Then they [the elders from the church at Ephesus] all wept freely, and fell on Paul's neck and kissed him, sorrowing most of all for the words which he spoke, that they would see his face no more. And they accompanied him to the ship. [Acts, chapter 20]. ow hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us. For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

And not only *that*, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation. For as by one man's [Adam's] disobedience many [the whole human race] were made sinners, so also by one man's obedience [Christ's] many will be made righteous. Moreover the law entered that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more, so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

or when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things *is* death. For the wages of sin *is* death, but the gift of God *is* eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. [Romans, chapters 5 & 6]. or I [Paul the Apostle] received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the *same* night in which he was betrayed took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke *it* and said, "Take, eat; this is my body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of me."

n the same manner *he* also *took* the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. This do, as often as you drink *it*, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till he comes.

Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks *this* cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgement to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

For this reason many *are* weak and sick among you, and many sleep [have died]. For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world. Therefore, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another [rather than eating all the food before the rest arrive]. But if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, lest you come together for judgement. And the rest I will set in order when I come. [1 Corinthians, chapter 11]. lessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ, just as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, by which he has made us accepted in the Beloved.

In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace which he made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he purposed in himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in him. In him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of his glory. [Ephesians, chapter 1].

But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off [Gentiles] have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made both one [Jew & Gentile], and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *that is*, the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances, so as to create in himself one new man *from* the two, *thus* making peace, and that he might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. And he came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. For through him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.

Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief *cornerstone*, in whom the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit. [Ephesians, chapter 2].

e has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed *us* into the kingdom of the Son of his love, in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins. He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. And he is before all things, and in him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things he may have the pre-eminence. For it pleased *the Father that* in him all the fullness should dwell, and by him to reconcile all things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of his cross. [Colossians, chapter 1]. ut we know that the law [the 10 commandments from God] *is* good if one uses it lawfully, knowing this: that the law is not made for a righteous person, but for *the* lawless and insubordinate, for *the* ungodly and for sinners, for *the* unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for men-slayers, for fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine, according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God which was committed to my trust.

And I [the Apostle Paul] thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because he counted me faithful, putting *me* into the ministry, although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did *it* ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.

This *is* a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on him for everlasting life. Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, *be* honour and glory forever and ever. Amen. [1 Timothy, chapter 1]. or the bodies of those animals, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned outside the camp. Therefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered outside the gate. Therefore let us go forth to him, outside the camp, bearing his reproach. For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come.

Therefore by him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of *our* lips, giving thanks to his name. But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.

Pray for us; for we are confident that we have a good conscience, in all things desiring to live honourably. But I especially urge *you* to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner.

Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you complete in every good work to do his will, working in you what is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom *be* glory forever and ever. Amen. [Hebrews, chapter 13]. lessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace *that would come* to you, searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when he testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.

And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay *here* in fear; knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, *like* silver or gold, from your aimless conduct *received* by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

e indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you who through him believe in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God. [1 Peter, chapter 1]. herefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, that he no longer should live the rest of *his* time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God. For we *have spent* enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles—when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries.

n regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with *them* in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of *you*. They will give an account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. For this reason the gospel was preached also to those who are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit. But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers.

And above all things have fervent love for one another, for "love will cover a multitude of sins." *Be* hospitable to one another without grumbling. As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If anyone speaks, *let him speak* as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, *let him do it* as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen. [1 Peter, chapter 4]. his is the message which we have heard from him and declare to you, that God is light and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practise the truth. But if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin.

f we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And he himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world. Now by this we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.

And everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure. Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness. And you know that he was manifested to take away our sins, and in him there is no sin. Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practises righteousness is righteous, just as he is righteous. He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. [1 John, chapters 1 - 3]. y this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the *spirit* of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world.

They are of the world. Therefore they speak as of the world, and the world hears them. We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

In this is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and his love has been perfected in us. By this we know that we abide in him, and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit.

And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son *as* Saviour of the world. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. [1 John, chapters 4 & 5]. he Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants—things which must shortly take place. And he sent and signified *it* by his angel to his servant John [the Apostle], who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw.

Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.

ohn, to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come [God], and from the seven Spirits who are before his throne, and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn [the pre-eminent one] from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To him who loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and has made us kings and priests to his God and Father, to him *be* glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Behold, he is coming with clouds, and every eye will see him, even they who pierced [crucified] him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of him. Even so, Amen. "I am the Alpha and the Omega, *the* Beginning and *the* End," says the Lord, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty." [Revelation, chapter 1]. fter these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation *belongs* to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" All the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and fell on their faces before the throne and worshipped God, saying: "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom, Thanksgiving and honour and power and might, *Be* to our God forever and ever. Amen."

Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, "Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?" And I said to him, "Sir, you know." So he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple.

And he who sits on the throne will dwell among them. They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat; for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes." [Revelation, chapter 7]. nd war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death. Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time."

Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman [Israel] who gave birth to the male *Child*. [Christ]. But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time [three & half years], from the presence of the serpent. And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. [Revelation, chapter 12]. herefore the Lord said: "Inasmuch as these people draw near with their mouths and honour me with their lips, but have removed their hearts far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the commandment of men, therefore, behold, I will again do a marvellous work among this people, a marvellous work and a wonder; for the wisdom of their wise *men* shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent *men* shall be hidden."

We to those who seek deep to hide their counsel far from the LORD, and their works are in the dark; they say, "Who sees us?" and, "Who knows us?" Surely you have things turned around! Shall the potter be esteemed as the clay; for shall the thing made say of him who made it, "He did not make me"? Or shall the thing formed say of him who formed it, "He has no understanding"?

The humble also shall increase *their* joy in the LORD, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel. For the terrible one is brought to nothing, the scornful one is consumed, and all who watch for iniquity are cut off—who make a man an offender by a word, and lay a snare for him who reproves in the gate, and turn aside the just by empty words. Therefore thus says the LORD, who redeemed Abraham, concerning the house of Jacob: "Jacob shall not now be ashamed, nor shall his face now grow pale; but when he sees his children, the work of my hands, in his midst, they will hallow my name, and hallow the Holy One of Jacob, and fear the God of Israel." [Isaiah, chapter 29].

or unto us a Child [Messiah, Christ] is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon his shoulder. And his name will be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father [or Father of Eternity], Prince of Peace. Of the increase of *his* government and peace *there will be* no end, upon the throne of David and over his kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgement and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this. [Isaiah, chapter 9].

ow the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After his mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. Then Joseph her husband, being a just *man*, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly.

But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call his name JESUS [Joshua or Yeshua meaning 'God saves'], for he will save his people from their sins."

So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call his name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us." [Matthew, chapter 1]. oseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child. So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped him in swaddling cloths, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. And this *will be* the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger."

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!" So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, "Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us." And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. [Luke, chapter 2]. he next day John [the Baptist] saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! This is he of whom 1 said, 'After me comes a man who is preferred before me, for he was before me.'" And John bore witness, saying, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and he remained upon him. And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God." Again, the next day, John stood with two of his disciples. And looking at Jesus as he walked, he said, "Behold the Lamb of God!" [John, chapter 1].

hen I saw a great white throne and him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them.

And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is *the Book* of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.

The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works.

Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the [Lamb's] Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire. [Revelation, chapter 20].

THE SUPREME TRANSACTION

GRACE: We give our sins to the sinless Son of God and he pays the penalty required by God - death with his blood shed in our place, so that God is then able to justly declare a verdict of 'not guilty'.

FAITH: Those who know they need to be redeemed, who gladly receive Jesus Christ as their Saviour, Lord and King, who seek to serve him in obedience, will be clothed by God in his Son's perfect righteousness.

LIFE:Those whose names are written in the 'Lamb's Book of Life' are citizens of the eternal kingdom of heaven, and the adopted children of God the Father because they loved, honoured and trusted in the finished work of God the Son to save them.

EPHESIANS 2, 4 - **9**:But God, who is rich in mercy, because of his great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ and raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.



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