

Awake!
**PUT ON THY
STRENGTH**

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Chapter 1

Awake! Put on Thy Strength

“Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean. Shake thyself from the dust; arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem: loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion” (Isa 52:1-2).

The word of the Lord came to Isaiah the prophet the son of Amos, concerning Zion and concerning Jerusalem. It was a strong word requiring an urgent and definite response. In the past, God spoke to the patriarchs at many times and in different ways through the prophets. In these last days, He has spoken and is speaking to us through His Son. He has spoken to the human race through the Prophet and the Messenger of the Covenant. When God has a message for a people, if they have no access to God, or are temporarily unreachable by God, He sends the message to them through a spokesman. His usual mouthpiece is a prophet. The word of the Lord comes through a prophet.

The ministry of the prophet is to receive word from the Lord and deliver it to His people. A prophet does both forthtelling and foretelling. Forthtelling is preaching or proclaiming God’s truth, while foretelling concerns itself with revealing the mind of God concerning the future. The prophet is God’s spokesman. He has a “*Thus saith the Lord.*” God supernaturally gives the prophet His word and sends him to deliver the message to the intended party. The party could be a king, a judge in

Israel, an army commander, or even the entire nation. It could be a word of reproof, admonition, or pronouncement of judgement from God. It could also be a message of comfort, a promise of restoration, or a strategy to bring supernatural victory to the people of God as they battle an enemy.

Most people think of a prophet only as one who foretells the future. That's partially true. Foretelling is part of what biblical prophets do. However, the primary mission of a prophet is not foretelling, but forthtelling. They are preachers who have clear and direct access to God on matters given to them. God speaks to them, gives them a vision concerning a situation or an individual, and commands them to deliver the message. It's to them that God speaks when He needs to correct moral decadence in His people, call them to repentance, or warn them of impending judgement. He sends them to rebuke kings for injustice and abuse of power.

In the Old Testament, there are two major types of prophets. There are those whom God called and sent to speak His words to the individuals or groups; these prophets who ministered predominantly through spoken words are referred to as *oral prophets*. Elijah and Elisha come quickly to mind. And there are those who ministered predominantly through both preaching and writing, like Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. These are *writing prophets*. It's in the writings of these prophets that we get the majority of the scriptural revelation that unfolds God's plan to us.

God spoke through them concerning the coming Messiah, His sufferings, His resurrection, His second coming, and His kingdom. They spoke through their writings concerning the company of God's children to be brought forth by the Messiah and how the knowledge of the will of God will cover the earth as the water covers the seas. The Old Testament records show sixteen writing prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. There are seventeen if you count Moses, the man of God who wrote the first five books of the Bible.

When the word of the Lord comes to a prophet, it's usually code sealed, as it were, in an envelope with an address on it, and the prop-

task is to deliver the message to the recipient. When the message is delivered by the prophet (whether spoken or written), the recipient may not immediately understand the hidden meaning. The prophet may need to interpret the message, which usually comes in prophetic language, to the recipient.

"Understandest thou what thou readest?" (Acts 8:30) was the question Philip asked the Ethiopian eunuch who was reading the prophecy of Isaiah. The man rightly answered, "How can I, except some man should guide me?"

More often than not, the prophetic words of God are like encrypted messages in sealed envelopes. As the Scriptures state:

"And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed:

"And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned" (Isa 29:11-12).

A quick example of such a message is the one sent by God through the prophet Nathan to David. It was in an envelope, so to speak, but not rigorously sealed, like the scroll in the Book of Revelation which John saw in the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne, "a scroll with writings within, and on the back sealed with seven seals."

Nathan told David that there were two men in one city, one rich, the other poor. The rich man had many flocks and herds. The poor had only one little lamb, which meant everything in the world to him. The rich man had a visitor, and instead of taking an animal out of his multitude of herds to entertain the visitor, this rich man snatched the one and only little lamb that the poor man cherished, and killed it as food to entertain his visitor. That was the message, delivered to David in prophetic language. However, David did not immediately understand the import of the message. The message was partially sealed. David, on hearing the story, was very angry with the wicked rich man. He did not know the message was addressed to him; it was loosely sealed so David could not immediately perceive the true meaning. So he said furiously to Nathan, "As the LORD liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die" (2 Sa 12:5). He had already judged before opening the envelope and truly deciphering the meaning. Then, Nathan decrypted the message for the

king: *“Thou art the man.”* With these words, the whole message was unveiled to David. He did not need an extra word of explanation. The whole picture was clear to him in an instant.

In a similar manner, the word of the Lord came to Isaiah the prophet in the passage above, to be delivered to a people. And as we look carefully at the words used, we see that the message is an urgent one. *“Awake!, awake!”* was the beginning of the message.

But wait—before we open the envelope, we must ascertain the addressee of the letter. To whom is the message addressed?

It’s addressed to Jerusalem, the big city, and specifically to Zion, the city of God within the city of Jerusalem.

Put on Thy Strength, O Zion

Child of God, may I ask: Where are you from? Where is your citizenship? Where were you born? Think about these questions. And yes, they are trick questions.

And while we are at it, if I may ask a couple more: Who is your father? And what is your mother’s name?

*“For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise. Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But **Jerusalem which is above** is free, which is the mother of us all”* (Gal 4:22-26).

“We, however, are free citizens of Heaven, and we are waiting with longing expectation for the coming from Heaven of a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, in the exercise of the power which He has even to subject all things to Himself, will transform this body of our humiliation until it resembles His own glorious body” (Phil 3:20, 21).

I am a new creature. I am a totally new creation in Christ Jesus. The old man of sin is no more; I am born of God. God is my father. I have been born from above, born in heaven where my father dwells. I am a citizen

of heaven. My street address is in the metropolis of heavenly Zion, a city within the city of heavenly Jerusalem. Zion is the city of my Father and my God. That is where He dwells and the seat of His throne. *“Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness. Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King”* (Psa 48:1, 2).

I am a citizen of heaven. I do not mean that I will go to heaven when I die, like most believers think, but that I am, today, a citizen of heaven, my country of birth. That is where my Father dwells, and where our home is. I have access to our home; of course I do. My Father dwells there and wants to see me all the time. I am a visitor here in this world, but my culture and conversation are of heaven. I am a pilgrim here, and the Father wants me in our city on Mount Zion even now.

Talking naturally, I have dual citizenship, but let’s use my first nativity for this illustration. I was born in a village in Nigeria, West Africa. Let’s say you meet me in London, and you ask me about my citizenship; I will answer, *“I am a citizen of Nigeria.”* I think it would be crazy for you to interpret that to mean *“When I die I will return to Nigeria.”* You would probably think that in a few days I would be back in Nigeria, because your citizenship is where you have rights and are expected to live.

My friend, are you a citizen of heaven? Are you living as a citizen of heaven? Are you a good ambassador of your country of birth? We have been born from above; let us live in newness of life. Let us seek those things that are above. Apostle Paul admonishes us, *“Since you were brought back to life with Christ, **focus on the things that are above**—where Christ holds the highest position. Keep your mind on things above, not on worldly things. You have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. Christ is your life. When he appears, then you, too, will appear with him in glory”* (Col 3:1-4). *“For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself”* (Phil 3:20, 21)

Since you’re a child of God, born by His Spirit, you are a citizen of the heavenly Jerusalem, a member of the general assembly and the church of Jesus Christ.

“But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels,

“To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,

“And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel” (Heb 12:22-24).

The next obvious question we are about to ask is this: “To whom was the message to Isaiah addressed?” The message sent by God in the fifty-second chapter of the prophecy of Isaiah was addressed to Zion. Not to Egypt, or Assyria, or Babylon, but to Zion and Jerusalem.

The urgent trumpet call is directed at Zion. It commands her to shake off her stupor and put on her strength and kingly authority. It summons her to array herself in garments of glory and beauty, befitting her dignity as the priestess and bride of Jehovah. She is the priestly queen of the nations, the virgin bride of the Messiah. And the prophecy declares that henceforth, the impure that desecrate her soil shall no longer ride victoriously through her streets. *May this prophecy be truly fulfilled in the church of our day. May the Spirit of God expose and expel the impure and the profane from His holy congregation. May He expose and expel the Babylonians from the congregation of His people, and may the refiner’s fire and the fuller’s soap purify the sons of Levi.*

Zion is commanded to rise from the dust, throw off her chains from her neck, and assert her freedom. God has already done His part; the rest of the job belongs to Zion, to wake up and put on her strength. In the fifty-first chapter and the ninth verse, the arm of the Lord is called upon: *“Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord; awake, as in the ancient days, in the generations of old. Art thou not it that hath cut Rahab, and wounded the dragon?” (Isa 51:9).* Zion needs to do her part by putting on her strength, which is the strength the arm of the Lord has provided.

She’s not to stop there: she’s to also put on her beautiful garments, without spot or wrinkle, garments of splendor that befit royalty and a holy city. She’s exhorted to rise from the dust, throw off her bonds, because her jubilee has come. She has been redeemed before. This bondage is of her own making, and therefore she has to deliver herself.

Israel was once in bondage in Egypt. God heard their cry in the affliction

Pharaoh put on them. God heard, and sent them Moses, and brought them out of Egypt with a strong arm. He brought them out of slavery and through the wilderness to the land of promise, the land that flowed with milk and honey. But when they got settled in the land, they forsook the Lord their God and went *a-whoring* after other gods and did many abominable things before the Lord. He sent prophets to warn them, but they would not hear.

The Lord sent the message to Jerusalem and to Zion. Whenever the word of the Lord is addressed to a city, it is usually addressed to the king of the city; however, it would normally be seen or received first by the watchmen of the city, who would blow the trumpet or take the message to the king. The watchmen are to keep awake at all times and see whatever is approaching, so they can quickly send the message to the king or alert the people. *But if the watchmen themselves are asleep, then the entire city is in serious jeopardy.* The inhabitants of Mount Zion are the watchmen of Israel, and of the city of Jerusalem.

“Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the LORD shall bring again Zion” (Isa 52:8).

Restore the glory and beauty of Zion, O Lord our God, and let Thy watchmen see eye to eye and fulfill their destiny. *“I have posted watchmen on your walls, Jerusalem. They will never be silent day or night. Whoever calls on the LORD, do not give yourselves any rest, and do not give him any rest until he establishes Jerusalem and makes it an object of praise throughout the earth” (Isa 62:6, 7).*

Therefore, the message given to Isaiah by God Almighty is directed to the kings and priests on Mount Zion, who are also the watchmen of Israel.

As we open the envelope containing the message, what do we see? We see words jumping at us like 3D letters on a high-definition screen, saying, “Wake Up! Wake Up!”

Consider this: if the word of God comes to me saying, “Joseph, awake! Awake!” the first thing that is clear is that I must be sleeping, or at least dozing or slumbering. And the purpose of the message is to shock me and shake the sleep off me. Our main passage admonishes us—no, no, scratch that, the passage commands us—to AWAKE!

Whom do you tell to wake up? Of course, you wake up someone who is sleeping. You might shake someone and wake them up from complacency. Or wake someone up to see the state he is in, the mess he's in. If you tell someone to "wake up and smell the coffee," perhaps he or she will get the message and mend his or her ways. A person's eyes might be open, but he or she may not be awake.

So, the message sent to Zion is meant to startle her out of complacency. It is meant to shake her out of slumbering, to shock her out of lethargy, which can be described as a pathological state of sleepiness, inactivity, and unresponsiveness. It's a state where one is totally insensitive to the Holy Spirit. In that state, one becomes drowsy, dull, listless, and unenergetic.

"Wake up!" is the cry of the prophet, in obedience to what God told him to say to Zion. This suggests Zion must have been living in a state where she didn't hear the voice of the Master, who had been at the door for a while, knocking and waiting for someone in the church to hear His voice and open the door. The command was directed to Zion, not Egypt, or Assyria, or Babylon.

The letter from the Lord in the Book of Revelation that carries similar messages is not addressed to the world of unbelievers, but written, addressed, and delivered to the seven churches, though it's sealed on the outside with seven seals.

God, in this hour, is sending us another wake-up call to shake us out of slumber, and to admonish us to call Him who is our Strength to fill us, so we can be full of strength, energy, and vitality.

We must not be like a slothful night-guard, found sleeping on duty, or a watchman dozing on the wall, or like a servant found not watching when his lord arrives; or like the five foolish virgins whose lamps ran out of oil at midnight when the bridegroom came.

"Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately.

"Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and

will come forth and serve them. And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants" (Luke 12:35-38).

"Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh" (Mat 24:44).

Therefore, let's wake up! Be fully conscious, and be mentally and spiritually alert. *"Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil"* (Eph 5:14-16).

Awake to spiritual things. Be attentive to what is happening in the spirit realm. Become aware of the devices of the evil one. You ask, "How can I keep awake?" Fix your eyes upon Jesus, the Sun of Righteousness. As His soldier, put on His whole armor, stand, and fight, quenching all the fiery darts of the wicked. Then pull out the sword of the Spirit, strike with the two-edged sword, and avenge all disobedience as your obedience is fulfilled.

Stand, resist the devil, and he will flee, as in terror, from you. Be strong in the Lord. Do not give in to fear or doubt. Do not fight in the flesh. Walk in the Spirit and contend as one born of the Spirit of God. Keep your eyes on the supernatural realm, keep your eyes on the unseen realm, keep your eyes on the word of faith, keep worshipping Him. Let the high praises of God be on your lips and the two-edged sword in your hands.

You are His watchman. He has stationed you upon the highest hill in Israel, and with eagle eyes you can see far off. You are His watchman prophet, and you are not to fall asleep. You are to watch over the house of Israel and proclaim what the Almighty has said. You are to see and warn the people of any impending danger. *"But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand. So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me"* (Eze 33:6, 7).

You say, "But that was spoken to Ezekiel, who was a prophet in Israel." True, he was, and a watchman prophet indeed!

But you also are the children of the Prophet, “the Prophet like unto Moses” (the Messiah). Talking to the children of Israel, Peter said: “*Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days. Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers*” (Acts 3:24, 25).

And as the children of the Prophet, you are the “watchman company” that dwell on Mount Zion and must keep watch over the city of Jerusalem and over the house of God. You, therefore, must not sleep, for you are not of the night: you are of the day. “*For they that sleep, sleep in the night; and they that be drunken, are drunken in the night.*”

“*But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation*” (1 Th 5:8).

The watchman company are stationed on Mount Zion, the highest point in Jerusalem. They have spiritual insight, foresight, and farsight, because they dwell in the mountain realm—the Zion realm. They can warn the inhabitants of Jerusalem of impending disaster. They have eyes that see, and ears that hear. And therefore, they know what the Spirit is saying to the church.

Are you a watchman for the house of God? And if you know you are one, are you fulfilling your ministry? Are you contributing your part, spiritually, to the building up of the Body of Christ? Are you walking in love? Are you contributing to the edification of the Body by walking in God’s kind of love? “*And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it*” (Col 4:17). This same message is addressed to you today from the Master.

A while ago, in the mid-seventies, God sent a message to us during an important prayer meeting in the botanical garden of the university of Ibadan, through the mouth of the prophet Joel, saying:

“*Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; Prepare war, **wake up the mighty men**, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up: Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruning-hooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong*” (Joel 3:9, 10).

We were brought together by a vision and prophetic revelation to awaken the ministry of the Holy Spirit in a particular north central state of Nigeria. There had been a mighty movement of the Holy Spirit

among the youth half a decade earlier, which had totally transformed many young people in the area. The mighty revival had left an indelible mark on every secondary and high school in the state, with young teenagers filled with the Holy Ghost and ministering with power in their villages and towns.

Many of us teenagers, myself included, knew some of the young men, including university students, that God used mightily in spreading the revival among young believers in Nigeria in the early seventies. Their ministry transformed many teenagers to Spirit-filled believers who turned their idol-worshipping villages upside-down. We attended village boot-camp crusades where we, under their guidance, would pray with fasting for three or four days, after which we would march out into the villages, witnessing from door to door, and proclaiming the power of the resurrected Christ, who was and is able to save and deliver. We encouraged them to forsake their gods, their voodoo, and their witchcraft to serve the living God. By the power of the Name of Jesus, many villagers believed, and many brought their charms and voodooes to be burnt at the marketplace to celebrate the victory of Jesus the Lord over all satanic powers. For He has “*given us power to trample over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt us.*” Witch-doctors believed, and were saved and delivered, though *not without a fight*. But the word of the Lord and the blood of Jesus prevailed.

This sets the background for the word that God sent to us through the prophet Joel. The movement of God on the campuses in western Nigeria among the youth took place between 1970 and 1975. There was then a cool-off, and some of the young men were no longer as active as they used to be in leading, while others had traveled abroad. The prophecy of Joel above was read in 1977, and the Spirit of God used it to revive us and revive the work of the ministry among the brethren in the aforementioned state.

Specifically, the spirit of God was telling us to “*wake up these mighty men of war*” in our land and engage them in the battle that was raging. These men, who mentored many of us and whom we looked up to, saw an incredible amount of opposition from the orthodox church establishments. They had been opposed and sidelined by the system for

teaching the baptism and manifestations of the Holy Ghost, and were to be woken up and brought back into the fray.

Young's literal translation renders the passage as "*Proclaim ye this among nations, **Sanctify a war**, stir up the mighty ones, Come nigh, come up, let all the men of war. Beat your ploughshares to swords, And your pruning-hooks to javelins, Let the weak say, 'I am mighty'*" (Joel 3:9, 10).

The literal translation, instead of telling us to prepare for war, says we should "*sanctify a war*," essentially meaning we should set ourselves apart for warfare. This is not for the faint of heart. It is for the strong. It then tells us to "*stir up the mighty ones*," which is the equivalent of the King James version's "*wake up the mighty men*." These men were warriors, and mighty, but they were, for one reason or the other, dormant. They were to be woken up. Everyone was to consecrate or set themselves apart for war. Not a carnal war; not a war with machine guns; but spiritual war against principalities and powers. "*For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places*" (Eph 6:12). We were to become battle-minded and forge the garden tools into swords, and every weak person was to rise up to the occasion and say, "*I am strong*."

Everyone was to put his or her trust in the Lord and walk by what the Word says. And the Word says, "I am strong," but the source is not me, it's of the Lord. We are to walk in faith and thereby tap into the strength which God supplies. With this inexhaustible strength and power, we can overcome any circumstance and scale any mountain. "*And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God. For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith*" (Mar 11:22, 23).

"*Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light*" (Eph 5:14). For they that sleep, sleep at night. We are of the day. Sleeping, as we are considering it here, is spiritually associated with the night, and night is associated with darkness. All evil works are done under the cover of darkness. In addition, darkness is ignorance. To live in darkness is to have no light of truth; it is to be ignorant of the truth. Ignorance leads to bondage. "*My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge*" (Hos 4:6).

Ignorance is weakness. Wisdom is strength.

Light is knowledge and wisdom.

Darkness is weakness. Light is strength,

Christ is our Light. Christ is our Life. Christ is our Strength. Christ is our Righteousness. Christ is our Everything. Christ is our All in All.

*"Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they **that sleep sleep in the night**; and they that be **drunken** are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, **putting on the breastplate of faith and love**; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation"* (1 Th 5:6-8).

Soberness means we should not be under the influence of any intoxicating agent. This will allow us to watch attentively, with all our faculties engaged with careful thoughtfulness. This is strength. Any intoxicating agent in this life, including wealth, success, and positions of power, whether in the world or in church organizations, can lead to sleep or drunkenness. Instead of power- or substance-related drunkenness, we are to put on the breastplate of faith, put our constant trust and total dependence on Christ, and be filled with the Spirit. "*And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord*" (Eph 5:18-19).

We are also admonished to watch. To watch in this passage is to keep awake and be vigilant. Apostle Peter, in the fifth chapter of his epistle, writes:

"Be vigilant, watch. Your adversary the devil as a roaring lion walks about seeking whom he may devour. Whom resist, steadfast in faith, knowing that the selfsame sufferings are accomplished in your brotherhood which is in the world" (1 Pet 5:8, 9).

Dear reader, the Holy Spirit is admonishing us to be alert and clear-minded because our adversary, the devil, is prowling around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. We are commanded to wake up and resist him steadfastly. The secret to victory over the adversary given in this passage is to resist him and be firm about it. Don't give in. Resist in faith and he will flee. "*Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep a clear head, and set your hope completely on the grace to be given you when Jesus, the Messiah, is revealed*" (1 Pet 1:13).

Our part is to resist steadfastly; the power to overcome comes from the Lord Jesus Christ. But to be able to resist effectively, we must keep a clear head and mind. We must not become intoxicated with power, political (church politics) or corporate. We must not become intoxicated with worldly wealth and self-importance. We must not become intoxicated with self-righteousness, forgetting that it is by grace we have been saved. We must keep a clear head and mind and not allow any root of bitterness to spring up and defile us. Pride of life, greed, selfishness, and bitterness—these are all enemies of spiritual strength, strength-sappers, that will leak and eat away the supernatural strength accumulated in a child of the Almighty God.

Therefore, brethren, let us concentrate on Christ who is our strength. Let us meditate on and preach Him. Let's preach Christ crucified, raised from the dead, ascended up to heaven, seated at the right hand of the Father, *principalities and powers being made subject unto Him*. He, Christ, the glorious One, is our soon coming King. *To Him every knee shall bow. To Him every tongue shall confess, that He, Jesus Christ the Anointed One, is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

The message here is for us today to put on Christ who is our strength. For, indeed, *I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.*

*God is the Strength of my life, and my portion forever
God is the saving strength of His anointed
No weapon sharpened against me shall prosper
There's no divination against me, for no magic can harm Israel
He has said concerning us: Touch not my anointed,
And do my prophets no harm*

*He will never leave me nor forsake me
I am the King's kid, I am an apple of His eyes
I am an heir of God, and joint heir with Christ Jesus
I belong to the royal priesthood, I'm a king and a Priest
Therefore, I am anointed and I am strong
Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power,
I am more than a conqueror
I will not stagger at the promise of God through unbelief
I am strong in faith, giving glory to God*

My bow will abide in Strength, 'the arm of my hands' are made strong,

*By the hands of the mighty God of Jacob
I have the Name of Jesus, He gave me authority to use His Name
At the Name of Jesus:*

*Every knee shall bow,
I have authority over demons,
I have authority over sickness and diseases,
I have authority over all the power of the enemy,
And nothing shall by any means hurt me.*

*The rest of my life, I shall live to declare the Name of the Lord in the land of the living.
My life is dedicated to the glory of God in the face of the glorious One, whom I love
and call—JESUS my Lord, the Anointed One; To whom be glory and honor,
dominion and power, now and forever, Amen.*

What Is Strength?

But, we might as well ask at this juncture, what is it that constitutes strength? It is often said that *nothing demonstrates a clear understanding of a matter more than an accurate definition of it*. Therefore, let's define strength. What is strength? And how do I get or increase strength?

For the purpose of the meditation in this little book, we define strength as the "spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical qualities necessary to deal with life situations or events that are distressingly difficult. It's the capacity to apply and sustain a great force without yielding or breaking. It is the ability to mount an indomitable defense and then unleash an irresistible offense that leads to victory in a duel."

As this definition suggests, there are spiritual, mental, and physical aspects to strength. Spiritual strength is the spiritual equivalent of what people refer to as *intestinal fortitude*, **which makes one** unconquerable. It includes courage, resoluteness, endurance, and guts. It's the ability to withstand and overcome the **pressures of life**. It is spiritual resilience. It manifests as the capacity to resist the devil, overpower him, and make him flee. It includes the spiritual ability to resist trials and temptations and not give in. And when the devil comes in to attack, being strong definitely includes the power to go on the offensive. It is the capacity to apply a great force in attacking and subduing the opponent. The spiritual strength we are talking about here is supernatural, and draws grace from the inexhaustible source that is Christ. Spiritual strength in a

child of God is not static, but grows as we submit to the Lord, seek Him, and **wait upon Him**.

“Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations:

That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:

Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls” (1 Pet 1:6-9).

The trial of your faith will make you stronger as you pass through it, learning perseverance and obedience. You become tougher and tougher through subsequent trials, and your faith becomes purer and purer, like gold that is being refined. It takes strength and spiritual resilience to pass triumphantly through trials, but one gains additional strength in doing so. And this brings praise, honor, and glory to the Lord Jesus.

Physical strength is the capacity to lift a tremendous amount of load and sustain the application of great force without yielding or breaking. A bodybuilder, weightlifter, or wrestler may have a considerable amount of physical strength. Some can perform incredible feats like pulling a truck over a considerable distance or lifting over a few thousand pounds.

There’s also mental or emotional strength. There are people who are mentally strong; they never give up even after they’ve reached the limits of their physical bodies. They are fighters. However, to be truly strong, one must be spiritually and emotionally strong. One with only physical strength will falter sooner than later as the pressures of life persist.

Of all these, spiritual strength is the most important. This strength comes from the Spirit of God who dwells within. And all who latch on to this can *“be strengthened with all might”* by the power of the Holy Ghost.

Let’s pause and ask a seemingly ridiculous question: **Who needs strength?** If we check the answer to this question, it might make us appreciate the importance of seeking the face of God.

The question is, “Who needs strength?” The answer is certainly “Everyone.” Every human being needs strength for everyday life situations and activities. We all need strength to perform our missions.

A Soldier: Definitely, we as soldiers need strength to endure hardship and to fight. *“Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier” (2 Tim 2:4).* A soldier must be ready to build strength and resilience by enduring hardship. He must go through intense training in both obedience and resilience before he’s certified as a warrior.

An Athlete: Needs strength and stamina. Needs to run and not become weary, and contend or compete and not faint. As athletes in a race, we need strength and stamina to complete the race and win the prize. *“Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible” (1 Cor 9:24, 25).* An athlete must be disciplined, exercise self-restraint in training and diet, must keep the body under so he may obtain the price.

A Prophet, a Priest, and a King: They need spiritual strength and anointing from the Lord. They need supernatural enablement to perform the missions committed to them, which no ordinary man can perform. *“And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron” (Heb 5:4).* The Lord God is the strength of His anointed. The more a prophet, a priest, or a king abides in the presence of God, the closer he is to God, the stronger he becomes.

A Servant: Above all, anyone who desires to be like our Master Jesus Christ must humble himself and become the servant of all. Of course, a servant needs strength to serve, and one who would be a servant of all surely needs all the strength and energy he can get. The servant of all will become the greatest in the kingdom of God.

In short, everyone needs strength. And all who abide in God’s presence and wait upon Him will be strengthened from day to day. *“They go from strength to strength, every one of them in Zion appeareth before God” (Psa 84:7).* With the help of the Holy Spirit that dwells within, all who believe are able to handle enormous amounts of stress effectively. They’re able to

persevere through pressure, disappointments, sorrowful events, and catastrophes without opening their mouths to say things that are unbecoming toward God, against themselves, or contrary to their faith. They therefore overcome, because they are strong in faith.

My dear friend, may this be your testimony for the rest of your life in His Name. You will be *“strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness.”* Amen.

In this book, we shall concentrate on spiritual strength, which I believe will produce an unconquerable mental and emotional strength in us. There are some people who are physically strong but who are spiritually, mentally, and emotionally weak. When such are hit by the pressures of life, they end up on their backs, whimpering like spineless yellow-bellied crybabies. In other words, they have no spiritual backbones. They crash in the day of adversity. The preacher, the wise son of David, said, *“If your strength fails in the day of adversity, your strength is small.”* Here are a few different renderings of this verse of Scripture (Prov 24:10) in five different translations:

“If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small” (KJV)

“If you faint in a crisis, you are weak” (GW)

“If you grow weary when times are troubled, your strength is limited” (ISV)

“If thou faint in the day of adversity, Thy strength is small” (ASV)

“If thou lovest courage in the day of trouble, thy strength is small” (Darby)

And finally, this is not a translation, but a “revised emphasized version” by the Kwara Brethren in the seventies renders this verse as *“If thou faint in the day of adversity, the totality of thy strength is small”* (KWB, 1970s).

But, the question is: if you find yourself already in adversity, and discover your strength has failed you, *what should you do?* Is there hope for you? Can you rise again?

Yes! There is hope. And this *“hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec”* (Heb 6:19, 20). There is hope in Christ Jesus, your High Priest, who knows the feeling of your infirmities, and is ready to pull you up and uphold you. Just humble yourself before Him; let your soul and spirit adore Him. Let your spirit and soul cry out to Him, and He will lift you

up with His right hand. *“Nevertheless I am continually with thee: thou hast holden me by my right hand”* (Psa 73:23). Take the time to worship Him and cast your cares upon Him, and His right hand and His holy hand will bring the victory.

“O sing unto the LORD a new song; for he hath done marvellous things: his right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory” (Psa 98:1). Trust in Him totally in this hour; He will send you help.

“We have a chief priest who is able to sympathize with our weaknesses. He was tempted in every way that we are, but he didn’t sin. So we can go confidently to the throne of God’s kindness to receive mercy and find kindness, which will help us at the right time” (Heb 4:15, 16 GW).

Therefore, if you find that your strength falters and fails in the day of trouble, remember your High Priest understands. He knows your infirmities and understands your weakness and failure. Just look unto Him, reach for His outstretched hands, and He will pull you up. Don’t lie down there in the dust. Raise your eyes up to the heavens, and tap into His strength.

“I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth. He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber. Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. The LORD is thy keeper: the LORD is thy shade upon thy right hand. The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night. The LORD shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul. The LORD shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore” (Psa 121).

When you seem to be down and out, dear one, lift your inner eyes unto the Lord who dwells in heaven. That is where your help is. Don’t consider the physical situation you are in. Consider Jesus. Look unto Him. Weak people are those who look at circumstances and consider their abilities and limitations. You cannot be strong if you keep looking at the physical circumstances. You have to believe the word of God even when it is contrary to physical evidence. Be like Abraham:

“Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be.

“And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara’s womb:

“He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform” (Rom 4:18-21).

What should you do today so your strength will not fail you in the day of adversity? This is the next question we must ponder. How do you prepare for the day of adversity? How do you build or get strength?

First, you must know who you are and where your strength lies. Your strength is in the Lord Jesus who is your Master and Deliverer. You must also know who your enemy is, and that your Master has defeated your enemy and given you power over him. Jesus spoilt the powers of darkness. It was in spoiling principalities and powers, putting them to nought, and overcoming them that He delivered us from the power or authority of Satan. Satan has no authority to dominate a Christian. When you know this truth, and know that the Name of Jesus belongs to you, you can put Satan on the run every time. God has delivered us from the power of darkness, from the authority of Satan—and He has translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son. Your strength is in the Name of Jesus not in the philosophy of men; *“that your faith might not be in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. But we speak wisdom among the perfect, but not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, those being brought to nothing. (1 Co 2:6).* The powers of darkness that rule this world has been dethroned and being brought to nothing.

Someone would ask, why then is the devil—demons, oppression, depression, sickness, and every work of the devil ruling so many Christian today? It’s because they do not know what belongs to them. It is concerning them that God spoke saying: *“my people perish for lack of knowledge.”* But they that know their God shall be strong and shall do exploit. They shall trample upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the powers of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt them. With the Name of Jesus and a revelation of the authority He has given you, your victory is guaranteed in the day of adversity.

The fortieth chapter of the Book of Isaiah contains a message that holds the key to the question above. Isaiah wrote about the divine provision that God has made to help us overcome the trials of life in this perilous hour. In the thirty-first verse, we read:

“But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint” (Isa 40:31).

The preceding verse in this passage states that even the young men with natural strength and stamina, and who are in their prime, shall faint and utterly fall as they are subjected to the pressures and perils that are increasing upon the earth in this end-time. But the good news from Isaiah’s prophecy is that in the midst of all this, God *“giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength” (Isa 40:29).* This is for those who would wait on Him.

The verse quoted above states that the strength of those who wait upon the Lord will be renewed. Their strength will be rejuvenated and increased, because their strength is coming from the Lord. The Lord becomes the strength of their life. Those that wait upon the Lord have access to a divine and inexhaustible source of strength. In this hour when men’s hearts are failing them, when wars, rumors of wars, and various acts of terrorism are rampant upon the earth and security is nowhere to be found, God is providing His children a place of refuge and refreshment. The saints of the Most High can retreat into their secret chamber and draw new strength from the El-Shaddai, the God *who is more than enough.*

The prophet Isaiah listed the benefits of waiting upon the Lord in this thirty-first verse.

1. First, those that wait upon the Lord receive a new strength. They will be rejuvenated. They will be endued with the overcoming strength of well-bred young men.
2. Waiting upon God will lead us into His rest. As we wait on God we get a deeper revelation of the work Christ did for us and we begin to rest from our own labor. We begin to rest in His Covenant and in His Word which is *yes and amen.* This is strength indescribable. All work and worries have ceased. We have entered His rest. Quietness and confidence has become our strength. We have ceased from all our works. No more panicking. Condemnation is a thing of the past. Stressful laboring has ceased, we are resting in His inexhaustible care and provision; He’s become our refuge and strength, and beneath are His everlasting arms

3. The third benefit is that “they shall mount up with wings as eagles.” To mount up with wings is to rise up in faith into one’s spiritual position, designated by God in Christ Jesus. It is to soar with wings of faith above the storms of life. It is to rise above the perils of this evil world and be seated in Christ Jesus in heavenly places. Those who wait upon the Lord cannot be overwhelmed by storms; on the contrary, they are overcomers by their faith. My dear fellow believer, the storms of life will come, for sure, but they cannot overcome us as we allow God’s Spirit and power to lift us above the earth realm, above all storms. As we wait upon Him.
4. The fourth benefit is that if we make waiting upon the Lord our habit, we will run and not become weary, and walk and not grow tired. This is supernatural stamina. This is longevity of incredible proportion from the inexhaustible source that is Christ. It follows from this revelation in the same chapter: “*He gives strength to those who grow tired and increases the strength of those who are weak*” (Isa 40:29). Because God is a continual supply of strength, those that wait upon Him will never want for strength. When their strength fades, it is replenished from the inexhaustible source.

The International Standard Version of the Bible gives us another angle to these verses:

“He’s the one who gives might to the faint, renewing strength for the powerless. Even boys grow tired and weary, and young men collapse and fall, but those who keep waiting for the LORD will renew their strength. Then they’ll soar on wings like eagles; they’ll run and not grow weary; they’ll walk and not grow tired” (Isa 40:29-30 ISV).

Okay, then: we know that to renew our strength so we can overcome in the day of adversity, we need to “wait on the Lord.”

But what does it mean to wait on the Lord?

Isaiah told us renewed and increased strength will come from waiting upon the Lord. Waiting upon the Lord includes but is not limited to the following:

1. To wait upon the Lord is to get into our upper room, as the disciples did during the ten days of waiting after His ascension and the descent of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. They were seeking the face

of God in prayers and supplication, and waiting for the promise of the Father. For you and me, dear child of God, to wait upon the Lord is to set apart a quality time when there will be no interruption, physical, mental, or due to any engagement or appointment—a time when we are totally concentrating on Him. It is a time dedicated to seeking His face, offering our sacrifice of worship and praise, and offering our sanctified incense unto Him as a sweet-smelling savor. It is then the time when we stay quiet in His Presence and listen and allow Him to speak to us, and to pour Himself into us. This is the hour of intimacy with the Father. This is the hour of communion. This is the hour of revelation and strengthening. This is the hour of the supernatural.

This time of waiting on God must be deliberate. It must be consciously and systematically planned for, so the atmosphere is suitable for concentrating on God without distraction, so one can talk to God, and more important, so one can listen to what He has to say in that hour. It should not be an emergency meeting with God as a result of a sudden storm that just hit. This is the regular process of building oneself up in the most holy faith. It allows God to constantly pour Himself into us so we can know Him and become stronger. “*For they that know their God shall be strong and do exploits.*” This is the time to seek to know His mind and will so we can do His will. This is the time to hear what He wants for and from us as individuals. This is the time to hear what the Spirit is saying to the church.

2. “*Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him*” (Psa 37:7). We are to put our faith and hope in the Lord, stand still with complete trust, and see His salvation on our behalf. To wait upon Him is to earnestly expect from the Lord, and to patiently tarry for Him. “*For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him*” (Isa 64:4).
3. While it might be too late to start building your shelter after the storm has hit, with our Father God, there’s an ever-present mercy waiting to spring to our rescue if we make our 911 call to Him in our emergency. If we have not been up-to-date with the “waiting on

God” described above, and find ourselves in an emergency, it is never too late to run to the Mercy Seat. Run as fast as you can and take hold of the horns of the altar. It does not matter whether the root-cause of the emergency is your fault or not. Run to the Mercy Seat, for mercy will rejoice over judgment.

May mercy always rejoice over judgment in your life, in the name of the Lord. This is my prayer for you and me in this hour.

This other aspect of waiting upon the Lord is as a result of an emergency in one’s life. We’ve all been in situations where we urgently need to send an SOS to heaven. If we have been regulars at the throne of grace, we are not strangers or refugees requesting asylum, but residents running home to take shelter.

Either way, God has made provision for all His children in the time of storm. There is a secret place for all to hide and receive strength in times of trouble. It’s a place you can go and pour out your hearts to Him, and attentively wait for His comfort and insight, and for a way out of a no-way-out situation. This is a time of desperate praying, spiritual warfare, and submissive worship. The spiritual warfare here may mostly be for casting down imaginations, and everything that exalts itself against the Word of God, *“and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ”* (2 Cor 10:4).

If you find getting into a prayer mood a little difficult because of the heaviness of the moment and the pressing issues that are almost choking you, begin by praying from the inside in the spirit. Pray in tongues. In your agonies, sing in the spirit. Pray in the spirit and pray in your understanding also. And do this until you break through into the highway of prayer and your praise, your worship, and your prayers are smoothly flowing from your heart to the Father.

This breakthrough is important, for it is in this realm of prayer that the Spirit of Truth, the Anointing, whom the world cannot receive, will begin to speak and reveal the Father’s mind to you. It is in this realm of prayer that the infusion of strength begins to flow from the Father to your being. This is what you were waiting for as you waited

on God. He has arrived, and the mountain is not covered by scary fire and smoke, but by His glory; and you are in the midst of it. He has arrived, and your SOS issue has been TKO, “taken care of.” He has arrived, and you’re receiving strength. He has arrived, and you are being changed, transfigured by the glory of His Presence.

But, my friend, we must recognize that the desire of God is for us to constantly abide in His Presence, where our needs and issues will be taken care of as BAU, “business as usual,” and not as fire-fighting emergencies. He wants us to dwell in His pavilion, in His secret place.

“He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.

Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler.

Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday.

A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee. Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked. Because thou hast made the LORD, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation;

There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.

Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet.

Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name. He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him.

With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation” (Psa 91, KJV).

Chapter 2

They That Know Their God

“Who went up to heaven, and cometh down? Who hath gathered the wind in his fists? Who hath bound waters in a garment? Who established all ends of the earth? What is His name? and what is His son’s name?” (Prov 30:4 YLT)

“But the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits” (Dan 11).

What is His name? What is His Son’s name? Do you know Him? Have you met His Son? Answer, if you have understanding. I believe the majority of you reading this book have the spiritual understanding that God was expecting and have answered these questions with an affirmative yes. If you don’t know Him yet, and have not met His Son, I also have good news for you: He’s not far from where you are right now. Bow your head, open your heart, and let the King of glory come in.

Who is this King of glory? The Lord Jesus Christ, our Messiah, the anointed One. He’s God Almighty’s beloved Son, who was sent down to deliver us from sin and Satan, and has translated us into the Kingdom of God. He came in the flesh as Jesus of Nazareth, healed the sick, taught and preached the gospel. When the time came, He was arrested, falsely accused, tried, and crucified, even though Pilate found no fault in Him. He died, was buried, and on the third day, He was raised from the dead. He died for your sin and mine. He died in your place, and all you need to do is accept Him as your Lord and Savior. *“For God so loved the world*

that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed” (Rom 10:9-11). If you have never done this before, this will be a good time to do it.

Tell God you believe in your heart Jesus Christ is His Son. Tell Him you believe Christ died on the cross for you, and was buried, and was raised from the dead for your justification. Tell God you *accept Jesus as your Savior, Lord, Physician, and King*. Tell Jesus to come into your heart and take over your life, right this moment, and become your Lord and Savior. Thank Him for doing so. Amen.

That’s it! That, my friend, is an encounter with God. It’s an encounter of the ultimate kind. It’s the beginning of an everlasting relationship with the Father God. It’s your introduction to knowing the Most High.

This is how we all became children of God. For *“as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name”* (John 1:12). You, like many of us, have become a new creature in Christ Jesus. And like young children, we must desire the sincere milk of the Word of God, so we might grow by it. He wants us to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. He wants to put His Spirit in us so we can walk in wisdom and understanding, and so we can be full of might and of the fear of God. For the *“fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction”* (Prov 1:7). *“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding”* (Prov 9:10). This is the introduction to a career in “knowing the Almighty God.”

He Has Made HIM Known

Don’t you desire a career in knowing God? Wouldn’t you give everything up for the opportunity to be His confidant? God has made it possible for any of us to draw nigh unto Him and become His friend. He has paved the way for us to intimately know Him in spirit and in truth.

The world cannot know Him. Only those who have Jesus in their hearts, and in whom the Spirit of truth and revelation dwells, can see and know God. To the world He is the “Unknown God.”

“No one has ever seen God. God’s only Son, the one who is closest to the Father’s heart, has made him known” (John 1:18).

The Jews who did not believe the gospel that Paul preached in Thessalonica gathered a company of thugs and set the city in uproar against Paul and Silas and their host brethren. These Jews troubled the people and incited the rulers of the city, telling them that the men, Paul and Silas, who had “*turned the world upside down*” were in their city also. And they went on a rampage, searching everywhere for Paul. The brethren immediately, by night, sent Paul and Silas out of Thessalonica and brought them to Berea.

The Bible tells us that the Bereans were more noble than those in Thessalonica. And they listened to the preaching of Paul, received the word of God with readiness of mind, and by themselves searched the Scriptures daily to confirm that those things Paul taught were so. But when the troublemakers, the Jews of Thessalonica, heard that the word of God was preached by Paul to the Bereans, they traveled there also, and stirred up the city. Immediately, the brethren at Berea sent Paul away by sea, and he was brought to Athens.

The Athenians were wholly given to idolatry, to philosophy, and to superstition. They were polytheists. And in the city were two sects of philosophers: the Epicureans and the Stoics. These men, like many philosophers of their day, spent most of their time in philosophical debates and in hearing and talking about new things. The Athenians worshipped many gods. After multiplying their idols to the utmost, some Athenians were still apprehensive, thinking that there was still another god they were missing in their collection, and that this “unknown god” they fearfully suspected must be higher than all the idols they already knew and worshipped. To make sure they had everything covered, with respect to all gods, so that no evil would be directed against them from this higher god of whom they had no knowledge, they erected an altar in their city with the inscription “TO THE UNKNOWN GOD.” So they worshipped many gods, they adopted any new god they heard about, and to make sure they were covered, they also worshipped the

“unknown God,” whom they believed was higher than all their gods.

Let’s take the lens off the Athenians for a moment and focus it on ourselves. You are a believer, all right! *But Who is God to you?* Is He someone you know personally, or a stranger you hear about once a week in the house of worship? Is He just the faraway benevolent Almighty to whom you send an SOS or 911 call when in trouble? Do you have an active spiritual relationship with Him like you have with your close friend? I mean, that friend you watch football with, or hang out with for hours; that friend you loved to visit for sleepovers while you were a teenager and you talk to almost every day? Is God known to you as you know this friend of yours? Can you recognize His voice if He calls you from within a crowd? Can you even recognize His voice if you are alone in the room and He speaks to you? Is He to you a God that can be touched, known, heard, loved, worshipped, and adored? Or do you, like the Athenian philosophers, consider Him an “unknown God”? *Pause, and think about these words.*

As Paul waited for the brethren and Silas at Athens, he was stirred when he saw the city was obsessed with idolatry. He went to the synagogue first, as was his custom, disputed with the Jews, and then went to the marketplace and spoke to the people that met with him. It was here that the philosophers encountered him, thinking he was a hawker of another strange god, for they heard him talk about Jesus, and about Him being raised from the dead. They were curious. So they brought him to Areopagus, who was their Plato, their chief philosopher, to hear what he had to say; for they spent all their time hearing and talking about new things.

“Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars’ hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.

God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands;

Neither is worshipped with men’s hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before

appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us:

For in him we live, and move, and have our being; *as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device.*

And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead” (Act 17:22-31).

In talking to these polytheistic idol worshippers, Paul was also being used to speak to us. We were like them before Christ Jesus found us, but I hope and pray we're no longer like them. We were captured by those dumb idols in the world and were in bondage, worshipping them. But God delivered us, transformed us, and translated us into His kingdom. And God overlooks the times of ignorance, but calls everyone to repent and serve the Most High as the only God. We have been delivered from idolatry, whether it be from worshipping pagan gods, or wealth, or status in society, or money, or a job, or other men. We have been set free to serve the Lord God of heaven. We have freely made a quality decision to worship the Most High God, and to serve Him alone. Is that true of you today, my friend?

The Holy Spirit, through Paul, was telling us in the passage above to put our total dependence on God, in whom we live, and move, and have our being. Now we are in Christ Jesus. He's the origin of our life and the source of eternal life.

*In Him I live and move and have my being
I abide in Him, I live in Him
He is the vine—I am the branch
The branch is in the Vine
The life of the Vine is in the branch
The life of God is in me
His nature, the Love nature is in me
His life flows through my inner man
I will let that life and love dominate me*

*It's He that strengthens me
Christ is my strength
I cannot be defeated
I cannot be conquered
I can do all things, because I'm in HIM
I can do all things, because He's in me
I can do all things through Christ Who is my strength*

*It's in Him I live, It's in Him I move,
It's in Him I have my being
I am in Christ Jesus, I put Him on
He is my strength
He became sin for me, and I am the righteousness of God in Him
And I am the righteousness of God in him
He bore my sins on His body on the cross..
So I am dead to sin, and alive to righteousness*

By His stripes, I am healed.

“In Him was life and the life was the light of men” (John 1:4). We are in Him. Everything that we are, we are in Him, for we are nothing outside of Him. The totality of our existence is in Him, and nothing is left outside. Without Him we can do nothing, and beside Him we are nothing. It is in Him we live and move, and in Him we are what we are.

We have been born of God and are in Christ Jesus. We live in Him and He lives in us. We have the special privilege of knowing God because the only begotten of the Father, who alone can reveal God to any man, dwells in us and with us. Through Christ our Lord, we can do all things. He strengthens us. The flesh and human reasoning limit us. It makes us look to circumstances, consider the problems, and succumb to the tests and the storms. The flesh makes us utter the language of doubt and confess inability and lack of strength. But the Word of God and faith say: *“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”* The strength of the Almighty is ours. He is with us always. He has promised to be the strength of our lives. Scripture says nothing about our being strong in ourselves. It says God is our strength. It commands us to be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. It tells us to draw close to Him, discover His will and passion, learn His ways, and know Him intimately. *For they that know the Almighty God, shall be strong and do exploits.*

Therefore, we need to deal with the veil that covers our eyes and stops us from seeing Him clearly. We need to remove the plug that blocks our ears, preventing us from hearing what He's saying. This of course, is the ever-present veil of the flesh, which presents the biggest obstacle in knowing God who is the Spirit. We are therefore to submit the flesh to the Lord Jesus, in whom the flesh has been dealt with on the cross. We are to "put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom 8:3, 4). Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have no obligation to live after the flesh. We are no longer slaves to the flesh, we liberated children of the Most High God. Let us walk in the liberty where Christ has set us free. "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Rom 8:5, 9). We have the Spirit of God. He dwells in us. May God open our eyes to clearly see Him in us and know who we are in Christ Jesus.

Let's wholeheartedly pray the prayer Apostle Paul prayed for us. Let's all pray that prayer now:

*"That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto **me** the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:*

*The eyes of **my** understanding being enlightened; that **I** may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,*

*And what is the exceeding greatness of his power **toward me** who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,*

Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:

Father God, I pray:

*"That **You** would grant **me**, according to the riches of **Your** glory, to be strengthened with might by **Your** Spirit in **my** inner man;*

*That Christ may dwell in **my** hearts by faith; that **I**, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;*

*And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that **I** might be filled with all the fullness of God" (Eph 1:17-21; Eph 3:16-19, personalized KJV).*

*Father God, I pray that I'll "be filled with the knowledge of **Your** will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; That **I** might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;*

Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness; Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:

*Who hath delivered **me** from the power of darkness, and hath translated **me** into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom **I** have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:*

And he is before all things, and by 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 might have the preeminence" (Col 1: 9-18). To him be glory and dominion, and power, for ever and ever, Amen.

When Israel Was a Child

The word of the Lord came to Hosea the son of Beerī concerning His people, saying, "When Israel was a child I loved him and I called my son out of Egypt." God told Hosea to give the message of repentance to Israel his son. As a father cares for, nurtures, and protects his child, so did the Lord with tender care lavish His affection over Israel. With a mighty hand and extravagant show of power did the Lord deliver them out of Egypt. He bore them on eagles' wings out of the land of bondage. And in the wilderness, He took care of them, feeding them with the bread of heaven and water out of the rock. He drew them with cords of human kindness, and with love He removed the yoke of bondage from their necks.

He took care of Israel. He fed them with food of angels. But Israel, His sons, forgot the Lord God their Father. They went a-whoring after Baal and the gods of the Canaanites. Israel forsook the Lord their God that delivered them out of slavery, and did evil continually by serving “*Baal, and Ashtaroah, and the gods of Syria, and the gods of Zidon, and the gods of Moab, and the gods of the children of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines, and forsook the LORD, and served not him*” (Jdg 10:6).

“When Israel was a child, I loved him, and I called my son out of Egypt. The more I called them, the farther they went away. They sacrificed to other gods—the Baals, and they burned incense to idols. I was the one who taught the people of Ephraim to walk. I took them by the hand. But they didn’t realize that I had healed them. I led them with cords of human kindness, with ropes of love. I removed the yokes from their necks. I bent down and fed them” (Hos 11:1-4).

God called and reasoned with His child to come back, but Israel was an unrepentant prodigal son who habitually ran away from home. A child is expected to grow up, and so was the child Israel, who was delivered, pampered, and protected; but the child refused to grow up.

“Ephraim, he hath mixed himself among the people; Ephraim is a cake not turned. Strangers have devoured his strength, and he knoweth it not: yea, gray hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth not” (Hos 7:8, 9).

Perhaps God is speaking to you or me through Hosea with this message to Ephraim, a tribe in Israel. Perhaps God is telling us to recognize our situation like Ephraim and pray, “*Turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the LORD my God*” (Jer 31:17). For there is hope for you, and there’s hope for me, because the Lord our God will never leave us or forsake us.

“And there is hope in thine end, saith the LORD, that thy children shall come again to their own border. I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus; Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke: turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the LORD my God” (Jer 31:17, 18).

When a child is born, yes, God knows and expects that the child will behave like a child for some time. He will talk like a child, and act like a child. But a time will come when this child will put away childish things and begin to act like a responsible grown-up. God does not expect a sixteen-year-old to still be in diapers or crying for milk while sucking a pacifier. God expects that a time will come when we His children grow

up, stop being babies, and become grown-up enough to take care of ourselves, and even start feeding young ones who were born after us with the sincere milk of the Word. He expects us to move on toward maturity.

Think about when you were born again. *How long ago was it? How far, spiritually, have you traveled from that initial point? Have you grown in your first love? Do you trust Him more today? Are you more confident in faith today? Do you handle life’s stressful situations better today? Have you learnt to cast your cares upon Him?*

God took Israel out of Egypt to transport them to their inheritance and turn them into overcomers. His plan was to watch them grow into maturity, and then establish them where He dwelt, so they might dwell in His presence. He wanted to dwell with them, to be their God and have them be His people. His purpose was to reveal His mind to them and teach them His ways. He began to unfold His plan and purpose by sending Moses to deliver them out of the house of bondage.

He Made His Ways Known Unto Moses

“Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb” (Exo 3:1).

And so it was that God found a man at the backside of the desert whom He could teach His ways. Israel had been in slavery in Egypt after the death of Joseph for several years. They cried unto the Lord, and He heard them and located a man called Moses at the backside of the modern Saudi Arabian desert.

“And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt.

“And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I.

“And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father,

the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God” (Exo 3:2-6).

No one narrates this event in the life of Moses and God’s people better than Stephen before he became the first martyr:

"This is the Moses whom the Israelites rejected by saying, 'Who made you our ruler and judge?' This is the one God sent to free them and to rule them with the help of the messenger who appeared to him in the bush.

*This is the man who led our ancestors out of Egypt. **He is the person who did amazing things and worked miracles in Egypt**, at the Red Sea, and in the desert for 40 years.*

This is the same Moses who told the Israelites, 'God will send you a prophet, an Israelite like me.'

This is the Moses who was in the assembly in the desert. Our ancestors and the messenger who spoke to him on Mount Sinai were there with him. Moses received life-giving messages to give to us, but our ancestors were not willing to obey him. Instead, they pushed him aside, and in their hearts they turned back to Egypt.

They told Aaron, 'We don't know what has happened to this Moses, who led us out of Egypt. So make gods who will lead us.' That was the time they made a calf. They offered a sacrifice to that false god and delighted in what they had made. So God turned away from them and let them worship the sun, moon, and stars. This is written in the book of the prophets”(Act 7:35-42).

Let’s continue this thread of meditation with this example of the life of Moses, the man of God. Let’s examine his character and explore how he represents Christ in certain ways: the shadows of Christ in the lives of men of God who have walked this way before us. The ultimate goal of this book, as stated already, is to help us concentrate on Christ who is our strength. The Messiah’s life and character during His earthly tenure with us down here is portrayed in part by many pictures and shadows in the Old Testament persons, patterns, sabbaths, feasts, and ordinances, which, when all collated and aggregated together, give us a true picture of our Christ. The right place to go to learn of His nature is the Scriptures concerning Him. The things concerning Him are stored in Scriptures, and it behooves us to search for them and dig them out.

“Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?”

“And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself” (Luke 24:25-27).

The Lord Jesus expounded unto the two brethren on the road to Emmaus things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures. Which Scriptures did He use? From which books of our Bible did He quote? Was it from Matthew? Mark? Luke? Or John? Was it from the Book of Acts? Or the Epistles? Or from the Book of Revelation? No, not from any of these, for none of these books had been written yet. He taught all these from the Jewish Scriptures, from the Torah. He taught this from the five Books of Moses, and from the prophecies of the “writing prophets” we talked about earlier.

Let’s read the twenty-seventh verse again. *“And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.”* Therefore, we can get to know Him if we ask the Holy Ghost, who is our Teacher, to expound to us things concerning our Christ from the life and prophecies of Moses, the man of God. Yes, Moses was a prophet.

*“And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the LORD will make **myself known** unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house. **With him will I speak mouth to mouth**, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the LORD shall he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?” (Num 12:5-8).*

The Lord God himself testified of Moses’ ministry and the quality of his intimacy with God. He was no mere prophet. In fact, Mariam found that out the hard way. He was the prophet the Lord anointed to be an Old Testament type of the true Prophet of the New Covenant, the Lord Jesus Christ. For God said:

“I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him” (Deu 18:18).

Moses was a mighty prophet of God. God sent him to bring deliverance to His people who were in bondage to Pharaoh and the Egyptians. The

Scripture testified of Moses that he was the meekest man on the face of the earth:

“Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth” (Num 12:3).

This meekness spoken of with respect to Moses is not shyness or passivity, but quiet inner strength. It is humility and gentleness toward others, and being willingly submissive and totally obedient to God. It is having a quiet but confident trust in the Lord God and being willing and able to do whatever He commands. This is spiritual strength. And Moses possessed that quiet imperturbable strength because he was close to God and knew His ways.

He was a type of Christ in this attitude of meekness; not a perfect picture, but a shadowy representation nevertheless. Of Jesus, the Scriptures declared in the prophets:

“Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law” (Isa 42:1-4).

This prophecy speaks of the meekness of Christ the Messiah, of whom Moses was a shadowy and imperfect type. The passage described how He would not be arrogant, loud, or obnoxious, but humble and gentle in both words and actions. A meek person like Moses, when opposed by Miriam, would not automatically jump in to defend himself. Peter, speaking about the Lord Jesus Christ with respect to meekness, wrote:

“Who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously.” (1 Pet 2:23)

A meek person will not jump in to defend himself when accused wrongly, because he has a quiet, confident, and unshakable trust in God. Therefore, he does not get discouraged, and because of his unshakable confidence in God, he never fails. This meekness found in Christ Jesus may look externally like weakness, but it is the utmost supernatural strength. We seek a prototype of meekness in Moses, and God testified of him as the meekest of all men that lived upon the earth, but Jesus is

the ultimate example of someone who was meek. He had all the power of the Godhead within His reach while here on earth, yet He did not use any of that to defend Himself against His accusers, opposers, and torturers. Instead, He used it to help others and finally lay down His life for us all. He had several opportunities to get revenge or attack those who attacked Him, but instead He interceded and sought forgiveness for those killing Him.

O, that the mind and attitude of Jesus Christ would be in you and me.
O, that His beauty will be found in me. Let's sing the song:

*Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me
All His wonderful passion and purity
Oh Thou Spirit Divine, all my nature refine
Till the beauty of Jesus be seen in me*

(Albert Orsborn/Tom M. Jones)

The second verse of the third chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews records another testimony the Spirit of God gave concerning Moses. He was the meekest man on earth, and God also testified of him as being faithful in all His house. Moses, again, was a type of Christ in faithfulness. *“Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house. For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house. For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God”* (Heb 3:2-4).

Dearly beloved, we are to put on Christ so His beauty, meekness, and faithfulness will manifest in us. These traits will make us indomitable in the world. This is indescribable strength. This will release the capacity of Christ in our daily life. This will cause us to enter into His rest as we continue to walk in His ways. *“He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel”* (Psa 103:7).

Moses was an example of meekness, faithfulness, courage, and strength. We see his courage and fearlessness exhibited in the courts of Pharaoh. He was not afraid of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. The author of the Book of Hebrews tells us that by faith Moses, *“when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the*

recompence of the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, **not fearing the wrath of the king:** for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible. Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them” (Heb 11:24-28).

Moses was an example of a leader who lived a life of sacrifice for his people. Though he had the opportunity to enjoy a life of royalty in the palace of Pharaoh as a prince, he chose to suffer affliction with the people of God. He forsook Egypt and Pharaoh’s palace and chose to be faithful to God who had called him to be a deliverer.

“*This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear. This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us: To whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust him from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt*” (Acts 7:37-39).

Moses loved the people of God, and he would stop at nothing to protect and defend them. He was even willing to sacrifice his own eternal destiny to rescue them. He was again in that respect a type of Christ. The thirty-second chapter of the Book of Exodus presents an extraordinary intercessory prayer of Moses for the children of Israel after they sinned grievously against God and were on the verge of destruction:

“*And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written. And the LORD said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book. Therefore now go, lead the people unto the place of which I have spoken unto thee: behold, mine Angel shall go before thee: nevertheless in the day when I visit I will visit their sin upon them*” (Exo 32:31-34).

He was a selfless intercessor and a bold messenger of God sent to confront Pharaoh, the king of the nation that held His people in bondage. This was Moses, of the Hebrew slaves, who killed an Egyptian and ran away from Egypt, who had come back, and had the audacity to walk into the palace of Pharaoh and demand that the whole nation of slaves be released with immediate effect. Can you see how bold and confident in God this man Moses was?

God had called him from the backside of the Midian desert, where he kept the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law. After much hesitation, Moses was convinced by God to return to Egypt and carry out the assignment of bringing the children of Israel out of Egypt. He returned to Egypt forty years later and appeared before a new Pharaoh, for the old one had died. However, the new Pharaoh must have known Moses, since they were probably brought up together in the palace before he became a fugitive, wanted by the king for murder.

The first thing we read in Exodus is this fugitive stepping into the palace without showing respect for His Majesty, making one bold demand after another, and laying down one dreadful plague after another. Hear how the Book of Exodus describes the first encounter:

“*And afterward Moses and Aaron went in, and told Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness.*

“*And Pharaoh said, Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go.*

“*And they said, The God of the Hebrews hath met with us: let us go, we pray thee, three days’ journey into the desert, and sacrifice unto the LORD our God; lest he fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword*” (Exo 5:1-3).

Moses stepped into the court of Pharaoh, not as a normal person, but as a god in the house of Pharaoh. This confidence came as a result of speaking to and hearing from God. He had been with God and spoken to Him. He was reluctant at first, but had listened to the voice of God, and knew that God was with him. For God later said unto him, “*See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh: and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet*” (Exo 7:1). He went before Pharaoh with the confidence of a messenger of the Almighty God and did not fear the anger of the king, but insisted upon what God had commanded. He told Pharaoh: “*Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness*” (Exo 5:1).

Not a Hoof Will Be Left Behind

Egypt was in total darkness. The stubborn Pharaoh had hardened his heart again and would not let the people go. He had not learnt his lessons

from the previous plagues that were dished out over Egypt by God through the hands of Moses and Aaron. This was one of the last and also one of the most dreadful plagues Egypt suffered because of Pharaoh's refusal to let the people of God go. The Bible tells us that the darkness was so thick that it could be felt. It was thick darkness. It was scary blackness and dense darkness. We often read this account without really thinking about it and thus never really grasping the seriousness of this plague. The Bible tells us that the darkness was so much that people could not see each other's faces and no one got up from his or her place in three days. Not only was the light of the heavens or firmament totally clouded and covered, most likely fires and candles were put out as well by the heavy and damp vapors and fogs that made the darkness even more palpable. It was complete and terrifying darkness.

“And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even darkness which may be felt.

“And Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven; and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days:

“They saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days: but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings” (Exo 10:21-23).

The situation in Egypt during this plague reveals the state of a man who continually rebels against God and His word. A life without God is one without light. It is a life in total darkness. Egypt was covered in total darkness, “but the children of God had light in their dwellings.” This in itself is another miracle of miracles. Israel was dwelling in Egypt. The entire land was in darkness, unprecedented darkness that could be felt. But the children of God who were slaves in Egypt, in the small area they were confined to, had lights in their dwellings.

God is Light, and in Him is no darkness at all. The devil is the prince of darkness. He rules over the realm of darkness. The devil is evil and dwells in darkness; his is the kingdom of darkness and in him there is no light at all. His children walk in darkness and their eyes are evil. For *“if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!”* (Mat 6:23). That darkness is as ominous and palpable as the one in Egypt.

You are a child of the light. Walk in the light. Darkness has covered the whole land, but we the children of God have light in our dwellings. Let us walk in that light, and let us shine that light for others to see. Let us attract those in darkness and bring them to the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ, who is the image of God. Let us walk in the light and let our lights so shine before men that they will glorify our Father who is in heaven.

So Pharaoh called Moses and said, *“Go ye, serve the LORD; only let your flocks and your herds be stayed: let your little ones also go with you”* (Exo 10:24). This plague really got to Pharaoh. He began to realize that the God of Moses was indeed higher than all his gods and controlled all of them. Egypt's chief object of worship was the sun god. But the God of Moses had put Egypt in total darkness for three days, withdrawing the sun, and essentially controlling their sun god whom they worshipped so fervently. This was not only mentally and physically scary, but it also affected the spirits of the Egyptians to see how all their gods had been defeated and humiliated by Moses and the God of the Jews. So, Pharaoh thought he could negotiate a partial release of the people of God. At first he had told them they could go worship God, but to leave their wives and children behind. Now, he felt defeated but still wanted to have something of theirs to hold on to.

Pharaoh told Moses that it was okay to *“Go, worship the LORD! Even your women and children may go with you, **but your flocks and herds must stay behind**”* (Exo 10:24, GW). Pharaoh said it like he was doing them a favor. He said, you can go and worship God, and *“**even your women and children may go with you.**”* He said it like he was doing them a favor by letting their wives and children go with them. They could now go with their wives and children, but all their livestock had to stay behind.

God has delivered you from the kingdom and dominion of Satan, and has translated you into the Kingdom of His dear Son. But even though that is true, the former taskmaster may still want to withhold from you that which is yours, if you let him. Pharaoh told Moses they could go, but they were to leave their flocks behind. Pharaoh had no right by God to do that. The devil has no right to hold your inheritance or any of your properties. Insist on enjoying all that God has given to you in Christ Jesus. Do not let the evil one deprive you of your blessings.

He may, like Pharaoh, say, “Well, you are saved, all right! That’s okay. But as for healing and deliverance from your incessant excruciating headaches, leave that for now. Healing is not yours; enjoy your salvation, that’s good enough for you.” Listen to how Moses answered Pharaoh below, and fire back at the devil in the same manner.

Moses answered Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, saying: “*You must allow us to take our animals for the sacrifices and burnt offerings we have to make to the LORD our God*” (Exo 10:25). Don’t forget Moses was talking to the king of Egypt. He used the phrase *you must allow us*. He was in the court of Pharaoh, probably with Pharaoh’s chiefs and army commanders in attendance. In their presence, Moses said, “O king, you must allow us to take our flocks with us.” What audacity of faith and courage! What boldness! What confidence in the Most High God! And it gets better. Moses categorically declares:

*“Our cattle also shall go with us; **there shall not an hoof be left behind;** for thereof must we take to serve the LORD our God”* (Exo 10:26). Blessed God for a man who knew His God! For *“the people that know their God shall be strong, and do exploits”* (Dan 11:32 Webster). Moses was fearless and persistent, and possessed an unflinching tenacity in bringing the will of God to pass in the face of humanly insurmountable opposition.

My dear friend, arise today and make this declaration over your own life. Take stock of all the things God has told you are yours in Christ which the enemy might have held back from you or be trying to hold back. Mark them all; write them down. Arise in faith and pray and make this same declaration with Moses, that “All that the Father God has given you is yours, and that you are appropriating them all, and not a hoof will be left behind” in the name of the Lord Jesus. Insist on claiming and walking in your benefits. They are yours. Just place your trust and confidence in God, *“who richly provides us with everything to enjoy”* (1 Tim 6:17).

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.”

“According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue” (Eph 1:3, 2 Pet 1:3).

Fear Not, Be of Good Courage

“And Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, that is over against Jericho. And the LORD shewed him all the land of Gilead, unto Dan,

And all Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim, and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah, unto the utmost sea, And the south, and the plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees, unto Zoar.

And the LORD said unto him, This is the land which I sware unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed: I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither” (Deu 34:1-4).

Moses was an outstanding man of God. The Scriptures testified of him in the last verses of the thirty-fourth chapter of Deuteronomy as the greatest prophet whom God knew face to face. There has never been another prophet in Israel like Moses. But because the sins of the children of Israel rubbed off on him, he was prevented from entering the promised land. He wanted to and pleaded with God, but to no avail. What God did for him was allow him to see the land far off from the top of Mount Nebo. *“As the LORD had predicted, the LORD’S servant Moses died in Moab. He was buried in a valley in Moab, near Beth Peor. Even today no one knows where his grave is. Moses was 120 years old when he died. His eyesight never became poor, and he never lost his physical strength”* (Deu 34:5-7).

Before his death, Moses the man of God had laid his hands on Joshua the son of Nun as his successor in leading the people of God into the land of promise. When he did, the Spirit of God descended upon Joshua, and he was filled with the Spirit of wisdom, and the Israelites obeyed him and did what the Lord had commanded through Moses.

“Now after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD it came to pass, that the LORD spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses’ minister, saying, Moses my servant is dead” (Josh 1:1, 2a).

The era of the Law was passing away. Moses was dead. Keeping the Law was good, but could not bring anyone into the promised land. The Law is feckless. Laboring under the Law cannot cause us to enter His Rest. Only faith can. So the Lord God called Joshua, saying:

“Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel” (Josh 1:2)

God said, “Now therefore, awake, arise and go over Jordan and begin contend in battle and take over the land which I have given you.”

“Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses. From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast. There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.

This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.
9 *Have not I commanded thee?*

Be strong and of a ***good courage***; be ***not afraid***, neither be thou ***dismayed***: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest” (Josh 1:3-5,8,9).

God’s admonition to Joshua constantly included the fact that he needed to be strong and of full courage. Joshua was to put on the strength of the Lord. He had walked in faith before. Joshua was one of the twelve spies. Together with Caleb, he wholly followed the Lord and brought a good report of the land. They encouraged the congregation to trust the Lord and march in obedience to God and take the land. They saw the same obstacles the other ten spies saw, but they chose to trust God and walked in faith, while the others were crippled by fear.

The devil uses fear to attack many of God’s children. He comes to them as a roaring lion seeking to devour, or to steal and deprive them of the blessings the Father has bestowed upon them. Fear may manifest itself as anxiety, worry, apprehension, or concern. These are still fear-based emotions. The cause of fear is found in its definition. What is fear?

Fear is an unpleasant emotion caused by the belief that something dangerous or catastrophic is going to happen. It’s an anticipation of pain or danger. The keyword here is ***anticipation***. Faith is an expectation that the word of God, His word of deliverance concerning you, is about

to manifest. In faith, the keyword is expectation. To expect is to believe. On the other hand, fear causes one to anticipate the worst. It is a negative form of believing. The enemy tries to get you to disbelieve the promises of God, tries to make you imagine the worst possible outcome, makes you anticipate it, and so you become fearful. It is negative faith, and therefore it’s very potent. With faith, we overcome the world. In the same manner, when we live under fear, the enemy can overcome us.

Is the devil bullying you through the spirit of fear? Many of God’s people are not aware that God has given them authority over the spirit of fear. Not only has God delivered us from the spirit of bondage to fear, He has also given us authority over fear in Jesus’ name. He defeated the devil and all his evil forces. And He gave us authority to trample over serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt us.

The key to overcoming fear is total and complete trust in God. Trusting God is how Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego faced the fiery furnace without fear (Dan 3). Trusting God is how Stephen stood before his killers, fearlessly testifying His word, and declared what He saw in a vision (Acts 7). To trust God is refuse to give in to fear. Even in the darkest times, we can trust in God to make things work out for good. This trust comes from knowing God and knowing that He is good. Once we have learned to put our trust in God, we will no longer be afraid of the things that come against us. We will be like the psalmist who said with confidence, “*Let all who take refuge in you be glad; let them ever sing for joy. Spread your protection over them, that those who love your name may rejoice in you*” (Psa 5:11).

“*God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind*” (2 Tim 1:7, NKJV). A spirit of fearfulness and timidity does not come from God. “*There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love*” (1 John 4:18). If, as children of God, we still fear God’s punishment, we have not yet believed in His love for us. To help our faith in His love, God has liberally sprinkled encouragement concerning His love for us throughout the Bible. He tells us that nothing shall separate us from the love that He has for us in Christ Jesus. He tells us He will never leave us or forsake us. God tells us not to be afraid of being alone, of being too weak, of not

being heard in our prayers, or of being destitute. These admonishments cover many different aspects of the “spirit of fear.”

God has given us His own Spirit. He gave birth to us; therefore our spirits came from Him. And He has not given us a spirit of timidity, nor has He given us the spirit of bondage to fear. He has given us the spirit of love, of power, and of a sound mind. Fear is a spirit. And it’s a messenger the enemy often sends to attack children of God with the goal to intimidate and defeat. He goes around like a roaring lion seeking whom he can, using fear, to subdue and devour. We are to resist him steadfastly. We are to stand against him by faith using the word of God.

Why Do We Christians Live in Fear?

Is it because we do not trust God? Or we do not believe in His love? Surely if His word dwells in us richly, fear will have no place. Fear will have its way with us if we deny ourselves daily communion with Him or we do not learn to walk in the Spirit. If we believe in His love and walk in it, there will absolutely be no place in us for fear. Perfect love casts out fear. Fear is tormenting.

The devil torments people with different types of fear. There are the fear of failure, fear of death, fear of sickness and disease, fear of lack, fear of evil report, and the fear of man. Outcomes of fear include panic and emotional breakdown. Fear leads to defeat, total and complete. If we sow fear, we’ll reap torment. If we walk in fear, we displease God. Fear is the absence of faith. And without faith, it is impossible to please God.

Overcome Fear

How can I overcome fear? First, I need to wait upon God. I walk in daily expectation of God’s favor. I live in constant knowledge of and faith in God’s love for me. I know He loves me because I am His child and the apple of His eye. This is my confidence. If the Almighty loves me this much, who is there to fear? All fear is gone because I know Him who holds tomorrow. I know Him who controls all things, and I am His beloved. I know who I am—God’s child. I know who my Father is—God. And I know who my enemy is—a defeated foe.

Second, I study and meditate on His word daily. His word builds an overcoming faith in me. I overcome by soaking myself in God’s word. I am strengthened by His word, and I become a master over fear and demonic forces. I am no longer intimidated; I become an intimidator over the devil. Yes, the tables have been turned, the predator has become the prey.

Third, I overcome fear with prayer, praying with all manners of prayer and supplication with thanksgiving. My prayers also become more effective as I wait upon God with fasting to subdue my flesh and enthrone the spirit. I am daily engaged in spiritual warfare, becoming more and more proficient in wielding and using the supernatural weapons of our warfare: faith, truth, high praises of God on my lips, and the two-edged sword in my hand.

Fourth, I cultivate the habit of casting my cares on Christ Jesus, and let Him carry my burden for me. He has paid for them already on the cross, so why should I bear them again? When I am hit by difficult issues of life that are too big for me, I back off and let Him take care of them. Casting these scary cares on Him releases me, and all fears are gone as I hear Him softly say, “Fear not, boy, only believe.” As I hear Him say those words, I sing this song:

*Only believe, only believe,
All things are possible, Only believe.
Only believe, only believe,
All things are possible, Only believe.*

*LORD, I believe, LORD, I believe,
All things are possible, LORD, I believe.
LORD, I believe, LORD, I believe,
All things are possible, LORD, I believe.*

How can we stop fear? If I am already under attack by the spirit of fear, my way out is to start praying in the spirit, letting my spirit pray with groaning too deep for words. I groan in the spirit and sing with my understanding also. Then I start pushing the word into my mind from my spirit to flush out the territory already captured by fear. I continue to do that until fear dissipates. It’s warfare, and I must recapture every domain in my mind, drive out every enemy occupation, and subdue

every thought to the obedience of Christ. For *“there is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love”* (1 John 4:18).

God does not want us to live in torment, or in bondage to fear. He does not want us to be victims of the devil’s bullying. Jesus came to set us free. Fear was a work of the enemy. *“For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil”* (1 John 3:8). Meditate on these three verses to overcome fear.

“Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand” (Isa 41:10). *“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go”* (Josh 1:9). *“And the Lord, He is the One who goes before you. He will be with you, He will not leave you nor forsake you; do not fear nor be dismayed”* (Deu 31:8).

Year of Jubilee

Aliberto was only nineteen when his mother died. His father had died a year earlier. Both, as far as he knew, lived lives of servitude. His father had owed a huge debt, which as years rolled by became increasingly difficult to pay off. He kept falling further and further behind until finally he had to surrender his property and himself and his wife as bondservants in payment of the debt. He worked for a hard taskmaster, and so his health began to fail, and soon afterwards, he died. All Aliberto had known since birth was a life of servitude. His entire family lived under bondage, and he continued the miserable life as a bond-slave after his father and mother died. One bright afternoon, as Aliberto was strolling through his master’s field, he heard an unexpected sound. It was the long blast of a trumpet. The trumpet continued to sound, becoming louder and louder, and soon seemingly coming from every direction. While he was wondering as to the meaning of this sound, he heard a great commotion. Then he saw a group of people running in a state of excitement, shouting and jubilating as they went.

He walked in their direction, stopped an old man along the road, and asked what was going on. The old man replied, “Why, son, haven’t you heard? This is the Year of Jubilee! Can’t you hear the sound of the

trumpet? You are free! I know you’re so young and have never seen a Jubilee before. It’s the time when all slaves are freed, all debts cancelled, and all properties restored to their original owners.” Aliberto stood transfixed on the side of the road, his eyes bulging out with astonishment and his mouth wide open with disbelief. “All slaves are free? I am free?” he exclaimed. “Yes, son,” the old man reaffirmed, “all slaves are free as of right now. You are free, go home! Return to your family.”

The trumpets blasted for hours, echoing across the mountains and valleys of the land, proclaiming the message of liberation. While the trumpets continued unrelentingly to proclaim their message, slaves said goodbye to their masters, properties were restored to their owners, and prisoners shouted for joy as they streamed out of prisons. It was the Day of Atonement in the Year of Jubilee.

“And thou shalt number seven Sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years; and the space of the seven Sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years.

Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land.

And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubilee unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family” (Lev. 25:8-10).

When Israel came into the land of Canaan, the land was divided among them by lot, according to their families and their tribes. Each family received a portion of the land, a lot given to them by God. If a man became poor and heavily in debt, he might be forced to sell a part or all of the land which God gave him. To ensure that the plot of land given to each family perpetually remained with them, God made a provision for the unfortunate. He arranged that any adverse circumstances that might cause a family to lose their land would not continue forever, but would only hold until the Year of Jubilee, when all land must return to its original owner. The powerful people, who had acquired land to land and field to field, had no permanent advantage over their less fortunate neighbors. The Year of Jubilee was the equalizer. However right the purchaser or the usurper of an estate might be, the trumpet sound on the Day of Atonement of the Year of Jubilee annulled the whole

transaction and returned the debtor to the property ownership position that either he or his ancestor had enjoyed.

Blessed be our God forever more. He's the help of the helpless, the father of the fatherless, the defender of the weak. He had made provision for the weak and the unfortunate.

A few specific things ordained by God happened in the Year of Jubilee. First, liberty was proclaimed for all inhabitants of Israel who were in bondage for any reason. It was a time of total release when every slave and every bondman in Israel was released and given a fresh start. Second, all debts were canceled. Every Israelite was released from his debts and financial obligations. Third, the people were to enjoy a full year of holy convocation, a time of joy and celebration. There was to be no labor during the year, no sowing or reaping, and no toil on their farms. The people were to live on what they had preserved from the previous year, and what they could gather that grew spontaneously of itself. Another feature of this year was that ancestral possessions were returned to those who had been compelled to sell them because of poverty or surrender them to creditors in payment for their debts. These were the major provisions of the Year of Jubilee.

In fulfillment of the Year of Jubilee, the Lord Jesus Christ blew the trumpet of Jubilee. He proclaimed our deliverance from bondage. This He proclaimed when He entered the synagogue in Nazareth.

“And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written,

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears” (Luk 4:16-21).

I have heard the trumpet of Jubilee
I am free. Free from all satanic bondage, depression, and oppression

Free to serve the living God.

Jesus has set me free, I am free indeed.

I have limitless ability because the Name of Jesus has been given to me
Satan has no power over me, has no right over anything concerning me
He's no longer my master, he cannot overcome me
Because I am in Christ, I can overcome Satan and his forces
I am of God, I am God's Child, I have overcome them
Because greater is He that is in me, than he that's in the world
I can boldly stand in God's Presence because of the Blood of Jesus
I stand delivered, liberated from all forms of bondage
I stand free, liberated by the Blood of Jesus Christ
I stand free from condemnation, free from guilt, and free from fear
I have become the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus

He has delivered me from fear

He has not given me the spirit of bondage to fear,

But He has given me the Spirit of love, of power, and of a sound mind

I am not afraid of devils, I can cast them out in His name

I am not afraid of sickness, by His stripes I am healed

I am not afraid of the dark, He is the Light of my life

I am not afraid of lack, He is my Jehovah-Jireh

I am not afraid of Satan, the Lord Jesus has given me power over him

I am not afraid of man, for God has said:

“I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me” (Heb 13:5,6).

Chapter 3

Following the Lamb

“And I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open the book, or to look thereon: and one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not; behold, the Lion that is of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath overcome to open the book and the seven seals thereof. And I saw in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain” (Rev 5:4-6).

Are we not talking about strength? Shouldn't the title of this chapter be “Following the Lion”? A lion is fast, strong, and ferocious. On the other hand, a lamb is a feeble, fragile, cute thing you have to be careful not to crush. Yes, the Lamb represents Christ Jesus and symbolizes gentleness, humility, innocence, and purity. It is the animal God sets apart for the ultimate sacrifice. Its nature is contrary to the other beasts that are wild and ferocious. It's even different from goats, which are often unruly, and swine, which are unsightly and filthy. Lambs are known for humility and gentleness. The Holy Spirit is revealing to us in the Book of Revelation that ultimate power and strength resides in the nature of the Lamb. Jesus Christ our Lord, the Lamb of God, did not attain His position by a show of strength or self-exaltation, but because, like a lamb, He humbled Himself and was obedient to God in all things. Therefore, God the Father exalted Him.

And so the apostle John, on the Isle of Patmos, looked and saw a scroll in the hand of the One who sat on the throne. The scroll had writings in it, and on the outside was sealed with seven seals. Then he saw a powerful angel speaking with a loud voice saying,

“Who is worthy to open the book, and to lose the seals thereof?”

No one in heaven, on earth, or under the earth could open the scroll or look inside. John, knowing the gravity of the vision, began to cry. He cried bitterly because no one was found who was qualified to open the scroll that contained our destiny. But as he was crying, one of the elders said to him, *“Stop crying! The Lion from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has won the victory. He can open the scroll and the seven seals on it.”* (Rev 5:5, GW).

But when John looked at the One who took the scroll to open the seal, what did he see? He saw a Lamb! He saw a lamb standing in the center near the throne with the four living creatures and the leaders. The lamb looked like he had been slaughtered. He had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent all over the world. He took the scroll from the right hand of the One who sat on the throne.

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

And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne. And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of saints.

*And they sung a new song, saying, **thou art worthy** to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;*

And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth” (Rev 5:6-10).

It was not the lion that overcame, it was the Lamb. Most people would easily believe that the Lion could overcome, but the Lamb prevailing

against such insurmountable opposition might be considered a big stretch. However, the Lamb overcame. Weakness and might, meekness and yieldedness, existed in the same being. *“He was abused and punished, but he didn’t open his mouth. He was led like a lamb to the slaughter. He was like a sheep that is silent when its wool is cut off. He didn’t open his mouth”* (Isa 53:7).

Meekness means being calm in the face of accusation, not standing up for personal rights, and not seeking self-vindication. As a lamb to the slaughter, He put up no resistance. He was totally submissive, yet the Lamb was given dominion and power.

There is an infinite power in the Lamb that cannot be accounted for on any natural ground, for the Lamb’s strength is spiritual. In the natural world, everything about a lamb speaks of weakness and helplessness. But there is something about this Lamb that is not natural: it is divine. All the strength and mighty forces of God’s heavenly universe are bound up with, centered in, and expressed through this weak-looking fragile Lamb.

My beloved brethren, the Spirit is teaching us that if we seek the grace of the Lord Jesus to suffer wrong rather than do wrong, to accept joyfully the spoiling of our goods, to restrain our natural wrath and reaction, and hand things over to the Lord, then we will see the Lord do things that none of our wrath and strength could have done. It is when, in meekness, we let the Lord defend us, when we let go and get out of the way, that we see the mighty hand of God come to our vindication and exaltation. That’s the way of the Lamb. *“Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously”* (I Pet 2:23).

This is not natural. No, human constitution is not that way. The philosophy of the world is totally contrary to the constitution of the Lamb. We know that quite well. But when God reconstitutes man according to the way of the Lamb, then the ground is prepared for the exercise of infinite power. See this little Lamb, led to the slaughter without resistance, opening not His mouth, and laying down His life for the offence of others. Yet the little Lamb overcame the world and all its unseen rulers in heavenly places.

“And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.”

*“These shall make war with the Lamb, and the **Lamb shall overcome them:** for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful”* (Rev 17:12-14).

Strong’s dictionary indicates that the original word translated “lamb” in the passage above and in several other passages in the Book of Revelation means “little lamb” or “lambkin” in the original. The same word is used twenty-nine times in the Book of Revelation. Behold, “a little Lamb” has prevailed. What a contradiction! The book did not say, “The lion has prevailed,” but that a lamb overcame. Nothing speaks more of weakness than a little lamb. You would not want to put much weight upon a little lamb or you’d crush the feeble thing. Though a symbol of weakness, the Lamb prevailed, manifesting the strength of a lion. In the seventeenth chapter of the Book of Revelation, John tells us about the most terrifying war that he saw while in the spirit, and how the Lamb prevailed in the greatest war ever waged.

In Christ the Lamb of God, we clearly see a complete reversal of the whole course of fallen human nature. This is human nature reconstituted to that of the Lamb, a changed nature. It is not human nature to lay down our lives, but when we’re changed to the Lamb, we can do it. Remember, the Scriptures say that *“we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.”* Laying down our lives for the brethren does not mean dying a martyr’s death. Laying down our lives for the gospel of Christ is not a single act but a lifelong act, an everyday act. The world will consider the way of the Lamb as weak and stupid. The world expects you to stand up for your rights and to fight for your ends. But the Lamb laid down His life. When He was reviled, He suffered it, He endured it, He answered nothing. *“As a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and as a sheep that before its shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth”* (Isa 53:7).

That takes some doing; that represents a strength that is not in you and in me naturally. We have another nature. Men might say that is weak. I say there is no strength like it. You do not know what strength is until you can stand right up against the whole nature of this world and its judgments and standards and take the opposite view and the opposite course.

It was not the lion that was seen on the throne opening the seal on the scroll: it was the Lamb. It was not the Lion of the Tribe of Judah that

John saw seated on the throne of God: it was the Lamb of God. It was the Lamb, the lowly, humble, innocent little Lamb, that stood on the throne of Almighty God. It was the Lamb that took the scroll from the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne and opened the seals thereof. The Lamb is worthy.

“And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands;

*Saying with a loud voice, **Worthy is the Lamb** that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.*

*And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto **him that sits upon the throne, and unto the Lamb** for ever and ever.*

And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever” (Rev 5:11-14).

*Worthy, worthy, is the Lamb
Worthy, worthy, is the Lamb
Worthy, worthy, is the Lamb; that was slain
Glory Hallelujah,
Glory Hallelujah,
Glory Hallelujah, Praise the LORD.*

The great multitude that John saw in the vision of the seventh chapter of the book of Revelation cried with a loud voice, saying, “Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.” They ascribed glory, honor, and power to God Almighty who was seated upon the throne and to the Lamb. And in the concluding chapters of the Book of Revelation, the Spirit referred to the throne of the Most High as “*the throne of God and of the Lamb.*”

*“And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of **the throne of God and of the Lamb.***

“In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

*“And there shall be no more curse: but **the throne of God and of the Lamb** shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him” (Rev 22:1-3).*

The Lamb of God that took away the sins of the world has been exalted and made to sit together with the Most High God on His throne. The throne of the Most High is referred to in the closing chapters of the Book of Revelation as “the throne of God and of the Lamb.” It’s not called the throne of God and of the lion, but of the Lamb. The humble and lowly Lamb that was sacrificed to take away the sins of the world overcame, and has been exalted and made to sit with the Almighty God on His throne.

My dear fellow Christian, our desire today must be to follow in His steps. To follow the Lamb of God. To grow in the nature of the Lamb of God so we can be **infinitely strong** and, like the Lamb, prevail in every battle. The way to divine and infinite strength is the “way of the Lamb.”

O Lord Jesus, teach us your ways, that we may know you. That we may know that the way up is down, and that the way to everlasting and infinite strength and power is the way of the Lamb and the cross. Help us, Lord God our Father; to You be the glory and honor and power, both now and forever, Amen.

Teach us, Lord God, to abide in Christ Jesus the Vine, so we can bear the fruit of the spirit. “*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law*” (Gal 5:22-23).

Salvation is free. “*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast*” (Eph 2:8, 9). The baptism in the Holy Spirit is free. Spiritual gifts are free. Prophecies, visions, healing, miracles, word of wisdom, word of knowledge, discerning of spirits—all are free. They are gifts freely given by a gracious God. But after these, your spiritual progress depends on your commitment to knowing God. Your progress depends on how far you follow the Lamb. If you follow the Lamb all the way, you will overcome. If you follow the Lamb all the way, you will become an overcomer like the Lamb, and will be made to sit with the Father on His throne, even as the Lamb overcame and is seated at the right hand of the Father on His throne. Overcoming is not a gift. There is a price to be paid! There is a **high calling** of God in Christ Jesus.

Brothers and sisters, let’s pursue the things of God with passion, and seek Him with all our hearts, with all our souls, and with all our strength. Let

us press forward toward the goal to win the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. *“That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.*

“I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you” (Phil 3:10-11, 14-15).

Let's Follow the Lamb

Thousands of lambs gave their lives on the altar as sacrifices in the worship of God under Judaism. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob sacrificed animals to God as part of their worship. These innocent animals lived to die. They were brought to the priest to be offered as sacrifices to atone for the sins of the offerer. They were usually a year old or under.

“And if he bring a lamb for a sin offering, he shall bring it a female without blemish. And he shall lay his hand upon the head of the sin offering, and slay it for a sin offering in the place where they kill the burnt offering.

“And the priest shall take of the blood of the sin offering with his finger, and put it upon the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and shall pour out all the blood thereof at the bottom of the altar: And he shall take away all the fat thereof, as the fat of the lamb is taken away from the sacrifice of the peace offerings; and the priest shall burn them upon the altar, according to the offerings made by fire unto the LORD: and the priest shall make an atonement for his sin that he hath committed, and it shall be forgiven him” (Lev 4:32-35).

The lamb for sacrifice is first brought to the priests at the gate of the tabernacle of the congregation. There the lamb is examined, identified with the sins of the offerer, and then killed. The blood of the lamb makes atonement for the sins of the offerer. This is symbolic of the suffering of the Lamb of God who took away our sins. His blood made atonement for you and me.

“Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach” (Heb 13:12, 13).

We therefore follow the Lamb through to the east gate of the outer court of the tabernacle. At the gate we see Christ; He is the Gate, the Door to the Tabernacle of God. It's through Him we gain into the presence of God. *“Jesus said, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me”* (John 14:6). There was only one gate, the east gate, leading into the tabernacle of the congregation. This speaks of the one way of access to God, and that is through Jesus Christ His Son. *“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved”* (Acts 4:12).

During the season of Passover, innocent lambs were led by Jewish worshippers toward the gate of the tabernacle without resisting. They were led to the altar, where they were slaughtered and offered up as a sacrifice for the sins of the Jewish family that owned them. Submissive, innocent, pure, and without blemish, these lambs are types of the true Lamb of God who took away the sins of the world. Isaiah said: *“He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth”* (Isa 53:7). The lambs for sacrifice were brought to the brazen altar in the outer court of the tabernacle. And this was fulfilled in Jesus Christ the Lamb of God. He was arrested, brought before Pilate, examined with brutal lashes, led to Golgota carrying His own cross, laid on the wooden instrument of death, and then crucified. Through all these, He did not resist or defend Himself. Let us follow Him, the Lamb of God, to Golgota, bearing His reproach.

His suffering started the night before in the Garden of Gethsemane, where He was sweating blood. Then He had been dragged and slapped by the soldiers, was made to walk back and forth from Herod's court to Pilate's, and was given the thirty-nine brutal lashes that Roman soldiers normally gave a condemned criminal before crucifixion. This treatment was enough to kill a normal man. But after all these, He was made to carry His cross, in shame, walking in the midst of a mob mocking and spitting on His face as He dragged his already worn-out and lacerated body through the streets of Jerusalem. The women that saw Him were all crying, but the

mob kept mocking Him. His body must have become totally weak, and they needed someone to help Him carry the cross to the top of the *“hill far away.”*

“Dear Lord, I wish I was there to carry the cross
I wish I was the lucky one compelled from the road-side to bear cross
Don’t you know how blessed you are? Simon from Cyrene
How enviable you lot, It’s inestimable
What blessedness, O what joy is yours
That you, though compelled, were opportune to help Him
And to bear His cross for Him, to the place of the Skull
But now, O’ Lord, help me today
To please you in all things, and to obey you
And though I was not there like Simon the Cyrenian
Something I can do, even this that you commanded
To deny myself, take up my cross, and follow You”.

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“And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head. And after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify him.

And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name: him they compelled to bear his cross. And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull, They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink.

And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots” (Matt 27:30-35).

Passing through the gate and entering the courtyard, the first piece of furniture in front of us, and also the largest piece of furniture in the tabernacle, is the brazen altar. The Hebrew word translated as “altar” in our Bibles is *“mizbrech”* meaning *“slaughter place,”* and that exactly is what the brazen altar was. It was at the entrance of the tabernacle courtyard. At this altar, animals were slaughtered and their blood put on the horns of the altar. This massive altar at the entrance of the outer court was used more often than any other furniture of the tabernacle.

The high priest would go into the Holy of Holies only once a year on the Day of Atonement; the priests would go into the Holy Place each morning and evening for their ministry; but the people of Israel would come to the brazen altar all the time to offer sacrifices of lambs, goats, and bullocks for their sins as individuals and for their families. The brazen altar foreshadowed the cross of Jesus Christ.

The whole idea of slaughter, blood, sacrifice, or the cross sounds morbid and gruesome, because modern society wants a Christianity that does not demand a sacrifice. But they forget that Christianity was born by sacrifice. The Lamb of God was sacrificed for humanity. His blood was shed and He died a gruesome death on a Roman cross. That’s what gave birth to Christianity. Will you follow the Lamb to the altar?

Will you lay down your life at the altar? Will you take up your cross and follow Him? Will you stop being in charge of your life and lay it down on the altar? Jesus said: *“Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel’s, the same shall save it. For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”* (Mark 8:34-37).

He’s not asking you to nail yourself to a physical cross or inflict excruciating pain on yourself in order to be His disciple. He’s demanding that you present your life as a living sacrifice on the altar. A sacrifice laid on the altar like Isaac is totally submissive to the dealing of God. He’s asking us to offer our bodies as living sacrifices, willingly surrendered unto God to do His will in us and through us. Will you follow the Lamb to the altar? Will you present your body as a living sacrifice and lie there on the altar in total and ultimate surrender?

Follow the Lamb to the Place of Death

The apostle gave a succinct narration of the plight of the children of Israel who came out of Egypt in the first Epistle to the Corinthians. *“Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea. And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed*

them: and that Rock was Christ. But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness” (1 Cor 10:1, 6).

That generation that came out of Egypt with Moses could not enter into the land of promise. God raised up a new generation under a new leadership to enter the land. But before they could move forward to enter the land He gave them, they must cross Jordan. Before they could partake of the new life in the land of Canaan, they must die. They must cross Jordan before stepping into their inheritance on the side of Jericho.

God gave them detailed instructions concerning the crossing of the Jordan in preparation for the conquest of the land of Canaan. They were to carry twelve stones from the wilderness side with them before stepping into the Jordan. The priests carrying the Ark of the Covenant were to be in front and to dip their feet into the waters of the Jordan, and as they did the waters would be swept back so the people could cross over on dry land.

“Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth passeth over before you into Jordan. Now therefore take you twelve men out of the tribes of Israel, out of every tribe a man.

*And it shall come to pass, as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests that bear **the ark of the LORD**, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of Jordan, that the waters of Jordan shall be cut off from the waters that come down from above; and they shall stand upon an heap. And it came to pass, when the people removed from their tents, to pass over Jordan, and the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people;*

And as they that bare the ark were come unto Jordan, and the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the brim of the water, (for Jordan overfloweth all his banks all the time of harvest,)

That the waters which came down from above stood and rose up upon an heap very far from the city Adam, that is beside Zaretan: and those that came down toward the sea of the plain, even the salt sea, failed, and were cut off: and the people passed over right against Jericho.

And the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan, and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground, until all the people were passed clean over Jordan” (Josh 3:11-15).

Before stepping into the Jordan, Joshua was commanded by God to take twelve stones from the wilderness side and carry these into the river. *“And Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests which bare the ark of the covenant stood: and they are there unto this day. For the priests which bare the ark stood in the midst of Jordan, until every thing was finished that the LORD commanded Joshua to speak unto the people, according to all that Moses commanded Joshua: and the people hastened and passed over” (Josh 4:10).* Joshua erected the twelve stones on the bottom of the Jordan as a pillar.

After all Israel had crossed the Jordan, God told Joshua to command the priests to come up. *“And it came to pass, when the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD were come up out of the midst of Jordan, and the soles of the priests’ feet were lifted up unto the dry land, that the waters of Jordan returned unto their place, and flowed over all his banks, as they did before” (Josh 4:18).*

Likewise, *“the children of Israel did so as Joshua commanded, and took up twelve stones out of the midst of Jordan, as the LORD spake unto Joshua, according to the number of the tribes of the children of Israel, and carried them over with them unto the place where they lodged, and laid them down there” (Josh 4:9).* *“And those twelve stones, which they took out of Jordan, did Joshua pitch in Gilgal” (Josh 4:20).*

Here we have a picture of Israel as a nation being identified with Christ in His death and resurrection.

“In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ” (Col 2:11).

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

This is what baptism represents. It is a symbol of death and burial with Christ, and resurrection with Him. It symbolizes that we died with Christ, we were buried with Him, and we were raised up with Him to newness of life. Therefore the sixth chapter of Romans states that we were “buried with Christ by baptism,” because it signifies that God has laid our old life in His grave. But it didn’t end there. Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, and we were raised together with Him, and are therefore to live in newness of life.

When I was immersed in water and my body was under it, it was the outward representation of my old man being buried with Christ in His grave. It indicates that God has buried the old man of sin out of his sight.

And when I am raised out of the water of baptism, it is the sign that I have risen in Christ, and in Him have a new incorruptible life which the grave can no longer take away.

But there's so much more to this. Christ died. He was buried and was in the grave. But on the third day we heard the good news from the angel at His grave site. "He is not here, He is risen!" And even more good news is that *"as He is, so are we in this world"* (1 John 4:17). We are not of the world, even as He is not of the world. We are part of Him. He is the head; we are members of His body. Christ and us united make one complete body. We are no more twain, but one in God's sight. We are members of His body, flesh of His flesh, bones of His bones. Just as the natural body (or the head) is not complete without all its members, so also is Christ. I repeat it: as the body is not perfect without each and all its members, so Christ is not complete alone. In a word, the church and Christ, in God's estimation, *"are not twain, but one flesh"* (see Eph 5:30, 32). Therefore the apostle writes, in the thirty-seventh verse of the same chapter, *"Ye are the body of Christ . . . and no one ever yet hated his own body, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church; for we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder."*

We are members of His body, joint heirs with Him. Therefore the apostle goes on, *"Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him; knowing that Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him; for in that He died, He died unto sin once, and in that He liveth, He liveth unto God: likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord: neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin; but yield yourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace."* For baptism is the profession of the death of the flesh, and how can a dead man live? And if a dead man cannot live, he therefore cannot transgress against the law. A dead man is free from the law.

"Know ye not that so many of us as have been baptized into Jesus Christ have been baptized into his death: therefore we have been buried with Him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we should walk in newness of life." In other words, at our baptism we signify

that, having life in Christ, we have laid down the life of Adam in the grave of Christ, and that henceforth *"as Christ was raised, even so we should walk in newness of life."* For, as he goes on, *"if we had been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection; knowing that our old man hath been crucified with Him, that the body of sin (that is the sinful body) might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin."*

The old covenant was an earthly thing, composed of the natural seed of Abraham; and to be born in Abraham's family entitled a man to all the privileges of that dispensation; but the New Testament church is heavenly. She's composed of the spiritual seed of Abraham. As the Scripture says, *"If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed,"* and to be "born of God" entitles a man to all the privileges of this dispensation of grace. In the old dispensation God was dealing with man in the flesh, and it concerned *"meats and drinks, divers washings, carnal ordinances, and a worldly sanctuary"* (Heb 9:10). God allowed and ordained these just to prove to man that the flesh could never be improved, and that *"the flesh profiteth nothing"* (John 6:63; 3:6). All that was then attempted was *"the purifying of the flesh."*

But now, under the new covenant, the church is a heavenly thing, *"begotten again by the resurrection of Christ"* (1 Pet 1:3); and as such is herself *"risen with Christ"* (Col 3:1) into a new kingdom. And the *"kingdom of God is not meat and drink,"* as it once was in the old covenant (Rom 14:17), but a *"new creation"* (2 Cor 5:17; Gal 6:15); and as in the old covenant that which is *"born of the flesh is flesh,"* so is it equally true in the new, that *"that which is born of the Spirit is spirit"* (John 3:6).

Under the old dispensation, circumcision was the outward ordinance of admission into the covenant with God, and this ordinance, true to the purpose of this dispensation, typified *"the putting away of the filth of the flesh"* (1 Pet 3:21); for the attempt was still to improve the flesh, *"to sanctify to the purifying of the flesh"* (Heb 9:13).

Under the New Testament, baptism is the outward show of what already took place in the Spirit realm at new birth. It is an emblem of *"the death of the flesh"* (Rom 6:6, 11). "Putting away the filth of the flesh" is not enough now, for it has been already proved that "flesh is flesh," and flesh cannot please God however clean it is. For *"all flesh is grass"* (1 Pet 1:24), and that *"in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing"* (Rom 7:18). In

Christ, therefore, God has brought in the new creation. The flesh, the old man, has been given up as hopelessly bad; and what God has done with it is to put it into Christ's grave. Therefore, in the Epistle to the Colossians, we read, "*Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry*" (Col 3:5).

The admonition is to "mortify," not "purify," your members which are upon the earth. Mortify means "put to death." We are not told to purify or put away the filth of the flesh, but to totally put the flesh to death as we have been buried with Christ. We are to lead the flesh to the cross and nail it to the cross to die with Christ. We are to lead the flesh to Jordan, and leave it buried there with the twelve stones at the bottom of the river of death. And then, as Christ was raised from the dead, so we are raised with Him and should walk in newness of life. We should, as a heavenly people, walk a heavenly walk. For we are partakers of the heavenly calling, whose conversation is in heaven, and whose life is hidden with Christ in God (Heb 3:1; Phil 3:20; Col 3:3).

Follow the Lamb to the Brazen Laver

We discussed the brazen altar above as the massive piece of tabernacle furniture on which sacrifices were offered unto God by the priests before they could enter any further into the court. Just beyond the brazen altar was the brazen laver. This was the only other article of furniture in the outer court. The laver was a brass tub on a stand, constructed out of brazen mirrors, and served as the place for the priests to wash their hands and feet with water and check themselves in its reflective mirrors before proceeding to the Holy Place.

The Lamb had been slaughtered at the altar, but that was not the end of the Lamb. For though it had been killed, it was in a way still alive, for its blood still spoke, and the life of every living creature in its blood. The "*blood of the Lamb speaketh better things than the blood of Abel . . . For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul*" (Lev 17:11). The priests would collect the blood and carry it with them to the Holy Place, to sprinkle every item in the Holy Place with it. But on the way to

the Holy Place, they must wash their hands and feet every time they passed by the laver, which must be several times a day. Then the priests would go into the Holy Place with the blood, which was a shadow of the reality fulfilled when the Lamb of God was sacrificed for us.

Let us therefore follow the Lamb as its blood passes through the laver on its way to the Holy Place. Let us allow the Word to cleanse us from all the daily uncleanness that attaches itself to us as we walk and work in the dusty outer court.

"Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.

It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.

For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:

Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others" (Heb 9:21-25).

Indeed, there are many children of God who have been born again or experienced what God symbolizes at the brazen altar, and have made a quality decision to move forward to the realm of total submission and cleansing of their hands and feet. These ones have chosen to yield to Jesus Christ as Lord of their lives. They allow the Word of God to purify and separate them for the use of the Master. These ones have accepted Jesus the Lamb of God that died for them at the brazen altar, and have decided to yield to Him as Lord at the brazen laver. And it is only those who have experienced the dealings of the Lord at the brazen laver that will be able to proceed into the Holy Place. Let's all meditate on these words.

The Holy Place is the place of ministry. Many today claim to be in the ministry of Jesus Christ, but never experience the laver and know nothing about yielding to Christ as Lord. Yes, they may have their own ministries, with a large following, but that is just it, their own ministry, and not the Holy Place. Until one has entered the Holy Place through the five pillars, one cannot enter into the place of ministry.

Follow the Lamb to the Holy Place

The Jewish people were only allowed to enter the outer court where sacrifices were offered on their behalf at the brazen altar. They could go no further. The priests acted as their representatives before God in the Holy Place. After washing with the water of the laver, they entered the Holy Place through the five pillars. This compartment took up about two-thirds of the entire space of the sanctuary, though it had only three pieces of furniture in it. As you entered the Holy Place, on the right was the table of shewbread, on the left was the golden lamp stand, and straight ahead was the golden altar of incense. While all elements in the outer court were made of bronze, all the articles in the Holy Place were made of gold or covered with gold.

On the table of shewbread were twelve flat cakes, which were there for the priests to eat. They are symbolic of Christ, who is our Bread of Life. The golden lamp stand, made of beaten pure gold, had a central stem and three branches on either side. This was the source of light in the Holy Place, with all seven lamps burning brightly. This represents Christ, who is the Light of the world, the light that lightens every man that comes into the world. The altar of incense was made of acacia wood covered with gold, and with it was a golden censer used to carry burning incense into the Holy of Holies. This is a symbol of our spiritual worship and prayer as the royal priesthood. On this altar the priests burned sweet-smelling incense every morning and evening, and the smoke of the incense rose up before God as a sweet-smelling savor.

In this dispensation of the new creation in Christ Jesus, nothing prevents us from going all the way. By the blood of Jesus, we can enter into the sanctuary and partake of the ministry in the Holy Place. Christ has become our living bread. We partake of the flesh and of the blood of the son of man, and therefore we have life in us. And since our High Priest has gone all the way, into the Holiest of All, with the blood of the Lamb of God, we have a standing invitation to come into the Holy of Holies.

“Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an 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 profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised”
(Heb 10:19-23)

Let us follow the Lamb of God, who also is our High Priest, all the way through the veil into the Holiest of All. There we experience the Presence of the Most High God. The Holy of Holies is the sacred place where the Presence of God resides. Let us, by the blood of Jesus, go into the Presence of God and worship Him. *“Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need”* (Heb 4:16).

But you and I have a quality decision to make, and a part to play to make this happen. May the Lord God Almighty, our compassionate and mighty High Priest, and the Spirit of Grace and Truth, help us in this endeavor.

We have answered the question, “Whose job is it to subdue the enemies under Christ’s feet?” We concluded that the company referred to as the “rod of His strength,” also known as the “scepter of His strength,” which Isaiah the prophet described in the eleventh chapter of his prophecy as the “branch out of the stem of Jesse,” has the great assignment of subduing the enemies of Christ. This company of overcomers will impose the rule and dominion of Christ over principalities and powers, and the host of wickedness in heavenly places.

Who Is the Branch?

But who is the “branch”? Who is the “rod of His strength” or the “scepter of His strength”? We know what the Scripture said they will do, but who are they? We also know that they will come out of Zion, the city of the living God.

We can derive their identity from what our Lord Jesus said, and confirm it from the interpretation of the prophecy of Isaiah. The Lord said, *“I am the Vine.”* So we know He is not the branch. The vine holds the branches. The vine gives life to the branches. He even went ahead and said to His disciples, *“Ye are the branches.”* He was referring to the members of His body as the branches. So He, Christ Jesus, is the Vine, and the members of His body are the branches. Scripture normally refers to the body of

Christ as a corporate body, as opposed to talking about individuals. So, the church is the aggregation of all the multitudes of people from every tribe and tongue who have been born of the Spirit and have become children of God. These all together form the Body of Christ. This company of people also collectively form the “branch,” or specifically, contain the “branch.” For the “branch” indeed is a church within a church and a city within a city.

Notice, my dear fellow pilgrim, that in the letter our Lord Jesus sent to the seven churches, the promises were not made to every member of the churches. The promises were made to a people within the congregation, to the church within the church. The promises were indeed made to “him that overcometh.” And the promises were punctuated by the admonition “*He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches*” (Rev 3:6).

This rod of His strength or scepter of His strength is the company of His anointed ones at the end-time. This is the overcomers’ company from Mount Zion. They are His mighty army, made up of His elite soldiers. They are His Gideon’s army, marching down from Mount Zion to subdue His enemies and make them His footstool.

Mount Zion is the dwelling place of the Most High God, and the hometown of these overcomers. For “*ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect*” (Heb 12:23).

Mount Zion, God’s habitation, is also His palace, the seat of His throne. These anointed ones, these overcomers, are part of that general assembly and the church of the firstborn that are on Mount Zion. They have kingly power and authority, inherited from the Chief Overcomer, to subjugate the enemies and bring all things under the rule of our God and King.

The manifestation of this overcomers’ company is therefore God’s ultimate plan for the end of the age. This glorious hope lies before us. It is imminent. It is what we are eagerly waiting for. And not only we, but also the beasts and all cattle, creeping things and flying fowl, together

with every living thing that moves, are looking forward to this momentous occasion. In fact, the whole of creation, living and nonliving, down to the elemental constituents of the earth, is longing, groaning, and travailing in pain throughout these night hours. They are all waiting for the day to break, longing for the manifestation of the sons of God. And in the dawn of their kingdom, justice and equity will spread like a mantle over the entire world; “*For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters covers the seas*” (Hab 2:14). And in the days of these kings “*shall the God of heaven establish a kingdom which shall never be destroyed.*” This shall surely come to pass speedily, for the “*prophecy is certain, and the interpretation thereof, is sure*” (Dan 2).

Finally, My Brethren, Be Strong in the Lord

“*And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death*” (Rev 12:11). In this great conflict that rages between us and the forces of evil, we must understand the pattern of warfare that God has set up in His word for ultimate triumph. We must first know for sure that the battle is the Lord’s and not ours. Failing to realize this will only lead to prolonged frustration and perplexity as we struggle to stop the wave of iniquity that is breaking in upon us, the people of God.

The church of Jesus Christ has been on the defensive for too long. In fact, victory for God’s people has generally been seen from a negative standpoint. Victory has always been seen as knowing how to ward off the attack of the enemy, or to get healed, or recover from some spiritual setback. The church has understood victory to mean escaping the onslaught of the enemy.

But the hour is at hand when the Lord God of Hosts, the Man of War, and the Lord of the Armies will mobilize His forces for a decisive onslaught on the adversary. And the gates of hell shall not prevail against the onslaught of the church. When our Lord Jesus died on the cross, “*He spoilt principalities and powers, and made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it*” (Col 2:15). But in this end-time battle, God will execute the sentence passed at the cross, and crush the hosts of evil under our feet. “*And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen*” (Rom 16:20).

The central message of this book to us, the church, is to awake and put on strength. God desires to have supernatural children. He hasn't given birth to weaklings. His children are conquerors. They are world overcomers. *"Who is he that overcomes the world, but he that is born of God; and this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith."* The Lord Jesus said: *"When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils"* (Luke 11:21, 22).

In the statement made by our Lord above, you would notice there are two strong men. The Lord said that when a strong man, fully armed, guards his palace, his property is safe, until a stronger man shows up and defeats him. The stronger man does three things:

1. Attacks and overpowers the strong man.
2. Takes away his armor. Disarms and takes away all the weapons which the strong man trusts in.
3. Divides the loot of the strong man; takes all the strong man's possessions from him and walks away with them.

Who is the armed strong man guarding his mansion where he keeps his loot? Correct! The Lord is referring to the devil and his host here as the strong man. And who is the stronger "strong man" that showed up?

Yes! That is you and me, and every born-again, Bible-believing, Holy-Ghost-filled child of God who knows their position of authority in Christ Jesus. Of course, the Lord Jesus Christ, our Forerunner, did this first when He spoilt principalities and powers, and dispossessed them of all authority and powers. Then He gave the keys to the church. We are stronger and more than conquerors through His Name. *"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given unto me,"* Jesus said; then He turned to His disciples and us and said, *"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen"* (Mat 28:19, 20).

Just as there are two strong men in the Lord's message above, there are two armors. There is the armor of the strong man, and also the armor

of the stronger man. The armor of God is represented by the armor of the stronger man, who overpowers the strong man and takes his prized possessions. The apostle admonishes us to put on the whole armor of God. The Lord Jesus Christ triumphed over Satan at the cross and in the grave. There He overpowered the devil and spoilt his goods. He robbed Satan of his powers and his authority. *"And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it"* (Col 2:15). Jesus took away Satan's armor from him and totally disarmed him as far as we, God's children, are concerned. Then He was raised from the dead and became Lord of all, and gave us His word and the authority to use His Name to overpower the enemy. He gave us supernatural armor to fight and totally dismantle satanic strongholds. Apostle Paul states:

*"Finally, my brethren, **be strong in the Lord**, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*

"Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand" (Eph 6:10-13).

"(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)

"Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled" (2 Cor 10:4-6).

“Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up: Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruning-hooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong” (Joel 3:9, 10).