

Chapter 1

God's Liberty Plan

*"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth". **Genesis 1:1***

*"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." **Colossians 1:6-17.***

God = everything.

*"But who is able to build him an house, seeing the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain him?" **2 Chronicles 2:5.***

*"All nations before Him are as nothing, and they are counted to Him less than nothing, and vanity." **Isaiah 40:17.***

Man = nothing

*"For if a man thinketh himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself." **Galatians 6:3.***

*"And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." **Genesis 2:7.***

What was man before God breathed the breath of life into him? Nothing, a lump of dirt, dust.

What is a lump of dirt? Nothing, valueless. Man, therefore, is nothing.

What is the difference between this dust and that dust? God's breath!

*"For He knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust." **Psalms 103:14.***

But when God breathed into the nostrils of man, who was nothing, he became alive. he became something, a living soul.

God + man = something. Therefore, it takes God (Everything) + dust (nothing) = man (something) Christ, God's New Man.

In the original creation, it takes "God who is everything to make man who was nothing, into something, but man was not content to remain so. When man became something through Christ, his Creator, he was deceived by the serpent, Satan, into thinking he was everything.

"For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." **Genesis 3:5.**

But man became nothing as at the first.

"In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." **Genesis 3:19.**

Man, in separating himself from God, became nothing again. To redeem man from the fall, God joined himself to man, making one new man, the God-Man, Jesus Christ. Genesis 3:15; Ephesians 2:15; Ephesians 4:24. But God always had a plan to make man, nothing, something, even more than what he was when first created.

"Angels on probation had been deceived by Satan, and had been led on by him in the great rebellion in heaven against Christ. They failed to endure the test brought to bear upon them, and they fell. Adam was then created in the image of God and placed upon probation. He had a perfectly developed organism. All his faculties were harmonious. In all his emotions, words, and actions, there was a perfect conformity to the will of his Maker. After God had made every provision for the happiness of man and had supplied his every want, He tested his loyalty. If the holy pair should be obedient, the race would, after a time, be made equal to the angels." **Confrontation 18.2.**

The Elevation

After man fell, God put into operation the plan of redemption, in Christ, who would become the God-Man to elevate man to a position even higher than the angels who never sinned, i.e., joint-heirship with Christ.

*“And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.” **Romans 8:17.***

“Great as is the shame and degradation through sin, even greater will be the honor and exaltation through redeeming love. To human beings striving for conformity to the divine image, there is imparted an outlay of heaven’s treasure, an excellency of power, that will place them higher than even the angels who have never fallen.”
Christ Object Lessons 162.4.

What an elevation!

To become the something as God designed, man, because of sin, must learn by experience what it takes to be the something in character like the God-Man. This experience prepares him to live in the presence of a Holy God and fellowship with the angels of heaven throughout eternity. This is achieved by overcoming every test God gives and the temptations that the enemy of God and man throws at him, as he did at the God-Man. By continual surrender and victory over every temptation and defect of character, this is achieved through the indwelling Christ, by the Holy Spirit, in latter rain proportion in the end time.

A few lines of the poem “A Psalm of Life” by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow convey the sentiment that God’s plan for man does not end in the grave.

Tell me not, in mournful numbers,

Life is but an empty dream!

For the soul is dead that slumbers,

And things are not what they seem.

Life is real! Life is earnest!

And the grave is not its goal;

Dust thou art, to dust returnest,

Was not spoken of the soul.

While Wordsworth's words speak of the grave, not being man's end, it is the Bible that clearly tells us what man's end is:

"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." **Revelation 3:21.**

What a destiny! Reigning with Christ as kings.

"And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth."
Revelation 5:10.

Such sentiments should cause us to blush with shame in our desire for self-exaltation when we see what it takes to elevate humanity to the highest positions creatures can attain unto in the universe, the life of the dear Son of Yahweh.

Questions for discussion

God is everything, has everything, knows everything, and needs nothing. In His infinite wisdom and foreknowledge, He knew that a rebellion would occur.

1. Was it a calculated plan in making intelligent creatures and giving them free will?
2. If God = Everything; Man = Nothing; Who = Something? Give Biblical evidence.

Chapter 2

The Basis of Freedom

Yahweh is the God of liberty, and everyone who receives His Son is released from bondage and enters the glorious freedom of the children of God, just as it was before sin entered the universe. This principle was proclaimed by the Son of God Himself.

*“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to... preach deliverance to the captives, and ... to set at liberty them that are bruised.” **Luke 4:18.***

He came into the world specifically to set men free and to restore in their hearts the true principle of liberty, which is the heart of the character of God.

This is liberty driven by the agape love that resides in the heart of the Father, a love too honorable to allow self, its enemy, to thrive or to serve as a cover for evil. The Spirit of God enlightens it, and those who possess it are made free from all men and softened by its love. This is true freedom—the freedom Christ gives to everyone who believes in Him, for "whom the Son makes free is free indeed." This freedom is rooted in the heart of the Father in the two key principles that uphold everything in the universe: love and freedom.

According to the dictionary, “liberty is freedom, the power or right to act, speak, or think as one wants without hindrance or restraint.” It is the one aspiration shared by all humanity. People risk their lives to be free from bondage, even willing to endure death to secure this boon. This quest for freedom is also evident in the lower creation, as seen in animals that seek to escape when confined. Such is the quest for physical freedom. But humanity has been endowed since creation with a freedom beyond the physical. This freedom is the delight in obeying God’s Ten Commandments, the moral law, which teaches love and respect for God and our fellowman. This is the only safeguard of liberty.

At man’s creation, God made him free to exercise dominion over the earth, its associated heavens, and all things therein.

*“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.” **Genesis 1:26-28.***

Under the temptation of unbelief in God and belief in Satan’s lies, man fell and so lost his freedom. This loss of freedom led to the loss of dominion over the lower creation. Having lost his freedom, he could no longer treat the lower creation with the same authority, care, and compassion as before. The lower creation rebelled against him and no longer freely submitted to him.

But God, who is full of compassion and tender mercies, was moved to save man and restore to him the freedom he forfeited when he gave heed to Satan’s lies. The plan devised in eternity, before the world’s foundation (Ephesians 1:4), which involved the cross and death of God’s Son, was immediately put into action, and man was once more made free, free to choose God’s way or even to return to bondage under Satan.

*“But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honor, and didst set him over the works of thy hands: Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for man.” **Hebrews 2:6-9.***

The freedom that the cross and death of Christ restored to Adam and all humanity is more than mere physical freedom. It is freedom of soul, freedom of thought, and freedom of action. God covenanted this when He gave His only begotten Son to rescue humanity and set us free.

*“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.” **John 3:16-17.***

In this freedom, there is not a trace of coercion or self. Man is not only given the ability to obey God’s law, the law of liberty that he broke, but also the mind that delights in obeying it.

*“If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well ... So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.” **James 2:8, 12.***

*“I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.” **Psalms 40:8.***

This freedom makes the soul as free as a bird soaring above the clouds and mountain-tops. This is the liberty that all those who have the mind of Christ abiding in them possess, and it does not have to be watched. This is the freedom that both the slave master and the slave, who are both slaves to sin, the greatest slavery, are given in Christ and experience when believed and received.

It is only after men are freed from the bondage of sin and embrace the glorious liberty of the gospel, standing firm in it through the Holy Spirit, that they can reflect the righteousness of God, Christ Jesus.

*“But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. **1 Corinthians 1:30.***

Only then can the practical aspects of Christianity—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.” **Galatians 5:21-22.***

And not the works of the flesh.

*“Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like.” **Galatians 5:19-21.***

Questions for discussion

1. Would you say that the dictionary definition of liberty/freedom, which is the power or right to act, speak, or think as one wants without hindrance or restraint, is the same as the liberty one has in Christ?
2. If your answer is no to the above question, what would you say is the Bible's definition of liberty/freedom? Please write your definition of the Bible's liberty.

Chapter 3

Practical Illustrations of Liberty

The greatest desire of the human spirit is of liberty. It is the one aspiration shared by all humanity. People risk their lives, at great cost, to be free from bondage, even willing to endure death to secure this boon. This quest for freedom is also evident in the lower creation. It is seen in animals that seek to escape when confined. Such is the quest for physical freedom. But humanity has been endowed since its creation with a freedom beyond the physical. This freedom is the delight in obeying God's Ten Commandments, moral law, which teaches love and respect for God and our fellowman. This is the only safeguard of liberty.

The miracles Christ performed while He walked among men were practical illustrations of His work of liberty, "to preach deliverance to the captives" and "to set at liberty them that are bruised."

*"And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. And, behold, there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity for eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift herself. And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity. And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God." **Luke 13:10-13.***

In this miracle, unlike others, the woman did not explicitly ask for deliverance, but the compassionate Saviour, filled with the Holy Spirit, read her longing and responded to it.

The hypocrisy of the ruler of the synagogue and his fellows is revealed when Jesus referred to watering animals on the Sabbath day.

"And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the Sabbath day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the Sabbath day. The Lord then answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his

ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day? Verse 14-16.

Two points stand out regarding the liberty of the gospel in this scenario, in which the woman was bound by Satan and had no strength, being infirm, which describes our condition, like hers, before we met Christ. This is verily the experience of the man before he met Christ, as illustrated in Romans 7:24-25, contrasted with the deliverance in Romans 8 when justified by faith in Christ.

1. Like her, we were bound by Satan, ‘taken captive at his will.’ John 8:34; 1 John 3:8; Proverbs 5:22. Sin is the cord with which Satan binds us.
2. We have a spirit of infirmity and cannot free ourselves from the chains that bind us. It was when we were “without strength that Christ died for us” Rom. 5:6. What is your spirit of infirmity by which you are bound, which the chains of sin keep you bound, so you cannot lift yourself? It is the sin that so easily besets? Is it hypocrisy, like the rule of the synagogue?

To be without strength is the same as being infirm. The woman was without strength and also bowed down for eighteen years. The (Amplified Bible) AMP says, “*She was bent double and could not straighten up at all.*” This paints a picture of a person with severe arthritis in the back, the waist, or the hips who cannot stand erect, symbolic of spiritual infirmity.

Many have been bound and bent double by Satan for more than eighteen years. But Christ says to such today, “My son, my daughter, thou art loosed from thine infirmity.” Did that woman believe she had a spirit of infirmity and was loosed from it by the words of Christ? Yes. Do you believe that having a spirit of infirmity, you are loosed from it by the words of Christ? If you believe these words of Christ are meant for you, you are loosed from whatever infirmity besets you, whether spiritual or physical; then cease the wrong course you were pursuing, lest a worse spiritual malady or physical condition afflict you.

What did Christ do for those bound in sin by Satan and unable to lift themselves? “

“Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.” Matthew 8:17.

Christ became all that we are so that we may become all that He is, free. What a reversal! He was born under the law to redeem those under the law, i.e., under the condemnation of the law.

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

Further, Christ has delivered us from the curse, being made a curse for us.

“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.” Galatians 3:13.

Knowing no sin, He was made to be sin for us.

“To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” 2 Corinthians 5:19-21.

All this He did for humanity when we were yet rebels and infirm, without strength. What love is this! Though we cannot comprehend its magnitude or how it was done, lingering a little longer gives us insight into why He did.

In the experience of the woman with the infirmity who could not raise herself, we get a glimpse of why He did all of this for us. He did it for the woman so that she might walk in liberty from her infirmity, and not remain as she was at first. But will we let Him free us, as He did the woman, from her infirmities? Yes, we are infirm and cannot help ourselves. He has done it, that, like the infirm woman, we may be free and not again to be bowed down with our infirmities.

Because of the weakness of our flesh, we are unable to free ourselves from our infirmities.

“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.” Romans 8:3.

But why did He free us from the infirmity of sin? He did it, that we might live free from sin and its dominion.

“For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.”

Romans 6:14.

He accomplishes this by strengthening with might through the Spirit in the inner man all those who trust in Him.

*“That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man”. **Ephesians 3:16.***

Another case for consideration is that of the woman caught in adultery. She, too, was in bondage like the infirm woman, and also could not “straighten up” and help herself.

This woman was so addicted to her infirmity and bound by it, being in bondage to seven devils. Seven being an indication of completeness, hence she was in complete bondage. Though previously healed by Christ, she chose to return to that bondage. And though caught in the very act, Christ pitied her and did not condemn her, nor condone her.

*“When Jesus had lifted himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.” **John 8:10-11.***

Like the woman, though delivered from the bondage of our infirmity, we often venture back into it. But Christ empowers us with the words “neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.” Though empowered, we must always choose to believe His words of deliverance and be kept like the dog from returning to his vomit or the sow wallowing in her mud, or, as Solomon says, the fool to his folly.

*“For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.” **2 Peter 2:21-22.***

*“But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.” **Proverbs 26:11.***

Unless a radical change of nature has occurred in us, we will always “default” to our former infirmities. That radical change is the new birth of which Christ spoke to Nicodemus.

*“That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.” **John 3:6-7.***

Likewise, Christ says to the unbeliever, “ye must be born again,” and like Him, through the constant surrender of the will to the Holy Spirit, whom He promised to dwell in the believer, we shall be kept from our former infirmities of the spirit. The promise is:

*“... I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.” **John 14:16-17.***

The Spirit of truth not only dwells with you, but shall be in you. Further, the Apostle Paul speaks of this radical change in Galatians 2:20, stating it is no longer the old man with his infirmities who is alive.

*“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not Christ but I, liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.” **Galatians 2:20.***

It is the old man, the old way of life, the way of self, which is crucified, dead, and buried. The new man emerges, even Christ, who lives in the believers by the Holy Spirit, keeping us from the bondage of our infirmities.

Like Christ and the Apostle Paul, the Apostle John is emphatic that “once Christ is allowed to indwell,” i.e., to take up permanent residence in the believer by continuous surrender, the radical change of character that occurs is permanent.

*“He that committeth sin is of the devil; For this purpose, the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.” **1 John 3:8-9.***

Being born of God, therefore, means much more than we credit it with. It means that, though the believer lives in fallen, sinful human flesh, as Christ did, he is empowered by Christ, who crucified

the flesh with its lusts, and by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in him, he is enabled always to do the will of God and not the works of the flesh.

“And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him.” Joh 8:29.

This will be manifestly seen in the final generation of living saints, the hundred and forty-four thousand; the remnant of the woman’s seed.

“And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads ... which were redeemed from the earth. These were redeemed from among men ... And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.” Revelation 14:1, 3-5.

Questions for discussion

1. When freed by Christ from our infirmities, are we still infirm of ourselves?
2. To be under the law is to be under the condemnation of the law. According to Galatians 4:4, was Christ under the condemnation of the law?
3. Of all the people who ever lived on the earth, the record is that Christ is the only one who never sinned. Since all have sinned, can anyone possibly experience sinless living?
4. What is hypocrisy, and how does it affect one’s spiritual growth?

Chapter 4

The Freedom of Faith

The freedom Christ granted to the woman who had been infirm for eighteen years is the same as the freedom of “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus”, which frees from “the law of sin and death.” Romans 8:2. In this freedom, there is no sign of bondage, because the spirit, thoughts, and actions are all made free—like the woman who believed Jesus when he said to her, “Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity.” This illustration shows how someone who is justified by faith is free from the bondage of sin.

Christ does the same for all who believe His words. Like the infirm woman who was without strength and could not help herself, we too are without strength and cannot help ourselves. To free us from our infirmities, He became like us, verily us.

“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” 2 Corinthians 5:21.

What a glorious exchange! But why does He do it?

Understanding why He freed her from her infirmity, we should also see how and why He frees us from our infirmities. It was certainly not for her to remain in the bondage she was in before she met Him, but rather to be free from her infirmity. The same is true for us. He does this so that we might live free from the infirmity of sin and no longer be dominated by it.

“Knowing this that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin ... For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.” Romans 6:6, 14.

Because of the weakness of the flesh, we are unable to do the good we desire and to fulfill the righteousness of the law, which is holy, just, and good. Christ, coming in the same flesh as ours

and overpowering it, strengthens those who trust in Him with might through His Spirit in their inner man, enabling us “to walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (Romans 8:4).

The words “Thou art loosed from thine infirmity,” which Christ spoke to the woman when she was bowed down by her infirmity and unable to lift herself, are instructive. Notice that these words are in the present tense, “thou art loosed,”—not “you will be loosed,” but rather “you are loosed.” These are the same words He speaks to everyone who is in captivity and bound by sin, and unable to free themselves from its grasp. “*Thou art loosed.*” If only you would believe it, it would be just as real to you as it was to the woman with her infirmity. Lest you think it was easier for the woman to be physically freed than for you to be spiritually freed, remember it’s just as easy for Christ to say, “Take up thy bed and walk” as to say, “thy sins be forgiven thee.” The woman could not lift herself, but at Christ’s word, she immediately stood upright.

*“And he said, The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.” **Luke 18:27.***

*“The Lord upholdeth all that fall, and raiseth up all those that be bowed down.” **Psalms 145:14.***

*“But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” **Matthew 4:4.***

No one is so bowed down by the weight of sin that Satan has bound him with, which Christ cannot free. Christ has come and set the captives free. All one needs to do is walk into this freedom by believing God's word.

*“If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.” **John 8:36.***

*“Stand fast in the liberty with which Christ has made you free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.” **Galatians 5:1.***

The yoke of bondage of the flesh falls under the categories of the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, 1 John 2:16, which the Apostle Paul enumerates in Galatians 5:19-21.

One of the most subtle works of the flesh, emulation, is seen by many Christians as an attribute rather than the sin it truly is. It is encouraged everywhere. Children are taught from an early age to strive to be better than other children in school, to excel in church by singing or reading better

than others. It is also among adults, with encouragement from family and friends to make sure they can sing, preach, or perform some activity better than one or that person. So, far from being regarded as a sin, it is cultivated. But the freedom Christ offers is from every obstacle of the flesh and spirit.

“Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” 2 Corinthians 7:1.

Question for discussion

1. What would cause a person who is loosed from an infirmity to go back therein?
2. What guarantee does one have that they can be kept from the infirmity with which they were bound?
3. List at least twelve promises in the Bible that guarantee victory over spiritual infirmities.

Chapter 5

The Power in Freedom

What was the purpose of Christ's coming to save the lost?

*“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.” **Galatians 3:13.***

Having died, He has redeemed humanity and set them free. This is the same freedom our foreparents had before being ensnared by Satanic lies. It is therefore the freedom that existed before the curse. Freedom from the curse of sin itself.

When God created man, i.e., Adam and Eve (Genesis 5:1-2), they were made kings, i.e., they were given total dominion over the earth and all things associated with it.

*“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.” **Genesis 1:27-28.***

The dominion given to man was total and complete, for the Apostle Paul says,

*“Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honor, and didst set him over the works of thy hands. Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him ...” **Hebrews 2:7-8.***

The dominion given to man extended beyond the earth, being set over the works of God's hand.

*“And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands.” **Hebrews 1:10.***

This is evidence of man's freedom, for as a ruler, he had absolute dominion over the works of God's hand, which works extended beyond the earth, even to the heavens. This dominion being over all the works of God's hands, is therefore over even the unfallen worlds. It is the dominion of Christ, with whom the redeemed are “joint-heirs.” Romans 8:17. Because of sin, we do not see everything put under man.

*“But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man” **Hebrews 2:9.***

His death redeemed man from the curse that caused the loss of his dominion. The crown with which Christ is crowned was the one man had as king, for he had dominion over the works of God's hand before the fall. This crown was lost, but was regained in the combat in which Christ, as man, was the victor over the evil foe with whom He contended as man, and for man. As He was about to leave the earth and ascend to His Father and our Father, He said, “... “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go and preach, etc.” (Matthew 28:18), indicating that the same power and dominion are given back to man in Him.

This power Christ shares with redeemed humanity. What He accomplished elevates humanity to the highest realm created intelligences can attain to, even next to Christ, above Gabriel and all the angels who have never fallen, who are all ministers and servants to humanity. Hebrews 1:7. What a thought! It is all because of the Son of God, our Saviour, the lord Jesus Christ,

*“Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as man, humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name.” **Philippians 2:6-9.***

Christ, as man, has tasted death for all humanity and has redeemed us unto God from the curse. As individuals, when we accept His death as ours, we are raised with Him and sit in heavenly places

in Him, with all things under our feet (Ephesians 1:22). Thus is restored the dominion that was lost through disobedience, and elevation to the highest position creatures can attain unto. Those who are dead and risen with Christ are admonished by the Apostle Paul to,

“Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.”

Romans 6:12.

This assures those who are Christ's that they are masters and have authority over sin, no longer dominated by it, for they are under grace, not under law, i.e., not under the condemnation of the law.

Having washed us in His own blood, we are made priests and kings unto God of the Melchizedek order of which He is High Priest.

“(For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest after the order of Melchizedec:)”

“For such an high priest became us ...” **Hebrews 7:21, 26.**

“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation ...” **1 Peter 2:9.**

What elevation this freedom of the order of Melchizedek has brought us! “Priests and Kings.” It is freedom from the power of the curse, though we are surrounded by it, freedom from “this present evil world” from “the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.” Freedom over all the enemy's power.

“Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.” **Luke 10:19.**

This is the power of the Holy Spirit given to us as it was to the Apostles, when they were of one accord, and one mind, on the day of Pentecost.

At the end of time, to which we have come, the latter rain power of the Holy Spirit, like the early rain of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, will be given to those who overcome every defect of character, and over self, our greatest enemy, whatever the cost. Such will rule throughout the next eternity with Christ over all the works of God's hand in the entire universe.

*“To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, am set down with my Father in his throne.” **Revelation 3:21.***

This is man's destiny in Christ, enjoying full liberty and rulership of the universe as joint-heirs with Him. To Him be glory, and honor, and praise, and thanksgiving!

Questions for discussion

1. Why does Christ have to sit down on the Father's throne, though He is essentially God?
2. Why only after the fall does He have His own throne according to Revelation 3:21?
3. What is meant by sitting in His throne, as He sits in His father's throne?
4. What is the significance of Christ being High Priest after the order of Melchizedek?

Chapter 6

The Freedom of the Cross

Part 1

The old negro spiritual, “Oh, freedom, oh, freedom, oh, freedom over me. And before I’d be a slave I’ll be buried in my grave,” sums up the cry for freedom in the bosom of humanity from the thralldom of slavery to sin. The Apostle Paul captures this cry and offers the only true solution: the crucifixion of the “I,” the self.

“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.”
Galatians 2:20.

We must be crucified and dead with Christ to be truly free and alive. Although most of the world is not crucified and dead with Him, it seems they are alive, but they are dead while they live. For

“... she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth.” **1 Timothy 5:6.**

Unless individuals are crucified, dead, buried, and risen with Christ, they cannot experience freedom from death or live a truly free life. To such, His resurrection will profit nothing.

The crucifixion of Christ is usually seen as an event of a single day at Calvary, almost two thousand years ago. But He was “the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world” (Revelation 13:8). This helps us understand and appreciate that the plan of redemption was not an afterthought on God’s part, but the eternal purpose of His will.

“According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love ... That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:” **Ephesians 1:4, 9-10.**

The Lamb of God was slain from the foundation of the world. Calvary gives us but a faint glimpse of the pain that was experienced by the Father and the Son from all eternity. That pain will not cease until God gives up sin and sinners. Then the entire universe will be once more clean, with the freedom and harmony it once enjoyed.

This freedom is brought about because Christ bore our sins in His body on the tree.

“Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.” 1 Peter 2:24.

The weakness and sin of humanity and the earth were borne on the cross of Christ; every trace of the curse of sin is borne by Christ crucified. This leads us to understand that wherever the curse of sin is seen, there is the cross of Christ. The cause of death is sin, and the curse of sin is death; that being so, it is sin that kills.

“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Romans 6:23.

The curse is in everything, yet we see life in everything. This is the miraculous nature of the cross of Christ. He suffered the death of sin, yet He lives, being the only person who could do this, because He knew no sin, though made sin (2 Corinthians 5:21). The curse is everywhere, also in us, and despite this, Christ bears it. Every piece of bread we eat, every breath we take, and every leaf of the forest, is stamped with the cross of Christ. Wherever there are persons scared by sin, and that's all humanity, there is Christ crucified for us, and in us.

“And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.” Matthew 25:40.

On the cross, He bears all things, and the sins of every man are on Him. The weight of our sins is on Christ, but because of ignorance and unbelief, we feel the heavy weight which we are unable to handle, though it is easy for Christ. If we only believe, we may be relieved and go free, for Christ bears the heavy burden (Matthew 11:28-29) of the sins of the entire world on the cross. Therefore, wherever sin is found, we can be sure the cross of Christ is there, for the cross of Christ is a present reality.

*“Moreover, the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.” **Romans 5:20.***

*“For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.” **John 1:17. New Living Translation.***

*“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men.” **Titus 2:11.***

A person is only guilty of their own wrongdoings. Ezekiel 18:20. It therefore stands to reason that sin is personal and can only be committed where a person is, though it can affect others where he is not. Sin is in the heart of man.

*“That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.” **Mark 7:20-23.***

This means that sin is in our nature, which we have inherited, for we are “born in sin and shapen in iniquity.” Psalm 51:5. What is needed to deliver us from this condition, which is in our hearts and signifies who we really are, is freedom.

If there is someone who can deliver us from sin, which binds us with its cords (Proverbs 5:22), that person must come where we are, even in us, where the sin is. If I can place my sins on one so that he can bear them, without that person being in me, I would not really need him; that or he would be unnecessary. The only person who can deliver me, and has come where I am, even in me, is the Lord Jesus Christ, who was crucified and killed by my sins, which He got for being me.

*“For innumerable evils have compassed me about: mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head: therefore my heart faileth me.” **Psalm 40:12.***

Whose iniquities? Ours, which Christ took on as us being us in the flesh. What an amazement that He who knew no sin became sin for us that we may be freed from the cords of sin which bind us, and be invested with His righteousness which we knew not.

*“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” **2 Corinthians 5:21.***

Though our sins killed Christ, He was able to rise from the dead. Since He never personally sinned (1 Peter 2:22), He could not remain dead, as sin is the cause of death. “For the wages of sin is death.” Romans 6:23. “... when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.” James 1:15. Christ, who was crucified and died, is the risen Savior, risen in the heart of the sinner. Though one may believe that Christ was crucified and rose from the grave almost two thousand years ago, unless one believes that He is risen in one's heart, one cannot have salvation. So that all one has to do to be saved is to believe the truth that Christ, who became him, is risen in him and dwells in him by and with the power of the resurrection. This is justification by faith, the true confession of faith.

*“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.” **Romans 10:9.***

What a most precious truth that wherever sin is, there is the Saviour from sin.

*“... thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins.” **Matthew 1:21.***

He can only do this saving if He is in us, where sin is, and He has come in the flesh.

*“Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh.” **Romans 1:3.***

*“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.” **Romans 8:3.***

*“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same. **Hebrews 2:14.***

*“For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren” **Hebrews 2:16-17.***

This truth of Christ coming in our flesh, and hence in us, when proclaimed, will save all who believe it, but the enemy of truth and righteousness has perverted this truth, stating that Christ “is not come in the flesh.”

“And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist.” 1 John 4:3.

Questions for discussion

1. Why does one have to believe that Christ has come in our sinful, fallen flesh to be saved?
2. Doesn't the Bible and Christ Himself tell us to “believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved,” so what really is the significance of contending that Christ came or did not come in the same flesh as fallen humanity?

Chapter 7

The Freedom of the Cross

Part 2

That sin is the cause of death goes without saying, except to those who forget or are ignorant of the fact that when God finished creating the world, His word says,

*“God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good.” **Genesis 1:31.***

It was only after the fall of our foreparents that sin and death came upon the world.

*“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.” **Romans 5:12.***

Sin contains death, and people out of Christ are dead in trespasses and sin, and hence carrying around death in their bodies.

*“And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.” **Ephesians 2:1.***

Sin came about through the transgression of the law.

*“Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. 1 **John 3:4.**”*

Some say we do not need to keep the law because Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law.

*“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree”. **Galatians 3:13.***

Being redeemed from the curse of the law does not mean being redeemed from the obedience of the law, but rather from its disobedience. The curse of the law is condemnation.

“Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.”
Romans 3:31.

Christ was sent by the Father in the likeness of sinful flesh to condemn sin in the flesh.

“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.” **Romans 8:3.**

All humanity has been redeemed from the curse by the death of Christ, but not all will accept the freedom secured. The redemption price has been paid in full for all, purchased with the precious blood of Christ.

“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” **1 Peter 1:18-19.**

Everyone on earth may be free from the dominion of sin and death if they only believe the good news that the price of their redemption has been paid in full by the sacrifice of the Son of God, freeing them from their darling sin, which speaks death to them. There is therefore no more need to sin.

“Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling [sinning].” **Jude 1:24.**

Being made free and taken out of our prison house of bondage, we are enabled to walk free.

“Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.” **Galatians 5:1.**

This freedom that brings us saving faith is the result of Christ being made sin for us who are ungodly. The innocent suffered for the guilty.

“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.” **1 Peter 3:18.**

“He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. All we like

*sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” **Isaiah 53:5-6.***

He bore our sins in His body. This was no make-belief, or superficial work our Savior undertook for us; it was real and actual, not figurative, for our sins were in His body.

*“Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes we are healed.” **1 Peter 2:24.***

Christ was made a curse for us, i.e., He was not a curse Himself; He was made so, and suffered the death we should have experienced, complete annihilation. This was the fate Adam faced, were it not for Christ stepping into the gap, and saying, “Let the punishment fall on me, I will give man another chance.” Being able to carry about our sin in His body, and remain untainted by it, is to the glory of God and our salvation. This experience will be reproduced in the remnant of the woman’s seed that they may be freed from every defect of sin of the flesh. What a humbling thought that, through the faith of Christ, a final generation will live without sinning and vindicate God’s plan of redemption and His character of love.

In this great work of redemption, the vindication of the Father’s character, the overcoming of sin, and the vanquishing of Satan’s accusations against God, the cross stands in stark relief. It is through the cross, the principle of unselfish love, that all of this was accomplished. It’s no wonder that the Apostle exclaims,

*“But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.” **Galatians 6:14.***

*“I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.” **1 Corinthians 2:2.***

The cross is the assurance that our sins have already been overcome, and we fight the fight of victory as we confront a defeated foe. The cross of Christ secured our redemption from sin and death. In the cross is the power of God, the gospel of our salvation.

*“For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.” **1 Corinthians 1:18.***

The cross of Christ is ever present and reveals God's glory, which is His character; it has redeemed us and continues to secure us from the curse. All that we may know of God is revealed in the cross of Christ. Apart from the cross, there is no knowledge of God.

“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.” Galatians 3:13

Further, the cross reveals to humanity the Savior as crucified and yet risen for our salvation.

“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.

The cross of Christ speaks of the redemption, not only of humanity but of the entire creation.

“For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.” Romans 8:22.

He bore our sins on the cross.

“Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.” 1 Peter 2:24.

He also bore the curse pronounced on the earth, being hung upon the cross, for says the word of truth,

“Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field.” Genesis 3:18.

Christ was crowned with thorns and hung on the tree, thus redeeming the whole creation from the curse.

Questions for discussion

1. What does it mean that all humanity has been redeemed from the curse of the law?
2. What does the Bible, in Genesis 2:17, mean when it says of Adam, “for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die?” What death is here referred to?
3. When the Bible texts speak of the cross of Christ, what does it really mean?
4. In not less than twenty-five words, explain how the character of God is revealed in the cross of Christ.

Chapter 8

Freedom's Fruit

The fruit of the Spirit, love (Galatians 5:22-23), does not dwell in us naturally and cannot be forced. On the contrary, it is natural for us to be angry, conceited, and annoyed rather than kind and patient when opposed. There is a clear difference between the fruit of the Spirit and the works of the flesh. Even as there is a clear difference between God and Satan. The works of the flesh are natural to us; therefore, for the fruit of the Spirit to be borne, we must be born again.

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." 2 Corinthians 5:17.

"For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature." Galatians 6:15.

Goodness, which is a facet of the fruit of the Spirit of God, does not come from within us naturally, as some teach, saying one must develop the good within. Goodness comes from the Spirit of Christ dwelling in the heart. Christ Himself acknowledges that goodness is not natural in man.

"And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? None is good, save one, that is, God." Luke 18:19.

Any good manifested by us comes from being joined to Christ. By the death of self, we become joined to Christ, and all good proceeds from Him.

"They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the passions and lusts." Galatians 5:24.

"For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. Galatians 3:27.

"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Romans 6:3.

*"Our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin." **Romans 6:6,7.***

*"I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." **Galatians 2:20.***

This is the experience of every true child of God. He still lives in the flesh to all outward appearance, as other men, yet he is in the Spirit and not in the flesh. He lives in the flesh a life that is not of the flesh, and the flesh has no power over him..

*"Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin." **Romans 6:6-7.***

*"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. The body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness." **Romans 8:9-10.***

The Apostle admonishes us, "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." Galatians 5:25. As God's children, we live in the Spirit, except we be reprobates.

*"Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" **2 Corinthians 13:5.***

Once we live in the Spirit, we are duty-bound to submit to the Spirit, for only by the Spirit's power can any person live the Christ life. The Spirit is the presence of God, by whom we live, and are totally dependent on for life, both spiritual and physical.

*"And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you". **John 14:16-17.***

This being so, it is incumbent on us to be guided and led by the Spirit.

*"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." **Romans 8:14.***

This is how the children of God can live in the flesh and yet have dominion over it. "There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body." We now have a natural body, but the true children of God will be given a spiritual body at the resurrection.

"It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body." 1 Cor. 15:42.

But while we are living in the natural body, we are to be spiritual, living as we shall in the future spiritual body.

"Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you."
Romans 8:9.

When we live in the Spirit and walk in the Spirit, the flesh with its lusts has no more power over us than if we were actually dead and in our graves. This allows the Spirit of God alone to animate our bodies. The Spirit uses the flesh as an instrument of righteousness.

"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." Romans 6:13.

The flesh is still corrupt, still full of lusts, still ready to rebel against the Spirit (Galatians 5:17), but as long as we yield our wills to God, the Spirit keeps the flesh in check, under control. Thus Christ is manifested in His people as He was manifested in the flesh two thousand years ago.

The revelation of God's character of love in Christ in us, with the Spirit of love and humility ruling us, we shall not be desirous of vainglory, provoking one another, or envying one another. All things will be of God, so that no one will have any desire to lord it over another, but will be of one mind and one spirit. This is the Spirit of life in Christ, verily the life of Christ which is given freely to all who believe.

"For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." Romans 8:2. "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift." 2 Corinthians 9:15.

Question for discussion

1. Love is of God (1 John 4:7). Can anyone who does not believe in God love?

Chapter 9

Love's Freedom

*“For brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.” **Galatians 5:13-15.***

Satan's goal is to create conflict, separation, and division among God's people today, just as he did in Israel's history. He understands that if he succeeds again, it will take a whole cycle for God to lead His people to the borders of the heavenly Canaan, as it was with Israel on leaving Egypt. Will the promise of entering the heavenly Canaan be fulfilled in the second generation as it was in the time of Israel? Observe the pattern of the second generation of Advent believers after 1844.

The first generation spanned 1844-1884. The believers fell into Laodicean lukewarmness as they forgot their former zeal for the 2nd coming. In the second generation (1884-1924), the 1888 message was sent early in this generation to cure the people of their lukewarmness and to prepare them for entrance into the heavenly Canaan via translation. During this time, the prophet who expected to be among the 144,000 died. The third generation (1924-1964) witnessed the 1956-57 SDA and Barnhouse Evangelicals meetings in which the doctrine of Christ coming in our sinful, fallen flesh was watered down, even discarded. The fourth generation (1964-2004) saw Laodiceanism become entrenched, with a program of works taking precedence in the organization, and the 1888 message was almost completely forgotten, or worse, lost sight of. Happily, groups both inside and outside mainstream Adventism began to hear of and search for this most precious message.

A new first generation of SDA in a new cycle (2044-2084) is seeking the truth to be sanctified by it, that they might be prepared for entrance in the heavenly Canaan via translation. But will it occur? Or will the second generation (2044-2084), like Israel entering earthly Canaan, be the ones

to enter the heavenly Canaan without seeing death? And further, will it be in a second or third watch of a second generation in a new cycle? Such are daunting prospects.

When some who profess to be children of God, looking for the return of their Savior from the wedding, fight one another and even go to the law instead of following the rule laid down by the Saviour, “love one another as I have loved you,” “go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother,” they show that they are actuated by the spirit of the enemy of truth and are not looking for and hastening, or even hastening unto to the coming of their Lord.

Contention and strife, and even lawsuits, among the professed people of God are a disgrace and a rebuke, and expose the church of God to ridicule by her enemies, and cause Satan’s host of evil angels to triumph, and so prolong the sojourn in this corrupt and decadent society. Such do not realize that they are in Laodicean lukewarmness, and are “piercing Christ afresh and putting Him to open shame.” This is caused by ignoring the authority that the word of God gives to His church.

“The Very Thing God Told Them Not to Do—I have written largely in regard to Christians who believe the truth, placing their cases in courts of law to obtain redress. In doing this, they are biting and devouring one another in every sense of the word, “to be consumed one of another.” They cast aside the inspired counsel God has given, and in the face of the message He gives, they do the very thing He has told them not to do. Such men may as well stop praying to God, for He will not hear their prayers. They insult Jehovah, and He will leave them to become the subjects of Satan until they shall see their folly and seek the Lord by confession of their sins.” **Selected Messages Book 3, 302.2.**

To prevent such a condition, the law of God must be strictly followed: “by love serve one another.” Galatians 5:13.

“Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.” **Romans 13:10.**

The way of love is the only way to prevent biting and devouring among Christians. Constancy in prayer, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, will bring about the desired outcome of love and unity for which Christ prayed (John 17:20-23), because a house divided against itself cannot stand. Amazingly, a minor matter between brethren can destroy the peace and harmony once enjoyed in

churches. Hope is extinguished, and families are torn apart. Oh, that the love of Christ dwelling in the hearts of God's people would cause them to love one another as He has loved them. Jesus says,

"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." **John 13:34-35.**

The apostle's words, "by love serve one another," show that love is the best servant and antidote to contention and strife in the church, as illustrated in the Savior's words,

"Whoever among you wants to be great must become the servant of you all, and if he wants to be first among you, he must be the slave of all men! For the Son of Man himself has not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life to set many others free." **Mark 10:44-45. (J.B. Phillips New Testament).**

It is really the faith of Christ working by love that makes servants the freest of all creatures. There was never a freer person than our Savior, and He was the greatest servant of all.

"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." **Luke 12:37.**

Love fulfills the law and brings peace and unity in the body of Christ. The freedom Christ has given us is dominion over ourselves, not over our fellowmen. The only person the Christian has the right to rule over is himself.

"He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city." **Proverbs 16:32.**

We have been made kings in Christ's kingdom, and as in the first dominion, the only thing apart from ourselves we are given rulership over is the lower creation. Genesis 1:26, 28. Having the mind of Christ, which led Him, "who was in the form of God," to take on the form of a servant, demonstrates the dignity that attaches to servanthood. In coming to Earth, He did not change His nature but remained God and King while in human flesh, as illustrated in washing His disciples' feet.

"Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am." **John 13:3-13.**

Jesus was fully conscious of who He was, Lord and Master, but never once sought to dominate or control the consciences of His disciples or anyone else. In all this, He demonstrated that the greatest freedom is found in service to others. Likewise, His followers today will find that the greatest freedom is the service of love rendered to their fellowmen in His name, who was the greatest of all servants. His children will also be servants, being kings and joint-heirs with Him, the greatest of all Servants. All who have God's love will of necessity love everyone, having experienced the freedom which Christ gives to those who believe in Him.

“Jesus Christ came into the world only to set men free and to plant in their souls the genuine principle of liberty. And this liberty with which Christ made men free is liberty actuated by love. It is a liberty too honorable to allow itself to be used as an occasion to the flesh or as a cloak of maliciousness. It is a liberty led by the Spirit of God. It is a liberty in which he who has it is made free from all men, yet it makes him who receives it so gentle by love that he willingly becomes the servant of all, in order to bring them to the enjoyment of that same liberty. This is freedom indeed: this is the freedom which Christ gives to whomsoever believes in him: “for whom the Son makes free is free indeed ... This is Christianity: this is the gospel and the liberty of the gospel. “But if ye bite and devour one another” – if so, you repudiate the gospel and deny the liberty which it brings: if ye be critical, narrow, and intolerant – “take heed ye be not consumed one of another.” For that is the only consequence that can come of such a course, with utter destruction at the last.” A.T. Jones, RH, September 11, 1900.

Questions for discussion

1. Can Israel's journey from Egypt and their entering Canaan in the second generation be a reliable model for God's people traveling to the Heavenly Canaan today?
2. With the flesh, our sinful desires, always seeking to draw us away from Christ (Galatians 5:17), explain how the Christian can ALWAYS overcome its pull.
3. The Bible states that there are wheat and tares in the church of God. Should one who continuously behaves like a reprobate be permitted into the fellowship with the church of God, considering the Apostle Paul's words in Titus 3:10?
4. Does Christ's demonstration of servanthood in His earthly ministry mean that He is the servant in the Godhead?

Chapter 10

The Blessedness of Freedom

That freedom carries blessedness in its bosom is seen in the experience of King David, as he recounts God's dealings with him. "Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile." Psalm 32:2 (Psalm 34:8, 40:4, 84:584:12, 94:12, 112:1). This blessedness is reiterated by the Apostle Paul in Romans 4:6-8. "David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." What, where, and when is this blessedness?

In Galatians 4:15, the Apostle puts this question to the brethren, and it is pertinent to us in this age as well. "Where is then the blessedness ye spake of?" Note, he does not ask where is the blessedness ye speak of is, but rather, "where is the blessedness ye spake of." The statement is in the past tense. This means that this was something they had in the past and therefore no longer have, like many today who have lost their first love and gone into Laodicean lukewarmness. It was the blessedness of Abraham, the blessedness of justification by faith, that they received when the true gospel was preached unto them, but which they lost.

This blessedness is only a memory to many today, as it was to the Galatians in Paul's day. Sadly, it is still a blessedness that is not known today to many who profess to be children of Abraham. How was this blessedness lost, and how can it be recovered? Also, how can the heathen among God's children receive this blessedness, as many like the mixed multitude were among the Israelites as they journeyed from Egypt?

It must be noted that the recovery of this blessedness and the first receiving of it are had in the same way, by faith in the uplifted Savior.

*“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.” **John 3:14-15.***

It is by believing in Christ, the Son of God. It is not by doing anything, but by believing, having faith.

*“For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.” **Romans 4:3-5.***

Justification, that is, being made righteous, is the blessedness of Abraham, which he obtained by believing God. It was imputed to him, i.e., he was counted righteous by God. The experience of Abraham illustrates to all that righteousness by faith, i.e., true justification, is “by faith, and not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, and not of works.”

*“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.” **Ephesians 2:8.***

While this blessedness lasts, it is enjoyed, and the result is seen in works of righteousness and love. This self-sacrificing agape love of God in Christ is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost (Romans 5:5) and is manifested in words of kindness and deeds of love.

*“Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.” **Ephesians 4:31-32.***

The wonderful blessedness of Abraham, righteousness by faith, when lost to a people and told to them, the messenger often becomes their enemy, though at first seen as an angel of God to them. This is because they no longer know the truth by experience. Having lost their first love, they have become lukewarm, Laodicean. The child of God who is truly justified by the faith of Christ will count such a one as a friend and brother for speaking the truth, though it hurts.

*“Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?” **Galatians 4:16.***

However shameful and painful the truth may be, when shown, the truly justified who are being sanctified daily will thankfully receive it as from God Himself. For it is the truth that sets one free.

*“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life.” **John 14:6.***

*“If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.” **John 8:36.***

Having lost the true faith, Christians always turn back to the weak and beggarly elements of the world, and hence to the bondage from which they were freed by Christ. This loss is the experience of Christ within, the hope of glory. Colossians 1:27.

*“But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? **Galatians 4:9.***

Jude, the servant of God, exhorts and longs for the return of the professed people of God to the faith once delivered to the saints.

*“Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.” **Jude 1:3.***

One can only contend for the faith if one is in the faith.

*“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?” **2 Corinthians 13:5.***

Questions for discussion

1. What is the blessedness of Abraham?
2. When this blessedness is lost, is it possible to be regained?
3. If the answer to #2 is yes, state how it can be regained.
4. Jude 1:3 speaks of the faith once delivered to the saints. What is the faith he is referring to?
5. What are the weak and beggarly elements to which Paul refers in Galatians 4:9?

Chapter 11

A Covenant of Freedom

A covenant, as defined by the dictionary, is an agreement. Is this also what God's covenant is? Let's see how God's dictionary defines it.

*“And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.” **Galatians 3:17.***

Here, the Bible defines a covenant as a promise. The terms are interchangeably used.

The Bible presents two covenants: the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. These covenants are illustrated by two women in the household of Abraham, God's servant: Hagar, a slave woman, and Sarah, a free woman. Both had children by Abraham; the slave woman's child, Ishmael, was a bond servant. A slave woman can never produce a free child, even if his father is a free man. The other woman, Sarah, was free, and therefore her son Isaac was a free man. Only a free man and a free woman can produce a free child.

*“For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman.” **Galatians 4:22.***

These two women symbolize the two covenants—one of bondage and the other of freedom, of grace.

*“For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.” **Galatians 4:25.***

All who are bound by sin are under the covenant of Mount Sinai, while those who are set free by Jesus Christ belong to the Jerusalem above. “... Jerusalem, which is above, is free, which is the mother of us all.” Galatians 4:26.

Hagar, being a slave woman, could not produce a free child. Similarly, the covenant made at Sinai by the people could not produce freedom from the bondage of sin. Sin is the transgression of the law (1 John 3:4), and brings the knowledge of sin (Romans 3:20). The covenant made at Sinai by Israel could not produce freedom because it was the promise of the people, not of God. That covenant had no power to make anyone free, for it was not of faith, which is the way of freedom. “For whatsoever is not of faith is sin.” Romans 14:23. Such a covenant had no power in it before it was made, when they were in bondage, nor after it was made it, for they were still in bondage.

A person guilty of sin cannot be set free by reading to him the law that condemned him; it only makes his bondage more painful. But did not God himself make that first covenant with the people?

“And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words.” Exodus 24:8.

Having made this covenant with the people, which was one of bondage, would not God be culpable for leading them or keeping them in bondage?

Remembering that Sinai represents Hagar, the slave woman, when the people at Sinai pledged to do whatever God said, it was like a person promising to win a swimming competition who cannot swim. Being in bondage, a slave is unable to make and keep a promise, for he is bound by whatever his master says, and sin is the master that binds.

“But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.” Romans 6:17-18.

At Sinai, God told Moses to tell Israel,

“Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation.” Exodus 19:4-6.

He was saying that it is He who delivered them from Egyptian bondage. However, they were still in spiritual bondage and, not recognizing that, responded in unison,

*“All that the Lord hath spoken we will do.” And Moses returned the words of the people unto the Lord. **Exodus 19:8.***

But God was trying to show them that just as He delivered them from Egyptian bondage without their help, He alone can deliver them from spiritual bondage, in which they were bound by the cords of sin. Proverbs 5:22.

When God said, “Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all the people: for all the earth is mine,” He was referring to the New Covenant, the covenant with Abraham, in which He pledged by Himself to bring Israel out of Egypt.

*“And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance.” **Genesis 15:13-14.***

They completely forgot or ignored this promise, even though Joseph had reiterated it,

*“And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die: and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.” **Genesis 50:24***

This shows that God did not lead them to make the covenant at Sinai. He who led them from Egyptian bondage was seeking to lead them into the covenant He made with Abraham, the New Covenant, the covenant of grace.

*“For he remembered his holy promise, and Abraham his servant. And he brought forth his people with joy, and his chosen with gladness: And gave them the lands of the heathen: and they inherited the labor of the people; That they might observe his statutes, and keep his laws. Praise ye the Lord.” **Psalms 105:44.***

This is the New Covenant in which all who believe what God says and, like Abraham, obey Him, will be counted and made righteous, and saved in His kingdom.

*“Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.” **Genesis 26:5.***

Like Abraham, all who believe in God and obey Him are counted righteous by the faith of Jesus and are in the New Covenant.

Faith justifies as evidenced in Abraham’s experience.

*“For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.” **Romans 4:13.***

Though the law could not bring the promise, it will be kept, demonstrating the obedience of faith.

*“For he remembered his holy promise, and Abraham his servant. And he brought forth his people with joy, and his chosen with gladness ... That they might observe his statutes, and keep his laws. Praise ye the Lord. **Psalms 105:42-43, 45.***

Hagar and Sarah, the bond servant and wife of Abraham, respectively, are referred to by the Apostle Paul as the two covenants, showing that the Old and the New covenants are not dispensational but experiential, and were found in the home of Abraham. The Old Covenant is the people’s promise to do what God says without trusting. On the other hand, the New Covenant is the people’s belief in God, allowing Him to work out His promises in them in Christ, which “are yea, and in him Amen unto the glory of God by us.” 2 Corinthians 1:20.

The contrast between the two covenants reflects the status of Sarah and Hagar—the free woman versus the slave woman—and their descendants. The slave woman can only produce children bound by slavery, regardless of how many, while the free woman can only bear children of freedom.

*“Nevertheless, what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman.” **Galatians 4:30.***

The covenant at Sinai keeps a person in bondage to the law, even though the law is “holy, just, and good,” demonstrating that the fault lies not with the law but with those who promise to uphold it. However, Christ has redeemed humanity from the curse of the law—its condemnation—by becoming a curse for us (Galatians 3:13), so that we might keep the law; blessed are those who do so.

“Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord.” Psalm 119:1.

Under the Sinai covenant, unbelievers face the law alone, leading to death. In contrast, believers find the law fulfilled in Christ, which grants freedom and eternal life. The Old Covenant was a promise by the people to obey God's commands. Since they could not keep these commands, which are all the words of God and sharper than a two-edged sword, they faced condemnation unto death. Conversely, the children of the free woman—Jerusalem above—who possess the covenant of promise in the hand of a mediator, even Christ, are free from the law's condemnation, for He works His righteousness into their character.

Freedom is what Christ, the mediator, gives to all who believe in Him; such are like Isaac, children of the promise. But through unbelief, people turn the promise of the New Covenant into the bondage of the Old Covenant. As Hagar and Ishmael were cast out of the family of Abraham, the Old Covenant must be rejected, that the blessing of the Abrahamic covenant, the New Covenant, righteousness by faith, might be experienced. The Old Covenant is self and the bondage of sin and the works of the law, while the New Covenant is the liberty of Christ and His righteousness, which is by faith. Self, the Old Covenant, must be cast out that the New Covenant, Christ, may appear in all His fullness.

“Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman.” Galatians 4:30 (Genesis 21:10).

Questions for discussion

1. Abraham was a recipient of the new covenant. Seeking to have the son whom God promised, he slumped into the old covenant experience. Can a person be in both the old and the new covenant simultaneously?
2. In Abraham's experience, the product of the Old and New Covenants was the same, a son. Is it the process or the product that makes the difference between the covenants?
3. God said, “Cast out the bondwoman and her son.” How then does He turn and bless Ishmael? Genesis 17:20. How is the justice of God's character manifested in this apparent reversal?

Chapter 12

Liberty's Final Display

*“Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month.” **Joel 2:23.***

According to the marginal reading of this text, which is the correct reading, the latter rain is defined as a “teacher of righteousness,” which is the Holy Spirit, the only teacher of righteousness “

*“But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.” **1 John 2:27.***

*Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. **John 14:26.***

The anointing is the Holy Spirit.

*“And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him.” **John 1:32.***

*“Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore, God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.” **Hebrews 1:9. (Psalm 45:7).***

The Holy Spirit, is the former rain and the latter rain (Joel 2:23). Since the church experienced the former rain at Pentecost, it follows that understanding the former rain can teach us something about the latter rain.

The early rain had two phases: a teaching phase and a demonstration or experiential phase. The first, the teaching phase, was conducted by the Holy Spirit under Christ's tutelage as He taught the

disciples for three years, from His baptism until His death. The demonstration phase began at Pentecost, when it fell upon the disciples in the upper room and three thousand people were baptized in one day, and thereafter the disciples performed mighty miracles.

That being the case, the latter rain must present a similar pattern of teaching and demonstration. Has the teaching of righteousness, preparatory to the demonstration, occurred? Verily, it began with the message of justification by faith in 1888 at the General Conference meeting in Minneapolis, USA, as stated by the prophet of the 3rd Angel movement.

“The Lord in His great mercy sent a most precious message to His people through Elders Waggoner and Jones. This message was to bring more prominently before the world the uplifted Saviour, the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. It presented justification through faith in the Surety; it invited the people to receive the righteousness of Christ, which is made manifest in obedience to all the commandments of God. Many had lost sight of Jesus. They needed to have their eyes directed to His divine person, His merits, and His changeless love for the human family. All power is given into His hands, that He may dispense rich gifts unto men, imparting the priceless gift of His own righteousness to the helpless human agent. This is the message that God commanded to be given to the world. It is the third angel’s message, which is to be proclaimed with a loud voice, and attended with the outpouring of His Spirit in a large measure.” **Testimony to Ministers and Gospel Workers (TM) 91.2.**

Beginning in 1888, the teaching phase continues until the demonstration phase begins. The teaching phase of the early rain lasted three years before the demonstration began. The teaching phase of the latter rain has continued for one hundred twenty-eight years (1888-2026). When will the demonstration phase occur? Again, considering the early rain, there was “the upper room” experience, which brought the disciples into oneness for the Pentecostal experience. A similar “upper room” experience of oneness among the people of God must also occur for the demonstration phase of the latter rain to begin.

“Not one of us will ever receive the seal of God while our characters have one spot or stain upon them. It is left with us to remedy the defects in our characters, to cleanse the soul-temple of every defilement. Then the latter rain will fall upon us as the early rain fell upon the disciples on the day of Pentecost.” **Christian Experience and Teaching (CET) 189.2.**

“I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace ... Till we all come in the unity of the faith.” Ephesians 4:1-3; 13.

The unity of the Spirit is followed by the unity of the faith. Unity enabled the Pentecostal outpouring in the early church. Similarly, it will bring about the latter-rain outpouring in the final generation church. But what is unity? There are several synonyms for unity, including agreement, harmony, and accord. The Day of Pentecost saw the disciples of one accord, in unity. Acts 2:1

There is a specific order to achieving this unity. First, there must be unity of the Spirit, and then unity of the faith will follow. It is important to note that the definite article precedes both "unity of the Spirit" and "unity of faith," indicating a specific Spirit and a specific faith. This Spirit is called the Third Person of the Godhead. Being the Third Person does not mean the lesser of the three, but rather one of three persons who make up the Godhead. Acts 17:29; Romans 1:20; Colossians 2:9. After quoting John 17:20-23, the prophet makes this statement to illustrate this unity.

“The unity that exists between Christ and His disciples does not destroy the personality of either. They are one in purpose, in mind, in character ... It is thus that God and Christ are one.” 8T 269.4.

The faith here refers to a system of truth.

“There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.” Ephesians 4:4-6.

One faith refers to the faith's uniqueness, rarity, distinctiveness, and exclusivity, which distinguish the church of God from all others. In this regard, “The Three Angel Messages” of Revelation 14:6-12 and the advancing light on the “Character of God,” which teaches that He is not in the least responsible for sin, sickness, death, or any of their consequences, but rather died to save us from them is unique faith and is found only in the church of God, which is “the pillar and ground of truth.”

The unity of the Spirit fosters the unity of the faith. Therefore, where there is no unity of the Spirit, there can be no unity of the faith. This leads to division and separation, even if the call for unity is loudly proclaimed. This Spirit-led unity is achieved as God's Spirit dwells in each believer (John 14:17), making them at one and at peace, loving one another (John 13:34), and preferring one another.

"No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us." **1 John 4:12.**

"Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another." **Romans 12:10. (1 Timothy 5:21).**

The root of division and lack of unity is the love of self and even hatred toward one another, which is essentially a disrespect for God. "If a man says, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" 1 John 4:20. Remember that hatred is of the flesh. Galatians 5:19-20. Therefore, for unity to prevail and the final display of the latter rain to be experienced, love brought by the Holy Spirit must be experienced (Romans 5:5), or else biting, devouring, and the exaltation of self will be the result, ending in destruction.

"For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself." **Galatians 6:3.**

"For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another." **Galatians 5:14-15.**

"We may speak of union, of harmony; we may pray for it, and really desire it; but there never will exist that union and harmony that Christ describes in the seventeenth chapter of John, and which the Spirit of prophecy tells us must be realized before he comes, until every one of us has received, in full measure, the baptism of the Spirit of God ... How can we ever hope to be translated without it? GCB February 20, 1899 page 39.21 PREPARATION FOR TRANSLATION. **Sermon, February 18, by Elder J. A. Brunson Branson.**

“The Lord wants us to come up into the mount, more directly into his presence. We are coming to a crisis which, more than any previous time since the world began, will demand the entire consecration of everyone who has named the name of Christ.” **Gospel Workers 369. 4.**

A revival of true godliness among us is the greatest and most urgent of all our needs. We must have the holy unction from God, the baptism of his Spirit; for this is the only efficient agent in the promulgation of sacred truth. It is the Spirit of God that quickens the lifeless faculties of the soul to appreciate heavenly things and attracts the affections toward God and the truth. **Gospel Workers 370.1.**

We are not willing enough to trouble the Lord with our petitions and to ask Him for the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Lord wants us to trouble Him in this matter. He wants us to press our petitions to the throne. The converting power of God needs to be felt throughout our ranks. **Fundamentals of Christian Education (FE) 537.4.**

Questions for personal consideration

1. Are you in a place where the righteousness of God, obedience to all the commandments, is being taught?
2. How does one get to experience ‘birth’ by the Spirit?
3. What determines whether one’s experience leads to “accord” or “discord?”
4. Is praying for the refreshing of the Spirit of God daily, critical and not optional at this juncture?
5. What causes devouring of brethren, overtly or covertly?

Notes