

THE REVELATION OF RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT SERIES

PART 14

"JUDGMENT AT THE HOUSE"

(CONTINUED)

I Peter 4:17..*"For the time is come that JUDGMENT MUST BEGIN AT THE HOUSE OF GOD..."*

II Thess. 2:6-7...*"And now ye know what withholdeth that he (the man of sin) might be revealed in his time. For THE MYSTERY OF INIQUITY DOTH ALREADY WORK: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that wicked be revealed, WHOM THE LORD SHALL CONSUME BY THE SPIRIT OF HIS MOUTH, and SHALL DESTROY BY THE BRIGHTNESS OF HIS COMING..."*

Though it may have seemed like we have skipped from subject to subject throughout this series, we can assure you that there is a connection! Our main theme is still to recognize the man of sin in the temple, and to understand some of the processes God uses in dealing with him. Miguel de Cervantes, in his literary classic, Don Quixote, wrote, "Our greatest foes, and whom we must chiefly combat, are within". Another has wisely worded it this way: "We have found the enemy, and he is us"! By now, we should all be able to offer a resounding "amen" to these, and other statements like them! They could not possibly be more true! It is only logical that if we cannot clearly recognize our adversary, or accurately perceive the true source of our problems, we will invariably employ the wrong strategy in our warfare, and waste precious time in the process. We must needs see the opposition, and understand from whence it comes, if we are to be victorious in battle. Wouldn't you agree?

Paul's words were certainly God-breathed, when he said that we were "enemies in our mind by wicked works" (Col. 1:21). And we all know that "the carnal mind is enmity against God" (Rom. 8:7). But have you ever really considered the fact that there was a time which actually antedated this internal enemy in man? That's right! There was a period when man was in perfect peace and harmony with God. Everything within him blessed God's holy name (nature). He brought glory to that name, by virtue of the fact that he was the image and glory of God (I Cor. 11:7). As you might guess, however, the "flesh", or "old man" came into existence when Adam originally rebelled against God. That is when "the mystery of iniquity" first began to work in his members; when the "man of sin" first "came to life" (if we can use that term), entered into the temple, and began his reign of terror. Perhaps we should clarify something here. While God did create Adam with the individuality of self (that is, a distinct consciousness in his soul of the activities occurring in and around, or in relation to, his being), He did not make man with this old "man of sin" within him (for there is a difference between "self" and "the flesh").

It should be pointed out that there is nothing intrinsically evil about the soul, or its self-consciousness, as long as it is coupled with, and submissive to "the hidden man of the heart"...led and instructed by a sense of God-consciousness in one's spirit; but the flesh is evil by nature). Nay, the flesh was the direct result of Adam's own doing; the deliberate invention of his own intention and choosing. We might think of this "monster", this freak of nature as the "Frankenstein" of Adam's dangerous experiment with sin! It was Adam's own uniquely designed and personal creation, shaped out of his quest for independence! Strange as it may seem to some, it was Adam who opened the door to death (for "to be carnally minded is death"; Rom. 8:6); and it was Adam who brought the entire realm of death into being through his disobedience! Before that, death was non-existent. It had no place anywhere in the vastness of God's creation, natural or spiritual. That is not to say that it did not fit into God's purpose, as if it were not anticipated by divine Counsel. The Almighty foreknew the outcome of the Genesis account before it was ever enacted. He was certainly not caught by surprise; nor was He ever out of control! Perish the thought! We are simply saying that death, and all that is involved in that dark and dreadful realm, was Adam's own earnings; the wages for his sinful actions (Rom. 6:23). We could say that he worked for it, when he allied himself with satan...so it was his reward! He introduced it into the world via his mind! To express it differently, we could say that he dug the pit into which he fell (Psa. 7:15; Prov. 26:27; by principle, see also Job 4:8-9; Psa. 9:15-17). We might even go so far as to say that he created a living hell for himself when he turned from God, and went his own way (for any turn away from God is a turn into hell; Psa. 9:17); yea, he formed a walking nightmare, that would occupy the inner recesses of his being from that day forward! You see, what Adam saw as an opportunity to produce a new life-form in his Edenic "laboratory" (that is, a life without dependency upon the Holy Spirit for guidance or assistance) was actually his own personal weapon of mass destruction! He unleashed his own worst enemy when he created the carnal mind; an enemy that would stalk and terrorize him and his offspring all the days of their lives! Unlike Dr. Frankenstein's simple-minded, benign, and generally misunderstood creature, who only reacted violently when he felt threatened or provoked, there is nothing naive or innocent about this natural brute beast! When it comes to conduct, it is anything but passive! And it needs no provoking! This was evidenced by the fact that immediately after the formation of "the flesh", it went completely out of its master's control! Beginning with (in) Adam's firstborn son, Cain, this lumbering, lead-footed "giant" went on a rampage, a killing spree; and its bloody trail can be traced down through the entire course of human history (without doubt, it is responsible for all wars and strife; James 4:1)! It was, and is, and remains to be the single greatest threat to humanity!

THE MAKING OF AN ENEMY

In regard to these thoughts, we are given a very unique and eye-opening window to the past in the fourteenth chapter of Isaiah. Again, we are compelled to draw our text from a passage that has been subject to much controversy; but, as usual, we will not allow this to pose an obstacle for us. It is simply too important to overlook, for fear of being criticized (it won't be the first time, that's for sure)!

As was the case with our two previous illustrations (which we discussed in Parts 12 & 13 of this series), this one, too, comes to us in the form of a rebuke to a natural, earthly king, to teach us something about the rise and fall of Adam, and the manner in which he formed what has now come to be known as "the flesh". As you know, this proverbial prophecy was mainly directed by Isaiah toward the king of Babylon, Belshazzar (as well as toward the entire Babylonian monarchy represented in him, for that matter), and was pertinent to their time-frame (Isa. 14:4). As one might imagine, though, there is a deeper meaning involved. Now, let's cut directly to the chase:

"Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations. All they shall speak and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? Art thou become like unto us? Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee. How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, which did weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thy heart, I WILL ascend into heaven, I WILL exalt my throne above the stars of God: I WILL sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I WILL ascend above the height of the clouds; I WILL BE LIKE THE MOST HIGH. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, TO THE SIDES OF THE PIT. They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, IS THIS THE MAN that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; that made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners? All the kings of the nations, even all of them, lie in glory, every one in his own house. But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch, and as the raiment of those that are slain, thrust through with a sword, THAT GO DOWN TO THE STONES OF THE PIT: as a carcase trodden under feet. Thou shalt not be joined to them in burial, because thou hast destroyed thy land, and slain thy people..." (Isa. 14: 9-20a).

We find that in order to properly understand this prophecy, it is necessary to operate on the same principle of interpretation used in our study of Ezek. 28. Again, we must be prepared to focus our vision on two different characters. The one is nearer to us; the other is farther. From a historical perspective (the nearer), we know that the Lord honored his word precisely as it was delivered. The fulfillment of it is briefly recorded in Daniel 5:30, as well as in the writings of Josephus (Ant. 10.11.2-4). Because of his arrogance, his haughtiness and his pride (not to mention his blatant disrespect for the things of God), the Lord quickly brought King Belshazzar down to a place of humility and shame, just as He had previously done to his father, Nebuchadnezzar (in prophetic language, and especially as it is applied in this case, heaven is used in a general sense to describe an exalted place of greatness and prominence). Though he sat in a position of power and great influence among the nations, causing others to stand in awe of his majesty; and though he had inherited a shining reputation through Babylon's massive military conquests, insomuch that he caused kings and their kingdoms to shake and tremble at the very mention of his name, it was not enough for him. He actually sought to attain a god-like status, to rival God Himself! Therefore, the handwriting was upon the wall (Dan. 5:1-28); he was weighed in the balances, and found wanting! Not long thereafter (in fact, that very night),

we read that he was violently stripped of his throne, and succeeded by Darius the Mede. And because of the cruel and inhumane treatment given to both his subjects and captives alike during his reign, he was even denied the dignity of a decent burial. He, who had once adorned himself in the finest apparel this world had to offer, who had surrounded himself with stupendous pomp and splendor, and who had made his bed of the most comfortable materials available in his time, was slain. Afterward, instead of the royal burial traditionally given to kings, his stinking carcass was cast into an open pit, and left there to be covered with worms and flies, as a testimony for all to behold! (The New English translation brings it graphically to life: "Maggots are the pallet beneath you, and worms your coverlet"). What a pitiful ending for such a man of prominence and might!

With that in mind, and without further ado, let us now adjust our gaze to that which is beyond. We do not want to tarry long on the issue (for again, this is not our intention), but for the sake of those who are not yet settled or persuaded in their minds as to the spiritual identity of this character, we would make but a few brief observations; then we shall feel free to continue.

It should be apparent to all who read these lines that the address was obviously given to a member of the human race. This is seen by the facts that 1) he is specifically referred to as A MAN (verse 16); and 2) only mortal beings can suffer corruption. Spirits do not. No matter how desirable the thought might seem, you simply cannot put the devil in the grave (nor was he ever told that he would die as a result of transgression)! Secondly, this one was said to have desired to be "like the Most High". According to our most reliable Authority, the Word itself, this aspiration narrows the choices down considerably (Gen. 3:4-6). And as a third powerful witness, we read that this individual was responsible for "making the world a wilderness" (verse 17), and for "destroying his land" (verse 20). Now, if we recall correctly, the Lord removed all doubt about this, when He said to Adam, "Cursed is the ground for thy sake" (Gen. 3:17). Not once was the devil blamed for this. It was solely for ADAM'S sake! "Wait", someone may ask, "What about the name, 'Lucifer'? Isn't that a good indication as to whom this refers"? Well, that all depends. It depends on whether you are prepared to accept the simple facts, or whether you choose to revert to popular tradition! You see, while many have commonly associated the name "Lucifer" with satan, there is nothing in Scripture to actually support that belief. How could it, when this is the only place where it is even found? The truth is, the word "lucifer" was never intended to be interpreted as a proper name in the first place. It has been assumed that it was, mainly because the King James translators capitalized it (though the belief originated with early Catholicism). However, it is taken from a Latin word, which simply means, "light-bearer". It is really no different than using any other common title, such as "electrician", "brick mason", or "plumber". It is descriptive of the occupation or role of the addressee. This is why the Amplified version of verse 12 says, "O light-bearer and daystar, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened and laid prostrate the nations"! Their reason for not using the word "lucifer" is explained in the footnotes. They read, "'Light-bearer' or 'shining one' was originally translated 'lucifer' (from the Latin Vulgate), but because of the association of that name with Satan it is not now used. Some students feel that the application of the name lucifer to Satan, in spite of the long and confident teaching to that effect, is

erroneous. Lucifer, the light-bringer, is the Latin equivalent of the Greek word, "phosphoros", which is used as a title of Christ in II Peter 1:19, and corresponds to the name, "bright Morning Star" in Rev. 22:16, which Jesus called Himself. The application of the name has existed since the third century A.D., and is based on the supposition that Lk. 10:18 is an explanation of Isa. 14:12, which some authorities feel is not true" ---end quote. (We would point out that when Jesus told his disciples in Lk. 10:18 that He "beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven", He was not speaking of some prehistoric event, but one that had just occurred. It was in response to their saying, "Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through Thy name" (verse 17). In other words, while they were busy casting out devils, and witnessing their subjection to them in His name, He was seeing the event as it transpired behind the veil, in the spiritual realm. The demonic forces were losing their positions of authority in the lives of men, and were falling like flashes of lightning into the lower regions). Needless to say, we are in agreement with, and are among the students mentioned in these comments from the Amplified!

Although through the centuries satan has masqueraded as an angel of light (II Cor. 11:14), he has never been one. He has always coveted the title of "light-bearer" or "shining one", and has persuaded certain theologians to bestow upon him that prestigious title, but in very truth, it has never rightfully belonged to him. There was only one in that pre-dawn era who was specifically designed for the purpose of bearing the light of God's glory; and there was only one who stood in the ranks of majesty, endued with power from on high, and capable of becoming like the Most High, and that was ADAM! He was the original "light-bearer"; "the shining one", covering himself "with light as a garment" (ref. Psa. 104:2; because he was being made in the image of God)...arrayed in heavenly splendor! As we pointed out in our last message, he was privileged to dwell in "the heavens" of God's divine presence (for wherever God is, is heaven, you see); and it was there that his "throne", or seat of authority, was. Yea, he "walked with God in the cool of the day"...daily conversing with Him about the mysteries of life, and gaining an understanding from the heavenly perspective. Ezekiel's terminology was that "every precious stone was his covering", and that he walked "up and down in the midst of the stones of fire" (28:14). That is to say, his walk was governed by revelation of the Spirit; his steps were ordered of the Lord. He was receiving bright and shining revelations, which, in turn, served as the foundational principles for his life. He was then adorning himself with the light of truth! But when he attempted to independently continue his upward progression into the higher echelons of heavenly glory, he was cast down. And how great was his fall! He fell from that high and lofty place of glory and virtue where God had brought him, from that dimension of divine direction and discernment, to the realm of corruption and decay. To use Isaiah's language, he fell from heaven, from the towering heights thereof, even unto hell! The Almighty pronounced in His Word, "thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee" (v.11); that is, corruption became his foundation, and corruption was his covering! He was virtually swallowed up in death, and the various degrees of degradation associated with it! He left off from walking upon the stones of true spiritual revelation, and was compelled to live among "the stones of the pit" (Isa. 14:19)! And rather than sitting "upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north" (verse 13; New English version reads, "on the mountain where the gods meet, in

the far recesses of the north"; that is, in the place from whence judgments are rendered), he made his residence in "the sides of the pit" (v. 15)! How very descriptive all this is of the carnal mind, and it's foundational principles! It is an open gravesite; a loathsome pit. It is the very gateway of death; and it's hellish thoughts are the corrupted "stones" thereof! Those who have walked therein know exactly what we mean! It is no exaggeration when we say that he made his bed (resting place) in hell (ref. Psa. 139:8)!

(By presenting these thoughts in this way, we certainly don't want to leave the impression that we think satan is nonexistent; nor do we want you to think that he is uninvolved with the flesh, or the problems facing mankind. Quite the contrary! He is definitely in the picture [he is just not the center of attention]! He is continuously working from behind the scenes, inspiring and instigating the carnal mind in it's devilishness. According to Paul, he daily energizes the old man of sin with "all power and signs and lying wonders, and all deceivableness of unrighteousness" (II Thess. 2:9- 10)! As such, the flesh is the perfect stronghold for him to occupy [and has been, ever since the Adamic/satanic alliance was first made]. Howbeit, the picture given here in Isa. 14 is not of him. It portrays Adam at the peak of his power, and the attitude which brought him down to ruin. It shows us the order of events wherein the flesh came into being; and it declares in no uncertain terms it's final destiny! "The Lord of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand...For the Lord of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? And His hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?" (Isa. 14:24, 27).

"I WILL...WITH GOD'S HELP"!

Reading through the Psalms, we receive precious instruction from the experiences of David. No matter that his enemies were primarily natural, and ours spiritual (Eph. 6:12), the lessons are nevertheless applicable. We should all take notes on his godly attitude!

Psalm 18, in particular, is a literary masterpiece, when it comes to models. Here, David gives us the perfect example of the attitude of an overcomer, as well as an excellent contrast with that of Adam. Embodied in this powerful record are a great many of the principles we have led up to in our series; and reveals the proper way for us to encounter spiritual conflict. Therefore, let us give the more earnest heed to these words, that we, too, might share in the victory! Shall we?

David begins by saying, "I will love Thee, O Lord, my strength. THE LORD IS MY ROCK, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower. I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies" (verses 1-3). This, we could say, was his "Declaration of Dependence". It was his statement of faith; his testimony of trust. It shows that from the outset, his confidence was wholly in God!

(Interestingly enough, three times in this psalm he referred to God as his "Rock": in the verse quoted above; in verse 31, where he said, "For who is God save the Lord? or who is a Rock save our God"?; and in verse 46, where he said, "The Lord liveth; and blessed be

my Rock; and let the God of my salvation be exalted". Clearly articulated, the way of God, the revelation of His Spirit, was the foundational principle upon which his declaration rested. Unlike Adam, this veteran of foreign and domestic wars had learned better than to build upon "the Rock of I"! The framework of his constitution was based totally upon the foundation of God, and His Word!

Next, the Psalmist declared his dilemma. "The sorrows of death compassed me, and the floods of ungodly men made me afraid (Berkeley's translation more generally renders this, "Cords of death encompassed me and the floods of ungodliness assailed me"). The sorrows of hell compassed me about: the snares of death prevented (preceded) me". Surely, we understand his words to be figurative. He was expressing in the strongest of terms the seriousness of his position. Be it known that he was not wallowing in self-pity; nor was he looking for an excuse to complain. He was simply facing reality! It was as if waves of ungodliness were beating vehemently against him; as if snares preceded his every step, and traps were laid on every hand! The overwhelming feelings of death had already set in...and his life constantly felt threatened by them!

May we say that these words represent the condition of mankind in general. Whereas Adam started in the heavens, and ended in hell, it was just the opposite for us. By common experience, we all entered this world in a state of hellish carnality. Because of Adam's transgression (yet according to the eternal purpose of God; Rom. 8:20), the creature was "made subject to vanity", and lowered into the distressing depths of frustration, depression, and despair. Therefore, we could rightly say that we have all been through a little bit of hell (to one degree or another)! We ask you: who among us has been able to avoid the sorrows of hell that invariably come at various times in life; or who has not tasted the bitter dregs of death? Who has not been surrounded with snares and pitfalls of the carnal mind; or who has not walked upon "the stones in the pit"? Certainly, were it not for the fact that we found ourselves in this predicament in the past, we would have never sought God in the first place! We would have been content to remain right where we were..."dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1)!

No doubt, we could all agree that this was pertinent in the past. But even now, since we have positionally been "quickened together with Christ...raised up together, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:5-6), have you ever felt at times during your conversion experience like you were being assaulted with waves of oppression from every direction, but could not pinpoint the source? Or perhaps you recognized the source, but could not quite understand the reason for it? How about the snares of death? Ever felt like no matter which way you turned, carnality lay before you like a trap? Like you were being set up to take a fall? Then you can identify with David! He knew that Saul doggedly pursued him...but he never knew where he might pop up next, or what to expect from him! At times, he was able to distance himself far enough from him, so that he felt a limited sense of security; at other times, he felt him practically hovering over him, breathing right down his neck! He knew this rebellious, rejected king would do anything to take his life; and he knew that, were it not for the intervention of

God, he had it within his power to do so. Therefore, David refused to take any chances that might put himself in jeopardy! So what did he do?

Let us note David's response: "In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried unto my God..." (verse 6a). Ah, how vital this is! Rather than seeking his own solution, rather than consulting with his advisors, rather than trying to fight his oppressors with humanly devised strategies, rather than trying to negotiate with them, and rather than just hoping his troubles would go away if he ignored them long enough, he looked to the Rock from whence he was hewn! He understood perfectly that his help "cometh from the Lord"; therefore, he did not waste his time searching in vain for deliverance from other sources! As we said, his faith was wholly invested in God! He was anchored in the Rock of his salvation!

What was the result? "...He heard my voice out of His temple, and my cry came before Him, even unto His ears" (verse 6b). Exactly what we might expect! Now comes the thrilling part: "Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations of the hills moved and were shaken, because He was wroth. There went up a smoke out of His nostrils, and fire out of His mouth devoured: coals were kindled by it" (verses 7-8). Wow! Talk about illustrative! Oh David sure had a way with words, when the anointing came upon him!

Again, we point out that the Psalmist was speaking figuratively. His words are not to be taken literally, as if this were an actual event. (Just imagine for a moment..."Yahweh---the fire-breathing God")! However, we should pay special attention to this connection between fire, and "the breath (Spirit) of His mouth". For, you see, it is directly involved in the work of the Spirit! As we shall further explore in our studies, God uses fire for the purpose of revelation and disclosure (not to mention destruction)! He takes away the chaff, burns away the dross, and removes all that serves to obscure, that only truth might remain!

Continuing, we read, "He bowed the heavens also, and came down: and darkness was under His feet. And He rode upon a cherub, and did fly: yea, He did fly upon the wings of the wind. He made darkness His secret place; His pavillion round about Him were dark waters and thick clouds of the skies. At the brightness that was before Him His thick clouds passed, hail stones and coals of fire. The Lord also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave His voice: hail stones and coals of fire. Yea, He sent out His arrows, and scattered them; and He shot out lightnings, and discomfited them. Then the channels of waters were seen, and the foundations of the world were discovered at Thy rebuke, O Lord, at the blast of the breath of Thy nostrils" (verses 9-15). Could he have possibly been more poetic with his terminology? We think not!

Whereas above we encountered the leading part of II Thess. 2:8, "the SPIRIT (BREATH) OF HIS MOUTH...", here we have the counterpart..."the BRIGHTNESS OF HIS COMING". How clear this makes the analogy; and how obvious this makes the connection between these passages! They are companion volumes in the Spirit! We shall reserve the majority of our thoughts on this subject for later, when we can expound upon

it at greater length; but we would be amiss not to comment on the tremendous example we have here of the Lord condescending to men of low estate: "He bowed the heavens also, and came down"! What amazing grace is demonstrated here!

Personally speaking, have you ever had times when, for no apparent reason, and for no particular fault of your own, everything around you was dark and mysterious; when nothing seemed to make any sense, and the spiritual realm was silent? Pressures mounted; problems loomed...and you were wearied with attacks from the Adamic nature (either from without, from within, or both). Have you ever been there? We must confess that we have! We have experienced times when the old man in others almost seemed to have a personal vendetta against us; when it seemed that no matter what we did, how we did it, or how carefully we sought to preserve peace in the midst, the flesh was bound and determined to rise up within them! We have been acquainted with some who deliberately tried to stir up contention; who loved nothing better than to see if they could "get a rise" out of the "beast" nature in those around them! We could not comprehend why they would want to speak and act the way they did...but they did, nonetheless! And no amount of words, regardless of how loving, gentle, or well arranged, seemed to effect them. There was simply no approaching them...and the impending conflict represented the sorrows of death to us. To be in their presence was like being around the dark raging waters of a whirlpool, which ever threatened to pull us in (most of you can probably relate to this). Then, there have been other times when those same fleshly feelings suddenly rushed over us, when foreign emotions crowded in around us, and when carnal attitudes pressed themselves upon our minds, all of which were diametrically opposed to our spirits. They were not invited; nor did we entertain them; but they came, nevertheless! And we could not explain them. They were just there...one after another...continuously knocking at the door...repeatedly seeking opportunity and acceptance from us. Try as we may in our own strength, we just couldn't stop them from coming! However, when we cried unto the Lord for deliverance, then, He suddenly appeared in the clouds. He broke through the veil with "the brightness of His coming", and showed Himself mighty to save! When "the Lord thundered in the heavens, the Highest gave His voice", our "earth" began to shake and tremble, "the foundations of the hills" moved, and the "thick clouds" of misunderstanding began to pass away! Praise God! He made sense of the situation, by showing us the underlying motives and principles involved. "Then the channels of waters were seen, and the foundations of the world were discovered at Thy rebuke, O Lord, at the blast of the breath of Thy nostrils". He showed us the activities occurring "beneath the surface", so to speak, and allowed us to see the scene as He saw it! He enabled us to judge the situation "from the mount where the gods meet, from the sides of the north"...with righteous judgment!

Listen to what happened next. "He sent from above, He took me, He drew me out of many waters. He delivered me from my strong enemy, and from them that hated me: for they were too strong for me. They prevented me in the day of my calamity: but the Lord was my stay. He brought me forth also into a large place: He delivered me, because He delighteth in me" (verses 16-19). This, dear friends, is paramount in importance to an overcomer. We must always remember that no matter how capable we think we are, we

are no match for the flesh (not our flesh, or the flesh that exists in others)! Jesus gave us this testimony, when He said, "I can of Mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and My judgment is just; because I seek not Mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent Me" (Jn. 5:30). Therefore, if He testified this way, then surely we can do no better! Our enemy is simply too strong for us to conquer alone!

(While we are on the subject of "wills", may we quickly bring out another point? According to Isaiah's account, it was the five "I wills" of Adam that originally brought the old man into being: "I WILL ascend into heaven, I WILL exalt my throne above the stars of God: I WILL sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I WILL ascend above the heights of the clouds; I WILL be like the Most High". However, it is the "I wills" of David that bring about the old man's demise! Compare the difference: verse 1, "I WILL love Thee, O Lord"; verse 2, "The Lord is my Rock...in whom I WILL trust"; verse 3, "I WILL call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised"; and verse 49, "Therefore WILL I give thanks unto Thee, O Lord, among the heathen, and sing praises unto Thy name"! Needless to say, one represents the way of the wicked, the way of self-dependence; the other, the way of the righteous, the way of God-dependence)!

Verse 28 should be underscored in our Bibles, because it signifies a critical point in the chronological order of events. What does it say? "For Thou wilt light my candle: the Lord my God will enlighten my darkness". In other words, David was saying, "He will illumine and inspire me; He will dispel every question I might have concerning this perplexing situation". May we simply say that unless God "lights our candle", and unless He illumines us with the fiery breath of inspiration, we will never see things correctly! We will be left in the dark, in the sides of the pit! This is because the light of human reasoning only enhances the problem! It actually increases the darkness around us!

This brings us to an interesting change in David's terminology: "For by Thee I have run through a troop; and by my God I leaped over a wall...He teacheth my hands to war, so that a bow of steel is broken by mine arms" (verses 29, 34). Did you notice the change? Previous to God's coming and illumination, David saw himself as being overpowered by his adversary. But since he was enlightened, he sees himself in union with God! Now there is no obstacle too great for him to hurdle; no force too strong for him to confront! He has been educated for warfare; so now he is prepared for the fray! He has the mind of God on the matter, now...and that changes everything!

David's victorious attitude, and the success of his campaign, can be directly attributed to the fact that he kept his eyes on God! Not once does he look to himself! "As for God, His way is perfect: the Word of the Lord is tried: He is a buckler to all those that trust in Him...It is God that girdeth me with strength, and maketh my way perfect..." (verses 30, 32). As you recall, Adam was said to have been perfect in his ways until iniquity was found in him. It was when he attempted to attain a higher state of perfection (God-likeness) independently of God that he stumbled and fell. But David understood that the key to ascending ever higher into the life and mind of the Spirit was in allowing God to make his way perfect. Then, "He maketh my feet like hind's feet, and setteth me upon my

high places...Thou hast enlarged my steps under me, that my feet did not slip" (verses 33, 36). That is to say, when we cooperate with Him, placing our complete trust in Him; and when we refuse to lean to our own understanding, He draws us out of the sorrowful surroundings of hell and death, and enables us to reach new heights in the heavens. He bids us godspeed to the mountaintops, and sets us in our high places, the place He has specifically prepared for us (Jn. 14:2-3). And not only that, but He also secures our steps under us, so that we can confidently walk upon the "stones of fire", without fear of slipping! Glory to God in the highest! He does for us what we cannot do for ourselves!

From here on out, David becomes the aggressor: "I have pursued mine enemies, and overtaken them: neither did I turn again till they were consumed. I have wounded them that they were not able to rise: they are fallen under my feet. For Thou hast girded me with strength unto the battle: Thou hast subdued under me those that rose up against me. Thou hast also given me the necks (will) of mine enemies; that I might destroy them that hate me. They cried, but there was none to save them: even unto the Lord, but He answered them not. Then did I beat them small as the dust before the wind: I did cast them out as the dirt in the street" (verses 37-42).

In all of this, the son of Jesse fails not to give God the glory. He knew that were it not for the Lord God of Israel leading him, guiding him, and strengthening him for the encounter, things would never have turned out this way! He would most assuredly have gone down to the pit! Instead, it is his enemy that is beaten small as the dust before the wind (for dust he is, and unto dust he returns; Gen.3:19); it is he who is cast out as dirt in the street!

Beloved, the moment we think we can subdue our Adamic adversary in our own strength, we are already defeated! How can we possibly conquer the flesh with the flesh? Or how can we attain a greater level of spiritual maturity through fleshly means? As Paul said in Gal. 3:3, "Are ye so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh"? Humanly devised tactics, words of man's wisdom, and self-imposed strategies concocted in our heads, have no power over the man of sin. This is because he is the one that comes up with these ideas! He makes the suggestions! Whether he comes against us from within, or from without, we are absolutely powerless in ourselves to overthrow him, either in word or in deed. Nevertheless, he is delighted when we try! For whenever we attempt to do so, we only give him new ground in which to operate. How often he has proved this to be so!

This is why it is so necessary for us to learn to wait patiently for the Spirit. When He comes, He illuminates the battleground, and clearly reveals the strongholds of the enemy. He takes away the guesswork for us; where we don't have to judge matters according to appearance, according to "the way that seems right to a man" (Prov. 14:12), but according to righteous judgment! He makes it where we can see all the way around us; where we can survey the situation from the vantage point of truth. Then He equips us with the spiritual strength and stamina necessary to put the old man under our feet! We don't know about you, but we like that arrangement!

O brother, O sister, let us never forget that His strength is made perfect in weakness; and that it is in our weakness that we are made strong (II Cor. 12:9-10). While it is true that we can of our own selves do nothing, we are likewise assured that we can do ALL THINGS through Christ Jesus which strengthens us! It is a matter of waiting upon Him, hearing His voice, and acting immediately upon it. Furthermore, it calls for a diligent, determined effort to completely carry out our orders, once they have been given. We cannot afford to stop short of our mission (see I Sam. 15)! The Lord has no mercy on the flesh, or the driving powers of darkness...and neither should we! As He continues to guide us, we shall take dominion over every Adamic/satanic expression exhibited before us. It is a concerted effort; Christ & us, with Christ in us! And it is in this state of union that we will see the ultimate consummation and utter destruction of the man of sin! Hallelujah, his days are numbered, that's for sure! Let us hasten the Day, when we shall be able to say once and for all with David, "He delivereth me from mine enemies: yea, Thou liftest me up above those that rise up against me: Thou hast delivered me from the violent man..." (verses 47-48)! At such a time, our "whole earth" shall be at rest, and be quiet, and shall break forth into singing...for the staff of the wicked one shall be broken, and the oppressor shall have ceased (Isa. 14:4-7)! To God be the glory!

to be continued...

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