



## The Glory of His Character

Through the ages that have passed since the creation of the world and the fall of Adam and Eve, there has been a steady tread of divine interventions by God designed to lead us back to the culmination of the sin problem and the reuniting of a cleansed remnant with our Creator. The Bible contains the story of these efforts by God to establish a chosen race of people who know Him and worship Him and have His law written upon their minds and hearts. Because of his devotion and love for God, Abraham was chosen to be the head of this chosen race, and he was told by God that his descendants would be as the stars in the sky and the sand on the seashore.

Abraham's grandson, Jacob, after years of trouble and sorrow, won the victory over his character weaknesses when he wrestled all night with Christ in the form of an Angel at Peniel, and persevered to victory. As a result, his name was changed to Israel, which means, "he struggles with God," or "overcomer." Gen. 32:28. From that time on throughout the Bible, the people of God from all nations have been counted as the children of Israel, or Israelites.

"The honored name Israel was henceforth to memorialize this night of struggle. As applied to the descendants of Jacob, it implied the transformation of character God sought for in them and their destined role of ruling with God. The name was transferred first to his literal descendants and later to his spiritual posterity, who also were to be victors as he had been (John 1:47; Rom. 9:6). 1 BC 407. [Not EGW.]

The important point to remember, is that the Israel of God throughout the Bible are those who persevere with God and are overcomers. As Paul says, "Not all who are descended from Israel are Israel. Nor because they are his descendants are they all Abraham's children." Rom. 9:6, 7. Throughout the Bible, God speaks consistently of a remnant of Israel who will be accounted worthy of salvation and a place in His kingdom.

"Though the number of the Israelites be like the sand by the sea, only the remnant will be saved." Rom. 9:27.

"In that day the remnant of Israel, the survivors of the house of Jacob,..will truly rely on the Lord, the Holy One of Israel. A remnant will return, a remnant of Jacob will return to the mighty God. Though your people, O Israel, be like the sand by the sea, only a remnant will return." Isa. 10:20-22.

"This remnant was to consist of those who had profited from the discipline of the exile and had become spiritually pure." 4 BC 70. [Not EGW.]

When Jesus finished His work here upon earth and ascended to heaven to begin His ministry in the holy place of the heavenly sanctuary, the remnant of the Israelite nation who accepted Him became the foundation of the Christian church. As the centuries of time passed, God preserved a remnant who would not be deceived by the sophistries and false teachings of the enemy through the papal church. Throughout the dark ages true believers clung to their faith in the principles of God's word, and preserved the light of truth, sometimes at the cost of their lives. During those long years of persecution, God required only that His people stand against the prevailing errors of their time, preserve the truth they understood, and be willing to die for their faith.

But throughout both Old and New Testaments, the Bible writers have predicted a time when the great controversy would be finished, and the remnant of God's people would be delivered entirely from sin:

"This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time,' declares the Lord.'I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, "Know the Lord," because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest,' declares the Lord. "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.'" Jer. 31:33-34.

"In those days, at that time,' declares the Lord, 'search will be made for Israel's guilt, but there will be none, and for the sins of Judah, but none will be found, for I will forgive the remnant I spare.'" Jer. 30:20.

"Surely the day is coming; it will burn like a furnace. All the arrogant and every evil doer will be stubble, and that day that is coming will set them on fire,' says the Lord Almighty. 'Not a root or a branch will be left to them. But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings.'" "

"See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the Lord comes. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers; or else I will come and strike the land with a curse.'" Mal. 4:1, 2, 5, 6.

"The remnant of Israel will do no wrong; they will speak no lies, nor will deceit be found in their mouths. They will eat and lie down and no one will make them afraid....

"The Lord, the King of Israel, is with you; never again will you fear any harm....

"The Lord your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing....

"At that time I will gather you. At that time I will bring you home." Zeph. 3:13-17.

The time has now come when God's remnant people are to prepare their hearts and lives for the second coming of Jesus, for we can see that the winds of strife--which have been held back by God to permit His remnant people to be sealed--are being let loose across the earth.

"After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth to prevent any wind from blowing on the land or on the sea or on any tree. Then I saw another angel coming up from the east, having the seal of the living God. He called out in a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm the land and the sea: 'Do not harm the land or the sea or the trees until we put a seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God.' Then I heard the number of those who were sealed: 144,000 from all the tribes of Israel." Rev. 7:1-4.

The next mention of the sealing of God's people is found in Revelation 9 during the sounding of the fifth trumpet:

"The fifth angel sounded his trumpet, and I saw a star that had fallen from the sky to the earth. The star was given the key to the shaft of the Abyss. When he opened the abyss, smoke rose from it like the smoke from a gigantic furnace. The sun and the sky were darkened by the smoke from the abyss. And out of the smoke locusts came down upon the earth and were given power like that of scorpions of the earth. They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any plant or tree but only those people who did not have the seal of God on their foreheads."

It is evident that by the fifth trumpet, the sealing of the people of God will at least be in progress. Then as God sees His people moving into line and preparing their hearts to receive the sealing and the latter rain, He allows the winds of strife to begin to blow upon the earth:

"The sixth angel sounded his trumpet, and I heard a voice coming from the horns of the golden altar that is before God. It said to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, 'Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates. And the four angels who had been kept ready for this very hour and day and month and year were released to kill a third of mankind."

During the dangerous and tumultuous time of the sixth trumpet, God's people experience the closing work of Jesus in the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary, and the work of character perfection will be fully completed by the end of the sixth trumpet:

"In the days when the seventh angel is about to sound his trumpet, the mystery of God will be accomplished, just as he announced to his servants the prophets." Rev. 10:7.

What is the mystery of God?

"I have become its [the church's] servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness--the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints. To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." Col. 1:25-27.

The purpose of the whole plan of salvation has been to bring the human race back to the perfection that was given to them in the Garden of Eden at the time of their creation. This goal will be fully realized in the last remnant just before Jesus comes. This does not take place automatically just because we become a Christian. There has to be a daily walk with Jesus in which He becomes our closest Friend and Counselor. We must seek His wisdom about everything. Then we will walk with God as did Enoch, and thus be prepared for translation from this earth without seeing death.

"We can have what Enoch had. We can have Christ as our constant companion. Enoch walked with God, and when assailed by temptation, he could talk with God about it. He had no 'It is written,' as we have, but he had a knowledge of his heavenly companion. He made God his Counselor, and was closely bound up with Jesus. And Enoch was honored in this course. He was translated to heaven without seeing death. And those who will be translated at the close of time will be those who commune with God on earth. Those who make manifest that their life is hid with Christ in God will ever be representing Him in all their life practices. Selfishness will be cut out by the roots." 1 BC 1087.

How can we experience the cleansing that is necessary to be perfectly like Jesus in character? First, we must go back to the original plan of salvation that was made by the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit before the creation of the world:

"God had a knowledge of the events of the future, even before the creation of the world. He did not make His purposes to fit circumstances, but He allowed matters to develop and work out. He did not work to bring about a certain condition of things, but He knew that such a condition would exist. The plan that should be carried out upon the defection of any of the high intelligences of heaven--this is the secret, the mystery which has been hid from ages. And an offering was prepared in the eternal purposes to do the very work which God has done for fallen humanity....

"To present to the world this mystery that God kept in silence for eternal ages before the world was created, before man was created, was the part that Christ was to act in the work He entered upon when He came to this earth. And this wonderful mystery, the incarnation of Christ in the atonement that He made, must be declared to every son and daughter of Adam.... His sufferings perfectly fulfilled the claims of the law of God." 6 BC 1082.

Some people believe that in order to be our Savior, Jesus had to experience everything we do in the same fallen human nature that we have. Others believe that Jesus was tempted in the nature of Adam before he sinned. The truth lies somewhere in the middle. Yes, He did take upon Himself our human nature after 4,000 years of sin. But His spiritual nature was untainted by sin. Did this give Him an advantage over us? In some ways it does, for when He came to earth, the law of God was already written upon His heart.

"Then I said, 'Here I am, I have come--it is written about me in the scroll. I desire to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart.'" Ps. 40:7, 8.

This is not the case of every other child who is born into this world.

"Children are the lawful prey of the enemy because they are not subjects of grace. They have not experienced the cleansing power of the blood of Jesus. The evil angels have access to these children, and some parents are careless and suffer them to work with but little restraint. Parents have a great work to do in this matter by correcting and subduing their children and bringing them to God and claiming His blessing upon them. By faithful and untiring efforts and the blessing of grace entreated of God upon the children, the power of evil angels will be broken, a sanctifying influence is shed upon the children, and the powers of darkness must give back." CT 118.

David said of himself:

"Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me." Ps. 51:5.

But when Jesus was born into this world, He was already connected with His Father through the Holy Spirit. His mother, Mary, was told by the angel Gabriel:

"The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the Holy One to be born will be called the Son of God." Luke 1:35.

As He grew as a child, His character was flawless:

"With deep earnestness the mother of Jesus watched the unfolding of His powers, and beheld the impress of perfection upon His character. With delight she sought to encourage that bright, receptive mind. Through the Holy Spirit she received wisdom to cooperate with the heavenly agencies in the development of this child, who could claim only God as His Father." DA 69.

If Jesus was perfect from the time He was conceived and remained so throughout His life, how can He understand fallen human beings who have been born with propensities to sin? The answer lies in the plan that was made in the heavenly councils between Christ and His Father before sin ever came into the universe. Every day of Christ's life was already mapped out before He came to earth. David wrote:

"All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be." Ps. 139:16.

While this text can be applied to each one of us, it is especially true of Jesus, for He came to earth to represent every person who would live upon this earth, and to overcome every temptation and trial that would be experienced by any person who ever lived. Therefore, in the plan of God, Jesus experienced and overcame every sin and weakness of the fallen nature. He must experience loneliness, rejection, ridicule, physical exhaustion, hunger, sleepless nights, fear and dread of death, temptation and torture by the evil one, misunderstanding by those He loved, disappointment, abandonment and finally the torture of death on the cross. All these

experiences were woven into the plan for His life before He ever came to this earth. This was necessary, not only because He could then empathize with every human being, but also so that by dependence upon His Father He could overcome for every person, regardless of their circumstances, trials, temptations, or background, and have the victory to give them through the power of His Holy Spirit indwelling in their life.

Not only did Jesus experience the variety of human emotions that we feel, He suffered with greater intensity than we do because of His perfect nature and His hatred of sin:

"As one with us, He must bear the burden of our guilt and woe. The Sinless One must feel the shame of sin. The peace-lover must dwell with strife, the truth must abide with falsehood, purity with vileness. Every sin, every discord, every defiling lust that transgression had brought, was torture to His spirit." DA 111.

"The human nature of Christ was like unto ours, and suffering was more keenly felt by Him; for His spiritual nature was free from every taint of sin. Therefore His desire for the removal of suffering was stronger than human beings can suffer." 5 BC 1104.

"When our Redeemer considered to take the cup of suffering in order to save sinners, His capacity for suffering was the only limitation to His suffering." KH 69.

"No one in the world ever longed more earnestly for appreciation and fellowship than did Christ. He hungered for sympathy. His heart was filled with a longing desire that human beings might appreciate the gift of God to the world." TD 189.

"Christ was put to the closest test, requiring the strength of all His faculties to resist the inclination when endangered, to use His power to deliver Himself from peril and triumph over the power of the prince of darkness. Satan showed his knowledge of the weak points of the human heart, and put forth his utmost power to take advantage of the weakness of the humanity which Christ had assumed in order to overcome his temptations on man's account." 7 BC 930.

"Not one act of Christ's life was unimportant. Every event of His life was for the benefit of His followers in future times." TK 29.

"All that Christ received from God, we, too, may have." COL 149.

"As the vine branch constantly draws the sap from the living vine, so are we to cling to Jesus and receive from Him the strength and perfection of His own character." DA 676.

"By the power of the Holy Spirit the moral image of God is to be perfected in the character. We are to be wholly transformed into the likeness of Christ." TM 506.

"Christ's life must circulate through us as the blood circulates through the veins." OHC 60.

"The impartation of the Spirit is the impartation of the life of Christ." SD 33.

You see, everything that Jesus went through when He was here on this earth, God the Father, God the Son, and the third person in the Godhead--the Holy Spirit--experienced at the same time, for the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are one with each other.

"God was in Christ...and endured all the temptations wherewith man was beset." 7 BC 930.

Consequently, the same Holy Spirit who dwelt in Christ and recorded in Himself everything that Jesus accomplished for us in His victories over the flesh, is now available to us as the Holy Spirit dwells in those who accept Jesus as their Savior and are also filled by the Holy Spirit. Thus, and thus only, can the perfect character of Christ be duplicated in us, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit. Only when we are abiding in a continual love relationship with Jesus can His victory over sin and the devil be transferred to us.

How, then, can we allow sin in our lives and permit our carnal natures to rule over us, when we can have the power of the Holy Spirit to give us the victory that Christ has won for us by His life, death, resurrection, and ministry in the heavenly sanctuary?

"By the power of the Holy Spirit the moral image of God is to be perfected in the character. We are to be wholly transformed into the likeness of Christ." TM 506.

"Tender, compassionate, sympathetic, ever considerate of others, He represented the character of God. As Jesus was in human nature, so God means His followers to be. In His strength we are to live the life of purity and nobility which the Savior lived." SD 21.

"The impartation of the Spirit is the impartation of the life of Christ. It imbues the receiver with the life of Christ." DA 805.

Paul said:

"I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power,.. to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God." Eph. 3:16-19.

"Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so He condemned sin in sinful man, in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit....

"Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation-- but it is not to the sinful nature to live according to it. For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God." Rom. 8:1-4; 12-14.

Throughout history Christians have known that the life of Jesus is an example of what He wants His followers to be. This we cannot do in our own strength, for we are born with the sinful propensities of those who have gone before us. But through the cleansing power of the Holy Spirit, the life of Jesus is available to us, and through the Holy Spirit we are to become like Him. The Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy tell us that the final generation will grow up into the full character of the life of Christ:

"Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself just as he is pure." 1 John 3:2, 3.

"The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is a revelation of His character of love. The children of God are to manifest His glory. In their own life and character they are to reveal what the grace of God has done for them." COL 415, 16.

"Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude,..and like loud peals of thunder, shouting:

"Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. Fine linen bright and clean was given her to wear. (Fine linen stands for the righteousness [KJV] of the saints. Then the angel said to me, 'Write: "Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!"' Rev. 19:6-9.

"Through the Holy Spirit, God's word... becomes a transforming power in the life of the receiver. By implanting in their hearts the principles of His word, the Holy Spirit develops in men the attributes of God. The light of His glory--His character--is to shine forth in His followers. Thus they are to glorify God, to lighten the path to the bridegroom's home, to... the marriage supper of the Lamb." COL 414.

Dear friends, is your character now being cleansed of anything in your life and practice, and even your thoughts, that would not be like our wonderful Savior, Jesus? If not, hasten quickly to the sanctuary where Jesus is yet interceding for us, to receive His free grace--the perfection of His character. Then you will be ready to meet Jesus with joy as He comes with the clouds of heaven to bring His waiting children home.

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