

Children of Promise

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All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.

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INTRODUCTION

It is the soldier, not the newspaper, who allows Americans to have freedom of the press. It is the soldier, not the reporter, who gives Americans freedom of speech. It is the soldier, not the campus organization, who gives Americans freedom of demonstration. It is the soldier—the one who salutes the flag, marches under the flag, and sees the flags lowered because of the death of those who died defending their country. The soldier preserves even the rights of those who choose to defile all that the flag represents.

And today, in nearly every nation around the world, there are spiritual soldiers: men and women who march under the banner of the love of Jesus Christ. His army is made up of those who have believed on Jesus Christ and have become the children of God's promises. We who have believed and received His great grace are now hid with Christ in God and have become heirs of every one of His promises.

Sadly, many Christians do not view themselves in this light. They suffer from identity crises, measuring themselves according to a standard of legalism, or live in bondage to sin. This booklet is written to reveal the truth about who we are in Christ. We have been born of God's promise, not the Law. We are a majestic force who have strength, peace, and joy from the Spirit of God.

Chapter One
TWO NATURES AT WAR

“For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would” (Galatians 5:17).

According to Galatians 5:17, there is a struggle for dominance between the Holy Spirit (through the spiritual man) and the natural man. This struggle of natures is a problem that has plagued believers since sin came into the world.

Isaac and Rebekah named one of their sons “Jacob,” which meant “double-minded” or “prone to cheating”—and he was! Jacob manipulated his brother Esau out of his birthright (Genesis 25:29-34) and tricked his father into giving him the blessing that belonged to the oldest son (Genesis 27:1-29). In Genesis 32:28, however, God gave Jacob a new name: Israel, meaning “prince with God and power with men.”

We see in the Bible that throughout his life,

Jacob went back and forth between two natures. In Genesis 45:26, he is referred to as Jacob, because he refused to believe his sons when they told him that Joseph was alive. For years, Jacob was depressed, convinced that his son had been killed. Then, in Genesis 45:27-28, after he saw the wagons of food and provisions sent to them by Joseph, Jacob believed that his son was alive. When he believed, he was again called "Israel."

As Jacob's death drew near, his sons gathered around to receive their blessings. Finally, in Genesis 50:2, after he died, he was called Israel—prince with God, power with men.

The Mountain of Legalism

"For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a free woman.

"But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise.

"Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar.

"For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in

bondage with her children” (Galatians 4:22-25).

When Moses went up to speak to God, Mount Sinai was a place where not even a beast was allowed to set foot (Exodus 19). Not a single thing could live on that mountain. It represented the holiness of God and that to be holy, men would have to keep the law perfectly. No one could do it. When Moses came back down from the mountain with God’s commandments, the Israelites said that they would keep all of them (Exodus 19:8; 24:3). As history has proved, they were never able to do so.

From human viewpoint, Mount Sinai stands for religion: man’s efforts to serve God. The greatest weapon Satan has is religion. Any religion that does not believe in the saving power of the name of Jesus Christ is not Christian (Acts 4:12). No one can be saved by simply practicing a religion. Some think that believing in God is enough to get a person into heaven. That is far from the truth. Only one name was given by which men might be saved. There is only one mediator between God and men—it is Jesus Christ. Salvation is a gift of grace by faith in Christ (Ephesians 2:7-10) and not of works (Romans 4:3; 11:6).

The Banner of Truth

“Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth. Selah” (Psalm 60:4).

“We will rejoice in thy salvation, and in the name of our God we will set up our banners: the LORD fulfil all thy petitions” (Psalm 20:5).

Many are waving the American flag these days; it is the banner of our country. The flag brings to mind the character of our nation; and by displaying it we reveal our oneness with what it stands for. According to the Scriptures, Christians have a banner too. It is the Cross, where Jesus Christ died because of His love for mankind. Spiritually, at salvation, every believer dies with Jesus, is buried with Him, and is also resurrected with Christ, who came out of the grave. Every believer also ascends with Christ, who is seated at the right hand of the Father.*

The Christians’ banner is a display of categorical truth around the Person of Christ. God has given that banner to all those who fear Him, and it is displayed by those who are filled with categories of truth.

But notice that Psalm 20:5 refers to “banners” in the plural, speaking of the many sides

of the nature and character of God and His Finished Work for us. According to this Psalm, we set up our banners in the name of God. His name reveals His nature. The nature of God is merciful, compassionate, longsuffering, forgiving, and full of truth (Exodus 34:6).

We rejoice in our deliverance, which comes because of who He is, which is seen in His characteristics. These are the banners we set up for all people to see. They are the standards that bring victory, grand expressions that reveal that we are more than conquerors. God displays these banners; they are Finished Work revelations of Jesus Christ for believers.

**Be sure to read What Happened When You Received Christ?, by Pastor Carl H. Stevens, Grace Publications, 1999.*

Chapter Two

BEAUTIFUL AND MAJESTIC ARE GOD'S CHILDREN

"Draw me, we will run after thee: the king hath brought me into his chambers: we will be glad and rejoice in thee, we will remember thy love more than wine: the upright love thee" (Song of Solomon 1:4).

"He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love" (Song of Solomon 2:4).

"Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem, terrible as an army with banners" (Song of Solomon 6:4).

The bride was brought into the inner chamber. Over her in the banqueting house was the banner of love, which refers to Calvary, the banner over every Christian.

"Thou art beautiful as Tirzah" is a wonderful statement. "Tirzah" means God's greatest delight. When we understand that we are seated

above, hid with Christ in God, we realize that we are beautiful within (Psalm 45:13) and that there is no spot in us (Song of Solomon 4:7). We are especially beautiful because we have Christ's life. Jesus said it Himself: "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you" (John 15:9).

Manifesting Glory and Majesty

"Comely as Jerusalem" is another great phrase. Jerusalem is the place that was and will again be used to manifest the glory of God. It is where Jesus Christ will reign one thousand years in peace. When we manifest the glory and peace of God, we are "comely as Jerusalem."

The next phrase used to describe believers is "terrible as an army with banners." The word "terrible" speaks of majesty. We are as majestic as an army going out to war.

"O God, thou art terrible out of thy holy places: the God of Israel is he that giveth strength and power unto his people. Blessed be God" (Psalm 68:35).

We are God's people, seated together with Christ as ones hidden inside the veil of the Finished Work. Even in this life, we are powerful and majestic. We receive power and strength from God because of our position in Christ,

which is above everything else. Because of *the* Truth, we have the banner of victory.

Therefore, we are made free from a life of sin and its consequences (see Romans 6:18-20). We are free from the Law (Romans 8:2). When love abounds in our hearts, we have no fear (1 John 4:18). We have no guilt and no condemnation (Romans 8:1). We are free from oppression (Exodus 3:9-10). We are free indeed (John 8:36).

The Majestic Heavenly Armies

“O God, thou art terrible [(or majestic)] out of thy holy places: the God of Israel is he that giveth strength and power unto his people” (Psalm 68:35). Beyond words, beyond knowledge, and beyond sight, try to comprehend what it means to be in the Holy Place. We are as majestic as armies that have won the war through Christ. We are individuals who have overcome and are seated in heavenly places with God. We are individuals to whom God does not impute iniquity or sins (Romans 4:7-8). We are those who have been justified by faith because of grace, as expressed in the Word of God (Romans 5:1-2). We have the majesty that belongs to members of a royal family. We are children and heirs of the King of kings.

“Who is blind, but my servant? or deaf, as my messenger that I sent? who is blind as he that is perfect, and blind as the LORD’S servant?” (Isaiah 42:19).

This verse reveals that God’s people must walk by faith, not by sight. We are to walk as children of the promise, seeing ourselves and each other in Christ. The Father sees us as complete in Him who is the head of all principalities and powers (Colossians 2:10). Jesus Christ sees us as members of His body, flesh, and bones (Ephesians 5:30). Jesus Christ sees us as one spirit, being joined to Him (1 Corinthians 6:17). He sees us as absolutely perfect—without spot or wrinkle—and our beauty overwhelms Him. He says it in Song of Solomon 6:5. “Turn your eyes away from Me! I have a Bride just as beautiful as I am, and her beauty has overcome Me.”

The fact is that we are as He is in this world (1 John 4:17), and His love is made perfect in us when we believe in every verse that proclaims who we are in the Finished Work.

Chapter Three

THE STRENGTH OF THOSE WHO REIGN ABOVE

“Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me: thy hair is as a flock of goats that appear from Gilead” (Song of Solomon 6:5).

According to Judges 16, hair represents unusual power and strength such as Samson had. For women, hair speaks of beauty, according to 1 Corinthians 11. The goats from Gilead are animals that climb the steepest peaks and never slip, even in the most dangerous places. Of course, we do slip; but God still sees us as strong and beautiful. The flock that appears in Gilead is a type of believers who are seated above, reigning even in the most precarious places.

Breaking from Bondage

“But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.

“For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that

bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband.

“Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.

“But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now.

“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.

“So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free” (Galatians 4:26-31).

Before she bore Isaac, Sarah was barren. Yet God kept His promise to Abraham and at 90 years old, Sarah conceived (Genesis 21:1-3). Today, every born-again believer is a child of promise, just as Isaac was.

Most religious systems today have their origins in bondage, not freedom. But we are children of promise, made free of bondage, and we are citizens of the New Jerusalem, which will one day descend from above. There we will reign over the earth with Christ for one thousand years.

Every Foe is Defeated

Throughout history, God's people have been persecuted. Cain killed Abel because of jealousy. Ishmael, who was born after the flesh, persecuted Isaac, who was born after the Spirit. God will remember all that they do because they know the truth, yet deny it, and go against it.

In Exodus 17:8, Amalek attacked the weakest of the people of Israel as they journeyed through the desert. He killed the old and the feeble who lagged behind, "...and he feared not God" (Deuteronomy 25:17-19). Amalek's nature was so troubling, God declared that his remembrance would be blotted out from under heaven.

There will always be people and even nations who will persecute the people of the promise, the people of the truth (see Genesis 21:9). They lust after power, desiring to have more, and war rages outwardly and in their own members (James 4:1-2). What they don't realize is that all who receive Jesus Christ as their personal Savior have amazing freedom and power that comes from being hid with Christ in God. Those who attack God's people have already been defeated. They have already been conquered, yet they don't even realize it.

Thanks be to God for the peace, joy, and freedom from fear and oppression that come because we understand the absolute principle of life, which we have in Christ.

CONCLUSION

The Word of God describes in detail the inner chamber and the banqueting house mentioned in Song of Solomon. The banner of love above us is Calvary. Christ sees us as “beautiful as Tirzah”—we are the delight of God’s Son. Not only that, we are as “comely as Jerusalem” because we manifest the glory of God.

We have overcome Satan by the blood of the Lamb, the Word of our testimony, and that we love not our lives unto the death (Revelation 12:11). We have strength and beauty, therefore we walk in places that no one else can walk, because we walk in the Spirit of the living God.

These are the things that God has given us. He pictures each of us as being in Christ, hidden within the veil of the Holy of Holies. We are His children forever—children of His promise—and all of His promises are for us.

Heavenly Father, thank You for this inheritance. In our position as kings and priests before You, keep

us humble yet bold before men, ready to serve and to lead them to the Promised Land through the saving grace of Jesus Christ. In His precious name, Amen.