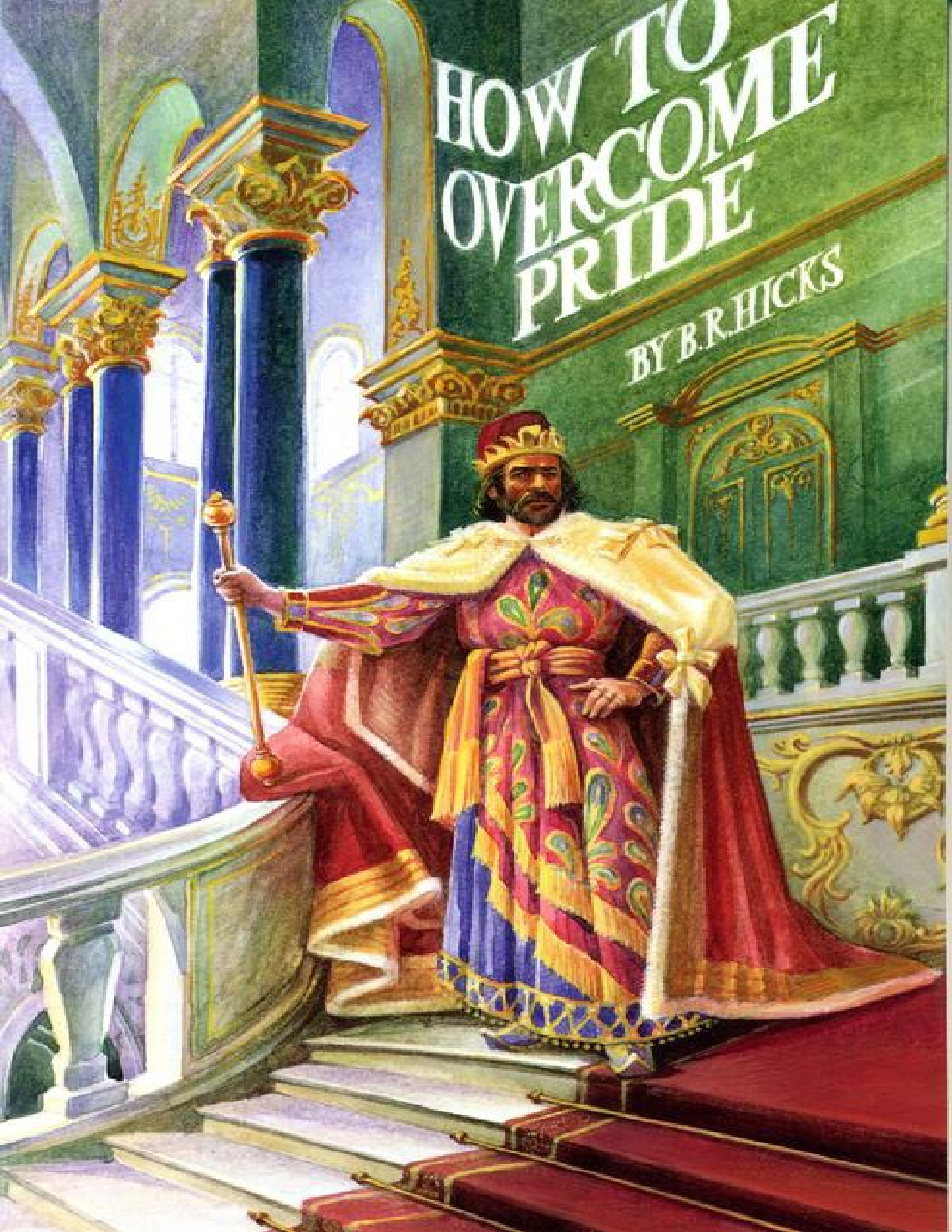


HOW TO OVERCOME PRIDE

BY B. R. HICKS





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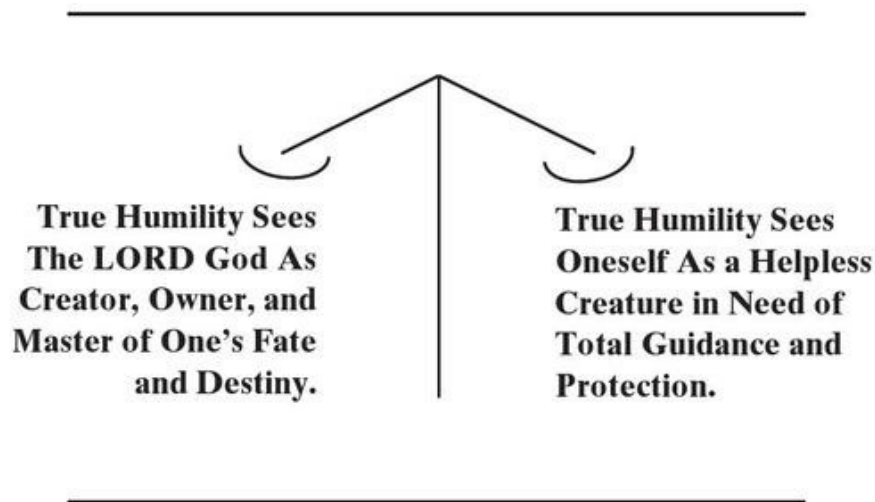
Introduction

When we lay aside our independent pride that we inherited from Adam the First, who chose fallen Lucifer's will in the Garden of Eden, and we learn to lean in total dependence upon God, we please Him. Having God satisfied with our lives brings us happiness, and every person desires to be happy.

A person always can tell when God has led him to the place of *humility* because he will recognize, realize, and show a consciousness of his own defects, faults, and shortcomings. His awareness, then, will compel him to repent and take on Christ's Humility, which will make him gratefully take the low place in rank, condition, or position in all of life's situations. The humble soul and spirit loses its conceit that would make a person feel the need to boast of his achievements and inheritances.

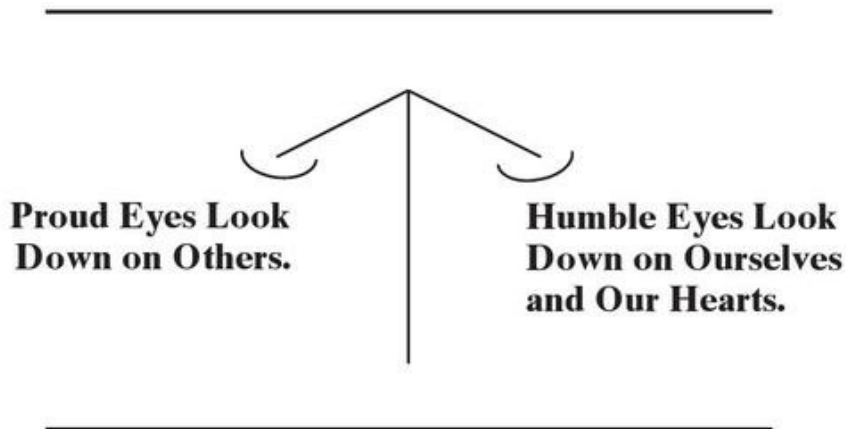
The souls and spirits of believers who have fed on Christ's Humility will possess His sweet *Root of Humility* that will beget within their hearts a holy desire and determination to choose submission to the Father's Purposive Will and to leave life's decisions to Him as the Divine Decider.

Humility is that low, precious, sweet *Root of Christ* from which all spiritual virtues shoot. The casting down of our spirits and wills in true humility earns us the privilege to be joined to Christ's Humility Root. True humility is not brow-beating ourselves nor groveling around in a self-despising spirit. Rather, it is the spiritual eyesight that helps us make a proper estimation of ourselves as "small creatures," who are controlled by the Creator and Owner, Almighty God, El Shadday, and the LORD, the Master of our fate and destiny. True humility is the absence of pride or self-assertion.



True humility sees the LORD for Who He is — the Creator, Owner, and Master — and ourselves for who we are — helpless creatures in need of the Sovereign LORD's complete governmental Authority.

Pride looks down on others, but humility looks down on one's *self*.



Laying hold of Christ's Gift of His humble Grace enables us to humble ourselves and take the low place without degrading ourselves. Then, when His glorious Mercy exalts us, we are not inflated with proud opinions of ourselves because Christ's Humility has taught us Who the LORD God is and who we are. When we come to the Knowledge of Who the LORD God is, we *will be humbled*. Likewise, when we come to the knowledge of who we are, we *will become more humble*.

There is no dark, fleshly cave in which pride can abide once we have come into the Light of Christ's Humility Knowledge.

The enemy's errors and lies would have us believe that we will be degraded by being joined to Jesus Christ's Humiliation. However, this is not true. The road of humility that Jesus Christ walked is the only road that leads to God. All other roads lead us astray. Only in the depths of Christ's Humility can we gain the highest view and the grandest vision of the New City, the Prize, the Bride of Christ.

The act of deciding to humble ourselves does not consist in our *choosing* to humble ourselves or of our *refusing* to humble ourselves; rather, the only decision that God has committed unto us is to choose *freely* and *willingly* to humble ourselves, now, after His Almighty Hand has put us in our rightful place; otherwise, God, in His Almighty Power, will *force* us into the place of humility.

The moment we truly feel our "nothingness" as a creature, when compared to our divine Creator, our whole being becomes an open door, an inlet through which the LORD Jesus Christ's Presence can flow. Then, Jesus Christ, our Bridegroom, becomes our "Everything." This kind of soul goes forth with an omnipresent awareness of what he owes to others instead of what others owe to him.

Just as the dark blue firmament of the sky enhances the brightness of the sun, Christ's Humility makes the glorious Light of Truth of the Heavenly Father shine more brightly. The Heavenly Father brings glorious Light of Truth to the Humility Firmament of Christ and reveals Himself to the lowly and humble ones dwelling therein. He gives Understanding to these little ones and shows the meaning of His Truth to their humble, pure minds. But He hides His Light and Grace from the proud, the curious, and those who are wise in their own conceits.

Christ's Humility will break our icy pride into a million pieces. Then, the Sun of Righteousness will cause His Exalted Glory to melt the icy pieces so that the waters of pride can be changed and joined to the Tree of Life inside our spiritual hearts.

How sad it is when God's saints receive wounds in their hearts and remain ignorant of the fact that the wounds are only the icy blows from Christ's Humility. If we do not see Christ behind the "tool" that gives us the blows, the wounds, we will be angry at the "tool."

LORD's Purposive Will in Giving Humility

**I. Christ's Death on
the Cross Displayed
His Total Humility.**



**II. Christ Uses People to
Minister His Humility.**

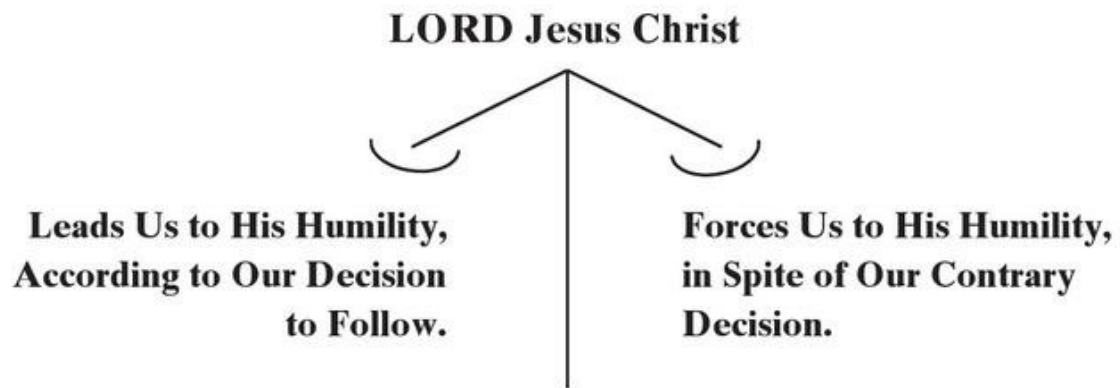


**Humble Hearts
See Christ's Cross
and His Hand that
Ministers Humility.**

If we remain blind to the origin of the wounds we receive in our hearts, our pride will freeze and harden all the deeper, leaving us bitter and unforgiving. When we become poor by acquiring Christ's Humility, we become rich in His Forgiveness.

Christ's Humility gives us the truest form of fasting because we stop feasting on our own self-love, self-conceit, and self-exaltation that we exercise through our voicing our own praise. Christ's Humility is the answer to all man's proud problems.

God *leads* us to the place of humility if our decision is to follow Him; or He ultimately *forces* us to the place of humility by *His* Decision, regardless of our willful, contrary choice. Reaching the place of humility is a necessity — not something we can take or leave. Our choice is to submit, now, or be forced to humble ourselves before an Almighty God in Eternity. Ultimately, all things will bow in humble gratitude to the Creator.



May you, the reader, find answers for your lives as you study the Truth of How to Overcome Pride and grow in Christ's Humility.

— The Author

Chapter One

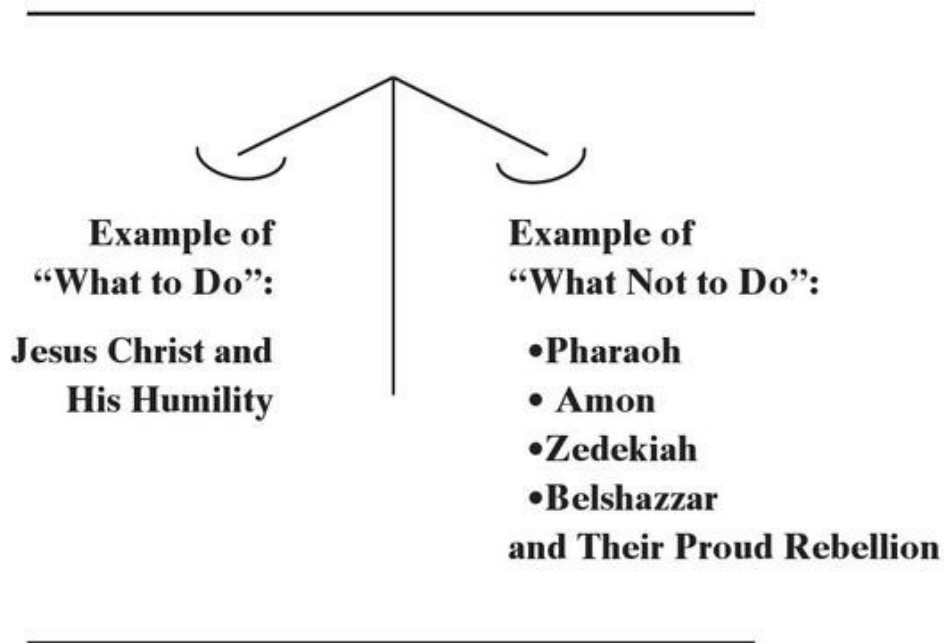
God's Word Warns Us To Humble Ourselves

After we have made the decision to accept Jesus Christ as our personal Saviour, the next most important decision we must make is to humble ourselves under God's mighty Hand. Humility is the ability to condescend, to get down low. This attribute is such a priceless treasure in God's Sight that He gives each individual an opportunity to choose to forsake the way of pride and walk with Christ Jesus down the Stairway of His Humility.*

The decision to humble ourselves and let God deal with our proud human will is unavoidable, if we choose to grow in Christ's Stature.** Sooner or later, we will lose all self-pride and human arrogance, which will constrain us to take our rightful place in submission to our Creator. When we choose willingly to bow in submission to Jesus Christ, now, we are rewarded with a new Spiritual Stature and a new, glorious Union with the LORD Jesus Christ. Then, in Eternity, we will be rewarded according to the measure of Spiritual Stature and for the degree of Glory that we have gained in Jesus Christ as we have allowed our LORD to work His Humility in our lives while we were on Earth.*** However, those who are foolish enough to refuse to humble their proud human wills to the LORD Jesus Christ's holy Headship and Purposive Will in this life will be forced to bow their knees in Eternity. *Every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is LORD to the Glory of God the Father (Philippians 2:10,11).* In view of the eternal weight of this decision, it behooves us to learn what God's Word teaches us about humbling ourselves and overcoming our human pride.

Humility is so repulsive to the proud fleshly man that people sometimes spend their entire lives trying to avoid the low place. However, God's Word presents us with amazing examples of where pride and self-conceit will lead us. These examples are warnings to us of the ultimate end of human rebellion against God's great Humility Power and Might.

God's Word relates the stories of four men who proudly refused to humble themselves before the LORD. These men were Pharaoh, Amon, Zedekiah, and Belshazzar. Although these men lived during the Old Testament dispensation, they nevertheless serve as instructive examples to us, today, of "what not to do." The record of their lives is God's warning to us.



First, God warned Pharaoh, Amon, Zedekiah, and Belshazzar to lower the pride of their dignity by humbling themselves before Almighty God. Before God sent Judgment upon them for their haughty, arrogant, exaggerated self-esteem, He faithfully warned them of their coming evil misfortune. When God's warnings went unheeded, His Judgment followed. These men did not voluntarily humble themselves, so God humbled them anyway.

Those who choose to follow these men in their proud rebellion against God's holy Headship,* Purposive Will, and Master Plan will also share in their punishment. God is the same yesterday, today, and forever; therefore, if God warned men to humble themselves in the Old Testament dispensation, He still extends these same warnings to men today. If God punished those who disregarded His warnings under the Law, He still punishes those who walk in proud rebellion against His Purposive Will and Master Plan for their lives in today's dispensation of Grace.

I. Pharaoh Did not Humble His Proud Heart before God, so He Reaped Premature Death.

Pharaoh, the King of Egypt, stoutly refused to heed God's warning for him to humble himself. When it was time for God's children, the Hebrews, to leave Egypt and enter into their promised inheritance, Pharaoh proudly rebelled against God's Purposive Will and Master Plan for his life *and* for the lives of the children of Israel.

And Moses and Aaron came in unto Pharaoh, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD God of the Hebrews, **How long wilt thou refuse to humble thyself before me?** let my people go, that they may serve me (Exodus 10:3).

God sent His servants, Moses and Aaron, to ask Pharaoh how long he intended to refuse to bow his knee and accept God's Purposive Will for himself, for Egypt, and for the children of Israel. God already had sent various plagues upon the land of Egypt because of the king's rebellion. Yet in spite of all the suffering and pain that he and all his people had experienced, Pharaoh stubbornly refused to humble himself and accept the loss of his slaves, the Hebrews.

Pharaoh paid a dear price for his pride because He and all the people of Egypt suffered the loss of their firstborn sons. Not one family with a male child escaped the Death Angel's visitation. When the Death Angel passed over the land, even the beasts that belonged to the Egyptians lost their firstborn. Perhaps his own son's death touched Pharaoh or perhaps he feared an uprising from the people who had lost sons or perhaps for both reasons, Pharaoh relented temporarily before God and let the Hebrews go.

God will be in debt to no man. So just imagine the blessing and prosperity that God would have heaped upon Pharaoh in exchange for his slaves if he had humbled himself. However, Pharaoh never received God's blessings because he refused to take his rightful place as a creature before God the Creator and humbly wait for God to repay him for the loss he would suffer once Israel had obeyed God's Will and had left Egypt to go to Canaan's Land. Instead of repenting of his proud rebellion against God, Pharaoh repented of his decision to let God's children go. Determined to recapture his lost slaves, the king led his army in fast pursuit of the Israelites.

This last course of action cost Pharaoh his life, both naturally and spiritually. He died without having another opportunity to humble himself and find his rightful place as a creature before his Creator.

Moses and Aaron had declared God's Purposive Will to Pharaoh from the beginning of their dealings with him, and the LORD had given the king opportunity after opportunity to humble his heart willingly. Instead of bowing in humility and willingly letting God's people go, Pharaoh repeatedly hardened his heart against God's Purposive Will and Master Plan.

One of God's divine Principles by which He operates says that "the wages of sin is death." Pharaoh's death, then, was a just reward for his sin. Time after time, through Moses and Aaron, God had extended His Mercy and warnings to Pharaoh. But the unyielding hardness of Pharaoh's heart brought about his own demise. God is Just and Merciful, and while premature Death often is the consequence of a person's refusing to bow his knees and his heart to God's Will, no blame lies with God because the person has simply and disastrously made the wrong choice.

If we are wise, we will let Pharaoh's death be a warning to us. When God's Purposive Will and Master Plan touch the lives of people who are close to us, we have an opportunity to humble ourselves and graciously accept His Will. If we are obedient, God will reward us, in His time and season, with abundant blessings and new Life. However, if we rebel and proudly refuse to humble ourselves, we can expect to receive the same thing Pharaoh received — afflictions and Death.

II. Amon Did not Humble His Proud Heart before God, so He Reaped Premature Death.

Amon, the fifteenth King of Judah, also refused to heed God’s warning to humble himself. He stubbornly refused to forsake his idolatrous worship of false gods, although he had seen God’s Judgments come upon his father for the same type of disobedience.

Amon was two and twenty years old when he began to reign, and reigned two years in Jerusalem. But he **did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, as did Manasseh his father: for Amon sacrificed unto all the carved images which Manasseh his father had made, and served them; And humbled not himself before the LORD**, as Manasseh his father had humbled himself; but Amon trespassed more and more (II Chronicles 33:21-23).

Amon’s father, Manasseh, had set an evil example before his son. Manasseh had known the reality of the LORD God of Israel, yet he rebuilt the high places that his father Hezekiah had broken down. He reared up altars for Baalim, made groves, and worshipped and served all the Host of Heaven. Thus, his son, Amon, grew up surrounded by idolatry, witchcraft, and wizards, but very little worship of the true God (II Chronicles 33:1-6).

Manasseh wrought great folly in Israel by backsliding on God. So God allowed him to be captured by the King of Assyria and carried to Babylon. Humbled under God’s Judgement, Manasseh repented in humility before the God of his fathers and confessed that the LORD was God (II Chronicles 33:12,13).

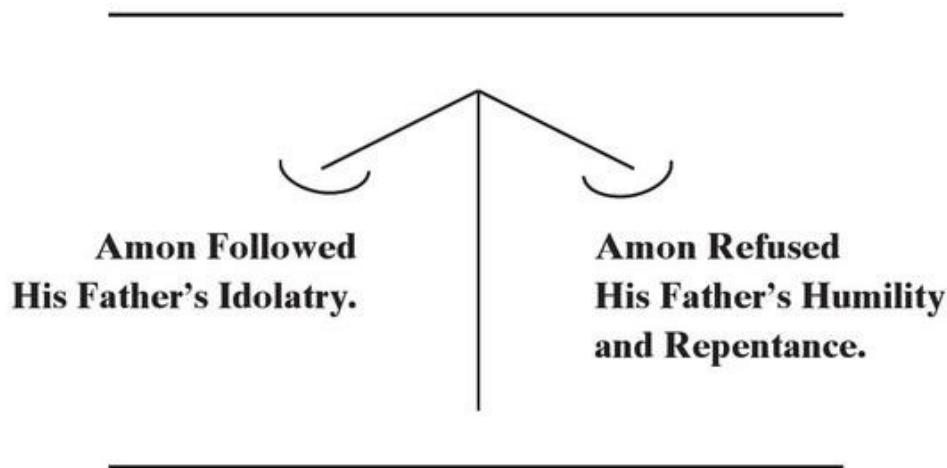
Although Amon had witnessed God’s Judgment that had befallen his father, he never let it work the fear of God in his own heart. When Manasseh repented, God restored his kingdom. Back on his throne, Manasseh commanded all the people of Judah to serve the LORD God of Israel. But his son Amon, already rooted in the worship of false gods, did not obey his father’s command. Even after Amon had become king and leader of the people, he continued to do evil in the LORD’s sight. He rebelliously continued to practice witchcraft and worship false gods, so the True God sent Judgment on him.

Amon retained his exalted position and authority for only two years before he was cut off for his sins.

And his servants conspired against him, and slew him in his own house (II Chronicles 33:24).

Amon’s proud rebellion against God’s Word cost him his life. He refused to bow his knees to the true God of Heaven, the LORD God; instead, he bowed himself before all the false gods of the host of Heaven. When Amon needed help to save his life, not one of the carved images that he had served possessed the power to save him from the humiliation of being murdered in his own house by his own servants. Amon had shunned the Only True God Who had the Living Power and Authority to save him.

Amon followed his father in his wickedness, but not in his humility.



Amon refused to accept God’s Mercy and Forgiveness for repentant idolaters; hence, he died in proud rebellion without ever humbling his heart.

We may not worship graven images in the natural realm, but we often bow down to many false *mental* images. Very frequently, for example, the “gospel according to us” reads contrary to the Truth found in God’s Word. Our false ideas and opinions are against the Truth of God’s Word; hence, they are false gods, as far as the True God is concerned. He wants us to worship and obey His Son, the LORD Jesus Christ, the Living Truth. It is humiliating to

confess that we have been wrong, that we have been worshipping the false gods of our erroneous ideas and opinions, but penitent humiliation is better than the humiliation of dying and, then, having to face God's Wrath with our sins unforgiven. May we have the Wisdom to hear God's warning that He gave through Amon and humble our hearts while there is still time to receive forgiveness for our sins.

III. Zedekiah Did not Humble His Proud Heart before God, so He Was Taken Captive.

Zedekiah, the last King of Judah, was Josiah's son. He was another person who refused to heed God's warning to humble himself. The name *Zedekiah* means *justice of Jehovah*. His proper name was *Mattaniah*, but Nebuchadnezzar changed it to *Zedekiah*, while he was held captive in Babylon.

Zedekiah was one and twenty years old when he began to reign, and reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And **he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD his God, and humbled not himself before Jeremiah the prophet speaking from the mouth of the LORD. And he also rebelled against king Nebuchadnezzar**, who had made him swear by God: but **he stiffened his neck, and hardened his heart from turning unto the LORD God of Israel** (II Chronicles 36:11-13).

Zedekiah was a weak man who had no power to lead the completely demoralized people of Judah back to God. His actions, when he allowed the false prophets to continue leading the people astray, showed that he lacked the courage to vindicate Jeremiah as God's true Prophet. Therefore, he suffered the dire consequences of his cowardice. Ultimately, he was taken captive by the Chaldeans. His children were slain before his eyes; his own eyes were put out; then, he was loaded with chains of brass and carried to the King of Babylon.

Zedekiah stoutly refused to humble himself before Jeremiah, the anointed Prophet whom God had chosen to proclaim His Word. Furthermore, Zedekiah rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar, the king whom God had authorized to correct His people.

Zedekiah's eight-year-old brother, Jehoiachin, had served as king for only three months and ten days before being carried away captive into Babylon. Judgment already had fallen upon Israel. God's Judgment upon the land and the tremendous responsibility which the kingship imposed upon Zedekiah should have been enough to have brought the twenty-one-year-old king to his knees in humble surrender before the LORD, but this was not the case.

In modern language, Zedekiah would be called a *nationalist*, but since God was using King Nebuchadnezzar to rule over His children in order to correct them, the LORD called Zedekiah's action rebellion. Rebellion takes many forms, but it always is directed against God Himself. By seeking to overthrow King Nebuchadnezzar's authority and establish his own rule, Zedekiah revealed his inner rebellion against God's Authority over him. He made his rebellion even more obvious by ignoring God's own Words when He spoke through the Prophet Jeremiah. Instead of leading Israel to humble herself and repent of her sins, as the LORD had commanded, he continued to allow the false prophets to lead her into the abominable practice of worshipping false gods and heathen idols.

Deceived by Zedekiah's promises of freedom from authority, in both the natural and spiritual realms, Israel walked straight into Death and captivity in a foreign land. Thus, she experienced far greater humiliation than she would have known had she humbled herself before the LORD God.

Therefore he [God] brought upon them the king of the Chaldees, who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man, or him that stooped for age: he gave them all into his hand. And all the vessels of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king, and of his princes; all these he brought to Babylon. And they burnt the house of God, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem, and burnt all the palaces thereof with fire, and destroyed all the goodly vessels thereof. And them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon; where they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia: (II Chronicles 36:17-20).

If Zedekiah and Israel had humbled themselves and had accepted God's Kingly Authority, as it was administered through Nebuchadnezzar, and if they had heeded God's Prophetic Word, as it was spoken through Jeremiah, they might have had the privilege of being the chosen ones to rebuild the Temple and the walls of Jerusalem. Instead, they were forced to accept the authority of a foreign king and obey the commands of his sons.

Our carnal mind may say that God was unfair to punish all the people because one man (who happened to be the king) refused to humble himself, but before we accept this as being a valid judgment, we need to look at the other side of the story. One Man, Christ Jesus, dared to humble Himself and walk down His Stairway of Humility to die on the Cross of Calvary. Consider, now, how many people have been blessed by this *one* Man's Life of Humility.

The Apostle Paul said, in his letter to the Romans: “For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.” Someone is always watching our lives, whether we know it or not. In one way or another, we all are leaders and, therefore, responsible to humble ourselves to God’s Authority and God’s Word in every situation. There will be someone who will follow our pathway of humility if we walk in Christ’s Humility, leading them in the way.

God’s Punishment required proud Zedekiah to humble himself to a wicked, ungodly, heathen king because he would not humble himself to the holy, righteous LORD God, his true King. Surely, then, we have no excuse for failing to humble our hearts in the trying circumstances of life. If God required the King of Judah to accept His Authority and His Word as it came through a mortal man, then who are we to demand a personal visitation from the LORD before we believe and humble ourselves?

When the rich man in Hell saw Lazarus in Abraham’s bosom, he requested that Lazarus be resurrected from the dead so that he could personally witness to his brothers who were still alive. But he was told, in so many words, to humble himself and accept the witness that God had provided for his brothers. Luke recorded what Abraham told him:

And he said unto him, **If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead** (Luke 16:31).

Just as Zedekiah was accountable for God’s Word that was spoken through Jeremiah’s mouth, so also are we accountable for God’s Word that comes to us through His servants who are anointed by God’s Holy Spirit. Humility and sincere love for the Truth will cause us to accept and obey the LORD’s Word, regardless of whether it comes to us from Him personally or through His anointed leaders.

IV. Belshazzar Did not Humble His Heart Before God, so He Reaped Premature Death.

Belshazzar, the last native King of Babylon, came from a line of proud kings. He was either the son or grandson of King Nebuchadnezzar, the man who sought to usurp Glory and Honour that rightfully belonged to God.

The king [Nebuchadnezzar] spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty? (Daniel 4:30).

Judgment fell quickly on such great pride.

While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee.... The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar: and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' *feathers*, and his nails like birds' *claws* (Daniel 4:31,33).

After having lived in humiliation for seven years, King Nebuchadnezzar’s normal, human intelligence returned because he finally recognized God’s infinite, divine Sovereignty, which he had previously scorned as contemptible, and he gave Glory and Honour to the most High God, the LORD God.

And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: And all the inhabitants of the earth *are* reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and *among* the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou? At the same time my reason returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honour and brightness returned unto me; and my counsellors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me. **Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase** (Daniel 4:34-37).

However, Nebuchadnezzar’s personal testimony did not influence his son Belshazzar, an immediate family member, to humble himself before the One, True God. Belshazzar’s very name declared whom he considered to be the supreme deity. The name *Belshazzar* means *Bel, protector of the king*. Bel was the name of the god most revered by the Babylonians.

In spite of Nebuchadnezzar’s witness to the contrary, Belshazzar continued to rely on his impotent god for protection. His stubborn refusal to accept the Divinity of the LORD God led Belshazzar to offend the only LORD

God — the only One Who had Power to judge him for defiling the Holy Vessels that had been carried away from the Temple in Jerusalem.

Belshazzar, in his rebellious obstinacy, proud imprudence, and lack of fear of God, gave a sumptuous entertainment for his courtiers and impiously made use of the vessels that Nebuchadnezzar had plundered from the Temple in Jerusalem. Fearlessly, Belshazzar allowed his heathen friends, his wives, and his concubines to drink wine out of the vessels that had been consecrated to the worship of the True God Jehovah. While drinking wine out of the holy cups, they praised their man-made gods of gold, silver, brass, iron, wood, and stone. This blasphemous act of sacrilege filled Belshazzar's cup of iniquity to overflowing.

In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaister of the wall of the king's palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote (Daniel 5:5).

As King Belshazzar watched the fingers write on the wall, his splendrous countenance changed, and he turned deathly pale. Convulsions in his loins made it impossible for him to stand upon his feet because his fear was so great. Although he was in the grip of a fearful situation, he did not repent of his idolatrous ways. Still clinging to his false gods, he called, first, for the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers to tell him the meaning of the words.

Belshazzar's offense had been twofold: he had desecrated God's holy vessels from His Temple, and he had indulged in idolatrous worship, and for this, God was going to bring Judgment upon him.

And this is the writing that was written, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. **This is the interpretation** of the thing: MENE; **God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it.** TEKEL; **Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.** PERES; **Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians** (Daniel 5:25-28).

Only after the wise men of the kingdom had acknowledged their inability to interpret the writing on the wall did the king send for Daniel the Prophet of the LORD God. As Daniel interpreted the strange words, Belshazzar heard the price he would have to pay for refusing to humble himself and for refusing to give Glory and Honour to the True and Living God.

Daniel rejected the reward the king promised him so that he would be under no obligation to flatter him. Then, the LORD's anointed servant began to remind the king of all the opportunities God had given him to humble himself during the seven years of his father Nebuchadnezzar's humiliation. Daniel ended his discourse by telling the king how greatly he had sinned:

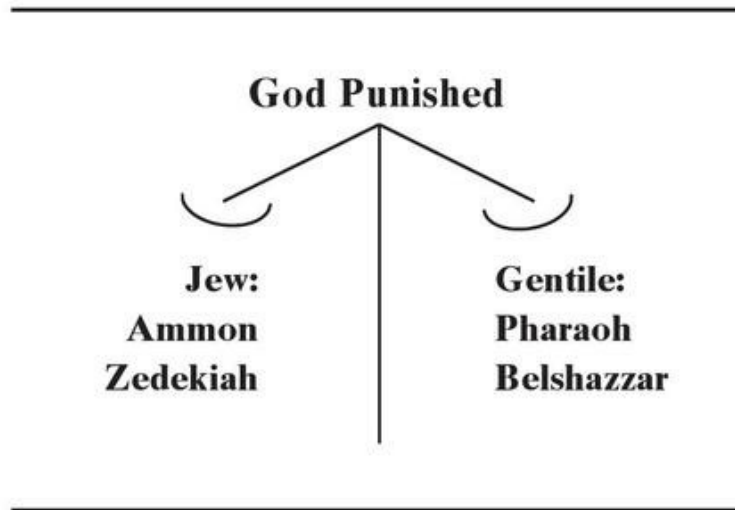
And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this; But hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of his house before thee, and thou, and thy lords, thy wives, and thy concubines, have drunk wine in them; **and thou hast praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know: and the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified:** (Daniel 5:22,23).

Daniel reminded Belshazzar that his very life and eternal destiny depended upon the LORD. However, nothing in God's Word indicates that Belshazzar humbled himself after hearing God's solemn decree. On the contrary, he immediately proclaimed Daniel the third ruler in his kingdom, the kingdom that God had just said had been taken from him. This act alone reveals the king's continued defiance. Belshazzar thought he could defy the Living God and escape His Punishment, but he forfeited his life *that very night*.

In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain. And Darius the Median took the kingdom, *being* about threescore and two years old (Daniel 5:30,31).

This proves once again that captivity and Death are the results of man's failure to humble himself.

God is an impartial God. He punishes both Jew and Gentile who refuse to humble themselves to His holy Will.



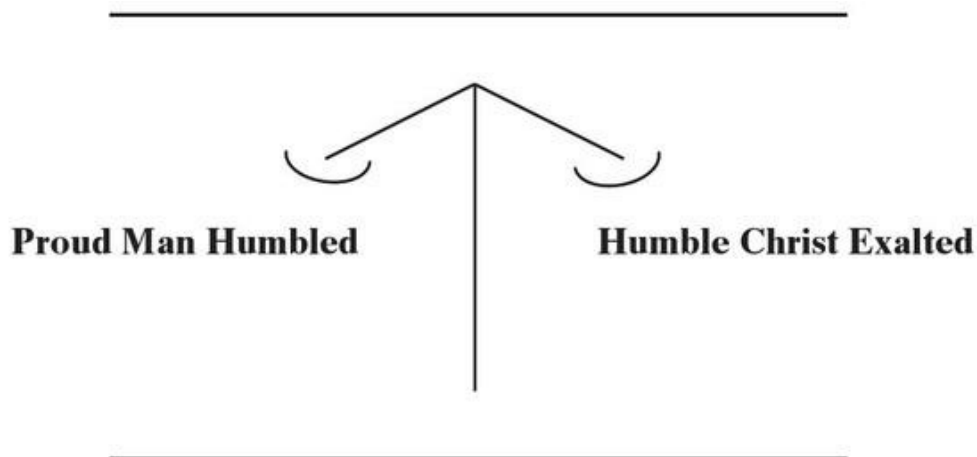
We see two examples on each side of the Scales: on one side are two Jews, and on the other side are two Gentiles; each example warns us of what not to do. Jesus Christ is the only Example we need on the obedient side of the Scales to show us what to do to humble ourselves. Therefore, we should not be angry when some other person fails as our example of humility.

To humble ourselves before the LORD God is a vital and inescapable issue. All through God's Word, He warns us of the serious consequences that await those who fail to humble their proud hearts willingly.

Isaiah the Prophet confirmed the inescapable Principle of Practicing Humility. If we do not humble our hearts voluntarily, God will involuntarily humble them for us.

The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day. For the day of the LORD of hosts *shall be* upon every *one that is* proud and lofty, and upon every *one that is* lifted up; and he shall be brought low: (Isaiah 2:11,12).

In the day that Christ returns to judge the Earth, God will humble guilty man's pride and his lofty looks, and God will exalt Christ and His Humility.



Man's lofty looks cause him to lift up his eyes in unwarranted pride and self-importance in all he thinks, says, and does. Therefore, he haughtily shows great pride in himself and great disdain, scorn, and contempt for others.

God's goal and objective is to humble all proud hearts and bring them down in humility at Christ's Feet. God will not cease His Workings until He brings down man's haughty self-confidence and causes him to trust in Christ alone.

When the Holy Spirit exalts Christ in man's heart, man's mind is filled with overflowing love toward Christ, in

Whose favour there is Life. With Christ exalted, man's mind also is filled with trustful reverence for Christ Who pours contempt upon all the proud and lofty. With gratitude and joy, the humbled heart celebrates and praises the divine excellency of Christ's Humility. Our life in this present, evil world is a long lesson in Christ's Humility.

And the mean man shall be brought down, and the mighty man shall be humbled, and the eyes of the lofty shall be humbled: But the LORD of hosts shall be exalted in judgment, and God that is holy shall be sanctified in righteousness (Isaiah 5:15,16).

Through Christ's holy Justice and righteous Judgments, which He will execute among His people when He comes again, His people shall be humbled, and the LORD alone shall be exalted.

Neither the mean man nor the mighty man shall escape Christ's Power to humble them when He returns to the Earth. He will bring low those who have exalted themselves; and, therein, He shall be Glorified. The LORD Jesus Christ, Who has All Power in Heaven and in Earth, is able to accomplish the following things:

- to break the strongest in pride;
- to humble the loftiest of looks;
- to abase the haughtiest of hearts; and
- to tame the pride of the meanest and the mightiest of men into humble submission.

God is glorified when guilty man's pride is humbled and abased. The humbling of man's pride is inescapable. Either man voluntarily humbles his pride, or God humbles man's pride without his voluntary permission. Hence, we need to take on low, humble looks before God is forced to lay us low.

Behold, the Lord, the LORD of hosts, shall lop the bough with terror: and the **high ones of stature shall be hewn down, and the haughty shall be humbled** (Isaiah 10:33).

The arrogant Assyrian King, Belshazzar, in his great pride, magnified himself by thinking he was above all supernatural control and that he had power to act according to his own haughty will and for his own glory. He was completely unaware that he was knocking on the door of destruction. In his diseased perception of reality, he imagined that he was knocking at the gates of victory.

When, in his arrogance, Belshazzar shook his proud finger at Zion, God shook His humble Finger back at him. The proud "boughs" of the king were lopped off and brought down by God's terrible Humility Might. The king's stately "trees of pride" were brought down with a crash by God's All-Powerful Humility Might! The Assyrian army, which looked like a forest of trees surrounding Zion, was turned into a graveyard of corpses by God's Humility Might.

God has given these written warnings to influence us and to help us make the decision to humble ourselves in this life* — an act that will determine our eternal destination and reward.

Jesus Christ willingly humbled Himself by going down into deeper suffering and degradation than we ever can know, but God never left Jesus' Soul in Hell. On Resurrection Morning, the Father, with His Glory, entered into Death, Hell, and the tomb to raise Jesus Christ from the dead. On the Day of Pentecost, Peter brought God's Message to the Jews:

Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36).

Jesus Christ passed through Death, Hell, and the grave in order to do God's Purposive Will; however, neither Death, Hell, nor the grave were His final abodes, nor were they His ultimate reward.

The four men, whose lives we have briefly touched on, present an unspeakably sad picture of people who never voluntarily humbled themselves in this life. Pharaoh, Amon, Zedekiah, and Belshazzar were all kings and leaders with great power and authority, yet they came to wicked, premature deaths or captivity. They will spend Eternity in Death, Hell, and the Lake of Fire because they refused to humble their hearts before the LORD.

May their mistakes teach us the importance of always maintaining a lowly attitude of mind before the LORD. Let us humble our hearts quickly when God's Will touches those who are close to us. Humility and repentance is a must and a certainty when we realize that we have been worshipping or bowing down to false mental images, for they are contrary to the Truth of God's Word. We need to have a mind to humble ourselves and receive God's Word as it

comes to us through the LORD's anointed Prophets, and we should surrender to come under the authority of the leaders whom God sets over us. Regardless of how high we may have been exalted in this world, we should always remember that the LORD Jesus Christ, the Creator of Heaven and Earth, is our Supreme Sovereign LORD. He deserves to receive all worship, praise, honour, and glory from His creatures.

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- * B. R. Hicks, [*How To Overcome The Seven Basic Fears Of Man*](#) (Jeffersonville, Indiana: Christ Gospel Churches Int'l., Inc.) 1985.
 - ** B. R. Hicks, [*Secrets To Spiritual Growth*](#) (Jeffersonville, Indiana: Christ Gospel Churches Int'l., Inc.) 1980.
 - ***B. R. Hicks, [*Degrees Of Reward For Spiritual Growth*](#) (Jeffersonville, Indiana: Christ Gospel Churches Int'l., Inc.) 1984.
 - * B. R. Hicks, [*The Headship Of Christ*](#) (Jeffersonville, Indiana: Christ Gospel Churches Int'l., Inc.) 1971.
 - * B. R. Hicks, [*The Powerful Voltage Of Christ's Humility*](#) (Jeffersonville, Indiana: Christ Gospel Churches Int'l., Inc.) 1967.

Chapter Two

How To Humble Ourselves Voluntarily

After seeing the importance of humility, we immediately ask, “How do I humble myself?” Thank God, He never tells us to do something without giving us clear instructions that will enable us to obey His Command. His Word tells us how or in what manner, way, means, state, or condition we can voluntarily humble ourselves.

God, in His Foreknowledge, realized that Israel would need to practice humility; therefore, while Israel was still in the wilderness, God began instructing her in how to humble herself. Before she was scattered by her enemies and before she was carried away captive into Babylon, God gave Israel Knowledge of how to behave when these things would come upon her. He did not leave the important matter of humility to her own understanding or to chance; otherwise, she might never have sought the LORD for the necessary instruction and direction in the Way of Humility.

God revealed to Israel four ways in which she could humble herself. These are also the ways in which we can humble our proud *selves* when we are in distressing, humiliating circumstances. We must (1) be willing to accept our punishment and acknowledge God’s Righteousness in sending it, (2) be willing to obey the Word of God that comes to us through anointed leaders, (3) afflict our souls by fasting, thus denying our *selves* the pleasure of eating natural food, and (4) become like a little child before the LORD — not *childish* but *childlike*. In these ways, we can lay hold of Christ’s true, inner Humility of Heart and Mind.

I. We Humble Ourselves by Accepting Our Punishment and by Acknowledging God’s Righteousness in Punishing Us.

God promised Israel that His gracious Favour always would return to her when she confessed her iniquities and trespasses, humbled her heart, and accepted her just punishments for her iniquities and trespasses.

If they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, with their trespass which they trespassed against me, and that also they have walked contrary unto me; And *that* I also have walked contrary unto them, and have brought them into the land of their enemies; **if then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity:** (Leviticus 26:40,41).

God’s instructions to Israel show us the first way we are to humble our proud, self-righteous *self*. Whenever we trespass God’s Laws, we must humble ourselves and accept our punishment and acknowledge our sin.

Confession and repentance always qualify the soul to receive new visitations of God’s manifold Mercy and great Grace. Our confession must include accepting our blame, our guilt, and our shame. Then, we can give Glory to God. There must be a confession of the *nature* of sin, which includes obstinately rebelling against God’s Master Plan and wilfully walking contrary to God’s Purposive Will. We always should repent and bewail our sins that proceed from our uncircumcised hearts. An uncircumcised heart is an impenitent, unbelieving, and unhumiliated heart; it is a heart surrounded with fallow, hard ground that produces thorns and briars that prevent the Love, Light, and Lift of Truth from entering it. If we have a humble heart, we submit to God’s just and righteous dealings with us. Hence, our humble heart justifies God and condemns our *self*, instead of condemning God and justifying our own *self*.

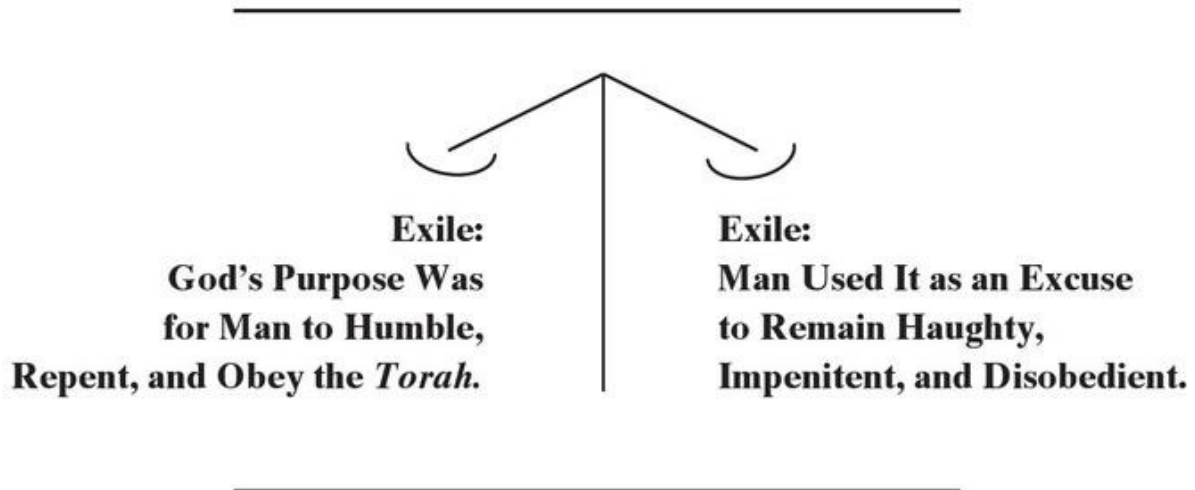
The Moral Principles that God gave to Israel are part of ALL Scripture.

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works (II Timothy 3:16,17).

Thus, all Scripture *still* applies to us. God warned Israel that if she made the choice to walk contrary to His Word, He also would walk contrary or in an opposite direction to her. God did not forsake Israel; it was her choice to forsake the teachings of the Father’s *Torah* that resulted in God’s putting Himself in an opposite position to her.

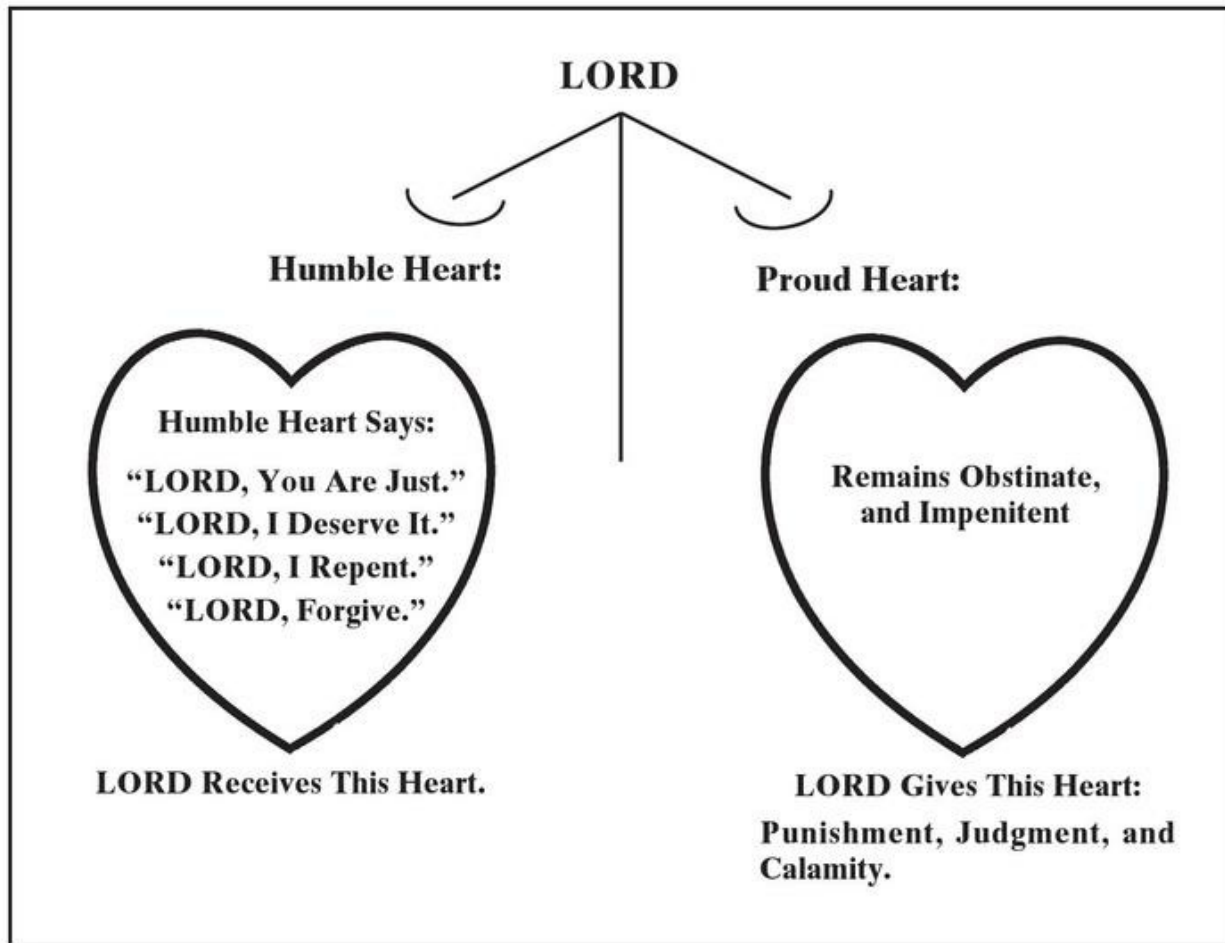
God never deviates from His Pathway of Holiness, nor does He change His Principles of Truth to please man’s sinful flesh. If man walks contrary to God’s Laws of Righteousness, he will lose God’s Presence and Power.

God's Purpose in exiling His people was to give them a choice either to humble themselves and obey His *Torah* or to use their exile as a further excuse for not humbling themselves. The purpose for their punishment was to cause them to repent of their sins and return to the *Torah* through faithful obedience to it. However, they could choose to continue in their disobedience and become more rebellious to the LORD's *Torah* because of their painful circumstances that His Chastisement had brought upon them.



How unfortunate that many of God's people refuse to humble themselves, repent, and obey Him while they are on the Pleasure Side of His Scales. These impenitent ones often use the Pain Side of the Scales, their exile, to continue to excuse their haughtiness, impenitence, and disobedience. This type of person leaves God with no choice but to allow such a one to go down to his grave in proud rebellion. But if God's children would use their times of exile (the times they seem to be separated from the Presence of the LORD), to humble themselves, to repent, and to obey God, they would see that their exile was nothing but a long, painful circuitous route that the precious LORD Jesus Christ guided them through, by His invisible Hand, in order to educate them.

God puts us in exile so that He may achieve His Purpose of leading us back home to our eternal, unlosable Calling of being in the Bride! How great Thou art, O LORD!



As long as Israel followed the leading of the Ark of the Covenant that housed God’s Holy *Torah*, she walked triumphantly, conquering every formidable foe. Later, when she transgressed God’s *Torah*-Truth and Commandments, she discovered that her rebellious way led into shameful humiliation. God visited her with His just Punishment. Eventually, Israel was carried away captive into the land of Babylon.

Did the LORD God suggest that being a captive in a strange land was reason for her to stage a rebellious demonstration against the Babylonian government in order to obtain her freedom? Of course not! God counseled Israel to humble her uncircumcised heart and accept God’s Just Punishment. Zedekiah’s rebellion against Babylonian authority did not gain him the liberty he desired. God instructed Israel to accept her Punishment by confessing that her iniquity and the iniquity of her fathers had brought them to the place of captivity. God desired that Israel confess and repent and be led back to her Eternal Calling, which was to be Jehovah’s Wife or Bridal Nation. As the wife of the Only True God, she was not to prostitute herself to false idols.

After Israel had entered into Canaan’s Land, Rehoboam, King of Judah, had an opportunity to put this first point of humility into practice, and it worked for him. God allowed Shishak, the King of Egypt, to come in great force against Judah because Rehoboam, along with all Israel, had forsaken the Law of the LORD. Shishak and his army took the fenced cities and set their faces toward Jerusalem. As Rehoboam and his princes waited in what appeared to be certain defeat, the LORD spoke through the Prophet Shemaiah and said:

Thus saith the LORD, **Ye have forsaken me, and therefore have I also left you in the hand of Shishak** (II Chronicles 12:5).

Then, the people humbled themselves in their hearts, admitted their sin, and repented. They acknowledged that the LORD was just and righteous in sending His Punishment and that they deserved the calamity He had sent upon them.

Rehoboam and the Princes of Israel did not waste time in quarreling with the LORD or in trying to justify

themselves.

Whereupon **the princes of Israel and the king humbled themselves**; and they said, The LORD *is* righteous (II Chronicles 12:6).

The LORD looked upon their humility and spoke again to His Prophet Shemaiah:

And when the LORD saw that they humbled themselves, the word of the LORD came to Shemaiah, saying, **They have humbled themselves**; *therefore* I will not destroy them, but I will grant them some deliverance; and my wrath shall not be poured out upon Jerusalem by the hand of Shishak. Nevertheless they shall be his servants; that they may know my service, and the service of the kingdoms of the countries (II Chronicles 12:7,8).

Neither Rehoboam nor his Princes pleaded for God to change His original Verdict that left them in the hands of the Egyptian king. They accepted Shemaiah's edict and acknowledged that the LORD was Righteous in His Judgment. In so many words, they said, "We have sinned and deserve no Mercy. Whatever You see fit to bring upon us will be just and fair punishment." Although they deserved no Mercy, their humility constrained the LORD to lessen His sentence of Judgment. Shishak came against Jerusalem, but he did not destroy it as he originally had planned.

King David also exercised this Principle of Humility Truth. He understood that, by accepting his punishment and acknowledging his own sin, he justified the LORD. When repenting for his sin with Bath-sheba, David said:

For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin *is* ever before me. **Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done *this* evil in thy sight**: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, *and* be clear when thou judgest (Psalm 51:3,4).

Sin is rebellion against God, against His Person, against His Plan, and against His Will. David felt upon his soul the burning stain of guilt that was caused by his sin. Consequently, he repented and cast himself upon God's Mercy and Grace, from which issues His Forgiveness of Sin or His discharge of man's indebtedness and guilt. God bestows favour and forgiveness on the penitent rebel by overlooking his disobedience.

In one of the Psalms, David said:

Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word (Psalm 119:67).

By saying, "I sinned; therefore, God judged," David acknowledged that God was Just when His Judgment allowed affliction to come upon him. David's erring from the right path caused him to reap God's affliction upon him. David's suffering was the means that God used to cause him to submit to God's Law of Truth in his heart. Hence, David made this confession:

It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes (Psalm 119:71).

David condemned himself and exalted God.

Some people, Christians included, would rather accuse God of being unrighteous than to humble their proud hearts and acknowledge their own guilt in a situation.

Job's self-justification caused Elihu to remind Job of his need to humble himself before the LORD.

Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne chastisement, I will not offend *any more*: *That which* I see not teach thou me: if I have done iniquity, I will do no more (Job 34:31,32).

The word for *meet* means fitting. Elihu said, in so many words, "Job, it is fitting to justify the LORD whether you understand everything that is happening or not. Accept your punishment and acknowledge that God is Holy."

We, too, should acknowledge, by faith, God's holy, righteous Nature in the just afflictions He sends upon us, although we are blind and ignorant to our own faults. In our blindness and ignorance, we should not criticize and condemn God, but we should exalt His Holy Name by faith. We never should assume such brazen impudence by complaining to God that He has treated us unjustly and has punished us for offenses of which we are not guilty. This type of murmuring is an accusation against God. In our hearts, we feel that we deserve better treatment than we are receiving from God. In essence, we are saying that we have been righteous, but that God is rewarding our good with evil. We should beseech God to open our blind eyes and let us see our sins, faults, and failures of which we have no knowledge.

In the Book of Job, chapter thirty-five, verse two, Elihu's opening words went right to the heart of the problem

and revealed Job's spiritual pride. Job's wrong thinking said that righteousness is unavailing before God. Since God is High, and Job was low, and since God is All Wisdom, and Job was blind and ignorant concerning himself, how did Job dare to vaunt his self-righteousness before a holy God?

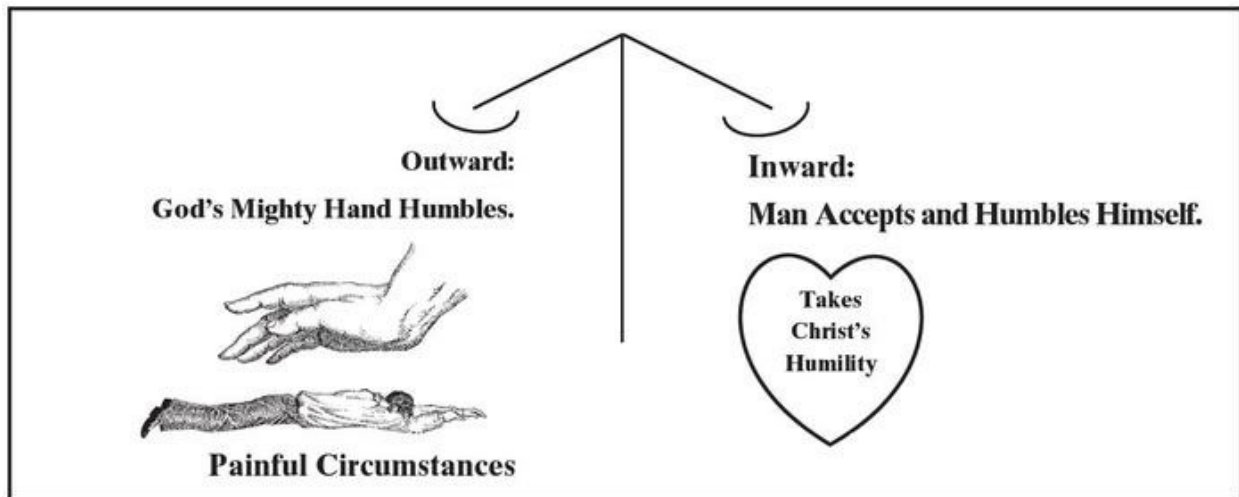
Elihu continued to reveal Job's spiritual pride in order to bring Job to the Light so that he, in turn, could repent. Elihu said to Job:

Thinkest thou this to be right, that thou saidst, My righteousness is more than God's? (Job 35:2).

In Elihu's reasoning with Job, he said that Job's bitterness and pain were the reason Job had hurled his unrighteous and unjust complaints against God.

Later, after the scales had been stripped from Job's eyes, he finally saw his pride and cried out: "Wherefore I *abhor myself, and repent* in dust and ashes" (Job 42:6). After Job had been brought to the Light of Truth, he abhorred his sinful thoughts and offensive attitude that he previously had adopted against God, and he abhorred the words in which he had expressed his wrong thoughts. Job penitently and humbly acknowledged his blindness and ignorance about the impenetrable mystery of God's righteous, holy, just Workings in His Chastenings and Judgments upon him. After Job's wicked thoughts and rebellious attitude had been mortified, God blessed him with a double portion of His blessing.

God's Principles never change; therefore, the same Truth of Humility is taught in the New Testament. We, also, in the New Testament dispensation, are to condemn faults, failures, and sin in ourselves and to exalt God, just as they did in the Old Testament dispensation. Our submission to God's Chastening and Judgment reveals that Christ is Working His Humility within us in the midst of our trials. Our lack of submission in the midst of God's Chastening and Judgment reveals the working of our own proud rebellion. If our hearts are proud, we will murmur and complain under the misfortunes of God's Providence. However, if our hearts are humble, we will gratefully rejoice and seek to see and to learn what God has for us in His painful Providence. God's divine Purpose is to bring our wills into a state of complete, holy rest and humble submission to His Purposive Will in all things. It is not enough for us to be humbled outwardly by the painful circumstances sent by God's mighty Hand; we also must humble our hearts inwardly.



Christ's Humility is manifested when we are willing to perform the *lowest task* for Christ's sake. Christ's Humility makes us consciously aware of our own incompetence to do anything aright, apart from Christ. Self-sufficiency is inefficiency. The heart that has no *sense* of its weakness has a weakness in its *senses*.

The humble heart readily humbles itself even further when God's Providence allows it to be ignored. Remember, we can outwardly accept that it is God's humility Hand over us when we find ourselves placed under His afflicting Providence; however, we may not really humble our hearts, inwardly, and take on Christ's Humility that causes us to offer sweet, satisfying praises to God for His righteous Judgments.

God's mighty Hand of Chastening is the Hand of a kind, loving Heavenly Father; God chastens His children because He loves them and desires that they produce greater Fruits of His Spirit. His motive is not to make them

suffer needlessly. God does not desire to inflict pain for no good reason.

The Apostle Peter spoke with great Wisdom when he admonished Christians to accept God's Chastening:

Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, **that he may exalt you** in due time: (1 Peter 5:6).

The *mighty hand* in this Scripture refers to God's mighty Hand of Chastening.

The Apostle Paul also admonished Christians not to despise the LORD's Chastening.

And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, **My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him:** For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; **for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?** But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: **shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness** (Hebrews 12:5-10).

The Greek word for *despise* means to care little, to have little regard for, to disesteem, to despise. Thus, Paul encouraged Christians to do more than just accept the LORD's Chastening; he taught them to appreciate it.

When the word *chastening* is traced back to its original meaning, we see even more clearly why we should appreciate it because it means tutorage or education and training, disciplinary correction, chastening, chastisement, instruction, nurture. More specifically, it means to train up a child, that is, to educate or discipline by punishment, to teach.

Every man is born into this world with a desire and a will to please *self*, so he must be taught how to please *God*. The LORD God demonstrates His infinite Love through His Chastening. If He had no care nor concern for us, God would just let us go our own willful way, which would lead us to eternal Destruction. As a last resort, a natural parent sometimes has to use stern discipline in order to teach a rebellious child a necessary lesson, and so it is with God. If we refuse to learn by hearing and obeying His Word, He must let trials and tribulations correct us.

God's Chastening or Punishment takes on new meaning after we realize that His Purpose for sending it is to make us partakers of His Holiness in the midst of our painful trials and tribulations.

The word *partaker* means to participate, to accept and to use, to receive, to take, to eat, and to have. God wants to share with us the Holiness of His very own Nature, but we cannot receive His Holiness unless we are willing to accept His Chastening.

Our Father takes many pains to prepare the situations and circumstances that teach us the lessons we need to learn. True humility is demonstrated in our quick acceptance of our Punishment and our acknowledgement of the LORD's Righteousness in every afflicting stripe upon our backs. This is the first way we humble ourselves.

II. We Humble Ourselves by Obeying the Word of God that Comes Through Holy, Anointed Leaders.

God does not always speak directly to us. In fact, He seldom speaks any other way than through His chosen leaders. If we are to learn how to humble ourselves, we need to listen to God-given leaders.

Hezekiah was a leader who brought God's Message to the people, and if they had heard and obeyed him, they would have been restored to God's Favour and found forgiveness for their sins.

Hezekiah was the distinguished King of Judah, the son of the successor of the apostate Ahaz. He restored the *Torah*-Truth to a place of honour and abolished the worship of idols in his kingdom and tore down the high places that had been dedicated to idolatry. He also broke the brazen serpent that had been erected in Moses' day because it had become the object of idolatrous regard. During Hezekiah's reign, the Temple was repaired, and the Passover was celebrated with unequalled, magnificent festivities. Only the celebration of the Passover in King Solomon's day rivaled Hezekiah's.

Hezekiah's first official act as king was to purge, repair, and reopen the temple that had been neglected during his father's idolatrous reign. He held a month-long revival in which the Priests and Levites reconsecrated themselves and began, again, to offer sacrifices to the LORD. Then, Hezekiah sent letters to all the tribes of Israel, inviting them to come to Jerusalem for the Passover.

So the posts went with the letters from the king and his princes throughout all Israel and Judah, and according to the commandment of the king, saying, Ye children of Israel, turn again unto the LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, and he will return to the remnant

of you, that are escaped out of the hand of the kings of Assyria. And **be not ye like your fathers, and like your brethren, which trespassed against the LORD God of their fathers**, *who* therefore gave them up to desolation, as ye see. Now **be ye not stiffnecked, as your fathers were, but yield yourselves unto the LORD**, and enter into his sanctuary, which he hath sanctified for ever: and serve the LORD your God, that the fierceness of his wrath may turn away from you. For if ye turn again unto the LORD, your brethren and your children *shall find* compassion before them that lead them captive, **so that they shall come again into this land: for the LORD your God is gracious and merciful, and will not turn away his face from you, if ye return unto him** (II Chronicles 30:6-9).

The LORD instituted the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread in Moses' day. The Passover was supposed to be observed annually in Jerusalem, on the fourteenth day of the first month of Israel's spiritual calendar; then, the Feast of Unleavened Bread followed immediately, during which time the people ate only unleavened bread.

However, by Hezekiah's day, Israel was so backslidden that she no longer went to Jerusalem to observe the LORD's Passover. The ten tribes of Israel worshipped two golden calves at Bethel and Dan. So most of the people laughed scornfully when they read Hezekiah's invitation to observe the Passover in the second month, instead of the first month, as God had commanded in the beginning.

Just a few sincere people in Israel, comparatively speaking, willingly humbled themselves and obeyed their King, their leader.

Nevertheless divers of Asher and Manasseh and of Zebulun humbled themselves, and came to Jerusalem (II Chronicles 30:11).



The Nation of Israel had turned her back on the LORD God; she had ignored His Commandments and had set up altars to worship idols in opposition to true worship of the LORD. According to the natural mind, the people had every reason to say, "It will do no good to obey the leader this time. We did not go to Jerusalem in the first month when God said for us to go, so why should we go now?"

Did Hezekiah have authority to issue such an invitation? Did he know that God would honour the people and accept them when they came? The answer to both questions is "Yes."

Hezekiah was more than a political figure; he was a spiritual leader; and, as such, he had a revelation that God was a "Covenant-keeping God." When Hezekiah took office, he practiced the first point of humility by confessing that transgression had caused Israel to fall into disfavour with the LORD. He entreated the people to attend to his words:

He in the first year of his reign, in the first month, opened the doors of the house of the LORD, and repaired them. And he brought in the priests and the Levites, and gathered them together into the east street, And said unto them, **Hear me, ye Levites, sanctify now yourselves, and sanctify the house of the LORD God of your fathers, and carry forth the filthiness out of the holy place. For our fathers have trespassed, and done that which was evil in the eyes of the LORD our God, and have forsaken him, and have turned away their faces from the**

habitation of the LORD, and turned their backs. Also they have shut up the doors of the porch, and put out the lamps, and have not burned incense nor offered burnt offerings in the holy *place* unto the God of Israel. **Wherefore the wrath of the LORD was upon Judah and Jerusalem, and he hath delivered them to trouble, to astonishment, and to hissing, as ye see with your eyes.** For, lo, our fathers have fallen by the sword, and our sons and our daughters and our wives *are* in captivity for this (II Chronicles 29:3-9).

Then, Hezekiah continued his plea for the people to return to their worship of the True LORD God of Israel:

Now it is in mine heart to make a covenant with the LORD God of Israel, that his fierce wrath may turn away from us (II Chronicles 29:10).

Hezekiah knew about God's Covenant of Mercy that He had made with King David and with David's son Solomon.

And as since the time that I commanded judges *to be* over my people Israel, and have caused thee to rest from all thine enemies. **Also the LORD telleth thee that he will make thee an house.** And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, **I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever.** I will be his father, and he shall be my son. **If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: But my mercy shall not depart away from him,** as I took *it* from Saul, whom I put away before thee. **And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever** (II Samuel 7:11-16).

God had given His Promise that guaranteed the permanence of the Davidic Dynasty that would come through David's Seed, Jesus Christ, the Messiah, according to the flesh, of Whom King Solomon was a type. Although God promised to chastise the erring ones in David's house, He promised that His Mercy would not be permanently taken away. It was this Promise from God that gave Hezekiah courage to call for reformation in his day and ask for the humble, penitent ones to respond to his call.

Later, when King Solomon dedicated the Temple that God had prophesied he would build, he reminded God of His Covenant of Mercy that He had made with David and His people.

And said, O LORD God of Israel, *there is* no God like thee in the heaven, nor in the earth; **which keepest covenant, and shewest mercy unto thy servants, that walk before thee with all their hearts:** Thou which hast kept with thy servant David my father that which thou hast promised him; and spakest with thy mouth, and hast fulfilled *it* with thine hand, as *it is* this day (II Chronicles 6:14,15).

Hearken therefore unto the supplications of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, which they shall make toward this place: hear thou from thy dwelling place, even from heaven; and when thou hearest, forgive.... And if thy people Israel be put to the worse before the enemy, because they have sinned against thee; and shall return and confess thy name, and pray and make supplication before thee in this house; **Then hear thou from the heavens, and forgive the sin of thy people Israel, and bring them again unto the land which thou gavest to them and to their fathers** (II Chronicles 6:21,24,25).

O LORD God, turn not away the face of thine anointed: **remember the mercies of David thy servant** (II Chronicles 6:42).

In the very next chapter — the seventh chapter of Second Chronicles — supernatural Fire fell from the LORD as a witness that the LORD God had heard Solomon's prayer and that He still honoured His Covenant of Mercy with David.

King Hezekiah was aware of the LORD's faithfulness to His Covenant in the past with the House of David, and he realized that the LORD would continue to honour His Covenant with His people by granting His Mercy, Grace, and Pardon to them, if Israel would do her part by turning her heart back to God. God is not a liar, we never have to worry about His doing His part if we do our part, which is to humble ourselves before Him.

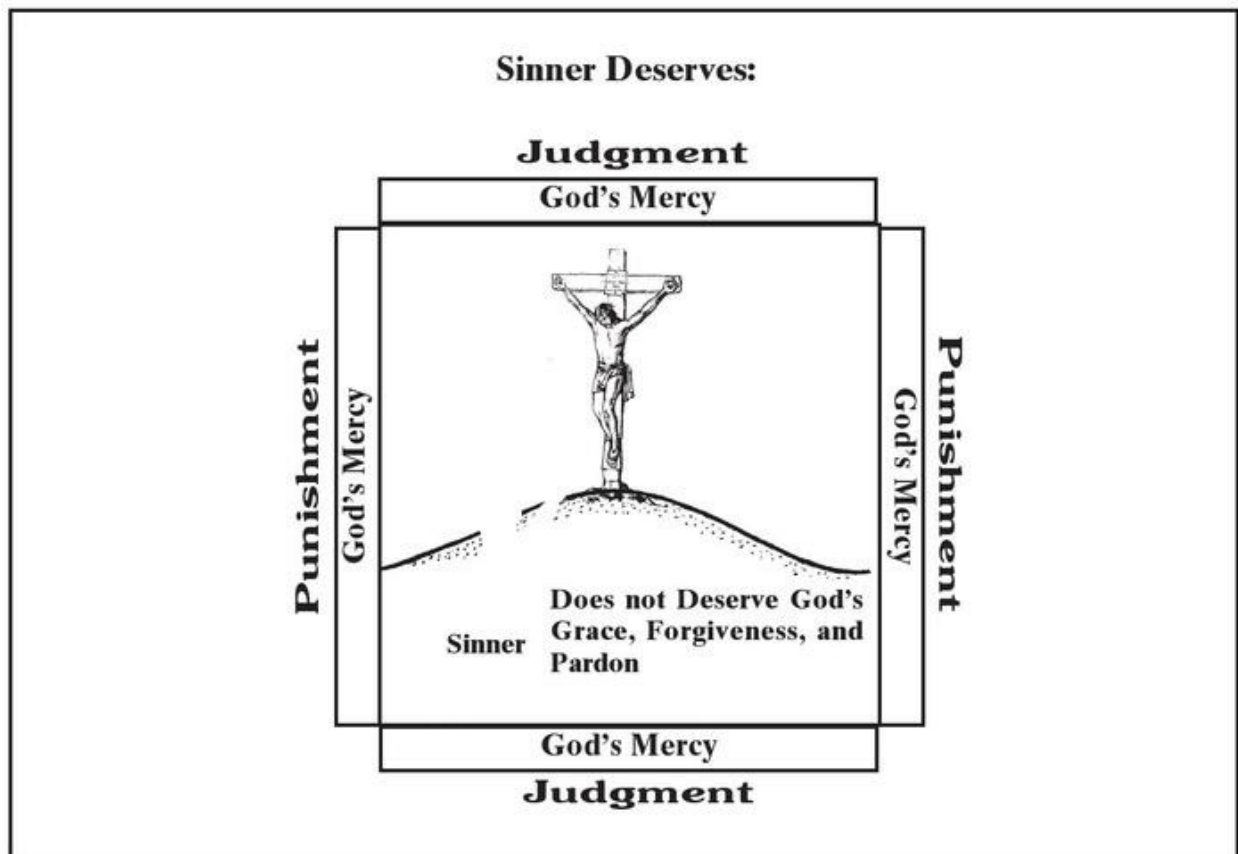
What a gazing stock the obedient Israelites must have been as they made their way to the Temple. If they had traveled to Jerusalem just one month earlier, they might have been able to confess their sins secretly, for no one would have especially noticed them. However, after Hezekiah's letter had arrived that exhorted all the people to turn from their idols and return in repentance to the Living God, it was an open confession of guilt to be seen going to Jerusalem.

For anyone to have to admit that he had been remiss and had gone the wrong way — that he had disobeyed the *Torah*, when God's Laws told him to worship in Jerusalem where the LORD had placed His Holy Name — would be extremely humiliating. Anyone's flesh would almost rather die and go to Hell than to return to God. It is one

thing to humble ourselves and accept our Punishment as being just and right, if God has *personally* convinced us of our sin through His Word and by His Holy Spirit. This way of being led to repentance makes it easier to humble ourselves and take a public stand for the Truth. But we need a deeper measure of humility to throw ourselves upon God's Mercy when we see no reason, apart from the testimony of our spiritual leader, for God to show Mercy.

When they left their idolatrous brethren behind, Hezekiah's humble, obedient followers gave a powerful testimony as they made themselves a public spectacle on their way to Jerusalem.

Hezekiah knew a secret that the people did not know about God's Mercy. He knew that God's Mercy would push back the Punishment and Judgment that these idolaters deserved, if they humbly repented of their sins. And he knew that God's Grace would bring in His Pardon and Forgiveness that they did not deserve.



God does not show Mercy because people deserve it, but because He is WHO HE IS. God's Mercy is infinite, and it is an inseparable part of His Holy Name and Nature.

If we have sinned and erred spiritually, our only hope is to hear and obey the words of God's servant who says, "Come on; repent and try again. Make a new start with the LORD. He still loves you; He is just waiting for you to turn your heart back to Him."

The Book of Second Chronicles records what God did for those who humbled themselves and obeyed their leader's words.

Also in Judah **the hand of God was to give them one heart to do the commandment of the king and of the princes, by the word of the LORD.** And there assembled at Jerusalem much people to keep the feast of unleavened bread in the second month, a very great congregation. And they arose and took away the altars that *were* in Jerusalem, and all the altars for incense took they away, and cast *them* into the brook Kidron (II Chronicles 30:12-14).

After the humble, penitent Israelites had followed Hezekiah's plea and had gone to Jerusalem, God confirmed that Hezekiah's words were in accordance with His Purposive Will by giving these followers *one heart* to do the commandment of the king and the princes. He gave them the kind of unity that has power to accomplish a given

purpose, which was the same type of unity and power the people had when they misdirected this power and built the Tower of Babel. Still, their power shows what can be done through unity. When the LORD spoke about the people at Babel, He said:

And the LORD said, **Behold, the people is one**, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: **and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do** (Genesis 11:6).

God had to confuse their language at the Tower of Babel because they had attained unity outside of God's Will.

The repentant Israelites' used unity within God's Will to perform a good purpose, which was to cast down the false gods or idols and their idolatrous altars and their false incense. Their purpose was to obey the king's and the princes' commandments, which were given in accordance with the LORD's Word.

When God's Will works within one's heart, it always subdues the human will. The sincere souls who followed the words of their leader had their wills sanctified, and this gave them a desire to stride forward in their spiritual education and in their moral development. Thus, the people began to have "a will and a do" to repent and to do the right thing spiritually. They began their offensive warfare in behalf of the LORD's Name by destroying all the altars that had been erected to false gods in competition with the LORD's Name, and they cast them into the Brook Kidron.

For a multitude of the people, *even many of Ephraim, and Manasseh, Issachar, and Zebulun, had not cleansed themselves, yet did they eat the passover otherwise than it was written*. But Hezekiah prayed for them, saying, **The good LORD pardon every one That prepareth his heart to seek God**, the LORD God of his fathers, though *he be not cleansed* according to the purification of the sanctuary (II Chronicles 30:18,19).

In spite of the fact that many of the people were ceremonially unclean, God gave them the privilege of eating the Passover lamb out of season because of their sincere desire to worship and to serve the True LORD God.

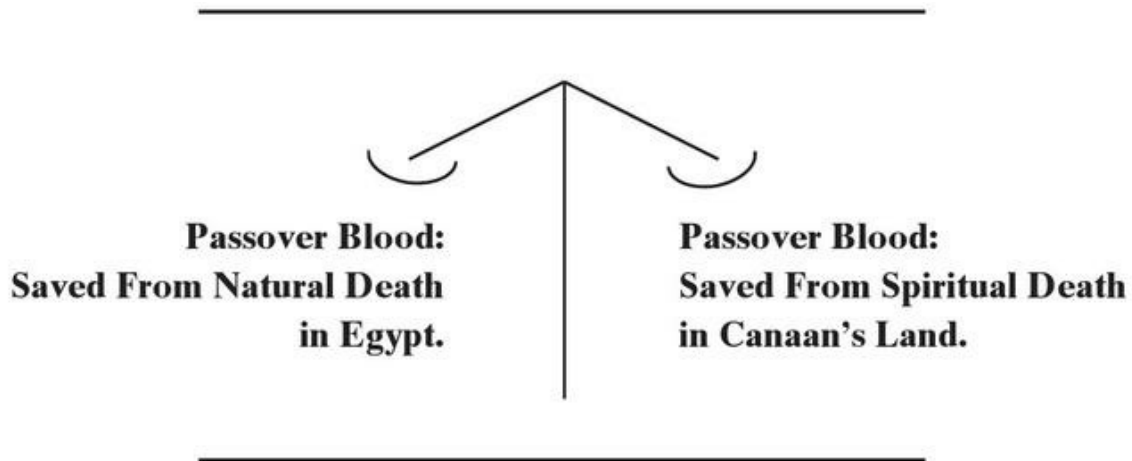
When the Priests and the Levites saw the common people's zeal and the sincerity, they were ashamed and sanctified themselves. Likewise, the best preparation we can make for feeding afresh and anew on our Passover Lamb, Jesus Christ, is to cast our iniquities and spiritual idolatries into the River of Remission of Christ's Blood.

In Hezekiah's day, there were many irregularities at the Passover, according to the strictness of the Ceremonial Law. But in answer to Hezekiah's prayer, God's Law of Mercy superseded the Ceremonial Law. Consequently, God allowed the ritual institutions to give way to God's Mercy and Grace, which ministered to the public necessity, benefit, and advantage. Therefore, the new converts were blessed and were sent away rejoicing and praising the LORD's Name.

God's Purpose for commanding Israel to observe and to keep the Passover was for her to remember God's Protective Power and His Power of Deliverance from Death.

Although the Israelites in Hezekiah's day never physically returned to Egypt, their minds went back, spiritually, to the night the Death Angel passed through the land of Egypt. They remembered how their fathers had told them about God's Power that miraculously had protected them from danger, harm, and injury when the Death Angel passed over the land of Egypt. They remembered how the blood of the slain lamb in Egypt had protected, defended, and guarded their forefathers against the physical death brought by the Death Angel. Likewise, they realized and acknowledged that, through faith, the Lamb's Blood was saving them from spiritual Death, just as it had saved the first generation of Israelites from natural Death in Egypt. So, in Hezekiah's day, Israel returned to God and made a new start with Him by humbly laying hold of the spiritual life, through faith, that always accompanies the Lamb's Blood.

If the Israelites made a new start with God in their spiritual life, under the shadow and type, when they had only *animal* blood, certainly we can make a greater new start in our spiritual life through faith in Christ's Living Blood.



In addition to saving the penitent, sincere souls from spiritual Death in Hezekiah's day, God also granted healing to those who humbled themselves and obeyed the command of their spiritual leader, Hezekiah.

And the LORD hearkened to Hezekiah, and healed the people (II Chronicles 30:20).

When God's people heed the voice of their spiritual leader and, by faith, lay hold of Jesus Christ's precious Blood, the holy, spotless Lamb, God grants new spiritual Life and Strength to them so that they can worship and serve Him only.

In response to Hezekiah's prayer, God forgave the people's sin and healed them and did not lay their sin to their charge. Because God was well pleased with Hezekiah's spiritual concern for His people, He forgave them; He healed them; and He restored them to comforting communion and joyful, peaceful fellowship with Himself. Through the Blood of the Lamb, God granted them new spiritual life and strength to worship and serve Him.

When the Passover was finished, the sincere Israelites went out and continued to destroy the remaining altars of idol worship. They broke the idolatrous images in pieces; they cut down the groves; they threw down the high places; and they threw out all the idolatrous altars in Judah. They were empowered to do all these things because they had followed the words of their spiritual leader.

Let us follow the example set by these Israelites. Let us continually find new life and strength in Jesus Christ, God's Resurrected Lamb.

III. We Humble Ourselves by Afflicting Ourselves.

We humble ourselves by afflicting our souls through fasting and self-denial of natural pleasures. Israel practiced this class of humility on the Day of Atonement, when all the people fasted from natural food.

And this shall be a statute for ever unto you: that in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, ye shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, whether it be one of your own country, or a stranger that sojourneth among you: For on that day shall *the priest* make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, *that ye may be clean from all your sins before the LORD. It shall be a sabbath of rest unto you, and ye shall afflict your souls, by a statute for ever (Leviticus 16:29-31).*

God commanded the Israelites to afflict their souls or to make the *nephesh* soul poor by denying it food so that it would remember that its existence does not depend upon natural substance ingested by the body. Actually, the life of their *nephesh* souls depended upon the atoning blood being carried into the Holy of Holies and placed on the Mercy Seat by the High Priest. Under the Old Testament Covenant, the atoning blood of the LORD's goats gave them life from year to year because it was a picture of Christ's Atoning Blood that He has now placed on the Mercy Seat in the Holy of Holies in the Heavens and in the Sea of Forgetfulness behind God's back. (There were two goats sacrificed on the Day of Atonement: one goat's blood was placed on the Ark, in the Holy of Holies. The other goat was a scapegoat that went into the wilderness, never to return.)

The chief culprit that separates man from his God is man's carnal mind because it makes him believe that his

nephesh soul exists as a result of his eating and drinking natural food substances. Since this is the case, the LORD provided a time for Israel to deal especially with the sins of her own *nephesh* soul since the *nephesh* is the soul in the body.*

On the Day of Atonement, Israel afflicted herself, her *nephesh* soul, before the LORD, acknowledging that the soul lived because of the atoning blood of the sacrifice.

The Hebrew word for *afflict* is *aw-naw*, which means to depress, to look down on or to browbeat self, to abase self, to afflict or to chasten self, to humble self, to deal hardly with, to submit self, to weaken in any wise. The *nephesh* soul in the body must humble itself before God and acknowledge that its existence does not depend upon substance from the creation, but upon the Life-giving Substance from Christ's Blood, the Creator. Hence, from the evening of the ninth day to the evening of the tenth day of the seventh month, all Israelites afflicted their souls by fasting* so that they would remember this Truth: Man's existence and the maintenance of his existence come only from the LORD, the Creator.

The Day of Atonement was a holy convocation, a day in which the entire Nation of Israel had to stand before the LORD. As all the people fasted and humbled themselves, the High Priest entered into the Holy of Holies with the blood of atonement, which had power to restore the oneness of a living relationship between God and His people. All those who failed to humble themselves in this manner were cut off from the Nation of Israel. In other words, the individuals who refused the Living Oneness of Relationship with Israel's God were also refused the privilege of sharing a living relationship with His people. How could one who refused God's Life expect to have a living relationship with His people since the Life in God's people also is from God?

Israel's practice of humbling herself through fasting provides a pattern for Christians to follow today. Beloved, our own flesh, which is full of Death and Destruction, poses the greatest threat against Christ's Life that we face in our journey toward spiritual maturity in Christ's Stature. Fallen Lucifer** and all his army*** cannot keep us from being one with the Life of the LORD Jesus Christ, if we deal with the will of our carnal flesh. Regardless of how rebellious and revolting our will may seem to be or how much it actively opposes God's Will, we can weaken it by fasting. Then, with our fleshly will weakened, we can more easily humble ourselves before the LORD.

Fasting from food is very humbling because it does more than deprive our physical bodies of nourishment. It causes us to know that man does not live by bread alone. God taught Israel this Principle of Truth by forcing her to suffer hunger during her experience in the wilderness. She fasted from all her former pleasant, natural food and ate only Manna from Heaven.

And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no. And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live (Deuteronomy 8:2,3).

God led Israel into a place of hunger and testing and made her completely poor, which caused her to lose all independence so that she could learn that man's power is not the sole condition for his existence on Earth. God desired that Israel learn empirically. He wanted her always to remember that it was His Life and His Sovereign Ruling Power and His Providing Care that gave His people every tiny piece of bread to sustain and maintain every minute of their existence, both naturally and spiritually.

God sends dispensations of affliction upon His people for the purpose of humbling them and teaching them constant and absolute dependence upon Him for their lives and for everything they enjoy. God also sends dispensations of affliction for the purpose of revealing His Love and to show forth His Power to maintain our lives. Afflictions prove our sincerity and increase Christ's Stature in our hearts. Remember, in the natural realm, it is the wind that tries the strength of the root of the tree; the storm that tries the pilot's knowledge at sea; the battle that tries the soldier's ability to fight; and, in the spiritual realm, it is God's Mercy and Grace that lead us into dispensations of poverty and hunger.

During the Devil's temptation, Jesus proved His Moral Strength and Power in the midst of hunger.

Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungered. And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. 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 4:1-4).

These verses clearly show that Jesus did not willfully thrust Himself into a place of temptation in order to prove His Moral Strength and Power; rather, He was *led* and *driven* there by the Holy Spirit. The precious Dove-Spirit descended upon Him and led Him into the wilderness, driving Him into a place of hunger so that He could display His Moral Strength and Power through His acknowledgment of the Truth and through His defense of the Truth, which He employed when He responded to the Devil's temptation by saying, "[M]an shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). Jesus Christ lived by the Words of His Heavenly Father. Jesus Christ, the Eternal Word and the Eternal Bread of Life, knew that He was the Word of Life and the Bread of Life because He lived by the Father; therefore, He had no need or reason to turn stones into natural bread.

In her wilderness of fasting and affliction, Israel murmured and complained and doubted God's ability to maintain her life. But Jesus, in His wilderness of fasting and affliction, firmly believed and knew, with no doubts, that His Father would maintain His Life; therefore, He refused to turn stones into bread.

Because our fleshly, carnal man is the *fat* one and the *strong* one, who stands in opposition to God's Will, God leads us to fast, to pray, and to deny *self* the natural pleasures it craves so that we can mortify *self's* strength and power to oppose God's Will. While fasting from natural food, we give our spiritual man an opportunity to grow and increase in faith and trust in the Heavenly Father and in His Power to sustain and maintain our lives, both naturally and spiritually.

Fasting does not *buy* atonement from God, but it does force our flesh to assume its rightful place of humility before God when we take the low place of exclusive surrender to God's Purposive Will and rely in complete dependence upon Him for the sustenance and maintenance of our lives. Fasting makes our flesh too weak to rise up in rebellion against God's Will, which is its natural response when opposed in any manner.

King David practiced fasting as a means of bringing his flesh under subjection to the LORD and His Holy Nature. On one occasion, David told how his enemies had lied against him.

False witnesses did rise up; they laid to my charge things that I knew not. They rewarded me evil for good to the spoiling of my soul (Psalm 35:11,12).

David's wicked enemies had accused him of plotting against Saul's life (I Samuel 24:10), which David knew was not true, although Saul was David's persecutor. But David's enemies gave false testimony which aided Saul's unlawful deeds. Then, when David's enemies later became sick, he could have yielded to fleshly rejoicing over their importunity. Instead, he maintained a right attitude and fasted and prayed for them:

But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth: **I humbled my soul with fasting;** and my prayer returned into mine own bosom.

I behaved myself as though he had been my friend or brother: I bowed down heavily, as one that mourneth for his mother (Psalm 35:13,14).

David's thoughts and feelings were so unselfishly concerned with his enemies' and his attackers' welfare that, when they were suffering and in distress, he conducted himself as though he were praying for himself or for his friends or for members of his own family.

When God pours out His Judgment upon our enemies, our attackers, we must not let our pride rise up in evil rejoicing over their pain and suffering. God cannot and will not maintain a relationship of oneness with our evil flesh. Our proud, rebellious flesh *must* be mortified, regenerated, converted, conformed, and transformed into Christ's humble, submissive Nature. God judges the sins of His people, as well as the iniquities and transgressions of His enemies. We can leave vengeance to God and trust His Nature of Justice. It is of eternal importance, therefore, to know how to bring our flesh under subjection to Christ through fasting. Keeping our relationship with God is vitally important, but petty revenge is unimportant, and gloating over our enemies' misfortunes and suffering is unacceptable behaviour for a Christian.

As we fast for God to mortify the deeds of our flesh, the body may cry out, "I'm starving to death; I must eat or I will die." But what we need to remember is that fasting in God's Will never brought Israel to Death in the wilderness nor Jesus to Death in *His* wilderness because, in each instance, they were led by God's Spirit. Israel was led by the Cloud and Fire into her wilderness of hunger, and Jesus was led and driven by the Dove Spirit into His wilderness experience.

When we have humbled our hearts and afflicted our souls sufficiently before the LORD, Christ will apply His Atonement Blood to our flesh and bring us into a new, fresh, living relationship with Himself, just as He did for the

Nation of Israel. If the Blood of the Old Testament Covenant brought Israel back into a fresh, new, living relationship with God each year, Christ's Resurrected, Omnipresent Blood of the New Testament Covenant continually will bring us into a *greater* living relationship with God and the Lamb.

IV. We Humble Ourselves by Becoming Like a Little Child.

A little child is God's "apostle," sent forth, day by day, to teach us the Way of Humility and also to teach us the value of innocence, forgiveness, trustfulness, and forgetfulness.

And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. **Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven** (Matthew 18:2-4).

Jesus's twelve Disciples were in a constant contest to see who would be the greatest in the Kingdom. Each one of them seemed to have a good reason for feeling he should be considered the greatest. Several of the Disciples could, indeed, claim some specific distinction:

- Peter, the chief speaker, had been given the Keys to the Kingdom; therefore, he felt he was worthy of being considered the greatest Disciple in the Kingdom.
- Judas, the treasurer, had been given the money box; therefore, he felt he was worthy to rule over all their needs.
- Simon and Jude were Jesus' brothers, according to the flesh. As Jesus' nearest relatives, they felt they deserved the highest offices.
- John, the beloved Disciple, was the favorite of the Prince of Peace; therefore, he believed he was worthy of the highest position.
- Andrew was the first one called; therefore, he believed he was worthy of always being first.

Jesus rebuked their proud, foolish fancies by teaching them to be humble and by giving them the example of a little child. Because Jesus understood that so few learn His Humility Truth, He used different means and methods to teach His Humility.

The Disciples' striving needed to be ended, and they needed to become humble as little children, which meant that their thoughts had to be converted or turned and changed into a different kind of thinking and understanding. They needed to take on another frame of mind about God's Kingdom and about themselves. They also needed to repent of their proud ambitions, their greed for honour, and their insatiable desire to rule and reign over others. These things in their nature were contrary to Jesus Christ's Humility; therefore, they needed them mortified and converted into three things: Christ's Humble Submissiveness to the Father's Master Plan; Christ's Humble, Exclusive Surrender to the Father's Purposive Will; and Christ's Sacrificial Sharing. By Christ's Converting Power and Grace, the Disciples needed to become like children.

People, today, might answer the Disciples' question of who is greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven by saying that the greatest person is the one with the most degrees after his name in the educational world or the Pastor with the largest church in the religious world or the business man with the finest automobile, houses, and yachts. But Jesus' answer was totally contrary to man's carnal thinking. Instead of encouraging His Disciples in their mental quest for the highest place, Jesus told them that their corrupt thinking had to be converted. The Greek word for *converted* means to turn quite around or reverse, convert, turn self about.

The innate, evil inclination of a person's flesh constrains him to seek the glory and fame of the high places of this present evil world. The striving of man's pride manifests itself at a very early age and his fleshly ambition continues its proud struggle all through his adult life, as he clamours to reach the top of the ladder of success. Men want anything that makes them appear to have an exalted position before others so that they can make their own names known.

Once we learn about pride, recognizing the *natural* pride of *ambition* is easy. However, discerning the fleshly origin of our corrupt, spiritual ambitions that cause us to want to be the "greatest" in the Kingdom of Heaven is more difficult. True spiritual exaltation is not the result of corrupt spiritual ambitions, nor is it the result of the fleshly efforts of man. True spiritual exaltation has its origin in Jesus Christ's childlike Humility. God's Word

admonishes us not to be boastful, for the Psalmist said:

Lift not up your horn on high: speak *not with a stiff neck*. For promotion [exaltation, to be high] *cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another* (Psalm 75:5-7).

God warned man not to thrust his head upward as a gesture of insolent pride, while he speaks with a contemptuous voice that is supported by a haughty neck. Man's fate is in God's Hands. True exaltation does not come from any point of the compass by man's seeking allies to help him establish his superiority above all others. God ultimately decides each person's eternal fate and his eternal position, according to how great his pride is, on one side of the scales, and according to how much of Christ's Humility he has acquired on the other side of the scales. The LORD puts down one man, according to his pride, and lifts up another, according to his humility.

Jesus Christ knew that His Father is not a respecter of persons and that His decision to put down one person and to exalt one above the other is based upon His divine Principle that Humility Precedes Honour.

The fear of the LORD is the instruction of wisdom; and before honour is humility (Proverbs 15:33).

The Fear of the LORD is the "firstborn" of Wisdom and Humility. And Exaltation is the "reward" of Wisdom and Humility that brings forth their firstborn — the Fear of the LORD! Hence, God gives spiritual exaltation in proportion to a person's Wisdom, Humility, and Fear of the LORD.

Jesus set a little child in the midst of His Disciples in order to demonstrate to them the right way to achieve spiritual success. Since it is impossible for grown men to become small in body, Jesus had to be referring to the nature and disposition of a child's mind. Let us consider some of the qualities of a child's mind that exude the nature of humility.

A. A Little Child Is Innocent.

A little child is innocent or free from the corrupting malice of ambition. A wealthy little child is innocently oblivious of the fact that his little playmate may be the child of a poor beggar. Little children are innocent of the great, proud aims of their parents. So they are free to enjoy the life their Heavenly Father has given them.

A little child views others as being without hostility because he has no inner, malicious thoughts toward them. When we find ourselves suspecting everyone of talking about us or plotting against us, it is time to start humbling our minds before the LORD. It is time to get down low and realize that no enemy can come against us without our Father's permission. Repeatedly, our minds must be turned away from thoughts of fleshly retaliation and be converted so that we look only to our Heavenly Father, Who assumes all responsibility for protecting His little children.

Humility is making ourselves become a babe, through Christ's redeeming, converting Power. His Power frees our souls from corrupting, malicious thoughts of ambition and suspicion when we make ourselves low.

We honour God and the Lamb when we exalt His Name in every situation that He sees fit to choose for us. If we wait for God to exalt us, we will have true exaltation. For us to strive for the top through fleshly ambition is not the way to exaltation! Great peace floods our souls when we accept the position of an innocent child and wait for God to lead us. Children must be led. Remember, the adult Israelites, not the children, were the ones always murmuring about their leaders, about their food, about the way God led them, and about Canaan's Land.

Ambition and suspicion will keep us from being childlike, but we *must be like a child* if we want to learn how to humble ourselves.

B. A Little Child Is Forgiving.

A little child quickly gives up his resentment and his desire to punish with long-displayed anger. He quickly gives up his desire to penalize his offenders and quickly exhibits his willingness to forgive and to pardon them. When a little child's parents correct him or when his friends hurt him, he quickly forgives and goes happily on his way.

While hanging on Calvary's Cross, Jesus Christ showed a forgiving Spirit toward His persecutors. He cried, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do..." (Luke 23:34). Jesus never let someone else's wrong spirit keep Him from doing His Father's Will. He forgave them, although they continued to torment Him in the midst of His Crucifixion.

We must be forgiving in order to learn true humility.

C. A Little Child Is Trustful.

A little child displays trust and confidence in his father's word and in his father's nature. In one Parable, Jesus stressed the trusting nature of a child in order to teach His spiritual children how to trust in their Heavenly Father's Nature.

If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him? (Luke 11:11-13).

Jesus gave His children both instruction and encouragement to pray to God as their Father. Jesus appealed to their bowels of mercy as earthly fathers; He said that an earthly father who is full of love and concern for his child would never give the child a stone to eat instead of bread, nor would he give his child a serpent instead of meat. Neither would a natural father give his child a scorpion in place of an egg. No natural, earthly father would be so uncaring. If earthly parents, although evil, are so kind, how much more will our Heavenly Father, in His infinite Kindness, give us good things? If our earthly parents, although weak and ignorant about all our needs, give what is best for us, and in the best way possible, how much more will our Heavenly Father, Who infinitely excels our parents in that He possesses both divine Wisdom and Goodness, give us the best, namely His Spirit and His Word?

We must come humbly and trustfully to the LORD, as a little child comes to his parents, knowing that the very Wisdom and Goodness of His Nature motivate His actions. God, the Heavenly Father, in His infinite Wisdom and Goodness, will be Faithful to perform His Word of Promise, which says, "[N]o good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly" (Psalm 84:11). The upright who walk forward in humble trust toward God the Father always find the good things that His Wisdom and Goodness have provided for them. We cannot approach God in fearful doubt. The one road to God's Presence is humble trust. God is a kind, loving Heavenly Father Who is willing and zealous to bless His children with Good Gifts that will help them grow and mature spiritually.

We must become trustful as a little child so that God can teach us His Humility.

D. A Little Child Is Forgetful.

A little child also quickly erases facts and knowledge from his mind and overlooks injuries he has received. He quickly forgets offenses.

People often say, "I'll forgive, but I can't forget." Those who believe this deceive themselves since forgiveness cannot coexist with a spirit that continually calls to remembrance the offenses it has received from others.

If any person ever had a justifiable reason for holding bitter feelings against another, Jesus Christ is that Person. Yet, while hanging on Calvary's Cross, Jesus showed His Forgiveness of His persecutors. We can pray for God to forgive us only after we have forgiven those who are causing or have caused us pain.

Prophetically, the Prophet Zechariah saw that the Messiah (Jesus Christ), would go *beyond* forgiving and manifesting the sweet spirit of forgetfulness toward those who crucified Him. Zechariah wrote these words:

And *one* shall say unto him, **What are these wounds in thine hands?** Then he shall answer, **Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends** (Zechariah 13:6).

Jesus called His persecutors His *friends*, although they were His bitterest enemies. Jesus considered them friends because they helped Him to pour out His precious Blood on the Cross, thus fulfilling the Father's Master Plan and Purposive Will.

It is easy to forgive and to forget when our hearts consider that God is the *Head* over all things. Consequently, whatever our enemies do, they only further God's Master Plan and Purposive Will in our lives. However, when we receive a wound, we usually call the person who inflicted it our "enemy." But Jesus, our Instructive Example, held no grudge; He called his persecutors "friends."

We must humble ourselves as a little child *and quickly forget the offenses we receive* from others. Such Humility Forgiveness and Forgetfulness from God's Son should break our hard hearts. May God grant us the same sweet, forgiving, forgetful Spirit that Jesus had so that we, too, can call our enemy "friend," when he is the one who pushes us to fellowship the *Crucified* Christ so that we can experience the resurrection Power and Glory of the *Resurrected* Christ. Anyone is a "friend" if he helps us to draw nigh to God.

The Knowledge of how to humble our hearts before the LORD is both precious and priceless. We humble

ourselves in the following ways: by accepting our Punishment and acknowledging God's Justice and Righteousness in afflicting us; by obeying the Word of God that comes through our spiritual leaders; by afflicting *self* through fasting and self-denial; and by becoming as a little child in our thinking.

If we are wise, we will faithfully practice humbling our hearts because it is much easier and far more profitable to humble ourselves than to wait and be humbled by the LORD and lose our reward forever.

* The subject of man's *nephesh* soul is covered in the following Sermon Study by B.R. Hicks – [The Sixteen Minds of Man](#); (Jeffersonville, IN: Christ Gospel Churches Int'l., Inc., 1996).

* B. R. Hicks, [The Rewards Of Fasting](#) (Jeffersonville, Indiana: Christ Gospel Churches Int'l., Inc., 1983).

** B. R. Hicks, [Lucifer](#) (Jeffersonville, Indiana: Christ Gospel Churches Int'l., Inc., 1970).

***B. R. Hicks, [Lucifer's Army](#) (Jeffersonville, Indiana: Christ Gospel Churches Int'l., Inc., 1972).

Chapter Three

How God humbles The Proud

God loves His Creation. He has no desire to bring one unnecessary pain or suffering into our lives that is not for our highest best and for His Eternal Glory. Hence, God's pure Motive for humbling a person is based on His Knowledge that, eventually, every creature in Heaven, in Earth, and under the Earth shall bow and confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the Glory of God the Father (Philippians 2 :10,11).

God will not cease to foster man's spiritual education until *all* men, voluntarily or involuntarily, have humbled themselves and have bowed their knees to Jesus Christ, His beloved Son. Realizing that, sooner or later, every heart must bow down low before the LORD, God gives man instructive warnings to humble himself; then, He follows these instructive warnings with explicit directions on *how* man *can* humble himself.

Some people are wise enough to heed God's warnings and take advantage of the opportunity in this life to humble themselves, while others, in their lack of wisdom, continue to walk in their own proud ways. By putting the last group in humiliating circumstances, God gives them a second chance to repent of their pride before it is eternally too late for them to humble themselves voluntarily.

If we fail to heed God's instructive, theoretical warnings to humble ourselves, we can expect to learn, experientially, how God humbles those who refuse to heed Him.

In the past, God has humbled the proud in the following ways: (1) by letting them experience hunger, (2) by serving them the same diet day after day, (3) by allowing them to experience painful afflictions, and (4) by letting them experience failure.

I. God humbles the Proud with Hunger.

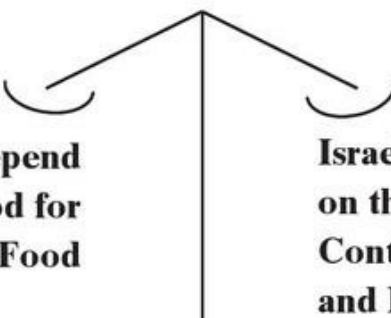
In order to humble His people's proud hearts, God allowed the Israelites to feel the discomfort, pain, and weakness caused by a lack of food.

Hunger can be experienced in both the natural and spiritual realms. God knows that hunger brings one very low. Only an exceptionally proud person remains haughty and arrogant when faced with starvation.

And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; **that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live** (Deuteronomy 8:3).

Natural bread is the work of man's intelligence. By the sweat of his brow, he masters the forces of nature to wrest his bread from the soil. Able to provide his food, man conceives the deceitful idea that he is the master of his fate and the reason for his own existence on Earth. Man's primary concern in life is to provide his own bread and maintain his own existence. The need for food occupies almost all man's thoughts concerning working. His insatiable preoccupation and his breathtaking race to make a living deny man the time and interest for his spiritual existence and spiritual education. For this reason, God led Israel through the wilderness, a place in which it was impossible for man to use his intelligence to master the forces of nature and produce his own bread. God humbled Israel to the place of total dependence on Him to provide her food, her bread, and to maintain her existence.

The LORD God also provided for Israel's spiritual food by giving her the Bread of His *Torah*, His Commandments, Judgments, and Statutes. The LORD God maintained Israel's spiritual existence by imparting Wisdom, Understanding, and Knowledge to her. Thus, Israel was humbled to depend totally on the LORD God for her spiritual and natural food and for the continuance and maintenance of her spiritual and natural existence.



**Israel Humbled to Depend
on the LORD God for
Natural and Spiritual Food**

**Israel Humbled to Depend
on the LORD God for
Continuance of Spiritual
and Natural Existence**

God led Israel to a place of total helplessness and powerlessness so that she would have the chance to humble herself completely and depend upon the LORD God, her espoused Spiritual Husband. Also, God's Purpose in humbling Israel in the wilderness was to remove the worry and responsibility of her earning her bread by the sweat of her brow so that she could have plenty of rest and free time to study and learn His Holy *Torah*.

The Israelites miraculous deliverance from Egypt and their supernatural crossing of the Red Sea were still fresh in their minds when they entered the wilderness and began to suffer the discomfort, pain, and weakness of hunger. Yet, instead of recalling all that God had already done for them and humbling themselves as little children and looking to their Heavenly Father to feed them, they murmured and complained against their human leaders, Moses and Aaron.

And the children of Israel said unto them, **Would to God we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we did eat bread to the full;** for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger (Exodus 16:3).

Although they seemed to direct their anger against Moses and Aaron, their true animosity and accusations were against the LORD God. "Would to God we had died by the hand of the LORD in Egypt," they complained. In their hearts, they said, in so many words, "We may as well have saved ourselves this long journey. God was planning to kill us anyway."

This accusation was not founded upon the Truth. With their own mouths, they confessed that the LORD had fed them all the time they had lived under Egyptian bondage. If God had purposed to destroy them, He simply could have waited and let the Egyptians do the job for Him. He could have let them die as bondslaves under the cruel hands of their taskmasters. But, instead of letting them die in bondage in the heathen land of Egypt, God showed His loving Concern for the children of Israel by working miracles to start them on their journey toward Canaan's Land.

In spite of all the Mighty Wonders God had performed upon the Egyptians and upon Israel, all but a very few Israelites gained no humility or gratitude. Therefore, He allowed them to hunger in the wilderness in order to give the proud, rebellious, ungrateful ones another opportunity to humble their hearts and look to Him as the Source and the continuance of their existence. The LORD God humbled Israel in the wilderness so that she would look to Him as her Creator, Owner, and Master of her fate and destiny. Then, she would be able to lift up the Name of the LORD in continual praise and thanksgiving.

God continues, today, to humble the proud by allowing them to suffer the discomfort, pain, and weakness of hunger — sometimes in the natural realm and sometimes in the spiritual realm — in order to teach them total dependence.

For example, a wrong attitude, when God's Word or Spiritual Bread is closed up to us, may make us pridefully say in our hearts, "God, You said that man should live by every Word that proceeds out of Your mouth, but *You* are not feeding me. I'm going to perish, and it will be *Your* fault because *You* are not keeping Your Word." But a right attitude will make us confess the Truth and say, "LORD, I know you are Just, Righteous, Kind, and Holy. I know You faithfully perform Your Word. So, LORD, have Mercy on my discomfort, pain, and weakness, and feed me with Spiritual Bread that is convenient for me." Proud, defiant rebellion will keep us from taking the low place and humbly confessing our hunger to the LORD.

**Spiritual Mouth Says:
“I Am Trusting in God. I Am
So Grateful to Learn Obedience
Through Suffering
Hunger. I am Unworthy to
Fellowship Christ’s Suffering
Through Hunger.”**

**Carnal Heart Says:
“I Do Not Deserve this
Suffering. This Is not Fair.
I Am Angry Because I Am
Robbed of Food.”**

Hunger is humiliating because it hurts our pride; it lowers our dignity; it hurts our feelings because it makes us appear foolish or contemptible; it mortifies us. But humiliating hunger gives us an opportunity to: bow down low at Jesus’ Feet; to recognize and remember the Goodness of our Father’s unchanging Nature; to mortify the pride of our hearts; and to increase in Christ’s priceless Humility.

In the past, when we have asked for Bread, either naturally or spiritually, He never has given us a stone, nor a serpent, nor a scorpion. The Holy Nature of the LORD’s ineffable Name never changes.

In the face of hunger, true Humility offers up gratitude and thankful appreciation for every tiny crumb of Truth that God has seen fit to give us in previous days. Therefore, let us humble ourselves, for God will not let us starve — neither in the wild, unrestrained wilderness — nor in the fruitless, burning desert of this world. God’s Word says:

And he brought us out from thence [Egypt], **that he might bring us in, to give us the land which he sware unto our fathers** (Deuteronomy 6:23).

**God Brought His People
*Out of Egypt.***

**God Brought His People
*Into Canaan’s Land.***

God’s Purpose in dealing with Israel was to bring her *out* of Egypt and *into* Canaan’s Land. God’s Purpose in allowing Israel to suffer hunger was to humble her proud heart; to purge her from her pride; and, then, to take her into Canaan’s Land.

Some faithfully believed, trusted, and relied on God’s Wisdom and Goodness to bring them into the Promised Land, after He had brought them out of Egypt. These people let the hunger they experienced work more humility in them. They are examples we can follow in learning how to humble ourselves.

II. God Humbles the Proud by Giving Them the Same Diet, Day after Day.

God allowed Israel to eat the same diet of Manna every day in order to unveil the people who ate in faith, on one hand, and, on the other hand, to expose the people who ate in unbelief. Those who ate in unbelief found their diet in the wilderness tiresome because it was unvarying. They found the uniformity of their diet wearisome and irksome.

And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, **and fed thee with manna which thou knewest not**, neither did thy fathers know; **that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only**, but by every *word* that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live (Deuteronomy 8:3).

By serving Israel the same, unvarying, unchanging menu, day after day, God humbled her still further. He opened the windows of Heaven and rained Manna down upon them, but they said, “[T]here is no bread, neither is there any water; and *our soul loatheth this light bread*” (Numbers 21:5).

The unbelieving souls perceived the Manna as being insufficient. The Truth was that the quality of the Manna was excellent, but their unbelief and dissatisfaction with the Manna twisted the Truth in reverse. God had given them satisfying, sufficient Bread out of His Mercy and Grace, but most of the people considered the Manna a monotonous provision.

Those who ate in faith found the Manna to be completely digestible. Their bodies absorbed it, and it kept the cells of their bodies in perfect repair. The Manna had such rejuvenating Power that its anointing kept the very clothes that touched their bodies from wearing out.

However, the unbelievers’ fleshly carnal *self* grew weary of eating the same diet. Although they ate Angels’ food and drank Water out of the Rock that was Christ, their souls cried out for a change.

This Principle works, today, in the natural realm. If, for example, limited finances cause us to live on hamburgers for an extended period of time, the entire family starts dreaming of chicken or fish or a thick steak. There is nothing wrong with hamburger; it is not lacking in needed vitamins and protein; we just want something different to eat.

This is also true spiritually. Each time we open God’s Word, we want to *eat* something that is living, new, and exciting. In our search for new, quickened Truth, we tend to pass lightly over old Truths that previously have been quickened to us. Until our flesh is mortified and crucified, if new Truth is slow in coming, we react in the same way that the Israelites did. In the old heart, our flesh will say, “This old Truth is insufficient. I need the strong Meat of the Word.” However, if we humble our proud hearts and give the Governance and Guidance of our spiritual diet over to the LORD, He will give us the Bread and the Meat of His Truth that our spiritual man needs. God will bless His Word to our spiritual man and use it to sustain us all the way to spiritual Canaan’s Land.

When Israel reached natural Canaan’s Land, she found it was a place flowing with milk and honey, a land of corn and wine, a land of abundant fruit. Tragically, those who had refused to accept God’s Humility-Manna Bread in the wilderness never had the privilege to eat of the LORD’s abundant supply of exalted corn in Canaan’s Land because they died in the wilderness. They ate Manna in an ungrateful manner, thus they never received its exalted blessing that would have filled them with the faith and courage to possess the land. Only four men from the old generation: Caleb, Joshua, Phineas, and Eleazar, had eaten the Manna in faith, so only they, of the ones who had come out of Egypt, believed in God’s promised inheritance. They did not doubt they could possess the land, so, later, they did indeed possess it.

This is a lesson that shows us that we must come humbly before the LORD and pray, as He taught His Disciples to pray, “Give us this day our daily bread.” If we humble our hearts before Him, then whatever He feeds us will be sufficient for all our spiritual needs.

Learning to appreciate the Truth that God gives us, even if it is Truth we have learned before, helps us to be humble. We need to let the LORD know how grateful we are for every crumb of Truth that He has given to us for our spiritual growth.

III. God Humbles the Proud by Allowing Them to Experience Painful Afflictions.

God uses the pain, suffering, distress, and calamities that illness, loss, and misfortunes impose upon us in order to humble our proud hearts.

Many times people try to place all the blame for their afflictions and sufferings on Satan, but this completely ignores the fact that affliction is one way God humbles the proud.

Job’s story provides a classic example of Satan’s power to afflict God’s people. Yet God limits Satan’s power, which was revealed in Job’s case. Each time Satan wished to afflict Job, he had to present himself before the LORD and lay his evil plan before Him in order to receive His special permission. The first time Satan appeared in God’s

Presence to accuse Job, God granted Satan permission *to touch Job's possessions but not his body*. Later, God allowed Satan *to afflict Job's body*, but commanded that he *spare Job's life*. God's whole Purpose in allowing Satan to afflict Job's body was to humble Job's spiritually proud heart. Thus, Satan was nothing more than a celestial tool in the LORD's Hands.

Although the LORD used Satan to administer some afflictions, He does not limit Himself to using Satan alone. God also has and does use men as terrestrial tools in His Hands to afflict the proud in heart and bring them to their knees in humility. For example, He allowed inimical men to carry King Manasseh to the land of Babylon. Held captive by the King of Assyria, Manasseh was wise enough not to waste time blaming the Devil or the men who had bound him; instead, he humbled himself under God's mighty Hand of Affliction.

And when he was in affliction, he besought the LORD his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, (II Chronicles 33:12).

God's Punishment of Manasseh caused him to humble himself in his affliction, and he began to repent and pray. Thus, his repentance moved God to restore him to his kingdom.

And prayed unto him: and he [the LORD] was intreated of him [Manasseh], and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the LORD he was God (II Chronicles 33:13).

Because the affliction God had sent had brought the desired humility and repentance in Manasseh's proud heart, God delivered him from the humiliation of his captivity.

The definitions of different Hebrew words for *affliction* identify the various forms affliction can take.

One meaning of *affliction* is *to cramp*. A person who is cramped in the natural realm finds it difficult or impossible to move in any direction. God humbles us by allowing circumstances to put us into a cramped, hampered, and confined condition that leaves us with no way to turn. In this restrained and confined condition, we find it impossible to turn to the right or to the left, to go forward or to turn back. God's Purpose, beloved, for creating this restrained condition is to teach us to bow down our proud hearts. We can humble ourselves to Christ's Humility in any place of confinement, if we choose to do so.

Affliction also means *adversary, an enemy*. It means to besiege, to bind up, and to distress. When Israel turned from following after the LORD and turned to worshipping idols, she found that God became her Adversary. The Holy One of Israel turned and fought against the nation until she repented of her idolatry. Some Israelites, however, never humbled themselves, not even when their Adversary was God Himself. They were like Lucifer, who would rather be a proud king in Hell than to be God's humble servant in Heaven.

Affliction means to be narrower. Sometimes people think the Crucified Way is too narrow a way, yet the narrow Way of Holiness is nothing compared to the *narrow strait* in which God puts proud hearts in order to humble them.

Affliction means pangs; it means to be shut up, to be in a strait, to be troubled, to vex. This is how God afflicted Manasseh. He shut him up in captivity in Babylon, where he was troubled and vexed in soul until he humbled his proud heart. He was painfully distressed in his mind and plagued with anxieties and fears until he repented and was restored to his spiritual relationship with the One True God. God allowed Manasseh to suffer all these things in order to force him to humble his proud, idolatrous heart.

Someone has said, "God can't make us go on, but He can make us wish we had." Knowing God's Power to humble, we should voluntarily choose to humble ourselves quickly, before He has to send afflicting situations and circumstances into our lives.

IV. God Humbles the Proud by Letting Them Bewail and Repent over Others' Sins and Failures.

The Apostle Paul revealed, by the Spirit of God, the fourth way that God humbles us. He humbles us through the failures and remisses of others. When those for whom we are responsible, either spiritually or naturally, grieve the LORD by their defection from Him, and also fail to fulfill our aspirations for them, it humbles our soul to a depth of pain and grief that personal hunger, a monotonous diet, and even personal afflictions never can.

Again, think ye that we excuse ourselves unto you? we speak before God in Christ: but we *do* all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying. For I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and *that* I shall be found unto you such as ye would not: lest *there be* debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults: *And lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and*

that I shall bewail many which have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they have committed (II Corinthians 12:19-21).

When God humbles us among those who grieve Him by their pernicious sins, we experience the grief of God's Spirit, which causes us to bewail or to weep, to mourn, and to repent for them. When God humbles our souls with this kind of prayer for ignorant sinners, whose sins have caused the LORD intense emotional pain, our souls express this grief or pain by long, loud cries in intercessory prayer and by long, pitiful groans in travailing prayer.

In situations where we experience hunger, monotonous diet, or afflictions, we can humble ourselves by choosing to yield up the power of our wills to the LORD's Purposive Will. We control our own will by forcing it to give up its claim to rule and reign over us; and, instead, we force it to surrender to the LORD's Commands and Demands.

Exclusive surrender to God is giving up our wills to His Rule and Reign, when we have been striving to keep our *own* wills on the Throne of our hearts. But when another human being, whom we love, decides to rebel against God and to defect from His Master Plan and Purposive Will for his life, we are powerless and helpless because we cannot make a decision for him to humble his will. We can do nothing but fall upon our faces before the LORD and cry out in wailing and mourning, as we share the grief of God's Spirit over his rebellion and express our sorrow for his regrettable sin. After we have done this, we must wait for God to bring that person to the place of repentance and humility. We cannot repent and humble ourselves for him. We cannot make another person's choices for him, no matter how much we love him.

Paul besought his spiritual children at Corinth to humble themselves and repent of their deeds of uncleanness, fornication, and lasciviousness. He desired to be spared the pain and humiliation of publicly bewailing and grieving for their sinful acts that had brought grief and sorrow to God's Heart.

The Greek word for *bewail* means to grieve, to experience the painful feeling or act of grief, to feel passion, to suffer sorrow, to vex, to mourn, to bewail.

Because of others' sins, the spiritual ones who serve Christ are brought in the Spirit to the Garden of Gethsemane so that they might fellowship Jesus' sufferings for others' sins.

In agony, Jesus sweat great drops of Blood in the Garden as He demonstrated His exclusive Surrender to His Father's Will and His complete Humility Dependence upon His Father for His very Life. Some people think that Jesus prayed in the Garden for the Father to spare Him from going to Death at Calvary's Cross, but this theory is contrary to God's Word. Jesus was actually dying in the Garden; His life was leaving Him because of the great grief and weight of man's sins that His Soul felt. In the Book of Hebrews, Paul explained the mystery of Jesus' experience in the Garden. Paul said:

Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; (Hebrews 5:7).

The Father heard His Son praying to be spared from drinking the Cup of Death in the Garden, when He was there, praying for others' sins. Jesus wanted to live long enough to fulfill God's Master Plan and Purposive Will of Redemption at the Cross. He wanted to live until He could give His Life on Calvary's Cross, thus sacrificially sharing His precious Blood to atone for fallen man's sins. The Father not only heard Jesus' prayer, but He answered it by sending Angels to strengthen Jesus' Human Body.

Sin brings a tremendous grief to God's Spirit, and those who live close to God also feel His Grief and Sorrow. They are brought low before the LORD as they bewail for the souls of sinners and for their sinful deeds. Most of the time, ministers, spiritual leaders, and spiritual parents do their bewailing and mourning in the privacy of their prayer closets. However, God occasionally humbles them in public by putting the bewailing spirit upon them that Jesus experienced in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Jesus allows this to happen for two reasons: first, it gives the proud, rebellious ones an opportunity to humble themselves and repent of their sins. Second, it gives His spiritual ones an opportunity to bow down low and fellowship the suffering Jesus experienced in the Garden of Gethsemane.

While the Disciples slept, Jesus agonized alone before His Father. Near to Death, He demonstrated His exclusive Surrender to His Father's Purposive Will. He would rather have died in the Garden than to have laid aside the burden of lost souls or to lift up one Finger of His Divinity to strengthen Himself unless He knew that was His Father's Perfect Will. Jesus did all the things He saw His Father doing. When He did not strengthen Himself in the Garden, it was obvious that, in the beginning, He did not see His Father moving to strengthen Him. Consequently, Jesus' Life was being poured out in the Garden, not on Calvary's Cross. But when the Father saw Jesus' exclusive

Surrender and complete Dependence upon Him for His Life, the Father sent an Angel to strengthen Jesus so that He could continue bearing the grief of lost souls and go on to the Cross.

Sometimes, we feel that those near to us should at least carry the burden for their own spiritual needs. But God will let them fail; He will let them go to sleep, as it were, and leave us bearing the burden alone. Beloved, we would be lost and without hope, today, if Jesus had not humbled Himself in the Garden of Gethsemane when His Disciples failed to stay awake and help Him bear the burden for sinful man.

Thank God for giving us the privilege to bear His burdens of grief over sinful souls. Burdens for others are good for us because they make us weep and wail before the LORD.

If every person in the Corinthian Church had been obedient and all things had been lovely, Paul might have begun to take pride in his spiritual success. But the spiritual weaknesses and sins of the people caused him to mourn and bewail before God for their sins.

Times come when rejoicing is proper, as Jesus pointed out to His Disciples. When the seventy Disciples rejoiced because the devils were subject to them, Jesus said:

Notwithstanding in this **rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven**
(Luke 10:20).

God humbles us with the failures of others so that we can learn to take pleasure in nothing besides Jesus Christ and His Perfect Will.

Failing to perceive the tremendous Power of Christ's Humility that lies hidden in the low place, the carnally minded person stumbles over humiliation; hence, he fails to attain the divine Power of Christ for which his heart yearns.

Regardless of how humiliating a situation may be, God has concealed a portion of His Power of Humility that can be ours if we willingly accept the low place. But the blindness of the carnal mind makes it impossible for the flesh to discern the tremendous Power that God has hidden there for us. The man who allows his proud carnal mind to rule him stumbles over life's humiliating situations without ever really humbling himself before the LORD; thus, although he experiences the humiliation, his heart fails to gain the power of true Humility.

It is very sobering to realize that it is possible to be brought down low and still miss God's Purpose for allowing that particular situation to come into our lives. The secret of gaining Christ's Humility Power is in willingly humbling our hearts before the LORD.

When God humbles proud man, He does it in four ways:

- God humbles proud man with hunger,
- God humbles proud man with the same diet,
- God humbles proud man with afflictions,
- God humbles proud man with having him bewail in repentance over others' sins.

Chapter Four

The Power Of True Humility

Power means authority. Two constituents of true power are duty and responsibility. Yet most people envision power as a place or position in which one can do as he pleases. Carnal love for power has its roots in fleshly fear. People are afraid of being controlled by others. They think that other persons either will not be just and fair to them or that they will not exercise their control in a way that will please them. It is true that power outside the control of the LORD God's Will is inevitably destructive.

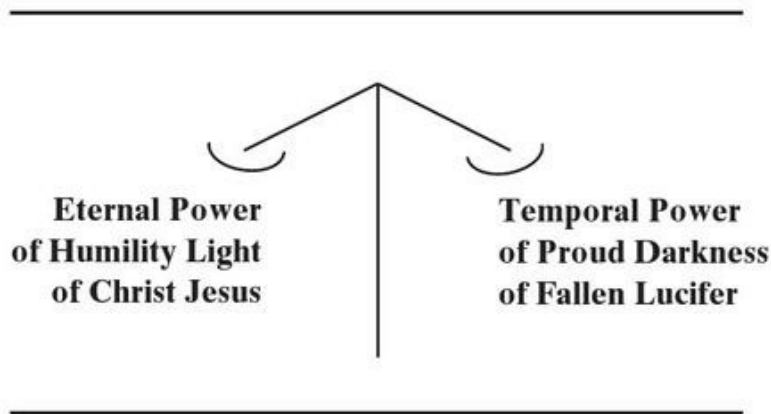
A test of true spiritual growth takes place when one acquires power and authority because the vestment of power and authority reveals the exact nature and motive of the heart. Power intoxicates the strongest heart, just as strong wine intoxicates the most intelligent mind unless one has achieved true spiritual growth in Jesus Christ.

Power in the natural realm is like a diamond; it fascinates those who behold it and enchants the one who wears it. Without Jesus Christ's Holy Justice, power becomes oppression and tyranny. Therefore, whatever is just is truly powerful, and whatever is truly powerful is just. True Power is both pleasurable and painful. However, the seekers of power know only the imaginary pleasure of power. The possessors of power are the only ones who empirically know its pleasure and pain.

To the natural man who does not yield his heart to Jesus Christ, nothing gratifies him more than power and authority. However, power and authority, apart from Christ, conquers the feeble mind and the weak heart and turns a person into a wicked dictator.

The dispensing of True Power and Authority in Christ Jesus consists of security and progress.

There are only two classes of Power: the Power of the Humility Light of Christ Jesus and the power of the proud darkness of fallen Lucifer.



God has given us a free moral will to choose which class of power will govern and guide us.

Most men seek after the temporal power of this world that makes it impossible for them to lay hold of Jesus Christ's eternal Humility Power. We cannot serve two masters at the same time. We must choose either the Humility Power of the Light of Christ Jesus or the proud power of darkness of this present evil world.

When men seek after temporal power to rule and reign over others, claiming that they have the right to govern and determine the affairs of men, it becomes impossible for them to lay hold of Christ's True and Lasting Power of Humility!

When mortal man uses his God-given gifts and abilities to achieve various measures of power in this world, the thought that he may be displaced by someone with greater abilities constantly plagues him. Thus, man lives in mortal fear of losing his exalted place of power in this present world.

When men achieve the highest positions of power and authority in this world, they move other men by their

dictatorial power as though they were pawns on a chess board. But impressive and oppressive as their power seems to be, it is earthbound, and, therefore, temporal. The possessors of earthly power are insecure and live in constant fear of losing their earthly kingdoms. When their proud worlds begin to collapse around them, they are completely ineffectual in moving God's Arm to help them because they do not realize that God responds only to the Power of Humility and not to the power of proud arrogance.

We may be confined in a situation that is humiliating, but regardless of this, God always will hear our cry, if it is an humble cry. God has concealed a portion of His Power of Humility Light that can be ours in every dark situation, if we willingly humble ourselves and accept the low place. The Power of Christ's Humility Light will help us to ascend in the midst of our darkness into a fresh, new union and relationship with God. But the blindness and darkness of the carnal mind prevents the flesh from discerning the tremendous Power that God has hidden in the low place. If we allow the power of darkness and our carnal minds to rule us, we will stumble through the humiliating situations of life without ever really humbling ourselves before the LORD and receiving the powerful Humility Light of Christ Jesus. Thus, although we experience the humiliation of life's situations, our hearts fail to gain Christ's powerful Humility that would illuminate our hearts with new Light and Truth and enable us to assume our duty and responsibility to make the LORD Jesus Christ's Name known.

It is very sobering and sad to realize that it is possible for us to be brought down low and, yet, completely miss God's Purpose in allowing a particular situation to come into our lives so that He can make His Name known. God's Eternal Purpose, always, in bringing us low, is for us to humble ourselves, give up our temporal, proud powers of darkness that rule and govern our attitudes and dispositions, and, then, to look to Christ Jesus's precious, eternal Powerful Humility Light to be the Governor and Guide of our lives in order to make the LORD's Name known. We can *think, feel, and act* more like Christ in our daily lives when we are governed by the eternal Power of Christ's Humility. The secret of gaining true and lasting Power is in willingly humbling our hearts before the LORD.

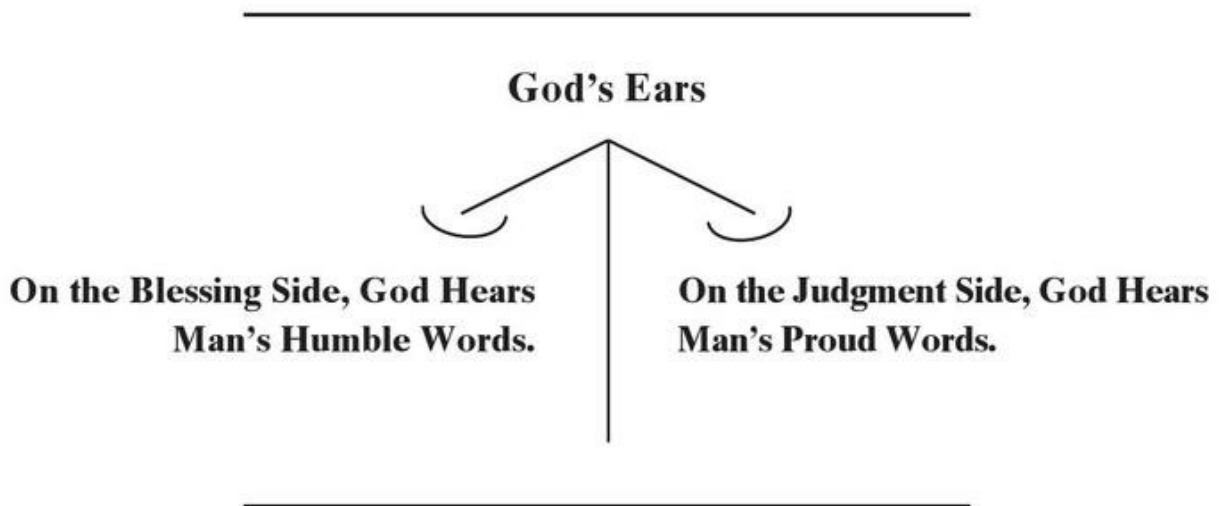
Why should we desire to settle for a little temporal, earthly power, when we have the privilege of laying hold of Christ's eternal, divine Humility Power that will open God's Ears to our prayers; that will cause His Mouth to speak; that will cause Him to open His Treasure House for our benefit; and that will allow us to dwell where God dwells?

I. True Humility Opens God's Ears to Our Prayers.

God will always open His Ears on the Blessing Side of His Scales when we do the things He commands in His Word: (1) humble ourselves, (2) pray, (3) seek God's Face, and (4) turn from our wicked ways.

If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land (II Chronicles 7:14).

God has Ears to listen on both sides of the Scales — on the Blessing Side and on the Judgment Side.



When Israel filled the land with her proud prayers to idols, God heard and judged her. However, when Israel (1)

humbled herself, by making herself low and small before God, and showed a consciousness of her sinful defects and (2) when she prayed and begged imploringly for the LORD to pardon and forgive her sin and (3) when she sought to find God's Face instead of the faces of her idols and (4) when she turned from her wicked ways, which changed her position from the wickedness of her depraved moral character to the Righteousness of Christ's Holy, Moral Character, God heard her on the Blessing Side of His Scales, and He forgave her sins and healed her land.

However, when Israel refused to humble herself before God, He also heard her proud prayers as she offered them to idols, and He afflicted her with droughts, famines, and captivity on the Judgment Side of His Scales. Man's proud words have no power to attract God's Ears of blessing since His Ears of blessing will not listen to idolatrous praise and honour that are given to false gods.

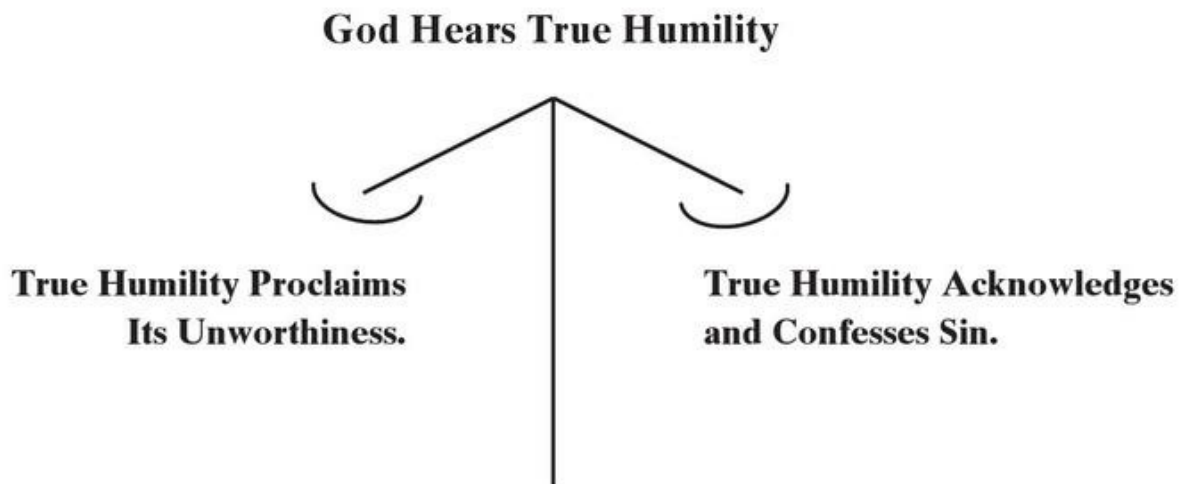
The LORD personally appeared to King Solomon to reveal to him and to the Nation of Israel that every cry that proceeds out of a humble heart is a powerful sound that opens God's Ears. When the LORD's people begin to humble themselves before Him in prayer and fasting, and begin to confess their sins, seek His Face, and turn from their wicked ways, God hears from Heaven.

The Apostle John preached this same Principle of Truth to the early Church when he said:

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).

It is useless to come into God's Presence and claim our worthiness or make excuses for our sins. We must enter humbly into God's Presence by confessing and acknowledging our faults, telling our sins, and owning up to guilt about our offenses against God's Spirit and Word in order for God to hear us and for us to receive His Pardon and Forgiveness. No one else can confess our sins for us. We must confess our *own* sins, faults, crimes, and guilt.

We must not approach God with a proud, exalted notion of our great worth, importance, and excellence. We must approach God humbly and acknowledge our unworthiness of His great Mercy that pushes back what we deserve — Death and Hell. We must confess how undeserving we are of His great Grace that brings us His Pardon and Forgiveness. We must own up to our wicked ways that are shameful and despicable in the holy LORD's Eyes. Only True Humility causes God to hear and minister to our needs.



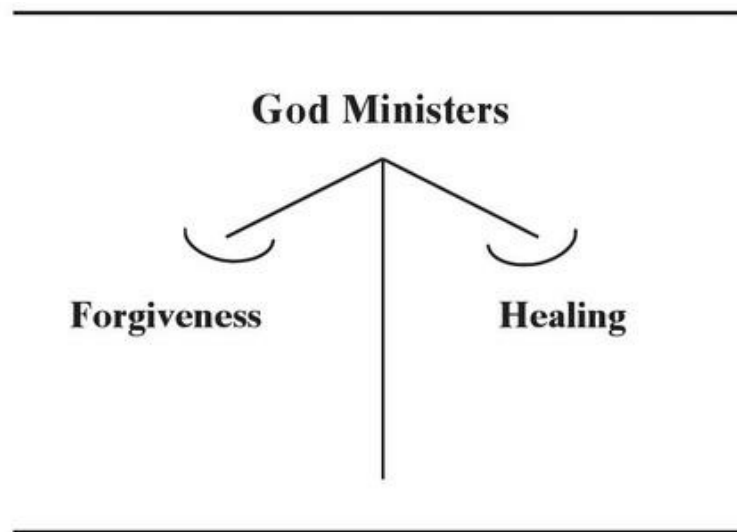
When we feel proud and lifted up, this is the time for us to humble ourselves and proclaim our unworthiness. When we have committed sins, our first and immediate need is to humble ourselves by confessing our sins and praying for forgiveness and healing. Then, we can pray for the LORD to deliver us. God *will hear* this kind of humility, and He *will answer*.

If we deny our sinful guilt, we make the LORD's Truth a lie; therefore, we deceive ourselves. But if we humble

ourselves and confess our sins, seek His face, and turn from our wicked ways, God will open His Ears to hear us, and He will minister to us.

A. True Humility Causes God to Minister Forgiveness and Healing to Our Needs.

God faithfully ministers the blessing of Forgiveness and Healing to us after we have humbled ourselves before Him.



If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and [God] will forgive their sin, and will heal their land (II Chronicles 7:14).

The Hebrew root word for *forgiveness* is *sawlakh*, which means to pardon and to spare. God ministers *forgiveness* or *pardon* to the penitent soul; that is, He releases the penitent soul from Punishment for his crimes and offenses. God cancels the Punishment. He does not exact a just penalty for the guilty soul's offenses when the following things have happened: true repentance, a seeking of God's Face, and a turning from sin.

God also ministers *healing* and *health* to the penitent soul. God makes the guilty soul sound and well and restores it to health, again, after it has humbled itself and made sufficient repentance to the LORD. Jesus Christ's precious Blood rids the penitent soul of its disease and cures the grievous wounds of guilt; thus, the soul is freed from its pain and trouble. God heals the penitent soul so that it becomes sound, well, and healthy.

Pride gains no audience with God, but Humility causes God to minister forgiveness and healing to those who take the low place (which is their rightful place as sinners) and confess their sins and guilt.

Christ Jesus comes to save sinners who acknowledge their sins and guilt. However, Christians frequently refuse to confess their sins. Instead, they cover up their sins of anger, rebellion, and resentment by labeling them differently — such as calling them nervousness, tiredness, or strain. They also say their faults and failures are human defects that should be accepted, although the truth is that these things mar their moral character. They look upon these human flaws, failings, imperfections, and defects as something to be tolerated instead of being things that need to be confessed as sins and washed away; neither do they see them as evil, inherent traits that must be mortified and crucified.

Remember, God said, "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves..." which shows that Christians are not sinless. Furthermore, John, as a Christian who preached to Christians, said, "If we confess our sins..."

Each day presents new opportunities for us to humble ourselves before the LORD, to confess our sins, and to turn from our wicked, proud ways that are so contrary to Christ's holy, humble Ways. As we humble our hearts before the LORD Jesus Christ, He will faithfully minister His Blood of Forgiveness, and He will heal our spiritual land of its corrupt wounds of guilt. Christ's spiritual fruitfulness can never grow in a heart that is corrupted by sins of the flesh.

If humility wrought nothing but forgiveness and healing, we would be more than recompensed for humbling our proud hearts. But the humble place is also where the Tree of Love buds, blossoms, and brings forth fruit. The Place of Humility causes the heart to grow in strong affections for the Crucified Christ and to develop strong cords of attachment and devotion to His Humility. The heart also grows in intense, deep devotion to the Resurrected Christ. Each time we experience a new portion of Jesus Christ's Blood of Forgiveness, our capacity for love toward the LORD increases.

When a proud Pharisee complained about the sinner woman who anointed Jesus' Feet with her tears and wiped them with the hairs of her head, Jesus replied:

Wherefore I say unto thee, **Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little** (Luke 7:47).

In other words, much forgiveness begets much love; and little forgiveness begets little love.

This teaches us that the more we allow Jesus Christ to show us our sinful faults, failures, and imperfections, and the more we confess them and repent of them, the more we grow in Christ's Love. The Apostle Paul, who knew this secret, declared himself to be the chief of sinners. Each time Paul repented of his sins, he experienced new Blood of Forgiveness, so his love for Jesus Christ was great.

Instead of trying to whitewash our sins and change their crimson and scarlet colour through fleshly efforts, we need to learn to humble ourselves quickly and take the place of a guilty sinner so that Christ can make our sins as white as snow and wool. Humility's cry that ascends from the hearts of penitent sinners has power to open God's Ears.

B. True Humility Causes God to Bring Us Deliverance.

Nothing is so powerful as Humility! When God hears the cry of Humility, He brings deliverance.

And **when he** [Manasseh] **was in affliction, he besought the LORD his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, And prayed unto him: and he** was intreated of him, and **heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem** into his kingdom. **Then Manasseh knew that the LORD he was God** (II Chronicles 33:12,13).

These verses tell us about Manasseh's humbling himself after God had afflicted him. Although God judged idolatrous Manasseh by sending him into captivity, He delivered him when He heard Manasseh's humble cry.

When God humbled Manasseh by allowing him to suffer affliction and be bound by his enemies' hands, Manasseh humbled his proud, idolatrous heart before the LORD and repented of his idolatrous ways. Manasseh's cries of humility ascended into God's Ears and caused the LORD to deliver him from his enemies and bring him out of the land of captivity.

Deliverance from the bondage of an unpleasant situation does not come as long as our hearts remain obstinate and rebellious against the LORD. In fact, obstinacy and rebellion worsen the problem because they are forms of inner accusations against God's holy Nature of Mercy. Our obstinacy and rebellion accuse God of withholding the best from us. God's loving Mercy sends our souls into the bondage and captivity of cruel situations so that we will humble ourselves and repent of our wicked ways. If we humble ourselves and acknowledge God's Mercy, Holiness, and Justice in His Judgment, our humility will cause God to move in our behalf, and He will deliver us.

God has promised to save the humble.

When *men* are cast down, then thou shalt say, *There is lifting up*; and **he shall save the humble person** (Job 22:29).

When our cries of humility ascend from the Lowest Place, God's Ears hear in the Highest Place; therefore, when He hears us, He lifts us up from our downcast position.

When he maketh inquisition for blood, he remembereth them: **he forgetteth not the cry of the humble** (Psalm 9:12).

Humility has power to deliver us from God's divine Wrath, even when He comes as the Avenger of Blood to pour out His Judgments upon us. However, He is not forgetful of those who humble themselves before Him. He will deliver them. He will set them free from their deserved penalty of Judgment.

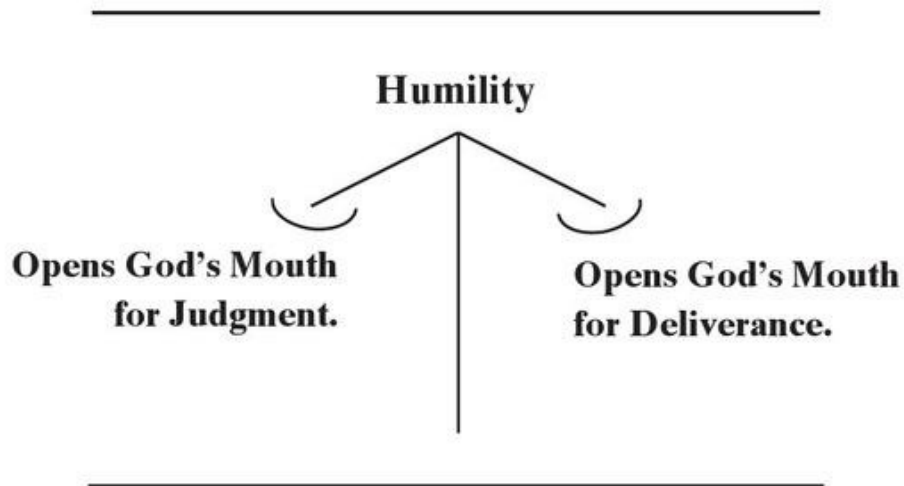
The Psalmist confirmed God's remembrance of the humble.

Arise, O LORD; O God, lift up thine hand: **forget not the humble.... LORD, thou hast heard the desire of the humble:** thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear: (Psalm 10:12,17)

For a moment, consider the Power of Humility. The lowly Voice of Humility is so strong that God hears it while it still is in the inaudible, invisible realm — while it still is in the form of a desire. Before the mouth speaks audible words of humility and before the heart feels it, God hears the inner, lowly Voice of Humility. Human beings may speak against us; devils may plot our downfall; and our flesh may scream against our visible humiliations, but, beloved, God hears the lowly Voice of Humility above all other voices. Surely no sound can make itself heard like the lowly Voice of Humility.

II. True Humility Causes God’s Mouth to Speak to Us, Either in Judgment or Deliverance.

In addition to opening God’s Ears to hear, Humility also has the Power to open God’s Mouth to speak, and when He speaks, He speaks either Judgment or Deliverance, depending on our willingness to humble ourselves under God’s Almighty Hand.



A. Humility Causes God’s Mouth to Stay Judgment.

Our repentance and the power contained in our humbling ourselves before God work in our favour to cause God to change His Verdicts of Judgment, even when they have already gone forth from His Mouth. Mortal men consider their own words of judgment irrevocable, but God is always willing to change His Judgments when He sees a person humbling himself. The LORD’s ways are most remarkable — so far above man’s ways. When God reverses His Judgments, we realize what great changing power Humility really has. The Power of Humility can stay God’s Hand of Judgment, and He will cancel His Decree of Punishment, even after He has spoken His Judgments!

King Darius, for example, had signed a decree that had been drawn up by men who were jealous of Daniel’s position of authority. Since the law they had written was rooted in jealousy and crowned with pride, it was a bad law. Their decree forbade any man to petition, for thirty days, any god or man besides King Darius. These evil men knew that Daniel would not cease to pray to his LORD God during this time of restraint, so they hoped to ensnare and to entangle Daniel by their irrevocable law. Predictably, the first to be accused of transgressing this ridiculous law was Daniel, the most valuable man in the kingdom. Quickly, Daniel’s accusers reminded the king of his irreclaimable, irrevocable word.

Then these men assembled unto the king, and said unto the king, Know, O king, that **the law of the Medes and Persians is, That no decree nor statute which the king establisheth may be changed** (Daniel 6:15).

Neither the king’s friendship with Daniel nor his personal need for Daniel’s services caused him to humble himself and change the word that had gone out of his mouth. Rather than lose face before a few jealous men, King

Darius commanded that Daniel be thrown into the lions' den. Apart from the intervention of God's miracle-working Power, Daniel would have furnished an evening meal for the lions.

Nothing moved King Darius to revoke the judgment of death that accompanied the breaking of his man-made law. But the power of Daniel's humility, while he was in the lions' den, caused the great God to reverse the *law of savagery* inherent in the lions' nature, and they were turned into purring kittens and furry pillows for Daniel's head.

How great and powerful is True Humility! True Humility also had power to move God to reverse the Word of Judgment which He already had spoken against the sin in Ahab's, Josiah's, and Hezekiah's lives. These were all men whose great humility in the midst of Judgment constrained the LORD God to modify their decreed Punishment.

1. Ahab's Humility Stayed God's Word of Judgment.

During his lifetime, King Ahab wrought such wickedness that God sent Elijah to prophesy not only his untimely end but also that of his entire household. The Bible described Ahab thusly:

But there was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the LORD, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up. And he did very abominably in following idols, according to all *things* as did the Amorites, whom the LORD cast out before the children of Israel (I Kings 21:25,26).

God's Judgment against Ahab was Just, Right, and Fair. The king had no foundation of righteousness upon which to base an appeal for clemency. Nevertheless, when this wicked man heard God's decree of Judgment, he began to practice humility and humbled himself before the LORD God of Heaven.

And it came to pass, **when Ahab heard those words, that he rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly** (I Kings 21:27).

Ahab rent his kingly mantle as a demonstration that he was stripping himself of all the proud power and authority that his earthly position represented. By so doing, he acknowledged God's exalted position of supreme Power and Authority. Ahab also exchanged his royal robes for a garment of humble sackcloth, which imposed added suffering and humiliation upon his body and soul.

Sackcloth had a coarse, rough texture; it was dark in color and frequently made of goat's hair. Mourners clothed themselves in humble sackcloth to symbolize the inner grief and anguish they felt in their souls.

In Ahab's process of humbling himself, he granted his flesh no pleasure day or night, for he slept in sackcloth. Ahab also humbled himself by afflicting himself through fasting. Moreover, he changed his proud, arrogant walk in idolatry; he began to walk softly before the True God. Walking softly indicates a subdued attitude of heart that is willing to be influenced and impressed by God.

The wicked Ahab humbled himself so greatly in rending his clothes, in putting on sackcloth, in fasting, in lying in sackcloth, and in going softly that it caused God to speak again to Elijah. He said:

Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before me? because he humbleth himself before me, I will not bring the evil in his days: but in his son's days will I bring the evil upon his house (I Kings 21:29).

Ahab's humility was so powerful that it stayed God's Hand of Judgment from falling upon him. Immediately, the carnal mind rises up to ask why God would stay His Judgment upon Ahab and, then, visit it upon his son. This was not injustice on God's part, but rather further proof of the Power of Humility. When God justly judged Ahab for his sin, the king humbled himself before the LORD. However, the Bible gives no account of his son's having ever humbled himself or having ever repented of his evil ways. After God's Word of Judgment had gone forth, Ahab's son continued in his wickedness, which carried with it God's Judgment of Death.

Ahab's son did not humble himself before the LORD, as his father had done. Therefore, God's Word of Judgment went forth to slay him. Christ's Humility Power would have saved Ahab's son from Death, just as it had saved his father, but, by refusing to humble himself, the son left God with no alternative but to carry out His Word of Judgment.

2. Josiah's Humility and Prayers for God's People Stayed God's Word of Judgment.

Both Josiah's father, Amon, and his grandfather, Manasseh, had been very wicked kings who had led God's

people away from the One True LORD God and had caused them to walk in sinful idolatry, as they engaged in worship of false gods.

Josiah was only eight years old when he began to reign, but he was a good king who did that which was right in the LORD's sight. The Bible says that he walked in all the ways of David, his father, and turned not aside to the right hand nor to the left.

During the eighteenth year of Josiah's reign, Hilkiah, the High Priest, found the Book of the Law in the LORD's House, and he read it to King Josiah. When the king heard the Words of the Book of the Law, he realized that God's people were guilty of idolatrous sins that would call God's Wrath down upon them. Although Josiah personally walked uprightly before the LORD, he humbled himself before the LORD on behalf of his people. Moreover, he sent men to inquire of the Prophetess Huldah concerning the Judgment that God had prophesied against His people. Josiah wanted to learn more details about the Judgment that God was about to send. The Bible records what the LORD spoke through the lips of the Prophetess:

...Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, even all the words of the book which the king of Judah hath read: Because they have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands; therefore **my wrath shall be kindled against this place, and shall not be quenched.** But to the king of Judah which sent you to enquire of the LORD, thus shall ye say to him, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, *As touching the words which thou hast heard; Because thine heart was tender, and thou hast humbled thyself before the LORD, when thou heardest what I spake against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, that they should become a desolation and a curse, and hast rent thy clothes, and wept before me; I also have heard thee, saith the LORD. Behold therefore, I will gather thee unto thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered into thy grave in peace; and thine eyes shall not see all the evil which I will bring upon this place....* (II Kings 22:16-20).

Again, God stayed His pronounced Judgment — this time against the people of Israel. God granted peace during Josiah's lifetime because he humbled himself. Josiah humbled himself by rending his clothes and by weeping before the LORD. As a result, the LORD heard the sound of Josiah's voice of humility and stayed His Judgments upon Judah during Josiah's days.

Israel knew peace, not because she had repented of her idolatrous wickedness, but because her king had humbled himself before the LORD when he had no reason to think that the Judgment would touch him personally. Josiah's humility did not change the people's hearts, but it gave him peace during his reign, and it spared him the pain of watching his people suffer for their sins of idolatry.

3. Hezekiah's Humility Stayed God's Word of Judgment.

Hezekiah was a good king. After he had come to the throne in Judah, he did the following things:

- He restored the feast of the Passover.
- He restored worship to the one True God in the Temple.
- He prayed and cried unto the LORD when Sennacherib, the proud Assyrian King, boasted himself against the LORD, against Hezekiah, and against God's people.

In response to Hezekiah's prayers, God sent His Angel to cut off all the mighty men of valour, the leaders, and the captains in the camp of the King of Assyria. So Sennacherib returned with "shame of face" to his own land where his own sons slew him.

After the LORD had wrought this mighty miracle for Hezekiah, many came to Jerusalem to bring presents to the LORD and to Hezekiah. Instead of Hezekiah's bowing low at the LORD's Feet, with humble, grateful appreciation, his heart became lifted up in pride. Consequently, God's Wrath fell upon Hezekiah, and he fell sick with a great illness.

In those days Hezekiah was sick to the death, and prayed unto the LORD: and he spake unto him, and he gave him a sign. But Hezekiah rendered not again according to the benefit *done* unto him; **for his heart was lifted up: therefore there was wrath upon him, and upon Judah and Jerusalem. Notwithstanding Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, both he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the wrath of the LORD came not upon them in the days of Hezekiah** (II Chronicles 32:24-26).

God's Spoken Word of healing that came through His Prophet Isaiah meant little to the king. Before he would

believe God's Promise to heal him and add fifteen years to his life, Hezekiah required a sign from the LORD (II Kings 20:1-11). Because Hezekiah prayed and wept unto the LORD, God gave him a sign through the sun. God humbled the sun and caused it to go back ten degrees. God could do this miracle because He makes the laws of Nature, and He has the Power and the Right to change them according to His Will. He IS the Creator, Owner, and Master of all Creation. So, instead of the sun hastening to go down, according to its normal course, it returned ten degrees into the light and continued to shine, which was a sign that God would turn Hezekiah's life back so that he could continue to live. Yet in spite of the great miracles that God performed by humbling the sun and healing the king's boils, Hezekiah's proud heart caused him to fail in humbling his heart and rendering to God the praise and worship that were due His Name. (Later, Hezekiah humbled his heart before the LORD.)

Again, pride filled Hezekiah's heart, and he showed all the secret treasures of the LORD's Kingdom to the ambassadors from Babylon. These actions brought God's Wrath upon the king and all his subjects. Yet, when Hezekiah and the people humbled themselves before the LORD, God stayed His Word of Judgment.

Ahab's humility caused God to stay Judgment for him *personally*. King Josiah humbled himself for the sins of his people, and God stayed His Judgment on the *kingdom*. In King Hezekiah's case, the people joined the king in humbling themselves for the sins of their *leaders*.

Each of us faces similar situations in our lives. Sometimes we must humble ourselves because of our own proud wickedness, if we hope to receive the LORD's Mercy. At other times, we have an opportunity to humble our hearts for those of lesser spiritual growth who will not humble themselves. Occasionally, the LORD will put us in a position to humble our hearts because our leaders, either spiritually or naturally, have offended the LORD. In every case, it is the Power of Humility that causes God's Mouth to speak Words of Mercy to those who are actually worthy of only His Words of Judgment.

B. True Humility Causes God's Mouth to Speak Deliverance for Us.

The powerful Force of Humility opens God's Mouth and causes Him to speak Words of Deliverance and Freedom. During the days of King Rehoboam, the people followed their king in forsaking the LORD and in worshipping idols. Therefore, God spoke through the Prophet Shemaiah and said that He had left them in the hands of the wicked King of Egypt, through whom God had purposed to pour out His Wrath upon Rehoboam and Jerusalem.

Whereupon the princes of Israel and the king humbled themselves; and they said, The LORD is righteous. And when the LORD saw that they humbled themselves, the word of the LORD came to Shemaiah, saying, **They have humbled themselves; therefore I will not destroy them, but I will grant them some deliverance; and my wrath shall not be poured out upon Jerusalem by the hand of Shishak** (II Chronicles 12:6,7).

When Rehoboam and the Princes of Israel heard these words, they humbled themselves before the LORD, and their humility moved the LORD to speak deliverance to them.

The LORD stayed the wrathful Destruction that He had purposed to pour out upon Jerusalem through the Egyptian king. Although they became servants of the King of Egypt, and although they suffered the loss of their treasures out of the LORD's House and out of the king's house, God spared their lives because they humbled their hearts by accepting their Punishment and acknowledging that God was Just and Righteous in judging their idolatrous transgressions.

As Christians, we sometimes feel that we are about to be destroyed by the enemy of our souls, but if we know the secret of humbling our hearts before the LORD, we soon will hear Him speak the Words of Freedom that will deliver us from our enemy.

III. True Humility Opens God's Treasure House.

The mighty, miraculous Power of Humility also opens God's Treasure House of Truth, thus giving joy and gladness, deliverance, exaltation, and Grace to the humble ones who find His Treasures.

We may be the proud owners, for a season, of much of this world's goods and, yet, still be spiritually poverty-stricken in our souls. Those who are rich in pride never can unlock the door to God's Treasure House of priceless, spiritual Treasures. His priceless Treasures of Truth are reserved for the humble.

God feeds those who are willing to lie humbly as babes upon the great Breasts of His Word, which are the Truths

in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. When Christians humble their hearts and minds before the LORD, He opens the door to His Treasure House of Truth, unfolding great mysteries of His Truth that are hidden from those who are wise and prudent in their own eyes.

The miraculous Power of Humility that unlocks the door to God's Storehouse of Wisdom is the same Power that allows us to enter in and possess and use the following special Treasures: Joy or Gladness, Deliverance, Exaltation, and Grace or Gratitude.

A. Joy or Gladness Is One of God's Treasures.

Although humbling ourselves is painful to the proud *self* within the heart, God bestows His great Treasure of Joy or Gladness on the humble.

The LORD's Truth brings joy or gladness to our own hearts and to the hearts of those with whom we share the Truth.

When the soul finds the LORD's Truth, it experiences lasting joy or gladness. Joy gives peace, satisfaction, and security. However, without Jesus Christ's Humility in our hearts, the joy that we feel in the high seat of worldly self-exaltation is tainted by the constant fear of losing our position. This fleshly fear serves as the breeding ground for much jealousy and strife in both the religious world and in the carnal world.

My soul shall make her boast in the LORD: **the humble shall hear *thereof*, and be glad** (Psalm 34:2).

Our flesh seems constantly to be on the alert, lest any praise or attention be diverted from ourselves to another. Conversely, humility gives us power to be glad for the opportunity to boast about the LORD's mighty Deeds. When others receive the exalted privilege of boasting about the LORD's mighty Acts in their lives, humility makes us rejoice for them, too.

King David said, "I will boast in the LORD; I will exalt Him and His mighty acts, rather than brag on the accomplishments of the flesh."

Our old man or our flesh, until it is mortified and crucified by Christ, resents the words of praise that others pour out to the LORD, if we feel we are the ones who should receive them. For example, if we are ministers of God's Word, our unmortified, fleshly ears are wide open, hoping to hear someone say, "My, that was a beautiful sermon *you* preached." But how does our unmortified flesh feel when people say, "God really blessed my soul with His Word this morning. O, praise the LORD for His Goodness"? Our unmortified flesh feels sad, dejected, and discouraged because it has not been lifted up. But the humble will rejoice and be glad when the LORD is lifted up on High.

When we recognize the feelings of our proud flesh, we instantly can begin to humble our hearts before the LORD and acknowledge the Truth that God alone is worthy of praise; He alone deserves to be exalted and worshipped. On the other hand, *we* deserve Death and Hell, but the LORD's Mercy has pushed back what we deserve, and His Grace has brought us the Salvation and blessings that we do not deserve and allows us to be called by His Name. After Christ's Humility floods our souls, He fills us with Joy from His Treasure House; then, it is easy to be glad and rejoice when His Name is lifted up or when *any part* of Christ's Body is lifted up.

The joy of the humble has power to bring pleasure to God's Heart.

I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify him with thanksgiving. *This* also shall please the LORD better than an ox or bullock that hath horns and hoofs. The humble shall see *this*, and be glad: and your heart shall live that seek God (Psalm 69:30-32).

The sixty-ninth Psalm is a prayer that David prayed during the persecution and cruel treatment he received at Saul's hands. He pleaded with God for relief and salvation in the midst of his painful distress. David's faith and unswerving loyalty remained steadfast and true in the midst of his sufferings and caused him to look confidently forward to the future. David's personal sacrifice of praise and the grateful appreciation he gave God from his heart meant more to God than David's outward sacrifice of the best of his animals.

In the Old Testament, horns and cloven hoofs were two of the necessary qualifications that made an animal fit for sacrifice. The animal's horns were a sign of maturity, and its cloven hoofs were one of the marks of its being a clean animal. This teaches us that mature "horns" of trusting praise and the clean "hoofs" of grateful appreciation from our innermost heart, during the time of painful testings and trials, are far more important to the LORD than outward sacrifices. The Old Testament *outward sacrifices* that God's people gave to Him did not please the LORD as much

as the *inner praises* from their hearts.

The humble in heart praise God, personally, during their times of sufferings and persecutions; they also have the Power of Humility that enables them to rejoice and praise the LORD every time others praise God while they are in painful circumstances. Thus, God receives a double portion of praise from the humble.

B. Deliverance Is One of God's Treasures.

While the Power of Humility causes God to speak Words that bring deliverance from Judgment, humility also has power to teach us how to deliver ourselves from the snare into which pride causes us to fall.

My son, *if thou be surety for thy friend, if thou hast stricken thy hand with a stranger, Thou art snared with the words of thy mouth, thou art taken with the words of thy mouth. Do this now, my son, and deliver thyself, when thou art come into the hand of thy friend; go, humble thyself, and make sure thy friend.* Give not sleep to thine eyes, nor slumber to thine eyelids. **Deliver thyself as a roe from the hand of the hunter, and as a bird from the hand of the fowler** (Proverbs 6:1-5).

God's *Torah* advocated the uprightness of reciprocal help. Help was to be given, willingly and promptly, to those who suffered illfortune. If help were given in the form of a loan, no interest was to be charged.

And if thy brother be waxen poor, and fallen in decay with thee; then thou shalt relieve him: yea, though he be a stranger, or a sojourner; that he may live with thee. Take thou no usury of him, or increase: but fear thy God; that thy brother may live with thee. **Thou shalt not give him thy money upon usury, nor lend him thy victuals for increase** (Leviticus 25:35-37).

As the Nation of Israel grew, their business transactions also grew, so a business man occasionally needed financial help. When he could not obtain a loan because of his lack of collateral, he would ask his friend to stand surety for the loan. Sometimes, the friend had to surrender more than he could afford in order to make up for the main payment of the loan. This inflicted severe hardship on his dependent family. Therefore, the wise man in the Book of Proverbs gave many warnings against taking this risk.

He that is surety for a stranger shall smart for it: and he that hateth suretyship is sure (Proverbs 11:15).

A man void of understanding striketh hands, *and becometh surety in the presence of his friend* (Proverbs 17:18).

Take his garment that is surety for a stranger: and take a pledge of him for a strange woman (Proverbs 20:16).

Be not thou one of them that strike hands, or of them that are sureties for debts (Proverbs 22:26).

Take his garment that is surety for a stranger, and take a pledge of him for a strange woman (Proverbs 27:13).

The wise man warned that being too generous, impulsive, and indiscriminating in one's acts of benevolence ultimately could bring more suffering to one's own family than the help given to others would benefit them. Therefore, the wise man urged the person involved in this kind of perilous situation to extricate himself quickly by humbling himself, which literally means "to trample upon thyself." In other words, he was saying, "Be prepared to trample upon your proud dignity and humiliate thyself in order to secure a speedy release from an unwise pledge."

King Solomon dealt strongly with this problem of becoming a surety for the obligation of others. The flesh abhors to admit poverty in any measure; therefore, when a person asks a friend to be surety for him, the pride of one's flesh forces the friend to agree to do it, even though it could result in severe suffering for his family to have to fulfill his promise of surety. The wise man taught his son that humility had power to deliver him from the promised indebtedness that his proud flesh might cause him to assume.

If a brother asks us to co-sign a note for him, for example, the flesh easily says, "Sure, brother, I'll be glad to sign for you." But, later, what do we do when we realize (before we actually co-sign the note) that we have spoken unadvisedly? Our own obligations might make it impossible for us to make payments on such a note if the borrower defaulted in making his payments; nevertheless, if we sign, we find ourselves legally responsible for the debt. We cannot force our brother to release us from the bond of our own words, but humility has Power to deliver us. If we come humbly and tearfully to him and acknowledge our poverty and inability to assume any added indebtedness, our humility will touch our brother's heart and cause him to release us from our oral promise.

We may never face the problem of being surety for another person, but we all have been ensnared by rash

promises we have spoken that we were unable to keep in one way or another. Humility is our only hope of being delivered from the pride that has put us in such a position.

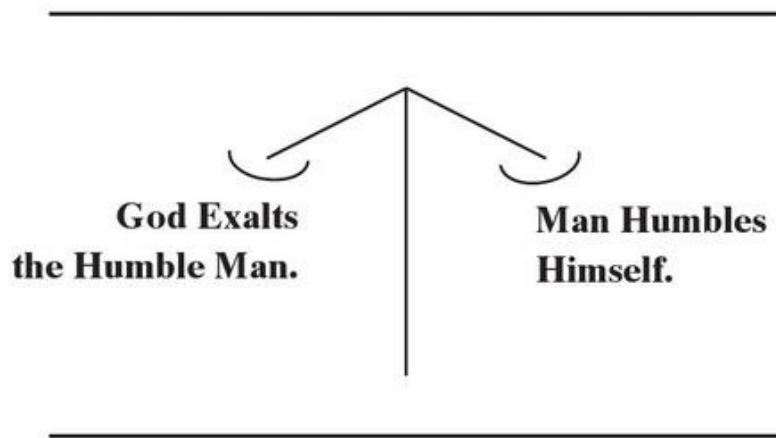
C. Exaltation Is One of God's Treasures.

Humility Power also opens God's Treasure House wherein is kept His Treasure of Exaltation. Humility has power to rejoice in the low place, and it has power to deliver us from our complaining pride that rises up when we find ourselves in the low place. Humility has power to bring us to the place of legitimate exaltation in Christ. Humility is the Key that opens the Door to God's Exaltation. Humility is the Door to God's Power that raises on high, that elevates, that lifts up, and that exalts one in dignity, power, honour, and wealth.

Christ's Humility is both the *Key* and the *Door* to God's Exaltation.

And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and **he that shall humble himself shall be exalted** (Matthew 23:12).

When God opens our eyes to see ourselves as God sees us, we will repent. Clear eyesight will cause us to be abased in our own eyes, and when we humble ourselves in contrition for our sin, God will exalt us to inherit the Throne of Glory. God, as our Owner and Master, will own us and crown us before men and Angels.



Those who exalt themselves to worldly positions of power and honour soon misuse their power to oppress others unmercifully. The scribes and the Pharisees, for instance, used God's Word for self-exaltation by placing themselves as judges of the Law. From this position, they could vindicate the people's disobedience. Yet they never allowed obedience to the Laws of tradition to touch their own proud hearts. They unmercifully forced others to walk in strict obedience to the Laws of their traditions, while they themselves followed the Laws only in form.

Before we can be trusted to rule in mercy over others' flesh, we must humble our own hearts and let God's Word rule over the fleshly attitudes and dispositions of our own proud hearts. We must allow Jesus Christ to mortify and crucify our pride and replace it with His powerful Humility, which is the Key to the Door of His Exaltation.

In the eternal New City, next to God and the Lamb, Jesus Christ, and His Position of Exaltation, the Bride will hold the position of highest honour and greatest authority. In the Book of Revelation, we see the posture the Bride will assume before the LORD in Eternity. She will not assume a proud posture in her service to God and the Lamb; rather, she will minister to God and the Lamb as a servant.

And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; **and his servants shall serve him: And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads** (Revelation 22:3,4).

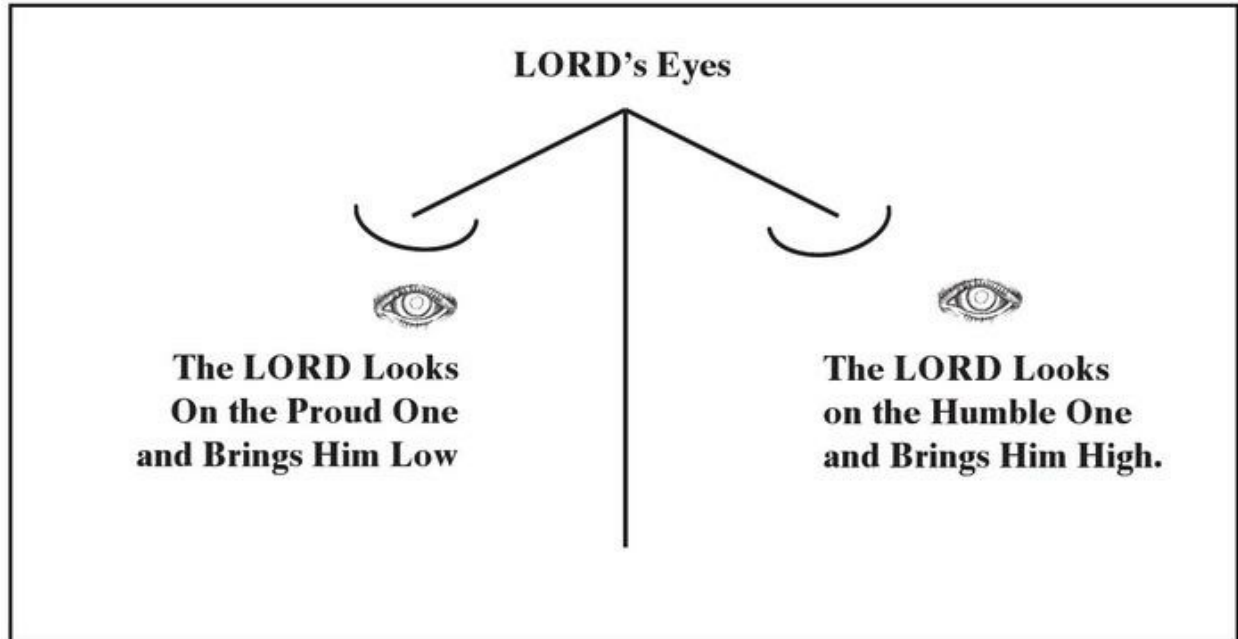
The servants mentioned here are none other than the Bride herself, for she alone has the Promise of wearing His Name (Revelation 3:12). Although the Bride will share the Throne with God and the Lamb throughout Eternity (Revelation 3:21), she will have the privilege and joy of being His personal servant. She will be ardently devoted to her LORD and Bridegroom, and she will obediently and reverently serve Him by bringing Honour and Glory to Him.

In this life, as well as in Eternity, God's divine Law for granting *legitimate exaltation is based on humility*. The

Gospel of Luke verifies this Principle.

I tell you, **this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted** (Luke 18:14).

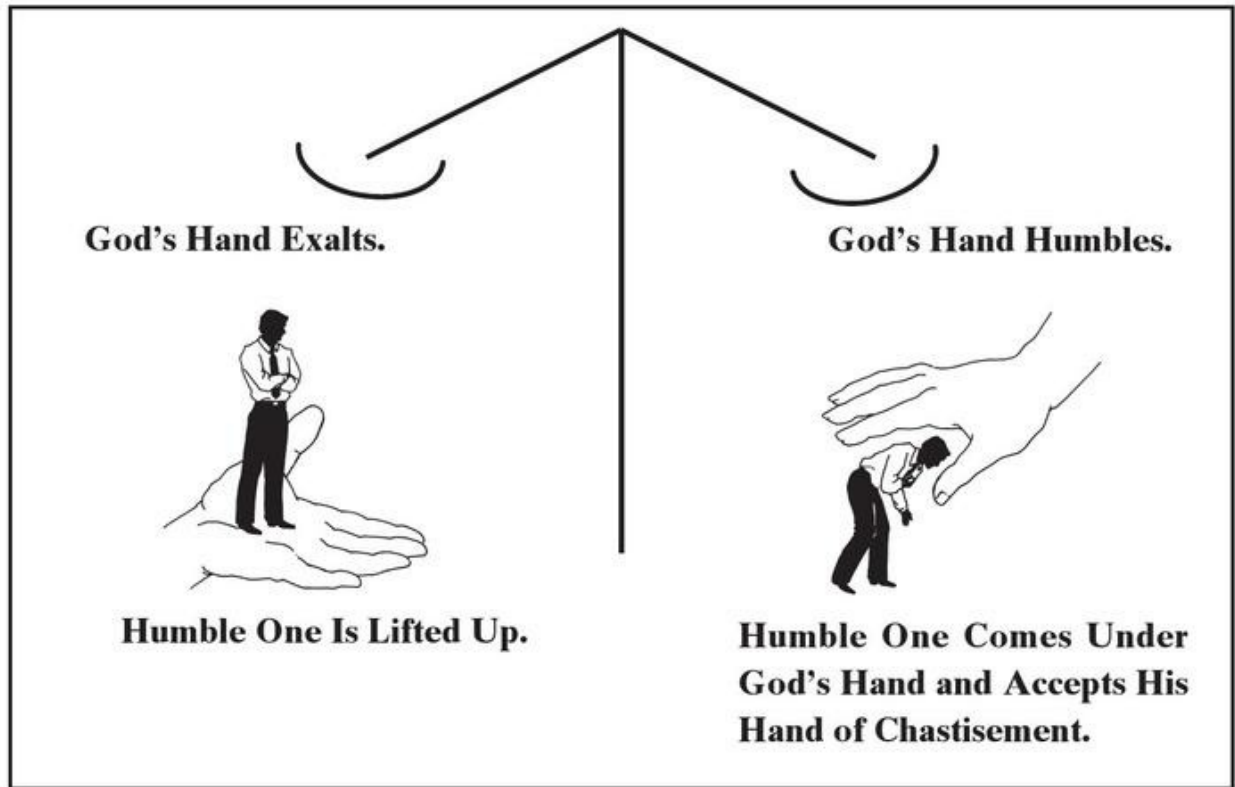
Proud people are evil competitors with God; therefore, the LORD, in His holy Justice, must abase them. It is unlawful for the sinful creature to strive with the Holy Creator, Owner, and Master. God looks upon every proud one and brings him low. Likewise, God looks upon every humble one and brings him to the high place of exaltation.



Humility has power to lift the repentant publican from the low place of a sinner into the experience of justification and exaltation through the Power of Christ's Redeeming Blood.

Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up (James 4:10).

Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: (I Peter 5:6).



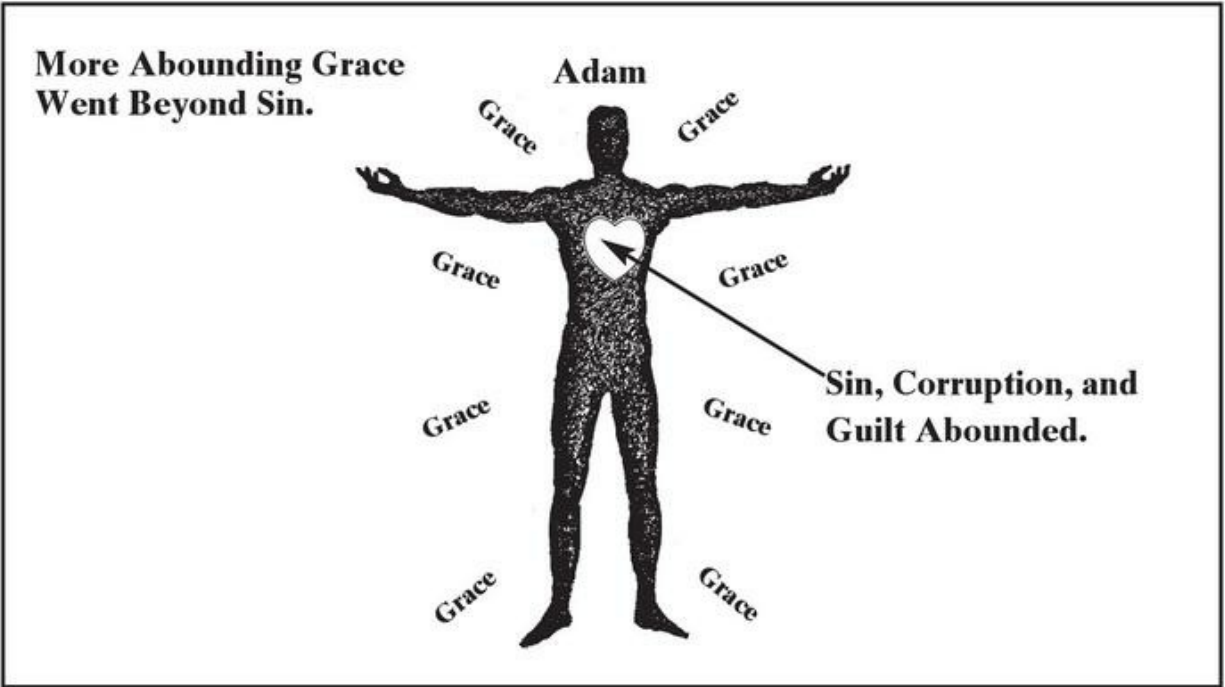
God puts His people under His Hand in order to correct them and to let them see that their names are written in the palms of His Hands.

Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls *are* continually before me (Isaiah 49:16).

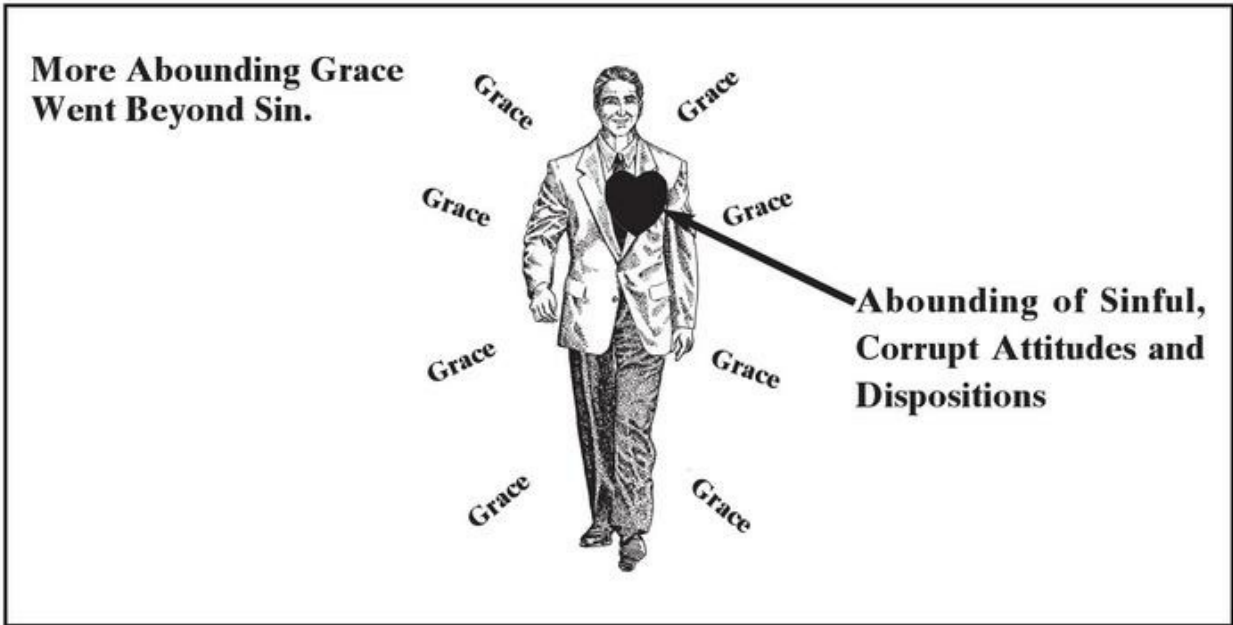
Humble ones bow low and willingly come under God's Hand. They rejoice to see God's great Love that has engraved their names in His Hands. Then, the righteous LORD lifts up the humble ones to *stand* in the same Hand that humbled them. If we love God's Hand wherever we find it — whether in the low place or in the high place — we will discover that His Hand is the same — both in the low place and in the high place. The place in which we find His Hand does not matter! But if we love only *position*, then we will hate the low place, as well as God's *Hand* in the low place. What glorious, spiritual ecstasy is found in loving the LORD's Hand.

D. Grace Is One of God's Treasures.

In the very beginning, Adam's sin or offense abounded and extended its corruption and guilt to all mankind. But the LORD Jesus Christ's Grace abounded beyond the boundary lines of sin to cleanse the sin and subdue its corruption and remit man's guilt. The *enemy* called *sin* is strong, but the *Friend* called *Grace* is all powerful to deliver man from his enemy.



Likewise, in our own lives, when the tyrant and oppressor of sinful flesh abounds in our attitudes and dispositions, Grace will abound even more, thus cleansing, subduing, and remitting our guilt.



When we give our hearts to Jesus Christ, He imparts some of His Grace to us. It is His Grace that enables us to start out on our spiritual journey, as we begin our walk with Him.

...But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might **grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life** by Jesus Christ our Lord (Romans 5:20,21).

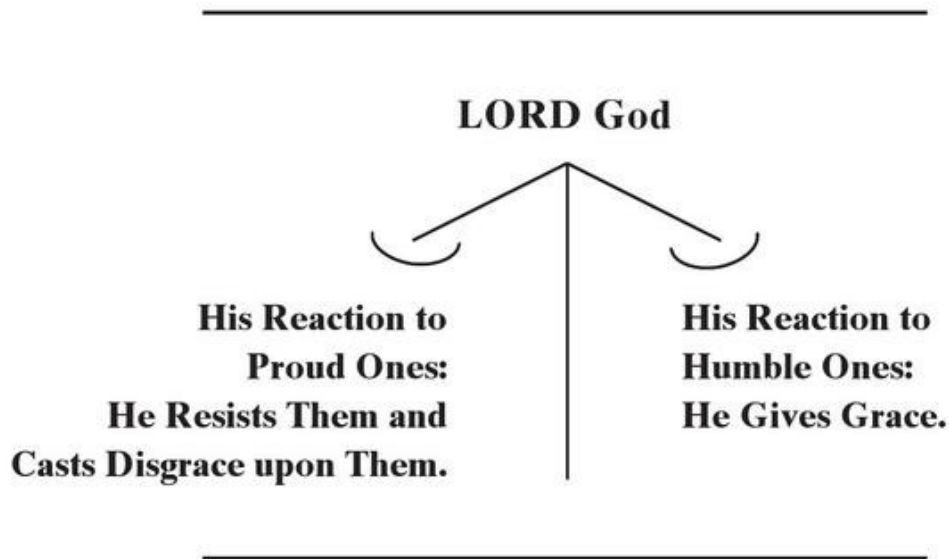
The word *grace* comes from a word that means gratitude. Jesus did not redeem fallen man grudgingly; rather, He

did it with Grace or Gratitude and was thankful that He was able to give the priceless Substance of His Blood as an offering for the cleansing of man's corrupt sins and the guilt and penalty of his offenses against God.

When we give our hearts to Jesus Christ, He begins to impart His Grace to us. His Grace, then, enables us to start walking with Him on our spiritual journey. Very soon after we have started on our way in spiritual growth, we find that we need *more* Grace, if we hope to stay in our spiritual race. How do we lay hold of more of His Grace, and how do we use it after we receive it? God's Word teaches us that He *gives* Grace to the *humble*.

From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?... Ye ask, and receive not, because **ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts....** Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?... **But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble** (James 4:1,3,5,6).

God's Word clearly shows the contrast of God's reaction to the proud and to the humble.



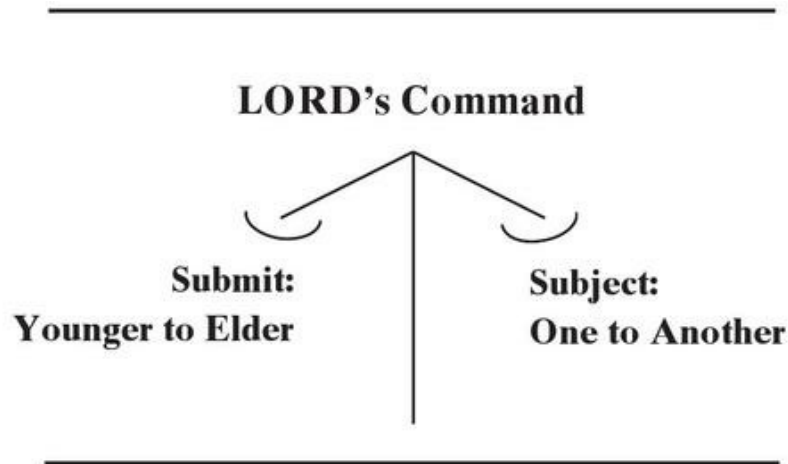
God resists or sets Himself in battle array against the proud. He casts disgrace upon them because of the proud ones' rebellion against their Creator and Owner and their betrayal of their LORD and Master's Crown. When proud man rebels against God's Laws and resists His Sovereign Rulership, he *should* fear and tremble because God will become his enemy and resister.

We should resist pride in our hearts, or else God will resist us. God gives *Grace* to the humble, but He gives *disgrace* to the proud. We choose either God's Gift of Grace or His Gift of disgrace, based on whether our choice is humble or proud.

Our spiritual man desires to serve the LORD and to walk in His Footsteps of self-denial; whereas, our carnal heart lusts to indulge in sinful pleasures. Man can exercise self-control up to a point, but pride always enters in to cause man to take the Glory for whatever temperance he may achieve. However, when we truly humble our hearts and confess the Truth — that we are powerless to achieve the goal for which our spiritual man longs — then, God will hear our confession of Truth and will give us His Spirit of Grace that will enable us to deny the appetites and desires of the flesh and mortify them. Thus, we will experience gladness of heart for Christ's mortification and restraint of our old man. When Christ overcomes for us, after we have humbled ourselves by taking our rightful place, God receives all the Praise and Glory, for we realize our spiritual poverty and helplessness apart from His Grace.

Humbling ourselves before the LORD takes a great portion of Christ's Humility and Grace, but we need a greater portion of Christ's Humility and Grace to be in subjection to the authority of our fellow mortal creatures, which God's Word commands us to be. It is easier to submit to the LORD, the Creator, because it is easier to perceive that He deserves our subjection and submission. But God also commands that we yield to the actions, control, and power of the creature since God's creatures act as vessels to help us complete God's Master Plan and Purposive Will for our lives.

Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble (1 Peter 5:5).



While God demands that the younger submit unto the elder, and that all be subject one to another, it takes an extra supply of Jesus Christ's abounding Grace for us to submit to our elders and give them the respect and reverence their authority demands.

God commands the younger believers to defer to their elders for decisions and judgments in spiritual things. Since elders are more mature and have more theoretical and empirical Knowledge, the younger believers in Christ must surrender to their control and be submissive to their decisions. God also commands every believer to be subject one to another; that is, each one must humbly come under the other's control and authority, with unswerving allegiance to Christ, and obey this Principle for Christ's Sake. The LORD's Grace will help us to yield to our elders' admonitions, reproofs, and exhortations and to be in submission to their rule and authority. When the heart is clothed in humility, obedience is sweet and pleasant, even if it is our peers we are obeying. God's Grace gives humble hearts greater portions of His Wisdom, Understanding, and Knowledge.

In every situation, Jesus Christ has a Mind to humble Himself to His Father's Purposive Will. Likewise, He is able to clothe our minds with that same Humility so that *in everything* we, too, will desire the Father's Purposive Will.

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 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 a man, **he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross** (Philippians 2:5-8).

Although, as a Gift from His Father, Jesus Christ was the Creator of the world, He nevertheless humbled Himself as a Human Being and obeyed His mortal creature-parents — Mary, His mother according to the flesh, and Joseph, His father according to legal adoption. He stayed in subjection to the laws of the land — He paid taxes. He stayed subject to the Mosaic Laws — He fulfilled them. At His Death, Jesus stayed in subjection to those who persecuted and crucified Him — He allowed them to kill Him. Who are we, then, to resist coming under the authority of those whom God sets over us? Humility has power to lay hold of the LORD Jesus Christ's Grace that will take us into new depths of His Surrender and Obedience.

Only Humility Power can open God's Treasure House in which are found the eternal Treasures of: Joy or Gladness, Deliverance, Exaltation, and Grace or Gratitude.

Gazing upon such priceless Treasures, the heart cries out, "Surely, LORD, this is more than mortal man deserves."

E. True Humility Has Power to Dwell Where God Dwells.

Humility not only has the power to descend into the lowest place; it also has the power to ascend into the heights and dwell where God Himself dwells.

God dwells in both the High Place and the low place.

**LORD Dwells:
In Eternity**



In High, Holy Place

**LORD Dwells:
In Earth**

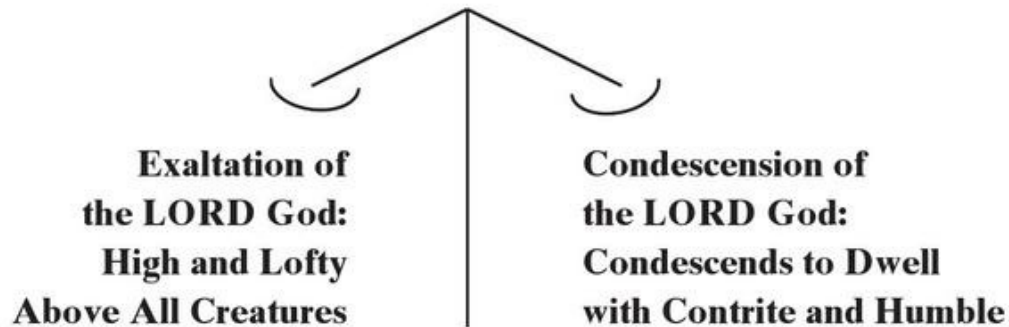


In Low Place

For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; **I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit**, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones (Isaiah 57:15).

The LORD God is High and Lofty. He is above all finite creature's eminence—above all human rank and prominence. And, yet, the High and Lofty God is *near* to the contrite and humble on Earth. His Exaltation and humble Condescension are two different sides of His one ineffable, inscrutable Name.

LORD's Nature of Condescension and Exaltation



The LORD God's Exaltation and Condescension are opposites in position. However, these two opposite sides of His inscrutable Nature are joined together in perfect balance and harmony. God's divine Anger lasts against sinful man only until His divine Chastenings have produced both the desired purifications from pride and the humility of spirit in his heart. God draws near to and dwells with those who are contrite and humble.

Every believing heart desires to dwell where God dwells. After he sinned, the beautiful Cherub, called Lucifer, was cast out of Heaven because he tried to dwell where God dwelled, although he refused to humble himself. Pride has no hope of dwelling in God's Presence, for that privilege goes only to the humble. The High and Holy God, Who inhabits Eternity, dwells, even now, with those who have humbled themselves and taken on a contrite and humble spirit. Nothing in Time or Eternity compares to the blessing of dwelling in God's Personal Presence.

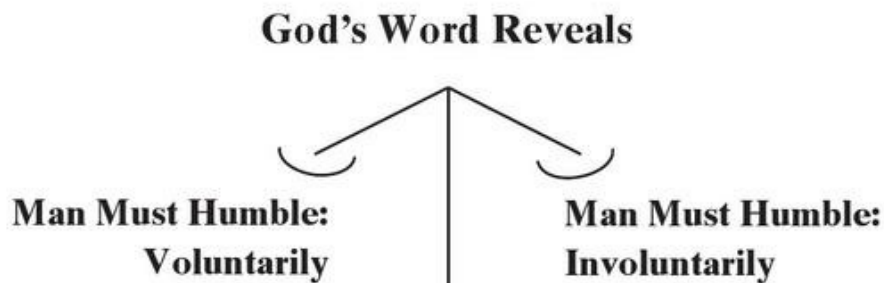
Through Humiliation and Death, the Son of Man, Jesus, gained an eternal Union with God. He was made both LORD and Christ after His resurrection. On the Day of Pentecost, the Apostle Peter declared:

Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that **God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ**
(Acts 2:36).

Never again will Jesus have to be separated from the LORD's Presence because He has been eternally joined to the Godhead. If, in this life, we allow our hearts to become married to the LORD Jesus Christ's Humility, we can share His Dwelling Place both now and in Eternity. Praise God for His Humility and for the Humility of His Son Jesus Christ!

God loves man and desires to have unbroken fellowship with him. In order to help man make the right decision that will assure him an eternal Relationship with the LORD, God has spent many years in sending forth His Word to warn man of the consequences of failing to humble his heart. God also has spent many years in giving His Word to teach man how to humble himself and in showing man how He humbles the proud who do not humble themselves. And, through all God's warnings and teachings and examples, He has unveiled the Power of Humility that He gives the humble, penitent soul who learns to overcome his selfish pride and lay aside his self-assertion.

Beloved, the matter of humility is unavoidable. There is no question about whether we will humble ourselves or not. We *will* do it — either voluntarily or involuntarily.



If we are wise, we will chose to humble ourselves voluntarily in this life and, thus, reap the reward of forever being with the LORD in His glorious Dwelling Place. Those who do not voluntarily make the choice to humble themselves in this life will be forced to humble themselves and their proud hearts involuntarily and to bow their knees to the LORD Jesus Christ in Eternity. The correct question each man must ask himself is not “**AM I** going to humble myself before God?” The correct question is this: “**WHEN AM I** going to humble myself before God?”

May God grant us Wisdom to choose to walk daily in Jesus Christ’s Humility and in the Way of the Cross in this life, while there is the opportunity to gain the eternal reward of Christ’s Humility, so that we may dwell in the eternal Pleasure and Exaltation of the High and Holy Personal Presence of God and the Lamb. Or will we be unwise and have to learn Christ’s Humility in Eternity? Then will be too late to gain, by growth in Spiritual Stature, the substance that will allow us to be joined eternally to the LORD Jesus Christ Himself.

Summary:

In this study on how man can humble himself and overcome his carnal pride, we have seen the four main points that God has revealed in His Word to help man make the right choices in this life.

The first main point of Truth revealed the warning God gives man that *he must humble himself*. Pharaoh, Amon, Zedekiah, and Belshazzar are examples of men who did not heed God’s warning, so they all reaped the Punishment of Death or, in Zedekiah’s case, captivity.

The second main point of Truth showed *how man is to humble himself*. Man humbles himself in the following ways: by accepting his Punishment for his sin and acknowledging God’s Righteousness in meting it out; by obeying God’s Word that comes through his anointed leaders; by afflicting himself through fasting from natural food; and by becoming like a little child before the LORD.

The third main point of Truth revealed *how God humbles the rebellious, proud man*. God humbles people by letting them experience hunger; He humbles them by serving them the same diet day after day; He humbles them by allowing them to experience painful afflictions; and He humbles them by letting them experience failure.

The fourth main point of Truth disclosed the *Power of Humility*. Humility has Power: to open God’s Ears; to cause God’s Mouth to speak; to open God’s Treasure House; and to dwell where God dwells.

Humility is an intricate, inseparable part of God’s Nature; therefore, Humility is an infinite, eternal Substance. The fact that God has given poor, finite mortal man an opportunity in this life to gain such an infinitely weighty substance and make it a part of his own Spiritual Stature certainly is more than any mortal creature deserves. Let us all be faithful to take advantage of the time we have been given to lay hold of Christ’s Eternal Treasure of Humility! Laying hold of the Humility of the LORD Jesus Christ is the only way to overcome our carnal pride.



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- I. Pharaoh Did Not Humble His Proud Heart before God, so He Reaped Premature Death.
- II. Amon Did not Humble His Proud Heart before God, so He Reaped Premature Death.
- III. Zedekiah Did not Humble His Proud Heart before God, so He Was Taken Captive.
- IV. Belshazzar Did not Humble His Heart Before God, so He Reaped Premature Death.

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How To Humble Ourselves Voluntarily

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- II. We Humble Ourselves by Obeying the Word of God that Comes Through Holy, Anointed Leaders.
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 - A. Joy or Gladness Is One of God's Treasures.
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E. True Humility Has Power to Dwell Where God Dwells.