

Saviors on Mount Zion - Reconciling the Creation Joseph Herrin (11-10-09)

Obadiah 21

Then saviors shall come to Mount Zion... and the kingdom shall be Yahweh's.

Romans 8:19

For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God.



Roast Lamb

The word of revelation being shared here is meat for the mature. It will require some chewing. Those accustomed only to milk will undoubtedly find portions of what is set forth here difficult to swallow. I urge you to exercise patience, and to stir up the spirit within you. Set your mind to attend to what is written here, and you will find yourself very well rewarded.

It seems that the Father has chosen my seasons of camping on Jekyll Island to be times of revelation and insight. I believe this latest revelation is the crown, and summation of all that has preceded it. What has previously been viewed dimly has been set forth by the Spirit with a steadily increasing clarity.

It is the Father's plan that the work of reconciling the creation to Himself should be brought to completion through the work of a mature body of sons and daughters. Yahweh has determined by His sovereign counsel that what Christ began 2,000 years ago in reconciling the creation to the Father, should

not be brought to fulness through any other means than through the sacrificial lives of a full-stature body of Christ.

II Corinthians 5:18-19

Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

People of God, how did the Son of God reconcile the world to the Father? Was it by words alone? Was it not by a poured out life? Was it not by embracing a cross and suffering many things while choosing freely to love and forgive? It will be by such means that the reconciliation of the entire creation is brought to fulness as a cadre of sons and daughters manifesting the life of Christ take up the cross and follow in the footsteps of Yahshua. In both testimony and the experience of suffering, those who are disciples of Christ will be conformed to their Master.

Matthew 10:25

It is enough for the disciple that he become as his teacher, and the slave as his master. If they have called the head of the house Beelzebul, how much more the members of his household!

I have in previous writings addressed the reason that God has left His sons and daughters on this earth when He could have raptured them away at the moment they receive Christ. When we receive the seed of Christ by the work of the Holy Spirit, the Father has merely begun a work in the lives of His children. He must see this work come to maturity. We know that it is the Father's expressed intent that all those born of the seed of Christ should be conformed to Him in character.

Romans 8:29

For whom He foreknew, *He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son*, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

The apostle Paul expresses the truth of our calling in another place.

Ephesians 4:13

Until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of

God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fulness of Christ.

From the very first chapter of Genesis we read of Elohim's intent to create man "in Our image," and "after Our likeness." The first man to attain to the image of God was Yahshua. He was the first man to be born of woman who could declare, "He who has seen Me has seen the Father." Those who have received the Spirit of Christ are on a pathway to conformity to His image. They are destined to arrive at the fulness of the stature that belongs to Christ. When they arrive at such a state they too will be able to declare, "He who has seen me has seen the Father." How could anything else be true, if the saints of God are to be conformed to the image of Christ?

What the Spirit has been bringing forward with much clarity at this season, which I now set forth on my last day on Jekyll Island, is that we are not only called to be conformed in character to Christ, but we are called to share in His work of reconciling the creation to the Father. "*He gave to us the ministry of reconciliation.*"

Neither is it merely that we are given this call, for the church has long believed that this ministry of reconciling the creation back to God was accomplished through evangelism, the preaching of the gospel. What the Spirit is testifying is that a much deeper work is accomplished as we enter into a place of intercession for mankind and the fallen creation.

How is this intercession accomplished? That is the real key. The intercession is accomplished by becoming partakers in the suffering of Christ. Yet many are those who suffer for their obedience without setting the captives free. Why is this? Because they do not manifest love and forgiveness as they are experiencing the suffering of Christ.

Forgiveness is the key that sets the creation free!

When Christ declared on the cross, "Father forgive them, for they do not know what they do," what were the results of that forgiveness?

John 1:12-13

As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

The forgiveness of Christ set the creation free from the penalty of sin and death. The forgiveness of Christ released those who were bound and captive to sin that they might become partakers of the Holy Spirit and walk in newness of life. The forgiveness of Christ allowed those who were walking in the domain of darkness to be transferred to the kingdom of light.

Forgiveness is the key that unlocks the door to entry into the kingdom of God.

Let me share here that the forgiveness of sin is obtained only through the shedding of the blood of Christ. It is not merely that Christ said, "I forgive you." It was that He was willing to offer His soul as an atonement for the souls of men and women. Remember the recent teaching I posted titled *Life is in the Blood*.

<http://parablesblog.blogspot.com/2009/10/foundation-four-life-is-in-blood.html>

The Scriptures declare that the SOUL is in the blood. When Christ poured out His blood on the cross, He was surrendering His soul in place of the collective soul of fallen Adamic man. The Scriptures testify that "the soul that sins must die." Yet God allowed one who knew no sin to offer His soul as a ransom for those who did sin.

II Corinthians 5:21

He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

A great exchange took place, but it would not have been possible had not Christ entreated the Father to forgive those who were to receive this priceless deliverance from the consequences of sin.

Here is a marvelous thing: Christ paid the full cost for man's redemption on the cross, and He initiated that reconciliation that is to be realized when the words of the apostle Paul are fulfilled:

Colossians 1:19-20

For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fulness to dwell in Him, and through Him *to reconcile ALL THINGS to Himself*, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth

or things in heaven.

Ephesians 1:9-10

Having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might sum up all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth — in Him.

We do not see at this time all things reconciled to God through Christ. We do not yet observe all things summed up in Christ. Yet we are promised that when God's work is complete that this will be the condition of all creation.

I Corinthians 15:25-28

For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be abolished is death. For He has put all things in subjection under His feet. But when He says, "All things are put in subjection," it is evident that He is excepted who put all things in subjection to Him. And when all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, that God may be all in all.

When Yahweh's plan of the ages is fulfilled, then there will be nothing left in the creation that has not been reconciled back to God through the cross of Christ. The only thing that will not be placed under a free and willing subjection to Christ is the Father Himself. When all things are subjected to the Son, then the Son also will be subjected to the Father that God may be all in all.

How is this work of reconciling the creation back to the Father to be accomplished? Will Christ do it all, or will He accomplish this work through a group of sons who attain to the fulness of His own stature? It is through sons in whom is the indwelling Spirit of Christ that the work will be completed. The apostle Paul has declared that Christ must reign until He has placed all enemies under His FEET. Are not feet a part of the body? And are not the saints the body of Christ?

This ministry of reconciliation has been entrusted to the body of Christ. Yet we should not assume that it will be accomplished merely by preaching the good news of Christ. It must also be accomplished by entering into that same ministry of forgiveness that was observed in the life of Christ. He declared that He did not come to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might

be saved. To the woman caught in adultery He said, "Neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more." To the paraplegic lowered through the roof into His presence He announced, "Your sins are forgiven." And in His dying words on the cross He proclaimed, "Father, forgive them."

With these words of forgiveness the creation is set free from its bondage to sin. And this same power of forgiveness has been entrusted to the saints of Christ.

John 20:22-23

And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. *If you forgive the sins of any, their sins have been forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they have been retained.*"

It was for this purpose that the Holy Spirit was given - that those who received the Spirit of Christ might enter into this ministry of forgiveness. It is this same authority to forgive and retain sins that is spoken of in the following words of Yahshua.

Matthew 16:19

"I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

What do keys do? Keys open up prison doors. Keys are used to unlock that which was locked. Christ is declaring that He is entrusting to mankind this ministry of releasing others from their bondage to sin. How are they to do so? By the act of forgiveness. Matthew records yet another conversation of Christ on this matter of forgiveness.

Matthew 18:15-19

"And if your brother sins, go and reprove him in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed. And if he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax-gatherer. *Truly I say to you, whatever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.* Again I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father who

is in heaven.”

Is it not remarkable that these words of Christ concerning any two agreeing on a matter have been used in all manner of applications relating to material blessing, but their original context is ignored? Christ was declaring that if any two agreed to bind a man over to be punished for their sin and refusal to repent, it would be done in heaven. If these same ones, finding a repentant heart, were to loose a brother from his sins, it would also be done in heaven. This power to forgive sins is the mightiest power and authority entrusted to the church.

If you doubt that this was truly the intent of these words, observe how this was actually practiced among the apostles and the church. Paul in writing to the Corinthian church concerning a Christian man engaged in grievous sin wrote:

I Corinthians 5:4-5

In the name of our Lord Yahshua, when you are assembled, and I with you in spirit, with the power of our Lord Yahshua, I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Yahshua.

What an enormous authority Christ gave to His followers in granting them the ability to forgive or retain the sins of others. The apostle Paul, being fully aware of this authority, exercised it often.

I Timothy 1:20

Among these are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have delivered over to Satan, so that they may be taught not to blaspheme.

These are but two examples of binding. I am persuaded that in many more instances the authority to loose others from their sins was exercised by the disciples of Christ.

James 5:14-15

Is anyone among you sick? *Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him.*

The authority of Christ granted to His people was to be used for building up, and not for tearing down.

II Corinthians 13:10

For this reason I am writing these things while absent, in order that when present I may not use severity, in accordance with *the authority which the Lord gave me, for building up and not for tearing down.*

People of God, the kingdom of God will be manifested upon the earth as mature sons and daughters begin to walk in the authority God has given them to build up, and not to tear down. We must first be proven before we can be entrusted with such power. When Paul was breathing out threats and murder before his conversion he had no such spiritual authority. Only those who are full of the Holy Spirit can be entrusted with such power.

In the examples cited above we read of elders praying and the sins of those who have transgressed being forgiven. The position of elder is a spiritual office. It is required that those who walk in such authority be filled with the Holy Spirit. The apostle Paul was a man filled with the Holy Spirit. We also read of deacons having the same qualification laid upon them.

Acts 6:3

"But select from among you, brethren, seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task."

Among those selected in Jerusalem to serve as deacons was Stephen. He was a man full of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 6:5

And the statement found approval with the whole congregation; and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit...

When we too are filled with the Spirit of Christ we will find ourselves entering into His work of reconciliation. Every time we suffer for righteousness' sake, and choose to not hold other's sins against them, we are proclaiming release to the captives, and we are setting the prisoners free.

Do you think it was coincidental that the chief persecutor of Stephen became the greatest proponent of the Christian faith? Those stoning Stephen laid their cloaks at the feet of the young Pharisee named Saul. This Saul, who in the

Greek was called Paul, later encountered the Lord of glory as he was on his way to Damascus breathing out threats and murder against the saints of God. He was converted, and he who was formerly the enemy of God became a great champion of the faith.

Paul was set free the moment that Stephen forgave him his sin. Stephen laid down his life, in the same way as the Son of God. In choosing to forgive he also set all those who trespassed against him free.

In this hour, we need to understand that the reconciliation of the creation back to God is one of the chief reasons that the body of Christ has been given the Holy Spirit. Let us look once more at the words of Christ.

John 20:22-23

And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, their sins have been forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they have been retained."

The disciples did not always understand this. Before they received the Spirit to indwell them, they mistakenly thought that the Spirit was given for them to judge the world, rather than to set it free.

Luke 9:52-56

And they went, and entered a village of the Samaritans, to make arrangements for Him. And they did not receive Him, because He was journeying with His face toward Jerusalem. And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, "Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?" But He turned and rebuked them, and said, "You do not know what kind of spirit you are of; for the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them."

All those who are disciples of Christ are to enter into His ministry of reconciling the world unto God. We destroy the works of the devil as we forgive sin. Saul was released from Satan's captivity as Stephen petitioned the Father to forgive those who were stoning him. Saul, the most zealous enemy of Christianity, was defeated by an act of love and forgiveness. The Spirit of Christ was released to effect the reconciliation of Saul unto God as Stephen put aside all anger, offense and wrath, and spoke forth words of forgiveness.

Because Stephen did not retain the sins of Saul, neither did heaven retain

them. When Stephen spoke forth words of forgiveness, the sins of Saul were canceled.

You and I have been given this same ministry of reconciliation. Christ too has breathed upon us, and has declared, *“If you forgive the sins of any, their sins have been forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they have been retained.”*

What then will you do with this profound gift? In what way will you exercise this authority? The sons of God have been entrusted with authority to destroy the enemy’s kingdom by forgiving the sins of mankind. We have been appointed to complete that work that Christ began of reconciling the world unto God. It is Christ in us accomplishing this work. We must be led of His Spirit in these things. We must never presume to exercise such authority of our own initiative.

To be continued...

Saviors on Mount Zion - Reconciling the Creation - Part 2 Joseph Herrin (11-14-09)



More Meat - Get out your fork and a sharp knife

Note: If you have not read part one of this writing, I encourage you to do so before continuing.

Hebrews 7:25

[Yahshua] is able to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since *He always lives to make intercession for them.*

Let me begin part two of this series by sharing a definition of intercession that is greatly different from that in the minds of most Christians. Most Christians that I know equate intercession with prayer. Intercession is much more, however.

Intercession: an interposing or pleading on behalf of another person.

When Christ went to the cross, He manifested the most profound act of intercession the world has ever seen. He interposed Himself between God and man. In effect, Christ invited the Father to lay the sins of the creation upon His back, that the penalty might be paid fully by One who was righteous. The consequences of sin could never be covered by prayer alone. It required an interposition of the life of one on behalf of another.

The Scriptures are filled with examples of this type of intercession. Consider the following example from the life of Moses.

Exodus 32:9-14

Yahweh said to Moses, "I have seen this people, and indeed it is a stiff-necked people! Now therefore, let Me alone, that My wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them. And I will make of you a great nation." Then Moses pleaded with Yahweh his God, and said: "Yahweh, why does Your wrath burn hot against Your people whom You have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? Why should the Egyptians speak, and say, 'He brought them out to harm them, to kill them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth'? Turn from Your fierce wrath, and relent from this harm to Your people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants, to whom You swore by Your own self, and said to them, 'I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven; and all this land that I have spoken of I give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it forever.'" So Yahweh relented from the harm which He said He would do to His people.

Exodus 32:31-32

Then Moses returned to Yahweh, and said, "Alas, this people has committed a great sin, and they have made a god of gold for themselves. But now, if You will, forgive their sin - and if not, please blot me out from Your book which You have written!"

This is intercession! Yes, Moses began with prayer and pleading before the Father, but he did not stop there. Moses placed himself between God and the people. He was willing to become a curse in order that he might deliver a people who had been nothing but grief to himself. In this way Moses was figured as a type of Yahshua who would one day place Himself between God and man to effect the salvation of mankind.

We find a similar example in the life of the apostle Paul.

Romans 9:1-3

I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart. *For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren*, my kinsmen according to the flesh...

This again is the epitome of intercession. Paul was willing to become a curse that others might live. The Scriptures declare, "Cursed is every man who hangs on a tree." Christ became a curse "for the sake of [His] brethren." Paul testified that He could wish that God might allow himself to do the same that

his brethren might be reconciled to God.

People of God, it is the lowliest of experiences to be accursed, yet it is the highest manifestation of the love and character of God for a man to do so that others might live. Christ was “despised and forsaken of men.” Those hurling insults at the Son of God believed that He was suffering for His own sins. They “esteemed Him smitten and stricken by God.” They did not understand that it was for THEIR sins that He permitted Himself to endure the reproach and shame of the cross.

Will not Christ lead all those who would be mature sons to similar experiences? Consider once more the Scripture with which this writing opened.

“He always lives to make intercession for them.”

How does Christ perform this intercession? Is it not through His body? Paul testified, “It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me.” It was Christ living vicariously through Paul that produced in the heart of the apostle the desire to become a curse that others might be saved. Christ truly does live to make intercession for the world. He does so through sons who are surrendered to His will and led by His Spirit.

Every time I have heard this Scripture proclaimed, the minister has evoked images of Christ sitting on His throne in heaven offering up prayers to the Father on behalf of mankind. Intercession is much more than this. Christ is alive in HIS BODY. Through surrendered sons He is producing a heart that yearns to see the creation reconciled to the Father, and these sons are willing to endure shame, reproach and suffering that others might be set free.

Every time Paul suffered on his missionary journeys, he was interceding. He was beaten, stoned, shackled, imprisoned, slandered, and he endured many things that are truly considered a curse to mankind. He bore all these things willingly and patiently that others might be reconciled to the Father.

Will you be an intercessor?

There is much more appointed to those who would be mature in Christ than merely proclaiming the gospel and praying for others. It has been appointed to the sons of God to enter into the sufferings of Christ on behalf of the

creation.

Colossians 1:24

Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I do my share on behalf of His body (which is the church) in filling up that which is lacking in Christ's afflictions.

Note that Paul says that his afflictions are actually "Christ's afflictions." This is how Christ ever lives to make intercession. He is interceding through His body on earth. Will you permit Christ to suffer affliction through you that others might be delivered from the bonds of sin and Satan? Can you endure reproach and suffering at the hands of men and women willingly, while entreating the Father to forgive them?

The kingdom of Satan will be overturned by a much more profound intercession than mere prayer. We conquer by our willingness to suffer while maintaining an attitude of love and forgiveness. Satan's kingdom has no defense against such complete selflessness.

Romans 8:36-37

As it is written: "For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

What is it that the people of God are called to conquer? Is it not sin and Satan? What is the means by which this victory is attained? The method appears as a great paradox. We not only conquer, but we are more than conquerors, as we submit willingly to being killed all day long. We plunder the enemy's camp as we present ourselves as sheep for the slaughter.

It is no wonder that in this sensual age of the Laodicean church that this message is neglected and seldom uttered. Where are those Christians who are willing to suffer shame, reproach, loss and even death for obedience to Christ? My own flesh recoils violently at the sight of the cross. I too cry out, "Father, if there be any other way, please let this cup pass from me." Yet there is no other way by which intercession can be made on behalf of God's people. There is no other method except the cross that will destroy the enemy's camp and set the captives free.

Yahweh is patient in bringing His sons and daughters to a place of maturity

where they are willing to become a curse before man that others might be saved. It requires selflessness to enter into this work of intercession. We arise from our mother's womb altogether selfish. When we are born again of the seed of Christ we have the spark of divine life planted within our members. This divine life, if allowed to mature, will result in the appearing of a new creation. This new creation is in the image of Christ.

Should we then not expect that when the image of Christ begins to be manifest in us that we too will find ourselves being drawn to experiences of intercession where we willingly suffer for the sake of others that they might be set free? Will not Yahweh prove our Christ-likeness by bringing us also to Gethsemane and Calvary experiences?

I can hear the arguments of some now: "You are making yourself to be as Christ. You are saying that salvation is in your hands, when Christ accomplished salvation for us."

Listen carefully to what I am saying: It is Christ IN US who is ever living to make intercession. It is Christ who continues to reconcile the world to God, and He is doing so through mature sons in His image. Those who enter into such a high calling can only declare as did the apostle Paul, "It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me."

People of God, if left to my own Adamic nature, I would never choose to embrace shame, and suffering, and reproaches. I would not eagerly choose these things for my own benefit, much less for the welfare of others, and certainly not for the welfare of my enemies. It can be nothing other than Christ IN HIS SAINTS that would lead any of them to submit themselves to such experiences willingly.

The ways of God are not the ways of the natural man. A carnal church despises the ways of God. A carnal church has replaced the message of the disciple's cross with a message of worldly blessing and prosperity, of ease and comfort. The result is that the world is not saved. Mankind is not reconciled to the Father, for only through laying down our lives can the ministry of reconciliation be accomplished.

Here, in very plain speech, is the ministry of intercession explained. The apostle Paul reveals the manner by which the sons of God are able to bring forth life in the creation.

II Corinthians 4:7-12

But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the surpassing greatness of the power may be of God and not from ourselves; we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying about in the body the dying of Yahshua, that the life of Yahshua also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Yahshua's sake, that the life of Yahshua also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. *So death works in us, but life in you.*

We are carriers of Yahshua's death! What a radical concept! We are "always carrying about in the body the dying of Yahshua." This dying in us results in life in others. Will not Christ (revealed in His body) continue to be in labor pangs until all creation comes forth into the freedom of the sons of God? The apostle Paul declared:

Galatians 4:19

My children, with whom I am again in labor until Christ is formed in you...

These words come from the same book from which we read, "It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me" (Galatians 2:20). It is therefore Christ who continues in labor as He seeks to see mature sons come forth in His image. We are given the exceedingly high honor and privilege of entering into this work of Christ. As we surrender to death, life is manifest in others, and Christ is fully formed in us.

Let me now make this teaching very practical. You and I do not need to go seeking ways to suffer for others. Christ never did anything of His own initiative. He was always observing the Father, and He did all things precisely as He saw His Father doing them. Our calling is a very simple one. We need only to follow the leading of the Spirit.

Romans 8:14

For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

If you will surrender to be led of the Spirit in all things, you will find the Father leading you down a path that will lead to conformity to Christ. The Father will begin by dealing with the sin in our own lives, while leading us ever on toward spiritual maturity. Over time we will find the Spirit leading us into experiences of suffering for our obedience. Some of this suffering will be on

behalf of others that they might be reconciled to God.

Most people will not recognize the path you are on as obedience. They will conclude that you are suffering for your own sins, as the Jews did of Christ. Yahweh will intentionally lead His sons and daughters to actions and obedience that they cannot defend to those who are led by the natural mind.

The cross has ever been this way. The Jews did not accuse Christ of being righteous. They accused Him of assorted transgressions, such as heresy and Sabbath breaking. Paul was not subjected to suffering on charges of obedience. He was accused of defaming the Law of Moses and setting aside the traditions of his people. He was often accused of being a rabble rouser and of inciting riots. These are not noble charges. They are charges of transgression.

We too will be characterized as transgressors, and the accusations against us will often be false. If we would be conformed to the image of Christ, we will not seek to defend ourselves, or to convince those who judge according to the natural mind of our righteousness. We will be as sheep led to the slaughter. We will endure and forgive, and in doing so we will be accomplishing the work of intercession and reconciling the creation back to God.

For what reason might you be induced to embrace the cross? The apostle Paul exhorted those who were suffering many things with the following words.

Hebrews 12:1-3

Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Yahshua, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you may not grow weary and lose heart.

Consider Christ! His time of suffering was intense, but brief. He has now entered into reward. He has been given all authority and all power. He has been given the name that is above every other name. He has entered into the joy of the Father.

We are in a race, and there is a finish line and a prize. Not all will attain to the prize. In order to receive the prize, we must compete according to the rules.

I Corinthians 9:24-27

Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. And everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; but I buffet my body and make it my slave, lest possibly, after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified.



What I have been sharing in these last two posts are the rules by which we are called to compete. Like a runner, we are to set our eyes on the goal before us. We are not to be distracted with the allure of the world and the busy-ness of this life. We are called to take up our cross daily and follow Christ.

Those who are seeking to live at ease while anticipating receiving the prize that belongs to the firstborn and the overcomer will know profound grief. They will realize that they were like Esau, trading away their birthright to satisfy their temporal desires. We cannot go camp out on the field around which only a few runners are competing and have a picnic, play games, and be at ease and then have any expectation that if we walk over and cross the finish line that we will be awarded the prize.

Christ is our pattern-man, and we must walk as He walked. He was fully

surrendered to the will of the Father. He was led of the Spirit of His Father in all things. He did not live to please Himself, but rather to please God. He did not shrink back when there was a cross before Him.

Last year the Spirit of Christ led me to write the book *Christ in You - The Hope of Glory*. This book sets forth the astounding things that await the overcoming sons of God. To receive the portion of the firstborn should be the goal toward which we all strive. I encourage you to read this book if you have no comprehension of the joy that is set before the sons of God.

Paul saw this joy and thought little of his earthly trials in the light of that which was to come.

II Corinthians 4:17-18

For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

We must take our eyes off of the temporal and look to those things that are eternal. Moses is given as an example of one who was looking ahead to the reward.

Hebrews 11:24-26

By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin; considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; *for he was looking to the reward.*

Such are the ways of God. We conquer through suffering. We attain the prize by being put to death all day long. And in the process we will see Christ reconciling all things back to His Father in heaven. Hallelujah!