Shepherd's Embrace
ministries

Experience the Shepherd's Embrace

The Writings & Commentary of Greg Wilson

Greg Wilson
SHEPHERD'S EMBRACE MINISTRIES · WICHITA, KANSAS

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Experience the Shepherd's Embrace: The Writings & Commentary of Greg Wilson
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A Word of Welcome

Shepherd's Embrace Ministries seeks to extend the living presence of the Great Shepherd Yeshua Jesus into the hearts of all who will receive Him unto a rich relationship with Him and abundant life walking holy in His joy, via messages written and spoken, articles and commentary, counseling, original devotional music, prayer guides, artwork, fiction, and poetry, **from Greg Wilson out of Wichita, KS**.

Next Biblical Holiday

This book gathers the articles, commentary, poems and other writings from the Shepherd's Embrace Ministries website into one place, so you can read them at your own pace, wherever you are. My prayer is that as you read, you will sense the Good Shepherd drawing near, and rest in His embrace.

Grace and shalom to you,
Greg Wilson

> Many more resources, including music, videos, audio messages, the podcast and artwork, are waiting for you at **shepherdsembrace.org**.

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PART ONE

Getting Started

Why This Ministry?

A Call To Embrace The Good Life

Crash Course for New Believers

The Cost of Freedom: Presentation of the Gospel for Adults & Kids

Foundations of the Faith

GETTING STARTED

Why This Ministry?

By Gregory John Wilson

Greetings, friend or stranger! As I was praying, I asked Elohim (God) if he had anything he wanted to bring to my mind. I waited, and in a few minutes, what seemed to gently be put in my mind was that I should put together a personal ministry in which I can have an outlet to share truths I am learning with others.

Now, I want to be very clear – I do *not* know everything, whatsoever, and humbly admit that. That's why one section of the website when it is up will be called "Big Questions" – questions I am still grappling with, that I want your input on. Nevertheless, there are certain truths about the one true Elohim, His son Yeshua the messiah, and his plan for this world and the world to come, that I can humbly pass along, among other topics that I feel have not been brought to light that well in general. So, before the El of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, I declare that I am humbly trying to follow His leading to launch this little ministry, and I pray you will be encouraged to **seek His face and His will** because of it.

Sincerely,
-Greg Wilson

GETTING STARTED

A Call To Embrace The Good Life

By Gregory John Wilson

Greetings, My Fellow Man,

I, Greg Wilson, appeal to you today - to sharpen your conscience, to guide you toward the One who is love, whose righteous laws are in accordance with love.

Look at the trees, the birds, the sunset, the clouds, and know that there is a Creator, and He has set forth good laws for man when He gave His law on Mount Sinai - starting with the 10 commandments:

1. Worship the true God and have no other Gods
2. Have no idols
3. Don't take God's name in vain
4. Rest on the Sabbath (a gift!)
5. Honor your father and mother
6. Don't murder
7. Don't commit adultery
8. Don't steal
9. Don't bear false witness
10. Don't covet

These are in accordance with loving Yahweh (a pronunciation of God's personal name) with all you are and loving your neighbor as yourself, the two great commandments that the rest of the whole Law hangs on, according to the New Testament.

Yet we have not chosen the way of love in our lives. We have lived for self instead and our hearts have become hardened.

So hear the Master's call today - calling you to tenderize your heart and return to His loving laws - to turn away from sin. Romans 7:7 in the New Testament says the Law defines what sin is. So the goal is to keep the Law as it applies in our personal lives, after we have drawn near to the Father and entered into a loving relationship with Him.

But just how will Yahweh reconcile us to Himself since we have sinned and the wages of sin is death?

He has given His son Yeshua (Jesus) - a Jew - who has become sin for us so we can become the righteousness of Elohim (God as it appears on the Hebrew scriptures beginning with Genesis 1:1) - 2 Corinthians 5:21. He suffered for our sin so we can be forgiven and not go to the lake of fire, as Revelation surely speaks of.

So declare that He is the Lord of your life today! Forsake your sin and receive Yeshua (Jesus) as your personal Savior!

> *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*
> 1 John 1:9

Receive the Savior and have your heart renewed to walk in righteousness before the Creator in love.

Amen - So be it!

Sincerely,
Greg Wilson

GETTING STARTED

Crash Course for New Believers

- **Genesis 1-3** (Creation and Fall)
- **Exodus 20:1-21** (Ten Commandments)
- **Isaiah 53** (Prophecy of Jesus' Substitutionary death)
- **Book of Psalms & Proverbs** (Pouring out your heart to God and learning wise behavior)
- **Matthew 5-7** (Jesus'/Yeshua's practical teachings) – see Matt. 5:17-19 on observance of the Law
- **Luke 24:45-47** (The Gospel - repentance and forgiveness of sins in Yeshua's name to all nations)
- **John 3:14-21** (Salvation through Jesus)
- **John 5:39-40** (The Scriptures bear witness to Yeshua - come to Yeshua for life - not just words on a page)
- **Acts 2:38-39** (Repentance for remission of sins)
- **Acts 17:22-31** (Plan for Salvation)
- **Romans 3:23, 6:23, 10:9-10** (Plan of salvation)
- **Romans 3:31, 7:7** (The Law of Moses is not done away with)
- **Romans 11** (Gentiles grafted into Israel)
- **Romans 13** (Practical instruction for living)
- **1 Corinthians 15:1-4** (The Gospel)
- **Galatians 5:22-23** (Fruit of the Spirit)
- **Ephesians 6:10-18** (Spiritual Armor)
- **Philippians 4:8** (Focus on what's good)
- **Colossians 1:15** (Yeshua (Jesus) is the image of God (Elohim))
- **1 Thessalonians 5:1-11** (The Day of the Lord)
- **2 Thessalonians 2:1-12** (The Man of Sin – Antichrist?)
- **1 Timothy 6:11-16** (Fight the good fight of faith)
- **2 Timothy 3:16** (All scripture is God-breathed)
- **2 Timothy 4:1-5** (Encouragement to spread the Word)
- **Titus 2:11** (The Grace of God brings salvation)

- **Titus 3:9** (Shun foolish questions and strife)
- **Philemon 1:5** (Love and Faith)
- **James 2:26** (Faith without works is dead)
- **1 Peter 3:18** (Christ suffered for our sin)
- **2 Peter 3:10-18** (The Day of the Lord)
- **1 John 1:9** (If we confess our sins He forgives us)
- **1 John 2:15-17** (Do not love the world)
- **1 John 3:10** (Believers do righteousness; unbelievers don't)
- **1 John 4:7** (Let us love one another)
- **2 John 1:6** (Love means following Yahweh's commandments)
- **3 John 1:2** (May you prosper, soul and body)
- **Jude 1:20** (Build yourself up in faith, and pray in the Holy Spirit)
- **Revelation 2-4** (Correction and guidance for churches)
- **Revelation 5-19:10** (Tribulation before Yeshua comes to reign)
- **Revelation 19:11-22:21** (Yeshua comes and reigns for 1,000 years, then New Heavens and New Earth come, with the New Jerusalem)

Pray and seek guidance from Yahweh (God) Himself, and let Him guide you to scriptures, and to His will for you!

The Cost of Freedom: Presentation of the Gospel for Adults & Kids

Now that man and woman had been established in their paradise to enjoy and care for God's creation, they could have children as well and thus develop the earth with more image-bearers (humans) who could care for the earth as well and enjoy a relationship with the Creator as well! God's command was to be fruitful and multiply and rule over the earth - cultivate it and care for it and raise up children to do this as well. We ourselves are "Adam" - "earth" - made of the earth but mixed with the Eternal spirit of God - so we care for the "earth" but as we have God in us, we also have a yearning to connect with the Divine as well, and not just be "earth" - "Adam".

We were made to behold the Eternal one's glory and enjoy Him forever, ever beholding more of His character and love for us, and allowing Him to live through us and accomplish His will - which is also righteous and pure and holy and loving and just.

But an enemy had access to Adam and Eve too. An enemy that had tried to be God himself - exalt Himself above God and do his own will - thus questioning the authority and goodness of the Eternal Holy Creator.

And thus HaSatan - the Adversary in Hebrew, also known as Satan or the Devil, somehow came in the form of a snake, or entered a snake to use to tempt Eve first, and then she would tempt Adam.

The Creator was so gracious that He gave men and women the OPTION to go their own way and try to be their own god, living independently of Him. Nevertheless he warned them, if you do that, you will die - you will cut yourself off from the true source of life in trying to be your own god and you will die.

The Devil appealed to this sense of freedom and independence they could have by eating the fruit of the Tree of the knowledge of good and evil - mind you, I believe everything was more spiritual in those days - so I don't think it was a simple fruit - but something that changed you from the inside out. And so Eve was attracted to the fruit and liked what it offered, being deceived to partake of it, which she sadly did. And Adam, for whatever reason, went along with her and sinned as well.

I have long wondered why getting the knowledge of good and evil would be bad, though. Isn't that what God wants us to know - right from wrong, so we can do right? I have come to the conclusion that the name of the tree refers more to us independently trying to know what's right and wrong ourselves - US

wanting to have the knowledge and even defining our own right and wrong, instead of simply listening to our Father and doing what He says.

It is very interesting, after they eat of the fruit, even GOD admits:

> *Behold the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil.*
>
> Genesis 3:22

So the devil WAS telling a half truth when he told Adam and Eve that they would be like god if they ate the fruit. This is just further evidence that God actually gave the option for man's mind to be changed and be "like Him, knowing good and evil." I believe God wanted to test them - to see if they loved Him and understood Him to be the great Father of all, and thus would submit to Him, or if they would rebel and choose to be their own god and live off of their own knowledge of what they think is good and evil instead of living in obedience to what the Creator says.

In this light, it was not that the actual fruit was tempting because of its taste or look or texture - it was the temptation of being able to live for self in independence and selfishness instead of having to submit to the Creator.

I don't know about you, but I still FEEL this pull of the fall - the desire to just please myself and do what I want, instead of submit to the Father in love. It is a battle inside - good versus evil. That is why the apostle Paul says we must "die daily" to self - and follow the Master's command to take up our cross daily and follow Him. This is the true way of love - self-sacrificing love instead of seeking to please self.

So in that day, humanity and the world fell into a broken state, cut off from the life and fellowship and love of the Father Creator, now destined to die instead of live forever…

But. The Bible also says God knows the end of things - the future - what will happen. So this great tragedy did not surprise Him. In fact, the great great great love of God knew what it would cost to redeem man and get him connected again to God's eternal life – and HE WAS WILLING to pay this torturous price to take care of man's sin and provide a way for man to be perfected and pure again.

This cost would involve God Himself absorbing, taking our sin somehow, and taking the punishment for it as well - the death and separation from God, so that He could give us back life, our sins having been covered. This great exchange was made possible on the Great Cross of calvary where God sent Himself inside a physical human body to offer His perfect righteousness to us, and somehow absorb all the sin of the world and it's punishment on Himself! All things are possible with Him! Somehow He was able to do

that! And then raise His son Jesus again to inherit His rightful place as King of Kings and Lord of Lords, only submitting to God the Father above Him! Hallelu-Yah - which means PRAISE YAH - God's short name!!!

So. The cost of allowing man to have freedom and ultimately fall into sin and death was the cost of God's own life. If it was me, I would not have even given man an option to sin so I would not HAVE to come down and suffer and die myself!! But our God's love is unfathomable. He did not want robots - He wanted us to CHOOSE Him. And when we didn't, He was WILLING to come down and suffer and die to give us another chance to be with Him forever and enjoy eternal life with Him!!! Praise Him!!!!

Do you believe these things? If you need more understanding or confirmation from God, just pray to Him. Ask Him to show you that He is real and the Bible is true, and I believe He will.

'Til next time, Have a great day kids!

Foundations of the Faith

By Gregory John Wilson

The chronological scope which has been revealed to us in the Bible begins at the creation of the earth, the seas, the animals, the sun, moon, and stars, and last but certainly not least, man and woman - mankind. Elohim (God) is from everlasting to everlasting, however, and thus we don't know what He was doing before the creation of earth, though we can dream! Likewise, the revealed scriptures end with a new heaven and new earth - in which righteousness dwells (2 Peter 3:13). And who knows what all Elohim and us will be doing for eternity, but it will be great! In between the creation and the new creation we find ourselves, awaiting the redemption of our bodies from sin and death.

Yes, the next major event after creation was the fall of mankind as they sinned and this brought death on themselves and humanity. The serpent was cursed, woman was cursed with painful childbirth, and man was cursed with toilsome labor. Thus, from that time on, there was now a dichotomy in the world - obedience to Yahweh or disobedience to Him, righteousness or sinfulness, although all men since Adam are born into death and sin (Romans 5:12). The next major event, after Elohim judges the world with the flood, is the forming of the people of Israel - a special people chosen by Elohim to receive His righteous law, or instruction - Torah - that reveals what sin is (Romans 7:7). Israel's father was Abraham, the father also of all who are justified by faith, but whose faith leads them to action, confirming the validity of their faith to begin with. Abraham sets the example of "believing El (God)" and being justified (declared righteous) on account of that faith - (his belief was credited to him as righteousness). But, in the book of James, actually Jacob, if you render the word true to the Greek, we see that Abraham was also justified by his works - being obedient to offer Isaac up - although Elohim saved Isaac. His faith was perfected by his works (James 2:20-24). It is a great paradox - faith saves you, but true faith will produce works that confirm this saving. The faith does come first though - we can't just start piling up a list of deeds and expect to be justified by them. We are justified by coming under Elohim's will - hearing, believing, and doing - making Him Lord.

So, the Law is given to Israel later on Mt. Sinai, which Yeshua says will not pass away, at least until heaven and earth passes away. It sets the standard for what sin is, beginning with the 10 commandments. Yet some of the instruction given was time sensitive - Yahweh is not asking us today to go build a tabernacle like they were instructed to build one then. And so other parts of the Instruction, or Torah, could be time sensitive as well - for example, certain ethnicities were not allowed to come in the congregation of Yahweh because of their ill conduct, but light of John 3:16 we know the whole world is invited to come

and taste of Elohim's salvation. Just an example. This is something I am still wrestling with - what is time-sensitive, what is not. Anyhow, now through one man - Abraham, that grew into a family, and then a nation - Israel, Elohim now established a light in the world for what righteousness looks like - or is supposed to look like. Strangers are welcome to be considered just like native born Israelites, though - Leviticus 24:22, and in the new Testament we see gentiles grafted into the Jewish olive tree.

And so Israel continues, sometimes following Yahweh, sometimes not, sometimes in exile, sometimes in the promised land, until Yeshua (Jesus) is born under Roman rule - the One who will fulfill the Law, and reverse the curse of death that sin brought, and give us everlasting righteousness (2 Corinthians 5:21). In His sermon on the mount, He affirms that the Law is good and will not pass away until heaven and earth do, and that people who keep it will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. The Apostle Paul bakcs this up too in his letter to the Romans, where he calls the Law "holy," "just," and "good." Paul also speaks of the curse of the law, but this must be the curse of death for not keeping the Law, because he already said it is holy and good, and that the real problem is really us sinning, breaking the Law, not the Law itself (Romans 7:13).

And so Messiah (Christ - the Anointed One) takes our sin upon Him on the stake (perhaps mistakenly called a cross - another study!), paying the death penalty for us, so we can be justified and again have Elohim's perfect righteousness (2 Cor. 5:21 - He mad Him who knew no sin to be sin for us that we might become the righteousness of Elohim in Him). Praise Yeshua! And so, we as believers in Yeshua carry in us the first-fruits of new life that will be fulfilled when we are resurrected. We are justified by our faith in Yeshua, like Abraham, and yet as Yeshua urges the assembly in Thyatira, we are to hold fast what we have, and keep Yeshua's works until the end. Again - the paradox - justified by faith, but by works also - the perfection of our faith. So we await the final judgments which are to come to the earth spoken of in Revelation - the seven seals, the seven trumpets, and the seven bowls, in which the wrath of Elohim is fulfilled. Men are wicked, and His wrath is just. Whether we are raptured to heaven before tribulation or protected on earth, I do not know, but after the tribulation, presumably, Messiah Yeshua comes on His white horse followed by the armies of heaven on white horses and defeats the evil armies on earth. Then comes His 1,000 year rule with resurrected martyrs, when Satan is locked up. Then Satan is released to deceive the nations and gather them against the "beloved city" and "camp of the saints," (presumably Jerusalem), yet Elohim reigns fire from heaven on these enemies. Then, all the dead are raised for the final great white throne judgment, in which people are judged according to their works, and those not in the book of life are cast into the lake of fire.

At last, the New Heaven and New Earth can come, accompanied by the New Jerusalem, in which Elohim will dwell with men and wipe away every tear. Beyond this, I don't know what will come, but it will be glorious.

And so we wait for the fulfillment of all things, calling on men to repent and believe in Yeshua, and walk uprightly according to the Law, having received the love of the Father.

And if you have not trusted in Yeshua (Jesus) as your savior, I invite you to do so in repentance from sin - breaking the Law, calling on the name of Yahweh (the LORD), receiving His gift of salvation - forgiveness and eternal life, because He took your sins on the cross.

If you still have questions, seek the truth, and you will find.

Shalom (Peace),
-Greg Wilson

PART TWO

The Character of God

A Holy Kind of Bipolar

THE CHARACTER OF GOD

A Holy Kind of Bipolar

By Gregory John Wilson • September 23, 2026

In the fifth chapter of Revelation, John the apostle is weeping. A scroll sealed with seven seals sits in the right hand of Him who sits on the throne, and no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth is worthy to open it. Then one of the elders leans over and tells him to dry his eyes:

> *"Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals."*
>
> Revelation 5:5 (NKJV)

So John turns to look for a lion. And what does he see?

> *"And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain…"*
>
> Revelation 5:6 (NKJV)

He is told "Lion," and he sees a Lamb. Not two different beings—one Person. The same Messiah who roars is the Messiah who was slain. The same hands that hold the scepter of judgment still bear the scars of love.

I have jokingly called this "a holy kind of bipolar." Let me be careful with that phrase. Bipolar disorder is a real and often painful struggle for many dear people, and I do not use the word lightly. And God is not moody. He does not swing back and forth between good days and bad days. The whole point of this article is the opposite: God has *two poles*—two perfect, unshakable magnetic ends to His character—and both are held together in flawless, unchanging holiness.

> *"For I am the LORD, I do not change."*
>
> Malachi 3:6 (NKJV)

> *"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning."*
>
> James 1:17 (NKJV)

> *"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever."*
>
> Hebrews 13:8 (NKJV)

Paul puts the two poles side by side in one breath:

> *"Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God…"*
>
> Romans 11:22 (NKJV)

So let's consider them. And as we do, let's not merely study Him—let's praise Him.

1. Both Poles in One Name

When Moses asked to see God's glory, the LORD passed before him and proclaimed His own name. Notice how God describes Himself:

> *"The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty…"*
>
> Exodus 34:6–7 (NKJV)

Merciful, gracious, forgiving… *and* by no means clearing the guilty. That is the Lamb and the Lion in the very same sentence, in God's own self-introduction. The prophet Nahum does the same thing:

> *"God is jealous, and the LORD avenges; the LORD avenges and is furious. The LORD will take vengeance on His adversaries, and He reserves wrath for His enemies; the LORD is slow to anger and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked."*
>
> Nahum 1:2–3 (NKJV)

> *"The LORD is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and He knows those who trust in Him."*
>
> Nahum 1:7 (NKJV)

Slow to anger—yet great in power. Furious with His adversaries—yet a stronghold for those who trust Him. Even the prophet Zephaniah, in one verse, pictures the Mighty Warrior singing a lullaby:

> *"The LORD your God in your midst, the Mighty One, will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing."*
>
> Zephaniah 3:17 (NKJV)

The Lion — אַרְיֵה (Aryeh)	The Lamb — שֶׂה (Seh)
Holiness that cannot tolerate sin	Love that will not abandon sinners
Justice — "by no means clearing the guilty"	Mercy — "forgiving iniquity and transgression"
King who reigns and judges	Sacrifice who bleeds and dies
Roars against evil	Silent before His shearers
Defends His flock from the wolf	Lays down His life for the sheep
Returns riding a white horse	Came riding on a donkey
"The wrath of the Lamb" (Rev. 6:16)	"The Lamb is its light" (Rev. 21:23)

2. Praise the Lion: The Wrath of God

Modern believers are often a little embarrassed by the wrath of God. We'd rather skip those chapters. But Scripture never apologizes for it, and neither should we. God's wrath is not a temper tantrum; it is the settled, righteous, measured opposition of a perfectly good God against everything evil. A God who was *not* angry at child abuse, genocide, slavery, and the destruction of His image-bearers would not be good. He would be indifferent. The Lion is worthy of our praise.

The Lion of Judah was promised from the beginning

> *"Judah is a lion's whelp; from the prey, my son, you have gone up. He bows down, he lies down as a lion; and as a lion, who shall rouse him? The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh comes; and to Him shall be the obedience of the people."*
>
> Genesis 49:9–10 (NKJV)

Jacob's blessing over Judah reaches all the way to the Messiah, the one to whom the scepter truly belongs. Yeshua is that Lion—the royal Son of David who will never lose His throne.

Praise Him for His holiness

> *"Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory!"*
>
> Isaiah 6:3 (NKJV)

> *"For our God is a consuming fire."*
>
> Hebrews 12:29 (NKJV)

His wrath flows from His holiness. He is so utterly pure, so blazingly good, that sin simply cannot survive in His presence. Hallelujah that there is Someone in the universe who is completely untouched by corruption!

Praise Him for His justice

> *"He is the Rock, His work is perfect; for all His ways are justice, a God of truth and without injustice; righteous and upright is He."*
>
> Deuteronomy 32:4 (NKJV)

> *"Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne…"*
>
> Psalm 89:14 (NKJV)

> *"God is a just judge, and God is angry with the wicked every day."*
>
> Psalm 7:11 (NKJV)

> *"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness."*
>
> Romans 1:18 (NKJV)

Every victim who has ever cried, "How long, O Lord?" can take comfort in the Lion. No evil will slip through the cracks. Nothing will be swept under the rug. The Judge of all the earth *will* do right (Genesis 18:25).

Praise Him for His power and His roar

> *"A lion has roared! Who will not fear? The Lord GOD has spoken! Who can but prophesy?"*
>
> Amos 3:8 (NKJV)

> *"They shall walk after the LORD. He will roar like a lion. When He roars, then His sons shall come trembling from the west."*
>
> Hosea 11:10 (NKJV)

> *"The LORD is a man of war; the LORD is His name."*
>
> Exodus 15:3 (NKJV)

Notice Hosea 11:10: the Lion's roar is not only a warning to His enemies—it is a *summons* to His children. When He roars, His sons come home.

Praise Him for His holy zeal

We sometimes picture Yeshua as only soft-spoken and mild. But watch Him in the Temple:

> *"When He had made a whip of cords, He drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the changers' money and overturned the tables… Then His disciples remembered that it was written, 'Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up.'"*
>
> John 2:15, 17 (NKJV)

And hear Him speak to the religious leaders who were loading heavy burdens on the people while shutting them out of the Kingdom:

> *"Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell?"*
>
> Matthew 23:33 (NKJV)

The Lion roars most fiercely at those who harm His sheep. That is not the opposite of His love; it *is* His love, with teeth.

Praise Him as the Destroyer of our enemy

The devil is a counterfeit lion:

> *"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour."*
>
> 1 Peter 5:8 (NKJV)

But the true Lion of Judah has already crushed him:

> *"For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil."*
>
> 1 John 3:8 (NKJV)

> *"Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it."*
>
> Colossians 2:15 (NKJV)

Praise Him as the returning King

> *"Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war… Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS."*
>
> Revelation 19:11, 15–16 (NKJV)

> *"…that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."*
>
> Philippians 2:10–11 (NKJV)

Praise the Lion: Blessed are You, Lion of the tribe of Judah! You are holy, holy, holy. Your throne is built on righteousness and justice. You will not let evil win. You roar, and Your children come trembling home. You have crushed the serpent's head, and You are coming again as King of kings and Lord of lords. We bow before You!

3. Praise the Lamb: The Love of God

If the Lion alone were the whole story, not one of us could stand. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Hebrews 10:31). But the Lion is also the Lamb, and the same God whose holiness demands justice is the God whose love provides the sacrifice.

The Lamb was promised from the beginning

> *"And Abraham said, 'My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering.'"*
>
> Genesis 22:8 (NKJV)

> *"Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt."*
>
> Exodus 12:13 (NKJV)

> *"For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us."*
>
> 1 Corinthians 5:7 (NKJV)

On Mount Moriah, God provided a ram in the place of Isaac. In Egypt, the blood of a spotless lamb turned death away from every door it covered. Every one of those lambs was a signpost pointing to the day John the Immerser would look at Yeshua and cry out:

> *"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"*
>
> John 1:29 (NKJV)

Praise Him for His substitutionary sacrifice

> *"But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth."*
>
> Isaiah 53:5–7 (NKJV)

Think about that. The Lion whose roar shakes the nations chose to be *silent*. He could have called more than twelve legions of angels (Matthew 26:53). Instead, He opened not His mouth—except to pray for the very ones driving the nails:

> *"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do."*
>
> Luke 23:34 (NKJV)

Praise Him for His precious blood

> *"…knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."*
>
> 1 Peter 1:18–19 (NKJV)

Praise Him for His undeserved love

> *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."*
>
> John 3:16 (NKJV)

> *"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."*
>
> Romans 5:8 (NKJV)

> *"In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."*
>
> 1 John 4:10 (NKJV)

Praise Him for His gentleness

> *"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."*
>
> Matthew 11:28–29 (NKJV)

> *"A bruised reed He will not break, and smoking flax He will not quench…"*
>
> Isaiah 42:3 (NKJV)

> *"He will feed His flock like a shepherd; He will gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and gently lead those who are with young."*
>
> Isaiah 40:11 (NKJV)

The One who could crush you with a word stoops down to carry you in His arms. If you are bruised today, the Lamb will not break you. If your faith is only a smoldering wick, He will not snuff it out. He will fan it back into flame.

Praise Him for His endless mercy

> *"The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in mercy. He will not always strive with us, nor will He keep His anger forever. He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor punished us according to our iniquities. For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward those who fear Him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. As a father pities his children, so the LORD pities those who fear Him."*
>
> Psalm 103:8–13 (NKJV)

> *"Through the LORD's mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness."*
>
> Lamentations 3:22–23 (NKJV)

Praise Him as the Lamb who Shepherds

Here is one of the most beautiful paradoxes in all of Scripture: the Lamb becomes the Shepherd.

> *"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep."*
>
> John 10:11 (NKJV)

> *"…for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."*
>
> Revelation 7:17 (NKJV)

That is the very heart of this ministry's name. We are held in the Shepherd's embrace—by the One who knows what it is to be a lamb led to the slaughter, and who now leads His lambs to living water.

> **Praise the Lamb:** Blessed are You, Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! You were silent before Your shearers. You were wounded for our transgressions. You loved us while we were still sinners, and You bought us with Your own precious blood. You are gentle and lowly in heart. You do not break the bruised reed. Your mercies are new every morning. You shepherd us to living fountains and wipe every tear from our eyes. We love You!

4. Where the Two Poles Meet: The Cross

So how can God be both? How can He "by no means clear the guilty" and yet forgive me, who am guilty? The answer is Golgotha. At the cross, the Lion's wrath and the Lamb's love did not cancel each other out—they *kissed*.

> *"Mercy and truth have met together; righteousness and peace have kissed."*
>
> Psalm 85:10 (NKJV)

> *"…whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness… that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus."*
>
> Romans 3:25–26 (NKJV)

> *"For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."*
>
> 2 Corinthians 5:21 (NKJV)

Just and *the justifier*. The Lion's justice was fully satisfied; not one sin was overlooked. And the Lamb's love was fully displayed; not one sinner who trusts in Him is turned away. The wrath that should have fallen on us fell on Him. That is why the believer can sing without fear:

> *"Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him."*
>
> Romans 5:9 (NKJV)

> *"For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ."*
>
> 1 Thessalonians 5:9 (NKJV)

> *"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus…"*
>
> Romans 8:1 (NKJV)

Here is the stunning truth: for those who are hidden in the Lamb, the Lion is no longer a threat—He is a *defender*. His roar is now aimed at everything that would harm us. The same power that once stood against us now stands *for* us.

> *"What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"*
>
> Romans 8:31–32 (NKJV)

5. A Word of Warning, A Word of Welcome

Revelation contains one of the most startling phrases in the Bible. When the day of judgment comes, people cry out to the mountains:

> *"Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"*
>
> Revelation 6:16–17 (NKJV)

The wrath of the Lamb. Let that sink in. If you reject the Lamb's love, you will one day meet the Lamb's wrath. There is no third option, no neutral God in the middle. The One who offers Himself to you today as a Lamb will one day return as a Lion.

But—and here is the good news—today is still the day of the Lamb's welcome:

> *"Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."*
>
> 2 Corinthians 6:2 (NKJV)

> *"The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."*
>
> 2 Peter 3:9 (NKJV)

His patience is not weakness. It is the Lamb holding back the Lion so that you have time to run into His arms. If you have never done so, run to Him today.

6. Becoming Like Him: Bold as Lions, Gentle as Lambs

As we behold Him, we are being transformed into His image (2 Corinthians 3:18). So His people, too, should carry a bit of this "holy bipolar":

> *"The wicked flee when no one pursues, but the righteous are bold as a lion."*
>
> Proverbs 28:1 (NKJV)

> *"Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves."*
>
> Matthew 10:16 (NKJV)

- **Be lion-hearted** in standing for truth, confronting injustice, defending the vulnerable, and hating what is evil (Romans 12:9).

- **Be lamb-like** in humility, forgiveness, patience, and a willingness to suffer wrong rather than repay evil for evil (1 Peter 2:21–23).
- **Speak the truth in love** (Ephesians 4:15)—truth without love is a lion without a lamb; love without truth is a lamb without a lion.
- **Leave vengeance to Him.** "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord (Romans 12:19). We can afford to be lambs because our God is the Lion.

7. The Final Picture: Worthy Is the Lamb

By the way, the Bible never actually says "the lion shall lie down with the lamb." What it says is even richer:

> *"The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them."*
>
> Isaiah 11:6 (NKJV)

In Messiah's Kingdom, all the predators are made peaceful, all the prey are made safe—because the One on the throne is the perfect union of Lion and Lamb. And in eternity, heaven will never stop singing about it:

> *"You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation…"*
>
> Revelation 5:9 (NKJV)

> *"Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom, and strength and honor and glory and blessing!"*
>
> Revelation 5:12 (NKJV)

> *"Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!"*
>
> Revelation 19:9 (NKJV)

> *"The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light."*
>
> Revelation 21:23 (NKJV)

Notice: the Lamb receives *power* and *strength*. The Lamb who was slain is praised with Lion-sized worship. In the end, the two poles are one glorious Person seated on one eternal throne.

A Closing Prayer of Praise

Abba Father, we praise You, for You are both the Lion and the Lamb.

We praise You, Lion of Judah, for Your holiness that blazes like a consuming fire, for Your justice that will set every wrong right, for Your zeal that drives corruption from Your house, for Your roar that calls Your children home, and for Your power that crushed the serpent and will one day make every knee bow.

We praise You, Lamb of God, for Your silence before Your shearers, for Your blood that turns away death, for Your love that found us while we were still sinners, for Your gentleness with bruised reeds, for mercies that are new every morning, and for the Shepherd's arms that carry us close to Your heart.

Thank You that at the cross, Your wrath and Your love kissed, so that You could be both just and the justifier of all who trust in Yeshua. Thank You that the Lion now fights *for* us, and the Lamb now leads us. Make us bold as lions and gentle as lambs, until the day we join every tribe and tongue in singing, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain!"

In the name of Yeshua, the Lion and the Lamb. Amen.

PART THREE

The Father's Love

The Richest Treasure at the Best Party

Come Home, My Son!

The Richest Treasure at the Best Party

What the prodigal son spent, what he found, and why being with the Father is the richest, most joyful place anyone could ever be

By Gregory John Wilson • November 17, 2026

The main idea: The younger son in Jesus' story wanted his father's money without his father's company, and he spent it on a party that was never really a party at all. But the greatest treasure in the story was never the money. It was the Father. Fellowship with Him *is* the richest treasure anyone could have, and being with Him is the best party anyone could ever enjoy. And at His table, the good gifts He made, food and drink and the love of marriage, are finally enjoyed the way they were meant to be: in love, with thanksgiving, without excess, and with faithfulness.

1. A Tale of Two Parties

Most of us know the story of the prodigal son. A young man takes his inheritance early, leaves home, blows it all, ends up feeding pigs, comes back, and his father throws him a party.

But have you ever noticed that there are *two* parties in this story?

There is the party the son went looking for, out in the far country. And there is the party the father threw for him when he came home. One of them was loud and expensive and left him starving in a pigpen. The other one was full of music and dancing and love, and it never cost the son a single penny.

One was a false party. The other was the real thing. And the difference between them is the difference between everything the world offers and everything God offers.

2. “Give Me My Share”

> *“A certain man had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me.’ So he divided to them his livelihood. And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living.”*
>
> Luke 15:11–13 (NKJV)

Think about what the son was really asking. He wanted his father’s *things*, but not his father. He wanted the riches without the relationship. He wanted the gifts and none of the Giver. “Give me what’s mine, and I’ll go enjoy it somewhere you’re not.”

And if we’re honest, that is the oldest temptation there is. We want God’s blessings without God. We want the good life He made, but on our own terms, in our own far country, where nobody is watching and nobody tells us no.

3. The False Party in the Far Country

Jesus doesn’t give us every detail of what “prodigal living” looked like. But the older brother fills in some of it later, and it isn’t pretty:

> *“But as soon as this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with harlots, you killed the fatted calf for him.”*
>
> Luke 15:30 (NKJV)

We can picture the rest. Drinking until he couldn’t stand up. Sexual immorality. Feasting until he was sick. Buying friends who would laugh at his jokes as long as he was paying. The kind of party the Bible names plainly:

> *“Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy.”*
>
> Romans 13:13 (NKJV)

Here’s what made it a *false* party. It wasn’t that food or wine or physical pleasure are bad in themselves. God made them. It was that every one of them had been pulled out of its proper place. Taken out of context. Cut off from love. Overindulged. Used up for self instead of shared in love.

There was no love at that party. Not really. Everyone there was using everyone else. The son was using them for company and pleasure. They were using him for his money. Nobody was giving. Everybody was taking. And at the center of it all, there was no Father. No one delighting in anyone. No one being delighted in.

The Bible has a sobering way of describing a life like that. It says it's like living as an animal, driven by appetite and instinct rather than by love:

> *"…and whatever they know naturally, like brute beasts, in these things they corrupt themselves."*
> Jude 10 (NKJV)

> *"…whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame—who set their mind on earthly things."*
> Philippians 3:19 (NKJV)

That's the false party. It looks like freedom. It feels like pleasure, for a while. But underneath, it's just appetite, running the show. And appetite is a terrible master.

4. When the Money Ran Out

> *"But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want. Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him anything."*
> Luke 15:14–16 (NKJV)

Notice those last words: *"no one gave him anything."* Where were all his party friends now? Gone, with the money. The false party always ends this way. It promises everything and leaves you with nothing. It is a feast that ends in a pigpen, hungry for the pods the pigs are eating.

> *"Do not mix with winebibbers, or with gluttonous eaters of meat; for the drunkard and the glutton will come to poverty…"*
> Proverbs 23:20–21 (NKJV)

And then, in the mud, the son finally remembered where the real riches were:

> *"But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!'"*
>
> Luke 15:17 (NKJV)

Even the servants in his father's house were richer than he had been at the height of his partying. Because they were near the father.

5. The Father Was Running

> *"And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him."*
>
> Luke 15:20 (NKJV)

The son had a speech ready. He was going to ask to be a hired servant. But the father didn't even let him finish. He was already running. Already embracing him, pigpen smell and all. Already calling for the best robe and a ring and sandals.

> *"'And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' And they began to be merry."*
>
> Luke 15:23–24 (NKJV)

And they began to be merry. That's the real party. Music. Dancing. A feast. And at the center of it, not money, not appetite, but a Father who is overjoyed to have his child home.

That is what our Father is like. Heaven itself throws a party over one child coming home:

> *"Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."*
>
> Luke 15:10 (NKJV)

6. The Richest Treasure: The Father Himself

Here is the line in the story that I think holds the key to all of it. The father says it to the older brother, but it's true for both sons, and for us:

> *"Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours."*
>
> Luke 15:31 (NKJV)

You are always with me. That's the treasure. Not the inheritance. Not the fatted calf. Not the ring. The Father. Being with Him. Being loved by Him, delighted in by Him, known by Him. And notice: when you have Him, you have everything that is His anyway.

The younger son traded that for a pile of coins. And the coins ran out. But the love of the Father never runs out. It is the one treasure that can't be spent, stolen, or wasted.

> *"Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise You."*
>
> Psalm 63:3 (NKJV)

> *"How precious is Your lovingkindness, O God! Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Your wings. They are abundantly satisfied with the fullness of Your house, and You give them drink from the river of Your pleasures."*
>
> Psalm 36:7–8 (NKJV)

Did you catch that? *The river of Your pleasures.* God is not against pleasure. He is the source of it. The truest, deepest pleasure there is flows from Him like a river. The false party is just a muddy puddle by comparison.

> *"You will show me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore."*
>
> Psalm 16:11 (NKJV)

> *"But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us… that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus."*
>
> Ephesians 2:4, 7 (NKJV)

Rich in mercy. Exceeding riches of grace. That's the real wealth. Everything the prodigal blew in the far country doesn't even register next to it.

> *"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."*
>
> Matthew 6:21 (NKJV)

7. The Best Party: Where Good Gifts Are Good Again

So does this mean God's people are supposed to sit around stone-faced, never enjoying a good meal or a glass of wine or the joys of marriage? Not at all. Remember, it was the *Father* who threw the feast, with the fatted calf and the music and the dancing. Jesus' very first miracle was at a wedding party, turning water into the best wine of the night (John 2:1–11).

The difference is this: at the Father's table, His good gifts are back in their proper place. They're received with thanksgiving, enjoyed in love, shared with others, and kept in their right measure. They aren't our gods anymore. They're gifts from our Father, and we enjoy them in His presence.

> *"For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer."*
>
> 1 Timothy 4:4–5 (NKJV)

> *"…nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy."*
>
> 1 Timothy 6:17 (NKJV)

Food and drink, without the excess

God made food to be delicious. He made wine to gladden the heart. The Bible says so:

> *"…and wine that makes glad the heart of man, oil to make his face shine, and bread which strengthens man's heart."*
>
> Psalm 104:15 (NKJV)

> *"Go, eat your bread with joy, and drink your wine with a merry heart; for God has already accepted your works."*
>
> Ecclesiastes 9:7 (NKJV)

But at the Father's party, we don't need to be drunk to be happy. We don't need to stuff ourselves to feel full. We are already filled with something far better.

> *"And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord."*
> Ephesians 5:18–19 (NKJV)

Drunkenness and gluttony are what happens when we try to fill a Father-shaped hole with a bottle or a plate. But when the Father has filled it, a meal can just be a meal again: a joyful, thankful gift, enjoyed with the people we love.

The love of marriage, with faithfulness

The same is true of physical intimacy. God isn't embarrassed by it. He designed it, and He calls it good. In fact, the Bible tells a husband to *delight* in his wife:

> *"Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice with the wife of your youth… and always be enraptured with her love."*
> Proverbs 5:18–19 (NKJV)

> *"Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge."*
> Hebrews 13:4 (NKJV)

In the far country, the son spent that gift on harlots. Pleasure with no covenant, no faithfulness, no love, no tomorrow. It cost him everything and gave him nothing that lasted. But in its proper place, in a faithful marriage, under the Father's blessing, that same gift is beautiful. Honorable. Undefiled. A real joy, given by a good Father, between two people who have promised to love each other for life.

That's the pattern for every good thing God made. Out of place, it becomes a trap. In its place, with Him, it becomes a gift.

8. What Makes the Father's Party Beautiful: Love

So what is it, finally, that makes the Father's party so different from the false one? In a word: *love*.

At the false party, everybody takes. At the Father's party, everybody gives. And that's exactly what God's law has been about all along. It isn't a list of rules to spoil the fun. It's a description of what love looks like, so that the party can be good for everyone at it.

> *"Jesus said to him, 'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."*
>
> Matthew 22:37–40 (NKJV)

> *"Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets."*
>
> Matthew 7:12 (NKJV)

> *"Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law."*
>
> Romans 13:10 (NKJV)

Treat others the way you would want to be treated. And then Jesus raised the bar even higher, and made it even more beautiful: love them the way *He* has loved us.

> *"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another."*
>
> John 13:34 (NKJV)

> *"Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others."*
>
> Philippians 2:3–4 (NKJV)

Imagine a party where every single person there is looking out for everyone else. Where nobody is being used. Nobody is left out. Nobody goes home ashamed, or hurt, or empty. Where the host is the kindest, most generous Father there ever was, and His love is the music everyone dances to.

That's the Father's party. That's the kingdom of God.

> *"…for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit."*
>
> Romans 14:17 (NKJV)

9. Don't Miss the Party at Home, Either

There's one more person in this story, and he's a warning too. The older brother never left home. He never wasted a penny on harlots. But when the party started, he stood outside, angry, and wouldn't go in.

> *"But he was angry and would not go in. Therefore his father came out and pleaded with him."*
>
> Luke 15:28 (NKJV)

He had been near the father all along, but he had never enjoyed him. He saw himself as a servant, slaving away, and he never once threw a party, because he never realized everything was already his. You can miss the Father's party by running off to the far country. But you can also miss it standing right outside the door, with your arms crossed. Either way, the Father comes out looking for you, pleading with you to come in and enjoy Him.

10. The Party That Never Ends

Every good meal we share in the Father's love, every joyful gathering, every faithful marriage, every act of love at His table, is just a taste. A foretaste of a party still to come, when the Father gathers all His children home for good.

> *"And in this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all people a feast of choice pieces, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of well-refined wines on the lees."*
>
> Isaiah 25:6 (NKJV)

> *"Then he said to me, 'Write: "Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!"'"*
>
> Revelation 19:9 (NKJV)

That's the best party there will ever be. And the greatest treasure at it won't be the food, or the wine, or the music, wonderful as they will be. It will be Him. Being with our Father, forever, face to face.

11. A Prayer

Father, forgive me for the times I've wanted Your gifts without You, and gone looking for joy in far countries where You're not. Thank You for running to meet me. Thank You that Your love is better than life, and that in Your presence is fullness of joy. Teach me to treasure You above everything else. Help me to enjoy Your good gifts in their proper place, with thanksgiving, in love, without excess, and with faithfulness. And fill my life with Your kind of love, so that others can taste Your party too. In Jesus' name, amen.

Closing thought: The prodigal thought the party was out there, and the riches were in his pocket. He had it backward. The riches were in his Father's love, and the party was at home. It still is. And the door is open.

THE FATHER'S LOVE

Come Home, My Son!

By Gregory John Wilson • September 23, 2026

There is a picture I cannot get out of my mind. An old man stands at the edge of his property, one hand shading his eyes, looking down a long and empty road. He has stood there before. He has stood there more times than anyone in the house can count. The servants have stopped asking what he is looking for. They know.

He is looking for his son.

Yeshua told us about this man, and He was not telling us a story about someone else. He was pulling back the curtain on the heart of His own Father—and ours:

> *"But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him."*
>
> Luke 15:20 (NKJV)

A great way off. The father saw him before anyone else could have, because the father had never stopped looking. Whether you are a son or a daughter reading this, please hear me: that is how the Father in heaven is looking at you right now.

The Poverty He Sees

Think of what the father saw coming up that road. Not the proud young man who left with a full purse and a head full of plans. He saw rags. He saw bare feet. He saw the hollow cheeks of someone who had been so hungry he longed to eat what the pigs were eating. He saw a boy who smelled of the far country.

> *"But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!'"*
>
> Luke 15:17 (NKJV)

The Father sees our poverty, and He sees all of it. He sees the empty cupboard and the unpaid bill. He sees the parent who skipped dinner so the children could eat. He sees the man sleeping in his car and the woman who has pawned the last thing she owned. None of it is hidden from Him, and none of it is beneath Him.

> *"This poor man cried out, and the LORD heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles."*
> Psalm 34:6 (NKJV)

But He also sees a deeper poverty—the kind that can hide behind a nice house and a full bank account. The poverty of a soul that has wandered from its Maker. The loneliness at three in the morning. The shame we carry like a sack of stones. The ache that no amount of pleasure or success has ever filled. We can fool the world, and we can often fool ourselves, but we cannot fool Him:

> *"Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked…"*
> Revelation 3:17 (NKJV)

And here is what undoes me: when He sees us like this, He is not disgusted. He is moved.

> *"But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd."*
> Matthew 9:36 (NKJV)

In Spite of Our Sin

We need to be honest. The son in the story was not a victim of bad luck. He demanded his inheritance while his father was still alive, which was as good as saying, "I wish you were dead." He walked away on purpose. He wasted everything on purpose. His poverty was, in large part, his own doing.

So is ours. Much of the brokenness in our lives we have chosen with our own hands. And yet the Father's heart does not harden toward us. Listen to the way God speaks over His rebellious people through the prophet Hosea. You can almost hear His voice break:

> *"How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over, Israel? … My heart churns within Me; My sympathy is stirred."*
>
> Hosea 11:8 (NKJV)

And listen to Yeshua, looking out over the city that would soon reject Him, weeping over it:

> *"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!"*
>
> Matthew 23:37 (NKJV)

How often I wanted to gather you. That is the cry of a Father who wants to shelter His children—to pull them in close, under His wings, out of the cold and the storm—even while they are still fighting Him. He does not wait for us to clean ourselves up before He longs for us. He longs for us in the pigpen.

> *"As a father pities his children, so the LORD pities those who fear Him. For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust."*
>
> Psalm 103:13–14 (NKJV)

He Laid It All Out on the Cross

But love like that faced a real problem. Sin is not a small thing to a holy God. It had built a wall between the Father and His children, and it could not simply be ignored. Justice had to be done. The debt had to be paid. A holy Father could not pretend His children had not run away.

So He did the unthinkable. Rather than lose us, He gave up His own Son. The Father did not wait for us to find a way back to Him; He came all the way down the road Himself. On the cross, heaven laid everything out on the table—every drop of blood, every breath, every last thing it had—to pay what we owed.

> *"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."*
>
> Romans 5:8 (NKJV)

> *"But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed."*
>
> Isaiah 53:5 (NKJV)

Do you see it? *The chastisement for our peace.* Yeshua took the blow so that there could be peace between us and the Father. He who was rich became poor—stripped, beaten, thirsty, and naked on a Roman cross—so that we who are poor could be made rich:

> *"For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich."*
>
> 2 Corinthians 8:9 (NKJV)

The cross is where the storehouses of heaven's grace were broken open. And it was the Father's own idea. It was His pleasure to make peace this way:

> *"For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself… having made peace through the blood of His cross."*
>
> Colossians 1:19–20 (NKJV)

The Robe, the Ring, and the Feast

The son had a speech ready. He had practiced it all the way home: *"I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants."* He never got to finish it. The father was already calling out over his shoulder:

> *"Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found."*
>
> Luke 15:22–24 (NKJV)

A robe for the rags. A ring for the shame. Sandals for the bare, bleeding feet. A feast for the hunger. The Father does not take us back as hired hands on probation. He takes us back as sons and daughters, clothed in the righteousness of His Son.

And notice who is happiest in the story. Not the son—though he must have wept for joy. It is the father. The one who threw the party. The one who finally had peace in his heart, because the child he had grieved over was home at last.

> *"Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."*
> Romans 5:1 (NKJV)

Come Home

Maybe you are still in the far country. Maybe you have been there so long you have forgotten the way back, or you are sure the door has been locked behind you. Maybe you are ashamed of what you spent and who you became. Maybe you are simply tired—tired of hunger, tired of pretending, tired of being alone.

The door is not locked. The Father is still standing at the edge of the road. The price has already been paid in full, and He is not asking you to pay it again. He is not asking you to fix yourself first. He is only asking you to come.

> *"Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price."*
> Isaiah 55:1 (NKJV)

If you listen closely, beneath all the noise of this world, I believe you can hear Him calling your name. His voice is not angry. It is breaking with love:

> **Come home, My son. Come home, My daughter.** I have seen every tear and every empty day. I know where you have been, and I have not stopped loving you for a single moment. I gave My Son so that nothing would stand between us anymore. There is a robe waiting for you, and a place at My table. Come home.

A Prayer for the Journey Home

Abba Father, I have wandered far from You. I have spent what You gave me on things that could never satisfy, and I have come to the end of myself. I am poor in more ways than I can say.

Thank You that You never stopped looking for me. Thank You that while I was still a great way off, You saw me and ran to me. Thank You for Yeshua, who became poor so that I could be made rich, who took the chastisement that brought me peace, and who shed His blood to tear down every wall between us.

I am coming home. Clothe me in Your robe of righteousness. Put Your ring on my hand. Shelter me under Your wings, and let me never wander from Your house again. Provide for my needs, heal my heart, and let me know Your peace.

In the name of Yeshua, Your Son and my Savior. Amen.

PART FOUR

Grace, Law & Salvation

Love That Takes the Blow

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Filthy Rags?

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The Kindness of God Leads To...

Seek & You Will Find - Examining The Pursuit Of Truth

GRACE, LAW & SALVATION

Love That Takes the Blow

Beholding the undeserved kindness of Jesus, receiving His forgiveness, and offering it to those who have hurt us

Composed by Gregory John Wilson • October 30, 2026

The main idea: At the cross, Jesus absorbed the full weight of the sin we deserved to be punished for, and in return He offered us forgiveness. Such kindness in the face of such evil. When we stop and truly *behold* that love, and humbly *receive* it, His love comes in and begins to fill our hearts. And a heart filled with that kind of love slowly becomes able to *give* the same undeserved kindness and forgiveness to the people who have mistreated and hurt us.

If you are carrying a wound today, maybe from someone who was supposed to love you, I want to start by saying: I'm sorry. What happened to you matters, and it matters to God. This article isn't a lecture, and it isn't a quick fix. It's an invitation to sit for a while at the foot of the cross, and to let the love you find there do its slow, healing work in you.

> *"The LORD is near to those who have a broken heart, and saves such as have a contrite spirit."*
> Psalm 34:18 (NKJV)

1. Behold: The Incredible, Undeserved Love of Jesus

Everything begins with looking, really looking, at what Jesus did. Not rushing past it because we've heard it before, but slowing down and letting it sink in.

> *"Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!"*
> 1 John 3:1 (NKJV)

He took what we deserved

Every unkind word we've spoken, every selfish choice, every time we've wounded someone else: the just penalty for all of it fell on Him. He didn't just witness the punishment. He absorbed it, like a shield taking the blow meant for us.

> *"Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed."*
>
> Isaiah 53:4–5 (NKJV)

> *"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all."*
>
> Isaiah 53:6 (NKJV)

> *"For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."*
>
> 2 Corinthians 5:21 (NKJV)

He did it while we were still against Him

Jesus didn't wait for us to clean ourselves up first. He loved us at our worst.

> *"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."*
>
> Romans 5:8 (NKJV)

> *"In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."*
>
> 1 John 4:10 (NKJV)

Such kindness in the face of such evil

Think about the night He was arrested. When Peter struck a servant of the high priest with a sword, Jesus stopped him, touched the man's ear, and healed it (Luke 22:50–51). He healed one of the men who had come to take Him away to die.

And then, while soldiers mocked Him and nails held Him to the cross, He prayed for the very people who put Him there:

> *"Then Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.'"*
>
> Luke 23:34 (NKJV)

> *"…who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously; who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed."*
>
> 1 Peter 2:23–24 (NKJV)

Take a moment with that. The most wronged Person in history answered the greatest evil ever committed with forgiveness. That is the heart of the One who loves you.

2. Receive: Letting His Forgiveness Into Our Hearts

Beholding His love is the beginning, but He wants more than our admiration. He wants us to *receive* it, personally.

> *"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name."*
>
> John 1:12 (NKJV)

It can be hard to receive

For many of us, receiving is harder than it sounds. We feel we should earn it, or we feel too ashamed. Peter felt that way when Jesus knelt to wash his feet:

> *"Peter said to Him, 'You shall never wash my feet!' Jesus answered him, 'If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me.'"*
>
> John 13:8 (NKJV)

Jesus gently insisted. He still does. You don't have to be good enough to be washed. You only have to let Him.

What He does with our sin

> *"He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor punished us according to our iniquities. For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward those who fear Him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us."*
>
> Psalm 103:10–12 (NKJV)

> *"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 (NKJV)

> *"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus…"*
>
> Romans 8:1 (NKJV)

When forgiveness comes in, love comes in

Receiving forgiveness isn't only about a clean record. It opens the door of our hearts, and His love pours in.

> *"Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us."*
>
> Romans 5:5 (NKJV)

> *"…that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God."*
>
> Ephesians 3:17–19 (NKJV)

Jesus once said of a woman who wept at His feet, "her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little" (Luke 7:47). The more deeply we receive His forgiveness, the more deeply we come to love. And "we love Him because He first loved us" (1 John 4:19).

3. Give: Offering the Same Kindness to Those Who Hurt Us

This is the tender part, and maybe the hardest. Once His love has filled us, He invites us to let it flow out, even toward the people who have wronged us.

> *"And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you."*
> Ephesians 4:32 (NKJV)

> *"…bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do."*
> Colossians 3:13 (NKJV)

Notice the order. We forgive *as* we have been forgiven. We are not asked to manufacture this kindness on our own. We are asked to pass on what we have received. A cup that is filled to overflowing spills over onto whatever is near it.

> *"But I say to you who hear: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you."*
> Luke 6:27–28 (NKJV)

> *"Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord… Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."*
> Romans 12:19, 21 (NKJV)

Others who walked this road

Joseph was betrayed and sold into slavery by his own brothers. Years later, when he had the power to repay them, he wept and comforted them instead:

> *"But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive."*
> Genesis 50:20 (NKJV)

And Stephen, as stones were thrown at him, echoed his Lord:

> *"Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, 'Lord, do not charge them with this sin.' And when he had said this, he fell asleep."*
>
> Acts 7:60 (NKJV)

Again and again

> *"Then Peter came to Him and said, 'Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?' Jesus said to him, 'I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.'"*
>
> Matthew 18:21–22 (NKJV)

Sometimes we forgive someone, and then the memory comes back and the hurt rises up again. That doesn't mean you failed. It just means it's time to forgive again, and to bring the wound back to the One who heals.

4. A Gentle Word About What Forgiveness Is, and Isn't

If you've been deeply hurt, the word "forgive" can feel heavy, even frightening. So let's be clear and kind about what it means.

- **Forgiveness is not saying it didn't matter.** Jesus didn't pretend our sin was small; He paid for it. You can name what happened honestly and still choose to forgive.
- **Forgiveness is not the same as trust or reconciliation.** Forgiveness releases the debt. Trust is rebuilt over time, when there is real change. Reconciliation takes two people.
- **Forgiveness does not mean staying in harm's way.** If someone is hurting you, it is right to seek safety and help. Loving boundaries and forgiveness can go together.
- **Forgiveness is often a process.** For deep wounds it may begin as a choice long before the feelings follow. That's okay. God is patient with you.
- **Forgiveness is releasing them to God.** We let go of our right to pay them back, and we trust the Judge who judges righteously, just as Jesus did.

> *"He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds."*
>
> Psalm 147:3 (NKJV)

5. Walking It Out

Behold

- Slowly read Isaiah 53 or Luke 23. Picture Jesus taking the blow that was meant for you.
- Remember the healed ear and "Father, forgive them." Let His kindness amaze you again.

Receive

- Tell Him honestly what you've done, and thank Him that it is forgiven and removed "as far as the east is from the west."
- When shame whispers, answer with Romans 8:1: "no condemnation."

Give

- Bring one person who hurt you to Him in prayer. Ask Him to bless them, even if all you can say at first is, "Lord, help me want to."
- Look for one small, safe way to answer unkindness with kindness this week.

You may also find comfort in the poems Suffer Well and Through the Eyes of Grace, and the article The Kindness of God Leads To…

6. A Prayer

Lord Jesus, I behold You on the cross, taking the punishment I deserved, and still saying, "Father, forgive them." I don't understand love like that, but I want it. I receive Your forgiveness now. Wash me, fill me, and let Your love come all the way into my heart. You know the people who have hurt me, and You know how deep it goes. Heal my wounds. Help me release them into Your hands, and give me Your heart toward them. Where I can't forgive yet, make me willing. Let Your kindness flow through me, the same kindness You have shown to me. In Your name, amen.

Closing thought: We don't forgive others by gritting our teeth. We forgive by drinking deeply from the love of the One who forgave us first. Behold His love. Receive it. And then, gently and over time, let it flow through you to others, until His love that took the blow for you becomes the love that heals the world around you.

The Schoolmaster: Law Love vs Spirit Love

By Gregory John Wilson

- Wouldn't it be strange if a husband told His wife, "YOU SHALL LOVE ME", in command form?
- In OT, God had to say this to His bride though - to spell out the standards of what is right and not right.
- Although we humans should naturally love our most Amazing, Wonderful, LOVING, Compassionate, Glorious, Just Father God, we don't, because of our selfish flesh that does not give Him the glory He deserves.
- He knows that we were MADE to love Him, and when we do that, we will be most fulfilled.
- Thus in the case of our love for GOD, there was a time and a place for God to spell out the standards of what is right and expected of us, His bride - the greatest commandment according to Jesus - Hear oh Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and strength….
- Yet still, this feels a bit wooden, a bit fake, a bit unnatural, Him telling us we MUST LOVE Him. Again, it SHOULD come natural to us to love Him, like a couple that is joyfully in love. That couple doesn't need to be told that they need to love each other. They are overflowing with love for each other!
- Yet, for our good, God found it necessary to have to spell out what we should do - in the Law – which is thus like a Schoolmaster, teaching us what we should do, prodding us to do it, swatting us when we don't. – Consider Galatians 3:23-27:

> *23 "But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, confined for the faith which should afterwards be revealed. 24 So that the law has become our tutor to bring us to Messiah, that we might be justified by faith. 25 But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. 26 For you are all children of God, through faith in Messiah Yeshua. 27 For as many of you as were immersed into Messiah have put on Messiah."*
>
> Galatians 3:23-27

- So before we had that personal saving faith in God our Father, believing in the salvation Jesus offers via the cross, and thus knowing Him in an intimate living way, it says the Law was our tutor, or "Schoolmaster" in the KJV. It teaches us how we are NOT doing what's right, or having the right

HEART that LOVES Him.

- BUT. Now that we have that living faith and relationship with Him, it's like we no longer need that Schoolmaster telling us, "You SHALL love Him, you SHALL do this, you SHALL do that". - We know it in our hearts now, and hopefully if we are walking in the Spirit, we ARE full of that love for God. We have fallen in love with Him and no longer need the swats of the Schoolmaster! Our hearts have been made new in His love and His commandments are written on our hearts!
- It's not that the Law is abolished. NO. It's filled up in our hearts - the way it was always meant to be - the LOVE we should have for Him! We've entered a new covenant! The Law no longer has to beat us over the head. Our spirits have been made alive to walk in His ways!
- Now. Is it still profitable to study and know the Law and try to obey it? Sure! But in a NEW Messianic way, not by ROTE or stiffly, or woodenly. No, in a LIVING way, from our HEARTS!
- For the Jews still blinded to Messiah, they seek to carry out the statues of the law, but in a heavy, dutiful sense, not in the living, loving way we know. The veil lies over their hearts. It is dead, sorry to say.
- Yet, BECAUSE we still have the flesh, it's like that Law is still there in the background to keep us on track and make sure we're not going crazy or veering off track in the "Spirit". Scripture says all Scripture is profitable for instruction and doctrine. So it profits greatly to LOVE the Law of the Lord, but with a heart alive on fire, not just going through mechanical outward motions!
- So next time you see a newlywed couple smiling gleefully at each other, gushing with love, think of your relationship with YESHUA, the bridegroom, and His Father, the Almighty, and the great love that exists between you 3, that moves you to keep His commandments from a living, willing heart, no longer dead in sin.
- Shalom, peace to you as you fulfill the law naturally as you walk in the Spirit!

Filthy Rags?

By Gregory John Wilson

I was reading in the prophets how their righteousness was like filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6), and it HIT me that yes, in that situation, their righteousness was pretty lame!! But that doesn't mean our righteousness is ALWAYS like filthy rags.. For example, note another place in scripture where Yah say EVEN IF Moses and Samuel stood before Him, He would not be favorable (Jer. 15:1) - as in, recognizing that they were exceedingly righteous. And Ezekiel 14:14 says that Noah, Daniel, and Job could save themselves by their own righteousness, but only themselves.. not the rest.

Are we perfect on our own? Do we need to be perfected in Messiah? Yes. But let's not just say any of our efforts to be righteous are filthy rags. The prophets do not read so.

GRACE, LAW & SALVATION

The James 2:24 Factor

By Gregory John Wilson

I've been ruminating on this subject for a while, and it came together in my mind. So let's jump in.

So mainstream protestant Christianity has capitalized on the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith – no works required – it's a free gift.

Verses for this doctrine are undeniable – including Eph. 2:8-9, which says

> *"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."*
>
> —Ephesians 2:8-9

Indeed, if we go back to our spiritual father, so-to-speak, Abraham, the scripture just says – "He **BELIEVED** God, and it was counted as righteousness to him!"

So we must never say one has to just stack up a pile of good works to be saved.

BUT.

If we follow the rest of the story of Abraham, something else happened. He was tested. With a very hard test. Sacrificing his own son.

Now just a side note – in other places in scripture, we see that God detested the false worship involving burning children in the fire – it never entered His heart. Yet somehow he asked Abraham to sacrifice his son – almost like He wants to share Himself with mankind and have a connection with them – like he wanted Abraham to understand how it would feel to give up one's only son… Something God would eventually actually do in giving Jesus to be the payment for the world's sins – the way men and women can be made completely righteous again!

Anyway, Abraham proved he was willing to obey God at the cost of offering his own son, though God intervened and called the whole thing off, thankfully, saying:

> *"Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me."*
>
> —Genesis 22:12

Abraham **FEARED GOD**. He obeyed Him, regardless of the cost, though Isaac was spared.

Then God speaks again:

> *"And the angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time,*
>
> *And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for **BECAUSE** thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son:*
>
> *That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies;*
>
> *And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; **because thou hast obeyed my voice."***
>
> —Genesis 22:15-18

What is interesting about this is that God already gave Abraham part of this promise **EARLIER**, **BEFORE** he proved his obedience:

> *"And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness."*
>
> —Genesis 15:5-6

There it is – just for believing that God would do what He said, he is counted as righteous. But again, fast forward to Genesis 22 again. It shows how Abraham's faith bore fruit, was proved real, and thus the checkpoint was passed, and God indeed repeats that He will bless Abraham, this time not just because He said He would, but **BECAUSE** Abraham obeyed. Recall:

> *"for **BECAUSE** thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son:*
>
> *That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven…"*
> —Genesis 22:16-17

And so it is, God's promise is confirmed when our faith proves true – bearing fruit.

Ya'akov (James, supposed half-brother of Yeshua (Jesus)) comments on this dynamic in his new testament letter:

> *"Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.*
>
> *But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?*
>
> *Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?*
>
> *Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?*
>
> *And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.*
>
> *Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only."*
> —James 2:19-24

> And there we have it. The James 2:24 factor – Faith must have works for it to be saving faith. This is a hard pill to swallow, you may think.

Again, it's not that we stack up a pile of good works that earn our way into the kingdom.

It is **BELIEVING** in Yah (God's short name) and His word, and continuing on in a relationship with Him, where we follow Him in obedience, cleaving unto Him in faithfulness.

So what is the test that will confirm your faith? I don't know. It is probably different for each one of us. For the rich young ruler, the test was selling his many possessions and giving to the poor. What will it be for you? I do not know.

So seek Him in diligent prayer, believe His promises, and be strengthened in your faith, being filled with His spirit and bearing good fruit that can find you a place in the Kingdom.

> May you pass any test that comes your way, passing that "checkpoint", and continue on, abiding in Messiah, walking with the Father, and yes, even being called His friend, like Abraham was.

Shalom (Peace),
-Greg Wilson

GRACE, LAW & SALVATION

The Kindness of God Leads To...

By Gregory John Wilson

January 5th, 2020

The title of the message comes from Paul's letter to the Romans in the Bible, - at the end I will complete the phrase - be thinking about what it could be! But in this message we will look at how God the Father deserves our honor and respect, and just WHY He is SO worthy of it all - His kindness is immense and leads us to…. Well, you'll find out soon!

So, as a father, sometimes I try to tell my 5 year old daughter serious things for her to listen to and obey. It maddens and frustrates me at times that many times she treats it all as a joke, as a game, and does not pay the proper respect to me as her father, taking my words seriously and trying to obey them. Well it turns out, God feels the same way sometimes! If we go to the book of the prophet Malachi, we will see! Listen to what the LORD said:

> *A son honors his father, and a servant his master. Then if I am a father, where is My honor? And if I am a master, where is My respect?' says the LORD of hosts…*
>
> Malachi 1:6

In the Christian world today, the emphasis seems to be almost exclusively on God's amazing Grace and love. And let me be clear, I do not want to minimize at all God's great grace love and mercy. But the other side of the coin is our response to His love and mercy and Grace, which should be one of deep honor, respect, and obedience. This IS God almighty we are talking about - the one infinitely wise, infinitely good, infinitely powerful. If we should be listening to anyone, it is Him.

But to help us have a proper reverence for God, the primary thing we can look at IS His grace and love - the extent of His grace and love, for the Bible says that 'the kindness of God leads to...' - you'll find out soon! So let us look at just how deep, how insane is His love!!

Now like the first verse we heard, we are talking about God the Father, AND YET, the Bible says that if you have seen Jesus, YOU HAVE SEEN THE FATHER!! Elsewhere Jesus says that the Father does His works THROUGH Jesus, as the spirit of the Father lives in the Son. Thus, we can see the ministry of the Son as an EXTENSION of the ministry of the Father God. Indeed, Jesus even called His disciples - grown men - LITTLE CHILDREN.

So when Jesus came to His hour of trial, being taken captive in front of the authorities before His execution, imagine that the Father God is interacting with sinful fallen humanity THROUGH the son.

So mature is the Father in the Son, choosing to have IMMENSE grace - not even looking at the injustice they were doing to Him! Like a father that knows He is dealing with immature foolish children. Yet these 'children' were wicked as well - hating Jesus because Jesus was righteous and they were not! And because they failed to consider that in the scroll of the prophet Isaiah, a HUMAN is called MIGHTY GOD, EVERLASTING FATHER. - they considered His claim to deity blasphemy instead…

So, have you ever been wronged like Jesus was? None of us have been unjustly condemned to a torturous scourging and death, and so no, we have not. But think of when you have been wronged. Most likely, you felt indignant - HOW DARE THEY MISTREAT ME LIKE THAT! I know I have certainly felt angry when I have been mistreated by people bankrupt of love.

But our Lord and Savior and God in the flesh is not like us. His grace is immense, and at the cross, Jesus - with His perfect spirit - gave up all rights to retaliate or have justice. For so He had to fulfill the prophecies!! So imagine, the Father in Flesh looking down from the cross at His sinful creation of humanity while they are mocking and even killing Him! - and loving these grown up children, asking the Father above to even FORGIVE them, for they knew not what they were doing, like other physical children that don't always know the gravity of their foolishness or sin.

And so the Lord suffered and died, awaiting His resurrection 3 days later. And then He rose and ascended back to heaven having paved the way for sinners to be forgiven. And yes there is coming a day when Justice will be served, when Jesus will come to rule and reign in the New Jerusalem, and before that, fight against the rebel armies of Earth.

So as we consider the immense kindness of the Lord Jesus - Father God in flesh, this should stir US to immense reverence and gratitude and repentance, like children drawing near to their wise, loving father, willing to hear His ways and adjust our lives according to His righteous instructions.

He is our father and our master indeed, His grace and kindness is great, and therefore we should all the more give Him the honor and respect He is due, as we know that the kindness of God leads to…

Repentance! (Romans 2:4)

And repentance involves turning away from sin and turning towards God, which involves showing Him honor and respect, as we were talking about at the beginning of the message!

With that I conclude and pray you are blessed by the message. Real quick, are there any quick questions or comments or prayer requests?

And you can always call or email or write letters to me if you'd like to, using my info on the bulletin! Thank you.

Seek & You Will Find - Examining The Pursuit Of Truth

By Gregory John Wilson

How do we know that we know the truth? This question plagued minister Greg Wilson for a good length of time during his college years. It was nothing short of a supernatural experience with Father God on March 30th, 2011 that assuaged the questions and propelled Greg into a deeper walk with God. Jesus in the Bible puts a promise out for us - "Seek and we WILL find". So come join Greg as he takes a step back and looks at evidence - including personal testimony and bible prophecy - that leads us to reach out and connect with a REAL personal God who has given us true scriptures which can help us in tasting the immeasurable gift of a personal relationship with Him that will last past the pains of death and into eternal bliss.

I. Introduction

A. Growing up, & College Years - March 30th tell later..

B. What qualifies me to talk to you? - Personal experience with God - March 30th - other answered prayer, and having been a careful student of the Scriptures.

II. Pursuit of Truth

A. **Where are you?**

1. Have you sought after the purpose and meaning of life - truth? Or just accepted what you grew up with, or what culture says?

B. In order to have a fulfilling life with meaning, we need to know that we have a purpose based on what is true. Or should I say WHO is true.

C. For when we look at the world there is obvious handiwork of a creator - all kinds of animals, trees, mountains, the sun moon and stars - inviting us to reach out to this great and powerful creator.

D. So how do we learn more about this creator? Well simple - we know He is living and intelligent, and surely knows everything that happens in His creation - so.. we TALK to Him! We ask Him questions, ask Him to guide us and reveal Himself to us!

1. Many times in my life, things have happened that cannot just be coincidence - a song I start singing randomly that has a message pertinent to some issue I was facing. Or my Mom calling me on various occasions right when I needed it. Things like that. Also, there can be even more direct revelations of the Creator via experiences like my March 30th experience - feeling any overwhelming sense of His presence, or even having visions or dreams of Him or His Jewish son, Yeshua (Jesus)!
    a. Muslims - dreams and visions

2. But to really understand the grand scheme of things, we kind of need to know the big story too! And... ancient holy writings which have been put together and become the most popular book in the world deserve our attention… Yes, I am speaking of what we know as the Bible.

E. But why should we trust the Bible? If we want to examine everything and see if it is true, we must consider why to trust the Bible as well.
    1. Archeology - real places
    2. Meticulous preservation - Jewish scribes would count every single letter of the Torah - first five books of Bible. - we are talking about a people that have a deep reverence for God and His commands…
    3. One of most important evidence - fulfilled prophecy - in New Testament records of the life of Jesus, there are many quotations of old testament verses being fulfilled.
        a. Most notably I think - Isaiah 53 - a suffering servant who would suffer for the sins of the people - written way before Jesus, but describing exactly what He did when He gave His life. (Read Isa. 53 and elaborate)
        b. There are other prophecies as well - such as one of a person from EVERLASTING born in Bethlehem - who could that be? Or a king riding in Jerusalem on a donkey! These things were spoken of before Christ, but fulfilled in Him.

F. So.. a combination of 1. seeking the Creator to reveal Himself to you personally and 2. prayerfully studying the time-honored, prophecy-proven scriptures, new and old, will put you on a path to hopefully encountering the living God and His plan in your life!

III. Basic message of Bible

A. With the evidence for trusting the Bible given, let's look at the basic message of the Bible!

B. And that is, we have sinned - disobeyed God's perfect standard, which He revealed in His law, but that through repentance and faith we can come back to Father God and be made pure again and in right relationship with Him, receiving His love and care and seeking to walk righteously, in accor-

dance with His commands, new and old, as they apply to us, unto a resurrection of eternal life, to have blissful adventures with our Creator forever!

So I invite you, wherever you are on your journey, to embrace the pursuit of Truth, whether you already know much truth or only a little, and embark or continue on a journey towards the ultimate treasure and prize - a relationship with your all-powerful creator and Father, in whose hand is every delight you could desire. Amen.

PART FIVE

Hebrew Roots

Does the Original Sabbath Apply To Today?

Aviv: A Basic Biblical Understanding of the Hebrew New Year

The Great Split & The Great Reunification

Unveiling The Righteous Jewish Jesus

HEBREW ROOTS

Does the Original Sabbath Apply To Today?

By Gregory John Wilson

April 15th, 2024

Many of us know the 10 commandments of Exodus 20 and how it includes a command to keep the sabbath holy. We also know the Jews see this as Saturday, or "Shabbat" in Hebrew, which comes from the root verb "shavat", meaning "to cease/stop". So they "stop" what they do Saturday, actually Friday sundown to Saturday sundown, and worship God, enjoy time together with meals, and overall have a very sweet time in fellowship, rest, devotion, and worship. Meanwhile, Christians generally observe this time on Sunday, with the famous Sunday morning church service, and then generally relaxing at home, although these days it seems more common for Christians to use the rest of Sunday to perhaps get things done or go shopping, etc…

So which one is it, Saturday or Sunday, and does it really matter? Didn't the apostle Paul say, after all, in Romans 14:5 that

> *"One person regards one day above another, another regards every day alike. Each person must be fully convinced in his own mind."*
>
> Romans 14:5

And also in Hebrews 4:9-11, some would say the author is speaking of a spiritual sabbath rest we now enter where the day doesn't matter –

> *"So there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God. 10 For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His. 11 Therefore let us be diligent to enter that rest, so that no one will fall, through following the same example of disobedience."*
>
> Hebrews 4:9-11

A Bigger Question

This question of Sabbath is actually part of a bigger question, though, that being how literally and to what extent do we apply the Law of Moses given by God to our lives today?

I want to lay a little bit of a foundation to clarify some theologies out there which would say that the Law is bad and done away with.

First off, GOD HIMSELF gave this Law!! And God is holy and perfect. Thus the Law cannot be bad. BUT, when the Apostle Paul writes in terms of the Law being his enemy - this refers to the fact that the Law points out our sin and condemns us!

Ever since Adam and Eve went their own way in rebellion to try to become like God, that sinful selfishness has been passed down and the Law just seems to take delight and really laying out each and every way in which we are sinful and bad! Thus it gets a bad rap. But note, Paul also clarified that it's OUR SIN that is really the bad guy - not the Law - but since we are sinners, the Law appears like the bad guy to us – Romans 7:12-13 –

> *"So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good. Therefore did that which is good become a cause of death for me? May it never be! Rather it was sin, in order that it might be shown to be sin by effecting my death through that which is good, so that through the commandment sin would become utterly sinful."*
>
> Romans 7:12-13

And sin in the Law, if it was grave enough, was punished by death. But note, as the Jews call the entire first 5 books of the Bible "Torah" (Law) - even in Genesis we see God declaring this curse because of sin – in the day we would eat of the fruit, WE WOULD DIE. And die we did - spiritually. It's like a cell phone - once we disconnected from God, we started the process of losing our charge. And a phone that's left unplugged long enough eventually dies completely - black screen, no life. So, Romans 6:23 -

> *"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."*
>
> Romans 6:23

We were born into sin - we sin by nature, yet God has provided remedy. Jesus has become sin for us and born its punishment so we can receive His holiness instead via His Spirit. This is the great exchanged when we come to Him like a prodigal son, coming home to a loving Father. He takes our sin, and gives us His holiness.

So in Romans 3:31, after Paul finishes talking about us being saved by this faith in Jesus, he comes back to the Law. What do we do with it now that we've been saved from its penalty of death? We now have His life flowing through us. We've been "connected to the electrical outlet" again, so-to-speak. Let's see what Paul says:

> *"Do we then nullify the Law through faith? Far from it! On the contrary, we establish the Law."*
>
> Romans 3:31

Wow. No, the Law is not going away in a sense. On the contrary, the Law is being established. I believe a distinction should be made though - the Law contains many commands of what to do and what not to do. It is these righteous precepts that I believe the Holy Spirit lays on our hearts to do, which the Law itself sums up as love God with all you are (Deuteronomy), and love your neighbor as yourself (Leviticus 19:18) –

> *"You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD (YHWH - 4 letter Hebrew holy name of God, sometimes pronounced Yahweh or Jehovah)."*
>
> Leviticus 19:18

Thought that was a new testament concept? Think again. Jeremiah speaks of a new covenant, in which His laws will be written on our hearts. And surely this happens when the Holy Spirit via our conscience woos us to love God and others.

So what happened to the death penalties and the animal sacrifices of the Torah (Law of God), or the ritual cleansing washing, etc?

Friend, I have to admit - this is a grey area for me. I do not know if Jesus' death means that we should annul death penalties given by the government, or if He merely died for our spiritual eternal life, and the justice of Torah should carry on. In any case, as the name of my ministry efforts suggests - God still can carry out Mishpat (Justice) but also show great Chesed (Kindness/Mercy), and human governments can follow suit. As far as the animal sacrifices, Hebrews makes it pretty clear, regardless of if a temple would ever come back, that Jesus' sacrifice brings in something greater - the direct access to God, the removal of sin, and the way open to Heaven with God instead of sleeping in the dust. The word says Jesus went and made proclamation to the spirits of those who died in the flood, which says to me that those spirits were held in bondage and maybe suffering, but that He offered them a chance and a way to LIGHT and eternal life.

And regarding ritual cleansing, Jesus was perfectly pure and LIFE, and he touched the unclean and made THEM clean. So obviously cleanliness is good, but if we have the spirit of Jesus in us, the more important thing is being cleansed from the inside out, and having that LIFE of His sanctifying us - yet perhaps the washings associated with seminal emissions, etc, could still have their place in keeping our outer bodies clean.

And now we come full circle back to the Sabbath, one of the basic 10 commandments. Most Christians would have respect for at least the 10 commandments, and as we've seen, the righteous statutes of the Law indeed should guide us today, but in a Spirit-filled way, full of life and newness instead of heavy rules and bondage that the Pharisees had made out of it. Remember, you can't put new wine into old wineskins!!

Enjoying the Sabbath Command?

So if the 10 commandments apply to us today, how would the Sabbath command apply?

As for me, I do not see any solid evidence really for it changing to Sunday. I am aware the women found Jesus' body resurrected on Sunday morning, and that is AWESOME. Even meeting on Sundays to celebrate this sounds great! But a command to rest for the WHOLE SEVENTH day does not seem to be abolished. Remember the words of Jesus in Matthew 5:17-19 –

> *"Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. 18 For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished. 19 Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven."*
>
> Matthew 5:17-19

Also, the seventh day is a very special day, going back to even creation - God set this day apart to be special from the foundation of the world! When He had finished His vast work of creation in all its glory, and all was perfect, then came the seventh day when He fellowshipped with man and woman. I do not think this memorial to creation can be easily overturned, and neither do I see any substantial evidence in the New Testament saying the day has been changed.

Now. Regarding when the seventh day actually IS that exodus 20:8 refers to, let's look at some historical evidence. I quote from www.biblethingsinbibleways.wordpress.com who is quoting from a Roman historian named Cassius Dio, in the work *Roman History 37.16.1-4 [A]*.

"A Roman historian named Cassius Dio who wrote about Roman History, gives an account of Wars waged between Rome & Judea. In it he explains the capture of Jerusalem in 63 BC saying "As it was, they made an exception of what are called the days of Saturn, and by doing no work at all on those days afforded the Romans an opportunity in this interval to batter down the wall. The latter, on learning of this superstitious awe of theirs, made no serious attempts the rest of the time, but on those days, when they came round in succession, assaulted most vigorously. Thus the defenders were captured on the day of Saturn, without making any defense, and all the wealth was plundered". Cassius wrote that the Romans who learned that the Jews rested on the Days of Saturn (Saturday which was known as Saturn's Day in Rome), attacked the Jerusalem stronghold on those days. These words also tally with the writings of Josephus, showing us that Saturn's Day in Rome coincided with the day kept as the Sabbath by the Jews, even in the 1st Century BC."

So there it is. The Jewish Sabbath lined up with Saturday, (Saturn's day), which is still in our week today. And if the Jews had it on the wrong day – which is highly unlikely considering the meticulousness of their scribes who would count every single letter of the Torah - I think Jesus would have said something about it and it would have been recorded in our scriptures, as that would be a pretty big issue.

So because of this, it is my conviction the sabbath is Saturday, BUT, because Genesis says that there was EVENING and there was MORNING, the first day - it appears the first day started with evening. And thus the Jewish practice of observing Sabbath Friday night to Saturday night, which I hold to as well. Also in the book of Nehemiah he would close the gates before sundown, implying they were starting sabbath at sundown – Nehemiah 13:19 –

> *"It came about that just as it grew dark at the gates of Jerusalem before the sabbath, I commanded that the doors should be shut and that they should not open them until after the sabbath."*
>
> Nehemiah 13:19

Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) is also said to be from sundown to sundown. So it's a pretty established pattern in scripture. Nevertheless, if it still seems like the answer is not 100% clear, perhaps this is a chance for us to apply Romans 14:5 mentioned above, and give grace to one another regarding this issue, following our conviction of when and what to observe, not judging other well-meaning servants of the Lord. Remember also, Jesus said sabbath was a GIFT, made for man to enjoy, not a burden for men to have to be slaves to - sabbath is made for man, not man for the sabbath - Mark 2:27. Embracing the Jewish practice of Shabbat is an ancient, rich, and now Spirit-filled practice we can do to draw closer to Jesus (Yeshua - a Jewish Rabbi, even after resurrection) and our Heavenly Father יהוה - the 4 Hebrew let-

ters equivalent to English Y H (W or V) H - sometimes pronounced Yahweh, Jehovah, or Yahuah. I believe the Father has left this pronunciation a bit mysterious on purpose - because He is the Great I AM, shrouded in mystery, and perhaps He doesn't want His name being profaned so much in the world today. Nevertheless, I treasure this name that comes from Exodus 3, that does seem related the Hebrew verb "TO BE" as He is the foundation of all existence.

Conclusion

Anyhow, I hope this article has been helpful to you the reader, whoever you are, in regards to application of the Law of God to our lives, and specifically, the 4th of the 10 commandments, the command to rest and remember the sabbath day and keep it holy - Exodus 20:8-11 –

> *"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9 For six days you shall labor and do all your work, 10 but the seventh day is a Sabbath of the LORD your God; on it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male slave or your female slave, or your cattle, or your resident who stays with you. 11 For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and everything that is in them, and He rested on the seventh day; for that reason the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy."*
>
> Exodus 20:8-11

Amen Amen. Let us enter the rest our Father wants to give us physically, emotionally, and spiritually, a rest from our own strivings and sin, and a breath of fresh air of His Spirit of love and peace and patience. Selah (Meditation). Amen.

Sincerely,
-Greg Wilson

Aviv: A Basic Biblical Understanding of the Hebrew New Year

By Gregory John Wilson

The first month of the biblical year

A few plagues before the last one - the death of the firstborn, we see that in the land of Mitsrayim (Egypt) the barley "was in the ear." The word used for "ear" is Strong's H24 - "aviv". So the barley was "in aviv". Now what does Aviv mean? According to Strong's Hebrew dictionary, it comes from an unused root verb meaning to be tender, and it means "green, i.e. a young ear of grain". So the barley was in its green stage, whatever that looks like. So what is the significance of that? Well… Skip ahead a little bit to the last plague, when Yahweh declares that their present month is to be the first month of the year (Exodus 12:1-2). Then in Exodus 13:4 we see the Israelites are leaving Egypt in this first month and it is called the month of Aviv!

So it makes sense that around the time the barley was "in aviv-green" that that is the time of the first month, called Aviv. Thus the greenness of the barley seems to define the month - thus it is called aviv-green. So it makes sense that we look for the green barley to define this new moon (month). It also makes sense that the first new moon after the barley has become "aviv-green" is the new moon/month of Aviv - the first month of the year, in which Passover is kept the night of the 14th, etc… In summary, in general terms, Aviv - the first month of the biblical calendar, is in the time when things are turning Green (Aviv) in the Spring - an appropriate time for a new beginning instead of the pagan January coming from false god Janus which is in the middle of when everything is dead.

HEBREW ROOTS

The Great Split & The Great Reunification

By Gregory John Wilson

(Greetings)... Introduce self and ministry… Today I'm examining a grand progression in history, starting with identifying who the 'forever' people of God are, later to look at what Law governs this people. We'll also see how after the Jesus-believing Jews were rejected by the rest of the Jews, how the authentic Jewish Jesus was hijacked by the gentiles to create a religion a bit estranged from the heritage of the people of God - the Split. And lastly, how Jews and Gentiles are reunifying again, aligning with the foundation of the Torah and identifying with Israel, the forever people of God. I hope you enjoy and are blessed!

1. The original 'church' (ekklesia) - assembly of called out ones - Israel gathered at Mount Sinai - Acts 7:38 uses ekklesia here, translated as church!
2. Israel will not pass away as long as the sun and moon and stars are here!

> *Thus says the LORD, who gives the sun for light by day and the fixed order of the moon and the stars for light by night, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar; the LORD of hosts is His name: "If this fixed order departs from before Me," declares the LORD, "Then the offspring of Israel also will cease from being a nation before Me forever." Thus says the LORD, "If the heavens above can be measured and the foundations of the earth searched out below, then I will also cast off all the offspring of Israel for all that they have done," declares the LORD.*
>
> Jeremiah 31:35-37

3. Yeshua arrives - He came to divide, He stood for righteousness
    a. Many Jews believed in Him, Many did not, perhaps partly because of not understanding how He could be One with the Father, and partly because of Yeshua's rebukes of the religious Jews' hypocrisy.
    b. Eventually, the Messianic Jews believing in the Messiah Yeshua were rejected from the synagogue, the place of worship of the one true God. Thus the GREAT SPLIT began, which ideally should have never happened.
    c. The Messianic Jews met elsewhere - in homes, etc…
    d. Eventually, Gentiles began taking over the Messianic community, Probably moreso when the temple was destroyed in 70 AD and the Jewish center of worship was uprooted.

e. I think because the Jews had rejected the Messianic Jews, eventually the Gentile-dominated "church" began hating and despising JEWISH ways - saying it was BAD to observe the Law, etc - bad to circumcise sons, eat pure, rest on sabbath, etc..

4. Also, enter Constantine… Making 'Christianity' official, while retaining pagan ways - worship on Sunday..
5. After this, the catholic church declared at Council of Laodicea the following:

> *"Christians shall not Judaize and be idle on Saturday (Sabbath), but shall work on that Day: but the Lord's Day, they shall especially honour; and as being Christians, shall, if possible, do no work on that day. If however, they are found Judaizing, they shall be shut out from Christ."*
>
> Council of Laodicea

6. Combined with a mistreatment of Paul's letters, you have the perfect storm: 'the Law is a curse! We're not under the curse of the law!' Yet.. The curse was always if you BROKE the law. How could that now be reversed? Cursed if you keep God's righteous commandments? Messiah did take the curse of the law - death - the penalty for not keeping the law, and thus we are free from that as we are justified by faith. Yet by faith we do not abolish the law, we ESTABLISH it, as the very same Apostle Paul declared in Romans 3:31! Also see Romans 7:7 where Paul says the Law defines sin. If it defines sin, why would we now be able to break the law and sin!
7. Thus, the "Christian Church" split physically and doctrinally with the ancient faith, instead having new doctrines, estranged from the Jewish root. So instead of the gentiles being grafted into a Jewish Olive tree as Romans 11 says, the Jews were expected to give up their Torah-observant Judaism and convert to 'Christianity'.

The Reunification

But these days, a new thing is happening. Christians are waking up to identifying as part of the Israel that was never terminated! Along with that, comes the ways of the Kingdom of Israel - the Torah given to Moses given to Israel.

9. And contrary to perhaps popular belief, the God-man Yeshua (Jesus) did not abolish the Law. He said so in Matthew 5:17-19, saying he came to fulfill it instead. But lest we say that means abolish too, He also said til heavens and Earth pass away not one little bit of the Law would pass and that those who keep and teach these commandments would be honored in His kingdom.

10. And thus we see that Jesus was a Jewish Rabbi to the core, also telling a man to keep the commandments (Torah) to enter into life. And thus there should not be any contradiction between Israel and those who follow Yeshua. Yeshua, the King of Israel rules over Israel, Jews and Gentiles grafted in.
11. And thus, ALSO, many Jews are waking up to this reality and embracing Yeshua as the Messiah - the chosen one to bring ultimate redemption! They see the prophecies fulfilled as well - notably Isaiah 53, outlining this suffering servant to be the sacrifice for sin, which was exactly what Yeshua did!
12. And so the breach that happened with the Christian Church emerging separate from Israel, despising Jews and the Torah, is being healed as people are seeing that Israel is still the people of God and Gentiles are grafted into this Nation, and the Laws of Israel still apply.
13. Thus, We pray that more of the natural sons of Israel will see their righteous Jewish King Yeshua, upholding their precious Torah, and be regrafted into the Israel of God again, and that more Christians will reconnect with their rich Jewish heritage and not be arrogant against the natural branches of the tree (the Jews).
14. And of course, we await Yeshua to come again and reign over His people Israel and exterminate evil from the world.

Conclusion

Shalom to all listening who seek the Father and His righteousness. I pray this study has blessed you and enlightened you! Feel free to subscribe to my channel and receive notifications for other edifying music and possibly messages, as I am inspired to share. Thank you. Yah bless.

Unveiling The Righteous Jewish Jesus

By Gregory John Wilson

I want to ask you, what is it you love about Jesus? His God-sized love for humanity, of course, is pre-eminent in reasons to love Him. But I want to touch on aspects of His character and person that have been -- "veiled", shall we say? I want to touch on the middle-eastern Jewish Jesus' zeal and moral fiber - His rugged, robust, rich personality - how He taught people with authority in His words, cleared the temple of the money-hungry businessmen with zeal, and yes, embraced the tender child with a deep pure love of the Father.

He grew up in a Jewish culture and the blood of His mother Mary was Jewish, of the tribe of Judah, of King David's line, as was his adoptive father, Joseph. In short, Jesus was JEWISH, by blood and by faith. And in the book of Revelation He is indeed called the 'Lion of the tribe of Judah' as His mother and adoptive father were both from the tribe of Judah, of which it was prophesied that a ruler would come! And indeed, Yeshua, or Jesus, is STRONG like a lion! He is majestic and royal like a lion! And His Father God was and is the God of Israel!

And in Jesus' teachings, we will see that He did not abolish the beloved Torah, or Law, of the Jews, but established it, as Matthew 5:17-19 speaks of. He was a Jewish rabbi, this Jesus was, as people would call Him rabbi, and he instructed that only He, the Messiah, be called rabbi, - which is literally 'my great one' but commonly translated as teacher.

To Mary it was told that Jesus would inherit the throne of His father David and reign over Israel forever as king! Yes, the people of Israel is not just a thing of the past! Thus, the New Jerusalem, apparently the eternal capital and home of the saints, the 12 gates have the 12 tribes of Israel written on them - suggesting that these tribes of Israel (and the Gentiles attached to Israel - see Romans 11:13-24) will live within the gates in the city, with each tribe having their own entrance to the city. Also, in Jeremiah 31:35-37 it says that as long as there is sun and moon, the nation Israel exists. Thus, in addition to Jesus being Jewish, the Jewish NATION will continue to exist as well! (Jewish here meaning of any of the twelve tribes). And so Jesus, or His more truer Hebrew name Yeshua, will rule over Israel, the forever people of God, forever, as the King of Israel, with Jew and Gentile grafted into (or attached to) the so-called Olive tree of Israel!

Thus, the usual white-skinned Jesus is actually probably a darker skinned Jewish man named something similar to Yeshua, which means salvation in Hebrew, the Language of the Jews and the land of Israel!

Are these thoughts new to you? If so, that's ok! It's all part of connecting with the Jewish way of our Lord Jesus, or Yeshua.

Now I'd like to touch on one aspect of Jesus' Jewishness a bit more. And this is His stance towards the Law of God given to Israel at Mount Sinai. Yes, this is the law God gave to Moses to give to Israel, called the Torah in Hebrew. In Judaism, the Torah is always greatly reverenced. Sometimes, a few verses are taken from Paul's letters in the Bible to say the law has been abolished - done away - but is this what Jesus preached and practiced? In the book of 1 John, it says we are to walk as Jesus walked. And so, let's look at the Master Jesus' stance on the Law to clear up some of the questionable verses from Paul. And note, that Paul also said the Law reveals what sin is in Romans 7:7. And we don't want to break the law and sin!

But to consider the Master's words, let's examine one of His clearest statements on the Law - Matthew 5:17-19:

> *Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.*
>
> Matthew 5:17-19 NASB

So Jesus didn't come to abolish or cancel the law but to fulfill it. But if fulfills means we don't do it anymore, that would be the same thing as abolish - which He didn't do. So fulfill can mean 'fill up' here - bring it to it's fullness! And then as Jesus continues talking, He clears it up even more - the Law won't pass til Heaven and Earth pass! And whoever KEEPS and TEACHES the Law will be HONORED by God!

Now let's look at an interaction between Jesus and another man in the book of Luke:

> *And a lawyer stood up and put Him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" And He said to him, "What is written in the Law? How does it read to you?" And he answered, "YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND; AND YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF." And He said to him, "You have answered correctly; DO THIS AND YOU WILL LIVE."*
>
> Luke 10:25-28 NASB

So here, Jesus says the way to eternal LIFE is keeping the commandments of the Law, summed up by the two great commandments - love God and love others! In Matthew 22:37-40 Jesus also confirms that the whole Law and Prophets hang on those two principles - loving God and loving others!

But of course, we fall short of that, and that's why we need His forgiveness, purchased by the cross of Calvary! But the goal is righteousness! To be righteous like our Master Jesus.

Now let's look at one last example of Jesus standing up for the Torah (or Law).

It comes from Mark 7:1-23.

In this story, the Pharisees are upset with Jesus because His disciples are not ceremonially washing their hands before they eat, a tradition the Pharisees kept, but not a commandment of God.

Jesus was upset with these people because they put their tradition ahead of God's actual commandments, and Jesus reprimands them for a specific example of this - saying sons could give their money they would normally use to honor their parents with to the temple instead, nullifying God's command to honor your father and mother - one of the 10 commandments! So Jesus was concerned with the commandments of the Law here. Yet in the same passage, Jesus seems to also say that it doesn't matter what goes in your mouth because that doesn't defile you - it's what comes out of the heart that defiles you - seeking to contradict God's commands about avoiding eating certain animals…

But in light of the context of the whole story, remember, it was about eating with unwashed hands, not eating unclean meat. And to solidify this, in the parallel passage of this story in Matthew 15, Jesus concludes His whole message by clarifying that to eat with unwashed HANDS does not defile a man, as opposed to eating unclean meat, in verse 20.

Thus, what have we seen from the Scriptures? That Jesus was a Jewish man by blood, culture, and faith, and that, though He was untrained in human institutions, He was the greatest Jewish rabbi, or teacher, ever, because of His eternal identity as the son of God! We also saw from the Scriptures that Jesus, or Yeshua, His natural Hebrew name, did teach obedience to the Jewish Torah, or Law, given at Mt Sinai, summed up by the 2 greatest commandments, love God and love others.

And lastly, we saw that Jesus will reign forever over Israel, the forever people of God, as the Lion King of the tribe of Judah, in a heavenly city called the New Jerusalem, in which the twelve gates bear the names of the 12 tribes of Israel.

Jesus was Jewish. Jesus was righteous. He calls us to learn from the Jewish law, and be a part of Israel, like a wild branch grafted into a cultivated Olive tree.

May the Lord bless you as you consider these things and seek the Father's face. Amen.

Thoughts, Questions, or prayer requests?

Prayer

PART SIX

Feasts of the Lord

Does the Original Sabbath Apply To Today? (see Part Five)

Aviv: A Basic Biblical Understanding of the Hebrew New Year (see Part Five)

Shadows of Things to Come: The Feasts of the Lord

Yom Kippur Musings 2026

Shadows of Things to Come: The Feasts of the Lord

By Gregory John Wilson • September 24, 2026

Leviticus 23 is one of the most remarkable chapters in the Bible. In a single chapter, God lays out Israel's whole sacred year—a calendar of rest, sacrifice, harvest, trumpets, atonement and rejoicing. And notice whose feasts they are:

> *"Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'The feasts of the LORD, which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, these are My feasts.'"*
>
> Leviticus 23:2 (NKJV)

They are not "Jewish holidays" in the sense of something man invented. They are *His* feasts. The Hebrew word is **מוֹעֲדִים** (*mo'adim*)—appointed times, fixed appointments on God's calendar. And each one is called a **מִקְרָא קֹדֶשׁ** (*mikra kodesh*), a "holy convocation." The word *mikra* can also carry the sense of a public reading or a rehearsal. Year after year, Israel was rehearsing something.

What were they rehearsing? Paul tells us:

> *"So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ."*
>
> Colossians 2:16–17 (NKJV)

> *"For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come…"*
>
> Hebrews 10:1 (NKJV)

A shadow is not nothing. A shadow tells you the shape of what is coming before it arrives. When you see a shadow coming around the corner, you know someone is about to appear—and you can even tell something about what he looks like. The feasts are the shadow; Yeshua the Messiah is the substance. He did not come to erase them, but to fill them full:

> *"Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill."*
>
> Matthew 5:17 (NKJV)

Many believers have noticed a striking pattern: the **spring feasts** were fulfilled, to the very day, at Messiah's first coming. The **fall feasts** still point forward, and seem to describe the events surrounding His return. I hold the details of the future with an open hand—prophecy is often clearer in the rear-view mirror—but the pattern is too beautiful to ignore. Let's walk through the year together.

The Year at a Glance

Feast	When	Shadow → Substance
Passover **פֶּסַח** (Pesach)	1st month, 14th day	Yeshua crucified as our Passover Lamb
Unleavened Bread **חַג הַמַּצּוֹת** (Chag HaMatzot)	1st month, 15th–21st	The sinless One buried; His people purged of leaven
Firstfruits **בִּכּוּרִים** (Bikkurim)	Day after the Sabbath during Unleavened Bread	Yeshua raised, the firstfruits from the dead
Weeks / Pentecost **שָׁבוּעוֹת** (Shavuot)	50 days after Firstfruits	The Holy Spirit poured out; the first great harvest
Trumpets **יוֹם תְּרוּעָה** (Yom Teruah)	7th month, 1st day	The last trumpet; the gathering of His people
Day of Atonement **יוֹם הַכִּפֻּרִים** (Yom Kippur)	7th month, 10th day	Our High Priest's once-for-all blood; Israel looks on Him whom they pierced
Tabernacles **סֻכּוֹת** (Sukkot)	7th month, 15th–21st	The King dwells with His people; the nations come up to worship
The Eighth Day **שְׁמִינִי עֲצֶרֶת** (Shemini Atzeret)	7th month, 22nd day	New heavens and new earth; eternity with God

Spring — fulfilled at His first coming: Passover → Unleavened Bread → Firstfruits → Shavuot

↓ the long summer harvest ↓

Fall — pointing to His return: Trumpets → Atonement → Tabernacles → the Eighth Day

0. The Sabbath: The Heartbeat Beneath Them All

Before God names a single annual feast, He names the weekly one:

> *"Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation. You shall do no work on it; it is the Sabbath of the LORD in all your dwellings."*
>
> Leviticus 23:3 (NKJV)

The Sabbath is the heartbeat of the whole calendar—the pattern of *sevens* runs through everything that follows: seven days of Unleavened Bread, seven weeks to Shavuot, the seventh month holding three feasts, seven days of Tabernacles. The Sabbath is a foretaste of the rest that remains for the people of God (Hebrews 4:9), a rest we enter by trusting in Yeshua, who is Lord of the Sabbath. (I have written more on this in my article on the Sabbath.)

The Spring Feasts — Fulfilled

1. Passover (Pesach) — The Lamb Slain

> *"On the fourteenth day of the first month at twilight is the LORD's Passover."*
>
> Leviticus 23:5 (NKJV)

The facts:

- Kept on the 14th of the first month (Aviv, later called Nisan), at twilight—"between the evenings." (See my article on Aviv for how the year begins.)
- It remembers the night in Egypt when each household killed a lamb without blemish, put its blood on the doorposts, and the destroyer passed over every house marked by blood (Exodus 12).

- The lamb was chosen on the 10th day and kept until the 14th (Exodus 12:3–6). Not one of its bones was to be broken (Exodus 12:46).

The fulfillment:

> *"For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us."*
> 1 Corinthians 5:7 (NKJV)

John the Baptist introduced Him with Passover words: "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29). Yeshua rode into Jerusalem in the days when the lambs were being selected, was examined by priests, Herod and Pilate—"I find no fault in Him"—and was crucified at Passover. John makes a point of telling us His legs were not broken:

> *"For these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, 'Not one of His bones shall be broken.'"*
> John 19:36 (NKJV)

On the night He was betrayed, at the Passover table, He took the bread and the cup and said, "This is My body… this is My blood of the new covenant." The blood on the doorposts became the blood on the cross. Judgment passes over everyone who is covered by it.

2. Unleavened Bread (Chag HaMatzot) — The Sinless One

> *"And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the LORD; seven days you must eat unleavened bread."*
> Leviticus 23:6 (NKJV)

The facts:

- Seven days, from the 15th to the 21st of the first month. The first and seventh days are holy convocations with no customary work.
- All leaven (yeast) is removed from the house. Israel left Egypt in such haste that their dough had no time to rise (Exodus 12:39).
- Throughout Scripture, leaven often pictures sin, pride or false teaching that quietly spreads through the whole lump (Matthew 16:6; Galatians 5:9).

The fulfillment:

Yeshua is the Bread of Life (John 6:35), born in Bethlehem— בֵּית לֶחֶם, "House of Bread." He had no leaven in Him; He "knew no sin" (2 Corinthians 5:21). As Passover ended and Unleavened Bread began, His sinless body was laid in the tomb—and it did not decay:

> *"For You will not leave my soul in Hades, nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption."*
>
> Acts 2:27 (NKJV)

And Paul applies the feast to us, the people His blood has covered:

> *"Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."*
>
> 1 Corinthians 5:7–8 (NKJV)

Notice the order: first the blood, then the walk. We do not clean the house so that the Lamb will die for us. The Lamb dies for us, and *then* we clean the house—because we are already "unleavened" in Him.

3. Firstfruits (Yom HaBikkurim) — The Risen One

> *"When you come into the land which I give to you, and reap its harvest, then you shall bring a sheaf of the first-fruits of your harvest to the priest. He shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted on your behalf; on the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it."*
>
> Leviticus 23:10–11 (NKJV)

The facts:

- The first sheaf of the barley harvest was waved before the LORD "on the day after the Sabbath" during the week of Unleavened Bread. (Jewish groups in the Second Temple era debated which Sabbath was meant, but the day it points to is plain in the Gospels.)
- No one could eat from the new harvest until the firstfruits had been given to God (Leviticus 23:14). The first sheaf was the pledge that the rest of the harvest was coming.

The fulfillment:

> *"But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep."*
> 1 Corinthians 15:20 (NKJV)

Yeshua rose on "the first day of the week"—the day after the Sabbath—the very day the priest was waving the first sheaf in the Temple. He is the first sheaf out of the ground, presented to the Father and accepted on our behalf. And because the firstfruits were accepted, the rest of the harvest is guaranteed:

> *"But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming."*
> 1 Corinthians 15:23 (NKJV)

4. Weeks / Pentecost (Shavuot) — The Spirit Poured Out

> *"And you shall count for yourselves from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering: seven Sabbaths shall be completed. Count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath; then you shall offer a new grain offering to the LORD."*
> Leviticus 23:15–16 (NKJV)

The facts:

- Israel counted seven weeks—the "counting of the omer"—from Firstfruits. The 50th day is Shavuot ("Weeks"); the Greek name *Pentecost* simply means "fiftieth."
- It celebrated the wheat harvest. Strikingly, the offering was *two loaves baked with leaven* (Leviticus 23:17)—the only feast offering where leaven is commanded.
- Israel arrived at Sinai in the third month (Exodus 19:1), and Jewish tradition has long connected Shavuot with the giving of the Torah on the mountain, with fire, wind and a great sound.

The fulfillment:

> *"When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place."*
> Acts 2:1 (NKJV)

Fifty days after the resurrection, in Jerusalem, at the feast, the Holy Spirit fell with the sound of a rushing wind and tongues of fire. At Sinai the Law was written on tablets of stone; at Pentecost the Spirit began writing it on hearts, just as Jeremiah promised:

> *"I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people."*
>
> Jeremiah 31:33 (NKJV)

When the Law came at Sinai, about three thousand people died after the golden calf (Exodus 32:28). When the Spirit came at Shavuot, about three thousand souls were saved (Acts 2:41). "The letter kills, but the Spirit gives life" (2 Corinthians 3:6).

And those two leavened loaves? Many have seen in them a picture of the one new man—Jew and Gentile, both still imperfect (leavened), both presented to God together and accepted as firstfruits because of the Messiah (Ephesians 2:14–16). That is a reading, not a proof text, but it fits the harvest that began that day and has never stopped.

The long summer. Right after Shavuot, and before the fall feasts, Leviticus 23 inserts one verse about the harvest:

"When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field… You shall leave them for the poor and for the stranger" (Leviticus 23:22).

Between the spring and fall feasts lies the long summer harvest—a fitting picture of the age we live in now, when the gospel goes out to the ends of the earth and even the stranger is gathered in, like Ruth the Moabitess gleaning in the field of Boaz. (Ruth is read in synagogues at Shavuot to this day.)

The Fall Feasts — Pointing to His Return

The seventh month is the Sabbath of the months, and it holds three appointed times in quick succession. If the spring feasts were fulfilled to the day at His first coming, it is reasonable to expect the fall feasts to find their fullness in His second.

5. Trumpets (Yom Teruah) — The Awakening Blast

> *"In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall have a sabbath-rest, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, a holy convocation."*
>
> Leviticus 23:24 (NKJV)

The facts:

- Kept on the new moon of the seventh month. *Teruah* means a shout or a blast—the day of the shofar. Today it is widely known as *Rosh Hashanah*, the civil new year.
- Torah gives almost no explanation for it: only a trumpet blast, a memorial, and rest. It begins a ten-day season of repentance leading to Yom Kippur (the "Days of Awe" in Jewish tradition).
- In Scripture, the shofar gathers the assembly, sounds the alarm for war, announces a king, and heralds the presence of God (Numbers 10:1–10; Exodus 19:16).

The potential fulfillment:

> *"For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first."*
>
> 1 Thessalonians 4:16 (NKJV)

> *"…in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."*
>
> 1 Corinthians 15:52 (NKJV)

> *"And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."*
>
> Matthew 24:31 (NKJV)

A shout. A trumpet. A gathering. A King announced. The resurrection of the dead—the rest of the harvest that Firstfruits promised. Yom Teruah looks like a rehearsal for the day the King returns. When the seventh trumpet sounds in Revelation, loud voices in heaven cry, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!" (Revelation 11:15).

6. The Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) — Cleansing and Mourning

> *"Also the tenth day of this seventh month shall be the Day of Atonement. It shall be a holy convocation for you; you shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire to the LORD."*
>
> Leviticus 23:27 (NKJV)

The facts:

- The holiest day of the year and the only commanded fast. Once a year the high priest entered the Most Holy Place with blood to make atonement for himself, the sanctuary and the people (Leviticus 16).
- Two goats: one slain as a sin offering, one—the scapegoat—sent into the wilderness bearing Israel's sins away.
- The Year of Jubilee, with liberty proclaimed throughout the land, was announced by the shofar on Yom Kippur (Leviticus 25:9–10).

The fulfillment — already and not yet:

> *"Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption."*
>
> Hebrews 9:12 (NKJV)

The atoning work is finished. Yeshua is both the sacrifice and the High Priest who carried His own blood into the true sanctuary in heaven. Yet Hebrews goes on to describe the people waiting outside for the High Priest to come back out:

> *"…so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation."*
>
> Hebrews 9:28 (NKJV)

The prophets foresee a day when Israel as a nation will "afflict their souls" in national mourning and be cleansed:

> *"And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son…"*
>
> Zechariah 12:10 (NKJV)

> *"In that day a fountain shall be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness."*
>
> Zechariah 13:1 (NKJV)

"And so all Israel will be saved" (Romans 11:26). I have explored this feast in much more depth in Yom Kippur Musings 2026.

7. Tabernacles (Sukkot) — The Crown of the Year

And now we arrive at the crowning event of the whole year. The trumpet has sounded. Atonement has been made. The fast is over. What comes next? Five days later, the greatest party on God's calendar.

> *"The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the Feast of Tabernacles for seven days to the LORD."*
> Leviticus 23:34 (NKJV)

> *"And you shall take for yourselves on the first day the fruit of beautiful trees, branches of palm trees, the boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook; and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God for seven days."*
> Leviticus 23:40 (NKJV)

The facts:

- Seven days, from the 15th to the 21st of the seventh month, at the full moon after the final ingathering of the harvest. It is also called the Feast of Ingathering (Exodus 23:16).
- Israel lived in **סֻכּוֹת** (*sukkot*)—temporary booths—to remember that God made them dwell in booths in the wilderness, where He dwelt among them in the tabernacle and led them by the cloud and the fire (Leviticus 23:42–43).
- It was one of three pilgrimage feasts when every man went up to Jerusalem (Deuteronomy 16:16). By the Second Temple period it was so central that it was often simply called "the Feast."
- Over the seven days, **seventy bulls** were offered, counting down from thirteen to seven (Numbers 29:12–34). Ancient Jewish tradition connected these seventy bulls with the seventy nations of Genesis 10—Israel offering sacrifices on behalf of the whole world (Talmud, *Sukkah* 55b).
- In the Temple, a priest poured out water drawn from the Pool of Siloam at the altar each day, and giant lamps were lit in the Court of the Women that were said to light up all of Jerusalem.

The Feast Where There Is Only Joy

Every feast has joy in it, but Sukkot is the only one where God commands joy *three times* (Leviticus 23:40; Deuteronomy 16:14, 15). And the last command is extraordinary:

> *"Seven days you shall keep a sacred feast to the LORD your God in the place which the LORD chooses, because the LORD your God will bless you in all your produce and in all the work of your hands, so that you surely rejoice."*
>
> Deuteronomy 16:15 (NKJV)

The Hebrew behind "surely rejoice" is וְהָיִיתָ אַךְ שָׂמֵחַ (*v'hayita ach same'ach*)—literally, "and you shall be *only* joyful." Nothing but joy. No fasting, no affliction of soul, no sin offering hanging over your head—that was all settled five days earlier on Yom Kippur. Jewish tradition calls Sukkot *Z'man Simchateinu*, "the Season of Our Joy."

And notice who is invited into that joy: "you and your son and your daughter, your male servant and your female servant and the Levite, the stranger and the fatherless and the widow" (Deuteronomy 16:14). No one is left out of this feast.

That is the order of God's calendar and of God's plan: the trumpet, then the atonement, then *only joy*. Once sin is fully dealt with, there is nothing left but to celebrate.

The King Comes to Tabernacle With Us

The heart of Sukkot is *God dwelling with His people*. And John chose his words carefully when he introduced the Messiah:

> *"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."*
>
> John 1:14 (NKJV)

The Greek word for "dwelt" is *eskēnōsen*—literally, "He *tabernacled*" or "pitched His tent" among us. (Some believe Yeshua was actually born at Sukkot; Scripture does not say so directly, but the imagery is unmistakable.) At His first coming He tabernacled among us in a body of flesh—a temporary tent. At His return He will tabernacle among us as King.

Yeshua Himself used the Temple ceremonies of Sukkot to reveal who He is. On the day of the great water-pouring He stood up and cried out:

> *"On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, 'If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'"*
>
> John 7:37–38 (NKJV)

And in the light of those great lamps He declared, "I am the light of the world" (John 8:12).

The Nations Come Up to Jerusalem

Here is the prophecy that makes Sukkot unlike any other feast. Zechariah 14 describes the day the LORD returns and His feet stand on the Mount of Olives (14:4). Then:

> *"And the LORD shall be King over all the earth. In that day it shall be—'The LORD is one,' and His name one."*
>
> Zechariah 14:9 (NKJV)

> *"And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles."*
>
> Zechariah 14:16 (NKJV)

Of all the appointed times, this is the one Scripture explicitly says the *nations* will keep when the King reigns from Jerusalem. The seventy bulls once offered on behalf of the nations become the nations themselves streaming up to worship. Isaiah saw the same pilgrimage:

> *"Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it. Many people shall come and say, 'Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths.' For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem."*
>
> Isaiah 2:2–3 (NKJV)

Many see this fulfilled in the thousand-year reign of Messiah that John describes in Revelation 20, when the saints "lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years" (Revelation 20:4). God promised to raise up "the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down"—literally the *sukkah* of David (Amos 9:11; Acts

15:16). Sukkot is a seven-day feast, and many have seen in it a picture of the great "Sabbath" of history—the Messiah's reign of peace, when swords are beaten into plowshares and the whole earth rejoices under its rightful King.

John also caught a glimpse of the feast in heaven—palm branches and all:

> *"After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, saying, 'Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!'"*
>
> Revelation 7:9–10 (NKJV)

And the story does not end with the earthly Jerusalem. When the New Jerusalem comes down out of heaven, the voice from the throne announces the ultimate Sukkot:

> *"Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God."*
>
> Revelation 21:3 (NKJV)

> *"And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it.… And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it."*
>
> Revelation 21:24, 26 (NKJV)

"Tabernacle" and "dwell" in Revelation 21:3 come from the same Greek root as John 1:14. The One who tabernacled among us in flesh will tabernacle among us forever. The nations still come up. The joy is still only joy.

8. The Eighth Day (Shemini Atzeret) — A New Beginning

But Leviticus 23 does not end on the seventh day. There is one more appointed time—one that is easy to miss:

> *"For seven days you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD. On the eighth day you shall have a holy convocation, and you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD. It is a sacred assembly, and you shall do no customary work on it."*
>
> Leviticus 23:36 (NKJV)

The facts:

- The 22nd of the seventh month, immediately after the seven days of Sukkot. It is the last appointed time of the year.
- It is called an עֲצֶרֶת (*atzeret*)—a solemn or sacred assembly, from a root meaning "to hold back" or "to linger."
- After seventy bulls across seven days, on the eighth day only *one* bull was offered (Numbers 29:35–36).
- The medieval commentator Rashi explains it with a parable: a king invited his children to a feast for many days. When the time came for them to leave, he said, "Please, stay with me one more day. Your parting is hard for me."

Why the Eighth Day?

In Scripture, seven is the number of completion—a finished week, a full cycle. Eight is the number of *new beginning*: the first day of a brand-new week.

- A son was circumcised and brought into the covenant on the eighth day (Genesis 17:12).
- Eight souls came through the flood into a washed, new world (1 Peter 3:20).
- Priests were consecrated for seven days and began their ministry on the eighth (Leviticus 8–9).
- Yeshua rose on the first day of the week—the day after the seventh, the "eighth day"—the beginning of the new creation.

So if the seven days of Sukkot picture the Messiah's kingdom on this earth, the Eighth Day steps beyond it, beyond the cycle of weeks and years and history itself, into eternity:

> *"For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered or come to mind."*
>
> Isaiah 65:17 (NKJV)

> *"Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells."*
> 2 Peter 3:13 (NKJV)

> *"Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away.… And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away. Then He who sat on the throne said, 'Behold, I make all things new.'"*
> Revelation 21:1, 4–5 (NKJV)

Even in the new creation, Isaiah sees the rhythm of worship continuing: "from one New Moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, all flesh shall come to worship before Me" (Isaiah 66:22–23).

Think again about Rashi's parable. The feast is over, the week is complete—and the King says, "Stay with Me." That is the Eighth Day. Not a temporary booth anymore, but a permanent home. Not seventy bulls for scattered nations, but one offering for one people gathered around one throne. Not a week that ends, but a day that never does:

> *"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. They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. There shall be no night there… And they shall reign forever and ever."*
> Revelation 22:3–5 (NKJV)

Living in the Rehearsal

So here is the whole story of redemption, written into one chapter of Leviticus and rehearsed every year for thousands of years:

Passover — the Lamb is slain.

↓

Unleavened Bread — the Sinless One is buried; we are made new.

↓

Firstfruits — He rises, the pledge of the harvest.

↓

Shavuot — the Spirit is poured out; the harvest begins.

↓

Trumpets — the shout, the trumpet, the gathering.

↓

Atonement — Israel looks on Him whom they pierced; all is cleansed.

↓

Tabernacles — the King dwells with us; the nations come up; only joy.

↓

The Eighth Day — all things new, forever.

Four of these appointments have been kept to the very day. I believe the other four will be fulfilled in some special way as well. The God who set these times has never been late for an appointment.

Whether or not you celebrate the feasts in your home, let them teach you where history is going. We are living in the long summer harvest, between Shavuot and the trumpet. The fields are white. The Bridegroom is coming. And the feast that waits for us is not a feast of mourning, but a feast of only joy.

A Prayer

Father, thank You for Your appointed times. Thank You that You are a God who keeps every appointment You make. Thank You for Yeshua, our Passover Lamb, our Unleavened Bread, our Firstfruits from the dead, and for the Spirit You poured out at Shavuot.

Keep us faithful in the harvest field while we wait for the trumpet. Let us look on the One who was pierced with mourning and with love. And bring us, with Israel and with every nation, into the joy of Your tabernacle, where You dwell with us and we dwell with You forever.

Maranatha. Come, Lord Yeshua. Amen.

Yom Kippur Musings 2026

By Gregory John Wilson

Yes. If we read Yom Kippur (יוֹם הַכִּפֻּרִים, Yom ha-Kippurim) through the whole biblical storyline, there is a remarkably rich pattern: Yeshua has already fulfilled the central sacrificial and priestly reality of Yom Kippur, while Scripture also points toward a future, visible completion of its themes—especially Israel's mourning, cleansing, judgment, and the full restoration of God's dwelling with His people.

The key is not to force every detail of Leviticus 16 into a one-to-one prediction. The New Testament itself gives us the interpretive framework, especially Hebrews 8–10.

1. First: What was Yom Kippur actually accomplishing?

Leviticus 16 is the heart of Yom Kippur.

Once a year, the high priest went beyond the veil into the Holy of Holies, into the special presence of YHWH. He did so with blood because sin had defiled God's dwelling place among Israel.

There were several interconnected purposes:

- atonement for sin
- cleansing of the sanctuary
- cleansing of the priesthood
- cleansing of Israel
- removal/bearing away of Israel's sins
- reconciliation between God and His people
- humbling/afflicting oneself before God
- and ultimately the restoration of fellowship between a holy God and His people.

Leviticus 23 calls it explicitly the Day of Atonement, a Sabbath of rest in which Israel was to "afflict your souls."

That is important because Yom Kippur wasn't merely about getting forgiven for individual sins. It dealt with the much larger problem of sin separating God's holy presence from His people.

And that is precisely where Yeshua's priesthood becomes extraordinary.

2. Yeshua is both the High Priest AND the sacrifice

This is perhaps the most profound fulfillment.

Under Torah: High Priest → enters God's presence → carries blood → makes atonement for the people.

In Hebrews: Yeshua → High Priest → offers His own blood → enters the heavenly sanctuary → obtains eternal redemption.

Hebrews 9 deliberately uses Yom Kippur imagery:

> *"Christ came as High Priest…"*

and says that He entered the greater heavenly sanctuary "once for all" with His own blood, obtaining eternal redemption.

That is radically different from the Levitical system.

The earthly priest had to bring the blood of another creature.

Yeshua brings His own life.

The earthly priest had to repeat the ritual every year.

Yeshua offers Himself once.

The earthly priest entered an earthly Holy of Holies.

Yeshua enters heaven itself, appearing before God on our behalf.

So Hebrews isn't merely saying:

> *"Jesus is kind of like the Yom Kippur sacrifice."*

It presents the entire earthly priesthood and sanctuary as a copy/shadow pointing toward the greater heavenly reality.

3. The blood of Yeshua accomplishes what animal blood could only symbolize

This is where Hebrews 10 becomes especially powerful.

The annual sacrifices were never presented as the ultimate solution to sin.

Hebrews says:

> *"the blood of bulls and goats" could not take away sins.*

Instead, those sacrifices served as an annual reminder of sin.

Then comes the contrast:

> *"by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy."*

That's the fascinating phrase:

"those who are being made holy."

There is both a completed reality and an ongoing reality.

Yeshua's sacrifice is complete.

Our sanctification is ongoing.

So we shouldn't think:

> *"Yeshua died, therefore nothing remains."*

Rather:

The atoning foundation is finished; the transformation of His people continues.

Hebrews explicitly holds those together.

That fits beautifully with Yom Kippur's purpose of both atonement and cleansing.

4. The veil is opened

Think about what happened at Yeshua's death.

Matthew 27:51 says the veil of the Temple was torn in two.

That's an enormous theological statement.

The barrier separating ordinary humanity from the Holy of Holies is torn.

And Hebrews later interprets access to God through Yeshua:

> *"we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus"*
>
> Hebrews 10:19

In other words:

Yom Kippur was about the High Priest entering God's presence on behalf of Israel.

Yeshua takes that further:

He opens access to God's presence for His people.

The direction has changed.

Under the earthly system: people → priest → Holy Place → God

Through Yeshua: believers → Yeshua → God's very presence.

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5. The "mercy seat" connection is astonishing

Romans 3:25 contains an especially important connection.

Paul says God presented Messiah Yeshua as a sacrifice of atonement through His blood.

The Greek word Paul uses there is *hilastērion*.

That word can refer to the mercy seat / atonement cover of the Ark.

The translation footnote explicitly identifies the connection with the atonement cover of Leviticus 16.

So there is a profound picture:

Leviticus – Blood is brought into the Holy of Holies and applied in connection with the atonement cover.

Romans – God presents Messiah Himself as the atoning reality.

This makes Yeshua not merely the animal that dies.

He becomes the very place and means through which God's mercy and righteousness meet.

And Paul emphasizes something crucial:

God remains just while also being the One who justifies the person who trusts in Yeshua.

So atonement isn't God simply ignoring sin.

It is God dealing with sin righteously while extending mercy.

6. The two goats give us another beautiful picture

Leviticus 16 has two goats.

One is sacrificed.

The other has Israel's sins confessed over it and is sent away into the wilderness.

The symbolism is striking: sin is both atoned for and removed.

And this becomes an important way of understanding Yeshua's work.

The New Testament repeatedly speaks of both sides:

His blood deals with guilt

> *"the blood of Jesus… purifies us from all sin."*
> 1 John 1:7

He bears/removes sin

Isaiah 53 says:

> *"YHWH has laid on Him the iniquity of us all."*

And Hebrews says:

> *"Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many."*

So the biblical picture isn't merely:

> *"Jesus paid the penalty."*

It is much bigger:

- He bears sin.
- He removes sin.
- He cleanses sin.
- He reconciles us to God.
- He brings us into God's presence.

That's profoundly Yom Kippur-shaped.

> One caution: Scripture does not explicitly say, "the first goat is Jesus and the scapegoat is Satan," so I would avoid making that popular interpretation dogmatic. The strongest biblical connection is simply that Yeshua's one sacrifice accomplishes what the entire sacrificial system anticipated.

7. Isaiah 53 looks remarkably like Yom Kippur theology

Isaiah 53 is not itself a Yom Kippur ritual passage, but its language is deeply compatible with the atonement pattern.

The Servant:

- bears our griefs
- bears our sorrows
- is wounded because of our transgressions
- bears our iniquities
- gives His life as an offering for sin

- bears the sin of many.

That is exactly the conceptual world into which Yom Kippur fits.

And Isaiah adds something extremely important:

His suffering ultimately produces righteousness.

This connects directly with Daniel 9.

8. Daniel 9 sounds almost like a prophetic description of Yom Kippur fulfilled

Daniel 9:24 gives six things associated with the prophetic completion of God's redemptive purpose:

1. finish transgression
2. make an end of sin
3. make atonement for iniquity
4. bring in everlasting righteousness
5. seal vision and prophecy
6. anoint the Most Holy.

Then verse 26 says: "Messiah shall be cut off."

The passage therefore connects Messiah being cut off with God's larger purpose of dealing with sin and bringing everlasting righteousness.

This doesn't mean every interpretation of Daniel's 70 weeks is identical. There are major disagreements about the chronology and fulfillment of the passage.

But the theological connection is very strong:

Messiah + being cut off + atonement + righteousness + sanctuary.

That is exactly the territory of Yom Kippur.

9. Yeshua's resurrection means the High Priest is alive

This is another place where the fulfillment surpasses the shadow.

The Levitical high priest eventually died.

Another priest had to replace him.

Yeshua: dies → rises → ascends → enters heavenly sanctuary → remains High Priest forever.

Hebrews 7:24 says His priesthood is permanent because He continues forever.

This means there is no annual succession of high priests.

No annual replacement.

No repeated sacrifice.

No return to the beginning.

The High Priest Himself lives forever.

10. And Yeshua is still ministering as High Priest now

This is where I think the "already/not yet" understanding becomes especially beautiful.

Yom Kippur has been fulfilled in its essential atoning reality.

But Scripture still describes Yeshua as actively ministering for His people.

Hebrews 9:24 says He entered heaven itself and appears in the presence of God for us.

Hebrews 4:14–16 therefore tells believers to approach God's throne boldly because we have a great High Priest.

So Yom Kippur isn't merely:

> *"Something Jesus did 2,000 years ago."*

It describes the reality of our present relationship with God:

We have a living High Priest in God's presence.

11. But there is a FUTURE dimension to Yom Kippur

This is where things get really interesting.

Hebrews says:

> *"Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many"*

and

> *"he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation."*

Notice the distinction.

First coming: He comes to bear sin.

Second coming: He comes without bearing sin, bringing salvation.

That sounds very much like the movement of Yom Kippur:

atonement → cleansing → judgment → restoration.

The sacrifice is finished.

But the full consequences of that sacrifice have not yet been manifested throughout creation.

12. Zechariah 12–13 may be one of the most fascinating "future Yom Kippur" passages

This passage deserves serious attention.

Zechariah 12:10 says that God will pour out upon the house of David and Jerusalem a Spirit of grace and supplication.

Then:

> *"they will look on Me whom they pierced"*

and they will mourn deeply.

Then Zechariah 13:1 says:

> *"On that day a fountain shall be opened… for sin and for uncleanness."*

That's an extraordinary sequence:

Pierced One → mourning → Spirit of grace → fountain → cleansing from sin.

And Revelation explicitly connects the "pierced" language with Yeshua:

> *"every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him."*

Revelation then cites Zechariah 12:10.

This strongly suggests a future dimension of Messiah's work in which Israel recognizes the pierced Messiah and experiences profound mourning and cleansing.

And that sounds extraordinarily close to the spiritual themes of Yom Kippur.

13. "They shall mourn" is significant

Yom Kippur isn't merely:

"God forgives us, yay!"

It is a day of humility, repentance, self-affliction and recognition of sin.

Leviticus commands Israel to humble themselves before YHWH.

Now compare Zechariah:

Israel sees the pierced One → mourning → cleansing.

And compare Revelation:

the nations see Him coming → mourning.

And compare Matthew 24:

the tribes of the earth mourn when they see the Son of Man coming in glory.

There is therefore a remarkable biblical pattern:

Yom Kippur – affliction → recognition of sin → atonement → cleansing

Messiah's consummation – seeing the Pierced One → mourning → cleansing → salvation/restoration

I would not claim that Zechariah 12 is simply "Yom Kippur 2.0." Scripture doesn't say that.

But the thematic correspondence is substantial.

14. Yeshua's return completes what His first coming began

This is perhaps the cleanest way to frame it.

Yeshua's first coming – He:

- becomes human
- lives without sin
- becomes the suffering Servant
- gives His life
- sheds His blood
- makes atonement
- rises from the dead
- ascends
- enters the heavenly sanctuary
- intercedes for His people.

Yom Kippur's sacrificial/priestly reality is fulfilled.

The present age – He:

- remains our High Priest
- intercedes
- sanctifies His people
- gives access to God
- gathers His people
- awaits the final defeat of His enemies.

Hebrews describes Him as having offered the one sacrifice and now sitting at God's right hand while awaiting the final consummation.

His second coming – He:

- appears again
- is seen openly
- brings salvation
- judges
- completes the defeat of evil
- brings the fullness of God's kingdom.

Hebrews explicitly says He will appear a second time.

15. There is another amazing connection: Yom Kippur → Jubilee

Leviticus 25 connects the Day of Atonement with the proclamation of Jubilee.

The trumpet of Jubilee is sounded in the seventh month on the Day of Atonement.

And Jubilee means:

- liberty.
- release.
- restoration.
- return of inheritance.
- freedom from bondage.

That gives us another prophetic layer.

Yeshua announces in Luke 4:

> *"He has sent Me to proclaim liberty…"*

and then describes restoration in Jubilee-like language.

So the biblical trajectory can be viewed as:

Yom Kippur → atonement → cleansing → Jubilee → restoration.

And ultimately Revelation describes the restoration of God's dwelling with humanity.

16. The ultimate goal isn't merely forgiveness—it is God's presence

This may be the deepest point of all.

Why does Yom Kippur matter?

Because God wants to dwell among His people.

The problem isn't merely:

> *"People broke rules."*

The deeper problem is:

> *How can sinful humanity live in the presence of a holy God?*

The entire Tabernacle/Temple system revolves around this tension.

Then Hebrews says Yeshua gives us access.

And Revelation 21 brings the story to its destination:

> *"Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men."*

No more separation.

No more temple barrier.

No more sacrificial system.

No more uncleanness.

No more death.

The goal toward which Yom Kippur was pointing reaches its fullest expression:

God dwelling with redeemed humanity forever.

17. So what has Yeshua already fulfilled?

I would summarize the already fulfilled aspects this way:

Yom Kippur	Yeshua
High Priest	Yeshua is the eternal High Priest
Blood of sacrifice	His own blood
Holy of Holies	Heavenly sanctuary
Annual sacrifice	One sacrifice forever
Atonement	Eternal redemption
Cleansing	Cleanses conscience
Bearing sin	Bears/takes away sin
Access to God	Open access through Him
Temporary priesthood	Permanent priesthood
Repeated sacrifices	Once for all

Hebrews makes essentially this entire comparison itself.

18. What remains future?

Not another sacrifice.

This is crucial.

The Bible does not teach that Yeshua will return and die again to complete Yom Kippur.

Hebrews explicitly rules that out.

His sacrifice is finished.

The future fulfillment concerns the application and consummation of what He already accomplished:

- Messiah's visible return
- resurrection

- judgment
- Israel's recognition/mourning
- cleansing
- defeat of evil
- salvation's full manifestation
- restoration of creation
- God's dwelling permanently with humanity.

Hebrews says Yeshua's second appearance is "not to bear sin."

That distinction is incredibly important.

19. The beautiful paradox of Yom Kippur in Yeshua

Yom Kippur is simultaneously about:

- death and life
- judgment and mercy
- holiness and access
- sin and cleansing
- mourning and restoration
- separation and reconciliation
- blood and forgiveness
- humbling and exaltation.

And all of those themes converge in Messiah.

The Cross says: *Sin is serious.*

The resurrection says: *Death doesn't have the final word.*

The ascension says: *The High Priest has entered God's presence.*

The Spirit says: *God's presence has entered His people.*

The Second Coming says: *The work will ultimately be manifested openly throughout creation.*

And the New Jerusalem says: *God will dwell with His people forever.*

A possible “Yom Kippur timeline” in Messiah

Leviticus 16

↓

Earthly High Priest enters Holy of Holies

↓

Blood offered for Israel

↓

Sin symbolically carried away

↓

Sanctuary cleansed

↓

Israel humbled before YHWH

↓

Isaiah 53 – The Servant bears our iniquities

↓

Yeshua's death – The true sacrifice

↓

Resurrection – The High Priest lives forever

↓

Ascension – He enters the heavenly sanctuary

↓

Present age – He intercedes and sanctifies His people

↓

Zechariah 12 – Israel looks upon the Pierced One and mourns

↓

Zechariah 13 – A fountain opens for sin and uncleanness

↓

Second Coming – Messiah appears openly—not to bear sin, but to bring salvation

↓

Judgment and restoration

↓

New Creation – God dwells permanently with His people.

That gives us what I think is the most biblically careful conclusion:

Yeshua did not merely "replace Yom Kippur." He fulfilled what Yom Kippur was prophetically pointing toward. His blood provides the once-for-all atonement. His priesthood provides permanent access to God. His present ministry continues the work of sanctifying His people. And His return will bring the consequences of that atonement into their complete, visible, creation-wide fulfillment.

And perhaps the most beautiful sentence Hebrews gives us for Yom Kippur is:

> *"Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many; and He will appear a second time… to bring salvation."*
> Hebrews 9:28

So there are really two appearances surrounding the great Yom Kippur mystery:

First appearance: He comes to bear sin.

Second appearance: He comes without bearing sin, to bring salvation.

And between them stands the living High Priest, Yeshua, in the presence of the Father for us.

PART SEVEN

Christian Living & Relationships

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CHRISTIAN LIVING & RELATIONSHIPS

Being Content with the Little Blessings

By Gregory John Wilson • November 24, 2026

Let me ask you something. When was the last time you just STOPPED… and gave thanks?

Not for the big things – the new job, the answered prayer, the healing (though praise God for those!). I mean the little things. A tranquil moment on the porch. The beautiful leaves falling from the trees in autumn, or springing back to life in spring. A hot cup of coffee in the morning. A movie on the couch with your spouse. Sometimes the small things make a big difference.

> *"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning."*
>
> James 1:17 (NKJV)

EVERY good gift. Not just the big ones. That cup of coffee? From above. The laughter of your kids in the next room? From above. The cool breeze on a hot day? You guessed it.

The Never-Ending "More"

So what is the opposite of being content? It's always needing or wanting MORE. The next thing to buy. The next upgrade. The next vacation, the next promotion, the next notification. Our whole culture runs on telling us we don't have enough yet – and we believe it.

> *"All things are full of labor; man cannot express it. The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing."*
>
> Ecclesiastes 1:8 (NKJV)

Solomon had everything a man could want, and he found that MORE never satisfies. The eye is never satisfied with seeing. There is always one more thing. And if we are always chasing the next thing, we miss the blessing sitting right in front of us, today.

Godliness With Contentment

> *"Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content."*
>
> 1 Timothy 6:6–8 (NKJV)

Great GAIN! Paul says contentment is not a loss – it is profit. The person who is content in God is richer than the person who has everything and still wants more. We came in with nothing and we'll go out with nothing. So everything in between is a gift.

And Paul knew what he was talking about. He wrote this from hard places:

> *"Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need."*
>
> Philippians 4:11–12 (NKJV)

Notice the word LEARNED. Contentment doesn't come naturally to our flesh. It is learned – one thank-You at a time.

So How Do We Learn It?

1. Stop

We can't notice a blessing we rush past. So slow down. When you take that first sip of coffee, really taste it. When you see the leaves turning gold and red, actually look. When your spouse laughs at the movie, enjoy that moment. Treasure it up in your heart, like Mary did (Luke 2:19).

2. Give Thanks

Then turn it toward Heaven: "Thank You, Father, for this." Out loud or in your heart. It only takes a second, but it changes everything. A blessing received with thanks becomes a moment with God.

> *"In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."*
>
> 1 Thessalonians 5:18 (NKJV)

3. Let It Be Enough

This is the hard part. Instead of immediately reaching for the next thing, let the one good thing be enough – for now. One good conversation. One good meal. One quiet evening. Be satisfied, and say so.

4. Remember the Greatest Gift

Under all the little blessings is the biggest one: the Father Himself, and the gift of His Son. If we have Him, we have what matters most.

> *"Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.'"*
>
> Hebrews 13:5 (NKJV)

Conclusion

Contentment isn't about having less ambition or never wanting anything. It's about seeing what you ALREADY have as gifts from a loving Father – and thanking Him for them. The tranquil moment. The falling leaves and the spring blossoms. The cup of coffee. The movie with your spouse. Sometimes the small things really do make a big difference.

So today, try this: stop three times and give thanks for something small. You might find that you're richer than you thought.

Shalom,
-Greg

Want to talk or pray about this together?

(316) 771-9721

CHRISTIAN LIVING & RELATIONSHIPS

Navigating the Modern Digital World

By Gregory John Wilson • November 24, 2026

SO many things are managed digitally these days. And with a smartphone – NOW with SUPER smart AI capabilities – we have mobile access to the digital world-wide world of data, and we can manage things on the go. For example, transferring money to a bank account with an app, or sending an online invoice to a client that can be paid online, all while sitting in a parking lot.

Also, from interactive maps to having huge libraries of photos and videos with us wherever we go, to being able to look up information about practically anything, NOT TO MENTION all the social media apps that invite us into endless doomscrolling – and then also navigating instant communication with our network of friends, family, co-workers and colleagues, sometimes world-wide!!!

ALL THIS CAN BECOME ADDICTING. It IS AMAZING, everything you can do from a device with internet – whether smartphone, tablet, or computer. I mean that. Think of what a person a hundred years ago would say if they saw it! But anything that powerful in our hands needs to be handled with wisdom.

> *"All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any."*
>
> 1 Corinthians 6:12 (NKJV)

The Dark Side

BUT… in all this, what is the dark side? Let me name a few.

- **Always on edge.** Being on edge, always thinking you have to check notifications and messages – addicted to that dopamine hit when the DING sounds on your phone. Our minds rarely get to rest, because the next little buzz could come at any moment.
- **Pulled away from what matters.** Taking people away from other responsibilities, and from family, and from doing their work well. How many dinners have been spent with every head bowed – not in prayer, but over a screen?

- **Ensnared in sin.** Worse yet – addicting sexual content online, ensnaring men in sin. What used to take effort to find is now one tap away, any hour of the night. This is a real battle, and many good men are losing it in secret.

So. The Solution?

Ditch the digital world altogether? Not practical. The world runs on all this data – as well as your personal network of people needing things from you, via documents or messages, etc. As well as just managing bank accounts and bills and documents you have to send – for applying to jobs, or for school, or things the government needs, or for work. For most of us, throwing the phone in the river is not the answer.

A Digital Detox

So, the term *digital detox* is out there… and that's a good start. At the end of the day, put the devices aside and relax. Enjoy your family. Or enjoy solitude, praying to God and feeling His presence and being calmed by Him. Maybe even keep the phone in another room at night, so the last voice you hear before you sleep and the first one you hear when you wake is His, not a screen's.

The Best Treasure

But also throughout the day. What is the BEST treasure?? Is it all the treasures of data in your phone when you have cellular service or wifi? That stuff is really neat… BUT. THERE IS A BETTER TREASURE.

> *"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."*
> Matthew 6:21 (NKJV)

It is found by pausing, reflecting, and praying. He will bring a peace, a delight, a joy that supersedes the joy from tech. Instead of reaching for the phone in a quiet moment – in line at the store, at a red light (please don't text and drive!), waiting for a meeting – try reaching for Him instead: "Father, You're here. Thank You."

> *"You will show me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore."*
> Psalm 16:11 (NKJV)

Tech Is Just a Window

I will say also that tech is just a window… to accessing GOOD things TOO. A text from a friend CAN lift you up. A song, too! Or a good YouTube video! The question is in the excess and the addictive aspect – where you are always seeking that high, instead of being satisfied with, say, one good text, and then going out and doing something in nature, being happy about that one good text you got.

Contentment is the key. One good gift, received with thanks, is better than a hundred grabbed in a hurry and never enjoyed.

When the Content Itself Is Wrong

Of course, if one is accessing morally bad content on the phone, that is obviously not good in any sense, and that should be avoided at all costs – whether it means getting off an app, putting a filter on your device, giving someone you trust accountability, or whatever it takes. Yeshua didn't mince words about it:

> *"If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell."*
> Matthew 5:29 (NKJV)

I personally had to leave the Meta world of Facebook and Instagram. WhatsApp is OK for me. Your list might look different – but be honest with yourself and with God about what is pulling you down, and cut it off.

Conclusion

The digital world is here to stay, and much of it is a real blessing. But it makes a terrible master. So let's use our devices as tools and windows, not as a hiding place or a never-ending feed of little highs. Put them down at the end of the day. Pause during the day to pray and enjoy the better Treasure. Receive the good things with thanks and be satisfied. And where something is dragging you into sin, cut it off, whatever it costs.

And remember: the One who made you is not competing for your attention with a notification sound. He is simply waiting, with a peace and joy no screen can give. Seek Him first, and let everything else find its place.

Shalom,
-Greg

Want to chat about this more to find victory in this area?

(316) 771-9721

CHRISTIAN LIVING & RELATIONSHIPS

The Tree of Knowing

Why knowledge without the Father's living voice puffs us up, and what it means to be a child who is led

By Gregory John Wilson • November 16, 2026

The main idea: When Adam and Eve ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, their eyes really were opened. But in gaining that knowledge, humanity took up a role we were never made for: relying on what *we* know instead of living by the living voice of our Father. That same fruit still grows today, in pride, in quick judgment, and even in how we handle the Bible. God's call is not to be the ones who know it all, but to be His children who love Him, are known by Him, and walk as He guides.

1. A Little Lesson From My Daughter

I love my daughter dearly. And she taught me something about this without meaning to.

Not long ago I taught her one little thing. A simple fact, a small skill. She took it in, and she was proud of it, which made me glad. But a little while later, she turned around and began quizzing *me* on it. "Do you know how this works, Dad?" And she carried herself as though she knew everything about the subject, even though she didn't, and even though I was the one who had taught it to her in the first place!

I had to smile. But it also made me stop and think. Isn't that what we so often do with our Father? He teaches us a little, and before long we are acting as though we understand it all, correcting others, even questioning Him, as if the knowledge were ours and not His gift.

> *"And if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know. But if anyone loves God, this one is known by Him."*
>
> 1 Corinthians 8:2–3 (NKJV)

Just before that, Paul puts it even more plainly: "Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies" (1 Corinthians 8:1).

2. Back to the Garden

In the beginning, God placed the man in a garden full of good things, with one boundary:

> *"Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."*
>
> Genesis 2:16–17 (NKJV)

Then the serpent came with his offer:

> *"For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."*
>
> Genesis 3:5 (NKJV)

Notice what the temptation really was. It wasn't mainly about fruit. It was about *knowing* for ourselves, independently, deciding good and evil on our own terms, instead of trusting the One who already knew and who walked with them in the cool of the day.

3. Their Eyes Really Were Opened

Here is something we often skip over. The serpent was lying about death, but he was not entirely wrong about knowledge. After they ate, God Himself said:

> *"Then the LORD God said, 'Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil.'"*
>
> Genesis 3:22 (NKJV)

"Like one of *Us*." The Father, the Son and the Spirit acknowledge that humanity had truly taken hold of something that belonged to God's own role: the knowledge of good and evil.

So the problem wasn't that the knowledge was false. The problem was that it was never meant to be *our* job. It came without the wisdom, the love and the perfect holiness that only God has to handle it rightly.

> *"Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings."*
>
> Genesis 3:7 (NKJV)

4. Our Role: Children, Not Judges

We were made to be something simpler, and far more beautiful: children of a Father, walking with Him, listening to His voice, doing what He shows us.

> *"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God."*
> Romans 8:14 (NKJV)

> *"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me."*
> John 10:27 (NKJV)

> *"Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and depart from evil."*
> Proverbs 3:5–7 (NKJV)

Even Jesus, the perfect Son, lived this way: "the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do" (John 5:19). If the Son of God lived by the Father's living direction, how much more do we need to?

And He told us plainly how to enter His kingdom: "unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:3). Not as little know-it-alls. As little children, who know they still have much to learn, and who look up to their Father.

5. The Fruit Still Grows: Pride and Judgment

We still reach for that tree every day. We learn a little and start to feel we know a lot. We become quick to judge, quick to correct, quick to decide who is right and who is wrong. And so often, like my daughter quizzing her dad, we are confidently *wrong*.

> *"Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him."*
> Proverbs 26:12 (NKJV)

> *"And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge… but have not love, I am nothing."*
>
> 1 Corinthians 13:2 (NKJV)

> *"For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known."*
>
> 1 Corinthians 13:12 (NKJV)

"I know in part." If the apostle Paul could say that, we can say it too.

6. A Warning About the 66 Books

This is where it gets close to home for those of us who love the Bible. The Scriptures are God's word, holy and true, and I treasure them. But it is possible to read all 66 books, even many times, and still come away with the fruit of the tree of knowing: confident, prideful, and grossly mistaken in our interpretation and application.

I sometimes think the number 66 itself is almost a warning to us. Mere knowledge of the books, apart from the guidance of the Holy Spirit, can lead us badly astray. Jesus said this to the most knowledgeable Bible scholars of His day:

> *"You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life."*
>
> John 5:39–40 (NKJV)

> *"…who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life."*
>
> 2 Corinthians 3:6 (NKJV)

Peter even warned that some passages are "hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures" (2 Peter 3:16). The answer isn't to read less. It's to read humbly, prayerfully, and in step with the Author.

> *"However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth."*
>
> John 16:13 (NKJV)

7. A Living Voice, Not a Static Rulebook

God's word is not a dead list. It is alive, because its Author is alive:

> *"For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword… and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."*
>
> Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV)

His voice will always be in accordance with His character as revealed in His word. He will never lead us into sin or contradict who He is. But He is a Person, not a machine. How He responds, what He asks of us, and how He guides us depends on the whole context of each situation, which only He can fully see.

First, there are situations where even a lie served a just cause. When Rahab hid the Israelite spies and sent the king's men the wrong way, she was protecting lives, and God honored her faith (Joshua 2:1–6):

> *"By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace."*
>
> Hebrews 11:31 (NKJV)

But caution here. This is never a loophole to hide our sin or to get away with something. Rahab was shielding others from harm, not covering for herself.

Now think of a child who lies. Lying is still wrong; that never changes. But what if the child lied out of fear of unjust rage and emotional abuse if the truth came out? How would Father God respond? He sees the fear, the pressure, and the whole heart behind it. Even when the lie is technically wrong, He can deal with it in mercy, with a compassion and wisdom that a rulebook alone could never supply.

David and the showbread

We see this in Scripture itself. When David and his men were fleeing for their lives from King Saul, hungry and in need, the priest gave them the holy showbread, which the law said was only for the priests to eat (1 Samuel 21:1–6; Leviticus 24:5–9). And Jesus did not condemn it. He pointed to it:

> *"But He said to them, 'Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him: how he entered the house of God and ate the showbread which was not lawful for him to eat, nor for those who were with him, but only for the priests?… But if you had known what this means, "I desire mercy and not sacrifice," you would not have condemned the guiltless.'"*
>
> Matthew 12:3–4, 7 (NKJV)

The Pharisees knew the rule perfectly. What they lacked was the heart of the One who gave it. Mercy, in that moment, was the deeper obedience.

8. What This Is NOT

- **It isn't a reason to set the Bible aside.** The Spirit speaks in harmony with the word He inspired. We need both: the written word and the living voice of its Author.
- **It isn't permission to do whatever we feel.** "Being led" can never be an excuse for sin. God's guidance always reflects His holy and loving character.
- **It isn't a dismissal of learning.** Study, teaching and sound doctrine matter. The danger is not knowledge itself, but knowledge that makes us proud, closed, and no longer listening.

9. Living by the Tree of Life

There were two trees in the middle of the garden. One offered knowledge apart from God. The other offered life with Him. In Jesus, the way back to that tree of life is opened again (Revelation 2:7, 22:14). Here are a few ways to walk in it:

- **Hold what you know with open hands.** Be willing to say, "I might be wrong," and "I know in part."
- **Read the Scriptures with prayer.** Before you open the book, ask the Author to open your understanding (Luke 24:45).
- **Listen before you judge.** "He who answers a matter before he hears it, it is folly and shame to him" (Proverbs 18:13).
- **Ask the Father in each situation.** "Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, 'This is the way, walk in it'" (Isaiah 30:21).
- **Let love lead.** Knowledge puffs up; love builds up.

> *"But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy."*
>
> James 3:17 (NKJV)

10. A Prayer

Father, forgive me for the times I have reached for the tree of knowing, trusting my own understanding and judging others as if I had the whole picture. I know only in part. Make me a little child again, loving You, known by You, and listening for Your voice. As I read Your word, let Your Spirit open my eyes and guide me into Your truth, with Your mercy and Your heart. Lead me today, in this situation and the next, and I will follow. In Jesus' name, amen.

Closing thought: We don't need to know everything. We need to know the One who does, and to be known by Him. A child holding her Father's hand doesn't have to have all the answers. She just has to keep listening, and keep walking where He leads.

CHRISTIAN LIVING & RELATIONSHIPS

Husbands… You Gotta Submit Too!

"Submitting to one another in the fear of God." — Ephesians 5:21 (NKJV)

By Gregory John Wilson • November 1, 2026

The main idea: Most of us know the verse that says wives should submit to their husbands. Fewer of us notice the verse right before it, which calls *all* believers to submit to one another. Yes, God has given the husband the role of head and leader of the home. But a wise husband also knows when to listen to his wife, receive her counsel and yield to her. Behind every good man is a good woman, supporting him and making him better, and sometimes, as with Moses, even saving his life.

1. The Verse Before the Famous Verse

Many husbands could quote this one from memory:

> *"Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body."*
>
> Ephesians 5:22–23 (NKJV)

But just one sentence earlier, Paul wrote something addressed to every believer in the church: men and women, husbands and wives alike.

> *"…submitting to one another in the fear of God."*
>
> Ephesians 5:21 (NKJV)

In fact, in many of the oldest Greek manuscripts, verse 22 doesn't even have its own verb. It borrows "submitting" from verse 21. Paul's teaching on marriage grows right out of a call for *mutual* humility. Before he says anything about roles, he says we all bow low before one another, because we all bow low before God.

2. Yes, the Husband Leads

Let's be clear and peaceful about this: mutual submission does not erase God's order. Scripture does call the husband the head of his wife and the leader of his home. That is a real calling, and a weighty one.

But notice what kind of leadership it is. The very next instruction to husbands is not "make sure she obeys you"; it is this:

> *"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her."*
>
> Ephesians 5:25 (NKJV)

Christ leads by laying down His life. He leads by serving.

> *"Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."*
>
> Mark 10:43–45 (NKJV)

> *"If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet."*
>
> John 13:14 (NKJV)

A husband who leads like Jesus will often find himself kneeling, not lording it over anyone.

3. Behind Every Good Man Is a Good Woman

When God made the woman, He described her this way:

> *"And the LORD God said, 'It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him.'"*
>
> Genesis 2:18 (NKJV)

The Hebrew word for "helper" is *ezer*. It is not a word for a servant or an assistant. Most often in Scripture, it is used of God Himself: "My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth" (Psalm 121:2). A wife is a strong, God-given help, standing alongside her husband to make him better and complete what is lacking.

> *"The heart of her husband safely trusts her; so he will have no lack of gain. She does him good and not evil all the days of her life."*
>
> Proverbs 31:11–12 (NKJV)

> *"Her husband is known in the gates, when he sits among the elders of the land."*
>
> Proverbs 31:23 (NKJV)

> *"She opens her mouth with wisdom, and on her tongue is the law of kindness."*
>
> Proverbs 31:26 (NKJV)

Notice that the husband in Proverbs 31 is respected in the city gates, and the chapter makes it clear that much of the reason is the wise, faithful woman beside him. As another proverb puts it:

> *"An excellent wife is the crown of her husband…"*
>
> Proverbs 12:4 (NKJV)

4. Moses: Saved by His Wife

Moses was one of the greatest men of God who ever lived. He spoke with God face to face. He led Israel out of Egypt. And yet, on his way back to Egypt to begin that very mission, something startling happened:

> *"And it came to pass on the way, at the encampment, that the LORD met him and sought to kill him. Then Zipporah took a sharp stone and cut off the foreskin of her son and cast it at Moses' feet, and said, 'Surely you are a husband of blood to me!' So He let him go. Then she said, 'You are a husband of blood!'—because of the circumcision."*
>
> Exodus 4:24–26 (NKJV)

It is a mysterious passage, and we don't know every detail. But the heart of it is clear. Circumcision was the sign of God's covenant with Abraham's descendants (Genesis 17:10–14), and Moses had not been obedient in circumcising his son. The man about to lead God's people had neglected God's command in his own home, and it was serious enough that his life was on the line.

And who stepped in? His wife. Zipporah saw what needed to be done, and she did it. Her quick obedience saved her husband's life.

Husbands, let that humble us. Even the great Moses had a blind spot, and God used his wife to set it right. Sometimes the Lord's correction for us comes through the woman sitting across the dinner table.

5. Other Husbands Who Listened, and One Who Didn't

Abraham and Sarah

When Sarah urged Abraham to send Hagar and Ishmael away, Abraham was deeply troubled. But God Himself told Abraham to listen to his wife:

> *"But God said to Abraham, 'Do not let it be displeasing in your sight because of the lad or because of your bondwoman. Whatever Sarah has said to you, listen to her voice; for in Isaac your seed shall be called.'"*
>
> Genesis 21:12 (NKJV)

David and Abigail

When David was on his way to take revenge on foolish Nabal, Abigail met him with gifts and wise words. David humbly received her counsel, and later she became his wife:

> *"Then David said to Abigail: 'Blessed is the LORD God of Israel, who sent you this day to meet me! And blessed is your advice and blessed are you, because you have kept me this day from coming to bloodshed and from avenging myself with my own hand.'"*
>
> 1 Samuel 25:32–33 (NKJV)

Pilate, who did not listen

On the other hand, when Jesus stood on trial, Pilate's wife sent him a warning:

> *"While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent to him, saying, 'Have nothing to do with that just Man, for I have suffered many things today in a dream because of Him.'"*
>
> Matthew 27:19 (NKJV)

Pilate did not heed her, and he handed the innocent Son of God over to be crucified. How different history might remember him if he had listened.

6. What Submitting Looks Like for a Husband

Submitting to your wife doesn't mean giving up your God-given responsibility to lead. It means leading with a humble, open heart. In practice, it can look like this:

- **Truly listening.** "Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath" (James 1:19). Ask for her thoughts, and actually weigh them.
- **Receiving her counsel and correction.** "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but he who heeds counsel is wise" (Proverbs 12:15).
- **Yielding your preferences.** Not every decision is a hill to die on. "Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others" (Philippians 2:4).
- **Honoring her as a co-heir.** "Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife… as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered" (1 Peter 3:7).
- **Remembering you belong to each other.** "The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does" (1 Corinthians 7:4).
- **Admitting when she's right.** It takes a secure man to say, "You were right, and I was wrong. Thank you." That's not weakness; that's Christlike strength.

> *"Nevertheless, neither is man independent of woman, nor woman independent of man, in the Lord. For as woman came from man, even so man also comes through woman; but all things are from God."*
> 1 Corinthians 11:11–12 (NKJV)

7. A Word of Wisdom and Balance

Mutual submission is not a tug-of-war, and it isn't about who gets their way. Both husband and wife are submitting, first and foremost, to God: "in the fear of God." That means:

- **A husband still leads.** Listening to his wife is part of wise leadership, not a replacement for it. He remains responsible before God for the direction of his home.
- **Neither follows the other into sin.** Adam listened to his wife when she offered him the forbidden fruit, and God held him accountable (Genesis 3:17). Zipporah, on the other hand, led Moses *toward* obedience. The question is always, "What does God say?" "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29).

- **It flows from love, not pressure.** Submission is offered freely, as an act of worship to Jesus, never demanded or manipulated by either spouse.

When both spouses bow low before God and before each other, the home becomes a place of peace. (See also The Gracious Husband and the poem Through the Eyes of Grace.)

8. A Prayer for Husbands

> *Lord Jesus, thank You for the wife You have given me. Thank You that You made her a strong helper, comparable to me, and that You often speak to me through her. Forgive me for the times I have been proud, stubborn or unwilling to listen. Teach me to lead the way You lead: by serving, by laying down my life, by washing feet. Give me ears to hear her wisdom, humility to receive her correction, and grace to say, "You were right." Let us submit to one another in the fear of God, and let our home be filled with Your peace. In Your name, amen.*

> **Closing thought:** Being the head of the home was never meant to make a man too big to bow. The strongest husbands are the humblest ones: men who lead like Jesus, listen like Abraham and David, and thank God for the Zipporah beside them. Husbands, you gotta submit too, and you'll be a better man for it.

CHRISTIAN LIVING & RELATIONSHIPS

What Do We Do with Halloween?

By Gregory John Wilson • October 31, 2026

The main idea: Halloween grew out of an ancient festival centered on the dead and the spirit world, and today it is still treated as a sacred night by many who practice the occult. The Bible is clear that the devil is real and that witchcraft is real. God's people are called to fix their minds on what is good, pure and lovely, not to make a game of darkness and fear. And if we want something truly worth trembling over, it isn't ghosts or goblins; it is the eternal state of a soul that has not yet come home to God through Jesus.

Many of us have warm memories tied to this time of year: costumes, candy, crisp autumn nights, laughing with friends. I understand that, and I don't write this to shame anyone or to scold children for enjoying a treat. But as followers of Jesus, we are called to ask honest questions about what we celebrate, and why. So let's look at Halloween together, gently, but without looking away from what it really is.

1. Where Halloween Came From

The Celtic festival of Samhain

Long before Halloween, the Celtic peoples of Ireland, Scotland and nearby lands kept a festival called *Samhain* (pronounced "SOW-in") around November 1. It marked the end of the harvest and the beginning of the dark half of the year. It was believed that on this night the boundary between the living and the dead grew thin, and that spirits, fairies and the souls of the dead walked among the living.

People lit bonfires, left out food and drink to appease the spirits, practiced forms of divination to learn the future, and wore disguises so that wandering spirits would not recognize them. In other words, the heart of the festival was fear of the dead and dealings with the spirit world.

All Hallows' Eve

As Christianity spread, the church gradually set November 1 as All Saints' Day (also called All Hallows' Day), to remember believers who had gone before, and later November 2 as All Souls' Day. The evening before, October 31, became *All Hallows' Eve*, which was shortened over time to "Halloween."

But rather than replacing the old customs, the new observance often absorbed them. Going door to door for "soul cakes" in exchange for prayers for the dead, dressing up in disguises, and carving faces into turnips to frighten away spirits (the forerunner of the jack-o'-lantern) all carried on. Irish and Scottish immigrants brought these traditions to America in the 1800s, and over the following century they grew into the costumes, trick-or-treating, haunted houses and horror films we know today.

The "trick" behind the treat

Long before it was a children's game, the treat began as a payoff to the spirits. In the old Samhain beliefs, the *aos sí* (the fairy folk of Irish and Scottish folklore) and the restless dead roamed the land that night. Families left out food and drink to appease them, so that their people and their livestock would make it safely through the winter. The unspoken threat was clear: give the spirits their due, or suffer harm. That is the real "trick" at the root of it all: not a child's prank, but the fear of what dark spirits might do if they were not paid off.

Over time, people in disguise came to the door in the spirits' place. In Scotland and Ireland, "guisers" went from house to house in costume asking for food or coins, and the night became known for mischief and pranks against those who would not give. By 1927 the phrase "trick or treat" was appearing in print in North America: give us something, or we'll make you sorry.

So underneath the candy is a very old pattern: an offering made out of fear, to keep evil from striking. Scripture calls that kind of offering what it is:

> *"Rather, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons."*
> 1 Corinthians 10:20 (NKJV)

You may have heard that Druid priests went door to door demanding offerings and placing curses on homes that refused. I could not find solid historical evidence for that story, and I don't want to pass it on as fact. But the history we do have is dark enough: a night built around appeasing spirits so they would not do harm.

What it still is for some

For many families, Halloween is "just fun." But it is worth knowing that for those who practice witchcraft and neo-paganism today, Samhain is one of the most important nights of their year, and some openly satanic groups count Halloween among their highest holidays. The themes that fill store shelves this time of year (death, ghosts, witches, demons, curses, séances and fear) are not neutral. They are the very things God's Word tells His people to have nothing to do with.

> *"There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, or one who practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. For all who do these things are an abomination to the LORD, and because of these abominations the LORD your God drives them out from before you."*
>
> Deuteronomy 18:10–12 (NKJV)

2. The Spiritual Reality Is Real

Our culture often treats the devil as a cartoon in red pajamas with a pitchfork. That is exactly how he would like to be seen. But the trusted Word of God speaks plainly: there is a real enemy, and there are real spiritual forces of evil.

> *"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour."*
>
> 1 Peter 5:8 (NKJV)

> *"For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places."*
>
> Ephesians 6:12 (NKJV)

> *"The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly."*
>
> John 10:10 (NKJV)

Witchcraft is not make-believe

Scripture also shows that there are people who draw on the devil's power to do witchcraft, sorcery and divination, to curse and harm others instead of blessing them. Pharaoh's magicians copied some of Moses' signs "with their enchantments" (Exodus 7:11). In Philippi, Paul met a slave girl "possessed with a spirit of divination" whose fortune-telling earned her masters much money, until Paul cast the spirit out in the name of Jesus (Acts 16:16–18). And Scripture lists sorcery among the works of the flesh:

> *"Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God."*
>
> Galatians 5:19–21 (NKJV)

God's way is the opposite of the curse. His people are called to bless, even those who mistreat them: "Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse" (Romans 12:14).

But we do not need to be afraid

If you belong to Jesus, hear this clearly: the enemy is real, but he is not your equal, and he is not God's equal. Jesus has already triumphed over him at the cross (Colossians 2:15).

> *"You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world."*
>
> 1 John 4:4 (NKJV)

> *"Like a flitting sparrow, like a flying swallow, so a curse without cause shall not alight."*
>
> Proverbs 26:2 (NKJV)

> *"Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you."*
>
> James 4:7 (NKJV)

3. When God Allows the Enemy to Strike

This is a sobering truth: God is so sovereign that He can even use the devil's attacks to bring about His purposes. Satan could only touch Job as far as God allowed (Job 1:12). When King Saul kept rebelling, "the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and a distressing spirit from the LORD troubled him" (1 Samuel 16:14). And Paul told the church to hand an unrepentant man over "to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (1 Corinthians 5:5).

But that is not God's ideal will. His heart is to bless, protect and give life.

> *"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope."*
>
> Jeremiah 29:11 (NKJV)

> *"Say to them: 'As I live,' says the Lord GOD, 'I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways! For why should you die, O house of Israel?'"*
>
> Ezekiel 33:11 (NKJV)

When people keep on sinning and refuse to repent, they open doors through which the enemy can come in to harm and oppress them. That is why Scripture warns, "nor give place to the devil" (Ephesians 4:27). Playing with the occult, even "just for fun," is one of those open doors.

I want to say this gently, too: not every hardship is the result of someone's sin. Job was blameless, and Jesus said of the man born blind that neither he nor his parents had sinned (John 9:3). So we don't point fingers at the suffering. But we do take seriously the doors we open in our own lives, and we close them through repentance.

4. The Thrill of "Spooky"

There is a strange phenomenon this time of year: people enjoy being scared. Haunted houses, horror movies, skeleton decorations, eerie music. The racing heart and the shiver down the spine can feel exciting. It's presented as harmless fun.

But fear is not a toy. What we let into our eyes and ears shapes our hearts. Fear, especially for young children, does not simply disappear when the lights come back on. It lingers in nightmares, in anxiety, in a sense that the darkness is powerful and close. Children absorb what we celebrate, and they learn that death, demons and dread are things to be enjoyed.

Over and over, the Bible tells God's people the opposite: *do not be afraid.*

> *"Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand."*
>
> Isaiah 41:10 (NKJV)

> *"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind."*
>
> 2 Timothy 1:7 (NKJV)

> *"There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love."*
>
> 1 John 4:18 (NKJV)

And God tells us exactly where to set our minds:

> *"Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things."*
>
> Philippians 4:8 (NKJV)

> *"I will set nothing wicked before my eyes…"*
>
> Psalm 101:3 (NKJV)

Mixing joy with darkness

Here is the heart of the problem: "spooky fun" tries to mix something good (joy, laughter, celebration, community) with something dark (death, evil spirits, witchcraft and fear). When you mix the two, the result isn't neutral. It's tainted. A little poison in a glass of water doesn't make the poison harmless; it makes the water unsafe to drink.

> *"Does a spring send forth fresh water and bitter from the same opening?"*
>
> James 3:11 (NKJV)

> *"Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!"*
>
> Isaiah 5:20 (NKJV)

> *"And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them."*
>
> Ephesians 5:11 (NKJV)

Paul wrote, "I want you to be wise in what is good, and simple concerning evil" (Romans 16:19). We don't need to become experts in darkness, or entertained by it. We are children of the light.

5. So What Do We Do?

Every family will need to seek the Lord on the details, but here are some ways to hold your ground with grace:

- **Step away from the darkness.** Leave behind the costumes, decorations and entertainment that celebrate death, witches, demons and fear. "Abstain from every form of evil" (1 Thessalonians 5:22).
- **Don't hide in fear, either.** We don't need to cower behind locked doors. We belong to the One who is greater.
- **Shine as light to your neighbors.** Some families keep the porch dark; others choose to open the door and bless children with kindness, a treat and a word of hope, without joining in the darkness. Either way, let love, not judgment, be what your neighbors remember.
- **Fill the night with good.** Gather for a meal, a game night, a time of worship or a "light party" with your children. Pray for your neighborhood. Fun and joy belong to God's people; we just don't need darkness mixed in to enjoy them.
- **Remember another October 31.** On this date in 1517, Martin Luther posted his ninety-five theses, sparking the Reformation and a return to Scripture and the grace of God. It's a fine night to thank God for His Word.
- **Close any open doors.** If you have dabbled in the occult (fortune-telling, Ouija boards, spells, mediums or the like), confess it, renounce it, and get rid of anything connected to it. When the people of Ephesus came to faith, "many of those who had practiced magic brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all" (Acts 19:19).

6. If You Want to Be Afraid of Something…

If you really want to feel fear this Halloween, set aside the plastic skeletons and the scary movies, and consider something real: the state of your soul.

Jesus didn't tell us to fear ghosts or curses. He told us what is truly worth fearing:

> *"And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."*
>
> Matthew 10:28 (NKJV)

> *"And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."*
>
> Matthew 25:46 (NKJV)

> *"And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire."*
>
> Revelation 20:15 (NKJV)

If you have never repented of your sin and given your life to your Creator, then the most frightening thing in the world is not a haunted house; it is facing eternity apart from God, in a torment that does not end. I say that with tears, not with a pointing finger, because the same Jesus who warned us about hell came to save us from it.

The way out of the darkness

> *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved."*
>
> John 3:16–17 (NKJV)

> *"He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love."*
>
> Colossians 1:13 (NKJV)

> *"Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, 'I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.'"*
>
> John 8:12 (NKJV)

> *"…that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved."*
>
> Romans 10:9 (NKJV)

Turn to the Father today. Confess your sin, trust in Jesus who died and rose again for you, and receive His Holy Spirit. He will bring you out of the darkness into His marvelous light (1 Peter 2:9), and you will never need to be afraid of the dark again. (See also "Everything's Going to Be Okay": True or Not? and The Blanket of Night.)

7. A Prayer

Father, thank You that You are light, and in You is no darkness at all. Forgive me for every time I have treated evil as entertainment, or let fear take root in my heart or in my children's hearts. I renounce every work of darkness and close every door I have opened to the enemy. Fill my mind with what is true, pure and lovely. Protect my family under Your wings. Let my home be a light to my neighbors, full of kindness and truth. And for anyone reading this who does not yet know You, draw them out of darkness into the light of Jesus, their Savior. In His name, amen.

Closing thought: Let's not mix darkness and light this year and in all years to come. In Jesus we get something far better: a joy that isn't mixed with darkness, and a peace that no darkness can touch. Let's leave the shadows behind and walk as children of the light, and lovingly invite others to come with us.

CHRISTIAN LIVING & RELATIONSHIPS

Working From Rest: Living Every Moment in His Peace

By Gregory John Wilson • October 28, 2026

The main idea: God calls us to do everything (our work, our relationships, our growth in holiness) from a place of *rest* in our hearts. We rest in Jesus' finished work on the cross, which secures our salvation and will complete our sanctification. We rest in His faithfulness to take care of us and in His perfect timing. And we do it **moment by moment**, even in the middle of a busy, overwhelming shift, tasting His joy and peace right now as we lean on Him.

1. The Invitation: "Come to Me"

Most of us live the other way around. We work, strive, and push, and hope to find rest when it's all done. But Jesus offers rest *first*, and then invites us to work alongside Him, yoked together, with Him carrying the weight.

> *"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."*
>
> Matthew 11:28–30 (NKJV)

Notice He doesn't say there will be no yoke. There is still work to do. But it is *His* yoke, shared with a Master who is "gentle and lowly in heart." That changes everything about how the work feels.

2. Resting in the Cross for Our Salvation

The foundation of all rest is this: the work that saves us is already done.

> *"So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, 'It is finished!' And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit."*
>
> John 19:30 (NKJV)

> *"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast."*
>
> Ephesians 2:8–9 (NKJV)

> *"There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His."*
>
> Hebrews 4:9–10 (NKJV)

You don't have to strive and scramble to win God's smile by how productive you are. If you belong to Jesus and walk with Him, you are accepted in the Beloved (Ephesians 1:6). Start there, every morning, and then obey Him from that place of rest.

3. Resting in Him for Our Sanctification, Too

Many believers rest in the cross for forgiveness but then go back to anxious striving to become holy. Paul confronted that directly:

> *"Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?"*
>
> Galatians 3:3 (NKJV)

The same Lord who began the work is the One who will finish it:

> *"…being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ."*
>
> Philippians 1:6 (NKJV)

> *"For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified."*
>
> Hebrews 10:14 (NKJV)

> *"Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it."*
>
> 1 Thessalonians 5:23–24 (NKJV)

This doesn't mean we sit back and do nothing. We obey, we repent, we put His teachings into practice. But we do it as branches drawing life from the Vine, not as people trying to manufacture fruit on our own.

> *"Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure."*
>
> Philippians 2:12–13 (NKJV)

> *"I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing."*
>
> John 15:5 (NKJV)

4. Resting in His Faithfulness to Take Care of Us

Much of our stress comes from feeling that it all depends on us: the bills, the schedule, the outcome. But we have a Shepherd.

> *"The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul."*
>
> Psalm 23:1–3 (NKJV)

> *"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble."*
>
> Matthew 6:33–34 (NKJV)

> *"…casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you."*
> 1 Peter 5:7 (NKJV)

> *"Through the LORD's mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness."*
> Lamentations 3:22–23 (NKJV)

> *"It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows; for so He gives His beloved sleep."*
> Psalm 127:2 (NKJV)

5. Trusting His Timing: Don't Rush

Hurry is often a sign that we've stopped trusting. The person who believes God is in control doesn't have to panic.

> *"Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: 'Behold, I lay in Zion a stone for a foundation, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation; whoever believes will not act hastily.'"*
> Isaiah 28:16 (NKJV)

> *"Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him…"*
> Psalm 37:7 (NKJV)

> *"My times are in Your hand…"*
> Psalm 31:15 (NKJV)

> *"He has made everything beautiful in its time."*
> Ecclesiastes 3:11 (NKJV)

> *"But those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint."*
> Isaiah 40:31 (NKJV)

Jesus Himself was never in a hurry. When He heard Lazarus was sick, He waited two more days (John 11:6), and His timing brought far greater glory to God. On the way to heal Jairus' daughter, He stopped to minister to a woman in the crowd (Mark 5:25–34). He was interrupted, and yet He was never late. (See also My Times Are In Your Hands.)

6. Calm Your Soul

Rest is something God gives, but Scripture also shows us actively *quieting* ourselves before Him. Sometimes we have to speak to our own souls.

> *"Surely I have calmed and quieted my soul, like a weaned child with his mother; like a weaned child is my soul within me."*
> Psalm 131:2 (NKJV)

> *"Return to your rest, O my soul, for the LORD has dealt bountifully with you."*
> Psalm 116:7 (NKJV)

> *"Be still, and know that I am God…"*
> Psalm 46:10 (NKJV)

> *"For thus says the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel: 'In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and confidence shall be your strength.' But you would not."*
> Isaiah 30:15 (NKJV)

That last phrase is sobering: *"But you would not."* God offered Israel strength through quiet trust, and they chose to run instead. The rest is available. We have to receive it.

7. Rest in the Middle of the Rush

This isn't only for quiet mornings with coffee and a Bible. It's for the middle of a long shift when the tasks keep piling up, the phone keeps ringing, and it feels like everything is urgent.

Remember Martha. She was serving Jesus, a good thing, but she was doing it frazzled and resentful:

> *"And Jesus answered and said to her, 'Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her.'"*
>
> Luke 10:41–42 (NKJV)

And remember Jesus in the storm. The disciples were panicking; He was asleep.

> *"But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him and said to Him, 'Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?' Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, 'Peace, be still!' And the wind ceased and there was a great calm."*
>
> Mark 4:38–39 (NKJV)

The same Jesus is in the boat with you at work. You can do the next task with your whole heart, calmly and confidently, because you're doing it for Him and with Him.

> *"And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men."*
>
> Colossians 3:23 (NKJV)

> *"The LORD will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace."*
>
> Exodus 14:14 (NKJV)

> *"My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness."*
>
> 2 Corinthians 12:9 (NKJV)

Being rushed and stressed doesn't make us more effective. It usually makes us less: more mistakes, shorter tempers, less love. "He sins who hastens with his feet" (Proverbs 19:2). Peace is not the enemy of good work; it's the soil it grows in.

A Story: Two Delivery Drivers

Picture two delivery drivers on the same busy route, each with a truck full of packages and a long list of stops before the end of the day.

The first driver is racing the clock. He jumps out before the truck has fully stopped, tosses the box toward the porch, and is pulling away before anyone reaches the door. If someone waves, he doesn't see it. Every house is just another number to get through. By the end of the shift he is exhausted, irritated, and

can't remember a single face.

The second driver has the same route and the same number of packages. But he's decided to see it differently. Before each stop he breathes and prays quietly, *"Lord, who are You sending me to here?"* He walks the package to the door and sets it down gently. To him, every house holds a special person, and he is bringing them a gift. He smiles at the elderly woman who has been waiting all week for her medicine. He says a kind word to the tired mom with a baby on her hip. He lets the little boy who loves trucks wave from the window, and he waves back.

He still works hard, and he still finishes his route. Often he finishes it just as well as the first driver, and with fewer mistakes. But he finishes it full instead of empty, because he wasn't just moving boxes. He was carrying love from house to house.

That's how God wants us to go through life. Every person we meet, whether a coworker, a customer, a cashier, a neighbor, or someone in our own family, is a "stop" on the route He has given us today. We don't have to rush past them. We can slow down in our hearts and ask, *"What can I give this person?"* A smile, a kind word, patience, a prayer, our full attention, a little respect and dignity. Each one is someone Jesus loves and died for, and each one deserves to be treated that way.

> *"Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another."*
> Romans 12:10 (NKJV)

> *"As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."*
> 1 Peter 4:10 (NKJV)

> *"And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'"*
> Matthew 25:40 (NKJV)

Only a heart at rest can live like this. When we're frantic, people become obstacles. When we're resting in Him, people become gifts, and we become gift-bearers.

The Driver Who Keeps Turning Around

Now, here's the honest part of the story. Even the second driver doesn't get it right all day long.

Around ten o'clock he falls behind schedule, and before he knows it he's speeding through a neighborhood, tossing a box onto a porch without even looking up. He catches himself. *"Lord, I'm rushing again."* He takes a breath and turns back to the way he meant to drive.

At noon someone cuts him off, and anger flares up hot in his chest. Turn around. In the afternoon a worry about money creeps in and starts to grow into fear. Turn around. Later, a tempting image on a billboard or a phone pulls at his eyes. Turn around. Near the end of the day the stress of the last ten stops starts to crush him. Turn around, again.

He misses turns. His GPS keeps saying "recalculating." And every time, he makes the U-turn and gets back on the route, back to rest, back to peace, back to treating the next person as a gift.

That is the Christian life. Our flesh has a natural pull toward **hurry, fear, anger, lust, stress**, worry, pride, impatience, and all the rest. Those pulls don't vanish the moment we decide to rest in Jesus. So we keep turning, over and over, back to Him. That's what repentance really is: in Hebrew, *teshuwah*, "returning"; in Greek, *metanoia*, "a change of mind." Not a one-time event, but a daily, hourly, sometimes minute-by-minute turning back home.

> *"I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish."*
>
> Galatians 5:16–17 (NKJV)

> *"For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace."*
>
> Romans 8:6 (NKJV)

> *"Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, 'This is the way, walk in it,' whenever you turn to the right hand or whenever you turn to the left."*
>
> Isaiah 30:21 (NKJV)

> *"Let us search out and examine our ways, and turn back to the LORD."*
>
> Lamentations 3:40 (NKJV)

> *"For a righteous man may fall seven times and rise again…"*
>
> Proverbs 24:16 (NKJV)

So don't be discouraged when you notice you've drifted back into hurry or fear or anger. Noticing it is the Holy Spirit's kindness, His gentle voice behind you saying, *"This is the way."* There is no condemnation (Romans 8:1), only an invitation. Make the U-turn, receive His grace, and get back on the route. The Lord who began this work in you is patient with every turn.

8. Moment by Moment: His Joy and Peace Right Now

Here is the key: **rest is not a one-time decision; it's a moment-by-moment walk.** You may enter His rest at 7:00 and find yourself tense again by 7:15. That's okay. Turn back to Him. Again and again. Every moment is a fresh opportunity to lean on Him and receive what He wants to give you *now*.

And what He gives is not just relief from stress, but His own joy and His own peace, in this moment, not only someday.

> *"Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."*
>
> John 14:27 (NKJV)

> *"These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full."*
>
> John 15:11 (NKJV)

> *"You will show me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore."*
>
> Psalm 16:11 (NKJV)

> *"You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You."*
>
> Isaiah 26:3 (NKJV)

> *"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."*
>
> Philippians 4:6–7 (NKJV)

> *"Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."*
>
> Romans 15:13 (NKJV)

Joy and peace are fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22). They grow naturally as we abide. And "the joy of the LORD is your strength" (Nehemiah 8:10), the very strength you need for the next hour of the shift.

9. What It Looks Like in Practice

Not…	But…
"I have to get all of this done right now or else."	"Lord, I'll do the next thing in front of me, with You. The rest is in Your hands."
Rushing from task to task with a tight chest.	Taking one slow breath, whispering "Jesus, I trust You," and moving forward calmly.
"I have to become a better Christian, and fast."	"Thank You that You are finishing the work You started in me. Show me today's step."
"Why isn't this happening yet?"	"My times are in Your hand. I'll wait on You."
Waiting to feel peace once the shift is over.	Receiving His peace and joy *in* the shift, moment by moment.

A few simple habits that help:

- **Start from the cross.** Before the day begins, thank Him that "It is finished." You are loved and accepted before you do anything.
- **Breathe and pray between tasks.** A few seconds is enough: "Lord, I rest in You."
- **Do one thing at a time.** "Sufficient for the day is its own trouble." Sufficient for the moment, too.
- **Hand over what you can't control.** Cast that care on Him, out loud if you need to.

- **See each person as a "delivery."** Ask quietly, "Lord, what can I give this one?" and offer love and respect, even in a quick moment.
- **Notice His joy.** Look for small gifts in the moment: a kind word, a finished task, a breath of fresh air. Thank Him for each one.

10. What This Is NOT

- **It isn't laziness.** Scripture honors hard, diligent work (Proverbs 6:6–11; 2 Thessalonians 3:10). Rest is about the posture of the heart, not avoiding effort.
- **It isn't ignoring responsibilities.** We still plan, prepare, and show up. We just do it trusting God with the outcome.
- **It isn't pretending stress never comes.** Jesus felt deep anguish in Gethsemane. Bring your real feelings to Him, and let Him lead you back to peace.
- **It isn't an excuse to keep sinning.** Resting in His work includes letting His Spirit change us. We rest *and* we obey, and that obedience flows out of the rest.

11. A Prayer for the Busy Moment

Lord Jesus, thank You that it is finished. I'm Your child by Your grace, and I don't have to carry this day alone. Thank You that You are finishing Your work in me. I give You this shift, these tasks, these people, and this pressure. Calm my soul like a weaned child. Help me not to rush, but to move in quiet confidence, doing each thing heartily for You. Fill me right now with Your joy and Your peace. I trust Your care and I trust Your timing. In Your name, amen.

Closing thought: You don't work *for* rest; you work *from* rest. The cross settled your salvation, the Spirit is completing your sanctification, and your Father is holding your future and your timing. So take a breath. Come to Him again, right now, and let His joy and peace carry you through this moment, and the next, and the next.

CHRISTIAN LIVING & RELATIONSHIPS

Growing in Self Denial

By Gregory John Wilson • October 5, 2026

Jesus said:

> *"If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me."*
> Luke 9:23 (ESV)

We often picture self-denial as fasting or giving things up, but most of it happens in relationships. It shows up when someone hurts us and everything in us wants to defend, explain, or win.

1. Listen First

- Self-denial starts with setting aside the need to be heard first (James 1:19).
- Listening isn't waiting for your turn to talk. It's trying to understand what the other person is actually feeling.
- Often people need to feel heard more than they need to be right.
- Ask questions before you give answers.

2. Ask Forgiveness First

- Don't wait for the other person to make the first move. Go first (Matthew 5:23–24).
- Own your part fully, with no "but."
- "I'm sorry I was harsh" heals. "I'm sorry I was harsh, but you…" undoes the apology.
- Deal with the plank in your own eye first (Matthew 7:3–5).

3. Address Their Fault Only When Necessary, and in Kindness

- Not every offense needs to be named. Love covers a multitude of sins (1 Peter 4:8).
- Ask yourself: is bringing this up for their good, for the relationship, or just to even the score?

- When it does need to be said, speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15). A gentle answer turns away wrath (Proverbs 15:1).
- Timing matters. Sometimes the right word comes later, once things have calmed down.

4. Stay Connected to God's Love During the Hard Conversation

- You can't give what you aren't receiving. We love because He first loved us (1 John 4:19).
- Anger often rises when we feel empty, unseen, or threatened. Remembering that you're already fully loved takes away the need to fight for it.
- Pray silently in the middle of the conversation: "Lord, fill me so I can keep giving."
- Abiding in Him is what produces fresh grace instead of a short fuse (John 15:5).

5. Be Patient and Give It Time

- Reconciliation is usually a process, not a moment.
- Trust and warmth come back gradually, so don't demand an instant makeup.
- Give the other person room to process at their own pace. Love is patient (1 Corinthians 13:4).
- Do your part and leave the rest to God (Romans 12:18).

6. Let Go of Needing to Win

- The goal is restoration, not victory.
- Sometimes self-denial means letting the other person have the last word.

Closing thought: Every hard conversation is a chance to look a little more like Jesus, who didn't defend Himself but entrusted Himself to the Father (1 Peter 2:23).

On the Theme of Modesty…

By Gregory John Wilson

I have decided to tackle this subject not because I want to focus on it – but because I am seeing the necessity of it being addressed clearly in today's culture, so females (and males) understand WHY it is important – not just because we Christians are old antiquated fuddy-duddies that can't get with the picture.

So. Let's get started…

The Ultimate PURPOSE of Modesty

So let's ask – WHY do women need to dress with modesty? Did not GOD create their bodies and call them GOOD? Why the need to HIDE their bodies (effectively) with modest clothing?

The answer lies in looking into the WAY God has designed the marital covenant relationship and covenant-faithful sexuality as opposed to promiscuousness.

Let me explain… (Bear with me as I build my point step by step).

In the beginning God created Eve for Adam and they were the first couple. Do we see modern terminology like 'marriage' or a marriage ceremony in Genesis? No. Nevertheless, the covenant faithfulness they were to have was affirmed by Jesus in the new testament when He said that what God has joined together, let no man separate:

> *And He answered and said to them, "Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."*
>
> Matthew 19:4-6

Combine this with God's ways He revealed to us regarding adultery in the 10 commandments. That adultery is flat out evil and was actually punishable by death by stoning. This extreme punishment just shows how PASSIONATE God is about FAITHFUL LOVE in marriage and not engaging romantically/sexually with someone who is not your loving spouse.

Thus, when a woman dresses immodestly publicly with tight or revealing clothing or clothing that "sexualizes" her body due to the nature of the clothing, married men can see this and naturally be "turned on" sexually/emotionally by this immodesty. They would be seeing in another woman what they should only see of their wives' bodies in private in the context of eros romantic sexual love under the banner of agape deep pure love of God in their hearts. And of course, if the man is not strong in guarding his eyes and his heart, this opens the door to him desiring sex - either with that woman specifically, or just in general - and could trigger him to look up sexual images online or flat out pornography and to masturbate - another act of unfaithfulness and defilement – literally from manus: "hand", and stuprare: "to defile" or "to dishonor" (related to stuprum, meaning disgrace).

And thus you see, the immodesty of the woman opens the door to the married man sinning! Ideally he has the self control to not go down that path - but a sensible woman will not want to be a stumbling block. Remember – Jesus taught:

> *But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea.*
>
> Matthew 18:6

And remember, Jesus called His grown bearded disciples little children!! So the verse above applies to grown men as well being caused to sin.

For Unmarried Men

Now, that was addressing married men.

What of unmarried men?

Unmarried men engaging in sexual activity outside of marriage would generally fall into the sin category of fornication, traditionally thought of as any sex outside of marriage.

The word "fornication" in the New Testament comes from the Greek word "porneia" - G4202 in the famous Strong's concordance (dictionary) of the Bible. To be honest, I am a questioner – like, well HOW do I KNOW the Strong's is the EXACT correct definition of the word?? And even HAVING the Strong's does not give us complete understanding - because that Greek word is admittedly used in different WAYS depending on the passage…

In general though – we learn it can refer to many types of unlawful/immoral sexual behaviors, as well as idol worship strangely - probably with the connection of worshipping idols being like prostituting one's self against faithfulness to God - as He compares Himself to Israel's husband.

Is Sex Outside Marriage Wrong?

As far as the question regarding if sex outside of marriage is ok or not, the traditional understanding of "fornication" is any sex outside of marriage, although if you really seek out a root biblical definition of the word (examined above) - it doesn't explicitly say any sex outside marriage, although I would still say biblically, any sex outside marriage is sin, missing the mark of God's ideal intention.

So we have to use our brains a bit here, guided by scripture - to deduce this. I want to make mention of a commandment in the Torah:

> *"If a man entices a virgin who is not betrothed, and lies with her, he shall surely pay the bride-price for her to be his wife. If her father utterly refuses to give her to him, he shall pay money according to the bride-price of virgins."*
>
> Exodus 22:16-17, NKJV

Thus, we learn here from this passage that if a man and woman have relations outside (before) marriage – in terms of two single people (not adultery per se) - that the man is to pay the "bride-price" and then MARRY the woman. That is to say, the Bible does not support just casual sex with no marriage commitment attached. If sex comes first, the man is to make it right and marry the woman and care for her - and not just leave her, or worse, leave her pregnant to try to care for the baby just by herself!

It seems rather obvious as well, though, that the IDEAL is that the couple court or date one another FIRST, hopefully with their parents or the community supporting them in this – and that they become properly engaged to one another, and then have a beautiful ceremony declaring their lifelong commitment to each other, and THEN comes the "frosting on top" – the sexual relationship. A couple just having relations first is more just animalistic/self-seeking instead of it being in the context of a bigger commitment – where the fruit of relations (CHILDREN) - can be loved in a stable environment and raised up well with their parents loving and supporting them.

Remember, in Matthew 19:4-6 mentioned above, it says when a man and woman come together they become ONE FLESH!! Take a look also at 1 Corinthians 6:15-17:

> *"Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot? Certainly not! 16 Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body with her? For 'the two,' He says, 'shall become one flesh.' 17 But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him."*
>
> 1 Corinthians 6:15-17

So the Word is saying that EVEN in a so-called "one night stand" with a harlot – even THAT constitutes becoming one flesh with that harlot!! This could explain the feeling of someone's heart being broken up into so many pieces if they have been with many different partners. And thus, this passage supports that the person with whom you engage sexually becomes PART of you – and thus you should only engage sexually with the person you have developed a loving relationship with - who will become your loving partner for life in all things – so that that unity is not broken as Jesus says should not happen in Matthew 19:6 - "Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."

Conclusion

Coming back around to the original thrust of this article – MODESTY – we can see that IMMODESTY thus opens the door to unfaithfulness on the part of married men, and for lack of better term, "fornication" (or sex outside marriage) on the part of unmarried men. Immodesty puts the cart before the horse, so to speak - stirring up desire in inappropriate public situations, which could lead to broken families – single moms trying to raise their kids and having to work - if the man does not commit to marry, as well as broken hearts and pain if the couple separates without making that loving commitment to love each other for life - as Jesus commands should be done in Matthew 19:6.

Jesus said, "what God has brought together, let no man separate" – He didn't say, "let no man separate for 10 or 20 or 50 years" he said "let no man separate" PERIOD. And thus the traditional marriage vows "til death do us part" DOES find its foundation in sound biblical teaching from our Lord and Master Jesus.

And thus, let women adorn themselves modestly – (but it doesn't have to be ugly or distasteful or too extreme, in the case of radical Muslim practice).

Yes, great responsibility ALSO lies in the hearts and minds of men – that they learn to grow in self control with intimate communion with God - and can divert their eyes, heart, and mind if presented with tempting situations in public – so as to be completely faithful to their wives in mind and heart and body - not masturbating either or lusting after digital images on devices. If this is an issue I would recommend men just getting off of any social media network where provocative content could show up easily. I personally am so happy to have left Facebook behind. The videos tab was so accessible and the feed could

be filled with very indecent sexual videos. I had to just toss the whole thing to avoid the risk of falling into sin – which, if fallen into, is then very hard and painful to have to confess to wife etc. The Lord's strong discipline with me in this area has, praise Him, led me to fear Him in this, and STEAR CLEAR of this sin.

Last note – married couples - as the word says, do not deprive one another in relations, (except with mutual consent to devote to prayer etc) – because if the couple is fulfilled in this way, enjoying ONE ANOTHER – this also totally lessens the risk of one or the other falling into any sort of unfaithfulness or sexual immorality.

So. Women - dress modestly so as to not be a snare to another man in public, even if no relationship comes of the immodesty. Remember, your immodest dress could simply stir the man up as well to seek after sexual content online and masturbate - which is sin as well, which could find its spark in the original situation of your immodest dress. And men, find your satisfaction, first spiritually in God and Jesus and the Spirit – and then physically, with your wife. If you are not married and "burn with passion" as the Word says, seek after a wife and pray God leads you to the right woman in His time, and in the meantime, DELIGHT yourself in your personal, wonderful relationship with HIM, and occupy your time seeking to serve Him or save money from a job for a house etc, to prepare for your future family.

Shalom - peace to all. Thanks for reading if you did, and feel free to comment or question in an email to me - shepherdsembraceministries@gmail.com.

Sincerely,
-Gregory John Wilson

CHRISTIAN LIVING & RELATIONSHIPS

The Gracious Husband

By Gregory John Wilson

Compromise, Mercy, and the Condescended Will of God

There is a kind of love that will not insist on being right. It is the love that lays down not only its life but its preferences, its plans, and even, at times, what it believes to be the very best thing. This is the strange and beautiful shape of grace in marriage, and it turns out to be the same shape grace takes in the heart of God.

The Married Man Is Concerned With Pleasing His Wife

Paul writes with unusual candor about the difference marriage makes to a man's attention. "But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife" (1 Corinthians 7:33). Paul is not condemning the married man here. He is describing him. The single man, Paul says, is able to give himself to the things of the Lord without division; the married man, by contrast, now carries a second concern always beside the first — the good and the pleasure of the one he has bound himself to.

Notice that Paul frames this not as sin but as a kind of holy division of the heart. To please his wife, a man must attend to "the things of the world" — the ordinary, the domestic, the practical, the negotiated. He cannot always do the single-minded, undiluted thing. He must weigh her needs, her fears, her weaknesses, her joys. And in weighing them, he will very often choose a good that is not the maximal good, a peace that costs him the perfect execution of his own vision. This is not failure. It is love learning to bend.

The Perfect Will and the Compromised Will

Theologians have long distinguished between what God perfectly desires and what God permits. There is the will of God as it would be in a world without sin, weakness, or brokenness — and there is the will of God as He actually works it out among real people who are frail, afraid, and slow of heart. The second is not a lesser God; it is the same God stooping. It is mercy expressed as accommodation.

A husband lives daily in this second register. He may know the "perfect" thing — the ideal budget, the ideal schedule, the ideal decision for the household — and yet choose to set part of it aside because insisting on it would wound the peace of his home. He compromises not because the perfect thing was wrong, but because the person beside him matters more than the perfection of the plan. And in doing so, he is not stepping outside of God's will. He is stepping into God's "compromised" will — the merciful will — which has always made room for the beloved's weakness.

God the Husband, Humanity the Bride

Scripture repeatedly casts God as a husband and His people as His bride — in Isaiah, in Hosea, in Ephesians where marriage itself is named a picture of Christ and the Church. If that image is true, then we should expect to find God doing the very thing we are describing: making gracious compromises with the bride He loves, allowing what is less than the perfect thing in order to keep covenant with a broken people. And that is exactly what we find.

The Killing and Eating of Animals

In the beginning, the diet God gave was gentle: "Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed… and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat" (Genesis 1:29). Death was not part of the original picture. The animals were not given as food, and in a world without the Fall they would never have died at all. Yet after the flood, God concedes: "Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things" (Genesis 9:3).

This is a compromise in the fullest sense. It is not the Eden ideal. It is God meeting fallen humanity where it now stands — a world already stained with death — and permitting what the perfect world would never have required. He does not withhold Himself in disgust at the loss of the ideal. He condescends, He accommodates, and He keeps feeding His bride. The concession is itself an act of mercy.

The King They Asked For

God had meant to be Israel's King Himself. When the people came to Samuel demanding a human king "like all the nations," the Lord said, "They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them" (1 Samuel 8:7). The perfect arrangement was the direct kingship of God. What they asked for was, in one sense, a step down — a rejection of the ideal.

And yet God granted it. He gave them a king. And more than that, He worked His grace even into the compromise: from within the very institution they had wrongly demanded, He raised up David, "a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will" (Acts 13:22). The concession did not defeat God's

purposes; it became the channel of them. The throne they insisted on became the throne from which, in the fullness of time, the true King — the Son of David — would come. God did not abandon the bride for choosing less than the best. He entered her choice and redeemed it.

The Certificate of Divorce

When the Pharisees pressed Jesus on Moses' permission for divorce, He answered with the same principle in plain words: "Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so" (Matthew 19:8). Here Jesus Himself names the two wills. There is what was "from the beginning" — the perfect thing. And there is what was permitted "because of the hardness of your hearts" — the merciful accommodation to a people not yet able to bear the ideal. God legislates for the bride He actually has, not merely the bride He wishes she were.

Why the Compromise Is Not a Fall

It would be easy to hear all this as a lowering of standards, as though grace were mere permissiveness. But that is to misread the heart of it. The compromises of God flow not from indifference to the good but from a love that refuses to lose the beloved over it. "The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy" (Psalm 103:8). His accommodation is the shape mercy takes when it meets weakness. He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust (Psalm 103:14). And so He bends the perfect thing rather than break the person.

This is precisely the freedom — and the calling — of the gracious husband. He is not required to be a perfectionist who sacrifices his wife on the altar of the ideal. He is invited to imitate the God who allowed the lesser thing in order to keep the greater love. When he sets aside the perfect plan for the sake of peace, when he chooses her over the flawless execution of his will, when he condescends to her weakness as God condescends to ours, he is not falling short of God's will. He is walking in it.

The Pattern of the Cross

Ultimately, every gracious compromise is a small echo of the great one. Husbands are told to love their wives "even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it" (Ephesians 5:25). The cross was, in a sense, the ultimate condescension — God Himself absorbing the cost of the bride's brokenness rather than demanding she meet Him at the perfect standard she could never reach. He came down. He bore what she could not bear. He kept the marriage by paying for it.

So when a man yields, compromises, keeps the peace, and chooses his wife's good over his own vindication, he is doing something far larger than smoothing over a disagreement. He is showing the household — and the watching world — what God is like: gracious, merciful, patient, and willing to bend the perfect thing for the sake of the beloved. And that, in the end, is not weakness at all. It is the very strength of God.

Truly Living Like Messiah

By Gregory John Wilson

We hear that we are supposed to be "Christ-like" but there are key elements of His life and ministry that we have forgotten about. He lived a perfect life – it was completely fulfilling, but that meant trials and opposition too. Yes, He did good to masses of people, yet He also confronted and railed against the evils of his day, of the religious leaders.

I would like to propose that while we "get" the "doing good" and "loving people" part of the Messiah-life, we have forgotten the less popular aspects of His ministry – speaking truth and blasting the evils of his day – this is part of living a fulfilling life, too.

Concerning speaking truth, many times He said hard things to accept – truth is not always appetizing. When starting his ministry, he declared "the Spirit of YHWH is upon me" and they marveled, yet He did not stop there and revel in the glory. He went on to say things that nearly got Him killed – He predicted they would say "physician heal yourself!" which basically happened at the stake (instead of cross) – people saying he saved others, let him save Himself! He also said they would ask for miracles, yet Yeshua recounts instances from the Tanakh in which only certain people were healed, or helped, and others weren't, just as presumably the people of Nazareth would not see many miracles because of their unbelief. This led to the people trying to throw Him off a cliff (Luke 4:16-30).

Another time, Yeshua said the way is narrow that leads to life, and few are they that ever find it – not exactly popular.

He wasn't afraid to speak strongly against evils of His day – the pharisees' hypocrisy and pride (Matt 23) and He sort of violently drove out the moneychangers from the temple – Elohim's house, which should be for prayer, not business.

Am I saying we should do all these same offensive things? Perhaps in the right context. We certainly shouldn't be afraid to speak out against evil.

Again, to live a most fulfilling life, it seems it involves not only doing good to the people around us, but also fighting evil.

> *Do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with your Elohim.*
>
> Micah 6:8

Another time, Yeshua confronted the people's motives – seeking Him for physical food, not for spiritual truth their souls needed. (John 6:26-27).

Yet again, Yeshua spoke about an event that happened – a tower falling on people and killing them – were they worse sinners? No, but if you don't repent, you will likewise perish.

So, if we are truly to be like Messiah – though perhaps there are some aspects of who He is that we will never and should never be like – Elohim in flesh – anyway, if we are to be like Him though, I think we should also possess authority in speaking out against evil, etc.. And also in doing good to others.

May you hear His word for what He wants you to do, and DO IT! (It's those that DO His will that will enter the kingdom).

Shalom
-Greg

Showing Chesed!

By Gregory John Wilson

January 12th, 2020

Last week we looked at the kindness of God leading us to repentance...

So today I'd just like to talk about a basic topic - but one that I think the world still needs to hear. And that is: US showing *chesed*, or mercy and kindness and love, to our fellow man. Chesed is a Hebrew word used many times in the Hebrew portions of the Bible, and according to Strong's Concordance and Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon, can mean love, kindness, benevolence, mercy, pity, and even zeal!

So what I think exists in the world frequently is people whose hearts have grown cold, or who lack having a basic kindness and graciousness towards their fellow man. Life becomes just all business - gimme what I want, and I'll pay you - and gimme it fast -- instead of simply treating a person with charm and graciousness simply because they are another human being created in God's image.

And I want to touch on the aspect of *graciousness*. This is when we show grace - we don't immediately jump on someone's faults and cut into them for their faults. We show them a measure of kindness, despite any faults they may have! Or, for example, if a worker accidentally does something wrong, their boss could let them know in a gentle, understanding way, correcting them gently, instead of abrasively with bitterness and disgust. Or a husband with his wife - he can let her gently know that there is something she's doing that's bothering him, instead of reacting rashly with anger. The Bible says God is patient with us, and we should be patient with others. Patience is a fruit of the Spirit. However, there are times in the Bible when God's patience runs out - when He is genuinely upset. I think there are occasions when a spouse can communicate they are genuinely upset - if there is a valid reason for being upset.

Continuing on, let us look at some examples from the Bible of people showing chesed to others.

1. Abraham with the 3 messengers

Our first example comes from the so-called "Father of faith", Father Abraham, the man who was specially chosen by the Almighty to be the Father of the People Israel, who believed in God's words and was thus considered righteous, but who also obeyed God's voice, kept His charge, His commandments, His statutes, and His laws (Gen 26:5). So we know Abraham was a good God-fearing man.

SO let's look at an example of how this God-fearing man treats others with kindness - chesed, honoring them. This example comes from Genesis 18 where the chapter starts out by saying that THE LORD - Yahweh God - appeared to Abraham in the plains of Mamre. Then it is quite interesting, as it seems to describe how this happened, via THREE men approaching the tents of Abraham and Sarah. Needless to say, it seems one of these men could have been the LORD Himself - a pre-incarnate Jesus - God in flesh, and the other 2 could've been angel messengers. So Abraham pleads:

> *My Lords, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant.*
>
> Genesis 18

And so the 3 men abide with Abraham. But notice the kindness and honor Abraham shows - he HASTENS to his tent to his wife, and asks her to quickly prepare food, and then he RUNS to fetch a calf to cook for the men. Yes, He is hosting an important guest - GOD, and probably 2 other angels - or perhaps a manifestation of God in 3 persons, and so his zeal to care for the 3 messengers is understandable and praise-worthy, but nevertheless, he is that kind of man - showing kindness to others, especially others in high authority.

2. Joseph with his brothers

Our next example comes from a descendant of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob - Joseph. God revealed Himself to Joseph in dreams, revealing how he would be lifted up and honored later in his life. His brothers did not like this, or the fact that their father loved Joseph more than any of them. (Gen 37:3) Well, they betrayed Joseph, putting him in a pit, and then selling him to foreigners as a slave. God blessed Joseph as he served his master Potipher, and yet then he was mistreated AGAIN by Potipher's wife, who tried to commit adultery, and then blamed Joseph for trying to sleep with her, when she was the one who tried to seduce him. So Joseph went to prison for Potipher's wife's lies. Yet the plan of God could not be thwarted. Eventually Joseph rose to power as he was able to interpret the Pharaoh's dreams. He was in charge of organizing a mass savings program, saving up wheat for the 7 coming years of famine. And in the end when his brothers came before him, bowing down - just like Joseph's dreams had foretold, Joseph is not hardened or bitter, but he says that his brothers meant what they did to him for evil, but God used it for good - to bring him to leadership in Egypt to actually help preserve his brothers and Egypt when the famine came. So although Joseph faced many trials, he retained his tenderness and kindness - recognizing that God used him to bless his brothers even when his brothers had mistreated HIM.

3. Barnabas

And for our last and final example of showing kindness in the Bible, we will look at a less than famous, yet marvelous New Testament character whose name is… Barnabas! Have you all heard of Barnabas? We first hear about him in Acts chapter 4, in the context of a discussion about the new group of Jesus-followers in Jerusalem, after Jesus had ascended back to heaven. We learn his actual name is not even Barnabus, but JOSEPH - like our last example from the Older Testament! Barnabus was a nick-name the disciples called him, meaning "Son of Encouragement or Consolation"! And we will see just why, as this man was truly deserving of such a name. He was a Jew from the tribe of Levi, who had obviously embraced the Jewish Messiah Yeshua (Jesus), and was thus assembling with the believers in Jerusalem. The group of believers were sharing their possessions and helping those in need, and Barnabus was no exception. On the contrary, out of his heart of love, consolation, and generosity, he even sold a piece of land he owned and gave the money to the apostles, so they could distribute it to those in need! That is the first evidence of his noble, loving, generous heart.

And then we see this character Barnabas (or Joseph) at work again later in the 9th chapter of Acts, showing more consolation and love and kindness! You see, this was when Paul had just had his conversion after encountering the risen Jesus. Before, mind you, he hated followers of Jesus, and was zealously opposed to them, somehow misunderstanding the legitimacy of Jesus, possibly due to his religious upbringing that rejected Jesus. But Paul met the Lord, turned to Jesus, and began boldly proclaiming Jesus. Yet the followers of Jesus in Jerusalem were still suspicious and afraid of this Paul, who had previously had Christians put in jail and possibly worse.

Yet noble-hearted, kind, Barnabas KNEW that Paul's conversion was real, with REAL evidence of Paul boldly proclaiming Jesus in Damascus, even at the risk of his position and possibly more - the other Jews were opposed to Jesus. And so Acts 9:27 says:

> *But Barnabas took hold of him and brought him to the apostles and described to them how he had seen the Lord on the road, and that He had talked to him, and how at Damascus he had spoken out boldly in the name of Jesus.*
>
> Acts 9:27

Barnabas did not hold a grudge against Paul, but he embraced him, seeing the Lord's work in his life, and he defended Paul's legitimacy to the other believers. A Son of Encouragement indeed!

His actions exemplify the kindness I am trying to get at - reaching out to others with warmth, and in this case, believing in someone when there is evidence that they are sincere and that the Lord is working in their lives.

Conclusion

So to conclude, we started out discussing the importance of showing kindness to our fellow man - because God has shown US kindness, and because it fulfills one of the great laws of Scripture, - love your neighbor as yourself, as Jesus preached. We saw 3 examples of men showing kindness to others from the Scriptures - Abraham, with sincerity RUNNING to prepare food for the heavenly messengers, Joseph not holding a grudge against his brothers, but acknowledging how the Lord even used their mistreatment of him to bring him to Egypt where he could save their lives by predicting the coming famine and then rising to power in Egypt, having power to save up mass amounts of food, which he would give to his brothers when they came to him in need. And lastly, we saw ANOTHER Joseph, nick-named Barnabas, who was also a Jew, but living in New Testament times, who apparently had a HUGE heart, selling his land to give money to the poor, and embracing the repentant, converted Paul, bringing him into fellowship with the believers. He would later even go on to travel with Paul on missionary journeys, as he must have formed a close friendship with Paul. Such is the way of those with kindness in their hearts, extending forgiveness, giving grace, and doing practical acts of good-will to their fellow man, loving them sincerely. May we follow suit!

Questions, Comments, Prayer Requests?

Prayer

Music

343. Amazing Grace
422. I Love You With The Love Of The Lord
429. They'll Know We Are Christians By Our Love

Special: El Shaddai by Amy Grant

PART EIGHT

Prayer, Hope & Encouragement

The Blanket of Night: Resting Under God's Covering

"Everything's Going to Be Okay": True or Not?

Just Say Thank You

Intimate Honor: Connecting with our Loving Heavenly Father

Praying the Psalms

My Times Are In Your Hands

Our True Hope

Treasuring the Moments

PRAYER, HOPE & ENCOURAGEMENT

The Blanket of Night: Resting Under God's Covering

By Gregory John Wilson • October 29, 2026

The main idea: The darkness of night doesn't have to be something we fear. God made the night, and He means it to be a comforting covering, like a soft blanket pulled up over us. In the dark we can't see everything, and that's a gift: we don't *have* to see, analyze, and manage everything. The One who never sleeps is keeping watch, so we can lie down in peace.

1. Two Ways to See the Night

As children, many of us were afraid of the dark. We imagined what might be hiding in the closet or under the bed. As adults the monsters change shape, but the fear can be the same. We lie awake at 2:00 a.m. with the "what ifs": What if something happens? What if I lose my job? What if that noise was something? What did they mean by that comment? Our minds race to see, analyze, and solve everything before morning.

But there is another way to see the night. Think of a child tucked in by a loving parent: the lights go down, the blanket comes up to the chin, and the door is left open a crack. The darkness isn't a threat; it's a signal that the day is done and someone bigger is in charge. The darkness becomes a covering.

That's how our Father wants us to experience the night.

2. God Made the Night

> *"God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. So the evening and the morning were the first day."*
>
> Genesis 1:5 (NKJV)

The night is not an accident or an enemy. God named it, just as He named the day. And notice the order: *"the evening and the morning."* In God's reckoning, the day begins at evening. Before we do any work, we rest. We lie down, He keeps us, and then we rise to join what He has already been doing all night long.

> *"It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows; for so He gives His beloved sleep."*
> Psalm 127:2 (NKJV)

3. A Blanket, Not a Threat

People who keep birds know a simple trick: when the birds are anxious and noisy, you drape a cloth over the cage. As the light dims, they settle down and grow quiet. The covering doesn't harm them; it calms them.

The night can do the same for us. The darkness covers the clutter of the day: the unfinished tasks, the piles of things to do, the faces and conversations. It is God's way of saying, *"That's enough for today. Rest now. I've got you."*

> *"He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty."*
> Psalm 91:1 (NKJV)

> *"He shall cover you with His feathers, and under His wings you shall take refuge; His truth shall be your shield and buckler."*
> Psalm 91:4 (NKJV)

> *"The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms…"*
> Deuteronomy 33:27 (NKJV)

A shadow is a kind of darkness too. But the shadow of the Almighty is the safest place in the universe. Under His wings it is dark, warm, and secure, like a chick tucked under its mother.

4. You Don't Have to See It All

So much of our stress comes from trying to see and understand everything: to predict every outcome, to figure out every person, to have a plan for every possibility. The night gently takes that away. In the dark, you *can't* see it all, and you were never meant to.

> *"The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever…"*
>
> Deuteronomy 29:29 (NKJV)

> *"Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding."*
>
> Proverbs 3:5 (NKJV)

> *"LORD, my heart is not haughty, nor my eyes lofty. Neither do I concern myself with great matters, nor with things too profound for me."*
>
> Psalm 131:1 (NKJV)

> *"For we walk by faith, not by sight."*
>
> 2 Corinthians 5:7 (NKJV)

When you lie down and your mind starts running through everything, you can say: *"Lord, I can't see all of this, and I don't need to. You see it. The secret things belong to You. I give them back to You for the night."*

5. He Keeps Watch So You Don't Have To

The reason we can stop watching is that Someone else never stops.

> *"He will not allow your foot to be moved; He who keeps you will not slumber. Behold, He who keeps Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. The LORD is your keeper; the LORD is your shade at your right hand."*
>
> Psalm 121:3–5 (NKJV)

> *"The LORD shall preserve your going out and your coming in from this time forth, and even forevermore."*
>
> Psalm 121:8 (NKJV)

And the darkness that limits *our* sight doesn't limit His at all:

> *"If I say, 'Surely the darkness shall fall on me,' even the night shall be light about me; indeed, the darkness shall not hide from You, but the night shines as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike to You."*
>
> Psalm 139:11–12 (NKJV)

When Israel traveled through the wilderness, God didn't leave them alone in the dark. He was there as a pillar of fire, all night long:

> *"And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so as to go by day and night."*
>
> Exodus 13:21 (NKJV)

Jesus Himself slept peacefully in the back of a boat in the middle of a storm (Mark 4:38). He knew His Father was watching. Because of Him, we can know it too.

6. No Need to Fear the Terror by Night

Instead of fearing what *could* happen in the night, we can rest in what God *has promised* about the night.

> *"You shall not be afraid of the terror by night, nor of the arrow that flies by day, nor of the pestilence that walks in darkness, nor of the destruction that lays waste at noonday."*
>
> Psalm 91:5–6 (NKJV)

> *"I will both lie down in peace, and sleep; for You alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety."*
>
> Psalm 4:8 (NKJV)

> *"I lay down and slept; I awoke, for the LORD sustained me."*
>
> Psalm 3:5 (NKJV)

> *"When you lie down, you will not be afraid; yes, you will lie down and your sleep will be sweet."*
>
> Proverbs 3:24 (NKJV)

David wrote Psalm 3 while running for his life from his own son Absalom. If he could lie down and sleep in that situation, trusting the Lord to sustain him, we can lie down in ours.

7. Filling the Night With Him

The night is not only for sleep. It can also be a sweet time of closeness with God: in the quiet, with no screens and no distractions, just you and Him.

> *"When I remember You on my bed, I meditate on You in the night watches. Because You have been my help, therefore in the shadow of Your wings I will rejoice."*
>
> Psalm 63:6–7 (NKJV)

> *"The LORD will command His lovingkindness in the daytime, and in the night His song shall be with me, a prayer to the God of my life."*
>
> Psalm 42:8 (NKJV)

> *"I will bless the LORD who has given me counsel; my heart also instructs me in the night seasons."*
>
> Psalm 16:7 (NKJV)

If you wake in the night, you don't have to start analyzing. Instead, let His song be with you. Remember His help. Rejoice in the shadow of His wings. And trust that whatever the night holds, "weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning" (Psalm 30:5).

8. What It Looks Like in Practice

Not…	But…
Replaying the day and analyzing every conversation.	"Lord, I give You today. What's done is in Your hands."
Lying awake imagining everything that could go wrong.	"You will not slumber or sleep. You are keeping me and those I love."
Needing to solve tomorrow tonight.	"Tomorrow belongs to You. I'll meet it with You in the morning."
Seeing the dark as something to fear.	Pulling the darkness up like a blanket, and resting under His wings.

A few simple habits that help:

- **Hand over the day.** Before bed, briefly thank Him for the day and give Him anything unfinished.

- **Put the screens down.** Let the darkness actually be dark, and let your mind slow down with it.
- **Pray a psalm.** Psalm 4, Psalm 91, and Psalm 121 are wonderful bedtime prayers.
- **Picture the covering.** As you pull up the blanket, picture God's wings over you and His everlasting arms beneath you.
- **If you wake, worship instead of worrying.** Whisper a verse, hum a song, and let Him quiet you again.

9. What This Is NOT

- **It isn't ignoring wisdom.** Lock the doors and take sensible care. When Nehemiah faced real enemies, "we made our prayer to our God, and because of them we set a watch against them day and night" (Nehemiah 4:9). We pray *and* act wisely, and then we trust.
- **It isn't a judgment on people who struggle to sleep.** Sleeplessness can come from many things, including health and grief. If that's you, there is no condemnation. Bring it to Him, and seek help when you need it.
- **It isn't a promise that no hard nights will come.** Jesus Himself had a long, anguished night in Gethsemane. But even in our darkest nights, He is with us, and morning is coming.

10. A Prayer for Bedtime

Father, thank You for the night. Thank You that You made it, and that You give Your beloved sleep. I give You this day, everything I did and didn't do, everything I understand and everything I don't. I don't need to see it all; You see it. Cover me with Your feathers, and hold me in Your everlasting arms. Watch over me and those I love, for You never slumber or sleep. Let Your song be with me in the night, and wake me to Your mercies in the morning. In Jesus' name, amen.

Closing thought: Tonight, when the lights go out, don't brace yourself against the dark. Pull it up like a blanket. You don't have to see everything, figure out everything, or guard everything. Your Keeper is awake. Lie down in peace, and sleep. (See also Working From Rest.)

PRAYER, HOPE & ENCOURAGEMENT

“Everything’s Going to Be Okay”: True or Not?

By Gregory John Wilson • October 27, 2026

The main idea: “Everything’s going to be okay” can be one of the truest things you’ll ever hear, or one of the most dangerous. It depends on what your life is built on. Jesus said the person who hears His words *and does them* will stand when the storm hits, and the person who hears and does not do them will fall. And if there is never a turning to God in repentance, what is at stake is not just a hard season, but eternity.

1. Words We Say to Comfort

We’ve all said it, and we’ve all heard it. At a hospital bed, after a layoff, when a marriage is cracking, when a child has walked away. “Don’t worry. Everything’s going to be okay.”

Usually we mean well. We want to calm the fear. But here is the honest question: **is it true?** Sometimes it is. Sometimes it isn’t. And love doesn’t just tell people what feels good; love tells them what is true.

God has always had a problem with comfort that isn’t grounded in truth. In Jeremiah’s day, the false prophets kept reassuring the people while they went on ignoring God:

> *“They have also healed the hurt of My people slightly, saying, ‘Peace, peace!’ when there is no peace.”*
> Jeremiah 6:14 (NKJV)

A bandage on a wound that needs surgery isn’t kindness. So how do we know when “it’s going to be okay” is real?

2. Two Houses, One Storm

Jesus ended His Sermon on the Mount with a picture that answers the question:

> *"Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall."*
>
> Matthew 7:24–27 (NKJV)

Notice a few things:

- **Both men heard.** The difference wasn't knowledge. Both sat under the same teaching. One *did* it; the other didn't.
- **Both houses got the storm.** The same rain, the same floods, the same wind. Following Jesus is not a promise that storms won't come.
- **The outcome was decided before the storm arrived.** It was decided by the foundation, in the quiet days of building, long before the clouds rolled in.

> *"But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do the things which I say?"*
>
> Luke 6:46 (NKJV)

3. When "It's Going to Be Okay" Is True

For the one who is building on the Rock (trusting Jesus and putting His words into practice) the answer is yes. Not because the storm will be small, but because the foundation is strong.

> *"These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."*
>
> John 16:33 (NKJV)

> *"When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, nor shall the flame scorch you."*
>
> Isaiah 43:2 (NKJV)

> *"And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose."*
>
> Romans 8:28 (NKJV)

Look closely at that last promise. It doesn't say all things work together for good, period. It says all things work together for good *to those who love God*. And Jesus told us what loving Him looks like: "If you love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14:15).

So for the child of God who is walking with Him, even the losses, even the grief, even death itself, will turn out okay. Better than okay. That's not wishful thinking. That's a promise from the One who cannot lie.

4. When It Isn't True

For the one who has heard the words of Jesus and set them aside, the honest answer is: **not necessarily.** When the storm comes (and it will) the house built on sand doesn't stand. Jesus didn't soften it: "great was its fall."

That can happen in this life. Choices have consequences. A life built on pride, bitterness, lust, greed, or simply ignoring God has no footing when trouble hits. Marriages, health, peace of mind, and relationships can collapse.

But there's a bigger storm coming than any we face here.

5. The Storm That Decides Eternity

> *"And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment."*
>
> Hebrews 9:27 (NKJV)

Just a few verses before the two houses, Jesus said this:

> *"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven."*
>
> Matthew 7:21 (NKJV)

And when people asked Him about those who had died in a tragedy, He turned the question back on them:

> *"I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish."*
>
> Luke 13:3 (NKJV)

If someone goes through their whole life and never turns to God (never repents, never surrenders to Jesus as Lord) then "everything's going to be okay" is not true for them, and it isn't loving to pretend it is. Their eternal destiny is at stake.

6. The Good News: You Can Rebuild on the Rock

Here's the beautiful part. As long as you have breath, it is not too late to change foundations. God isn't waiting to see you fall; He is waiting for you to come home.

> *"The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."*
>
> 2 Peter 3:9 (NKJV)

> *"Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord."*
>
> Acts 3:19 (NKJV)

> *"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 (NKJV)

We don't earn our way onto the Rock. Jesus *is* the Rock, and He paid for our sin with His own life. Salvation is a gift received by faith:

> *"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast."*
>
> Ephesians 2:8–9 (NKJV)

But real faith doesn't just hear; it builds. It takes Jesus at His word and starts putting His teachings into practice, day by day, with the help of His Spirit. (See also The James 2:24 Factor and The Kindness of God Leads To….)

7. So, What Do We Say?

Next time someone you love is in the storm, don't throw empty words at them. Point them to the Rock.

- To a believer walking with God: *"Yes, it's going to be okay. He is with you in this, and He will bring you through."*
- To someone far from God: *"It can be okay. There is a way. Jesus is ready to forgive you and give you a foundation that won't wash away. Come to Him."*

And to yourself, ask honestly: **what am I building on?**

> *"Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."*
> 2 Corinthians 6:2 (NKJV)

Closing thought: One day every storm will be over. "God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying" (Revelation 21:4). For those on the Rock, that day is the final, forever answer: yes, everything is going to be okay. Make sure you're on the Rock.

PRAYER, HOPE & ENCOURAGEMENT

Just Say Thank You

By Gregory John Wilson • October 6, 2026

The main idea: If you are walking with God uprightly, and not knowingly holding on to rebellion or sin, your prayers can move from *begging* to *believing*. Instead of "Lord, please help me," pray "Lord, **thank You** for helping me."

1. The Condition: Walking Uprightly

This isn't a formula for everyone in every state. It's for the child who is walking with the Father.

> *"For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD will give grace and glory; no good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly."*
>
> Psalm 84:11 (NKJV)

> *"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear."*
>
> Psalm 66:18 (NKJV)

> *"Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God. And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight."*
>
> 1 John 3:21–22 (NKJV)

If you are knowingly in rebellion, the first prayer isn't "thank You," it's "I'm sorry." Repentance restores the confidence. Then you can say thank you.

> *"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 (NKJV)

2. He Already Knows, and He Already Cares

> *"For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him."*
> Matthew 6:8 (NKJV)

> *"It shall come to pass that before they call, I will answer; and while they are still speaking, I will hear."*
> Isaiah 65:24 (NKJV)

You aren't informing a reluctant God or talking Him into helping you. You're agreeing with a Father who is already for you.

> *"He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"*
> Romans 8:32 (NKJV)

3. Begging Prayer vs. Believing Prayer

"Please, please help me"	"Thank You for helping me"
Often comes from fear	Comes from faith
What if He doesn't?	*I know He will.*

> *"Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them."*
> Mark 11:24 (NKJV)

> *"Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him."*
> 1 John 5:14–15 (NKJV)

> *"But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him."*
>
> Hebrews 11:6 (NKJV)

Thanksgiving is faith speaking out loud.

4. Jesus Prayed This Way

At Lazarus' tomb, *before* Lazarus came out, Yeshua lifted up His eyes and said:

> *"Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. And I know that You always hear Me…"*
>
> John 11:41–42 (NKJV)

He gave thanks for the five loaves *before* they multiplied:

> *"And Jesus took the loaves, and when He had given thanks He distributed them to the disciples, and the disciples to those sitting down; and likewise of the fish, as much as they wanted."*
>
> John 6:11 (NKJV)

Yeshua walked perfectly with the Father, so He thanked Him in advance. As we walk with Him, we're invited into the same confidence.

5. Thanksgiving Is How Scripture Tells Us to Bring Our Requests

> *"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, **with thanksgiving**, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."*
>
> Philippians 4:6–7 (NKJV)

We don't stop asking. We ask *with thanksgiving*, and the peace comes with it.

> *"In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."*
>
> 1 Thessalonians 5:18 (NKJV)

> *"Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name."*
>
> Psalm 100:4 (NKJV)

Thanks is the door into His presence.

6. Thanksgiving Goes Before the Victory

Jehoshaphat put the singers *in front of* the army:

> *"…he appointed those who should sing to the LORD, and who should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army and were saying: 'Praise the LORD, for His mercy endures forever.' Now when they began to sing and to praise, the LORD set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; and they were defeated."*
>
> 2 Chronicles 20:21–22 (NKJV)

Jonah gave thanks from inside the fish, *before* he was delivered:

> *"But I will sacrifice to You with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay what I have vowed. Salvation is of the LORD."*
>
> Jonah 2:9 (NKJV)

Paul and Silas sang hymns at midnight in chains:

> *"But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were loosed."*
>
> Acts 16:25–26 (NKJV)

7. What It Sounds Like in Practice

Not…	But…
"Lord, please give me strength today."	"Thank You for being my strength today."

"Please provide for this bill."	"Thank You that You are my Provider and this bill is in Your hands."
"Please heal my child."	"Thank You that my child is in Your care, and that You are the LORD who heals."
"Please don't leave me."	"Thank You that You will never leave me nor forsake me." (Hebrews 13:5)

You can still name the need. Just name it from a place of trust instead of fear.

8. What This Is NOT

- **It isn't a technique to manipulate God** or "claim" whatever we want. It's trust in *His* will and *His* timing. "Thank You for helping me" includes "Thank You for helping me Your way."
- **It isn't denial.** Lament is biblical: the Psalms, and Yeshua in Gethsemane. You can pour out your heart honestly and still end in thanks.
- **It isn't for covering ongoing, known sin** with nice words.

> *"Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God; for I shall yet praise Him, the help of my countenance and my God."*
>
> Psalm 42:11 (NKJV)

9. Thankfulness Changes Us

- Fear shrinks when gratitude grows.
- It moves our focus from the size of the problem to the size of our God.
- Of the ten lepers healed, only one came back to give thanks. Gratitude brought him to Jesus' feet.

> *"And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks… And He said to him, 'Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well.'"*
>
> Luke 17:15–16, 19 (NKJV)

Closing thought: A child who knows his father loves him doesn't beg for dinner; he says, "Thanks, Dad," and sits down at the table. If you're walking with your Father, come to the table. Just say thank you.

PRAYER, HOPE & ENCOURAGEMENT

Intimate Honor: Connecting with our Loving Heavenly Father

By Gregory John Wilson

Devotional based on Malachi 1:6a

Here we see the LORD of hosts – Adonai Tseva'ot – asking His people a question –

> *"If then I am the Father, where is my honor?"*
> Malachi 1:6a

He has the right to ask this question, being God Almighty Himself, and it is not arrogant of Him to ask it. It is fitting. So, His question teaches us that a Father must be honored – as does the 5th commandment.

Yet. At the other end of the spectrum, we find that we can call Him Abba – Daddy (Romans 8:15) – and have warm intimacy with Him. Thus, these two ends of the spectrum meet – Intimacy yet Honor – and so we come to Him with tenderness and intimacy, yet still being in awe of Him and with reverence. This is modeled perfectly by the perfect Son – Yeshua – who cried with fervency in the garden to His Father – for Him to spare Him the cross if there was any way – but He also submitted to the will of His Father, with reverence. Let us do likewise.

Prayer

Abba Father, I come as your small child to you with tenderness and cries for Your care, yet I know You are the Mighty God, the Mighty Lion, who cares for His own yet is stirred to wrath by sin and Your enemies. I submit to your care and discipline and I praise You Father in awe. Amein.

Praying the Psalms

By Gregory John Wilson

Introduction

An acquaintance came to me asking for help in prayer, and so I said he should find psalms that express his heart and pray them. Thus I got the idea that I could study the psalms myself and make a topical index for what psalms to pray when you are feeling various ways. Thus, this work was born, and is dedicated to my acquaintance and friend Tre Jackson.

Some psalms are not direct prayers but can be turned into prayers, thanking Elohim for certain truths, such as that the man who delights in Elohim's instruction will prosper in whatever he does. (Psalm 1).

I hope this little volume helps you draw near to the Almighty and express yourself better to Him. May He answer your cry for help and reveal Himself to you.

A difficulty I had in examining the psalms was how to treat the psalms asking for destruction of enemies. In light of Messiah's command to love and pray for our enemies, perhaps David's and others' prayers against enemies were just for the time they lived in, or as David was the head of Israel's government, he could carry out vengeance on enemies and foreign nations that opposed Elohim (God). In the end, justice will be served against the enemies of Elohim, but He still desires that they be saved and repent instead. Thus, I have not included the judgment prayers against enemies in light of Messiah's commands.

I will also say, with David's prayers of victory over enemies, just remember that now our struggle is

> *not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, authorities, world rulers of the darkness of this age, and against spiritual wickedness in the heavens;*
>
> Ephesians 6:12

and Yahweh might allow us to suffer at the hand of physical enemies – even by martyred. We are to forgive and pray for them.

Also, if you're walking contrary to Yahweh, don't expect to be able to claim promises. Instead, become contrite and repentant and then He will hear you.

I hope this reference volume will help you find hearty prayers to express yourself and promises to thank Yahweh for.

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2. **Psalm 4** – "Hear me when I call, O Elohim of my righteousness!"
3. **Psalm 5** – "Give ear to my words, O Yahweh"
4. **Psalm 7** – "Save me from all those who persecute me"
5. **Psalm 9:13-14, 19-20** – "Have mercy," "Arise, O Iah'ueh (Yahweh)"
6. **Psalm 10, esp. vs. 1, 12** – A prayer against the wicked
7. **Psalm 12** – "Help, Yahweh, for the godly man ceases"
8. **Psalm 13** – "How long, O Yahweh?"
9. **Psalm 16:1-3** – "Preserve me, Oh Elohim"
10. **Psalm 17** – "Hear a just cause, Oh Yahweh"
11. **Psalm 18:4-24** – "I Cried, He Heard"
12. **Psalm 22** – "My El My El, why have you forsaken me?"
13. **Psalm 25:1-7, 16-22** – "To you, YHWH, I lift up my soul"
14. **Psalm 26** – "Vindicate me, Oh Yahweh"

15. **Psalm 27:7-9, 11-12** – "Hear when I cry"
16. **Psalm 28:1-5** – "To you, I will cry, O Yahweh my rock"
17. **Psalm 31:2-4** – "Bow down your ear"
18. **Psalm 31:9-13** – "Have mercy on me – I've sinned"
19. **Psalm 31:15-18** – "Bless me and save me!"
20. **Psalm 32:3-11** – Confession of sin and HaShem's forgiveness and guidance
21. **Psalm 35:1-3** – "Plead, HaShem, with those who strive with me"
22. **Psalm 35:11-28** – "Awake to my vindication"
23. **Psalm 36:10-12** – "Oh, continue your lovingkindness to those who know you"
24. **Psalm 38** – "Oh YHWH, do not rebuke me in your wrath"
25. **Psalm 39:7-13** – "Deliver me from all my transgressions"
26. **Psalm 40:11-17** – "Do not withhold your tender mercies from me, Oh HaShem"
27. **Psalm 41:4-13** – Prayer for mercy because of sin, and victory over enemies
28. **Psalm 43** – "Vindicate me, Oh Elohim"
29. **Psalm 44:23-26** – "Arise for our help!"
30. **Psalm 54** – A cry for salvation and affirmation of His help
31. **Psalm 55** – Prayer for deliverance from enemies
32. **Psalm 56** – Prayer for victory over enemies
33. **Psalm 57** – "Be merciful to me, Oh Elohim (God), be merciful to me!"
34. **Psalm 59** – Prayer for deliverance from enemies and judgment for them
35. **Psalm 60:1-5, 11-12** – Prayer for restoration and help
36. **Psalm 61** – "Lead me to the rock that is higher than I"
37. **Psalm 64** – Preserve my life from the enemy
38. **Psalm 67:1-2** – "Elohim (God) be merciful to us and bless us, cause His face to shine upon us…"
39. **Psalm 69** – Crying out for help in trouble
40. **Psalm 70:1, 5** – Cry for help and deliverance
41. **Psalm 71:2-24** – "Do not cast me off in the time of old age"
42. **Psalm 77:1-10** – "My voice is to Elohim and I cry"
43. **Psalm 79:8-13** – "Let Your compassion speedily meet us"

44. **Psalm 80:3-7, 19** – "Cause us to turn back, O Elohim, and cause Your face to shine, that we might be saved!"
45. **Psalm 85:4-7** – "Turn back to us, O Elohim of our deliverance"
46. **Psalm 86:1-7** – "Show favor to me, Oh HaShem"
47. **Psalm 86:16-17** – "Show me a sign for good"
48. **Psalm 88** – Prayer for help in time of affliction
49. **Psalm 90:13-17** – Return, O HaShem! How long?
50. **Psalm 102:1-11** – "Let my cry come to you – I am cast down!"
51. **Psalm 102:24-28** – "Oh my El, do not take me away in the midst of my days"
52. **Psalm 109:1-5, 21-31** – Cry for help from attackers and accusers
53. **Psalm 118:17** – "Let me not die, but live, and declare the works of Yah!"
54. **Psalm 118:25** – "I pray, Oh Yahweh, please save!"
55. **Psalm 120** – "Yahweh, deliver my soul from false lips"
56. **Psalm 121** – I lift up my eyes to the hills; where does my help come from? My help comes from YHWH, maker of the shamayim (heavens) and earth.
57. **Psalm 123** – As the eyes of servants are toward the hand of their masters, our eyes are toward YHWH our Elohim
58. **Psalm 130** – My being has waited for Yahweh, more than those watching for morning
59. **Psalm 140** – "Rescue me, Oh YHWH, from men of evil; preserve me from men of violence"
60. **Psalm 141:1, 8-10** – "YHWH, I have cried to you, guard me from their trap"
61. **Psalm 142** – "I cry out – no one is concerned for me"
62. **Psalm 143** – "Do not enter into judgment with Your servant, for before You no one living is in the right"

Section 3: Repentant Prayers

1. **Psalm 6** – "O Yahweh, do not rebuke me in your anger"
2. **Psalm 38:18** – "For I will declare my iniquity; I will be in anguish over my sin"
3. **Psalm 51** – Restore Me!

Section 4: Prayers of Praise

1. **Psalm 8** – "How excellent is your name!"

2. **Psalm 9:1-2, 11** – "I will praise Yahweh"
3. **Psalm 29:1-2** – Give unto Yahweh glory and strength. Worship Him in the beauty of holiness.
4. **Psalm 30** – "I will extol you, O Yahweh, for you have lifted me up!"
5. **Psalm 34** – Blessing and praising Yahweh, and declaring His goodness
6. **Psalm 47:6-7** – "Sing praises!" – (do this with heart and soul!)
7. **Psalm 57:7-11** – "I will awaken the dawn!"
8. **Psalm 61:8** – Singing praise and performing vows
9. **Psalm 66:1-12, 16-20** – "Make His praise glorious" (follow instructions and pray the prayers)
10. **Psalm 67:3-7** – "Let the nations be glad and sing for joy!"
11. **Psalm 86:12-13** – "I praise You with all my heart"
12. **Psalm 92:1-5** – "It is good to give thanks to HaShem and to sing praises to Your name, O most high"
13. **Psalm 101:1** – I sing of kindness and right-ruling; to You, O HaShem, I sing praises!
14. **Psalm 104** – Bless HaShem, O my soul, along with all creation
15. **Psalm 105** – Praise HaShem for His deeds
16. **Psalm 108:1-6** – I awake the dawn!
17. **Psalm 111** – Praise Yah for His works!
18. **Psalm 113** – From the rising of the sun to its going down, the name of יהוה is to be praised
19. **Psalm 115:1** – Not to us, but to Your name give esteem
20. **Psalm 117** – Hallelu-YAH all you nations!
21. **Psalm 118:28** – You are my El, and I praise You; You are my Elohim, I exalt you!
22. **Psalm 134** – Come, bless YHWH, all you servants of YHWH
23. **Psalm 135** – Praise the name of Yahweh, you servants of YHWH
24. **Psalm 138** – I will praise YHWH with all my heart
25. **Psalm 145:1-2** – I exalt you, my Elohim, the king…
26. **Psalm 146:1-2** – Praise YHWH, Oh my soul!
27. **Psalm 147** – Extol YHWH, Oh Yerushalayim! Praise your Elohim, O Tsiyon!
28. **Psalm 148** – Praise Yah, all His works!
29. **Psalm 149** – Hallelu-Yah! Sing to YHWH a new song…!
30. **Psalm 150** – Praise Yah with all instruments!

Section 5: Prayers of Trust

1. **Psalm 11:1a** – "In Yahweh I put my trust"
2. **Psalm 31:1** – "In you, Yahweh, I put my trust; let me never be ashamed…"
3. **Psalm 31:5** – "Into Your hand I commit my spirit…"
4. **Psalm 31:14** – "I trust in You, Yahweh – you are my Elohim"
5. **Psalm 52:8-9** – Trust in His mercy and wait on His name
6. **Psalm 56:3-4** – "Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in You"
7. **Psalm 57:1b** – "For my soul trusts in you; and in the shadow of your wings I will make my refuge, until calamities have passed by."
8. **Psalm 62:8** – "Trust in Him at all times, you people"
9. **Psalm 71:1** – "In You, Yah, I put my trust; let me never be put to shame."
10. **Psalm 73:28** – "I have made my refuge in the Adon (the Lord) Yahweh"

Section 6: Prayers of Thanks

1. **Psalm 16:7** – Blessing Yahweh for His counsel
2. **Psalm 92:1-5** – "It is good to give thanks to HaShem, and to sing praises to Your name, O Most High" (give thanks)
3. **Psalm 95:1-7a** – "Let us come before His face with thanksgiving" (give thanks)
4. **Psalm 100** – "Enter into His gates with thanksgiving and into His courts with praise!" (do it!)
5. **Psalm 105:1** – "Give thanks to יהוה! Call upon His name, make known His deeds among the peoples."
6. **Psalm 106** – "Oh, give thanks to HaShem, for He is good!"
7. **Psalm 107** – Giving thanks for His deliverance
8. **Psalm 118:1, 29** – "Give thanks, for He is good, because His kindness is everlasting" (do it)
9. **Psalm 118:21** – I thank You, for You have answered me, and have become my deliverance.
10. **Psalm 136** – Give thanks to YHWH, for He is good! For His kindness is everlasting.
11. **Psalm 139:14** – I give thanks to You, for I am awesomely and wondrously made

Section 7: Prayers of Devotion and Love

1. **Psalm 18:1** – "I will love you, Oh Yahweh, my strength"

2. **Psalm 19:12-14** – "Cleanse me and let my words and meditation be acceptable in your sight"
3. **Psalm 31:23** – "Oh, love Yahweh, all You His saints!" (do it!)
4. **Psalm 48:9-10** – Thinking on His love, and declaring His praise to the ends of the earth
5. **Psalm 63** – "O Elohim, you are my Elohim, early I will seek You."
6. **Psalm 76:7** – You are to be revered!
7. **Psalm 77:11-20** – "I remember the deeds of Yah"
8. **Psalm 86:11** – "Teach me Your way"
9. **Psalm 101:2-4** – "I act wisely – when do you come to me?"
10. **Psalm 119** – "Oh how I love your Torah!"
11. **Psalm 131** – Oh Yahweh, my heart has not been proud, nor my eyes haughty
12. **Psalm 139** – "You know me"
13. **Psalm 141:2-7** – "Place a guard for my mouth; let not my heart be inclined to evil; let the righteous reprove me."

Section 8: Asking Yahweh for things

1. **Psalm 27:4** – "One thing I have desired – to dwell in the house of Yahweh and behold His beauty and inquire in His temple"
2. **Psalm 28:9** – A prayer for Yahweh to save His people and bless His inheritance, and shepherd His people and bear them up forever.
3. **Psalm 39:4-6** – "HaShem, make me to know my end"
4. **Psalm 94** – "O El of vengeance, shine forth! Render punishment to the proud."
5. **Psalm 122:6-9** – Pray for the peace of Jerusalem
6. **Psalm 144:13-15** – Let our storehouses be filled, no breaking in, no going out…

Section 9: Prayers of Rejoicing!

1. **Psalm 31:7-8** – "I will be glad and rejoice in your mercy"
2. **Psalm 33:1-17** – "Rejoice in Yahweh, Oh you righteous!" (express reasons for rejoicing to Yahweh)
3. **Psalm 35:9-10** – "My soul shall be joyful in HaShem!" (say this to Yahweh)
4. **Psalm 47:1** – "Oh clap your hands; shout to Elohim!" (do what it says! Perhaps with praise music)
5. **Psalm 70:4** – Rejoice if you seek Him – be glad in Him
6. **Psalm 81:1-4** – Shout for joy

7. **Psalm 96** – "Sing to HaShem a new song! For He shall come to judge the earth."
8. **Psalm 97** – Yahweh shall reign! Rejoice in Yahweh, you righteous, and give thanks at the remembrance of His set-apartness.
9. **Psalm 98** – Break forth in song, rejoice, and sing praises! (do it!)
10. **Psalm 122** – I was glad when they said to me, let us go into the house of YHWH!

Section 10: Declarations

1. **Psalm 36:5-9** – "Your mercy, HaShem, is in the heavens"
2. **Psalm 37** – Contrast of the righteous and the wicked. (pray the truths or commands to Yahweh)
3. **Psalm 40:5** – "Many, O HaShem my Elohim, are Your wonderful works"
4. **Psalm 40:6-10** – "I delight to do Your will, Oh my Elohim"
5. **Psalm 45:6-9** – "Declaring the Son's royalty"
6. **Psalm 46:1-3** – "Elohim is our refuge and strength" (address to Elohim (God) and personalize it for yourself)
7. **Psalm 46:10-11** – "Be still, and know that I am Elohim" (declare that you will do this, to Elohim, and personalize the rest).
8. **Psalm 62:5-7** – "My soul, wait silently for Elohim alone."
9. **Psalm 68** – "Let Elohim arise!" (declare it!)
10. **Psalm 72:18-19** – "Blessed be YHWH Elohim, the El of Yisrael"
11. **Psalm 86:8-10, 15** – "There is none like you"
12. **Psalm 89:1-2, 5-18** – "Who is mighty like you, Oh Yah?"
13. **Psalm 90:1-12** – The days of our lives are seventy years, or if due to strength, eighty years…
14. **Psalm 91** – He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High, who abides under the shadow of El Shaddai (God Almighty)…
15. **Psalm 92:6-15** – the wicked versus the righteous
16. **Psalm 93** – Yahweh shall reign!
17. **Psalm 99** – He is kadosh!
18. **Psalm 102:12** – But You, HaShem, shall be enthroned forever…
19. **Psalm 111** – Great are the works of Yahweh
20. **Psalm 112** – Blessed is the man who reveres HaShem
21. **Psalm 114:7-8** – Tremble, Oh earth, from the face of the Adon

22. **Psalm 115:9-18** – He is their help and their shield
23. **Psalm 116** – "I love YHWH, because He has heard my voice." (direct the psalm to YHWH in prayer)
24. **Psalm 118:2-9** – "Yah is on my side" (if you follow Him!)
25. **Psalm 118:18** – Yah has punished me severely, but did not give me over to death.
26. **Psalm 118:19-20** – Going through the gates of righteousness
27. **Psalm 118:22-23** – The chief cornerstone
28. **Psalm 118:24** – "This is the day Yahweh has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it!"
29. **Psalm 118:26** – Blessed is He who is coming in the Name of YHWH!
30. **Psalm 118:27** – YHWH is El, and He gave us light…
31. **Psalm 124** – "Barukh be YHWH, who did not give us a prey to their teeth"
32. **Psalm 125** – Those who trust in YHWH are like Mount Tsiyon – It is not shaken, it remains forever.
33. **Psalm 126** – "Those sowing in tears shall reap with songs of joy!"
34. **Psalm 127** – "If Yahweh does not build the house, its builders have labored in vain."
35. **Psalm 128** – Barukh are all who revere YHWH
36. **Psalm 129** – "Often they have distressed me from my youth…"
37. **Psalm 133** – See how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity.
38. **Psalm 145:3-21** – Yahweh's character
39. **Psalm 146:3-10** – Barukh (blessed) is he who has the El of Ya'akov for his help!

Section 11: Prayers of Longing

1. **Psalm 42** – "As the deer longs for the water streams, so my being longs for You, O Elohim."
2. **Psalm 62:8b** – "Pour out your heart before Him"
3. **Psalm 63** – "My flesh longs for You"
4. **Psalm 84:1-2, 8-12** – "My being has longed and even fainted for the courts of Yahweh"

PRAYER, HOPE & ENCOURAGEMENT

My Times Are In Your Hands

By Gregory John Wilson

December 29, 2019

So today, we near the end of the western calendar year of 2019. So I ask you, do you view the coming year with pleasant anticipation? Or perhaps with uncertainty or loneliness? I hope you are anticipating a good year to come. But if not, I want to offer you the comfort of the Lord. There is a psalm where the author declares, 'My times are in Your hands'. (In the hands of God, that is). That is from psalm 31 verse 15. That should be comforting - God knows the situation you are in and knows the future plans He has for you as well! He can bring you through any trouble you might be experiencing - any lack of peace in your heart, for He is the God of all comfort, says the scripture.

He is intimately acquainted with the paths you take, declares the psalmist in psalm 139. Listen to how the scripture reads:

> *For the choir director. A Psalm of David. O LORD, You have searched me and known me. You know when I sit down and when I rise up; You understand my thought from afar. You scrutinize my path and my lying down, And are intimately acquainted with all my ways. Even before there is a word on my tongue, Behold, O LORD, You know it all.*
>
> Psalm 139:1-4 NASB

The psalmist continues later in the psalm:

> *If I say, "Surely the darkness will overwhelm me, And the light around me will be night," Even the darkness is not dark to You, And the night is as bright as the day. Darkness and light are alike to You.*
>
> Psalm 139:11-12

So as we walk this path, maybe we fear the darkness will swallow us up, and we will not dwell in light and safety. But the psalmist David chooses to take God's perspective - which is that the darkness does not cause fear or anxiety in Him, but it is merely like the light! So when we take God's perspective, we know

He is ruling and reigning just the same at night as in the day - and thus we can rest in Him whether it be daytime or night time. And the same goes with these short winter days with greater darkness. God is still on the throne, and we can rejoice in Him!

Let's read some more of Psalm 139 now:

> *Your eyes have seen my unformed substance; And in Your book were all written The days that were ordained for me, When as yet there was not one of them.*
>
> Psalm 139:16

So David speaks of when he was just a baby, and yet God had already written all the days of his life, ordained for him, in His book. So you are walking through this storybook of your life that the Father has planned, and this should bring you comfort - He knows the future and will be with You in your future, orchestrating your life according to His pleasure. Again - our times are in His hands!

And though He knows the plans He has for us, we should also take stock of our lives to see if there is anything that needs adjusted! This is how the above psalm 139 concludes:

> *Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxious thoughts; And see if there be any hurtful way in me, And lead me in the everlasting way.*
>
> Psalm 139:23-24

This has always been a favorite scripture of mine - it is the reality check of the bible, inviting God to turn us away from any wrong way and to lead us on in the way that leads to everlasting life. There is not much more to say!

To conclude, as we consider that our times are in His hands, I want to leave one more tidbit with you. God is the author of time, and he declares various points in time - like when a new year is.. We began talking about the close of the western calendar year of 2019. But did you know, this is not the schedule of the bible? Does it make sense, a new year beginning when everything is dead and cold?

So I would just like to share the first biblical month defined in the Bible is the month of Aviv, when the barley was green - for Aviv means green! And this is… in the Spring when everything comes alive again - March or April depending on the year. So when Spring comes around, remember, Our times are in His hands - every new year, every birthday, every special moment with loved ones.

May God bless you as you trust in Him!

Prayer requests or comments or questions?

PRAYER, HOPE & ENCOURAGEMENT

Our True Hope

By Gregory John Wilson

Musings during Christmas-time — December 22, 2019

Well, Christmas is just a few days away now. For some, it will be a warm time with family and perhaps friends, with food and probably some hot drinks of some sort! But for others, maybe for some of YOU, family is NOT coming, and even amidst all the festivity, maybe you will feel sad and alone!

I have found that when we put all our hope into a DAY, with only the highest expectations for that day, we can set ourselves up to be let down. For this world is not perfect, and everything might not go our way. Is there a better way? I believe there is.

If we instead place our hope in a Person, an all powerful person who cannot fail us - Father God - any disappointment can be washed away by the joy we can have, knowing we have a future of eternal bliss with the Glorious Father above, and that He is guiding us and caring for us while we are here down below. His Holy Spirit can comfort us, and then everything will be more enjoyable, be it a simple mug of hot apple cider or hot chocolate, or if we have the pleasure of gathering with loved ones.

You see, to me it seems many want to place their hope in the here and now, and want everything right in front of them right now, regarding Christmas Day. Party party party! But what are we celebrating? Are we just worshipping pleasure? Or can we celebrate something truly wonderous and deep and joyful - the Almighty God drawing near to us and having a relationship with us!

For Christians, of course Christmas is the time to remember just that, and this is good. But let's not forget that the sweet baby Jesus will return again in glory to rule and reign and judge the nations with righteousness! This is a great hope for the future - the Kingdom of God coming to earth in glory and splendor, so we should not get TOO fixed on the past now, should we? Yes, it is good to remember the frail way God sent His amazing gift of love to earth. He was a baby once. But He will ever rule and reign as a full robust manly Jewish man!

So again, fix your hope on the exciting future to come with the Father, not just something from the past! And this should bring more LIFE and fresh air, so to speak, to your Christmas time! Christ the babe was given so you could ultimately have life to the fullest with God in a future eternity! So the past points to

the future.

Now while talking about 'our true hope' I find it necessary to point out another aspect of truth regarding Christmastime. And that is… well, to start, the Bible never tells us when the birth of Jesus occured. Sadly, moreover, it is pretty common knowledge when you research, that December 25th used to be a pagan celebration of a false God, with immorality, etc.. It was Christianized into the 'Christ-Mass' to remember Jesus' birth, yet some remaining elements like Christmas trees are said by some sources to have pagan roots as well. And in the book of Deuteronomy, God tells His people to not worship Him like the pagans worship. Thus, I say this so you just know that at least some of the roots of Christmas are not exactly founded on a holy foundation.

Thus, I would like to suggest as well that you consider the purely *Biblical* schedule of holidays that originates from God's words in Leviticus 23. These were also continued in new testament times and Jesus provides rich fulfillment to these feasts, including Passover and the Feast of Tabernacles.

In Zechariah 14, there is a prophecy given of the Lord being King over all the earth and people from the nations coming up to Jerusalem to keep the feast of tabernacles. So as you remember Christ's birth at this time of year, also look to the time when He will be King over all the earth and we will be keeping the feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem! Jesus 'tabernacled' with us 2000 years ago when He took on flesh to dwell in, something remembered at Christmastime, and the book of Revelation says He will do so again when He returns to the earth to reign and dwell with us.

Thus, may you embrace Our True Hope during this time of year - a relationship with Father God and His Son, who came as a babe to become a man to pay for our sins so we can have life everlasting, and also remember He will come again when we will apparently be keeping the feasts of the Bible, specifically the feast of tabernacles!

Prayer requests or quick questions or comments?

Treasuring the Moments

By Gregory John Wilson

2/8/20

Intro

In the book of Luke in the Bible, we hear the famous account of the birth of Jesus, and of the angel appearing to the shepherds, telling them good news of great joy, and then the multitude of angels rejoicing with glory in the sky! Later, when the shepherds come and find the baby Lord Jesus, they recount what the angel said - Luke 2:11:

> *for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord!!!*
> Luke 2:11

and the scripture in Luke 2:19 says:

> *Mary treasured all these things, pondering them in her heart.*
> Luke 2:19

The wonder of THE LORD - God almighty - being born in human flesh!! A MONUMENTAL occasion!

Maybe you don't always have such monumental moments in your life, but also, as Mary treasured those things in her heart, she was probably treasuring how blessed she felt and how happy she was to be the mother of the Lord in flesh! And this is what I want to talk about today - looking for and finding moments in your life that bring you joy and make you feel blessed, that you can treasure in your heart to enrich your whole soul. Because I have found when I take time to REMEMBER and TREASURE special things that happen in my life, I end up feeling a lot more happy and blessed, just meditating on the special things that have happened.

So like Mary, what are the special moments in your life that you can 'treasure up' in your heart, and thus feel more blessed?

For some of you, maybe that is a difficult question to answer - maybe you don't have family to come see you, or you feel there is not much positive or special to celebrate in your life. And if that is the case, you truly have my condolences.

And yet, I want to encourage you that your life can be rich, even if it is at an assisted living facility like Larksfield Place.

Intimate Prayer & Bible Study

Consider the significance of an intimate prayer life - daily engaging in personal prayer to the heavenly Father, enhanced by study of His word.

For example, in the mornings, you can invite His peace into your life by taking time to pray at your breakfast meal, and thank Him for the tasty food and your day ahead. Then you can meditate on the truths of scripture and consider how they could be applied to your life.

And then as you proceed in this manner, you can treasure up these special moments in your heart.

Another part of treasuring up special blessed moments is giving THANKS to God for them! Psalm 116:17 says:

> *To You I shall offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving, And call upon the name of the LORD.*
> Psalm 116:17

So sometimes, yes, it is a SACRIFICE of Thanksgiving, because we can all too often be consumer-oriented - just looking to get something more instead of giving thanks for what we already have. So it might be a little bit of a sacrifice to take time to remember your blessings and then to actually give thanks for them, whether they be big or small. But when you do it, I think you will find that you will appreciate those blessings ANEW as you remember them again and give thanks for them, and this will in turn make you feel more happy and blessed! And sometimes, it IS just the little things that add sweetness to your days - a creamy sweet cup of coffee in the morning, or a piece of apple pie after dinner.

So I ask you, what else can you treasure up in your heart and give thanks to God for to enrich your life and enhance your feeling of blessedness? It will be different for each person, but do consider what blessings you can consciously remember and treasure.

And maybe the greatest thing you can remember to treasure is that the creator God loves you! His presence I believe caused you to be formed in your mother's womb, and caused you to be created! That does not just happen automatically. And so here you are today, a creation of God, made in His image, and loved by Him.

Now what other things can we treasure in this life - in these passing days? Maybe it's the cheerful servant heart of the lady or man who serves you lunch, or a long phone call from a loved one. Maybe it's the rays of the sunrise coming in your window, or a beautiful blue sky, if you get outside sometimes.

Or maybe you're thankful for a hobby you have! Do any of you like doing crossword puzzles, or maybe doing artwork?

For sure, if the Lord does not return in our lifetimes (when the saints are transformed into bodies that do not die), we will have to leave this world behind one day via death - hopefully quick and painless.

Yet the Bible promises a resurrection to life again, and eternal life of the soul as I read it, where though our bodies die, our true person - spirit lives on with God, to await the bodily resurrection into a new glorious heavens and earth!

And we should of course treasure this hope above all else in our hearts and give thanks for it daily, having hope for a future of bliss with no death or pain.

Yet, to conclude, one does need to be aware that not all humanity will taste of this eternal bliss. You see God is a just judge, and can only dwell with completely righteous people for eternity. So we have to submit ourselves to Him in repentance, and let Him make us righteous indeed, from the inside out - cleansing us, giving us a new heart and causing us to walk out righteousness as well. And it's all because of Jesus' sacrifice - paying for our sin, that we can be considered innocent and clean.

Do you desire that righteous eternal life, in relationship with your heavenly Father? You can always draw near to God in prayer, saying you are sorry for any sin, and that you want to be His son or daughter because of the sacrificial death of His only-begotten son, Jesus. I encourage you to draw near to God in this way if you have never done so before, and always stay close to Him via prayer and thanksgiving, always treasuring Him in your heart and treasuring all the blessings He gives. Amen, so be it.

Prayer requests, comments, questions?

Prayer

PART NINE

Kids' Content

Adventures in the Bible & Beyond

Adventures in the Bible & Beyond

A Kids' Bible Curriculum Looking at Biblical History, The Biblical Present, the Biblical Future, and How We Fit in it All!

Introduction

Hey Kids! Welcome to the club! "Adventures in the Bible & Beyond"! Here you will learn about how EVERYTHING started, at least as early as the creation of the world, and you'll see how God established beauty and order in the creation of all things, and how He's a just and merciful God, having beauty and order in His commandments as well - instructing us in the RIGHT way to walk and live and treat Him and others! Sounds like fun, huh? You as a kid are just starting your journey in this life, and I hope to set you on the best path you could ever be on in your life - a path walking towards the ALL-POWERFUL ALL-BEAUTIFUL ALL-GLORIOUS ALL-MERCIFUL KING JESUS (Yeshua) and God the Father, and their Kingdom, which will come to earth and last forever! Don't you want to be part of the kingdom? Good, that's what I thought! Now let's get started in journeying through the Bible and how it applies to our lives today!

Lesson 1: Beauty & Order Established

In the beginning, before there was land or oceans or fish or animals or anything, God was there. Maybe He already had created a beautiful heaven where He chose to dwell. But what's most important is that God is the source of all existence - even His personal name, sometimes pronounced Yahweh, comes from the verb "to be"! And another title for Him in the bible is I AM. HE IS, and without Him, we have nothing. He gives life to all, and like a phone plugged in the wall, we live because He gives us life. And so, "in the beginning" - the first phrase of the whole Bible, God decided to create the place where we would eventually dwell - the earth and the sky!

He started on the first day by JUST creating LIGHT! And notice, this was before there was sun or moon or stars! So perhaps this was a more spiritual light, or its source was just not from something physical like the sun. Indeed, at the end of the bible, we see that when everything is made perfect again in the New Heavens and the New Earth, when the New Jerusalem comes down to be on earth (the special city made by God), we won't need the sun or moon - because God will illuminate everything. He will be our light!

So again, He is the source of everything, and the light comes from Him. That was the first day. And there was also the first evening. And it says the evening came FIRST! That's why we celebrate Shabbat (sabbath) starting with the evening before the 7th day - friday night!

The next day is kind of interesting. Apparently everything, or almost everything was all WATER. So in this day, God SEPARATED the water to make a big expanse in the middle - the sky! That was the second day. But, there was still no land yet! So on the third day, God made the water that was BELOW the sky to come into one place, and he made dry land appear - just by speaking it into existence! He also declared and made all the trees and grass and bushes appear! Even fruit trees!

On the fourth day, God made some pretty things - like icing on a cake - he made the SUN and MOON and STARS! The sun was to give light during the day, the moon during the night, and also the stars at night of course - like sparkling jewels decorating the dark night sky! These lights God said would be to track days and years and seasons, as well as for SIGNS! AMAZING! If you know how to read the sky, you wouldn't have to just depend on your smartphone. Wise people have studied the stars and knew how to interpret them - like the wise men that traveled from afar, following a star to see the newborn King of Kings Jesus! How amazing are the mysteries hidden in the stars that God has placed there for us to discover.

On the fifth day things started getting even more interesting. There was sky and water, (and land), but no animals living there yet! So on the fifth day, God created all the animals that live in the water - the fish, the whales, the dolphins, the crabs! He also made all the BIRDS that fly in the sky! How beautiful that must have been, to see all the creatively sculpted, colorful creatures come to life and start to fly around the sky and swim in the water!

And then the sixth day. The water and the sky had animals, but what about the land? God made all the land animals on the fifth day! The LIONS, ELEPHANTS, Tigers, horses, wolves, rabbits, squirrels! How amazing and creative God is! And lastly, He made another kind of creature to dwell on the land. Well also in the water if they so choose. A very special creature... Who do you think it was? Yes, it was US!! HUMANS! And what's special about humans? It's that we are made in the same image as God HIMSELF! So what is the image of God? Well, there is a special verse that tells us WHO is the image of God! It's found in a letter of the Bible called Colossians - a letter that the apostle Paul (someone who goes out and spreads the message of God and Jesus) wrote to the believers who lived in Colossai. And towards the beginning of this letter, Paul is explaining who JESUS is. And Paul says, with God's guidance, that JESUS is the

> *image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation*
>
> Colossians 1:15

That's from the book of Colossians, chapter 1, verse 15. In the bible, we also see how this is true, because Jesus Himself said that whoever has seen Him has seen the Father (Father God)!! That's from the book of John, chapter 14, verse 9 (John 14:9). God is spirit (invisible), but Jesus is the physical expression of God! So we are kind of like Jesus because we are made in His image - but we are not totally like Jesus because He is perfect and He is ONE with God, and He was in the beginning, creating everything WITH God. But we have the same sort of nature - with a mind to think, emotions to feel, and creativity to create things ourselves!

So on the sixth day, God finished His creation with His crowning jewel - humankind - man and woman. The first man was named Adam (aDAM in Hebrew, the language of the first part of the bible), and the first woman named Chavah in Hebrew - or Eve in English. Magnificently created in God's image. Now man and woman had a beautiful home to live in and enjoy and explore. And they could take care of the animals, and have children of their own to raise up and love in the beautiful world that God (Elohim in Hebrew) had created!

Now it was time for a special pause - to stop and reflect on everything that had happened. To relax, to not have to do regular work. Like a celebration. This was the seventh day, later named "Shabbat" in the bible. That's where the word Sabbath comes from. And Shabbat comes from the verb Shavat, which means to "cease" or "stop" - exactly what we do on the seventh day each week! Imagine what that first seventh day was like - Adam and Eve had JUST been created, and now God was done working, and as a Father, could spend intimate time with His offspring, His children, Adam and Eve, in the new paradise that He had so beautifully made for them to dwell in.

Hallelu-Yah! Praise the Lord! God created everything in 6 days - established beauty and order - and on the 7th day, rested with His special creation.

Lesson 2: The Cost of Freedom

Now that man and woman had been established in their paradise to enjoy and care for God's creation, they could have children as well and thus develop the earth with more image-bearers (humans) who could care for the earth as well and enjoy a relationship with the Creator as well! God's command was to be fruitful and multiply and rule over the earth - cultivate it and care for it and raise up children to do this as well. We ourselves are "Adam" - "earth" - made of the earth but mixed with the Eternal spirit of God - so we care for the "earth" but as we have God in us, we also have a yearning to connect with the Divine as well, and not just be "earth" - "Adam".

We were made to behold the Eternal One's glory and enjoy Him forever, ever beholding more of His character and love for us, and allowing Him to live through us and accomplish His will - which is also righteous and pure and holy and loving and just.

But an enemy had access to Adam and Eve too. An enemy that had tried to be God himself - exalt Himself above God and do his own will - thus questioning the authority and goodness of the Eternal Holy Creator.

And thus HaSatan - the Adversary in Hebrew, also known as Satan or the Devil, somehow came in the form of a snake, or spiritually entered a snake to use to tempt Eve first, and then she would tempt Adam.

The Creator was so gracious that He gave men and women the OPTION to go their own way and try to be their own god, living independently of Him. Nevertheless he warned them, if you do that, you will die - you will cut yourself off from the true source of life in trying to be your own god and you will die.

The Devil appealed to this sense of freedom and independence they could have by eating the fruit of the Tree of the knowledge of good and evil - mind you, I believe everything was more spiritual in those days - so I don't think it was a simple fruit - but something that changed you from the inside out. And so Eve was attracted to the fruit and liked what it offered, being deceived to partake of it, which she sadly did. And Adam, for whatever reason, went along with her and sinned as well.

I have long wondered why getting the knowledge of good and evil would be bad, though. Isn't that what God wants us to know - right from wrong, so we can do right? I have come to the conclusion that the name of the tree refers more to us independently trying to know what's right and wrong ourselves - US wanting to have the knowledge and even defining our own right and wrong, instead of simply listening to our Father and doing what He says.

It is very interesting, after they eat of the fruit, even GOD admits

> *Behold the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil.*
>
> Genesis 3:22

!!! So the devil WAS telling a half truth when he told Adam and Eve that they would be like god if they ate the fruit. This is just further evidence that God actually gave the option for man's mind to be changed and be "like Him, knowing good and evil." I believe God wanted to test them - to see if they loved Him and understood Him to be the great Father of all, and thus would submit to Him, or if they would rebel and choose to be their own god and live off of their own knowledge of what they think is good and evil instead of living in obedience to what the Creator says.

In this light, it was not that the actual fruit was tempting because of its taste or look or texture - it was the temptation of being able to live for self in independence and selfishness instead of having to submit to the Creator.

I don't know about you, but I still FEEL this pull of the fall - the desire to just please myself and do what I want, instead of submit to the Father in love. It is a battle inside - good versus evil. That is why the apostle Paul says we must "die daily" to self - and follow the Master's command to take up our cross daily and follow Him. This is the true way of love - self-sacrificing love instead of seeking to please self.

So in that day, humanity and the world fell into a broken state, cut off from the life and fellowship and love of the Father Creator, now destined to die instead of live forever…

But. The Bible also says God knows the end of things - the future - what will happen. So this great tragedy did not surprise Him. In fact, the great great great love of God knew what it would cost to redeem man and get him connected again to God's eternal life – and HE WAS WILLING to pay this torturous price to take care of man's sin and provide a way for man to be perfected and pure again.

This cost would involve God Himself absorbing, taking our sin somehow, and taking the punishment for it as well - the death and separation from God, so that He could give us back life, our sins having been covered. This great exchange was made possible on the Great Cross of calvary where God sent Himself inside a physical human body to offer His perfect righteousness to us, and somehow absorb all the sin of the world and its punishment into Himself! All things are possible with Him! Somehow He was able to do that! And then raise His son Jesus again to inherit His rightful place as King of Kings and Lord of Lords, only submitting to God the Father above Him! Hallelu-Yah - which means PRAISE YAH - God's short name!!!

So. The cost of allowing man to have freedom and ultimately fall into sin and death was the cost of God's own life. If it was me, I would not have even given man an option to sin so I would not HAVE to come down and suffer and die myself!! But our God's love is unfathomable. He did not want robots - He wanted us to CHOOSE Him. And when we didn't, He was WILLING to come down and suffer and die to give us another chance to be with Him forever and enjoy eternal life with Him!!! Praise Him!!!!

Do you believe these things? If you need more understanding or confirmation from God, just pray to Him. Ask Him to show you that He is real and the Bible is true, and I believe He will.

'Til next time, Have a great day kids!

Lesson 3: Sin Runs Rampant

Well, after man and woman were expulsed from the garden of Eden, they did have children, and those children had more children, et cetera. But, as mankind was now in a fallen state of sin – righteousness was not too common to come by. On the contrary - it seems the selfish urges of lust and hatred and violence ran rampant, and humanity as a whole fell to a very low state in this time of history, given over to their sin.

Somehow, God preserved one man - Noah (along with his family) – who still walked with God in righteousness during this time of history.

But regarding the rest of humanity - at this time, Holy God judged the situation to be unfixable, other than by a mass cleansing and restart. I was pondering this - I believe if there was a way to get humanity back on the right path without a flood, God would've done it. But it appears humanity was too far gone. God was sad – there was so much evil and bad things happening in the world. He was moved to start over with His man, Noah.

So the cleansing waters began to come - yes, the waters of judgment for the wicked - they perished and the world was able to start anew with Noah and his family, as they had been preserved in the ark that floated on the water.

But. God had mercy as well with these people who lost their physical lives. We see later in 1 Peter 3:18-20 that when Jesus died, he actually went to where these souls were in darkness to proclaim to them the gospel and offer them a chance to have eternal life.

> *For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit; in which also He went and made proclamation to the spirits now in prison, who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through the water.*
>
> 1 Peter 3:18-20

Notice also, when the ark was being constructed it says that God was patiently waiting. Waiting for what? Perhaps that others would believe in the coming judgment and want to take refuge themselves as well in the ark that Noah was building!

So God is like a mighty Lion, seated on his throne. Have you ever seen a lion at a zoo? Their faces actually look very peaceful and calm - this represents God's patience He has, even when sinners do things that would probably irritate us a lot and make us mad! But He waits, and waits for people to repent.

Yet at some point, He does bring His fair punishment - justice, upon sinners. This is what happened in the flood. It's called justice, because "just" means something that's right. It is right for God to remove sin and punish those who sin - this is just, fair, right.

But again, He does have A LOT of mercy and patience as well!

That's all for now, kids. Have a great day.

More content coming soon – to cover all major events of the Bible, past, present, and to come!

PART TEN

Poetry

What Did You Give in the Trial Time?

Through the Eyes of Grace

Take Me Back To Heaven

Suffer Well

Eternal Son

A Time for Bad, A Time for Good

A Man

Getting Back to Rest

POETRY

What Did You Give in the Trial Time?

November 23, 2026

By the river of life where the crystal streams flow,
Where the light of the Lamb makes the golden streets glow,
There's a buzz in the crowd as the saints gather 'round,
And a question goes up with a curious sound:

"Hey, what did YOU give in the trial time, friend?
Back in the old earth, from beginning to end?
What did you lay down? What did you give up?
How much did you pour from your little clay cup?"

Then up jumps a fellow with joy on his face:
"I traded my comfort for a far-away place!
I sold off my boat and my big-screen TV
To carry the Word to the isles of the sea!"

And a grandma speaks up with a twinkle and grin:
"I prayed every morning for my neighbors and kin!
I fed every stray and each widow in need,
And I sowed in their hearts a good Kingdom seed."

A mother calls out from the edge of the throng:
"I changed forty thousand small diapers – so long!
I laid down my sleep and my own little plans,
And I placed all my children in the Master's hands!"

Then one with bright scars on his hands and his brow
Says softly, "I gave Him my life – and look now!"
And the whole place erupts with a shout and a cheer,
As the King calls out, "Well done, My son – come near!"

But then there's a man at the back of the crowd,
Who is studying his sandals, not saying aloud
What he gave in the trial time – for, truth be told,
He mostly gave time to his couch and his gold.

"Well, I… watched a lot of good shows," he confessed,
"And I scrolled on my phone, and I mostly just rested.
I MEANT to serve more, to give more, to go,
But I always said 'Later,' and 'Lord, maybe so…'"

"I believed in the Lamb, and I'm here by His grace,
But my wood, hay and stubble went up in that place;
When the fire came testing the works I had done,
I was saved, yes – as through fire – but my crowns? I had none."

And a woman beside him says, "Same here, I'm afraid –
I kept score of each wrong, and I kept what I made.
He called me to love, to lay down and to give,
But I lived for myself for the time I could live."

Then the ones with the crowns march right up to the throne,
And they cast them all down, for they weren't their own:
"It was You in us, Yeshua – Your Spirit, Your Vine!
Every fruit that we bore was Your life, and not mine!"

So friend, you're still living in trial time today,
With a cross to take up and a life to give away.
The clock's ticking down, and the race isn't run –
What will you tell them when the testing is done?

So pour it out! Lay it down! Be a sacrifice – LIVING!
Abide in the Vine and get busy with giving!
For the joy set before us is worth every cost,
And nothing that's given in love is e'er lost.

Then when, by the river, they turn and ask you,
You can laugh, "Let me tell you what HE carried me through!"

POETRY

Through the Eyes of Grace

October 28, 2026

He walked in weary, dust upon his name,
A ledger full of failures, faults, and shame.
He braced himself to hear the Judge's call,
But heaven looked, and saw no sin at all.

For on a hill beneath a darkened sky,
The spotless Lamb was lifted up to die;
And every debt that stood against this man
Was nailed there, canceled, in redemption's plan.

So now the Lord looks down with shining eyes,
No frown of wrath, no cold and stern disguise.
He does not count the sins that once were there;
He sees a son, forgiven, washed, and fair.

How blessed is the man, the psalmist knew,
Whose sins the LORD no longer holds in view.
As far as east is from the evening west,
His wrongs are gone, and he is wholly blessed.

The Father runs to meet him on the road,
And lifts from off his back the heavy load;
He quiets him with love and stills his fears,
And sings with joy above him through the years.

And she, who shares his table and his name,
Has seen that grace, and learned to love the same.
She knows his flaws, the days he falls apart,
Yet keeps no list of wrongs within her heart.

She looks at him the way her Lord looks too,
And sees the man that grace is making new.
When he is weak, she will not tear him down;
She speaks of him as one who wears a crown.

She wakes beside him in the morning glow,
And whispers thanks for him, so he will know
That he's her chosen, cherished and adored,
Not for his merit, but by grace outpoured.

Her eyes are soft, her words are seasoned sweet,
She lays no stone of judgment at his feet.
Her love, like His, will think no evil thing,
And so her husband's weary heart can sing.

For when a man is loved without a score,
He finds the strength to love her even more;
And hand in hand they walk the narrow way,
Two sinners saved by grace, from day to day.

O Lord, who looks on us with love so free,
Teach every heart to love as tenderly,
Till every home reflects Your face above,
Seen through the cross, and covered by Your love.

POETRY

Take Me Back To Heaven

September 26, 2026

You promised struggles and troubles.
I thank You for telling us the truth,
Not sugarcoating.
But You give us a way out - restoration -
You overcame the harsh world
With tender goodness and forgiveness -
Yes, it cost you dearly.
I don't know how You did it,
But You are the Holy I AM,
And I worship You.

So each time the trouble comes,
Help me have a little more grace,
A little more kindness,
To suffer well,
And overcome the evil with good.

And then take me back to heaven in my heart,
Where shalom - peace, and well-being woo my heart back into joy.
Only joy, in this feast of Tabernacles,
As Your word says.

POETRY

Suffer Well

September 25, 2026

When the words cut deep like arrows in my heart,
When I want to give 10,000 defenses against the attack,
Lead my heart into the suffering of Christ,
How gracefully He suffered,
Embracing His unjust cross.

Guide me into releasing the right to win,
And so I will forgive - literally "let go" in Greek.
And I will rejoice in suffering unjustly,
Forgiving and praying for those who do me wrong,
Becoming a son of my Father
Like the ultimate Son
Who was crushed into death and still forgave and did not retaliate or seek vengeance.

POETRY

Eternal Son

September 24, 2026

Who is this man, yet more than a man?
Eternally being, He told them I AM
when they came to unjustly arrest Him
When He would pour Himself out
Unto the bitter, tortured, painful end.

They could not bear His power
As He declared Himself by the Holiest Name
And they stumbled backward, falling to the ground.

Yet this Eternal Image of the Eternal Head of Spirits
Is also the Best and the Humblest.
After they fell, He still offered Himself
Into their evil hands to be bound and begin the winepress.

The winepress that would crush the life out of the great I AM
If such a thing is possible
And that would produce the richest of wine,
Offered to all humanity - to drink freely of HIM -
ETERNAL LOVE - The God-man I AM.

And so, I've seen Your work, arranging my life,
Guiding me, speaking to me in unique ways I only know
But I've yet to behold You in person, oh Eternal Image of the I AM.

You were FOREVER BEING - the ROCK of existence,
Always having inherited life from the Father I AM
And at the fullness of time, you drank the poisoned cup of death
And absorbed the pain, the sin, the judgment,

All to show the kind of love the great I AM has and does.

And in the days to come, the earth and its saved souls will be made new in glory,
As we progress into life with You, and behold Your glorious face.
Forgive me Lord, for minimizing you, oh Eternal One who tasted death, and yet lives again for forever.

I desire to sit with You,
To learn of You,
To behold Your glory
And abide in Your peace and love.

Guide me on until I see Your face.
Selah - pause and meditate.

POETRY

A Time for Bad, A Time for Good

December 26, 2025

Everyone wants to enjoy life,
To have only the good, and none of the bad.
And so we try to force our way,
Even at the cost of those around us.

God wants to bless us with the good things,
But He also wants to develop our character.
A character of selfless love, that gives itself for others.

And this is what costs us —
Costs OUR happiness,
As we treat others more important than ourselves.

And so, there is a time for the bad (when we suffer)
And a time for the good, when things go our way.
The Master of all went through this progression too —
First the Cross, then the Crown.

So let us follow His example,
Taking up our cross when necessary,
And of course enjoying the good times.

Until we have passed all the tests,
And suffered the bad ordained for us,
We will accept the bad as we accept the good too.

Until one day it will ALL be water under the bridge,
And only love and joy will remain,

In heavenly peace in a new world
With the King dispensing His beautiful will,
And us enjoying to the full.

And so only the good will eventually remain,
After the selfless requirements of love have been fulfilled.
And we will be enraptured with wonder,
Forever with our King,
With only
The Good.

POETRY

A Man

December 25, 2025

I call you Lord,
I feel your Spirit,
I know you're connected to the invisible Father,

But sometimes I forget,
You're a man that I can talk to,
And your Spirit will be the bridge
Between heaven and my heart

Because you the Man,
Are seated there in Heaven.
And I'm supposed to fellowship with You,
But until I come to You,
The mystery remains -

I detect your intentions and your comfort in my heart and mind via your Spirit – which is simply You in Spirit form – the Spirit that emanates from your heart, oh Man Jesus the Messiah.

How I long to sit down for coffee with you,
To see your smile,
To speak of all the times you saw me through.
To chat about theology, and let you correct me 😁

Because Your presence is infectious,
God of very God.
One look from your eyes
And I'm undone, my Heavenly brother.

So somehow, my Friend,
Help me know that You are always near.
But I can't deny that sometimes the invisible mystery kills me,
But I guess it keeps things interesting.

Just at least let me see your gaze in my mind's eye,
And of course I'll never stop talking to You
Until we have that coffee date.

So, my Lord, until that day,
Cheers, l'chaim, I drink in your name,
As you maybe drink too – the finest heavenly wine, oh King of Kings,
far away,
but somehow still close to me.

I will remember,
You are a Man,
The finest Man there is –
With the most robust personality,
Incredible wisdom, Unfathomable kindness.
One day, my Lord, one day we'll talk.

But who knows, maybe you'll send me a text one day,
Just to help me out a bit down here.
Actually you have already – via the people in Your body who speak on
Your behalf.

But one day, one day, at the thought of meeting you,
I almost tremble, and I rejoice,
For YOU undo my soul, pierce my heart with love,
And guide me in peace, massaging my soul.

I love you. Help me show it by obeying,
Even though your burden is light and your yoke is easy!!
But oh my Lord, YOUR burden was heavy.
NO-ONE like You, who prefers to take the brunt of the judgment yourself, instead of us, the guilty.
All so we can be well.
All so we can enjoy the Father's kindness.
All so I can one day have…

That coffee date with you,
A Man,
The God-man,
My eternal Friend
Who I will always talk to and laugh with and be guided by.

POETRY

Getting Back to Rest

November 20, 2025

This world races on
Driven by lightning in wires
Fed into our faces on bright screens.

We eat it up and want more more more.
We end up frazzled, spoiled, and lacking peace.

So now, I take a step back.
I remember the embrace of my Friend,
the Master whose heart only has good
for me.

So I sluff off this heartjacket of stress
As you lead me into a broad place.
My enemies are long gone
Only heaven remains,

As long as I walk with you.

And when the bad comes,
I bear with them, I love them,
Yes, I may even suffer.

But nothing like you suffered, my Lord.
Oh loving Most High and Son of the Most High,
You took the brunt of our fall and our punishment,

So we could enjoy the kindness of the Father and You again.

So sit me down, my Lord, make me breathe deep.
I will listen, I will rest, and I will repent.

I HOPE in you. The peace will keep coming,
Every shabbat, every day.
Your grace is great. Your faithfulness never fails.

My Lord, I rest in You.
Lead on, my Holy King.

PART ELEVEN

Big Questions

Big Questions

Big Questions

After lots of study, some biblical questions are still up in the air. I invite your thoughts on these big questions - feel free to email me .

1. The Messianic Interpretation of the Law

Galatians and other bible passages speak of benefits we have because of the cross (complete justification/eternal life and free access to God's presence via Holy Spirit in our hearts) and thus not being "under" the Law (under its condemnation?), but what does this really mean? Even the end of Galatians asserts we should be fulfilling the point of the Law which is to love our neighbor...

2. Levitical vs. Melchizedekan Priesthoods

I came across Jeremiah 33:20-22, which says if day and night cease, then the covenant can be broken with the Levites. Day and night are still here, so where is the levitical priesthood? Hebrews says (7:12) that the priesthood has been changed from Levitical to Melchizedekan and there is a change in Law. Jesus is spoken of as a priest in the order of Melchizedek - Psalm 110:4, but if Jeremiah says that as long as there is day and night, the covenant with the Levites stands, then should both orders of priesthood be in operation today? Levitical for the earth, Melchizedekan for the heavens?

3. A Renewed Israel

Yeshua says that in the regeneration, His 12 disciples will rule over the 12 tribes of Israel. Will this restored Israel exist in the New Heavens and the New Earth, or in the millenium before the New Earth, or? Also, will the 10 lost tribes (Ephraim) be gathered back to the Land of Israel at some point to be united with Judah, Levi, and Benjamin (Jews) - as the Ezekiel prophecy of uniting Ephraim and Judah speaks of? See Ezekiel 37 for a vision of Israel coming back to life, going back to their land, and then awaiting the Lord to come and dwell with them.

4. Time Sensitive Parts of Torah

What parts of the Torah were time-sensitive to Israel at that time, and what still applies to us today? For example, people excluded from the congregation, versus John 3:16.

5. Fulfillment of the Fall Feasts

How do you think the fall feasts will be fulfilled in the future, if in any way, as we have seen the Spring feasts of Leviticus 23 fulfilled by Yeshua becoming the Passover Lamb, rising on first fruits and sending the Spirit on Shavuot (Pentecost)? Yom Teruah (Feast of Trumpets) seems to be associated with the last trumpet sounding and Yeshua coming back, and the last feast of the year Sukkot (Tabernacles) seems to be associated with Yeshua remaining with us to "tabernacle" with us forever with joy in the millenium and new heavens and new earth. Thoughts on Yom Kippur (day of atonement) in between these other two fall feasts?

PART TWELVE

Faith-Filled Fiction

Hananiel's Quest: A Preview

FAITH-FILLED FICTION

Hananiel's Quest: A Preview

SpiritWarriors

A series of episodes set in Wichita, Kansas, beginning in the spring of 2018. The SpiritWarriors are a small band of young men who know the Father and His Son, Yeshua, heart to heart. They walk the city, often by night, watching for the little things the Father places in people's paths and the snares the enemy sets, fighting pain, suffering, evil and injustice with the love of God. Told by an unseen narrator who notices what most people miss.

Start at the Beginning

Introduction What Most People Miss An unseen narrator opens the series: the Father's winks, the enemy's snares, a handful of SpiritWarriors in Wichita, and a young man named John on his first night in a humble apartment off 13th Street. Read the Introduction → Episode 1 Lamps Left Burning In his first week delivering for Lamplight Pizza, John prays with a lonely widower on his porch. Then, on his first night off, a nudge sends him to the Keeper of the Plains, where an old man under a bridge needs help and a stranger steps out of the shadows. Read Episode 1 → Episode 2 A Table for Three Coffee with Marcus. A Tuesday pizza for Mr. Hollis. A grocery store where the enemy waits in every aisle, and a lost kid named Tyler stocking the shelves. Then a Sabbath table, unexpected guests, and a text late at night that changes everything. Read Episode 2 →
See All Episodes →

The House of Light

An allegorical series about a house of light amidst a neighborhood of darkness all around. In this fantasy world, spiritual realities are seen physically, like light and darkness. Those in the House of Light have come to know the Great King, who fills the house with light from His home in heaven, and fills their hearts with light too. Those outside live in varying shades of darkness, but the lighter darkness is the more dangerous, because those who live in it don't see their need for the light.

Start at the Beginning

Episode 1 The Gray Street Mara lives in the "decent" gray middle of Hollow Lane, sure she can see just fine, until a lost ring and an old man's light show her what the gray was hiding. Read Episode 1 → Episode 2 The Dimming Mara carries the light home to a family that would rather squint, and when pride creeps in, her light begins to fade. Back on the hill, Elias shows her where the light really comes from. Read Episode 2 → Episode 3 Into the Murk Mara carries bread down to the Murk Houses, where the darkness is thickest but the hearts are honest, and finds someone from the gray who can't even see his own hand. Read Episode 3 →

See All Episodes →

Tales of Halandas

In the language of the Halandi, the people who live there, *Halandas* means *Testing*. Every soul there has been placed by the Great Father to walk through tests that show what is in their hearts, and, for those who submit to them, shape them to share His nature of love and self-sacrifice, until they are ready to cross over into His country and His glory forever. Each tale is a complete story of a test, and the tales build on one another, following the Halandi through their lives and opening up more of their world as they go.

Start at the Beginning

Tale 1 The Heartspring of Jory Fenn Cheerful Jory Fenn loves everyone in Thistledown with the Great Father's love, but the frowns of his elders slowly muddy the spring in his heart, until he learns, under the old oak on Listening Hill, whose smile he really lives by. Read Tale 1 → Tale 2 The Three-Strand Cord Jory finds the love of his life in Elowen Marsh, the weaver's daughter of Reedmoor. But as his work, his singing and his friends crowd her out, the golden strand of their joining-cord grows dull, until the Great Father's Son meets him on the river bridge. Read Tale 2 → Tale 3 The Guarded City Jory loves the sweet, simple mornings with the Father and the Son on Listening Hill so much that the rest of his day starts to feel like a cellar, until the Son walks him to the walled city of Harrowgate and shows him the spring at its heart. Read Tale 3 →

See All Tales →

A Novel by Greg Wilson

Hananiel's Quest

Completed · In final editing · Publishing soon

I am in the process of editing my completed novel, *Hananiel's Quest*, and will be self-publishing it or seeking a publisher for it in the near future.

The Story

Hananiel's Quest begins in the city of Jerusalem with Hananiel, a 27-year-old believer in Yeshua (Jesus) who attends a Messianic Jewish congregation in Jerusalem. He is hungry to do the will of the Father, to draw near to God, and his prayers lead to God leading him in a very special way that leads to him touring Israel in a band, performing worship music and sharing ancient Hebrew scrolls newly discovered from an archaeological dig. He faces opposition, but the Spirit is working in Israel and Jews are becoming open to Yeshua.

Along the way, you will see the Shabbat (Sabbath) kept and celebrated, as well as the biblical feasts which have prophetic significance in Yeshua (He is the Passover Lamb, and the Spirit came at Shavuot, Pentecost). *Hananiel's Quest* corrects the idea that the Law is done away with (see Matt. 5:17–19, Rom. 3:31, Rom. 7:7, 7:12), and holds the Torah up in honor instead. It also explores the concept of Gentiles being grafted into the Jewish olive tree (Romans 11) and being brought near to Elohim (God), no longer strangers to Him.

Problems addressed are how to love enemies that persecute believers, and the problem of saying the Law has been done away with. Romans 3:31 says in light of being saved by faith, we do not abolish the law, but establish it. My message will point people toward honoring and learning from the Law of Moses instead of discarding it.

What Readers Will Take Away

- A heart for reaching Jews for Yeshua, with respect for the Law, for the Jews were entrusted with the oracles of God.
- A heart for seeking Yahweh to speak supernaturally into one's life and direct them in ministry.
- A heart for missions to the nations.
- A heart for keeping the feasts of the LORD with their prophetic significance.
- An example of loving family life: Hananiel, his young wife, and the kids they care for at their children's home.

So I invite you to quest with Hananiel and see where his quest will take him, from touring America declaring the gospel, to working in England with a congregation and pioneering a children's home. See all that he and his friends accomplish with the help of the Almighty, and ultimately what price he is willing to pay for the Faith in the end.

Read a sample: the first six chapters

Hananiel's Quest: Chapters 1–6

Coming Soon

The Land of Halandas

Fictional story episodes set in the Land of Halandas, a kingdom similar to Israel, will be posted here soon. Stay posted!

PART THIRTEEN

A Merry Heart

Greg's Most Cheesy, Wonderful Dad Jokes

Greg's Most Cheesy, Wonderful Dad Jokes

Proverbs 17:22 says "A merry heart does good like a medicine: but a broken spirit dries the bones". Thus, although **Dad Jokes** are a bit cheesy and silly - humor and laughter still can work wonders in your spiritual life!! Well, I hope some of these original ones of mine provoke at least some kind of a laugh. 😃

Coffee

What do you call a caffeinated cow?

A "caff"
When the man went to the coffeeshop, how much did he order?

A LATTE!!!
What kind of coffee is very emotional?

An "espresso"

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

About Greg

I grew up in a wholesome Christian family in Colorado til 3rd grade, then Texas til 10th grade, then Colorado again to finish out high school. Then I went to the University of Oklahoma after getting accepted to their Music Composition program. I ended up transferring to Oklahoma Wesleyan University where I finished out my college, getting a BA in Music, with a piano emphasis (with classical piano and voice recital)...

It was in high school that I felt compelled to really turn to God and forsake sin, and that I did, by His grace. Later in college I went through a spiritual "eclipse" - many questions popping up coming between me and God. On March 30th, 2011, I had a very special experience where it was like God was right in front of me, and I felt an intense fatherly love and felt like I could literally weep forever. That took away questions. I proceeded to have an intimate walk with Him, praying daily.

Towards the end of college I was just reading Matthew 5 during my devotional time, and I read about Yeshua (Jesus) not abolishing the Law, and the Law remaining as long as heaven and earth are here, and those who keep it being called great in the kingdom of Heaven!! Thus, I began to observe Friday sundown to Saturday sundown sabbath - not to be called great, but to do what is right. It's been a special time of rest and closeness with Yah (God's short name). From there, I have just continued to seek His face and His will and study the Scriptures, growing in understanding concerning various topics such as the Biblical feasts, Gentiles grafted into a Jewish olive tree, and more support for honoring the Torah in the New Testament.

Experience the Shepherd's Embrace

Articles, commentary, poetry and more from Greg Wilson and Shepherd's Embrace Ministries, written to help you rest in the love of the Good Shepherd and walk in His ways.

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