

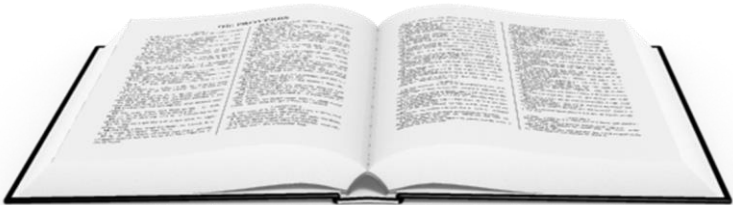


THE GOD OF THE *Blank Check*

TROY EDWARDS

The God of the Blank Check

By Troy J. Edwards



Vindicating God Ministries

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are taken from the *King James Version* (KJV) of the Bible.

The God of the Blank Check

Troy J. Edwards

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Published by **Vindicating God Ministries**

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Dedicated to a man of God who I lost
track of:

Brother Lawrence

*I may have forgotten your full name
but I will never forget your friendship
and encouragement during our time in
Korea.*

Chapter One

The God of the Blank Check

And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. (Exodus 3:13-14)

God has an intense desire to do many things for His people. The reason why God is hindered from doing them is because He needs our faith and cooperation. In Hebrews 11:6 the Apostle wrote, “*But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that **he is**....*” One sure way to give Him the cooperation He needs is to receive the revelation of what He said that *He is* to His people.

Why Moses Needed God’s “Name”

In the opening text, we find that God has been moved by the cries of Israel because of the heavy bondage inflicted on them by their enslavers, the Egyptians (Exodus 2:23-25). God then commissioned Moses to go into Egypt and rescue His people.

Moses, an Israelite who had been raised as a daughter of Pharaoh but refused this entitled position (Exodus 2:1-10; Hebrews 11:23-27), was nonetheless familiar with Egyptian religion. Moses remembered the importance of knowing the name of a deity in this culture.

The nations in the Ancient Near East believed in multiple deities, most specializing in a specific area. The

Egyptians who enslaved Israel during this period of time were no exception. They often appealed to multiple deities, pleading to the particular god that specifically dealt with the want or need that was present.

Furthermore, to know the name of a particular deity supposedly gave one power over it, obliging it to grant one's request. No doubt that after four hundred years of enslavement in Egypt these pagan ideas would have had a strong influence on the Israelites. Therefore, Moses merely announcing to Israel that "the God of their fathers" has sent him would not carry any weight. He needed Yahweh to give Him a specific name. As Albert Barnes notes:

Moses was familiar with the Egyptian habit of choosing from the names of the gods that which bore specially upon the wants and circumstances of their worshippers, and this may have suggested the question which would be the first his own people would expect him to answer.¹

The love and even humility of the true and living God is utterly amazing. God had the divine right as the true God, the Creator of all things, to refuse this demeaning request. He could have demanded that the people recognize who He is or remain in bondage. Instead, God, the most gracious, kind, and benevolent One, condescended to the perceived desires of the people.

The "Blank Check" God

Not only did God give Moses a specific Name but He gave him something that surpassed all that was offered by the pagan religions that may have influenced the minds of the Israelite people. Instead of the Israelites having to appeal to different deities for their numerous needs and desires, God told Moses to tell them "I am". God was and would become to them everything they could ever need or

desire. Some literal translations of Exodus 3:14 clarify this point:

*And God said unto Moses, **I Will Become** whatsoever I please, And he said—Thus, shalt thou say to the sons of Israel, **I Will Become** hath sent me unto you. (Rotherham Emphasized Bible)*

*And God said unto Moses, **I will be that I will be:** and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I will be hath sent me unto you. (Leeser Old Testament)*

*And God will say to Moses, **I shall be that I shall be:** and he will say, So shalt thou say to the sons of Israel, I Shall Be sent me to you. (Julia Smith Literal Translation)*

God, in essence, would show how much more powerful and generous He is than the numerous Egyptians gods proposed by Egypt and reveal to His covenant people that He is anything and everything that they need. This incident with Moses revealing the Name, “I Am” is recorded in Scripture to help us understand that even in this dispensation God can and will become whatever *we* need Him to be.

Since God revealed this Name to declare that He is willing to become to His people whatever we need or desire, some have stated that the meaning of His Name signifies a “blank check” given to us to fill in what we need and cash it in at the bank of Heaven:

Well has it been said, “Jehovah, in taking this title, calling Himself ‘I am,’ was furnishing His people with a blank check, to be filled up to any amount. He calls Himself I am, and faith has but to write

over against that ineffably precious name whatever we want.”²

“I believe it includes everything the human heart longs for and needs. This unfinished name of God seems to me like a blank check signed by a rich friend given to us to be filled in with whatever sum we desire. The whole Bible tells us what it means. Every attribute of God, every revelation of His character, every proof of His undying love, every declaration of His watchful care, every assertion of His purposes of tender mercy, every manifestation of His loving kindness—all are the filling out of this unfinished ‘I am.’”³

There is no doubt that when one understands the giving, loving nature and character of the God of the Bible that they would not question the fact that God’s revelation of His name gives us a blank check that we can fill out to get what we need or desire from Him.

A Covenant Name

There are two Hebrew words commonly used of God in the Old Testament. One of the first ones we find is *Elohim* which, among many things, means *God of might, power, and strength*. However, when God wanted to make a special revelation of Himself to His people, He used the name *Yahweh* or *Jehovah* (Gen. 22:14; 15:1). This not only distinguished Him from the numerous false deities in the cultures surrounding His people, but also revealed Him as the self-sufficient, covenant keeping God.

A *covenant* is a legally binding agreement which obligates the participants to keep and fulfill the promises and conditions stated therein. By revealing this Name, “I am,” God has bound Himself to us by covenant to be whatever we need Him to be.

This covenant gives us the right to claim all promises that God has made to us. God does this for

several reasons. First, to show man His willingness to do what He has promised by binding Himself to do it. By doing this it gives men a pledge to hold on to in order to alleviate fear. It is also used to destroy unbelief, enlarge the measure of our faith, and enable us to approach God with boldness.

Within a covenant there are usually memorials – things to remind people of the covenant (Luke 22:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26). In Exodus 3:15 God says, “... *this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.*” The Amplified Bible renders it, “*This is My name forever, and by this name I am to be remembered to all generations.*” This is exemplified by the psalmist:

Praise Yahweh, my soul, and don't forget all his benefits, who forgives all your sins, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from destruction, who crowns you with loving kindness and tender mercies, who satisfies your desire with good things, so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's. (Psalm 103:2-5; World English Bible)

You cannot fill in the blank check if you don't know or if you forget what God has placed in the bank account. This is why God, in His kindness, gives us His covenant blank check Name as a memorial to keep us in remembrance of what He desires to do for us.

Fulfillment in Jesus

Jesus, the second member of the Triune Godhead, revealed Himself to be the “I am”:

*Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, **I am.** Then*

took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by. (John 8:58-59)

While many so-called “Christian” groups are denying the Biblical concept of the Trinity, thus rejecting the truth concerning the deity of Christ (as well as the person-hood of the Holy Spirit), this Scripture, among numerous others, gives us strong evidence that Jesus is indeed God. Furthermore, it is solid proof that Jesus is the God of the Old Testament.

The Jews of our Lord’s time on earth, understood Jesus’ implication when He addressed Himself as “I am” better than most modern Christians today who claim to believe in Christ. They knew that Jesus had just referred to Himself under the same sacred title that was divinely revealed to Moses in Exodus 3:14. This is what moved them to stone the Lord as they believed He had blasphemed. But those of us who trust that Jesus is as much God as the Father is have no problems understanding that He is the “I am” manifested in the flesh.

Why is this important to our lesson? So many people attempt to make a strong distinction between the Old and New Testaments, insomuch as they often relegate the promised blessings and benefits given to the Old Testament saints as belonging only to their dispensation. We are then told by these “apostles of unbelief” that the blessings that were given to those under the Old Testament (particularly miraculous healing, provision, protection, etc.) are no longer available to the New Testament believer.

Yet, if Jesus is truly the “I am,” then all of the blessings and benefits of that Name that was available under the old dispensation could not have been dissolved

in the New Testament era since it was Jesus' blood sacrifice, the sacrifice of the great "I am," on our behalf, that ushered in a new dispensation. Our Lord Jesus is "*the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises*" (Hebrews 8:6).

The Name of Jesus—The "I am"

Jesus, in His teaching on prayer, tells us that we have a blank check with His Name signed on it and that this check must be presented to the bank of Heaven in His Name:

*And **whatsoever** ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask **any thing** in my name, I will do it. (John 14:13-14)*

*Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that **whatsoever** ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. (John 15:16)*

*And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, **Whatsoever** ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. (John 16:23)*

To pray in the Name of the Lord is to pray in line with His character. The Name of Jesus is the Name of Yahweh, the great "I am". It is the Name of a generous God who is willing to become whatever His people need Him to be.

Furthermore, the words “any thing” and “whatsoever” stated in our Lord’s prayer promises covers the essence of the “I am” revelation. Hence, “any thing” and “whatsoever” signifies the fact that “the Name of Jesus” is indeed a blank check to fill in whatever you need. As some classic authors have well stated:

“... in this Saviour and at that moment Christ placed in his hands blank checks signed with His own name and not one of them has ever been refused at the bank of Heaven”⁴ (Ruth Paxson)

“Suppose you give a man your checkbook signed with your own name and left blank, to be and use My name. ‘filled in as he chooses.’ That would be very close to what Jesus has done in these words”⁵ (Charles H. Spurgeon)

God is not a liar and means exactly what He says. We can ask Him for anything in His Name and He will be whatsoever we need Him to be, thus, supplying our need through His own creative power.

Chapter Two

Yahweh Yireh: The Lord Our Provider

Abraham named that place Yahweh Yireh. It is still said today, “On the mountain of Yahweh it will be provided.” Names of God Bible. (Genesis 22:14; Names of God Bible)

God told Moses in Exodus 3:14, “***I Will Become whatsoever I please***” (Rotherham Emphasized Bible). God’s revelation of His name gives us a blank check that we can fill out to get what we need or desire from Him.

God is Yahweh Yireh

While God certainly reveals to us His Name as a blank check to be filled out, some are unsure of what they can get from God and others are so carnal that they would believe that they could ask God to do things that are sinful; things that can bring harm to themselves and others. In order to make known to His faithful children the vast unlimited riches of His wealth as well as to diffuse unholy and harmful requests, throughout Scripture God has given numerous examples of what He is willing to be to His people. One of those “Names” demonstrating His willingness is “Yahweh Yireh,” which means “The Lord who sees and provides.”

While some Bibles versions transliterated the name either “Jehovah-Jireh” or “Yahweh Yireh”, most English translations did well by giving us the *actual* translation. Here are a few of the many:

Abraham called the name of that place “Yahweh Will Provide”. As it is said to

this day, “On Yahweh’s mountain, it will be provided.” (World English Bible)

Abraham named the place Yahweh-Yireh (which means “the Lord will provide”). To this day, people still use that name as a proverb: “On the mountain of the Lord it will be provided.” (New Living Translation)

Abraham gave that place the name “The Lord will give us what we need.” And it is said to this day, “On the mountain of the Lord it will be given.” (New Life Version)

Furthermore, note that this revelation of God as a provider was not meant for Abraham alone. In the latter two translations we read, **“To this day, people still use that name as a proverb: ‘On the mountain of the Lord it will be provided’”** (New Living Translation) and **“And it is said to this day, ‘On the mountain of the Lord it will be given’”** (New Life Version). “To this day” implies that the revelation goes far beyond Abraham’s time. We can boldly say that it extends into our time. We can and should declare by faith, “To this day, God has been and will continue to be my provider. He will give me what I need.”

If we have a need, God is in covenant with us to supply it. God’s children should never feel that the God who has covenanted Himself with us to provide our needs would deprive us of His divine provision.

Why this Name was Revealed to Abraham

While there is no Biblical promise stating that needs will never arise in our lives, we have been given the

assurance that when they do come, God will provide for them.

Why did God reveal this particular Name to Abraham? Learning the background will give us some practical insights into how we are to conduct ourselves whenever we are confronted with a need in our lives.

Most are familiar with the story of God promising Abraham and Sarah a son in their old age. This son would be the catalyst for God making Abraham's descendants into a great nation. This nation would eventually usher in the Savior of the world. In due time God worked a miracle and gave the elderly couple a son named Isaac.

However, their came a day when God commanded Abraham to take His only son, the seed of the promised nation, to a mountain as an offering:

And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am. And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of. (Genesis 22:1-2)

Upon an initial reading of this passage, at least as the King James Version renders it, it would appear that God is commanding Abraham to offer Isaac as a human sacrifice similar to the practice of the pagans. This would be a strange thing for God to ask Abraham to do since God stated his aversion to taking a human life to Noah after the flood (Gen. 9:5-6). Furthermore, He later revealed to Moses His disdain for child sacrifice (Deut. 12:31; 18:10).

John Bellamy believes that the passage was incorrectly translated and offers the following translation: “.... and cause him to ascend there concerning the offering, upon one of the mountains, which I will mention to thee.” (The Holy Bible: Newly Translated from the Original Hebrew with Notes).

The idea is not to burn Isaac as an offering but to *take Him* where a burnt offering would take place. Abraham himself may have misunderstood God’s intentions, but he did not appear to believe that Isaac would die or *remain* dead (Gen. 22:5; see also Hebrews 11:17-19). On the contrary, Abraham was so full of faith that he knew that by his obedience, God would step in with a provision:

*And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? And Abraham said, My son, **God will provide himself a lamb** for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together. (Genesis 22:7-8)*

Abraham made a confession of faith in God’s provision *before* there was any tangible proof of the need being met. We must learn to “say” *before* we “see” (Mark 11:24; Rom. 4:17-18; 2 Cor. 5:7; Heb. 11:1). Too many of God’s people won’t “say” *until* they “see”. Waiting to receive the provision from God before you declare His faithfulness as a provider is not faith but unbelief and is one of the reasons so many of God’s people never see the supplication of their needs. God’s people today must learn to follow the example of Abraham in making faith declarations concerning God’s provision. Whenever there

is a need, we, like Abraham, should say, “God will provide the thing needed.”

When Abraham showed God that he was willing to give up even the most precious thing to him, then God provided Abraham what was truly needed for the offering:

Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and saw that behind him was a ram caught in the thicket by his horns. Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering instead of his son. Abraham called the name of that place “Yahweh Will Provide”. As it is said to this day, “On Yahweh’s mountain, it will be provided.” (Gen. 22:13-14; World English Bible)

Abraham’s faith was rewarded when a lamb was provided for the sacrifice (Hebrews 11:6). If God will reward Abraham’s faith in His provision, He most certainly will do the same for His children today. However, we must act in faith and speak in faith as Abraham did. Otherwise, we should expect to receive nothing from the Lord (James 1:6-7).

“Provider” is God’s Character and Nature

It is the very nature of God to provide for His people. He demonstrates this through His numerous promises, thus giving His people more revelation of the kind of God He is:

O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him. O fear the LORD, ye his saints: for there is no want to them that fear him. The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they

that seek the LORD shall not want any good thing. (Psalm 34:8-10)

Take note that God declares Himself as good and then connects His goodness to the fact that He provides for His children. When teaching along these lines I asked our congregation if God did not supply the needs of His children would He still be good? Many of them answered “yes,” to which I explained to them that, based on this Scripture, they responded incorrectly.

If I neglected my family by never working or taking care of them then there is no one who would call me a good father or husband, and rightfully so. I would be considered a bad man. Even the Scriptures themselves would declare me worse than an infidel (1 Timothy 5:8).

The problem with most Christians is that we believe that God has double-standards. We believe that He can act in ways that He would forbid us to act while He still claims to be good. Beloved, God would not be good if He did not provide for His loved ones. Again, He connects His goodness to His provision and we have no right to disconnect it.

Our faith is strengthened by the fact that God is good, and we can taste and see this by trusting Him to take care of every need. Because he is good it is within His very nature to supply our need. If we are not seeing God’s provision then He is not at fault nor should He be blamed. The defect is with *our faith*.

David, believing this truth about God, was able to say, “*I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread*” (Psalm 37:25). I have been able to say the same thing over my own life. I have often asked my children if they have ever gone without a meal and lacked anything. They always respond with an emphatic, “no.” I remind them,

based on this Scripture, that this has always been due to God's provision.

Jesus' Promise to Supply Our Needs

One of the most important truths in our discussion is that Jesus is our "Yahweh-Yireh" and is ready to meet our every need: "*But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus*" (Philippians 4:19). Under the New Covenant, God's faithful and obedient children are guaranteed the supplication of every need through the shed blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Sometimes I have heard people quote Philippians 4:19 and declare, "It says God will supply your *needs*, not your *wants*." Such statements only paint a picture of a stingy God who will give His children the bare minimum—enough to survive and that's it. This is not the picture that Paul was trying to convey when he (by God's Spirit) wrote that statement. Two other translations should help us further:

And my God will liberally supply (fill to the full) your every need according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. (Amplified Bible)

But my God shall abundantly supply all your need according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. (Darby Translation)

God's wants to abundantly supply and fill to the full our needs. In other words, He is a God who goes above and beyond what we need to ensure we have plenty. He is not a miserly, penny pinching God that some would portray Him to be.

There are others who claim that God is primarily concerned about our spiritual needs and put little emphasis on the physical. Our Lord Jesus repudiates that false idea as well:

Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. (Matthew 6:31-33)

As long as our focus is on God's desires and not material things, God will ensure that we have our material needs met in abundance. Our Lord is just as concerned about our physical needs as He is for our spiritual needs. Only ascetic religion claims otherwise. God is indeed our covenant provider. He declares, "I am thy provider" and will supply what we need in abundance. He is our blank check. Fill in what you need through prayer.

Chapter Three

Yahweh Rophe: The Lord Our Healer

*And said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for **I am the LORD that healeth thee.** (Exodus 15:26)*

As we have already learned from previous chapters, God commissioned Moses to rescue the Israelites from Egyptian bondage. Moses, knowing the influence that the Egyptian pagan culture had on the Israelites, asked God to give him a “name” to approach them with.

The pagan cultures surrounding Israel believed that knowing the name of a deity gave them power over that deity. God condescended to Moses’ request by giving him a name that would cover any need that the Israelites had. What a wonderful, Loving, and kind God He is.

The Lord that Heals

Since the fall in the Garden of Eden, mankind has suffered numerous problems and have been impacted by many needs. These problems and deficiencies faced by men were never the plan nor the will of God.

Among these numerous problems faced by mankind has been sickness and disease. Were there no sin, there would never have been sickness. However, sin brought death which led to man suffering sickness and disease (Romans 5:12). This came by our own fault.

Yet, God, in His graciousness, chose to meet this need brought about by sin by becoming to us the *Lord that healeth us*. This is the compound name “Yahweh-Rophe”:

“... in another place Ex. xvi. 26, Rophe is added. The root of this word in Hebrew literally means to *sew together, to mend, to repair, heal, cure &c.* This literal meaning is quite significant. Jehovah who is Jesus with true Christians is the great physician of souls to *mend, cure, heal*. **Spiritual curing or healing is to deliver from evils and preserve the individual from their influence.** Such is the spiritual import of the Word which is the internal of its literal meaning. Jehovah—Rophe is then Jehovah thy healer.”¹ (Emphasis are mine)

God as Yahweh Rophe desires to not only deliver us but protect us from all evils, and these evils include sickness and disease. However, He requires some cooperation on our part. First, we are to “*diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God.*” We are to listen to God’s voice. This includes both the still small voice of the Holy Spirit who is always speaking to us (1 Kings 19:11-13; Matt. 10:19-20; John 14:26; 16:13; 1 Tim. 4:1) as well as His written Word, the Bible (Deut. 4:12, 36; 5:22; 1 Sam. 15:1; Psalm 103:20; Joel 2:11). After all, we are told that healing comes via the Word of God (Psalm 10:17-20; Prov. 4:20-22).

If we will listen to God’s Word and learn from His Word then we will learn to “*do that which is right in his sight*” and not what is right in our sight (Deut. 12:28; Judges 17:6; 21:25). Too many so-called Christians today are doing what they think is right rather than studying God’s Word to find out what He says is right. If you are doing what is right in *your sight* rather than in God’s sight then you are *wrong*. You will never experience God as your Yahweh-Rophe.

Fulfilled in Jesus

As with every revelation of God in the Old Testament, the Name, “Yahweh-Rophe” finds its fulfillment in the second member of the Triune Godhead, our Lord Jesus Christ.

*Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil **in the name of the Lord**: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. (James 5:14-15)*

Note that healing is guaranteed when it is done in *the name of the **Lord*** because God said, “*for I am the **LORD** that healeth thee.*” Of course, the “name of the Lord” specifically being referred to by James is the Name of Jesus our Lord. It is by this Name that healing takes place:

*Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: **In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.** And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. (Acts 3:6-7)*

*Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that **by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth**, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. (Acts 4:10)*

*And these signs shall follow them that believe; **In my name** shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.* (Mark 16:17-18)

Jesus is Yahweh. He is the God of the Old Testament as well as the New. The authority of His Name is aligned with that of Yahweh-Rophe. Jesus' Name is *the Lord that health thee*.

God is Not Behind Sickness

One of the more confusing statements in Exodus 15:26 is, "*I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which **I have brought** upon the Egyptians.*" The implication here is that God directly afflicted the Egyptians with diseases. Statements of this nature have been used by proponents of "suffering theologies" to claim that God afflicts people with sickness for various reasons (to punish, test, mature, etc.).

However, sickness and disease is the result of sin and Satan (John 5:14; Acts 10:38). God's nature is not one of sickness but of healing. God cannot bring sickness because He is *the Lord thy Healer* and not *the Lord that maketh thee sick*. God cannot do what He *is not* and He must do what He *is* because that is in His nature (Matthew 7:17-18).

Someone will reasonably ask, "then why does it say in Exodus 15:26 that He *brought* diseases among the Egyptians?" Sadly, our translators have failed to recognize that the Hebrew language contains numerous idioms that should not be translated into another language in a literal manner. One of the most important idioms in

this case is what is referred to as “the idiom of permission.” The great scholars who contributed to the wonderful 1834 resource, “Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge” referred to this idiom when they wrote,

“.... it is well known, that in Scripture, God is frequently represented as doing what, in the course of his providence, he only permits to be done”²

Exodus 15:26 is among several Scriptures cited by Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge as an example of God being said to do that which He merely permitted.

Since Egypt is used as the example of God having brought disease upon people, we would do well to look further at how this confirms this idiom of permission:

*He made a way to his anger; he spared not their soul from death, but **gave their life over to the pestilence**; And smote all the firstborn in Egypt; the chief of their strength in the tabernacles of Ham (Psalm 78:50-51)*

Note that God did not, by His miraculous power, directly afflict Egypt with disease. It says He “*gave their life over to the pestilence.*” The Hebrew word for “gave” is *sâgar* which, according to Strong’s dictionary, means “to surrender, deliver (up), give over.” Therefore, God “smote” the firstborn, not by directly harming them, but by “giving them over to” or by no longer protecting them from disease (Judges 20:28, 35; 1 Kings 14:15-16; 2 Chronicles 13:15-16; Isaiah 57:17).

Another translation of Psalm 78:50 reads, “*He found a way to show his anger. He did not spare their lives. **He let them die with a deadly disease***” (Easy to Read Version). God did not personally afflict the disease,

He merely did not intervene in preventing it. Considering all of this, I believe that the following paraphrase of Exodus 15:26 by Dr. Jack C. Blanco is more consistent with God's nature:

The Lord said to Moses, "If you will listen to me and do what is right, if you will keep my commandments and laws, I will not let any of you come down with the diseases of the Egyptians. I will heal you for I am the Lord." (The Clear Word)

In Scripture, God often took responsibility for what He did not prevent Satan from doing such as the moving (tempting) of David to number Israel (2 Samuel 24:1). It is only through the progress of revelation, in which we learn about a being called "Satan," that we realize that God had no direct involvement in the matter (1 Chronicles 21:1; James 1:13). The same truth can be applied to Exodus 15:26.

In Job 2:7 we are told that Satan, "*smote Job with sore boils.*" However, when we get to Job 42:11 we are told, similar to Exodus 15:26, that Job's family and friends, "*comforted him over all the evil that **the LORD had brought upon him.***" It was God only in the permissive sense and Satan in the direct, causative sense. This is how all such passages are to be interpreted because God is the Healer and not the sickness-bringer.

It is Always God's Will to Heal

The fact that God refers to Himself as "Yahweh-Rophe," the Lord our Healer, informs us that healing is God's nature. This also tells us that it is always God's will to heal and there is never a time when God is unwilling to relieve anyone of sickness and pain.

It is sad that there are people who teach otherwise—making statements that cause us to doubt God's willingness to heal in every instance. For some it

would seem that there is a lottery system with God in which He wills some to be healed while denying this same demonstration of His love to others. There are even those who teach that miracles are no longer for today and conclude that it is never God's will to heal supernaturally in our present dispensation.

However, God's Word is in dispute with such ignorance. God's Word is the revelations of His will for our lives. When it comes to divine healing, God's Word has revealed that it is already His will to heal you (Psalm 107:17-20; Proverbs 4:20-22). If God says, "I am thy Healer" then this naturally means that it is always His will to heal. God's "I Am" is God's "I will". Therefore, whenever you read in Scripture where God says "I am" or "I will" (He will, the Lord will) then this is a clear revelation of His will for our lives.

In Exodus 23:25 God said, "***I will take sickness away from the midst of thee***" and again in Deuteronomy 7:15 He told Moses, "***Yahweh will take away from you all sickness***" (World English Bible). As one writer explained, "Will in the first person and shall in the second and the third, are used to express either promise, willingness or determination, as the case may require."³ Therefore, whenever we read an "I will" or "the Lord will" attached to any promise in Scripture then there should never be any doubt about His will for us in that particular area.

Furthermore, some ministers have told us that we should always pray "if it be thy will" in relation to this provision. However, if God has already expressed His will when He said, "I will" then to preface a request for healing with an "if it be thy will" is a statement of unbelief. Let not that man think that he will receive anything from the Lord (James 1:5-7). No Christian should ever pray "if it be thy will" where God has expressed an essential truth about His person and nature.

Present Tense Reality

Finally, the name “I am” reminds us that God’s promise of healing is a *present tense reality*. Everything God is and has is presently available and is to be claimed *now* (Heb. 11:1, 6; Mark 11:24; 1 John 5:14-15). His promises are always present tense realities (2 Pet. 1:3-4). Therefore, He is not the Lord who is *going* to heal you. He is the Lord that *healeth* thee at the moment that you claim it.

The Psalmist wrote, “*Praise Yahweh, my soul, and don’t forget all his benefits, who forgives all your sins, who heals all your diseases*” (World English Bible). The Young’s Literal translation reads, “*Who is healing all thy diseases.*” He *is* healing. It is available. In Luke 5:17 we read, “.... *the power of the Lord was present to heal them.*” If we are not healed then it is because we have not taken it from Him by the hands of faith.

The present tense reality of what God is to us keeps us operating in faith regardless of our feelings or circumstances. His Word reveals who He *is* and enables us to believe that He *is*. God *is* everything His Word says about Him. Hence, faith says it is already done.

God proclaims Himself as the Lord that *healeth thee*. This is *personal*. This proves that it is His perfect will to heal *everyone* who will reach out to Him in faith and fill in the blank check for this particular need. Therefore, make your confession and change the “thee” to “me.” Say, “He is the Lord that *health me.*”

God is indeed our covenant healer. He is willing to bring healing and health to all who reach out to Him for it. He is our blank check. Fill in what you need through prayer.

Chapter Four

Yahweh Nissi: The Lord Our Victory

Moses built an altar and named it “The Lord Gives Me Victory.” (Exodus 17:15; Contemporary English Version)

Many of God’s people struggle and are often defeated by sexual sins, impatience, unforgiveness, worry, financial difficulties, marriage problems, sicknesses of many kinds, etc. They do not know how to get the victory over these struggles. This is primarily because they do not *know* their God.

Know God – Know Victory

Daniel said, “.... *but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits*” (Daniel 11:32). God has made every effort to help us to know Him by making revelation available through His wonderful Name, “I am”. As we come to know and understand this name we begin to see the generosity of God. He has actually given us a blank check to fill in what we need.

There is no reason for being defeated by sin or life’s circumstances when God has handed us a blank check and told us to fill in what we need. He goes further to tell us the many things we can write on this check that He is willing to do. One of the numerous things that God reveals is His willingness to give us the victory in every situation that we confront in life.

In Exodus 17, Israel continued in what we know to be a series of complaints against God and His servant, Moses. Despite God demonstrating His power time and time again in protecting and providing for His people, they continually walked in unbelief (Psalm 78:32-42). We are told:

And he called the name of the place Massah, and Meribah, because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the Lord, saying, Is the Lord among us, or not? Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim. (Exodus 17:7-8)

The children of Israel expressed their unbelief through their words. God's people do not seem to understand that our words have power (Proverbs 18:21). It was right after Israel expressed unbelief in the Lord's presence that we are told *then* came Amalek. The word "then" is a "sentence connector". It lets us know what opens the way for Amalek to fight with Israel.

Because of Israel's verbal expressions of unbelief, they lost God's protection and opened the door for the enemy to attack them. If one questions God's presence after numerous demonstrations of it then they are bound to lose that presence. No presence means no God. *No God – no victory*. On the other hand: *Know God – know victory*.

We are told in Scripture that we can prevent access to our enemies or we can give it to them through sin (Ephesians 4:27; James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:7-9). Our words determine our victory and our defeat.

God is Yahweh-Nissi

Thankfully God is merciful and is willing to give us victory even in those areas in which we brought about our own defeat. The next day, Moses went to the top of the hill with the rod of God as a symbol of intercession while Joshua led an army of Israelites to fight against Amalek.

This was not an easy and instant victory as it required Moses' cooperation and perseverance with God:

*And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, **that Israel prevailed**: and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed.*
(Exodus 17:11)

Moses' actions, or lack of action, determined the outcome for Israel. So many have embraced a fatalistic idea of God's sovereignty in which God determines everything that happens regardless of what we do. This is not a Biblical teaching. Many things God desires for us do not come to pass because we either don't do our part or give up our part before we see the fulfillment of God's plan. Thankfully, Aaron and Hur saw how much the victory for Israel depended on Moses' cooperation with God and assisted him (v. 12).

It was that cooperation with God, and God's subsequent moving that Israel was victorious over Amalek. We read, "*And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people*" (Exodus 17:13) or, as another translation says, "*That's how Joshua defeated the Amalekites*" (Contemporary English Version). Because of this victory we are given another revelation of God's character:

*Moses built an altar and called it **Yahweh Nissi**. He said, "Because a hand was lifted against Yah's throne, Yahweh will be at war against the Amalekites from one generation to the next."* (Exodus 17:15-16; Names of God Bible)

The name "Yahweh-Nissi" means "The Lord is my banner". We are told that, "A banner is a piece of cloth, suspended from and displayed by a pole, usually

having on it a figure or device of some sort, and frequently inscribed with a form of words.”¹

Every nation then and now carries a flag or banner representing their nation. The United States invaded Iwo Jima in February, 1945. When they had defeated the enemy and captured a mountain called “Suribachi,” the Marines placed the United States flag on top of this mountain to declare their victory. No doubt, Moses was using similar language when God revealed to Him the name, Yahweh-Nissi, or, as the Contemporary English Version renders Exodus 17:15, “*Moses built an altar and named it ‘The Lord Gives Me Victory.’*”

God is Our Victory Banner

In Scripture we find that a “banner” represents God’s victory over our enemies. In Psalm 60:4 we read, “*Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth.*” Some other translations help us to see the victory aspect of this:

You have set up a banner for those who fear You [with awe-inspired reverence and submissive wonder—a banner to shield them from attack], A banner that may be displayed because of the truth. Selah.
(Amplified Bible)

But you have raised a battle flag for those who honor you. They will show your banner when they face the enemies arrows.
(Unlocked Dynamic Bible)

In another Psalm, this banner of protection and victory is connected directly to the Name of our God:

*We will rejoice in thy salvation, and in the name of our God we will set up our banners: the LORD fulfil all thy petitions. Now know I that the LORD saveth his anointed; he will hear him from his holy heaven with the saving strength of his right hand. Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but **we will remember the name of the LORD our God.** (Psalm 20:5-7)*

“Salvation” is from the Hebrew word “yeshû‘âh”. According to Strong’s dictionary it means “something saved, that is, (abstractly) deliverance; hence aid, **victory**, prosperity: - deliverance, health, help (-ing), salvation, save, saving (health), welfare.” Again, we will find some other translations helpful:

*We will [shout in] triumph at your **salvation and victory**, and **in the name of our God** we will set up our banners. May the Lord fulfill all your petitions. (Amplified Bible)*

Then you will win victories, and we will celebrate, while raising our banners in the name of our God. May the Lord answer all of your prayers! (Contemporary English Version)

When you defeat your enemies, we will shout joyfully. We will lift up a banner proclaiming that it is God who has helped you. May Yahweh do for you all that you request him to do. (Unlocked Dynamic Bible)

We shall be glad in thine health; and we shall be magnified in the name of our God. The Lord [ful]fill all thine askings; (We shall be glad for thy victory/We shall be glad for thy salvation, or thy deliverance; and we shall magnify the name of our God. May the Lord grant all thy requests;)
(Wycliffe Bible)

Hence, a “banner” is raised in triumph and victory over an enemy. Just as in the Old Testament God’s people raised their banner, the Name of their great God, over their enemies in victory, the Name of our great “I am” is our banner of victory over the devil in this dispensation.

Fulfillment in Jesus

As with all of God’s Names that assist us in filling in the “blank check,” the Name Yahweh-Nissi, our victory banner, is fulfilled in Jesus. In Matthew 1:21 we read:

And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

The Greek word for “save” is *sozo*. According to Thayer’s Greek Definitions it means, “to save, keep safe and sound, to rescue from danger or destruction.” Thayer’s also defines it as “to save a suffering one (from perishing), i.e. one suffering from disease, to make well, heal, restore to health.”

All of this points to the work of the devil with whom Jesus went to war against in His ministry upon earth when He confronted sickness and disease (Matthew 8:16-17; 12:22-29; Luke 13:10-16; Acts 10:38). It is

through the Name of Jesus that we are rescued from and have the victory over satanic attacks. S. D. Gordon explained the significance of this Name:

“For that name ‘Jesus’ means ‘Victor,’ literally, Jehovah-Victor.’ It is a word taken bodily over from the old language of the Hebrews into the Greek or Aramaic of our Lord’s time; and thence it has gone into every language where it is found today. There is the shout of victory in the very name.”²

Through His death, burial, and resurrection, Jesus defeated Satan permanently and gave us the victory over him (Colossians 1:12-14; 2:14-15; Hebrews 2:14-5; 1 John 3:8). John wrote in Revelation 12:10, “*Now is come **salvation**, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ.*” Salvation is another word for “victory”:

*Then I heard a loud voice in heaven saying, “Now have come **God’s victory**, power and kingship, and the authority of his Messiah; because the Accuser of our brothers, who accuses them day and night before God, has been thrown out! “**They defeated him because of the Lamb’s blood and because of the message of their witness. Even when facing death they did not cling to life.** (Rev. 12:10-11; Complete Jewish Bible)*

Satan is an already defeated enemy through the blood of Jesus. The victory presently belongs to us. Jesus’ Name is the fulfillment of the name “Yahweh-Nissi”. Jesus is our victory banner. Whatever Satan and his evil forces attempt to throw at us, it is conquered in Jesus’

Name. We must simply cooperate with God and stand against the devil with the authority given to us in His Name (Luke 10:17-20). Whatever, you are struggling with, speak positively in line with God's Word that it is already defeated and that victory over every circumstance is yours.

Chapter Five

Yahweh Shalom: The Lord is My Peace

*Yahweh said to him, “Calm down! Don’t be afraid. You will not die.” So Gideon built an altar there to Yahweh. He called it **Yahweh Shalom**. To this day it is still in Ophrah, which belongs to Abiezer’s family. (Judges 6:23-24; Names of God Bible)*

In our present time, especially with political upheavals and pandemics being propagated, hindering work, mitigating social gatherings, and hurting businesses, many people are finding themselves more stressed than ever. With so many losing jobs and businesses, it is natural to fall into despair.

Many of God’s own people are battling with turmoil in their minds, homes, schools and on their jobs. Many are worried about multiple things. They desire peace and tranquility but the multiple problems in life lead to fears which bring them torment (1 John 4:18). This lack of tranquility can often produce stress, high blood pressure, heart attacks, and nervous breakdowns.

The Revelation of Yahweh Shalom

Years ago I remember hearing the story of the great Pentecostal pioneer, Smith Wigglesworth. At the time, Wigglesworth, whose occupation was plumbing, was working at the house of a very rich man. Though Wigglesworth had a number of financial needs, he was full of the joy and peace of the Lord.

On the other hand, the rich man, though far from lacking any financial difficulties, was suffering much

turmoil. He saw how much peace Smith Wigglesworth was experiencing and told him how he was willing to give all he had to have the same. Wigglesworth let him know that it would not cost the man a cent and began to introduce him to the God of peace, Jesus Christ.

While Wigglesworth provides us an excellent example of walking in God's peace, our Lord Himself provides an even better one. Even in the midst of what Scripture describes as a "great storm," Jesus is at peace, asleep upon a pillow, until awakened by his panicked disciples. Once awoke, Jesus responded to the storms, not by panicking, but by simply rebuking it (Mark 4:37-39).

Like our Lord Jesus, regardless of the storms that surround us, and despite the fear mongering of the news media, God's people must learn to take possession of His peace. We need to remember, as God revealed to Gideon, that our God is *Yahweh Shalom*.

Health, Prosperity, Favor and Safety

After the death of Joshua, Israel continued to forsake the true God and fall into idolatry, worshipping the false deities of their pagan neighbors. Naturally, forsaking God meant the loss of His protection. Israel was constantly being defeated by their enemies. They would repent, God would deliver them, and they would fall back into the same pattern of sin.

At one point Israel, in their backslidden condition, fell into the hands of the Midianites who severely oppressed them. They cried out to God who told them He would help them no more. After Israel continued to cry out to God, our loving and forgiving God changed His mind and decided to help. He chose Gideon as His instrument to rescue the people. After dialogue with the angel of the Lord concerning his mission, Gideon was afraid that he would die because he had seen an angel. The angel assured Gideon that he would not die when he

said, “*fear not: thou shalt not die*” (Judges 6:23). This is an assurance that God’s people must speak over themselves when confronted with any fear, whether it be a doctor’s report, a troubling report concerning the economy, or anything intended to steal one’s peace.

Thus Gideon, as a demonstration of His faith in the word of God’s messenger, built an altar in recognition that God is *Yahweh Shalom*. This is a revelation of another aspect of God’s nature and character. The Hebrew word *shâlôm* is translated as “peace” in most parts of the Old Testament. The word “peace” is limited to the idea of “tranquility” to most English speakers. However, the Hebrew tell us that it means much more than that.

The word, according to some experts in the Hebrew means “health, prosperity, favor, rest, safety, and tranquility”. God is all of this and is more than willing to provide all of this to His people. It is difficult to have peace when I have no hope of recovering from bad health, when I have no means of paying my ever increasing debts, or when I feel that there is danger all around me with no guarantee of safety. God’s *shâlôm* is not a mere quiet acquiescence in the midst of turmoil but an assurance that God will deliver me from the very circumstances that would cause me to be fearful. It is by this divine assurance that God calms my fears as another translation renders verse 24:

Gideon built an altar for worshipping the Lord and called it “The Lord Calms Our Fears.” It still stands there in Ophrah, a town in the territory of the Abiezer clan. (Judges 6:24; Contemporary English Version)

The Lord will calm our fears about bills, health, safety and whatever else that is presently troubling us.

Why So Many Christians Lack Peace

Sadly, many of God's own people are not experiencing His peace though He desires to give it to us. If all of that we stated above is true concerning God, and God is willing to provide this shalom to His people, then why are so many Christians failing to experience it? Why are so many of the Lord's children living below their privileges? Part of it may be our failure to embrace God's teaching:

*Thus saith the LORD, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; I am the LORD thy God which **teacheth thee to profit**, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go. (Isaiah 48:17)*

Let's start with the fact that God provides *teaching*. He teaches us to profit, to gain, to benefit. This teaching is His Word (Psalm 78:1; 94:12). The reason why God's people do not benefit from what God has provided is found in the verses that follow:

O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea: Thy seed also had been as the sand, and the offspring of thy bowels like the gravel thereof; his name should not have been cut off nor destroyed from before me. (Isaiah 48:18-19)

God told the people that they weren't experiencing His *shalom* and all that it entails is because they do not *listen* to or obey His teaching. Many do not experience God's shalom because they ignore His Word, His

teaching and His commandments. They allow the fears and cares of the world to choke out God's Word (Matt. 13:22; Mark 4:19).

If we are not experiencing God's shalom, the blame lies with us. Some years ago I was close to a nervous breakdown. I was working hard in the church that I pastor and was involved in other ministries as well. I attempted to please everyone by doing all that they asked and suggested. However, this all began to overwhelm me and I lost my peace. As I cried out to God, He let me know that I was listening to everyone but Him. When I repented my peace was restored, though I made a few people angry with me because I would no longer do what they wanted. Some even left the church. But it is worth losing people to gain peace.

On positive note, I remember another time when I was in the military. I was working in one of the most stressful environments. There were days when I was chastised harshly by senior officers when certain things were not completed to their satisfaction. However, God's peace and joy remained with me. It was so evident that many of my co-workers were amazed at how I could remain calm and steadfast. One of them began attending church with me while others often solicited my counsel and prayers when facing trials of their own.

You can always come out victorious in any situation when you allow God to be your peace. But we must listen to, stand on His Word and yield to Him. Way too many professing Christians neither study nor believe God's Word. This failure leads people to unwittingly reject God's shalom and as a result they backslide and turn away from Christ.

Learning to Take Hold of His Peace

Once we begin to study God's Word and claim His promises then we will become Word-Focus rather

than problem-focused. To experience God's *shalom* we need to put our mind on *Him* not our circumstances:

Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength (Isaiah 26:3-4)

God's peace is described as being *perfect*. The Lord's peace is better than anything that the world can offer us (John 14:27; 16:33). However, God's promises are always upon condition. In order to receive God's perfect peace our minds must be *stayed* on Him. The problem with too many people is that their minds are focused on everything but the Lord Jesus Christ.

The word "stayed" is from the Hebrew word "*sawmak*" which means "to lean upon or take hold of." Our minds must *lean on* and *take hold* of God Himself because He is our peace. We are responsible for doing this. We have the ability to control our thoughts (1 Cor. 10:3-5). We have the authority to tell our minds what it must think. Satan attempted to put all manner of thoughts in the Lord's mind. However, He always responded with, "It is written" (Matt. 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-14). The reason so many people are unable to control their thoughts is because they are ignorant of "what is written." Once my mind has taken hold of the fact that Yahweh is my *shalom*, Satan will not be able to infiltrate my it with a contrary idea.

When we follow God's instructions then we can be assured that Yahweh is our everlasting protection. The Names of God Bible renders Isaiah 26:3-4 as follows:

With perfect peace you will protect those whose minds cannot be changed, because

they trust you. Trust Yahweh always, because Yah, Yahweh alone, is an everlasting rock.

Note three other English translations of verse 4 of Isaiah 26:

Trust ye in the Lord unto eternity; for in Yah the Lord is everlasting protection.
(Isa. 26:4; Leeser Old Testament)

Trust in the Lord from this time forward, even in Yah, the Lord, an enduring protector! (New English Translation)

So trust the Lord always, because in the Lord Yah you have a place of safety forever. (Easy to Read Version)

God is your protector. This is why you can have peace. There is no reason to be afraid when Yahweh Shalom Himself is standing beside you to protect you from anything that would attempt to harm you.

Protection for Hearts and Minds

Your only requirement is to keep your mind on Him. This is taught very clearly in the New Testament. Philippians 4:6 begins by saying, “*Be careful for nothing*” Another translation says, “*Be anxious for nothing*” (E. W. Bullinger’s Companion Bible). It goes on to say:

.... but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and

minds through Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6b-7)

The word “keep” in verse 7 means to “garrison” or “guard”. Another translation of verse 7 reads, “*And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will protect your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus*” (Modern English Version). When we obey the instructions in this passage to resist worry and anxiety then there is a supernatural peace that comes from God, one that we will not be able to understand, that will stand as a protective guard over our hearts and minds. The heart and mind is the very realm of satanic attack.

You will not understand why you are at peace when there is so much chaos around you and others are in fear and panic, but that is okay, because it is just God’s *shalom* covering you and protecting you.

When you do your part in resisting worry and fear, God will do His part by giving you the *shalom* that protects you from hidden dangers and verbal attacks of the enemy that are intended to bring fear and intimidation.

The War for Peace

God not only declares that He gives us peace, but in numerous places in Scripture He declares Himself to be our peace (Rom. 15:33; 16:20; 2 Cor. 13:11; Phil. 4:9; Heb. 13:20; 1 Thess. 5:20).

We must recognize that God is not the author of anything that is antagonistic towards peace. Scripture says, “*For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints*” (1 Corinthians 14:33).

Thayer’s Greek dictionary defines the word “confusion” as “instability, a state of disorder, disturbance”. Confusion, disorder, instability and chaos

does not originate with God. Anti-peace confusion is the work of Satan:

*But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is **earthly, sensual, devilish**. For where envying and strife is, there is **confusion** and every evil work. (James 3:14-16)*

Another translation of verse 15 says, “*It is earthly and selfish and comes from the devil himself*” (Contemporary English Version). All confusion that leads to fear and works of evil are Satan’s doing.

Too many people like to spout the useless mantra, “God is in control” as if He is the One who brings everything about that happens. However, Scripture makes a clear distinction between the works of God and those that are the works of the enemy. James, in agreement with Paul, vindicates God’s character from being the author of confusion:

*But the wisdom that is **from above is first pure, then peaceable**, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace. (James 3:17-18)*

Here we have a clear distinction as to how God works and how Satan works. Satan is an agent of chaos and confusion. God is a peace-loving God. The good news is that our God of peace has promised to crush Satan under our feet very soon (Rom. 16:20).

Until then, always remember that God is indeed our peace. With Him we can have safety, tranquility and health when we claim Him for what He has declared to be unto us.

Chapter Six

Yahweh Rohi: The Lord is My Shepherd

The Lord is my Shepherd [to feed, guide, and shield me], I shall not lack. (Psalm 23:1; Amplified Bible)

As we have been learning in this series of lessons, getting to know God's Name, which is His character, is instrumental in developing our faith. Too many of God's people are living below their privileges and do not get far in their walk with Christ because they truly do not know God as they should. Yet, God has revealed so much about Himself by giving us His Name as a "blank check" that we can claim at the bank of Heaven.

God is Yahweh-Rohi

Daniel said, *"the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits"* (Daniel 11:32). Why is it that so many people in the church do not do exploits? Why is it that the majority of prayer requests is "pray my strength in the Lord"? Why are so many of God's children professing weakness? Simply put, it is because they do *not* know their God.

One of the revelations that helps us to know God as well as providing one of those covenant "blank checks" Names that God gives His people as a revelation of what He is to them is found in one of the most familiar psalms in Scripture:

Psalm 23:1-6

1 The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

2 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

3 He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

5 Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

The Hebrew word for “shepherd” is *râ’âh* or *rohi* which means “shepherd, pastor, herdsman, feeder, companion, and friend.” The Passion Translation renders verse 1 as follows: “*The Lord is my best friend and my shepherd. I always have more than enough.*”

If one studied the pagan religions around the world one would find a complete system of works in order to appease the particular deity of that religion, but seldom, if ever, will you find that the deity (or deities) are looking for your friendship. If any of these deities (actually fallen angels and demons) did anything for their worshippers, it was only to demand something in return, something that was detrimental to your health and life.

But Jesus, the Chief Shepherd (1 Peter. 5:4), does things simply because He loves us. He desires to be our friend and our companion. He wants to take care of us.

The people of these times, like King David who wrote this psalm, lived in an agricultural society. Those of us who live in modern times and in urban settings know

little about shepherding. From the little that we do know, and what we can derive from Scripture, shepherds usually protected the sheep with their very life (1 Samuel 17:34-36; John 10:11-15). They also personally know each one of the sheep by name (John 10:3). A good shepherd is so concerned about each individual lamb that if one is lost, He will leave the rest to go after that lost one (Matthew 18:12). God declares Himself to be a shepherd because He manifests such attributes and desires to have true intimacy with His “sheep” (us).

Our Need Supplier

Again, the Passion Translation says that because God is our Shepherd, “*I always have more than enough.*” God does not just give us “enough”. He does not give us the bare minimum. He gives us more than enough. Another translation reads, “*The Lord takes care of me as his sheep; I will not be without any good thing*” (Bible in Basic English).

Hebert Lockyer believed that the name “Yahweh Rohi” means that God is “able to supply physical and spiritual healing” (All the Divine Names and Titles in the Bible, p. 48). When the sheep are sick then the shepherd will stop whatever he is doing to take care of them.

As a shepherd, God supplies the *physical* and *spiritual* needs of His people. Too many Christians seem to go to one extreme or the other when it comes to the supplication of our needs. They are either ascetic in focusing only on the spiritual aspect. Then there are the hyper-prosperity preachers who ignore the spiritual and focus only on the physical.

There is no need for either extreme. As a shepherd, God is pledged to take care of both for us. He gave us a physical body which means that He is personally concerned for its needs. However, He wants us to recognize and put more focus on the things of the

Spirit. Nevertheless, our Shepherd is there to help us in both areas.

This revelation of the Lord is stated numerous times in Scripture (see Genesis 48:15; 49:24; Psalm 80:1; 100:3; Isaiah 40:11; Ezekiel 34:11-16). Israel was a shepherding people and most of their occupation was taking care of sheep. Therefore, God used metaphors or described Himself in ways that the Israelites could easily identify with. Hence, this revelation of God as a shepherd would have a strong faith-building meaning to them.

Modern day Christians would do well to learn about “shepherds and sheep” in order to fully grasp how much they can trust God as the divine shepherd in their own lives. Yahweh-Rohi is a summary of every other “I am” covenant Name of God found in Scripture and how He meets every need of His people (Healer, Provider, Peace, etc.).

Fulfilment in Jesus

Recently our ministry did a teaching series on the deity of Christ. I have been amazed to find that many who claim to be Christians are denying this essential truth. Some have gone as far as to claim that I am not qualified to teach about God because I affirm the Triunity of the Godhead and, in particular, the deity of the Lord Jesus.

If one denies the deity of Christ then one cannot truly experience God as a Shepherd because this truth has its fulfillment in Him. If Jesus is not God, and if He is not Jehovah (or Yahweh) then He cannot be the great shepherd because we are told that God is the Shepherd. Yet, Jesus is the *great* Shepherd who was raised again and will perfect us:

*Now the God of peace, that brought again
from the dead our Lord Jesus, **that great
shepherd of the sheep**, through the blood*

of the everlasting covenant, Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. (Hebrews 13:20-21)

Jesus is our great shepherd. Therefore, Jesus is “Yahweh Rohi,” the Name given by God concerning Himself. Furthermore, our Lord declares that He is the good shepherd. As our shepherd He is willing to give His own life to protect us from satanic attacks:

The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. (John 10:10-15)

Note how Jesus contrasts Himself with the “thief” and the “wolf”. Both are symbols of Satan. Jesus did not come to harm us but to help us. On the other hand, there is an enemy of both God and man who desires nothing but our devastation, death and destruction.

The trials and difficulties that we encounter in this life does not originate from God. He is the good Shepherd. A good shepherd will not do things to harm the sheep. Jesus does not put sickness on His sheep or destroy His sheep financially. These things originate with sin and Satan.

Jesus is willing to lay down His very life for the sheep – and He has. The shepherd laid down His life to rescue the sheep from Satan’s kingdom of death, defeat and destruction (Col. 1:12-14; 2:14-15; Heb. 2:14-15; 1 John 3:8). He continues to protect us from the onslaught of the enemy. There is no reason to be afraid of the devil since the great shepherd has defeated Him and continues to protect us from Him. An example of this is shown in David as a shepherd, a type of Christ:

And David said unto Saul, Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock: And I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him. Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God. (1 Samuel 17:34-36)

When the rest of Israel was afraid of Goliath, David explained to King Saul why he knew that this giant can be easily defeated. David had experience as a shepherd under God’s protection. When an enemy tried to take his sheep, he risked his life to retrieve it and was able to take on ferocious animals.

Like the lion that attacked David's sheep, we are told that, "*your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour*" (1 Peter 5:8). However, when the lion attacks, you can call to the great shepherd, Jehovah-Rohi, and He will help you. He has already taken this "lion" by the beard and slain him.

Finally, our Lord's ministry as a shepherd is connected to His teaching, healing and deliverance ministry. Jesus, as our shepherd, is guaranteed to meet every physical and spiritual need in our lives:

And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. (Matthew 9:35-36)

This is the summary of all that we have been saying concerning Christ as our Shepherd. Teaching, healing, deliverance, and compassion are the benefits of acknowledging the Lord Jesus as our Shepherd.

God is Yahweh-Rohi. God is a shepherd. In Jesus we have everything we need as a shepherd: Protector, Savior, Healer, Deliverer, Teacher, Leader, and Need Supplier. Truly there is no God greater and more wonderful than our Lord Jesus.

Chapter Seven

Yahweh Tsidkenu: The Lord My Righteousness

In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.
(Jeremiah 23:6; see also 33:16)

God's revelation of His name gives us a blank check that we can fill out to get what we need or desire from Him. Throughout Scripture God has given numerous examples of what He is willing to be to His people.

In the previous lessons in this book, we learned about the covenant privileges that belong to God's children when they grasp the revelation of the "I am" God. We learned that God is our provider, healer, victory, peace, and shepherd.

Breaking the Power of Condemnation

Sadly, many people may deem themselves unworthy of receiving any of the blessings that God makes available via the revelation of His Names. The condemnation of our sins along with their feelings of unworthiness keep us from claiming these covenant blessings.

Thankfully, God reveals another Name that can restore our confidence to receive from Him. This is found in our opening passage in which God declares Himself in the Hebrew as "Yahweh-Tsidkenu," in which our King James Bible translates as "The Lord our righteousness." Another translation renders it as follows:

*In his days Judah will be saved. Israel will live in safety. And the Branch will be called **The Lord Who Makes Us Right With Himself.** (23:6; New International Reader's Version)*

“Tsidkenu” refers to a *moral* or *legal* right. It refers to “prosperity”. Because God is my righteousness, I have a legal and moral right to all that God has made available to me. In other words, God has given me *right-standing* with Himself, thus making all that He is and has available to me. His righteousness supplies the power to live right and to live holy, but if I slip and repent in sincerity, His righteousness remains available to me.

This message is not for the insincere believer who lives in continuous habitual sin with no remorse and no desire to repent. There are some who sin intentionally with the mindset that they will simply just ask for God’s forgiveness and the blood of Jesus will cover them. However, they have plans in mind to continue in sin. This message is not for that person. God being our righteousness is *not* a license to sin. If you sin because you are merely taking advantage of the fact that God is wonderful, gracious and merciful then you are mocking God and you will reap what you are sowing (Gal. 6:7-8).

However, for those who are sincere in their faith, who endeavor to live a holy life pleasing to God, but still struggle in some areas and occasionally and remorsefully find themselves slipping into sin, thus suffering the condemnation and guilt that sin brings, God has made Himself your righteousness. Hence, it is not a matter of whether *we* are worthy of God’s blessings. Jesus is worthy and He has become our righteousness. Hence, I am entitled to everything God has made available to me, not because I have earned it, but because Jesus earned it and has become my righteousness.

The Blessings of God's Righteousness

According to the Brown-Drivers-Briggs dictionary "Yahweh-Tsidkenu," speaks "of people enjoying salvation." God did not merely save us from hell and guarantee us Heaven upon death. He wants us to enjoy our salvation even while on earth. Enjoying life has always been a part of His salvific plan: "*As the scripture says, 'If you want to enjoy life and wish to see good times, you must keep from speaking evil and stop telling lies'*" (1 Peter 3:10; Good News Translation).

Yahweh, my righteousness, gives me the legal right to have whatever belongs to Him and to enjoy my days on the earth. It is difficult to enjoy one's salvation when one is sick, broke, stressed, and in bondage to sin and condemnation. In Jeremiah 23:6 we are told, "*In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely ...*" The word "saved" means "healing, health, victory, deliverance and restoration".

Furthermore, God promises to protect Israel when He says that they will dwell "safely". This is all summed up in His declaration that He is "The Lord our righteousness." Note that God being our righteousness is connected to our deliverance and safety:

*No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and **their righteousness is of me**, saith the LORD. (Isaiah 54:17)*

God did not promise that weapons would *never* be formed against us. In this world we may be subject to attacks by the enemy. Therefore, we live under the

possibility that people and devils can form weapons against us. The good news is that any weapon formed against God's people will not prosper or succeed. As our Lord Jesus said, "*nothing shall by any means hurt you*" (Luke 10:19b). You may come under attack, but the attack will not succeed against you.

The passage goes on to say that this is your *heritage*. What is a "heritage"? A heritage, simply put, is your legal right, your entitlement to whatever is being promised to you. When you *inherit* something then it belongs to you. Why are we entitled to God's safety and protection? Because God says, "and their righteousness is of me." It is not based on our personal righteousness but on God becoming our righteousness.

This truth is strongly revealed in Balak's attempts to bribe Balaam into cursing Israel. God would not allow it. Though Israel had sinned, God no longer saw iniquity in them once He cleansed them:

God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good? Behold, I have received commandment to bless: and he hath blessed; and I cannot reverse it. He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel: the LORD his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them. (Numbers 23:19-21)

Take special note of the statement, "*He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel.*" Does this mean that Israel *never* sinned? Anyone who knows their Bible history knows that Israel sinned multiple times.

Yet, God did not lie here nor is He pretending that sin never occurred in Israel. It is simply the fact that when we sin and repent, God wipes the slate clean and deletes all records pertaining to our transgressions. God says, *“I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins”* (Isaiah 43:25).

God blots out our sins, forgets them, and covers us with His righteousness. Since this is the case then no one has a right to put a curse on you. I have been told that there are certain ethnic Christian groups who spend hours, months, and years seeking to be released from a generational curse put on them by their ancestors. However, if they understood this truth about God being their righteousness then they would not waste so much time. Declaring who God is will bring immediate deliverance from any supposed curse.

Sin Opens the Door to the Devil

One of the reasons for proclaiming God as our righteousness is due to the fact that it is sin itself that opens the door to the devil (Genesis 4:6-7; 1 John 3:8-12; Eph. 4:26-27). Again, this is illustrated in the story of Balaam and Balaak.

Because Balaam understood the truth that God protected Israel based on righteousness, which prevented him from cursing them, and because he was greedy for money, he taught Balaak another method for destroying them. He caused Israel to fall into sexual deviancy, thus losing their righteous covering (Rev. 2:14-15; Numbers 25:1-15). Because of Israel’s sin a plague killed numerous people in the nation. It was not until they dealt with the sin that God’s righteousness was restored and the plague was removed.

Comparing Balaam’s and Israel’s situation to how Satan works upon God’s people to remove them from His

protection today, we find the following teaching insightful:

Therefore, knowing that he has no power over them of himself, he will, like Balaam, try to lead them to forfeit that favour which forms their safeguard, and to put themselves in his power by offending God. When Balak could not prevail by force, nor Balaam by a curse, they placed temptation in Israel's path, seduced them into sin, and thus drew them out of God's protection. And in like manner, Satan, knowing that he has no power over us to make us fall except we give him that power, and that we do give it to him whenever we sin wilfully, will leave nothing untried to lead us into sin, especially that which will show the deepest ingratitude, and do the greatest despite unto the Spirit of Grace. Then, if we listen to him, we are lost—we put ourselves out of the pale of God's protection. It is not that His arm is shortened, that it cannot save; but that our iniquities stand between us and Him, and we are then left to our own feeble resources, utterly powerless against the assaults of the enemy.¹

Scripture affirms that sin that brings sickness and disease (John 5:13-14; Mark 2:1-12; Psalm 103:1-12). It is not God who afflicts us with these things. Sin contains within itself its own seeds of destruction (Gal. 6:5-6; James 1:13-15). Satan knows this is the only inroad he has into the lives of God's people. But the Lord is willing to restore righteousness unto us and *heal* us when we repent:

Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they

*shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a **righteous man** availeth much.* (James 5:14-16;).

The “name of the Lord” here is “Jehovah” or “Yahweh”. It is by this Name that our righteousness is restored. Further note that *if* we sin (not *when* we sin. We do not have to sin but it is possible that we might, thus opening the door for sickness), then God has promised to forgive us immediately.

When we are forgiven and turn from sin God cleanses us from unrighteousness and graciously becomes our righteousness, thus restoring us to righteousness (1 John 1:7-9).

James goes on to say that after we have confessed our faults that the “*effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.*” It is God’s righteousness that locks Satan out of our lives. God begins to treat us as if we never sinned at all. He will hear our prayers and supernaturally heal our bodies.

The Psalmist said, “*Who forgiveth **all** thine iniquities; who healeth **all** thy diseases*” (Psalm 103:3). God forgives all our iniquities. There are no exceptions on the list. Furthermore, He heals all our diseases. Again, there are no exceptions. The reason He can do all of this is stated in the rest of the psalm:

*For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath **he removed our transgressions from us**.... But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them*

that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children (Psalm 103:11, 12, 17)

The Lord does what is right for His people even when we do wrong. He becomes our righteousness and executes righteousness on our behalf. However, we must continue to caution our readers that this should not give us an excuse to willfully sin, believing that it is okay to please the flesh because “God got us covered”. We are mocking the grace of God when we have such an attitude and behave in such a manner.

Fulfilment in Jesus

Jesus is indeed the “Yahweh” of the Old Testament and fulfills for us this “blank check Name” in the New Testament through His death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 5:15-19). Despite the fact that men lost the righteousness of God through our rebellion, Jesus’ sacrifice restored what we could never have regained for ourselves.

“Who was put to death for our evil-doing, and came to life again so that we might have righteousness.” (Rom. 4:25; Bible in Basic English)

“.... who was given up to death because of our shortcomings and was raised again to give us right standing with God.”
(Williams New Testament)

Jesus sacrificed much to give us His “righteousness,” or His “right-standing” with God. Jesus Himself is now our righteousness:

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.... For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. (2 Cor. 5:17, 21)

Because of what Jesus has done, we are no longer the old sinners that we used to be. We are new creations. This again should be applied to the fact that God's people need not suffer under a "generational curse." Since you are now a new creation through the blood of Christ then you are no longer subject to the sin of your ancestors or even your own past.

This is all due to what some have referred to as "the divine exchange at the cross." Jesus took upon Himself our sin and in exchange gave us His righteousness. We are now the righteousness of God in Christ. Earlier Paul wrote, "*But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption*" (1 Cor. 1:30).

Let us stop using silly cliches like, "I'm just a sinner saved by grace." This is inconsistent with what Scripture says about you. To make such a claim is to say that the work of Christ was inefficient and ineffective on your behalf. Either one is a "sinner" or one is "saved" but one cannot be both.

The Scripture says, "*But of him are ye in Christ Jesus.*" Christ was made unto you "righteousness." Therefore, if you are in Him, you must accept by faith in this Word that you are not a sinner. This righteousness does not come by "works" but by faith in the Lord Jesus (Rom. 3:22; Phil. 3:9; James 2:8-12). That means that even if I do not *feel* like I am the righteousness of God

then I must declare it by faith based on what God's Word says (2 Cor. 5:7).

I will act in the way that I believe. If I continue to declare that I am a sinner then I will sin. But if I declare that God is my righteousness then I will begin to live righteously. Scripture says, "*For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he*" (Proverbs 23:7a). Think and speak what God says and not how you feel or what others say about you.

Conclusion

God being our righteousness qualifies us for every blessing God has made available; blessings that we would not be otherwise qualified to receive due to our past sinful behavior. Jesus, through His sacrifice, released us from every ordinance that was against us and through His righteousness has made available to us every blessing from God (Col. 2:13-15; Gal. 3:8-14; Eph. 1:3).

Chapter Eight

Yahweh Qâdash: The Lord My Sanctifier

Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the LORD that doth sanctify you. (Exodus 31:13)

Many of God's people are struggling with sin and cannot seem to get the victory over it. No doubt that this is due to their failure to grasp the revelation that Yahweh is their sanctification. When we take hold of this revelation then we will not struggle with sin so often.

With this revelation we can break the backs of pornography, lust, alcoholism, smoking, and drugs. When we recognize that it is Yahweh who sanctifies us, who cleanses us, who sets us free from sin, then we will walk in the victory that He has made available to us.

God is Yahweh-Qâdash

The Hebrew word for "sanctify" is *qâdash*. Other English translations render this as "set you apart, make you holy, made you a special people, etc." All of this entails sanctification.

God as our sanctification does more than just ensure us a place in Heaven when we die. He brings a new birth; a complete transformation in life and status. We are not the same person we were before giving our lives to Yahweh. We now have power over all the things that kept us in bondage in the past (2 Peter 2:19; Proverbs 5:22; John 8:34; Romans 6:16-20).

Sadly, so many Christians have embraced the lie that we are just “sinners saved by grace”. This statement presents us with two contradictory ideas. As stated in the previous chapter, we are either “sinners” or we are “saved by grace.” We can be one or the other but we cannot be both. The Lord not only saves us, but sanctifies us, sets us apart, thus providing power to resist sin and Satan.

Hence, if Yahweh is your Sanctifier then you are not “a sinner saved by grace.” Your new position is one who has been sanctified by Christ. But someone might say, “but I have sinned since I have been saved.” Who among us haven’t? What we must do is learn to recognize our position in Christ. When we recognize our position then our behavior will begin to match our position.

When I recognize what God has become on my behalf then I will accept this by faith despite my present behavior and circumstances. When I recognize what God has done in me as my Sanctifier then my faith will begin to change the patterns of my behavior. On the other hand, if I continue to see myself as a sinner then I will continue sinning. I will continue to make excuses for my sin by declaring that I am just “a sinner saved by grace.”

This is not about trying to discontinue sinning by sheer will power. In my younger Christian days, I wrote out the ten commandments in a notebook. Every day I would check to see which ones I broke and which ones I kept. Not a day went by where I could find that I kept all ten commandments. I had to learn that we are to “*have no confidence in the flesh*” (Phil. 3:3). Instead, we are to embrace Yahweh as our sanctifier, the One who sets us apart and gives us power over sin.

The Problem with Sin

Before we can fully appreciate the wonderful truth about God being our sanctifier, we must understand the problem with sin.

First of all, the problem with sin is *not* God. People have many false ideas about God. One of them is that He is perpetually angry, hates for people to enjoy themselves, and personally punishes people when they sin. Nonetheless, God is not the long-bearded old man often depicted in cartoons who is waiting to smite people the moment that they step out of line.

Despite these false depictions of Him, God is not looking to harm us. On the contrary, He desires to deliver us from the very thing intended to harm us. God does not directly or personally punish people for their sins. However, we will still suffer for our sins. The suffering will not come from God's hand but the sin itself. Several places in Scripture we are told that sin itself produces death (Rom. 5:12; 6:23; Prov. 8:36; James 1:13-15).

It is no secret that smoking cigarettes has led to heart disease and lung cancer. God did not use His power to strike anyone with these sicknesses. It was the harmful ingredients in the cigarettes that brought about these deaths.

I am often reminded of a famous basketball player who contracted AIDS due to promiscuity. Nonetheless, he stated that God gave him the disease in order to teach him. This is incorrect. It was one of his many sex partners who already had AIDS that gave it to him. God did not afflict this man. On the contrary, God warned against sexual promiscuity in order to save people like him from the disease. You see, the destruction or punishment for sin is within the seed of the sin itself:

Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. (Gal. 6:7-8)

Another translation of verse 8 says, “*If you follow your selfish desires, **you will harvest destruction**, but if you follow the Spirit, you will harvest eternal life*” (Gal. 6:8; Contemporary English Version).

The sin-seed that we plant brings us the harvest of destruction. Every farmer knows that if you want apples then you plant apple seeds. You do not plant orange seeds and become angry at harvest time because you do not see apples on the tree. You cannot blame God for the lack of apples. You receive a harvest based on the seed you plant.

Bible Depiction of God as Punisher

There are times when Scripture *appears* to depict God as the direct punisher of sin. Nonetheless, this is usually because we have failed to interpret Scripture properly. For example, Isaiah complained:

*But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away. And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee: for thou hast hid thy face from us, and **hast consumed us, because of our iniquities.*** (Isaiah 64:6-7)

Isaiah accuses God of consuming His people due to their iniquities. This appears as if God is personally afflicting the people as punishment for their sins. However, we missed the part where Isaiah wrote, “*for thou hast hid thy face from us*”.

The “face” of God, or rather, His *face shining upon us*, represents His favor, blessing, and protection (Numbers 6:23-27; see also Psalm 67:1; 80:3, 7, 19;

Daniel 9:17). On the other hand, the *hiding* of God's face represents the loss of His protection (Deut. 31:16-18; Isaiah 59:1-2; 1 Pet. 3:12).

When God hides His face then He will no longer intervene to stop the consequences of our sins. Thus, He permits our own sins to destroy us. Hence, another translation of verse 7 reads, "*No one worships you or even asks you to help us. That is because you have turned away from us and **have let our sins destroy us***" (New Century Version). God's only part is to *let* sin destroy us if we persist in rebelling against Him. He has no choice as He must respect the freedom that He gave us to choose.

God does not want us saved from sin to keep us from enjoying life. God Himself gives us richly things to enjoy (1 Timothy 6:17). We can enjoy life without falling into sin (Psalm 34:11-13; 1 Peter 3:10). Sin certainly has its pleasures, but those pleasures only last for a season (Hebrews 11:25). Eventually they destroy the sinner.

God knows that we struggle with sin but He also knows that if we do not get the victory over it then sin will destroy us. That is why He personally sanctifies us by setting us apart from the power and penalty from sin; He sets us free from Satan and his ability to tyrannize and control us. It does not mean that we will never be tempted but it does mean that when God sanctifies us, He gives us the strength to resist sin.

Fulfilment in Jesus

As with every Name of God we have studied in this book so far, the Lord our Sanctifier finds its ultimate fulfillment in our Lord Jesus Christ:

*But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, **and sanctification**, and redemption* (1 Cor. 1:30).

*Wherefore Jesus also, that **he might sanctify the people with his own blood,** suffered without the gate. (Hebrews 13:12)*

*Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, **to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ,** and called (Jude 1:1)*

Jesus is our sanctifier; He gives us the power to walk free of sin. He gave His very blood to guarantee our sanctification. This is how vitally important it was to the Lord to sanctify us and preserve (protect) us from sin and its harmful effects.

However, though Yahweh Jesus is our sanctification, we are required to do our part with the power He has provided us when He sanctified us:

***Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy: for I am the LORD your God. And ye shall keep my statutes, and do them: I am the LORD which sanctify you.** (Leviticus 20:7-8)*

One may ask, “if God is my sanctifier then why do I have to sanctify myself?” While God is indeed our sanctifier, He still needs our cooperation. We have to do our part with the power that God gives us.

We cannot sanctify ourselves if God does not sanctify us, but once God moves towards our sanctification, we can walk in the light of it. We are then able to take possession of our bodies and keep them from sinful practices:

For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God: (1 Thessalonians 4:2-5)

Paul made a similar statement in his letter to the Corinthians when he wrote, “*But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection*” (1 Corinthians 9:27a). When we are sanctified, we can control our bodies and tell them what to do. We do not have to use our bodies for sinful practices. If one cannot control one’s body then they do not know God. Take note of Paul’s statement in verse 5: “*even as the Gentiles which know not God.*” Knowing God, knowing His nature and character, knowing Him personally and intimately, leads God’s people to live holy.

Sanctification and the Word of God

Finally, if God’s people desire to walk fully in the light of this truth they must leave behind some of the old cliches we mentioned earlier, such as claiming that we are “sinners saved by grace.” We must begin speaking God’s Word over ourselves.

Sanctification is through the Word of God (John 17:17; Ephesians 5:26). God’s Word declares that when Jesus sanctified us then we were no longer the persons that we used to be. Concerning our being sinners, the Bible uses the word “were,” indicating that we are no longer a “sinner” (Rom. 6:17-20; Eph. 2:1-6; 1 Cor. 6:8-11; 2 Cor. 5:17). You are now “sanctified” and called to be a *saint*:

Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours
(1 Corinthians 1:2)

Catholicism has given us a false idea about sainthood. They have taught that only a special person selected by a particular group of men can become saints (usually after death). However, according to Scripture, all of those who are connected to Christ are sanctified by Him, thus are called to be saints.

If one is sanctified then one is no longer a sinner but a saint. One cannot be both a “sinner” and a “saint”. We are one or the other. We must leave the cliches and speak over ourselves what God’s Word says about us. We must declare what God has done in us and for us through the finished work of Christ.

Sanctification gives us the power to resist satanic temptation. Contrary to popular opinion, we do not have to sin every day. We have been sanctified and have power over sin. Regardless of how we may feel, or what sensations our bodies experience, we have control over them because we are saints and not sinners.

Sin’s power and penalty no longer has a legal right over anyone who has been set apart by Yahweh-Qâdash, our sanctifying Lord. Satan no longer has the right to pull us back into sin nor does he have the right to inflict the penalty of sin upon us. We are no longer sinners but saints. Amen.

Chapter Nine

Yahweh Tsebahoth: The Lord of Armies

As for our redeemer, the LORD of hosts is his name, the Holy One of Israel. (Isaiah 47:4)

Many of God's people are understandably concerned about the numerous dangers around them, especially in these times where wickedness and violence has increased. However, our God has a whole army of angels to take care of His people.

God is Yahweh-Tsebahoth

Many Christians harbor legitimate concerns about their safety and well-being. We are concerned about accidents, home break-ins, muggings, rape, etc. We are concerned for our children and grandchildren's safety in schools.

Furthermore, Christians have concerns due to the increased hostility towards those who proclaim the gospel. Intolerance towards the things of Christ has risen as never before in America. While this has been an ongoing issue with our brothers and sisters in Islamic, socialist and communist countries, one wonders whether or not they can rescue souls from Satan's kingdom in the USA anymore without experiencing harm.

The good news is that in Yahweh-Tsebahoth, God's wants to give us an assurance of His safety and angelic protection over us. The Name "Yahweh-Tsebahoth" or "Yahweh-Sabaoth" means "Lord of armies". Sabaoth itself means "a mass of persons (or figurative things), especially regularly organized for war" (Strong's Dictionary). This is the Name used in Isaiah 47:4.

Anyone familiar with Scripture is fully aware that references to God’s “army” is usually a referral to His unfallen angels (Ps. 148:2; Rev. 12:7). Some alternative English translations of Isaiah 47:4 transliterate “Yahweh-Tsebahoth” in reference to *angelic* armies:

*The one who frees us people of Judah, whom we call Yahweh, Commander of the **angel armies**, is the Holy One of Israel.*
(Unlocked Dynamic Bible)

*We have a Redeemer. Yahweh is his name, the Commander of **Angel Armies**, the Holy One of Israel!* (The Passion Translation)

God dispatches these “angel armies” for our personal protection: “*Yahweh protects me Yahweh will command his angels to protect you in whatever you are doing*” (Psalm 91:9, 11; Unlocked Dynamic Bible). Similarly, another translation of Isaiah 47:4 reads, “*says our Protector—the Lord of Heaven’s Armies is his name, the Holy One of Israel*” (New English Translation).

The Connection to Protection

God declares Himself by the name “Yahweh-Tsebahoth” in numerous places in the Scriptures. But Isaiah 54 is especially relevant to our teaching on this. In this passage we again see that this Name is connected to God’s willingness to protect His people from harm:

Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed; neither be thou confounded; for thou shalt not be put to shame: for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more. For thy Maker is thine husband;

the LORD of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called.
(Isaiah 54:4-5)

We are told to “fear not” and not to focus on our past shame. God has promised to be a husband to His people. A husband is a covenant partner who shares all of his resources with his spouse. Therefore, if a husband has access to a whole army, would he not use that army to protect his spouse as well as the nation he rules over?

Our God says that He is the “*Commander of the angel armies*” (v. 5; Unlocked Dynamic Bible). The New English Translation renders verse 5, “*the Lord of Heaven’s Armies is his name. He is your Protector, the Holy One of Israel.*” As we jump down to verse 17, we see clearly God’s promise to protect His people from all harm:

No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD. (Isaiah 54:17)

Satan hates us and will ensure that weapons are formed against us. We are guaranteed to be attacked by his forces in some significant way (Ephesians 6:10-12).

I can recall the many times God protected me from physical harm before and after I gave my life to Christ. Growing up in Trenton, New Jersey we faced quite a bit of danger. I can remember as a teenager being in the middle of a robbery with a gun to my head. I did

not serve the Lord during that time but I do not doubt that He protected me in that and many other incidents.

I can in remember in later years serving the Lord by working as an evangelist, sharing the gospel in some of the “red light” districts. Some pretty tough sinners hang out in those areas and I have been threatened with bodily harm on more than one occasion. I remember on one particular evening when two men threatened me. I told one of them that they could not hurt me because God has given His angels charge over me. When his partner challenged me, I told him, “no weapon formed against me shall prosper.” The two men walked away without laying a hand on me.

Jesus is Yahweh-Tsebahoth

All of the promises related to God’s Names are available to His people in this present dispensation. Not only has Jesus made us eligible to receive these promises due to His great sacrifice on our behalf, but Jesus Himself actually is the fulfillment of them. For example, Jesus is Yahweh-Tsebahoth.

Just before Joshua and Israel experienced a mighty victory over the walled city of Jericho, Jesus appeared to Joshua in His preincarnate state and announced Himself as the leader of Heaven’s armies:

*And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? And he said, Nay; but as **captain of the host of the LORD am I now come.** And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him,*

What saith my lord unto his servant? And the captain of the LORD'S host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so. (Joshua 5:13-15)

Verse 14 in the King James Version appears as if God is not there for Joshua, Israel or for their enemies. However, I do not believe that is rendered clearly. Another translation reads, "*The man answered, 'I am not an enemy. I am the commander of the Lord's army. I have just now come to you'*" (v. 14; Easy to Read Version). God clearly came in support of Joshua and Israel as the "captain" or "commander" of God's angelic army.

Take note that Joshua worshipped this being who referred to Himself as "captain". This person could not have been an angel since we are forbidden to worship angels (Col. 2:18; Rev. 22:8-9). Therefore, this individual would have to be Yahweh appearing to Joshua in a visible form. Moreover, most Bible scholars affirm that this is Jesus appearing to Joshua in His preincarnate state (or before He came to earth as a man).

Before Joshua and the Israelites went to conquer Jericho, Jesus appeared to Joshua to give him assurance of the victory. He did this by letting Joshua know that the battle would be achieved in the spiritual rather than in the physical realm (Judges 5:19-20; 2 Chron. 20:15-18). This encouraged Joshua and built his faith. It gave him confidence to go forth and win a mighty victory against seemingly impossible odds.

Joshua and his men won the victory over the strongly walled city of Jericho by walking around it seven times and then shouting and blowing trumpets (see Joshua 6). Is walking around your enemy's city seven times and then shouting and blowing trumpets a normal winning

strategy in war? Not if you are doing it of your own accord.

However, if God says that His army will do the fighting and told you to follow those particular instructions then it leaves us with no doubt that God was the one who brought the victory. There is no victory in this world that we can accomplish apart from God providing His help, which is often by His angel armies. God will use His angelic armies to tear down the walls of sickness, defeat, deprivation, and danger in our lives.

God's Angels are Available to Us

Jesus said that we can have whatever He has and can do even greater than what He did (Matthew 21:18-22; John 14:11-14; 16:13-15, 23). Even more wonderful and astounding is the fact that the Father loves us as much as He loves Jesus (John 17:23). It would be difficult to believe these things if the Bible itself did not state it in plain language.

In His earthly walk Jesus presents Himself as the best example as to how we can obtain any of the blessings God has made available to us. For example, Jesus said that all He had to do was ask and God would give Him all the angelic help He needed:

*And, behold, one of them which were with Jesus stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest's, and smote off his ear. Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. **Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?** (Matthew 26:51-53)*

Jesus said that if He needed twelve *legions* of angels, God would not send Him any less than that. What is a “legion”? Adam Clarke, explains:

“A legion, at different times, contained different numbers; 4,200, 5,000, and frequently 6,000 men; and from this saying, taking the latter number, which is the common rate, may we not-safely believe that the angels of God amount to more than 72,000?”¹

Had Jesus asked, God would have sent 72,000 angels to deliver His divine Son from the wicked hands of men. Thankfully Jesus refused this deliverance in order to die on our behalf so that we can be saved. Nevertheless, it illustrates the fact that, if we needed them, God would send 72,000 angels to deliver us from danger.

One angel is usually powerful enough to help us in our need. So, imagine what ten angels can do. Now imagine what 72,000 can do if we needed them. Demonic forces do not stand a chance. Whatever the Father was willing to do for Jesus, He is willing to do for us.

Why don't God's people see more angelic activity in their lives? Because we do not ask the Father for it. He is willing to do many things if we would just ask Him. Sadly, unbelief hinders us from doing so. Yet, God has given His angels to us as serving spirits:

Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation? (Hebrews 1:14)

We who have made Jesus our Lord and Savior are heirs of salvation. God's angels are given to serve on our behalf. One of several jobs of these serving spirits is to protect God's people:

Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven. (Matthew 18:10)

This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles. The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them. O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him. (Psalm 34:6-8)

There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone. (Psalm 91:10-12)

These passages are references to what we have called “guardian angels”. I have had so many vivid experiences with this truth about guardian angels but do not want to take up any more space to give the details. Let us just say that I believe that this truth that God is my “Yahweh-Tsebahoth” is very real because I have experienced it in some very dramatic ways.

God reveals this Name to His children to let us know that He loves us, is concerned about our well-being, and has made His personal armies available to us for our protection. One need not fear men when they have an army of angels to keep them in times of danger.

Chapter Ten

Yahweh Shammah: The Lord is There

It was round about eighteen thousand measures: and the name of the city from that day shall be, The LORD is there.
(Ezekiel 48:35)

Have you ever *felt* forsaken by God? There may be times that God's people *feel* forsaken. They do not know if God is with them or not. Quite often our feelings are inconsistent with the truth found in God's Word.

This is why knowing these Names which reveal certain aspects of God's character are important. Knowing what God has promised to be to His people will develop faith. When feelings come that go contrary to God's Word then we will have a weapon to use against those feelings in order to reject them. We must walk by faith and not our feelings (2 Cor. 5:7; Hebrews 11:1).

God is Yahweh-Shammah

This final Name that we will examine assures us of God's continual presence with His faithful children. This truth must dominate our feelings. When I do not feel like God is there, I must remember that He is Yahweh-Shammah, the Lord who is there. As a matter of fact, we should make this personal by saying it this way: "The Lord is there *for me.*"

In our opening passage, Ezekiel is referring to the New Jerusalem. This is also spoken about by John in the book of Revelation (Revelation 21:9-27). Furthermore, this is the Name God revealed to Israel in relation to the Shekinah glory and His continued presence in Jerusalem during the millennial reign of Jesus Christ (Rev. 20:1-10; 21:3).

One of the most wonderful truths about the New Jerusalem is how everything that would hurt or harm us will be done away with because of God's presence being there in full manifestation:

*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*
(Revelation 22:3; see also Jeremiah 3:17)

We will look at what a curse is in more detail. However, it is important to know at this point that a curse is the loss of God's protective presence, and this opens the door to defeat in every area of our lives (Joshua 7:12). However, when Jesus reigns in the millennium and in the New Jerusalem afterwards, the curse will be dissolved. There will be no more sickness, pain, or poverty because none of those things can live in the presence of Christ.

While the passages referenced above appear to be applicable primarily to the future, there is truth in them that is relevant for us today. You see, the reason why sickness, disease and other curses are presently in existence on the earth is because God's presence is limited.

Until Satan is bound for a thousand years and then later thrown into the lake of fire (Revelations 20:1-10), he is the present evil ruler of this world. Satan currently deceives men into doing his bidding (2 Cor. 4:4; Rev. 12:9). This means that men will continue to push out God's presence. Adam and Eve is an example of how the sinner despises God's presence. After they fell, the first thing they did was hide from God (Genesis 2:15-17; 3:7-10). Sinners will always wish to hide from God because they prefer their sin more than they prefer Jesus (Rev. 6:15-17; John 3:16-21).

Though God loves the sinner, his sin separates him from God's presence and leaves him open to disastrous results (Isaiah 59:1-2). Hell and eternity in the lake of fire is the ultimate fulfillment of created beings who do not want to be in God's presence. On the other hand, Heaven is for those who want to be in His presence.

God respects the freedom of choice that He has given men. This means that men can limit how much of the presence an omnipresent God will have in their lives. The limiting of God's presence on the earth among men is the reason for natural disasters, pandemics, poverty and other harmful events in the world.

Look at many of the third world countries that suffer the most sickness, disease, poverty, famine and drought. These countries are either communist or their primary religion is anything other than true Christianity. The countries suffering the most have Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Catholicism or some other paganism as their primary religion. They have pushed God out of their society and have kept Him from blessing them.

The United States itself is going in this direction as it removes God's laws (the Ten Commandments) from its courthouses, its continued murdering of unborn (and newly born) children, its promotion of the homosexual agenda, its push towards secularism, etc. Furthermore, the church as a whole in the USA seems to be on a downward decline. Thankfully, God has a remnant of people in the USA that worship Him, thus inviting His presence in our nation to a limited extent. But for the most part, God is being pushed away by the very people that are supposed to be the carriers of His presence.

God's Presence Equals God's Blessings

The degree of God's presence we have is equivalent to the level of blessing that we will receive:

*So David would not remove the ark of the LORD unto him into the city of David: but David carried it aside into the house of Obededom the Gittite. **And the ark of the LORD continued in the house of Obededom the Gittite three months: and the LORD blessed Obededom, and all his household.** And it was told king David, saying, *The LORD hath blessed the house of Obededom, and all that pertaineth unto him, because of the ark of God. So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obededom into the city of David with gladness.* (2 Samuel 6:10-12)*

Because the presence of the Lord was in Obededom's house, he received God's blessings as well. If you don't want God's presence then you cannot have God's blessings. The devil can give us some material things if we serve him, but he can never give you the peace and tranquility that God provides. The pleasures of sin that Satan may bring are only for a moment but always lead to death (Hebrews 11:25; Romans 6:23; James 1:13-15).

Everything Satan is able to give us usually comes with too heavy of a price, both now and in eternity (Luke 4:5-8). It is better to have the blessings that come with God's presence: "*The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it*" (Proverbs 10:22).

The lies that have been told about God makes it understandable as to why some would not want His presence. God has been falsely accused of being the source of sickness, poverty, tragedy, and death. Yet, as we discovered in these covenant "blank check" names of God, He is the source of life, peace, health, safety, provision and prosperity—the very opposite of what some

have taught about Him. Knowing this truth should cause us to desire His presence.

On the other hand, many people want the blessings that come from God's presence but do not want God's presence itself because they want to continue in sin. However, we cannot have one without the other:

*Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them, **The LORD bless thee, and keep thee: The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel; and I will bless them.*** (Numbers 6:23-27)

The "Name" of God being placed upon His people is a guarantee of His presence, which is why we are emphasizing His "I am" covenant names. The *shining* of God's face was a metaphor symbolizing His favor, blessing, and protection over His people. Another translation renders verses 24-25 as follows: "*The Lord bless you and **protect you.** The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you*" (Common English Bible).

God's face is the means by which God answers prayer (Psalm 67:1; 80:3, 7, 19; Daniel 9:17). If you feel like your prayers never get past the ceiling then that's okay, because the presence of God is right there with you. Certainly, God is in Heaven but the precious Holy Spirit is with us. His face, His presence, is shining upon us.

The Loss of God's Presence

God's face was the only way that Israel knew that they could be helped (Psalm 27:9). God's "face" or

presence is victory, protection, blessing, and guaranteed answers to prayer. The shining of God's face was His answering of prayer.

The hiding of God's face was when He refused to answer prayer (Isaiah 59:1-2; 1 Pet. 3:12). There are some who say, "God always answers prayer. Sometimes His answer is 'yes,' 'no,' or 'wait' but He always answers prayer." This is nothing more than a useless cliché. God either answers prayer by giving us what we ask for (Psalm 91:15; Isaiah 58:9; 65:24; Jeremiah 29:12-13; 33:3) or He does not answer at all (Psalm 18:41; Prov. 1:28-30).

If God hears your prayers then you are guaranteed an answer. If He does not hear your prayer then you get no answer at all. The latter happens when His presence is no longer with us. The loss of God's presence is the loss of His blessing, protection and guaranteed answers to prayer.

This is also what is described in Scripture as a "curse" (Compare Deut. 28 with Deut. 31:16-18 and 32:20, 30). Summarizing the "curses" in Deuteronomy 28, God spoke to the people, *"and said, "You are unfaithful and can't be trusted. So I won't answer your prayers; I'll just watch and see what happens to you"* (Deut. 32:20; Contemporary English Version).

God told the people that they would suffer *curse*s because He would not answer their prayers and would only watch from a distance what their enemies do to them. The word "cursed" in Deuteronomy 28 is the Hebrew word, *'ârar*. Hebrew scholar Chaim Bentorah explains:

"Curse in Hebrew is 'Arur, which comes from the idea of a situation where God is not present. To curse someone is to demand that God removes His protective covering, His Succoth, or arm of protection, from that person. In Jeremiah 17:5, the word 'Arur is passive. Hence, this is not an act of

God, but a result of what will happen if we trust in the arm of flesh.”¹

Hence, God does not use His omnipotent power to punish or bring harm to people. All Old Testament passages in which God is said to inflict curses, wrath, sickness, defeat, poverty, natural disasters, etc. is actually the loss of His protective presence where He *allows* (but does not *cause*) these things to take place:

*and all the nations will know the people of Israel were exiled because they acted wickedly and willfully turned their backs on Me. This is why I turned My back on them and **allowed** their enemies to do with them as they pleased. As a result, all of them fell by the sword. (Ezekiel 39:23; The VOICE)*

Curses do not come by God’s personal hand but by a lack of His presence. A curse, simply defined, is *being without God in your life*. The good news is that repentance and turning back to God always restores His presence as God is in love with His children and always longs to be with them (Malachi 3:6-7; Zechariah 1:3; James 4:7-8; Hosea 14:1-4).

Fulfillment in Jesus

The most wonderful thing about Yahweh-Shammah is that, as with all we have learned in the previous lessons, it finds its fulfillment in Jesus. The Bible says that Jesus suffered the curse for us by being forsaken by God on our behalf (Gal. 3:13; 2 Cor. 5:21; Matt. 27:46). Because of the redemptive work of Christ, we are given this covenant promise:

*Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, **I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.** So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me. (Hebrews 13:5-6)*

Why would we fear man when Jesus promises never to leave us nor forsake us? Never believe that you won't *feel* fear, but when you recognize that God is with you, you can resist the fear and accomplish the tasks that He has called you to do. There is no task that God can assign you that He will not be with you in it.

However, we must declare it. The apostle wrote, "*So that we may boldly say....*" We must speak this promise out of our mouths. We must do this most especially at those times when we do not feel the presence of God. God's promises are true despite feelings that may seem contrary to them. Speak the truth with boldness that God is your Yahweh-Shammah, your very present help in a time of trouble (Psalm 46:1-5).

Conclusion

To summarize, God's presence brings blessing but the loss of it brings danger. God covenants with us to keep us in His presence as long as we want to be in His presence. He loves us but will also honor our wishes if we do not want Him. Claim Yahweh Shammah as your God and allow Him to always "be there" for you.

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Invitation and prayer for salvation

To become a TRUE Christian One must be born again -1. John 3:1-7

We must be born of the water and the Spirit. This water is not speaking of water baptism but of the Word of God (1 Pet. 1:23; James 1:18; 1 Cor. 4:15; Eph. 5:25-27).

There is only ONE avenue into heaven and that is to be born again. Water baptism, church membership, religious duties, giving to the poor, living a moral life, taking the Lord's supper, being a member of a denomination, or an INTELLECTUAL reception (vs. a heart reception) of Jesus Christ cannot save you. You must be born again.

Are you born again? If you are not you will not spend eternity in heaven with Jesus Christ but instead you will enter into eternal damnation. I urge you to consider accepting Jesus Christ as your savior.

To be born again is very simple. You need only accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour. Why not give your heart to Him today. All you need to do is ask Him to come into your life. Here is a simple prayer to pray:

Lord Jesus

I ask you to come into my heart right now. You said in your word that if I confess you with my mouth and believe in my heart that God raised you from the dead then I will be saved (Rom. 10:9). I recognize that I am a sinner and I need your forgiveness and a change in my nature. I repent of all my sin. I know that all that come to you, you will not reject (John 6:37). Thank you for your dying for me so that I can be born again. Thank you Father for Jesus. Thank you Holy Spirit for coming in to my life. AMEN.

You are now born again. It's that simple. By the way, welcome to the family!

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A Biblical study of God’s relation to time and knowledge of the future

The Bible Principle of Accommodation

Why God permitted acts such as slavery, polygamy, stoning, etc

The Wrath of God

What It Is and How It Is Executed



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In these difficult and trying times it is more important now than ever before that we know the true character of God. There is no better explanation of His character than the revelation of His Name, “I am”. With this Name, God lovingly condescended to His people by giving them a “blank check” to fill out, submit to the bank of Heaven, and receive what they need from Him.

In this study, we will learn about the riches God has placed in our Heavenly bank account through His “I am” Name. Your faith will soar as you learn about the God who is willing to meet every need and godly desire of His children. Your excitement will increase as you understand that His “I am” promises are guaranteed through our Lord Jesus Christ.