

Forgiven And Never Forsaken

1. In the awful day in which we live, it is so vitally important that we always seek to live our lives in a way which pleases God, and always have a desire to walk with Him. For Satan is out to destroy the life of every person that he possibly can; and he is working harder to accomplish this goal than he has ever worked before. He is constantly busy, bringing as much conflict and torment and torture as possible, upon the life of any person who attempts to live their life in a Christian manner. John 10:10 tells us that the thief (Satan) cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy; and he is most certainly working overtime at doing such. We also read in 1 Peter 5:8: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour."

A. Be sober. Greek-nepho (nay-fo): to abstain from wine, that one may constantly remain alert to Satan's tricks, traps, and deceptions; to be discreet, watchful, or in a continuous state of normal mental capability.

B. Be vigilant. Greek-gregoreuo (gray-gor-yoo-o): to remain aware, alert, watchful, to be on guard or to constantly remain prepared for self-protection (against the forces of evil). The main way in which we remain vigilant, is to always keep our hearts in right-standing with God Almighty. Because Jesus made us many promises, concerning our protection from the forces of evil. But of course, these promises will only be fulfilled if we walk and live our lives daily in accordance with God's Word. One of the greatest promises which Jesus gave to us, comes from Luke 10:19, which tells us: "***Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall by any means hurt you.***" This promise of Jesus simply means, that if we constantly live our lives in accordance with his holy Word, that we will have the power and the authority through his mighty name, to overcome any obstacle which Satan may ever attempt to bring before us; and the power to never be defeated by any of his evil spirits. Another promise which we are given by our Heavenly Father, comes from Eph. 6:16, which tells us: "Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked." This is telling us that we must constantly walk and live our lives with our entire faith in Jesus Christ as our mighty protector. Faith in ourselves or in anyone else will never work. For Jesus is the only match for Satan; not we ourselves. We have been given power and authority over Satan's kingdom, as we mentioned before. But sometimes Satan attempts to forget that he has already been defeated forevermore. And when he does so, it takes Jesus Christ to put him back in his proper

place; not us. The Christian battle has already been won forevermore; by Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary. But many times Satan will attempt to persuade us that there is no truth in this fact. Let us never forget that he is the biggest liar to ever exist, and the father of lies.

C. Because your adversary the devil. Greek-antidikos (an-tid-ee-kos): opponent, enemy, or constant opposing force.

D. As a roaring lion, walking about. Satan is continuously, always, roaming the earth, looking for those who he can trick, deceive, fool, or cause problems for. He never stops. If we are waiting for Satan to give up, we might as well go ahead and quit the race; for he will never give up until he is thrown into the lake of fire. We will face temptation for as long as we live upon the earth. But let us never forget, that Jesus has already won the battle for us; as I mentioned before. All that we must do is to continuously trust in Him, and use the Biblical authority which He gave us through his mighty name.

E. Seeking whom he may devour. Greek-katapino (kat-ap-ee-no): to gulp up entirely, drown (spiritually-with his lies and deceptions), to destroy, or to bring an end to one's existence. Satan has no limits whatsoever, in his attempts to destroy the lives of every child of God that he possibly can. But he can only destroy those who allow him to do so. We must constantly walk in the perfect will of God, and use the power and authority which Jesus has given unto us through his mighty name.

2. Everywhere that we look, people are facing problems like they have never had to face before; and finding life harder to live than at any other time in history. Satan is trying to tear up the minds of Christian people all over the earth; filling their minds with lies of every kind. Anything that he can tell them, that will bring confusion to their minds, or fill them full of doubt and fear concerning their relationship with God, he is certainly busy attempting to do so. First of all, we must always remember that God has absolutely nothing to do with confusion or fear. It is every bit the work of Satan. God's Word tells us in 1 Cor. 14:33: "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints." Anything that God has a part in, is always operated or takes place in a most peaceful manner. Or anything that we are ever told that truly comes from the mouth of God, will bring perfect peace to our hearts; not confusion. We are also told in 2 Tim. 1:7: "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."

A. Confusion-Greek-akatastasia (ak-at-as-tah-see--ah): instability, disorder, commotion, tumult, misunderstanding, or uproar of any kind.

B. Fear-Greek-deilia (di-lee-ah): timidity, faithlessness, doubt, or unbelief.

C. Power-Greek-dunamis (doo-nam-is): miraculous or abundant strength, might, or ability to overcome any obstacle which one may face or encounter.

D. Love-Greek-agapa (ag-ah-pay): affection or benevolence or charity.

E. Sound mind. Greek-sophronismos (so-fron-is-mos): disciplined, controlled, mentally strong and stable, or mentally wise.

3. We must never forget that the Word of God is true, and no fault shall ever be found in it. God's Word tells us in 1 John 1:9: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

A. Confess-Greek-homologeō (hom-ol-og-eh-o): to acknowledge, or to admit; to have a confrontation with God, concerning one's own sins or wrong doings; admitting one's guilt of such sins.

B. He is faithful. Greek-pistos (pis-tos): trustworthy, sure, or true (to his Word, which promises us everlasting forgiveness).

C. And just. Greek-dikaios (dik-ah-yos): holy, righteous, fair, or to see that justice is given. However, we have much more than justice to be thankful for; we have the mercy of God to be ever thankful for, and to give Him praise for. If God only gave us justice, we would every one be in Hell. For justice is only to see that one receives what one deserves. But the mercy of God goes far beyond the point of justice. God's mercy has no boundary line, or no termination point.

D. To forgive us our sins. Greek-phiemi (af-ee-ay-mee): to lay aside, omit, send away (eternally), pardon, or to declare a wrongdoer to be innocent once again.

E. And to cleanse us. Greek-katharizo kath-ar-id-zo): to make completely clean (from sin), or to totally purify (one's soul).

F. From all unrighteousness. Greek-adikia (ad-ee-kee-ah): injustice, wrongfulness, iniquity, sin (of any kind or to any extent), wickedness, or any particular act which is contrary to God's perfect will.

4. God also tells us in Psalm 103:12: "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us." No one has ever been able to tell where the east ends, and the west begins; or how far one direction is from another. Neither is mankind able to tell how far away God hath removed our sins from us.

5. Throughout all of the Old Testament, the blood of many animal sacrifices was shed for the sins of mankind. But none of these sacrifices which were slain throughout all the generations of the Old Testament, had blood which was pure enough to cleanse mankind from sin permanently. The blood of the animal sacrifices was only able to wash away sin for a short period of time.

This was why God the Father had to send his only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to shed his blood on the cross of Calvary. For it required the blood of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, to wash away our sins eternally. First of all, God's Word tells us in Heb. 9:22: "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without the shedding of blood is no remittance." And in Heb. 10:4 we read: "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins." This verse is speaking of removing on a permanent basis. And also, in Heb. 10:12 we read: "But this man (speaking of Jesus Christ), after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God." And because Jesus loved us enough to come and give his own life for us, we can be cleansed from every sin eternally.

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It does not matter what Satan may think or have to say about the matter, nor does anything else matter, but that we believe the holy Word of God, and accept Jesus Christ as our personal Savior. Then we are forgiven, eternally!

6. Once we receive eternal forgiveness from God through Jesus Christ his Son, this is just the beginning of the many other precious promises which we are given from God. One of the greatest of these precious promises, is the promise from God that He will never leave us nor forsake us. He tells us in Heb. 13:5: "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." Regardless of how bad things may look at times; or how helpless we may feel; God has promised that He will never leave us alone. When it looks as though we have nothing; and it looks like God is never going to show up; we can rest assured that God is right by our side. We have promises from back in the Book of Genesis, of where God began to make promises to his children of his continual presence with them. We will begin by reading God's promise to Jacob, in Gen. 28:15: "And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of." Then a little later, in Gen. 28:20-21, Jacob stated that if God would be with him and provide for him, that he would return unto his father's house in peace; and the Lord would be his God. We read: "And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, So that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God."

A. Behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest.

God gave this solemn promise to Jacob, that He would be with him, and protect him, everywhere that he went.

B. And will bring thee again into this land. Jacob was presently on the run

from Esau his brother. For he had lied to his father, Isaac, and doublecrossed Esau out of his sacred blessing, or his birthright; which we can read of in Gen. 27:1-28:9. Jacob was on his way to the house of Leban; where he would also be doublecrossed into having to work double the time, before he would be able to marry the woman whom he loved; Rachel. One important point that we all need to remember, that Paul told us in Gal. 6:7, was that we will surely reap what we sow. Just as Jacob had tricked his father into giving unto him the sacred blessing which was supposed to be given to his older brother Esau (Gen. 27), Jacob had also been tricked by his father-in-law, Leban, into having to work for him for fourteen years; rather than what was normally required of a man; which was seven years. But Jacob was later able to gain the advantage over his father-in-law Leban, regarding the separation of their cattle. God allowed this to happen, because He had seen how Leban had treated Jacob wrong regarding his wife Rachel. We can read all about these stories regarding Jacob and Leban, in Genesis chapters 29-31. I feel that without a doubt, Jacob had to do some repenting of the wrong which he had done unto his brother Esau; even though the Word does not tell us directly of it.

C. Jacob still had hope that someday he would be able to return to his father's house in peace; even though he had stolen his brother Esau's birthright. He had made the promise that if God would protect him, that he would allow the Lord to be his God. (Gen. 28:20-21). Even though it may appear that God pays no attention to the wrongdoings of Jacob, you can rest assured that Jacob suffered greatly for his wrongdoings. He was now on the run from his brother Esau; for he feared what Esau would do to him if he was to ever catch up with him. And I'm sure that at some time during his days of having to live in fear, that he asked for God's forgiveness. Otherwise, God would not of been able to watch over him and protect him as He did.

7. We will now read of where God told Jacob to return to his father's land. We read in Gen. 31:1-3: "And he heard the words of Leban's sons, saying, Jacob hath taken away all that was our father's; and of that which was our father's hath he gotten all this glory. And Jacob beheld the countenance of Leban, and, behold, it was not toward him as before. And the Lord said unto Jacob, Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred; and I will be with thee."

A. We are first told of how the sons of Leban accused Jacob of taking away all that belonged to their father; and of receiving all the glory for all that he had taken from Leban.

B. Jacob beheld the countenance of Leban. Hebrew-paniym (paw-neem): referring to the look on a person's face; or the type of impression that a

person displays by the look on their face; such as looking fearful, angry or mad, happy, joyful, etc.

C. *It was not toward him as before.* I would assume from reading of how Jacob had prospered concerned all his flocks, that the countenance on Leban's face was not one of happiness at all; but probably one of extreme anger. For Leban was probably to the point of even wanting to kill Jacob if he could get the chance.

D. *And the Lord said unto Jacob, Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred; and I will be with thee.* This promise of the Lord, is a fulfillment of the promise which God gave unto Jacob back in Gen. 28:15, which we read earlier. Most certainly, this story which tells us just a few of the years of the life of Jacob, is a perfect example of the forgiveness of God, and also of the promise of God to never leave nor forsake us. Even though Jacob sinned in stealing his brother's birthright, God forgave him, and never did forsake him. He was always with him during the bad times, as well as during the good times, and made sure of his protection.

8. Most of us have read the story of Joseph, and his coat of many colors; and of how his brothers were all jealous of him. The life of Joseph is covered in Genesis chapters 37-50. These chapters cover several years of time. And we can read throughout these last chapters of Genesis, many things which Joseph went through during his lifetime. Yet God never did forsake Joseph. We read in Gen. 39:20-21: "And Joseph's master took him, and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were bound: and he was there in the prison. But the Lord was with Joseph, and showed him mercy, and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison." One important point which I believe that I should bring to your attention at this time, concerning the forgiveness of God, which Jesus clearly reminded us of, was that if we intend to receive the forgiveness of God, then we also must forgive those who do us wrong. One of the great lines from the Lord's prayer, is "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us." Jesus also told us in Matt. 6:14-15: "***But if ye forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.***" And we also read in Mark 11:25-26: "***And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in Heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in Heaven forgive your trespasses.***" When we refer back to the story of Jacob, of how he done his brother Esau wrong in stealing his birthright, we can see that Esau surely forgave Jacob. We read in Gen. 33:1-4: "And Jacob lifted up his eyes,

and looked, and, behold, Esau came, and with him four-hundred men. And he divided the children unto Leah, and unto Rachel, and unto the two handmaids. And he put the handmaids and their children foremost, and Leah and her children after, and Rachel and Joseph hindermost. And he passed over before them, and bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother. And Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him: and they wept.” It is very evident that God had done a mighty work in the life of Esau. Also, God done a mighty work in the heart of Joseph as well. He caused both Esau and Joseph to highly prosper, in spite of the wrong that was done unto them. But God could not of blessed either one of them, if they had not of had a heart to forgive others. In spite of all the tribulation which Joseph’s brothers caused him to have to go through for so many years, he still forgive them. We read in Gen. 45:1-15: “Then Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood by him, and he cried, Cause every man to go out from me. And there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren. And he wept aloud: and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard. And Joseph said unto his brethren, I am Joseph; doth my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him; for they were troubled at his presence. And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life. For these two years hath the famine been in the land: and yet there are five years, in the which there shall neither be earing nor harvest. And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God: and He hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt. Haste ye, and go up to my father, and say unto him, Thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath made me lord of all Egypt: come down unto me, tarry not: And thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen, and thou shalt be near unto me, thou, and thy children, and thy children’s children, and thy flocks, and thy herds, and all that thou hast: And there will I nourish thee; for yet there are five years of famine; lest thou, and thy household, and all that thou hast, come to poverty.

And, behold, your eyes see, and the eyes of thy brother Benjamin, that it is my mouth that speaketh unto you. And ye shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that ye have seen; and ye shall haste and bring down my father hither. And he fell upon his brother Benjamin’s neck, and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck. Moreover he kissed all his brethren, and wept

upon them: and after that his brethren talked with him.”

A. The story of Joseph is one of the greatest stories in the Bible, which gives us a picture of a man of God who had to withstand many years of temptation and trial; and who had every reason to turn away from God and walk in sin; but Joseph kept his faith in God, and was never forsaken by God. He had every reason to hate his brothers; yet he still loved them after his many years of suffering, and held nothing against them. May we all walk in this same manner of love and forgiveness as Joseph chose to walk in. And when we do so, we can rest assured, that God will never leave us nor forsake us; regardless of what we may have to go through. And one other very important verse of scripture, which most truly applies to this story of Joseph, is found in Rom. 8:28, which tells us: “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose.” God allowed Joseph to be sold into Egypt, and to go through the many torments which he had to go through, because He had a very important job for him to do. Even Joseph himself told his brethren that they had not been the cause of him having to come into Egypt, but God had planned it, so that He could make Joseph Lord over all Egypt.

B. Jesus’ main thing which He desired to influence upon us, was to always be a forgiving person. Just as He is always a forgiving God, He also expects us to be forgiving people. If we expect God to forgive us for our wrong doings, then we must also always forgive others who do us wrong. If we refuse to do so, then we might as well never expect to receive forgiveness from God.

C. Jacob probably expected his brother Esau to still desire to get even with him for the wrong which he had done, in stealing his birthright. But Esau had allowed God to fill his heart with love for his brother Jacob; in spite of what wrong he had done to him. It was certainly a time of rejoicing for Jacob. For Esau held no grudge against him whatsoever; but came to him and treated him with brotherly love.

D. Joseph also treated his brothers with the love of God, when they with great surprise realized that it was their brother Joseph whom they faced, when they went down into Egypt to get food to eat. Joseph wept when he met his brothers again, and told them to go back and get their father Jacob; and bring him back with them, and move down to Goshen in Egypt; for there would be five more years of famine to come.

9. Another man in the Bible, who received much forgiveness from God, and was never forsaken by Him, was David. We read and hear of David continuously. He is one of the most remembered saints of Christian history. Yet David also had many wrongs to ask and receive God’s forgiveness for. One of the most popular stories in the life of David, was the story of David’s

sinful act of adultery, which he committed with the woman called Bath-sheba. We read in 2 Sam. 11:1-5: “And it came to pass, after the year was expired, at the time when kings go forth to battle, that David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the children of Ammon, and besieged Rabbah. But David tarried still at Jerusalem. And it came to pass in the eveningtide, that David arose from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king’s house: and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself; and the woman was very beautiful to look upon. And David sent and inquired after the woman. And one said, Is not this Bath-sheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite? And David sent messengers, and took her; and she came in unto him, and he lay with her; for she was purified from her uncleanness: and she returned unto her house. And the woman conceived, and sent and told David, and said, I am with child.” The story is pretty clear to understand. David saw Bath-sheba taking a bath upon the rooftop of her house; which was a pretty common practice in the days of David. But the king’s castle set high on the hilltop, and he could overlook the roofs of many of the private houses. And when he saw Bath-sheba taking a bath, he could see that she was very beautiful. Therefore, he desired for her to come into his own house, and have sexual relationships with him. And he sent his servants down to get her, and she done just as he desired for her to do. And then she ended up pregnant with a child, because of their sinful relationship. But this was not the end of David’s wrongdoing concerning this woman. After he had committed fornication (sexual relationships between a man and a woman who are not married to one another) with her, he also made sure that Bath-sheba’s husband was killed in warfare. We also read in 2 Sam. 11:13-17: “And when David had called Him (Bath-sheba’s husband), he did eat and drink before him; and he made him drunk: and at even he went out to lie on his bed with the servants of his lord, but went not down to his house. And it came to pass in the morning, that David wrote a letter to Joab, and sent it by the hand of Uriah. And he wrote in the letter, saying, Set ye Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retire ye from him, that he may be smitten, and die. And it came to pass, when Joab observed the city, that he assigned Uriah unto a place where he knew that valiant men were. And the men of the city went out, and fought with Joab: and there fell some of the people of the servants of David; and Uriah the Hittite died also.” It is very clear for us to see, that even though David was a great servant of God, he also went through his days of sin. Do not ever think for a moment, that David, or any of the many other well-known men and women of the Bible, lived their lives without ever sinning against God. Let us always remember what Paul told us in Rom. 3:23: “For all have sinned and come short of the glory of

God.” And many times we have a picture of the Old and New Testament saints, as being people who never sinned. But I can assure you, that even though the Bible may not tell us very much about the sinful lives of some of the saints, they had their days of doing wrong, just as we do. Even though David wrote most of the great Psalms of the Bible, and was a great soldier for God most of the time during his life, he also had his days when he yielded unto temptation, as we can see from the story which we have read. And if we were to read in chapters 12-18 of the Book of 1 Samuel, we would also see that David suffered in an awful way, for the sin that he committed with Bath-sheba. For the baby died which Bath-sheba gave birth to, as a result of her sinful relationship with David.

And then the sons of David, began to practice the same sinful acts within their own family. And David had a son later who revolted against him in a horrible manner. His name was Absalom. Yet we also know that David was forgiven by God, and God never did forsake him. We read in 2 Sam. 22:1-4: “And David spake unto the Lord the words of this song in the day that the Lord had delivered him out of the hand of all his enemies, and out of the hand of Saul: And he said, The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; The God of my rock; in Him will I trust; He is my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and my refuge, my Savior; thou savest me from violence. I will call on the Lord, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies.” As we mentioned before, David had to face some pretty severe consequences for the sins which he committed, just as we also many times have to do; but God never did forsake him.

10. Another story from the Word of God, which tells us of the never-forsaking love of God, comes from the Book of Daniel; and we read of how He kept his mighty hand of love upon three Hebrew servants, and continually showed his mighty presence with them. We read in Dan. 3:1-30: “Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height was threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof six cubits; he set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon. Then Nebuchadnezzar the king sent to gather together the princes, the governors, and the captains, the judges, the treasurers, and counselors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up. Then the princes, the governors, and captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counselors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, were gathered together unto the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up. Then an herald cried aloud, To you it is commanded, O people, nations, and languages, That at what time ye hear the

sound of the coronet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of music, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up: Wherefore at that time certain Chaldeans came near, and accused of the Jews. They spake and said to the king Nebuchadnezzar, O king, live for ever. Thou, O king, hast made a decree, that every man that shall hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of music, shall fall down and worship the golden image: And whoso falleth not down and worshipping, that he should be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. There are certain Jews whom thou hast set over the affairs of the province of Babylon, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego; these men, O king, hath not regarded thee: they serve not thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up. Then Nebuchadnezzar in his rage and fury commanded to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. Then they brought these men before the king. Nebuchadnezzar spake and said unto them, Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, do not ye serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up? Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of music, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made; well: but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up. Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego: therefore he spake, and commanded that they should heat the furnace one seven times more than it was wont to be heated. And he commanded the most mighty men that were in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace. Then these men were bound in their coats, their hosen, and their hats, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. Therefore because the king's commandment was urgent, and the furnace exceeding hot, the flame of the fire slew those men that took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, and spake, and said unto his counselors, Did not we cast three men bound

into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king. He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, and walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God. Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, and spake, and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come hither. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, came forth of the midst of the fire. And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counselors, being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them. Then Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, Who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in Him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God. Therefore I make a decree, That every people, nation, and language, which speak any thing amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill: because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort. Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, in the province of Babylon."

A. Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold, whose height was threescore cubits.

a. Threescore-Hebrew-shittiyim (shit-teem): sixty (cubits); telling us that onescore would be equal to twenty.

b. Cubits-Hebrew-ammah (am-maw): a unit of measure, referring to the forearm, or the distance from the elbow to the middle fingertip, which would be app. two feet. Therefore, the height of the golden image which Nebuchadnezzar built, would of been app. one-hundred and twenty feet tall.

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B. And the breadth thereof six cubits. This tells us that the breadth or the width of the golden image which Nebuchadnezzar had built was app. twelve feet wide.

C. The golden image was set up in the plain of Dura, in Babylon, which was the capital city of Babylonia. A pedestal of this ancient statue has been found by archeologists in recent years.

D. Nebuchadnezzar sent out a notice which required all of his governmental officials to come to the dedication of his statue. Hebrew-chanukka (chan-ook-kaw): a consecration service, or a service to announce the beginning of the official acknowledgment or recognition of a particular place, thing, or person. In this particular situation, it was for the acknowledgment or

recognition of a golden image which Nebuchadnezzar had set up; and which he was about to require everyone to bow before and worship.

E. The *herald* cried out that all people and all nations and all languages would fall down and worship the golden image when they heard the sound of the different instruments, and all the different kinds of music. Hebrew-karowz (kaw-roze): one who proclaims or makes official announcements; a governmental speaker.

F. It was declared that whosoever refused to fall down and worship the golden image at the hour of the playing of the instruments and the music, would be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. It would take great courage and faith in God Almighty to refuse to obey such an order; knowing that this deadly punishment had been declared for anyone who refused to obey.

G. The *Chaldeans* came and informed king Nebuchadnezzar that there were three Jewish men; Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego; who refused to fall down and worship the golden image. Hebrew-kasday (kas-dah-ee): an inhabitant of Chaldea, which was located in southern Babylonia. There were also many magicians and astrologists among the Chaldeans.

H. Out of his fury and rage, Nebuchadnezzar ordered that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego be brought before him.

a. *Fury*-Hebrew-chema (khem-aw): anger, madness, or displeasure.

b. *Rage*-Hebrew-regaz (reg-az): violent anger or emotion, wrath, provoked trembling or trouble.

I. Nebuchadnezzar told the three Jews that if they would bow down and worship his golden image, when they heard the sound of the instruments and the music, that all would be *well*. Otherwise, they would be cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. Hebrew-towb (tobe): good, pleasing, or favorable. Also from the Hebrew word yatab (yaw-tab): meaning acceptable, favorable, pleasing.

J. Nebuchadnezzar wanted to know who would be the God who would deliver them out of his hands, or out of the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, had faith that they would never be forsaken by God Almighty Jehovah. They told Nebuchadnezzar that they would not be *careful* in answering his question concerning the matter.

Hebrew-chashach (khash-akh): to be concerned about, or take time for fear of making a mistake. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego had no fear whatsoever, concerning the threat of Nebuchadnezzar. They knew that their God was able to deliver them from the fiery furnace, and that the mighty hand of God was most certainly much greater than any thing that Nebuchadnezzar could ever do unto them. And they made it known unto

Nebuchadnezzar, that even if God did not deliver them from the fiery furnace, that they would never bow down and serve the gods of Nebuchadnezzar, nor worship his golden image.

K. When Nebuchadnezzar heard the courageous answer which was given unto him by Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, he ordered that the fires of the furnace be heated up seven times hotter than it ordinarily burned. And then he ordered that the most mighty men in his army bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, and throw them into the furnace. And then we see the first piece of evidence that God had not forsaken Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. That evidence being that God allowed the men who cast them into the furnace, to be consumed by the heat from the fires of the furnace.

L. Next, we see a second piece of evidence of God's never forsaking love. Nebuchadnezzar was astonished, and rose up in haste, and questioned his counselors, as to how many men they had cast into the furnace. For he knew that it should of been three men; yet he seen four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they had no hurt; or in other words, the fire had no effect on them whatsoever. This is a fulfillment of a promise which God made in Isa. 43:2, which tells us: "When thou passeth through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overthrow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee."

a. *Astonied*-Hebrew-tevahh (tev-ah): to be in amazement, astonished, surprised, or to marvel.

b. *Counselors*-Hebrew-haddabar-(had-daw-bawr): assistants, or governmental advisers.

M. *And the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.* The first question which always comes to my mind, when reading this part of Nebuchadnezzar's statement, is "How could Nebuchadnezzar possibly of known what the Son of God looked like?" But after going into deeper study of this matter, I was able to understand, that most likely, it was not whom Christians actually know as the Son of God, or Jesus, who Nebuchadnezzar saw in the furnace; but only an angel of God. For there are other places in the Word of God, where angels are called "sons of God." In Job 38:4-7, as God was questioning Job concerning a matter, we read: "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare, if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? Or who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? Or Who laid the corner stone thereof; When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" And we also read in verse 28 of this reading from Daniel chapter 3, of where Nebuchadnezzar stated that God sent his angel

and delivered his servants that trusted in Him. So I believe that there is left no room for doubt in our minds, that it was an angel of God who Nebuchadnezzar saw in the furnace with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego; not actually the Son of God.

N. Nebuchadnezzar called Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego from the mouth of the furnace, and told them to come forth from the furnace. And all of Nebuchadnezzar's government officials saw that the fire of the furnace had no power over them whatsoever. Not a hair of their head was singed, their coats were not changed, and neither of the three of them had the smell of fire upon them. And Nebuchadnezzar spoke blessings unto the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego; Who had sent his angel to deliver them because of their faith and trust in Him. And Nebuchadnezzar declared how that God had changed his (Nebuchadnezzar's) own word, and protected the lives of these three men, because they refused to bow to any god except their own God. Nebuchadnezzar then declared that any person, nation, or language, who dared to speak anything whatsoever against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, would be cut into pieces, and their houses would be made a *dunghill*; because he now realized that no god other than the eternal God could ever deliver anyone in this manner. Hebrew-nevaluw (new-aw-loo): to be foul, as a heap of manure; to be stinking, as to cause nobody to want to have any further relationships with.

O. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego were promoted in the kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar. This of course, was because of God's anointing upon their lives, and due to their reverence and obedience unto God Almighty. For true promotion comes from God alone; not from mankind. We read in Psalm 75:6-7: "For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge: He putteth down one, and setteth up another." And we can most certainly see from the lives of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, that God certainly keeps his Word, in promising that He will never leave us nor forsake us.

11. We also have a story of the prophet Daniel; of how he was thrown into a den of lions; because he refused to submit himself unto a decree or law passed by king Darius, that he could not pray to or make any request of his own God; but only of king Darius. Yet God never did forsake Daniel during this time of persecution. We read in Dan. 6:1-28: "It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom an hundred and twenty princes, which should be over the whole kingdom. And over these three presidents; of whom Daniel was first: that the princes might give accounts unto them, and the king should have no damage. Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king thought to set him over

the whole realm. Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him.

Then said these men, we shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God. Then these presidents and princes assembled together to the king, and said thus unto him, King Darius, live for ever. All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors, and the princes, the counselors, and the captains, have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whosoever shall ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions. Now, O king, establish the decree, and sign the writing, that it be not changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not.

Wherefore king Darius signed the writing and the decree. Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime. Then these men assembled, and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God. Then they came near, and spake before the king concerning the king's decree; Hast thou not signed a decree, that every man that shall ask a petition of any God or man within thirty days, save of thee, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions? The king answered and said, The thing is true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not. Then answered they and said before the king, That Daniel, which is of the children of the captivity of Judah, regardeth not thee, O king, nor the decree that thou hast signed, but maketh his petition three times a day. Then the king, when he heard these words, was sore displeaded with himself, and set his heart on Daniel to deliver him: and he labored till the going down of the sun to deliver him. Then these men assembled unto the king, and said unto the king, Know, O king, that the law of the Medes and Persians is, That no decree nor statute which the king establisheth may be changed. Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast him into the den of lions. Now the king spake, and said unto Daniel, Thy God whom thou servest continually, He will deliver thee. And a stone was brought, and laid upon the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet, and with the signet of his lords; that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel. Then the king went to his palace, and passed the night fasting: neither were instruments of music brought before him: and his sleep went from him. Then the king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of

lions. And when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel: and the king spake and said to Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions? Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live for ever. My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before Him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt. Then was the king exceeding glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God. And the king commanded, and they brought those men which had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions, them, their children, and their wives; and the lions had the mastery of them, and brake all their bones in pieces or ever they came at the bottom of the den. Then king Darius wrote unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you.

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I make a decree, That in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel: for He is the living God, and steadfast for ever, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion shall be even unto the end. He delivereth and rescueth, and He worketh signs and wonders in Heaven, and in earth, Who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions. So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.”

A. King Darius made Daniel the highest ranked president over his kingdom. And Daniel was *preferred* above all the other presidents and princes. Hebrew-netsach (nets-akh): to become chief, highest ranked, superintendent, overseer, or first in command.

B. Because an *excellent* spirit was in him. Hebrew-yattiyir (yat-teer): redundant, or to have a spirit which is wise in management, and has the ability to cause things to fulfill their purpose, or to get the most from all available resources.

C. Due to the excellent spirit which was found in Daniel, Darius placed him in control of the whole realm, or the entire nation. Daniel was seen to have these desired features, because he constantly looked to God for guidance, and therefore was never forsaken by God.

D. The other princes and presidents sought to find *occasion* against Daniel, but could find none. Hebrew-illah (il-law): to set oneself above the law, or to disobey because of one's high rank or position. The only way that the others could find fault against Daniel, was to have the king pass a decree forbidding anyone to pray or to look unto anyone other than the king himself. Darius

agreed to do such, because he did not realize that it was only a trick to get Daniel put to death. The other princes and presidents were filled with jealousy because of Daniel's anointed inspiration given unto him by God Almighty Jehovah.

E. Daniel did not allow this satanic work to hinder him from continuing to be faithful unto God in his prayer life, and his daily devotion unto Him. We can be sure that Daniel daily thought of the day when he and the other Hebrew people would be allowed to return to Jerusalem. For God's Word tells us that he went three times a day to his chamber, and prayed upon his knees, and gave thanks unto God for all of his blessings; beside of the windows which were located on the side facing Jerusalem; just as he had done in the past. He knew that God would not forsake him.

F. Then the other officers sneaked and saw Daniel praying unto God, and went and reminded Darius of the decree which he had signed; and told him of how Daniel continued to pray unto his God daily. When Darius heard this story, he was sore displeased with himself. For he realized the real purpose of the officers having him to make the decree. And Darius tried in every way that he knew how, to have Daniel delivered from the penalty which he knew that he had been tricked into bringing upon Daniel. And the officers reminded Darius that the Medes and the Persians strictly did not allow any law or decree to be changed.

a. Sore-Hebrew-saggiy (sag-ghee): greatly, extremely, or excessively.

b. Displeased-Hebrew-beesh (be-aysh): unhappy, sad, or regretful.

G. Then king Darius was forced to order Daniel to be brought and thrown into the den of lions. But Darius also reminded Daniel that his God whom he served would deliver him from the mouth of the lions. Evidently, Darius also had faith in God's continued presence and protection.

H. And a stone was brought and laid upon the mouth of the den of lions; and then Darius sealed it with his own signet.

a. Sealed-Hebrew-chatham (khath-am): to mark, or to certify as official.

b. Signet-Hebrew-izqa (iz-kaw): an official certification such as a signature, or a mark.

I. We are told that Darius went to his palace and fasted all night; also that he did not lie down to sleep at all during the night. Without a doubt, Darius realized that he had done wrong; and I'm certain that he sought God's forgiveness first of all; and then I feel certain that Darius' main concern was praying for the safety of Daniel. For we were told earlier, that that he did not lie down to sleep.

J. When morning came, Darius went to the den of lions, and cried out with a loud voice, to see if Daniel had been protected from the lions. And then Daniel

answered the call of Darius with a loud voice, saying, “king, O king, live for ever. For my God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions’ mouths, that they have not hurt me; for I was found innocent before Him; and also I have done nothing to hurt thee, O king.” We have another situation where God sent his angel to save his servant, just as He did in the situation with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego; when they were thrown into the fiery furnace.

K. Then king Darius ordered that Daniel be taken up from the lion’s den; and he was not hurt in any way, because he believed in God Almighty Jehovah. And king Darius was extremely glad or happy because of how God had not forsaken Daniel.

L. The king commanded those who had tricked him into this dirty act, along with their wives and children, to be thrown into the den of lions; and the lions had the *mastery* of them all; and broke all their bones into pieces. And their remains laid forever at the bottom of the den of lions. Hebrew-qowre (ko-ray): to have as guests, to be in control of, or to be in charge of.

M. And then king Darius made a new decree that all men within every dominion of his kingdom should tremble and fear or respect the God of Daniel; declaring Him to be the living God, and seated in Heaven forevermore; and declared that his kingdom would never be destroyed, and that He would always have dominion.

Darius also declared that God Almighty Jehovah was the God who delivers and rescues, and who works signs and wonders in Heaven and on the earth; and who had through his mighty hand, delivered Daniel from the power of the lions. And Daniel prospered very much during the reign of Darius, and during the reign of Cyrus; who was king of Persia.

12. In the New Testament, we have a story about a man named Peter. Even though Peter greatly sinned against God, He was forgiven, and never forsaken. We read of how Peter denied Jesus, yet Jesus was not reluctant at all about forgiving Peter. And Peter turned out to be one of the greatest evangelists during the time of the early Church. We read in John 13:36-38: “Simon Peter said unto Him, Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus answered him, ***Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards.*** Peter said unto Him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake. Jesus answered him, ***Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice.***” And we go on to read in John 18:15-18: “And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple: that disciple was known unto the High Priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the High Priest. But Peter stood at the door without. Then went out that other disciple, which was known unto the High Priest, and spake unto

her that kept the door, and brought in Peter. Then said the damsel that kept the door unto Peter, Art not thou also one of this man's disciples? He saith, I am not. And the servants and officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals; for it was cold: and they warmed themselves: and Peter stood with them, and warmed himself. And in John 18:25-27 we read: "And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. They said therefore unto him, Art not thou also one of his disciples? He denied it, and said, I am not. One of the servants of the High Priest, being his kinsman whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did not I see thee in the Garden with Him? Peter then denied again: and immediately the cock crew." I'm certain that Peter felt horrible after he realized what he had done. After all that Jesus had done for him, Peter actually denied three times that he even knew Him. But we can also rest assured that Peter confessed his sin which he had committed, and received the forgiveness of God. He then, after receiving the Holy Ghost on the Day of Pentecost, became a great man of God. We read of Peter's first great sermon in Acts 2:14-42: "But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: And I will show wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke: The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come: And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know:

Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that He should be holden of it. For David speaketh concerning Him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for He is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: Because thou wilt not leave my soul in Hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy

countenance. Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in Hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three-thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." Peter also preached many other great messages. Another which we may read, is written in Acts 3:1-26: "Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour. And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple; Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms. And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us. And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them. 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. And he leaping up stood, and walked and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God. And all the people saw him walking and praising God: And they knew that it was he which sat for alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened. And as the lame man which was

healed held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering. And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? Or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk? The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go. But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses. And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by Him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all. And now, brethren, I know that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. But those things, which God before had showed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, He hath so fulfilled. Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; And He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began. For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people. Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days. Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities." We also are going to read another story about Peter, which proves to us that Peter was never forsaken by God. We read in Acts 12:1-11: "Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the Church. And he killed James the brother of John with the sword. And because he saw pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.) And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions (four-a total of sixteen soldiers) of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people. Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the Church unto God for him. And when Herod would have brought him forth,

the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and the keepers before the door kept the prison. And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands. And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me. And he went out, and followed him; and wist not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision. When they were past the first and the second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city; which opened unto them of his own accord: and they went out, and passed on through one street; and forthwith the angel departed from him. And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews.”

Peter will always be remembered for his faithfulness to God, even though he was earlier guilty of denying the Lord Jesus three different times. He received the forgiveness of God for his sins, and never again feared to confess Jesus as his personal Savior; and never had to be concerned about being forsaken by God. Peter knew that God would always be with him, regardless of what circumstances he may have to face.

¶

Conclusion:

May we ever be thankful unto God Almighty, for the forgiveness of our sins; even those which we do not even realize that we commit. And we must always remember, that Jesus did not ever promise us that we would not have to face tough circumstances while living our Christian lives on this earth; but He did promise us that He would never leave us nor forsake us. But He promised to be with us, even unto the end of the world. (Matt. 28:20)

Calvin Smith