



GOD

in love with

FRAIL MAN

Olumide Osisanya

About the Book

God is to be known as powerful, ever-present, holy, all-knowing and full of glory. In all of these, love is central to His attributes. His love is a core part of Him that should be understood by all, and its acceptance will pave the way for a rich understanding of His person.

Because we do not comprehend His love, we often misunderstand His nature. Consequently, we are filled with a warped understanding of His being, confused about His identity, and His posture towards us.

This book will help its readers to appreciate better, the unchanging loving nature of the sovereign God, who continues to reach out to humanity regardless of our failure.

About the Author



Olumide Osisanya has been a student of the scripture for more than 2 decades and he enjoys writing and teaching about the person of God and his relationship with man, as revealed in the holy scriptures. He holds Masters degrees in Science and Education.

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Etchwise

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*To all who agree that seeking your glory is the end of all search
and have come to understand that life is meaningful only when
God is the meaning.*

*Even to Jonathan Edwards who proclaimed it and John Piper
who explained it.*

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Preface

Decades ago, when I encountered the reality of the personality called God as a teenager, it was such a life changing experience, and the impact has continued to transform me, with no sign of weaning. Over the years, I have come to understand the feelings of disconnect from God experienced by so many people, in their search for Him. This experience is not peculiar to those who are unwilling to discover His truth, as many genuine saints also feel disconnected. This because what ought to be an estimable knowledge of God, seems to be subsumed under the exaggerated teachings about His presumed anger against the unrighteous.

Discovering God for me became a story of joy, after several years of internal struggle in an attempt to understand what exactly this God wants from me as a person. It was such a strange thing in those days, to contemplate Him as really loving, beyond the imposed idea that suggest we must see Him as loving, even when all that is constantly published is the threat of damnation. He is portrayed as One who seems to threaten everyone with hell daily; a picture of a God who has been really offended and who is bent on avenging Himself. In those incomplete and misleading presentations, He is everything but love.

However, having discovered His love for me and gained a clear understanding of how His will relates with my identity, it became compelling, to share my thought about this glorious

being. He is such a rich being, that we all should intentionally expose our minds to, in order to discover our identity, because we are divinely connected to Him as His creature.

It is my hope that this work will present very useful thoughts about the person of God, His love and His purpose for all men.

Introduction

The right presentation of God's word is fundamental to holding accurate view of His person, without which our understanding of Him will remain at best; confusing and frustrating. A clear revelation of God is given through the scriptures and by it we can savour the richness of His being; for all that may be known of Him are fully revealed in it.

Gaining meaningful understanding about what it means to call Him God is a very important element in the journey of discovering His person, as the source of life and all authority, because He is sovereign. And to understand Him as loving, and ultimately as the reason for the existence of all things, is a vital knowledge that will shape our relationship with Him, for good.

His authority is not a threat to us rather it explains the purpose of all things within the framework of His eternal will and the unquestionable essence of His acts. As the scriptures reveals, He loved us with so great a love (Ephesians 2:4). This reveals a picture of a God who though unseen yet plays a vital role in our existence and the continued sustenance of a world that is plagued with the consequence of the terrible decision made by man at the beginning (Genesis 3:4-7). Apostle John further described how this great love led to the voluntary release of the son of God into the world of sin, to bear the sins of many (John 1:29; 3:16). His demonstration of love is stronger than the devastation caused by sin, as the unimaginable happened! God became man (John 1:14).

God, who indeed is perfect in all His ways, is revealed not as one that pushes the sinful man away from His holiness, rather, His perfection is the strength that is drawing man from wickedness into glory. God promised to bring an end to sin and to free the guilty. This is the core of the message of His love; the holy God found common ground with man. Scriptures clearly reveals that God's love and goodness towards man is consistent and everlasting. We will discover how His will kept man within the reach of mercy and eventually opened the door of reconciliation and eternal hope through Jesus Christ, the saviour of all men.

This book is an attempt to give some clarity to the truth already revealed about the person of God, His posture towards us, and what the appropriate response of every soul should be towards Him. It is my hope that the readers of this piece will further grasp the reality of this great and loving God. And gain a meaningful understanding of who God is; initiating a humbling appreciation and submission to his will.

This work does not explain every item in the scriptures that alludes to the person of God, but it does give a simple and clear understanding on the revealed knowledge about His person; as a God who indeed is love, and worthy of all adoration.

Chapter One

The Place of God

God's rightful place is to be the centre of all creation and the object of their love. This is rightly so because He is the reason for all things (Genesis 1:1, John 1:1-3), the source of all lives and the origin of existence: both the ones visible and those that remain unseen. All were brought into existence by His will and for the singular purpose of His pleasure (Colossians 1:16, Revelation 4:11).

God's place as the creator and His sovereignty is distinctively special; deserving of more honour than any other being, and to be sought above all else. John Piper wrote in his book asking a great question about the relationship of the creator with the created and the need for the heart of the created to be captivated by the reality of the divine. Answering the question on '*Why is it important to be stunned by the God-centeredness of God?*' his response and teachings on this subject indicate the need for man to discover the purpose of existence and to align with the

divine opinion that God primarily lives for Himself and for no other. God's sole existence is for His will and His purpose, from where every other being receives existence and purpose in accordance to His eternal plan; because He lives for no other but himself even before time began.

His works are from the divine expression of His nature, without interference from any external factor. He is not opened to private or public counsel and will never be. No one instructs Him: *'Shall any teach God knowledge?'* (Job 21:22). He does not receive direction from His creatures because He exists in completeness, He does not learn nor undergo training; in Him is the knowledge of life.

He is not subject to the opinion of His creature nor is He moved by the opinion of any. He does not experience confusion because He is the source of all knowledge and there is nothing hidden from Him. *'Who hath directed the Spirit of the LORD, or being his counsellor hath taught him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and shewed to him the way of understanding?'* (Isaiah 40:13-14). He is absolute in knowledge and full of wisdom.

He lives for no one, yet He cares for all. He is caring, committed, loving and faithful towards all out of the abundance of His goodwill. He is bound by His will, working out His unchanging plan. He is adamantly unrepentant in His views and will only consider His eternal plan and purpose as the foundation of His

actions (Ephesians 1:11). He is strongly committed to His plans without room for amendment. His will is perfect and just, even as He is perfect. This is rightly so, because He is the source of perfection and completeness is found in Him alone. He is God alone, full of glory.

Does this suggest that God is selfish? No, He is God-centred. An understanding of the person of God will keep the heart of the creature from every corrupt perception of God and appropriately lay the right foundation for truth to prevail in their hearts. This will grant the creature an unshaded appreciation of the existence of the creator in glory: where the sovereign is received as possessing the full right to lay claim to His creatures and the right to influence their choices, in line with His superior and good pleasure; not because He is a dictator but as possessing all knowledge, and willing to lead them into all truth.

As the creator, the knowledge by which His creatures could experience more abundantly His glory, is in Him, and freely accessible to all that draws near. In His sovereignty He remains accessible to his creature that He might be found when sought. *'And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.'* (Jeremiah 29:13). His promise is true. He will not hide from any, He will not prevent His creature from understanding Him. All that is required is to seek Him by faith, without which, no connection can be established with Him (Hebrews 11:6).

God would not seek to please His creature above His will because He is not made for them. He is God all by Himself, and exists primarily for Himself. Even before creation came into existence, He was God and without His creature He remains God. *'Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.'* (Psalm 90:2). As the eternal being, He must continue to seek Himself, primarily for His own good and secondarily for the good of all who depend on Him for life.

His eternal plan cannot be subjected to the thinking of man whose days is but for a while, His eternal plan is fuelled by His eternal life. This however, is not to the detriment of His creature but to the end that His glory guarantees the continued existence of His creature and their preservation. This should evoke pleasure within the creatures whose association with the sovereign is guaranteed by His unchanging glory, *'For I am the LORD, I change not.'* (Malachi 3:6).

John Piper also wrote in his book that *'God's most fundamental allegiance is to His own glory. He is committed to being God before He is committed to being anything else'*. This is the foundation of the sanctity of God, the unreserved devotion to Himself as the only sovereign, to whom all authority and power must yield without reservation, responding in worship. He could never be committed to man without His absolute commitment to Himself: from Him all lives are derived. God's allegiance to Himself should never be considered strange, as it is the principle that governs the relationship of the sovereign and His creature.

It is fitting that the hope of the world does not depend on beings whose ends are determined by time but on the only One, who is without beginning and end. *'I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.'* (Revelations 1:8). It should never be misunderstood that God's loyalty is first to Himself as God: the source of life, the light of the world, and the only potentate (1Timothy 6:15). He is consistent in His loyalty, the source of hope for all His creature: that He is God alone is an irrevocable agenda before them. *'I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.'* (Revelation 22:13).

God continues to seek the purpose for which the world was created which is centred around Him. The purpose began with Him and, if the world was created for His pleasure, it presupposes that He must continue to seek His own will above all others as the most important being of the universe. Life and living must be centred on God and for this same reason, He cares so much about man.

Every of His work declares His glory as the maker of all things (Job 4:17, Psalm 95:6, Proverbs 22:2, Isaiah 51:13). He exists in perfection, completely satisfied with himself. *'He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment (just): a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.'* (Deuteronomy 32:4). Perhaps He would have suffered from an irreversible damage to His person, esteem, influence, and consequently felt weak and rejected, if He were a God whose satisfaction and knowledge is dependent on man or other created things.

But far be it that the source of all wisdom and knowledge be subjected to the influence of a changing and fading world. He is '*perfect in knowledge.*' (Job 37:16) and remains the same today and forever more (Hebrews 13:8). His creation shows forth His glory: a proof of his completeness, created as a symbol of His sufficiency. His completeness is seen in the things He has made, showing forth His fullness and by it, extends His glory into His creature that He might be known. Man was created to show this glorious state, the revelation of God who is full of all glory.

The scripture reveals that God does not listen to any one before taking decision. '*For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.*' (Romans 11:34-36). He has no instructor because His work was determined before the foundation of the world. His decisions flow from His complete knowledge and they are just and steadfast, '*As for God, his way is perfect.*' (2 Samuel 22:31).

He has no special advisers, nor does He receive knowledge from man. Should God at any point be seen to receive instruction on what to do, He will then, not qualify to be called 'all knowing' even as Job asked the question, '*Shall any teach God knowledge?*' (Job 21:22). Alas! God does not merely possess all knowledge; He is the source of all knowledge. '*I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end.*' (Revelation 21:6). He also gives knowledge freely, He does not receive, for all things are from Him and by Him. '*let not arrogance come out of your mouth: for the LORD is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed.*' (1 Samuel 2:3).

God is not in need of a help mate that could counsel Him. In Him is perfect understanding and judgement. *'O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out.'* (Romans 11:33). The God of creation is perfect in knowledge and complete in understanding and His predetermined counsel is good, perfect and pure: it is distinct from man's imagination and ideology. It's superior in orientation yet it works all together for the good of those who trust in Him. *'For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.'* (Isaiah 55:8-9).

This truth is the foundation of joy, peace, love and holiness for all of His creation. *'For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.'* (Proverbs 2:6). As we grow in the knowledge of God and accept His self-centeredness, that is, His God-centeredness, we are built on the solid ground of His glory, which is immutable. Hence, the assurance to continue to abide in the wealth of His knowledge, growing up in Him unto the full measure of His being, remains guaranteed.

Indeed, His ways are not the ways of His creatures, for when man had lost all hope of meeting up to the standard of His holiness, He unveiled His eternal plan, in His Son Jesus, whom He made the propitiation for sin (Romans 3:25; 1John 2:2, 4:10). He became a part of the world of men, He chose to

identify with man in his weakness. *'And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.'* (1 Timothy 3:16). This is the demonstration of His commitment to His good pleasure which is to keep man on the path of life, regardless of the price. *'Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself.'* (Ephesians 1:9). His good pleasure is the hope of the world. *'Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.'* (Ephesians 1:5).

God's thought is greater than ours and it brought us a gift we could never imagine or have asked for. Should we have been left to suggest what His gift should be to us, could any conceive the gift of eternal fellowship as sons? Never! none could consider it, none could have contemplated it! Yet His eternal plan was set to bring us into the riches of His pleasure, *'Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the LORD for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.'* (Isaiah 55:13).

In His pleasure, He promised to abundantly pardon those who return to Him without restraint (Isaiah 55:7). And this He has fulfilled in accordance to scriptures. *'I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, my counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.'* (Isaiah 46:9-10).

I am captivated by His commitment to Himself, which stands as an assurance that what He promised, He will do because He does not change. Therefore, will I sing the song with the psalmist, '*Bless the LORD, all his works in all places of his dominion: bless the LORD, O my soul.*' (Psalm 103:22).

Indeed, God is complete in Himself, lacking in nothing, His existence predates creation. His existence is in completeness without void or vacuum with complete satisfaction in Himself and His glory. From this completeness, man was created to discover His awesomeness, majesty and the glory of His being; to experience an intimate fellowship with the divine, in an atmosphere devoid of corruption and depravity: a loving fellowship between the sovereign and His loved creature.

Reference

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Chapter Two

A Glimpse of His Glory

God's sovereignty means that He is without equal and possesses all power all in Himself, which declares Him as omnipotent. He is able to perform all His wills without restraint. Yet in His power, He remains truthful and faithful without error or failure. His exercise of power and authority are not without discretion but in truth, they attest to His glory. He is consistent in truth not only when things work in support of His will but even at those moments when creatures rebel against His will, He remains faithful.

He does not change and will never experience change. He is God, the omnipotent. *'You alone are the LORD. You made heaven, the highest heaven, with all its armies. You made the earth and everything on it, the seas and everything in them. You give life to them all, and the armies of heaven worship you.'* (Nehemiah 9:6 GW). Every creature must continue to bow before Him as to the king immortal, invincible and the only

wise God, to whom be the glory and honour among all creature, now and evermore (Romans 16:27, 1Timothy 1:17, Jude1:25). The stunning realities of the person of God ought to leave us in awe of His glory and create an irresistible inner satisfaction with Him; a submission to His will.

For God, His glory, His purpose, His agenda comes first and above all: the most relevant guide and the driving force for His creature, defining the essence of life, preserving and bringing honour to His eternal glory in line with His predetermined plan. The only way to understand His glory is to understand Him because He is the glory. He is everything to be known, knowledge begins with the understanding of His purpose: a perpetual admittance of His perfection and the beauty of it, as defined by Him.

The sovereign God is the quintessence of what true glory is. He exudes it and all honour belongs to him. He is the 'God of glory' (Acts 7:2). Thus, it is God's purpose to glorify Himself (Ephesians 1:4-11). Man ought to acknowledge that glorifying God is his highest calling, the foundation for every good and joy in this present world and that which is to come. The words of King David capture some splendid truth about the reality of this God, '*Glory and honour are in his presence; strength and gladness are in his place.*' (1Chronicle 16:27). And again he wrote '*Give unto the LORD, ye kindreds of the people, give unto the LORD glory and strength. Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come before him: worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.*' (1Chronicle 16:27-29). He is

to be celebrated for who He is, full of glory. All of Him that man has experienced from creation is but a glimpse of His glory, a finite revelation of the infinite God.

He is not limited or subject to the same conditions to which His creatures are, because they are finite, but He is infinite. They were created but He is the creator possessing all glory and knowledge, and He cannot deny Himself as the fountain of goodness. Otherwise, He will be a liar, which is impossible to imagine or conceive, that He would deny the truth about Himself as the everlasting, self-sufficient, most noble, most wonderful and the definition of perfection, which He is! To act differently than seeking His own good and glory will be false, pretentious, and an attempt to deceive the creature to believe that the creator is feeble and transient, when indeed He is everlasting, beyond perfection, whose being cannot be fully captured by words: words are incapable of fully describing His glory. The purest form of His deeds is to seek Himself, being the self-sustaining and the only glorious One.

It remains holy and pure for God to consider the world in the light of His will alone and to think of Himself as God without error. When God thinks of Himself as God, it demonstrates truth and holiness, but when the created thinks of itself as God, it's a sign of error and lack of truth. *'And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?'* (Daniel 4:35). All the earth is of no value without Him and to

Him alone belong all their worship. The knowledge of God is more glorious than the knowledge of all the works combined and to seek His glory is the purest form of worship.

He is Holy

God is holy (Psalm 99:5). He is holy in the absolute and for all eternity. He is pure and unique in His purity. His is a superior nature that cannot be compared with any other. God is different, separate from all other beings, '*for the LORD our God is holy.*' (Psalm 99:9).

His holiness cannot be shared with created things as only Him so exist. '*There is none holy as the LORD.*' (1Samuel 2:2). He declared in Job, '*Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me if you have such insight.*' (Job 38:4). This simply speaks to the glory of the One who created all things for Himself and by Himself. He was with none when He brought life into existence, He cannot be questioned, He stands in authority and power all by Himself. He is unique, He is holy.

His holiness means He is not like even the most glorious angel. He is greater in holiness than even the angels in an infinite measure. It is from His holiness that all other creatures were created. His holiness is without beginning. He is holy. So holy is He that even the angels cannot look into His face but in awe bow before His presence crying, '*Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.*' (Isaiah 6:3). They can barely look upon Him for the greatness of His holiness. In awe, the angels sing of the uniqueness of His holiness.

His works are all together righteous, at bliss with His glory, '*The LORD is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.*' (Psalm 145:17). All His works are done in holiness, '*for the LORD our God is righteous in all his works which he doeth.*' (Daniel 9:14). His work is a witness to His unchanging holiness because righteousness belongs to Him (Daniel 9:7). It is not what He is only because of what He has done (Isaiah 6:3, Revelation 4:8), but for who He is, innately holy, '*for thou only art holy.*' (Revelation 15:4).

His holiness was not acquired. He is declared glorious in holiness. You are God '*glorious in holiness.*' (Exodus 15:11). Without the glory of His holiness, His power, love, goodness and mercy would have been less than perfect, but His completeness is the reason He is the glorious one, infinite in glory, power, love, goodness, mercy and grace.

When faced with the holiness of His glory, we are humbled by it and stunned by its depth- unattainable, all surpassing and everlasting (Revelation 1:17). God will not change himself to accommodate or please man. However, He is available, easy to reach and accessible to all who call on Him. His holiness means that He is separate from all other creature, but it does not hide Him from them. '*The LORD is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.*' (Psalm 145:17).

His Name

His glory is acknowledged in all His revelations as seen also in His name. God's name is glorious: it is inseparable from His

glory, an identity that describes His character and excellence, witnessed in every place and His testimony spreads across His creation (Psalm 72:19). An identity that is inherently good, which only the creator possesses. His name declares Him as glorious, full of goodness and He remains so forever and ever (Luke 18:18-19). His name is delightful; therefore, the scriptures says, '*sing praises unto his name; for it is pleasant.*' (Psalm 135:3). His name is highly exalted and operates at the same level as His word.

His testimony is not in variance with His identity: they are one and the same. '*I will bow down toward your holy temple, And give thanks to your Name for your loving kindness and for your truth; For you have exalted your Name and your Word above all.*' (Psalm 138:2 WEB). He has magnified His name above all things: His name is lifted in honour as the emblem of His glory. To honour His name is inseparable from seeking His glory, His name declares His glory in full excellence and radiance. '*O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens.*' (Psalm 8:1). His name is set above the heavens, it is magnified above all things. To lavish our praise on Him will be recognition of His beauty, '*Let them praise the name of the LORD: for his name alone is excellent; his glory is above the earth and heaven.*' (Psalm 148:13).

To attribute excellence to Him alone, is to honour His name, to separate Him from His creature and declare Him as unique, without equal. To celebrate Him as the only one whose name alone is glorious because His name agrees with His glory. '*Sing*

unto him, sing psalms unto him, talk ye of all his wondrous works. Glory ye in his holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the LORD.' (1 Chronicles 16:9-10). His name is a symbol of His authority, His unwavering identity that stands as protection for His own. In His greatness, He remains loving, never a terror to them that call on Him, *'And in his name shall the Gentiles trust.'* (Matthew 12:21). The well of hope, where the thirsty souls are satisfied with everlasting pleasure. *'He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.'* (Psalm 23:3). For without Him, we would be lost without hope, as sheep without shepherd but *'To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.'* (Acts 10:43). His name is as consistent as His word and it will never change, it will never fail. For this reason, we are not consumed because it is our refuge, *'The name of the LORD is a strong tower.'* (Proverbs 18:10).

He does great things because of who He is; He will not allow His name to be blasphemed (Psalm 106:8). At moments when His name was rejected, when His kindness was despised, for the glory of His name, He kept His promise alive, *'And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am the LORD, saith the Lord GOD, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes.'* (Ezekiel 36:23). He wants every soul to know Him; He wants to be known by His name *'Sing unto God, sing praises to his name: extol him that rideth upon the heavens by his name JAH, and rejoice before him.'* (Psalm 68:4). His name is a witness to His faithfulness, the

quality of His being that preserves the lost. He will continue to act on behalf of those that honour Him, He will not let go nor give up on them. *'But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.'* (Malachi 4:2). In another place, the testimony of His word declares, *'For our heart shall rejoice in him, because we have trusted in his holy name.'* (Psalm 33:21). Confidence in His name is the source of our hope.

Without doubt He is to be revered by all and above all else: *'He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant forever: holy and reverend is his name.'* (Psalm 111:9). We therefore, should give glory to His name and *'worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.'* (Psalm 29:2).

He is Good

God is inherently good in the measure of His eternal existence. *'No one is good except God alone.'* (Mark 10:18), and every good and perfect gift comes from Him (James 1:17). Goodness is His exclusive preserve, He alone is goodness. *'This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.'* (1 John 1:5). He did not become good by His actions, rather His actions as perceived by created things are but a small reflection of the depth of His goodness that is beyond what the finite mind can process. *'his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.'* (Deuteronomy 32:4). He is declared good not merely for the things He has done but originally for who He is, good- *'for the LORD is good.'* (Psalm 135:3).

So, we continue to approach in reverence that perhaps we might find the path to appreciate the revealed truth, with all sense of honour, craving the sincere milk of His word that we may experience an inward elevation into a realm deeper than the finite. Feeding on the brilliance of His glory as it were, our sustenance, acquiring the right insight that He is good, not per time but everlastingly and that none compels Him to be good. *'His work is honourable and glorious.'* (Psalm 111:3). His goodness is not initiated nor sustained by His creature but simply by the weight of His eternal will.

The psalmist calls for a witness to the reality of God's goodness, when he invites men to taste of and to confirm the testimony that God is indeed good: *'O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.'* (Psalm 34:8). His goodness is worthy of trust; it is out of His eternal existence that is unfailing. His goodness is not subject to change or time. It is the same forever because He is 'goodness'. It is an abiding truth that all must know, *'For the LORD is good.'* (Psalm 100:5).

He is good to all without exception in the beauty of His glory. His goodness is without discrimination and its power is toward all, *'The LORD is good to all.'* (Psalm 145:9). His capacity to do good flows out of His goodness as a being. *'Thou art good, and doest good.'* (Psalm 119:68). He is unable to act contrary to His being because He does not change, and this is what His name represents, goodness without end. His goodness is not defined by situation, good or bad as perceived by men, for all His deeds are good. *'Good and upright is the LORD.'* (Psalm 25:8). And so,

when we think of His goodness only in the face of good situation, we diminish the beauty of His goodness and will be unable to accord Him the glory that is due His name. '*The LORD is good. He is a fortress in the day of trouble. He knows those who seek shelter in him.*' (Nahum 1:7 GW).

He is Powerful

His power is another essential manifestation of His person that reveals another side of His glory to the world, shown forth in how He made the world. '*O LORD, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches.*' (Psalm 104:24). His power in creation brought into existence the heavens and the earth, setting in boundaries it hosts as it pleases Him, '*upholding all things by the word of his power.*' (Hebrews 1:3). He has appointed to all His creatures the limit of their work and the place of their influence.

The power displayed in creation is His predetermined will, the display of His glory. Still these revelations are but like a drop in an ocean because His power is magnificent, '*power belongeth unto God.*' (Psalm 62:11). All power belongs to Him alone because He is the originator of it all, and He gives to whom He wills. All names, authorities, lords, rulers, leaders, dominion, kingdom, derive their power from Him, as delegated by Him, sustained by Him, to achieve His will alone. Yes, even the powers exercised by His creature in the most wicked ways are from Him, regardless of the wickedness of the evil doers, who turns the delegated power into object of wrath rather than glorify God. He is proclaimed glorious in power, '*Thy right*

hand, O LORD, is become glorious in power.' (Exodus 15:6). His power is inseparable from His glory and fulfils His eternal will, in righteousness, glorifying His name before His creature. The exercise of His power does not operate to assert His authority as much as it is a function of His nature in glory.

To describe Him as powerful is to simply say that He is the fullness of power. His power was not acquired nor was it granted to Him, He holds power by His essence much like His goodness, bequeathing to all His creature as He deems fit, even to those who have rejected His will. He did not obtain His power: it is inseparable from His nature.

He is Incomprehensible

He is rich in glory and cannot in fact be simply described as only glorious because He is 'glory'. His essence is overwhelmingly deeper than what the creature can completely grasp in its widest imagination. *'Behold, God is great, and we know him not, neither can the number of his years be searched out.'* (Job 36:26). However, what is revealed about Him should lead to an outflow of joy while the things unknowing should keep our heart in awe and deep gratitude that we are found worthy of an intimate relationship with the Most High. It is a lofty idea to imagine Him as a being that could be searched out because then, we will consider Him as a thing that can be quantified. He is immeasurable and beyond the reach of the created, the very reason He has chosen to reveal Himself in a form, that He might be experienced and seen in glory.

As we contemplate the notion that God is not to be known as glorious simply by the manifestation of His glorious works, but by the identity He had before His works came to be, we gain clearer understanding of His identity 'I AM' (Exodus 3:14): a declaration of the splendour of His nature. Not that the mind can fully comprehend who He is, but to accept Him as true in the face of His infinite nature that cannot be fully captured in the thought of finite beings, however, *'that which may be known of God is manifest.'* (Romans 1:19).

Therefore, we would miss the point of His desire to be sought by His creatures, if our thought is to completely understand His glory because the finite cannot evaluate the infinite: but we can experience him as true by the available revelations and so, we can seek him more intimately. *'For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead.'* (Romans 1:20).

Although He is expressed in His glorious works, yet He is incomprehensible and too deep to be surveyed by the finite mind. We are reminded of the unsearchable nature of His being, and to consider Him as one to be known and received only in the light of the revelations in the holy scriptures (2Timothy 3:16).

It is completely impossible to give a definition to the person of God but based on His revelation of Himself, He gave himself up for recognition. We can gain meaningful understanding of who He is in the ways He presents Himself. The clearer we are able to

understand and see God for who He is, the more we become aware of whom we are. He is the light that reveals the content of darkness, without Him, we are unable to understand our identity. An encounter with Him will leave us changed forever.

He will not hide

Along with the testimonies of the holy scriptures about the person of God, creation also is a witness and a perceivable proof of God's completeness: an expression of His self-existence, an unveiling of His pleasure, His power, His love, His goodness, His kindness, His mercy, His grace and His glorious will revealed in what is created, unshaded from the man He loves. *'For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead.'* (Romans 1:20). In creation, His image is revealed in the world of His creatures, His works effectively communicate His relevance, not merely as a participant but as the author of life, whose wisdom transcends man's imagination. *'O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out.'* (Romans 11:33). The depth of His wisdom is an attribute of His glory, sincerity and truth beyond what the mind can conceive, and from which every creature receives inspiration.

Undoubtedly, God has sufficiently revealed the elements of His glory in creation, in forms and shapes, small and great, that the mind can understand, and fulfil the ultimate will of glorifying Him.

Chapter Three

Absolute in Love

God is love, the source of true and perfect love. And He loves Himself above all. His love is absolute and unwavering. This love is without beginning and end, possessed only by the sovereign God. This love is greater than the love He has for His creature, simply because only the creator deserves such love. The expression of this love is beyond time. God is eternal and so is His love for Himself. This is true of Him because before things came into existence, He is. Before created things came to be, God is; loving Himself in the absolute. He exists in perfect love and in harmony with His will. In His love, before time began, God exists all alone in glory through His good pleasure in perfect love.

And so, because of his ability to love Himself with such a perfect and complete love, His creatures are positioned purposefully as beneficiaries of the absolute love He has for Himself. So, when God created things both in the heavens and on earth, His love

was imputed to them as an evidence of His goodness, glory, greatness and completeness. Also imputed within the created things is the desire to understand this great love and to please God by embracing His love for Himself which is the foundation for every other love.

It is out of the love God has for Himself that He created all things- both visible and invisible, that they may experience the glory of his love. With this same complete love that only him deserves, He expresses love towards all created things in a just and perfect way. He loves without compromise or regret and expresses Himself in love, even towards rebellious creatures, simply out of His will and good pleasure.

Just as God does not have a beginning so is the love that He has for Himself. All other things have beginnings and so is the love of God for them all. The conception of God's love for man began with the conception of the creation of the world. His love for man is derived from His love for Himself. Man came to be, out of the love God has for Himself. It is impossible for God to love man in the exact way He loves Himself or more than He loves Himself, just as it is inappropriate for man to love God the way man loves himself. Man ought to love God above himself just as God has to love Himself above man. God's love for Himself is without beginning.

God is perfect, with perfect understanding and perfect love for Himself. He is incapable of loving any being more than Himself. To love man more than Himself is to love a lower and imperfect

being in the place of the Almighty and the only perfect One. It will be an aberration for the love of the created to be sought above that of the creator. For the continuity of truth, perfection and love, the perfect must be sought above all other, to keep hope alive for the imperfect and the lower beings. God must be loved first for the benefit of others. It is from loving Him, that all other beings receive love for existence.

That God's love for Himself is superior to the love He has for his creatures is an essential knowledge man must acquire. This does not by any means diminish the quality of God's love for His creatures rather, by this, they are properly situated in His love and established in power (Ephesians 2:4). The truth about God's love for Himself is as old as God. God is the reason behind all existence. Beyond all doubt, God is the focus and the centre of attraction. So, God's love for His creation emanate from the state of completeness in Himself. This love overflows unto created beings like angel, man and other creatures both visible and invisible as a demonstration of that complete glory and love that exist in Him and for Him. God is worthy of all glory and honour and no other being is so honoured.

Every instruction in the Holy Scriptures is designed to bring man to that place of complete submission and acceptance of God as truly worthy. As it is written, *'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.'* (Luke 10:27). Man is instructed to love God above all other beings including himself. The object to be loved above all others

is God. Man is to love Him above all others. This presupposes God Himself must love that same object above all others: God loving 'God' above all others. This is the truth: only God is loved above all others. And this validates why God must love Himself above man because He is superior, the sovereign, the first and there is none beside Him: '*I am the LORD, and there is none else.*' (Isaiah 45:6).

Man is called into relationship with God in which his deepest expression of love is not towards self or other beings but towards God alone: To love God with all emotion, with all his will, with all his energy and with all his understanding and to only love his neighbours simply as he loves himself. This is necessary because the love man has for self ought to be subordinate to the love he shows toward God. It means his love for other men must equally be subordinate to that he has for God. This is so true as his love for self and other beings must be a derivative of the love expressed toward God.

The ability to love other creatures come from the knowledge of the love of God, understanding that God loves Himself before the world began and that He takes pleasure in no other but in Himself. If man is the building, God is the foundation which must be sought above others. The honour, strength and the hope of the building lies in the quality of its foundation, without which the building will not stand. God is the foundation of every creature. Every life comes from Him and He sustains them all.

Without God, man is lost. *'Thou will shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.'* (Psalm16:11). He is self-sustaining and yet He invites man into His fellowship: that man may by God's self-existing love derive pleasure for his soul. Man is called to enjoy the pleasure that abounds at His right hand and to abundantly delight in the fullness of the joy in His presence. The revelation of God's love is the most powerful expression of His personality to man. The purest form of love was revealed in the manifestation of God in the world of sinful man (1 Timothy 3:16, Romans 5:8). This is the greatest gift to the world He loves; undeniably communicated to the world with so much power and grace (John 3:16-18)

When God offered His son as the propitiation for sin (Romans 3:24-25, Romans 5:6-8), He by that singular action, laid to rest every iota of doubt about his love for man. It was an unreserved expression of love, to the world that rejected Him (Romans 3:10-11). God at the cross did not merely promise to love, much more He expressed the fullness of His love to man in the most powerful and accessible way: *'God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.'* (Romans 5:8).

Because His love for self has no end, He continues to demonstrate love towards man who needs to come to an unwavering understanding that the love of God was never withdrawn even after sin entered the world through the fall of Adam (Genesis3:6-7). God has always loved all men, despite

the continuous rejection of His will through several generations. God's love for man did not begin on the cross of Calvary; rather, His love for man took him to the cross.

Before the creation of the world, the love of God towards man existed. God's love for man predates His creation and it is this love that brought about the creation of man in accordance with God's good pleasure. No wonder, the love of God continued to work on behalf of man even after the fall of man. The offering of the son of God, was the full manifestation of God's love. He did not wait for man to love but through the complete love He has for Himself, He offered man an opportunity to receive love. *'In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.'* (1John 4:9-10).

Chapter Four

Bringing Glory to Him

Essentially, to bring glory to God does not refer to a transfer of honour to Him, as though they were not His originally but bearing testimony to His fullness and perfection: To agree that He is the source of glory, the definition of glory and the full expression of it. It is to give honour to Him, in the innermost part of us, in speech, in desires, in actions and in our allegiance, recognising Him as the only being, full of glory all by Himself.

God is to be understood in all of creation for what He is: '*the God of glory*' (Psalm 29:3). Not as though creation is the source of His glory or the full demonstration of it because His glory is beyond creation, but in it, a glimpse of His glory is shed on the mind of His creature. His glory is infinite in beauty and power, this is to be acknowledged by all: '*the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.*' (Jude 1:25).

God is to be revered by all His creatures; however, every careless thought, or neglect of the knowledge of God, destroys our perception of Him and diminishes His glory before us. It takes away the honour that should be His. As David wrote, '*Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still.*' (Psalm 4:4). We should be careful not to count God to be ordinary or imagine Him to be as feeble man, whose days are but for a while; but to be in awe, to be careful to recognise Him for who He is: full of glory.

It is the glory of all creatures to freely accept the revelation of God, not letting it slip. Rather, to purposely seek His glory as supreme, with all the heart, the mind, and power; for all that might be known of God is revealed. To acknowledge Him for who He is, and to attribute to Him the glory of His works and the perfection in it becomes the noble duty of His creature. '*From everlasting to everlasting your glorious name is praised and lifted high above all blessing and praise.*' (Nehemiah 9:5). In witness to His majestic works and the unchanging reality of His glory, He is honoured when we yield to Him: seeking His glory. To claim ignorance would not be an excuse because the knowledge of Him is revealed to all already (Romans 1:19-20).

However, when the thought of seeking God is only considered meaningful in the light of receiving personal benefit from Him, it is an indication of a lack of understanding of His person; a short-sighted view of the divine relationship and His ultimate plan for His creature. Indeed, there are exceeding, great and precious promises from God to all who are His, freely bestowed

as an evidence of the shared intimate relationship (2 Peter 1:3-4). But considering God relevant only in the face of the search for basic needs of life is a product of a warped understanding.

The example of Jesus Christ who sought not Himself when faced with the choice of what is worth living for, remains a worthy model for all. *'I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.'* (John 5:30). Who in the face of death will not insist on his freedom, setting his heart on the plan before him, choosing the path to honour God. *'Saying, Father...not my will, but thine, be done.'* (Luke 22:42). Whereas, the first Adam was overtaken by the desire to meet his personal glory (Genesis 3:5-6), Christ Jesus sought the honour of God. And for his humility, he received honour- *'Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him...that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.'* (Philippians 2:9-11). He was clothed with glory for honouring God above self, in promoting the eternal will over the base human view and pursuit of the world.

At some other times, man is made to believe that all that God requires of Him is to offer things to Him rather than first submitting to His will. Whereas, God's pleasure is not in things but in the heart that is obedient to His will. *'Is the LORD as delighted with burnt offerings and sacrifices as he would be with your obedience? To follow instructions is better than to sacrifice. To obey is better than sacrificing the fat of rams.'* (1 Samuel 15:22 GW). More so, God is complete in His existence; self-sufficient, never in need, requiring none to complete Him, the fullness of

glory and the author of life, whose glory evokes worship. A deep contemplation of His person and His glory will leave the soul with one singular response and experience- worship.

Knowing that without God, nothing will exist or function effectively, and that all things came into existence to satisfy God's pleasure, is the beginning of wisdom. It is divinely intended that all creatures should come to this understanding, and to acknowledge within the soul, that the pursuit of a God-centred life is essential. Man's experience of glory and his enjoyment of an intimate relationship with God are absolutely inseparable from the pursuit of God's will: the acknowledgement of the need to glorify the creator always, '*seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness.*' (Matthew 6:33). Quite instructive that the pursuit of God is not against the glory of man, rather, in the pursuit of God, man will ultimately find peace for his soul and his glory revealed in the everlasting glory of God.

God is fully deserving of glory amongst all created things and will not share it with any being: '*I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.*' (Isaiah 42:8). He is glorious by nature. An irrevocable state: none can compete with Him, and none will compare with Him. A state that cannot be lost or taken from Him, there is none that works in righteousness like Him, He is God alone. He is the source of perfection; His glory is without end. To attribute His glorious works to another or acknowledging the created in His place will be counted for rebellion against him. His existence is supreme. His works

should not be ascribed, imputed, or traded to another being. He holds all power and authority. He will forever be the unique being of the universe from whom all creatures derive fulfilment. He is God, publicly declaring His mind, declaring things yet to be known before they come to pass. *'Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.'* (1 Timothy 1:17)

To live in dependence on God is to appreciate His good, acceptable and perfect will (Romans 12:2). This is a beautiful expression of love from the created to the creator: an essential part of honouring God, who is consistent in His plan and unchanging in His disposition towards man. His will does not change, it is not influenced by time; His purpose remains irrevocable, by it, His promise to man remains everlasting.

God is the centre of attention for every creature: symbolising order, coherence, unity and harmony, in line with his purpose, bringing every creature to the place where He holds pre-eminence with glory and in glory. The pre-eminence over His creation is an outflow of the strength of His will. His will finds complete and absolute approval in no other thing but in Him. His will is never subject to the opinion of His creation because they emanate from His eternal perfection. This is rightly so because He alone is perfect, and perfection must remain the standard, to sustain the life and continuous existence of His creation. *'As for God, his way is perfect: the word of the LORD is tried: he is a buckler to all those that trust in him...It is God that girdeth me with strength, and maketh my way perfect.'* (Psalm 18:30, 32). Man exists for the pleasure of God; right now, and so will it be forever. He is the strength that sustains the universe.

Chapter Five

Appreciating His Glory

In recognition of the special place of God's glory, some young men of the tribe of Israel who were in slavery in Babylon, were faced with the reality of standing up in defence of this glory: the awareness and the desire to see God honoured was to them a matter of life and death. God was dishonoured by the proclamation of the king in the land of Babylon, but for these young men, honouring the sovereign God was not going to be determined by the opinion of men, but the divine truth. For them, God was considered worthy of all glory and the defence of His honour worth living for.

The threat was strong, and the king was bound to destroy those who rebel; but beyond the words of the king that threatened to put to death anyone who violates the words of his command, these young men could only see the weight of glory found in fellowship with God. They refused to be kept in spiritual slavery and opted to be bound in chains by men that they might remain

free in God, as they seek His glory. They understood that seeking self will end in death. *'He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.'* (John 12:25). They showed courage, were ready and willing to risk their physical existence in the defence of God's glory. To honour God was a lifestyle they were unwilling to give up.

These young men although threatened with death, chose to seek the path of freedom in God, that through their choice God might be glorified and there in, remain free spiritually. The weight of horror that stood against them was not strong enough to deter them from seeking peace in God. Seeking the establishment of the will of God was not strange to them: no cost was considered too much to be paid and they were willing to do exactly that, even with their lives.

Whether in death or life, they desired only one thing- the glory of God. Rejecting the freedom offered by the king, refusing to give glory to any other being but to the only sovereign God. These young men along with the people in the kingdom of Babylon at that time had been told to bow down to worship the image made by king Nebuchadnezzar, but their understanding of God set them apart, standing up for what they believe. *'The herald called out loudly, "People of every province, nation, and language! When you hear the sound of rams' horns, flutes, lyres, harps, and three-stringed harps playing at the same time with all other kinds of instruments, bow down and worship the gold statue that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. Whoever doesn't bow down*

and worship will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace.' (Daniel 3:4-6 GW). They refused to bow before the image, to give the glory that belongs to God in worship to created things. *'Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered King Nebuchadnezzar, "We don't need to answer your last question. If our God, whom we honor, can save us from a blazing furnace and from your power, he will, Your Majesty. But if he doesn't, you should know, Your Majesty, we'll never honor your gods or worship the gold statue that you set up.'* (Daniel 3:16-18 GW). They were not lost on the idea of what brings true pleasure to God and what it means to honour Him was clear to their minds. They were also not in doubt of the deliverance power of the God they serve; He can deliver from the furnace and from the hand of the king, they declared with all boldness.

However, their greatest strength was in their unwavering willingness to stay with the God of all glory, even if His plan was for them to die in the furnace. It was not about what they want but who they lived for. Their knowledge of God turned what could have been the fear of death into a life of worship. In the presence of the great God and in the defence of His glory, death was incapable of holding them captive. They were lit up with the same glory they had bestowed on the sovereign God. They received strength by their faith in God to trample upon that which held men captive (Daniel 3:21-25). The light of God had shed truth upon their soul, and they could count the freedom promised by the king as dung, choosing to face death in the name of their God.

They found joy and true pleasure in accepting God's plan and purpose above the threat of the king. Irrespective of the outcome of their choice, they chose to give honour to God through the acknowledgement of His person. To the extent that they considered their life of little worth in honour of His name, even in the face of the death by fire. The word of the Lord was in their soul, even as it is written, *'fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.'* (Matthew 10:28).

In the end, their choice and experience brought them into an experiential knowledge of God's power, and His wisdom. This was the strength that kept them firm in the face of the wrath of the king. *'Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.'* (Daniel 3:19). They had incurred the rage of a King who appeared to be supreme in his own mind, threatening, *'who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?'* (Daniel 3:15). It was a moment that the glory of God was subjected to evaluation by a king and a kingdom that put itself up as an enemy of the sovereign God; one in which the carnal authority was in opposition to the author of life.

Mortals in the process of self-propagation, failed to acknowledge God as the source of all power. In their hands, those who had chosen to stand with the sovereign God were subjected to humiliation. It was a deliberate attempt to take them through the process that will wipe away their memory from the land of the living. These ones were not counted worthy

of living. They were to be judged without mercy for choosing to identify with the sovereign God. But for these young men, this is where faith in God stands above every fear, calming every nerve in obedience, even though the king had counted them as not worthy of living. *'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.'* (Daniel 3:21). It was to be a journey of total annihilation, a path to shame and condemnation. They were considered not fit to live upon the face of the earth. They were deemed not fit to continue among men; their crime was, choosing God above all others.

Released to be consumed by the raging fire, to be left without memory among the living, was the instruction of King Nebuchadnezzar. It was clear, without ambiguity; the furnace was to be heated far and beyond. This was adhered to, to the extent that even those who were saddled with the responsibility of throwing these three men into the furnace died in the process- a testimony that it was functioning well (Daniel 3:22).

The furnace was extremely hot. And so, they were thrown into the furnace to be consumed by it. *'And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.'* (Daniel 3:23). The verdict by the king declared them guilty: the men who stood with God were found guilty by man's court of justice. However, their case was a priority in heaven. The issues had gone beyond these men, it was a matter of God's dominion and glory that was being questioned. It was an attack on the creator and He showed up on behalf of the men who stood up to honour him.

Not only did He intervene, He revealed himself to the king as glorious. *'Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, and spake, and said unto his counsellors, 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, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.'* (Daniel 3:24-25). The eyes of the king were opened that he could see clearly beyond the fire of the furnace: he saw what others around him did not see. He saw the glory of the majestic God manifested: glory over fire, declaring God as supreme.

Alas! The words of the king had fallen to the ground before his very eyes and before all the accusers. In defence of the glory of God, even the fire agreed to honour God in recognition of His glory.

What was designed to bring death to the young men turned out to be the source of glory before the very people who desired them dead. *'Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, and spake, and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, ye servants of the Most High God, come forth, and come hither. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, came forth of the midst of the fire.'* (Daniel 3:26). They were proclaimed free by divine intervention, and it became impossible for man to resist their freedom from death. The very voice that sentenced them to death by fire had no other choice but to obey the divine will: they were declared free before all, even before their accusers. *'And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's*

counsellors, 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.' (Daniel 3:27). The very place where they were called rebel and sentenced to death became the place of glory; they were referred to as the, '*servants of the most high God.*' (Daniel 3:26). The place of shame became the throne of glory.

They were completely immune from the fire and its rage, clothed with honour before those who rebelled against God. The fire was obedient to the sovereign authority. Not even the smoke of the fire was on their cloth. The very fire that was designed to bring them into bondage became the platform for the expression of freedom. They were thrown into the fire bound but stood in it freed. The fire did not touch their body, rather it removed every element of bondage they were surrounded by. It removed their chains and kept them safe. They went into the fire bound but came out of it freed.

Even those that were previously enemies of God repented of their rebellion because of the faith of these young men and joined the camp of God. King Nebuchadnezzar was won over by the choice of these young men and he blessed their God, declaring Him as the only true God. '*Then Nebuchadnezzar spoke, and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, 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.*' (Daniel 3:28). God was publicly honoured by

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego as they recognised the place due to Him and enthroned Him before all men, even before the king. They yielded their will to allow the will of God to thrive, an expression of obedience motivated by faith in the eternal one. They had no conflict of thought as to what choice to follow, thereby, positioned themselves to receive all that God is able to do freely for those whose heart is set on him. *'But know that the LORD hath set apart him that is godly for himself: the LORD will hear when I call unto him.'* (Psalm 4:3).

Absolute dependence on God will always evoke the manifestation of His glory in power. He will always recognise and reward every heart that trusts in Him. *'he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.'* (Hebrews 11:6). Reposing confidence in God regardless of the situation or circumstance keeps us in His will.

The case of King Nebuchadnezzar was that of a man, lifted high and granted power by God who then walked away from the will of God. He failed to recognise that all power comes from God (Psalm 62:11) and that He gives it to whom He wills. *'He ruleth by his power for ever; his eyes behold the nations: let not the rebellious exalt themselves. Selah.'* (Psalm 66:7). His heart was turned to vanity rather than the king of glory. However, through the faithfulness of the young men whose devotion to God could not be dampened by the fear of death, the King received opportunity for repentance; he gained understanding by their choice and concluded that there is only one God.

The king reversed his initial decree and declared a new decree in favour of the sovereign God. *'Therefore I make a decree, That every people, nation, and language, which speak anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, 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.'* (Daniel 3:29). The law of the land was changed to give way to the recognition of the true God. To ignore this God was no longer possible because His glory was made known in the most majestic fashion before the king. Once, people were threatened with death for aligning with the sovereign God, but the story changed, to align with God now mean life and prosperity.

The king went on to honour the young men. *'Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, in the province of Babylon.'* (Daniel 3:30). Promotion came to men who were ready to die in the service of God. They gained beyond what they could have imagined. It was to be a service to God, but it turned out to be to their glory; they did not seek to glorify themselves, it was a gift from God. They recognised that living a God-centred life was the path to glory. The readiness to submit one's will, thought, and opinion for a God-centred experience is the deepest form of worship. This truly is the purpose driven life.

They came to the resolve that; man's ultimate business is to do the business of bringing glory to God, the pursuit of the honour of the everlasting One, who by Himself is full of glory: a continuous acknowledgement of His glory through

unwavering submission of every heart to His plan. *'Thine, O LORD, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O LORD, and thou art exalted as head above all.'* (1Chronicles 29:11). A readiness to give up on one's plan and to see God enthroned to the detriment of personal pursuit, being reassured that His will is not only superior but the best.

Chapter Six

The lost Glory

Following the creation of man on earth (Genesis 2:7), God made a special place of rest and work for man referred to as a garden. *'And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed.'* (Genesis 2:8). The garden was such a special place, full of life and perfection. The best of gardens made today cannot compare. Its glory, far beyond imagination, is such a place that would never be experienced again in this present world. The garden that the scriptures spoke of, was a place of holiness, perfection and glory. Its materials were divinely illuminated, they were not subject to the present conditions of decay we now experience on earth. It was free from corruption. The most beautiful palace today will be no match for this place of glory.

It was a time when the fruits of the garden ministered life. It was the place of great admiration and splendour. It bore witness to the glory of God's beauty. The atmosphere was splendid

creating such inner bliss that lifts the heart into the realms of thanksgiving and worship of the Most High. His works declare His glory and power. The garden was a project made for man. It was after man's creation that God planted the garden on the east side of Eden, for man.

In the garden was everything that man needed for life and living, his needs were provided for. The garden was a symbol of God's provision for man and a witness to the confidence reposed in man. All that man needed for food were made available even before he began to labour in the garden. *'And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food.'* (Genesis 2:9). The fruits of the trees were not only good for food, they were beautifully made and were pleasant to behold. In the garden, man was surrounded with beauty and glory, with the best of what the heart could desire.

God brought man into the garden planted in Eden in accordance with His will and gave him a commission. His duty in the garden was simple, he was to be the keeper, the dresser and the symbol of obedience and the executor of God's will. *'And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.'* (Genesis 2:15). It was an extraordinary responsibility, acting on behalf of God before all other creature. He was to tend a garden that was at that time not subject to death. He was to be the keeper of life at a time that sin, rebellion and death were absent in the world. At a time, the garden was full of life; not subject to decay. His duty was to keep

the life in his custody, he was meant to be the defender of the earth from corruption. His tending and dressing were in hope of preserving truth. He was to stand against all unauthorised invasion into the world under his control and an advocate of truth.

Man continued to walk in righteousness before God until he failed to adhere to His instruction. In performing his duty as a dresser and keeper of the garden, he was warned about the danger of eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. He was to remain the symbol of truth on earth, and the image bearer of God. *'And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.'* (Genesis 2:16-17). He was free to do every other thing but to have nothing to do with the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

The instruction was unambiguous, yet man violated the simple trust vested in him. He failed in his duty as the keeper and dresser of the garden, the symbol of God's truth. Man violated God's instruction, he departed from the will of the sovereign God. Man chose death above life, he sought his own glory rather than God's, he ate from the forbidden tree.

This decision of man had nothing to do with hunger or lack of quality trees to eat from but was out of the error of self-gratification. *'for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.'* (Genesis 2:17). Man sinned wilfully against God and

experienced instant spiritual separation: his spirit experienced alienation from the life of God, man died.

Following the fall of man into sin, some have dared to query and to doubt God's sovereignty and goodness, '*if God is sovereign and loving, he would have prevented the first man, Adam, from sin at the beginning,*' they say. They claim that a loving God would not have allowed man to sin. Clearly such view of God, shows a lack of knowledge of the person of God. The very nature of this sovereign God exudes goodness, the foundation for every good. His goodness is the reason He did not stop man from sinning.

Being good, God will not withdraw the right of man to choose. God created man with freewill, that is, not subject to external control, without the free yielding submission of man. Neither good nor evil can exercise dominion over man, except man freely surrenders his will. The choice of man to sin is a product of man's exercise of his freewill: this man himself controls. Sin did not overpower man in the garden, man's disobedience was a free, deliberate and a well calculated attempt to pursue elevation in glory without the help of God. This led him into depravity.

If God had stopped man from exercising his right to choose, which unfortunately at that point was to sin, God would have violated the right of man to freely choose. And by so doing, He would have withdrawn the power He freely gave man. God would have acted like a dictator who cannot embrace

opposition, should He have stopped the choice of man to sin. Without any iota of doubt, God is all powerful, but His power is exercised in line with His holiness; every of his act must align with His will. His will is for man to freely exercise his freewill, and that, is the case till now. More so, there would have been no tenable evidence against man, suggesting that man attempted to sin or deny God in the first place, should God had stopped his decision to sin.

The right of man to choose is what those who now query God's goodness and sovereignty are equally exercising in asking the question. The right exercised to query God is the same that the first man exercised in rejecting God in the beginning. Had God withdrawn that right to choose, man will be incapable of free decision making and it would be right to say that God forced man to love him.

A good God will not withdraw your right to choose even when He knows you are able to use it against Him. God is sovereign and is aware that the right to choose meant freedom to decide what you want in life, yet God granted it. He made man an intelligent being with the strong power of choice. God did not stop man from choosing to act contrary to divine instruction, a witness to His commitment. *'For the gracious gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.'* (Romans 11:29). This is consistent with His good nature which allows man to exercise freely the power of choice that was granted to him (Genesis 1:28-29).

The instruction to not eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil was simply an instruction about love. God was telling man to exercise his freewill to reciprocate the love already shown him, to respond in love to God by following His instruction. It was God telling man that He would not be a dictator even though He is sovereign. His sovereignty will not be used to exploit or take advantage of His creature because He is righteous and just. He wants to be served through love not by force, to be worshipped through our voluntary decision. The ability of man to recognise and to stay on the side of God without compulsion, marks him out as embracing freedom.

In every circumstance, the demonstration of the sovereignty of God and the exercise of His power remain consistent with His love and goodness. God is not erratic, nor does He act arbitrarily. Man's exercise of his free will against God is not enough ground for God to change His mind about granting freewill to man, just as we know that He does not change (Hebrews13:8). His decisions are based on His will and defined by divine protocol. His ways are understandable and predictable because they are based on truth and consistent with His nature.

When God created man, He made him as a model of His being to possess absolute authority upon the earth, ruling over all created things. God granted man the authority and freedom to decide on earth what his choices will be. When man began to name the animals in the garden of Eden in Genesis 2:18-19, the names he called them were the same name in the mind of God.

This was possible because at that time, there was no sin, man was spiritually connected to God, his spirit received illumination from God. Man was not forced to name the animal, it was a gracious exercise of his freewill. God could not have turned around to violate the power of choice already granted to man by interfering with man's choice to sin. As a good God, He had to allow man to exercise the right to choose freely.

Man's freewill is the complete freedom to decide to either continue to accept God as good and sovereign or to out rightly reject Him. God set man forth in full power and glory. He granted man a great privilege to bear the freedom of choice without interference, even from Him. However, God's will, is that man will choose Him freely and not by compulsion. The freedom to choose God is the expression of true worship. It will be the recognition of God for who He is. God does not impose Himself on His creature rather, He provides the platform for them to experience Him in glory and truth; an intimate fellowship between the creator and the created.

This is a demonstration of wisdom and power by God that He will choose to relate with man by the choice of man while He maintains His will as sovereign and calling on man to freely choose Him as God. He set himself before man, as the symbol of life, telling man that choosing otherwise will only lead to death (Genesis 2:16-17). He showed clearly to man the implication of sin, giving man the reason to continue to live by choosing life. Although He is deserving of all honour and worship, yet He will

force no one to serve Him. This indeed is the revelation of power, purpose and glory by the only good and sovereign God.

Unfortunately, rather than recognising the goodness of God in His dealings with us, man exercised his freewill against God; he submitted to the counsel of the deceiver, the one also called Satan, not realising that Satan had made himself an enemy of God. Satan presented to man a false knowledge of the facts already revealed to man by God, saying '*For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.*' (Genesis 3:5). Man was deceived by Satan and so he exercised his freewill contrary to the known truth.

The testimony of Satan appeared convincing and reassuring to man. He was convinced he could get more out of life without God's help, and that in fact, God was hiding the complete truth from him. God does not want you to be like him says the deceiver (Genesis 3:5), contrary to the desire of God to make man in His image and likeness (Genesis 1:26). Suddenly, man began to look outward for completeness rather than an inward search.

Man failed to call to mind all that God has done for him. He sought for spiritual endowment in the tree of knowledge of good and evil. The tree became very enticing in the light of the qualities as perceived by man. Therefore, exercising freewill in violation of the will of God became inevitable. '*And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was*

pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.' (Genesis 3:6). The heart of man was given over to lust and the pride of life. What was not to be desired, had suddenly become desirable. Man had yielded the quality time he ought to spend with God to an unprofitable discussion with the enemy of God. And man fell into sin!

Man was in the light but chose to have a quick interaction with the object of darkness and death, which is Satan. He had allowed Satan to stir up the desire for the very thing he was warned against. Man yielded to the pressure, and the desire for greater glory became a trap. He became a victim of the work of darkness; he opted to follow the wicked one and was trapped in the snare of sin.

Man has fallen, the glory is lost, there is darkness upon the land, the path of death is now appointed. The end is now determined, the sinner must now face judgement. Sin created hopelessness; the face of beauty is turn to ashes. His eyes were opened as Satan claimed but not into light: they were opened into darkness and shame. Man became self-conscious and despised his state, he felt naked. Man was deceived. Rather than becoming like God as Satan alluded; man became depraved and spiritually dead. Man lost the value he once possessed.

Chapter Seven

Preserved for Glory

Yet, after the fall of man into sin, the Light of the world showed up to help. Man was pulled down by sin, but the hope of the world is revealed from the heaven, God paid a visit to the garden.

Man was not left hopeless, he was not abandoned by God. God came to his rescue even before man could call out for help. God did not wait for man to call before offering a helping hand. He had chosen not to violate the right of man's freewill, however, since man have become incapable of making right decisions, in the face of depravity and sin, God is free to offer help. He intervened.

God's justice did not accuse man of sin, although all things were known to Him, rather He gave man a fair hearing. God was not willing to pass judgment without a fair hearing. *'And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And*

he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. And he said, who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?' (Genesis 3:9-11). He did not judge man before hearing him out. Man had sinned, and this was known to God, yet He asked man to give account of his action, a demonstration of His goodness and justice. He was patient in love with Adam, as a faithful and empathic saviour because His ways are righteous altogether. 'The LORD is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy. The LORD is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works.' (Psalm 145:8-9).

Although God revealed to man some of the implications of his sin (Genesis 3:15-19), He went on to demonstrate His love and goodness to man by covering his perceived shame. *'The LORD God made clothes from animal skins for the man and his wife and dressed them.'* (Genesis 3: 2 GW). God through this act showed to man that he will not be abandoned nor rejected. There is an open door made available to man, and he is free to exercise his freewill to enter in.

Man's sin rendered him incapable of making right decisions, because he had lost every sense of godliness, trapped in the shadow of death. Thus, man was prevented from taking further decision that might eternally sever his relationship with God. *'And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us (satan), to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever.'*

(Genesis 3:22). Man had become a wicked soul, alienated from the life of God. Man now operates at another realm where evil and good are defined by his understanding and not by God. He has become a 'god' unto himself and self-evaluating: in the image of Satan. He has become like Satan by nature, disobedient (Ephesians 2:2-3).

Man was no longer subject to the will of God and he had gained the ability to exhibit all shades of wickedness. He could no longer be trusted to keep the truth under his care, because he was no longer in the light. He could no longer be the keeper of life on earth because he lost his life. God said, '*Behold, the man is become as one of us.*' (Genesis 3:22). Man through disobedience fell into shame and nakedness and became like one whom God referred to as 'one of us'.

Who is that one that is dead like man, who sinned like man if not Satan? '*Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.*' (John 8:44). Man had become like Satan whom God referred to as 'one of us'. Man is dead in sin, murdered by Satan's deception. Satan is the father of lie, a murderer from the beginning, who was part of God's kingdom until iniquity was found in his heart (Ezekiel 28:15), when he sought to be like God. Man had become dead to the life of God just like Satan. Man had become like Satan, who was alienated from the kingdom of heaven because of sin and rebellion.

Sin brought depravity and unwillingness on the part of man to call out to God. He had become like the adversary of God. He had followed the path of the deceiver of the whole world, that is Satan (Genesis 3:22). Man had become like Satan who also became an enemy of God by disobedience, he had fallen into darkness and brought himself under the dominion of the wicked one. Man experienced spiritual death, he missed the true path to being like God as he failed to embrace God's love.

Man deviated from the path that was designed to cloth him with full glory. He chose to disobey the creator following the example of Satan, thereby inheriting death. Satan lied to man that he would become like God and not die (Genesis 3:4-5). But man died, he lost the glory of God (Romans 3:23). Death devalued man. He became sinful like Satan who was one of the hosts of heaven, created in righteousness. He became rebellious like the one who was created to give glory to God in the heaven, who also turned against the creator.

He followed the rebellion of Satan. Prophet Isaiah wrote about this deceiver '*How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.*' (Isaiah 14:12). Satan fell into sin because he desired what was not his rightful place. He was made in glory and beauty but was captured by lust and he rejected the

authority of God. He fell from glory forever. His end is determined already (Ezekiel 28:13-16, Revelation 20:10).

Satan promised man that he will become like God, a state that he could not attain in his own rebellion. Satan was rejected by God after his rebellion and was stripped of his glorious state. Unfortunately, this is the one whose word man decided to follow and so corrupted his soul.

For this reason, man could no longer keep his role as the keeper of life in the garden. He was not qualified to do so. God warned man that disobedience will make him like Satan. *'for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.'* (Genesis 2:17). Eating from the tree will lead to death, it will be instant, that very moment, that very day. It will not delay, because death abides in disobedience. It was not the path to life but death. It does not have glory but vanity. Obedience is of God, to disobey is of Satan, and at the end, it was about choosing who to be like. Unfortunately, man chose the path of destruction, separation from the source of life. The violation of the divine instruction brought death leading to the loss of all spiritual endowment and man became corrupt.

So, when God said man had become like one of us, He could not have been referring to the Godhead. Man did not become like God the father through his sin. Neither did he receive the Holy Spirit by sinning. Man sinned and died, and through this became deprave and not divine. *'for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.'* (Genesis 3:19). God is not dust nor will He return to dust; thus, man's sin did not symbolise divine

attainment but death. Man lost every sense of divine ability and fell into darkness.

Man joined Satan through sin and became like him, dead in sin, just as the scripture said, '*for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.*' (Genesis 2:17). Satan lied to man, he orchestrated the fall of man in accordance with his plan which is to turn the heart of man against God. If man could be taught to seek his personal good, his love for God will be tainted and his obedience corrupted, bringing enmity between God and man: and perhaps, make it impossible for God to continue to love man.

Although Satan succeeded in turning the heart of man against God and in bringing enmity between man and God, his wickedness could not turn God against man. He was out to bring man into death, the reason he is referred to as a murderer (John 8:44). He destroyed the body of man, but the hope of a new life was promised to man through the love of God (Genesis 3:15). Though man's love for God was tainted, the love of God for man remained unchanging.

Now present in man are all the attributes of Satan; man and Satan became one in character. Just as man became like Satan, Satan is also like man. In a place in scripture, Satan's way of thinking is likened to that of man. In his unwillingness to serve God he still gives regard to the things of man, '*Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.*' (Matthew 16:23).

In becoming like Satan, man became a rebellious soul who simply defines his choices by his corrupt nature. He was no longer dependent on the divine source for inspiration, he has been disconnected through sin and no longer possessed the ability to do right under this condition. Man followed the path of Satan, man lost value. He became an unclean thing (Isaiah 64:6).

Man became depraved and could only live in sin. Every thought of his heart was corrupt. However, God's plan was to prevent man from complete destruction that will leave him beyond redemption: *'lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever.'* (Genesis 3:22). God took a decision on the continued stay of man in the garden. Man was already sold out to sin by the wrong exercise of his freewill. It was clear that man will continue in the path of sin and in further disobedience, he might eat of the tree of life and live forever in a state of sin. He was already in a state of sin through disobedience and if he should eat of the tree of life, it would result in a permanent state of death, that is irrevocable (Genesis 3:22).

In order that man may be kept in a redeemable state, God took the decision against the continued stay of man in the garden of Eden, since man could no longer yield to divine influence. God sent him out of the garden, and this He did in love. *'So the LORD God sent the man out of the Garden of Eden to farm the ground from which the man had been formed. After he sent the man out, God placed angels and a flaming sword that turned in all*

directions east of the Garden of Eden. He placed them there to guard the way to the tree of life.' (Genesis 3:23-24 GW).

God's decision to evict man from the garden was not a punishment for his sin but a continued demonstration of love, for He will not allow man to destroy himself completely. He was being protected, barred from the garden in response to his sinful tendency that could keep him permanently in slavery to sin. Man could exercise his freewill to eat of the tree of life, but it would have been a choice made from imperfection. Before the deception of Satan, man was in a perfect state, able to reject or accept the influence of sin, but after sin, man became a slave to sin, unable to distinguish truth from error, therefore, it was needful that he should be helped.

So, why did God not send man out of the garden prior to his disobedience? The answer is without ambiguity. Man was a trusted being before sin entered his heart, he was entrusted with truth and love, with the mission to glorify God. Before sin, he could not have been held accountable for an offense he had not committed, man was pure and holy. Until sin, he was the emblem of God's love and purity in the world and the symbol of His will. He shone with glory and the brightness of divine beauty. He was righteous; he had power over sin and could decide to continue to walk in holiness because he possessed holy nature. Man had lived all his life in holiness until sin entered his world. So, he could not have been sent out of the garden as a holy person.

After sin, he became depraved; he lost righteousness and became incapable of walking in holiness. He was no longer capable of following the truth and needed help. Had God left him in the garden he would have continued to violate all holy instructions given to him, incapable of managing the garden. He would have sought to eat from the tree of life. Man was no longer fit to live in the garden. He was no longer qualified to do the work of tending and keeping the garden of truth. More so, man was no longer in the right state to eat of the tree of life. He had to be washed through spiritual cleansing from his sin. He needed to experience the forgiveness of God, so he could be fit to take of the tree of life.

Man was sent out of the garden, to secure his future, for full redemption from sin. God having prepared something better for him, he remained in the plan of God.

Chapter Eight

Greater than Sin

It was a tragic experience when sin crossed the path of man, leading him into bondage. He was created to be the image of the sovereign God, now clothed with the semblance of the enemy of God. The work of life was tainted by sin, subjected to weakness and rendered powerless by death. The once beautiful relationship shared with God was ruined because of man's disobedience. Man had brought himself under sin and its power and there was no way to evade the damning consequence of sin (Romans 5:12-14). However, God is willing to grant man the way back to Him, although the stain of sin had separated man from Him, the holy and sovereign God, who truly loves man.

There was none found among men that could stand in gap for man. There was none fit to take up the garment of truth and righteousness because '*from birth their hearts are set on nothing but evil.*' (Genesis 8:21). They all are dead in sins and iniquities,

and it is impossible for a dead person to help himself. *'None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him.'* (Psalm 49:7). The price for sin is so great and we are unable to pay it. Unable to attend to this challenge in a dead state. One who is dead can do nothing to improve his state, unable to appreciate the magnitude of help required. Death mean inability to do good or appreciate it value and that is our state without the gift of salvation.

Without the help of God, man is incapable of calling for help, incapable of repentance, and unable to acknowledge his depravity. He is corrupt and unwilling to seek God. *'No one understands. No one searches for God.'* (Romans 3:11). How then can man be reconciled to God? How will a spiritually dead man seek for pardon from the Most High? How will he search for the light of the world when he abides in darkness? Without doubt, except God sought for man, reconciliation will be an impossible feat for man. Except forgiveness is offered as a gift, man will never understand the depth of his depravity.

Sin brought shame and fear unto man and he attempted to hide from the all-knowing God who is not ashamed to identify with man even in his depraved state. *'And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.'* (Genesis 3:8). Hiding away from God in shame was not enough to turn God away, His love for man was not seasonal; He was not ready to abandon man because of sin. God's ability to love man is a product of the love

He has in Himself for Himself, He is able to love man in spite of his failure.

God called on man to receive forgiveness. *'For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.'* (Hebrews 8:12). This forgiveness is the loving and voluntary cancellation of the debt of man without recourse to man's effort, but His offering of Christ as the atonement for sin (1John2:2). God is ready to pardon man and to declare him free of all guilt. This is the unhindered demonstration of the glory of His love, notwithstanding man's failure. *'For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.'* (Jeremiah 31:34). Before God, sin is not strong enough to stop His will. Forgiveness is a promise He made to Himself and He will deliver it.

While man hid in guilt, away from the holy presence of the Most-High (Genesis 3:8), God responded in love by searching for man. *'And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?'* (Genesis 3:9). Sin turned man away from embracing the love of God, but it could not turn God away, as He sought for the sinful man. His perfection did not reject the fallen man, but it sought to preserve him. It was man that turned away from God by his choice. *'And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.'* (Genesis 3:10). God was not ashamed to identify with man. He was ready to bear his burden. It was man who by choice alienated himself from life! However, God's love remained open and accessible to man. He was a present help at

the time of need. He showed up even when man was not worthy. Regardless of man's disobedience, the love of God was clearly flourishing unhindered.

God expressed His commitment to man providing a covering for his state of emptiness. '*Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins (from animals), and clothed them.*' (Genesis 3:21). Though Adam had made attempt at covering himself with fig leaves, yet he felt naked and ashamed. His efforts were not good enough to cover his shame neither could his sense of lack be taken away by his effort, but God offered him a covering. He was temporarily covered with the skin from animals whose blood had been shed. A symbol of what was to come, when man will receive spiritual covering from sin and shame through the precious blood of the saviour (John 1:29, 1 Peter 1:19-20). God demonstrated His willingness to preserve and to deliver man from shame and death.

God's love for man is an amazing expression of His glory. His love for Himself ensures that He would continue to love man even in the face of rebellion. The sin of man was not strong enough to turn Him away: the path to Him remains open. Because God is truthful and consistent in character, He will not exclude Himself from man. His care for man is a product of His everlasting will.

The love that brought the creator into the world of the created, is an unfailing love. The world had fallen into sin and the principles that governed it were already compromised, but

God's love remained unchanging and His disposition reassuring. He visited the sinful world. He proved His willingness to deliver man from the trap of sin and to bring him into complete freedom. *'God was manifest in the flesh.'* (1Timothy 3:16). He made His home with us through the revelation of His only begotten son, He became our neighbour. God became a part of our daily experience, clothed with the body He made. He was numbered amongst His people.

Although man's sin was great, the demonstration of God's love was greater (Romans 5:20). He granted man the privilege to experience Him regardless of sin. *'He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.'* (Psalm 103:10). He was ready to give His best for the man He loves. He went all length to communicate to man, the magnitude of His love. *'What is man that You should magnify him and think him important? And that You should set Your mind upon him?'* (Job 7:17). Who is man that God should seek friendship with him? Indeed, nothing personal or intrinsic to man could have merit the love of God. However, the will of the Most High is set in motion working out for man, a path to deliverance.

He kept man in His thought that He might fully achieve all His counsel. He has dispelled every doubt about His love for man. He has manifested it in full; the weight of His love, that all may behold. *'As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.'* (Psalm 103:12). The plan to restore man back into glory and to bring him into the fellowship remained unchanged because of His love. His love for man is

unquestionable. He is not compelled to love but in accordance to His eternal will and purpose, He abolished death (2Timothy 1:9-10).

Immortality has been made accessible through the saviour, an opportunity for man to experience His gift of love; the fullness of the work of transformation into God's image and likeness.

The will of the sovereign God to make man in His image (Genesis 1:26) cannot be thwarted, His will cannot be altered, neither by the wickedness of man nor by the deceit of Satan. He is eternally committed to Himself and has chosen to situate man in Himself. He has broken the gate of captivity that man may discover Him without condemnation (John 3:17). The consequence of sin was death, but the love demonstrated by God is greater (Romans 6:36). He withheld the punishment of sin; from the fall of Adam into sin and until the coming of Jesus Christ, man was kept from the punishment of sin. Although man was declared guilty, and suffered many unpleasant consequences, the penalty for sin was not borne until Christ (Isaiah 53:5,10; Romans 4:25, 8:32a; 1Corinthians 15:3; 1Peter 2:24).

Man's experience of physical death, sickness, failure, pain, separation from the life of God, and also the malfunction of the earth as seen in natural disasters and disorderliness are all consequences of sin. Sin brought disorder into the world and its operations, making it uncontrollable, and faced with continuous degeneration.

The sin of man cannot be denied, and its consequences are evident to every eye. But how is it that God will not hold man accountable for sin? Who has the authority to cover the sin of man? *'But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.'* (1Corinthians 2:9). The Lord has spoken, the whole earth has heard it. The voice of righteousness has declared man free. Words will fail to describe the depth and the riches of His plan.

It is alien to the heart of men, that the guilty will someday go free, indeed, man is blessed. *'But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.'* (Galatians 4:4-5). He has declared it, it shall not be overturned. It is an everlasting promise from the everlasting God. Man was not going to be left to Satan's deceit. He has promised to hold captivity captive. *'Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.'* (Psalm 32:1-2). He promised He would no longer hold sin against the man that turns to Him in faith.

The demand of judgement has been fulfilled and the holy one is free to forgive without limit and restrain, those who come to Him in faith. *'for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.'* (Jeremiah 31:34). The forgiveness offered by God is profound. The promise of forgiveness is to all men, to

those who cannot help themselves. God is willing to help all men, but He is only able to help those who are willing to receive His help. God offered man a helping hand through His son, Jesus Christ who by his death received the punishment for the sin of whole world. *'Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.'* (Isaiah 53:4-5). He died so that man might be delivered from death and to receive the new righteousness. *'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.'* (2Corinthians 5:21).

This forgiveness is the fulfilment of the promise of God to grant pardon to all who turn to Him. *'I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.'* (Isaiah 43:25). In another place it says, *'for thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.'* (Psalm 86:5). Forgiveness of sin is one of the benefits of the absolute love God has towards Himself. Because His love for Himself can never change, His promise towards man remains unchanging through all eternity.

Not even the failure of man is strong enough to change God's willingness to accept the man that turns to Him. In Christ, the man who is guilty will go free. As it is written *'there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.'* (Psalm 130:4). He will never turn away or reject anyone who comes to Him through

Jesus Christ. *'For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.'* (Romans 10:11). His forgiveness is everlasting.

God's love is more powerful in its influence than the consequence of sin (Romans 5:20). Man is to be rescued from the power of pain, shame and bondage forever. *'For the wages (consequence) of sin is death (without the life of God); but the gift of God is eternal life (unending life) through Jesus Christ our Lord.'* (Romans 6:23). God will not let go of man, He will not allow man to remain defeated in sin. *'I have seen his ways, and will heal him: I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him and to his mourners. I create the fruit of the lips; Peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near, saith the LORD; and I will heal him.'* (Isaiah 57:18-19). Man might have failed but he is not going to be abandoned, he might have rejected life, but he is not going to be left dead in sin. This is the reason the son of God appeared in our world, clothed with flesh and blood that on behalf of man, he might bring an end to the devastation caused by the devil (1John 3:8).

Chapter Nine

The Invasion

Following man's eviction from the garden, Satan continued to seek a way to bring man into complete annihilation from God and to set him before God as beyond redemption. The spirit of man was separated from the Spirit of God because man died spiritually after sin, which for Satan was just the beginning of his plan. Spiritual death was not enough, Satan wanted more. He wanted man to share in eternal destruction with him.

As for Satan, he knew his case was determined already, and that he would one day suffer everlasting destruction because his case is beyond redemption (Revelation 20:10). His part in God's kingdom is completely wiped away and this is what he desires for man. Unto Satan is reserved eternal condemnation without failing, and so, he is set to do all in his power and deceit to bring man into an irreversible sinful state. He was rejected by God and his ultimate desire, is for man to receive similar rejection from God.

In pursuit of this wicked agenda, Satan wanted man's body, now weak and degenerating, to be fully corrupted and stained with the flesh of some of the fallen angels. As recorded in Genesis Chapter 6, Satan attempted to completely corrupt the mortal body of man. *'And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, that the sons (fallen angels) of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose.'* (Genesis 6:1-2). Those here referred to as the sons of God are part of the fallen angels, who failed to keep their state as angels (Jude 1:6).

They chose to invade the world of men to further corrupt man's existence. Satan through these fallen angels tried to destroy what was left of man. He wanted man's body completely corrupted by that of the fallen angels through marriage. Angels took up the human body and began to live among men. They had unholy association with daughters of men in intimate relationships.

The fallen angels had children among the sons of men. They gave birth to giants on earth and lived among men. *'This was back in the days (and also later) when there were giants in the land. The giants came from the union of the sons of God and the daughters of men. These were the mighty men of ancient lore, the famous ones.'* (Genesis 6:4 MSG). God was not pleased with man's persistent rejection of Him, yet He planned a way out for man. He would not allow Satan's plan to completely corrupt man's nature continue.

He brought an end to the plan of the fallen angels who violated the rules of their own existence. They had failed to stay within their space. *'And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.'* (Jude 1:6). They were imprisoned away from the earth and never again will this group of fallen angels have influence upon the earth. They had gone beyond the boundary of their freedom. They had broken the code of conduct and violated the rules of engagement. They know their end is determined. *'God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment.'* (2 Peter 2:4). They are waiting for the final judgement unto condemnation because they are found guilty already by God. Their condemnation is unchanging, just and everlasting.

As time went by, the children of men grew upon the face of the earth, kingdoms were raised, and rulers were made. Everyone lived as they wished. None was subject to the authority of God (Genesis 6:11-12). Sin ruled upon the earth. The desire of Satan was perpetrated. Man had become self-governing in disobedience. There was no limit to his evil exploit.

The ways of man had become corrupt before the Lord, *'And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.'* (Genesis 6:12). All of man's imagination and works were filled with ungodliness and wickedness. *'And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great*

in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.' (Genesis 6:5). Everyone acted as they pleased without love or care for one another, without the fear of God. Hatred ruled upon the face of the earth. Man had turned against himself, in violence and horror. There was no longer care for one another. There was no love for God and no care for other lives. *'The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence.'* (Genesis 6:11). The heart of man had become vain; the fruits of his wickedness were visibly noticeable and detrimental to his existence.

However, God's care for man preserved man from the consequence of the invasion of the fallen angels, who in violation of the will of God, took up the image of man, and married women on earth (Genesis 6:2). The goodness of God continues to seek the preservation of man from complete destruction by sin and Satan. King David marvelled at the magnitude of God's overwhelming love, when he wrote '*O LORD, what are humans that you should care about them? What are mere mortals that you should think about them?*' (Psalm 144:3 GW). Although man was made lower than angels in glory, yet God had bestowed so much honour and glory on him (Hebrews 2:7). This is a great mystery, that the creator of the world will consider it a worthy project, to set His love on man.

Of all His wondrous works, how is it that God is mindful of man? Without doubt it will remain a mystery when we consider God's association with man from the point view of what man did and what he had become. But a much deeper and beautiful

angle to consider, is God's perspective. He had a plan for man from the beginning that was not dependent on man's action or reactions. It was simply a function of His eternal will, to keep man in His love. Although, the failure of man, might seem to have delayed the process of bringing man into complete semblance of God that began in the garden; it cannot stop the project of love that God began. God's love for man is the reason, man is in His thought, and His love for man will fulfil His eternal will.

For this reason, God brought an end to that world (Genesis 6:8,17) to preserve the few men who had not been corrupted by the invasion of the fallen angels or perverted in their way of life (Genesis 6:8,18). *'And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth.'* (Genesis 6:12-13). The angelic invasion was brought to an end through the 'water of Noah' when God, *'spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly.'* (2Peter 2:5). God preserved the few people who had not mingled their blood with the corrupt world but showed devotion to Him. *'Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God.'* (Genesis 6:9).

Evil communication can corrupt good manners; thus, it was necessary to end the influence of evil as accompanied by the fallen angels. Therefore, God wiped away the world of

corruption to preserve the continuous existence of man (Genesis 6:13-17, 7:1-12; Hebrews 11:7; 1Peter 3:20). An end to that world was a demonstration of His mercy to preserve man from complete destruction. He took the willing man, the man whose heart is stayed on Him; delivered him from the rage of the water that came upon the earth in judgement that a new generation might begin with him. He slowed the hand of evil by wiping out the ungodly and the seed of Satan.

At that point in time, bringing an end to that world, was a temporary process, through which God slowed down the rate at which evil was growing among men. Man had become the symbol of sin, trapped hopelessly in iniquity and it was necessary to deal with the source of evil and to preserve man for redemption.

Chapter Ten

Beyond Corruption

While the assault of Satan upon the world of men continued unabated, God's goodness toward man continues to preserve man from complete destruction. Ensuring that the opportunity for reconciliation with the creator remains. The door of redemption remains open just as He promised, it could not be rendered null and void by sin (Genesis 3:15). In order to bring an end to the influence of evil in the world, man through God would one day destroy the wicked one. Satan would be defeated and destroyed someday as promised. The works of wickedness will be rendered void.

At the fullness of time, God sent forth His son in accordance with His will (Galatians 4:4-5). The son came into the world as promised, clothed with human body. *'Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God.'* (Psalm 40:7-8). His mission was clear from the beginning: he will deliver his people; he will set man free by destroying the

works of the Satan, as it is written '*I will announce the good news of righteousness among those assembled for worship. I will not close my lips. You know that, O LORD.*' (Psalm 40:9). God sent the deliverer to end the dominion of Satan over the world of man, to set the captive free, that man might freely serve and worship the only potentate.

The son of God came into the world, although in the form of man, Satan and other fallen angels could recognise him. They encountered him and bore witness to his authority, as revealed when an unclean spirit acknowledged him saying, '*what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God.*' (Mark 1:24). His identity was not hidden from them, he was revealed that he might be known as the saviour. And because of his authority, he exercised control over fallen angels and often cast them out of men.

On one occasion '*the devils besought him, saying, If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine.*' (Matthew 8:31). This shows that, not only were 'devils' not permitted to inhabit man's body, they could not voluntarily invade even the body of animals without the permission of the Son. They needed to acknowledge him, who now possesses all authority, on behalf of man. The line of authority on earth had changed and '*when they (fallen angels) saw him, fell down before him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God.*' Mark 3:11. He is indeed the son of God, but did not receive their witnesses and often rebuked them from speaking about him although they knew him (Mark

1:34, 3:12). He was not on earth to receive witness from the fallen angels but to glorify God, to bring praise to Him in the same vessel that Satan had through deceit corrupted.

If the other fallen angels recognised the son of God, it is clear that Satan equally did; he knew the son but was unwilling to honour him. This is the one sent forth to show to all creation the good pleasure of the loving God. He will not seek his own glory but live for God's pleasure. However, for Satan, he is faced with a new challenge, as he plots to bring man to an irreversible sinful state. He was not ready to give up. He sought to destroy the only begotten son of God through temptation.

Satan's agenda was to deceive and destroy the son of God. He had at first succeeded at deceiving Adam in the garden, and now he stood in opposition to the promise of God. Unfortunately for Satan, the promise of deliverance meant man was still redeemable. Satan had previously failed when he invaded the world that then was, with fallen angels, an attempt to completely corrupt the body of man (Genesis 6:1-4). So that the son of God might be prevented from coming into the world, since the body of man would have been corrupted with that of fallen angels. There would have been no unadulterated body that the son of God could come through. But God wiped away that generation (Genesis 7:12-24) to keep hope alive for man.

And now that the son is come, Satan sought to pollute him, so that the sacrifice can be rendered meaningless on account of sin. Should Christ have sinned, he would not be qualified to

stand on behalf of man before God. But God was glorified even in the temptations orchestrated by Satan, as Christ stood in righteousness exulting and exalting God in his trials. It is impossible for a sinner to redeem another sinner from sin, therefore, it was necessary that the saviour be perfect in all his ways, and such was Christ Jesus. He '*was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.*' (Hebrews 4:15).

The same deceitful argument Satan made in the garden of Eden, was presented to Jesus Christ in an attempt to derail him. Skilled at deceiving, he raised questions that were targeted at turning the heart of Christ from trusting in God (1John 2:16). The principle was simple; focus on self and God will instantly be confined to history in the mind. He was not going to tell Christ to abandon God but will simply lure him by evoking in him the desire for self-glory.

The three recorded temptations that the wicked one brought before Christ were designed to turn him towards satisfying the base human desire of self-enthronement, without recourse to God. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life were the foundation of the three temptations. They were also present at the heart of the temptation that brought man into sin in the garden of Eden. As described in Genesis chapter 3:6, the lust of the flesh turned what should be an abomination to a desirable element, as the woman concluded '*that the tree was good for food*', simply because she had given attention to the deceit of Satan. '*And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food (lust of the flesh), and that it was pleasant to the eyes (lust*

of the eyes), and a tree to be desired to make one wise (the pride of life), she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat.' (Genesis 3:6).

Satan deployed the same deceitful plot against the saviour, '*And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.'* (Matthew 4:3). He called out to the saviour, to use his position in God to satisfy a base need rather than glorify God. However, the saviour responded in honour to God when he said, '*It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.'* (Matthew 4:4). The essence of life is not merely in meeting our basic needs but for the honour of God. Jesus exulted the word of God as all to live for. While eating bread can satisfy bodily needs, the food for the soul should rank far and above all our heart desire. God will provide for our daily needs, but he wants us to understand that the most pressing need of man is spiritual restoration (Deuteronomy 8:3). As expressed in the words of Christ, '*For what will it benefit a person if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul?*' (Mark 8:36 ALT).

Christ had an outstanding response to the second temptation in Matthew 4:6-7 saying, '*It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God*'. Although angels coming to rescue anyone would have been an experience worthy of note, it would not have glorified God, simply because the motivation was self-focused. God is glorified in us only when we find His pleasure as our pleasure. And again '*the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of*

the world, and the glory of them; And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee (the pride of life), if thou wilt fall down and worship me.' (Matthew 4:9). Satan offered to give all power to Christ if he would accept him as the true 'god'. He sought to be served like the Most High. *'All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine.'* (Luke 4:6-7). Satan lied, *'When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.'* (John 8:44). However, Jesus did not become a victim of Satan's plot, rather, he defeated and rebuked him, *'And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.'* (Luke 4:8). Satan was defeated in the battle for God's glory, *'And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.'* (John 1:5). Jesus was not seeking 'self' but the will of God. He understood the need to continually glorify God. In a place *'Jesus saith... My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.'* (John 4:34).

Unlike Adam who sought self-glory and fell into the trap set by Satan, Jesus was declared victorious as he honoured God. It was clear to him from the beginning that his mission was to do the will of God, just as he declared in John 5:30, *'I can of mine own self do nothing.'* He will not do anything that does not glorify God. He will not participate in any fellowship without God. His heart is set on God's work and to finish His work (John 4:34). He had no personal ambition, he could not be led astray by false promises (Luke 4:7). He had confidence in the person who sent him to the world. His self-esteem was not in doubt, he was

complete in God. He was not seeking to be like God because he knew God was for him, with him and in him, *'the Father is in me, and I in him.'* (John 10:39).

In faithfulness to his God, he was clothed with the nature of man (1 Timothy 3:16, Philippians 2:7-8). He became a shepherd to the lost sheep, that through death he might destroy the power and the influence of Satan. He was on the mission to bring an end to the works of the wicked one, once and for all: to *'deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.'* (Hebrews 2:15). His heart was set on the mission. That all may understand his purpose, he declared, *'As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.'* (John 9:5).

He understood that a perfect offering was the standard requirement, if man was to receive complete forgiveness. *'Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.'* (Hebrew 2:14). He was tempted in every way like man, but he stood firm in righteousness; *'judge me, O LORD, according to my righteousness, and according to mine integrity that is in me.'* (Psalm 7:8). He remained the perfect sacrifice for sin, without stain or spot (Hebrews 4:15, 1 Peter 1:19).

He was not ashamed to identify with man, the mission was accomplished, sin has been paid for, and the hold of sin is broken. He opened the door of salvation to man, through the offering of his soul, as he took the place of man in death.

Chapter Eleven

Remember No More

God is the embodiment of truth, His declarations concerning man are not vain, and His promises are sure (Exodus 34:6, Deuteronomy 32:4). He promised to forgive sin, and that will not change, nor will anyone stay His hand concerning his readiness to forgive. *'For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.'* (Hebrews 8:12). It was not a promise out of duress neither was it to deceive or beguile man, when God declared His intention to be merciful to man. It was a demonstration of His goodness and His irreversible love for man.

This is not to say that sin will be overlooked. God will not ignore sin nor overlook man's iniquities; every sin must be punished without respect of person. However, He has promised to be merciful (Hebrews 8:12). Therefore, in order to redeem man from the guilt and punishment of sin, He made a decisive plan

to atone for the sin of man and to render the hold of sin ineffective, through the sacrifice of His son. The redemption plan is for man to attain freedom from sin; it is not a freedom to sin. God's promise is to free man; the freedom is not for sin but for man. It is man that will go free, sin will not. His plan is to let go of man from the punishment of sin by destroying the hold of sin. *'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.'* (Psalm 103:11-12). He would make an end of sin, it will be eliminated, purged and removed and shall not be a part of His promise. His forgiveness is an irreversible promise, a demonstration of His commitment to His will that chose man in love before the world began: an unwavering cancellation of every wrong and the termination of all condemnation that stood against man (Jeremiah 31:34).

The door is now opened by His mercy; man is free to walk away from condemnation. *'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.'* (Matthew 11:28). It is an unchanging promise, every wrong done by man, is in Christ, incinerated never to be brought against man. It has been officially expunged and completely deleted from the account of the offender. *'for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.'* (Jeremiah 31:34). Mercy stood up in judgement for the unrighteous and the helpless. And when He said no more remembrance of sin, He meant it for God does not lie, He cannot lie and will not lie. This is because *'The word of the LORD is correct, and everything he does is trustworthy.'* (Psalm 33:4). His word is sure and ever abiding.

Never again will He bring up the issue of sin against the one that turns to receive His forgiveness. God voluntarily slayed His son for our sin, in order to obtain freedom for all men. It was His pleasure to do it. *'Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin.'* (Isaiah 53:10). His promise to forgive without remembering the matter of sin anymore is anchored on His integrity.

He is consistent and truthful and so He can be trusted to deliver on what He has promised. *'Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.'* (Hebrews 6:17-18). He sealed His promise by oath that man may know of His unchanging will to forgive the offender and pardon their sin eternally. This is God's eternal commitment, to liberate man from the slavery of sin.

Thus, any man who accepts this covenant relationship that begins with receiving God's forgiveness, will stand in the presence of His glory; blameless and beyond reproach in love (Colossians 1:22). He will be granted forgiveness, with every record of sin obliterated forever. *'though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.'* (Isaiah 1:18). His promise is without fail, they are kept by His everlasting power.

The omniscient God who created the universe is all knowing (1Samuel 2:2, Job 37:16) and does not forget things because He is perfect. But concerning the man whose sin is forgiven, God 'cannot remember' the sin anymore. This is not a problem of disability or loss of memory with God rather it is His decision never to bring up the issue of sin with those who have accepted His love (Hebrews 9:27-28). On their behalf, sin has been defeated (Psalm 85:2, 32:1-2). God did not forget that man sinned against Him, He did not forget the cruel violation of His love by man and that the world is under the influence of Satan *'the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience.'* (Ephesians 2:2-3). However, in accordance with His promise to forgive those who will receive Him, He has chosen not to bring up the issue of sin ever again. *'For the scripture saith, whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.'* (Romans 10:11).

The offenses are not counted anymore. *'Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.'* (Psalm 32:2). This is His promise to those who freely receive His forgiveness. God will not remember your sin anymore because they are covered by the blood of the saviour. He will never beat man with it again. He will not raise any accusation against those who turn to Him in love. He has poured out His forgiveness that all may freely receive it. This forgiveness will overwhelm every accusation. It is complete and true, a gift of love from the perfect God to the imperfect man. *'Who will accuse those whom God has chosen? God has approved of them. Who will condemn them? Christ has died, and more*

importantly, he was brought back to life. Christ has the highest position in heaven. Christ also intercedes for us.' (Romans 8:33-34 GW). Hallelujah! The judge has become our attorney, who then will accuse the man whose trust is in God. He speaks on behalf of His own, His testimony is everlasting; the sinner is free to go. The payment made for sin was sufficient; an entrance is now widely open. *'and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.'* (Jeremiah 31:34, Hebrews 8:12).

God has done all that is required to bring peace back into His relationship with man. *'now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.'* (Hebrews 10:17-18). His work is complete, His purpose has been established. He is pleased with the sacrifice of His son whom He made *'an offering for sin.'* (Isaiah 53:10). By His blood, He opened the door for men to enter into rest; the hold of sin is broken, no more remembrance of sin. *'For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.'* (Hebrews 4:10). The past is buried. God promised to bury our sin, not to exhume the bones to beat man over the head, ever again. God can be trusted because of His faithfulness that He will deliver from death all that come to Him.

For those who trust in Him, He will never bring their sins against them under any condition. This is because they are dead and buried in Jesus Christ. *'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 Corinthians 5:21). Even if man brings it up, God is committed to His promise. He will not count it against you and

will ignore every accusation because He has dealt with it all in Jesus Christ once and for all (John 1:29, 1John 2:2-3). As Apostle Paul wrote '*For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*' (Romans 8:38-39). Such is the peace granted to everyone whose hope is in God: an unwavering commitment to pour out irreversible forgiveness, a proof of His love to all men.

We have this assurance in us that we have received complete forgiveness through Him that loved us. He chose never to remember sin because they are covered in the blood of Jesus Christ (Isaiah 45:25). Sin will never be put into the account of the one who receives His love and forgiveness. '*to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.*' (Romans 4:5). His plan is to impute righteousness through the remission of sin (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Offered in this remission, is the guarantee that man will not need any other saviour in the future. For '*Through this Man, is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins, and by Him all that believe are justified from all things.*' (Acts 13:38-39). Through the forgiveness offered in Christ, man is cleansed and brought into union with God in true holiness. One sufficient offering, made for reconciliation, proved to be all that was needed to heal the depravity of man and it became the source of purification for those who believe (1Corinthians 6:11). He did the work of

washing by which He took away our filth, set us apart unto Himself, and declared man innocent of all offences.

The highest price was paid to redeem the scum of the earth, so that man can receive the highest honour. *'For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.'* (2 Corinthians 8:9). The saviour took man's place in spiritual poverty and death so that man might take his place in life and glory. What more can be desired? What more can be received? *'For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called.'* (1 Corinthians 1:26). Those who have received forgiveness through Jesus Christ possess all of God. They have received divine elevation in Christ and made to sit in the heavenly places (Ephesians 2:6).

Christ offered himself as the sacrifice for sin and received the wrath of God on behalf of all men (Isaiah 53:4-5, 1Peter 2:24). He became the substitute, took the punishment for sin, he gave himself to suffering and the death on the cross. The just for the unjust, the innocent for the guilty, that man might receive an everlasting access to his God. *'to Him, give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins.'* (Acts 10:43). Through Jesus, man is called into the divine fellowship and *'in Him, we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins.'* (Colossians 1:14).

In demonstrating His love, He vowed to forgive and never to cast away those who receive His love. *'thus saith the LORD; If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the LORD.'* (Jeremiah 31:37). God swore to preserve man from total alienation from His love. His love is great and His mercy beyond measure, and He, by His word of promise, left man with the hope of reconciliation.

It is the will of God to forgive and it is unchanging. *'Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.'* (Micah 7:18-19). This is the good news, that of His freewill, we are invited to receive freely that which we could not earn by the best of our efforts. *'I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee.'* (Isaiah 44:22).

The door of forgiveness is open to all: God is calling on all men to turn to Him, and to freely receive pardon. *'Good and upright is the LORD: therefore will he teach sinners in the way.'* (Psalm 25:8). His word is sure, abiding in truth. He will forgive, and none can stop His will to do so. He will not reject the weak nor will He turn down the downtrodden. *'Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.'* (Hebrews 4:16). The mercy is

for all who calls on Him for help. His call is an open invitation to all, to receive full pardon without extra condition or hiding criteria. There is mercy for all that come to Him.

This is God's plan before the foundation of the world, to have man as His image bearer, in truth and true holiness. He is completely devoted to His plan and will go to every length to bring it to pass. He willed it and He has performed it. His call is to all men, without favouritism. As He said in a place '*Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*' (Matthew 11:28). We are persuaded that He is faithful and His word unchanging, more so, He no longer remembers our sin. '*for with the LORD there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption.*' (Psalm 130:7).

He is God all by Himself, He lives to please no other but Himself. He is fully committed to His promise to forgive. And this He demonstrated in sending His son to take our place in condemnation that we may receive life (John 3:16-17, Romans 5:6-9).

If God was not interested in forgiving man, not even man's persuasion or apology would have been enough to bring forgiveness. If not for God's steadfast love, man would have remained without forgiveness, tears would not be enough to change God's mind neither will much wailing. Not even the promise from man not to offend again would be sufficient to secure forgiveness from God. He did not forgive because we desired it, it was God's original plan to forgive. His forgiveness

was purely a matter of His eternal will and purpose. His forgiveness was predetermined, planned before the foundation of the earth. It was for this reason He ordained the death of the saviour before time began. This paved the way to unrestricted access to His forgiveness. '*the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.*' (Revelation 13:8).

The full demonstration of His love for man at the time of need, even before man could conceive the thought to call upon Him for help, He was ready to forgive and to completely pardon. Of a truth, His counsel for man cannot be rendered ineffective by the error of man; He has chosen to forgive, no one can invalidate His forgiveness.

Chapter Twelve

Everlasting Mercy

God is full of mercy and this is rightly so because He is the source of all compassion. '*our God is merciful.*' (Psalm 116:5). Like every of His attributes, He is declared as a God of mercy, something that is inherent in Him. '*The LORD, The LORD God, merciful.*' (Exodus 34:6). It is mercy that paved the way for the holy and incorruptible God to find common ground with the depraved and guilty man; without His mercy, the foundation of an intimate relationship would be impossible. '*For the LORD thy God is a merciful God.*' (Deuteronomy 4:31).

He is the only one described as merciful- an identity that fits the only true God. He is described as merciful not just for what He has done but for who He is by nature, full of mercy. And His works declare this testimony '*He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered: the LORD is gracious and full of compassion.*' (Psalm 111:4). One critical element in mercy is the reality that it is not deserved. '*For there is not a just man upon earth, that*

doeth good, and sinneth not.' (Ecclesiastes 7:20). In mercy, God condescends to man, He chose to be mindful as He beheld man's horrible state, approaching man without despise.

Man has been declared guilty and depraved. As it is written, *'God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, that did seek God. Every one of them is gone back: they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.'* (Psalm 53:2-3). And so, mercy is the only hope that can open the door of reconciliation with God. God's mercy opened the door of forgiveness to man, removing from those who believe in him, the appointment with judgement. It is appointed that one day all men will die after which they will face judgement on the day of wrath (Hebrews 9:27-29). However, the forgiveness that is offered by God removes those who freely accept His forgiveness from the list of those to be condemned on the day of wrath (John 5:24, John 6:54, John 10:27-28). This freedom is directly connected to the exercise of faith in God.

Without mercy, forgiveness will be impossible and non-existent. Even as the psalmist cried *'O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.'* (Psalm 51:1). God in showing mercy, had compassion on man's horrible situation as dead in sin and iniquities (Ephesians 2:1,4) and willingly pardoned all that turned to receive His mercy regardless of their past (Psalm 130:3-4). God expressed His eternal plan to liberate man by being an actor in the world of men. He had promised to

defeat sin and to crush the works of wickedness as also the prophet wrote. *'He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.'* (Micah 7:19).

God called out to man even after he sinned (Genesis 3:9); a demonstration of His mercy to a rebellious soul. The strength of His mercy was more than the stain of sin. *'But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth.'* (Psalm 86:15). He could not be turned away by the failure of man. His mercy is an outflow of His love towards man. He is rich in mercy towards man (Ephesians 2:4). The depth of His mercy towards man is described as immeasurable *'for as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him.'* (Psalm 103:11). His mercy is immeasurable and beyond the stain of sin!

There is no end to His exercise of mercy toward those who call on him *'for his mercy endureth forever.'* (Psalm 136:2). This is His sovereign will. It is such a great delight and reassuring to know that God is rich in mercy towards man. *'Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him.'* (Deuteronomy 7:9). He is faithful in His dealings, He does not change. He does not have deception in Him. He keeps His word and His promises are unfailing. He will remain merciful towards the needy *'for God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.'* (Romans 11:32).

He is trustworthy and consistent in mercy. *'LORD God of Israel, there is no God like thee, in heaven above, or on earth beneath, who keepest covenant and mercy with thy servants that walk before thee with all their heart.'* (1Kings 8:23).

One of the most amazing revelations of the person of God is the image of God's exclusive right to his decision. God is revealed as reserving the absolute right to how He exercises His power, even the power of mercy and has made an eternal decision to bring man out of shame, sin and death. Of a truth, He has chosen to be merciful to sinful man and He calls him to receive freely of His mercy. *'and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy.'* (Exodus 33:19). He cannot be forced or coerced into showing mercy. All of His works flow out of His predetermined counsel which is unchanging (Ephesians 1:11). This gives a deep consideration again to the supremacy of His will. His actions are not arbitrary, they follow the pattern of His will. His mercy will be for whom He wills it for and not to those who claim to deserve it nor is it for those who don't deserve it; It is about His will, what He wants to do, which in this case is to forgive and have mercy on man.

He has determined in Himself to whom His mercy will be given, yet He remains just because none is deserving of it. He cannot be queried in the exercise of His right. His mercy is for the sinful man and not for the angels that sinned *'For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made*

like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.' (Hebrews 2:16-17). No one can subvert His choice to demonstrate mercy towards man; no accusation will be strong enough to nullify His choice to be merciful. No opposition to His mercy will be powerful enough to inhibit it or to render His decision void or faulty. He is always right in His decisions and perfect in all of His ways (Deuteronomy 32:4, 2 Samuel 22:31, Psalm 18:30).

This might appear to be unimaginable, that God will show such mercy to man who rebelled against Him, but that is exactly what He did. Through the offering of His son as the atoning sacrifice for sin, God made a way to bring complete mercy and forgiveness to man (Isaiah 53:3-4,10; 2 Corinthians 5:21). He brought the gift of life to those who did not deserve it (Romans 6:23). God demonstrated that His mercy is the power that can overcome all weaknesses. Of a truth His mercy transcends the weight of sin and the depravity of man.

Through mercy, God became accessible to even the scum of the earth and could be reached by the worst of men. He became such a One to run to and not to run from. When we turn to Him with our heart, we will find His mercy by the gate of our heart. *'Therefore also now, saith the LORD, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness.'* (Joel 2:12-13). The call to

the people to approach God with confidence in His love and faith in His unfailing promise of mercy becomes the anchor. In His mercy, He has opened the everlasting door for all to come in, there is hope through His mercy. *'Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.'* (Psalm 85:10). The demand of death has been met; justice has been served; payment for sin has been made, the debt of sin is cancelled, the sinner is redeemed, and can now go free!

God has glorified His name; the light of His mercy shines brighter than the stain of sin. His will has prevailed, the offering was pleasing. *'Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven.'* (Psalm 85:1). Truth has visited the earth, the way to God is beautified. Glory and mercy have prevailed over death. He will purge every sinner who turns to Him whiter than snow (Isaiah 1:18). He cannot be stopped, He will forgive, and man will stand forgiven. *'He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things.'* (Romans 8:32).

Why will He not freely offer mercy, when of His own will, He gave up His son as offering for sin? Why will He not pardon those who come, when our reconciliation is a key part of His eternal plan? Why will He not be merciful, when He is the one that called and chose us? Without doubt He will pardon exceedingly. He will forgive all that come to Him and will abundantly pardon without restrain. *'whosoever believes on him shall not be ashamed.'* (Romans 10:11). And again, the scripture says, *'For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be*

saved.' (Romans 10:13). His mercy is irrevocable, and everlasting in nature. To all who freely receive Him is the promise of an ever-abiding mercy that is not subject to change. *'Behold, the eye of the LORD is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy.'* (Psalm 33:18).

God is full of mercy and His works are manifestations of His kindness. For this reason, He brought himself low, that He might find common ground with us. He experienced humiliation in a world that rejected Him, willing to show His mercy to the seed He loves.

He obtained victory over sin and death, pouring out His mercy on all men. And He declared, *'I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God.'* (Hosea 2:23, See also Hosea 1:10, Romans 9:25, 1 Peter 2:10). This is the testimony of the God of mercy to those who are trapped in the snare of sin and guilt, that He is willing and ready to pour on them His mercy, forever. And this He did when He made His son an offering for sin (Isaiah 53:3-10, John 1:29, 2 Corinthians 5:21, 1 John 2:2). He had poured out His love and mercy upon rebellious man, a people who did not seek Him. *'For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.'* (1 Thessalonians 5:9). The choice of man as a special creature is imbedded in His will, and is unmerited mercy is committed to seeing it through.

Chapter Thirteen

Judgement for Who?

In spite of the boundless demonstration of love to man, God's 'hand' is tied in the face of unbelief, and He is unable to save the man who is unwilling to be saved through accepting the love offered in His mercy. The unwilling man stands aloof in unbelief despising the so great a love displayed on the cross of the saviour, rejecting the gift of forgiveness offered by this loving God. When overcome by an unhealthy consideration of self, to his own detriment, he loses grip of the everlasting treasure of God's word that speaks forgiveness, and he is bound to ignore the helping hand stretched out to him. The unwillingness to submit to God's will blinds the heart further; hinders its ability to appreciate the commitment of the sovereign.

Mercy is all that God is able to do in protecting man from the consequence of his depravity. His mercy took away from us the punishment that is due us because of our rejection of Him. The

mercy of God is able to pardon every sinner and to obliterate all account of sin. However, God will never free the man that rejects His mercy from the pending condemnation. *'but he that believeth not is condemned already.'* (John 3:18). While He keeps His mercy for the willing hearts, *'keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin.'* (Exodus 34:7). This is His will for all men that through His mercy, forgiveness can become accessible to them. *'Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.'* (1Timothy 2:4). But He declares clearly that those who reject His pardon will in the face of His mercy be held guilty and shall not be innocent, *'will by no means clear the guilty.'* (Exodus 34:7). Those who reject His mercy shall remain guilty, for His mercy can only be received by the heart that turns to Him in faith.

He is willing to pardon but will not ignore the man who chose to reject His mercy. The one who rejects mercy shall be held guilty, the wrath of God is upon him. *'For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.'* (Hebrews 10:26-27). This is an unforgivable state-to stand in opposition to God's forgiveness is death. The person who rejects the mercy of God is sinning wilfully, standing in opposition to God's kindness, a deliberate rejection of His offer of forgiveness. After the knowledge of what God did to destroy the hold of sin and death has been publicly declared, to reject this solution is to reject His will. Do not be deceived there will be judgement, and this shall be for those who rejected His love

and mercy. To ignore God will be to embrace death in everlasting destruction that shall come upon the adversary of God.

If man rejects God's call to receive mercy, he will be rejecting the compassion and patience of God that brings forgiveness. For anyone who rejects His mercy is rejecting forgiveness and the opportunity to freely receive life, would be eternally lost. His mercy cannot be earned because all have become miserable (Isaiah 64:6). His mercy is not for a selected few but for all and should He for any reason have required that His mercy be offered on merit, there would still be none worthy to receive it (Psalm 10:4, 14:1-3, 53:1-3; Romans 3:10-12). There will be absolutely no means to declare any as worthy of His mercy. His mercy is free, everlasting, and abiding with His own for all age. God's mercy is for those who want it and not just for those who are in need of it.

Everyone who rejects Him will face the final judgement without mercy. God is unreserved about the declaration of His mercy to the sinful man. Through His mercy, He offers to man a legal path to escape from the wrath of His justice and to find the path to eternal life. *'For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.'* (John 3:17). He sent His son into the world to be the propitiation for our sin so that God might remain just in freeing the guilty (Romans 3:25-26, 1John 2:2). He wants to let the guilty go free. Sin cannot be ignored, and all disobedience must be punished to establish truth and justice. For this reason, He

ensured that the price for disobedience was paid in full. God was willing to take the place of man in death as a show of His love and willingness to be merciful to their unrighteousness, and this He did (Isaiah 53:3-10, 1 Timothy 3:16).

He is merciful and ready to pardon, but He is unable to pardon *'the rejection of His pardon'*. He calls on all to freely come to Him but cannot force and will not force any to draw near. He will abundantly pardon the worst of men whose heart is set on Him (Isaiah 40:2, 43:25; Nehemiah 9:17b; Jeremiah 50:20; Micah 7:18-19). But the one who continues to reject His pardon is openly standing in opposition to the mercy revealed in God. Standing before all who reject this pardon is the *'fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.'* (Hebrews 10:27).

The one who rejects mercy positions himself an adversary of God, to be consumed by an everlasting destruction from His holy presence. *'In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ...'* (Romans 2:16). And that judgement shall be without mercy. *'He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?'* (Hebrews 10:28-29). Those who reject mercy are despising God's love and forgiveness, counting it as common, without relevance. They have treated with insulting neglect the offer of the Son of God as the atoning

sacrifice for sin. God has done the best for man and He is left with no choice but to condemn, if we choose to experience his wrath rather than mercy. As He said in a place; *'Wherefore as the Holy Ghost saith, Today if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your hearts.'* (Hebrews 3:7-8).

Through the promise of His mercy for man, He chose to pour out full wrath on His son, that eternal life might be imputed to all that believe. *'He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.'* John 3:36. His justice has made a way for man to escape the condemnation of sin, if we reject it, we are bound to face the full wrath of His justice (John 3:18-19). *'For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.'* (2 Corinthians 5:10-11). In rejecting His free gift of forgiveness, God is left with no other option than to subject us to the test of His justice, which we cannot survive because all are in sin (Isaiah 64:6, Romans 3:23).

When we reject God's mercy, we inadvertently reject His intervention in our case, and we sink deeper into the shadow of darkness with the cloud of uncertainty all around. *'O LORD, who would be able to stand if you kept a record of sins? But with you there is forgiveness so that you can be feared.'* (Psalm 130:3-4 GW). None will ever be worthy of His mercy, it is what He shows freely because of who He is; merciful. In God remains the

uncompromising expression of mercy to the world of depraved men that they might be forgiven freely.

God is willing to pardon man of all guilt knowing that man is completely helpless and hopeless. To reject His mercy is to call Him a liar and to wilfully continue in sin. The sin of rejection cannot be forgiven. He that turns away from the help of God cannot be helped. Those who reject His mercy rejects his sacrifice and peace. His justice will ensure that those who reject the offer of forgiveness and of deliverance from sin are duly rewarded.

His mercy remains the only anchor for every believing soul. *'His mercy is on them that fear Him from generation to generation.'* (Luke 1:50). They are kept in it and preserved by his life. It stands as a surety for them. *'For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.'* (Hebrews 4:15). The throne of grace is the fountain of forgiveness, He calls on all to draw near, to enter boldly without the fear of rejection, and receive forgiveness of sin without any sense of guilt or shame. Man is invited to come boldly without succumbing to shame and the guilt of sin. To approach God without the feeling of unworthiness and to completely trust in God's faithfulness and willingness to heal every heart, with confidence believing that what God has promised, He will do.

It is the God of mercy that beckons on all men to come. He will not shut the door against those who approach Him (Romans 10:11-13). He guarantees your acceptance through His mercy. It is an everlasting promise that if we turn to Him, He will not turn away from us. *'For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.'* (Romans 10:13). This is His eternal plan for those who receives His forgiveness. *'Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us.'* (Titus 3:6)

The reward of the rejection of His mercy will not be delayed on every generation that rejects His mercy. *'He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whosoever confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.'* (Proverbs 28:13). To deny the depravity of man and to ignore the help of God to deliver from death, is to continue to abide in death. *'Those who believe in him won't be condemned. But those who don't believe are already condemned because they don't believe in God's only Son. This is why people are condemned: The light came into the world. Yet, people loved the dark rather than the light because their actions were evil. People who do what is wrong hate the light and don't come to the light. They don't want their actions to be exposed.'* (John 3:18-20 GW). Their judgement will not fail and shall not lack in fervency; the Holy One will not ignore those who rejoice in iniquity whose heart is sold out to all wickedness. *'For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness.'* (Romans 1:18).

Chapter Fourteen

Opened Door!

Through all generations, God continues to demonstrate to all men, the nature of His unchanging love and plan; to restore peace and reconcile the world unto himself (Isaiah 43:19-21, 2 Corinthians 5:19, Revelation 21:3). He declared His will and made it abundantly clear through manifold testimonies in His word by which He communicated His mind to all; even the revelation of his Son. *'God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.'* (Hebrews 6:17-18). God's intention and willingness to deliver man from eternal death was not a secret but was published from the time of old and today it stands as a promise kept before the world (Acts 2:39). For all generations, His promise and oath stood as a guarantee that His purpose will never be altered. The freedom of man remains a vital part of His will. And now, He has fulfilled the promise.

The window of His kindness is open to all men but not forever, as it is written. *'Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near'* (Isaiah 55:6). It will not be opened for all eternity. One day, the door will be closed. The season of forgiveness will come to an end; A glorious end, when the kindness of God would have been fully declared before all. The present world would cease, a new world will come into existence (2 Peter 3:10-13). However, His mercy continues to delay His judgement that all may receive His love. *'The Lord is not slow concerning His promise, as some regard slowness, but He is waiting patiently towards us, not wanting any to be lost but for all to make room for repentance.'* (2Peter 3:9 ALT). He demonstrated to all that the promised deliverance is a product of His mercy and not the effort of man. A gift of love it is, to all who receive His mercy. *'Behold, the eye of the LORD is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy; 'To deliver their soul from death.'* (Psalm 33:18-19). They that hope in Him will never be abandoned.

He does not desire that any should perish (Isaiah 30:18, 1Timothy 2:4). It is clear from the beginning that the weight of sin could not be successfully borne by man. If reconciliation is not offered as a gift, the burden would be unbearable. Therefore, He calls out *'everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.'* (Isaiah 55:1). On this ground, man can freely access God without consideration of his unworthiness. God is willing to bring man out of shame and will reject none that turns to Him.

God's mercy guarantees abundant forgiveness to all who turn to Him. When anyone turns to Him, such a person is positioned to freely receive mercy. It is written *'the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children.'* (Psalm 103:17). King David understood this when he declared, *'But as for me, I will come into thy house in the multitude of thy mercy: and in thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple.'* (Psalm 5:7). And again, he wrote in another place saying, *'But I have trusted in thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation.'* (Psalm 13:5).

God has fully paid for the sin of man through His son Jesus Christ, and He is willing to completely forgive man's iniquity, transgression and sin. *'Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies.'* (Psalm 103:3-4). The scripture says, *'By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the LORD men depart from evil.'* (Proverbs 16:6). God has offered His son as the sacrifice for sin, however, if man fails to turn to Him to freely receive pardon, he will not be guiltless. *'he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.'* (John 3:18).

To reject God's forgiveness is to deny His love and mercy and to abide under the wrath of God. *'He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.'* (John 3:36).

Nonetheless, greater than wrath is the act of mercy and love displayed; the son of God was made the sacrifice for sin, the complete manifestation of the will of God to deliver all men from wrath. He has shown that the summary of His will is good, great and beautiful: He identified with the scum of the earth. He gave His best and calls on all men to freely receive forgiveness through Christ Jesus. *'In other words, God was using Christ to restore his relationship with humanity. He didn't hold people's faults against them, and he has given us this message of restored relationships to tell others. Therefore, we are Christ's representatives, and through us God is calling you. We beg you on behalf of Christ to become reunited with God. God had Christ, who was sinless, take our sin so that we might receive God's approval through him.'* (2 Corinthians 5:19-20 GW).

In mercy, God grants to man the escape route from eternal condemnation. *'Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.'* (Isaiah 55:7). It is not deserved, yet man can freely come. It is not of works so there is no limit to the outpouring of His mercy (Ephesians 2:9). Forsake the wicked thought that works in opposition to God that constantly rejects and refuses His help, doubting repeatedly His promise to pardon. *'For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.'* (Isaiah 55:8). His thought towards man, is to abundantly pardon. It is unthinkable that the Most

High will be so forgiving despite our frailty. That He should continue to seek our good even at our lowest; it is an amazing story of His great love through which He loved us. '*The LORD redeemeth the soul of his servants: and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate.*' (Psalm 34:22).

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About the Book

God is to be known as powerful, ever-present, holy, all-knowing and full of glory. In all of these, love is central to His attributes. His love is a core part of Him that should be understood by all, and its acceptance will pave the way for a rich understanding of His person.

Because we do not comprehend His love, we often misunderstand His nature. Consequently, we are filled with a warped understanding of His being, confused about His identity, and His posture towards us.

This book will help its readers to appreciate better, the unchanging loving nature of the sovereign God, who continues to reach out to humanity regardless of our failure.

About the Author



Olumide Osisanya has been a student of the scripture for more than 2 decades and he enjoys writing and teaching about the person of God and his relationship with man, as revealed in the holy scriptures. He holds Masters degrees in Science and Education.

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