

# Letters on the Word

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## HOLINESS



*“... He hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world that we should **be holy** and without blame before him **in love.**” (Eph. 1:4)*

Grace and peace to you dear brothers and sisters in the Lord! This quarter’s issue of *Letters on the Word* is on holiness: a fundamental characteristic of our Heavenly Father, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; and the Father of

our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. A search done on the word “holy” in the King James Version of the Bible brings up over 500 results that tell of God’s holiness and His desire for his children to be holy. What is holiness? Why is it foundational in our Covenant walk with the Lord? In this issue, we examine God’s Scriptures on holiness in order to gain a better understanding of who He is and who we are in Christ. *God is holy* (i.e., perfect in goodness and righteousness). There is none holy as the Lord, I Samuel 2:2 tells us. Ephesians 1:4 tells us that He chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world that we should *be holy* and without blame before him *in love*. We see

that holiness is fundamentally important to our Father in His love relationship with His children. It is therefore important in our Covenant walk with Him. “The more we know God’s goodness, the more we trust Him. The more we trust Him, the easier it is for us to put our lives in His hands. Only by placing our lives in His hands can we open the way for Him to save us, bless us and work through us, so that His wonderful will can be done on earth as it is done in heaven” (Copeland 2008).

Glory be to the most high God who has blessed us with holiness – and with all other spiritual blessings in Heavenly places in Christ Jesus (Eph 1:3)!

*“...He hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.” (Eph. 1:4)*

# THE HOLINESS OF THE FATHER AND HIS CHILDREN

“... *Be ye holy, for I am holy.*” (1 Peter 1:16b)

Merriam–Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary (2003) defines holy as exalted or worthy of complete devotion as one perfect in goodness and righteousness ... *perfect in goodness and righteousness*. The Bible tells us that our God is holy, i.e., our God is perfect in goodness and righteousness. Our Father’s holiness is key to our salvation ... and the numerous other spiritual blessings He has given to His children in Christ Jesus (Eph. 1:3).

As Dr. E. W. Kenyon describes in “The Father and His Family,” ©1998, Christianity is not a religion; it is a family, a Father and His children. It differs from all the religions in the world in this respect.” It is a love relationship between the Father and his children.

God created man in his image and likeness; therefore man was created in goodness and righteousness.

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness ... And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. (Genesis 1:26, 31)

We deduce from the Bible that man had to continue to operate in God’s goodness and righteousness in order to continue in the original love relationship with his Father. One of the necessary conditions for love is the ability to exercise one’s free will. As part of God’s family, man had and continues to have a free will that can be exercised in obedience or disobedience to the Father. Man’s disobedience to the Father resulted in the loss of this original relationship: in a spiritual fall that caused man to hide from the pres-

ence of God (Genesis 3:8), and necessitated a plan for his redemption. The Bible tells us that this plan was created from the foundation of the world (Eph 1:4). Such a redemptive plan was and is necessary for man, who has a free will, to continue in a love relationship with the most high God who is of purer eyes than to behold evil (Hab. 1:13), perfect in goodness and righteousness, and unable to associate with evil. The Bible tells us that not only Adam *but all have sinned* (i.e., been disobedient to God) and come short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23). Thus, in order for God to redeem his family and bring his children back into the love relationship originally intended, the plan of redemption had to be executed. And it was executed through the only begotten Son of God.

Relating to God requires that we are holy even as he his holy. This has always been a requirement for our love relationship with the Father; hence the fall of man in the

**“Be ye holy, for I am holy.”**

**(1 Peter 1: 16b)**

Garden of Eden. As repeated attempts to be holy through the law were not successful (Old Testament, Gospels); the redemptive plan for holiness through grace was executed through Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of the Father, out of which were born many sons and daughters of the Father, including you (if you are born again) and me – redeemed from our fallen state of disobedience.

The death of Jesus Christ on the cross, and His resurrection, vic-

**“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.**

**(John 3:16)**

tory over Satan and ascension to the right hand of the Father (i.e., the place of highest authority), *far above* all principalities, powers, might and dominion, and every name that is named in this world and the world to come, paid the price for all who have been disobedient, as long as they accept this gift that brings them back into the original love relationship with the Father, intended from the beginning in holiness and righteousness.

But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets. *Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe:* for there is no difference. For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God: Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” (Romans 3: 21-24)

For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth. (Romans 10:4)

Yes, this requirement for holiness, righteousness and perfection has always been a fundamental requirement in our love relationship with our Heavenly Father. That is

**“Be ye perfect, even as your father which is in heaven is perfect.**

**-(Matthew 5:48)**

why it is only those who have *never sinned* who can claim to approach our Heavenly Father successfully without Christ Jesus as mediator,

# RIGHTEOUSNESS AND GOODNESS: THE BASIS OF FAITH

(that is, so long as we are talking about the same Almighty God who is also the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and the Father of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ). In other words, we can say that our faith in Jesus Christ is accounted to us as (His) righteousness which then allows us to relate to the Father in righteousness, holiness. This principle is seen operating in the Old Covenant as well, where Abraham's faith in the Father was accounted to him as righteousness — enabling him to relate to the Father in holiness, righteousness.

For what saith the Scripture: Abraham believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness. (Romans 4:3)

The redemptive plan of God therefore allows me (and all who are children of God) to say that “I am the righteousness of God by faith in Jesus Christ.”

“I am the righteousness of God by faith in Jesus Christ.”

*“I am the righteousness of God by faith in Jesus Christ.”*

You can tell that I love this truth about myself in Christ Jesus. This is who I am in the spiritual Kingdom of my Heavenly Father.

How does this affect my relationship with God, practically? I know that all righteousness and holiness in me comes from God through Jesus Christ, by His grace. Jesus, relating to the Father, did not try to develop any holiness of His own separate from the holiness of the Father. He operated solely in the holiness of the Father. He said that he did only what he saw the Father do. He had no agenda of His

own outside that of the Father's.

I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me. (John 5:36).

In other words, He exercised His free will in obedience to the Father's will. Likewise, the spiritually-adopted children of God (you and I), as branches of the vine (God's only begotten Son Jesus Christ), can do nothing on their own, but as branches must bring forth the fruit of the vine.

I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. (John 15:5)

This foundation of holiness, righteousness and goodness is fundamental to our faith, our victorious walk with the Lord. In “The Father and His Family,” Dr. Kenyon discusses the rights of the children of God: rights that come with God's plan for redemption. Jesus Christ (being tempted at all points and yet without sin) paid the price for all the sins of God's children. When he had paid the penalty, He rose from the dead. He conquered Satan, broke his dominion and took away his authority and power. Then in the trophies of His triumph, He ascended to the right hand of the Majesty on High and laid the tokens of His victory at the feet of His great Father (Eph 1: 15-23; Col 2: 15).

This monumental spiritual work accomplished by Jesus Christ secured certain legal rights for the children of God. On the ground of this victory, the sinner has a legal right to accept Jesus Christ as a personal Savior and become a child of

the most high God. This child of God then has legal rights to the following:

- Eternal life (John 3:16).
- Victory over sin and Satan (Eph. 1).
- A home in Heaven (John 3:16).
- Use the Name of Jesus in prayer (John 16:23; Acts 3:6).
- The Father's protection and care (1 Peter 5:7; John 15:7)
- A child's place in the Family of God (John 1:12).
- The indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, the care and protection of the Spirit, and the intercession and teaching of the Spirit (John 14:15-17; John 16:13).

## Are we claiming our rights?

- To be translated at the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus (Acts 1:11; 1 Thess. 4:17).
- Immortality for the body (1 Cor. 15: 40-50).
- An inheritance in the New Heavens and New Earth (2 Peter 3:13).
- To live with the Father throughout eternity (John 3:16).

The child of God has several other legal rights that are laid out in the Scriptures (New Testament), the legal document that details the Covenant between the Father and His Family through Jesus Christ. For example, the child of God has a legal right to abundant life (John 10:10); to a life of divine health (1 Peter 2:24); to a life at rest in the Lord (Matt. 11:28-30; 1 Peter 5:7), and more ...

# STUDYING THE WORD AND TAKING YOUR PLACE IN CHRIST

But how will this child know to claim his rights if he does not know them in the first place?

"There is no excuse for the spiritual weakness and poverty of the Family of God when the wealth of grace and love of our great Father with His power and wisdom are all at our disposal." (Kenyon 1998)

Indeed, as Dr. Kenyon explains in his essay "Why We Don't Pray for Faith" (Advanced Bible Course 2004), some of the things that some of the children of God have been praying for belong to them already by Covenant; however they lack knowledge of their Covenant rights (and obligations). Therefore, they pray amiss, asking the Father to give them what already belongs to them (Eph. 1:3). They lack knowledge of their rights because they haven't taken the time to look seriously at the terms of the Covenant that they got into with the most high God when they accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. Looking at the results of their prayers, some may begin to think that they do not have enough faith and may start to pray for more faith. However, as Kenyon explains in this case:

"A prayer for faith would be a prayer of unbelief, and a prayer of unbelief has no ground for an answer. The people who pray for faith always live in the realm of unbelief. If I asked you to give me faith in yourself and I had known you for years, you would think it an insult. So the believer's prayer for faith is an insult to Christ and the Father." (Kenyon 2004)

What is needed instead is a thorough searching of the New Covenant of God's Scriptures to find out and imbibe what belongs to us by right, guaranteed by the holiness, i.e., the goodness and perfection, of our Father. We then focus on *His goodness, His faithfulness* to deliver to us *in love* what He has promised is ours by Covenant, as we fulfill our part of the Covenant. As Kenyon asserts, "It is not a problem of faith at all. The only problem that confronts you is that of the integrity of the Word." (2004)

**"If I asked you to give me faith in yourself and I had known you for years, you would think it an insult. So, the believer's prayer for faith is an insult to Christ and the Father."**

(Kenyon 2004)

When I visit my (earthly) parents' in their home, there are some questions I never ask. For example, I never wake up in the morning and ask them whether I can go into their kitchen and eat their food. If I did, they would probably wonder what was wrong with me ... I know that their food is mine. As my parents, they have certain responsibilities as far as I am concerned, and as their child I also have certain responsibilities as far as they are concerned. While we have never put them down in writing, these responsibilities are well understood by both parties and ratified for a viable and healthy relationship.

Our Heavenly Father has gone through great lengths to secure and lay out our Covenant rights and responsibilities in His Word. If we take the time to read, study and imbibe His Word, we find that He watches over His Word to perform it (Jer. 1:12); His Word does not go out of His mouth and return unto Him void, but accomplishes that which He pleases, and prospers in the thing whereto He sent it (Isa. 55:10, 11); no Word of His shall be void of power (Luke 1:37); and His words are spirit and life (John 6:63). This is very comforting. We also find out our responsibilities as His children.

And how do we manifest our rights and privileges in Christ? We imbibe the Word and take our place in Christ.

"From today you are taking your place in Christ. You recognize that you have been delivered out of Satan's dominance. You recognize that you have been translated into the kingdom of the Son of His love. You are in the Father's family. You have a perfect right to the Throne Room now, and you have seen that every sin that you have ever committed has been wiped out as though it never had been. You stand complete in Him." (Kenyon 2004)

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