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Cry of The Covenant

By Dr. Mary Craig



In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. All that God created, He called "good." He created man, male and female, in His own

image. His plan was and is relationship, covenant relationship, with His creation. He sought and seeks for loyalty, and so, God covenanted with Adam in what we now call a covenant of works. It was, as it were, a loyalty test, for in it Adam had an obedience to keep. If Adam trusted and believed God, he would demonstrate that by doing what God said and not doing what God said not to do. Adam came to believe a lie, another word, and so disobey God.

That action plunged humanity into an "estate of sin and misery." But God is just, and biblical justice means more than mere conformity to legal norms and a system of laws. God in His justice shows Himself merciful, kind, full of lovingkindness, and faithful to His covenantal promises, despite His people's sins.

To demonstrate the nature of His character, God first gave the promise of a Savior (**Genesis 3.15**) and then



■ **Everlasting Covenant is the way God relates to His people.**



an enfolding of what we call the covenant of grace. All along, whether it be Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, or the new covenant in Christ, God desires justice, i.e., loyalty or faithfulness to the relationships of the created order. He desires men and women to be rightly related to Him as Creator/Redeemer and rightly related to each other and to the creation.

Thus, the just are those who wait for God, hope in Him, seek after Him, trust in Him, know and fear Him, love His name, and cry out to Him. (**Isaiah 33.2; Psalm 69; Psalm 52; Psalm 103, e.g.**) They are to see themselves as oppressed and needy with the LORD as their sole refuge. (**Psalm 140**) God is after those who bow before His decisions, or judgments, acknowledge their sin, and offer Him a broken spirit and contrite heart. (**Psalms 32, 51, 94, 118**)

The one who has faith in God is just in the sight of God. (**Habakkuk 2.4**) Likewise, the just shall live by faith. So, in demonstrating relationship with God, God's people were and are to have dominion over the creation, not domination. They are to nourish, build, replenish, exercise kindness and compassion over all creation, not mistreat, oppress, exploit, rob, or devour. (**Exodus 22, Deuteronomy 10 and 23, Psalm 76, Psalm 112, e.g.**) Justice cannot be separated from mercy, care for the afflicted and the poor. So, biblical justice consists in hope and trust in God in the vertical relationship and in deeds of compassion and alms-giving and mercy in the horizontal relationship.

The people, however, only demonstrated their faithlessness in both dimensions of covenant relationship.

The prophets championed social justice issues and argued that the people had forgotten the stories of the mighty redemptive acts of God in their history. The people had a continual bent toward idolatry and greed.

God manifested His heart in the cry of the covenant. *"I will be your God, and you will be My people."* If you listen or ask Him, you can hear the cry of God's heart for a people with whom and in whom He might dwell. Since before the foundations of the world, it was God's plan that man might be His dwelling place. In **Leviticus 26.12**, we read, *"I will walk among you and be your God, and you shall be My people."* God's people were to serve Him as evidence of their worship.



Likewise, Israel was given a king, whose chief function was to rule, or judge, to execute decisions. The king administered justice especially by coming to the aid of the oppressed. *"This is what the LORD says: Do what is just and right. Rescue from the hand of his oppressor the one who has been robbed. Do no wrong or violence to the alien, the fatherless or the widow, and do not shed*

■ **Jesus was delivered over to the suffering of the cross in our behalf.**

innocent blood in this place." (**Jeremiah 22.3**) God's covenant with David meant much to the people of Israel, for the prosperity of Israel was bound up with their king. (**2 Samuel 20.1; 2 Samuel 24; Psalm 89**)

A perfect king would mean all the blessings of God would be bestowed upon the people in full measure. **Psalm 72** shows us that this would mean intangible gifts of peace and security as well as material gifts of supply and fertility, i.e., life in its fullness. It was Israel's hope to have a Messiah, an Anointed One, a ruler who would restore to them all of the goodness of the creation. (**Psalm 72, Isaiah 42.1-7, Jeremiah 23.5, 6**)

Hosea exemplifies God's holy heart. Israel is unfaithful and begets violence and treachery. They have forsaken the LORD, so God will render His decision and execute it. Yet His mercy triumphs, for though His heart churns within Him, His solaces yearn together. Get this:

*My people are prone to apostasy:
Though they called them to the most High,
None at all should exalt Him.
How shall I give you up, Ephraim?
How shall I buckler you, Israel?
How shall I give you as Admah?
How shall I set you as Zeboim?
My heart is turned within Me,
My solaces yearn together.*

*I will not execute the fierceness
(Fuming) of My wrath,
I will not return to Destroy (ruin) Ephraim:
For I am God, and not man;
The Holy One in the Midst of you:
And I will not enter into the city...
(Hosea 11.7-9)*

God is after relationship. So He will lay a fresh foundation: righteousness, justice, mercy, faithfulness, steadfast love. Why? *"And you shall know the Lord."*(**Hosea 2.20**)

The cry of the covenant leads us to Jesus Christ, Messiah and Savior, King and Suffering Servant. God had to come because only God can save and only God can make good on His promises. Over and over God had intervened into human history. In Jesus Christ, God came incarnate, Immanuel *"God with us."* Jesus took our human nature in order to do for us what



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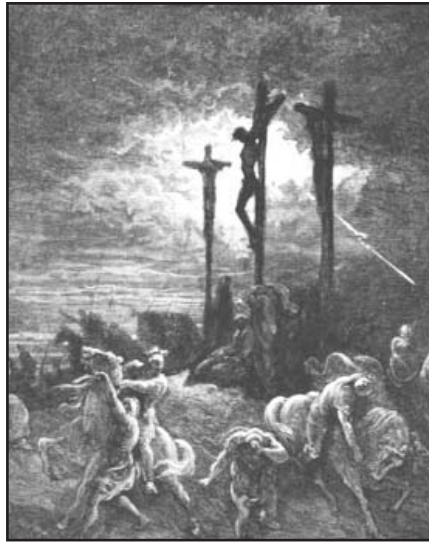
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we could never do for ourselves. He obeyed perfectly, personally, and perpetually. That means all the time, in thought, word, and deed. How's your life going so far as to meriting eternal life? (Probably a lot like mine!)

Out of His justice, with its mercy built into the system, God sent Jesus to fulfill both sides of the covenant. Jesus is both Lord and Servant. As the Lord, He claims His people for God, and as the Servant, He claims God for His people. Now as Jesus kept God's law perfectly, there is righteousness for everyone and anyone who believes. (**Romans 10.4**) God is just and the justifier of the one who believes in Jesus. (**Romans 3.26**)



In Jesus, the heart of God found fulfillment. God's desire has been and is to make His abode within the heart of every believer. (**John 14.17, 23**) *"Here I will dwell; for I have desired it."* (**Psalm 132.14**) In the OT God inhabited the praises of His people (**Psalm 22.3**), but something happened on the cross of Calvary to change everything so that under the new covenant, God inhabits His people. (**Ephesians 2.19-22**)

Jesus demonstrated a reign of justice contrary to human justice. His is not a justice that gives people what they deserve, but rather a justice in which God's

■ In Jesus, the heart of God found fulfillment.

determination and commitment to come to the aid of all who are oppressed is realized. (**Acts 10.38**) It is God's justice expressed in mercy, a justice bringing salvation to those who sit on the ash heap of human misery. Though He lived within the veil, Jesus died without the camp.

Don't ever doubt God's love for you. **2 Corinthians 5.21** says, *"He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."* At some point, God the Father, in a sense, turned His back upon the Son. God is too pure to look upon iniquity. (**Hab. 1.13**) We hear Christ's spiritual pain in the cry of abandonment: *"My God, My God, why have You forsaken me?"*

Jesus quotes **Psalms 22**. Read it in its entirety. Pray to get a grasp on the cry of the covenant. For the Father's desire to love, to inhabit a people, to be their God and for them to be His people, sent the obedient Jesus to the cross. *"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 53.5**)

He took the penalty of divine wrath, the curse, all the way back from the Garden. Jesus received different kinds of wounds in His body as He suffered and died. He was smitten with a rod upon the cheek. (**Micah 5.1; Matthew 26.67; John 18.22**) This is the contused wound produced by a sharp instrument. Romans used the cat-of-nine tails to scourge criminals, i.e., nine pieces of leather to which were attached sharp ivory or metal balls with protruding nails. The whip tore out

Check it out.

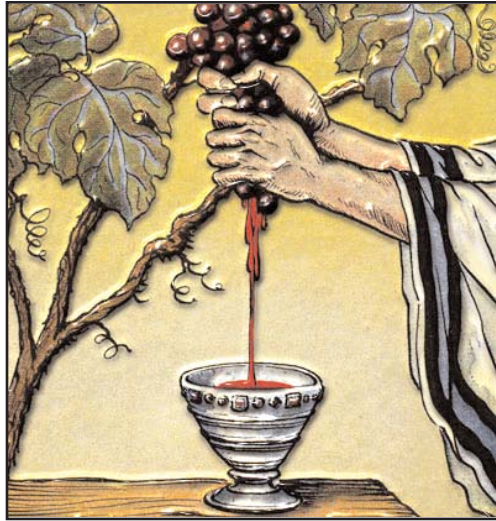
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pieces of flesh, lacerations produced by a tearing instrument. **(Psalm 129.3; Isaiah 50.6; Matthew 27.20; John 19.1)** Plucking His beard, beating Him with their fists, mutilated Him. **(Isaiah 50.6; Matthew 26.67; Matthew 27.30)**

The crown of thorns pressed upon the head of Jesus would have caused penetrating wounds, deep wounds caused by a sharp, pointed instrument. **(Matthew 27.29; John 19.5)** This, however, did not satisfy the blood lust of the crowd.

So they took Him out to crucify Him. As the stake lay upon His lacerated, bleeding back, Jesus stumbled and fell. His body received even more bruises and sores. **(John 19, Luke 23)**



They pierced His hands and His feet. **(Psalm 22.16; Zechariah 13.6)** Along with this perforating wound, Jesus suffered the incised wound. One of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. **(John 19.34; Zech. 12.10)**

Jesus' heart is believed to have burst. **Psalm 22.14** says, *"I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted within me."* His back, His hands, His feet, His head, His heart all delivered over to the suffering of the cross. Why? Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sin. **(Leviticus 17.11, 14)** It is the blood that makes atonement for the soul. **(Hebrews 9.22)**

The blood of righteous Abel cried out for justice, but it was a justice of vengeance. Jesus surpassed the law, coming in grace and truth. His Blood cries out for mercy on the judgment seat over the law. It cries out triumphantly in its victory over devils, disease, and death. To many, the Blood is offensive. They won't hear of it, speak of it, preach it or teach it. But the truth is that the Blood of Jesus Christ accomplished salvation for those who believe.

Through the Blood, every believer receives:

Forgiveness of sins according to the riches of God's grace **(Ephesians 1.7)**

■ **Through the cross-work, the blood of Jesus Christ has been poured out for the atonement and remission of our sins.**



Redemption **(1 Peter 1.18, 19; Acts 20.28)**

Cleansing of all unrighteousness and loosing from our sins **(1 John 1.7; Revelation 1.5)**

Justification and propitiation so as to be saved from wrath **(Romans 5.9; Romans 3.24, 25)**

Peace with God **(Colossians 1.20)**

Overcoming alienation; access to enter the holiest boldly **(Hebrews 10.19, 20)**

Divine healing **(Isaiah 53.5; 1 Peter 2.24)**

Victory over the devil **(Revelation 12.11)**

Sanctification **(Hebrews 13.12)**

Purging of the conscience from dead works to serve the living God **(Hebrews 9.14)**

Eternal glory as God shall dwell among His people **(Revelation 7.14-17).**

Will you respond to the cry of God's holy heart? Will you listen to the cry of the covenant calling you to faith in Jesus Christ? Are you willing to acknowledge and honor the Blood of Christ shed as the Lamb of God for the remission of sins that you might live in the promise of the covenant? This is how it all ends:

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth...and I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem,...and I heard a loud voice from the throne say, *"Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He shall dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be among them, and He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes, and there shall no longer be any death; there shall no longer be any mourning, or crying or pain; the first things have passed away."*... *"He who overcomes shall inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son."* **(from Revelation 21.1-7)**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen. ■

Strongholds: Things That Destroy

By Dr. Mary Craig



A stronghold is a defensive spiritual fortress behind which one hides and is protected. **(1 Samuel 23.14, 19)** When I conducted a spiritual warfare conference in Puerto Rico some years back, I saw a good example of a stronghold. There in Puerto Rico, the Spanish built El Morro. They built a stone wall 25 feet high and 18 feet thick to protect the port from raids by pirates and native Americans. It is a fortress. The world is full of many such fortresses built to ward off enemies.

A stronghold is a fortified dwelling used as a means of protection from an enemy. David hid from King Saul in wilderness strongholds at Horesh. These were usually caves high on a mountainside. They were difficult to attack. Such caves exist in Afghanistan and other regions where it's easy for people to hide out.

A stronghold is a powerful, vigorously protected spiritual reality. When God is the enemy or when we have thoughts, words, and deeds sympathetic toward the devil, strongholds become a defense for Satan against God. When Satan is the enemy, strongholds established by God and salvation through Jesus Christ protect us from him.

Godly strongholds include fortresses like the Lord, the Blood of Jesus, humility, holiness, the armor of God, and the walls of salvation. A demonic stronghold is any type of thing that exalts itself above the knowledge of God.

Christians cannot be owned by a devil. The devil does not own someone who has been bought by a price by Jesus Christ, i.e., redeemed by the Blood of the Lamb. But Christians can have thoughts in rebellion against God and His Word, thoughts not brought captive to the

obedience of Jesus Christ. These thoughts are lies we have swallowed, lying words we have believed, words which we have obeyed in disobedience to God. They are things like vain imaginations, sinful habits. They are fortresses keeping God out. They are fortresses protecting Satan and our sinful ways. They are fortresses protecting our very "selves." They are our defenses from anything entering from the outside that would threaten us and cause us to be overthrown. **(2 Corinthians 10.3-5)**

When we break down strongholds of Satan, we are tearing down our resistance to God. We are breaking our agreement with a foe which will fight to remain in our lives. We are turning, repenting. We are lowering our defenses against God and allowing ourselves to be open to God coming in to our hearts and lives. We are submitting to God. And then we build a fortress to keep the devil out. We turn and resist the devil. We build strongholds in the Lord so that Satan flees from us. We stay within the protection of the fortified city of God so that God can bless us for His glory and for our good.

Satan is an accuser, a deceiver, a destroyer. Jesus intercedes, tells the truth, and is truth. Jesus brings life and immortality to light through the gospel. **(2 Timothy 1.10)** Jesus is God. God is love.

Pride goes before a fall and a haughty spirit before destruction. **(Proverbs**

16.18) **Proverbs 11.2** says that when pride comes, so comes shame. Only by pride comes contention. **(Proverbs 13.10)** A rod of pride is in the mouth of the foolish. **(Proverbs 14.2)** Pride brings us low. **(Proverbs 29.23)**

About this fortress of pride, God says that He will bring it down. *"And the fortress of the high fort of your walls shall He bring down, lay low, and bring to the ground, even to the dust."* **(Isaiah 25.11, 12)** Pride is not of God **(1 John 2.16)**. God gives grace to the humble. He resists the proud. **(James 4.6)**

■ **Strongholds are walled fortresses with limited access, used for defense against enemies.**



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My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?
Why are You so far from helping Me,
And from the words of My groaning?
O My God, I cry in the daytime, but You do not hear;
And in the night season, and am not silent.

But You are holy,
Enthroned in the praises of Israel.
Our fathers trusted in You;
They trusted, and You delivered them.
They cried to You, and were delivered;
They trusted in You, and were not ashamed.

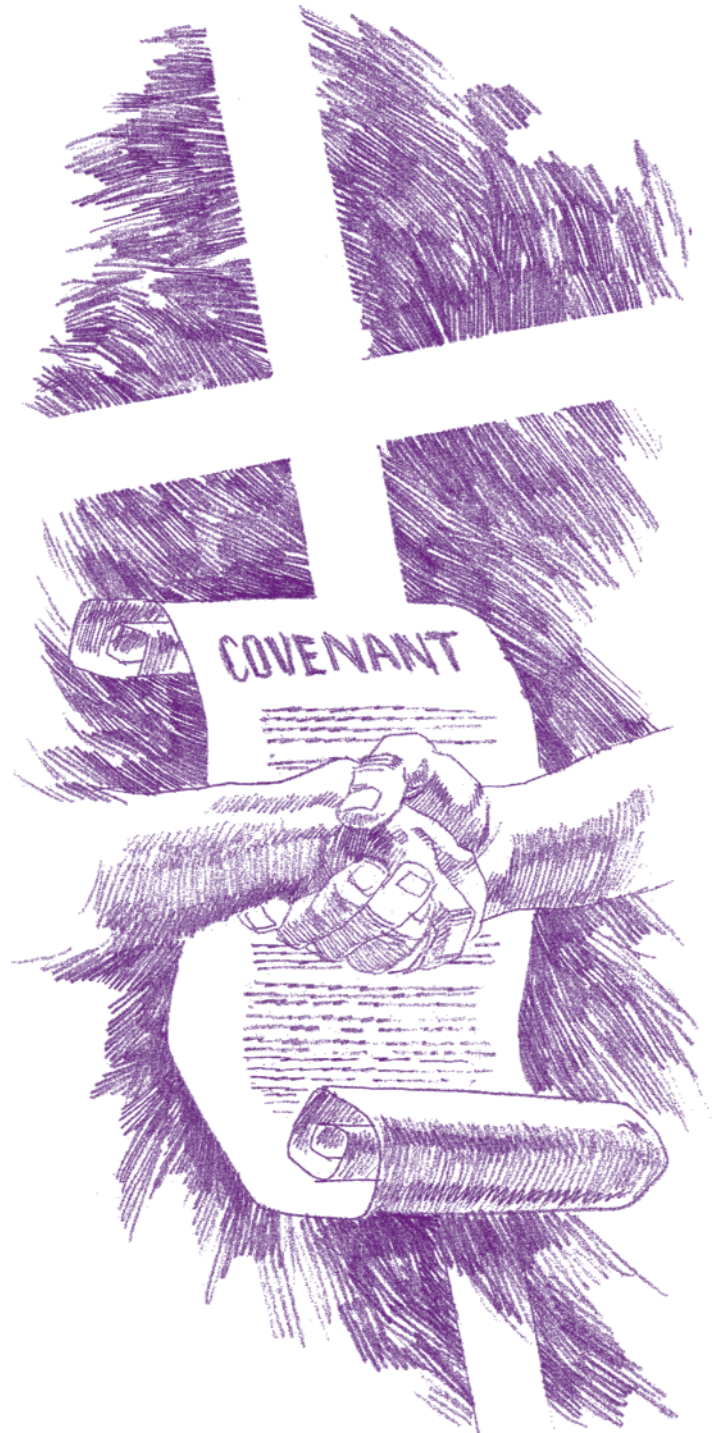
But I am a worm, and no man;
A reproach of men, and despised by the people.
All those who see Me ridicule Me;
They shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying,
"He trusted in the LORD, let Him rescue Him;
Let Him deliver Him, since He delights in Him!"

But You are He who took Me out of the womb;
You made Me trust while on My mother's breasts.
I was cast upon You from birth.
From My mother's womb You have been My God.
Be not far from Me, For trouble is near;
For there is none to help.

Many bulls have surrounded Me;
Strong bulls of Bashan have encircled Me.
They gape at Me with their mouths,
Like a raging and roaring lion.
I am poured out like water,
And all My bones are out of joint;
My heart is like wax;
It has melted within Me.
My strength is dried up like a potsherd,
And My tongue clings to My jaws;
You have brought Me to the dust of death.

For dogs have surrounded Me;
The congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me.
They pierced My hands and My feet;
I can count all My bones.
They look and stare at Me.
They divide My garments among them,
And for My clothing they cast lots.

But You, O LORD, do not be far from Me;
O My Strength, hasten to help Me!
Deliver Me from the sword,
My precious life from the power of the dog.
Save Me from the lion's mouth
And from the horns of the wild oxen!



You have answered Me.



I will declare Your name to My brethren;
In the midst of the assembly I will praise You.
You who fear the LORD, praise Him!
All you descendants of Jacob, glorify Him,
And fear Him, all you offspring of Israel!
For He has not despised nor abhorred
the affliction of the afflicted;
Nor has He hidden His face from Him;
But when He cried to Him, He heard.

My praise shall be of You in the great assembly;
I will pay My vows before those who fear Him.
The poor shall eat and be satisfied;
Those who seek Him will praise the LORD.
Let your heart live forever!

All the ends of the world
Shall remember and turn to the LORD,
And all the families of the nations
Shall worship before You.
For the kingdom is the LORD's,
And He rules over the nations.

All the prosperous of the earth
Shall eat and worship;
All those who go down to the dust
Shall bow before Him,
Even he who cannot keep himself alive.

A posterity shall serve Him.
It will be recounted of the Lord
to the next generation,
They will come and declare
His righteousness to a people who will be born,
That He has done this.

NKJ Psalm 22

A Missionary's Journal

By Dr. Mary Craig

I don't really keep a journal. It's mostly "in my head." But as I sit here thinking about the mission trip into Australia/New Zealand, my thoughts run to the importance of hearing the Lord's voice and obeying it.

Many years ago now, we started doing spiritual warfare over cities. Then it extended to the USA and then to nations around the world and now to the continents. Australia was the fourth continent called to repentance and resurrection for Jesus Christ and the 42nd nation where MCM mission teams have ministered.

On these trips, the Christian life is just daily. It isn't always until team members return home that we all begin to see the many ways in which God was there. For example, every day we would come into a new place, a new city, and someone would comment that that day was the first day of sunshine since November. However, when we went to Ayers Rock, a desert region in central Australia, it began to rain shortly after we prayed at this huge monolith, declaring Jesus Christ to be The Rock and only Savior and Source, the only Creator, and speaking for water to come forth from that Rock.

Marcia Murray, who traveled with me, noticed how friendly the people are in New Zealand and how much they care for their animals. She noted that during a sheep demonstration, the guide covered the ears of one little sheep destined to become meat for someone. The people generally were very good to their animals, as was obvious by the wagging tails and happy eyes of working dogs. We saw only one case of animal neglect, at Pencarrow's Lodge in Eastbourne, on the Storm Coast, a case we reported.

Marcia felt her prior obediences to the Lord led to her being able to go on this trip. She had offered herself to



Aborigines



Koala Bear



Ayers Rock

the Lord and to us to be airport transportation for other teams, and now the Lord made a way for her to go herself. Also, she had prayed for many other nations and teams as part of the "home front" and had recently become the Co-ordinator for Warriors of the Word, the prayer support for the ministry's organizational needs.

From the first leg of the air travel, God put us with other believers. People would be drawn to us. One woman approached us in the airport at Ayers Rock because she saw Marcia reading a biography of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. That led to a wonderful time of fellowship and spiritual encouragement. On the last leg of our journey, I sat between two young believers and was able to encourage them in their walk with the Lord. God is good to bring times of refreshing to each of us just when we need it.

We ended up in Sydney, Australia, just in time for their Australia Day celebrations. We were able to see a fabulous fire works display at Sydney Harbor, a grand conclusion to our trip before heading home. There, the Holy Spirit gave me the following concerning Australia:



■ Marcia Murray

Repent, for I am coming to you in judgment for defiling the name of My Son, for scorning the shepherds of My people, for worshipping idols. For you have heard but do not heed. You have seen but do not look. Your hearts are hard.

Cry for the sins. Call out, but you will not. Thousands in the valley of decision, yet I do not know them. Neither do they desire Me.

I have My own in this land, those who remain faithful to My Word, to Me. These I will protect in the day of judgment. These I will hide from My wrath.

Honor the Blood, for it is your hope. They celebrate liberty, but they are bound. They shoot off fire but fear not the fires of hell. They look up but not to Me. I see what they do. And they shall see what I will do. For the mouth of the Lord has spoken it.



If Australia was about the Rock, New Zealand was about a spirit of blindness. New Zealand has such a glorious climate and, from what I could see, no natural predators. The people care deeply about the land and each other for the most part. Marcy and I remarked at the fact that the people's faces showed no anxiety and little fear. Yet it reminded me of Revelation where some did not see their true condition spiritually. As I prayed in New Zealand, the Holy Spirit just kept mentioning their blindness.

All this just told me to keep humble before the Lord and to seek His face and His righteousness. We need His perspective on the events of our lives and history. He is the Rock of our salvation. As our foundation stone, He will not erode over time and we will find safety in the crags. We must love truth at all costs so as to see our true condition. This means coming again and again to the Word of God and to prayer. It also means loving one another, living in community so we don't get isolated and get off track in our thoughts. We need to see that God in His love sends sunshine and rain upon the just and the unjust because He is a merciful and gracious God even to the evil and unthankful. He doesn't lower His standards but maintains His own personal integrity. We need to do the same.

There are a lot of good things coming out of Australia and New Zealand. It will be interesting to see what God does. And God was even looking ahead to the Antarctica Expedition we have planned for the end of this year. We were able to talk with people who had traveled there and had insight concerning such an endeavor and we went to an Antarctica Museum in Christchurch, NZ. Antarctica will be the last continent to be called in, as March will have Betty Patten and I traveling to Singapore to minister in Asia.

The Lord listens to the cries of His people. He sends His messengers everywhere, for we are called to go, in His Name, by His grace, for His glory. ■



■ **Marcy and Mary at Ayers Rock, Australia.**



Continued from page 5

Proud people seek to preserve their superior status. They have to maintain their self-esteem, their estimation of themselves. Proud people get angry easily. They attack others. They accuse others. They can be quite insecure, driven to become territorial, possessive, self-preserving.

Accusation is a huge problem today, especially in our churches. Satan uses the mouths of Christians to accuse the brethren. **Isaiah 58** tells us to put away the pointing of the finger. The proud person is self-seeking. He seeks to preserve his own life. But Jesus said that we must lose our lives for His sake if we want to find life.

When we get angry, when we attack others, when we accuse other people, when we point the finger, we are saying we are better. We have that “holier than thou” attitude. We are seeking to maintain our own sense of greatness. We are seeking greatness, position, riches, and security apart from Christ and at the expense of others. (**Galatians 6.1; James 4.11, 12; Matthew 7.1, 2**)

1 Peter 4.8 tells us that love covers a multitude of sins. We are to set Christ above personal advantage, personal pleasures, personal ambitions. We never want to get between someone else and Jesus Christ.

Contention, condemnation, judging, accusation, and things like that are destructive to the Body of Christ. We are wounding our corporate self spiritually because we are the Body of Christ, individually and corporately. We are stabbing each other, knifing each other. We forget that to fight against the people of God is to fight God Himself.

The answer to this is to know who we are in Christ and to have our salvation securely resting in Jesus. When we are secure in our salvation, we don't have to preserve our own lives. The Holy Spirit preserves us. We have Jesus interceding as our Faithful High Priest in the power of an endless life. We walk according to the Law of Life as those set free from the Law of the Commandment. We have a new nature given to us by God that enables us to love God and to do His will. We are free to be humble servants of God, clothed in humility, meekness, love, and gentleness. We can be kind.

To have humility around us is the best fortress and stronghold we can have against Satan. If we

will focus on the fruit of the Spirit, on being conformed to the image of Jesus, on life in Christ, we will have the right perspective and emphasis of the Christian life.

But now let's turn to something else that destroys. Witchcraft. Witchcraft is counterfeit spiritual authority in its most broadest definition. It is using a spirit other than the Holy Spirit to dominate, manipulate, or control people, circumstances, outcomes, destinies. It might be a human spirit exalting itself to the place of "god" or a demonic spirit. You can look for the possibility of witchcraft by heeding the following indicators:

- *When guilt is being used to manipulate someone,*
- *When pressure, high-powered sales techniques, magic, and fear are being used,*
- *When a position as parent, boss, elder, leader, or any spiritual authority is being used for that person's personal advantage and gain,*
- *When others are being thought of or treated as slaves,*
- *When people attack, accuse, slander, and intimidate for the purpose of bending another to their will and to their way.*

We must all guard against falling into the use of witchcraft and yielding to the flesh. Christians operate in witchcraft when they offer up what I call soulish prayers. Those are the prayers where we try to "help God out." We use commanding and demanding prayer to "let another person have it" because we have judged that person as less than holy, less than what we have judged that they should be. We have played Holy Spirit and think we know better than God or more than God and can do a better job at being God.

The temptation to witchcraft comes from stressful circumstances. We feel out of control. We distrust God. We are ignorant of God's sovereignty. We don't really think God is doing the God-thing the right way. He just thinks He's God, but we don't agree. We don't like His timing or His patience or His perspective. We are self-seeking, self-promoting, self-preserving. We fear



losing control and balk at submitting to God.

One time our then pastor, Rev. Mical Pugh, was sitting in a hospital cafeteria with a young mother whose two year-old son was about to undergo open heart surgery. Here, away from the family and hospital staff she could let her guard down and release some of her tears, thoughts, and feelings. "I feel so out of control. There's nothing I can do but wait and pray," she confessed. Then she added, "It's really all an illusion, isn't it? While I may think I'm more in control when he's home or in the back seat of our car, I'm not-am I? God is really the only one in control." This young woman saw pretty clearly. She refused the illusion and surrendered control to God. God cares about us. That woman found the peace of God by making peace with God. Not that she sat by and did nothing, but she kept the right perspective.

We fall into the trap of witchcraft when we want to maintain control and assert our will against the will of God. That's why Jesus called Peter a satan when Peter rose up against the plan of God that Jesus would go to the cross and die. Jesus said Peter had not the thoughts of God in his heart, but the thoughts of a man. **(Matthew 16)** We may mean well, but yield to the pressure of the moment because we forget to fear God and trust Him. **(1 Samuel 13.11; Proverbs 3.5, 6)**

When we seek our own profit, usurp authority, yield to the use of political power and human persuasion, we must beware. It may indicate areas where we don't trust God to promote us, to protect us, to preserve us, to establish us. We can walk out of our anointing, out of true spiritual authority into a counterfeit, i.e., witchcraft. We are looking to another spirit, either our own or demonic. We come to fear anything or anyone we cannot manipulate or control.

We must ask: Where does my authority, my recognition, my security come from? God...or man? **1 Samuel 15.23** says that rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft. Why? Because we turn away from the true Source and Supply of authority and security to a counterfeit.

Those who practice witchcraft use their gifts and use people for themselves. People walking in true spiritual authority use their gifts and give themselves for the people.

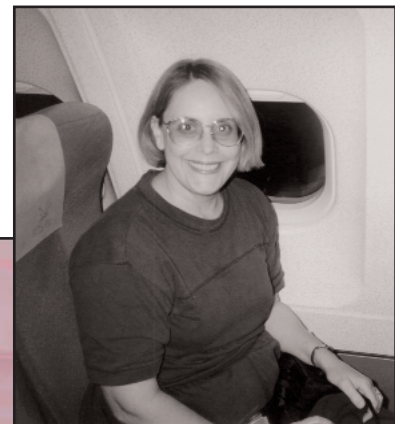
The greatest fortress against pride and against witchcraft, against things that destroy, is humility. God gives grace to the humble, and we really need the grace of God! Stay clothed in humility. Hope in God. Submit to the true authority of the one true and living God. Submit to God. Submit to God's Word. Bless and don't

retaliate. Keep in step with the Spirit. Seek to develop the fruit of the Spirit. Be an example to the flock, not a lord over it. Put off pride and witchcraft and learn from Peter:

All of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resists the proud, and gives grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time: casting all your care upon Him; for He cares for you. Be sober, be vigilant; because your

adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. But the God of all grace, who has called us into His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that you have suffered a while, make you perfect, establish, strengthen, settle you. To Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

1 Peter 5.5-11 KJV ■



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