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BLAMELESS

in Preparation for the Day of Christ

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Paul held great concern in all he wrote that believers should be ready for *the Day of Christ*. Probably at no time in history should this be of greater concern for Christians than in this present time. Praying one for the other along the lines of the prayers Paul laid out in his Epistles—especially those written from the prison in Rome—may be one of the greater things we can participate in to become ready for that Day. As we pray, we are taking the revelation given to Paul and, as it were, praying it into effect in our own lives and in the lives of whomever we hold before God's Throne.

In the **Philippians** passage that we have taken as a guide for praying last month and again this month, we are struck with four matters. All of these have to do with our being made ready to receive an inheritance with Christ in God's Kingdom. What we are praying is working toward Kingdom Character being forged into our own basic character. This will be necessary if we are to overcome the anti-Christ and reign with Christ. In what we're praying this month, we're dealing with those matters in our lives that will keep us from inheriting the Kingdom.

With what is presently happening on the world scene, those of us who are believers find it easy to understand that we may be fast approaching the consummation of this age. There are those who believe that a rapture is eminent to take us away from this present world system as it moves toward a never-before-known chaos. A rapture would cause us to miss the *time of trouble* that will close out the age. There are others, however, who are of the conviction that a time of trouble will have its purpose in bringing us on toward our being prepared to share with Christ in God's Kingdom on earth. Prophets seem to indicate this will be the purpose behind the troublesome years of this present age.

There are some who find it difficult to receive this concept. It seems more reasonable, however, that we bow our hearts toward wisdom and give ourselves to preparation for more than a rapture that will whisk us away from the trouble. While it has been a comfort for some to believe that we shall escape the *tribulation* of which Jesus spoke in **Matt 24:21**, it is not at all clear in Scripture that this is a correct understanding.

As this year is winding down, it is working in my heart that, for the coming year, we shall consider in our month by month study what the Lord Jesus, Paul and the Prophets taught about the closing of this age. Peter, John and Jude also have their part to add. We all want to know exactly what the Scripture says.

As we are spending time with the two prayers we draw from **Philippians 1:9,10**, we can see four points of emphasis that come through relative to the closing of this age, and our moving into the age to come. Three of the points have to do with our character as believers. The fourth has to do with what Paul called *the Day of Christ*.

We place the prayer passage here first as found in the King James Version. Then, we will see it as it occurs in *Weymouth's New Testament*. This is a version seldom seen today. It was published in **1913** and has been overrun by the many more modern translations. What we find in this version, however, is very refreshing and I believe presents an accurate interpretation of what Paul was putting across. However, it is to my displeasure that Mr. Weymouth did not make use of the *Received Text* as he interpreted the New Testament. This means some passages are cut a little short.

As we have often done, we take note of the word **THAT**. This is from that strong little word *hina* in the Greek New Testament that generally indicates what Paul said he was praying.

First, we see the **King James Version**—**9***And this I pray, THAT your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; 10***THAT ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till** (with a view toward being ready for) *the Day of Christ. 11***Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.**

And now, the same passage from **Weymouth**: **9***And it is my prayer THAT your love may be more and more accompanied by clear knowledge and keen perception, for testing things that differ, 10***so THAT you may be men of transparent character, and may be blameless, in preparation for the Day of Christ, 11***being filled with these fruits of righteousness which come through Jesus Christ— to the glory and praise of God.*

It is from verse **10** that we gain our prayer for this month. It is a prayer for soaking ourselves and others in supplication before God's Throne.

Our praying is moving us toward what Paul called *the Day of Christ*. It is from the above Weymouth version that we see the four significant points that must be worked in us if God's Kingdom is to be made manifest in us. See these: **(1)** We are to open ourselves to a kind of *Love* that is *accompanied by clear knowledge and keen perception*. **(2)** We must become proficient in our ability *for testing things that differ*. **(3)** We must become persons *of transparent character*. **(4)** We must have it as our goal to arrive *blameless in the Day of Christ*.

The Day of Christ is too great a subject for us to cover in this brief article. We will follow on, however, with prophetic references that point to this *Day* in the "prayer starter" booklet issued for this month.

Even though the Holy Spirit is keeping it within our hearts that we are moving swiftly toward the final season of this age, we are making no predictions. We are giving ourselves, however, to whatever preparations may make us spiritually ready for that Day. Any other preparation we might make, other than spiritual preparations, are likely to be vain. To be spiritually ready is vital—and is possible.

We must not miss this point: Those who shall take the Kingdom from right under the nose of the anti-Christ are called *saints*. These are holy people, inwardly clean. In case you have missed this, take note of these statements from the Prophet **Daniel**.

Daniel 7:18—*But the SAINTS (holy ones) of the most High shall take the Kingdom, and possess the Kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever.*

Daniel 7:21,22—*I beheld, and the same horn (the little horn) made war with the SAINTS, and prevailed against them; until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the SAINTS of the most High; and the time came that the SAINTS possessed the kingdom.*

Daniel 7:25-27—*And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the SAINTS of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time. •But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end. •And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the SAINTS of the most High, Whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him.*

The above reference to “the little horn” is a reference to *the anti-Christ*. Throughout his prophecies, Daniel makes reference to him by other terms, such as *a vile person*, a *king of fierce countenance*, *the prince that shall come*, etc. Nowhere do any of the Prophets call him “anti-Christ.” We can discern his work, however, in Scriptures that reach from **Genesis 3**, where we see him as the *seed of the serpent*, till we meet him as *the beast* in **Revelations 13**. Only **John** makes reference to this antagonist of Christ as *the antichrist*. (**I John 2:18; 2:22; 4:3** and **II John 1:7**)

As we have often said, since he cannot reach Jesus Himself, it will be his design to lay hold on whatever ground he can find in us that belongs in his own realm. When he finds any of his ground in us, he will use all his power to lay hold on it and wear us out.

Both Jesus and Paul are clear in telling us that many tendencies and practices of the flesh will give anti-Christ spirits access to us. With legal right, they will lay hold on these tendencies and use them to shake us to pieces and leave us like limp rags by the side of the road. They will do this while *saints* march on to victory in the Name and authority of Christ Jesus.

Before we take up again those four points of “Kingdom Preparation” emphasized in **Philippians 1:9** and **10**, let us take a close look at what Paul said will disqualify us for an inheritance in God’s Kingdom. He made similar statements in **I Corinthians 6:9,10; Galatians 5:19-21** and **Ephesians 5:5**. It is to the **Galatians** passage that we go for an up-close look. In verses **19-21** we take note of the qualities of character—qualities of *bad* character, that is—that will prohibit us from inheriting the Kingdom of God. The **works of the flesh** that Paul names here can give the anti-Christ a hold on us by which he can wear us out. Only fruit grown in our lives by the Holy Spirit can withstand him.

Galatians 5:

- 19** Now the *works of the flesh* are manifest, which are these; •*adultery* (sexual activity that breaks the covenant of marriage), •*fornication* (sexual activity in general that ignores the covenant of marriage), •*uncleanness* (lewdness, impurity in motive), •*lasciviousness* (outrageous behavior that shows no restraint),
- 20** •*Idolatry* (the worship of false gods which is an abomination before the Lord), •*witchcraft* (from Gr. *pharmakeía*, the illicit use of drugs; sorcery, magic, enchantment), •*hatred* (discord, alienation, enmity, feuding), •*variance* (contentious behavior, brawling, quarreling, disputes), •*emulations* (jealousy, envy, malice), •*wrath* (swellings of anger; anger that strikes like a poisoned dart), •*strife* (altercations between people who have contentious dispositions), •*seditions* (divisions, standing apart), •*heresies* (factions that come about because of discord),
- 21** •*envyings* (*malignity conceived at the sight of excellence in another person—Adam Clarke*), •*murders* (destruction of another person's life, or reputation—as one who hates his brother in his heart—I John 3:15), •*drunkenness* (debauchery from intoxication), •*revellings* (wild, un-restrained merrymaking), *and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do* (make a practice of) *such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God.*
- 22** But the fruit of the Spirit is •*love*, •*joy*, •*peace*, •*longsuffering* (patient enduring of evil, or, of wrong), •*gentleness* (a gracious and kind attitude), •*goodness* (benevolence toward others), •*faith* (fidelity, punctuality in performing promises, conscientious),
- 23** •*meekness* (*mildness, indulgence toward the weak and erring, patient suffering of injuries without feeling a spirit of revenge, an even balance of all tempers and passions; the entire opposite to anger.—Adam Clarke*), •*temperance* (keeping one's self under government; moderation, especially with regard to sensual or sexual appetites).

There need be no argument as to why souls who maintain *the works of the flesh* shall have no inheritance in God's Kingdom. The prayers we gain from **Philippians 1:9,10** will go far toward working into our lives those qualities that will make us acceptable and useful in God's Kingdom for the *Day of Christ*.

FIRST, there must be that kind of *Love* in us that comes from the heart of God. This Love, unlike the love born in our bosom out of human feeling, will be a love that can see clearly through matters with a keen perception that discerns what is right and what is wrong. How we need to learn to hold our loved ones before the Lord for this Love to find its release in them! This is so they will not be caught in traps that make them unable to discern between lust and true Love.

SECOND, we must become proficient in our ability *for testing things that differ*. This ability to put a matter to the test can best be devised in us by the Spirit of God. As He works in us, He will enable us to determine what is right and what is not right, so we can live with a love of the highest order directing our lives. Some have called this "tough love." It is a love that can remain strong in us while saying "no" to those we love.

Paul made a clear statement along this line in **Romans 12:1,2**— *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service* (which is your rational servitude for God’s Kingdom). *And be not conformed to this world* (be not fashioned in accordance with this age): *but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind* (but undergo a spiritual transformation by the renovation of the way you understand matters), *that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God* (that you may be able to put things to the test and discern what is good and well pleasing; so you can know the higher and more excellent desire of God for your life).

THIRD, we must become persons of *transparent character*. Paul realized that we who have given our lives to the Lord for the service of His Kingdom must train ourselves for excellence in this service. Those who are spiritual sluggards will know little of His Kingdom. There will be little good fruit coming from their lives. See in **Acts 24:16** what Paul said about his own discipline after he had come to know the Lord, having lived before as an antagonist of Christ. *And herein do I exercise myself* (In this matter I am giving myself to a disciplined training), *to have always a conscience void to offence toward God, and toward men* (so that the inward moral impression I have of myself will contain nothing against the moral rule of God’s Kingdom).

He expressed this further in **I Corinthians 9:27**. *But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.*

In the larger passage, Weymouth presents a compelling insight into Paul’s own disciplined life. This is something we, as religious leaders, cannot impose on others. But we can pray that the goal of those under our care might be that they excel for Christ’s Kingdom, with those who have gone before as examples. •*But every competitor in an athletic contest practices abstemiousness* (abstinence) *in all directions. They indeed do this for the sake of securing a perishable wreath, but we for the sake of securing one that will not perish.* •*That is how I run, not being in any doubt as to my goal. I am a boxer who does not inflict blows on the air,* • *but I hit hard and straight at my own body and lead it off into slavery, lest possibly, after I have been a herald to others, I should myself be rejected*—Weymouth’s New Testament, **I Corinthians 9:25-27**..

FOURTH, we must have it as our goal to arrive *blameless in the Day of Christ*. This leads us to a matter exceedingly vast, awesome, exciting and compelling for our spirits to pursue.

Be sure to join us with this month’s prayer-starters as we start out looking again at Matthew 5:44, recalling the primary trait of character that will take us through the final conflict and bring us to the Day of the Lord, the Love that flows to us from God.