

Have You Seen What We've Seen? (Observation 13)

Dear Friends in Christ Jesus our Lord,

In this Teaching Email we emphasize the *inner attitudes* through which Father's grace works – **humility** and **contriteness**. These are absolutely necessary so you can experience ***the facet of God's grace to fulfill His purposes***. This wonderful and powerful grace which Father gives His children is a biblical fact that's *corroborated in both Testaments*. We cited in Observation 12 the systemic reason why this facet of His grace *hasn't* been emphasized in Christianity for many centuries –the overriding influence of **anti-Semitic theologians** in both Roman Catholicism and Protestantism. From the second century onward they were determined to decisively split away from any practices they deemed “Jewish” or “Old Testament”. As a result Christianity was deprived of enacting the personal intimacy of the Covenant union which our Father offers through Jesus, and the spiritual power to carry out His will.

If our Lord Jesus visited faith communities today, would He be disheartened to see people who are far more engrossed in religious observance that satisfies their own spiritual expression than in being resolute in fulfilling Father's will out of loving obedience to our Lord Jesus? Would He be dismayed to see them living devoid of spiritual power and enslaved under demonic influence and control? Hear His testimony:

- “*Very truly I tell you, whoever trusts in Me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father*” (John 14:12).
- “*Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, ‘Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name’*” (Luke 10:17; see also 2Timothy 3:5).

We want to offer some insights as to why there is such *widespread powerlessness* within Christianity today. Again, Father's *grace with purpose* is entrusted only to those who possess inner attitudes of **humility** and **contriteness** which compel them to repent when they sin. (See the illustration on the next page.) When it comes to His grace, our Father “*opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble*” (James 4:6; see also 4:10; 1Peter 3:8; 5:6).

- Are you humble and contrite when you realize that you've sinned against God?
Or, does the Holy Spirit have to intensify pressure to convict you to repent?
- Are you filled with sorrow when you hurt the feelings of someone else?
Or, do they have to strongly convince you how much you hurt them?

Spiritual or emotional callousness reveals a prideful soul that's void of humility and contriteness. Most often this hardheartedness resides in those who've never deeply appreciated the sacrifice of Jesus and why He died for them. If this is you or someone close to you, nothing will change until Father sees your humility and contriteness.

Our Father will not entrust His *grace with purpose* to anyone who keeps even one foot on the side of the funnel. While we were still in Israel He told us, “*As long as you remain repentant I will use you. But if you refuse to repent I will find someone else.*” By His grace and *rhema* we continue to share what His Spirit gives us — it's a privilege we'd hate to forfeit!

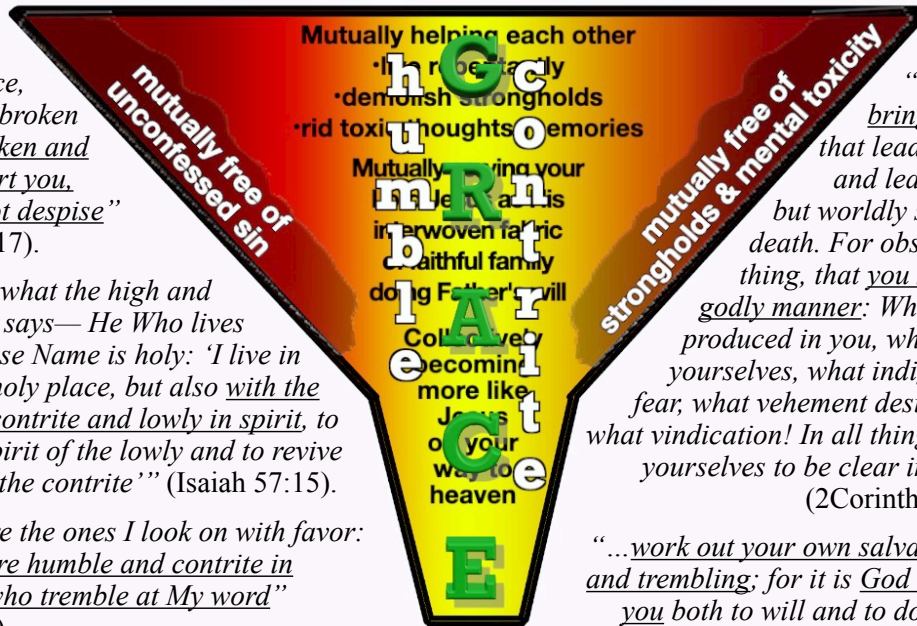
Genuinely Born Again Under The Lordship of Jesus Your Savior

Grace

“My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart you, God, will not despise” (Psalms 51:17).

“For this is what the high and exalted One says— He Who lives forever, whose Name is holy: ‘I live in a high and holy place, but also with the one who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite’” (Isaiah 57:15).

“...These are the ones I look on with favor: those who are humble and contrite in spirit, and who tremble at My word” (Isaiah 66:2).



Grace

“Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death. For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What diligence it produced in you, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication! In all things you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter” (2Corinthians 7:10,11).

“...work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God Who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure” (Philippians 2:12).

Heaven & Salvation

“Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?” (Romans 6:3).

Being baptized into the death of Jesus requires a **humble** and **contrite** attitude in a person who fully grasps their own sinful depravity — someone whose inner attitude isn’t ***“I’m not that bad!”*** or ***“I’m basically a good person.”*** Immersion baptism attests that you are dying to your sin nature, *if* indeed you’ve sincerely cast off your old ways and aren’t just going through the motion (see 2 Peter 2:20-22). Commitment to Jesus in being immersed parallels the pledges given by a couple getting married. Both the wedding and immersion baptism are specific moments of *proclaiming a life commitment*. Both marriage and baptism *ratify covenants*. The spiritual Covenant union with our Father is to be physically represented in the marriage covenant. Breaking either covenant has grave consequences! Marriage and immersion baptism are serious undertakings. In each covenant a person is forfeiting something old and taking on a new responsibility.

“We were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. For if we have been united with Him in a death like His, we will certainly also be united with Him in a resurrection like His. For we know that our old self was crucified with Him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin — because anyone who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we trust that we will also live with Him” (Romans 6:4-8).

“...baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a clear conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ” (1Peter 3:21).



Our Hebraic ancestors immersed themselves completely in a *mikveh*, a hewn stone “tub”, committing their lives to not compromise with ongoing sin and unbiblical values. They wanted to be purified to be fully available before God to do His will. In immersion baptism, we are pledging to keep a clear conscience through the humility and contriteness which draw us to repent. We also accept the responsibility to represent Jesus in the flesh to the world around us. So, are you a public compliment to our Lord or a defamation?

Being immersed isn't a guarantee that you'll remain repentant on your journey to your salvation. The Newer Testament contains a good number of “ifs” that reveal we can permanently leave the center of the funnel by rejecting the humility and contriteness that repentance requires. When we keep refusing to repent, we are denying Jesus and disavowing the purpose of His shed blood: *“Here is a trustworthy saying: **If we died with Him, we will also live with Him; if we endure, we will also reign with Him. If we disown Him, He will also disown us; if we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot disown Himself”*** (2Timothy 2:11-13; see also Hebrews 3:12-14).

Consider this:

- What physical act other than immersion baptism could someone who has been born again take to epitomize their radical change of heart, their total commitment to earnestly keep fleeing sin and by His grace wholeheartedly love and serve our Lord?
- Is there an indicator so dramatic, so dynamic and all-encompassing, as immersion baptism that could represent the radical change you've undergone when you are born from above and become a new creation in union with Christ?

We've noted in previous materials that infant baptism is a ritual that was adopted by Christianity from European paganism. Infant baptism is an expression of **syncretism** (merging different religions, cultures, or philosophies). Roman Catholicism used syncretism to convert pagan tribes, incorporating heathen practices to make Christianity more acceptable to them. Many Protestant denominations erroneously connected infant baptism as an extension of Old Testament infant circumcision. And the acceptance of infant baptism in Christianity was spurred on by **anti-Semitic theologians** who disregarded the Hebraic origins of immersion baptism for the *genuinely* born again. Certainly an infant has no understanding of their depraved sin nature, and there is no biblical pattern for baptizing anyone who hasn't repented and proclaimed their trust in Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

An observation you should consider: We've never met anyone who was baptized as an infant and because of that ritual went on to serve Jesus as Lord of their lives — apart from repenting and being born from above. They may busy themselves in “Christian” activities and programs, but they refuse to purposely seek our Father's will and then obey it. Only after they were immersed, expressing the humble and contrite attitude required in God's Word, were they then able to live by His grace with resolute determination to glorify our heavenly Father through doing His will.

If you'd like to know more about the Older Testament origin of baptism for repentance, see: TODAY! What Would Jesus Be Doing If He Were You? <<https://restorationministries.org/download/09.wwjid.pdf>>

What did our Lord tell us about trust and baptism just before His ascension?

“And [Jesus] said to them, ‘Going into all the world, proclaim the gospel to all creation. The one trusting and being baptized will be saved; but the one not trusting will be condemned. And these signs will follow those who trust: •In My name they will cast out demons; •they will speak with new tongues; •they will take up serpents; and •if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; •they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover’” (Mark 16:15-18).

Our Lord certainly isn't speaking to babies. But He *is* telling those who recognize their sinfulness, who with humble and contrite hearts repent, that they also need to be immersed in baptism. To be *immersed* means you take on the qualities of what you're plunged into, like cloth submerged into dye. Spiritually this means that you die to yourself to be raised up and set apart for our Lord's use. Being filled with the power of the Holy Spirit, your life is changed like Jesus said about those who trusted Him “*as the [Older Testament] Scriptures have said*” (John 7:38,39). But sadly, so little spiritual power is manifested in Christianity today. One reason for this is the lack of humility and contriteness that trigger the life-altering significance of immersion. And as long as followers of Jesus rely on clergy domination, spiritual power will be sorely lacking.

Anti-Semitic theologians robbed Christianity of spiritual power when they assimilated pagan Nicolaitanism into their practices and organizational hierarchy. Rejecting the pastoral role of the elder, the Older Testament *zaken*, they appropriated unbiblical models of leadership from heathen Hellenists. In contrast, the biblical shepherd/teacher (Hebrew *zaken*/Greek *poimen*) was a gray-haired man of character who led others by imparting wisdom and counsel to the extended spiritual family of God's people. In teaching God's commands and way of life, he rightly divided the Word to help personally clarify application and exhort his flock to action.

To explore the role of *zaken* as an Ephesians 4:1 shepherd/teacher, read the first 5 chapters of our book, *Pastoring By Elders* <<https://restorationministries.org/download/pastoring-by-eldersr.pdf>>.

The destructive domination of **anti-Semitism, Nicolaitanism, and Hellenism** throughout Christianity can never be overstated. Wherever the influence of European/Americanized Christianity has gone, one or more of these demonic dominators has undermined the spiritual power that reveals the full nature of our Lord Jesus through His followers. The Bible is useless if it isn't demonstrated in the lives of those who claim to belong to Jesus as their Lord (see Matthew 7:20-27). Please, make this verse real through your life to others: ***“For from Him and through Him and for Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever! Amen”*** (Romans 11:36).

Mike & Sue