

29 September 2013

## Bless the Lord our God (Pt5 & Final).

This is our fifth and final study on the topic of 'Blessing God'. In our previous study we covered three points; (1) bless God for giving us rest, and (2) bless God for giving us a King, and (3) bless God for speaking to us. In this study we will cover three points; (1) bless the glory of the Lord, and (2) bless God for delivering us out of the hands of our enemies, and (3) bless God for His free gift.

Let us add a little more detail to our points:-

### 1. Bless the glory of the Lord

Eze 3:12 *Then the spirit took me up, and I heard behind me a voice of a great rushing, [saying], Blessed [be] the glory of the Lord from his place.*

Could you imagine seeing the glory of the Lord here on earth?

In the wilderness the children of Israel saw the glory of the Lord in the cloud (see Ex.16: 10 & 24: 16) and in the tabernacle (see Num.14: 10) and then in the house of the Lord in Jerusalem (see 2Chr.5: 14).

Ezekiel the prophet describes what he saw as being the likeness of the glory of the Lord in Ez.1: 26 - 28, which had the appearance of a man on a throne, in the colour of amber, as the appearance of fire, and brightness round about. As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud of rain, this was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. Wow!

And in chapter 3 we learn that Ezekiel was taken by the Holy Spirit of God into heaven, where he heard a voice, perhaps a voice of an angel saying *Blessed be the glory of the Lord*. Wow!

Then you have Stephen who, just before his death the heavens opened *and he saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God* (see Acts 7: 55).

So the glory of the Lord must be something incredible to look upon, almost too amazing for the human eye to capture, but clearly worthy of our blessing God. Turn now to the book of Isaiah chapter two and read from verses 10 - 21. When we read verses 10, 19, and 21 we see a reference to the glory of the majesty of the Lord, which in each occurrence is followed by the words; *when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth*. So the reference to the glory of His majesty is associated with God's judgment. So when we think of the glory of the Lord, we can associate His glory to His majesty, hence, when we give glory to the Lord, perhaps we can include His majesty.

In 1Chronicles chapter 29 it is recorded that David blessed the Lord God of the father of Israel (see verse 10 & 11). Why did he bless the Lord? Read verse 11.

*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* (1Chr 29:11).

So David blessed God for his greatness, his power, his glory, the victory (which will be covered in our next point) and majesty. Why? Because all that is in the heaven and earth is the Lord's, and He is exalted as head above all! Wow!

So when we bless the glory of the Lord, we exalt Him as head above all the earth. Above other gods, above riches, above gold or silver, our jobs, our family and our lives.

And yes you will *not* see his glory until you get to heaven, but we have His Sacred writings that reveal the magnificence of His glory, so I suggest that we are still able to bless God for His glory, while we are here on earth, because whether we are here on earth or with Christ Jesus our Saviour, everything in heaven and earth are His, and He is exalted as head above all!

Last Friday night there was the regular Hari Krishna folk chanting their way up Queen Street. They believe they access Krishna (the supreme person) when they chant his name. In reality they exalt his name above the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. And in doing so they do not bless the glory and majesty of God, but Satan who is behind all modern-day false religions.

Remember the meaning of the word *bless* from our first study in this series? We established that verses where *blessed* is used of God the words *baruk* and *eulogetos* are behind the English word, hence having a sense of praise or kneel down. So we ask, have you ever got on your knees and praised the Lord for His glory?

Let us with one voice bless God for His Glory that encompasses His majesty, His greatness, and the work of His hands the heavens and the earth.

### 2. Bless God for delivering us out of the hand of our enemies.

Ex.18:10 *And Jethro said, Blessed [be] the Lord, who hath delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of Pharaoh, who hath delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians.*

See also Gen.14: 20 & 1Chr.29: 11

Throughout the Old Testament from Genesis through to Malachi God delivered His children out of the hand of their enemies (examples: Gen.14: 20 & Zech.10: 5) and the Lord was an enemy to those who were Israel's enemies (see Ex.23: 22 & 1Sam.24: 4). And in our Old Testament passages God delivers the children of Israel out of the hand of the Egyptians and it is from the deliverance of this physical enemy that Jethro blesses God. But our spiritual enemy in this the church age is no less real than the physical enemy of the Old Testament.

In our verse from Ex.18: 10, were all of Israel's encounters with their enemy over when they were delivered from the Egyptians? No! They continued to daily face people from different lands that wanted to kill them, yet Jethro on this day, blessed the Lord for delivering them out of the hand of their enemy, the Egyptians. David had enemies daily, like Saul who was continually trying to kill him (see 1Sam.18: 29). The Lord would send David out to kill another of his enemies the Philistines (see 1Sam.23: 2), and on other occasions the Lord would smite David's enemies (see Ps.3: 7). But whoever did the killing of the enemy, the reason for David's enemy being defeated, was because God had delivered them into his hand.

Today Christians are in a battle, a war that does not just last one day, one week, one month, one year or even 10 years, it rages in the heavens until Satan is thrown into the bottomless pit (see Rev.20: 3). And our enemy the devil is spiritual, (see Matt.13: 39) he walks about *seeking whom he may devour* (see 1Pet.5: 8). Our daily warfare against the devil is likened to a wrestling match (see Eph.6: 12), where two people are in close contact with each other, trying to strong arm the other chap, trying to expose a weakness in the other person. That is the picture of our spiritual battle, where the enemy is unseen, he hates us, and tries to deceive us and seduce us with the lusts of this world, and he will never give up tempting us, never give up using his devices to delay or destroy the Lord's work. Nevertheless, we have our small victories, our small successes as God gave the Israelites when he destroyed the Egyptians before them. And those successes are not due to our strength or wisdom, but they are because of what the Lord does for us, because when we ask God for help in our warfare He will deliver us out of the hand of our enemy, it may be just in a small area of the battle, but nevertheless He delivers those who call on Him, He puts their feet back on the rock (see Ps.40: 2). Today he gives us spiritual armour, and a spiritual sword and shield for us to attack and defend ourselves against our adversary.

Do you remember what Israel or David did when God wrought a great victory for them? They blessed God for delivering them out of the hands of their enemies. And that is exactly what we can do, we can get on our knees and thank God, we can praise Him for our small victories, we can bless the Lord for delivering us out of the hand of our enemy, even though the next day, the battle will continue to rage, and we may get discouraged. Nevertheless we can still thank God and bless Him for our mini-miracles our micro-victories.

Imagine for a moment you are a missionary working in Syria, and you witness Satan using a physical enemy (likely to be Muslim-based) to kill the local population, including Christians, with what we see in the media to be chemical weapons. How would you feel living in such a country? would you feel like waking up in the morning and heading downtown to the main street in Damascus (the capital) and preaching the gospel? Or would you be too concerned about the safety of yourself and your family? And when would you feel as though you had won *any* small battles on any day of the week that were worthy of thanking God for, or blessing Him? Perhaps not, but I am sure with all the requests that believers around the world make for such missionaries and others in war-torn countries, that they would feel God giving them small successes for which they would desire to bless Him.

Be ye encouraged to bless the Lord for delivering you out of the hands of your enemies when you witness a small victory for Christ.

### 3. Bless God for His free gift

Deut 8:10 *When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the Lord thy God for the good land which he hath given thee.*

Finishing this last study on this topic, on this point of 'blessing God', was not my idea! But what a way to conclude our study, to bless God for His free gift. Yes, our point is derived from a verse in the Old Testament, but as we have done for each of our points in this teaching, we have made an application for us today from our verse in Deut.8: 10, where Moses was speaking to the people of Israel and telling them that when they get to the land, that is a land of milk and honey, and have eaten and are full and recognise that all they have comes from the Lord, then they will bless the Lord for the good land which He gave them. And notice the land which God Almighty gave as a free gift, He gave it to Israel, not the Arabs. That's right, in the Holy Scriptures of truth God gave the land of Canaan to Israel as a free gift. They did not earn it, in fact the only thing they earned was expulsion from the land, but prior to that God gave them the land because He loved them, and He only wanted their love and obedience in return. The New Testament uses the phrase 'free gift' three times in the book of Romans and each of them are in chapter five. Let us read the whole chapter, with an ear for verses 15, 16 & 18. What is our 'free gift'?

For those today who are physically poor and do not own any land today, God is not going to give you a plot of land as a free gift as he did the nation of Israel. The free gift to every man today, poor or rich, given by God's grace is the man Jesus Christ as a saviour. God the Father gave His only begotten Son (see Jn.3: 16), the Lord Jesus Christ as a one-off payment for our sin debt, that we would be made the righteousness of God (see 2Cor.5: 21), that when we die God would see in the believer Christ's imputed righteousness and on that basis He would grant the believer eternal life in heaven. This free gift from God is profound. Most people today, in this the church age, who hear about this free gift see it as either a) a fraudulent gift, or (b) think that there is a catch and they have to work for the gift, or (c) they are good enough to get into heaven and do not need God's free gift, or d) they trust in a false god who offers them false hope.

Do you remember the look on the faces of children when they open presents on their birthday? They smile from ear to ear, they joy in opening their gifts. They do not have to pay for their gift, by the fact that they are gifts they are free, and every child loves to receive them. The response from the child to the giver, is generally appreciation, thanks and praise.

Do you remember a child that has ever rejected a gift that you have given them? I do not.

Do you remember an adult that has ever rejected a gift that you have given them? I do.

Now consider the verse in the Gospels where the Lord Jesus Christ teaches that when a person comes to Him they must do so as if they are little children with the attitude and heart of a child (see Mk.10: 14, 15 & Lk.18: 16 & 17), ready and prepared to receive the free gift.

And so with each of our points in this teaching, we bless God, we get on our knees and thank Him and praise Him and bless Him for all that *He* has done. And in this point we bless Him for the free gift of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ who bore our sin on Himself, that we might be made the righteousness of God, and when we die, our hope according to the Scriptures, is to spend an eternity with Him in heaven. And like Israel whom He took as His own child because He loved them, and not because of what they had done, so for us today, God does *not* give us His unspeakable gift (see 2Cor.9: 15) because we deserve it, but because He loves us (see Jn.3: 16).

So, let us conclude this study on Blessing God and get on our knees and praise Him, blessing Him for the free gift of His only begotten Son the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us encourage each other to remember daily what God has done in Christ and bless Him for His free gift. Amen!

To summarise this series of studies on the topic of blessing God, we have covered fifteen things to Bless the Lord for:-

1. He has loaded us with benefits, and
2. His kindness, and
3. He is very great and is clothed with honour and majesty, and
4. He is our strength, and
5. He responds to our prayers, and
6. His works, and
7. His promises, and
8. He directs our path, and
9. His mercy, and
10. His truth, and
11. giving us rest, and
12. giving us a King, and
13. speaking to us through the Scriptures, and
14. delivering us out of the hands of our enemies, and
15. His free gift!

And today we also covered a point that encouraged us to bless the glory of the Lord! Amen!