

Ezekiel 14v12-23—God’s Goodness Is Demonstrated By His Righteous Judgement Of Sin

Memory Verse

Ezekiel 36:26-27 NKJV

I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.

Revision: “...these men have set up their idols in their hearts, and put before them that which causes them to stumble into iniquity. Should I let Myself be inquired of at all by them? [No]

⁶ “Therefore say to the house of Israel, ‘Thus says the Lord God: “Repent, turn away from your idols, and turn your faces away from all your abominations.” (Ezekiel 14:2, 6)

We saw that having idols in our hearts, which could be unconfessed sin or hidden priorities (where we have consciously or unconsciously made something more important than God), will cause us to stumble into sin. This sin of the heart will lead to failure in other parts of our lives. Why? Because we are not yielded to the Spirit; we have not given the Holy Spirit permission to direct and empower our lives (see Romans 8:5-6). As a result we are using the flesh (sinful nature) to try to overcome the flesh (sinful nature). This is the same thing as trying to lift yourself up by your own shoe laces—it’s impossible. Another way of saying this is that we are trying to use evil to produce good—it just can’t work. It’s like using more mud to try to wipe mud of a dirty shirt—it’s only going to get dirtier.

We also saw that the only way to fix the situation is to repent—to restore God to His rightful place as Lord (the highest priority or greatest love) of our lives—meaning we are living for Him and not for ourselves (see 1 John 1:9).

Finally, I need to guard my heart, so that my affections are not stolen or turned away from God. The course of my life is determined by what or who I love the most. I will naturally follow, obey and willingly sacrifice for what I love the most, and despise everything else.

Proverbs 4:23 NLT paraphrase

Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life.

Proverbs 4:23 NKJV

Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life.

Matthew 6:24 NLT

No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other; you will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and be enslaved to money.

Because of this, I must be making a conscious and deliberate effort be on the lookout for any intruders that would threaten my relationship with God, that would seek to steal my affections and so turn my heart from Him and take me down a wrong path. In addition, I must always be watching for things that have unconsciously become idols in my life and repent of them as well. The main point is that I remember that the whole purpose of my existence is to love God more than anything or anyone else and so bring glory and honour to Him (see Isaiah 43:7). This will lead me to naturally *want* to obey Him because I love what He loves and hate what He hates; my first desire will be to please my Saviour who loved me and gave Himself for me (see Galatians 2:20).

God's judgement on persistent unfaithfulness: no more mercy— **14:12-23**

This section again lists the four different judgements or disciplines that God has repeatedly warned the the people of Judah and Jerusalem of in previous chapters:

1. Famine (vs 12-14)
2. Wild beasts (vs 15-16)
3. War (vs 17-18)
4. Plague, pestilence or disease (19-20)

“God had told Jeremiah to stop praying for the people because they were beyond hope (Jeremiah 7:16; 11:14; 14:11), and now He would tell Ezekiel that the presence of three righteous men whom the Jews revered would not save the city of Jerusalem.” (Wiersbe)

The main lesson we learn here is that, like any good parent, with persistent rebellion or disobedience, God will say, “enough is enough”. We see again that God’s patience has limits—there will come time when God’s mercy gives way to judgment, and His people will experience His divine discipline. We can think that we are getting away with things, but we are actually despising God’s patience and forbearance as He holds off His discipline and gives us more time to repent (see Romans 2:4). It finishes with God showing His good purpose in all that He is doing (vs 21-23); the evil escaping remnant would show the people already in exile that the inhabitants of Jerusalem were fully deserving of the severe judgement that was pronounced upon them.

Ezekiel 14:12-23 NKJV

The word of the Lord came again to me, saying: ¹³ “Son of man, when a land sins against Me by persistent unfaithfulness, I will stretch out My hand against it; I will cut off its supply of bread, send famine on it, and cut off man and beast from it. ¹⁴ Even if these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they would deliver only themselves by their righteousness,” says the Lord God.

¹⁵ “If I cause wild beasts to pass through the land, and they empty it, and make it so desolate that no man may pass through because of the beasts, ¹⁶ even though these three men were in it, as I live,” says the Lord God, “they would deliver neither sons nor daughters; only they would be delivered, and the land would be desolate.

¹⁷ “Or if I bring a sword on that land, and say, ‘Sword, go through the land,’ and I cut off man and beast from it, ¹⁸ even though these three men were in it, as I live,” says the Lord God, “they would deliver neither sons nor daughters, but only they themselves would be delivered.

¹⁹ “Or if I send a pestilence into that land and pour out My fury on it in blood, and cut off from it man and beast, ²⁰ even though Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it, as I live,” says the Lord God, “they would deliver neither son nor daughter; they would deliver only themselves by their righteousness.”

²¹ For thus says the Lord God: “How much more it shall be when I send My four severe judgments on Jerusalem—the sword and famine and wild beasts and pestilence—to cut off man and beast from it? ²² Yet behold, there shall be left in it a remnant who will be brought out, both sons and daughters; surely they will come out to you, and you will see their ways and their doings. Then you will be comforted concerning the disaster that I have brought upon Jerusalem, all that I have brought upon it. ²³ And they will comfort you, when you see their ways and their doings; and you shall know that I have done nothing without cause that I have done in it,” says the Lord God.

1. No hope for Judah in famine (12–14)

Ezekiel 14:12-14 NKJV

The word of the Lord came again to me, saying: ¹³ “Son of man, when a land sins against Me by persistent unfaithfulness, I will stretch out My hand against it; I will cut off its supply of bread, send famine on it, and cut off man and beast from it. ¹⁴ Even if these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they would deliver only themselves by their righteousness,” says the Lord God.

v 12 **The word of the Lord came again to me, saying:** Ezekiel was speaking God’s words, not like the false prophets whose prophecy came from the desires of their own hearts—either to please themselves or to scratch their listener’s itchy ears.

v 13 **When a land sins against Me by persistent unfaithfulness, I will stretch out My hand against it:** The **land** itself cannot sin as it is not a moral agent, but rather it is a source of blessing or cursing to the people it was given to (Israel). If the people obeyed, God would use the land to bless them; but if the people disobeyed, the land would become a curse to them. Why did God have to do this? Because the people needed to know that they were out of fellowship with God; God is always faithful to honestly communicate the state of our relationship with Him, good or bad (more on how this works in under the New Covenant at the end). Under the Old Covenant, God promised that if they were obedient then He would show His favour toward them by giving them physical blessings which included:

- freedom from hunger (good crops, abundance of food),
- freedom from wild beasts (would not be attacked or overrun by lions, bears etc),
- freedom from sickness (no disease or pestilence among them)
- freedom from war (they would live at peace with their neighbours)

Obviously, if they were unfaithful or disobedient, then they would experience the opposite: hunger, attack from wild beasts, sickness, and war. Therefore, *as a nation*, the people would know very quickly if they were walking in fellowship with God or not, by simply observing their physical circumstances (we’ll come back to this thought later).

v 13 **Persistent unfaithfulness:** The meaning of the Hebrew words here translated “persistent unfaithfulness” is: *untrue, unfaithful, deceitful, disloyal of violating one’s legal obligations, acting treacherously, or one who commits adultery or infidelity (physical or spiritual against God).*

“It is used of the sin of Achan in relation to the devoted thing (the *herem*, Joshua 7:1) and of a wife’s adulterous act (Num. 5:12), both of which incurred the death penalty. The meaning here is similarly of a land which by its unfaithfulness deserves the ultimate in punishment.” (Taylor)

v 13 **I will cut off its supply of bread and send famine on it, and cut off man and beast from it:** This is the first of the four judgements against the land listed in these verses. The crops would fail and/or the people would suffer hunger in the predicted siege of Jerusalem by the Babylonians. The land would not even supply enough to feed the animals.

v 14 **Even if these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they would deliver only themselves:** In other parts of the Bible, God is looking for someone to “stand in the gap”, to intercede on behalf of the people so that He wouldn’t have to judge them

(see Ezekiel 22:30). Abraham, David, Moses, Job, and Samuel were all leaders and men of prayer who were able to, at times, prevent God's judgement from falling on those around them by their intercessory prayer. But here God is saying that even if there was a godly leader/intercessor to "stand in the gap", it wouldn't make any difference. God's patience is finished. The wickedness of the land was overwhelming and you couldn't find even one godly person in Jerusalem (see Jeremiah 5:1-6). Judah was like the days before the flood when the world was so evil that God regretted that He had made them (see Genesis 6:5-8). Judah was ripe for judgement.

"Jerusalem was more culpable than Sodom. A few righteous men would have delivered Sodom. Here none could turn away the wrath." (Alexander)

"The prayers of the greatest intercessors cannot avail if men persist in their unbelief." (Spurgeon)

v 14 **Noah, Daniel, and Job:** Why did God use these three men? Maybe it was because, while all three men were tested and proved faithful, all of them only had limited success in their intercessory prayer. In the case of Noah and Daniel the cause was the persistent rebellion of those they were praying for:

- Noah interceded for the world in his day, but saved only his family.
- Daniel, also in exile, would have been praying for the nation (I believe), but Judah and Jerusalem was still defeated by the Babylonians.
- Job prayed for his children, but they were killed.

2. No hope for Judah from the wild beasts (15–16)

Ezekiel 14:15-16 NKJV

"If I cause wild beasts to pass through the land, and they empty it, and make it so desolate that no man may pass through because of the beasts, ¹⁶ even though these three men were in it, as I live," says the Lord God, "they would deliver neither sons nor daughters; only they would be delivered, and the land would be desolate.

v 15 **If I cause wild beasts to pass through the land, and they empty it:** Wild beasts like lions, bears, wolves, wild dogs, poisonous snakes and the like would multiply rapidly once the human population was devastated by the Babylonians, making life much more dangerous for the people who remained. It's like the current day situation with the white pointer sharks. Because we are no longer culling them, they are becoming more numerous, and are therefore killing more people. Like many people today are now scared to swim at certain beaches, so the remaining people would have been scared to go through many parts of the countryside for fear of being attacked or mauled by a wild beast.

v 16 **Even though these three men were in it, as I live," says the Lord God, "they would deliver neither sons nor daughters; only they would be delivered:** "In all the procedures of divine judgment the principle of individual responsibility can never be relaxed. Hence the need of personal piety—the absolute necessity that men and women should pray for themselves—that each one should repent for himself, that each one should believe for himself; and that each one should in his own proper person be born again by the effectual operation of the Spirit of God. No proxy in these matters is possible." (Spurgeon)

Application: *In the end it's up to the individual to call out to God and receive salvation from God. It is the individual responsibility for each of us.*

Romans 10:13 NKJV

For “whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

Isaiah 55:6-7 NLT paraphrase

Seek the Lord while you can find Him. Call on Him now while He is near. ⁷ Let the wicked change their ways and banish the very thought of doing wrong. Let them turn to the Lord that He may have mercy on them. Yes, turn to our God, for He will forgive generously.

Ezekiel 18:20 NKJV

The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself.

3. No hope for Judah in war (17–18)

Ezekiel 14:17-18 NKJV

“Or if I bring a sword on that land, and say, ‘Sword, go through the land,’ and I cut off man and beast from it, ¹⁸ even though these three men were in it, as I live,” says the Lord God, “they would deliver neither sons nor daughters, but only they themselves would be delivered.

v 17 **If I bring a sword on that land:** So far there has been famine and wild beasts, now God predicts that many would die due to being killed in battle by the Babylonians.

v 18 **Even though these three men were in it... only they themselves would be delivered:** God repeats for emphasis that even Noah, Daniel, and Job could only save themselves from the judgment of the sword soon to come.

4. No hope for Judah in plague (19–20)

Ezekiel 14:19-20 NKJV

“Or if I send a pestilence into that land and pour out My fury on it in blood, and cut off from it man and beast, ²⁰ even though Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it, as I live,” says the Lord God, “they would deliver neither son nor daughter; they would deliver only themselves by their righteousness.”

Here is the fourth and final judgement, disease and plague—the natural consequence of the siege and famine. There is also yet another reminder of the personal responsibility we each have for our own salvation and the fact that they are beyond hope.

5. The lesson from a remnant (21–23)

Ezekiel 14:21-23 NKJV

For thus says the Lord God: “How much more it shall be when I send My four severe judgments on Jerusalem—the sword and famine and wild beasts and pestilence—to cut off man and beast from it? ²² Yet behold, there shall be left in it a remnant who will be brought out, both sons and daughters; surely they will come out to you, and you will see their ways and their doings. Then you will be comforted concerning the disaster that I have brought upon Jerusalem, all that I have brought upon it. ²³ And they will comfort you, when you see their ways and their doings; and you shall know that I have done nothing without cause that I have done in it,” says the Lord God.

v 21 **How much more it shall be when I send My four severe judgments on Jerusalem:** Things were already bad, but they were going to get a lot worse. The people were suffering after two groups of people had gone into captivity to Babylon on two different occasions. The false prophets were saying that things were going to get better; but God here sets them straight by basically saying, *“how much worse shall it be when Jerusalem experiences My four severe judgements.*

v 21 **My four severe judgements:** These were God’s judgements; the Babylonians were simply a tool in God’s hands. God was in control. After God had used the Babylonians to discipline or punish many nations, they themselves were punished by God.

Jeremiah 51:7-8a NKJV [also see Jeremiah 25:9]

Babylon was a golden cup [of wrath—Revelation 14:10, 16:19] in the Lord’s hand, that made all the earth drunk. The nations drank her wine; therefore the nations are deranged.

⁸ Babylon has suddenly fallen and been destroyed. Wail for her!

Application: God will allow evil people and circumstances to afflict us, but don’t despair, because God is using them for our good and God will judge and destroy them soon enough—we must be patient. The Babylonians were evil to the core, they didn’t understand God’s purposes or His heart, and motivating and enabling the king of Babylon was satan himself (see Isaiah 14:1-23) . They didn’t understand that they were doing only what God wanted them to do, in fact what God had enabled them to do. Despite them acting entirely according to their own free will, God used them to do His exact bidding. The Babylonians 100% meant evil for Israel, yet God 100% used them for good.

The church in the world (see John 17:14-19) is the ultimate “you meant it for evil but God meant it for good” scenario (see Genesis 50:20). Consider that God allows satan to be the ruler of this world (see John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11). In fact, the Bible calls satan “the prince of the power of the air” (see Ephesians 2:2). Consider also that satan hates us with an intensity that we will probably never understand (see John 10:10). Yet, just like the Babylonians in Ezekiel’s day, every time he tempts us, attacks us, lies to us, and tries to kill and destroy us, he can only do what God has allowed him to do, and what he has been allowed to do are those things which work for our good, causing us to grow into the image of Christ (see Romans 8:28-29). When will satan learn! It’s an amazing thought that God can use something as evil as this world system that we live in, designed and maintained by satan himself, to bring about good—it’s a strong testimony to God’s incredible power and authority, that He is definitely in control.

Ezekiel and Jeremiah were basically telling the people in exile to submit and trust in God, to accept their current circumstances as being God’s best for them. We must believe that God truly only allows “good” things to happen to us—things that cause us to grow closer to Christ—it’s all about perspective!

In contrast, the false prophets were telling the people that the hard times they were experiencing were not God’s will for them. Their premise probably went something like, “God loves you so He will only allow good things to happen to you, meaning things that will make you feel better and enjoy life more.” Therefore, the false prophets gave the people false hope by telling them that they didn’t have to repent and also that God would defeat the Babylonians and everyone would go back home—this would indeed sound *good* to them.

v 22 **Yet behold, there shall be left in it a remnant who will be brought out, both sons and daughters; surely they will come out to you, and you will see their ways and their doings**: “This is an unusual reference to a **remnant**, because it does not seem to refer to a righteous remnant, but a wicked one. We understand this from the phrase **their ways and doings**, which almost always had a negative meaning.” (David Guzik)

We have learned previously in Ezekiel 11:14-20 that God would not completely wipe out the nation, but would instead leave a godly remnant, a remnant who would go back to the land of Israel and serve God. However, verse 22 describes a very different kind of remnant, an evil remnant, an unrepentant remnant. It’s like God is allowing some of the very worst of the people to suffer through the siege and then be scattered throughout the surrounding nations—but their behaviour would not change—they would be just as wicked and hard-hearted towards God as before the siege of Jerusalem. They would therefore prove to the rest of the nation of Israel and the other surrounding nations that God did indeed do the right thing, that He was completely justified in pouring out His four severe judgements on the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem.

It would be like having a freezer that had broken down while you were on holidays. After a month you come back and your house stinks and the inside of your freezer has turned green and black. You naturally throw out everything and clean the freezer. However, to prove to the insurance company that you really did lose all that food because the freezer broke down, you post a sample of the rotten food to the insurance company as proof of your situation, and that you really did have to throw away all the food in your freezer. The insurance personal would have no doubt that your freezer had broken down because of the mushy and maggoty rotten steak that is now stinking out their office.

This is a picture of what God is doing. He is demonstrating to the nation of Israel and all the surrounding nations that His severe judgements were just and fair, that they were in fact required because the people were so wicked and putrid in His sight; they were indeed as rebellious and evil as Ezekiel and Jeremiah had been describing them.

Psalm 9:16-18 NKJV

The Lord is known by the judgment He executes; the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands... Selah

¹⁷ The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God. ¹⁸ For the needy shall not always be forgotten; the expectation of the poor shall not perish forever.

v 22-23 **Then you will be comforted concerning the disaster that I have brought upon Jerusalem, all that I have brought upon it.** ²³ **And they will comfort you, when you see their ways and their doings**: The comfort comes in knowing that there will be perfect justice; the wicked will not get away with their wickedness and every wrong will one day be made right. We all have an inbuilt desire to see justice done; we all get anxious and angry when either the wicked go unpunished or the innocent are punished. Here God is saying that they would be satisfied and content that God had been fair in His treatment of the rebels in Jerusalem and Judah.

Consider the account in Revelation concerning God’s severe judgements during the Tribulation:

Revelation 16:4-7 NKJV

⁴ Then the third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood. ⁵ And I heard the angel of the waters saying:

“You are righteous, O Lord,
The One who is and who was and who is to be,
Because You have judged these things.

⁶ For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets,
And You have given them blood to drink.

For it is their just due.”

⁷ And I heard another from the altar saying, “Even so, Lord God Almighty, **true and righteous are Your judgments.**”

This is what God is demonstrating to the nation of Israel and the surrounding nations—that His judgements are **true and righteous**.

Application: **And you shall know that I have done nothing without cause that I have done in it,” says the Lord God** (v 23): It is good to know that there is always a good reason or purpose for what God allows to happen to us. Often when I ask my maths students to do something difficult that they don’t understand, they ask, “but why?”, and are resistant to do it. However, once I’ve explained the purpose of the exercise, they are generally quite willing to give it a go. Similarly, initially the exiles would have been wondering why God was so severe on those left in Jerusalem, but afterward, when they saw how evil and rebellious the evil remnant was, they would understand and even be comforted because they knew that God knew what He was doing.

“It would all take place in order to convince the exiles of God’s justice, that he had not brought about the destruction of Jerusalem *without cause*.” (Taylor)

“We do not know the cause of so much that crushes us to the ground. But if we did know it as well as we shall know it some day, we should have no difficulty in reconciling God’s dealings with His perfect love.” (Meyer)

For many of us, we can relate to the children of Israel in exile. We may be suffering for no fault of our own and we are wondering if God really knows what He’s doing; is He really being just and fair, and is what He is allowing really the best thing for us? We must trust that God has a plan for our lives and is very able to use this evil world to accomplish His good purposes, and that God will keep His promise to us in:

Romans 8:28-29 AMP

We are assured and know that [God being a partner in their labor] **all things work together and are [fitting into a plan] for good** to and for those who love God and are called according to [His] design and purpose.

²⁹ For those whom He foreknew [of whom He was aware and loved beforehand], He also destined from the beginning [foreordaining them] **to be molded into the image of His Son [and share inwardly His likeness]**, that He might become the firstborn among many brethren.

Application—Can we expect physical blessings under the New Covenant?

I’m going into this so that by understanding how God blessed His people the Israelites under the Old Covenant, we can understand how He blesses His people the church under the New Covenant.

Firstly, keep in mind that, even under the Old Covenant, this “God will bless me if I obey and curse me if I don’t” system didn’t always hold true for individuals. Just as God still does now, He used trials and tribulations to prepare His servants for service. For example, think about how king David was running from Saul for about 13 years—David was often in God’s will during this time, but his time of affliction was designed by God to prepare and equip him for when his time came to rule as king over the people. Other examples include the prophets and other righteous people who were often persecuted as they were faithful and obedient to God.

Secondly, under the New Covenant, God “has blessed us [the church] with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ” (Ephesians 1:3). The church, as a whole or individually, does not experience the physical blessings and curses as described under the Old Covenant, because the church is not a physical nation or kingdom like the people of Israel was and is again, but is rather a spiritual kingdom. Jesus made this clear when answering Pilate’s question:

John 18:33, 36-38 NKJV

Then Pilate entered the Praetorium again, called Jesus, and said to Him, “Are You the King of the Jews?”

³⁴ Jesus answered him, “Are you speaking for yourself about this, or did others tell you this concerning Me?”

³⁵ Pilate answered, “Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered You to me. What have You done?”

³⁶ Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here.”

³⁷ Pilate therefore said to Him, “Are You a king then?”

Jesus answered, “You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.”

³⁸ Pilate said to Him, “What is truth?” And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, “I find no fault in Him at all.”

What we see here is that Pilate was satisfied with Jesus’ answer that His kingdom was “not of this world”, meaning not a physical kingdom, and therefore His servants would not fight and cause yet another insurrection against the Roman government. In other words, Pilate was satisfied that Jesus’ otherworldly kingdom that He was king of was no threat to Caesar’s reign here on earth. However, there will come a day when Jesus comes back at His second coming, and, as is prophesied in Daniel 2:44-45, He will set up His own kingdom, putting an end to all human government. When this happens we will rule and reign with Him on the earth for a thousand years, and then for eternity in the new heavens and new earth God will create.

So if our blessings are not physical or material, what kind of spiritual blessings do we get to enjoy? First we need to understand that some of God’s blessings are conditional, while some are unconditional. For example, some of the promises that God gave to Israel were unconditional—for example, they would always be God’s people and that there would come a day when Jerusalem would be rebuilt and never destroyed again, even if they disobeyed—see Jeremiah 31:35-37. In contrast, some of the conditional blessings and cursings are what we have already read today in Ezekiel: peace or war, food or famine, health or sickness, or being overrun with wild beasts or not.

Likewise, with the New Covenant, some of God's promises for the church are unconditional, being based on God predestining us (choosing in advance) to receive specific blessings. This means that all true believers receive or experience these blessings *regardless of how much they choose to love and obey God on a day to day basis—it's the destiny of every believer—God has determined that it will come to pass*. Romans 8:28-30 tells us that God, by His foreknowledge, knew in advance who would choose Him and predestined those He foreknew to be conformed to the image of Jesus.

These unconditional blessings promised to the church include:

- **Peace with God** (We are justified by faith, no longer His enemies—Romans 5:1)
- **Justification** (We are declared both not guilty and perfectly righteous—Romans 3:24-4:8)
- **Sanctification** (God both starts and completes the process of our transformation from a sinner to practical perfection—Philippians 1:6, Acts 26:18, Romans 15:16, 1 Corinthians 1:2, 6:11, 1 Thessalonians 5:23, Hebrew 2:11)
- **Glorification** (We will receive our glorified bodies when Christ comes back for the church at the Rapture—1 Corinthians 15:35-56, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18)
- **Adoption** (We have been given full rights as God's adopted children—Romans 8:15, Galatians 4:5, Ephesians 1:5)
- **Suffering and persecution** (God promises that He will grow and mature us by allowing us to experience trials, temptations, and persecution in this life—1 Timothy 3:12, Hebrews 2:10, 5:8, 12:3-13, 1 Peter 5:10)

Some of the spiritual blessings we receive are conditional, meaning we only experience them if we choose to love and obey God on a day to day basis:

- **The peace of God** (Having the calm assurance that God is in control, no matter what we are going through—Philippians 4:7-9, Colossians 3:15)
- **The fruit of the Spirit** (It's only as I abide in Christ, allowing the Spirit to direct and empower my whole life, that I will bear the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control—Galatians 5:16-26)
- **The fruit of righteousness, goodness and truth** (We only experience these things as we walk as children of light, finding out what is acceptable to the Lord—Ephesians 5:9)
- **Maturity that only comes from abiding in (studying) the Word of God** (The mature Christian is skilled in the word of God and is: able to determine right from wrong, free from satan's lies and deceptions, free from habitual sin, and able to experience the full benefits of their salvation—Hebrews 5:12-14, 1 Corinthians 3:1-4, 1 Peter 2:1-2, John 8:31-32)

If I am experiencing the conditional blessings, then I know that I am in the will of God, and am walking in fellowship with Him and am abiding in His love—"If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love" (John 15:10a).

The opposite is also true. If I am not experiencing these conditional spiritual blessings, but am instead grieving the Holy Spirit (see Ephesians 4:30), then I must:

1. **Confess my sins to God**—If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9 NKJV)
2. **Repent**—Those whom I [dearly and tenderly] love, I tell their faults and convict *and* convince *and* reprove and chasten [I discipline and instruct them]. So be enthusiastic *and* in earnest *and* burning with zeal and repent [changing your mind and attitude]. [Proverbs 3:12.] (Revelation 3:19 AMP)