

No GREATER *Love*

“Greater love has no one than this: **to lay down one's life for one's friends**”
(John 15:13).

“I am the good shepherd. **The good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep**” (John 10:11).

“But **God proves His love for us** in this: **While we were still sinners, Christ died for us**”
(Romans 5:8).

“By this we know what love is: **Jesus laid down His life for us**, and **we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters**” (I John 3:16).

“For **God so loved the world** that **He gave the only begotten Son**, so that **everyone believing in Him should not perish, but should have eternal life**” (John 3:16).

These words have all been said before among Christians, and yet, are they understood? The magnitude of love that suffers long, endures intense pain for others while waiting patiently is merely the tip of God's love, His way of life and His character.

God, our Father in heaven is paving the way for mankind through His beloved Son—the tested stone that is a proven foundation. “This is what the Sovereign LORD says: ‘Look! I am placing a foundation stone in Jerusalem, a **firm** and **tested stone**. It is a **precious cornerstone** that is **safe to build on**. Whoever believes need never be shaken” (Isaiah 28:16).

Jesus Christ is that tested stone; he is the precious cornerstone that God, the Father holds very dear to His heart. God, our Father in heaven, has awarded this Son, this beloved Son to be His ONLY Heir of His kingdom. God has many sons in His family. The first creation in heaven is comprised of countless sons of God. God brings this large royal, ruling family together and He presides over them. “**God presides in the great assembly**; he gives judgment among the ‘gods’” (Psalm 82:1). Before time was created, He gave them ruling power and authority to make decisions and exercise judgment. “God presides in the great assembly; **he gives judgment among the ‘gods’**” (Psalm 82:1).

From this creation, God has established his headquarters described throughout the Bible in earthly imagery as Lebanon with its great cedars. This wonder would have remained a mystery to mankind on earth, except for the bitter disappointment of their fall. These heavenly sons of God in His headquarters—His Holy Council, from the first creation, allied with Satan to overthrow Almighty God. This aggression and decision to war against God opened the door for mankind to fill their positions. These great cedars—heavenly rulers, powers and authorities have fallen and God Almighty will replace them with humble, repentant mankind. “Replenish the earth,” God told

Adam and Eve. “‘Replenish’—build up again,” God said. From the second creation, God will fill His NEW headquarters—mortal mankind on earth. God will give grace and from the work of His hands, He will transform them into eternal sons and daughters who will be made perfect through suffering, binding themselves eternally in love with their Creator.

When speaking of His heavenly creation, God has no earthly equivalent except to use imagery on earth. Trees image leaders. Different trees on earth image different types of leaders. The great leaders in God’s headquarters—His heavenly council are described as cedars.

Imagery of the great cedars bring an immediate rich visual of the most spectacular trees on earth. They have the unique qualities that mirror the great leaders in God’s headquarters. These tall and grand trees are dimensionally stable with a built-in thermal insulator. With oils that act as natural preservatives, these trees are resistant to bacteria and fungus. To top it off, they release a fresh aroma that deters pests. God created sons in heaven with all of these eternal qualities and superior strength to lead His kingdom in truth, understanding and wisdom of His law and His way. God gave the name of His headquarters in heaven, ‘Lebanon’ to mirror on earth His stately and regal leaders—His pride and joy.

King David knew and fully understood God’s government in heaven comprising of many positions of multi-layered structures. He used the same imagery as Almighty God. “The **trees of the LORD** are watered abundantly, the **cedars of Lebanon** that **he** planted” (Psalm 104:16).

In God’s great love for the first creation in heaven, He gave His Holy Spirit abundantly as evidenced in His words of warning to the heavenly ruler over Egypt.

“Consider Assyria, **once a cedar in Lebanon... The cedars in the garden of God could not rival it**, nor could the pine trees equal its boughs, nor could the plane trees compare with its branches—no tree in the garden of God could match its beauty. **I made it beautiful with abundant branches, the envy of all the trees of Eden in the garden of God**” (Ezekiel 31:3, 8-9).

The great fall of God’s government in heaven—the fall of many of his sons is recorded by Ezekiel as God shared His lament and deep pain for the choices ALL of them made. They ALL fell from righteousness and chose to ally with Satan in an attempt to overthrow Almighty God.

“Then **all the trees of Eden, the CHOICEST and BEST OF LEBANON**, all the trees **that were well-watered**, were **CONSOLED IN THE EARTH BELOW**” (Ezekiel 31:16). The earth below is the prison for the conquered rogue heavenly rulers, powers and authorities. It is the lowest place in existence. A humbling for the once mighty. How the mighty will fall!

Foolish fallen rulers, powers and authorities (Ephesians 6:12), knowingly chose to ally against their Creator trumpeting themselves as the Supreme God resulting in Almighty God’s constant declaration that He, the God of Israel, is the one and only Supreme God and resulted in the first commandment for His people, Israel—“You shall have no other gods before me.”

These inferior gods—sons of God from the first creation will fail. Fire from God will devour them and they will fall, though once they were glorious.

“Open your doors, O LEBANON, that the fire may devour your cedars! Wail, O cypress, for the cedar has fallen, because the glorious trees have been destroyed; Wail, O oaks of Bashan, for the impenetrable forest has come down” (Zechariah 11:2).

“See, the Lord, the LORD Almighty, will lop off the boughs with great power. The lofty trees will be felled; the tall ones will be brought low. He will cut down the forest thickets with an ax; LEBANON WILL FALL BEFORE THE MIGHTY ONE” (Isaiah 10:33-34).

King David longed for the day that these rogue heavenly rulers would be overthrown. He praised the Almighty God daily. **“For you, LORD, are the Most High over all the earth; you are exalted far above all gods”** (Psalm 97:9). **“For the LORD is the great God, the great King above all gods”** (Psalm 95:3).

The Psalmist added, **“Your enemies... who said ‘Let us take possession of the pasturelands of God’... Cover their faces with shame so that men will seek your name, O LORD. May they ever be ashamed and dismayed; may they perish in disgrace. Let them know that you whose name is the LORD—that YOU ALONE are the MOST HIGH OVER ALL THE EARTH”** (Psalm 82:2, 12, 16-18).

God, the Great Creator—the Ancient of Days—the Life-Giving One of ALL creation, hurts when His creation sins.

On the day the greatest leader in God’s heavenly court chose to ally with Satan, God wept. This son of God inherited rulership over the ancient kingdom of Assyria, the very kingdom that captured the kingdom of Israel comprised of ten tribes in approximately 722-740BC. Deuteronomy 32:8 recorded the inheritance awarded to God’s heavenly court. **“When the Most High assigned lands to the nations, when he divided up the human race, he established the boundaries of the peoples according to the number in his heavenly court”** (New Living Translation). God gave Himself an inheritance; He received the descendants of Jacob that began with Abraham then Isaac onto Jacob. They received God Almighty as their inheritance. They will be eternally God’s people; He will not forsake His inheritance. He will work with them and achieve His objective.

Both the heavenly and earthly creation have brought suffering for God Almighty. **“Consider Assyria, once a cedar in Lebanon”** (Ezekiel 31:3). God is referencing the heavenly world when He uses earthly imagery. This cedar of Lebanon, leader in God’s great heavenly court became proud of the heights he achieved and began to lean on his own understanding. He began to fall from God’s way and became wicked. **“It was proud of its height, I (God Almighty) handed it over to the ruler of the nations, for him to deal with according to its wickedness. I cast it aside... On the day it was brought down to the grave I covered the deep springs with mourning for it...”** (Ezekiel 31:3, 10b, 11, 15). God wept intensely.

He foresaw the fall of this great leader long ago and put plans in place that would birth a different creation—one that would be reborn through suffering, be offered grace and awarded eternal life when humble and in servitude. To this fallen son who was once a great heavenly leader, God said, “Have you not heard? **Long ago I ordained it. In days of old I planned it, now I have brought it to pass, that you have turned fortified cities into piles of stone** (Isaiah 37:26). God planned a long time ago to use this rogue leader to punish weaker rogue rulers. It came to pass as God authorized it.

The Psalmist longed to see justice. “The voice of **the LORD breaks the cedars**; Yes, the **LORD breaks in pieces the cedars of Lebanon**” (Psalm 29:5).

The great day of reckoning will include both the rogue heavenly rulers, powers and authorities and unrepentant leaders on earth.

“In that day the lord will punish **the powers in the heavens above and the kings on the earth below**. They will be herded together like prisoners bound in a dungeon, they will be shut up in prison and be punished after many days” (Isaiah 24:21-22).

All of the proud and lofty, abusers of power and authority will be brought before God’s heavenly court and will give an account for their actions. “For the LORD of hosts will have **a day of reckoning against everyone who is proud and lofty** and against **everyone who is lifted up**, that he may be abased. **He will cut down the tall cedars of Lebanon and all the mighty oaks of Bashan**. Against all the lofty mountains, against all the hills that are lifted up” (Isaiah 2:12-14).

The rogue heavenly rulers, powers and authorities will be overthrown and on their Day of Judgment; they will be humbled, made mortal, and die.

God declared, “I said, ‘You are “gods”; **you are all sons of the Most High.**’ But **you will die like mere men, you will fall like every other ruler**” (Psalm 82:6-7).

God loves His creation. He opened the door for the heavenly sons of God in His Holy court a kingdom on earth—rulership over the nations, but they ALL failed. No more will God bestow such power and might on His creation. The pain of their failure is too great to bear. “Therefore, no other trees [leaders] by the waters [receiving abundant amounts of God’s Holy Spirit] are ever to tower proudly on high, lifting their tops above the thick foliage” (Ezekiel 31:14). God Almighty turned to one special Son.

It was planned from the beginning of the creation of both heaven and earth. Ezekiel recorded the announcement of Almighty God when He turned to a special Son—the tested stone and precious cornerstone. “**I myself** will take a shoot from the very top of a cedar [top leadership body] and plant it [establish through an anointing]; I will break off a tender sprig from its topmost shoots and plant it [start a NEW government] on a high and lofty mountain [God’s most high federal government]. **On the mountain [federal government] of Israel I will plant it [establish it]; it will produce branches and bear fruit** and become a **splendid cedar [a righteous great leader]**... All

the trees [leaders] of the field [everywhere] will know that I the LORD bring down the tall trees [proud and arrogant leaders] and make the low tree [humble leaders] grow tall [rule in the highest offices throughout both realms: heaven and earth]. I dry up the green tree [God takes down the present rogue leaders] and make the dry tree [humble leaders not yet ruling] flourish. 'I the LORD have spoken, and I will do it'" (Ezekiel 17:22-24). **This declaration is ABSOLUTE!**

So great is God's love for mankind that He was willing to allow THIS SON to die in order to rescue mankind. His ONLY Heir of His kingdom—the splendid cedar of Ezekiel 17:23. God desires that ALL of mankind repent. "The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead **he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance**" (II Peter 3:9). He wants all of mankind to choose LOVE over hatred, KINDNESS over abuse, COMPASSION and FORGIVENESS over cold-heartedness and ever-punishing, PATIENCE over intolerance, RIGHTEOUSNESS over wickedness.

God mirrors heavenly prophecies in the lives of special people on earth. Abraham had more than one son. His firstborn was Ishmael. Then, by a miracle, Isaac was born. After Sarah died, Abraham remarried and six sons were born to him by Keturah, but ONLY ISAAC was his HEIR. "By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. **He who had received the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son [heir], even though God had said to him, 'It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned'**" (Hebrews 11:17-18). This story is a mirror of a heavenly story. Isaac is described in Hebrews as the ONLY Son meaning only HEIR. Jesus Christ is not God's only son after the first creation in heaven, but he is God's only HEIR and God was willing to put that Son's life on the line to rescue every man and woman on earth. His love for mankind is great!

This special Son of God during his days on earth, "offered up prayers and petitions with **loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his REVERENT SUBMISSION**. Although he was a son, **he learned obedience from what he suffered and, once made perfect**, he became **the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him** and was designated by God to be high priest in the order of Melchizedek (Hebrews 5:7-10).

It is difficult for mankind on earth to understand the happenings in the spiritual world. This humble and deeply reverent Son did not seek his own way, rather he submitted to our Father in heaven and God brought him into perfection. He was made mortal for a time. He was not in heaven enjoying the extra-ordinary abilities of being spiritual and the power and authority of being King of Salem and High Priest. Rather, he was an ordinary man on earth. "He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not" (Isaiah 53:2-3).

This Son, who created heaven and earth through the power of His Father, willingly accepted the task of becoming mortal. He put his spiritual life on the line and in suffering, he became perfect—fully understanding the weaknesses of being human and vulnerabilities so that he could facilitate for all of mankind. In this perfection, Jesus Christ became the recipient of being coronated King of

kings and Lord of lords. He is King over all kings in both heaven and earth and Lord over all priests in heaven and on earth. This Son with all his successes deserves the adoration and love from God the Father, but Jesus revealed a greater God, one whose love goes beyond the deserved to the undeserved. Jesus said of the repentant believers, God loves them in the same degree that He loves him.

“I am in them and you are in me. May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that you sent me and that **you love them as much as you love me**” (New Living Translation John 17:23). How can that be?

This Son is greatly honoured by God, the Father. “But **about the Son** he says, ‘Your throne, **O God**, will last for ever and ever, and righteousness will be the scepter of your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; **therefore God**, your God, has set you above your companions” (Hebrews 1:8-9).

“O God... therefore God, your God...” of THIS Son, the Almighty God—God of all gods, speaks as if they are an equal with reverence and great honour. The Almighty God has given Jesus Christ, THIS Son, all power in heaven and earth to overthrow wickedness and restore God’s kingdom to way it was before sin was found.

“For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For he ‘has put everything under his feet’. Now when it says that ‘**everything**’ has been put under him, **it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ**” (I Corinthians 15:25-27).

And yet, it was written that God Almighty—the source of ALL power, loves repentant mankind as much as THIS Son. Our Father’s love is a mirror of the love Jesus Christ demonstrated while on earth.

The Apostle Paul understood the mysteries of the deep things of God. “I ask that out of the riches of His glory He may strengthen you with **power through His Spirit** in your inner being, so that **Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith**. Then you, being **rooted and grounded in love**, will have power, together with all the saints, **to comprehend the length and width and height and depth of His love**, and **to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge**, that **you may be filled with all the fullness of God**” (Ephesians 3:16-19). God is love.

This earthly existence operates in darkness and ignorance. The great depths of God’s love that can become known through Jesus Christ remains still a rare visible wonder. The Apostle John understood the great love of God and desired with all his heart to be transformed into His family. When in a vision, he stood in the throne room, he saw God holding a scroll. He understood the meaning of the scroll in God’s hand, that it was a legal document involving the release of mankind from their death sentence. A mighty angel trumpeted, “Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?” No one was found! Not in heaven, not on earth or even among those imprisoned under the earth (Revelation 5:3).

The Apostle John became distraught. What happened to the Messiah, he must have thought? “I wept and wept because no one was found who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside. Then one of the elders said to me, ‘Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals’” (Revelation 5:4-5).

Jesus Christ at that moment in time was traveling. He was neither under the earth sentenced with the rogue heavenly rulers already overthrown by God; He was not on earth because God—the source of all life, had accepted his blood as the sacrifice for mankind and he was brought back into eternal life. He was traveling for the short moment back into the heavenly realm—the third heaven where God’s throne resides and he arrived resurrected appearing like a sacrificed lamb, bloodied and torn, for the sins of mankind. This imagery of the sacrificed lamb reveals the contents of the scroll being related to the only Son of God being worthy to open it. The heavenly realm who witnessed this great sacrifice understood the meaning of being coronated King of kings, Lord of lords. Mankind is yet to understand the magnitude of the Father and Son’s great love for them. Their love surpasses all human knowledge and travels deep into selflessness to rescue a creation held in captivity and fallen into the depravity of wickedness to offer them grace and the status of being a HOLY, ROYAL members of GOD’S ETERNAL FAMILY RULING in His GREAT kingdom.

God Almighty will rebuild his fallen heavenly headquarters. He has already chosen the NEW members. The repentant righteous will hold all of the open positions.

“The righteous man will flourish like the palm tree; **he will grow like a cedar in Lebanon. PLANTED IN THE HOUSE OF THE LORD**, they will flourish in **the COURTS OF OUR GOD**. They will still yield fruit in old age; They shall be full of sap and very green” (Psalm 92:12-15).

“I [God] will be like the dew to Israel; he will blossom like the lily, and **he will take root like the cedars of Lebanon**. His shoots will sprout, and his beauty will be like the olive tree and **his fragrance like the cedars of Lebanon**” (Hosea 14:5-6).

God’s new government is sprouting and it will grow into a thick forest in Lebanon full of faithful and loyal leaders with many beautiful gifts and wonderful qualities. How wonderful is our Father in heaven who is patiently enduring, while working with His people and all of mankind to mold and form a kingdom of priests—righteous, law abiding, caring shepherds who will reign with Christ over both realms: heaven and earth.

Is it so difficult to love your fellow brother and sister during this time when ignorance is thick and covering the whole earth? “Father forgive for they do not know what they are doing,” was Christ’s response; that is the example for today. Live in peace, work to teach by example, and love for soon the whole world will know God and look to those who followed Christ wherever he went as bright lights—delights to their eyes.

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