

# Fresh Oil Releases

Fire Chronicles - Epilogue

Gazing Upon the Unseen

Precious saints

There is a lot of scripture quoted in this article but don't just skip over it, chew it and be nourished and strengthened by the Life-giving content ( I have used the Amplified Version in most cases). After writing the Fire Chronicles, I have corresponded with a number of believers and a large proportion of them find themselves in situations where they are pressed beyond measure in the manner Paul spoke of in the following verse:

*2Co 7:5 For even when we arrived in Macedonia, our bodies had no ease or rest, but we were oppressed in every way and afflicted at every turn--fighting and contentions without, dread and fears within [us].*

It seems as if the viper attack that is launched from the depths of the fire is intended to so overwhelm and exhaust its victim that the saint's mind is continually filled with thoughts of somehow escaping the situation, fleeing from the fury of the enemy. I have had seasoned saints tell me that never before in all the storm and shipwreck situations they have experienced, has there been such an overwhelming desire with their hearts to give up the fight of faith and end the suffering they are experiencing - by any means at their disposal.

This tells me something very important! Remember that, in Revelation 12, the dragon waits to devour the manchild as it emerges from the birth canal. Further on in the same chapter the fury of the enemy is highlighted:

*Rev 12:12 Therefore be glad (exult), O heavens and you that dwell in them! But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in fierce anger (fury), because he knows that he has [only] a short time [left]!*

Once the manchild comes forth, it sets in motion a chain of events which result in the kingdoms of this world becoming the kingdoms of our God. The enemy is well aware of the significance of the corporate birthing taking place at this time. His only solution is to derail the process by 'devouring' the child as it emerges from the womb of preparation. If He can somehow persuade you that you can no longer bear the suffering you are undergoing and cause you to abandon ship and throw in the towel, then he has succeeded in diminishing the full impact of what God is bringing forth in the earth! If he can get you to stop praying just before that bowl of prayer becomes full, he has succeeded in delaying the pouring out of that bowl and the manifestation of the answer to all the years of prayer you have sent heavenwards!

Listen to me, saints! **You are not a prisoner of your circumstances** - you are a prisoner of the Lord! Paul was not under the control of the Roman army as he was shipped to Rome. He was a prisoner of the Lord, Who chose to use the army of Rome to get Paul where He had appointed him to be. In the same way in your life, God has tailor-made the parameters of your imprisonment in order to bring you, both within and without, to your appointed destination. Plotting your own prison-break will not help you get there. It will only prolong the process! Joseph learnt that when he tried to get the butler to put in a good word for

him with Pharaoh. It only resulted in two years being added to his prison stay.

Beloved, it is appointed us to share in the sufferings of Christ if we really desire to share His glory:

*Rom 8:17 And if we are [His] children, then we are [His] heirs also: heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ [sharing His inheritance with Him]; **only we must share His suffering if we are to share His glory.** Rom 8:18 [But what of that?] For I consider that the sufferings of this present time (this present life) are not worth being compared with the glory that is about to be revealed to us and in us and for us and conferred on us!*

So what are the sufferings of Christ? Well, Isaiah gives a fair description of them:

*Isa 53:3 He was despised and rejected and forsaken by men, a Man of sorrows and pains, and acquainted with grief and sickness; and like One from Whom men hide their faces He was despised, and we did not appreciate His worth or have any esteem for Him.*

It appears to me that in many cases I have encountered recently, the attack of the viper is coming through other people. Beloved, if you are being despised and forsaken, treated with disrespect, unappreciated or considered of no worth, then you are sharing in the sufferings of Christ.

*Heb 12:3 Just think of Him Who endured from sinners such grievous opposition and bitter hostility against Himself [reckon up and consider it all in comparison with your trials], so that you may not grow weary or exhausted, losing heart and relaxing and fainting in your minds.*

If rejection, abuse and grief are your daily bedfellows at this time, then take comfort that you are undergoing these very things in order to make you a candidate to receive the glory of God!

*1Pe 4:12 Beloved, do not be amazed and bewildered at the fiery ordeal which is taking place to test your quality, as though something strange (unusual and alien to you and your position) were befalling you. 1Pe 4:13 But insofar as you are sharing Christ's sufferings, rejoice, so that when His glory [full of radiance and splendor] is revealed, you may also rejoice with triumph [exultantly]. 1Pe 4:14 If you are censured and suffer abuse [because you bear] the name of Christ, blessed [are you--happy, fortunate, to be envied, with life-joy, and satisfaction in God's favor and salvation, regardless of your outward condition], because **the Spirit of glory, the Spirit of God, is resting upon you.** On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified.*

The bite of the viper is intended to kill you. But guess what, I have good news for you - **IT'S NOT GOING TO!!** Paul just shook that grotty, venomous serpent off. How does one accomplish that practically? Well, we have to go right back to the wilderness and all those murmuring ancestors to discover the answer:

*Num 21:9 And Moses made a serpent of bronze and put it on a pole, and if a serpent had bitten any man, when he looked to the serpent of bronze [attentively, expectantly, with a steady and absorbing gaze], he lived.*

Here is God's solution to the viper bite! We must not only look but GAZE attentively at the serpent on the pole. What does this mean? That bronze serpent draped on the pole was a type of Christ, carrying

the sins of the world, on the cross. Beloved, when the viper strikes with all the fury of an enemy who knows his time is exceedingly short, you must gaze with a steady absorbing gaze upon the Lamb that was slain for you. This is the source of your strength and power to overcome and shake off those fangs piercing your hand. Gaze upon Him and recognize that not only did He carry your sins but those of your enemies. Not only did He procure forgiveness for you but also for those who persecute you. AND...it is your privilege to dispense it! 'Father, forgive them, they don't know what they are doing'.

There was a man called Moses who was unmoved by the violent threats of Pharaoh. He just kept on moving forward into the fulfillment of God's promise and plan. How did he manage to shrug off the hatred and venom of the king of Egypt, whom he had once played with as a child in the courts of Pharaoh?

*Heb 11:27 [Motivated] by faith he left Egypt behind him, being unawed and undismayed by the wrath of the king; for he never flinched but held staunchly to his purpose and endured steadfastly as one who gazed on Him Who is invisible.*

Moses gazed steadfastly upon Him who is invisible. He looked past the natural realm right into the realm of Heaven. This gave him the strength to shake off the viper. No wonder Paul urges us to look not at the seen but the unseen realm, because here we see the things that are unchanging facts - Christ has overcome and yes, IT IS FINISHED!.

There were two other men who found themselves imprisoned for the cause of Christ that I want to draw attention to. They were Ezekiel and John. Both these men received a revelation of the throne-room of God while being held captive.

*Eze 1:1 NOW [when I was] in [my] thirtieth year, in the fourth month, in the fifth day of the month, as I was in the midst of captivity beside the river Chebar [in Babylonia], the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God.*

*Rev 1:9 I, John, your brother and companion (sharer and participator) with you in the tribulation and kingdom and patient endurance [which are] in Jesus Christ, was on the isle called Patmos, [banished] on account of [my witnessing to] the Word of God and the testimony (the proof, the evidence) for Jesus Christ. Rev 1:10 I was in the Spirit [rapt in His power] on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a great voice like the calling of a war trumpet,*

Beloved, right in the midst of the tailor-made prison you find yourself in, God intends for the heavens to open and for you to have visions of God. He wants to speak clearly with you and open your eyes to see the Lamb that was slain as you have never seen Him before; to see Him as Ezekiel did as a man of fire upon a sapphire throne:

*Eze 1:26 And above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne in appearance like a sapphire stone, and seated above the likeness of a throne was a likeness with the appearance of a Man. Eze 1:27 From what had the appearance of His waist upward, I saw a lustre as it were glowing metal with the appearance of fire enclosed round about within it; and from the appearance of His waist downward, I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and there was brightness [of a halo] round about Him.*

Or, as John did on the isle of Patmos:

*Rev 1:13 And in the midst of the lamp-stands [One] like a Son of Man, clothed with a robe which reached to His feet and with a girdle of gold about His breast. Rev 1:14 His head and His hair were white like white wool, [as white] as snow, and His eyes [flashed] like a flame of fire. Rev 1:15 His feet glowed like burnished (bright) bronze as it is refined in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of many waters.*

Do not focus on the viper bite. **Focus upon Christ.** Fix your eyes on Jesus, the One who planted the vision and promise in your heart and the One Who will bring it to manifestation and completion:

**Heb 12:2** *Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

The Amplified Bible says 'Looking away from all that will distract'; fixing your eyes, your mind, your attention on Jesus who is sitting at the right hand of the very throne where the manchild is to be caught up. Don't fix your mind upon the seen but upon the unseen.

*Col 3:2 And set your minds and keep them set on what is above (the higher things), not on the things that are on the earth. Col 3:3 For [as far as this world is concerned] you have died, and your [new, real] life is hidden with Christ in God. Col 3:4 When Christ, Who is our life, appears, then you also will appear with Him in [the splendor of His] glory.*

**You have died** - did you get that? So that viper bite has no power to hurt you! You are hidden in Christ. And where is He? At the right hand of God. So close your eyes to your prison walls and open them to the throne-room scene all around you!

Notice also that Jesus ENDURED the cross in Hebrews 12:2 and Moses ENDURED because he gazed upon Him who is invisible. This present circumstance is intended to build endurance into you. Interestingly, the Greek word for 'endure' means 'to stay under, to remain, to persevere' - well, that takes care of your prison-break plans doesn't it?! God intends you to 'stay under' the pressure and onslaught... not to be crushed by it, but to develop something in you. And what is that something? We find out in the following verses:

*Rom 5:3 Moreover [let us also be full of joy now!] let us exult and triumph in our troubles and rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that **pressure and affliction and hardship produce patient and unswerving endurance.** Rom 5:4 **And endurance (fortitude) develops maturity of character** (approved faith and tried integrity).*

As you endure the hardship you are undergoing, it is bringing forth **MATURITY OF CHARACTER** in you. We have to come to the place of mature manhood because that is when we are considered ready to take over our Father's business and it seems that pressure and affliction and hardship are God's tools to make us grow up spiritually. In 1 Corinthians 13, right in the middle of his discourse of the qualities of love, Paul speaks of putting away childish things and becoming a mature man. Childish behavior is not fitting for the Man-child God is bringing forth. Mistreatment and persecution is intended to cause us to respond in the Spirit of Christ and not to react in immature or fleshly ways.

*Mat 5:44 But I say to you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which spitefully use you, and persecute you; Mat 5:45 To show that you are the*

*children of your Father Who is in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the wicked and on the good, and makes the rain fall upon the upright and the wrongdoers [alike]. Mat 5:46 For if you love those who love you, what reward can you have? Do not even the tax collectors do that? Mat 5:47 And if you greet only your brethren, what more than others are you doing? Do not even the Gentiles (the heathen) do that? Mat 5:48 You, therefore, must be perfect [growing into complete maturity of godliness in mind and character, having reached the proper height of virtue and integrity], as your heavenly Father is perfect.*

The manifestation of the sons of God does not take place on a stage with floodlights and an orchestra playing. It happens at the place where the nails are hammered into the hands and the whip is raised, the insults are hurled and injustice rules the day. The sons of God are recognized by their godly response in the face of persecution and ill treatment. Was it not the Roman soldier, who on observing the way Jesus died, said, "Surely this man was the Son of God!" Did not the islanders call Paul some sort of god because he was completely unaffected by the venom of the serpent? They could not know that Paul was also gazing steadfastly upon Him Who is invisible just as he wrote to the Corinthians:

*2Co 4:17 For our light, momentary affliction (this slight distress of the passing hour) is ever more and more abundantly preparing and producing and achieving for us an everlasting weight of glory [beyond all measure, excessively surpassing all comparisons and all calculations, a vast and transcendent glory and blessedness never to cease!], 2Co 4:18 Since we consider and look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen; for the things that are visible are temporal (brief and fleeting), but the things that are invisible are deathless and everlasting.*

Beloved, as you gaze steadfastly upon Him Who is invisible, you will be changed from glory to glory (2 Cor 3:18) as the image of Christ comes forth in you. Hang in there, resist the urge to flee. It will be worth it all! The venom of the viper has no power to harm you - it only causes Christ to come forth in you!

The birth pangs that are thrusting you towards the full light of a new day come in waves that are closer and closer together. In-between those seemingly bone-crushing periods of pressure on every side, rest and trust that He who brought you to the point of birth, will also be faithful to bring you forth unharmed.

*Heb 10:35 Do not, therefore, fling away your fearless confidence, for it carries a great and glorious compensation of reward. Heb 10:36 For you have need of steadfast patience and endurance, so that you may perform and fully accomplish the will of God, and thus receive and carry away [and enjoy to the full] what is promised. Heb 10:37 For still a little while (a very little while), and the Coming One will come and He will not delay.*

Right now as I end off, I pray along with Paul from Col 1:11, that you may be invigorated and strengthened with all power according to the might of His glory, to exercise every kind of endurance and patience with joy! The glory is even now beginning to be seen in you because Christ was the sole expression of the glory of God (Heb 1:3 AMP) and He is coming forth in you!

Selah!