

## Crumbs – Good News for the Diaspora!

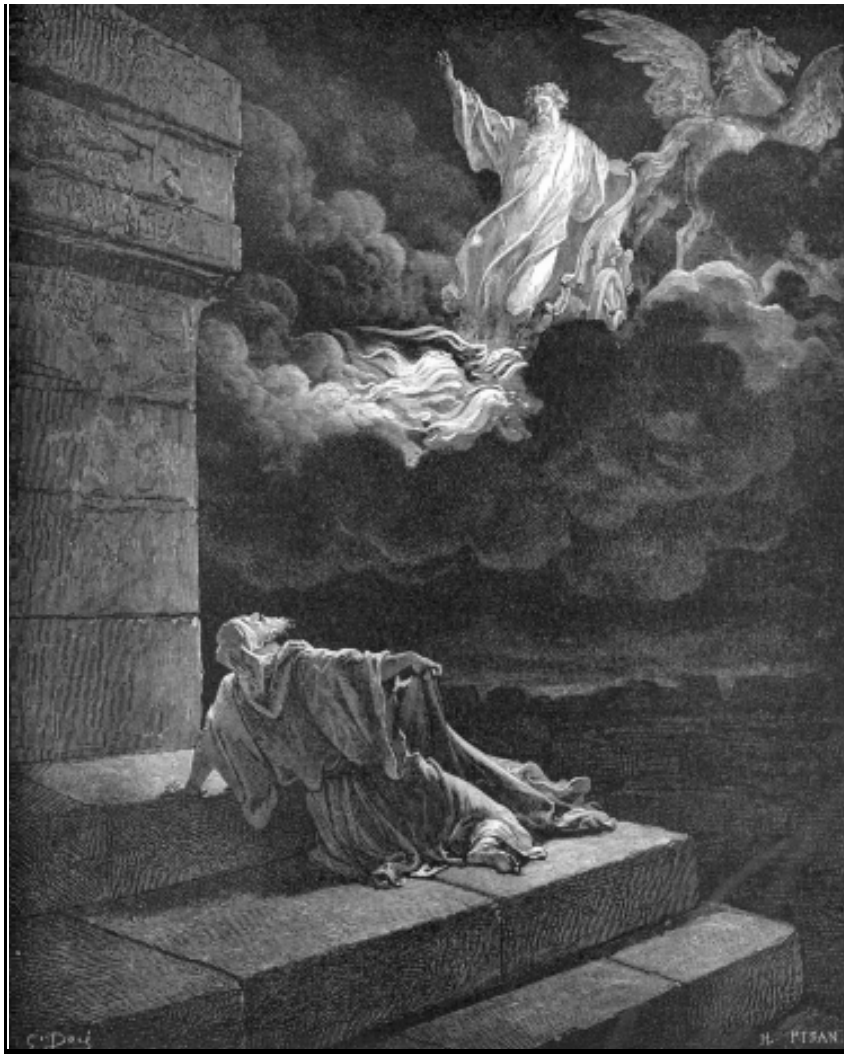


Illustration: Elijah's Ascent and the Chariots of Fire

### A Devotional for the Week of the Sixth Sunday after Easter.

SUNDAY.

*Where I am, there shall also my servant be. – John 12:26.*

When Jesus became man and dwelt on earth, and suffered and died, and even when He rose and ascended into heaven, His aim ever was to prepare a place for us in His Father's house, in the realms of eternal bliss.

May I now speak after the manner of men, and very plainly, of a heavenly and mysterious matter? When, having finished His work, Christ ascended into heaven and came to the gates of heaven, they opened unto Him wide, and all the cherubim and seraphim rapturously welcomed Him. But Jesus said He did not come to desire admittance for Himself, but for us whom He had redeemed; He came as our Savior, our Substitute, to take possession of heaven for us, and to prepare a place for us where we might be forever. I speak after the manner of men. Yes, and then the gates of heaven were not barred, then all the heavenly hosts, moved by the Holy Ghost, shouted with joy to welcome our Savior in the name of God the Father – *for us*.

Thus did our Atoner at His ascension take possession of heaven for us, and prepare a place there for us; and now in great loving-kindness He says: "Where I am, there shall also my servant be." Whoever does not reject Him, the Atoner and Opener of heaven, but embraces Him in true faith, and serves Him, and is His disciple and servant, – for him heaven is opened, for him the place is prepared where in everlasting bliss he will be with the Savior. The cherub has lowered his flaming sword which turns every way, the cherub no longer stands forbiddingly at the gate of Paradise.

*PRAYER.* – My Lord and Savior, by Your substitutional suffering and death You have fully and completely reconciled me, a lost and condemned sinner, to God, have opened the gates of heaven for me, and prepared a place for me where I may abide in all eternity. For this I thank You as heartily as ever I can. Grant me, I implore You, Your Holy Spirit, that with the eyes of faith I may firmly and steadfastly gaze upon You, and trust in what You have

merited for me. And then let me cling to You gratefully, and serve You, until in heaven I shall thank and serve You better. Amen.

Hymn 233, 4.

Christ is our place preparing,  
To heaven we, too, shall rise,  
And, joys angelic sharing,  
Be where our Treasure lies;  
There may each heart be found,  
Where Jesus Christ has entered;  
There let our hopes be centered,  
Our course still heavenward bound!

MONDAY.

*He ascended up on high; He led captivity captive.*  
– *Ephesians 4:8.*

This text evidently speaks of a triumph, a triumphal procession. Christ's ascension is represented as a triumphal procession. Christ ascended up on high and triumphantly led captivity captive. What was our captivity? Surely, sin, death, damnation, the power of the devil. Was not this the prison that held us with fetters we could not tear, with lock and bolt we could not break? But our Savior bore, and atoned for our sins, suffered our death and conquered it for us, tasted and destroyed our damnation, and bruised the head of the devil, in whose power we were.

In fact, in the early morning of Easter Sunday He descended into hell as the living and risen Conqueror, and preached of His victory and of their vanquishment to the spirits in prison. ( 1 Peter 3:19.) That was a triumph in itself. And now He ascended into heaven, and in triumphal procession He carried with Him our sins atoned, our death vanquished, our damnation destroyed, our evil foe trampled under foot. Verily, He despoiled our prison and all the hostile powers that were arrayed against us, stripped them of their

power, and made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in Himself, in His glorious exaltation. Wilt you not sing and say: "This is a sight that gladdens"?

In the name of Jesus, do you hear? trusting in Him, you may deride sin, laugh at death, defy damnation, and tauntingly fly in the face of Satan. No prison can hold you, no foe can harm you. He, your Savior, has ascended up on high, He led captivity captive.

*PRAYER.* – O Jesus – wondrous, conquering Hero – I trust in You, in the work You have accomplished for me, and in Your Word, Your blessed gospel. My captivity is ended and led free. I am in bliss. Give to me, O Jesus, the bold assurance of victory in Your name. Amen.

Hymn 239, 6. 8.

The world, sin, Satan, death, and hell  
Are vanquished by Immanuel,  
Dispute who will His mighty reign,  
He still the Victor must remain. Hallelujah!

We trust in Him, our Lord and God,  
Who hath redeemed us by His blood;  
He captive led captivity,  
From bitter death to set us free. Hallelujah!

TUESDAY.

*And gave gifts unto men. – Ephesians 4:8.*

The ascended Conqueror gave *gifts* unto us. What gifts? We will mention hut one, in which all other gifts are comprised. He gave us the *Holy Ghost*. Because Jesus reconciled us to God, the Holy Ghost again comes to us.

The Holy Ghost is the Spirit of the Father and of the Son, true personal God together with the Father and the Son. Him the Father, being reconciled, sends; Him the Savior gives to us; He comes to us with an abundance of grace. He comes to us, through the Word of Christ, the Gospel, the Author and real and first Preacher of which He is. He comes, to us through the Word now found in Scriptures. He comes to us through the Word that is preached, taught, heard, and studied. Hence He comes to us through the ministry of the Apostles and of all true and faithful preachers and teachers whom He gives us. He comes to us and, through His Word works faith in us, true faith: and through and by faith He leads us to Jesus, our Savior; and He makes us members of His body, of Jesus' body, so that in Jesus we have all things: forgiveness of sins, righteousness in the sight of God, life and salvation, the adoption of peace, joy, comfort, courage, strength, victory, resurrection, eternal glory.

Without the Holy Ghost we have nothing: through Him we have all things. If we lose the Holy Ghost, we lose all things; if we keep the Holy Ghost, we keep all things. The Holy Ghost is willing to abide with us forever. Here on earth He will abide with us through His *Word*. Christian, abide by the Word, that you may keep the Holy Ghost and all things that are given you through Jesus and in Jesus. In heaven the Holy Ghost will fully change you into the image of God.

*PRAYER.* – I thank You, Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, my Atoner and conquering Hero, for the gift of the Holy Ghost which You have given me. O Lord, by nature I am dead in sin, and unable to believe in You, and to obtain the blessings which You have procured. But through Your Word You have given me Your Holy Spirit and faith in You through Him. So now I have You, and in You I have all things that save me. Help me, my Shepherd, that I may always abide by Your Word and keep Your precious Holy Spirit. Amen.

Hymn 254, 1. 3.

Let songs of praises fill the sky;  
Christ, our ascended Lord,  
Sends down His Spirit from on high,

According to His word;  
All hail the day of Pentecost,  
The coming of the Holy Ghost!

The things of Christ the Spirit takes,  
And shows them unto men;  
The fallen soul His temple makes;  
God's image stamps again;  
All hail the day of Pentecost,  
The coming of the Holy Ghost!

WEDNESDAY.

*But this man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat on the right hand of God. – Hebrews 10:12.*

The Jews of the Old Testament worshiped God aright. Their worship throughout was a Christ-worship. There is no other true worship, and never has been, but the worship made in the name of Christ. But the worship of the Old Testament consisted in types that foreshadowed Christ and pointed to Christ. The sacrifices of the Old Testament were types of the sacrifice of Christ, foreshadowing the sacrifice of Christ, and pointing to it. Hence these sacrifices had to be continually repeated, since in themselves they could not take away sins.

But Christ had offered one single sacrifice, the sacrifice of Himself. That is valid forever. It has taken away all sins of all men and of all times. In proof and public confirmation thereof Christ now sits at the right hand of God. So you see that God made public acknowledgment to the fact that the sacrifice of Christ truly took away all sins and is valid forever in that He set Christ, who in our stead and in the stead of all the world was to atone for all the sins of the world, and really did atone for them, at His right hand. All the world has been redeemed and reconciled to God through that one sacrifice of Christ, which is valid forever.

If you would be altogether certain of your redemption, of the atonement for your sins, of your salvation, of the forgiveness of your sins, of life and eternal happiness, then look neither here nor there, but look upon Christ, who sits at the right hand of God, for He offered one sacrifice for sins which is valid forever. Behold, there is your redemption, your atonement, your salvation, the forgiveness of your sins, your life and your eternal happiness: at the right hand of God, fully acknowledged, confirmed, sealed, and ratified by the divine Amen. Look there! This look, this look alone, will kindle the right, true, certain, unconquerable, living, mighty, strong, all-, all-conquering faith in you.

*PRAYER.* – Lord Jesus, who did offer the *one* sacrifice for sins forever, and in proof of this, You sit at the right hand of God, grant me grace to look upon You, and in unwavering faith to recognize in You my salvation, and henceforth to look for no other sacrifice for sins, and to offer nothing but sacrifices of thanks, the fruit of my lips, giving thanks and singing praises to Your name. Amen.

Hymn 233, 5.

May we, His servants, thither  
In heart and mind ascend;  
And let us sing together:  
“We seek Thee, Christ, our Friend,  
Thee, God’s anointed Son,  
Our Life, and Way to heaven,  
To whom all power is given,  
Our Joy, and Hope, and Crown!”  
THURSDAY.

*Who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. – Romans 8:34.*

Our Savior makes intercession for us, He intercedes for us, He pleads our cause, He prays for us, He always implores grace for us, He is our Advocate with the Father, the almighty God. Could we be

better represented? Surely not. He is the eternal Son of the Father, God born of God. When He had become man, God the Father spoke these words from heaven: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." He gave His life for us and reconciled God with us. And God exalted Him unto His right hand in heaven.

We could not be better represented. We may rely upon Him fully, we may safely and confidently let Him plead our cause We may rely upon His love and faithfulness. We may depend upon it that His representation is efficacious with the Father. Our Savior firmly stands by us. And the Father does what the Savior asks Him to do for us. And praying for us, our Savior pleads His death for us, as well as the fact that by raising Him and setting Him at His right hand God ratified the full satisfaction which He rendered. And the Father cannot deny Him anything. Being represented by Him, we are altogether safe. How much we poor sinners do need a representative with the Father! And we have Him; He, the Savior, represents us.

Let me repeat it – being represented by Him, we are altogether safe. And with our Savior Himself we have and need no representative. For He is our dearest Friend and Lover. Compared with His love and friendship, all other love and friendship in heaven and in earth is as nothing. Will you rely entirely upon your Savior, my dear Christian? Do so. Most assuredly, you will not be deceived.

*PRAYER.* – If You, O Jesus Christ, represent me before God, and plead my cause, I am altogether safe. For You do plead for me, a poor sinner, Your all-sufficient merit, which You have procured for me and given to me, and which God, Your eternal Father, has fully acknowledged. Lord Jesus, I rely on You. Do plead my cause. I know You do plead it. I would have no other mediator, no other intercessor, but You only. Amen.

Hymn 348, 6.

O Love, who lovest me for aye,  
Who for my soul dost ever plead;  
O Love, who didst my ransom pay,  
Who for me e’er dost intercede –

O Love, I give myself to Thee,  
Thine ever, only Thine, to be.

FRIDAY.

*Draw me, we will run after Thee. – Song of Solomon 1:4.*

Oh, all is accomplished, all is glorious. We are saved. Heaven is ours. – But we – what are we? Has our soul decked itself with festive and resplendent joy in faith, in conformity with, and in honor of, the salvation which has been given us, and the glory we are so firmly assured of? Has it divested itself of its love for sin? Has it put on the garments of light, and of the new day which has dawned for it, and does it display their beauty?

Woe unto us! We must confess that we are beyond measure indifferent and prone to sin, and that many unseemly things of the night and of darkness that are a shame and a disgrace unto us are still to be found with us.– "Draw me, we will run after Thee!" There is no other remedy but that Jesus, the crucified, risen, and ascended Lord, draw us mightily away from it all and unto Himself. If Jesus, through His Word and the Holy Spirit, always assures us of His grace and of the forgiveness of sins; if Jesus, through His Word and the Holy Spirit, always makes us eager for His salvation and of the glory that awaits us; if Jesus, through His Word and the Holy Spirit, so captivates our hearts that with all our might we hate sin and dearly love Him; in short, if, through His Word and the Holy Spirit, Jesus takes hold of us with the almighty power of His grace, and draws us unto Him, and if with the great patience of a Savior He does this again and again: then will we run, then will we run after Him with heart and soul and mind, heavenward.

And, Christian, He will do it, He does it. Call upon Him, you poor, weak, weary child of God ! He draws you to Himself, heavenward.

*PRAYER.* – Yes. Amen, My Lord and Savior, do so, I pray You. Without You I can do nothing. Unless You draw me, I shall

certainly be left lying by the wayside. Take hold of me, sweet Jesus, and draw me after You on the road that we must wander unto heaven. Do to me in Your own Savior-love what an earthly mother does to her tired and reluctant child. Draw me after You, that I may run the way to heaven. Amen.

Hymn 234, 1.

DRAW us to Thee, | For then shall we  
Walk in Thy steps forever,  
And hasten on | Where Thou art gone,  
To be with Thee, dear Savior.

SATURDAY.

*I am black, but comely. – Song of Solomon 1:5.*

Come, dear Christian, let us show you how to move the Savior to draw you after Him to heaven. True, His own compassionate heart moves Him thereto. But does He not also want to be asked? You --redeemed Christian – beloved of your Savior – look into the mirror, the mirror of God's holy Law, and you will see that of yourself you are black – black with sin. And if you consider all that He did for you, what grace He bestowed upon you, and how He gave you His Holy Spirit, and then look upon yourself, then you will be constrained to admit, with a heart full of shame, that even yet you art black beyond measure.

But now look into the light of His Gospel. What you see there will move you to say:

Thou, O Christ, art all I want;  
More than all in Thee I find;  
Raise the fallen, cheer the faint,  
Heal the sick, and lead the blind.  
Just and holy is Thy name;  
I am all unrighteousness:

False and full of sin I am;  
Thou art full of truth and grace.

Plenteous grace with Thee is found,  
Grace to cover all my sin;  
Let the healing streams abound;  
Make and keep me pure within.  
Thou of life the Fountain art,  
Freely let me take of Thee:  
Spring Thou up within my heart,  
Rise to all eternity.

Yes, Christian, your Lord and Savior has clothed you with His own righteousness, so dearly purchased, and has given you the Spirit of faith, for you to wrap yourself therein and therein to appear before Him. And so, so He loves you, and cannot leave you, and draws you after Him to heaven. And the blacker you seem to yourself, and the more firmly you draw about you the folds of His righteousness, purchased for you and given to you, the more He loves you, all the more you may be assured that He cannot leave you, the more lovingly does He draw you after Him. And when you say to Him that in yourself, indeed, you are black, but that in His righteousness, imputed to you, and in His beauty you are comely, then does His heart yearn for you, and He holds out His arms to you, and He draws you, body and soul, after Him to heaven. See, so you may move Jesus to draw you after Him.

*PRAYER.* – My Lord and Savior, I am altogether black with sin, and You can have no pleasure in me. But in You, in Your righteousness, in Your bloody merit, in which You have clothed me, I am comely and beautiful; for there Your righteousness is without a flaw, Your merits without the least blemish. Arrayed with them I am sure to please You, O Lord; arrayed with them, You love me and must love me. Come now, and draw me to You and after You, until I shall be with You as Your own. Amen.

Hymn 107, 2. 3.

Other refuge have I none;  
Hangs my helpless soul on Thee;  
Leave, ah, leave me not alone,  
Still support and comfort me!  
All my trust on Thee is stayed,  
All my help from Thee I bring:  
Cover my defenceless head  
With the shadow of Thy wing.

Other refuge have I none;  
Hangs my helpless soul on Thee;  
Leave, ah, leave me not alone,  
Still support and comfort me!  
All my trust on Thee is stayed,  
All my help from Thee I bring:  
Cover my defenceless head  
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