



# Cornelius and Peter

*Acts 10:1-23*

# New Testament Churches



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# Importance of Caesarea

- ◆ Acts 23:23—Felix, the governor, lived there and was the official Roman capital of the Judea Province. Felix governed from the Promontory Palace, a grand complex originally built by Herod the Great that functioned as the Roman governor's official mansion and headquarters.

Herod's "Promontory Palace" at Caesarea Maritima was built on natural rock projecting into the Mediterranean. On the palace grounds, Herod's builders cut into the natural bedrock to create a large pool area that they filled with freshwater 8 feet deep. The palace was terraced and had two main levels.

Also, a temple was built inland from the harbor north of the palace overlooking the sea. It contained huge images of Julius Caesar (as a god) and Juno (as the patron goddess of Rome). Josephus mentions it could be seen from a great distance and its size was immense. It was possibly close to 100 feet from the column bases to the top of its pediment, surrounded by columns and built upon an expansive, elevated platform. Priests served at the temple and performed animal sacrifices. Captains would bring offerings when arriving at harbor and before leaving on journeys. The temple represented the main religious life of the people at Caesarea, but there were other shrines or temples during the time of Cornelius.



<https://jeanclaudegolvin.com/en/gallery/caesarea-maritima-caesarea-herods-promontory-palace-2/>

Promontory Palace

# Cornelius

*Acts 10:1-8*

- ◆ V. 3—about the 9th hour—3 pm, Jewish reckoning (Roman time would be 9 am. Roman time began at midnight; Jewish time at sunrise, i.e. 6 am)
- ◆ V. 9—About the 6th hour—noon, Jewish reckoning
- ◆ Band called the Italian band—A centurion was the commander of a *centuria*, which was the smallest unit of a Roman legion. A legion was composed of 6,000 soldiers. Each legion was divided into 10 cohorts (called bands in Acts). Each cohort contained 6 *centuria*. A centurion commanded about 80–100 men, and there were 60 *centuria* in a legion.
- ◆ Cornelius commanded 80–100 men, and his *centuria* was part of a larger group of 600 men called a cohort or in Acts called a band. The particular cohort of which he was a part, was called the Italian Band in Acts 10:1.

- ◆ Cornelius was a Roman centurion. He was a man of wealth and noble birth, and his position was one of trust and honor. A heathen by birth, training, and education, through contact with the Jews he had gained a knowledge of God, and he worshiped Him with a true heart, showing the sincerity of his faith by compassion to the poor. He was known far and near for his beneficence, and his righteous life made him of good repute among both Jews and Gentiles. His influence was a blessing to all with whom he came in contact. The inspired record describes him as “a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway.” (AA 132.3)

- ◆ Believing in God as the Creator of heaven and earth, Cornelius revered Him, acknowledged His authority, and sought His counsel in all the affairs of life. He was faithful to Jehovah in his home life and in his official duties. He had erected the altar of God in his home, for he dared not attempt to carry out his plans or to bear his responsibilities without the help of God. (AA 133.1)

- ◆ Though Cornelius believed the prophecies and was looking for the Messiah to come, he had not a knowledge of the gospel as revealed in the life and death of Christ. He was not a member of the Jewish church and would have been looked upon by the rabbis as a heathen and unclean. But the same Holy Watcher who said of Abraham, "I know him," knew Cornelius also, and sent a message direct from heaven to him. (AA 133.2)

- ◆ The angel appeared to Cornelius while he was at prayer. As the centurion heard himself addressed by name, he was afraid, yet he knew that the messenger had come from God, and he said, “What is it, Lord?” The angel answered, “Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a **memorial** before God. And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter: he lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the seaside.” (AA 133.3)

- ◆ The angel, after his interview with Cornelius, went to Peter, in Joppa. At the time, Peter was praying upon the housetop of his lodging . . . (AA 135.1)

- ◆ Frankincense was placed upon the loaves. When the bread was removed every Sabbath, to be replaced by fresh loaves, the frankincense was burned upon the altar as a **memorial** before God. (*PP* 354.1) Leviticus 24:7
- ◆ Many, oh, so many, among believers have scarcely food enough to eat, yet in their deep poverty they bring their tithes and offerings to the Lord's treasury. Many who know what it is to sustain the cause of God in hard and trying circumstances have invested means in the publishing house. They have willingly endured hardship and privation, and have watched and prayed for the success of the cause. Their gifts and sacrifices express the fervent gratitude and praise of their hearts to Him who has called them out of darkness into His marvelous light. No more fragrant influence can ascend to heaven. Their prayers and their alms come up as a **memorial** before God. (*2SM* 212.3)

The showbread was kept ever before the Lord as a perpetual offering. . . . Both the manna and the showbread pointed to Christ, the living Bread, who is ever in the presence of God for us. He Himself said, “I am the living Bread which came down from heaven.” John 6:48–51. Frankincense was placed upon the loaves. When the bread was removed every Sabbath, to be replaced by fresh loaves, the frankincense was burned upon the altar as a **memorial** before God. (*PP* 354.1)

Because He had rested upon the Sabbath, “God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it,”—set it apart to a holy use. He gave it to Adam as a day of rest. It was a **memorial** of the work of creation, and thus a sign of God’s power and His love. (*DA* 281.2)

Matthew 26:13; John 12:3—Mary anointing Jesus’ feet and head

- ◆ Who does not desire such memorials—deeds which are before God as a voice speaking in behalf of the human agent, keeping our names fresh and fragrant in the heavenly sanctuary? (*RH* May 16, 1893, par. 9)

# Peter

*Acts 10:9-23*

# Peter

- ◆ He was a fisherman (Luke 5:3).
- ◆ His brother was Andrew.
- ◆ He was married.
- ◆ Came from Bethsaida in Galilee (John 1:44)
- ◆ Original name was Simon, but Jesus said he would be called Cephas (John 1:42).
- ◆ The name Peter appears more than any other name in the Gospels (other than Jesus).



# Peter

- ◆ He had several names—Peter, Simon, Bar-jona (Matt 16:17), Simeon (Acts 15:14), Cephas.
- ◆ He seems to have been a leader and spokesman among the apostles: His name is given first in every listing of the apostles (Matt 10:2; Mk 3:16; Lk 6:14) and in the listing of the 3 selected ones—Peter, James, John—and he asked or answered questions of Jesus (Matt 15:15; 18:21; Matt 16:15; Matt 16:22)



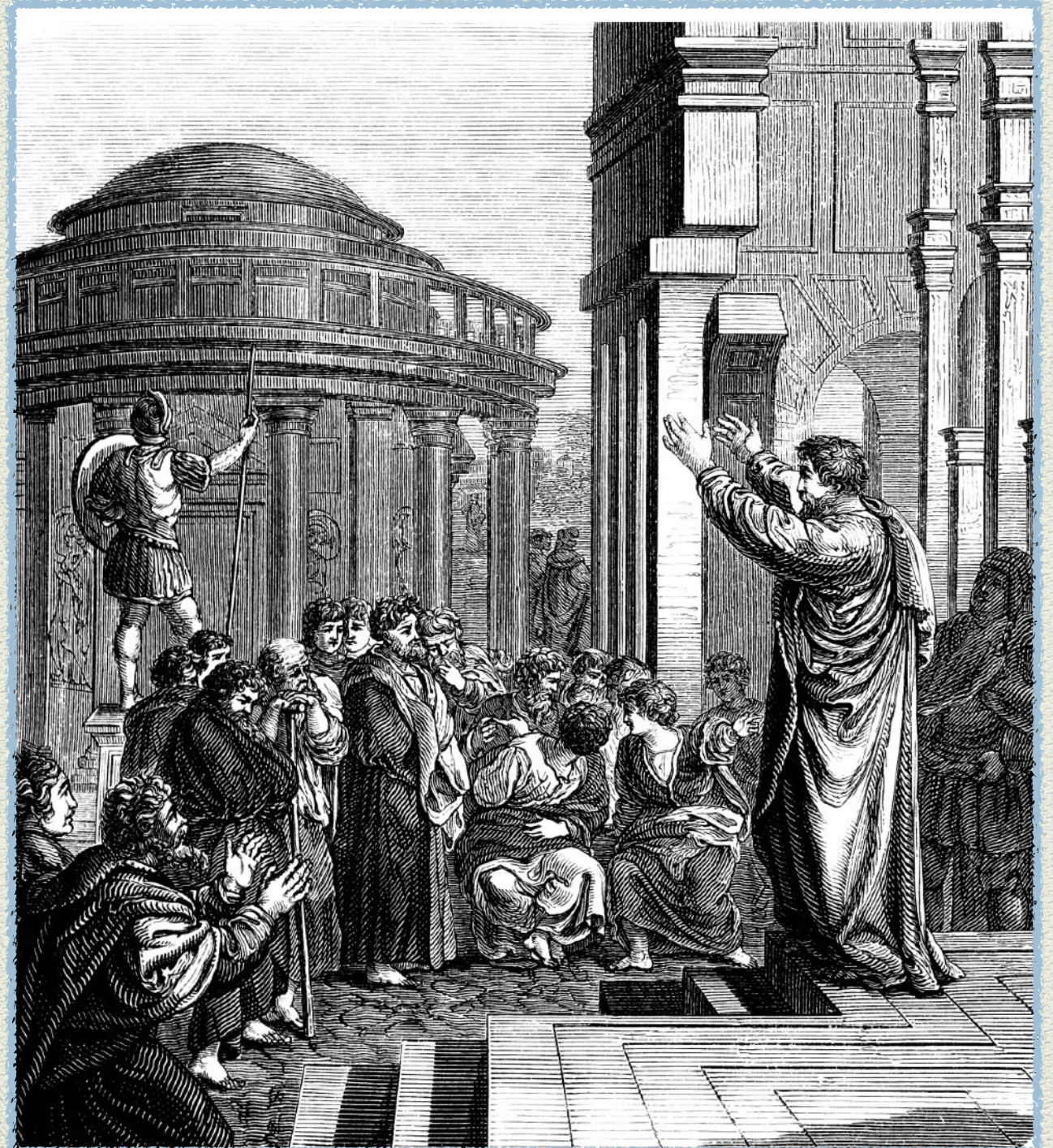
# Peter

- ♦ He seemed to be the first of the apostles to speak up, was the only disciple to get out of the boat and walk on the water to Jesus, and he presumed to know what the right thing to do or say was, even instructing Jesus (Matt 16:22—be it far from thee; John 13:8—you'll not wash my feet; 18:10—cut off the servant's ear). But he also saw his need—he called on Jesus to save him when he began to sink (Matt 14:30). He was the only one to deny Jesus and that 3 times (Matt 26:69). He was self-seeking (what am I going to get—Matt 19:27), but at other times he sacrificed to follow Jesus (Mark 1:18).



# Peter

- ◆ He was intelligent and wise and the first disciple to acknowledge Jesus as the Son of God (Matt 16:16).
- ◆ He was the first to take the gospel to the Gentiles.



The angel, after his interview with Cornelius, went to Peter, in Joppa. At the time, Peter was praying upon the housetop of his lodging, and we read that he “became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance.” It was not for physical food alone that Peter hungered. As from the housetop he viewed the city of Joppa and the surrounding country he hungered for the salvation of his countrymen. He had an intense desire to point out to them from the Scriptures the prophecies relating to the sufferings and death of Christ. (AA 135.1)

In the vision Peter “saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth: wherein were all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean. And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common. This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven.” (AA 135.2)

This vision conveyed to Peter both reproof and instruction. It revealed to him the purpose of God—that by the death of Christ the Gentiles should be made fellow heirs with the Jews to the blessings of salvation. As yet none of the disciples had preached the gospel to the Gentiles. In their minds the middle wall of partition, broken down by the death of Christ, still existed, and their labors had been confined to the Jews, for they had looked upon the Gentiles as excluded from the blessings of the gospel. Now the Lord was seeking to teach Peter the world-wide extent of the divine plan. (AA 135.3)

The time had come for an entirely new phase of work to be entered upon by the church of Christ. The door that many of the Jewish converts had closed against the Gentiles was now to be thrown open. And the Gentiles who accepted the gospel were to be regarded as on an equality with the Jewish disciples, without the necessity of observing the rite of circumcision.

(AA 136.2)

How carefully the Lord worked to overcome the prejudice against the Gentiles that had been so firmly fixed in Peter's mind by his Jewish training! By the vision of the sheet and its contents He sought to divest the apostle's mind of this prejudice and to teach the important truth that in heaven there is no respect of persons; that Jew and Gentile are alike precious in God's sight; that through Christ the heathen may be made partakers of the blessings and privileges of the gospel. (AA 136.3)

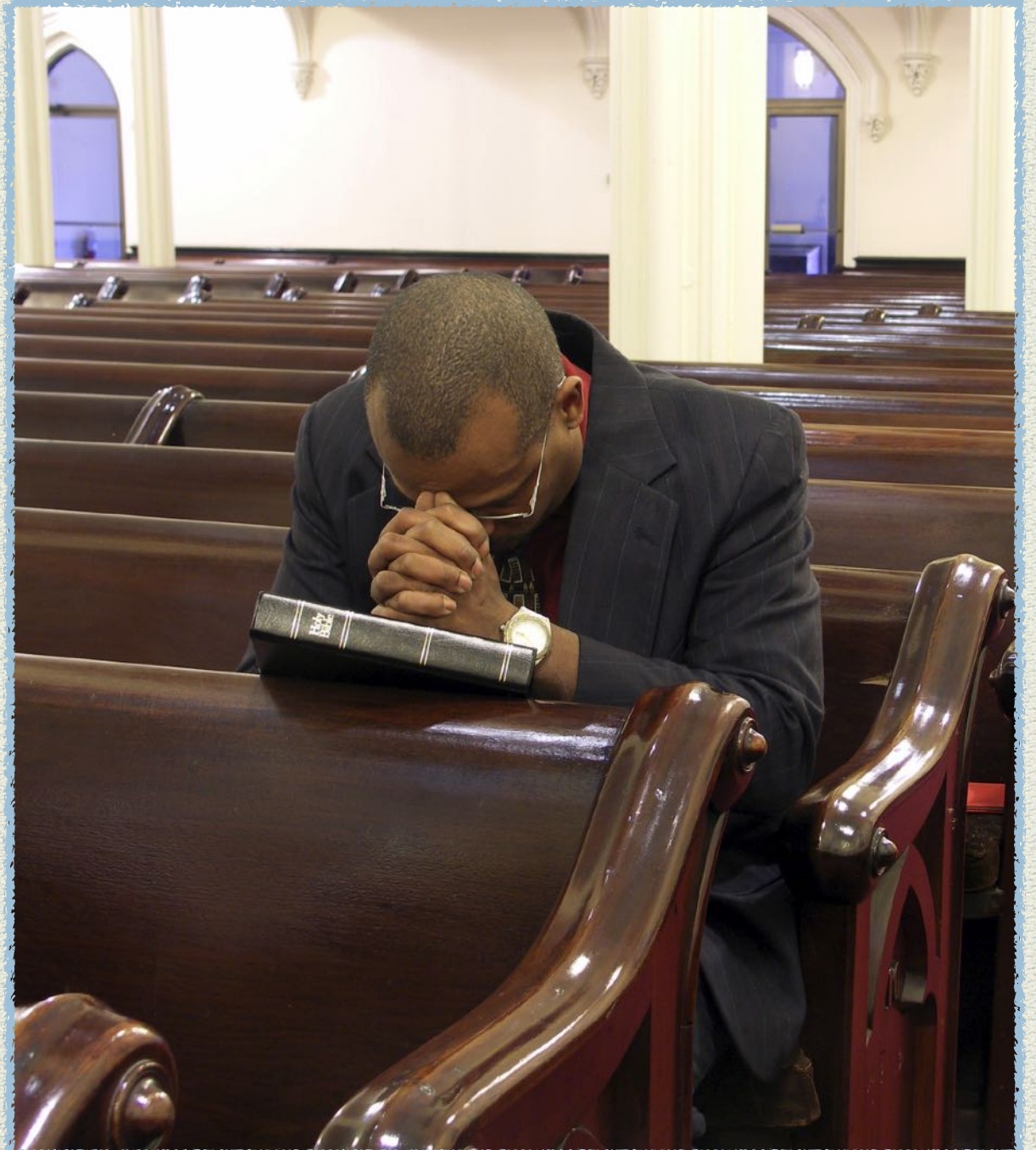
While Peter was meditating on the meaning of the vision, the men sent from Cornelius arrived in Joppa and stood before the gate of his lodginghouse. Then the Spirit said to him, "Behold, three men seek thee. Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them." (AA 136.4 )

What did Cornelius and Peter have in common?

# Prayer

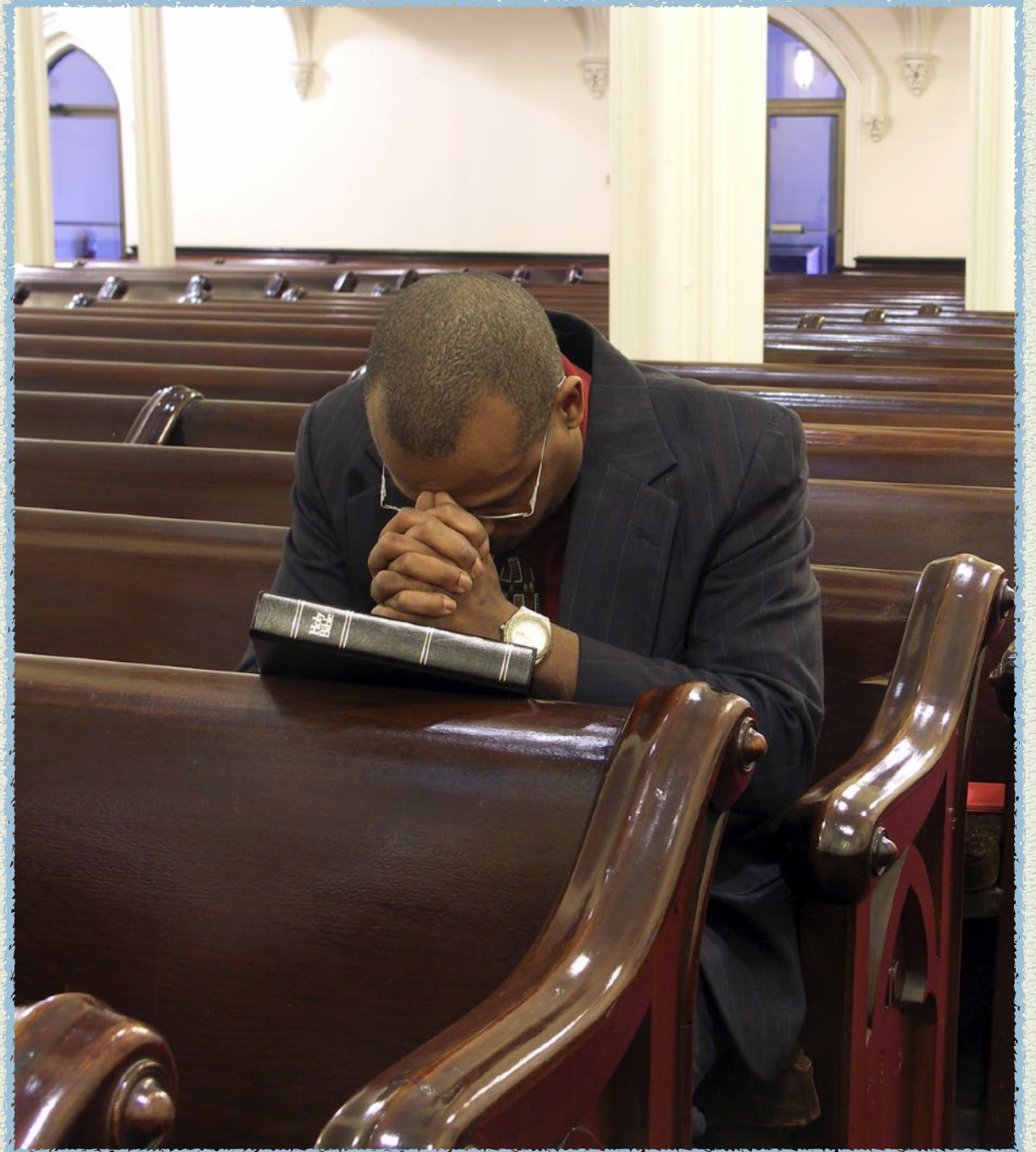
# Prayer . . .

- ◆ Prayer is the opening of the heart to God as to a friend. (SC 93.2)
- ◆ . . . prayer is the key in the hand of faith to unlock heaven's storehouse . . . (SC 94.2)
- ◆ Prayer is not to work any change in God; it is to bring us into harmony with God. (COL 143.1)
- ◆ . . . from a sincere heart ascends as incense before the Lord . . . (AG 86.5)



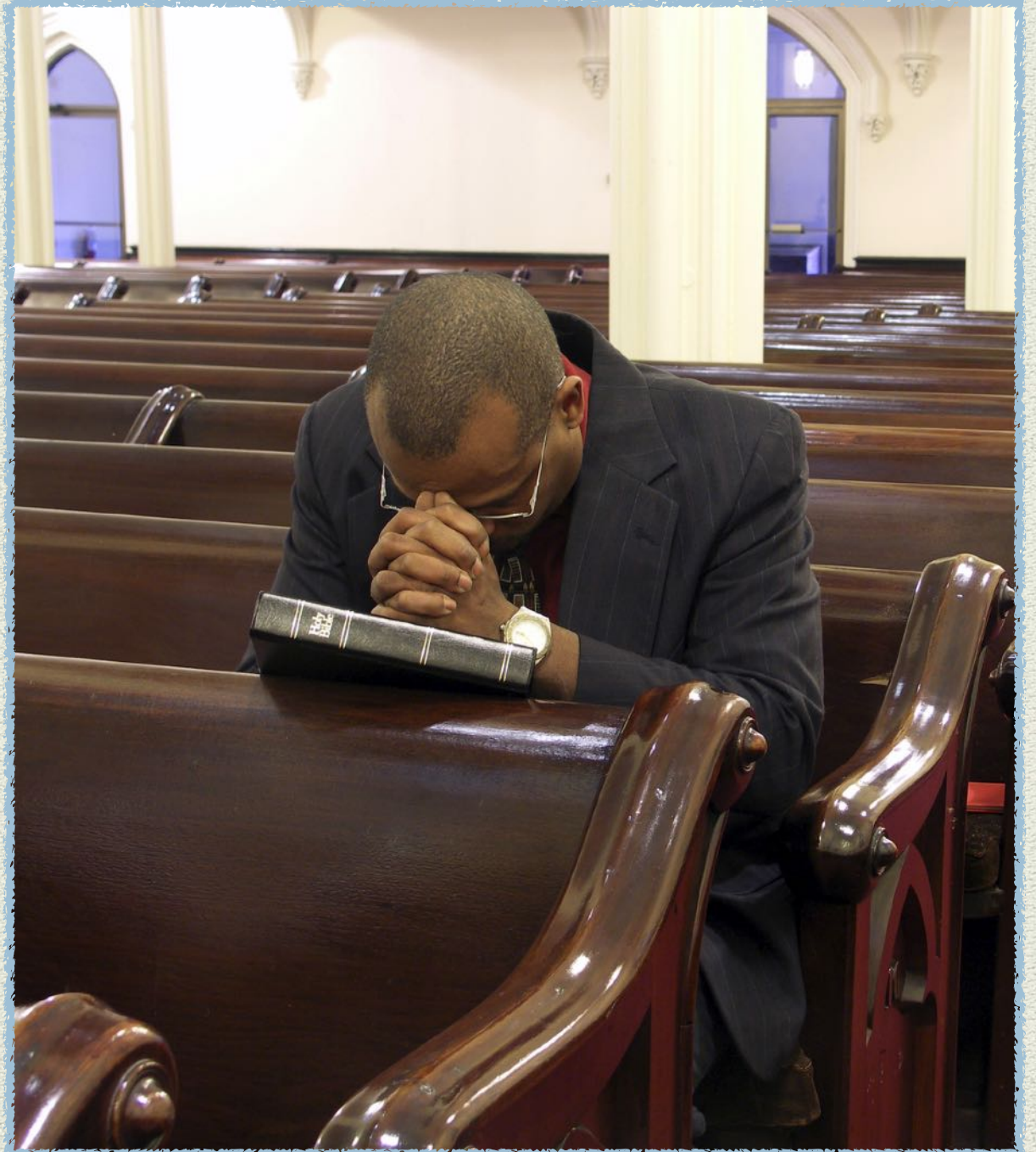
# Prayer . . .

- ◆ Every sincere prayer is heard in heaven. It may not be fluently expressed; but if the heart is in it, it will ascend to the sanctuary where Jesus ministers, and He will present it to the Father without one awkward, stammering word, beautiful and fragrant with the incense of His own perfection. (*DA 667.3*)



# Prayer . . .

- ♦ . . . is heaven's ordained means of success in the conflict with sin and the development of Christian character (*AA* 563)
- ♦ . . . is the life of the soul. (*ED* 258.3)
- ♦ . . . is the breath of the soul. (*GW* 254.4)



- ◆ There is no time or place in which it is inappropriate to offer up a petition to God. There is nothing that can prevent us from lifting up our hearts in the spirit of earnest prayer. In the crowds of the street, in the midst of a business engagement, we may send up a petition to God and plead for divine guidance . . . (SC 99)

- ◆ Although there may be a tainted, corrupted atmosphere around us, we need not breathe its miasma, but may live in the pure air of heaven. We may close every door to impure imaginings and unholy thoughts by lifting the soul into the presence of God through sincere prayer. Those whose hearts are open to receive the support and blessing of God will walk in a holier atmosphere than that of earth and will have constant communion with heaven. (SC 99.2)

- ◆ Nothing that in any way concerns our peace is too small for Him to notice. There is no chapter in our experience too dark for Him to read; there is no perplexity too difficult for Him to unravel. No calamity can befall the least of His children, no anxiety harass the soul, no joy cheer, no sincere prayer escape the lips, of which our heavenly Father is unobservant, or in which He takes no immediate interest. “He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.” Psalm 147:3. The relations between God and each soul are as distinct and full as though there were not another soul upon the earth to share His watchcare, not another soul for whom He gave His beloved Son. (SC 100.1)

- ◆ The way to the throne of God is always open. You cannot always be on your knees in prayer. But your silent petitions may constantly ascend to God for strength and guidance. When tempted, as you will be, you may flee to the secret place of the Most High. His everlasting arms will be underneath you. Let these words cheer you, “Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white; for they are worthy.” [Revelation 3:4.] (5LtMs, *Lt* 55, 1887, par. 14)

- ◆ As yet the disciples were unacquainted with the Saviour's unlimited resources and power. He said to them, "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My name." John 16:24. He explained that the secret of their success would be in asking for strength and grace **in His name**. He would be present before the Father to make request for them. The prayer of the humble suppliant He presents as His own desire in that soul's behalf. Every sincere prayer is heard in heaven. It may not be fluently expressed; but if the heart is in it, it will ascend to the sanctuary where Jesus ministers, and He will present it to the Father without one awkward, stammering word, beautiful and fragrant with the incense of His own perfection. (*DA 667.3*)

# A Few Prayers of Christ

# The Transfiguration

Only the three who are to witness His anguish in Gethsemane have been chosen to be with Him on the mount.

Now the burden of His prayer is that they may be given a manifestation of the glory He had with the Father before the world was, that His kingdom may be revealed to human eyes, and that His disciples may be strengthened to behold it. He pleads that they may witness a manifestation of His divinity that will comfort them in the hour of His supreme agony with the knowledge that He is of a surety the Son of God and that His shameful death is a part of the plan of redemption. (*DA 419.4*)

His prayer is heard. While He is bowed in lowliness upon the stony ground, suddenly the heavens open, the golden gates of the city of God are thrown wide, and holy radiance descends upon the mount, enshrouding the Saviour's form. Divinity from within flashes through humanity, and meets the glory coming from above. Arising from His prostrate position, Christ stands in godlike majesty. The soul agony is gone. His countenance now shines "as the sun," and His garments are "white as the light." (*DA 421.1*)

# Gethsemane

But God suffered with His Son. Angels beheld the Saviour's agony. They saw their Lord enclosed by legions of satanic forces, His nature weighed down with a shuddering, mysterious dread. There was silence in heaven. (*DA 693.2*)

Legions of angels were sorrowfully waiting, hoping that, as in the case of Isaac, God would at the last moment prevent His shameful death. But angels were not permitted to bear any such message to God's dear Son. The humiliation in the judgment hall and on the way to Calvary went on. He was mocked, derided, and spit upon. He endured the jeers, taunts, and revilings of those who hated Him, until upon the cross He bowed His head and died. (CCh 187.5)

At the sound of fervent prayer, Satan's whole host trembles. He continues to call legions of evil angels to accomplish his object. And when angels, all-powerful, clothed with the armory of heaven, come to the help of the fainting, pursued soul, Satan and his host fall back, well knowing that their battle is lost. (CCh 319.3)

I saw that the remnant were not prepared for what is coming upon the earth. Stupidity, like lethargy, seemed to hang upon the minds of most of those who profess to believe that we are having the last message. My accompanying angel cried out with awful solemnity, "Get ready! get ready! get ready! for the fierce anger of the Lord is soon to come. His wrath is to be poured out, unmixed with mercy, and ye are not ready. Rend the heart, and not the garment. A great work must be done for the remnant. Many of them are dwelling upon little trials." Said the angel, "Legions of evil angels are around you, and are trying to press in their awful darkness, that ye may be ensnared and taken. Ye suffer your minds to be diverted too readily from the work of preparation and the all-important truths for these last days. (EW 119.1)

And ye dwell upon little trials and go into minute particulars of little difficulties to explain them to the satisfaction of this one or that." . . . Angels have been grieved and God displeased by the hours which have been spent in justifying self. I saw that God will not bow down and listen to long justifications, and He does not want His servants to do so, and thus precious time be wasted that should be spent in showing transgressors the error of their ways and pulling souls out of the fire.  
(EW 119.1)

When Christ sent forth the disciples with the gospel message, faith in God and His word had well-nigh departed from the world. . . . Satanic agencies took possession of men. The bodies of human beings, made for the dwelling place of God, became the habitation of demons. The senses, the nerves, the organs of men were worked by supernatural agencies in the indulgence of the vilest lust. The very stamp of demons was impressed upon the countenances of men. Human faces reflected the expression of the legions of evil with which men were possessed. (*MH* 142.1, 142.2)

What is the condition in the world today? Is not faith in the Bible as effectually destroyed by the higher criticism and speculation of today as it was by tradition and rabbinism in the days of Christ? Have not greed and ambition and love of pleasure as strong a hold on men's hearts now as they had then? In the professedly Christian world, even in the professed churches of Christ, how few are governed by Christian principles. In business, social, domestic, even religious circles, how few make the teachings of Christ the rule of daily living. Is it not true that "justice standeth afar off: . . . equity cannot enter. . . . And he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey"? Isaiah 59:14, 15. (*MH* 142.3)

We are living in the midst of an “epidemic of crime,” at which thoughtful, God-fearing men everywhere stand aghast. The corruption that prevails, it is beyond the power of the human pen to describe. Every day brings fresh revelations of political strife, bribery, and fraud. Every day brings its heart-sickening record of violence and lawlessness, of indifference to human suffering, of brutal, fiendish destruction of human life. Every day testifies to the increase of insanity, murder, and suicide. Who can doubt that satanic agencies are at work among men with increasing activity to distract and corrupt the mind, and defile and destroy the body? (MH 142.4)

Satan will call to his aid legions of his angels to oppose the advance of even one soul, and if possible, wrest it from the hand of Christ. (*4bSG* 104.5)

I saw evil angels contending for souls, and angels of God resisting them. The conflict was severe. Evil angels were crowding about them, corrupting the atmosphere with their poisonous influence, and stupefying their sensibilities. Holy angels were anxiously watching these souls, and were waiting to drive back Satan's host. But it is not the work of good angels to control minds against the will of the individuals. If they yield to the enemy, and make no effort to resist him, then the angels of God can do but little more than hold in check the host of Satan, that they should not destroy, until further light is given to those in peril, to move them to arouse and look to Heaven for help. Jesus will not commission holy angels to extricate those who make no effort to help themselves. (4bSG 104.6)

If Satan sees he is in danger of losing one soul, he will exert himself to the utmost to keep that one. And when the individual is aroused to his danger, and with distress and fervor looks to Jesus for strength, Satan fears he shall lose a captive, and he calls a reinforcement of his angels to hedge in the poor soul, and form a wall of darkness around him, that Heaven's light may not reach him. But if the one in danger perseveres, and in helplessness and weakness casts himself upon the merits of the blood of Christ,  
(4bSG 105.1)

Jesus listens to the earnest prayer of faith, and sends a reinforcement of those angels which excel in strength to deliver them. Satan cannot endure to have his powerful rival appealed to, for he fears and trembles before his strength and majesty. At the sound of fervent prayer Satan's whole host trembles. He continues to call legions of his evil angels to accomplish his object. And when angels, all-powerful, clothed with the armory of Heaven, come to the help of the fainting, pursued soul, Satan and his host fall back, well knowing that their battle is lost. (4bSG 105.1)

But he who could command the heavenly hosts, and in an instant call to his aid legions of holy angels, one of whom could have immediately overpowered that cruel mob,—he who could have stricken down his tormentors by the flashing forth of his divine majesty,—submitted to the coarsest insult and outrage with dignified composure. As the acts of his torturers degraded them below humanity, into the likeness of Satan, so did the meekness and patience of Jesus exalt him above the level of humanity. (3SP 139.1)

# An Experience of Ellen White

My experience has been singular, and for years I have suffered peculiar trials of mind. The condition of God's people, and my connection with the work of God, has often brought upon me a weight of sadness and discouragement which cannot be expressed. For years I have looked to the grave as a sweet resting-place. (*4bSG* 106.1)

Then our past life was presented before me, and I was shown that Satan had sought in various ways to destroy our usefulness; that many times he has laid his plans to get us down from the work of God; he had come in different ways, and through different agencies, to accomplish his purposes; and through the ministration of holy angels he had been defeated. I saw that in our journeying from place to place, he had frequently placed his evil angels in our path to cause accident which would result in our losing our lives; (4bSG 106.3)

but holy angels were sent upon the ground to deliver. Several accidents have placed my husband and myself in great peril, and our preservation has been wonderful. I saw that we had been the special objects of Satan's attacks, because of our interest in, and connection with, the work of God. As I saw the great care God has every moment for those who love and fear him, I was inspired with confidence and trust in God, and felt reproved for my lack of faith. 4bSG 106.3