

The Foundation of His Throne

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Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, Yeshua:

It is written, *“Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne; Mercy and truth go before Your face” (Psalm 89:14, NKJV).*ⁱ Reading this verse makes me feel like I am standing in a court of law. We are, as we read, *“I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom” (2 Timothy 4:1).*

I remember the first time I read the New Testament. The words of Jesus pierced my heart— *“If you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins” (John 8:24).* Wow! Die in my sins? Why couldn’t God just forgive me? After all, He is a loving God. Right? It just did not make sense to me.

In 2002 while living in New Hampshire, I came to a crucial decision point in my life. I had been attending church somewhat regularly for nearly eight years. But I didn’t believe, or should I say, I did not yet understand anything about Christianity.

I felt that Jesus was this great guy. But he was not my Savior. I even believed that Jesus might have been a great rabbi. A sage (a wise man) who went around performing miracles and healing people. Jesus reminded me of the Baal Shem Tov, a mystic Chasidic rabbi who lived in Ukraine in the 1700s.ⁱⁱ He was also known for healing people. But there was something much different about Jesus.

My parents raised me in a Jewish home. I went to Hebrew school. But I realized I had been drawn to Jesus ever since I was a child. Even while attending a rabbinic school in Israel, I had this mysterious desire to travel to Bethlehem to watch the Christmas parade.

In 1984, I moved from Israel back to California to live with my father. My parents had divorced in 1975. And for much of these nine years, I had little to no contact with my father. In moving back to the United States, I wanted to live out my dream of building a better family than my parents. And it did not take long to reacclimate to American culture. While my interest in Jesus waned for a season, it never entirely went away. It remained within me like a smoldering ember burning in my heart.

I married my gorgeous college sweetheart, bought a small house, and had two beautiful children: a boy and a girl. The game of life was playing out perfectly, almost. Some of my family members wanted me to become a doctor. On the other hand, my mother wanted me to become

a rabbi to continue the family heritage. I did neither. I became an engineer, and later, a pastor (although I'm often called rabbi). Little did I know at that time that God would have other plans for my life.

For twelve years, we moved our small family all over the country—California, Oregon, Washington, Nevada, New Hampshire, back to California, and lastly, Virginia. While advancing in my engineering career, I was also looking for that special place I could call home. But nothing ever felt quite right.

And so here I was, a Jewish man from Israel, living in New Hampshire, working as a city engineer, and attending a conservative Baptist church. This was about the time I reached my crucial decision point. And the answers I needed could only be found in *one* book—The New Testament.

I wanted to know the truth about Christianity. Either Jesus was a mythical figure the Gentiles worshiped as a man-god, or maybe I was missing something. I was going to get to the bottom of things. So, I opened a King James Bible and began to read the words of Jesus: *"If you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins" (John 8:24).*

Ouch! Who was this man that could make such a statement? I decided to read the end of the story, the Book of Revelation:

"Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses."

"Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS" (Revelation 19:11-16).

Oh my, I gasped. Jesus is God! The Christians had it right after all! Suddenly, I knew without any shadow of a doubt that Jesus was the Messiah. And He was God. But did He need to die for me?

The prophet Isaiah spoke these words to Israel: *"Surely they are My people, Children who will not lie. So He became their Savior" (Isiah 63:8).* The Lord affirmed His word. Yes, Jesus became our Savior. But in what way did He save us?

It is written, *"For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6).* Again, the Lord affirmed, yes, Jesus, is this child that was born and given. But given for what, I asked?

I continued reading: *"But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed"* (Isaiah 53:5). Oh, I see now, this man Jesus was crucified for ours, my sins.

However, Jesus was not just an ordinary man. I already knew from the Book of Revelation that He was entirely God, and now from Isaiah, I could also see that He was also fully human. Therefore, Jesus is both fully God and man, co-equal and co-eternal with His heavenly Father. He is our God who appeared in the flesh,ⁱⁱⁱ Immanuel, God who dwells with us.^{iv}

I now fully understood that it was God, born in the flesh, who offered Himself as a living sacrifice for my sins. And this made all the difference. God sacrificed Himself, and on that glorious day in 2002, Yeshua became my Savior. By still, why couldn't God just forgive me? The Bible says:

"A man is justified [made right before God] by faith apart from the deeds of the law" (Romans 3:28).

"Therefore, the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith [and not our own human efforts]" (Galatians 3:24).

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

"Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace [of our heavenly Father] in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Romans 5:1-2).

So, let us now revisit our opening scripture verse: *"Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne; Mercy and truth go before Your face"* (Psalm 89:14). In Hebrew, justice and righteousness have the same meaning (*tzedakah*) derived from the root *tzedek*. *Tzedek* means fulfilling duties towards others, particularly the responsibilities imposed on a person based on moral virtues, such as remedying those injured.

Justice precedes righteousness, and thus, it appears from the order of God's wording that His courtroom justice precedes His remedy for our injustice. And God's remedy for our injustice establishes His righteousness, thereby enabling Him to extend His mercy. In other words, God's love is an outpouring of Him remedying our injuries by taking upon Himself the payment for our debt to sin.^v It is written, *"For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ"* (John 1:17).

The Law had to come first, not only to teach us what is sinful but, more importantly, that God's justice would be rendered through it. And it is the blood of Christ and His righteousness that has become the propitiation, the payment for our sin, so that now God's mercy (*Chesed* in Hebrew), might go forth.

In the words of the sages: *"Justice is the declaration of God's will and our means of serving and approaching Him."*^{vi} Therefore, it is written, *"In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is*

love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation [payment] for our sins" (1 John 4:9-10). For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul (Leviticus 17:11).

Mercy (*Chesed*) is God's love and benevolence towards us and translates as His kindness or grace. The word denotes the unbounded loving-kindness with which God created the worlds and permeated all of creation. It is written, *"Mercy shall be built up forever; Your faithfulness You shall establish in the very heavens. I have made a covenant with My chosen, I have sworn to My servant David: 'Your seed I will establish forever, and build up your throne to all generations.'"* (Psalm 89:2-4).

Judaism, the rabbis explain that kindness was, in fact, the reason for the creation. Since God's "nature" is absolute benevolence and loving-kindness, He created the worlds so that He would have someone upon whom He could bestow His kindness, as stated, "It is the nature of He who is good to do good."^{vii}

God's Divine attributes parallel His human qualities and are therefore associated with the dispersion of Godly light to all mankind, which was created a little lower than the angels.^{viii} For this reason, it is written, *"The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).* And Yeshua said, *"He who has seen Me has seen the Father" (John 14:9).*

The Bible goes on to tell us that: *"He [Jesus] has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises" (Hebrews 8:6-7).* This better covenant set up so that we: *"Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus" (Romans 3:24-26).*

God is merciful, but He is also a righteous and just God. You see, justification is "God's action of making us righteous in His sight." Not by us somehow becoming sinless or by earning our righteousness through good deeds and the works of the Law. But by inheriting the righteousness of Christ, who is perfect, because we believe that He died for our sins. In other words, God could not pretend our sins never happened. He needed someone within His heavenly court to accept responsibility for them. And that someone is Jesus.

Now, through the New Covenant, it is the blood of Jesus, not that of an animal, that makes atonement for our souls. And when God makes atonement, He also justifies us and declares us to be righteous in His sight—for those who believe that Jesus *is* the Christ. We now have been freed from the court's punishment for sin, which is death.

But God's justice does not stop here. He not only pays for our sins; He also makes us a new creation and gives us a new spirit—one that *cannot* sin. Yes, our flesh may continue to sin, but our new spirit cannot. For this reason, Paul said: *"Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee" (2 Corinthians 1:21-22).*

Yes, we are sealed and preserved for the day of our final redemption. As it is written, *"Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace [to our heavenly Father] in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Romans 5:1-2).*

And this "hope of the glory of God" is our marriage to Jesus. We are the bride of Christ, as it is written, *"For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ" (2 Corinthians 11:2).*

And in celebration of this marriage, we read, *"The Lord of hosts will [one day] make for all people A feast of choice pieces, A feast of wines on the lees, Of fat things full of marrow, Of well-refined wines on the lees (Isaiah 25:6).* Therefore, until that glorious day, *"Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready" (Revelation 19:7).*

Amen!

ⁱ All Scripture quotations are taken from the New King James Bible (NKJV) unless otherwise noted, Thomas Nelson Inc., 1982.

ⁱⁱ The Baal Shem Tov. Chabad.org.

ⁱⁱⁱ John 1:1-5.

^{iv} Isaiah 7:14.

^v Schochet, Jacob Immanuel. *Tzedek & Chesed – Righteousness and Kindness*. Chabad.org.

^{vi} Posner, Zalman. *The Purpose of Justice*. Chabad.org.

^{vii} Miller, Moshe. *Chesed, Gevura, & Tiferet*. Chabad.org. John 10:32.

^{viii} Chabad.org. Psalm 8:5.