

Message Twelve

A God Who Hides Himself—the Hidden God

RK Hymns: 1206, 966

Scripture Reading: Isa. 45:15; Eph. 3:16-17; Phil. 2:13; Luke 18:1-8

Isa 45:15	Surely You are a God who hides Himself, / O God of Israel, the Savior.
Eph 3:16	That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit into the inner man,
Eph 3:17	That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love,
Phil 2:13	For it is God who operates in you both the willing and the working for His good pleasure.
Luke 18:1	And He told them a parable to the end that they ought always to pray and not lose heart,
Luke 18:2	Saying, There was a certain judge in a certain city who did not fear God and did not regard man.
Luke 18:3	And there was a widow in that city, and she kept coming to him, saying, Avenge me of my opponent.
Luke 18:4	And for a time he would not; but afterward he said within himself, Even though I do not fear God nor regard man,
Luke 18:5	Yet because this widow causes me trouble, I will avenge her, lest by continually coming she wear me out.
Luke 18:6	And the Lord said, Hear what the unrighteous judge says.
Luke 18:7	And will not God by all means carry out the avenging of His chosen ones, who cry to Him day and night, though He is long-suffering over them?
Luke 18:8	I tell you that He will carry out their avenging quickly. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?

I. “Surely You are a God who hides Himself, / O God of Israel, the Savior”—Isa. 45:15:

- A. Hardly any of God’s children know that the Bible speaks of God as a God who hides Himself—v. 15:
Isa 45:15 Surely You are a God who hides Himself, / O God of Israel, the Savior.
1. This proves that God’s children do not have an adequate knowledge of God as the One who hides Himself.
 2. We may know God as the mighty God, the righteous God, and the God who is full of grace and lovingkindness; however, we may not know God as the God who hides Himself—*Luke 1:49*; *1 Pet. 5:6*; *Rev. 15:3*; *Eph. 2:7*; *Psa. 17:7*.
Luke 1:49 Because the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is His name.
1 Pet 5:6 Therefore be humbled under the mighty hand of God that He may exalt you in due time,
Rev 15:3 And they sing the song of Moses, the slave of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and wonderful are Your works, Lord God the Almighty! Righteous and true are Your ways, O King of the nations!
Eph 2:7 That He might display in the ages to come the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.
Psa 17:7 Wondrously display Your lovingkindness, / You who save by Your right hand / Those who take refuge in You from them who rise up against them.
- B. Although our God is omnipresent, omnipotent, and full of forgiveness, He is also the hiding God, as the book of Esther indicates—4:14.
Esth 4:14 For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from some other place, and you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?
- C. God created the universe and then hid Himself within it, until we do not know where to find Him—*Job 23:3*.
Job 23:3 Oh that I knew where I might find Him, / That I might come to His seat!
- D. God did countless things in the midst of the children of Israel and countless things in their personal lives, yet He concealed Himself; He was ceaselessly working, yet He was always

hidden—Isa. 45:15.

Isa 45:15 Surely You are a God who hides Himself, / O God of Israel, the Savior.

- E. We need to realize that the omnipotent God whom we are serving is still hiding Himself, especially when He is helping us—John 14:26; Rom. 8:28:

John 14:26 But the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things and remind you of all the things which I have said to you.

Rom 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

1. We cannot see Him, and apparently, He is not doing anything.
2. Actually, in a hidden way He is doing many things for us, as He is strengthening us with power through His Spirit into the inner man so that Christ may make His home in our hearts—vv. 28, 34; Esth. 4:14; Phil. 2:13; Eph. 3:16-17a.

Rom 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

Rom 8:34 Who is he who condemns? It is Christ Jesus who died and, rather, who was raised, who is also at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.

Esth 4:14 For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from some other place, and you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?

Phil 2:13 For it is God who operates in you both the willing and the working for His good pleasure.

Eph 3:16 That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit into the inner man,

Eph 3:17a That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, ...

- F. The God who hides Himself is operating within us silently yet mightily—Phil. 2:13:

Phil 2:13 For it is God who operates in you both the willing and the working for His good pleasure.

1. Our responsibility is to cooperate with Him by responding to the inner sense deep within us—Rom. 8:6.

Rom 8:6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the spirit is life and peace.

2. Whenever we sense God living and acting within us, we should say Amen, for there, in the depths of our being, secretly and ceaselessly the God who hides Himself is working.

- G. If we study the Scriptures carefully, we will see that God has the kind of temperament that dislikes ostentation; He likes to work secretly rather than openly—Matt. 6:1-8.

Matt 6:1 But take care not to do your righteousness before men in order to be gazed at by them; otherwise, you have no reward with your Father who is in the heavens.

Matt 6:2 Therefore when you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be glorified by men. Truly I say to you, They have their reward in full.

Matt 6:3 But you, when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing,

Matt 6:4 So that your alms may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will repay you.

Matt 6:5 And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites, because they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners, so that they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, They have their reward in full.

Matt 6:6 But you, when you pray, enter into your private room, and shut your door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will repay you.

Matt 6:7 And in praying do not babble empty words as the Gentiles do; for they suppose that in their multiplicity of words they will be heard.

Matt 6:8 Therefore do not be like them, for your Father knows the things that you have need of before you ask Him.

- H. Our disposition is diametrically opposed to God's disposition, a disposition that hides itself—Isa. 45:15:

Isa 45:15 Surely You are a God who hides Himself, / O God of Israel, the Savior.

1. God likes concealment; we like display—Matt. 6:1.
 Matt 6:1 But take care not to do your righteousness before men in order to be gazed at by them; otherwise, you have no reward with your Father who is in the heavens.
2. God does not crave outward manifestations; we cannot be content without them—v. 2.
 Matt 6:2 Therefore when you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be glorified by men. Truly I say to you, They have their reward in full.
3. This divine disposition constitutes a great trial and test to us.

II. The book of Esther supplies a vivid record of how the hiding God of Israel secretly took care of His oppressed elect in their dispersion and openly saved His persecuted elect in their captivity—1:1-22; 2:1-23:

- Esth 1:1 Now in the days of Ahasuerus (this is the Ahasuerus who reigned from India to Ethiopia over one hundred twenty-seven provinces)
- Esth 1:2 In those days when King Ahasuerus sat on the throne of his kingdom, which was in Susa the capital,
- Esth 1:3 In the third year of his reign, he held a banquet for all his princes and his servants. The army of Persia and Media, the nobles, and the princes of the provinces were before him
- Esth 1:4 As he showed the glorious wealth of his kingdom and the splendor of his great majesty for many days, for one hundred eighty days.
- Esth 1:5 And when these days were completed, the king held a banquet for seven days for all the people found in Susa the capital, both great and small, in the court of the garden of the king's palace.
- Esth 1:6 There were white cotton curtains and blue hangings tied with cords of fine linen and purple to silver rings and marble pillars, as well as couches of gold and silver upon a pavement of porphyry, white marble, mother-of-pearl, and mosaics.
- Esth 1:7 And drinks were served in vessels of gold, and the vessels were different from one another; and the royal wine was abundant, according to the king's bounty.
- Esth 1:8 And the drinking was, by commandment, without constraint; for so the king had ordered all the officials of his house to do as each man desired.
- Esth 1:9 Also Vashti the queen held a banquet for the women in the royal house that belonged to King Ahasuerus.
- Esth 1:10 On the seventh day, when the heart of the king was merry with wine, he commanded Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, and Abagtha, Zethar, and Carcas, the seven eunuchs who served in the presence of Ahasuerus the king,
- Esth 1:11 To bring Vashti the queen before the king with the royal crown, in order to show her beauty to the peoples and the princes; for she was beautiful in appearance.
- Esth 1:12 But Queen Vashti refused to come at the king's command given through the king's eunuchs; and the king became very angry, and his wrath burned within him.
- Esth 1:13 Then the king said to the wise men, who knew the times (for such was the custom of the king toward all who knew law and justice;
- Esth 1:14 And those next to him were Carshena, Shethar, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena, and Memucan, the seven princes of Persia and Media, who saw the king's face and sat first in the kingdom):
- Esth 1:15 According to the law, what is to be done to Queen Vashti because she has not performed the command of King Ahasuerus given through the eunuchs?
- Esth 1:16 And Memucan answered before the king and the princes, Vashti the queen has done wrong not only to the king but also to all the princes and all the peoples who are in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus.
- Esth 1:17 For this deed of the queen will go out to all women, causing them to view their husbands contemptibly as they say, King Ahasuerus commanded Vashti the queen to be brought to his presence, but she did not come.
- Esth 1:18 And this day the princesses of Persia and Media who have heard of the queen's deed will speak likewise to all the king's princes, and contempt and wrath will abound.
- Esth 1:19 If it please the king, let a royal order go forth from him, and let it be written among the laws of the Persians and the Medes, so that it cannot be overruled, that Vashti come no more into the presence of King Ahasuerus and that the king give her royal estate to another who is better than she.

- Esth 1:20 And when the king's decree which he will make is heard throughout all his kingdom, vast though it is, all women will give honor to their husbands, great and small.
- Esth 1:21 And this word pleased the king and the princes, and the king did according to Memucan's word.
- Esth 1:22 So he sent letters to all the king's provinces, to each province in its own script and to each people in their own language, that every man should be master in his own house and speak in the language of his own people.
- Esth 2:1 After these things, when the anger of King Ahasuerus subsided, he remembered Vashti and what she had done and what had been decreed against her.
- Esth 2:2 Then the king's attendants who served him said, Let young virgins, beautiful in appearance, be sought for the king;
- Esth 2:3 And let the king appoint officers in all the provinces of his kingdom to gather all the young virgins, beautiful in appearance, to Susa the capital, to the house of the women and into the custody of Hegai the king's eunuch, who is in charge of the women; and let their cosmetics be given to them.
- Esth 2:4 And let the young woman who pleases the king become queen in place of Vashti. And the word pleased the king, and he did so.
- Esth 2:5 There was a Jew in Susa the capital whose name was Mordecai the son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, a Benjaminite,
- Esth 2:6 Who had been carried away from Jerusalem with the captives who had been carried away with Jeconiah the king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away.
- Esth 2:7 And he was foster father to Hadassah, that is, Esther, his uncle's daughter, for she had neither father nor mother; and the young woman was beautiful in form and appearance. And when her father and mother died, Mordecai took her to himself as his daughter.
- Esth 2:8 So when the king's commandment and his decree were heard, and when many young women were gathered to Susa the capital into the custody of Hegai, Esther was taken to the king's house into the custody of Hegai, who was in charge of the women.
- Esth 2:9 And the young woman pleased him, and she obtained kindness in his presence. And he quickly gave her her cosmetics and her portions as well as the seven choice young maids who were to be given her from the king's house. And he transferred her and her young maids to the best place in the house of the women.
- Esth 2:10 Esther did not make known her people or her kindred, for Mordecai had charged her not to make these known.
- Esth 2:11 And every day Mordecai walked in front of the court of the house of the women to learn how Esther was and what was happening to her.
- Esth 2:12 Now when the turn of each young woman came to go in to King Ahasuerus, at the end of the twelve months of her preparation according to the regulation for the women (for the days of their beautification were completed as follows: six months with oil of myrrh and six months with spices and with the women's cosmetics),
- Esth 2:13 The young woman would go in to the king in this way: Anything that she desired was given her to go with her from the house of the women to the house of the king.
- Esth 2:14 In the evening she would go in, and in the morning she would return to the second house of the women, to the custody of Shaashgaz the king's eunuch, who was in charge of the concubines. She would not go again in to the king unless the king delighted in her and she was summoned by name.
- Esth 2:15 Now when the turn of Esther the daughter of Abihail, the uncle of Mordecai, who had taken her to himself as his daughter, came to go in to the king, she requested nothing except what Hegai the king's eunuch, who was in charge of the women, advised. And Esther obtained favor in the sight of all who saw her.
- Esth 2:16 So Esther was taken to King Ahasuerus in his royal palace in the tenth month, which is the month Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign.
- Esth 2:17 And the king loved Esther more than all the other women. And she obtained favor and kindness with him more than all the other virgins, so he set the royal crown on her head and made her queen in place of Vashti.
- Esth 2:18 And the king held a great banquet for all his princes and his servants, Esther's banquet; and he made it a holiday for the provinces and gave gifts according to the king's bounty.
- Esth 2:19 And when the virgins were gathered together the second time, Mordecai was sitting in the king's gate.

- Esth 2:20 Esther had not yet made known her kindred or her people, as Mordecai had charged her; for Esther did what Mordecai told her, as she had when he was bringing her up.
- Esth 2:21 In those days, while Mordecai was sitting in the king's gate, Bigthan and Teresh, two of the king's eunuchs, among those who were in charge of the threshold, became angry and sought to lay hands on King Ahasuerus.
- Esth 2:22 And the thing became known to Mordecai, and he told Esther the queen; and Esther told the king in Mordecai's name.
- Esth 2:23 And when the matter was investigated and found to be so, the two of them were hanged on the gallows; and it was written in the book of the chronicles in the presence of the king.
- A. The crucial point of this book is that the very God who chose Israel, the descendants of Abraham, as His elect, after He gave them into captivity to the Gentile nations, became a hidden God to them to take care of them secretly and save them openly while acting in secrecy—Isa. 45:15:
 Isa 45:15 Surely You are a God who hides Himself, / O God of Israel, the Savior.
1. This is the reason that the book of Esther does not mention the name of God even in places when the name of God should be mentioned—4:3, 16.

Esth 4:3 And throughout every province, wherever the king's commandment and his decree came, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting and weeping and wailing; many lay in sackcloth and ashes.

Esth 4:16 Go; assemble all the Jews who are to be found in Susa, and fast for me; and do not eat or drink for three days, night or day; I also and my maids will fast in the same way. And so will I go in to the king, which is not according to the law; and if I perish, I perish.
 2. On the one hand, God used the Gentile nations as tools to discipline His people; on the other hand, the hiding God was with the people of Israel, caring for them.
- B. The hiding God did many things for Israel in a secret way:
1. The hiding God established a top king in the Gentile world in power over a great empire extending from India to Ethiopia—1:1-2.

Esth 1:1 Now in the days of Ahasuerus (this is the Ahasuerus who reigned from India to Ethiopia over one hundred twenty-seven provinces)

Esth 1:2 In those days when King Ahasuerus sat on the throne of his kingdom, which was in Susa the capital,
 2. The hiding God caused the top king to depose his queen because of her disobedience to his word—vv. 3-22.

Esth 1:3 In the third year of his reign, he held a banquet for all his princes and his servants. The army of Persia and Media, the nobles, and the princes of the provinces were before him

Esth 1:4 As he showed the glorious wealth of his kingdom and the splendor of his great majesty for many days, for one hundred eighty days.

Esth 1:5 And when these days were completed, the king held a banquet for seven days for all the people found in Susa the capital, both great and small, in the court of the garden of the king's palace.

Esth 1:6 There were white cotton curtains and blue hangings tied with cords of fine linen and purple to silver rings and marble pillars, as well as couches of gold and silver upon a pavement of porphyry, white marble, mother-of-pearl, and mosaics.

Esth 1:7 And drinks were served in vessels of gold, and the vessels were different from one another; and the royal wine was abundant, according to the king's bounty.

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- Esth 1:18 And this day the princesses of Persia and Media who have heard of the queen's deed will speak likewise to all the king's princes, and contempt and wrath will abound.
- Esth 1:19 If it please the king, let a royal order go forth from him, and let it be written among the laws of the Persians and the Medes, so that it cannot be overruled, that Vashti come no more into the presence of King Ahasuerus and that the king give her royal estate to another who is better than she.
- Esth 1:20 And when the king's decree which he will make is heard throughout all his kingdom, vast though it is, all women will give honor to their husbands, great and small.
- Esth 1:21 And this word pleased the king and the princes, and the king did according to Memucan's word.
- Esth 1:22 So he sent letters to all the king's provinces, to each province in its own script and to each people in their own language, that every man should be master in his own house and speak in the language of his own people.
3. In His secret care the hiding God raised up Esther, a Jewish orphan virgin, to be crowned by the top king as his queen—2:1-18.
- Esth 2:1 After these things, when the anger of King Ahasuerus subsided, he remembered Vashti and what she had done and what had been decreed against her.
- Esth 2:2 Then the king's attendants who served him said, Let young virgins, beautiful in appearance, be sought for the king;
- Esth 2:3 And let the king appoint officers in all the provinces of his kingdom to gather all the young virgins, beautiful in appearance, to Susa the capital, to the house of the women and into the custody of Hegai the king's eunuch, who is in charge of the women; and let their cosmetics be given to them.
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the seven choice young maids who were to be given her from the king's house. And he transferred her and her young maids to the best place in the house of the women.

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- Esth 2:17 And the king loved Esther more than all the other women. And she obtained favor and kindness with him more than all the other virgins, so he set the royal crown on her head and made her queen in place of Vashti.
- Esth 2:18 And the king held a great banquet for all his princes and his servants, Esther's banquet; and he made it a holiday for the provinces and gave gifts according to the king's bounty.

- C. During the years of the captivity, God was hiding, and He is still hiding; even today in the church age, God is hiding Himself—Isa. 45:15.

Isa 45:15 Surely You are a God who hides Himself, / O God of Israel, the Savior.

III. The significance of the parable in Luke 18:1-8 is profound, and we need to know God as He is revealed, as the hidden God:

- Luke 18:1 And He told them a parable to the end that they ought always to pray and not lose heart,
- Luke 18:2 Saying, There was a certain judge in a certain city who did not fear God and did not regard man.
- Luke 18:3 And there was a widow in that city, and she kept coming to him, saying, Avenge me of my opponent.
- Luke 18:4 And for a time he would not; but afterward he said within himself, Even though I do not fear God nor regard man,
- Luke 18:5 Yet because this widow causes me trouble, I will avenge her, lest by continually coming she wear me out.
- Luke 18:6 And the Lord said, Hear what the unrighteous judge says.
- Luke 18:7 And will not God by all means carry out the avenging of His chosen ones, who cry to Him day and night, though He is long-suffering over them?
- Luke 18:8 I tell you that He will carry out their avenging quickly. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?

- A. The widow in verse 3 signifies the believers; in a sense, the believers in Christ are a widow in the present age because their Husband, Christ, is apparently absent from them—2 Cor. 11:2.

Luke 18:3 And there was a widow in that city, and she kept coming to him, saying, Avenge me of my opponent.

2 Cor 11:2 For I am jealous over you with a jealousy of God; for I betrothed you to one husband to present you as a pure virgin to Christ.

- B. Like the widow in the parable (Luke 18:3), we believers in Christ have an opponent, Satan the devil, concerning whom we need God's avenging:
- Luke 18:3 And there was a widow in that city, and she kept coming to him, saying, Avenge me of my opponent.
1. This parable indicates the suffering we have from our opponent during the Lord's apparent absence.
 2. During His apparent absence, we are a widow whose opponent is troubling her all the time.
- C. While our opponent is persecuting us, it seems that our God is not righteous, for He allows His children to be unrighteously persecuted—1 Pet. 2:20; 3:14, 17; 4:13-16, 19:
- 1 Pet 2:20 For what glory is it if, while sinning and being buffeted, you endure? But if, while doing good and suffering, you endure, this is grace with God.
- 1 Pet 3:14 But even if you suffer because of righteousness, you are blessed. And do not be afraid with fear from them, nor be troubled,
- 1 Pet 3:17 For it is better, if the will of God should will it, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.
- 1 Pet 4:13 But inasmuch as you share in the sufferings of Christ, rejoice, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice exultingly.
- 1 Pet 4:14 If you are reproached in the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.
- 1 Pet 4:15 For let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler into others' affairs;
- 1 Pet 4:16 But if as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this name.
- 1 Pet 4:19 So then let those also who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls in well-doing to a faithful Creator.
1. Throughout the centuries, thousands upon thousands of honest and faithful followers of the Lord Jesus have suffered unrighteous persecution; even today many are undergoing unrighteous treatment—Rev. 2:8-10.

Rev 2:8 And to the messenger of the church in Smyrna write: These things says the First and the Last, who became dead and lived again:

Rev 2:9 I know your tribulation and poverty (but you are rich) and the slander from those who call themselves Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.

Rev 2:10 Do not fear the things that you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison that you may be tried, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.
 2. Our God seems to be unjust, since He does not come in to judge and vindicate; because of this situation, the Lord Jesus used an unjust judge to signify God, who does not seem to do anything on behalf of His persecuted people—Luke 18:2-6.

Luke 18:2 Saying, There was a certain judge in a certain city who did not fear God and did not regard man.

Luke 18:3 And there was a widow in that city, and she kept coming to him, saying, Avenge me of my opponent.

Luke 18:4 And for a time he would not; but afterward he said within himself, Even though I do not fear God nor regard man,

Luke 18:5 Yet because this widow causes me trouble, I will avenge her, lest by continually coming she wear me out.

Luke 18:6 And the Lord said, Hear what the unrighteous judge says.
- D. The widow in the parable kept coming to the unrighteous judge and asking him to avenge her of her opponent; we ought to pray persistently for this avenging and should not lose heart—vv. 1, 3:
- Luke 18:1 And He told them a parable to the end that they ought always to pray and not lose heart,
- Luke 18:3 And there was a widow in that city, and she kept coming to him, saying, Avenge me of my opponent.
1. When our Husband is apparently absent and we are left on earth as a widow, temporarily our God seems to be an unrighteous judge—v. 6.

Luke 18:6 And the Lord said, Hear what the unrighteous judge says.

2. Although He appears to be unrighteous, we still must appeal to Him, pray persistently, and bother Him again and again, for He will carry out quickly the avenging of His chosen ones, who “cry to Him day and night”—vv. 7-8a.
 - Luke 18:7 And will not God by all means carry out the avenging of His chosen ones, who cry to Him day and night, though He is long-suffering over them?
 - Luke 18:8a I tell you that He will carry out their avenging quickly. ...
- E. Revelation 8:5 implies the answer to 6:9-11 and Luke 18:7-8:
- Rev 8:5 And the Angel took the censer and filled it with the fire of the altar and cast it to the earth; and there were thunders and voices and lightnings and an earthquake.
 - Rev 6:9 And when He opened the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and because of the testimony which they had.
 - Rev 6:10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Master, holy and true, will You not judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?
 - Rev 6:11 And to each of them was given a white robe; and it was said to them that they should rest yet a little while, until also the number of their fellow slaves and their brothers who were about to be killed, even as they were, is completed.
 - Luke 18:7 And will not God by all means carry out the avenging of His chosen ones, who cry to Him day and night, though He is long-suffering over them?
 - Luke 18:8 I tell you that He will carry out their avenging quickly. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?
1. The prayers of the saints in Revelation 8:3-4 must be for the judgment of the earth, which opposes God’s economy.
 - Rev 8:3 And another Angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer, and much incense was given to Him to offer with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.
 - Rev 8:4 And the smoke of the incense went up with the prayers of the saints out of the hand of the Angel before God.
 2. God’s judgment upon the earth—casting fire to the earth—is the answer to the prayers of the saints with Christ as the incense—vv. 3-5.
 - Rev 8:3 And another Angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer, and much incense was given to Him to offer with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.
 - Rev 8:4 And the smoke of the incense went up with the prayers of the saints out of the hand of the Angel before God.
 - Rev 8:5 And the Angel took the censer and filled it with the fire of the altar and cast it to the earth; and there were thunders and voices and lightnings and an earthquake.
- F. “When the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?”—Luke 18:8b:
1. Literally, the Greek words rendered “faith” mean “the faith”; this denotes the persistent faith for our persistent prayer, like that of the widow.
 2. The faith through which we were saved is the initial stage of faith; the faith that brought us into a life union with Christ is the linking faith—the faith that comes into us through our contacting the Triune God continually so that we may live by the Son of God—Rom. 1:17; Gal. 2:20; John 14:19.
 - Rom 1:17 For the righteousness of God is revealed in it out of faith to faith, as it is written, "But the righteous shall have life and live by faith."
 - Gal 2:20 I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.
 - John 14:19 Yet a little while and the world beholds Me no longer, but you behold Me; because I live, you also shall live.
 3. The linking faith is the divine requirement for the overcomers to meet Christ in His triumphant return—Luke 18:8b:
 - Luke 18:8b ... Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?

- a. Linking faith is the Triune God moving in us to link us to His unsearchable riches—Eph. 3:8.
 Eph 3:8 To me, less than the least of all saints, was this grace given to announce to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ as the gospel
- b. Linking faith is the faith of the believers who have no trust in themselves; rather, their trust is in God—2 Cor. 1:9.
 2 Cor 1:9 Indeed we ourselves had the response of death in ourselves, that we should not base our confidence on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead;
- c. When the Lord Jesus returns, He will find a number of overcomers who are living by the linking faith and will regard them as treasures for His kingdom in the thousand years of His reign—Luke 18:8b; Rev. 20:4, 6.
 Luke 18:8b ... Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?
 Rev 20:4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and of those who had not worshipped the beast nor his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.
 Rev 20:6 Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no authority, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.