

# Christ

## A Meditative Devotional Based On Christ The Surety

### Readings

- ▶ “He that is surety for a stranger shall smart for it” (Prov. 11:15)
- ▶ “For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec: By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament” (Heb. 7:21-22)

### Introduction

In the reading of the Scriptures one comes across those individuals who were “sureties” for another. No doubt Judah would come to mind when Jacob sent the family to buy wheat in Egypt. The news had come from a previous visit that they would not see the man’s face unless they brought their younger brother with them. The old father was distraught and in that dark hour, Judah offered to be the surety (Gen. 44:18-34). In this context the surety is a person becoming pledge for another. A second way the word is used is when God spoke to Abram and said, “Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land [that is] not their’s, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years” (Gen. 15:13). Used in this way the word indicates a certainty.

### Christ the Surety

When Solomon wrote, “He that is surety for a stranger shall smart for it” (Prov. 11:15), he mentioned a number of salient truths concerning the individual who is a surety.

- a) Being surety for an individual is warned against because of the affliction it brings one into. Furthermore, in Proverbs 6:3-5 such a one is strongly exhorted to get free from that binding, “Do this now, my son, and deliver thyself, when thou art come into the hand of thy friend; go, humble thyself, and make sure thy friend. Give not sleep to thine eyes, nor slumber to thine eyelids. Deliver thyself as a roe from the hand of the hunter, and as a bird from the hand of the fowler”. Twice over there is the mention of deliverance, illustrations of deliverance through personal intelligence of recognizing danger and the ability to escape from it.
  - i) In this we see a complete contrast to the one who became a “Surety” for us. If anyone had the understanding of all that was involved for to be the Surety for the sinner, it was the Lord, yet as the old hymn said, “From that track He turned not back”. Deliberately and fully conscious of what being a Surety for us meant, He did not deliver Himself, even when prompted to when He hung on the cross.
    1. The mocking crowds jeered Him to, “Save thyself, and come down from the cross” (Mk. 15:30).
    2. When the crowd came with Judas to take Him, He did not hide in the shadows but went forth to meet them (Jn. 18:4).
    3. Previously in the upper room He said, “Arise, let us go hence” (Jn. 14:31).Thank God He did not deliver himself, but in becoming our Surety He offered Himself to be the sacrifice for sin and became it, laying the foundation for our deliverance (Gal. 1:4; Heb. 2:8).
- b) Furthermore, the individual who pledges to be the surety is doing so for a stranger! Paul will use a number of words to describe what we were as sinner (Rom. 5:5-8) and when describing us as Gentiles, we are called “strangers”. He wrote, “That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world” (Eph. 2:12). We were “without Christ”, “without hope”, “without God”, deserving of nothing but the judgment of God.
- c) “He that is surety must smart for it”
  - i) To help us appreciate the word “smarting”, the same Hebrew word is translated “Burn” in the Levitical sacrifices. There are four Hebrew words translated “burn” in the consuming of the sacrifices in Leviticus. They are “Kathar/Qatar” (Lev. 1:9) which means, “To burn as incense, to turn into a vapor”; “Saraph” (Lev. 4:21) means, “To burn, to consume, to burn up”; “Alak” (Lev. 2:12) means “to ascend as a flame of fire”; and “Yakad” (Lev. 6:9) which means, “To burn as a common oven, slow

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and steady”. Of these four only “saraph” is the word translated “smart” in Prov. 11:15), and it is used of the sin offering (Lev. 4:21).

- d) The word “saraph” is used in a number of contexts and means to burn without mercy, without emotion, utterly consume. When our Lord was on the cross in those hours of desolation, the fire of God’s judgment fell upon Him. No mercy could be shown in withholding one iota of justice, no emotion could be shown in favoritism, but the Blessed Son of God must be seen as me in my arrogance of sinning, and in the wickedness of the damage I have done to others in my sinning. The fierceness of the justice of God cannot be modified, the sword of divine justice must fall without mercy (Zech. 13:7); the baptism must be in its fulness (Lk. 12:50); and the cup so bitter must be drunk to its last dregs (Jn. 18:11). The writer of Lamentations wrote, “From above hath He sent fire into my bones” (Lam. 1:13). What a “smarting the Lord endured”.
- e) The falling fire in the scriptures:
- i) In the Old Testament there were times when fire came out or fell from the Lord, and it resulted in rejoicing. “And there came a fire out from before the LORD, and consumed upon the altar the burnt-offering and the fat: which when all the people saw, they shouted, and fell on their faces” (Lev. 9:24). What a time of rejoicing that was, the sacrifice had been accepted and in the joyousness of knowing acceptance with God through the accepted sacrifice, the people rejoiced and worshipped. The same happened in 1 Kgs. 18:38; 1 Chron. 21:26, 2 Chron. 7:1).
  - ii) However, it was very fearful when fire fell because it was the wrath of God falling on man. Under such circumstances it brings to mind the penal sufferings of the Lord, “Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven” (Gen. 19:24). As I review the coming of fire on Nadab and Abihu (Lev. 10:1-2); on the rebellious of Israel (Num. 11:1; 16:35); on those who came to take the prophet (2 Kgs. 1:1-10); and on those who side with the beast against God (2 Thess. 1:7-8), I am deeply grateful that, by the mercy and grace of God, a way of deliverance has been procured and paid for by the Son of God at Calvary.
  - iii) The sacrifice for sin was not burnt on the altar but was carried outside the camp (Lev. 4:21) and burnt there. This was the shadow of the Lord when, concerning Him the Spirit wrote, “Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate” (Heb. 13:12).

### Conclusion

Much more could be written on this theme but space forbids. Nevertheless, the following thoughts may provide a springboard for further meditation and worship.

- a) For one to be a surety for another they must have several qualifications:
- i) They must have that which I lack.
  - ii) They must have the resources to meet the cost of that which they are surety for if I fail.
  - iii) They must have the willingness to be a surety.
  - iv) They must have integrity for to be depended on as a surety.
  - v) They must have intelligence as to what it means for them to be a surety.
  - vi) But unlike all earthly sureties, my security, cleansing, and righteousness is completely dependent on Christ, not if I fail, but when I fail He is the all sufficient one to meet my need.

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**May God grant us good understanding as He, by His Holy Spirit, deigns to guide us into all truth.**

**John 16:13**

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