



WORLD MAP

Equipping Leaders, Changing Nations



The following abbreviations are used in this book to identify English translations of the Bible:

kjv	King James Version
nkjv	New King James Version
niv	New International Version
rsv	Revised Standard Version
amp	The Amplified Bible
tlb	The Living Bible
weym	Weymouth's New Testament
nas	New American Standard
jerb	Jerusalem Bible
neb	New English Bible
tev	Today's English Version
smf	Simplified by the author

Dedication

This book is dedicated to the dear men and women of God in the nations of Asia, Africa and Latin America, whose love for souls inspires them to levels of commitment and sacrifice above and beyond the call of duty.

This book is not to be sold. It is a gift from Christian friends, who share my love and respect for you.

Ralph Mahoney -Editor
Founder / Director of World MAP

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What the Bible Teaches

Chapter 1

The Bible Is The Word Of God

A. GOD'S SPECIAL BOOK

The Word of God – the Holy Bible – is God's special book. It is not like other books, but is a supernatural book. It was written by many different people, who wrote by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, See 2 Timothy 3:16.

The Bible is the world's best seller. It consistently outsells any other book.

The Bible has been translated into more languages than any other book in the world. It was originally written in three languages – Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek. The Bible you have has been translated by dedicated people so that you can have God's words, thoughts and plans.

The Bible is also one of the oldest books in the world. The most ancient portions of the Bible date back almost 4,000 years. Yet it is still the most modern book in the world today; for in it we find the answers to life's greatest questions:

- “Where did I come from?”

- “Why am I here?”
- “Where will I Go?”

Even though the Bible is made up of 66 smaller books, it has only one central theme: God’s loving plan to rescue mankind.

At the front of the Bible you will find a list of the 66 books that can be found in the Bible.

The Bible is divided into two sections:

- The Old Testament and
- The New Testament.

The Old Testament tells us about God’s work with His people before the birth of Jesus. The New Testament tells us about Jesus’ birth, His life, His great ministry of healing and forgiveness for sick and sinful people, His death on the cross, His being raised from the dead and His ascension (going back to Heaven).

It also tells us about the continuation of His healing, forgiving ministry through those who saw Him after His resurrection. Those who follow Jesus’ teaching do many miraculous works just as He said they would. See John 14:12.

The teaching of those who saw Him after He was raised from the dead is contained in the Epistles (Letters). These were written within the first fifty years after Jesus’ resurrection. These make up about half of the New Testament.

B. STUDY THE BIBLE

The most important relationship you can have in this life is with God. Through reading the Bible you come to understand what God is like – His thoughts, His plans, and His promises for you.

The list (index) in the front of the Bible will help you find the page number of the part of the Bible you may wish to study.

To help you find specific parts of the Bible, the translators organized the text into:

- Books,
- Chapters within the Books, and
- Verses within the Chapters.

For example, if you see a reference like “Genesis 3:15”, this would mean

- The Book of Genesis.
- Chapter three, and
- Verse fifteen.

C. HERE IS THE WORLD’S GREATEST PROMISE

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” John 3:16

D. THE PURPOSE OF THE WORD OF GOD

“...the holy Scriptures...Are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness” 2Timothy 3:15-16

“His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you might partake of the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires” 2Peter 1:3-4

E. THE WORD OF GOD PRODUCES LIFE

“The words I have spoken unto you are spirit and they are life” John 6:63

1. It Is Creative

“By the WORD OF THE LORD were the heavens made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth ... For he spoke and it came to be; He commanded, and it stood firm” Psalms 33:6,9

See also Hebrews 11:3.

F. THE WORD OF GOD IS LIKE WATER

1. It Cleanses

We start life in the Kingdom of God totally “washed clean” by the Word of God.

“You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you” John 15:3

See also Ephesians 5:25-27.

2. It Keeps Us Clean

The Word of God, planted in our hearts, keeps us free from sin.

“How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word ... I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you” Psalms 119:9,11

G. THE WORD OF GOD IS LIGHT FOR OUR LIVES.

“And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts” 2Peter 1:19

1. It Gives Understanding In A Dark World

“... The commands of the Lord are radiant, giving light to the eyes” Psalms 19:8

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path ... The entrance of your word gives light; it gives understanding to the simple” Psalms 119:105,130

H. THE WORD OF GOD IS SPIRITUAL FOOD.

“Jesus answered, It is written: ‘Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God’ ” Matthew 4:4

1. It Causes Spiritual Growth

“Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly – mere infants in Christ. I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it...” 1Corinthians 3:1,2

“Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation” 1Peter 2:2

God’s aim for each of us is expressed in Ephesians 4:12-15:

“...that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.”

I. THE WORD OF GOD IS SEED.

In Luke 8:14-15, Jesus told His disciples the parable of the sower.

In verse 11 He said: *“The seed is the word of God.”* God’s will for our lives is fruitfulness, Psalms 1:3.

“Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness” 2Corinthians 9:10

J. THE WORD OF GOD IS LIKE A SWORD.

“Take...the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” Ephesians 6:17 See also Hebrews 4:12.

Note that Jesus used the word “sword” against Satan in His temptation in the wilderness, Luke 4:1-14, giving us an example of how we can use the Word of God in our own times of temptation.

K. THE WORD OF GOD HELPS US PRAY.

“If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you” John 15:7

‘Ask whatever you wish’ literally means to ‘ask as one who has the right – with authority (to command).

Now the creative word is in OUR MOUTH!

L. THE WORD OF GOD IS STRONG IN US.

“Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them in to practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against the house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundations on the rock” Matthew 7:24,25 See also verses 26,27.

Jesus said that the wise man who built his house on the rock was a picture of those who hear His Word and obey it. The Word of God builds ‘inner concrete’ within our lives so that no matter what may come against us we will stand strong.

Chapter 2

God

God is far too great for us to fully understand. He has no beginning and He has no end. There is no place where His presence is not felt. The Bible asks in Job 11:7: *“Can you fathom the mysteries of God? Can you probe the limits of the Almighty?”*

God lives in Heaven and He rules over the whole earth. The Bible tells us: *“this is what the Lord says: ‘Heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool...’*” Isaiah 66:1

“God reigns over the nations; God is seated on his holy throne” Psalms 47:8

In this study we are going to be looking at special truths about God. These are facts about God’s unchanging character. Through these you will understand more of what God is like. You will come to understand God and how He cares for you personally.

A. WHAT IS GOD LIKE?

1. God Is The Creator Of Everything

“You alone are the Lord. You made the heavens, and all their starry host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. You give life to everything, and the multitudes of heaven worship you” Nehemiah 9:6

“For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb”
Psalms 139:13

2. God Is All-Powerful

“...For who hath resisted His will? Hath not the potter power over the clay...?”
Romans 9:19-21

“Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendour, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, O Lord, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all” 1Chronicles 29:11

“Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us” Ephesians 3:20

3. God Is All-Knowing

“Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account” Hebrews 4:13

“... God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything” 1John 3:20

4. God Is Holy

“There is no one holy like the Lord; there is no one besides you; there is no Rock like our God” 1Samuel 2:2

5. God Is A Spirit

“God is a Spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth” John 4:24

6. God Is A Person You Can Know

“Come near to God, and he will come near to you...” James 4:8

“The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth” Psalms 145:18

7. God Is A Loving Father

“How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are...! 1John 3:1

B. GOD IS TOO GREAT TO LIVE IN TEMPLES

“The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands. And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else...’ For in him we live and move and have our being.’ As some of your own poets have said, ‘We are his offspring’ ” Acts17:24,25,28

C. WE ARE

1. Created By God

“I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place.

“When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be” Psalms 139:14-16

2. Owned By God

“Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you received from God? You are not your own: you were bought with a price. Therefore honour God with your body”

1Corinthians 6:19,20

3. Called To Worship God

“You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being” Revelation 4:11

D. MAKE A DECISION.

Jesus said, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind” Matthew 22:37

The Bible tells us about a man called Joshua. He was a great leader of the Nation of Israel.

The people had been wandering for forty years in the wilderness, without a land of their own. Joshua, under God's direction, led them in victory against the evil nations living in Canaan, and possessed their land for the homeless nation of Israel.

Joshua challenged all the people to make a decision:

"...choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. BUT AS FOR ME AND MY HOUSEHOLD, WE WILL SERVE THE LORD"

Joshua 24:15

The same challenge comes to each of us. Will you make the same commitment as Joshua this day?

MY COMMITMENT

This day I give my worship to the only true God of heaven and earth, and surrender my will, my life and possessions to Him. From this day I determine never to worship any other gods. My worship is for Him only, and I will teach others the truths about God.

A FINAL WORD

Remember the law of multiplying the Kingdom of God. It is your turn to teach someone else about God and teach them to teach another person. Just share what you know.

Chapter 3

Man And Satan

A. MAN – THE IMAGE OF GOD – MADE TO HAVE DOMINION

God had a very real reason for creating man (male and female). He had a wonderful plan and purpose for them. Because God is Love, He desired to have beings of like-mind and like-heart with whom He could share His life ... all that He is and all He is involved with ... who would rule the heavens and the earth with him like sons. So He created man – in His own image.

"Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.' So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them" Genesis 1:26-27

B. LUCIFER

God created many wonderful things before He created the heavens and the earth. Among them were the angels – spirit beings whose purpose is to fulfil God's will. Angels worship God and serve Him continually. Revelation 5:11-14.

However, Lucifer, one of the great leading angels, rebelled against God. He wanted the position and authority of God. He wanted to rule all creation from above God's throne in heaven.

When Lucifer rebelled, God cast him out of Heaven. At the same time, one-third of the angels joined in his rebellion and were cast out with Lucifer. Revelation 12:4.

“How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star [Lucifer], son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once led low the nations! “You said in your heart, ‘I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High’ ” Isaiah 14:12-14

Lucifer was cast to the earth, where he is known as ‘Satan’ or ‘The Devil.’ Separated from the glory of the Creator God, he lost the beauty and light he once had, Ezekiel 28:11-17 and became evil and full of darkness.

The angels who fell with him also lost their glory and became evil spirits, in God’s newly created world. But Satan’s evil ambition did not change and so he set about with another plan to try and usurp (unlawfully take) God’s Throne ... he went after the man God had created.

C. THE TEMPTATION

God gave His first man and woman (Adam and Eve) authority over all the earth, and told them keep it under His dominion.

To keep them safe from Satan and his evil spirits, God planted two special trees in the garden where Adam and Eve lived. God called the “The Tree of Life” and “The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil”

See Genesis 2:9, 17.

The Tree of life represented the Life and authority of God Himself – so in eating its fruit, Adam and Eve would be filled more and more with God’s strength and love and glory.

The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil represented Satan’s life and authority, and as long as Adam and Eve did not eat its fruit they were safe from the evil spirits which filled the earth. The dominion of the whole creation would always be theirs if they obeyed their loving Creator God. Hebrews 2:8.

“The Lord God took man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. And the Lord God commanded the man, ‘You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die’ ”

Genesis 2:15-17

However, Satan deceived Eve. He told her the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil wasn’t really bad – rather it would make them like gods. She believed the lie and ate the fruit of the tree. Adam, although he knew it was a lie, also ate of the tree.

1Timothy 2:14.

“When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it” Genesis 3:6

D. THE RESULT

Through that one act of sin, man lost the glory of God, fellowship with God and the dominion over the Creation. Satan then took the throne vacated by Adam and Eve and exercised his dominion over the earth, and death filled the world. Hebrews 2:14-15.

“...sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because [in Adam] all sinned...” Romans 5:12

All the generations following Adam and Eve have inherited their fallen nature. All have come under the power and dominion of Satan.

“As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath” Ephesians 2:1-3 People’s hearts, everywhere, are now filled with:

1. Idolatry

“For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave their thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of God for images made to look like mortal man and bird and animals and reptiles” Romans 1:21-23

2. Immorality

“Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served created things rather than the Creator – who is forever praised. Amen. Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion” Romans 1:24-27

3. All Kinds Of Wickedness

“Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done. They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Although they know God’s righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things, but also approve of those who practice them” Romans 1:28-32

E. GOD’S GREAT PLAN TO RESTORE

God did not give up man because of sin. No! Instead, He put into action another great plan – the plan to save mankind from Satan’s power and to restore him to His original plan of being His sons and sharing His throne. He began to prepare the world for the coming of the Saviour – Jesus.

“For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive” 1Corinthians 15:22 The New Testament records the story of Christ, the One Who would come to save us from our sins.

What The New Testament Teaches

Chapter 4

Jesus

A. JESUS IS THE SON OF GOD

Two thousand years ago a man appeared on the scene of history. He was born into the world and grew up into manhood just like every other person, but this man was different to anyone else. He was no ordinary man.

A virgin conceived by the Holy Spirit to bring Him to birth. He was God, Himself, coming to earth in human form. He was the “*Son of God*” Luke 1:26-35

“In the beginning was the Word [Jesus], and the Word was with God and the Word was God ... The Word became flesh and lived for a while among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth” John 1:1, 14

B. JESUS CAME TO THE WORLD FOR A SPECIAL PURPOSE

1. To Rescue Mankind From Satan’s Power

“For the Son of Man came to seek and save the lost” Luke 19:10 See also Colossians 1:13.

2. To Give His Life As A Ransom To Buy Us Back

“...the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” Matthew 20:28

3. To Destroy The Works Of Satan In Our Lives

“He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil’s work” 1John 3:8

4. To Give Us Eternal Life

“...and this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life” 1John 5:11,12 See also John 3:16,17 and John 10:10.

5. To Give Us New Birth Into The Family Of God

“Yet all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right (power) to become the children of God – children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God” John 1:12 See also 1John 3:1,2.

6. To Restore Our Fellowship With God The Father

“We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ” 1John 1:3

C. JESUS CAME TO SHOW US WHAT GOD IS LIKE

“If you really knew me [Jesus], you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen ... Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘show us the Father?’ Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words that I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing the work. Believe me when I say I am in the Father and the Father is in me ...” John 14:7-11 See also John 1:18.

1. He Showed Us God’s Love

“This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son in to the world that we might live through him. This is love; not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as atoning sacrifice for our sins” 1 John 4:9,10 See also Romans 5:8.

2. He Showed Us God’s Power

a. He healed the sick, the lame and the blind

“News about him spread all over Syria, and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, the epileptics and the paralytics, and he healed them” Matthew 4:24 See also John 9:1-7.

b. He cast out Evil Spirits

“And Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons, but would not let them speak because they knew who he was” Mark 1:34 See also Mark 5:1-17.

c. He performed miracles

“A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped ... Jesus got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, ‘Quiet be still!’ The wind died down and it was completely calm ... His disciples were terrified and asked each other, ‘Who is this? Even the wind and waves obey him!’ ” Mark 4:37-41 See also John 6:1-21.

d. He raised the dead

“... Jesus called in a loud voice, ‘Lazarus, come out!’ The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, “Take off the grave clothes and let him go’ ” John 11:43-44

D. JESUS SHARED OUR SUFFERINGS IN HIS LIFE

During His life on earth Jesus experienced all the troubles of life that we face, and so understands how we feel. *“For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are – yet was without sin”* Hebrews 4:15 See also Matthew 8:17.

E. JESUS DIED ON THE CROSS FOR US

Wicked men took the Lord Jesus and executed him by nailing Him to a wooden cross like a common criminal. He could have saved Himself, but He did not, for it was through His death on the cross that God was going to save the world. Jesus died for us! Read Mark 15:16-39.

“He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed” 1Peter 2;24 See also Isaiah 53:5-6.

F. JESUS ROSE FROM THE DEAD FOR US

After three days in the tomb God raised His Son from the dead! Read Matthew 28. This was for us!

“But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ... God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus...” Ephesians 2:4-6 See also Romans 6:4.

G. JESUS OPENED THE DOOR OF HEAVEN FOR US

When His work on the earth was completed, Jesus returned to Heaven to be with God His Father. But this, too, was for us... for He opened the way to God’s presence for us, where we can live now and forever!

“Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body...Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith...”

Hebrews 10:19-22 See also John 14:1-3.

MY COMMITMENT

Today I acknowledge that Jesus is the son of God and that He came into the world to meet my great need of a Saviour. I will also tell others that He came to the world for them.

Chapter 5

The Cross

When Jesus was put to death by being nailed to a wooden cross, wicked men thought they were just executing a man who was disturbing their way of life. They did not realize that the cross was planned by God from the beginning of the world.

A. GOD DEALS WITH ALL SIN

Through His Son's death on the Cross, the great Creator, God was dealing with every person's sin, suffering and sorrow. Jesus was dying in the place of every individual in the world. Receiving personally what He has done on the Cross brings the answer to all our needs.

1. God Reveals His Power Through The Cross

“For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God” 1Corinthians 1:18 See also Romans 1:16.

2. God Shows His Love On The Cross

“But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us” Romans 5:8

3. God Removed Our Sorrows On The Cross

“Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted” Isaiah 53:4

4. Jesus Took The Punishment For Our Sins On The Cross

“But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed ... We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all”

Isaiah 53:5,6 See also 1Peter 2:24.

B. NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD THROUGH THE CROSS

Because God is so holy and righteous, sin separates us from Him. No one with sin in their hearts is able to be in His presence.

So, not only by dying on the Cross did Jesus suffer for our sins in our place; but also He made it possible for us to know God personally and to experience the love, peace and joy which fellowship with Him brings.

1. We Become Acceptable To God Through The Cross

“God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” 2Corinthians 5:21

2. We Receive Forgiveness Through The Cross

“For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the Kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins”

Colossians 1:13-14

See also 1John 2:1-2.

3. We Become Members Of God’s Family Through The Cross

“Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them, brothers. He says, ‘I will declare your name to my brothers; in the presence of the congregation I will sing your praise’ ”

Hebrews 2:11-12 See also John 1:12.

C. FREEDOM THROUGH THE CROSS

Jesus’ death on the Cross was a great victory for us. Because God dealt with our sin on the Cross, it means also that all the misery and suffering which is a result of sin was also dealt with.

The Cross has won great freedom for us!

1. Freedom From Satan

“And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the Cross” Colossians 2:15 See also Colossians 1:13.

2. Freedom From Past Sins

“So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed” John 8:36 See also Colossians 2:13

3. Freedom From Present Sins

“For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace”

Romans 6:14

4. Freedom From Sickness

“This was to fulfil what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: ‘He took up our infirmities and carried our sicknesses’ ” Matthew 8:17 See also 1 Peter 2:24.

5. Freedom From The Curse Of The Law

“Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree’ ” Galatians 3:13 See also Deuteronomy 28:15-68.

6. Freedom From The Judgement

“Then Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But now he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgement” Hebrews 9:26,27

7. Freedom From Everlasting Death

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” John 3:16

D. LOVE AND JUSTICE MEET AT THE CROSS

The Cross is the place where the love of God and the righteous judgement of God meet. His righteous judgment demanded the death penalty for sin – the shedding of blood. His love met His own demands and Jesus, the Son of God, died in our place.

“But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified (made just as if I’d never sinned) by

his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation" Romans 5:8-11

E. THE CROSS IS THE CENTRE OF HISTORY

The Cross of Jesus Christ is the centre point of mankind's existence on earth. From the moment the first man and woman sinned, see Genesis 3, it was pre-planned by God that Jesus would die on the Cross.

From that time on, people looked forward in faith to what God promised He would do on the Cross to save them. Today we look back and, by believing in what Jesus has done for us on the Cross, receive forgiveness and new life.

MY COMMITMENT

Today I put my whole trust in what God was doing for me when Jesus died on the Cross. I believe He took the punishment for my sin. I receive the forgiveness that God is offering to me. And I thank Him for the relationship this now gives me with Him. I make a decision today that I will live each day in this personal relationship with God and commit myself to share this truth with others.

Chapter 6

The Blood Of Christ

The shedding of Jesus Christ's blood on the Cross was a factor in order for us to receive forgiveness for our sins and acceptance into the presence of God.

"...without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness" Hebrews 9:22

A. LIFE IS IN THE BLOOD

"For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves ... it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life" Leviticus 7:11

When we sin, we earn death. *"The wages of sin is death"* Romans 6:23 Jesus paid this penalty for us by shedding His blood (dying for us – in our place).

Atonement (at-one-ment) means to be made AT ONE with God. Jesus gave his life (shed his blood) on the Cross for our AT-ONE-MENT (atonement). This made it possible for us to be AT-ONE with God. Jesus' blood means we are no longer His enemy but His friend, His sons and daughters. By faith we accept what He did for us.

B. WHAT SIN DOES TO OUR LIFE

1. Separates Us From God

"But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that He will not hear" Isaiah 59:2

2. Makes Us Feel Guilty

"My guilt has overwhelmed me like a burden too heavy to bear" Psalms 38:4

3. Allows Satan Access To Us

"...the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before God day and night..." Revelation 12:10

4. Demands The Death Penalty

"...the soul who sins is the one who will die" Ezekiel 18:4

C. THE BLOOD IS FOR GOD

The blood of Christ wholly satisfies God's law – which requires a penalty for breaking the law.

1 John 3:4 says *"Sin is breaking the law."*

The blood protects us from the penalty of breaking the law (death).

In Exodus 12, God commands the people of Israel to put the blood of a lamb on their door-posts to protect them from the destroyer – who would kill all the firstborn.

This lamb was a picture of the Lamb – Jesus- Who would come later. God said, *"...when I see the blood, I will pass over [protect] you..."* verse 13.

1. Fellowship Is Restored

"But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him" Romans 5:8,9

2. We Are Redeemed (Purchased Back From Slavery To Sin)

"In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace" Ephesians 1:7

D. THE BLOOD IS FOR MAN

The Blood has satisfied God; now it is to satisfy us in the cleansing of our conscience from guilt.

1. The Blood Cleanses From Guilt

"How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our conscience from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!" Hebrews 9:14

2. The Blood Sanctifies Us

"And so Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own blood" Hebrews 13:12

3. The Blood Brings Us Close To God

"...and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross. Once you were alienated from God and enemies in your minds because of your evil behaviour. But now he has reconciled you.."

Colossians 1:20-22

4. The Blood Gives Boldness To Enter God's Presence

"Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, the body...Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water" Hebrews 10:19-22

5. The Blood Perfects Us In The Sight Of God

"...because by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy" Hebrews 10:14

E. THE BLOOD IS FOR THE DEVIL

Satan's most strategic activity in this age is as the accuser of the brethren (Revelation 12:10) and it is as this that the Lord confronts him in His special ministry as High Priest through His own blood. Hebrews 9:11-14.

1. The Blood Puts God On Man's Side Against The Devil

"...If God is for us, who can be against us? ...Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? Shall God who justifies? Who is he that condemns? Will Christ Jesus, who died – more than that, who was raised to life – and is at the right hand of God and is also interceding [praying] for us?" Romans 8:31,33,34

The devil has no ground for accusation against those who have received the work of Christ's shed blood for them.

2. The Blood Dissolves All Satan's Legal Rights Of Ownership Over Us

"...in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness [remission] of sins" Colossians 1:14

'Redemption' means to 'buy back.' We are under new ownership, and the price that was paid for us was the shed blood of Jesus.

"...the church of God, which he bought with his own blood" Acts 20:28 See also 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 and 1 Timothy 2:6.

F. WHAT THE BLOOD OF CHRIST HAS BROUGHT US

1. Purity Of Heart

"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from all sin" 1 John 1:7

2. Eternal Life

"Jesus said to them, 'I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day'" John 6:53-54

3. Approach To God

"But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ" Ephesians 2:13

MY COMMITMENT

I now understand what the shed blood of Jesus means to God, to Satan and to me. I make my commitment to share with others the truth concerning the blood of Christ. I will remind myself often of the covenant God has with me, to forgive my sin and cleanse me from sin and protect me from Satan's harm.

Chapter 7

The Resurrection

After His death on the Cross, Jesus lay in the grave for three days. Matthew 12:40. Then God raised His Son from the dead! Read Matthew 28.

"...and who through the Spirit of Holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord" Romans 1:4

A. GOD RAISED YOU UP TOGETHER WITH CHRIST

Jesus' death was for you. So was His resurrection!

“As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air ... But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions – it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus” Ephesians 2:1-6 See also Colossians 3:1-3

1. To Give You New Life

“... God... has saved us and called us to a holy life – not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Saviour, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” 2 Timothy 1:9-10

2. To Give You New Birth

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead...” 1Peter 1:3

3. To Give You A New Beginning

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation, the old has gone, the new has come” 2Corinthians 5:17

4. To Give You:

a. Victory over Satan. *“You dear children, are from God and have overcome the world, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world [Satan] ...for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God”* 1John 4:4;5:4,5 See also Colossians 2:13-15.

b. Authority over Satan. After His resurrection, *“...Jesus Christ ... has gone into heaven and is at God’s right hand – with angels, authorities and powers [this includes Satan] in submission to him”* 1Peter 3:21-22 See also Luke 10:17-19.

c. Power over Satan. *“I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know ... his incomparable great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come and God places all things under his feet and appointed him to be the head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way”* Ephesians 1:18-23 See also Mark 16:15-18, Acts 1:8 and 4:33.

5. To Make You A Son And Heir In God’s Kingdom

“For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of Sonship. And by him we cry ‘Abba Father.’ The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs – heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ...” Romans 8:15-17

B. THE RESURRECTION MEETS EVERY NEED OF LIFE

1. It Is Your Deliverance From The PAST

Your old sinful life was put to death on the Cross with Jesus, and buried with Him in the grave. Then, when Jesus was raised to life again, you were raised with Him as a new creation – leaving behind your old life in Jesus’ grave!

“We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life...the death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus” Romans 6:4-11 See also Ephesians 2:1-7 and Colossians 2:12-15.

2. It Is Your Power For The PRESENT

Because Jesus is ALIVE we have now received the power of the Holy Spirit to live a life of victory over sin and all Satan’s attacks against us.

“What then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? He did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all – how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against whom God has chosen? Shall God who justifies? Who is he that condemns? Will Christ Jesus who died – more than that, who was raised to life – who is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us? Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? No in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loves us...” Romans 8:31-39

3. It Is Your Hope For The FUTURE

The resurrection of Jesus gives us great hope for the future. He is called *“the firstborn from the dead”* Colossians 1:18. In His resurrection, he was opening the way for all those who would believe in him to follow after Him – to also be raised from the dead!

One wonderful day in the future, Jesus Christ will return to the earth again – not as a baby this time, but revealing to the whole world Who He really is – the glorious God and Ruler of all Creation. At that time all those who have died, believing in Him, will be raised to life again!

“If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. If only in this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men. But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep for since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own turn: Christ, the first fruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him” 1Corinthians 15:17-23 See also 1Corinthians 15:50-57 and 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.

MY COMMITMENT

Because of the resurrection of Christ, I make a commitment today to receive the fullness of my new life and liberation in Him. I will stand fast in this truth and share it with everyone I can.

Chapter 8

Repentance

Repentance is the first step we take to receive the salvation that God offers to us in the Lord Jesus Christ.

“... God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.’ When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, ‘Brothers, what shall we do?’ Peter replied, ‘Repent and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven’ ” Acts 2:36-38 See also Acts 17:30.

A. WHAT REPENTANCE IS NOT

1. Not Just Feeling Guilty

Feeling guilty about our sins comes before repentance, but is not repentance itself. No one repents unless they first feel guilty about their sin, but not all who feel guilty actually repent.

“As Paul discoursed on righteousness, self-control and the judgement to come, Felix was afraid and said, “That’s enough for now! You may leave. When I find it convenient, I will send for you’ ” Acts 24:25 Felix felt guilty but did not repent.

2. Not Just Being Sorry For Your Sin

Some people are very sorry because of the consequences of their sin, or because they have been caught. Many people are sorry, not for what they have done wrong, but for the penalty they receive in being caught.

“Godly sorrow leads to repentance that brings salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.” 2Corinthians 7:10

3. Not Just Trying To Be A Good Person

Many people try in their own strength to become a better person and change their way of life. Any self-effort has a root of self-righteousness in it, which does not acknowledge the need of repentance from sin.

“All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away” Isaiah 64:6

4. Not Becoming Religious

The Pharisees in the Bible were extremely religious in behaviour and practice. They fasted and prayed and had many religious ceremonies, yet never repented.

“But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father. ‘I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. The axe is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire”

Matthew 3:7-10 See also Matthew 5:20.

5. Not Just Knowing The Truth

Having an intellectual head knowledge of truth does not necessarily guarantee that the truth has become a living reality in one’s life. Believing with the head and believing with the heart are different (see Romans 10:10).

“You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that – and shudder. You foolish man, do you want further evidence that faith without righteous deeds is useless?” James 2:19-20

B. WHAT TRUE REPENTANCE IS

1. Being Sorry To God For Your Sin

True repentance is a sorrow not just toward one's self, or toward another person, but first and foremost it is true sorrow toward God.

"Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight..." Psalms 51:1-4 See also Psalms 38:8.

2. Being Truthful About Your Sin

"Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said 'I will confess my transgressions to the Lord' – and you forgave the guilt of my sin" Psalms 32:5 See also 1John1:9.

3. Turning Away From Your Sin

"He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whosoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy" Proverbs 28:13

4. Hating Sin

"Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity, therefore ... God has anointed thee ..." Hebrews 1:9

5. When Possible, Paying Back To Others What You Owe

"But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, 'Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount'" Luke 19:8 See also Leviticus 6:1-7.

C. WHAT REPENTANCE INVOLVES

1. Turning From Sin

"Don't be like your fathers were! The earlier prophets pled in vain with them to turn from all their evil ways. 'Come, return to me,' the Lord God said. But no, they wouldn't listen; they paid no attention at all" Zechariah 1:4. See also Galatians 5:19-21 and Ephesians 5:5.

2. Turning From The World

"Stop loving this evil world and all that it offers you, for when you love these things you show that you do not really love God" 1John 2:15. See also James 4:4.

3. Turning From Yourself

"He died for all so that all who live – having received eternal life from him – might live no longer for themselves, to please themselves, but to spend their lives pleasing Christ who died and rose again for them" 2Corinthians 5:15. See also Luke 14:26.

4. Turning From The Devil

"...to open their eyes to their true condition so that they may repent and live in the light of God instead of in Satan's darkness ..." Acts 26:18. See also Colossians 1:13.

5. Turning To God

"Therefore tell the people: This is what the Lord Almighty says: 'Return unto me,' declares the Lord Almighty, 'and I will return to you,' says the Lord Almighty" Zechariah 1:3

6. Turning To Right Living

"Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life, and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness" Romans 6:13

MY COMMITMENT

Today I decide to repent and will keep turning from sin as God reveals wrong doing to me.

Chapter 9

Faith

Faith has always been the mark of a disciple of Jesus. The early disciples were known as BELIEVERS. Jesus said: “...*Everything is possible for him who believes*” Mark 9:23

Faith means total dependence on God. When Adam sinned, he stepped out of God-dependence into in-dependence (which is unbelief). This is the reason God has placed such a high priority on faith. Faith is the way we come back into relationship with God (God-dependence).

This dependence on God is called faith. Faith advances you beyond your five senses of seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling and touching. Faith releases you from your limited capacities. By faith you move from in-ability to His-ability.

This is the walk of faith to which all of us are called – where “*nothing is impossible*” Matthew 17:20.

A. WHAT IS FAITH

Faith is obedient action in response to what God has said. True faith is expressed in 1) Obedience and 2) Action, in response to 3) Hearing God’s Word (voice).

“*Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.*” Hebrews 11:1.

Faith means having trust, assurance or confidence in another person or that person’s words. Having faith in God involves an exchange of self-trust for God-trust. We stop trusting in ourselves and trust Him. We abandon reliance on our limited source of knowledge and start receiving from His unlimited source.

B. TWO KINDS OF KNOWLEDGE

“*My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit’s power, so that your faith might not rest on MEN’S WISDOM, but on God’s power. We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. No, we speak of God’s SECRET WISDOM, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began*” 1Corinthians 2:2-7 See also verses 8-16.

1. Sense Knowledge

All knowledge that comes to natural man comes to him through the five senses – seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling and touching. This is limited knowledge, described as ‘man’s wisdom.’

2. Revelation Knowledge

This knowledge is not based on the five senses, nor on natural reasoning but on an alternative source – the TRUTH of the Word of God. It is received through man’s spirit, and is described as ‘God’s Wisdom’ – “*We live by faith, not by sight*” 2Corinthians 5:7

C. THE BASIS OF FAITH

The basis of having faith in God is in three important realities:

1. The Nature Of God

“When God made his promise to Abraham, since there was no one greater for him to swear by, he swore by himself.” Hebrews 6:13

a. He cannot change. *“I the Lord do not change...”* Malachi 3:6 See also James 1:17.

b. He cannot fail. *“I know that you can do all things; no plan of yours can be thwarted”* Job 42:2 See also 1Chronicles 28:20.

c. He cannot lie. *“God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfil?”* Numbers 23:19

See also Titus 1:2.

2. The Redemptive Work Of The Son Of God

“Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God”

Hebrews 12:2

Christ has become the source of our faith in God. The fact of His death and resurrection provides ground for our believing.

“... Christ Jesus... has become for us wisdom from God – that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption” 1Corinthians 1:30 See also Romans 5:1-2.

3. The Word Of God

“Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away” Matthew 24:35 See also Isaiah 40:8.

“The Lord said to me, ‘...I am watching to see that my word is fulfilled’ ” Jeremiah 1:12

His Word stands true forever. Faith comes when God brings a specific word – out of all He has ever said – directly to us in our circumstances. Spoken in this way, the Word of God comes alive to us, releasing our faith.

D. HOW FAITH WORKS

The principle of faith, Romans 3:27 is to operate in our lives continually, no matter what the circumstances, see 2Corinthians 5:7, James 1:5-60. It works in the following way:

1. God Gives Us Faith

“For in the Gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from the first to the last, just as it is written: ‘...The righteous will live by [HIS] faith’ ” Romans 1:17 See also Habakkuk 2:4 NIV.

The righteous live by HIS faith that is, the faith HE gives us as a gift.

“For by grace are you saved through faith, it is the gift of God ...” Ephesians 2:8-9 *“...according as God has dealt to every man ... faith”* Romans 12:3

2. Faith Comes By A Word From God

Firstly, God encourages us by speaking a “word” relevant to our circumstances.

This comes by the Holy Spirit speaking inside your spirit as you read the Bible or listen to preaching or teaching of the Word of God.

“...faith comes from hearing the word, and is heard through the word of Christ”
Romans 10:17 See also Genesis 15:3-5; 17:15-21; Joshua 1:8.

3. Obedience To The Word

For faith to operate in our situation, we must obey that word. Faith is ACTIVE, not passive. Most of God's promises are conditional – He will do His part, if we do our part.

“...faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead” James 2:17 See James 1:22-25; Genesis 15:6; Matthew 7:24-27.

4. The Crisis Or “Trial Of Our Faith”

This is a period of testing. Everything happening around us appears contrary to what God has said, and there seems to be no natural evidence for our believing. At this point, our faith rests completely on God's Word (what He has spoken to us).

“In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith – of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire – may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed” 1 Peter 1:6-7 See also Romans 4:16-21; Psalms 105:17-19.

In faith we cast ourselves on HIS FAITHFULNESS. In our times of doubt and struggle, God is faithful and does not abandon us.

“If we believe not, he abides faithful. He cannot deny himself” 2 Timothy 2:13

He was faithful to Thomas and Peter when their faith was tested. Jesus didn't abandon them. *“He will never leave us nor forsake us”* Hebrews 13:5

5. The Result

The end result is always victory on the part of the believer, bringing glory to God. See also James 1:2-4, 12; Genesis 21:1-3; Psalms 105:19-22; Acts 3:16; Hebrews 6:13-15.

“...for everyone born of God has overcome the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith” 1 John 5:4

MY COMMITMENT

Today I decide to live by faith and trust God in all areas of my life. I acknowledge my need to be totally dependant on God – which is faith in action. In problems, challenges and difficulties I will rely on His faithfulness. God's response will be His grace – His enabling power. I will teach others also to rely on God's faithfulness and walk with faith in God.

Chapter 10

Grace

“With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and MUCH GRACE was with them all” Acts 4:33

“From Antioch they sailed back to Antioch, where they had been COMMITTED TO THE GRACE OF GOD for the work they had now completed” Acts 14:26

Why was the grace of God so important in the experience of the early Christians? Why did the church in Antioch pray the GRACE of God would be upon Paul and Barnabas, and later on Paul and Silas, as they set out on their missionary journeys?

A. THE MEANING OF GRACE

The most common understanding of the word “grace” is “**God’s unmerited favour**” – in other words, even though we were sinners, deserving judgment, God looked upon us in love and forgave us.

This, however, is only half its meaning. It also means “**God’s enabling power.**”

“May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word” 2Thessalonians 2:16-17

Not only does His grace make us accepted in the family of God, but it also provides the power we need to live the Christian life. Two scriptures indicate the two aspects of God’s grace in every believer.

1. God’s Unmerited Favour

“For it is by grace [God’s unmerited favour] you have been saved, through faith- and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast” Ephesians 2:8-9

2. God’s Enabling Power.

“...In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will – to the praise of his glorious grace [enabling power], which he has freely given us in the one he loves” Ephesians 1:4-6 Read the whole chapter, which describes all that we have received by grace (by his enabling power).

In salvation, not only is God’s unmerited favour expressed (in that we receive forgiveness and restored relationship with Him even though we don’t deserve it), but so also is God’s enabling power – for it is by HIS power that we can and are being transformed.

“Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation, the old has gone, the new has come!” 2Corinthians 5:17

This principle of grace continues throughout our walk with God. In every area of our Christian lives, it is God’s grace that causes us to grow and be strong – God’s enabling power given to us without any merit on our part.

“...grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ...” 2 Peter 3:18

B. GRACE GIVEN TO THE HEROES OF FAITH

This operating force of grace is revealed in the lives of men and women throughout the whole Bible. Every hero of faith began his walk with God aware of his own weakness and inability.

It was only through him allowing God’s grace – His enabling power – to work in his life that he was able to become the kind of person that God wanted him to be, and to fulfil the plan and purpose God had for his life.

C. GRACE IN THE LIFE OF MOSES

Read Exodus 3:11-13; 4:1-13. The command the Lord gave Moses was no small task. Egypt was the ruling empire of the day. It was an evil nation, and Pharaoh, its satanic leader, held authority that was claimed to be divine. Every nation in the known world lived in fear of Pharaoh.

When God told Moses to go down to Egypt and tell Pharaoh to let His three million people go free from slavery, Moses' immediate response – out of his own weakness and inability – was as follows;

3:11 **“Who am I?”**

3:13 **“Who are you?”**

4:1 **“They won't believe me!”**

4:10 **“I'm not eloquent!”**

4:13 **“Lord, send someone else!”**

But with God's grace, Moses did go down to Egypt, and with signs and wonders brought the people of Israel out as God had told him to.

D. GRACE IN LIFE OF GIDEON

Read Judges 6:1-24. The call of God came to Gideon to deliver His (God's) people from the conquering armies of Midian. Israel had known only defeat for many years. Gideon's response to God's word in verse 13 reveals his initial unbelief: *“But sir, Gideon replied, ‘If the Lord is with us, why has all this happened to us? Where are all his wonders that our fathers told us about when they said, Did not the Lord bring us up out of Egypt? But now the Lord has abandoned us into the hand of Midian.’”*

Even when the Lord encouraged him and promised to be with him, Gideon answered: *“How can I save Israel? I'm the smallest member of the smallest family in our tribe!”* see verse 15.

But despite his fear and inability, with God's grace (enabling power) Gideon saved Israel. And he did it with just a small band of men. It was GRACE that made the difference!

E. GRACE IN THE LIFE OF THE APOSTLE PAUL

Read Acts 15:40. Before Paul and Silas set out on their missionary journey together, the church at Antioch prayed for them and *“commended [them] ...to the grace of the Lord”* for the work that was ahead of them.

Read Paul's description of his experiences in 2 Corinthians 11:22-33. It is understandable that he was first commended to the grace of God!

He needed it to survive! The Lord's answer to Paul's confession of weakness is His promise for us too: *“...My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness...”* 2Corinthians 12:9

F. GRACE RELEASED IN OUR LIVES

In our relationship with God – as we walk with Him each day – we constantly meet situations that would try to overwhelm us. Our response to God is to trust His Word. We express our trust through obedience.

This proves we believe what God's Word says despite what the circumstances might indicate. God's response to our faith is His grace – His enabling power, which causes us to triumph in every situation.

G. TWO IMPORTANT PROMISES

1. We Have Bold Access To The Throne Of Grace

“Let us then approach the THRONE OF GRACE with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and FIND GRACE (His enabling power) TO HELP US IN OUR TIME OF NEED” Hebrews 4:16

2. God is Able

"And God is able to male ALL grace ABOUND to you, so that in ALL things at ALL times, having ALL that you need, you will ABOUND in EVERY good work"
2Corinthians 9:8

MY COMMITMENT

Today I decide to receive God's grace – His enabling power – into every area and problem that arises in my life, and teach others to do the same also.

Chapter 11

Water Baptism

Jesus commanded all those who believed in Him to be baptized in water. *"Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit...'"* Matthew 28:18,19 See also Acts 2:38-41.

To be *"baptized"* means to be "totally immersed." When a person repents from his sin and believes Jesus died for him, before many witnesses, he (or she) is to be taken to water, put right under it and brought up again. Why would Jesus command that his believers do such a strange thing?

A. UNDERSTANDING WATER BAPTISM

Understanding what water baptism is all about is the key to a victorious and liberated Christian life.

The act of going under the water and rising up from it again is a picture demonstrating what has happened to the Christian believer.

B. FOUR STAGES OF CHRIST'S WORK PICTURED

1. He Died I Died In Him.

"For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be rendered powerless, that we should no longer be slaves to sin - because anyone who has died has been freed from sin" Romans 6:6-7

2. He Was Buried I Was Buried With Him.

"Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death ..." Romans 6:3-4

3. He Was Raised I Have A New Life In Him

"...in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. If we have been united with him in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection" Romans 6:4-5

4. He Ascended I Ascended In Him

"And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ"

Jesus ..." Ephesians 2:6 See also Colossians 3:1

C. WATER BAPTISM IS ...

1. Your Funeral Service!

A burial service is not to kill a man off. It is only performed when the man is dead already.

And so, because you have "died" in Christ, you bury your old life in water baptism.

2. Your Resurrection To New Life!

You rise out of the water demonstrating and declaring you are a new creation in Christ!

"Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since

Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him.

"The death he died, he died to sin once and for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ

Jesus" Romans 6:8-11

D. THE TWO KINGDOMS

"For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves" Colossians 1:12

Every man and woman born into the world is born into the Kingdom of Darkness; born slaves of the dictator Satan. There is no way out of this kingdom except by DEATH, and there is no way into the Kingdom of God except by BIRTH. And so Jesus became both our death and new birth - and this we declare in water baptism!

E. THE TWO RACES

As there are two kingdoms, so within each kingdom is a different race of people. The Adamic Race populates the Kingdom of Darkness, and the New Creation populates the Kingdom of God.

1. The First Adam

"For as in Adam all die..." 1 Corinthians 15:22 See also Romans 5:12. Adam was the father of us all, the entire human race. Adam's sin alienated us all from God. Because of his sin, we all inherited his rebellious and diseased nature and became subject to death. Adam's offspring are called "the Adamic Race".

2. The Last Adam

"You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly"
Romans 5:6 There was no way God could change the fallen Adamic Race. He had to put an end to that race and begin a whole new race of humanity. Jesus was the Last Adam. He came as the lastborn of the Adamic

Race and the firstborn of a new race. As He hung upon the Cross, He hung there as the Last Adam - the lastborn of the Adamic Race. When He died on the Cross, the Adamic Race and the Adamic sinful nature died.

God put to death the fallen creation in Him. The Adamic Race died in Christ.

3. The Second Man

"...so in Christ all will be made alive" 1 Corinthians 15:22 Jesus came as God's new Man, through which a new race would be created. Jesus was raised from the dead - not as the Last Adam but as the Second Man, the Head of the New Creation. *"So it is written. 'The first man Adam became a living soul'; the last Adam, (Christ) a life-giving spirit... The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second man from heaven. 'As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the man from heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven'"* 1Corinthians 15:45-49

4. The New Creation

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" 2Corinthians 5:17 See also Ephesians 2:10
In water baptism we declare to all our friends and acquaintances that we are no longer part of Adam's race and the Kingdom of Darkness. We are a New Creation in Christ, belonging to the Kingdom of God!

MY COMMITMENT

Through this study I now realise that my old life with its sin and judgment has been put to death in Jesus' death, and now because of Jesus' resurrection I have a whole new life to live. Because this is what water baptism pictures, I make this commitment to be baptized in water and to share this truth with others.

Chapter 12

The Holy Spirit

After Jesus rose from the dead, He appeared to His disciples for 40 days. Then, when they were all gathered together with Him on the top of a high hill, He was taken up into Heaven before their eyes, read Acts 1:1-11. However, before He left, Jesus gave His believers a very special and wonderful promise: *"...I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor to be with you forever - the Spirit of truth... I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counsellor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you."* John 14:16-18; 16: 5-7

Jesus has not left us alone in the world. He has sent the Holy Spirit.

A. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS GOD

The very first thing we must understand about the Holy Spirit is that He is indeed God.

"Then Peter said, 'Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied TO THE HOLY SPIRIT... You have not lied to men BUT TO GOD' ". Acts 5:3,4 See also 2 Corinthians 3:17.

God has chosen to express Himself to mankind as Father, as Son and as Holy Spirit. These are the expression of three distinct Persons (Personalities), yet the three are one.

B. THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit is God's gift to every believer. When a person believes in Jesus, and receives the salvation He offers, the Holy Spirit comes to live in the believer, imparting spiritual life. *"Peter replied, 'Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off - for all whom the Lord our God will call' ". Acts 2:38,39 See also John 7:37-39.*

C. THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

1. In The Believer's Personal Life

The Holy Spirit comes to dwell within the believer to minister to him personally:

a. He Testifies of Our Relationship With God. *"The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children"* Romans 8:16 See also 1 John 3:24.

b. He Teaches. *"But the Counsellor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you"* John 14:26

c. He Guides. *"...because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God"* Romans 8:14

d. He Helps Us Live A Life Pleasing to God. *"So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature".* Galatians 5:16 See also verses 17-25.

e. He Helps Us in Prayer. *"In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express".* Romans 8:26

f. He Gives Life To Our Bodies. *"And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit, who lives in you"* Romans 8:11

2. In The Believer For Service

As well as giving the Holy Spirit to dwell in the believer, God also wants to fill and baptize the believer with the Holy Spirit to empower him to serve and glorify God in the world.

a. The Holy Spirit Gives Power And Boldness To Witness. " *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth*" . Acts 1:8 See also Acts 2:14-40.

b. He Introduces The Supernatural Realm. " *There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit... To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another the ability to speak in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues*" 1Corinthians 12:4,8-10 See also Acts 2:4; 10:46; 19:6.

c. He Testifies That Jesus Is Alive. " *The God of our fathers raised Jesus from the dead... We are witnesses of these things and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him*" Acts 5:30-32 See also Acts 4:31-33.

d. He Brings a Fresh Understanding of The word Of God. " *...as it is written: 'No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him' but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God*" 1Corinthians 2:9,10 See also John 16:13.

e. He Fills Our Spirit With True Worship To God. " *...be filled with the Spirit, speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord*" Ephesians 5:8,19 See also John 4:24.

f. He Glorifies Jesus. " *But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; He will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. he will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you*" John 16:13-15 See also John 15:26.

D. HOW TO BE BAPTIZED IN THE HOLY SPIRIT.

God wants His Holy Spirit, who indwells you because you are a believer in Jesus, to fill you to overflowing with power to serve Him. Ephesians 5:18

1. **It Is A Gift Promised By God, So Ask For It** "...how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" Luke 11:13 See also verses 9-12.
2. **Begin to Praise God As You Receive In Faith** "Then they worshiped him ,and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God" Luke 24:52,53
3. **You Can Speak With A Supernatural Language** "...the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues..."Acts 19:6 See also Mark 16:17; Acts 2:4; 10:45, 46; 1 Corinthians 14:5, 18.

MY COMMITMENT

I thank God for the Gift of the Holy Spirit in my life. I make a decision today to respond to the Holy Spirit's prompting and directing. I determine to learn to listen for the voice of the Holy Spirit in my heart. I choose to be filled with the Spirit. I now open my spirit to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Chapter 13

Temptation

A. SATAN ATTACKS

Satan attacks the individual Christian mostly through temptation. And he focuses this assault in two spheres:

1. The Desires Of The World

He will seek to tempt a believer to become absorbed into the world's system: to make the material blessings that the world offers a central desire; to make the honour and recognition of this world an important goal; and to make the comfort of being one with those of this world our basis for security.

2. The Desires Of The Flesh

Through Christ's work on the Cross, the true Christian is delivered from the results of sin, and from the power of sin. Romans 6:6-14. But he still lives in a physical body that is subject to natural appetites and desires. Satan will use these to try and get a Christian to place greater importance upon them than upon the promptings of the Holy Spirit within him. Romans 8:5-9 See also James 1:14; Ephesians 2:3

B. SATAN'S ORIGINAL VICTORY

It was in the areas of the world and the flesh that Satan won his original victory in the temptation of the first man and woman, and these are still his tactics today.

"For all that is in the world, the LUST OF THE FLESH (craving for sensual gratification), and the LUST OF THE EYES (greedy longings of the mind) and the PRIDE OF LIFE (assurance in one's own resources or in the stability of earthly things) - these do not come from the Father but are from the world (itself)" 1John 2:16 Amplified Bible

Compare Eve's Temptation With This Verse:

Genesis 3:6

Good FOR FOOD

Pleasing TO THE EYE

Desirable for GAINING WISDOM

Since the fall of Adam and Eve, all mankind has been governed by their flesh (the three things outlined above).

The flesh is also corrupted by a sinful nature. Galatians 5:19-21

C. VICTORY WON BY CHRIST

1. Through His Life

Jesus was tempted in everything, exactly as we are, "*yet was without sin*" Hebrews 4:15

Compare Jesus' Temptation With This Verse:

Luke 4: 1-13

Stones to bread

Kingdoms of the earth

Pinnacle of the temple

1 John 2:16

"Lust of the flesh"

"Lust of the eyes"

"Pride of life"

2. Through His Death And Resurrection

Faith that appropriates (claims, receives) Christ's work releases the Christian from the power

and dominion that sin had over him. Romans 8:9

He is now free to choose to walk in obedience to God. Romans 6:8-14. "*For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man... in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature (flesh) but according to the Spirit*" Romans 8:3,4

D. THE CHRISTIAN'S CONTINUAL VICTORY

Based on the foundation of this great victory won for us by Christ, the Christian can now defeat any attack from the enemy. Here are seven keys to continual victory:

1. Know The Victory Is Already Won

Because of his defeat at the Cross, the devil's only strength now is found in the Christian's Ignorance.

Hosea 4:6. But when a Christian knows the complete work of the Cross and Resurrection in his life, the devil is stripped of any weapon against him.

2. Walk In Step With The Spirit

A new power is placed within the Christian - the Holy Spirit Himself. We are to walk in obedience to

His inner promptings day by day. Galatians 5:22-25

3. Recognize Temptation For What It Is

Temptation is NOT sin. YIELDING to temptation is! James 1:15 See Genesis 4:6,7

4. Understanding there Is A Way Of Escape Provided

"No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful. He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it" 1Corinthians 10:13 James 4:7 details the way of escape: Submit to God, resist the devil and he shall flee!

5. Keep The Right Focus In Life

"Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things" Colossians 3:1,2

See also Philippians 4:8; 1Timothy 6:11,12; 2 Peter 3:11-13.

6. Keep Away From Obvious Areas of Temptation

"I will set before my eyes no vile thing" Psalms 101:3 See also 1 Timothy 6:9-11

7. Be Aware Of Satan's Schemes

It is important for us to know the tactics that the enemy uses against us so that we are not outwitted by him. 2 Corinthians 2:11

a. He is a liar John 8:44

b. He is a slanderer and accuser Revelation 12:10

c. He is a deceiver Revelation 12:9

d. He is a tempter Matthew 4:1-11

e. He is an oppressor Acts 10:38

f. He is a hinderer 1Thessalonians 2:18

g. He is as a roaring lion 1 Peter 5:8

h. He can transform himself into an angel of light 2 Corinthians 11:14

As Christians, we are called to live in VICTORY! Through Christ, this victory is ours:

Over The World 1John 5:4

Over The Flesh Galatians 5:16

Over The Enemy Ephesians 6:11,13

MY COMMITMENT

I thank God for His promise to deliver me during time of temptation. I commit myself to respond to His help which is always available so that I can live in victory. I will share this truth with others also.

Chapter 14

Fellowship

A. THE PURPOSE OF FELLOWSHIP

The fellowship of Christians together is very important, for it is in our unity together that...

1. The Believer Is Encouraged And Grows In Christ

"I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong - that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith"

Romans 1:11,12

2. The World Comes To Know That Jesus Was Sent Of God

"I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one; I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me" John 17:22,23

B. CONDITIONS OF FELLOWSHIP

1. A Basic Commitment To One Another

"Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honour one another above yourselves"

Romans 12:10

Without a basic trust there can be no fellowship. The depth of fellowship will vary according to the depth of commitment.

2. Our Commitment Must Be Based On 'Agape'

'Agape' is a one-way love, which loves 'in spite of' not 'because of.' Such a commitment therefore will not be affected by the other person's inconsistent behaviour.

"A new commandment I give you; Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another" John 13:34

3. True Fellowship Is Christ-Centered

Our fellowship with one another is founded in our common commitment to Christ.

"...And our fellowship is with the Father and with the Son, Jesus Christ" 1John 1:3. See also Philippians 2:1,2

4. Walking In The Light

Our fellowship embraces the need to be open, honest and truthful with one another. This at times may mean:

a. Confessing Our Own Sins to Others, Or lovingly Covering Another's Sin. *"If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from every sin"* 1 John 1:6,7. See also Matthew 18:15

b. Obedience To The Light - general and specific commandments God has given,

c. The Removal Of Any Masks Or False Coverings So much of the world's fellowship is hypocritical - acting out a role, and is not genuine.

"Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the hearts" 1Peter 1:22

5. A Genuine Interest In The Other's Well-Being

There should be no hidden motives of self-gain. Our desire should be to give, not to get.

"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others" Philippians 2:3,4.

6. A Willingness To Lay Down One's Life

"My command is this; Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends" John 15:12,13.

Life involves more than physical life. It also includes our material possessions, our personal interests and preferences, etc. James 2:15,16. This also means a willingness to openly share of one's self. We can only know people to the extent they are prepared to reveal themselves.

C. FELLOWSHIP IN THE CHURCH MEANS...

1. Sharing All Things

There were three stages of development in their fellowship in Acts 4:32 - firstly, they were of one heart (spirit), then they were of one soul (mind), and then followed the physical expression of having all things in common.

"All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need" Acts 2:44,45.

2. Laying down Their Lives

"Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus. They risked their lives for me. Not only I but all the churches of the Gentiles are grateful to them" Romans 16:3,4.

3. Devoted To Serving The Brethren

"You know that the household of Stephanas were the first converts in Achaia, and they have devoted themselves to the service of the saints..." 1Corinthians 16:15.

4. Being A Channel Of Supply To Others In Need

"At the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need. Then there will be equality" 2Corinthians 8:14. See also 1Corinthians 16:17.

5. Sharing In Suffering

"Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles" Philippians 4:14.

6. Sacrificial Giving

"Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability" 2Corinthians 8:2,3.

7. Practicing Hospitality

"Dear friend, you are faithful in what you are doing for the brothers, even though they are strangers to you" 3John 5. See also Hebrews 13:2.

8. Building Up And Encouraging One Another

"We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us" 1Thessalonians 2:8. See also 2Timothy 3:10-14.

D. RESULTS OF FELLOWSHIP

The results of fellowship in the early Church were:

- a. A fear of God Acts 2:43
- b. Joy Acts 2:46
- c. Favour with all people Acts 2:47
- d. Addition of new believers Acts 2:47
- e. All needs supplied Philippians 4:19
- f. Emergence of leadership 1Corinthians 16:15,16

MY COMMITMENT

Through this study I now understand the importance of having fellowship continually with other Christians. Today I commit myself to being a part of a group of believers to whom I will give my loyalty, my love and my service.

Chapter 15

Generosity

“The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge” Psalms 19:1-2. Read also verses 3&4.

From this psalm, we learn that God’s Creation (the heavens and the earth)

- a. **Declare** the glory of God
- b. **Proclaim** the work of His hands
- c. **Pour forth** speech
- d. **Display** knowledge

We can learn from God’s Creation if we examine it carefully. Just as there are physical laws

which bring order out of chaos in the universe, God has also put into motion spiritual laws which govern life. One of these is the **Law of Generosity**. This teaches us that

“whoever sows generously will also reap generously” 2 Corinthians 9:6

A. PARTNERSHIP

As partners with God, 1Corinthians 3:9; 2Corinthians 5:20; 6:10, it is important for us to understand where responsibilities lie:

1. Ownership Is With God

“The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it; the world, and all who live in it”

Psalms 24:1.

See also Psalms 89:11; Job 41:11; 1Chronicles 29:10-14.

We are not owners, but stewards. All ownership is with God. Every single created thing, living or not, ultimately belongs to Him – including everything material and immaterial that we may personally have in this life: possessions, careers or families.

He has given us all things for us to enjoy. 1Timothy 6:17 and when we realize that they still belong to God, we can rest in the assurance that God also has ultimate responsibility for them.

2. Stewardship Is With Us

We are not owners, but stewards. A steward manages and takes care of what belongs to someone else. God owns everything; but as stewards, we manage and take care of it for Him. We have an obligation to be faithful in this stewardship.

The Lord holds us accountable for the special responsibility of managing and taking care of the things He has given us (read Matthew 25:14-30). When we understand this Owner-steward relationship that we enjoy with God’s property, then it becomes easy to give.

Before God, stewardship covers every single thing that belongs to us:

a. Our Life. Acts 17:25; 1Corinthians 6:19; Galatians 2:20; Job 33:4

b. Our Time. Psalms 90:12; Ephesians 5:15-16; Colossians 4:5

c. Our Talents and Abilities. 1Peter 4:10; 1Corinthians 12:4-7,11

d. Our Possessions. Matthew 6:19-21; Colossians 3:1-2

e. Our Finances. 1Timothy 6:6-10, 17-19; Matthew 6:24

f. The Message of the Gospel. 1Corinthians 4:1; 9:16-17; 1Timothy 6:20

Even so, many Christians still struggle to give (or tithe), no matter how much they may want to. But the action that releases a believer into the full blessings of good stewardship is SURRENDER – the unreserved submission of one’s entire life, possessions and plans to Gods will and purpose.

It is only when we give OURSELVES that we learn what it means to give some of the possessions (or money) God has given us.

B. GIVING IN THE EARLY CHURCH

“All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need ... No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had” Acts 2:44-45 and 4:32

This basic attitude of the early Christians laid the foundation for every expression of giving that was to come later.

As the number of Christians multiplied, different methods of giving appeared. But all their giving expressed their understanding of STEWARDSHIP – that everything ultimately belongs to God.

1. The Church Supported The Needy

In the early Church, special men were chosen to serve as deacons – helpers – in the distribution of offerings and gifts for the widows and needy. See Acts 6:1-3. These men made it their ministry to channel all the giving to where there was practical need.

2. Churches Gave Sacrificially To One Another

When the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem were in famine, the poor, suffering Gentile church helped them.

“Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability”

2 Corinthians 8:2-3 See also verses 1,4.

3. The Church Supported Travelling Ministries

The apostle Paul travelled from place to place establishing new churches. On some occasions he worked with his hands to provide his support. Acts 18:3; 2Thessalonians 3:7-9.

On other occasions the Philippian church showed the true spirit of giving which God commends, by supporting travelling ministries such as Paul.

“I have received full payment and even more; I am amply supplied, now that I have received ... the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God” Philippians 4:18. Read also verses 15-17.

4. Christians Worked To Be Able To Give

“he who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need” Ephesians 4:28

5. Giving Was The Proof Of Their Love

“At this time, your plenty will supply what they need... Therefore show [by giving]... the proof of your love ...” 2Corinthians 8:14, 24. See also verses 7-15; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; 1John 3:17-18.

C. GOD’S PRINCIPLES OF GIVING

In 1Corinthians 10:11, we are told to learn from Israel’s example. We are told to apply the principles given them by God. At the same time we are told to avoid the mistakes Israel (and the leaders) made in the wilderness. In the area of giving, we find some excellent guidelines that can help us in our giving:

1. God Expects Us To Begin With A Percentage

“Bring the whole tithe (10%) into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this, “says the Lord Almighty,” and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it” Malachi 3:10.

2. We Are To Give Systematically And Regularly

“Hezekiah gave orders to prepare storerooms in the temple of the Lord, and this was done. Then they faithfully brought in the contributions, tithes and dedicated gifts..” 2Chronicles 31:11-12

3. We Are To Give The First And The Best To The Lord

“Honour the Lord with your wealth, with the first fruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine” Proverbs 3:9-10.

MY COMMITMENT

I realize, through this study, the importance of having a generous heart and attitude toward others. Today I commit my self to begin a life of giving by starting to tithe to the Lord’s work. I will also encourage and teach others to do the same.

“But you are a chosen people, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light” 1Peter 2:9.

Chapter 16

Kingdom Living

A. CHANGE OF AUTHORITY

We have been delivered from Satan’s dominion (rulership or headship). We are now under a whole new authority - that of the Lord Jesus Christ.

As a believer begins growing in his new life in the Lord, he soon discovers that the only way we enjoy living in God’s Kingdom is in right RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS. Ephesians 1:17; Philippians 3:10.

At the very beginning of our new life with God, this relationship takes two distinct forms:

1. Saviour

This is the very first relationship we can have with Jesus. We cannot know God as Father or Friend until we first have had a revelation of Jesus as Saviour - the One Who died for us and rescued us from Satan’s kingdom. Jesus has saved us from:

a. God’s Judgment 1Thessalonians 1:10; 5:9; Romans 5:9.

b. Satan's Power Acts 26:18; Colossians 1:13; Hebrews 2:14; 1John 3:8.

c. Our Own Selves Philippians 3:19; 2Corinthians 5:15; Titus 3:3-6; 1Peter 1:18.

“Although he was a son ... he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him”

Hebrews 5:8-9. See also Hebrews 2:10; 2Timothy 1:10.

2. Lord

Knowing Jesus as Saviour brings us into God's kingdom, but that is not where our relationship with Him ends. Once we are inside His Kingdom, that relationship takes on dramatic new changes. Now we know Him not merely as Saviour, but as Lord - OUR Lord! He is KING in His Kingdom. Colossians 2:6.

“Therefore, I tell you that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, ‘Jesus be cursed’; and no one can say, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ except by the Holy Spirit” 1Corinthians 12:3. See also John 13:13; Romans 1:4; 1Corinthians 8:6; 1Corinthians 4:5.

When we enter the Kingdom of Light, we can enjoy what we were created for - a loving relationship with the Lord. Because of this, when Jesus becomes Lord of our life, we find that His dominion in our lives brings us out of the chaos of sin into divine order and peace. See Colossians 2:9-10; 1Corinthians 8:6.

B. THE MODEL CITIZEN

“Let your attitude toward life be that of Christ Jesus himself ...” Philippians 2:5. Jesus, though King of the Kingdom, became a servant. He is the example of what the true citizen of His Kingdom is like.

“You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord’ and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you” John 13:13-15. Read also John 13:5-17; Matthew 20:26-28; Luke 22:27.

C. SUBJECTS OF THE KING

As members of Christ's Kingdom, we enter into a Master-servant relationship with Him Matthew 6:24.

Jesus came to do his Father's will. Hebrews 10:5-9. In His day-to-day life, He displayed what the lifestyle of the Kingdom is all about: living to please God. Ephesians 5:8-10. We are to have this servant-heart, just as he had a servant's heart.

Many Christians do not like the concept of being a servant because it seems to make one person inferior to another. But in the Bible, we find four interesting paradoxes:

1. In Slavery, There Is Freedom

“But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life” Romans 6:22. Read also verses 16-23; 12:1; 1Corinthians 7:22; 2Corinthians 7:22; 2Corinthians 3:17; Ephesians 6:6-7; 1Peter 2:16.

2. In Being a Servant, There Is Greatness

“The greatest among you will be your servant. For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted” Matthew 23:11-12. See also 20:26-27; Mark 9:35; 10:43; John 12:26.

3. In Humility, There is Exaltation

“Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven” Matthew 18:14. See also Luke 18:14; Proverbs 29:23; James 4:10; 1Peter 5:5-6; Matthew 19:30.

4. In Submission, There is Authority

The Roman Centurion (a military leader over 100 soldiers) who came to Jesus understood this principle. *“...I did not even consider myself worthy to come to you. But say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, ‘Go’ and he goes; and that one ‘Come,’ and he comes. I say to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and he does it”* Luke 7:7-8.

Because the centurion was under authority, he was able to exercise authority, and readily submitted to Jesus’ authority. Read also verses 1-10; James 4:7.

The lifestyle of the kingdom of God is an attitude of SUBMISSION and OBEDIENCE TO GOD. See Matthew 12:50; Ephesians 6:6; Hebrews 13:21; 1John 2:17; 1Thessalonians 4:1. We submit ourselves to God’s will - NOT reluctantly - because of fear or duty - but rather:

a. Because Of All God Has Done For Us. Romans 12:1; Ephesians 4:1; Titus 3:4-7.

b. Because in Doing so We find Fulfilment. Psalms 40:8.

c. Because of Love. John 14:15; 1John 5:3.

D. FRUIT OF THE KINGDOM

“For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his children, encouraging, comforting and urging you TO LIVE LIVES WORTHY OF GOD, who calls you into His kingdom and glory” 1Thessalonians 2:11-12. See also 2Thessalonians 1:5.

In Matthew 21:43, Jesus said that the Kingdom would belong to those who *“produce its fruit.”* The fruit of the Kingdom is explained in a number of scriptures:

- Love, Joy, Peace. Galatians 5:22-23.
- Goodness, Righteousness, Truth. Ephesians 5:9; James 3:13-17.
- Righteousness, Peace and Joy. Romans 14:17; Hebrews 12:1.

Since we were created by God, we were also made for His Kingdom and its lifestyle.

The fruit of the Kingdom is simply the natural outworking of the miracle of the new birth that the Holy Spirit has performed in us. See Galatians 5:22.

Our responsibility as citizens of God’s kingdom is to live like the people we now are! 1Peter 2:11.

“We also pray that your outward lives, which men see, may bring credit to your master’s name, and that you may bring joy to his heart” Colossians 1:10 Phillips translation. See also Colossians 2:6; Ephesians 4:1; 6:8-10.

MY COMMITMENT

I realize, after studying about Kingdom living, that I am to submit my life to the service of others, just as Jesus did. I commit myself to being a willing, joyful servant of Christ and others.

Worship

A. BLESSING OF GOD

“Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name”

Psalms 103:1. It is awesome to consider that we have the ability to bless our Creator, but time after time in the Scripture we are exhorted to do just that. We bless Him through our praise and worship of Him. See Psalm 34:1-3.

B. PRAISE

Praise is an expression of admiration and appreciation. When we praise someone, we tell them how wonderful we think they are, or how great their accomplishments are. It is the same with the Lord. Praise has to do with acknowledging God’s character and power.

“Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you. I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands” Psalms 63:3-4.

1. Why Do We Praise God?

a. Because Of Who He Is. *“Sing praises to God, sing praises, sing praises to our King, sing praises. For God is the King of all the earth; sing to him a psalm of praise”.* Psalms 47:6-7.

b. Because Of What he Does.

“Praise the Lord, o my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. Praise the Lord O my soul, and forget not all his benefits. He forgives all my sins and heals all my diseases; He redeems my life from the pit and crowns me with love and compassion. He satisfies my desires with good things, so that my youth is renewed like the eagle’s” Psalms 103:1-5.

2. Who Is To Praise God?

a. Those Who Seek God. *“...they who seek the Lord will praise him...”* Psalms 22:26.

b. Everything That Has Breath. *“Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise the Lord”* Psalms 150:6.

3. When Do We Praise God?

a. At All Times *“I will extol the Lord at all times; His praise will always be on my lips”* Psalms 34:1.

b. In Every Circumstance *“Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus”* 1Thessalonians 5:16-18.

4. Where Are We To Praise God?

a. Surrounded By God’s People *“He [Jesus] says, ‘I will declare your name to my brothers; in the presence of the congregation I will sing your praises’ ”* Hebrews 2:12.

b. Among The Nations *“I will praise you, O Lord, among the nations; I will sing of you among the peoples”* Psalms 57:9.

c. On Our Beds *“I will praise you as long as I live... with singing lips my mouth will*

praise you; I think of you through the watches of the night” Psalms 63:4-6.

C. WORSHIP

Whereas praise is an expression of admiration and appreciation, worship is an expression of love or adoration. It is possible to admire someone and appreciate what they do without being in love with them. In the same way, worship has to do with our love of the Lord. It can be expressed only with the giving of our whole heart and life to Him.

“To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbour as yourself, is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices” Mark 12:33.

The religious rituals and ceremonies of Israel in the Old Testament became detestable to the Lord because their heart was far from Him. Isaiah 1:10-15; 29:13. Today, also, God is only interested in the genuine and sincere worship that comes from the heart.

“Yet a time is coming, and has now come, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks. God is a spirit, and his worshippers MUST worship in SPIRIT and TRUTH” John 4:22-23.
Read also verses 4-26.

1. In Spirit

Our spirit is called the “*inner man*”. Ephesians 3:16. True worship takes place when the inner man, in response to the promptings of God’s Spirit, expresses love and adoration to God. This can take the form of spoken words, a love song to the Lord, or silent adoration.

True worship requires the action of the Holy Spirit on our spirit. So only those who have been “born again of the Spirit” through faith in Jesus Christ can truly worship God. John 3:5-8.

The lifestyle of a true worshipper of God is one of OBEDIENCE. Our obedience is an active, practical expression of our love for God. Jesus said in John 14:15 “*If you love me, keep my commandments*”. See also verses 21,23-24.

2. In Truth

To worship God in truth is to worship Him as the Bible says we should. Nadab and Abihu (the sons of the high priest) offered strange fire before the Lord and died. Numbers 3:4; 26:61. This sober warning illustrates the need to study God’s plan (the Tabernacle of Moses) for priestly ministry.

There was a sacrifice, cleansing, anointing and clothing before worship. Exodus 30:17-38.

You will note in Revelation 1:5-6 that we are “...*washed from our sins in his own blood*” before being made “...*priests unto God.*”

An apostle/teacher in the United States was training lots of leaders how to heal the sick and perform miracles.

A prophetess said to him: “The Lord says to you, ‘How dare you teach those who are unclean to do my works! Stop it!’”

There was much preparation of the priests before they could go into the Holy Place to worship the Lord. To ignore the pattern was perilous. We must worship in truth - in the Bible way.

D. EXPRESSIONS OF PRAISE AND WORSHIP IN SCRIPTURE

1. With The Mouth

- a. **Singing.** Psalms 9:2,11
- b. **Praising.** Psalms 103:1
- c. **Shouting.** Psalms 47:1
- 2. **With The Hands**
 - a. **Lifting.** Psalms 63:4
 - b. **Clapping.** Psalms 47:1
 - c. **Musical instruments.** Psalms 150
- 3. **With The Body**
 - a. **Standing.** Psalms 134:1
 - b. **Kneeling, bowing.** Psalms 95:6
 - c. **Dancing and leaping for joy.** Psalms 30:11

“Who among the gods is like you, O Lord? Who is like you - majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders? ...Sing to the Lord, for He is highly exalted...”
Exodus 15:11, 21.

“Among the gods there is none like you, O lord ... For you are great and do marvellous deeds; you alone are God ... I will praise you, O Lord my God, with all my heart; I will glorify your name forever” Psalms 86:8, 10 12.

MY COMMITMENT

The greatest thing I will ever do in this life or in eternity is to worship God. I determine today to be a true worshipper and to make this my supreme goal in life. I will teach others this vital way of life by my example.

Chapter 18

Prayer

“He will call upon me, and I will answer him...and show him my salvation”.
Psalms 91:15-16. The time we spend with the Lord in prayer can release the most dynamic, history changing power the world has ever known.

The Bible describes many different operations of prayer, but in this lesson we are going to look at prayer as an individual first. Our prayer as a Body together can only be as strong as our personal time with the Lord.

A. THE SECRET PLACE

“But when you pray, go into your most private room, and closing the door, pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you in the open” Matthew 6:6

We have been invited into intimate prayer by none other than the Lord Himself. This kind of “secret” prayer presupposes and ensures:

1. **The Right Motives** Matthew 6:5
2. **A Right Relationship With God As Father** Luke 11:11-13
3. **A Real Trust In The Lord** Psalms 55:16-17
4. **A Dispensing Of False Fronts** Mark 7:6-7

As we express our feelings and burdens in conversation with God, it can be in the form of adoration, Psalms 34:1-4, confession 1 John 1:9, request Matthew 7:7, or thanksgiving, Ephesians 5:4-20.

B. FIVE COMMANDS RELATED TO PRAYER

1. Watch And Pray Always

“Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man” Luke 21:36. See also Mark 13:33-37.

2. Pray Lest you Fall Into Temptation

“Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak” Matthew 26:41.

3. Pray For Workers

“He told them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field” ” Luke 10:2.

4. Pray For Those In Authority

“I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone - for kings and all those in authority, that we live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness” 1Timothy 2:1-2.

5. Pray For Your Enemies

“Bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you” Luke 6:28.

C. WHEN TO PRAY

The Bible gives many examples of people who prayed, 1Chronicles 4:10. Many of the heroes of faith can be observed to have had regular times of the day set aside specifically for prayer, often three set periods a day - morning, noon and evening.

“As for me, I will call upon God; and the Lord shall save me. Evening, and morning, and noon, will I pray and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice” Psalms 55:16-17. See also Daniel 6:10.

The best example of a daily pattern of regular, whole hearted prayer - prayer that avoided meaningless religious ritual - can be found in the Lord Jesus Himself:

1. Early In The Morning Mark 1:35

2. All Night Luke 6:12

3. Before Each Meal Mark 6:41

D. WHAT TO PRAY

1. For Ourselves

“Jabez cried out to the God of Israel, ‘Oh that you would bless me and enlarge my territory! Let your hand be with me, and keep me from harm so that I will be free from pain.’ And God granted his request” 1Chronicles 4:10.

2. For One Another

“Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other...” James 5:16.

3. For The Ministries In The Body Of Christ

“Finally, brothers, pray for us that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honoured, just as it was with you” 2Thessalonians 3:1.

4. For The Sick And Distraught

“Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray...is any one of you sick? He should call for the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the Name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the

Lord will raise him up ... pray for each other so that you may be healed...” James 5:14-16.

5. For Those Ensnared In Sin

“If anyone sees his brother commit a sin that does not lead to death, he should pray and God will give him life...” 1 John 5:16.

E. HELP IN PRAYER

“In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express”. Romans 8:26

Part of the Holy Spirit’s purpose is to teach us, Luke 12:12, guide us in prayer Romans 8:27, and to help us in our faith, Ephesians 3:16-17.

The Holy Spirit will sometimes anoint a believer’s prayer in a special way, and this is called *“praying in the Holy Spirit”* Jude 20: Ephesians 6:18.

To help us in prayer, the Holy Spirit has also provided a special gift to the believer: The Gift of Tongues - speaking in another language to the Lord in prayer. See 1 Corinthians 12:4-11.

“...the prayer of the upright is his delight...He hears the prayer of the righteous” Proverbs 15:8,29.

F. YOKEFELLOW

Two joining together in prayer provides some very real advantages: *“Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven”* Matthew 18:19.

G. THE CHURCH PRAYING

If there is tremendous power when two people pray, what about the whole assembly of God’s people? See Acts 4:24.

Today God is calling His people to prayer! The Church’s mission is to change individual lives, families, communities, cities and nations through prayer!

MY COMMITMENT

Through this study I realize the wonderful opportunities of prayer - not only in my relationship with God, but also the supernatural results that follow. I commit myself to make prayer always a priority in my life.

Chapter 19

Heaven

“...God is in heaven and you are on earth...Therefore stand in awe of God” Ecclesiastes 5:2,7.

A. WHAT IS HEAVEN?

1. Heaven Is The Dwelling Place Of God

“Is not God in the heights of heaven? And see how lofty are the highest stars!” Job 22:12. See also Deuteronomy 26:15.

2. Heaven Is The Throne Room Of God

“The Lord has established his throne in heaven, and his kingdom rules over all” Psalms 103:19 See also Isaiah 66:1.

3. Heaven Is The Place Of God's Glory

"As I looked, thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. His clothing was as white as snow, the hair of his head was white like wool, his throne was flaming fire, and its wheels were all ablaze. A river of fire was flowing, coming out of from before him..." Daniel 7:9-10

See also Acts 7:55.

4. Heaven Is The Home Of The Righteous (Believing) Dead

"Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands" 2Corinthians 5:1.

5. Heaven Is The Future Home Of All Believers

"After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne..."

Revelation 7:9-10.

B. THE NATURE OF HEAVEN

Heaven is a place far beyond anything we could possibly conceive, 1Corinthians 2:9; 13:12. Heaven is a place of holiness, full of glory and without end.

But though the Bible doesn't describe all the details of what Heaven is like, it does give us some clues as to its nature. It is:

1. A Place Of Great Glory

"Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father..."

Matthew 13:43.

2. A Place Of Continual Worship

"After this I heard what sounded like the roar of a great multitude in heaven shouting:

'Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God...' Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting; 'Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns..'" Revelation 19:1-6,

See also Revelation 5:11-12.

3. A Place That Will Never End

"...and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" 2Peter 1:11. See also 1Peter 1:4.

4. A Place Untainted By Evil

"Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life" Revelation 21:27. See also Ephesians 5:5.

The Book of Revelation describes the New Jerusalem, coming out of Heaven as a place without:

a. Night. Revelation 22:5

b. Curse. Revelation 22:3

c. Pain. Revelation 21:4

d. Crying, sorrow. Revelation 21:4

e. Death. Revelation 21:4

This is because the nature of Heaven is a product of the nature of God. Since Heaven is the full manifestation of His presence, what God is like, heaven is a place of holiness, full of glory and without end.

C. OUR LINK WITH HEAVEN

As believers, we now live our lives in a special relationship with Heaven, because:

1. We Belong There

“But you have come to...the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven...” Hebrews 12:22-23. See also Philippians 3:20.

2. We Are Enthroned There

“And God raised us up with Christ and enthroned us with him in heavenly realms in Christ Jesus”. Ephesians 2:6.

3. We Have Our Source Of Life There

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ” Ephesians 1:3. See also Colossians 3:1-4.

4. We Have Our Names Recorded There

“However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven” Luke 10:20. See also Hebrews 12:23.

5. We Have Been Sent By The One Who Lives There

“They are not of the world, even as I am not of it...As you have sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world” John 17:16,18. See also 2 Corinthians 5:20.

6. We have Our Eyes Fixed There

“For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal”. 2Corinthians 4:17-18.

7. We Have Our Treasure There

“...He has given us new birth into a living hope...into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade – kept in heaven for you...” 1 Peter 1:3-4. See also Matthew 6:19-21.

8. We Are Being Called There

“...But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining towards what is ahead, I press on towards the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenwards in Christ Jesus”
Philippians 3:13-14.

Jesus Himself, before returning to Heaven, made a very special promise to every believer: *“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, trust also in me. In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am”* John 14:1-3. See also John 17:24.

MY COMMITMENT

I decide today to set my affections on things in Heaven, not on things of this earth. I realize my life on earth is only temporary, so I will live by priorities

established by this truth. I will share with others the good news about this wonderful eternal home Jesus offers to all who will believe on Him.

Chapter 20

When Jesus Returns – The Second Coming

“Whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you have proclaimed the Lord’s death UNTIL HE COMES”. 1 Corinthians 11:26.

A. THE PROMISE OF HIS RETURN

The Second Coming of the Lord Jesus to the earth is one of the most important subjects for the Christian. The writers of the New Testament discussed it more than 300 times, and the language used was almost always imperative. The first thing we need to know about the Second Coming is that it is CERTAIN.

1. Jesus Spoke About His Own Return

“At that time the sign of the Son Of man will appear in the sky, and the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory”. Matthew 24:30. See also John 14:2-3.

2. Angels Foretold It

“They were looking intently into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. Men of Galilee, ‘they said, ‘why do you stand there looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken back from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go to heaven’ ”. Acts 1:10-11.

3. The Early Christians Encouraged One Another With It

“For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage each other with these words”. 1Thessalonians 4:16-18. See also Revelation 1:7.

4. The Holy Spirit Bears Witness Of It

“Now it is God who has made us for this very purpose and has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come” 2Corinthians 5:5.

“But be patient, my brothers, as you wait for the Lord to come. Look at the farmer quietly waiting for his precious harvest. See how he has to possess his soul in patience till the land has had the early and late rains. So must you be patient, resting your hearts on the ultimate certainty. The Lord’s coming is very near”. James 5:7-8 Phillips Translation. See also Hebrews 10:37.

B. HOW WILL HE RETURN?

1. Unexpectedly

“Now, brothers, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, ‘Peace and safety,’ destruction will come on them suddenly...” 1Thessalonians 5:1-3. Read also verses 4-11.

2. Like The Lightning

“For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man”. Matthew 24:27. See also Luke 17:24.

3. In The Same Way That he Left

“...This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven”. Acts 1:10-1.

4. With Power And Great Glory

“At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory”
Luke 21:27.

5. In Full View Of All

“Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him. So shall it be! Amen” Revelation 1:7.

C. DRAMATIC EVENTS TO TAKE PLACE

1. The Mystery Of The Ages Will Be Completed

“...There will be no more delay! But in the day when the seventh angel is about to sound his trumpet, the mystery of God will be accomplished, just as he announced to his servants the prophets”. Revelation 10:6-7. See also Romans 16:25-26.

2. God’s People Will Enter Their Full Glory

“But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Saviour from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so they will be like his glorious body”.
Philippians 3:20-21. See also 1 Corinthians 15:35-53.

3. The Dead In Christ Will Be Raised To Life

“...because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you in his presence”. 1 Corinthians 4:14. See also John 6:40; 11:25.

4. Those Believers Still Alive Will Be Caught Up To Meet Him

“And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other”. Matthew 24:31.

5. Creation Will Be Set Free From Its Bondage

“The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God”. Romans 8:19-21. Read also verse 22 and Isaiah 35:1-7.

6. Every Enemy Will Be Destroyed

“Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet”. 1 Corinthians 15:24-25. See also 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10; 2:8.

7. Satan Will Be Bound

“And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years”. Revelation 20:1-2. Read also verses 3, 7-10.

8. Judgment Will Be Meted Out

“God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you and give relief to you who are troubled... This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of His power.

2Thessalonians 1:6-9.

9. A Kingdom Will Be Set Up That Will Never Be Destroyed

“In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever”. Daniel 2:44. See also

Revelation 19:15-16.

MY COMMITMENT

The Second Coming of Jesus is my great hope for the future. I will tell as many people as possible about Jesus, my saviour, before He returns again. I am, committed to Him and look with excitement for that day of his coming.

Chapter 21

Call Of God

God has a plan for the life of every individual believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. Not only does His call involve a wonderful purpose for us throughout eternity, but we also have an expression of that call upon the earth now.

“Who has saved us, and CALLED us with a holy calling ... according to his own purpose and grace...”. 2Timothy 1:9.

“Now if we are children, then we are heirs – heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ... And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been CALLED ACCORDING TO HIS PURPOSE”. Romans 8:17, 28. See also verses 29, 30.

A. GOD HAS CALLED US

1. From The Foundation Of The World

“For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will”. Ephesians 1:4-5. See also Ephesians 2:10 and Matthew 25:34.

2. To Be Separated Unto Him

“But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light”. 1Peter 2:9.

See also Romans 9:23-26.

3. To Fulfil His Purpose

“So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord... who has saved us and called us to a holy life – not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace...”. 2Timothy 1:8-9.

See also Romans 8:28 and Philippians 3:14.

B. OUR CALL ON EARTH

“Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God”. Romans 1:1.

In describing his own ministry, the Apostle Paul gives us an example of the call that is upon EVERY believer. It has three aspects:

1. The General Calling – “A Slave Of Christ”

Jesus paid a high price for us, His own life. *“For he who was a slave when he was called by the Lord is the Lord’s free man; similarly, he who was a free man when he was called is Christ’s slave. You were bought with a price...”*. 1Corinthians 7:22-23. See also 1Corinthians 6:19-20.

When Paul calls himself a slave of Jesus Christ, he is pointing to an even deeper meaning. According to the custom of his day, if a slave came to the time when he could be set free, but because of love for his master chose not accept his freedom, he then received a mark pierced in his ear. This was a sign that he was a “love or bond slave” to his master for life. Exodus 21:5-60; Deuteronomy 15:16-17.

The Apostle Paul, by choice, declared himself a bond slave of the Lord Jesus.

2. The Special Calling – “Called To Be An Apostle”

Just as the Apostle Paul has a special calling upon his life, so does every believer. Paul was called to be an apostle, but there are many different callings in the Body of Christ. See Romans 12:3-8; Ephesians 4:7-16. The special part that God has for us to play will be revealed to us as we earnestly seek His will.

3. The Particular Calling – “Separated Unto The Gospel”

Within each special calling there is a particular calling. For example, Peter and Paul were both apostles, but one was the apostle to the Jews and the other to the Gentiles. See Romans 11;13; 1 Timothy 2:7; 1 Corinthians 12;4-11.

We move into our special and particular calling only as we prove ourselves as servants of Christ, for we must first learn to be wholly under the authority of Christ before we can be SENT by Him.

See Matthew 28:18-19.

C. WHY DOES HE CALL US?

1. Because The World Is In Darkness

“We know that we ourselves are children of God, and we also know that the world around us is under the power of the evil one”. 1John 5:18 Phillips Translation. See also Ephesians 6:12 and Colossians 12:13.

2. Because People Are Hungry And In Need

“When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd”. Matthew 9:36.

3. To Prove His Wisdom

“His intent was that now, through the Church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in heavenly realms, according to the eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord”. Ephesians 3:10-11.

4. Because Time Is Short

“Do you not say, ‘Four months more than the harvest’? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for the harvest!” John 4:35. See also John 9:4.

D. WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE ARE CALLED?

1. We Are Made By Him

“Come, follow me, ‘Jesus said, and I WILL MAKE YOU fishers of men’”. Matthew 4:19.

See also Jeremiah 18:1-10.

2. We Are Taught By Him

“But the Counsellor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you”. John 14:26.

See also 1Corinthians 2:12 and John 2:27.

3. We Are Sent By Him

“As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world”. John 17:18. See also Mark 16:15.

When God calls, He comes and interrupts our lives. Some examples of this in scripture are:

Moses (a shepherd in the desert): *“Go, set my people free”*. Exodus 3:1-12.

Samuel (a boy serving in the temple): *“Wake up, speak for me”*. 1Samuel 3:1-19.

Ezekiel (a captive in a foreign land): *“Stand up, I am sending you”*. Ezekiel 2:1-7.

Disciples (businessmen, fishermen): *“Come follow me”*. Matthew 4:18-22.

Saul (an enemy of the Church): *“Go, I will tell you what you must do”*. Acts 9:1-9.

MY COMMITMENT

Now that I realize that God has had a plan for my life even before the foundation of the world, I now make a total commitment to this plan and will follow the Lord all the way. I will teach others also about God’s plan for their lives.

TOPICAL CONCORDANCE

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ABBREVIATED NAMES FOR THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

The following abbreviations will be found in the Topical Concordance. With a few exceptions, they are based on Strong's Concordance.

BY ORDER IN BIBLE**BY ALPHABETICAL ORDER**

GE	Genesis	1CH	I Chronicles
EX	Exodus	1CO	I Corinthians
LE	Leviticus	1JO	I John
NU	Numbers	1KI	I Kings
DE	Deuteronomy	1PE	I Peter
JOS	Joshua	1SA	I Samuel
JDG	Judges	1TH	I Thessalonians
Ru	Ruth	1TI	I Timothy
ISA	I Samuel	2CH	II Chronicles
2SA	II Samuel	2CO	II Corinthians
1KI	I Kings	2JO	II John
2KI	II Kings	2KI	II Kings
1CH	I Chronicles	2PE	II Peter
2CH	II Chronicles	2SA	II Samuel
EZR	Ezra	2TH	II Thessalonians
NE	Nehemiah	2TI	II Timothy
ES	Esther	3JO	III John
JOB	Job	AC	Acts
PS	Psalms	AM	Amos
PR	Proverbs	CA	Song of Solomon (Canticles)
EC	Ecclesiastes	COL	Colossians
CA	Song of Solomon	DA	Daniel
ISA	Isaiah	DE	Deuteronomy
JER	Jeremiah	EC	Ecclesiastes
LAM	Lamentations	EPH	Ephesians
EZE	Ezekiel	ES	Esther
DA	Daniel	EX	Exodus
HO	Hosea	EZE	Ezekiel
JOE	Joel	EZR	Ezra
AM	Amos	GA	Galatians
OB	Obadiah	GE	Genesis
JON	Jonah	HAB	Habakkuk
MIC	Micah	HAG	Haggai
NA	Nahum	HEB	Hebrews
HAB	Habakkuk	HO	Hosea
ZEP	Zephaniah	ISA	Isaiah
HAG	Haggai	JAS	James
ZEC	Zechariah	JDG	Judges
MAL	Malachi	JER	Jeremiah
"NEW TESTAMENT**		JOB	Job
MT	Matthew	JOE	Joel
MK	Mark	JOH	John
LU	Luke	JON	Jonah
JOH	John	JOS	Joshua
AC	Acts	JUDE	Jude
RO	Romans	LA	Lamentations
1CO	I Corinthians	LE	Leviticus
2CO	II Corinthians	LU	Luke
GA	Galatians	MAL	Malachi
EPH	Ephesians	MIC	Micah
PHP	Philippians	MK	Mark
COL	Colossians	MT	Matthew
1TH	I Thessalonians	NA	Nahum
2TH	II Thessalonians	NE	Nehemiah
1TI	I Timothy	NU	Numbers
2TI	II Timothy	OB	Obadiah
TIT	Titus	PHM	Philemon
PHM	Philemon	PHP	Philippians
HEB	Hebrews	PR	Proverbs
JAS	James	PS	Psalms
1PE	I Peter	RE	Revelation
2PE	II Peter	RO	Romans
1JO	I John	RU	Ruth
2JO	II John	TIT	Titus
3JO	III John	ZEC	Zechariah
JUDE	Jude	ZEP	Zephaniah
REV	Revelation		

A. THE BIBLE - THE INERRANT, INFALLIBLE, INSPIRED WORD OF GOD

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- A6. How Do I Learn What The Bible Teaches?**

1. THE BIBLE DECLARES ITSELF TO BE THE WORD OF GOD

- a) "*ALL SCRIPTURE IS GIVEN BY INSPIRATION OF GOD*" (2Ti 3:16)
 - "All Scripture" refers to the written Word.
 - "All Scripture" refers to the entire Bible (Old and New Testaments).
 - Jesus accepted the Old Testament as Scripture (Lu 24:27,44,45; Joh 5:39,46,47)
 - Peter said Paul's Epistles were Scripture (2Pe 3:15,16).
 - Because the Bible is the written Word of God, God's judgment will befall anyone who dares to add to or subtract from 'Vie words... of this prophecy' (Rev 22:18,19).

2. THE BIBLE IS FREE OF MISTAKES (INERRANT)

- a) GOD'S SPIRIT GUIDED "*HOLY MEN OF GOD*" (2Pe 1:21) so that the words they wrote (which have been preserved in the Bible) were kept free from error. God's Spirit, by supernatural superintendence, guided these particular writings so that they
 - said what God wished to be said.
 - were written error-free in the original copies.
- b) THE BIBLICAL WORDS ARE PROTECTED FROM ERROR BY GOD
 - "*I, the Lord, keep it, I water it every moment; lest any hurt it, I keep it night and day*" (Isa 27:3)
 - "*The pass withereth, the flower fadeth; but the word of our God shall stand for ever*" (Isa 40:8; Mt 24:35)
- c) THE OLD TESTAMENT WAS RECEIVED AS FROM GOD, HENCE INERRANT (Jos 1:8; 2Ki 22:8,11,13)
- d) WITHOUT EXCEPTION, FAULT CANNOT BE POUND IN THE SCRIPTURES
 - Christ said, "*The Scripture cannot be broken*" (Joh 10:35).
 - He preached inerrancy, even to the very strokes and accent marks which formed the alphabetical characters in the Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek languages. These were the languages in which the Bible was originally written. "One jot (smallest Hebrew letter) or one little (smallest accent mark over the letter) will by no means pass from the law, til all be fulfilled' (Mt 5:18).

3. THE BIBLE IS NOT WRONG ON ANY SUBJECT (INFALLIBLE)

- a) JESUS CERTIFIED OLD TESTAMENT AS ACCURATE
 - By citing the miracle stories of O.T., Jesus certified them as true, accurate, inerrant and thus infallible. A few examples follow:

- Accepted Genesis as a factual account of creation (Mt 19:4)
- Adam and Eve (Mt 19:4-6; Ge 1:26,27,2:7,18)
- Cain and Abel (Mt 23:35; Heb 11:4; Ge 4:1-15)
- Satan (Lu 11:18; Ezc 28:11-19)
- Noah (Mt 24:37,38; Ge 6:1-14)
- Jonah (Mt 12:39,40; Jon 1:7)
- Lot's wife (Lu 17:32; Ge 19:26)

Jesus took the Bible to be God's Word, true in every word, and entirely trustworthy.

b) CHRIST AND THE APOSTLES ACCEPTED THE OLD TESTAMENT AS INFALLIBLE

Modern-day theologians have cast doubt on the following books. Here is your defense against these enemies of the Bible.

- Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy - These books were written by Moses. Jesus validated them. See Joh 5:46,47.
- Deuteronomy, the book most attacked - In Mt 4:4,7,10 Christ defeats Satan by quoting from De 6:16 and 10:20.
 - > Would Jesus have used the words from these books if they were not "*...the sword of the Spirit... the word of God*" (Eph 6:17)?
 - > No! He would not! These books are the Word of God.
- Isaiah – mentioned in New Testament twenty-one times. Compare a few examples: Mt 15:7-9 and Isa 29:13; Mt 3:3 and Isa 40:3; Ac 8:28-33 and Isa 53:7,8.
 - > These three quotations come from the three different sections of Isaiah.
 - > The New Testament affirms the unity of the Book of Isaiah and that it is the work of one prophet.
- Daniel – Jesus quotes Daniel as a God-inspired foreteller of the future (Mt 24:15; Mk 13:14).
- Jonah – Jesus validates the Book of Jonah in Mt 12:40, 41.

4. THE WORDS IN THE BIBLE CAME FROM GOD THROUGH CHOSEN PERSONS (INSPIRED)

a) "*ALL SCRIPTURE IS GIVEN BY INSPIRATION OF GOD...*" 2 Ti 3:16)
 "By inspiration of God," **theopneustos** in Greek, literally means "*God breathed*." The author of the Bible is God Himself. He "*breathed*" the words through the mouths and pens of holy men (2Pe 1:21).

b) DAVID AFFIRMED HIS WRITINGS CAME BY THE SPIRITS INSPIRATION
 David wrote most of the Psalms. He said, "*The Spirit of the Lord spoke by me...*" (2 Sa 23:2; See also I Ch 28:11,12).

5. WHY SHOULD I STUDY AND OBEY THE TEACHINGS OF THE BIBLE?

a) FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH

- The Scriptures are spiritual food to nourish our spiritual growth (Jer 15:16; Eze 3:1-3; I Pe 2:2; I Co 3:1,2; Heb 5:12-14)

b) TO BE KEPT FROM SIN

- God's Word will keep you from sin. Sin will keep you from God's Word (Ps 119:9, 11, 133)

c) TO ENJOY HEALTH AND HEALING

- Obedience to biblical commandments results in health and healing for our physical bodies (Ex 15:26; Ps 107:20,119-50).

d) TO BE PROSPERED

- Joshua was the first man to have a Bible. He was promised blessing and prosperity by reading and obeying it (Jos 1:8).

- Meditate on the teaching of the Bible to be fruitful and successful (Ps 1:1-3).

c) TO BE KEPT ON GOD'S PATH, IN INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM

- The Scriptures light our path (Ps 119:104,105).

- The Scriptures break intellectual bondage (Ps 119:130).

6. HOW DO I LEARN WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES?

"..but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ" (Joh 20:31). Jesus said, *"Search the scriptures ...they testify of ME"* (Joh 5:39). Look for Jesus on every page and in every chapter (Lu 24:44).

a) YOU LEARN BY THE REVELATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

- Precede your time of "feeding on the Word" with prayer.

- Ask the Holy Spirit to teach you and anoint your mind to understand (Job 14:26; I Co 2:12-14; I Jo 2:27).

- Pray for the veil to be removed from your eyes and heart so you can understand the Old Testament (2Co 3:14-16).

- Pray for the Spirit to open your understanding (Lu 24:25, 27, 44, 45).

- Pray for *"...the Spirit of wisdom and revelation"* to be upon your heart and mind as you read the Bible (Eph 1:17,18).

b) YOU LEARN BY REGULAR READING

- Set aside at least 30 minutes every day to READ the Bible.

- Read one Psalm daily. You will read through the Psalms twice a year.

- Read one Chapter in Proverbs daily. You will read through Proverbs once a month.

- Read three pages of the Old Testament daily. You will read through the Old Testament once a year.

- Read three pages of the New Testament daily. You will read through the New Testament 3 times a year.

- As you read, use a yellow transparent felt-tip marker pen to highlight verses that speak to your need and bless you.

c) YOU LEARN BY SYSTEMATIC STUDY

- Study the outlines in this topical concordance for 25 minutes daily.

- Read every Scripture reference as you study through the outline(s).

- Write notes alongside the verses in your Bible as you study.

- Select one verse out of your 55 minutes of reading and study that was a blessing to you. Use 5 minutes to memorize that verse and the reference. 60 minutes (1 hour) a day — keeps the devil away.

d) SUMMARY OF WHAT THE BIBLE CONTAINS

- **Law** principally occurs in the first five books of the Bible — Genesis through Deuteronomy. Understanding these books is fundamental to all that follows.

- **History** is presented in the Old Testament from Joshua through Esther, and in the New Testament from Matthew through Acts. History is the record of the leading events in the divine/human drama of redemption. Redemption is the central theme of the Bible.

- **Poetry** primarily comprises the books of Job through the Song of Solomon. This is the compendium of devotional and Wisdom Literature of the Bible. It has teaching as well as inspirational value. Many of the chapters in the prophetic books also are written as Hebrew poetry.

- **Prophecy** includes all the books from Isaiah through Malachi in the Old Testament. The book of Revelation in the New Testament and portions of the Gospels, such as the Olivet Discourse, also contain statements concerning the future. These books teach us about God's future plan and purpose for redeemed mankind to rule and reign with Christ (Re 20:4; I Co 6:2).

- **Principles to live by** are contained principally in the New Testament, as well as in Wisdom Literature, i.e., Proverbs and Ecclesiastes in the Old Testament.

e) A BRIEF OVERVIEW /OUTLINE OF WHAT IS IN THE BIBLE

- Creation of the Heavens Ge 1:1
- Rebellion of Satan and chaos results Ge 1:2
- Creation or Restoration of earth Ge 1 & 2
- Rebellion of man and social chaos..... Ge 3
- Destruction by the flood Ge 6-10
- Restoration through Noah Ge 9-10
- Rebellion at Tower of Babel..... Ge 11:1-9
- Division of the nations and languages Ge 11:8-9
- Choosing of Abram, Isaac, Jacob & Joseph Ge 12 -36
- Joseph sold as slave into Egypt Ge 37 - 50
- Israelites alt slaves in Egypt Ex 1-6
- God chooses Moses and Israel as a nation Ex
- Disobedient nation..... The Prophets
- Scattering of the nation Jer; Eze; Da

REDEMPTION (A NEW ERA OF GRACE)

- Jesus Christ comes to earth as a man The Prophets and Gospels
- Mankind crucifies Jesus. The Gospels
- Resurrection of Jesus from the dead The Gospels
- Pentecost, the choosing of the Church Acts
- Church persecuted by the world and devil..... Acts & Revelation
- Resurrection of the dead and judgment..... Letters & Revelation
- Final separation of good and evil Revelation
- Heaven, New Jerusalem, New Heavens & earth Revelation
- Hell and eternal torment Revelation

B. GOD THE FATHER, SON AND HOLY SPIRIT

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1. HOW CAN I LEARN ABOUT GOD?

a) THE BIBLE TEACHES US ABOUT GOD

- See The Bible - Section A
- Dependability of God and His Word Lu 21:33
- Authority of God and His Word Mt 4:4; Joh 10:35
- Bible was inspired by the Holy Spirit 2Ti3:16
- Bible was written by direction of the Holy Spirit..... 2Pe 1:21

b) BIBLE USES HUMAN LANGUAGE AND IMAGES TO DESCRIBE GOD TO US

- Arm & Hand Ex 3:20; 6:6; De 4:34; 5:15
- Face..... Ge 4:14; 33:10; Isa 59:2
- Eyes & Ears..... Isa 37:17; Ps 11:4; 34:15; Pr 15:3; Zec 4:10
- Coming & going..... Ge 11:5; Isa64:1-3; Ps 18:9-19
- Voice of God heard by Adam & Moses..... Ge 3:9,10; De 4:12
 - > We can hear the voice of God..... De 5:24; Ac 22:14

c) GOD APPEARS TO PEOPLE IN HUMAN FORM

- In visions..... Da 7:9,13; Re 4:3; 5:7
- To people directly
 - > Adam..... Ge 3:8-10 > Jacob..... Ge 32:24-30 > Abraham.... Ge 18
 - > Joshua..... Jos 5:13-15 > Daniel..... Da 3:25
- God as the man Jesus Mt, Mk, Lu & Joh

d) BY LOOKING AT WHAT HE HAS CREATED (IN NATURE)

SEE TEACHING PASSAGE (Ro 1:18-25)

- The heavens tell the glory of God Ps 19:1
- Creation shows His eternal power and deity Ro 1:20
- Our conscience and heart know God's law Ro 2:14-16
- The fruitfulness of the land is a witness Ac 14:15-17
- God's Wisdom and Knowledge Ps 19:1-6; 104
- God's Power and Majesty..... Ps 18:7-15; 29; 66:1-7

e) SOME PROBLEMS WITH SEEING GOD IN NATURE

- Nature is not enough for full salvation
 - > unbelievers' minds are blinded by Satan 2Co 4:4
 - > a preacher is needed Ro 10:14
- The Fall of Adam has spoiled God's image in nature
 - > pain in childbirth Ge 3:16
 - > painful work; thorns and thistles Ge 3:17-18
 - > all creation is waiting to be renewed..... Ro 8:18-25

- > for Daniel Da 2:27-28 > Peter's vision Ac 10:11-15,34-35
- God's standard for judging Dreams, Visions and Prophecies
 - > test all things with the Word of God Ps 138:2; Pr 30:5-6
 - > don't believe every spirit I Jo 4:1-3
 - > submit all things to counsel Pr 11:14; 15:22
 - > wait for independent confirmation..... Mt 18:16;ICo 14:29;2Co 13:1
 - > God allows false words to test our love..... De 13:3
 - > if a word leads you away from God it is false..... De 13:1-3
 - > even a real miracle can be false..... De 13:1-3
 - > the commandments of God are above dreams, etc. De 13:4
 - > we must remove falsehood from our midst..... De 13:5
- Dreams and Visions can bring comfort
 - > to Abram Ge 15:1 > to Paul..... Ac 18:9
- Dreams and Visions can bring warnings from God
 - > Abimelech about Sara..... Ge 20:3 > Laban about Jacob.. Ge 31:24
 - > Joseph about Mary..... Mt 1:20 > wisemen about Herod Mt 2:12
 - > Joseph about Herod..... Mt 2:13 > Pilate's wife.....Mt27:19
- Dreams and Visions can bring guidance
 - > Gideon overhears a dream..... Jdg 7:13-15
 - > Joseph led from Egypt to Israel..... Mt 2:19
 - > Joseph led to Galilee.....Mt 2:22
 - > Ananias led to pray for Paul..... Ac 9:10
 - > Paul prepared for Ananias'coming..... Ac 9:12
 - > Paul led to go to Macedonia..... Ac 16:9
- Dreams and Visions may be false
 - > if one's own heart desires evil.....Jer 14:14; Jer 23:16
 - > dreams can be used to excuse a falsehood.....Jer 23:25-32
 - > some dreams lead us away from God..... Jer 23:27
 - > we must not follow these false dreams..... Jer 27:9
 - > our own dreams may be false..... Jer 29:8
 - > false vision can lead to fake prophecy..... Eze 13:7
 - > false religions give false dreams and visions.....Zec 10:2
- Some Dreams and Visions are pure fantasy
 - > due to hunger and thirst..... Isa 29:8
 - > product of an overactive mind..... Ec 5:3,7
 - > some dreams are strictly fleshly..... Jude 1:8
 - > alcohol and drugs cause false visions and dreams.. Isa 28:7
- d) IN A DREAM ...HE MAY SPEAK..... Job33:15-18
- Old Testament
 - > Abimelech..... Ge 20:3-7 > Jacob..... Ge 28:12; 31:10
 - > Laban..... Ge 31:24 > Joseph..... Ge 37:5-9
 - > Solomon..... IKi 3:5-15 > Nebuchadnezzar.....Da 2:131; 4:5,8
 - > Daniel.....Da 7
- New Testament
 - > Joseph..... Mt 1:20-21; 2:13,19-20
 - > Wise men..... Mt 2:11-12 > Pilate's Wife.....Mt 27:19

e) IN A VISION ...HE MAY SPEAK..... Job 33:15-18; Ps 89:19

- Old Testament

- > Abraham..... Ge 15:1 > Amos..... Am 7:1-9; 8:1-6; 9:1
- > Jacob..... Ge 46:2 > Zechariah..... Zec1:8;3:1;4:2;5:2;6:1
- > Isaiah..... Isa 6:1-8 > Ezekiel..... Eze 1,8,10, etc.
- > Daniel..... Da 2:19; & Chaps 7,8,10
- > Nahum..... Na 1:1 > Nebuchadnezzar..... Da 2:28

- New Testament

- > Paul..... Ac 9:3,6,12; 16:9; 18:9; 22:18; 27:23; 2Co 12:1-4
- > Ananias..... Ac 9:10-11 > Cornelius..... Ac 10:3
- > Peter..... Ac 10:9-17 > John..... Revelation

3. GOD'S NAMES REVEAL HIS CHARACTER

In the language of the Hebrews many different words are used to name God. In English they are translated as 'God' or 'Lord' or 'Lord God'. Below are some of the Hebrew names for God and their meanings:

<u>NAME</u>	<u>MEANING</u>
a) JEHOVAH.....	The Self-Existent One
First used with God as Creator.....	Ge 2:4
- Jehovah-Jireh.....	The Lord will Provide
Abraham told to offer Isaac.....	Ge 22:13-14
- Jehovah-Rapha.....	The Lord that Heals
God's promise to those who hear and obey Him.....	Ex 15:26
- Jehovah-Nissi.....	The Lord our Banner (in War)
Moses defeats the Amalekites.....	Ex 17:15
- Jehovah-Shalom.....	The Lord our Peace
Angel of God chooses Gideon.....	Jdg 6:24
- Jehovah-Ra-ah.....	The Lord my Shepherd
David's relationship with God.....	Ps 23:1
- Jehovah-Tsidkenu.....	The Lord our Righteousness
Name of the Lord When He Came to earth.....	Jer 23:6
- Jehovah-Shammah.....	The Lord is Present
Name of the City of God.....	Eze 48:35
- Jehovah-Sabaoth.....	The Lord of Hosts (Armies)
God as defeating the Babylonian armies.....	Jer 28:2
- Jehovah-M'Kaddesh.....	The Lord my Sanctifier
A holy Sabbath as a sign of holy people.....	Ex 31:13
b) ELOHIM or EL.....	The Strong One
God, the Creator.....	Ge 1:1
- El Elyon.....	Most High God
Melchizedek meets Abraham.....	Ge 14:18,19
- Here God is described as Possessor of Heaven and Earth.	
This is first mention of giving a tithe.....	Ge 14:20
Lucifer said I will be like El Elyon.....	Isa 14:14
- El Shaddai.....	Giver of Strength

- Abraham at age 99 is promised a son..... Ge 17:1
- El Olam..... The Eternal One
- Abraham makes a treaty with the Philistines..... Ge 21:33
- El Gibbor..... The Powerful One
- Prophecy about the coming Messiah..... Isa 9:6
- Also called Wonderful Counselor
- Everlasting Father
- Prince of Peace..... Isa 9:6
- c) ADONAI..... Master
- Abram complains to God about being childless..... Ge 15:2
- d) I AM THAT I AM or I AM..... Ex3:14
- Moses wonders how he will identify God to the Israelites... Ex 3:13
- e) JEALOUS..... Ex34:14
- God opposes idol worship
- f) FATHER..... see Section B7
- g) JESUS (SAVIOR)..... see Section B8,B9,B10,B11
- h) HOLY SPIRIT..... see Section B12.B13

4. THE NATURE OF GOD

a) FORM OF GOD

- Mystery of godliness is great..... I Ti 3:16
- Who can probe the limits of the Almighty..... Job 11:7-8
- All three are Divine
 - > Father..... see Section B7
 - > Son..... see Section B8, B9, B10, B11
 - > Holy Spirit..... see Section B12, B13
- All three are in Unity
 - > God is One..... De 6:4-5; Mk 12:29; Jas 2:19
 - > Jesus says that He and the Father are one..... Joh 10:30
 - > *"Let US make man in OUR image"* Ge 1:26
 - > *"Whom shall I (singular) send,*
and who will go for US?" (plural)..... Isa 6:8
 - > *"baptize in the name (singular) of Father,*
Son & Holy Spirit" (plural)..... Mt 28:19-20

b) SPIRIT- GOD IS A SPIRIT..... Joh 4:24

- thus no graven images, idols..... De 5:8; Isa 42:8; I Jo 5:21
- thus spiritual worship required..... Joh 4:24
- thus false religion is worthless..... see Section F6, G5
- thus spiritual rebirth necessary..... Joh 3:3-8; I Co 15:50

c) SELF-EXISTENT

- In the beginning God..... Ge 1:1; Joh 1:1
- the Father has life in Himself, so also the Son..... Joh 5:26
- He is the fountain of life..... Ps 36:9; Jer 17:13
 - > He is the giver of natural life..... Ge 2:7
 - > He is the giver of the born-again life..... Joh 3:6; I Co 15:45

- > He is the giver of eternal life..... Re 21:6
- d) UNIQUENESS & ONENESS OF GOD
 - the "only God"..... Joh 5:44; Jude 25
 - the Lord is one..... De 4:35; Mk 12:29
 - none before and none after..... Isa 43:10-13; Re 1:8
 - one God..... 1Co 8:4; 1Ti 2:5
 - > only one way to Him, His way..... Joh 14:6
 - > worship and obey only Him..... Ex 20:2-3; Heb 5:9

5. CHARACTER OF GOD

- a) THE GOODNESS OF GOD.....Mt 19:16-17
- b) BEHOLD THE GOODNESS & SEVERITY OF GOD.... Ro 11:22
- c) HOLY..... Re 4:8
 - There is no one holy as the Lord..... I Sa 2:2; Re 15:4
 - God is holy, perfect..... Le 19:2; Mt 5:48
 - > we are to share in His holiness..... Heb 12:10,14; I Pe 1:16
 - > the Holy Spirit comes to make us holy..... Ro 15:16
 - Holiness is beautiful not austere..... 2Ch 20:21; Ps 29:2
 - > see also Sanctification – Holiness..... Section E11
- d) RIGHTEOUS AND JUST..... Re 16:5; 19:2
 - God hates sin..... Heb 1:8-9
 - No unrighteousness in His kingdom..... I Co 6:9-10
 - > see also..... Job 34:12; Ps 7:9; 116:5; 119:137
 - We are to share in His righteousness..... I Jo 3:7
 - > we too are to hate sin..... Heb 12:4; I Jo 3:8-9
- e) LOVING AND MERCIFUL..... Joh 3:16;Ps 69:16;La 3:22-23
 - God is love..... I Jo 4:8; Tit 3:4-5
 - > we are to share His love..... Le 19:18; Lu 10:27; Ro 13:9; Ga 5:14
 - God's perfect love for us casts out fear..... I Jo 4:18
 - We approach God with confidence..... Heb 4:16
 - Nothing can separate us from God's love..... Ro 8:38-39
 - Teaching passage..... I Co 13:4-7
- f) FAITHFUL AND TRUE..... Isa 25:1; Re 3:14; 19:11
 - God is true in spite of man's deceitfulness..... Ro 3:4; Joh 17:3
 - God Who promised is faithful..... Heb 10:23; 11:11
 - We trust God to preserve us..... I Th 5:23-24; 2Ti 1:12
 - God is faithful to make an escape from sin..... I Co 10:13
 - Faithful people are hard to find..... Pr 20:6
 - God seeks faithful men, like Himself..... Re 2:10; 17:14; 2Ti 2:2
 - > Moses..... Nu 12:7
 - > David..... I Sa 22:14
 - > Daniel Da 6:4
 - > Jesus..... Re 19:11
 - > Epaphras, Tychicus, Onesimus..... Col 1:7; 4:7,9
 - God preserves the faithful..... Ps 31:23

- God watches over the faithful.....Ps 101:6
- God rewards a faithful servant.....Mt 25:21

g) GIVING

- God gives
 - > all Scripture.....2Ti 3:16
 - > His only begotten Son.....Joh 3:16; Ro 8:32
 - > the Holy Spirit..... Lu 11:13; I Th 4:8; Ro 5:5
 - > repentance..... 2Ti 2:25
 - > His gift of eternal life..... Ro 6:23; I Jo 5:11
 - > grace to the humble..... I Pe 5:5; Jas 4:6
 - > rest to the weary..... Mt 11:28
 - > wisdom..... Da 2:23; Jas 1:5
 - > to us victory through Jesus..... I Co 15:57
 - > to us ability to minister..... I Pe 4:11; Eph 3:7
 - > food to every creature..... Ps 136:25
 - > ability to produce wealth..... De 8:18
 - > power for earthly rulership..... Da 2:37
- We should share in God's character of Giving
 - > see Giving..... Section G8

h) THE GREATNESS OF GOD

OMNISCIENT...OMNIPRESENT...OMNIPOTENT...ETERNAL...UNCHANGING

i) GOD IS WISE, ALL-KNOWING (*OMNISCIENT*)..... Ro 16:27

- Therefore we trust our lives to Him.
- The Lord is a God Who knows..... 1Sa2:3
- His wisdom is profound..... Job 9:4
- Beyond human understanding..... Ps 139:4-6; Ro 11:33
- Character of Godly Wisdom..... Jas 3:17
 - > pure..... not mixed with falsehood
 - > peaceable..... does not start conflict
 - > gentle..... not harsh or hard
 - > merciful..... reveals God's love, not law
 - > no favoritism..... doesn't work for good of self or friends
 - > no hypocrisy..... means what it says
- Character of Ungodly Wisdom
 - > worldly, fleshly, devilish wisdom..... Jas 3:14-16
 - > is foolish to God..... I Co 3:18-20
- Wisdom is available for believers..... Jas 1:5-7; Col 1:9; Eph 1:17
 - > Christ is our wisdom..... I Co 1:24; Col 2:2,3
 - > Word of Christ is our wisdom..... Col 3:16
- Spiritual Gift of Word of Wisdom..... Section F11

j) GOD IS EVERYWHERE (*OMNIPRESENT*)..... Ps 139:7-12

- Therefore we can pray anywhere and know God hears us.
- Fills everything in every way..... Eph 1:22-23
- Not far from any one of us..... Ac 17:27-28; Jer 23:23
- In the grave, in heaven..... Ps 139:8; Am 9:2-3

- We cannot hide from Him..... Jer 23:24
- This does NOT mean God is IN everything. God condemns people for:
 - > worshiping idols or devils.....Isa 2:8-11; 20-21; Re 9:20
 - > worshiping creation or creatures.....Ro 1:25
 - > worshiping angels..... Col 2:18; Re 22:8-9
 - > worshiping spirits of the dead.....Le 20:6; De 18:9-11; Isa 8:19
- Note: We pray with confidence..... Jer 33:3

k) GOD IS ALL POWERFUL (*OMNIPOTENT*)

- He is the Creator of the heavens and earth..... Ge 1:1
- In Him all things hold together..... Col 1:17
- His power is vast.....Job 9:4
- Therefore He is able to save and deliver..... Isa 50:2
- All things are possible with God..... Mt 19:26; Jer 32:17
- Is anything too hard for God?.....Jer 32:27
- Weakness of God is stronger than men..... I Co 1:25
- We are to share His strength.....Joe 3:10; 2 Co 12:10; Heb 11:34

- > in God's grace..... 2 Ti 2:1
- > in His power.....Eph 6:10
- > to defeat Satan..... 2 Co 10:3-5
- > in faith..... Ro 4:20
- > to be strong and do exploits..... Da 11:32

l) GOD IS ETERNAL..... I Jo 5:20

- From everlasting to everlasting..... Ps 90:1-2
- The Beginning and the End..... Re 22:13
- Who is, was, is to come..... Re 1:8
- Nonebefore.-.none after..... Isa 43:10
- We can share His eternal life.....Joh 3:15-16; Ro 6:23; I Jo 5:11-13

- He is able to keep what we commit to Him..... 2Ti 1:12

m) GOD IS UNCHANGING..... Mal 3:6

- Therefore His offer of love is completely trustworthy.
- Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today, forever..... Heb 13:8
- Does not change like shifting shadows.....Jas 1:17
- We shall be changed to be like Him..... I Jo 3:2; I Co 15:51-53

6. WHAT DOES GOD DO?

a) INTRODUCTION

- In the beginning God created the heavens..... Ge 1:1
 - > This is probably when the angels were created.
- The creation of the earth and the near heavens..... Ge 1:1-31
 - > deals with the earth and the region near the earth

b) CREATION

- God created the universe from nothing..... Ge 1:1; Isa 42:5; Am 5:8;
 - > God can (and will) remake everything..... Isa 65:17; Re 21:1

- It was very good when created..... Ge 1:31
 - > the problem of evil comes after this creation period
 - > the problem of evil comes from man, not from God.
- Creation is attributed to
 - > the Father..... Ro 11:36
 - > the Son, the Word..... Joh 1:1-3
 - > the Holy Spirit..... Ge 1:2
- God created all human life.....Isa 42:5; Zec 12:1
- God created all spiritual forces and powers.....Col 1:16-17
 - > God alone can destroy spirits.....Mt 10:28; Lu 12:4-5
- God created by His spoken Word..... Ge 1:3; Ps 33:6,9; Heb 11:3
 - > according to God's will, plan & wisdom..... Eph 1:11; Re 4:11
- Since God alone is Creator of EVERYTHING, we must not worship the stars, spirits, idols, people, plants or animals.....Ro 1:20-25
- c) CONTINUING PROVISION AND PRESENCE
- God sustains all things by His Word..... Heb 1:3
- He is near to all of us..... Ac 17:27-28
 - > He cares especially for believers..... Heb 13:5
 - > Like Jacob, we may be unaware of God's presence..... Ge 28:16
- We live because of God's continued provision of life..... Ps 36:6
- God provides for the needs of all.....Ps 23:1-6; 147:1-9; IPe 5:6-7; Mt 5:45; 6:25-34; Ac 14:17
- God protects and watches over us..... Ge 28:15;De 32:11; Isa 25:4; Mt 23:37; Joh 17:11; Php 4:6-7; 2Th 3:3; Jude 24-25
- God will sometimes overrule the natural order by the miraculous..Section B2.
- d) GOD OFFERS SALVATION TO ALL..... Section E
- e) GOD IS IN CONTINUING RELATIONSHIP TO PEOPLE AS:
- Father..... see Fatherhood of God..... Section B7
- Creator..... see Creation.....6.b) above
- Husband..... to Israel.....Jer 3:20
- King..... see Kingdom of God..... Section D6
- Judge..... see Death and Endtimes..... Section H
- Savior.....see Salvation..... Section E
- Teacher..... see Holy Spirit/Word of God..... Section B12.B13
- Bridegroom & Husband.....see Death and Endtimes..... Section H
- f) GOD WILL RECREATE THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH..... Re 21:5
- First heaven and first earth will pass away.....Re 21:1
- New heaven and a new earth..... Re 21:1,5; Isa 65:17
 - > no more sorrow, death, pain..... Re 21:4
- We too will be made like Jesus..... I Jo 3:2

7. FATHERHOOD OF GOD

The peoples of Bible lands gave great reverence and respect to their Fathers. The term was used to reverence Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; the Patriarchs — who were the FATHERS of the nation (Lu 3:8; John 8:39). Hence the word "Father" was a Title of highest honor. The teachings of the Bible in regard to "Father" can only be understood in this context.

a) MEANING OF "FATHER"

- "Father" often means the first or the originator of something.
 - > Jabal, father of those in tents who raise livestock.. Ge 4:20
 - > Jubal, father of all who play the harp and flute..... Ge 4:21
- "Father" means he who transmits his nature to his "children".
 - > You are our Father, we - day. You - potter.....Isa 64:8
- "Father" means the one who is the authority..... Mk 13:32
- Earthly children inherit their bodies and souls from their fathers and mothers. Jesus is the "*begotten Son*" of God the Father.
- Jesus' Spirit is the Spirit of God..... Lu 13:35; Joh 3:16; Col 2:9

b) GOD AS "FATHER" OF ALL MEN

- Your Father, your Creator..... De 32:6; Mal 2:10; Joh 1:18
- Father of our spirits.....Heb 12:9
- Father to the fatherless.....Ps 68:5
- God thought we would call Him "Father"..... Jer 3:19
- Church leaders not to use "Father" as a "Title" to gain honor..... Mt 23:9

c) GOD AS LOVING FATHER OF ALL BELIEVERS

- See also Adoption..... Section E8
- That we would share in His nature of holiness..... Le 20:8; I Pe 1-2
- Father of all that believe..... Ro 4:11
- Jesus calls God "*our Father*"
 - > I am returning to My Father and your Father..... Joh 20:17
 - > your Father in heaven..... Mt 5:16,45
 - > your Father in heaven will give good gift..... Mt 7:11
 - > an impartial Father..... I Pe 1:17
 - > our Father in heaven..... Mt 6:9; Lu 11:2
- Apostles call Him our Father
 - > spirit of adoption, whereby we cry "*Abba, Father..*"Ro 8:15; Ga 4:6
 - > great love of the Father-we, children of God I Jo3:1
 - > our fellowship is with the Father I Jo 1:3

d) GOD AS FATHER OF JESUS, HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON

- Jesus represents the heavenly Father exactly..... Php 2:5-6; Heb 1:3
 - > Messiah (Jesus Christ) is called "Everlasting Father"..... Isa 9:6
- Father God speaks of Jesus:
Today I have become your Father..... Ps 2:7; Heb 1:5
- Father sent His Son to be the Savior of the world..... I Jo 4:14
- Jesus speaks of God and to God as His Father
 - > Abba, Father..... Mk 14:36

- > Father if Thou art willing..... Lu 22:42
 - > Father forgive them..... Lu 23:34
 - > ye blessed of My Father.....Mt 25:34
 - > no one knows the Father except the Son..... Mt 11:27
 - > I and the Father are one..... Joh 10:30
 - > the Father loves the Son.....Joh 3:35
- e) AS OUR HEAVENLY FATHER, GOD RELATES TO US IN MANY WAYS
- He loves us.....2Th 2:16; Joh 16:27
 - > He sent Jesus to die in our place (forgiveness).....Ga 1:4
 - > He raised Jesus from the dead (to bring us life).....Ga 1:1
 - He corrects and punishes us.....Heb 12:5-7; Re 3:19
 - He blesses us with spiritual blessings..... Eph 1:3
 - > the gift of the Holy Spirit comes from Him..... Ac 2:33
 - He is above all, through all and in us all..... Eph 4.-6
 - > He is deserving of all our glory..... Php 4:20; Re 7:12

8. DEITY OF JESUS CHRIST

Many people have gone astray and formed religious cults because they deny that Jesus was God, manifest in the flesh.

See also False Gospels.....Section F6

a) WHAT DOES JESUS SAY ABOUT HIMSELF?

- He came FROM HEAVEN and IS IN HEAVEN..... Joh 3:13
- He claims to be PRESENT EVERYWHERE..... Mt 18:20
- He says he is LORD even of the Sabbath of God..... Mk 2:27-28
 - > this shows Jesus' authority over the things of God
- He calls God His Father.....Joh 5:17-18
 - > the meaning is that He is equal with God..... Joh 5:17-18
- He is one with the Father; therefore He is God..... Joh 10:30-33
- Jesus says He came in His FATHER'S NAME..... Joh 5:43
- To see and know Him is to

SEE & KNOW THE FATHER.....Joh 14:7-11

- He speaks with the same

AUTHORITY AS SCRIPTURE..... Mt 5:21-22,27-28

- He uses the title -I AM.....Joh 18:5-8
 - > "I AM" is God's title..... Ex 3:14
- He talks of His EXISTENCE BEFORE ABRAHAM.....Joh 8:58
- He claims to be KING and final JUDGE..... Mt 25:31-46
 - > Old Testament has The Lord, Jehovah, as Judge... Ge 18:25; Joe 3:12
- He claims

ALL POWER IN HEAVEN & ON EARTH..... Mt 28:18-20

- Son of Man... His angels... His kingdom..... Mk 13:26-27; Mt 13:41
 - > angels are called the angels of God..... Lu 12:8-9; 15:10
 - > the Kingdom is called the Kingdom of God..... Mt 6:33; Mk 1:14

b) WHAT DO OTHERS SAY ABOUT JESUS?

- Paul writes "*Christ, who is GOD over all*"Ro 9:5

- Jews said He claimed to be SON OF GOD..... Joh 19:7
 - Apostle John said He
MADE HIMSELF EQUAL WITH GOD..... Joh 5:18
 - Teachers said He claimed to
DO WHAT ONLY GOD DOES.....Mk 2:5-7
 - Described as
ETERNAL, the CREATOR, He was GOD..... Joh 1:1-5
 - Thomas calls Him "*My LORD and my GOD*"Joh 20:28
 - The UNIVERSE WAS MADE through Jesus..... Heb 1:2; Joh 1:3; Col 1:16
 - Jesus is the EXACT REPRESENTATION OF GOD..... Heb 1:3
 - Jesus SUSTAINS ALL OF CREATION..... Heb 1:3; Col 1:17
 - Jesus is WORSHIPED BY ANGELS..... Heb 1:6
 - the Son is called 'GOD'.....Heb 1:8
 - He is FOREVER.....Heb 1:12
 - He is SUPERIOR TO ANGELS, he is not an angel..... Heb 1:4; IPe 3:22
 - He is SUPERIOR TO MOSES..... Heb 3:1-6
 - He is SUPERIOR TO THE HIGH PRIESTS
of Old Testament.....Heb 4:14-5:10
 - He is in VERY NATURE GOD..... Php 2:6-11
 - He is the IMAGE OF THE INVISIBLE GOD..... Col 1:15-20
 - In Christ the FULLNESS OF DEITY LIVES
INBODILYFORM..... Col2:9
 - The term "LORD" is used both of the Father and the Son
 - > the Father..... Mt 1:20; 9:38; 11:25; Ac
17:24; Re 4:11
 - >the Son.....Lu 2:11; Joh 20:28; Ac 10:36;
1 Co2:8; Re 19:16
- c) HE IS THE OBJECT OF DIVINE WORSHIP AND ACCEPTS IT
- MAGI worship Him.....Mt 2:11
 - DISCIPLES worship Him..... Mt 14:33
 - Canaanite woman worships Him..... Mt 15:25
 - The healed man worships Him..... Joh 9:38
 - Two MARY'S worship Him..... Mt 28:9
 - DISCIPLES worship Him after the ascension..... Lu 24:52
 - The ANGELS of God worship Him..... Heb 1:6
 - The FOUR LIVING CREATURES and the
24 ELDERS worship Him..... Re 5:8
- d) WHAT DOES GOD THE FATHER SAY ABOUT HIM?
- Father-Son relationship.....Mt 3:17; Mt 17:5;
Joh 8:16-19; I Jo 5:9
 - > this relationship implies equality with God..... Joh 5:17-18

9. JESUS DOES THE WORKS THAT ONLY GOD CAN DO

a) HE FORGIVES SINS, WHICH ONLY GOD CAN DO—

Mt 9:2-7 Mk 2:5-12 Lu 5:20-26

b) MIRACLES OF JESUS MATTHEW MARK LUKE JOHN

-Authority Over Nature

- > water to wine..... 2:7-11
- > first catch of fish.....5:4-9
- > storm stilled.....8:23-27.....4:37-41.....8:22-25
- > multiplied food.....14:15-21.....6:35-44.....9:12-17.....6:5-14
- > walked on water.....14:25-27.....6:47-51.....6:19-21
- > multiplied food15:32-38 8:1-9
- > money from fish..... 17:24-27
- > fig tree cursed.....21:19..... 11:12-23
- > 2nd catch of fish..... 21:4-7

- Authority Over Satan & Demons

- > demoniac in synagogue.....1:23-27.....4:32-36
- > demoniac.....8:28-34.....5:1-17.....8:26-39
- > demoniac (mute)..... 9:32-33
- > demoniac (blind & mute)12:22..... 11:14
- > young girl..... 15:22-28..... 7:25-30
- > afflicted child..... 17:14-18..... 9:17-29..... 9:37-43
- > spirit of infirmity..... 13:10-17

- Authority Over Sickness and Physical Infirmities

- > Peter's mother-in-law. 8:14-15..... 1:29-31..... 4:38-39
- > leper.....8:2-4..... 1:40-45..... 5:12-15
- > Centurion's servant....8:5-13..... 7:2-10
- > invalid5:5-18
- > made blind to see..... 9:27-31.....9:1-38
- > made blind to see..... 20:30-34..... 10:46-52..... 18:35-43
- > paralytic.....9:2-8..... 2:3-12..... 5:18-26
- > shriveled hand..... 12:10-15..... 3:1-6..... 6:6-11
- > bleeding stopped..... 9:20-22..... 5:25-34..... 8:43-48
- > deaf & dumb..... 7:32-37
- > dropsy..... 14:2-6
- > Malcus' ear.....22:50-51

- Authority Over Death

- > widow's son..... 7:11-17
- > Jarius' daughter..... 9:18-26..... 5:35-43..... 8:41-56
- > Lazarus..... 11:1-45
- > resurrection of Jesus...28:1-20..... 16:1-14..... 24:1-53..... 20:1-31

10. JESUS IS ALL THAT GOD IS

a) GOD THE CREATOR

Ge1:1 Ge2:7
 Job 33:4 Ps33:6
 Ps 104:30 Isa 40:28
 Isa 44:24 Isa 45:11-18
 Mal 2:10

+ JESUS THE CREATOR

Joh 1:3,10 I Co 8:6
 Eph 3:9 Col 1:12-17
 Heb 1:8-12 Re 4:8-11
 Re 10:6 Re 14:6-7
 Re 21:5-7 Re 22:3
 Re 7:17

b) GOD IS THE REDEEMER & SAVIOR

+ JESUS IS THE REDEEMER & SAVIOR

Ps 78:34-35	Isa 47:4	I Jo4:14	I Pe 2:21-24
Isa 44:6, 24	Isa 43:3-11	Ac 20:28	Ga 3:13
Isa 45:21	Isa 49:26	Lu 24:21-29	Lu 2:10-11
Ps 106:21	Lu 1:46-47	Joh 4:40-42	Ac 13:23
I Ti 1:1	Tit 1:1-4	Php 3:20	I Ti 1:1,2
I Ti 4:10	Tit 2:10-13	Tit 1:4	I Pe 1:10-11 Jude 25
c) GOD IS COMING		+ JESUS IS COMING	
Zec 14:3-5	I Th 4:13-18	I Th 3:11-13	Mt 25:31-46
Ps 50:1-6		Tit 2:11-13	Re 19:11,16
d) GOD IS THE ROCK		+ JESUS IS THE ROCK	
De 32:3-4	1 Sa2:2	Mt 16:17-19	Ac 4:11-12
2 Sa 22:2	Ps 18:2	Nu 20:1-11 with	I Co 10:4
Ps 31:1-4	Ps 78:35	Isa 28:16 with	Eph 2:20-22
Ps 89:26	Isa 17:10	I Pe 2:6-8	
e) GOD IS FIRST AND LAST		+ JESUS IS FIRST AND LAST	
Isa 41:4	Isa 43:10-11	Re 1:17	
Isa 44:6-8	Re 1:8	Re 22:13	
f) GOD: I AM & I AM HE		+ JESUS: I AM & I AM HE	
Ex 3:13-14	Isa 43:10	Joh 18:5-8	Re 1:17-18
Isa 43:25		Joh 8:24-28	
g) GOD THE KING		+ JESUS THE KING	
Ps 47:2,6	Ps 44:4	Mt 2:1-6	Lu 19:35-38
Ps 74:12	Zec 14:9	Lu 23:3	Joh 18:37
Isa 44:6	Jer 10:10	Joh 19:21	I Ti 6:13-16
		Re 15:1-4	Re 19:11-16
h) GOD IS THE SHEPHERD		+ JESUS IS THE SHEPHERD	
Ps23:1	Isa 40:10-11	Joh 10:8-12	I Pe 2:21-25
Ps 100:3		Heb 13:20	I Pe 5:4

11. JESUS - FULLY HUMAN AND FULLY DIVINE

a) HIS BIRTH

- Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham..... Mt 1:1
- Born of a woman..... Ga 4:4; Lu 1:29-33
- Born in Bethlehem..... Mt 2:1
- The man Christ Jesus..... I Ti 2:5
- Is called Son of Man..... Mt 12:8; 16:13; 25:31;
Joh 3:14; 8:28; 13:31
- Shared flesh and blood, our humanity..... Heb 2:14; John 1:14
- Spirit testifies Jesus is come in the flesh..... I Jo 4:2-3

b) PHYSICALLY LIMITED

- Was tired..... Joh 4:6-8
- Slept when tired..... Mk 4:38
- Natural growth in wisdom and stature..... Lu2:52
- Blood and water came out of His pierced side..... Joh 19:32-34

- Was hungry..... Mt 4:1-11; Mk 11:12
- Felt sorrow..... Mt 26:38; Job 11:35
- Was angry..... Mk 10:14
- c) UNITY OF DIVINE AND HUMAN NATURES
- Fullness of the Godhead bodily dwelleth in Jesus..... Col 2:9
- Both natures are referred to in the same passage
 - > Word became flesh... from the Father..... Job 1:14
 - > human nature... Son of God..... Ro 1:3-4
 - > God's Son in likeness of sinful man..... Ro 8:3
 - > human ancestry of Christ Who is God over all..... Ro 9:5
 - > God's Son born of a woman..... Ga 4:4
 - > human likeness ... Jesus Christ is Lord..... Php 2:7,11
- Human attributes with divine title
 - > virgin will birth a son... called "*God with us*"..... Mt 1:23; Isa 7:14
 - > blood of Jesus called "*God's own blood*" Ac 20:28
 - > God as Spirit does not have "blood". Here the "blood" of Jesus and His divinity is so close that we see we have "*God's own blood*".
 - > crucified...the Lord of glory..... I Co 2:8
- Divine attributes with human title
 - > He came from heaven... the Son of Man..... Joh 3:13
 - > Son of Man to ascend into heaven..... Joh 6:62
 - > human ancestry-God over all..... Ro 9:5

12. HOLY SPIRIT AS GOD

a) NAMES THE BIBLE USES FOR THE HOLY SPIRIT

- Spirit..... Mk 1:10; Ga 5:5; Re 22:17
- Holy Spirit..... Isa63:10-11; Lu11:13; 1Th 4:8
- Spirit of God..... Ge 1:2; Joe 2:28; Ro 8:14;
1 Co 3:16
- Spirit of the Father..... Mt 10:20
- Spirit of the Son..... Ga 4:6
- Spirit of Jesus Christ..... Php 1:19
- Spirit of Christ..... I Pe 1:11
- Spirit of the Lord..... 2 Co 3:17; Isa 63:14
- Spirit of Grace..... Heb 10:29
- Spirit of Truth..... Joh 14:17; 15:26; I Jo 5:6
- Spirit of Life..... Ro 8:2
- Spirit of Glory..... I Pe 4:14
- Spirit of Adoption..... Ro 8:15
- Comforter..... Joh 14:16; 16:7
- Spirit of Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Might,
Knowledge and Fear of the Lord..... Isa 11:2

b) HIS NAME IS USED THE SAME AS GOD

- Lie to Holy Spirit..... Ac 5:3
 - > lie to God..... Ac 5:4

- Temple of Holy Spirit..... 1 Co 6:19,20
 - > temple of God..... 1 Co 3:16,17
- Holy Spirit raised Jesus from the dead..... Ro 8:11
 - > God raised Jesus from the dead..... Ac 2:24,32
- Preaching with the Spirit's power..... I Co 2:4
 - > preaching with God's power..... I Co 2:5

c) HOLY SPIRIT HAS THE CHARACTERISTICS OF GOD

- Holy Spirit as Creator..... Ge 1:2
- Holy Spirit knows all things..... I Co 2:10-11; Joh 16:13
- Holy Spirit is all-powerful..... Lu 1:35; Ro 15:19
- Holy Spirit is eternal..... Heb 9:14

d) HOLY SPIRIT IS A "PERSON", NOT SOME "FORCE" OR "INFLUENCE" FROM GOD

- Bible uses "he" not "it"..... Joh 16:13-14
- uses "who" not "what"..... Eph 1:13-14
- Jesus says "another comforter", like Himself..... Joh 14:16
- Spirit teaches..... Joh 14:26
- Spirit decides to whom to give gifts..... I Co 12:11
- Spirit intercedes for us with groanings..... Ro 8:26
- It is wrong to grieve (resist) the Holy Spirit..... Eph 4:30; Ac 7:51
- It is wrong to blaspheme against the Holy Spirit..... Mt 12:31; Mk 3:29

13. WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

During the Old Testament times the Father was most prominent.
 During His time on earth Jesus, the Son, was most prominent.
 Now, during the Church age, the Holy Spirit is most prominent.

a) OLD TESTAMENT MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

- Involved in creation..... Ge 1:2
- Giving of prophecy..... Eze 2:2; 8:3; 11:1-5
 - > Balaam..... Nu 24:2-9
 - > Saul..... I Sa 10:6,10
 - > David..... Ac 1:16
- Giving of skills
 - > building skills to Bezaleel..... Ex31:2-5
 - > for administration in government
 - Joseph..... Ge 41:38-44
 - Moses & the 70 elders..... Nu 11:14-17,25-29
 - Othniel..... Jdg 3:9-10 Gideon..... Jdg 6:34
 - Samson..... Jdg 14:19,15:14 Saul..... I Sa 10:10
 - David..... I Sa 16:13
- Changing lives producing
 - > justice, righteousness & peace..... Isa 32:15-20
 - > devotion to the Lord..... Isa 44:3-5
 - > new heart..... Eze 36:26-28

b) HOLY SPIRIT'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE SCRIPTURES

- Author of the Scriptures
 - > Holy Spirit led men to speak for God..... 2 Pe 1:20-21
 - > all Scripture is "God-breathed" (Spirit)..... 2 Ti 3:16
 - > Spirit speaks through the Scriptures..... Re 2:7,11,17,29
- Interpreter of God's Wisdom..... I Co 2:9-14; Eph 1:17; Joh 15:26-16:15

c) MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT DURING JESUS' TIME ON EARTH

- The Holy Spirit's Ministry with Jesus
 - > Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit..... Lu 1:35; Mt 1:18
 - > Jesus received the Spirit at His baptism..... Lu 3:21-22
 - > Jesus was led by the Spirit to battle Satan..... Mk 1:12; Mt 4:1
 - > Jesus walked in power by the Spirit..... Lu 4:14
 - > Jesus preached with the Spirit's anointing..... Lu 4:18
 - > Jesus cast out demons by the Spirit..... Mt 12:28
 - > Jesus rejoiced in the Spirit..... Lu 10:21
 - > Jesus was raised from the dead by the Spirit..... Ro 8:11
- John the Baptist
 - > was filled with the Spirit before birth..... Lu 1:15
 - > saw the Holy Spirit remain on Jesus..... Mt 3:16; Joh 1:32
 - > said Jesus would baptize in the Spirit..... Mk 1:7-8

d) CHURCH AGE MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

- Spirit reveals that more than Israel is included in God's Kingdom
 - > mystery that Gentiles are included..... Eph 3:5-8
 - > outpouring of the Spirit on all nations..... Joe 2:28 with Ac 2:16-18

e) A TEACHING PASSAGE about the Holy Spirit..... Joh 14:16 -16:15

- Sent by the Father in Jesus' Name..... Joh 14:26
- Sent by Jesus from the Father..... Joh 15:26
- Testifies about Jesus..... Joh 15:26-27
- He makes sinners feel guilty for sin..... Joh 16:7-8
- He guides us in truth..... Joh 16:13
- He declares the Son and the Father..... Joh 16:14-15

f) A TEACHING PASSAGE

- about the work of Holy Spirit..... Ro 8:1-39
- freed from the law of sin and death..... Ro 8:2
- we fulfill the law by walking in the Spirit..... Ro 8:4
- gives strength to our physical bodies..... Ro 8:11
- we have peace and life by the Spirit..... Ro 8:5-6
- our evil deeds destroyed by the Spirit..... Ro 8:13
- helps us to pray in our weakness..... Ro 8:26
- sons not slaves of God by the Spirit..... Ro 8:15-17

g) HOLY SPIRIT in Ephesians

- How do I know I belong to God?
- We are marked in Christ by the seal of the Holy Spirit..... Eph 1:13-14
- How does the Spirit help us?
- Helps us know God by giving us wisdom & revelation..... Eph 1:17
- How can I gain access to God the Father in Heaven?

- We have access to the Father by the Holy Spirit..... Eph 2:18
- How can God live amongst us, His Church and temple?
- God lives in our midst by His Spirit..... Eph 2:22
- How did God reveal that the Gentiles are forgiven in Jesus?
- God's Spirit revealed it to the apostles and prophets.....Eph 3:4-6
- How can we be strengthened so that Christ can dwell in our hearts?
- God's Spirit in our inner being strengthens us.....Eph 3:16-17
- How can we live at peace with God's Spirit in us?
- By getting rid of such things as bitterness and malice.....Eph 4:30-32
- What is God's will for my life?
- Be filled with the Spirit..... Eph 5:17-18
- What part of the Armour of God is more than defense?
- The Sword of the Spirit (the Word of God)..... Eph 6:17
- Praying in the Spirit.....Eph 6:18
- Holy Spirit makes salvation reality to us/experiential in us
 - > convicts us of sin, righteousness & judgment.....Joh 16:7-8
 - > must be born of the Spirit.....Joh 3:3-6; Tit 3:5;
 - > Spirit then fills/indwells believer.....Ac 2:4; Eph 5:18; ICo 6:19
 - > empowers us to live free from sin.....Ro 8:2
 - > empowers us to do the ministry of God.....Joh 14:11-17; Ac 1:8;I Co 2:4
 - > guides us and teaches us.....Joh 14:26; 16:13
 - > produces fruit of Spirit in the believer.....Ga 5:22-23

C. SPIRIT BEINGS

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C5. DEMONS & DEMONOLOGY

C6. WORKERS OF EVIL AND MAGIC

1. ANGELS - MESSENGERS OF GOD

a) WHO ARE THE ANGELS?

Angels are mentioned frequently in the Bible, but not for the purpose of teaching us about angels themselves. Rather we learn about their involvement with God and His purposes.

- The word "angel" means "messenger" in both the Hebrew and Greek.
- Not to be worshiped.....Jdg 13:16-18; Col 2:18;
Re 19:10; 22:8-9
- There are two classes of angels, good & bad.....Re 12:7
 - > for bad angels see Section C2 and Demonology Section C5
- Angels are also referred to as:
 - > watchers.....Da 4:13,17,23

- > angels of heaven.. .Mt24:36 > heavenly host.....Lu2:13
- > spirits.....Zee 6:5; Heb 1:4,14
- > sons of God.....Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7
- > principalities, powers, thrones, dominions, authorities
.....Col 1:16;Ro 8:38;I Co 15:24;
Eph 6:12; Col 2:15
- Three Angelic Beings are named in the Bible
 - > Gabriel.....Da 8:16; 9:21; Lu 1:11-20,
26-38
 - > Michael.....Da 10:13,21; 12:1; Jude 9;
Re 12:7
 - > Satan (with many other names).....see Section C3
- Spiritual Beings are of different ranks or orders
 - > Celestial dignities.....2Pe 2:10-11
 - > Seraphs.....Isa 6:2,6
 - > Cherubims.....Ge 3:24; Ex 25:18; Ps 18:10;
Eze 10:2-9
- Satan was a cherub.....Eze 28:14-16
 - > Archangel.....ITh 4:16; Jude 9
- They are created by God the Father and Son.....Ne 9:6; Col 1:16
 - > before creation of man.....Job 38:1-7
- Spiritual beings (not flesh & blood).....Eph6:12;Hebl:14;Ps 104:4
 - > but often appear in visible, human form.....Ge 18:2-33; 19:1-22;
Jdg 6:11-22; Joh 20:12
 - > we may entertain angels without knowing it.....Heb 13:2
- Very many.....De 33:2; Da 7:10; Mt 26:53;
Lu 2:13; Heb 12:22
- Mighty in power.....2Ki 19:35; Ps 103:20;
2Th 1:7; 2Pe 2:11; Isa 37:36
- Wise, but not all-knowing.....2Sa 14:20; Mt24:36; IPe 1:12
- Christ Jesus is far superior to angels.....Heb 1:4-2:15
- b) WHAT DO GOOD ANGELS DO?
 - Worship and praise God.....Heb 1:6; Re 5:11-12
 - Law of Moses given via angels.....Ps 68:17; Ga 3:19; Ac 7:53
 - Are subject to Jesus.....Eph 1:20-22; Col 2:10;
IPe 3:22
 - They minister to the heirs of salvation.....Heb 1:7,14
 - > Their help is obtained by prayer to God.....Mt 26:53; Ac 12:5-7
 - They execute God's judgment.....2Sa 24:16; 2K 19:35;
Ps 35:5-6; Ac 12:23; Re 16:1
 - They are endtime harvesters.....Mt 13:39-41,49-50; 24:31
 - Watch over children.....Mt 18:10
 - Protect the people of God.....Da 6:22; Ps 34:7- 91:11
 - Will appear with Jesus at His 2nd coming.....Mt 16:27; 25:31;Mk 8:38;
ITh 4:16; 2Th 1:7
 - Announced great events in Jesus'life

- > conception..... Lu 1:31
- > resurrection..... Lu 24:23
- > second coming..... Ac 1:11
- > birth..... Lu 2:10-12
- > ascension..... Ac 1:10,11

c) ANGELS MINISTERED TO MANY PEOPLE

- Hagar, when she first left Sarah..... Ge 16:7-13
- Lot, before Sodom was destroyed..... Ge 19:1-22
- Hagar and Ishmael..... Ge 21:17-19
- Abraham, on the mountain with Isaac..... Ge 22:11-18
- Jacob, in vision with ladder..... Ge 28:12
 - > in vision regarding Laban's sheep..... Ge 31:11
 - > after he left Laban to meet Esau..... Ge 32:1
- Moses, at the burning bush..... Ex3:2
- Israel, with the pillar of cloud..... Ex14:19-20
 - > to lead them..... Ex 23:20-23; Nu 20:16
- Balaam and his donkey..... Nu 22:22-35
- Joshua and Israel..... Jdg 2:1-5
- Gideon, to choose him to lead Israel..... Jdg 6:11-22
- Samson's parents..... Jdg 13:2-23
- David, when he numbered the people..... 2Sa 24:15-17; 1Ch 21:16-30
- Elijah, to strengthen him..... IKi 19:5-8
- Assyrians, to kill them..... 2Ki 19:35; 2Ch 32:21; Isa 37:36
- Shadrach, Meshach & Abednego, in fire..... Da 3:25-28
- Daniel, in the lion's den..... Da 6:22
 - > angel Gabriel to show the future..... Da 8:16; 9:21
- Zechariah is shown much by angels..... Zee 1:9; 4:1-6
- Joseph, husband of Mary..... Mt 1:20-21
 - > go to and return from Egypt..... Mt 2:13; 2:19
- Jesus, angels minister to him..... Mt 4:11; Mk 1:13
- Children have their angel Mt 18:10
- Women, at the tomb..... Mt 28:2-8; Joh 20:11-13
- Zacharias sees Gabriel in the templ..... Lu 1:11-19
- Mary, mother of Jesus, sees Gabriel..... Lu 1:26-38
- Shepherds, at Jesus' birth..... Lu 2:8-16
- Jesus, praying and weeping in garden..... Lu 22:43
- Sick, to stir up water of healing..... Joh 5:4
- Apostles, to release them from prison..... Ac 5:19-20
- Philip, to witness to the Ethiopian..... Ac 8:26
- Cornelius, to call for Peter..... Ac 10:3-8
- Peter, to escape Herod's prison..... Ac 12:6-11
- Herod, to strike him and kill him..... Ac 12:21-23
- Paul, before the shipwreck..... Ac 27:23-24
- John, many places in the book of..... Revelation

2. DEMONS-SATAN'S ANGELS

a) INTRODUCTION

- some evil angels have been rejected by God..... 2Pe 2:4; Jude 6
- Evil spirits may dwell in people.....Mt 12:43-45; Mk 1:26; 5:9;
7:24-30; 9:14-27; 16:9
- Danger for unbelievers to deal with spirits.....Ac 19:12-16
- Demons called deceiving spirits.....ITi 4:1
 - > Never believe what demons say, they lie.....Joh 8:44;
 - > Don't talk to demons - cast them out.....Mk 16:15-18
- Demons believe there is a God.....Jas 2:19
- Can perform miraculous signsRe 16:14; 2Th 2:9-12;
Mt 24:24; Ex 7:11,22

b) BELIEVERS HAVE POWER/AUTHORITY OVER DEMONS

- Greater is Jesus in us than Satan in the world.....IJo4:4
- Demons could not enter pigs without permission.....Mt 8:30-32
- Apostles given power over demons.....Lu9:1
- Seventy others appointed to cast out demons.....Lu 10:1,17
- All disciples empowered to cast out demons.....Mt 10:1; Mk 16:17
- Promised power to command evil spirit.....Lu 10:18-20
- Paul cast out a spirit of divination.....Ac 16:16
- Demons cast out by word of faith & power.....Lu4:32-36

3. SATAN-NAMES AND HISTORY

a) NAMES USED TO DESCRIBE SATAN REVEAL HIS CHARACTER (MEANINGS OF THE NAMES ARE IN BRACKETS)

- Lucifer (Angel of Light)
 - > his name while he was in heaven..... Isa 14:12
- Satan (Opponent).....Mt 4:10; ICh 21:1;
Job 1:6; Zec 3:1
- Serpent, or Old Serpent.....Ge 3:1,4; Re 12.-9
- Dragon, Serpent, Devil, Satan.....Re 12:9; 20:2
- Devil (False Accuser).....Mt 4:1,5,8; Eph 6:11-12;
Re 12:9
- Tempter.....Mt4:3; 1Th3:5
- Beelzebub (Dung-God).....Mt 12:24; Mk 3:22
- Prince of devils or demons.....Mt 12:24; Mk 3:22
- Evil One.....Mt13:19
- Prince of this world.....Joh 12:31,14:30; 16:11
- Murderer, Liar.....Joh 8:44
- God of this world system or age.....2Co 4:4; Joh 12:31;
14:30; 16:11
- Belial (Worthlessness) 2Co 6:15
- Prince of the power of the air.....Eph 2:2
- Adversary, the devil (Enemy).....IPe 5:8
- Deceiver.....Re 12:9
- Accuser of our brothersRe 12:10
- Possibly, these refer to Satan
 - > angel of the Abyss or Pit.....Re 9:11

- > Apollyon, Abaddon (Destroyer).....Re 9:11
- b) SATAN IS COMPARED TO
 - A Serpent.....Ge 3:1; Re 12:9,20:2
 - A Hunter of birds (fowler).....Ps 91:3
 - A Planter of weeds.....Mt 13:25
 - A Wolf.....Joh 10:12
 - A Roaring Lion.....1Pe5:8
- c) GENERAL HISTORY OF SATAN

There is much teaching about Satan in the Bible.

 - He is a created being..... Eze 28:13
 - He was called "Lucifer" in heaven..... Isa 14:12
 - Anointed by God as guardian cherub..... Eze 28:14
 - > on the holy mount of God..... Eze 28:14
 - > model of perfection (wisdom and beauty)..... Eze 28:12,15
 - > in the Garden of God..... Eze 28:13
 - Originally in heaven but was cast out..... Lu 10:18
 - Sinned against God..... IJo 3:8
 - Sin was revealed in him..... Eze 28:15
 - > because of pride of his beauty..... Eze 28:17
 - Cause of Satan's fall from God's favor..... Isa 14:12-20
 - > I will ascend to heaven..... Isa 14:13
 - > I will raise my throne above the stars of God..... Isa 14:13
 - > I will sit enthroned..utmost heights..... Isa 14:13
 - > I will ascend above the clouds..... Isa 14:14
 - > I will make myself like the Most High..... Isa 14:14
 - Ruler of evil spirits, evil angels, demons..... Mt 12:24-28
 - Some believe Satan wanted to be in charge of God's creation before the creation of Adam.
 - Satan claimed that world belonged to him..... Mt 4:8-9
 - > Adam was given rulership of earth by God..... Ge 1:28
 - He deceived Eve in the garden of Eden..... Ge 3:1-7
 - He is cursed by God..... Ge 3:14
 - He is the enemy of man..... Ge3:15
 - In Job's time, Satan had access to God..... Job 1:6
 - > he is still called accuser of our brothers..... Re 12:10
 - He tempted Jesus unsuccessfully..... Mt 4:3,4
 - May appear as an angel of light..... 2Co 11:14
- d) THE FINAL END OF SATAN AND HIS ANGELS
 - Saints are to judge angels..... ICo 6:3
 - Satan will be made powerless by God..... Ge 3:15; Re 20:10
 - Jesus said he saw Satan fall from heaven..... Lu 10:18
 - > Satan is Prince of the power of the air..... Eph 2:2
 - > Satan is expelled from the mount of God..... Eze 28:16
 - > Satan is seen as thrown to the earth..... Eze 28:17; Re 12:10-13
 - > Satan is chained for a thousand years..... Re 20:1-3
 - Satan is cast into lake of fire..... Mt 25:41; Eze 28:18-

- Re 20:10
- No hope for their redemption.....Jude 6; 2Pe 2:4; Mt 25:41
 - > everlasting fire is prepared for him.....Mt 25:41

4. SATAN-POWER AND WORK

a) IS A PERSONALITY, NOT SOME FORCE OR INFLUENCE

- Interacts with Jesus in the temptation..... Mt 4:1-11
 - > he can speak..... Ge 3:1;Mt 4:3
- Jesus calls him a murderer, liar..... Joh 8:44
- He is cunning, disguises himself..... 2 Co 11:3 14
- Interacts with God..... Job 1:6-12; 2:1-6
- He walks, roars..... I Pe 5:8
- He can be chained..... Re 20:1-3

b) POWER AND WORK OF SATAN AND HIS FALLEN ANGELS

- Opposes and afflicts the righteous.....Job 1:12-19,2:5-7; Zec 3:1
 - > with disease.....Lu 13:16; Mt 17:15-18
 - > with demons.....Mk 5:15; 6:13; 16:9
- Attempts to destroy men
 - > with temptations..... I Ch 21:1; ITh 3-5
 - } Eve..... Ge 3:1-7 } Job..... Job 1:6-12
 - } David.....I Ch 21:1 } Christ.....Mt 4:1-11
 - } Judas.....Lu 22:1-6 } Ananias & Sapphira..... Ac 5:1-11
 - > with lies.....Joh 8:44
 - > had power of bodily death..... Heb 2:14-15
- Attempts to destroy the gospel..... Mt 13:19; 2Co 4:4
- Opposes God's work and workers..... Zec3:1; ITh2:18;Da 10:10-14
- Perverts the Scriptures.....Mt 4:6 & Ps 91:11-12
- Able to do signs and wonders.....2Th 2:8-9; Re 13:11-15
- See also Demonology..... Section C5

c) LIMITATIONS OF SATAN'S POWER AND AUTHORITY

- Jesus came to destroy Satan's works..... Heb 2:14; IJo3:8
- His temptations of Jesus were ineffective..... Lu 4:13
- Satan has no power over Jesus..... Joh 14:30
- Jesus cast out evil spirits.....Lu 11:20; 13:32
- Disciples empowered to cast out demons.....Mt 10:1; Mk 16:17
- Greater is Jesus in us than Satan in the world..... I Jo 4:4
- He needs God's permission to try Job.....Job 1:9-12
- His demons needed permission to enter the pigs.....Mt 8:30-32
- Stripped of power through the cross..... Col 2:15

d) ROLE OF THE SAINTS IN REGARD TO SATAN

- Must not worship angels.....Jdg 13:16-18; Col 2:18; Re 19:10; 22:8-9
 - > Satan and his angels desire worship..... Mt 4:8-10
- Resist the devil and he will flee.....Jas 4:7; I Pe 5:9
- Be fully armored to resist the devil..... Eph 6:11-17
- Are afflicted by Satan only as God permits..... Job 1:12; 2:4-7; 2Co 12:7-9

- Should be watchful..... 2Co 2:11
- Should overcome Satan..... I Jo 2:13; Re 12:10-11
 - > by the blood of Jesus
 - > by the Word of God
 - > by not loving our lives unto death
- We are promised victory over SatanRo 16:20
- Have power to command evil spiritsLu 10:18-20
- Primary weapon to defeat him: the WordLu 4:8,10,12

5. DEMONS & DEMONOLOGY

We must check our thinking about demons carefully. Much of what the world believes is not from the Bible. I Jo 4:1 tells us that there are many errors taught by false prophets and the spirit of Antichrist.

a) WHAT ARE DEMONS?

- Called "foul spirits" and "devils"Mt 4:24; 7:22; Mk 9:25
 - > spirits do not have flesh and bone Lu 24:39
- They are NOT spirits of dead peopleLu 16:27-31
 - > the rich man was unable to come back to earth
- Most Christians believe they are fallen angels.
 - > fallen angels are now bound by God..... Jude 6; 2Pe 2:4
- The prince of demons is called Beelzebub Mk 3:22
 - > usually understood to be one of Satan's names
- Demons believe there is a God and they are afraid Jas 2:19
- Disciples were afraid of spiritsMt 14:26; Lu 24:37
 - > this was before the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit
- Demons are able to do miracles in order to deceive.....Re 16:14

b) HOW DO PEOPLE AND DEMONS RELATE?

- Unbelievers often sacrifice to them ICo 10:20-21; De 32:17
- Demons are seducing spirits that tempt us to sin.....ITi 4:1
 - > demon activity will increase at the end times
- People may teach doctrines of demonsITi 4:1-5
 - > forbidding marriage and eating of certain foods
- People may be controlled or possessed by demons see below
 - > demons can also inhabit animals Mt 8:30-32

c) HOW DO PEOPLE RECEIVE A DEMON?

- People become demonized by worship of idols and works of the flesh.
I Co 10:20,21; Ga 5:19-21 (Note: Idolatry and Fornication are related, they go together. Witchcraft is associated with works of the flesh).
- People who make a habit of sinning may receive a demon. Joh 5:14
- False religions can deceive people and open them to demonic power.
- Satan is the deceiver and tempter Re 12:9; ITh 3:5
- Failing to forgive can bring the tormentors (demons)..... Mt 18:34-35
- Lord may send an evil spirit to the disobedient
 - > to trouble king Saul ISa 16:14-16
 - > to speak lies to false prophets IKi 22:23; IJo 4:1

- An evil spirit is able to enter a man who is empty Mt 12:44-45
 - > the person who is delivered is empty Mt 12:44
 - > even more spirits can enter if empty Mt 12:45
 - } this is a strong caution about delivering unbelievers
- Being filled with the HOLY Spirit protects us Ac 2:4; Eph 5:18
- Believers receive the Holy Spirit by asking God Lu 11:13
 - > one can receive an evil spirit by asking Satan
- The following are wrong:
 - > Having dealings with evil spirits 2Ch 33:6; ICo 10:20-21
 - > Worshiping devils Re 9:20
 - > Worshiping angels Col 2:18

d) OLD TESTAMENT AND DEMONS

- No examples of casting out demons in the Old Testament
- Jesus said the "strong man" must first be bound, then his household can be destroyed Mk 3:27
 - > the strong man (Satan) was not bound until Jesus came. This is the reason Jesus came I Jo 3:8
- Casting out demons-a sign of the Kingdom of God Mt 12:28; Lu 11:20

e) WHAT ARE DEMONIZED PEOPLE LIKE?

- May have great strength Mt 8:28; Mk 5:3-4; Lu 8:29; Ac 19:15-16
- Person may mutilate himself Mt 17:15; Mk 5:5
- May be in pain and be injured Mk 9:20
- May foam at the mouth.....Mk 9:20
- May appear as teachers in the Church ITi 4:1-5
- King Saul prophesied when afflicted by evil spirit ISa 18:10
- Demons may speak through the person Mt 8:29-31; Mk 1:24
 - > demons may speak about Jesus Mk 1:24; Ac 16:16,17
 - > Jesus did not allow them to speak much Mk 1:34
 - } We must be careful not to believe the deceiving words of demons.
- May live in unusual places (wilderness, tombs) Lu 8:27
- May go without clothes Lu8:27
- May be afflicted with a bodily disease
 - > dumbness..... Mk9:17 > deafness & dumbness..... Mk9:25
 - > blindness & dumbness..... Mt 12:22 > paralysis or lameness..... Ac 8:7
 - > convulsions.....Mk 1:26; 9:20; Lu 9:39
- Worshipers of idols Le 17:7; DC 32:17; Re 9:20
- May be fortune tellers (divination) Le 20:27; Ac 16:16
- May be involved in witchcraft, magic Isa47:9-13;Ac 19:18-19
- May call on the spirits of the dead 1Sa28:11-14

f) HOW SHOULD A BELIEVER RELATE TO DEMONS?

- The Bible does not give us any formula to cast out demons.
- Jesus simply gave authority to his disciples.....Mk 16:17
 - > not the 12 only, but us also Joh 17:20-23
- Jesus simply commanded them to come out..... Mk 1:25; 9:25
 - > attributed to Spirit of God / finger of God..... Mt 12:28; Lu 11:20

- Jesus did not allow the demons to speak..... Mk 1:34; Lu 4:41
 - Jesus was able to give the authority to disciples Mt 10:1
 - > the disciples needed faith to be successful..... Mt 17:19-20
 - Disciples commanded in the Name of Jesus..... Mk 16:17
 - Prayer and fasting may be necessary Mk 9:29
 - Faith on the part of a person askingMk 6:5-6; 9:23-24
 - > sometimes no faith is obvious Ac 16:16-19
 - Sweat cloth from Paul expelled demonsAc 19:11-12
 - Unbelievers are hurt trying to cast out demons Ac 19:13-16
 - > used the Name of Jesus Ac 19:13
 - > they themselves didn't know Jesus Ac 19:13
 - Casting out a spirit from an unbeliever
 - > may result in greater problems for him Mt 12:44-45
- g) DO DEMONS CAUSE ILLNESSES?
- Demons can cause physical sickness see 5.e above
 - Bible distinguishes between healing and casting out demons
 -Mt 4:24; 10:8; Mk 1:32; 3:15;
 - Lu 9:1-2; 13:32
 - Healings without mention of demons
 - > epileptics & paralytics.... Mt 4:24 > leprosyMt 8:3
 - > centurion's servant..... Mt 8:5-13 > woman and hemorrhage ... Mt 9:20-22
 - >two blind menMt9:27-30 > withered hand Mt 12:9-14

6. WORKERS OF EVIL AND MAGIC

a) DIVINATION (WITCHCRAFT, MAGIC, SPIRITISM)

- Heathen nations practiced magic, divination and spiritism
 - > deeds of the sinful nature (witchcraft) Ga 5:19-21
 - > Balaam receives fee for divinationNu 22:7
 - > Philistines had diviners ISa 6:2
 - > King of Babylon uses divinationEze21:21-23
 - > Pharaoh consults his magicians unsuccessfully Ge 41:24
 - > Nebuchadnezzar's magicians unable to tell dream..Da 2:2; 4:7
 - > Bar-Jesus or Elymas, a sorcererAc 13:6-12
 - > girl with a spirit of divination Ac 16:16
 - > magic books burned in Ephesus Ac 19:17-20
 - > magic of the wicked rity of BabylonRe 18:23
- Forbidden and to be judged by God
 - > All sorts of magic strictly forbidden by God De 18:9-13
 - > magic and speaking to the dead is forbidden by God..... Isa 8:19-20
 - > superstitions from the East and divination judged..Isa 2:6
 - > God threatens destruction on witchcraft Mic 5:12
 - > all idolatry is evil in God's sight..... 2Ki 17:17
 - > God will judge sorcerersMal 3:5
 - > people with magic will not enter New Jerusalem .. Re 21:8
 - > God is opposed to those who follow spiritists Le 20:6

- > Saul seeks the spirit of dead Samuel..... ISa 28:11
- > Saul died because he consulted a medium..... ICh 10:13
- > A sorceress was not allowed to live..... Ex 22:18
- > Turning to mediums and spiritists defiles
a person Le 19:31

b) FALSE SIGNS AND WONDERS

- Evil workers can perform miraculous signs Re 16:14; 2Th 2:9-12;
Mt 24:24; Ex 7:11,22
- Lawless leaders do miracles in Jesus' Name Mt 7:22-23
- Endtime false signs and wonders Mt 24:24
- Second beast does great and miraculous signs Re 13:13
- Sixth bowl of wrath-demons do wonders Re 16:13-14; 19:20

c) GOD IS MORE POWERFUL THAN MAGIC

- Pharaoh's magicians unable to change dust to gnats Ex 8:18-19
- God is greater than any magician Da 2:27-28; Nu 23:23
- God is far more powerful than any witchcraft Isa 47:9
- Bar-Jesus or Elymas sorcerer defeated Ac 13:6-12

d) NOTABLE MAGICIANS IN BIBLE

- Pharaoh's magicians perform miracles Ex 7:11
- Magicians make frogs come out of the water..... Ex 8:7
- Medium at Endor whom Saul seeks ISa 28:7-9
- Simon the Sorcerer Ac 8:9-11
- Bar-Jesus or Elymas a sorcerer, false prophet Ac 13:6-8
- Girl who had a spirit of divination..... Ac 16:16

D. SIN/ MAN

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D6. REDEEMED MAN AND GOD'S KINGDOM

1. NATURE OF SIN

a) DEFINITION: The following subtopics define sin.

Sin is rebellion against God. Because all have sinned (Ro 3:23), all have become God's enemies and are separated from His love..... De 9:7-8; Jos 1:18; Isa 59:2

- The original sin created the breach..... Ge 3:1-24
- Idol-worship is sin Ex 32:31; IKi 12:28-30;
Isa 31:7; Jer 17:3; 32:35;
Eze 23:49; Ho 13:2
- Burning incense (to false gods) Jer 44:23
- Witchcraft..... ISa 15:23

- Transgression of the law Le 16:16; Ne 1:6-7; IJo 3:4
 - > see Ten Commandments Section II
- Disobedience to God's command Ex 9:27,34; 10:16-17;
 - Le 5:17
 - > may be done in ignorance Le 4:2,13,22,27; 5:15,17
 - > may be done in secret..... Ps 90:8; Pr 28:13
- All unrighteousness IJo 5:17
- Sexual immorality, see Marriage and the Family..... Section G9.
 - > homosexuality Ge 9:22;18:20;19:5-9;
 - Le 18:22;Ro 1:24-27;
 - ICo6:9,10
 - > bestiality..... Le 18:23
 - > incest Ge 19:33-38; Le 18:6-20s
 - > the children of incest, Moab and Ammon, were very ungodly
 - De 23:3;Jdg 10:6;
 - IKi 11:4,7; 2Ki 21:11
 - > fornication Mt 5:32; Ac 15:20-29;
 - ICo 5:1,11; 10:8;
 - > adultery..... Ge 20:7-9; 39:7-10;
 - ICo 6:6-10; 7:2; Ga 5:19

- Not doing the good we know Le 5:1; Jas 4:17

(Sins of omission)

- Thoughts of foolish people Pr 24:9
- Vain or useless talk Pr 10:19
- Despising others, pride Pr 14:21; 21:4
- Unbelief and acts without faith Ro4:23;Heb 12:16;
 - Re 2:14,20; 9:21

b) SIN DESCRIBED AS

- Entering the world through Adam..... Ge 3:1-24; Isa 43:27; Ro 5:12
- Of the devil IJo 3:8; Joh 8:44
- Works of darkness Eph5:11-14
- Crouching at the door to attack Ge4:7
- Coming from the heart Mt 15:19-20
- The outcome of lust Jas 1:15
- Coming through ancestors Ex 20:5 Ps 37:28; Pr 14:11
- A source of human misery Job 15:20 Pr 13:15; Ro 2:9
- Inexcusable Ro 1:20,2:1; Joh 15:22

c) WHO HAS SINNED?

- Jesus Christ alone is without sin 2Co 5:21; Heb 4:15;
 - Heb7:26;IJo3:5
- Scripture says all are under sin..... Ga 3:22; Ps 53:3; Isa 53:6
- All have sinned IJo 1:8; IKi 8:46; Ro 3:23
- By heredity we are sinners Job 15:14; Job 25:4;
 - Ps 51:5; Ro 5:12-19;
 - ICo 15:21-22

- > Seth in image of sinful Adam.....Ge5:3
- We have sinned
 - > by our deeds (body) Ge 5:17-21
 - > by our attitudes (soul)..... Mt 5:21-22; Jas 2:8-9
 - > we are in a sinful state (spirit)Joh 16:8-9
- Therefore ALL are sinnersRo 3:23
- d) RESULTS OF SIN
 - Separates us from God Ge3:23,24;Isa59:2
 - Excludes sinner from heaven lCo6:9;Ga5:19-21; Eph 5:5-7; Re 21:27
 - Brings death Ge3:2.3; 3:19; Jas 1:15; Ro 6:23; Eze 18:4
 - Brings God's angerDe 25:16; Pr 6:16-19; IKi 16:2
 - Brings God's curse
 - > ground was cursed because of sin Ge 3:17-18
 - > toil and sweat because of it Ge3:16, 17, 19; Job 14:1
 - > pain in childbirth because of sin Ge 3:16
 - All creation in bondageRo8:21-22
 - Brims calamities
 - > drought..... Jer 5:24; 2Ch 6:26-28
 - > war.....2Ch 6:36-39
 - > sickness Ps 38:3
 - > national problemsPr 14:34; Jer 8:14-16; 2Ch 25:4
 - Incurs God's punishment
 - > present Isa 13:11; Am 3:2; Jer 5:25; Lu 12:47; Ro 2:8-9
 - > future punishment Mt 18:9; Mk 3:29; Lu 3:17; 2Th 1:9; 2 PC 2:9; Re 14:11; Re 20:15
 - God alone can forgiveEx 34:7; Da 9:9; Mic 7:18; Mk2:7
- e) GOD'S SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM OF SIN
 - See Gospel Section F3, F4, F5
 - See SalvationSection E2
 - See Death & Endtimes Section H

2. SIN AND THE LAW

a) LIMITED TIME-PERIOD OF THE LAW

- Exists until its requirements are fulfilledMt 5:18
- Christ Jesus fulfilled the Law..... Mt 5:17-18; Lu 24:44
 - > for those who walk after the Spirit of GodRo 8:3-5
- Love fulfills the lawRo 13:8-10; Ga5:14;Jas 2:8
- Bearing one another's burdens fulfills the law.....Ga 6:2

b) SALVATION BY PROMISE (GRACE & FAITH)

- BEFORE the Law-through AbrahamRo 4:13,16; Ga 3:17-21
 - > Abraham counted as having obeyed the law.....Ge 26:5
- AFTER the Law-through Jesus.....Job 1:17; Ro 8:2; Ga 2:16
 - > the law was in effect until John the BaptistLu 16:16
 - > after John the Baptist the gospel is preachedLu 16:16

c) CONTENT OF THE LAW

- Old Covenant Content
 - > Ten Commandments Ex 20:3-17; De 5:7-21
 - > Levitical LawsEx; Le; De
- New Covenant Understanding of the Law
 - > greatest commandment is to love God fully Mt 22:36-40; Lu 10:26-27
 - > next greatest is to love others as yourself..... Mt 22:39; Lu 10:27
 - > important matters - judgment, mercy, faith..... Mt 23:23
 - > Jesus is above the law..... Job 8:5-11; Mt 12:8

d) PURPOSE OF THE LAW

- Made for sinners
 - > made for the ungodly, not the redeemed..... ITi 1:9
 - > reveals God's wrath against the ungodly Ro 4:15
 - > law was added because of transgressions Ga 3:19
- Law is pictured as a prison..... Ga 3:23
 - > within a larger prison-the Prison of Sin Ga 3:22
 - > when faith comes we are freed from the LawGa 3:23
 - > with God's Spirit we are freed from Sin's
bondage..... Ga 5:13-18
- Is a shadow of the good things to comeHeb 10:1
- Brings a consciousness of sinRo 3:20; 7:7
- Put in charge to lead us to Christ Ga 3:23-29

e) RESULTS OF THE LAW

- Law gives sin its power ICo 15:56
 - > without law, sin isn't counted against usRo 5:13
- People are unable to keep the Law
 - > requires perfect obedience De 27:26; Ga 3:10-11;
Jas2:10
 - > no one can perfectly obey the law Ro 3:10
 - > Israel couldn't keep the law Isa 42:24; Jer 9:13; Da 9:11
 - > all people need to be justified by God's grace Ro 3:19-24
- Law unable to save because of man's sinfulness Ro8:3
 - > the law made nothing perfectHeb 7:19; Ga 2:16
 - > through the law we die to the law, to live
for God Ga 2:19-21

f) CHRIST JESUS IS THE FULFILLMENT OF THE LAW

- The law was in effect until John the Baptist Lu 16:16
 - > after John the gospel is preached insteadLu 16:16

- Church not obliged to keep the law of Moses Ac 15:5-21; Ro 6:14
 - > but this is not permission to sinRo 6:15
 - > justified by faith without the lawRo 3:28
 - Christ fulfilled the requirements of the lawMt5:17
 - Christ abolished the law by His deathEph2:15-17;Ro 10:3-4
 - Christ freed us from the curse of the lawGa3:13
- g) A NEW COVENANT WITH GOD
- The New Covenant (Grace and Faith) puts the REQUIREMENTS of the Law into our hearts Heb 8:10-13; 10:16-17
 - See the Gospel Section F3

3. SIN, TRIALS AND TEMPTATIONS

a) TRIALS

These are circumstances that we are meant to endure. They are not caused by our sinfulness; rather they are often caused by our standing for righteousness in a sinful world.

- Job withstands the attack of Satan Book of Job
- O.T. believers had cruel trials.....Heb 11:36-40
 - > many modern believers suffer cruel trials
- Trials come to refine us Jas 1:2-5; IPe 1:6-7
- We are partakers with Jesus'sufferings IPe4:12-16
- God is able to rescue the righteous 2Pe 2:7-9

b) TEMPTATIONS

Temptations are not sin, but Satan uses them to cause us to sin. We must resist the temptations to sin.

- God does not tempt us to sin Jas 1:13-15
- God provides a way out of temptations ICo 10:13; 2Pe 2:9
- Satan is the chief tempter
 - > Satan tempts Eve in Eden Ge3:1-7
 - > Satan tempts King David ICh 21:1-30
 - > Satan tempts us 2Co 2:10-11; 11:3; ITh 3:5
- World provides temptations IJo 2:15-17; Mt 13:22; Lu8:13
 - > desire for riches is a terrible snare ITi 6:9-11
 - > Achan takes the riches of Babylon Jos 7:1-26
 - > Lot desires the land around Sodom Ge 13:10-13
 - > King Saul keeps the best of the Amalekite cattle .. ISa 15:20-26
 - > Elisha's servant, Gehazi, takes gold and clothes ... 2Ki 5:20-27
- Our own evil desires entice us Jas 1:14
 - > the desires give birth to sin..... Jas 1:15
 - > full-grown sin gives birth to death Jas 1:15
 - > Esau gives up his godly birthright for food Ge 25:29-33
 - > King Solomon's desire for women leads him astray IKi 11:1-4
- Jesus was tempted in all points like we are Heb 4:15
- Jesus was tempted by the devil..... Mt 4:1; Mk 1:13; Lu 4:2

- > bodily-satisfy desires of the body Mt 4:2-4
- > soul - show His special relation with the Father Mt 4:5-7
- > spirit - worship Satan in order to receive powerMt 4:8-10
- We ought to pray to be kept from temptation Mt 6:13; Lu 11:4
- Be careful not to be tempted by sins of those we help Ga6:1
- We ought to resist temptations Pr 1:10; Ro 6:13; Eph 6:13
 - > Elisha does not take money for healing Naaman...2Ki 5:16
 - > Peter does not take money for spiritual gift Ac 8:20
 - > Job resists his wife's evil counsel Job 2:9-10
 - > Rechabites refuse wine Jer 35:5-6
 - > Daniel and his friends refuse the king's food Da 1:8

4. CREATION OF MAN

a) CREATION OF MAN

- By God the Father Ge 1:27; Isa 45:11-12
- By Jesus Christ..... Job 1:1-5; Col 1:13-16
- By Holy Spirit..... Job 33:4
- On the sixth day of creation Ge 1:26-27
- On the earth, not elsewhere De 4:32; Ps 104:30; Isa 45:12
- Body from the dust Ge 2:7; Job 33:6
- Man's spirit by God's breath Ge2:7; Ec 12:7
- Male & female He created them Ge 1:27; 5:1-2
 - > Woman is in no way inferior to man; the term "helper" used in Ge 2:20 is the term used of God in Ps 33:20
- It was very good Ge 1:31; Ps 139:14
- Created with a free will..... Ge 2:16,17; Jos 24:15

b) MAN IS A COMPOUND BEING-SPIRITUAL AND MATERIAL

- Man has an earth-like body Ge2:7;Ec 12:7
- Man has a spiritual part. God's breath of life Ge2:7;Ec 12:7
 - > called "soul"Mt 10:28
 - > called "spirit" Ac 7:59
 - > called "spirit" and "soul" and "body" I Th 5:23
- The immortal (spiritual) part lives in the body 2Co 5:63
- Death of the body happens when spirit departs Jas 2:26
 - > when the spirit returned the body became alive.... Lu 8:55
 - > after physical death, the spirit remains alive..... Mt 22:32
- Soul and Spirit are hard to separate
 - > used as if almost the same I Sa 1:15; Job 7:11; Isa 26:9
 - > Word of God is able to separate between them..... Heb 4:12
- Salvation is the saving of our SOUL 1Pe 1:8-9;Jas 1:21;Heb 10:39
 - > otherwise our soul is destroyed..... Mt 10:28; Ac 3:22- 23
 - > our SPIRIT goes back to God who made it Ec 12:7
- We can see our body. Our soul and spirit are not visible. Our spirit is the life from God. Our soul is our personality and character - who we are and who we are becoming.

c) MAN WAS CREATED IN THE LIKENESS OF GOD

- Man was made in image (likeness) of God Ge 1:26-27;5:1-2

- > so murder and harsh speaking are not allowed..... Ge 9:6; Jas 3:9-10
- Male & Female are in image (likeness) of God..... Ge 1:27;5:2
- Likeness is not physical-God is a Spirit Joh 4:24
- Likeness is righteousness, holiness and truth..... Eph 4:21-24
- Likeness is in ethical knowledge Col3:10
- Likeness is in authority to rule (on earth) Ge 1:26
- d) **MAN'S LOST AND RENEWED LIKENESS OF GOD**
- After the fall (rebellion) of man
 - > children are born in the image of their sinful parents..... Ge 5:3
- Jesus' first coming was
 - > in the likeness of man Ro 8:3; Php 2:7- 8
 - > in the perfect likeness of God 2Co 4:4; Col 1:15; Heb 1:3-4
- People after being redeemed by Jesus
 - > we are being renewed into image of Jesus..... Col 3:10
 - > we are predestined to be in image of Jesus Ro 8:29
- At the resurrection
 - >believers will have his likeness Ps 17:15;1Co 15:49
 - > wicked will have a despised likeness..... Ps 73:20
- e) **ALL RACES OF MAN HAVE THE SAME ORIGIN**
- From one man (blood) He made all men Ac 17:26-29
- One woman is the original mother of us all Ge3:20
- After the flood, all people come from Noah..... Ge 9:18-19
- f) **AUTHORITY ON THE EARTH**
- Superior to all earthly creation..... Mt 6:26; 12:12
 - > rule all creatures and creation Ge 1:28; Ps 8:1-9
 - > plants as food Ge 1:29
 - > animals as food Ge 9:1-3
- Redeemed man will judge the world and angels I Co 6:2-3

5. CONDITION OF UNREDEEMED, FALLEN PEOPLE

- a) **REBELLION OF MAN AGAINST GOD** see also Sin (Section D1)
- The disobedience, fall and curse on man Ge 3:1-24
- Sin and death entered through Adam Ro 5:12; ICo 15:21-22
- All guilty Ro3:23; Ge6:5; 1 Ki 8:46; Ps 14:2-3; Isa 53:6; 64:5-7
- All need to be saved..... 1Ti 2:4; Ro 3:23; Ga 3:22; 1Jo 1:8; 5:19
- b) **MAN IS UNDER THE WRATH OF GOD**
- **Sec Sin and the Law**..... Section D2
 - > cursed is the man who does not obey God's law.... De 27:26
 - > requirements of the law are known to all..... Ro 2:13-15
 - > no person can keep the requirements of the law....Ro 3:20; Ga 2:21
- **Wrath of God**
 - > towards unbelievers..... Job 3:36> against ungodliness..... Ro 1:18
 - > at judgment time..... Ro2:5 > those marked 666..... Re 14:9-11

- > Rahab from Jericho Jos 2:1; 6:17; Heb 11:31; Jas 2:25
- > Ruth from Moab Book of Ruth
- > Samaritan woman... Job 4:7-42 > Naaman from Aram..... 2Ki 5:15-19
- > Syrophenidan woman..... Mk 7:24-30 > Roman Centurion....Mt 8:5-13
- > Peter's vision..... Ac 10:9-16 > Cornelius, a Roman..... Ac 10:17-48

b) ALL CATEGORIES OF PEOPLE ARE INCLUDED IN GOD'S KINGDOM

- In Christ Jesus there is no difference between Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female Ga 3:28
- The poor & the rich Jas2:4-5;
- The old Le 19:32
- Children Mt 18:3; 19:14; Ac 2:39
- Married or unmarried I Co 7:

c) CONDITIONS FOR ENTRANCE INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD

- Humility/childlikeness Mt 18:3
- spiritual desireMt 5:6
- being born again Joh 3:3-5
- Full commitment to Christ Lu 9:62
- Faith and love..... Jas 2:5
- Enduring tribulations Ac 14:22; 2Th 1:5

d) NATURE OF THE KINGDOM

- eternal..... Da 2:44;Lu 1:33
- expansive..... Mt 13:31-32
- powerful.....Mk 9:1;2Co 10:4
- presentMt 12:28; Lu 17:21; 12:32
- glorious I Th 2:12
- unshakable Heb 12:28
- not of this worldJoh 18:36
- diversified Re 5:9,10; Da 7:14
- has authority..... Mt 16:19
- hidden/invisible Mt 13:33; Col 1:15,16
- tends to constant growth..... Isa 9:6,7; Mt 13:33
- includes the angelic hosts Heb 12:22; Re 5:11
- characterized by righteousness, peace and joy Ro 14:17
- is the place where God's will is doneMt 6:10

e) THE KINGDOM IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

- Abraham's seed to become a great nation Ge 12:2
- Abraham's name changed to father of many nations Ge 17:4,5
- Israel chosen to be a kingdom Ex 19:5,6
- Gideon knew the kingdom Jdg 8:23
- Israel rejected the kingdom I Sa 8:7
- Esther came to the kingdom Es 4:14
- David's seed promised to inherit the kingdom 2 Sa 7:13
- Isaiah saw the King exalted over His kingdom Isa 6:2-6
- Daniel prophesied about the future kingdom Da 2:44;7:14

f) OTHER NAMES FOR THE KINGDOM OF GOD

- kingdom of heaven Mt 13:11
- kingdom of Christ..... Lu 22:30; 2Pe 1:11; Eph 5:5
- kingdom of their father Mt 13:43; 26:29
- kingdom of light I Pe 2:9; Col 1:13
- the (holy) city Ps48; Heb 11:16
- (new) Jerusalem Heb 12:22; Mic 4:2; Re 21:2

g) OTHER "KINGDOMS", i.e. NAMES FOR SATAN'S KINGDOM

- Satan's kingdom Mt 12:26
- kingdoms of this world Mt 4:8; Re 11:15; Joh 14:30
- kingdom of darkness Col 1:13; Re 16:10
- Babylon Da 4:29; Re 18:2
- the sinful kingdom Am 9:8
- kingdom of the nations Hag 2:22

h) CHRIST AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD

- Jesus reigns supreme as King of the kingdom I Ti 6:15,16
- Jesus' coming inaugurated the kingdom Mt 4:17
- Jesus preached most often about the kingdom Mt 13
- Authority over demons demonstrated the kingdom Mt 12:28
- Jesus' presence constitutes the kingdom Lu 17:21
- Jesus' return represents the kingdom's full arrival Re 11:15

i) PEOPLE OF THE KINGDOM

- Servants Mt 13:27; 25:14-46; Re 7:15
- Sojourners and exiles Heb 11:13; I Pe 2:11
- children Mt 18:1-4
- spiritual priests Ex 19:6; I Pe 2:9; Re 5:10

j) PRINCIPLES OF THE KINGDOM

Note: Many principles of the kingdom are expressed in parables, which is a way of expressing the radical difference between them and the principles under which this world operates. Jesus often spoke in parables as a means of expressing these truths which are so difficult to express in human terms. They are foolishness to those who are perishing (I Co 1:18) and are spiritually discerned (I Co 2:9-13).

- it is more blessed to give than receive Ac20:35
- the way to live is to die Joh 12:24, 25; Mt 10:39
- the way to glory is through suffering Ro 8:17; 1 Pe 5:10
- strength is found through weakness Heb 11:34; 2Co 12:9
- the meek are exalted I Pe 5:5,6; Mt 5:5
- the persecuted are the ones who are blessed Mt 5:11,12
- the inferior are honored, chosen Isa 53:3; I Co 12:23
- the poor are really rich Lu 6:20; 2 Co 6:10;8:9
- the slaves are really free Ro 6:18; Phm 1:1
- the fools are becoming wise I Co 1:26; 3:18
- the most dependent are the most mature Joh 21:18
- God uses the worthless and useless Heb 11:38; Ex 4:10; Jdg 6:15

E. SALVATION (REDEMPTION)

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1. THE BLOOD OF JESUS (SUFFICIENT FOR TOTAL REDEMPTION)

a) BLOOD OF JESUS IS DESCRIBED AS

- Blood of Jesus Christ..... I Jo 1:7 - Innocent Mt 27:4
- Blood of His cross..... Col 1:20 - Precious IPe 1:19
- Blood of the Lord..... I Co 11:27 -Blood of the Lamb ... Re 7:14;12:11

b) WITHOUT THE SHEDDING OF BLOOD THERE IS NO FORGIVENESS

- Heb 9:22
- The Blood makes Atonement (Friendship with God) ... Le 17:11

c) WHAT THE BLOOD OF JESUS HAS ACCOMPLISHED

- The Church was bought by His blood..... Ac 20:28
 - > we have been purchased for God Re 5:9
- New covenant in His blood Mt 26:28; Mk 14:24; Lu 22:20; 1Co 11:25
 - > eternal covenant Heb 13:20
- Redemption through the blood Eph 1:7; Col 1:14
 - > redeemed from our former way of life IPe 1:18-19
- Justified (reconciled) by His blood..... Ro 5:9
- cleanses our consciences Heb 9:14
- We are brought close to God Eph 2:13
 - > peace with God through his blood Col 1:20
- Forgiveness of sins Mt 26:28
 - > purifies us from all sin 1Jo 1:7
- We are holy through his blood Heb 13:12
- Overcome Satan by the Lamb's blood Re 12:11

d) OLD TESTAMENT TYPES OF THE BLOOD OF JESUS

- Passoverlamb Ex 12:3-30; 1Co 5:7
 - > chosen beforehand Ex 12:3; 1Pe 2:4
 - > taken out of the flock Ex 12:5; Heb 2:14,17
 - > male Ex 12:5; Isa 9:6
 - > without defect Ex 12:5; 1Pe 1:19
 - > slaughtered in evening Ex 12:6; Mk 15:33-37

- > blood applied on doorframes.....Ex 12:7,22; Heb 9:13-14;
1Pe 1:2
- > not applied to the thresholdEx 12:7; Heb 10:29
- > meat roasted with bitter herbsEx 12:8; Ro 8:17
- > bread without yeast Ex 12:8; 1Co 5:7-8
- > eaten in haste (ready to leave) Ex 12:11
- > blood-marked arc not judged Ex 12:12-13; Ro 5:9
- > celebrates leaving Egypt Ex 12:17;Mt 2:15;Heb 8:7-13
- > aliens and Israelites to eat Ex 12:19; Ro 9:23-24
- > to remain inside until morningEx 12:22; Ac 13:43; 14:22;
Ro 11:22
- The Day of Atonement Le 16:1-34; 23:26-32;
Heb 9:1-10:39
- > only High Priest allowed to enter Le 16:2; Heb 10:19-22
- > not allowed to enter at will..... Le 16:2; Heb 10:19-22
- > offering for himself & household Le 16:6,11; Heb 9:7-10
- > sprinkling blood of bull and goat..... Le 16:14-19; Heb 9:11-14
- > scapegoat sent to desert Le 16:8-10,20-22 Joh 1:29
- > with sin offering for the people Le 16:15; 1Co 3:16
- > atonement for tabernacle partsLe 16:16; 1Co 6:19,20
- > bull & goat burned outside the camp Le 16:27; Heb 13:11-13
- > to be done once a year Le 16:34; Heb 9:7-10,25-28
- > starts Year of Jubilee - debts forgiven Le 25:8-9

2. MEANS OF SALVATION

a) FAITH VERSUS WORKS

- Source of Salvation

- > of God alonePs 3:8; 37:39; Isa 45:21-22;
Jer 3:23
- > by Jesus Christ alone.....Isa 45:21-22; Ac 4:12
- > is of God's Grace.....Eph 2:5,8; 2Ti 1:9; Tit 2:11
- > is through Faith in Christ Mk 16:16; Ac 16:31;
Ro 10:9; 1Pe 1:5
- > is NOT by Works or Sacraments..... Ro 11:6; Eph 2:9; 2Ti 1:9;
Tit 3:5
- > is NOT by the law but FAITH..... Ro 3:21-31; Ga 2:16

- Good Works

- > God has prepared them for us..... Eph 2:10
- > After being saved by Faith Eph 2:8-10; 1Th 1:3
- > Good Works demonstrate our Faith..... Jas 2:14-20; Re 2:13
- > Note: We obey God because we love Him. Water Baptism and Lord's Supper are part of His desire for us but we do not get saved by them.

b) IMPORTANCE OF GOD'S GRACE IN ALL ASPECTS OF SALVATION

- Our calling or election by GRACERo 11:5; Ga 1:15
- We believed through GRACE Ac 18:27

- The Gospel is about God's GRACE Ac 20:24
- Justified by God's GRACE Tit 3:7
- Eternal Life through GRACE Eph 1:7
- Forgiveness of Sins – GRACE Eph 1:7
- Comfort & Hope through GRACE..... 2Th 2:16
- Strength in GRACE 2Ti 2:1
- GRACE to Preach..... Eph 3:8
- GRACE to Serve God Heb 12:28
- Growth in GRACE 2Pe 3:18
- We are what we are, by GRACE 1 Co 15:10

GRACE:
*The undeserved
 gift of God's
 love and favor
 towards people,
 because of the
 work of Jesus.*

c) OUR PART IN SALVATION, WITH GOD'S HELP

- Repentance & Baptism..... Ac 2:38
- Confession & Faith Ro 10:9-10
- Acting on God's Word..... Jas 1:21-25
- Endurance..... Mt 10:22

d) SALVATION TEACHING PASSAGE-Ro 3:21-26see also:

- Produces righteousness Ro 3:21
- Apart from the law..... Ro 3:21.....Ro 3:28
- From God..... Ro 3:21-22 Php 3:9
- Through faith in Jesus Christ Ro 3:22.....Ac 4:12
- To all who believe Ro 3:23.....Ac 2:21
- Needed by all Ro 3:23 2Pe 3:9
- Freely by His grace Ro3:24 Eph 2:8
- Through faith in His blood..... Ro 3:25-26 Heb 9:14; 1Jo 1:7

e) SALVATION DELIVERS US FROM THE FOLLOWING:

- SinMt 1:21 & 1Jo 3:5
- Uncleaness Eze 36:29
- Self.....Ro 6:
- God's Wrath.....Ro 5:9; 1Th 1:10
- Law Ro 6:14
- Eternal DeathJoh 3:16-17
- This present Evil World Ga 1:4
- Power of the Devil..... Col 1:13; 2:15; Heb 2:14-15

f) AFFECTS ALL ASPECTS OF THE BELIEVER

- Body - healing - by His stripes 1Pe 2:24
 - > future glorified body 1Co 15:44; Php 3:21;
 - Ro 8:23
- Soul - salvation of the soul 1Pe 1:9
 - > hope and cleansing Heb 6:18,19; Jas 1:21
- Spirit - made perfect Heb 12:23
 - > communication with God's Spirit..... Ro 8:16

3. CALLING-FOREKNOWLEDGE-PREDESTINATION

a) DEFINITIONS

- Call: Because sin has spiritually blinded man and has made him unable to believe, God must act first in order to enable us to turn to Him.
- Foreknowledge - Predestination: Because God knows all things and has all power, we acknowledge that those who get saved do so by His almighty will and purposes.

b) PREACHING

- People are called by the preaching of the gospelRo 10:14-15

- > Jesus preached Mt 4:17; Mk 1:38-39;
Lu 4:18-19; 4:43-44
- > disciples preachedMt 10:7; Mk 3:14; 16:15;
Lu 9:2
- > we should preach 2Co 5:18-20
- What they preached
 - > the gospel.....Ro 1:15; 2Co 2:12; Mk 16:15;
Lu 4:18; Section F3
 - > deliveranceLu 4:18
 - > kingdom of God Lu 4:43; 9:2,60
 - > Jesus Christ Ac 5:42; 1Co 1:23; Ga 1:16
 - > word of faithRo 10:8
 - > the word..... 2Ti 4:2
- To whom they preached
 - > to the poor.....Mt 11:5
 - > everywhereMk 16:20;Ac 8:4
 - >inthcdtiesAc 8:40
 - > in all the worldMt 24:14
 - > in villagesAc 8:25
 - > to every creatureCol 1:23

c) GOD'S FOREKNOWLEDGE AND CHOOSING

- God knows the end from the beginningIsa 46:10
- God chose Israel De 4:37 7:6
- Jesus chose His disciples Joh 15:16; Ac 1:2
- Jesus foreknew Judas would betray Him Joh 6:70; 13:11
- Believers are chosen by God's foreknowledge 1Pe 1:2
- Believers are a chosen people 1Pe 2:9-10
- We were chosen in Christ before creation Eph 1:4; Ro 8:18-35
- Salvation is a GIFT from God Ro 5:15-17
- God's sovereign choosing is plainly taught.....Ro 9:1-33

d) PROCESS OF THE CALL AND THE CHOOSING

- Ro 8:28-39
 - > those who are called of God, LOVE God..... Ro 8:28
 - > the predestined ALLOW THEMSELVES
to be changed by GodRo 8:29
 - > the called go through a PROCESS called
SALVATION Ro 8:30
 - > to the end that they might be GLORIFIED
with HimRo 8:30
 - > the all-powerful God is working for the CalledRo 8:31-39
 - }1 He is fighting for us.....Ro 8:31
 - }2 He is supplying all our needs Ro8:32
 - }3 He is vindicating us Ro 8:33
 - }4 He is ever interceding for us Ro 8:34

e) CAUTIONS!! Some will say that if God knows who will be saved, then we don't have to do anything. Not so! God uses us to achieve

- His purposes.....2Pe 3:9
- Church must preach the gospel 1Co 1:21; 2Co 5:18-20

- > we are His ambassadors2Co 5:20; Eph 6:20
- > God is making His appeal through us2Co 5:20
- The gospel is also preached to those who reject it
 - > as a testimony to all nations, then the end will come Mt 24:14
 - > some will refuse to love the truth 2Th 2:10
- We are commanded to preach to the people Ac 10:42
- Called to preach the gospelAc 16:10
- People must be sent to preachRo 10:15
- Paul felt compelled to preach the gospel 1Co 9:16
- Paul tries all means so as to possibly save some 1Co 9:19-23
- We need to make our own calling and election sure 2Pe 1:10
- It is possible to resist God's grace2Co 6:1-2

4. REPENTANCE

a) REPENTANCE INVOLVES:

- Knowing that we are sinners in the sight of God Ps 51:3-4
- A deep feeling of remorse for our sins 2Co 7:10-11; Lu 18:13; Ps 38:18
- An active turning away from sin to God 1Th 1:9; Ac 26:18
- God responds by forgiving our sinsAc 2:38,5:31,8:22; 1Jo 1:9
- We continue by setting our hearts and minds to follow God
 - > which becomes SAVING FAITH see Section E5
- Great rejoicing in heavenLu 15:7,10

b) REPENTANCE IS COMMANDED BY GOD TO ALL..Eze 18:30-32; Ac 17:30

- Jesus came to call sinners to repentance.....Mt 9:13; Mk 2:17; Lu 5:32

c) REPENTANCE PREACHED BY

- O.T. prophets Joe 2:12; Ho 14:2; Da 4:27; Isa 58
- John the Baptist Mt 3:2
- Jesus.....Mt 4:17;Lu 13:3 - Jesus' followersLu 24:46-47
- Peter.....Ac 2:38;3:19 -Paul Ac 17:30-31

d) REPENTANCE INVOLVES A CHANGE OF

- Our mindMt 21:28-29
- Our hearts2Co 7:9-10; Isa 57:15
- Our willLu 15:18-20

e) REPENTANCE IS ASSOCIATED WITH

- Conviction of sin.....Ac 2:37-38; 19:16-19
- Water BaptismAc 2:38
- Holy Spirit.....Ac 2:38
- Turning to GodAc 2:38; 3:19
- Confession of sin.....Pr 28:13; 1Jo 1:9; Mt 3:6; Ps 38:18; Da 9:20
- Forgiveness of sin Lu 24:46-47; Ac 2:38
- Faith (believing)Mt 21:32; Mk 1:15; Ac 20:21

- Prayer 1Ki 8:33; Ac 8:22
- Turning from sin 2Ch 6:26
- Turning from idolatry Eze 14:6; 1Th 1:9
- Changed lifestyle Mt 3:2-8
- Fear of judgment..... Lu 23:40; Mt 3:7

f) EXAMPLES OF TRUE REPENTANCE

- King David (Bathsheba) 2Sa 12:13; Ps 51
- King David (Census) 2Sa 24:10-14
 - > Note: There were natural consequences despite God's forgiveness.
- Prodigal son Lu 15:18,21
- Tax collector Lu 18:13
- Zacchaeus..... Lu 19:2-10
- Thief on the cross Lu 23:39-43

g) EVIDENCE OF TRUE REPENTANCE

- Good works follow true repentance Mt 3:8,5:16; Ac 26:20; Eph 2:10; 1Ti 2:10,6:18; 2Ti 3:17; Tit 2:7,14; Heb 10:24; 1Pe 2:12
- We forgive our enemies Mt 6:12-15; 18:21-35; Mk 11:25-26; Lu 6:37; 11:4; 17:3,4; 23:34; Ac 7:60; Eph 4:32
- We do not go or look back Lu 9:62
- Restitution Lu 19:2-10

h) EXAMPLES OF FALSE OR INEFFECTIVE REPENTANCE

- Pharaoh in Egypt (immediate fear only) Ex 9:27,35; 10:16,20
- King Saul (desired honor of people)..... 1Sa 15:24-31
- Judas Iscariot (regret is not enough) Mt 27:3-5
- Simon the Sorcerer (fear only) Ac 8:18-24
- Esau (unable to change his mind) Heb 12:17

5. SAVING FAITH

a) DEFINITION OF SAVING FAITH

We believe that there is only one God and that He is as He reveals Himself in the Scriptures, the Bible. We believe that Jesus Christ is truly God and truly man and that He died for our sins and was raised for our justification. We demonstrate our faith to God by remaining faithful and obedient (by His help through the Holy Spirit) even if circumstances are difficult.

- See also The Gospel Section F4

There is a "gift of faith" which comes by the Holy Spirit to equip believers to do various works of ministry.

For this kind of faith, see Section F11

b) SAVING FAITH INVOLVES:

- Our Mind: knowledge of the truth of Christ Jesus Ps 9:10; Ro 10:17
- Our Hearts: agreeing that these things are true Mk 12:32; Joh 1:12
- Our Wills: acting upon the truth 1Jo 2:3-6

c) WHAT SAVING FAITH IS NOT:

Biblical, saving Faith does NOT involve charms, fetishes, special prayers, mantras, good works or religious activities or sacraments.

- See False Gospels Section F6

d) FROM WHERE DOES SAVING FAITH COME?

- Saving Faith is a gift from God Eph 2:8
- Our initial believing is from God Php 1:29
- Jesus is the author and finisher Heb 12:2
- Disciples ask Jesus for more faith Lu 17:5

e) HOW DOES SAVING FAITH COME TO US?

- Hearing Ro 10:14-17; Eph 1:13
- The Word of God (Gospel) Ro 10:14-17; Joh 20:31;
2Ti 3:15
- By Preaching Ro 10:14-17; Joh 17:20;
Ac 8:12

f) WHAT IS THE OBJECT OF OUR FAITH?

- The Truth of the Scripture Joh 5:46; Ac 24:14; 26:27
- Roman 4:18-25 includes
 - > sure PROMISES OF GOD Ro 4:20-21 Heb 11:13
 - > faith in GOD'S POWER Ro 4:21..... 1Co2:4-5
 - > faith in GOD HIMSELF Ro 4:24..... Joh 14:1; 2Ch 20:20
 - > faith in JESUS OUR LORD Ro 4:24..... Joh 14:1; 6:29; Ac 20:21
 - > the GOSPEL OF JESUS Ro 4:25..... see Section F4

g) WHAT DOES SAVING FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST ACCOMPLISH FOR US?

- We are saved..... Mk 16:16; Joh 3:16;
Joh 3:36; Ac 16:31; 1Pe 1:8
- We are declared righteous Ro 3:21-31; 5:1; Ga 2:16; 3:6
- We will not face God's wrath Joh 3:36; 1Th 4:16-18
- Our sins are forgiven Ac 10:43; 13:39; 26:17-18;
Ro 3:25
- We are adopted into God's family Joh 1:12; Ga 3:26
- We receive the Holy Spirit Ac 11:15-17; Ga 3:14;
Eph 1:13
- We are preserved until Jesus' return 1Pe 1:5
- We are cleansed (sanctified) Ac 26:17-18
- We have access to God Ro 5:2; Eph 3:12
- We inherit God's promises Ga 3:22; Heb 6:12
- We receive spiritual light..... Joh 12:36,46;
Heb 6:4,10:32
- We receive eternal life Joh 3:15-16; 6:40,47;
20:31; Ga 2:20

h) WHAT DOES FAITH PRODUCE IN US?

- Peace (with God) Ro 5:1; Isa 26:3
- Hope (of God's glory) Ro 5:2
- Joy Ac 16:34; 1Pe 1:8
- Boldness in preaching 2Co 4:13

i) WHAT IS THE CONNECTION BETWEEN FAITH AND GOOD WORKS?

- James 2:14-26

- > impossible that faith will not produce good deeds..Jas 2:14
- > words without actions do not helpJas 2:15-16
- > faith without actions also is useless Jas 2:17-20
- > Abraham's faith led to obedient actions Jas 2:21-24
- > Rahab acted on her faith that God was with Israel..Jas 2:25
- > it is still FAITH that justifies (Ro 4:1-3), but not with mere words, but actions that show we truly believe Jas 2:26
- We cannot be saved by doing good works
 - > ministry in Jesus' Name is insufficient Mt 7:22-23
 - > observing the law does not save..... Ro 3:20; 9:30-32
 - > no self-effort leads to faith or salvation Eph 2:8-9; Tit 3:5
- Doing good deeds is commanded by God
 - > but not as a means to salvation Ps 34:14; 37:3; Lu 6:35; Heb 13:16
- We are created in Christ to do good works Eph 2:10
- There are rewards for good worksMt 25:34-36; 26:6-13; 1Pe 2:12; Heb 13:16; Re 2:2; Re 22:12

j) PEOPLE OF FAITH

- Old Testament People with Enduring Faith..... Heb 11:1-40
- New Testament People of Faith
 - > leper Mt 8:2 > centurion..... Mt 8:10
 - > ruler Mt 9:18 > blind men Mt 9:28
 - > diseased Mt 14:36 > Canaanite woman .. Mt 15:28
- Victories won by men of faith
 - > Abraham Ge 22:8
 - > Caleb vs Anakite giants Jos 14:12
 - > David vs Goliath 1Sa 17:37
 - > Three Israelites in the fire Da 3:17
 - > Paul & shipwreck Ac 27:25-28:10

6. REGENERATION (BORN OF GOD)

Regeneration means that a person receives a new, holy nature from God. We need this new nature to be part of God's Holy Kingdom.

a) REFERRED TO AS:

- Born of God
 - > as opposed to earthly, human birth Joh 1:12,13
 - > those born of God do not continue in sin 1Jo 3:9-10
 - > those born of God are characterized by LOVE 1Jo 4:7
 - > those born of God believe Jesus is the Christ 1Jo 5:1
- Born again (in order to see the Kingdom of God) Joh 3:3,7
- Born of water and the Spirit (enter God's Kingdom)..... Joh 3:5
- Born of the Spirit (as opposed to the flesh) Joh 3:6,8
- New Creation (likened to being IN CHRIST) 2Co 5:17

- > created new to be like God Eph 4:24
- > new thinking producing righteousness
and holiness Eph 4:22-24
- Birth through the word of truth Jas 1:18
 - > is a gift from our heavenly Father..... Jas 1:17
- Birth through the living and enduring word of God 1Pe 1:23
- Washing of Rebirth & Renewal by the Holy Spirit..... Tit 3:5
 - > before we were disobedient and wicked in
many ways..... Tit 3:3
 - > our salvation comes from God's mercy,
not our works..... Tit 3:4,5
- b) HOW CAN A PERSON BE "BORN AGAIN"? Joh 3:4
- It is not a fleshly act but a work of the Spirit Joh 3:5,6
- Believe in Jesus and you will have eternal life Joh 3:14-16
- We were dead in sin - now alive in Christ Eph 2:1-7; Ro 6:11
 - > not by works, so none can boast, but
by God's grace..... Eph 2:8,9
- c) MAN'S PART IN BEING BORN AGAIN
- We must believe the Gospel, the good news of Jesus Joh 3:14-16
- We must separate ourselves from sinning 1Jo 3:9; Ro 6:12,13
- We must allow our mind and thinking to be transformed... Ro 12:2
 - > don't let the world shape you and your actions Ro 12:2
 - > we must know and obey God's will for us Ro 12:2
- We must put off the old, corrupted nature Eph 4:22
 - > we must put on the new nature (made like God's)..Eph 4:24
 - > we must be made new in our way of thinking Eph 4:23
 - > we should purify ourselves by obeying the truth... 1Pe 1:22,23
 - > we should love one another fervently..... 1Pe 1:22
- d) EVIDENCE OF BEING BORN AGAIN
- No longer bound by sin, not continuing in sin 1 Jo 3:9; Ro 6:1-3
- We now do good works..... Eph 2:10
- The growth of the Fruit of the Spirit is evident Ga 5:22-25
 - > as opposed to the deeds of the flesh Ga 5:19-21
- See also Spiritual Growth Section F12
- e) IS ACCOMPLISHED BY THE SPIRIT, NOT BY
ANY FLESHLY ACT..... Joh 3:6
- f) IT REQUIRES THE DEATH OF THE "FLESH"
(SINFUL NATURE).....Eph 2:1-10
- g) EVIDENCE IS THE GROWTH OF THE FRUIT
OF THE SPIRIT..... Ga 5:19-23
- See Spiritual Growth Section F12
- h) REGENERATION IS SOMETIMES MISTAKENLY CONFUSED WITH WATER
BAPTISM
- Two Scriptures associated rebirth and water or washings
 - > born of water/washing of rebirth Joh 3:5; Tit 3:5
- Washing and Water do not necessarily refer to baptism

- > washing of water by THE WORD Eph 5:26
- > clean through the
WORD I HAVE SPOKEN TO YOU Joh 15:3
- > born again..through. .WORD OF GOD 1Pe 1:23
- Baptism and salvation are associated 1Pe 3:21
 - > not because of the water, but a good conscience.... 1Pe 3:21
 - > it saves you BY THE RESURRECTION
OF JESUS..... 1Pe 3:21
- Paul baptized only a few of the Corinthians 1Co 1:14-16
 - > but he gave birth to them through the GOSPEL..... 1Co 4:15
- Cornelius was saved before he was water-baptized..... Ac 10:44-48

7. JUSTIFICATION

Because we are in Christ Jesus, we are moved out of the place of guilt and God's wrath and into a place of innocence before God and into a loving relationship with Him. God is the Judge and He declares us "Not Guilty" because Jesus has done all that is necessary.

a) GOD ALONE IS THE JUDGE AND LAWGIVER

- God as Judge of all..... Ps 50:6;75:7; Ac 7:7; 10:42;
Heb 12:23; 2 Ti 4:1
- God is able to save, able to destroy..... Jas 4:12
- God judges through Jesus according to the gospel..... Ro 2:16
- See also Ps 7:11; 9:8; 94:2; Isa 33:22

b) BEFORE BEING BORN AGAIN WE WERE ALL GUILTY BEFORE GOD

Guilt is not particularly a feeling we have, but rather our standing before God the Judge as worthy of the punishment of death.

- The wages of sin is death..... Ro 6:23
- All the unredeemed are guilty Ro 3:19,20; Ga 3:22; 1 Jo 1:8
- Trespassing God's commandments means guilt Le 6:4
 - > disobedience of one law means guilty of all..... Jas 2:10-13
 - > misuse of God's Name is guilt-worthy Ex 20:7; De 5:11
 - > idol worship is guilt-worthy Eze 22:4
 - > fighting against God's people brings guilt 1Sa 26.-9
 - > many, many other actions and thoughts bring guilt before God
- In the Old Testament confession and a trespass offering could clear
guilt Le 5:4-6
 - > restoration might be necessary Le 6:5-7; Nu 5:6-8
- In the New Covenant with Jesus having paid the full price,
see Repentance Section E4
- Guilt may be incurred in our ignorance Le 4:13,22,27
- Forgiveness by Priestly intercession..... Nu 14:18-20; Heb 7:25-27
- Guilt is inherited Ex 34:7; Nu 14:18
 - > unless one is born again Col 2:13-14

c) HOW CAN OUR SENTENCE OF "GUILTY" BE CHANGED TO "NOT GUILTY"?

- Our Innocence is not achieved by trying to keep the Law
 - > see Saving Faith Section E5

- > if through the law... Christ died in vain..... Ga 2:19-21
- > law should lead us to Christ to be justified by faith..... Ga 3:24
- > law brings knowledge of our guilt Ro 3:20
- Our Innocence is not achieved by any self-effort
 - > no fallen man is innocent before God Job 9:2-3; Ps 143:1-2
 - > we are NOT born innocent Job 25:4; Ps 51:5
 - > no ritual or actual cleansing can clean us Jer 2:22
- Our Innocence is due to Christ Jesus' actions on our behalf
 - > Christ's righteousness is counted as ours if we have faith in Him...
..... Isa 61:10; Jer 23:6; Ro 3:22; 1Co 1:30; 2Co 5:21
 - > by the Blood of Christ Sec E1
 - > by the resurrection of Christ Jesus Ro 4:25; 1Co 15:17
- It is God's doing (a free gift if we believe)
 - > God justifies men who have faith in Jesus Ro 3:24-26
 - > justification is from God Php 3:9
 - > by faith alone Ro 3:28; 4:3; Ga 3:6; Heb 11:4
 - > leads to peace with God Ro 5:1

8. ADOPTION

Relates to the rights, privileges and duties of our being included in God's household, His family.

a) OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD BEFORE ADOPTION

- Alienated from God Col 1:21-23; Eph 4:18
 - Under God's wrath Col 3:6; Eph 5:6
- Ro 1:18; Joh 3:36

b) HOW TO BECOME AN ADOPTED SON OF GOD

- Predestined by God..... Ro 8:29; Eph 1:5
- Receive Jesus, receive power to become the sons of God... Joh 1:12
- According to God's promise, not natural birth..... Ga 3:29; Ro 9:8
 - > from many nations..... Ga 3:28; Joh 11:51; Ro 9:4
- By faith in Christ Jesus..... Ga 3:26; Eph 1:5; Heb 2:9-11
- Those who have been baptized into Christ Ga 3:27
- Adoption is contrasted with Law Ga 4:5
- Those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God..... Ro 8:14

c) CHARACTER OF A SON OF GOD

- Holy Spirit witness to our adoption Ro 8:15-16
- Separation from sin is necessary 2 Co 6:17-18
- Freedom from bondages Ro 8:21
- As children we should be like God Mt 5:43-48; 1 Jo 3:2
 - > Jesus is the only BEGOTTEN Son Joh 1:18; 3:16; Heb 11:17;
1 Jo 4:9
- Peacemakers called sons of God Mt 5:9
- Blameless and harmless Eph 1:4; Php 2:15-16
- Love for Jesus Joh 8:42

- Love for other children of God Joh 13:34, 35
- Subject to Fatherly discipline of God Heb 12:4-11
- d) OUR ADOPTION IS COMPLETED AT THE RESURRECTION
- Completion at the resurrection Lu 20:35-36; Ro 8:19-23;
1 Jo 3:2
- Co-heirs with Jesus Ga 3:29; Ro 8:17
- Adoption is completed at glorification Ro 8:23; See E12

9. BAPTISM IN HOLY SPIRIT

a) PROMISED OUTPOURING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

- As an endtime outpouring of God's Spirit Eze 36:26-27
 - > cleansing > new heart > new spirit > God's Spirit in you
 - > in order to keep God's decrees
 - > followed by a coming together of the people of God..... Eze 37:
- As an endtime outpouring of God's Spirit Joe 2:28-32
 - > all people > young & old > men & women > prophesy
 - > dreams > visions > signs in heavens
- By John the Baptist
 - > Jesus will baptize in the Holy Spirit Mt 3:11; Lu 3:16; Mk 1:8;
Joh 1:33
- Jesus promises His disciples Ac 1:5; 11:16
 - > wait for promise, clothed with power Lu 24:49; Ac 1:8
 - > characterized by an overflowing lifestyle Joh 7:37,38
 - > to be given AFTER Jesus was glorified Joh 7:39
 - > Spirit of truth is with you and will be in you..... Joh 14:16-17
 - > Jesus must leave to send the Comforter Joh 16:7

b) OLD TESTAMENT TYPES OF HOLY SPIRIT BAPTISM

- We are clearly told that there are two baptisms..... 1 Co 10:2; Heb 6:2
 - > The Red Sea is salvation from bondage (water) Ex 15
 - > The Jordan is the abundant life (Spirit) Nu 13-14
 - > Born again means seeing the kingdom (water)..... Joh 3:3
 - > Born of water and Spirit means entering Joh 3:5
 - > Altar of burnt offerings for cleansing (water)..... Ex 29:36
 - > Altar of incense (oils) for worship (Spirit) Ex 30-6-8
- The Holy Spirit filled the temple in a CLOUD Ex 40:34,35
- FIRE came down when God showed His glory 2Ch 7:1-3; Ac 2:1-4
- It is as streams of WATER in the desert Isa 32:15-20; 35:5,6
- Described as a fountain of WATER Zec 13:1; Joh 4:14
- It is a flood of WATER poured out in last days..... Eze 47; Isa 44:3-5
- It is WATER poured out as rain in the end Joe 2:23; Eze 34:26; Jas 5:7
- It is the anointing OIL poured upon the priests..... Le 14:18; Ex 29:7
- It is the OIL pouring from the olive tress Zec 4:12
- It is the OIL in the lamps in the temple..... Le 24:2; Re 2: 1
- It is the OIL of gladness when the Spirit comes Isa 61:1-3

c) COMING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT-FULFILLMENT OF THE PROMISES

- Pentecost (Jews first receive Holy Spirit)Ac 2:1-4,16-21
 - > sound of a violent wind > tongues of fire > speak in tongues
 - > enabled by Holy Spirit > fulfillment of Joe 2:28-32
- Samaritans - receive the Holy Spirit Ac 8:14-17
 - > accepted Word of God > Holy Spirit had not come upon them
 - > been baptized "into the Name of the Lord Jesus"
 - > received the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands
- Gentiles (Cornelius receives the Holy Spirit)Ac 10:44-48
 - > first Gentiles to receive > while Peter was preaching the gospel
 - > Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message
 - > they knew they received the Holy Spirit because they spoke in tongues
 - > and praised God
 - > commanded to be baptized in the Name of the Lord
- Ephesian believers Ac 19:1-7
 - > believed > had not received the Holy Spirit
 - > water baptized into the Name of the Lord Jesus
 - > Holy Spirit came on them
 - > they spoke in tongues and prophesied

- The promise is for ALL WHOM THE LORD

WILL CALL..... Ac 2:38-39

d) HOW TO BE BAPTIZED IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

- Ask the Father in Heaven Lu 11:13
- It is for everyone (not a special few) Ac 2:38-39
- He will not give you a false thing Lu 11:11-13
- Conditioned upon willingness to repent Ac 2:38,39
- Given to those who obey God..... Ac 5:32
- Imparted through:
 - > laying on of apostles' hands Ac 8:14-17; 19:6
 - > laying on of other saints' hands.....Ac 9:17
 - > anointed preaching..... Ac 10:44
 - > times of waiting on God..... Ac 2:4
 - > times of intense prayer Ac 4:24-31
- Holy Spirit is NOT NECESSARILY RECEIVED simply
 - > when one believes and is saved Ac 8:14-17; 19:2
 - > when one has been water-baptized Ac 8:16

e) RESULTS OF RECEIVING THE HOLY SPIRIT

- Tongues. Ac 2:1-4,16-21; 10:44-48; 19:1-7
- Prophecy..... Joe 2:28-32 & -Power.....Lu 24:49; Ac 1:8
- Praising God..... Ac 10:44-48 & -Boldness to preach.... Ac 2:1-4,16-21
- Fruit of the Spirit..... Ga 5:22.....see Fruit of Spirit..... Section G1
 - > love > joy > peace > patience > kindness
 - > goodness > faithfulness > gentleness > self-control
- willingness to die for Jesus (witness Gr = martyr)..... Ac 1:8
- ability to minister in the supernatural..... Isa 61:1; 1Co 12;

Note 1:

The Baptism in the Holy Spirit is not a mystical experience for leaders only, neither is it for the first-century church only. It is for all whom the Lord our God calls (Ac 2:29-40). This experience should never be sought only for the power or gifts that accompany it. The proper attitude for receiving the Holy Spirit is with a humble repentant heart and for the purpose of glorifying Jesus (Joh 16:12-15). Sought in this way, it is IMPOSSIBLE that anyone would receive another spirit.

Note 2:

The Baptism in the Holy Spirit is not the climax of the Christian life. We should never think that because we have received the Holy Spirit we are better than others, or that we are more spiritual. The Corinthian church had clearly received the Holy Spirit and yet was still very carnal (1Co 1:7; 3:3). Rather, we should think of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit as an INITIAL filling of the Holy Spirit of which there will be many subsequent fillings (Eph 5:18 "Be continuously being filled with the Spirit" = Literal)

- the 120 experienced a second filling after Pentecost Ac 4:31
- we are commanded to be continually filled with the Spirit..... Eph 5:18
 - > the Greek meaning here is continual filling Eph 5:18
 - > filling is related to not walking after the flesh Eph 5:15-18
 - > we are often filled in times of worship and thanksgiving..... Eph 5:19-20
 - > God fills those who are properly submitted to each other..... Eph 5:21
- Paul told Timothy to stir up the gift of the Spirit..... 2 Ti 1:6
- The Ephesian church was in danger of losing the Spirit.... Re 2:5

f) SPECIFIC PEOPLE WHO WERE FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

- John Baptist Lu 1:15
- Jesus Lu 4:1
- Pentecost Ac 2:4
- Peter preaching Ac 4:8
- Stephen Ac 7:55
- Elizabeth..... Lu 1:41
- Promise for everyone..... Ac 2:38-39
- Disciples Ac 4:31
- Paul..... Ac 13:9

Note: In the Old Testament the Holy Spirit "came upon" individuals, temporarily giving them power from God to accomplish supernatural acts or to prophesy. It is only after Jesus was glorified that the Holy Spirit was "poured out" to the end that all who receive Him may be FILLED with the Spirit. Job 14:17 makes it clear that the Spirit of Truth would not only be with us, but in us. If He was only with us He may leave us. But now that He is in us He is there to stay. Some Old Testament examples of the Holy Spirit coming upon individuals are:

- the Seventy elders ...Nu 11:25
- Othniel Jdg 3:10
- Samson Jdg 14:6
- David..... 1Sa 16:13
- Ezekiel Eze 2:1-2
- Balaam Nu 24:2
- Gideon Jdg 6:34
- Saul 1 Sa 10:10
- Saul's servants 1 Sa 19:20

10. PERSEVERANCE

- a) Perseverance is our being safe "in Christ Jesus" until He returns.
- God will not change His promises to us 1Ki 8:56;Eze 12:25; Mt 5:18

- b) The question here is not whether I am able to deny Christ.
 - Rather whether God is able to keep me through the trials...2Ti 1:12
- c) Our confidence is not in our ability to do works that "keep us saved".
 - Our confidence is that God will not in any way deceive us.Nu 23:19
 - We need only keep the faith we have in Him.
 - We need to allow Him to work His will in us 1Th 2:13
- d) WE CAN KNOW THAT WE HAVE ETERNAL LIFE.. 1Jo 5:13; 4:13
 - Believe in Jesus and what He has done for us 1Jo5:13
 - Be filled with the Spirit of God 1Jo 4:13
- e) GOD IS FOR US, HELPING US
 - No external power can separate us from GodRo 8:31-39
 - Jesus Christ prays for us Heb 7:25
 > God always hears Jesus Joh 11:42
 > Holy Spirit intercedes for us Ro 8:26
 - God always provides a way out of temptations..... Ro 14:4; 1Co 10:13
 - Our confidence is in God, not in ourselves 2Ti 1:12
 - God is able to keep us Ro 14:4; Jude 24,25
- f) PROBLEMS WITH SIMPLY BEING CONFIDENT
 - There are dangers of being led astray Mt 24:3-14
 - We must guard our hearts..... Heb 3:12-14; Pr 4:23
 - We must continue in the faith..... Col 1:21-23
 - We must not get proud, lest we fall 1Co 10:12
 - We must pay close attention lest we drift away Heb 2:l
 - We must be diligent and not lazy Heb 6:11-12
- g) POSSIBLE TO DELIBERATELY TURN AWAY FROM GOD
 - Heb 6:4-6 & 10:26-27 If we DELIBERATELY sin and consistently wander away from the truth, it is possible to end up in unbelief.
 BUT NOTE that the Bible says He has better thoughts than that concerning us (Jer 29:11). Knowing the horror of falling away should be enough to keep a believer faithful.
 - It is possible for individual believers to deny Jesus and turn their back to God, but God has provided His Word, ministers in the Church, and the Holy Spirit so that those who are chosen will be kept from turning away.
 - If we deny God, He will also deny us.....2Ti 2:12
 - Turning from God is worse than never having known Him..... 2Pe 2:20-22
 - Trusting in works for salvation can sever us from Him Ga 5:3,4
 - Warning: we can fall even as those in the wilderness 1Co 10:5-12
 - Disobedience can cause us to lose what was ours Mt 21:43
 - THEREFORE, we must guard our hearts from sin's deceit.....Heb 3:13,14
- h) MIXTURE IN THE CHURCH
 - Jesus warns that the Church WILL HAVE true believers and pretenders.
 > wheat and weeds ... Mt13:24-30 > good fish and bad..... Mt 13:47-50
 > these are intermingled and difficult to separate Mt 13:28-30
 - Therefore we must not look at others' faithfulness, but to our own..... Ga 6:4; Php 2:12

- i) A TEACHING PASSAGE 1Pe 1:1-9
- Elect of God... He chose us 1Pe 1:2
- Chosen according to God's foreknowledge 1Pe 1:2
- We must allow the Holy Spirit works to purify us 1Pe 1:2
- We are saved for obedience to Jesus Christ..... 1Pe 1:2
- We are being justified by His blood..... 1Pe 1:2
- New Birth by God's mercy 1Pe 1:3
- Our inheritance is safe in heaven 1Pe 1:4
- God's power will shield us until the end 1Pe 1:5
- Suffering from trials 1Pe 1:6
- Trials are not to defeat us but to prove our faith..... 1Pe 1:7
- Our faith is not by sight..... 1Pe 1:8
- Our faith in God has Salvation as its goal..... 1Pe 1:9

11. SANCTIFICATION- HOLINESS

Sanctification deals with our character and conduct as God's children. God declares us righteous (Justification) but then by the Holy Spirit we become righteous. This is an ongoing process started at repentance. Holiness means being separated from sin and fully dedicated to God.

a) SEPARATION

- In the world but not of it..... Joh 15:18-19; 17:14-16;
1Jo 4:5-6; 1Co 2:12; Jas 4:4
- Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers2Co 6:14-18
- Do not love the things of the world 1Jo 2:15-17; 1Jo 4:4
- Do not share in the sins of Babylon..... Re 18:4-5
- Old Testament circumcision represented separation unto God
 - > for those under the law Ro 2:25
 - > was meant to be a heart separated to God Ro 2:28-29

b) EXODUS FROM EGYPT REPRESENTED SEPARATION UNTO GOD

Pharaoh tempted Israel not to fully separate themselves.

Satan likewise tempts us to not fully separate ourselves unto God.

- Pharaoh-stay in the land of Egypt and sacrifice to God .Ex 8:25
 - > Satan wants us to be religious but not separated from sin.
- Pharaoh - don't go too far from Egypt Ex 8:28
 - > Satan wants us to continually associate with sin.
- Pharaoh -let only the men go, not their familiesEx 10:11
 - > Satan wants us to become religious BUT not care for our homes.
- Pharaoh-don't take your wealth with you Ex 10:24
 - > Satan wants us to use our wealth somewhere other than for God.

c) GOD SEPARATES IN HIS WORK

- Creation
 - > light is separated from darkness Ge 1:4
 - > sky is separated from earth Ge 1:6-8
 - > seas are separated from dry land Ge 1:9-10
- Our sin separates us from God Isa 59:2
- Birth separates a child from his mother Ga 1:15
- Abram is separated from his homeland Ge 12:1

- Exodus, Israel is separated from Egypt Ex 12:1-39
- Clothing and planting rules (no mixing).....De 22:9-11
- Believers are to be separated from the world 2Co 6:17-18
- Apostles are separated to minister Ro 1:1; Ac 13:2
- The righteous will be separated from the wicked Mt 25:32
- d) SANCTIFICATION-HOLINESS
- Produced by God (Father, Son & Holy Spirit)
 - > Father..... Eze 37:28; 1Th 5:23; Jude 1
 - > JesusHeb 2:11; 13:12
 - > Holy Spirit..... Ro 15:16;1Co 6:11;2Th 2:13
 - > through Jesus' work Heb 10:10; 13:12
 - > through Word of GodJoh 17:17-19; Eph 5:26
 - > by God's corrections Heb 12:10; Jas 1:2-4
- Holiness is the character of God See Index
 - > we are to be holy as He is holy 1Pe 1:16
 - > endtimes-the holy will remain holy..... Re 22:11
- Holy men & women of old 2Pe 1:21; 1Pe 3:5
- Church to be a holy priesthood & holy nation 1Pe 2:5,9
- Can't inherit the kingdom of God without holiness..... 1Co 6:9-11
- Beauty of Holiness..... 1 Ch 16:29; 2 Ch 20:21; Ps 29:2; 96:9
- Highway of Holiness..... Isa 35:8
- Rejoicing in Holiness..... Ps 60:6; 97:12; 108:7
- Body, Soul & Spirit to be sanctified..... 1Th5:23-24
- Avoidance of sexual immorality & lust..... 1Th 4:3-8

12. GLORIFICATION

a) THE MYSTERY OF THE AGES

- Christ in you, the hope of glory Col 1:27
- Christ's ultimate purpose: bringing many sons to glory..... Heb 2:10

b) WE WILL NOT ALWAYS BE IN THESE FALLEN BODIES

- Righteous will shine in the kingdom Mt 13:43
- We will be changed 1Co 15:51
- Our lowly bodies will be transformed Php 3:20-21
- What will our spiritual bodies be like?
 - > like Jesus' glorious body Php 3:21
 - > with a new splendor 1Co 15:40
 - > imperishable 1Co 15:42
 - > a spiritual body 1Co 15:44
 - > we will be like Jesus 1Co 15:49
- We shall appear with Christ in glory Col 3:4
- When will we be changed?
 - > when the last trumpet sounds 1Co 15:51-52
 - > the dead will be raised with new bodies 1Co 15:52
 - > those still alive will be changed 1Co 15:52
 - > when Jesus appears we shall be like Him..... 1Jo 3:2,3

- > because of this hope we purify ourselves 1Jo 3:2,3
- c) JESUS GLORIFIED
 - Possessed heavenly glory from all eternity Joh 17:5
 - Revealed in the incarnation Joh 1:14
 - Transfiguration Mk 9:23; Lu 9:32
 - > Moses and Elijah appear in glorious form Lu 9:30,31
 - Seen in the Crucifixion Joh 7:39; 12:28-33
 - Seen after the Resurrection Lu24:36-39
 - Seen in Revelations Re 1:13-16; 19:11-12
 - Will be seen at His second coming Mt 16:27
- d) SUFFERING
 - Endure suffering to share His glory..... Ro 8:17; 2Ti 2:10; 1Pe 5:1
 - Glory far outweighs the suffering Ro 8:18; 2Co 4:17; Eph 1:18
 - Trials test our faith and produce glory 1Pe 1:6,7
 - God's Spirit and glory rest especially on him who suffers.. 1Pe 4:14
 - Stephen saw God's glory as he suffered martyrdomAc 7:55
 - Those who pass through tribulation highly honored Re 2:10; 7:9-17
- e) QUALITIES OF JESUS' RESURRECTED BODY
 - He talked..... Mt 28:9-10,17-20
 - Disciples recognized Him Mt 28:9
 - His hands and side remained marked by wounds Joh 20:20
 - He ate with them Lu 24:42-43
 - > He is not a spirit; the body is physical Lu 24:37-40
 - > His body was touchable Lu 24:39; Joh 20:27; Mt 28:9
 - He took a different form Mk 16:12; Lu 24:13-32
 - He appeared and disappeared Lu 24:31
 - He entered through closed doors Joh 20:26
 - He did many signs Joh 20:30
 - He was lifted up to heaven Ac 1:9

F. CHURCH

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F12. SPIRITUAL GROWTH

1. CHURCH-INTRODUCTION

a) DEFINITION

- The CHURCH is made up of those who have had their sins forgiven because of the shed blood of Jesus at Calvary Re 1:5; 7:14

- Each local gathering of believers is called the church.

> where 2 or 3 are gathered in Jesus' Name,

He is there..... Mt 18:20

- Also, all the believers in the world are called the Church... Mt 16:18

Note: The Scriptures make a distinction between the local church and the universal Church. All people who believe in Jesus for salvation are a part of the Universal Church But unless they join themselves to a local body of believers, i.e. a local church, it is difficult to conceive what membership in the Church Universal means. Examples of local church: Paul wrote to local churches (e.g.. Galatia) who had specific leaders (Ro 16:1,5). Jesus too addressed local assemblies, pointing out their specific needs as a body (Re 23). These local believers gather together regularly (Heb 10:25) for prayer, teaching and fellowship (Ac 2:42). Only then can they truly understand what it is to be true members of the Universal Church made up of people from every tribe, tongue and nation (Re 5:9).

- In Greek, "church" means "the called-out ones".

b) FOUNDATION OF THE CHURCH

- The Church belongs to Jesus Christ Mt 16:18 .

- It is founded on the confession (the rock) that Jesus is the Chnst (Messiah), the Son of the Living God Mt 16:16-18

The name "Peter" means "a small stone."

The word "rock" means "a huge rock"... bedrock.

Note: It is NOT Peter himself who is the foundation of the Church, but his confession of Jesus, the "huge rock".

Note: The acknowledgment of Jesus as Christ is the issue (Mt 16:20).

- To whom are the keys of the kingdom given?

> Is it Peter only? No, see Mt 18:18; Joh20:19-23

The keys are given to ALL the disciples in the Church of Jesus.

> Note: Peter used the keys to "...open the door of faith unto the Gentiles" (Ac 14:27).

> Note: Paul used the keys "...form Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel" I Co 4:15

> For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:" Ga2:8

- Jesus Christ is the Chief Cornerstone (meaning the top stone of a pyramid) of the Church... Eph 2:20 (He is over the Church-the Head)

- The apostles and prophets arc the foundational and foundation-laying ministries Eph 2:20. (The leaders are under the Church - supporting.)

- The Spirit-empowered Church began on Day

of Pentecost..... Ac 2:1-47

> Old Testament believers - "church in the wilderness'..... Ac 7:37-38

c) NAMES GIVEN TO MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH

- Believers Ac4:32;5:14
- Saints Ac9:13; ICo 1:2;Re 13:7
- Brethren Ac 12:17;Ro 1:13;Mt 23:8-10
- Christians Ac 11:26; 26:28
- Elect..... Mk 13:27; Ro 8:33

d) DESCRIPTION OF THE CHURCH

- God's workmanship Eph 2:10
 - > created to do good works Eph 2:10
 - > created to be holy Eph 4:24
- Citizens of God's Kingdom Eph2:19
 - > people of God (separated unto God) 2Co 6:16-17
- Members of God's Household Eph 2:19; ITi 3:15
 - > children of God Eph 1:5; 3:14-15; 5:8
- Temple of God Eph 2:20-22
 - > God lives in it by His Spirit Eph 2:22; ICo 3:16
 - > to be a holy priesthood IPe 2:5
- Bride of Christ Eph 5:25-32; Re 19:7; 21:2; 22:17
 - > loved by Christ..... Eph 5:25
 - > gave Himself for the Church Eph 5:25
 - > cleansed the Church Eph 5:26
 - > they will be united Eph 5:31-32
 - > Christ as the Bridegroom Job 3:29; 2Co 11:2
 - > wedding supper of the Lamb Re 19:9
 - > great mystery - Jesus & Church..... Eph 5:29-32
- Body of Christ..... Eph 1:22-23; 4:15; ICo 12:27; Col 1:24
 - > Jesus lives in us Ga 2:20
 - > Christ as the Head Eph 1:22; 4:15; 5:23; Col 1:18; 2:19
 - > interconnected Eph4:11-16;ICo12:26;Ga6:2
 - > unity Eph 4:4-6
- Temple of the Holy Spirit Eph 2:20-22; ICo 3:16-17; 6:19; IPe 2:4-8
 - > people are living stones IPe 2:5
 - > Jesus is the Chief Cornerstone IPe 2:6; Eph 2:20
 - > Apostles and Prophets are the foundation Eph 2:20
- A Family Eph2:19
 - > all have one Father Isa 63:16; 9:6; Ho 11:1; Ro 8:15; Job 1:12; Ga 4:5,6; 2Co 6:18
 - > called brothers and sisters Mt 12:50; ITi 5:2; Jas 2:15
- A Flock Isa 40:11; Ezc 34; Zee 9:16; Joh 10; Lu 12:32; Ac 20:29
 - > Jesus is the (Chief) Shepherd Joh 10; Mt 18:10-14; IPe 5:1-4

- > We are His sheep Isa 40:11; Lu 12:32; Joh 10
- > False shepherds called hirelings Joh 10:13
- > False brethren called wolves in sheep's clothing.... Mt 7:15; Ac 20:29
- > Satan is the (Chief) wolf..... Lu 10:3; Joh 10:12

c) ISRAEL AND THE CHURCH

- Much of what belonged only to Israel is now for the Whole Church.
..... Ro 2:28-29; Ga 3:26-29; Ro 4:11-12,16-18; 9:7-8
- Yet there is a definite future for Israel as a nationRo 11:1-36
 - > God did not reject His peopleRo 11:1
 - > a remnant was chosen by grace..... Ro 11:2-6
 - > Israel erred by trying to be saved by works Ro 11:6-7
 - > Israel's fall was the cause of Gentile's salvation... Ro 11:11
 - > Gentile nations will make Israel jealous Ro 11:11
 - > Israel will again be accepted, at the end Ro 11:12,15
 - > Israel as a natural branch is easily grafted in Ro 11:24
 - > Israel is hard against the gospel now Ro 11:25
 - > Israel will enter when God finishes with
the Gentiles..... Ro 11:25-27
 - > God's promises to Israel are not changed Ro 11:29
 - > Israel will enter by grace, not works..... Ro 11:30-32

f) THE CHURCH PICTURED IN EPHESIANS

- Gathering a church Eph 1:22
- Growing a body Eph 1:23
- Building a temple/building Eph 2:21-22
- Raising a family Eph 3:15
- Maturing a man Eph2:15;4:13
- Adorning a bride Eph5:23-33
- Aiming/training a soldier Eph 6:10-18

2. THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

a) GOD'S COMMISSION TO HIS PEOPLE

- Adam, Noah: be fruitful and multiply Ge 1:28;9:1-7
- Abraham: through you all nations blessed Ge 12:1-3; 18:18
 - > Repeated to Isaac..... Ge 26:4
 - > Repeated to Jacob Ge 28:14
 - > Revealed to David ICh 16:15-24
 - > Revealed to Korah Ps 47
 - > Revealed to Isaiah Isa 49:12; 11:9-12
- Moses: to be a kingdom of priests Ex 19:6
- Jesus: the Great Commission spoken Mt 28: Mk 16: Lu 24
- Paul: the gospel to the Gentiles Ac 9:15;Ro 15:7-21
- Peter: the gospel to all peoples Ac 10:9-48;11:15-18; IPe 2:9

b) GOD'S LOVE FOR THE NATIONS

- Many heathen in the Old Testament believed in Jehovah
 - >Melchizedek Ge 14:18-20
 - >Jethro..... Ex 18:9-12

- > Nebuchadnezzar Da 4:34-37
- > Ruth Ru 1:16,17
- > Rahab Jos 6:25; Heb 11:31
- > Ninevites Jonah
- > woman of Zeraheth IKi 17:8
- > Naaman 2Ki5:15
- God's children testify to Him before the nations
- > Joseph-Egyptians > Elisha-Syrians
- > Naomi-Moabites > David-Philistines
- > Moscs-Midianites > Elijah- Phoenicians
- > Solomon- Arabians > Daniel-Babylonians
- > the spies — Canaanites > Jonah — Assyrians
- People of every nation will be in the kingdom Da 7:14; Re 7:9,10
- > God's Spirit will be poured out on all flesh Joe 2:28
- > the nations will desire God's blessings..... Isa 2:2,3; 55:5,6
Isa 60:3; Zec 8:23
- > John's great vision of a kingdom full of people..... Re 5:9,10;7:9,10
- c) JESUS, THE MESSIAH FOR ALL PEOPLES
- The four women of Jesus'genealogy are Gentiles Mt 1
>Tamar-Canaanite >Rahab-Canaanite >Ruth-Moabite > Bathsheba-Hittite
- Prophecies concerning Jesus (Luke)
- > Zechariah's prophecy Lu 1:72-79
- > Simeon's blessing..... Lu 2:29-32
- > the Angels' announcement..... Lu 2:10,14
- > John's proclamation Lu 3:4-6
- Jesus' ministry as seen in Matthew
- > Kings of East (perhaps China) come
to worship Him..... Mt 2:1-12
- > begins ministry among the Gentiles Mt 4:15-23
- > told disciples to love their enemiesMt 5:44
- > announces all nations are included in
His kingdom.....Mt 8:11
- > prepares disciples to testify to the Gentiles Mt 10:18
- > ministry to the Gentiles prophesiedMt 12:18-21
- > only two people said to have great faith
- Roman centurion Mt 8:10
- Syrophenidan woman.....Mt 15:28
- > Jesus feeds 4000 Gentiles (Tyre/Sidonese) Mt 15:29-39
- > Kingdom to be taken from Israel, given
to Gentiles Mt 21:42-43
- > Kingdom to be preached to all people
before the endMt 24:14
- > disciples to be made from all nations Mt 28:19
- d) MISSION AND THE BOOK OF ACTS
- The Baptism in the Holy Spirit: power to testify..... Ac 1:8; 4:7-10
> Jerusalem = locally > Judea = regionally

- > Samaria = across cultural, racial barriers
- > To the uttermost parts of the earth - to all peoples
- The outpouring on Pentecost
 - > gift of tongues enabled 12 nations to hear the truth Ac 2:5-13
 - > Peter has new power and boldness to testify Ac 2:14-40
 - > the Apostles begin to perform signs and wonders Ac 2:43,3:
 - > the Church experiences tremendous growth Ac 2:41; 4:4; 6:7
- Yet the Apostles still unwilling
 - > testifying on Pentecost to nations was involuntary..... Ac 2:5-13
 - > for 20 years didn't take gospel outside Jerusalem. Ac 5:28:6:7
 - > again involuntarily, God scatters them via persecution..... Ac 8:1-4
 - > finally, Philip preaches to foreigners voluntarily... Ac 8:4-17
 - > God confronts Peter's unwillingness three times.... Ac 10:
 - > Peter meets opposition for this Ac 11:1-18
 - > finally, the church leaders acknowledge missions..Ac 15:
 - > by Paul's death gospel reached whole Roman Empire Ro 15:18-24
- The church in Antioch became first to SEND missionaries Ac 13:1-4
- Paul became the first missionary of the Church Ac 13:1-4
- Acts records Paul's 3 missionary journeys Ac 13: -28:
- Acts strongly supports a team mission concept Ac 16:2;20:4

3. GOSPEL-THE GOOD NEWS

The gospel (good news) is that Jesus has come. Jesus died on the cross for our sins to mend our broken relationship with God. Jesus is the Savior (deliverer) Who came to save (deliver) us from the penalty of sin (death) and the power of sin (bad habits and other bondages). Through faith in Him and the victory He won through His death, burial and resurrection, we are reconciled to God. See ICo 15:1-4; Heb 2:14,15; Ro 3:21-26.

a) PRECONDITIONS TO THE GOSPEL

- see Fall of Man Section D5
- see SinSection D1

b) CONTENT

- Promised in the Old Testament Ro 1:2; 2 Pe 1:18-21
- foretold Ge 3:15; Isa 29:18; 41:27; 52:7; (61:1-3 with Lu 4:18,19)
- Jesus Christ is the fulfillment Ro 1:3-4
- God frees us from wrath through Christ 2Co 5:19
- Concerns Jesus Christ Ro 1:1-4
 - > born of a virgin Isa 7:14; Mt 1:23
 - > truly flesh, from King David's line Ro 1:3-4; 2Ti 2:8; see B11
 - > truly the Son of God..... Ro 1:4; see B7, B8
 - > lived a completely sinless life Heb 4:15

- > crucified on the Roman cross Ac 2:23
- > Christ died for our sins ICo 15:3
- > Jesus' blood satisfied God Ac 20:28; Ro 5:9-11;
Heb 9:14-15
- > He was buried ICo 15:4
- > resurrected from the dead..... Ro 13-4; ICo 15:4; Ac 2:24
- > appeared to many..... ICo 15:5-8
- > ascended into heaven - glorified Ac 1:9-11; IPe 1:21
- > will come again as Judge 2Th 1:7-8; Ac 1:9-11
- Our part in responding to the Gospel
 - > we must confess Jesus is Lord..... Ro 10:9
 - > we must believe God resurrected Him Ro 10:9
 - > we must repent and be forgiven Ac 3:19; 5:31; Ro 2:4;
2Pe 3:9; Lu 24:47

c) CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GOSPEL

- Is the power of God to save us Ro 1:16; ICo 1:18; 15:1-2
- Shows the grace of God Ac 14:3;20:32
- Acceptance of the Gospel is associated with
 - > repentance..... Mk 1:15
 - > faith, needing to believe Mk 1:15; Heb 4:2
- First announced to Mary Lu 1:26-38
 - > Mary was a virgin Lu 1:27,34
 - > Jesus was a child of the Holy Spirit Lu 1:35
- Announced to the shepherds Lu 2:8-20
- Brings peace Eph 6:15
- Brings hope Col 1:23;IPe 1:3
- Brings life 2Ti 1:10
- Is preached to everyone Mk 16:15;Col 1:23;Ac 20:21
- Is absolute and exclusive..... Ga 1:8,9
- Is associated with
 - > sufferings Mk8:35; 10:29,30; 2Ti 3:12
 - > healing..... Mt 4:23
 - > miracles as confirmation Ac 14:3

d) PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL BY THE APOSTLES

- Peter > on Pentecost..... Ac 2:14-41 > cripple is healed..... Ac 3:11-26
 - >Sanhedrin..... Ac 4:8-12 > escape from prison.. Ac 5:29-32
- Stephen before the Sanhedrin Ac 7:2-53
- Paul > at Antioch..... Ac 13:16-41 > in Athens..... Ac 17:22-31
 - > before Felix..... Ac 24:10-21 > before Agrippa..... Ac 26:2-29

4. THE GOSPEL, AS OUTLINED IN ROMANS

a) PRECONDITIONS

- Gospel was PROMISED in the Old Testament Ro 1:2
- Because of ADAM, we all inherited death Ro5:12-14
- All are under WRATH of God

- > the GENTILE nations are under God's wrath Ro 1:18-32
- > the JEWS are under God's wrath..... Ro 2:1-29
- > Jews and Gentiles alike under SIN Ro 3:9
- > all need to be SAVED because all have sinned Ro3:23
- Purpose of the LAW was to point out sin..... Ro 7:7-25
- Gospel is POWER OF GOD for salvation..... Ro 1:16
- b) COMPONENTS OF THE GOSPEL
- Concerns JESUS CHRIST, God's Son Ro 13-4
 - > truly FLESH, from King David's line Ro 1:3-4
 - > truly the Son of God (DIVINE) Ro 1:3-4
 - > RESURRECTED from the dead Ro 13-4
 - > Jesus Christ if our LORD Ro 13-4
- Crucial element for us is FAITH (believing) Ro 1:53
 - > all people called to BELIEVE in Jesus Ro 1:5-6
 - > a righteousness from God by FAITH Ro 1:17
 - > a righteousness APART FROM THE LAW Ro3:21
 - > this righteousness is by FAITH in Jesus..... Ro 3:22
 - > redemption is by God's GRACE Ro 3:24
 - > our part is to have Faith in His BLOOD Ro3:25
 - > saved by FAITH, not by law Ro3:27-31
 - > Abraham was JUSTIFIED BY FAITH, not by works..... Ro 4:1-25
 - > faith brings PEACE with God Ro 5:1-2
 - > God will save us because of JESUS' BLOOD..... Ro5:9-11
 - > all depends on God's MERCY, not our efforts Ro9:16
 - > salvation by grace, NOT WORKS Ro 11:5-6
- c) CONTENT OF THE GOSPEL
- God's LOVE while we were yet sinners Ro5:8
 - > Christ died for us
- Our JUSTIFICATION came by Christ Jesus Ro3:24
- Christ DIED for us while we were powerless..... Ro 5:6
- Christ ROSE from the dead Ro 145
- We must CONFESS Jesus is Lord..... Ro 10:9
- We must BELIEVE God resurrected Him Ro 10:9
- We are to be BAPTIZED Ro 6:3-14
- God gives the HOLY SPIRIT to us Ro 5:5
- We are to TURN AWAY FROM SIN Ro 6:1-23
- Life in the Spirit and our ADOPTION Ro 8:1-17
- Prepared for the COMING OF THE LORD JESUS Ro 13:8-14
- We will all be JUDGED by God (not man) Ro 14:10
- Judging according to the GOSPEL Ro 2:16
- LIVING and the DEAD are under His lordship..... Ro 14:9
- Future GLORIFICATION..... Ro 8:18-39
- Likely to SUFFER for our faith Ro 53
- Suffering works CHARACTER in us Ro5:3-4
- Jew or Gentile all SAVED similarly Ro 10:12-13

- ISRAEL will be saved when the fullness of the GENTILES have been saved Ro 11:25
- God's intention is that ALL NATIONS believe..... Ro 16:26

5. THE GOSPEL AS OUTLINED IN EPHESIANS, PHILIPPIANS & COLOSSIANS

a) GOSPEL	Eph	Php	Col
- Salvation is in the HEAVENLY realm	1:3		1:5
- Concerns Christ JESUS			
> truly GOD		2:6	1:15,2:9
> truly HUMAN.....		2:7-8	2:9
- We were chosen and PREDESTINED in Christ	1:4,5,11		
> BEFORE THE CREATION of the world	1:4		
> to be HOLY and BLAMELESS in God's sight ..	1:4		
> to be ADOPTED as His sons through Jesus Christ..	1:5		
> in accordance with HIS PLEASURE and will	1:5		
> to the praise of His glorious GRACE	1:6,12		
- In Jesus we have REDEMPTION through HIS BLOOD... 1:7			1:14
> the FORGIVENESS of sins	1:7		
> in accordance with the riches of His GRACE ...	1:7		
- Purpose - CHRIST AS FIRST in heaven & earth	1:9-10		
- We need to BELIEVE the gospel of truth	1:13		
- Believers marked with HOLY SPIRIT	1:13		
> as a deposit guaranteeing our INHERITANCE... 1:14.....	1:6		
> full inheritance waits until the rest are saved	1:14		1:12
- Christ's RESURRECTION from death	1:19-21		
- the same POWER works in believers	1:18-19		
> Christ is seated at the right hand of God.....	1:20	2:9	
- Christ is SUPREME	1:22	2:9-11	
> the Church is a BODY (not merely individuals)..	1:23		1:18
- We were DEAD in our sins.....	2:1-3		
> we followed the ways of the WORLD	2:2		1:21
> we followed the ruler of the air (SATAN)	2:2		
> we satisfied our SINFUL NATURE	2:3		
- We were under God's WRATH.....	2:3		
> God's LOVE, MERCY & GRACE saves us.....	2:4-9	2:1	
> we are NOT SAVED BY OURSELVES OR BY WORKS.....	2:8-9		
> GOOD WORKS were prepared for us in advance	2:10		
- BLOOD OF CHRIST reconciles us to God.....	2:11-13		
- LAW OF MOSES IS ABOLISHED in Christ	2:15	3:9	2:14
> Jews and Gentiles are saved THROUGH THE CROSS	2:16,17	3:18	3:11
- GOD the FATHER is our destination	2:18		
> CHRIST JESUS, the Son, made the way.....	2:18		
> SPIRIT leads us to the Father by Son's way	2:18		
- God lives in and among us by His Spirit	2:22		
- WE WILL BE KEPT if we continue in our faith			1:21-23
- We also share in His SUFFERING		1:29	1:24
- Christ Jesus is COMING AGAIN		1:6; 3-20	3:4

- Our GLORIFICATION with JESUS 3:4; 1:27

6. FALSE GOSPELS

a) CHURCH HAS SAFEGUARDS AGAINST FALSE TEACHING

- Church ministry to protect believers Eph 4:11-16
- Fellowship of believers Heb 10:23-25
- Word of God (BIBLE) is truth Joh 17:17
 - > God's Word is exalted even above His Name Ps 138:2
 - > transgressors do not keep God's Word Ps 119:158
- Holy Spirit guides us... Isa 30:21; Pr 3:5-6;
Joh 10:4; 16:12-13
- Be firm in the faith 2Pe 3:17

b) GOD'S JUDGMENT ON FALSE TEACHERS

- Condemnation to those who teach falsely Ga 1:8,9

c) FALSE TEACHERS

- Promise liberty but bring bondage 2Pe 2:19; Ga 2:4
 - > falsehood does not satisfy Isa 32:6
- Teach damnable heresies 2Pe 1:21-2:2
 - > and the people love it Jer 5:31
- Have false visions and false prophecies Jer 14:14-15; Jer 23:25-32
- Have false dreams Jer 23:32; Zec 10:2
- Pretend to be Christians (sheep) Mt 7:15; Ga 2:4; 2Pe 2:1-3
 - > watch people's lives, not only words Mt 7:16-20
- Sometimes do great signs and miracles Mt 24:24; Mk 13:22
- False apostles 2Co 11:13
- False teachers 2Pe 2:1
- False prophets La 2:14; Eze 13:1-23;
IJo 4:1; Re 16:13; 19:20
 - > test for a false prophet De 13:1-3
- False brethren..... Ga 2:4; 2Co 11:26
- False Christs Mt 24:24; Mk 13:22

d) TYPE OF FALSE GOSPELS

- Some preach
 - > another Jesus 2Co 11:4; 2Jo 1:7
 - > another spirit 2Co 11:4
 - > another gospel 2Co 11:4; Ga 1:6-7;
2Ti 4:3-4
- Some teach a Christ-less gospel 2Pe 2:1
 - > fables & genealogies ITi 1:3-7; Heb 13:9
- human philosophy Col 2:8; Mt 15:9; Mk 7:7
 - > material science Col 2:8
- Some teach harsh treatment of the body..... Col 2:16-17
 - > not eating some foods Col 2:16-17,20-22
 - > mistreating the body Col 2:23
- Sabbaths and special days Col 2:16
- Marriage is forbidden ITi 4:3

- Preaching for material gain..... 2Co 2:17;4:2
- Preached by ignorant people2Pe 3:16
- Worship of angels.....Col 2:18
- "Gospel" of law and religious works Ga 3:1-5; Ac 15:24; ITi 4:3
- Special foods (water, oil, etc..)Heb 13:9
- Idols Ro 1:18-23; Zec 10:2
- People deified..... Ro 1:23;
Ac 12:22; 14:11; 28:6
- Demons worshipedDe 32:17; Ps 106:37;
Re 9:20; 13:4
- False Gods and Goddesses
 - > Baal.....Jdg 2:11-13
 - > Queen of heaven (Mother & Child)Jer 44:17,25
 - > Tammuz (Child of Mother & Child) Eze 8:14
 - > Many, many others..
- Heavens-sun, moon, stars De 4:19; 2Ki 17:16; Eze 8:16

7. CHURCH GOVERNMENT

Overseers, elders and deacons are the three ministries appointed to see that the needs of the members of the local church are met.

- a) GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS IPe5:1-4
 - Fear God, TRUSTWORTHY, hate dishonest gain Ex 18:21
 - MULTITUDE OF COUNSELORS brings safety Pr 11:14; 15:22; 24:6
 - He who leads must be SERVANT of all..... Mk9:35; 10:42-45
 - Must know the voice of God ICh 14:10-17
- b) OVERSEER (BISHOP) QUALIFICATIONS
 - Family concerns
 - > must not have more than one wife ITi 3:2
 - > must manage his family well ITi 3:4
 - > his children must be obedient..... ITi 3:4
 - Character
 - > not overbearing Tit 1:7
 - > self-controlled Tit 1:8; ITi 3:2
 - > not violent, but gentle..... Tit 1:7; ITi 3:3
 - > not quick-tempered nor quarrelsome Tit 1:7; ITi 3:3
 - > disciplined, moderate in habits Tit 1:8; ITi 3:2
 - Reputation
 - > good reputation with outsiders ITi 3:7
 - > blameless, above any reproach Tit 1:7; ITi 3:2
 - > not given to much wine Tit 1:7; ITi 3:3
 - > careful with money Tit 1:7; ITi 3:3
 - > hospitable Tit 1:8; ITi3:2
 - > upright, respectable Tit 1:8; ITi3:2
 - Ministry Abilities
 - > loves what is good Tit 1:8
 - > holy Tit 1:8

- > must firmly believe the truth Tit 1:9
 - > must not be a recent convert ITi 3:6
 - > must be able to teach Tit 1:9 ITi 3:2
- c) ELDERS
- Term seems to refer to all the leadership of the local church
 - > apostles and elders in the Jerusalem church..... Ac 15:2,4,6,22
 - > Paul sends for elders of Ephesus
(presumably these are all of the leaders) Ac 20:17
 - > Peter is an apostle and elder IPe 5:1
 - > the saints, the overseers and deacons Php 1:1
 - Qualifications same as for overseer Tit 1:6-9
 - > "overseer" and "elder" used interchangeably here
 - Elders direct the affairs of the church ITi5:17
 - Elders are supported by the church ITi 5:17
 - > especially teachers
 - Some of the elders teach and preach ITi5:17
 - The elders of the church pray for the sick Jas5:14
 - Appointed (Ordained)
 - > by the apostles..... Ac 14:23
 - > with prayer and fasting..... Ac 14:23
 - > in every church, in every town..... Ac 14:23; Tit 1:5
 - > Titus was to appoint elders Tit 1:5
- d) DEACONS (ATTENDANT, SERVANT)
- One of the categories of leadership Php 1:1
 - It is a very honorable position ITi3:8-13
 - Qualifications similar to overseers ITi 3:8-12
 - Possibly these are the original 7 deacons Ac6:1-7

8. CORRECTION & FORGIVENESS

a) CHURCH DISCIPLINE

- Apostle Paul disciplines unrepentant sinners
..... ICo 5:1-5; 2Co 12:19-21; 2Co 13:2; 2Co 13:10; ITi 1:20
- Warn a divisive person twice, then separate him..... Tit 3:10
 - > if he does not repent, separate him from the church
- Cause of leadership quarrel..... Mt 20:20-28
 - > strive for supreme position like unbelieversMk 10:42-45
 - > a true church leader is a servant..... Mk 9:35; 10:42-45
- Discipline of a church leader
 - > at least 2 witnesses are required ITi 5:19
 - > if sin, rebuked publicly so others are warned ITi 5:20
- 2 or more witnesses needed Nu 35:30; Mt 18:16;
2Co 13:1; ITi 5:19
- Careful not to be tempted by sin of those being helped..... Ga 6:1

Note:

The goal of all church discipline is never to condemn, but to restore. Therefore, discipline must be motivated by love toward the fallen, that his soul might be saved (ICo

5:5), and must not be so harsh as to cause excessive sorrow (2Co 2:5-11).

b) RULE OF LOVE

- Old Testament rule-eye for an eye (no excess) Ex 21:24; De 19:21
- Love your enemies Mt 5:43-45; Lu 6:27;
Ro 12:20; 1Th 5:15
 - > pray for those who persecute you Mt 5:44
 - > Examples: Jesus and Stephen Lu 23:34; Ac 7:59-60
- Reaffirm our love for fallen brethren 2Co 2:8
- The importance of rebuking sin in love Re 3:19; Pr 27:5,6;
Job 5:17,18

c) RULE OF FORGIVENESS

- Forgive in the same way as you want forgiveness Mt 6:14; 18:22-35;
Mk 11:25; Eph 4:32
- Rebuke and, if repentance, then forgive Lu 17:3-4
- Joseph forgives his brothers Ge 45:15; 50:15-21

d) RULE OF NO CONDEMNATION

- Don't condemn, you'll be condemned the same way..... Mt 7:1-5
 - > we are to discern between good and evil Mt 7:15-20
- Don't be judgmental Ro 14:13; 1Co 8:7-13
 - > rather, set no stumbling block for your brother

e) PROPER PERSONAL RELATIONS OF GREAT IMPORTANCE

- First the natural, then the spiritual 1Co 15:46
- Before we minister to the Lord
 - > first our earthly relationships must be right..... Mt 5:23-26
 - > first our relationships, then prayer to God Mk 11:25
- Procedure for a brother who sins against you Mt 18:15-18
 - > Note: it doesn't say "annoys you" but "sins against you"
 - > go to him alone and try to win him
 - > if no resolution, take 1 or 2 others with you
 - > if no resolution, take him before the church
 - > if no resolution, he must be put outside the church
- Forgive, forgive, forgive Mt 18:21-22; Lu 17:4;
Col 3:13
 - > be reconciled before night comes Eph 4:26
- Husband - wives, so prayers are not hindered 1Pe 3:7
- A man of wisdom overlooks an offense Pr 19:11

f) REPROOF OR CORRECTION

- Word of God is our standard 2Ti 4:2; Tit 2:13-15
- He who listens to a wise rebuke is helped Pr 25:12
- He who is stiff-necked is destroyed Pr 29:1
- Peter reproved by Jesus..... Mk 8:33
- 11 rebuked for disbelieving His resurrection Mk 16:14
- The Lord rebukes His sons Heb 12:5; Re 3:19
 - > proves that we are legitimate sons Heb 12:5-8
 - > is good for us, producing holiness Heb 12:10
 - > never pleasant but bears fruit of righteousness Heb 12:11

9. GIFTED PEOPLE IN THE CHURCH UNIVERSAL

..... Eph 4:11-17

a) PURPOSE OF THE 5-FOLD MINISTRY

- To prepare God's people for service Eph 4:12
- To unify the faith of God's people..... Eph 4:13
- To mature the people spiritually Eph 4:13
- To protect against false doctrine Eph 4:14

b) APOSTLE: Founder of local churches (more than an evangelist)

- Jesus first and greatest Apostle Heb 3:1
 - Apostles empowered to do miracles Mt 10:1; Mk 16:20;
Lu 9:1; Ac 2:43
 - Were ordinary men Ac 4:13; Mt 4:18
 - Called by God, Jesus, Holy Spirit ICo 1:1; Ac 20:24; 13:2,4
 - The twelve were for Jewish Church, Israel..... Mt 10:5,6; 19:28; Lu 22:30
 - Ascension Apostles for the Gentile Church Eph 4:11,12
 - > Were foundational (supporting, not ruling) Eph 2:20; Re 21:14
 - > Paul ICo 9:1; 2Co 1:1
 - > Barnabas Ac 14:14
 - > Andronicus Ro 16:7
 - > Junias (a woman apostle) Ro 16:7
 - > Silvanus ITh 1:1; 2:6
 - > Timothy ITh 1:1; 2:6
 - > Titus 2Co 8:23
 - > James, the Lord's brother Ga 1:19
 - > Others ICo 9:5
 - Authority to correct the Church ICo 5:3-5; 2Th 3:6
 - Apostles teach, preach, evangelize Ac 2:42; ITi 2:7;
2Ti 1:11; Acts
 - > appointing local leadership Ac 14:23
 - Paul's life as an apostle ICo 4:9-21; 2Co 11:21-12:13
 - False apostles 2Co 11:13-15
 - > see False Gospels Section F6
- ### c) PROPHET (sec Prophesying)..... Section F10
- Jesus Christ Chief Prophet..... De 18:15; Ac 3:22
 - > example of Jesus' prophetic ministry Mt 24:1-51; Mk 10:32-34
 - Spoke by the influence of the Holy Spirit..... Lu 1:67; 2Pe 1:21
 - Required to speak all of and only what God spoke Eze 3:10; De 18:20
 - Prophets and teachers in church at Antioch Ac 13:1
 - Prophets:
 - > Agabus, Anna Ac 11:28; 21:10; Lu 2:36
 - > Judas and Silas Ac 15:32
 - > Paul, Peter, John prophesy about false prophets ... ITi 4,1
 - Others can prophesy as well
 - > Joel, your sons and daughters will prophesy Joe 2:28

- > Philip's Daughters Ac 21:9
 - False Prophets to increase at end times Mt 24:11,24;
2Pe 2:1-2; Re (all)
 - > prophesy lies in Jesus' Name..... Jer 14:14
 - > see False Gospels Section F6
- Note: Not all who prophesy are prophets (ICo 14:31,32). The office of prophet carries with it the divine ability to know the future at times (e.g. Agabus) and to perceive what God is doing and thereby give direction to the Church (Ac 13:1).
- d) EVANGELIST - Proclaimer of the Gospel of Jesus
- Jesus as the great Evangelist Mk 1:14; Lu 4:43
 - Philip the evangelist led by the Holy Spirit Ac 8:26-39; 21:8
 - Philip the evangelist preached Jesus Ac 8:35
 - Paul exhorts Timothy to evangelism 2Ti4:5
 - Philip as an example
 - > one of the seven Ac6:5 > preached in SamariaAc 8:5
 - > led of the Spirit (angel)..... Ac8:26 > preached to the Ethiopian..... Ac8:26-30
 - > first served faithfully as deacon Ac 6:5
- e) PASTOR (SHEPHERD) One who cares for the people
- "Shepherd" is used mainly in relation to Jesus IPe 2:25; 5:1-4
 - > Jesus as Good Shepherd Heb 13:20; Joh 10:11,14;
IPe 2:25
 - > there shall be one fold and one Shepherd Joh 10:16; Heb 13:20
 - Shepherd contrasted with a hireling Joh 10:12
 - People need a shepherd Mt 9:36; Mk 6:34
 - The one and only reference to "pastor" in Epistles..... Eph 4:11
 - God promises the Church pastors Jer 3:15
 - Pastor keeps flock together..... Eze 34:5
 - Lead the flock primarily through example IPe 5:3
 - Are willing to lay down their lives for the sheep Joh 10:11
 - Are told to feed the flock of God (Church) Ac 20:28
- f) TEACHER - One who is gifted to teach the Word of God
- Jesus as teacher Mt 4:23
 - Prophets and teachers in church at Antioch Ac 13:1
 - Not many should be teachers Jas 3:1
 - Paul taught in Antioch, Corinth, Rome..... Ac 11:26;15:35;18:11;28:31
 - Apollos taught before the Holy Spirit Ac 18:25
 - > after he was better informed Ac 18:26
 - Elders must be able to teach..... Tit 1:9
 - Requires STUDY to be able to teach well2Ti2:15
 - False teachers, see False Gospels SectionF6

10. SPIRITUAL GIFTS IN THE BODY OF CHRIST

a) LIST OF SPIRITUAL ACTIVITIES WITHIN

- THE CHURCH BODY..... Ro 12:3-8
- All gifts are according to God's grace Ro 12:6
 - All gifts should be ministered with love ICo 13:1-13

- Eagerly desire spiritual gifts ICo 14:1
- b) PROPHESYING
 - According to his faith Ro 12:6
 - Because the Lord has spoken Am 3:8
 - By the Holy Spirit..... Lu 1:67; 2Pe 1:21
 - Seek especially to prophesy ICo 14:1
 - To edify, exhort, comfort..... ICo 14:3
 - Serves the believer, not unbeliever..... ICo 14:22
 - All may prophesy, one by one..... ICo 14:31
 - Other judge the words of the prophets ICo 14:29
 - Tongues and interpretation equal prophecy ICo 14:5
 - Must not be forbidden ICo 14:39; ITh 5:20
 - Someone should be available to interpret..... ICo 14:27
 - See Prophet as a specially gifted person Section P9
- c) SERVING Ro 12:7
 - Distribution of food Ac 6:1-7
 - Dorcas with sewing Ac 9:39
 - Good service is rewarded by God Mt 25:19-23,34-36
 - > bad service is punished Mt 25:24-30,41-46
 - Jesus as our example Mt 20:28; Php 2:7
 - > Jesus washes the disciples' feet Joh 13:1-17
 - Should serve as unto the Lord, not unto men Eph 6:5-7; Col 3:22-23
- d) TEACHING..... Ro 12:7
 - See Teacher as a specially gifted person Section F9
 - See qualifications of Elders, Overseers Section F7
 - A mature Christian ought to begin to teach Heb 5:12-14
 - Older women should teach the younger ones Tit 2:3-5
 - Parents are told to teach their children De 6:7; Pr 4:1-9; Eph 6:4
 - Teaching commanded in the Great Commission Mt 28:20
- c) ENCOURAGING Ro 12:8
 - Barnabas called Son of Encouragement..... Ac 4:36-37
 - Moses as encourager Ex 14:13-14
 - Jesus encourages Paul in prison Ac 23:11
 - Lord's coming encourages us regarding death ITh 4:13-18
 - We should encourage one another daily Heb 3:12,13
- f) GIVING
 - With generosity Ro 12:8
 - See Giving - Tithes and Offerings Section G8
 - Barnabas sold a field and gave to the church..... Ac 4:34-37
 - False giving - Ananias & Sapphira Ac 5:1-11
- g) LEADERSHIP
 - With diligence Ro 12:8
 - Fear God, hate covetousness, love the truth Ex 18:21
 - Leader is the servant of all Mt 20:26
 - See Government for overall church leadership Section F7
 - See Church Government Section F7

- See also False Teachers SectionF6

h) MERCY (COMFORT)

- Cheerfully..... Ro 12:8
- To those in distress Lu 10:37
- To the poor.....Pr 14:31
- To the backslider Lu 15:18-20; 2Co 2:6-8
- Comfort others with the comfort we've received..... 2Co 13-7
- Mercy and truth are associated Ps 25:10; 85:8-10
- Mercy and true judgment are associated Zec 7:9; Mt 23:23
- Mercy rejoices over judgment Jas 2:13
- Mercy and forgiveness are associated
 - > God's mercy and forgiveness to those who love Him..
..... Ex 34:7; Nu 14:18; Ps 86:5; Da 9:9
 - > God shows us mercy in the same way we show others mercy..
..... Mt 6:12-15; Mk 11:25-26; Lu 637-38; 11:4; Eph 4:32; Col 3:13
 - > to be generous in forgiving others Mt 18:21; Lu 17:3-4
 - > Gospel is a message of mercy and forgiveness Ac 13:38; 26:18

11. SPIRITUAL GIFTS IN CHURCH MEETINGS

a) 1 Co 12:1-26

Description of various SPIRITUAL GIFTS that function when the church body MEETS, in order to allow God to minister to the needs of people attending the meeting.

b) INTRODUCTION

- Pagans are led by dumb idols..... ICo 12:2
- The Spirit of God gives us discernment ICol2:1-3
 - > the Spirit of God never curses Jesus ICo 123
 - > the Spirit of God affirms Jesus is Lord ICo 123
- One Spirit, one Lord, one God ICo 12:4-6
- Spiritual gifts are to benefit of the Church..... ICo 12:7,25-26
- Each person has some Spiritual gifting..... ICo 12:7
- The Church is a unit ICo 12:12
- In many ways we are all alike
 - > all baptized by one Spirit (Holy Spirit) ICo 12:13
 - > all belong to one Body (Church of Jesus) ICo 12:13
- We have different functions ICo 12:14-26
 - > differences are necessary ICo 12:19-20
 - > we all depend on each other ICo 12:21-26
 - > they must all work together for unity ICo 12:25

c) DIFFERENT SPIRITUAL GIFTS -

d) THREE SPEAKING GIFTS

- Ability to speak in tongues ICol2:10
 - > Pentecost Ac 2:4
 - > Gentile believers, Cornelius..... Ac 10:46
 - > We note three types of this gift:
tongues as a sign to unbelievers..... ICo 14:22; Ac 2:4ff

- tongues as personal prayer language ICo 14:18
- tongues spoken publicly (and interpreted) in church..... ICo 14:19
- Ability to interpret these tongues..... ICo 12:10
 - > see under Prophecy..... see below
- Prophecy ICo 12:10
 - > seek especially to prophesy ICo 14:1-5
 - > see Prophecy..... Section F10
 - > is imperfect until Christ comes ICo 13:9
 - > should be judged ICo 14:29
 - > upbuilds, encourages and consoles ICo 14:3
- c) THREE KNOWING (revelation) GIFTS
 - Word of Knowledge ICo 12:8
 - > Supernatural knowledge of information
 - > Jesus has unexpected knowledge Joh 1:47-50; 4:17-18
 - > Peter has unexpected knowledge Ac 5:3; 8:23
 - Word of Wisdom ICo 12A
 - > Supernatural wisdom for a situation
 - > Jesus uses supernatural wisdom Mt 21:25-27; 22:17-22
 - Ability to distinguish spirits 1Co 12:10
 - > Paul and the slave girl..... Ac 16:16-18
- f) THREE POWER (action) GIFTS
 - Faith..... ICo 12:9
 - > Believing God for the impossible
 - > Jesus and-the fig tree Mt 21:19-22
 - > Paul and shipwreck Ac 27:21-26
 - Gifts of healing ICo 12:9
 - > imparting God's healing to the sick
 - > Jesus, see Healings Section B9,12
 - > Peter & John Ac 3:6-10
 - Power to do miracles ICo 12:10
 - > see miracles of Jesus Section B9
 - > see miracles of Apostles Section P9

12. SPIRITUAL GROWTH

a) GOAL IS SPIRITUAL MATURITY

- Rooted and established with Christ in our hearts Eph 3:17-19
- Path of the righteous grows brighter and brighter Pr 4:18
- To be able to distinguish between good and evil Heb 5:14

b) EXHORTATION TO MATURITY

- Stop being like children ICo 14:20
- Grow up in your salvation IPe 2:2
- By now you ought to be teachers Heb 5:12
- Jealousy & quarreling says you are still infants ICo 3:1-4

c) THINGS THAT MAKE US GO BACKWARDS

- No leadership - Moses on the mountain..... Ex 32:1-8
- Bad company-Solomon's wives IKi 11,4

- > bad company corrupts good morals ICo 15:33
- Worldly success-Amaziah 2Ch 25:2-14
- Actions of Satan Lu 8:12
- Trials of life Lu 8:13
- Love of the world - Demas Lu 8:14; 2Ti 4:10
- d) GROWTH DEPENDS ON OUR OBEDIENCE TO GOD
- Jesus learned obedience by what He suffered Heb 5:8-10
- Jesus did only what He saw the Father doing Joh 5:19
- Obedience to God leads to righteousness Ro 6:16
- Obedience to God leads to holiness IPe 1:14-16
- Obedient thought-life is spiritual victory 2Co 10:4-5
- Our obedience leads us to the good of the land Isa 1:19
- e) AREAS OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND GUIDANCE
- Through the Bible-Word of God to us
 - > hearing the Word of God brings spiritual blessing..... Re 1:3
 - > reading the Word of God brings spiritual blessing..... Re 1:3
 - > learn the Word of God to avoid sin Ps 119:9-11
 - > meditate on the Word of God to gain wisdom Jos 1:8; Ps 119:99
- Prayer-Talking with God
 - > worship God for Who He is Ps 29:2
 - > confess our weakness and sins IJo 1:9
 - > thank Him for help in the past Eph 5:20; ITh 5:18
 - > make our requests known to Him Php 4:6
- Fellowship - the Church helps us
 - > we help each other (sharpen each other) Pr 27:17
 - > Jesus gathers with those gathered in His Name Mt 18:20
 - > don't neglect fellowship, especially near the end .. Heb 10:24-25
 - > Church ministries given for our help Eph 4:11-14
- Ministry - we help others
 - > we help others as we've been helped De 16:17; 2Co 1:4
 - > physical helps show God's love through us Jas 2:15-17
 - > testifying helps us understand God's goodness Phm 1:6
 - > testifying helps us be overcomers Re 12:11
 - > we are to preach the gospel to all nations Mt 24:14; Mk 16:15
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- We must dwell with Christ and Christ in us Joh 15:5
- Die to the old nature to be spiritually alive Joh 12:24
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 - > great joy at Jesus' second coming..... Joh 16:20-22
 - Joy in the midst of suffering 2Co 8:2; Isa 29:19; Col 1:24; Ro 5:3; Heb 10:34; Jas 1:2; 1Pe 1:4-7;4:13; Lu 6:22,23; Ps 30:5; 126:5
 - Joy is associated with
 - > singing Zep3:14-17;Ps27:6;67:4;Isa 65:14
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 - > God is not author of confusion..... 1Co14:33
 - Gospel is gospel of peace..... Ac 10:36; Ro 10:15; Eph 2:14; 6:15
 - > salvation brings peace with God Ro 5:1
 - Wisdom from heaven is peace-loving Jas 3:17
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 - Peace of God passes understanding Joh 14:27; Php 4:7
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 - > peace is to rule our hearts Col 3:15
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- Character of a good woman Pr 31:26
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- Major characteristic of God Ex 33:19; 34:6; Ps 107:8;
 - 144:2
 - > the Lord is good, take refuge in Him Ps 34:8
 - > we see His goodness now in this life Ps 27:13
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- God's goodness leads us to repentance..... Ro 2:4
- Believers should rejoice in goodness 2Ch 6:41
 - > satisfied with goodness of God's house Ps 65:4
 - > we should be full of goodness Ro 15:14
- g) FAITHFULNESS Ga5:22
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 - 1Pe 4:19; Re 19:11
 - > if we are faithless, He remains faithful 2Ti 2:13
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 - > Abraham Ga 3:9
 - > Moses Nu 12:7; Heb 3:5
 - > Daniel Da 6:4
 - > Paul..... 1Ti 1:12
- Faithful person
 - > reverences God Ne 7:2
 - > keeps a confidence Pr 11:13

- > does not lie..... Pr 14:5
- > is rare to find Pr 20:6
- Faithfulness in small things brings big reward Lu 19:17
- Faithfulness to God even to death brings life Re 2:10
- God is looking for faithful stewards..... 1Co 4:2
 - > character of leaders 1Ti 3:11; 2Ti 2:2; Tit 1:6,9
 - > they will be rewarded Mt 24:45; 25:21,23; Lu 12:42
 - > faithful in little, then much Lu 16:10; 19:17
 - > faithful in natural, then spiritual things Lu 16:11
 - > faithful with another's things, then your own Lu 16:12
- h) GENTLENESS (MEEKNESS) Ga 5:23; Eph 4:2; Col 3:12
 - Jesus is meek..... Mt 11:29; 21:5; 2Co 10:1
 - Wisdom from above is gentle Jas 3:17
 - Paul is meek 1Co 4:21
 - Moses is meek..... Nu 12:3
 - Characteristic of a leader in the Church 1Ti 3:3; 6:11; 2Ti 2:25; Tit 3:2
 - > sign of a spiritual person Jas 3:13; 1Pe 3:4,15
 - Apostles were gentle among the people 1Th 2:7
 - We should receive the Word of God meekly Jas 1:21
 - We should counsel sinners meekly..... Ga 6:1
- Blessing to the meek
 - > shall be satisfied Ps 22:26
 - > shall be guided by God Ps 25:9
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 - > shall be saved by God..... Ps 76:9; 149:4
 - > shall be exalted by God Ps 147:6
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 - > shall be hidden in day of judgment..... Zep 2:3
- i) SELF-CONTROL (TEMPERANCE) Ga 5:23
 - Better a man with self-control than a warrior Pr 16:32
 - Paul preached righteousness, self-control and judgment... Ac 24:25
 - Control of the tongue a great challenge Jas 3:2
 - Control of the lusts of the flesh Ro 6:12-13
 - We should add self-control to our faith 2Pe 1:5,6
- j) OTHER PASSAGES REGARDING SPIRITUAL GROWTH
 - 2Pe 1:5-7.....+ faith + goodness + knowledge + self-control
+ perseverance + godliness + kindness + love
 - Ro 14:17..... Kingdom of God is righteousness, peace and joy.
 - Heb 6:1-2... repentance, faith, baptisms, laying on of hands,
resurrection of the dead, eternal judgment
 - 1Ti 6:11..... righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness

2. WATER BAPTISM

Water baptism is the ceremony that celebrates the entrance of a believer into the community of the Church. Its significance is substantial but not sufficient in itself to save

a person. To be saved requires God's grace, our faith in Jesus' death and resurrection, and a continued walk of obedience to God. Water baptism is likened unto circumcision whereby we proclaim our identification with a group of people, the Church of God.

a) OLD TESTAMENT TYPES

- Ark in the Hood 1Pe3:20-21
 - > Note: The RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST saves us, not water baptism.
- Circumcision Col 2:11-12
 - > Note: It is FAITH IN GOD that saves us, not water baptism.
 - > The cloud and Red Sea 1Co 10:2

b) JOHN THE BAPTISTS FORM OF BAPTISM

- Announced the Holy Spirit baptism by Jesus Mt 3:11; Mk 1:8; Lu 3:16
- Announced salvation and God's wrath to come Mt 3:12; Lu 3:17
- Prepared people to accept Jesus Lu 7:29-30, Joh 1:23
- People confessed their sins Mt 3:6; Mk 1:5
- Repentance for the forgiveness of sins Ac 13:24; Mk 1:4; Lu 3:3
- Comparison John's and Christian baptism..... Ac 18:25; 19:4-7

c) JESUS IS BAPTIZED BY JOHN

- To fulfill all righteousness Mt 3:15
- Spirit of God descended on Jesus Mt 3:16; Mk 1:10; Lu 3:22
- God affirms Jesus as His Beloved Son Mt 3:17, Mk 1:11; Lu 3:22
- Is followed by Jesus' temptation Mt 4:1; Mk 1:12; Lu 4:1

d) SIGNIFICANCE OF CHRISTIAN WATER-BAPTISM

- Baptized into Jesus and His death Ro 6:3
- Buried with Him and risen with Him Col 2:12
- By one Spirit into one Body 1Co 12:13
- Clothed with Christ..... Ga 3:27
- Good conscience towards God 1Pe 3:21

e) TEACHING PASSAGE Ro 6:1-14

- Our salvation is by God's grace Ro 6:1
- God's free gift leads us to say "no" to sin Ro 6:2,12
- In baptism we identify with Christ Jesus
 - > His death (crucified) Ro 6:3,6
 - > His burial Ro 6:4
 - > His resurrection..... Ro 6:4-5
 - > His new life Ro 6:4,8,11
 - > His freedom from sin Ro 6:6,7,11-23
 - > His obedience to God..... Ro 6:10
- A change of masters: from sin to God Ro 6:11-14

f) EXAMPLES

- The believers after Pentecost Ac 2:41
- Converts in Samaria Ac 8:12
- The Ethiopian Eunuch Ac 8:38
- Saul (Paul) after his conversion Ac 9:18
- Lydia, seller of purple cloth Ac 16:15
- Philippian Jailer and his household Ac 16:33
- Believers in Corinth Ac 18:8

- Disciples in Ephesus Ac 19:5

g) WHO SHOULD BE BAPTIZED?

- Only believers are to receive Christian Baptism

> believing (Faith) comes before baptism Mk 16:16; Ac 2:41; 18:8

> repentance comes before baptism Ac 2:38

> preach, believe, baptized, saved Mk 16:16

> repent, baptized, forgiven. Holy Spirit Ac 2:38

> preach. Holy Spirit, baptism Ac 10:44-48

- Infants seem to have a special place in God's view

> Note: The order is always believe and then be baptized.

> Note: Baptizing infants is not mentioned in the Scriptures.

> their angels in heaven always see the face

of My Father..... Mt 18:10

> young children are sanctified by a believing

parent 1Co 7:14

> rather young children should be dedicated to the Lord and blesse

..... Ex 13:2; Mk 10:16

> When they come to an age of accountability (know to choose good and refrain from evil) they can believe and be baptized..... Isa 7:15,16

h) WHEN ARE THEY BAPTIZED?

- Repent and be baptized Ac 2:38

- Those who accepted his message were baptized Ac 2:41

- When they believed, they were baptized Ac 8:12

> both men and women

- Ethiopian was baptized as soon as he believed Ac 8:36-38

- Cornelius ordered to be baptized Ac 10:47-48

> as soon as the Holy Spirit came upon them

- Philippian jailer was baptized immediately Ac 16:31-34

> and all his family

- Bible does not mention any delay before baptizing a Believer.

i) HOW ARE THEY BAPTIZED?

- Commanded by Jesus

> in the Name of Father, Son & Holy Spirit Mt 28:19

- As practiced by the Apostles

> in the Name of Jesus Christ Ac 2:38; 10:48

> into the Name of the Lord Jesus Ac 8:16; 19:5

> baptized into Christ Jesus Ro 6:3; Ga 3:27

- Form of baptism is determined by being BURIED..... Ro 6:4

> Jesus came out of the water Mk 1:10

> Because there was much water there Joh 3:23; Ac 8:36-39

> Note: Baptism as practiced in Bible times was by total immersion of the believer. This fulfills the analogy of burial.

j) OTHER CONCERNS

- Baptism in water and in the Holy Spirit are different

> water baptism is not the same as being baptized

in the Holy Spirit..... Ac 8:16

- Comparison John's and Christian baptism..... Ac 18:25; 19:4-7

3. LORD'S SUPPER-COMMUNION-BREAKING OF BREAD

Just as Baptism is the initiation of the person into the Church, the Lord's Supper is the continuation of that identity with the Church by the believer. It is the primary way we are reminded of God's commitment to, and covenant with His people, through Christ.

a) FORESHADOWING

- Melchizedek Ge 14:18-20
 - > bread and wine identified him as priest..... Ge 14:18
 - > Abram tithed to him before Mosaic law Ge 14:20
 - > Melchizedek foreshadows Jesus' priesthood Ps 110:4; Heb 5:6; 6:20
 - > More detail as to priesthood of Melchizedek Heb 7:1-28
- Original Passover Feast Ex 12:17-30
 - > see Blood of Jesus Section E1
- Ruth had bread and wine with Boaz Ru 2:14
- The table of shewbread in the tabernacle Le 24:5-9

b) BEGINNINGS IN NEW TESTAMENT TIMES

- Was Jesus' eager desire Lu 22:15
 - > As part of the Passover Feast Mt 26:17-30; Mk 14:12-26;
Lu 22:7-23
 - > As revealed to Paul by Jesus 1Co 11:23-34
 - > Jesus taught it as a means of identifying
with Him Joh 6:53,54

c) PRACTICED IN THE EARLY CHURCH

- As part of a church meal 1Co 11:17-34
- As part of the fellowship of believers Ac 2:42
- As part of the Sunday (1st day) meeting Ac 20:7,11

d) WHAT IS DONE?

- Originally as part of Passover Feast Mt 26:17-30
- Corinthian church kept it as part of a meal 1Co 11:17-34
- Paul practiced it as part of a Sunday meeting Ac 20:7,11
- The bread represents the body of Christ 1Co 11:24
- The wine represents the blood of Christ 1Co 11:25
- We wait upon each other and partake together 1Co 11:20-21

c) WHO IS TO PARTAKE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

- It is meant for believers, not unbelievers 1Co 10:21
- Self-examination is required 1Co 11:28
- Unbelievers who partake of Lord's table and idols' food
will be judged by God 1Co 10:18-22; 11:27-32

f) SYMBOLIC MEANING OF LORD'S SUPPER

- Communion is a type of the heavenly wedding feast..... Re 19:9
- It is a looking back and a looking forward
 - > proclaiming His victory on the cross 1Co 11:26
 - > proclaiming His victory at His return 1Co 11:26
- Jesus spoke symbolically before the Lord's Supper
 - > I am the vine, you are the branches Joh 15:5

- > I am the bread of life Joh 6:48
- Now He says
- this bread represents My body..... Mk 14:22
 - > this wine represents My blood Mk 14:24
- Note: Some people make a **SERIOUS ERROR** when they say that the bread and wine are the real body and blood of Jesus. They say communion is the re-sacrificing of Jesus again. This is a serious error.
 - > crucifying Jesus again is seen as having fallen away from the faith completelyHeb 6:6
 - > wicked hands crucified our Lord Ac2:23
 - > princes of this world crucified Jesus ICo 2:8
 - > Satan is the Prince and power of the world Joh 12:31; Eph 2:2
 - > crucifixion was a betrayal.....Mt26:2
 - > Jesus was sacrificed once, for ever, for all Heb 9:26; 10:10,12
 - > there is no more sacrifice for sinsHeb 10:26
- Bread and wine are not the real body and blood of Jesus; they represent, typify the reality.
 - > Jesus and the bread and wine are togetherMt 26:17-30
 - > He is not giving His body, but symbols of it.
 - > Jesus says He will eat of it again in the Kingdom of God Lu 22:16
 - > He cannot mean He will eat Himself.
 - > Resurrected Jesus breaks real bread (not His body)..... Lu 24:30
 - > Surely this indicates it is **NOT LITERALLY** His body and blood.
- Jesus promises to be with us always Mt 28:20; Mt 18:20
- Jesus claims to be in US (not the bread and wine) Joh 15:4-7

4. WORSHIP AND PRAISE

WORSHIP has to do with our attitude and actions of honour, love and respect toward the One we reverence and fear, our Ruler. PRAISE has to do with proclaiming (usually by our words and songs) the glory and goodness of the One we worship. Ps 51:15

a) WHO SHOULD BE PRAISED AND WORSHIPED?

- Worship God Ex 34:14; Mt 4:10; Lu 4:8 Re 22:9; IPe 4:11
 - > CommandmentEx 20:3; Mt 22:3637
- Angels worship JesusHeb 1:6
 - > see Deity of Jesus Section B8

b) WHO SHOULD WORSHIP GOD?

- All of His creation should praise Him..... Ps 148:1-4
- All His angels and the heavenly host Ps 148:2
- All who trust in Jesus Eph 1:12; Ps 22:23
- 24 Elders worship before the throne Re4:10-11
- Magi wish to worship Jesus..... Mt 2:2
- All the earth should praise Him Ps 148:7-13
 - > rulers of the earth Ps 148:11
 - > men and women Ps 148:12

- > young children Ps148:12;Mt21:15-16;Ps 8:2
- > those who have been martyred Re 6:9-11
- Eventually everyone will Php2:9-11
- c) WHY SHOULD GOD BE PRAISED AND WORSHIPED?
- Believers were CHOSEN to show His praises IPe 2:9
- Praise glorifies God Ps 50:23
- Because it is commanded Ps67:3-5;Re 19:5
- For His mercy Ro 15:9
- For our own benefit
 - > God inhabits the praises of Israel Ps 22:3
 - > it is pleasant for us to praise Him Ps 147:1
 - > praise is appropriate for the upright..... Ps 33:1
- Because of Who the Lord God is
 - > He is the great King over all the earth Ps 47:1-9
 - > because of His surpassing greatness Ps 150:2
 - > as Creator of everything Ps 148:5; Ne 9:5-6
 - > His Name is exalted Ps 48:10; 148:13; Ne 9:5
 - > He is our Protector..... Ps 144:2
- Because of His acts of power Ps 150:2; Lu 19:37
 - > for His healing Ps 147:3; 146:8; Section 12
 - > for His provision of food Ps 147:8-9
 - > for His help for the weak Ps 146:7-9
- To please Him Ps 149:3-4
- As spiritual battle (defeat the enemies of God) Ps 149:6-9; 2Ch 20:22-24
- d) HOW SHOULD PRAISE AND WORSHIP BE OFFERED?
- Deeds (fruits) of righteousness are praise Php 1:11
- Giving of offerings Le 19:24
- Not "where" but "how" (spirit and truth) Joh 4:23-24
 - > in spirit, no confidence in the flesh Php 3:3
- Worship in the beauty of holiness ICh 16:29; Ps 29:2; 96:9
- By our righteous lifestyle Php 1:11
- By speaking of Him Ps 145:11-13,21;
 - IPe 4:11; Heb 13:15
- By our ministry in service to God IPe 4:11; Col 3:17
- In unity with brethren Ps 133; Ro 15:5-7
 - > without anger in our heart ITi 2:8
 - > without unforgiveness Mt 5:21-26
- With
 - > thanksgiving..... Heb 13:15
 - > gladness Ps 9:2
 - > understanding ICo 14:15
 - > upright heart Ps 119:7
 - > all our heart..... Ps 9:1; 138:1
 - > bowing down Ps 138:2; Ge 24:52
 - > bowing of the head Ge 24:26
 - > kneeling Ps 95:6

- > standing 2Ch 20:18-19
- > lifted hands Ps134:2;141:2;Ne8:6;ITi2:8
- > hand clapping Ps 47:1
- > shouts of joy..... Ps 47: 1;Lu 19:37
- > musical instruments Ps 149:3; 150:3-6; Re 14:2
- > singing Ps 47:6; Heb 2:12; Col 3:16;
Eph 5:18-19
- > new song Ps 144:9
- > special singers and musicians ICh 23:5; 2Ch 20:21-22
- > dancing..... Ps 149:3; Ex 15:20; 2Sa 6:14

5. FALSE WORSHIP

It is best to learn and practice true worship, as explained in the Bible. However, because there is so much false worship in the world, a few, obvious forms of false worship are mentioned here.

See also False Gospels..... Section F6

a) GOD DOES NOT TOLERATE FALSE WORSHIP

- Forbidden..... Ex 20:4; De 4:16-19;
8:19; Isa 42:8
- Excludes from heaven ICo 6:9,10; Eph 5:5;
Re 22:15
- Eternally punished Re 14:9-11;21:8
- Keep far from a false matter Ex 23:7; Ps 119:104,128

b) IDOL WORSHIP (Sacrificing, Bowing Down, Praying to an Idol)

- Idol worship is
 - > forbidden..... Ex 20:4; Isa 42:8; IJo 5:21
 - > not permissible to mix idol-worship with true worship
of God..... Ex 32:1-6; IKi 12:27-30; Ps 106:19-20
 - > punished Ex 32:7-10
 - > worshiping God with images is sin Ex 32:4-6 & Ps 106:19-20
- Idols are worthless
 - > cannot save Isa 45:20
 - > idols are not to be feared Jer 10:1-5
 - > degenerate man worships idols Ac 7:42-43; Ro 1:22-23
 - > idols can't see or hear De 4:28; Ps 115:4-7
 - > liable to corruption Isa 40:20
 - > made by human skill Isa 44:10-20; Ps 115:4

c) WORSHIP OF SUN, MOON, STARS..

- Forbidden De 4:15-19; Jer 10:2;
Ac 7:42-43

d) WORLDLY AND SATANIC WORSHIP

- Empty religious activity
 - > worthless, only the commands of men Mt 15:8-9; Mk 7:6-7
- Satan and demons
 - > angels not to be worshiped..... Re 19:10; 22:8-9
 - > Satan desired Jesus' worship Mt 4:8-9; Lu 4:6-7

- > Demons are worshiped..... De 32:17; Ps 106:37;
ICo 10:20; Re 9:20
- Endtime false worship of beast and image
 - > wrath of God on all who worship these Re 14:9-11
 - > plagues of God to teach men not to
worship devils Re 9:20
 - > Beast is worshiped by non-believers Re 13:4-8
 - > Second beast causes people to worship the first Re 13:12
 - > Second beast causes people to worship the image. Re 13:15
- e) FORMS OF FALSE WORSHIP
 - Sacrifices Nu22:40;2Ki 10:23-24
 - With libations Isa 57:6; Jer 19:13
 - With incense Jer 48:35; Eze 6:13
 - With prayers and singing..... Ex 32:18-19; IKi 18:26
 - By cutting themselves IKi 18:28
 - By burning children De 12:31; 2Ch 33:6;
Jer 19:4-5; Eze 16:21
 - With sexual impurity Nu 25:1-3; 2Ki 17:9;
Isa 57:6-9; IPe 4:3
 - By carrying idols Isa 46:7; Am 5:26; Ac 7:43
 - By bowing to idols IKi 19:18; 2Ki 5:18
 - By kissing idols IKi 19:18; Ho 13:2
- f) MEANINGLESS WORSHIP
 - That which is based only on tradition Mt 15:1-9; Col 2:22
 - That which only has form but no power 2Ti3:5
 - That which is unaccompanied by good deeds Jas 1:26,27; Am 5:21-24
 - That which is based on externals Heb 10:1,2
 - The vain worship of legalism Col2:16-23
 - Worship performed by those who are unclean..... Ps 24:3,4

6. PRAYER

a) INTRODUCTION

Prayer is communicating with God.

- In the Garden of Eden, God and man simply talked..... Ge 3:8-13
- Now we pray and petition with thanksgiving Php4:6-7
- First mention of prayer (calling on His Name) Ge 4:26

b) HOW SHOULD WE PRAY?

- To God Ac 12:5
- In the Name of Jesus
 - >ask in My Name Joh 14:13-14
 - > the Father will give whatever you ask in
My Name Joh 15:16;16:23,26
 - > give thanks to God the Father in Jesus' Name Eph5:20
- By means of the Holy Spirit
 - > by the Spirit we cry Abba Father Ro 8:15-16
 - > pray in the Spirit..... Eph 6:8

- > pray in the Holy Spirit Jude 20
- > with our spirit (tongues) and with understanding
- (Interpretation of Tongues) 1 Co 14:13-15
- > Spirit enables our praying by interceding through us
- and for us.....Ro 8:26
- c) IS THERE A SPECIAL PRAYER POSTURE?
- Like fasting, prayer is a place of humility before God and generally the prayer position shows our dependence on God.
- On the face.....Nu 20:6; De 9:25; Jos 5:14; 2Ch 20:18; Mt 26:39
- Face between knees..... IKi 18:42
- Bowing down..... Ge 24:26; Ex 4:31; 12:27; 34:8
- Kneeling I Ki 8:54; 2 Ch 6:13; Ezr 9:5 Ps 95:6; Isa45:23; Da6:10; Lu 22:41; Ac 7:60; Eph 3:14
- Standing IKi 8:22; Mk 11:25; Lu 18:11-13
- Lifted hands Ps 28:2; La 2:19; ITi 2:8
- d) INNER ATTITUDE IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN OUTER POSTURE
- With humility..... 2Ch 7:14; 33:12; Lu 22:42
- Not for show..... Mt 6:5-7
- In faith.....Mt 21:22; Jas 1:6; Heb 10:22
- With truth..... Ps 17:1; 145:18; Joh 4:24
- With confidence.....Ps 56:9; Ps 86:7; IJo 5:14; Heb 10:19-22
- Having forgiven..... Mt 6:12; Mk 11:25-26
- Proper heart.....Jer 29:13; La 3:41; Ps 119:58,145; Heb 10:22
- e) PRAYER IS OFTEN ACCOMPANIED BY
- Watching (Be Alert!) Lu 21:36; IPe 4:7; Col 4.2
- Confession of personal and corporate sins Jas 5:16
- Repentance..... 1 Ki 8:33; Jer 36:7
- Fasting..... Ne 1:4; Da 9:3; Ac 13:3
- Weeping.....Jer 31:9; Ho 12:4
- Praise..... Ps 66:17
- Thanksgiving..... Php 4:6; Col 4:2
- Proclamation..... Ps 48:1-3; 18:3,46; 116:1,2
- f) A TEACHING PASSAGE.....Mt 6:5-14
- Not to be seen of men..... Mt 6:5
- In secretMt 6:6
- Don't keep on babbling like the pagans Mt 6:7
- g) OUTLINE OF A PRAYER GIVEN BY JESUS Mt 6: 9-13
- Sometimes called the "Lord's prayer" but it was meant to be the "Disciples prayer".
- Our prayer is to God alone Mt 6:9
 - > remind yourself of Who God is..... see Section B
- He is our Father in heaven Mt 6:9
 - > see the Fatherhood of God..... see Section B7
- He is to be thanked and praised Mt 6:9
 - > His Names reflect His relation to us see Section B3
 - > see Salvation see Section E
 - > see Providence of God..... see Index

- In faith desire the Kingdom of God in all areas of this world Mt 6:10
 - > listen for direction from the Holy Spirit
- In faith ask for all the provision needed Mt 6:11
- Ask for forgiveness and forgive othersMt 6:12
- Pray for spiritual leading & protection for all under your care.....Mt 6:13
 - > put on full Armour of God..... Eph 6:10-20
- We are reminded that God forgives us in the same way that we
 - > forgive one another Mt 6:14,15

h) PRAYERS ARE ANSWERED

- Promised Isa 58:9; Jer 29:12; Mt 7:7
- Sometimes immediately..... Isa 65:24; Da 9:21,23
- Sometimes after a delay.....Lu 18:7; 1Ki 18:42-44; Da 10:12,13
- Sometimes differently than we expect2Co 12:8-9
- Better than we can expect or think Jer 33:3; Eph 3:20

i) HINDRANCES TO PRAYERS BEING HEARD OR ANSWERED

- We fight for what we want instead of asking..... Jas 4:2
- We ask with selfish motives..... Jas 4:3
- We ask while making a practice of sin Ps 66:18; Isa 59:1-2
- We are deaf to the cry of the poor Pr 21:13
- We oppose the saints of God Ps 18:40-41; Mic 3:2-4
- We are disobedient to known command of God Pr 28:9
- We have an unforgiving spirit..... Mt 5:22-24; 6:12-15
- We lack faith Heb 11:6; Jas 1:6
- We keep idols in our heart Eze 8:5-18; 14:1-3
- We have turmoil in our home 1Pe 3:7

j) PRIVATE PRAYER

- Jesus as our Example..... Mt 14:23; 26:36,39; Mk 1:35; Lu 9:18,19
- Will be rewarded openlyMt 6:6
- New Testament Examples:
 - > AnnaLu2:36,37
 - > Paul Ac 9:11
 - > Peter Ac 9:40
 - > Cornelius Ac 10:30

k) PUBLIC PRAYER

- Agreement in prayer Mt 18:19-20
- May not be understood by others if prayer in "tongues"..... 1Co 14:13-16
- Pray for Interpretation of "prayers in tongues" in church meeting 1Co 14:13-16
- Should be offered for
 - > all men, kings, and all in authority..... 1Ti 2:1-2
 - > for ministers2Co 1:11; Php 1:19
 - > all believersEph 6:18
 - > our enemies Mt 5:44; Lu 6:27,28
 - > the sick..... Jas 5:14
 - > when our brethren are in danger..... Ac 12:12
 - > for all nations Ps 2:8; 1Ki 8:41-43; Isa 56:7

7. FASTING

a) INTRODUCTION

- Fasting means denying our bodies some of its usual provision.
- Not a cure-all for past sins Jer 14:10-12
- Ordained for the Church by Jesus Mk 2:20; Lu 5:35
- Some demons only come out by prayer & fasting Mt 17:15-21
- Bible mentions denying yourself:
 - > food and water..... Ex 34:28; De 9:9
 - > food Mt 4:1-2; Lu 4:1-2
 - > certain pleasant foods..... Da 10:3
 - > married persons may fast from sex - for a time,
by mutual consent, to pray..... 1Co 7:4-5

b) A TEACHING PASSAGE Isa 58:11

- Purpose & circumstances of a fast
 - > fasting should humble the body..... v3 Ps35:13
 - > the purpose is NOT ONLY to humble the body..... v5
 - > we are to do the Lord's pleasure, not our own..... v3 Zec 7:5
 - > we are not to exploit our workers while we fast.... v3
 - > not heard by God if our fast results in quarreling... v4
- Characteristics of a proper fast
 - > what is done in secret will be rewarded openly..... Mt 6:17-18
 - > spiritual & social oppression released..... v6,10 Ps 35:13
 - > helping others in a practical way..... v7,10
 - > personal sanctification..... v9
- Consequences of a proper fast
 - > health v8,11
 - > protection from God in front and behind v8
 - > guidance..... v9,11

c) EXAMPLES OF FASTS AND THEIR CIRCUMSTANCES

- Extraordinary Fasts
 - > Moses while receiving the Ten Commandments.... De 9:9,18; Ex 34:28
 - > Elijah fleeing from Jezebel - angel fed him..... 1Ki 19:2-9
 - > Jesus after His baptism and Holy Spirit anointing. Lu 4:1-2
- Israel wishing to be free from Philistine rule..... 1Sa 7:6
 - > Moabites & Ammonites..... 2Ch 20:3
- Ezra mourning over the unfaithfulness of Israel Ezr 10:6
- Daniel to gain understanding of a vision Da 10:3
- Paul after he met the Lord, fasted 3 days while blind Ac 9:9
- Leaders of Antioch church sending out Barnabas & Saul... Ac 13:2-3
- Paul and Barnabas while appointing elders Ac 14:23
- Esther before appearing before the king Es 4:16
- Elders of Jezreel - in order to accuse & kill Naboth..... 1Ki 21:12
- Ahab delayed God's judgment on himself 1Ki 21:27-29
- Nineveh - to prevent God's judgment..... Jon 3:6-10

d) ACCOMPANIED BY

- Mourning Ezr 10:6
- Confession of sin 1Sa 7:6
- Prayer & hearing from the Lord 2Ch 20:3
- Privacy, not for show Mt 6:16-18

e) NOT ACCOMPANIED BY

- Somberness & disfiguring Mt 6:16-18; Es 4:16-5:5

f) PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS WHEN FASTING

- Drink water when abstaining from food. Implied by words "*afterward He hungered*" - not "afterward He thirsted" Mt 4:1,2; Lu 4:1,2

Note: Fasting from food longer than 7 to 15 days can be dangerous to your health. Longer fasts should only be under clear, certain direction and miraculous enablement from the Lord.

- The three forty-day fasts mentioned in the Bible were all MIRACULOUS in nature and initiated by God - not the one fasting (Moses, Elijah, Jesus).

- > Moses did not eat or DRINK for forty days..... Ex 34:28
(you can die in the desert in 24 hours if without water).
- > An Angel fed Elijah a special meal before his forty-day fast 1Ki 19:5-8
- > Jesus was led (literal = driven) by the Spirit into the wilderness to fast Lu 4:1,2
.....and angels ministered to Him afterward.

- g) Longer fasts are all right if you've been given a special gift or grace from the Lord for the fast. When you have this gift, you are not hungry. "Afterward (not during the fast) he hungered" Lu 4:1,2

8. GIVING-TITHES AND OFFERINGS

a) INTRODUCTION

- Christ's giving of Himself for our salvation is the strongest
> example of giving..... Ga 1:4; 2:20
- God is a giver... including His Son see Section B6, B7
- There is a spiritual gift of giving; we are not talking about that gift here see Section F10, Ro 12:8

b) TITHE (giving of 1/10 of our income to the work of the Lord)

- Practiced before giving of the Law to Moses
 - > Abraham gave a tithe Ge 14:20; Heb 7:4-10
 - > Abraham was 430 years before Moses Ga 3:17
 - > Jacob promises to give a tithe to God..... Ge 28:22
- During the time of Moses' Law
 - > Law of Moses demands a tithe of everything..... Le 27:30,32
 - > Levites received the tithe for work of God Nu 18:21
 - > God condemns Israel for not giving a tithe..... Mal 3:6-12
 - > God blesses if the nation tithes..... Mal 3:6-12
 - > Church leaders may live from the tithe money..... 1Co 9:1-14
 - > Levites also required to tithe Nu 18:25-32; Ne 10:38
- During the time of Jesus on the earth
 - > we should do more than just tithe..... Mt 23:23; Lu 11:42

c) EXAMPLES OF GENEROUS /SACRIFICIAL GIVERS

- Israel when the Tabernacle was built Ex 36:5
- Poor widow put in all her wealth Lu 21:1-4
- Early Church gave to the needy Ac 4:34-35
- Macedonian church gave out of its poverty 2 Co 8:1-15

d) SACRIFICIAL GIVERS RECEIVE ABUNDANCE FROM GOD

- Giving does not buy God's provision – it releases it..... Mal 3:10
- Widow of Zarephath gave last food to Elijah... and was abundantly provided for I Ki 17:12-15
- Mary of Bethany anointed Jesus with expensive perfume ... and promised special recognition Mt 26:7-13

e) NEW TESTAMENT GIVING

- Giver should be rightly related to other Mt 5:23-24
- Give without a big show, even secretly Mt 6:1-4
- Freely you have received, freely give Mt 10:8
- More blessed to give than to receive Ac 20:35
- Giving according to your income I Co 16:1-2
 - > those handling money should be approved..... I Co 16:3-4
- Sow sparingly, reap sparingly 2Co 9:6; Lu 6:38
- Sow generously, reap generously 2Co 9:6; Lu 6:38
- Decide ahead of time..... 2Co 9:7
- Give cheerfully, not under compulsion 2Co 9:7
- God's reply to careful, cheerful giving
 - > abundance of grace 2 Co 9:8
 - > abundance for every good work 2 Co 9:8,11
- Result of giving
 - > needs of the church are supplied 2Co 9:12
 - > thanksgiving to God 2 Co 9:12
- Giving is a confession of our faith 2 Co 9:13
- Giving stimulates prayers 2 Co 9:14
- God gave first 2 Co 9:15

9. MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY

a) MARRIAGE IS INSTITUTED BY GOD

- A particular form for a wedding ceremony is not given in Bible.
- Adam and Eve..... Ge 2:24; Mt 19:4-6
- Jesus blesses marriage by His presence and a miracle..... Joh 2:1-11
- Marriage should be honored by all Heb 13:4
- Christian is not to marry an unbeliever..... 2 Co 6:14-18
 - > a Christian is to remain married to an unbeliever..... I Co 7:12-14
 - > a Christian is free if unbeliever chooses to leave..... I Co 7:12-16

b) GOD'S BLESSINGS ON THE HOME OF THOSE

WHO FEAR HIM..... Ps 128

- experience true happiness v.2
- experience God's favor v.2
- experience fruitfulness v.3

- posterity will inherit the blessings v3,6

c) HUSBANDS AND WIVES

- "Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing." Pr 18:22

- Husband's duties

- > love your wife, as Christ does the Church..... Eph 5:25
- > be sensitive to her weaknesses as a woman..... I Pe 3:7
- > provide for the family I Ti 5:8
- > give to his wife her conjugal rights I Co 7:3; Eph 5:31
- > nourish and cherish his wife, as his own body..... Eph 5:28,29
- > provide headship for his wife Ge 2:22, ICo 11:3
- > praise her..... Pr 31:28
- > Please her Pr 5:18; Ec 9:9; De 24:5;
I Co 7:33
- > speak tenderly to her..... Ca 2:10-14; Ho 2:14

- Wives' duties Pr 31:10

- > submit to her husband..... Eph 5:22,24, Col 3:18
- > honor her husband..... Es 1:20; Pr 31:23
- > obey her husband I Pe 3:6
- > love one's husband Tit 2:4
- > be full of good deeds..... I Pe3:1-6; Tit 2:5
- > give special consideration for the home Tit 2:5; Pr 31:15,27
- > be sensible, chaste, domestic and kind Tit 2:5
- > dress modestly, adorn inner jewels of the heart..... I Pe 3:3,4; I Ti 2:9,10
- > please her husband 1 Co 7:34
- > be a helper to her husband Ge 2:18-20
- > show hospitality 1 Ti5:10

- Examples:

- > of godly affection in marriage: Jacob/Rachel Ge 29:20
- > the beauties of marital love Song of Sol
- > godly parents: Joseph and Mary Mt 1,2, Lu2
- > couples serving the Lord together:
Aquila/Priscilla..... Ac 18:2,26

d) MARRIAGE AS A TYPE OF OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

- God and Israel..... Jer 3:14; Eze 16:1-8
- Jesus and the Church..... Eph 5:21-33; 2Co 11:2;
Re 21:2,9; 22:17

e) MARRIAGE OF ADAM AND EVE AS A TYPE OF CHRIST AND THE CHURCH

- No creature found suitable for a bride for Adam..... Ge 2:19-20

- > sinful man is not suitable as a bride of Jesus,

we must be born again of the Spirit Joh 3:3-7

- Eve taken out of Adam's side..... Ge 2:21-22

- > Church comes out of Jesus' pierced side..... Joh 19:34

- Eve is of the flesh and bone of Adam Ge 2:23

- > that which is of Spirit is spirit, of flesh is flesh..... Joh 3:6; Eph 5:30-32

- Eve has the life of Adam, taken out of Adam..... Ge 2:23

- > our new life is from being put into Christ Jesus..... Joh 17:20-23; 2Co 5:17

f) REMAINING UNMARRIED IS ALSO ENCOURAGED IN SCRIPTURE

- However, marriage must not be forbidden I Ti 4:1-3
- Example of Jesus, unmarried The Gospels
- Example of Paul, remaining unmarried special gift from God..... I Co 7:8
- Jesus teaches His disciples Mt 19:10-12
- Paul teaches the Church I Co 7:1-2,7-9
 - > because of this "present crisis" I Co 7:26

g) DIVORCE

- God hates divorce Mal 2:16
- Moses' law allows divorce for various reasons De 24:1-4
 - > probably Moses' law was given to regulate an existing practice because in divorce a written contract is given..... De 24:1
 - > the woman is free to remarry afterwards..... De 24:2
- Reason for Moses' permitting divorce for various reasons
 - > Jesus says - because of their hard hearts..... Mt 19:8; Mk 10:2-12
 - > it wasn't this way at the beginning..... Mt 19:3-5; Mk 10:6-9

h) TERMINATION OF A MARRIAGE COVENANT

- Death of one person frees the other to remarry..... Ro 7:2-3; I Co 7:39
- A believer is free if an unbelieving spouse leaves..... I Co 7:13-16
- Some believe Jesus allowed divorce for reason of adultery Mt 5:31-32; 19:9
 - > an example of reconciliation after adultery..... Jer 3:1; Hosea
 - > God "divorces" Israel for spiritual "adultery" Jer 3:8

i) SCRIPTURE WARNS AGAINST SOME MARRIAGES

- In the beginning there were no stated restrictions
 - > Cain & Seth probably married close relatives
 - > Abraham married a close relative (later forbidden by law) Ge 20:11-12
 - > Jacob marries two sisters (later forbidden by law)..... Ge 29:21-30
- Law forbids marrying close relatives Le 18:5-30; 20:17-23
 - > John the Baptist condemns King Herod for marrying his brother's wife, while his brother was still alive..... Mt 14:3-4
- A believer should not marry an unbeliever 2 Co 6:14-16
- Homosexual relationships are condemned Le 18:22; 20:13; I Co 6:9,10; I Ti 1:9,10

j) POLYGAMY (MORE THAN ONE WIFE)

- Polygamy forbidden. When practiced, it brought pain and sorrow to families.
 - > for Israel's king De 17:17
 - > for all Israel-don't break faith with first wife..... Mal 2:15
 - > one man one wife at the beginning Ge 2:24; Mk 10:6-8
 - > Church leaders must have only one wife..... I Ti 3:2,12; Tit 1:6
- First example is Lamech, he had 2 wives..... Ge 4:19
 - > from the line of Cain Ge 4:17-18
 - > he was also a murderer..... Ge 4:23-24

- > contrast with the line of Seth & Enosh
- > men began to call on the Name of the Lord..... Ge 4:25-26
- Abram married Sarai & Hagar, Sarai's servant Ge 16:3
 - > Abram believed Sarai's logic rather than
- God's promise Ge 16:2
 - > Hagar despised Sarai after she became pregnant.... Ge 16:4
 - > result is a quarrel between Abram and Sarai..... Ge 16:5
 - > result is sorrow for Hagar..... Ge 16:16; 21:10-13
 - > Hagar's son, Ishmael, is Isaac's enemy..... Ge 16:12; 21:9
- Esau had 2 wives Ge26:34
 - > this was a source of sorrow for his parent Ge 26:35
 - > Esau married Canaanites to displease his parents.. Ge 28:8-9
- Laban tricks Jacob into marrying Leah Ge 29:22-30
 - > Jacob also marries Rachel.....Ge 29:28-30
 - > Jacob loves Rachel more than Leah Ge 29:28-33
 - > Rachel is jealous of Leah because of children Ge 30:1
 - > Servant girls given as wives Ge 30:3,9
 - > trouble between children from different wives.....Ge 37:11,26-28
- Gideon had many wives Jdg 8:30
 - > one son murdered 70 of the others.....Jdg 9:1-5
- Samuel's father had 2 wives I Sa 1:2
 - > Elkanah loved Hannah moreI Sa 1:5
 - > other wife was a rival and caused discord..... I Sa 1:6-7
- David had several wives 2 Sa 3:2,5
 - >Bathsheba was obtained through murder.....2 Sa 11:26-27
 - > incest became a problem between
- Ammon & Tamar..... 2 Sa 13:1-15
 - > Absalom kills Ammon 2 Sa 13:28-29
 - > rivalry between sons of David from different wives..... I Ki 1:17-21
- Solomon had many wivesI Ki 1:1-6
 - > he was led away from God by his wives I Ki 11:3-4
 - > he began to practice idolatry..... I Ki 11:7
 - > God's anger is revealed against Solomon I Ki 11:9-13
 - > Solomon's kingdom to be lost.....I Ki 11:9,11,
- Rehoboam preferred one wife over the other 2 Ch 11:18-21
- Heathen king had many wivesDa 5:2
- But marriages made prior to salvation are not to be changed... I Co 7:20

k) PARENTS AND CHILDREN

Again, the greatest examples of Parent/Child relationships are found in how God relates to us as His children and how we should respond to Him as our Father.

- Parental duties:

- "And David returned to bless his household"2 Sa 6:20
 - > teach one's children.....De 6:6,7; 4:9
 - > train one's children..... Pr 22:6;Eph 6:4

- > provide for one's family 2 Co 12:14
- > sanctify them unto God.....:..... Job 1:5; Lu 2:22-23
- > nurture one's children Eph 6:4
- > to reprove them Pr 29:15; Re 3:19
- > to control them..... 1 Sa 3:13; 1 Ti 3:4,12
- > to chasten them..... 2 Sa 7:14; Heb 12:6; Pr 13:24
- > to discipline them..... Pr 13:24; 22:15; 29:17
- > to love them..... Tit 2:4; Pr 13:24
- > to not provoke them to anger Eph 6:4
- > to be a godly example to them 2Ti 1:5; 2Ch 26:4
- > to be forgiving towards them..... Lu 15:20-24
- > to include them in worship times Jos 8:35; Ne 12:43

Note: Parents must be careful to deal with sin in their own lives. The Scriptures warn us that those same sins may be passed on to our children and posterity (Ex 20:5; 34:7).

- Children's duties

- > honor and respect parents..... Ex 20:12, Eph 6:2
- > obey parents in all things..... Col 3:20
- > make their parents happy Pr 23:24,25; Pr 10:1
- > not to mock or despise them Pr 30:7
- > pay dose attention to their words Pr 6:20-23
- > take care of them when they are old 1 Ti 5:3,4

1) BARRENNESS (NO CHILDREN IN A MARRIAGE)

- Nowhere in Scripture is this a reason for divorce.

- Sometimes (usually not) it can be a judgment of God

- > Michal, Saul's daughter, David's wife 2 Sa 6:23

- Many of the beloved women of the Bible started barren. God intervened and some of these children are the most important people in the Bible.

- Sarai, Abram's wife, was barren Ge 11:29- 30

- > God's promise of a son Ge 12:2; 15:4-6; 18:10
- > wrong human effort produces Ishmael..... Ge 16:1-5
- > Isaac is born according to the promise Ge 21:1-7

- Rachel, Jacob's wife, was barren Ge 30:1

- > false human effort Ge 30:3
- > Joseph is born according to God's will..... Ge 30:22-24

- Samson's mother was barren Jdg 13:2

- > angel promises a special child Jdg 13:3
- > Samson is born..... Jdg 13:24-25

- Hannah, Samuel's mother, was barren 1Sa 1:5

- > she prays 1Sa 1:10-17
- > Samuel is born 1Sa 1:20

- Shunammite woman who helped Elisha was barren 2Ki 4:14

- > promised a child 2Ki 4:16
- > child is born 2Ki 4:17
- > child is miraculously raised from the dead 2Ki 4:32-35

- Elizabeth, Zacharias' wife, was barren Lu 1:5-7

- > angel Gabriel's promise to Zacharias Lu 1:13

- > John the Baptist is born Lu 1:57-58
- m) OTHER REFERENCE TO THE FAMILY
 - Home to be a place of serving others 3Jo 5-8; Tit 1:8
 - Christian leaders expected to have exemplary homes 1Ti 3:4,5
 - Not providing for one's family worse than unbelief..... 1Ti 5:8
 - Often whole families turn to Christ Ac 16:15,33; Joh 4:53
 - Families were sometimes called to serve the Lord together:
 - > Moses, Aaron, and Miriam Ex 4:29; 15:20
 - > Andrew and Peter Joh 1:41; Mt 10:2
 - > James and John (sons of Zebedee) Mt 10:2; 20:20
 - Scriptures teach appropriateness of family worship Ro 16:5; 1Co 16:19; Ex 12:3,4; 33:7-10
 - Maintaining God's presence the key to continued blessing 2 Sa 6:11

H. DEATH & ENDTIMES

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HI. PHYSICAL DEATH AND THE STATE OF THE DEAD

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H4. HEAVEN AND HELL -FINAL DESTINATIONS

1. PHYSICAL DEATH AND THE STATE OF THE DEAD

a) OLD TESTAMENT

- Resurrection from death Job 17:13; Ps 49:15; Ec 9:10; Ho 13:14
- SHEOL-place of the dead De 32:22; Job 26:6; Ps 16:10; 139:8; Pr 15:11

b) CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DEAD

- Body without the spirit is dead Jas 2:26
- Unable to move Mt 28:4; Re 1:17
- Ignorant of all human affairs Ec 9:5
- Have no human passions Ec 9:6
- Unable to glorify God Ps 115:17
- Don't return to the world Job 7:9-10; 14:10,14; Lu 16:26

c) FORBIDDEN EXPRESSIONS OF GRIEF OR RESPECT FOR THE DEAD

- Cutting, tatooing, shaving Le 19:28; De 14:1-2
- Offerings to the dead De 26:14
- Hopeless grieving like pagans 1 Th 4:13
- Calling upon the dead De 18:11; Isa 8:19

d) HISTORY OF DEATH

- Foretold by God as a consequence of disobedience Ge 2:17; 3:3
- Brought into world through man's disobedience Ge 3:19; Ro 5:12
- All people will die Heb 9:27
- Christ Jesus conquered death Ro 6:9; Re 1:18
- Christ delivers us from fear of death..... Heb 2:15

- All shall be raised from the dead..... Ac 24:15
 - > some to everlasting life Ro 2:5-10; 2Th 1:5-10
 - > some to everlasting punishment Ro 2:5-10; 2Th 1:5-10
- Death finally be destroyed by Christ..... Ho 13:14; 1Co 15:26
- None will die in heaven..... Lu 20:36; Re 21:4
- There is a second (eternal) death Re 21:8
- e) THE PLACE OF THE DEAD BEFORE CHRIST'S RESURRECTION - SHEOL
 - Called Sheol in Old Testament - Sheol included Hades.
 - FOR THE RIGHTEOUS - In Lu 16:19-28 described as
 - > Abraham's bosom (or by Abraham's side) vs 22
 - > a place of being comforted, blessed, appreciated vs 25
 - FOR THE UNRIGHTEOUS - In Lu 16:19-28 described as
 - > A place of awareness of life on earth and torment vs 23,25,27,28
 - > A place of suffering, thirst because of 'this flame' vs 23,
 - > An impassable 'great gulf' separate from the righteous..... vs 26
 - > a place of accountability to the testimony of Scripture..... vs 29
- f) THE PLACE OF THE RIGHTEOUS DEAD AFTER CHRIST'S RESURRECTION
 - With Christ. Php 1:22-23; 2Co 5:8; Lu 23:43
- g) THE PLACE OF THE UNRIGHTEOUS DEAD UNTIL THE LAST RESURRECTION - HADES
 - Completely separate from place of the righteous Lu 16:26
 - > those in Hades cannot reach the earth Lu 16:27
 - > Righteous cannot be held in Hades
 - > Christ did not remain in Hades Ac 2:27
 - > Jesus holds the keys to death and Hades..... Re 1:18
 - > Gates of Hades will be overcome by the Church... Mt 16:18
 - > Death and Hades are used as form of punishment
 - > 4th seal, 2 riders Death and Hades empowered to kill..... Re 6:8
 - > is a place of torment described as fire Lu 16:23-24
 - > held for judgment while continuing their punishment..... 2 Pe 2:9
 - Hades gives up its dead before the judgment Re 20:13
 - Death and Hades to be judged and thrown into Gehenna.... Re 20:14
 - > Who is in Hades?
 - place of unrepentant cities, waiting for the judgment..... Mt 11:23
 - rich man (unrighteous) goes to Hades..... Lu 16:23
 - all unbelievers..... Joh 3:18
- h) THE PLACES OF SOME ANGELS UNTIL THE LAST JUDGMENT
 - Earth, see Sections C2, C3, C4, C5
 - Tartarus
 - a gloomy place of bondage 2 Pe 2:4
 - the dungeon of the angels who are kept for judgment..... 2 Pe 2:4; Jude 6
 - some demons released during last times..... Re 9:1-11

2. SECOND COMING (ADVENT) OF JESUS

a) FORETOLD..... 1Co 4:5; 1Ti 6:14; 2Ti 4:1; Mk 14:62; Joh 14:3; Joh 21:22; Ac 1:11; Ac 3:19; Heb 9:28; Jude 14-15; Tit 2:13

b) JESUS FORETELLS HIS RETURN	<u>Mt 24</u>	<u>Mk 13</u>	<u>Lu21</u>	<u>OTHERS</u>
- Many will come claiming to be Christ	:5	:6	:8	
- Wars and rumors of wars.	:6	:7	:9	
- Famines and earthquakes	:7	:8	:11	
- Persecution of the Church	:9		:12	
- Many offended and leave the faith	:10	:9	:16	
- False prophets will deceive many	:11,24	:22		
- Gospel preached in the whole world	:14	:10		
- Rise of a great, ruthless leader	:15	:14		2 Th 2:1-12
> apparently connected with religion	:15	:14		
- Coming will be obvious	:27	:26	:27	2 Th 2:1-4
- Coming in great glory and power	:30	:26	:27	2 Th 1:7-10; Jude 14
- His angels will gather His elect	:31	:27		1 Th4:-5:
- Only the Father knows the time	:36	:32		
> not angels nor Jesus, unexpected	:36			
- Similar to the time of the flood	:38			2 Pe 3:3-9; 2Ti 3:1-5
- Some people taken, others left	:40			
- We must watch for His return	:42	:33-37	:36	
- We must be found faithful	:44-46	:36	:34	

c) A TIME OF WAITING FOR THE SECOND

COMING.....	Mt 25:
- Parable of 10 Virgins	Mt 25:1-13
> long delay	Mt 25:5; 2Pe 3:3-9
> some will be ready and enter, others excluded.....	Mt 25:10-12
> keep watch, you do not know the day or the hour..	Mt 25:13
- Parable of the Talents	Mt 25:14-30
> long delay	Mt 25:19; 2Pe 3:9
> be found busy and faithful	Mt 25:21.23
> lazy servant cast out	Mt 25:26
- Parable of Sheep and Goats	Mt 25:31-46
> separation of righteous and unrighteous	Mt 25:32
> some to inherit the kingdom	Mt 25:34
> some to be cursed and banished to eternal fire.....	Mt 25:41

d) OTHER RELEVANT SCRIPTURES RELATING TO END TIMES

- The return of scattered Israel..... Eze 36:24-38; Eze 37:1-14
 - > possibly fulfilled in 1948 when Israel became a nation again.
- Great final battle against Israel
- Restoration of the Temple
- > (Some believe this is fulfilled in the Church..... 1Co 3:16,17; 6:19; 2Co 6:16; Re 3:12)
- Rise and fall of 4 kingdoms before God's triumph..... Da 2:31-45; 7:-8;
- Seventy 7's relating to events for the end..... Da 9:20-27

- Angel message regarding final battle with Israel..... Da 11: & 12:
- Over great obstacles, Jesus triumphs over all.....Revelations
- e) PROPER RESPONSE TO THESE "END OF THE AGE" EVENTS
- Watchful, not asleep Mt 25:13; Mk 13:37; Re 3:2
 - > in order to pray..... 1Pe 4:7
 - > for self-control..... 1Th 5:6-7
- Actively doing His workMt 24:45-47; Lu 19:13
- Actively engaged in employment, working hard 2 Th 2:1-2; 2 Th 3:5-15
- Blameless and holy... 2 Pe 3:11; 1 Th 5:23
- Obedience 1 Ti 6:14
- Peace in our hearts Joh 14:1-4
- Patient waiting 1 Co 1:7
- Continuing in Jesus 1 Jo 2:28
- Good deeds with good motives 1 Co 4:5; Mt 25:34-46
- Hopeful of rewardLu 12:37; Php 3:20-21; Col 3:4; 1 Pe 5:4

3. RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD & FINAL JUDGMENT

a) BOTH ARE FOUNDATIONAL DOCTRINES Heb 6:2; 1 Co 15:50- 57

b) OLD TESTAMENT REFERENCES

- Resurrection after death Job 19:26; Ps 49:15; Isa 26:19
- Prophecy of Jesus' resurrection Ps 16:10; Ac 2:27
- Some to everlasting life, some shame Da 12:2
- God will ransom, redeem us from deathHo 13:14

c) JESUS AS 'FIRSTFRUITS' OF THOSE RAISED FROM THE DEAD

- Mt 28; Mk 16:1-14; Lu 24:1-46; Joh 20:1-31; 1Co 15:1-11
- Many infallible proofs Lu 24:35-43; Joh 20:20,27; Ac 1:3
- Believers shall likewise rise Ac 26:23; Ro 6:5; 1Co 15:49 & Php 3:21

d) RESURRECTION OF PEOPLE

- Jesus' resurrection is our assurance 1Co 15:12-28
- Resurrection body 1Co 15:35-49
 - > spiritual body 1Co 15:44
 - > see Glorification Section E12
- When shall this be? 1Co 15:50-57; 1Th4:13-18
- Righteous & wicked will be resurrected.....Joh 5:28-29; Ac 24:15; Re 20:13

e) SOME DOUBT

- Sadducees corrected by Jesus Lu 20:27-38
- Some sneered, some delayed, some believed..... Ac 17:32
- Some false teachers corrected by Paul 1Co 15:12; 2Ti 2:18

f) FINAL JUDGMENT - ONE OF THE FOUNDATIONAL DOCTRINES... Heb 6:2

g) CIRCUMSTANCES

- At the coming of JesusMt 25:31; 2Ti 4:1
- Exact time is unknowableMk 13:32

- Administered by Christ Jesus Joh 5:22,27; Ac 10:42;
Ro 14:10; 2Co 5:10
- According to heavenly books Re 20:12
- Believers will be with Him 1Co 6:2; Re 20:4
- Believers innocent by Gospel..... Jas 2:12
 - > rewarded 2Ti 4:8; Re 11:18
- Unbelievers judged guilty..... Mt 7:22-23;25:41;Ro 2:12-15
- All to be judged
 - >all people.....Mt 25:32; Heb 9:27; 12:23;
Re 20:12
 - > present heavens and earth 2Pe 3:7
 - > devils shall be condemned..... 2Pe2:4; Jude 6

4. HEAVEN AND HELL-FINAL DESTINATIONS

- a) HEAVEN, THE DWELLING PLACE OF GOD..... 1Ki 8:30; Mt 6:9
 - God reigns in heaven Ps 11:4; 135:6; Da 4:35
 - God answers from heaven 1Ch 21:26; 2Ch 7:14;
Ne 9:27; Ps 20:6; Mt 6:9
 - God sends His judgments..... Ge 19:24; 1Sa 2:10; Da 4:13;
Ro 1:18
 - Glorified Christ in heaven Ac 7:55-56
 - Jesus as Mediator in heaven Ac 3:21; Heb 6:20; 9:12,24
 - Jesus All-Powerful in heaven Mt 28:18; 1Pe 3:22
- b) HEAVEN, THE DWELLING PLACE
OF HOLY ANGELS..... Mt 18:10; 24:36
- c) HEAVEN, THE DWELLING PLACE OF THE REDEEMED
 - Prepared for us by God
 - > Jesus will take us there when He returns Joh 14:1-4; 1Th 4:17
 - > our future dwelling will be built by God 2Co 5:1; Joh 14:1-4
 - A place to store up our treasure for ever Mt 6:20
 - Names of the righteous written in heaven Lu 10:20
 - New Jerusalem
 - > a city from heaven prepared for believers Re 21:1-3
 - > no more tears, death, mourning, pain Re 21:4
 - > unrighteous not allowed in Re 21:8
- d) HELL (GEHENNA) -FINAL DESTINY OF THE UNRIGHTEOUS
 - Called the Lake of Fire Re 19:20; 20:10,14,15
 - Called the second death Re 21:8
 - Gehenna is contrasted with the kingdom of God..... Mk 9:43-47
 - Fear God who can destroy BODY and SOUL in hell..... Mt 10:28; Lu 12:5
- e) WHAT IS HELL LIKE?
 - Torment & Fire imagesIsa 66:24;
Mt 3:12; 5:22; 13:37-42; Mt 25:41; Mk 9:48
 - Compared to
 - > destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.....Jude 7
 - > flood but with fire not water 2Pe 3:7

f) WHO WILL BE IN HELL?

- The godless..... Isa33:14
- The rebels against God Isa 66:24
- Those using slanderous speech Mt 5:22; Jas 3:6
- One who misleads children Mt 18:8-9; Mk 9:42-48
- Pharisees..... Mt 23:33
- The unrighteous Mt 25:41
- Those with the mark of the beast Re 14:9-10
- The beast and false prophet Re 19:20
- The devil Re 20:10
- Death and Hades..... Re 20:14
- Those not in book of life Re 20:15
- Cowardly, unbelieving, vile, murderers, sexually immoral,
magic arts, idolaters, liars..... Re 21:8

I. OTHER TOPICS OF IMPORTANCE

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11. TEN COMMANDMENTS

12. DIVINE HEALING OF THE BODY

13. MARY - MOTHER OF JESUS

14. NAME OF JESUS

1. TEN COMMANDMENTS

a) INTENTION OF COMMANDMENTS IS LOVE

- Love the Lord God Mt 22:37-40
 - > commandments 1- 4 Ex 20:1-11
- Love your neighbor as yourself..... Mt 22:37-40; Ro 13:9
 - > commandments 5-10 Ex 20:12-17
- The LOVE chapter 1Col 3:1-8

b) PURPOSE OF THE LAW

- To give us the knowledge of sin..... Ro 3:20,7:7
- Law as a prison to constrain us Ga 3:23
- Law as a teacher or guardian Ga 4:1-5
- Law made nothing perfect Heb 7:19
- Sacrifice of Jesus did what Law was unable to do Ro 8:3-4
 - > we are to live a life led by the Spirit of God rather than living by the law
..... Ro 8:13-14

c) THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

- Disobedience comes from our own hearts Mk 7:21- 23; Ro 1:28-32
- #1. No other gods Ex 20:3;De5:7
 - > the very beginning of our relationship with God
 - > Jesus refers to #1 during His temptation Mt 4:10
- #2. Against making and worshiping idols Ex 20:4-6; De 5:8-10
 - > God is a Spirit, not an object..... Joh 4:24
 - > worship Creator, not creature..... Ro 1:25

- #3. Not to misuse God's Name Ex 20:7; De 5:11
 - > importance of the Name Jesus Php 2:9-11
- #4. Remember the sabbath day Ex 20:8-11; De 5:12-15
 - > some honour one day, some all days Ro 14:5-8
 - > Israel kept the Sabbath BUT
never entered God's Rest Heb 3:7-11; Ps 95:7-11
 - > God desires a believing heart Heb 3:12,19
 - > unable to enter Sabbath Rest by works;
- faith in God, not self, is needed Heb 4:1-3
 - > importance is to rest from our own works,
- not to keep a special day Heb 4:8-11
- #5. Honour father and mother Ex 20:12; De 5:16
 - > first commandment with a promise Eph 6:2
 - > example of our love for God the Father Mal 1:6
 - > Pharisees & teachers tried to use #1 to
disobey #5, wicked hearts Mt 15:1-6
- #6. Do not murder Ex 20:13; De 5:17
 - > does not refer to animals Ge 9:1-3
 - > hate is like murder Mt 5:21-22
- #7. Do not commit adultery Ex 20:14; De 5:18
 - > adultery is a work of unredeemed flesh Ga 5:19
 - > Marriage typified Christ and the Church Eph 5:22-33
 - > Jesus' teaching about adultery Mt 5:27-28
 - > Jesus' teaching about divorce Mt 5:31-32; Section G9
- #8. Do not steal..... Ex 20:15; De 5:19
 - > rather work in order to give Eph 4:28
- #9. Do not give false testimony Ex 20:16; De 5:20
 - > Satan misuses Word of God Ge 3:1-3
 - > it is impossible for God to lie Heb 6:18
 - > no liars in the New Jerusalem Re 21:27
- #10. Do not covet Ex 20:17; De 5:21
 - > we should try to please our neighbor Ro 15:2
 - > be content whatever our circumstances..... Php 4:11

2. DIVINE HEALING OF THE BODY

a) GOD'S VIEW OF HEALING

- Healing the sick is God's work Joh9:1-4
- Healing the sick is for the glory of God Joh 11:4
- It is good to heal the sick Mt 12:10-12
- Jesus was willing to heal the sick Mt 8:3,7
- Jesus gave the power to heal to the disciples Mt 10:1
- The Righteous die, some of sicknesses 2Ki 13:14
 - > so don't lose faith if some are not healed

b) PROMISED BY GOD

- Protection provided by obedience to God Ex 15:26
- Wisdom from God is health to the whole body Pr 4:20-22

- > especially guard your heart Pr 4:23
- Through Jesus (by His stripes we are healed) Isa 53:5; IPe 2:24

c) CAUSES OF SICKNESS

- Problems on earth because of Adam's sin Ge 3:16-19
 - > all creation groans because of the curse..... Ro 8:22
 - > people also are waiting for redeemed bodiesRo 8:23
- Sickness as Judgment of God
 - > caused by disobedience Le 26:15-16
 - > caused by rebellion Ps 107:17-18
- Sickness as a Trial from God at the hand of Satan
 - > Job's body is afflicted Job 2:6-7
 - > God is proving Job's love and loyaltyJob 2:3-5
 - > Paul was sick due to messenger of Satan 2Co 12:7
 - > the righteous suffer - Old Testament 2Ki 20:1-3; Da 8:27
- New Testament Ac 9:37; Php 2:27

d) MEANS OF HEALING

- See Spiritual GiftsSection F11
 - > see JesusSection B9
 - > see Disciples Section F11
- Through prayer..... Ge 20:17; 2Ki 20:5; Jas 5:16; Ac 28:8
- By laying on of hands, or touchMt 14:36; Mk 3:10; 5:23; 6:5; Lu 4:40; 6:19; 8:47; 22:51; Ac 28:8
- Tree of Life for continual healing.....Re 22:2
- Physicians mentioned - Old Testame nt..... Ge 50:2; 2Ch 16:12; Jer 8:22
- New Testament..... Mt 9:12; Mk 2:17; Lu 4:23,5:31

e) CONDITIONS FOR HEALING

- Do you want to get well?Joh 5:6
- Forgiveness of sins Mt 9:5-6
 - > forgive others so we will be forgiven Mt 6:14; Mk 11:25
 - > confess your sins Jas 5:15-16; IJo 1:9
 - > repentance leads to healing Ps 107:19-20
- Faith is necessary.....Ac 14:9; Mt 9:28-29
- Authority from Jesus is necessary Lu9:1
- Prayer and fasting may be necessary Mt 17:21

f) WHY SOME ARE NOT HEALED

- God's choice is not man's choice Lu 4:27
 - > Jesus heals only one man at Bethesda Joh 5:2-10
 - > God chooses whom He wishes Joh 5:21
- Unbelief or lack of Faith Mt 13:58,17:20; Mk 6:5-6
- Miracle lost because of doubt (Peter on water)..... Mt 14:31
- Don't ask; don't receiveJas 4:2; Mt 21:22; Joh 16:23-24
 - > some ask for selfish reasons Jas 4:3

g) ANOINTING WITH OIL (2 New Testament Scriptures)

- Before the coming of Holy Spirit Mk6:13

- James to Jewish believersJas1:1;5:14
- No reference to Jesus and the disciples (in the Book of Acts) using oil. Oil is a symbol of healing. Some are helped by being anointed with oil when a healing prayer is offered.

3. MARY-MOTHER OF JESUS

a) CHOSEN OF GOD

Mary is special in that she is the mother of Jesus. But the Bible does not honour her more greatly than other chosen servants of God.

- Angel Gabriel appeared to Mary Lu 1:26,27
 - > Gabriel also appeared to DanielDa8:16; 9:21
 - > Gabriel also appeared to Zacharias.....Lu 1:19
- Mary is called "highly favored of God" Lu 1:28
 - > Daniel is also called "highly favored of God" Da 10:11
- There are several "Marys" in the Bible. It is Mary, the sister of Lazarus and of Martha, whom Jesus honors by saying "... wherever this gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her".... Mt 26:13; Mk 14:9

b) VIRGINITY

- Virgin at the time of the birth of Jesus Lu 1:27; Mt 1:23
 - > Joseph had no union with Mary before Jesus' birth.....Mt 1:25
 - > Joseph had union with Mary after Jesus' birthMt 1:25
- Mary and Joseph had many children
 - > sons: James, Joseph, Simon & Judas Mt 13:55
 - > James the Lord's brother..... Ga 1:19
 - > Jesus' mother and brothersMt 12:46-47; Mk 3:31-32
 - > Jesus' mother and brothers and sisters Mt 13:55-56
 - > Jesus' mother and brothers and disciplesJoh 2:12
 - > Jesus' brothers didn't believe Him Joh 7:5
 - > after resurrection His brothers believedICo 9:5

c) JESUS'RELATIONSHIP WITH MARY, HIS MOTHER

- Obedient to Mary & Joseph as a child Lu 2:51
- Calls her "Woman" Joh2:4; 19:26
- Puts her into His best friend's care Joh 19:26

d) MARY'S RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS

- She followed Jesus.....Mt 27:55,56
 - > for dear identification see Mt 13:55
- She waits with the disciples for the Holy Spirit Ac 1:14

e) CHARACTER OF MARY

- Submissive to God and His will for her Lu 1:38
- Believed the word of God (faith)Lu 1:46-55
- Pure, virgin before Jesus' birth Lu 1:27
- A worshiper of God Lu 1:46

f) CONCLUSIONS ABOUT MARY

- Mary was a wonderful, virtuous, obedient woman who loved God and should be respected and appreciated.
- Mary was chosen by God for the most honorable duty of giving birth to Jesus, Who

according to the flesh comes from Mary and according to the Spirit, He comes from God. It is not correct to call Mary "the mother of God." It is proper to say that she is the mother of the man, Jesus.

- Mary followed/obeyed Jesus, the same as all the other believers..... John 2:5

- Mary waited for the promise of Jesus, the Holy Spirit, along with the other believers.... Ac 1:14

- No further mention is made of Mary the mother of Jesus after Pentecost.

- The wise men worship Jesus; they do not worship Mary..... Mt 2:11

- We are told that all we do in word and deed should be done in the Name of Jesus Col 3:17; Mk 9:39; Lu 2:21; Joh 10:25,20:31; Ac 2:38,3:6,4:10,

4:18,4:30,5:40,8:12,8:16,9:27,9:29,16:18,19:5,19:13,19:17,21:13,

26:9; ICo 5:4,6:11; Eph 5:20; Php 2:10; Col 3:17; 2Th 1:12,3:6; IJo 3:23.

There are no Bible verses which tell us to worship Mary, to pray to Mary, or to ask her to intercede for us or to do anything in Mary's name.

4. NAME OF JESUS

a) NAMES AND TITLES GIVEN TO JESUS

- Jesus... (Jehovah is salvation)Mt 1:21

- Emmanuel... (God with us) Mt 1:23

- Christ... (Anointed one, Messiah)..... Mt 1:17

- Potentate... (Ruler)...(Mighty Prince) ITi 6:15

- King of kings and Lord of lords ITi6:15;Re 19:16

- Lord Jesus..... Ac 8:16

- Lord Jesus Christ Eph 5:20

- God Joh 1:1,14

- Son of God IJo 5:13; Joh 3:18

- Word Joh1:1,14

- Jesus Christ..... Mt 1:1

- Word of God..... Re 19:13

- Wonderful Counselor Isa9:6

- Mighty God Isa9:6

- Everlasting Father Isa9:6

- Last Adam..... ICo 15:45

- Prince of Peace Isa9:6

- Bridegroom..... Mt 9:15

- Chief Shepherd IPe5:4

- Lamb of God Joh 1:29

- Chief Cornerstone IPe 2:6-7

- Son of man Mt8:20

- Way, Truth & Life Joh 14:6

- Light.....Joh8:12

- Living Bread Joh 6:51

- Living Stone IPe2:4

- Lion of Judah Re5:5

- Mediator 1Ti 2:5

- Priest Heb6:20

- SaviorLu 2:11

- Descendant of David 2Ti 2:8

- and many others

b) SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NAME OF JESUS

- It's the Name above every name Php 2:9

> every one will acknowledge Jesus as Lord Php 2:10-11

- God's commandment is to believe in Jesus' Name IJo 3:23

- Church is identified as those who call on Jesus' Name ICo 1:2

- Everything we do should be in Jesus' Name Col 3:17

> Peter preached baptism in Jesus' Name..... Ac 2:38

> see also Baptism Section G2

> lame man healed in Jesus' Name..... Ac 3:6; 4:10

- > our salvation is in the Name of Jesus Ac 4:12
- > miracles are done in Jesus' Name Mk 9:39; Ac 4:30
- > Paul preached in the Name of Jesus Ac 9:27-29
- > Philip preached Kingdom of God and
Jesus' Name Ac 8:12
- > Paul & Barnabas hazarded their lives
for Jesus' Name..... Ac 15:25-26
- > Paul was ready to die for the Name of Jesus Ac 21:13
- > Paul admonished and corrected in the Name
of Jesus..... I Co 1:10; 5:4
- > we are washed, sanctified & justified
in Jesus' Name..... I Co 6:11
- > we thank God & the Father in Jesus' Name Eph5:20
- > evil spirits cast out in Jesus' Name Ac 16:18
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c) OPPOSITION TO JESUS' NAME

- Jesus came in His Father's Name but was not received.....Joh 5:43
- Sanhedrin forbade disciples to teach in Jesus' Name Ac 4:18; 5:40
- Saul fought against the Name of Jesus Ac 26:9-12
- False Christs will come in His Name Mt 24:5; Mk 13:6; Lu 21:8

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SECTION A1

HOW TO TRAIN CHURCH LEADERS

By Ralph Mahoney

Chapter 1

Training Leaders

Introduction

There are THREE GREAT HINDRANCES to spreading the gospel. These obstruct the evangelization of those who have never heard the good news about what Jesus Christ has done to save and bless all nations. These are:

- CLERICALISM
- PNEUMATOLOGY
DEFICIENCIES
- CATHEDRAL BUILDING

In this section, *How To Train Church Leaders*, you will learn how to overcome CLERICALISM. The other two are dealt with in subsequent sections. If you follow the biblical alternative to "Clericalism," you will be effective in helping Jesus build His Church.

2,500,000 Israelites followed Moses out of Egypt into the wilderness. The severe deficiencies of Moses' leadership style illustrate CLERICALISM.

"And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses sat to judge the people: and the people stood by Moses from the morning unto the evening.

"And when Moses' father-in-law saw all that he did..., he said, What is this...***why do you sit judging the people without others to help... ?***

"And Moses said unto his father-in-law, Because the people come unto me to inquire of God: When they have a matter, they come unto me; and I judge between one and another, and I teach them the statutes of God, and his laws.

"And Moses' father-in-law said unto him, ***The thing that you do is not good.*** You will surely wear away, both you, and this people...: for this thing is too heavy for you; ***you are not able to perform it by yourself alone.***

"Do what I say, I will give you counsel, and God shall be with you: bring the causes [needs] of the people unto God:

"And teach the people God's ordinances and laws, and show them the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do.

"In addition, choose out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens:

"And let them judge the people at all seasons: and it shall be, that every difficult matter they shall bring unto you, but every simple matter they shall judge: so shall it be easier for you, and they shall bear the burden with you" (Exo 18:13-22).

Clericalism is trying to do the work God has called you to accomplish, by yourself, without the counsel or help of others. Clericalism is placing yourself OVER others instead of seeing yourself as the servant of others. *"And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant" (Matt 20:27;23:11).* Those who stay in the trap of Clericalism will fail to fulfill the true purpose of a church leader.

Clericalism can only be solved by using the principles of multiplying ministry utilized by Jesus and the Apostle Paul in the New Testament.

The solution to clericalism is to build a team. Invest your time and resources in the team. Let the team help you with the work God has called you to do.

You will succeed in team-building if you follow the principles given to Moses by God and his father-in-law, Jethro. Without these, Moses would have failed. Without them, you will fail as a church leader.

We will examine the five principles given to Moses. In these, we will find our solution to the problem of Clericalism.

A. FIVE PRINCIPLES GIVEN TO MOSES

1. Train Others To Help

"I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me. And if thou deal thus with me, kill me, I pray thee..." (Num. 11:14,15).

Moses was asking God to kill him because of the problems resulting from clericalism. Clericalism was killing Moses.

It will kill you!

To help him with this problem, God was talking to Moses (Numbers 11). In Exodus 18, Jethro (Moses' father-in-law) was also talking to Moses and saying the same thing.

When Moses listened to God and Jethro, here is what he found out.

The solution to his problem began with training others.

"And the LORD said unto Moses, Gather unto me seventy men... whom thou knowest to be the elders of the people, and officers over them..." (Num 11:16).

"In addition, choose out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens: And let them judge the people at all seasons: with you..." (Exo 18:21,22).

The scripture verses which follow teach us that the leadership gifts were given to the Church to train the members to do the work of the ministry.

This was the purpose of Moses' ministry. He just didn't know it.

The leader's job is to train and equip the members of the church who have leadership potential.

These members would then do the work of the ministry.

'When Jesus ascended up to heaven...He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For training and equipping the saints, so the members of the church would do the work of the ministry, and thus build up the body of Christ spiritually and numerically..." (Eph 4:10-12pph).

a. Each One — Teach One. Paul teaches in the above verses that the primary purpose of a church leader is to train others.

Paul explained this to young Timothy. His job as a church leader was to train others. He was to take the training he received from Paul and pass it on to other faithful men. These in turn were also to teach still other faithful men.

"And the things that you have heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2Tim 2:2).

Following Paul's principle of training others would set off a chain reaction of multiplication that would cause the gospel to be spread quickly over the whole world.

The following chart shows what would happen if you would take ONE other faithful man and spend ONE year training him.

The second year, you and the one you trained would each train one other. If you kept this process up for thirty-three years, look what would happen.

This illustrates the Bible principle of "EACH ONE -TEACH ONE."

EACH ONE —TEACH ONE	
AT END OF	# OF PERSONS TRAINED
Year 1	2
Year 2	4
Year 3	8
Year 4	16
Year 5	32
Year 6	64
Year 7	128
Year 8	256
Year 9	512
Year 10	1,024
Year 11	2,048
Year 12	4,096
Year 13	8,192
Year 14	16,384
Year 15	32,768
Year 16	65,536
Year 17	131,072
Year 18	262,144
Year 19	524,288
Year 20	1,048,576
Year 21	2,097,152
Year 22	4,194,304
Year 23	8,388,608
Year 24	16,777,216
Year 25	33,554,432
Year 26	67,108,864
Year 27	134,217,728
Year 28	268,435,456
Year 29	536,870,912
Year 30	1,073,741,824
Year 31	2,147,483,648
Year 32	4,294,967,296
Year 33	8,589,934,592

If each one would teach one, at the end of 33 years, more people would be trained than the population of the world. If we would do things the Bible way, we would experience biblical results.

"And there went great multitudes with him... And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women" (Luke 14:25, Acts 5:14). This is God's desire, for multitudes to follow Jesus.

*"After this I beheld, and, lo, a **great multitude**, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes... " (Rev 7:9). Yes! The Lord wants multitudes saved. "The Lord...is...not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2Pet 3:9). He has given us principles to insure this result.*

b. Fruit That Remains. In 1959 the author was ministering in the country of Nicaragua, Central America. The question was asked an elderly and wise church leader: "How were you able to plant five hundred churches in Central America in thirty years?" In response he told the following story.

"I went to Guatemala in 1929 as a missionary. Immediately I set out to visit villages where no born-again believers could be found. I preached and healed the sick for six nights. Every night I invited the sinners to come and receive forgiveness from Jesus or their sins. Many came every night.

"I would baptize the new believers in water and go on to the next village, to repeat the process. I thought I was winning about one hundred souls to Christ every week. That is the number I was baptizing.

"I would write to my home church who supported me and tell the story of all my success. It was unbelievable! I was winning over five-thousand souls each year to Christ.

"After two years and one hundred village crusades, I decided to go back and visit all these villages a second time.

"I went to the first village and to my amazement, all my converts had become 'reverts' — they had all reverted back to their pagan practices and were not living their lives by the Bible. There were no church meetings and no one leading or teaching the new believers. Those I had left in charge had not continued to follow Christ.

"I went to the second and third, the fourth and fifth village. It was the same in every one. My heart was broken. What I thought had been two years of successful ministry had produced no **remaining** fruit.

"The words of Jesus were ringing in my ears:

*"You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should **remain**..." (John 15:16).*

"I had no remaining fruit. What must I do? I set my heart to seek the Lord with a time of fasting and prayer. During that time the Lord spoke clearly to me. He said, 'I have not sent you to evangelize Central America by yourself. I sent you to train others.'

"The Lord showed me two important principles. **First:** Train others to take leadership responsibility! **Second:** Work where God is working!

"I immediately set about organizing a Bible School training course of six months' duration. About fifty students came and completed the first course.

"Shortly after that, I heard reports from the jungle areas of miracles of healing taking place. People were having visions of Jesus and as a result of the healing miracles, were being converted by the scores.

"Then I remembered. '**Work where God is working.**' Immediately we took the trained workers to that area. A great harvest of souls resulted. The trained workers started churches in each of the villages and cared for and taught the new believers. This produced 'remaining fruit.'

"I have followed those two principles since 1931: (1) Train others and (2) work where God is working!

"Today we have five Short-term Bible Training Institutes in which over a thousand workers have been trained. The five hundred churches are the remaining fruit of those Central American young people we trained. They went out to the places where we heard God was working. We worked with God and great fruitfulness resulted."

By 1989 (30 years after I first met that dear missionary) that Central American church movement had grown to several thousand churches.

c. Find The Leaders. And the LORD said unto Moses, "*Gather unto me seventy men... whom thou knowest to be the elders of the people, and officers over them...*" (Num 11:16).

A lot of time and effort is wasted training those with no leadership gift. The Lord's instruction was clear, "*Gather... seventy men... whom thou knowest to be elders [leaders]...*"

How can you recognize a leader? Observe how many followers there are. If no one is following, you do not have a leader.

When you go out to the field to bring in a herd of fifty dairy cows to be milked — you only have to find the "lead cow." If you start her toward the milking-barn, the rest will follow. So it is with leaders of people. You must find men and women others will follow, and train them.

This is what Jesus did. "*And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.*"

"*And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named Apostles... And he came down with them...*" (Luke 6:12,13, 17).

Jesus spent most of His time preparing the twelve apostles to carry on His ministry. He followed this principle of training others — who would teach others also. That is the ministry of leaders — finding more leaders and training them.

2. Teach Them The Bible

What training should we give church leaders? "*And teach the people God's ordinances and laws...*" (Exo 18:20).

Those familiar with Church Seminaries and Bible Schools are acutely aware that most teach every subject but the Bible. The Theological Seminaries too frequently become "Cemeteries" — where hundreds of potential church leaders' spiritual life is buried.

A basic choice was presented Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden:

"...*the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge...*" (Gen 2:9). Eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge would produce sin and death. Despite this biblical warning, the Church returns continually to this tree for the training programs.

What is the result? The Apostle Paul put it simply: "*Knowledge puffeth up, but love edifieth*" (1Cor 8:1).

Training programs that do not use THE BIBLE as the primary reference work produce arrogant, spiritually dead, impotent leaders whose only achievement after graduation is to pastor a church that gets smaller every year.

That which has no life cannot and will not grow. The tree of knowledge only produces death.

"Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye are in error, because you do not know the scriptures..." (Matt 22:29). The Scriptures keep us from error and produce life. *"...the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life "* (John 6:63).

It is the words of God the Father and God the Son (Jesus) recorded in the Bible that bring life to us.

"Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life..." (Rev 22:14).

a. **Academic Achievement Is Not The Goal.** Training programs based in intellectual achievement with emphasis on academic degrees will not produce the leadership needed to win lost souls to Christ or build growing churches. The greater emphasis on academics, the less capable the leadership. Teach the Bible. Train church leaders in the Bible. Let the Bible be the center of your training curriculum.

The question was asked about Jesus, *"...How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?"* (John 7:15).

The Jews marveled at Jesus' knowledge of the Scripture because they knew Jesus had no academic credential to commend Him to the religious or secular world.

We should learn from this example. Academic achievement is not the goal. Knowledge of the Scriptures and the power of God is what the church leader needs (Matt 22:29).

b. **Look For "Leader-Laborers".** The early apostles were not known for their academic achievement. *'Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marveled: and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus'* (Acts 4:13).

Not one of Jesus' apostles graduated from the Theological Seminary of the Pharisees or Sadducees. His standard for church leaders was this: *"The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest"* (Luke 10:2). The effective church leader is one who has proven he knows how to work hard. He has callouses on his hands. He has learned the discipline of strenuous productive labor.

By contrast, the Seminary graduate is often arrogant, too proud to work, lazy and unproductive. Such are not fit to represent Him Who washed His disciples' feet. *"If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet"* (John 13:14). Find a "leader-laborer" and you will usually have a productive church leader.

That is why Jesus chose fishermen like Peter and John, professional people like Matthew the publican and Luke the physician. They had practical skills and knew how to work hard. Such can be taught the Bible and be fruitful leaders.

3. Show Them The Work To Do

*"... and show them the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do" (Exo 18:20). The Apostle Luke began the Book of Acts with these words: "The former treatise have I made... of all that Jesus began both to **do** and **teach**" (Acts 1:1).*

a. Get Them Involved. It is not enough to teach the trainee. The trainer must immediately involve the student in DOING the TEACHING!

If you teach the student "soul-winning" — then immediately send them out to win souls. If you teach them how to heal the sick and cast out devils, immediately send them out to do this. That is what Jesus did.

"And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease.

"These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying... And as ye go, preach, saying,

"The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give"(Matt. 10:1-8).

"Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases. And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick. And they departed, and went through the towns, preaching the gospel, and healing everywhere" (Luke 9:1,2,6).

"After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come.

"Go your ways: behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves.

"And into whatsoever city ye enter... heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them. The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.

"And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name.

"And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.

"Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

"In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit. and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight" (excerpts from Luke 10:1-21).

b. Short-Term Training Is Best. Note that the training was short-term with both the twelve apostles and the seventy disciples that Jesus commissioned. He demonstrated what they should do, and then sent them out to do the same things He did. *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father "* (John 14:12).

The longer the training program, the less effective the graduates. Training should be kept to six months maximum — then the trainees should be sent out full time to do the work. If necessary, they can be brought back for further training a year or two later.

c. Keep It Practical. The short-term training should be 50 percent TEACHING and 50 percent DOING. What is taught should be immediately put into practice (doing). Don't train the head, train the hands. Keep the emphasis on Practics (practical training).

The author has spent much of the last thirty years traveling in over one hundred nations of the world. He has observed the training programs that produce good results and those training programs that produce no (or negative) results.

The Church in three nations is getting outstanding results. These are Korea, Brazil and Chile. In these nations, the above principles are being utilized. The churches are exploding in growth and the leaders are very successful in winning thousands of people to Christ.

The training is Bible-centered, short-term and practical. Academics are not emphasized. Dedication and commitment to Christ, purity of character and an emphasis on practical training (immediately doing what is taught) — these are the commonalities of the training programs in these three countries.

It is biblically based — and yields biblical results.

4. Transfer The Anointing

"And the LORD said unto Moses, Gather unto me seventy men of the elders of Israel... and bring them unto the tabernacle of the congregation, that they may stand there with thee.

"And... and I will take of the spirit which is upon thee, and will put it upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee, that thou bear it not thyself alone" (Num 11:16,17).

a. The Anointing Is Essential. This is probably the most important (but most neglected) principle in leadership development.

Without the power of the Holy Spirit (the anointing) coming upon the leader, he has no chance of succeeding. **Jesus never sent anyone to represent Him that He did not first empower.**

"Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases " (Luke 9:1).

"After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also... And he said unto them... Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you" (Luke 10:1,18,19).

"And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me.

"For John truly baptized in water; but ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit not many days hence " (Acts 1:4,5).

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

Jesus did not begin His ministry until the Spirit of the Lord descended upon Him at His Baptism in water by John the Baptist (see Matthew 3:16; Mark 1:10; John 1:32).

Jesus began His ministry by saying: *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised. To preach a year of liberation [or Jubilee]"* (Luke 4:18,19 — cf. Leviticus 25:1-54).

The anointing was essential for Jesus to fulfill His ministry (as outlined in the preceding verses). It likewise is essential for you.

Jesus **commanded** His disciples that they should "*be baptized in the Holy Spirit*" (Acts 1:5). Paul commanded "*...be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit*" (Eph5:18).

See the section of the **Leaders Training Guide** that deals with "*The Baptism In The Holy Spirit*" for more teaching on this vital subject.

b. Anointed Leaders Should Train Others. Let us not miss the vital principle involved in the above scriptures. The key leader was anointed and passed his anointing on to those he trained.

In contrast to this, the author has noted that often the training Seminaries are staffed by those who failed in the ministry. Those who went out to pastor a church or to evangelize and failed in the process, are often brought to the Seminary to train those with leadership potential. Such an approach is doomed to produce others who fail.

The law of Harvest found in the Bible is clear. "*And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind...*

"And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind..." (Gen 1:12,21).

We reproduce what we are. If failed leaders train, their students will be failures. Successful leaders, who carry a strong anointing of the Holy Spirit on their lives, should be involved in the training of leadership. They will reproduce others who will carry a strong anointing and be successful.

This was true of those Moses trained. God said, "*And... I will take of the spirit which is upon thee, and will put it upon them...*" (Num 11:17).

This was true of Elijah and Elisha. "*Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for you, before I be taken away from you. And Elisha said, I pray you, let a double portion of your spirit be upon me.*

"And he said, You have asked a hard thing: nevertheless, if you see me when I am taken from you, it shall be so unto you..." "*And it came to pass... there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.*

"And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof.

"He took up also the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and went back, and stood by the bank of Jordan... and smote the waters, and said. Where is the LORD God of Elijah? And when he also had smitten the waters, they parted... and Elisha went over.

"And when the sons of the prophets which were to view at Jericho saw him, they said, The spirit [anointing] of Elijah doth rest on Elisha" (2Ki 2:9-15).

This was true of Jesus and His disciples. "*The Comforter... is the Holy Spirit...*" (John 14:26).

"But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father..." (John 15:26).

"Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you" (John 16:7).

c. Anointing Is Shared. The anointing transferred from Moses to the leaders who were to share in his ministry. The anointing transferred from Elijah to Elisha who was to

share his ministry. The anointing transferred from Jesus to His disciples who were to share in His ministry.

The same principle still holds. The trainee shares in the anointing of the trainer. Hence, those who do the training should be those who carry the strong power of God upon their lives. The laws of Harvest will work. They will bring forth after their kind.

I knew an evangelist who had a dynamic miracle-healing ministry for the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America. I noticed that in almost every nation in which he ministered, the one who served as his interpreter would have the same anointing (ministry) as this evangelist. Two weeks of working with the evangelist caused the anointing to transfer. After the evangelist left, the interpreter would carry on in the spirit and power of the evangelist.

d. Who Transfers The Anointing? *God said, "And... I will take of the spirit which is upon thee, and will put it upon them..." (Num 11:17).*

It is under the guidance and sovereignty of God that this takes place. God is the One Who chooses the recipients and directs the key leadership in this blessed transfer. *"And no man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron"* (Heb 5:4). It is by divine appointment.

It seems in the early Church, they spent times of fasting, prayer and ministry to the Lord so a proper atmosphere was created in which God could speak (Acts 1:14; 13:1 - 3). Out of such times, the Holy Spirit came. The anointing came. The workers went out empowered by the Spirit and successfully fulfilled their ministries.

May we clear those steps to the Upper Room once again and pray and press into God's presence until the power of the Spirit comes. Then we will be ready to go forth proclaiming and proving the resurrection of Jesus.

"And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all" (Acts 4:33).

For further study on the anointing, see Section A2.9, **Receive The Triple Anointing**, in the **Leaders Training Guide**.

5. Transfer The Burden

"And the LORD said unto Moses, Gather unto me... the elders of Israel... that they may stand... with thee. And... they shall bear the burden of the people with thee..." (Num 11:16, 17).

If you see a man reaching for responsibility, promote him! That man will be a blessing to the Lord's work. If you see a man reaching for authority, be on guard! That man will damage the work of the Lord.

a. Leadership Is Not Lordship. *"Feed the flock of God... Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock"* (I Pet 5:3).

God made mankind to exercise dominion (see Genesis 1:26). For this reason, in the heart of most men there is the desire to rule.

Ruling according to the biblical model is quite different from the way most leaders in the world exercise their authority. Hence we need to understand the Bible model for leadership.

Using dominion as Jesus did was legitimate. *"...I do always those things that please the Father"* (John 8:29). He used His leadership position to teach, bless, heal,

break bondages, cast out demons, forgive sins and heal the broken-hearted (see Luke 4:18). All this pleased His heavenly Father.

"For even the Son of man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). Jesus did not exercise dominion as a self-serving dictator. Jesus saw His role as a servant ruler.

His disciples did not understand this. They thought leadership would mean a high position in which they would receive praise and honor.

"Then came to him the mother of Zebedee 's children with her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a special request of him.

"And he said unto her, What do you want? She said unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on your right hand, and the other on the left, in your kingdom.

*"Jesus replied, ...Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion **over** them, and they that are great exercise authority **upon** them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your servant;*

"And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your slave: Even as the Son of man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matt 20:20-28).

The Lord did not want His apostles ruling OVER. Rather He wanted them serving UNDER the people, bent low, washing their feet — like a lowly slave. *"If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet" (John 13:14).*

The Apostle Paul affirmed this in his writings. *"But now in Christ Jesus ye... are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone" (Eph2:13,20).*

This teaches us the leadership (apostles and prophets) are foundational ministries in the church. The foundation of a building is under it, in a supportive role —not over it, dominating and holding it under dominion.

The 'chief cornerstone' was the topstone (or head-stone) in the pyramid. This place is reserved for Jesus alone. He alone has any right to rule in the church as the 'chief cornerstone.'

Any church leader who tries to take the place of Jesus is in danger of operating as an 'anti-christ.' In the New Testament, the Greek word for 'anti-christ' not only means 'against Christ' but in some passages 'in the place of Christ.' Those trained for leadership must understand this important principle.

Centuries before Christ, the Israelites tried to make their deliverer, Gideon, a king. He wisely responded, *"...I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you: the LORD shall rule over you (Judg 8:23).*

1) The Parable of Jotham. I recommend you read the parable of Jotham (a relative of Gideon) in Judges 9:7- 21.

In his parable, none of the 'fruit-bearing trees' or vines would accept the summons to rule over the people. Only the thorny, fruitless 'bramble bush' responded to the call to be a ruler. Note how the 'fruitful vine' responded in Jotham's parable: *"Then said the trees unto the 'vine', Come thou, and reign over us.*

"And the 'vine' said unto them, Should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?" (Judg 9:12,13). The 'vine' refused to rule over others.

Jesus had the same attitude. He was the true 'vine', and He too refused to be made a king (see John 15:1). *'When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone'(John6:15).*

Paul wrote to the Philippians, *"...Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:*

"Who, being in the form of God, thought it not something to be grasped after to be equal with God:

"But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a slave, and was made in the likeness of men:

"And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Therefore, *"Let nothing be done through strife or conceit; but in humility of mind let each think of others as better than themselves" (Phil 2:3-8).*

2) Paul — An Example. Being an apostle of Jesus brought no honor or praise. Paul described his leadership role in these words. *"Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place;*

"And labor, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it:

"Being defamed, we entreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the off-scouring of all things unto this day.

"I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you"(I Cor 4:11-14).

The Corinthian church and their leaders had a wrong understanding of their role in this present world. They thought they were to be like gentile rulers (see 1 Corinthians 4:8). Paul used stinging words of sarcasm to correct their wrong ideas.

b. The Church Leader—A Burden-Bearer. The Scripture uses the oxen (water buffalo) as the symbol of the church leader. *"For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shall not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen?*

"Or does he say this referring to we who are leaders in the church? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written..." (1 Cor 9:9,10).

The oxen was chosen as the representation of the church leader because of its patient endurance in the labors of harvest. The steady, enduring strength and selflessness of the oxen has made it the most loved and revered of all animals used in agriculture.

As such, the oxen illustrates the biblical role of the church leader — a burden-bearer, one who joyfully takes the responsibility to see that others are fed and cared for.

It is obvious from Scripture that those who faithfully fulfill their leadership role bear many burdens like the oxen. Paul described his ministry in 2 Corinthians 11:23-28 in these graphic words:

"...in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft.

"Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one.

"Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep;

"In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren;

"In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.

"Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches. "None but the sincere church leaders want these kind of burdens and responsibilities. Such are God's oxen.

Seek out these kind of men and train them for leadership. Observe these biblical principles for training leaders:

"...for then thou shall make thy way prosperous, and then thou shall have good success " (Josh 1:8).

SECTION A2

TRAINING LEADERS TO....

By Ralph Mahoney

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PREFACE — CHAPTERS A2.1-A2.9

This section contains the material which has proven most popular and in greatest demand from this author. It is in a sense a "Manifesto for the Christian leader."

The first chapter outlines the preparations and principles by which an ordinary person can rise to an extraordinary leadership role. It is the author's own road map — drawn in retrospect of thirty-five years of active world-wide ministry.

The author has tried to carefully mark the detours, dangerous curves and collapsed bridges to prevent the church leader who starts the race from becoming a casualty of his own conquest. Those who follow the road map will keep the faith, and finish the course to receive the crown of life to cast at Jesus' feet.

In Section E4 the author attempts to outline the practical steps a spiritually developed leader must implement to cause God's will to be done on earth as it is in Heaven.

Chapters A2.1 - A2.9 of *The Shepherd's Staff* could be likened to our faith; Chapters E4.1-E4.5, to our works. "Faith without works is dead." The "works" of Chapters E4.1-E4.5 will complement the "faith" of Chapters A2.1-A2.9.

This material is thus dedicated to every church leader who wants to "...always abound in the work of the Lord." Anyone with any less aspiration than this will waste his time in reading it. For those sincere leaders willing to glorify Christ by life or by death — it will provide the encouragement, enlightenment and instruction needed to succeed.

Chapter 1

Wait On The Lord

Introduction

Are you called to be a church leader but fear your inadequacies will keep you from being successful? Do you believe you are too weak to be a strong leader? Perhaps you have already been thrust into a position of leadership and are facing frustration or even failure. If so, take heart. God has good news for you.

A. GOD USES THE WEAK

"He giveth power to the faint, and to those that have no might ...He increaseth strength" (Isa 40:29).

When God calls a person to become a leader, He doesn't choose him on the basis of how clever, talented or educated he may be. In fact, these are things which God may have to modify (or sometimes destroy) before He can use us. The Bible says, *"I will destroy the wisdom of the wise and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent" (I Cor 1:19).*

The Apostle Paul says, *"The foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called.*

"But God hath chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And... things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are (I Cor 1:25-28).

This is what the Apostle Paul is teaching us: Through our weakness, our faltering, our failings, God reveals His wisdom. Through our helplessness, God displays His power. His strength is made perfect in our weakness.

A preacher friend of mine (Jack) shared a recent experience with me. While he ministered in Japan, the Lord was impressing him with this scripture:

*"Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength **because of thine enemies**, that thou mightest still [defeat/silence] the enemy and the avenger" (Ps 8:2).*

1. Enemies Defeated

He was teaching the church leaders of Japan that the Lord uses the praises of babes and sucklings to defeat His enemies (see Matthew 21:16).

It is as if God takes delight in humiliating Satan by using the weakest members of His creation (you and me — His babes, His children) to still (defeat) the enemy and the avenger.

As Jack was flying home from Japan the Lord gave him a vision. He saw a group of children leading a bunch of bleating, helpless sheep. The children were praising God and rejoicing in Him.

As Jack meditated on this, the Lord spoke to him and said, **"I have chosen the symbol of lambs and sheep to represent my people because they are symbols of weakness and have no ability to lead or save themselves. But I am going to take a bunch of praising children who are leading a flock of bleating sheep and use them to utterly vanquish Satan, to defeat him at every turn of events."**

I believe Jack is right. God uses the weak to destroy His enemies. That means He can use you and me.

B. THE PEOPLE GOD CHOOSES

I am often astonished by the people God chooses to do particular jobs.

1. Paul

For example. He sent Paul to the uncultured pagan Gentiles. Paul had studied the Scriptures under Gamaliel (who was a great master teacher of the Pharisees). As a candidate for the Sanhedrin (a prestigious Jewish men's group who interpreted the religious laws in Israel) Paul had to memorize and quote (without error) the first five books of the Old Testament (called the Pentateuch). He was a Jew of notable background and achievement.

From a human viewpoint, no one could have been more suited to the task of evangelizing Jews than Paul. But to whom did God send Paul to minister? Not to the cultured Jews but to the ignorant and outcast peoples called Gentiles. The Gentiles had little appreciation for Paul's great learning and his mastery of Jewish law.

All of Paul's natural strength, all his education, cleverness and talent had to be set aside. God had to strip it all away by taking him to the desert of Arabia (like his forefather Moses) and there divest him of all those things he could have boasted in (see Galatians 1:17; Philippians 3:4-8).

In that *"...howling waste wilderness, that land of deserts, pits, drought, and the shadow of death where no man traveled or lived..."* (Jer 2:6), Paul learned his success as a minister of Christ would only be through laying down *"all that was gain — to count it loss — to gain Christ"* (see Philippians 3:7,8).

He learned to proclaim the gospel *"...not in plausible words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power"* (I Cor 2:4).

To convince people that Jesus was their Savior, Paul counted more on the Spirit working miracles through him than he did on his ability as an orator or preacher (I Cor 10:4; 2Cor 10:10). We should do the same.

2. Peter

Though Peter opened the door of faith to the Gentiles (Acts 10), he remained in Jerusalem among the most elite Jews of the Roman empire as "the apostle to the Jews" (see Galatians 2:8). What qualified Peter for this task? Certainly not great academic

achievement or education. The Bible describes him as "... *unlearned and ignorant*" (Acts 4:13). He was but a simple fisherman, yet God qualified him for the job by the power of the Holy Spirit.

C. TURN WEAKNESS TO BLESSING

"He gives power to the faint, and to those who have no might... he increases strength" (Isa 40:29).

The story is told of a blind man and a cripple who became inseparable friends. What contributed to their friendship?

The cripple could see perfectly but could not walk. The blind man had strong legs, but could not see. The cripple offered his seeing ability to the blind man in exchange for his mobility.

The blind man would carry the cripple on his back. The cripple would instruct the blind man which way to walk and warn him of objects in the path that would cause him to stumble.

Their mutual weaknesses and need brought them together to take advantage of each other's strength.

1. Depend More On God

In the same way, our spiritual blindness and lameness should drive us to a prayerful dependent relationship with God, so His strength can take the place of our weakness.

*The hymn writer said it beautifully:
His strength is made perfect in weakness.
His power is not for the strong.
He giveth more grace
To the weak in the race.
His strength is made perfect in weakness.*

The personal weaknesses which make us aware of our lack of ability or power to be a leader should cause us to turn our heart to God in prayer (sometimes with fasting). If we respond in this way, we will find *"He gives power to the faint, and to those who have no might... he increases strength"* (Isa 40:29).

The attitude of dependence upon God attracts His attention and draws Him to us, and causes Him to gloriously manifest His power through us.

Our inadequacies are seen as blessings in disguise when they press us to dependence on Christ.

However, if instead, we wallow in self-pity, or self-hatred, looking inside ourselves, searching for understanding of our problems, all we end up with is a feeling of inferiority.

2. Confess The Word

What psychologists call "an inferiority complex" is usually a carnal preoccupation with ourselves (self-consciousness). It can result in a view of yourself which says, "I am no good! I am just a useless washout... God can never use me." This kind of self-view leads to total discouragement.

I heard Billy Graham (most famous evangelist in history) say, "God can never use a discouraged servant."

This is true! We must overcome such attitudes by the word of our confession (Rev 12:11).

By saying about ourselves what the Bible says about us, we are made over-comers. the Bible says, *"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens [empowers, enables] me"* (Phil 4:13).

"Behold I give you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall by any means hurt you" (Luke 10:19).
Through our God - -we shall do valiantly.

It is He - Who shall tread down our enemies.

We will sing - and shout the victory.

Christ is King! Christ is King!

We must not confuse an inferiority complex with the scriptural meekness that God blesses. It is not the same thing.

3. Draw Near In Prayer

The kind of weakness to which God responds is that which produces a sense of dependence on Him. When we pray, "I need you Oh God, and cannot get along without you" — God works on our behalf. We become like King David who prayed, *"... My soul longs for thee, Oh God"* (Ps 63:1; 84:2).

This sense of need contributes to the development of a healthy devotional and prayer life.

That is the way it should work. Isn't it? In contrast to the above, an all pervasive self-consciousness will paralyze us. It is a barrier which will prevent God's power from flowing through us. Renounce this kind of carnality and turn from it. Recognize that God is the strength of your life and you need not be afraid (Ps 27:1). He will show Himself strong on behalf of those who reverence, worship and depend on Him.

4. Exchange Your Strength For His Strength

"Even youth shall faint and be weary, young men shall utterly fail; but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew [exchange] their strength" (Isa 40:30,31).

The key word in this verse is "renew" — which would better be translated "exchange." As we wait upon the Lord, He will take away our strength and replace it with His own.

It is not a matter of combining our strength with His, but a complete removal of our strength to put on His. God is saying, "If you are strong in yourself, I cannot use you. If you can do it yourself, you do not need Me."

What does the Lord ask us to do before He will "exchange" strength with us?

a. Acknowledge Your Need. King David wrote, *"This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him and saved him out of all his troubles"* (Ps 34:6).

Asaph acknowledged his weakness and need of God in these stirring words: *"So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was like a beast before thee "* (Ps 73:22).

Both David and Asaph received God's strength because they were willing to humbly acknowledge their need and weakness. There is a powerful word of promise for all who will do the same thing.

*"When the **poor and needy** seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I, the Lord, will hear them; I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them.*

"I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys; I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water.

"... That they may see, and know, and consider, and understand together, that the hand of the Lord hath done this..." (Isa 41:17-20).

1) **Paul - An Example.** Paul found that if he would acknowledge areas of need and weakness in his life, it would result in the strength of God coming to him in more powerful measure.

He writes, *"Lest I should be exalted above measure, through the abundance of the revelations, there was given unto me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me.... For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me "(2Cor 12:7,8).*

And how did the Lord answer Paul's petition for relief from this buffeting and weakness? *"My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect [complete] in [your] weakness "(vs 9).*

Now you can understand why Paul says:

*"Most gladly therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities [weaknesses], **that the power of Christ may rest upon me.** Therefore, I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake. **For, when I am weak, then I am strong"** (2Cor 12:9,10).*

This is the principle by which the power of the gospel works. When we're weak, and sense our great need of God, this makes us completely dependent on Him. This causes us to spend much time in prayer. The result? We are strong!

D. LEARN TO WAIT ON GOD

"They that wait upon the Lord will 'exchange' strength. They shall mount up with wings like eagles. They shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint" (Isa40:31).

1. Two Concepts

What does the Bible mean when it says to *"... wait upon the Lord?"* There are two concepts involved in *"waiting upon the Lord."* These are:

a. Waiting For God's Time. That is, take no major action until God shows you it is time to act.

b. Waiting In Prayer And Fasting. To spend time prayerfully in God's presence in devotional exercises, sometimes involving fasting as well as prayer.

2. Waiting God's Time

May I share my personal testimony with you? The Lord called me to His service in 1948, at age 16. I was born again and filled with the Holy Spirit but didn't understand the need to fully surrender my will and plans to the Lord.

The "deeper life" of Christian commitment had little appeal to me. I had already decided what I was going to do with my life and being a preacher had no part in that plan.

During the summer of 1948 the hand of the Lord came heavily upon my life. Events took place which made me feel as if I were being wrestled to the floor to pray. Many times I lay prostrate on the floor with tears flooding down my face. I was crying out in prayer to God.

In retrospect, I think many of those tears may have been tears of resistance to God's will. I wanted my way — and God wanted His way. This conflict of wills — my

will against God's will —was creating an internal struggle to the death. The death of my will.

After three months of this intense spiritual conflict, I surrendered my life to do what God wanted. He wanted me to go into all the world and preach the gospel.

a. Let's Go Now! When I finally gave up to the will of God I said to the Lord, "I'll go where you want me to go dear Lord, I'll say what you want me to say, I'll be what you want me to be." With this total surrender of my will to God's will I was ready to GO — RIGHT NOW!

There was no time to lose! (Or so I believed.) "Let's go God! Right now! I'm ready! The time is short! The Nuclear Age is here! The world is coming to an end! I'm ready to evangelize the whole world —by myself if necessary."

In my youthful enthusiasm, optimism, (and I should add, ignorance), I was expecting to be an instant "wonder world winner."

You see, my thinking was moulded somewhat by the theology of my church. Our church leaders emphasized the soon return of our Lord from Heaven. The Second Coming of Jesus was preached constantly in the pulpit. If not by the local preacher, then by the visiting evangelist. I expected Jesus to come very soon.

I remember a poll taken in the teenagers' Sunday School class the summer of 1948. We were asked, "How long will it be before the Lord comes again?" No one in that class of 50 teenagers believed the Lord could possibly delay His Coming beyond 1950.

World War II had just ended. The Korean conflict was simmering. The threat of nuclear holocaust seemed imminent. I felt that whatever God was going to do had to be done right now. There was no time to wait. With a commission to evangelize the world, and only two years left in which to do it, I had to start **immediately!**

What was God's response to my great sense of urgency?

b. Learn To Wait! I had to learn that whatever my interpretation of world events, whatever my own sense of urgency — God acts in His own time, not mine. When you are "itching" to get into action, it is the hardest thing in the world to wait.

I was not prepared (trained) to go and preach. True, I had been called. But God's **call** and God's **sending** are two different things. I didn't know it at the time but God wasn't a bit worried over the world situation in 1948. I was, but He wasn't. He had planned my training and preparation. All my anxiety and impatience didn't cause Him to speed up His schedule by a single minute.

I did not realize it at the time but I was straining to enter the battle and fight in my own strength. God knew I would have been destroyed if I had gone forth unprepared. So, He made me wait until I gained training and experience. Through those years of waiting on the Lord, I learned that I must never *"...go beyond the word of the Lord my God to do less or more"* (Num 22:18).

c. God Controls The Time. The Bible says, *"...When the fullness of time was come. God sent forth his Son..."* (Gal 4:4). God controls the times and seasons. He had a time to send Jesus into the world. He has a time for all things. Wait for God's time. Don't get ahead and don't lag behind. Wait upon the Lord. He will reveal His time to you.

The times and seasons are in the Father's own power (Acts 1:7). Let us learn to wait patiently on Him. He will reveal the times and seasons to us when we need to know them.

3. Waiting In Prayer And Fasting

"Let not them that wait upon thee ...be ashamed ...let not those that seek thee be confounded..." (Ps 69:6).

If we are to "exchange" our limited strength for His unlimited power, we must establish a consistent daily devotional habit. Disciplining oneself to times of regular prayer (and fasting) is one of the most difficult things for most church leaders to do. The pressure of daily schedules and activities tend to rob us of these essential devotional times with the Lord.

a. How Do Daily Devotional Times Help? Try this experiment. Fill a pitcher right to the top brim with water. Fill it so full another drop would make it run over. Then start dropping in stones about the size of your hand. What happens? With every stone that goes in the pitcher, a like amount of water overflows and spills out from the pitcher.

This is the way we exchange our strength for God's. We are filled with the water of our own strength. As we spend time in prayer. God begins dropping in the stones of His strength and power. These stones of grace displace the water of negative unbelieving attitudes, stones of dependence on the Lord displace the stagnant water of "I can do it without God" attitudes. His divine enablements fill our life, and our powerlessness is replaced with His strength.

How can I cause God's strength to fill my life? It is a natural-supernatural process. If you spend daily time in prayer it will be like the growing-up process. A child does not grow up and become strong by thinking about it or trying to force himself to grow up. It is a natural process that happens as a result of proper diet and exercise.

In the same way, if a church leader will spend time each day reading the Bible and praying, this spiritual nutrition will promote the growth of God's strength in his life. The exchange of your strength for His, will take place gradually and consistently.

b. How Should I Conduct My Devotional Time? The following outline was adapted from a series of messages on the subject, "Renewing The Devotional Habit." I have found this most helpful in my devotional times.

1) **Confess Sin.** Ask the Lord to bring any unconfessed sins to your mind. Acknowledge these sins to God and ask for and receive His forgiveness and cleansing (I Jn 1:9,10).

2) **Praise God.** Next, take time to give thanks and praise to God for Who He is and for what He has done (Ps 100).

3) **Surrender The Day To God.** Tell God how much you need His direction and guidance. Ask for His guidance and obey any instructions you feel God gives you in prayer.

4) **Pray For Family, Church, All Believers.** Pray for your spouse, children and family members. Pray for your church members and leaders. Pray for believers in other parts of the world. Pray for the orphans and widows (those without family).

5) **Pray For Leaders, Missionaries, Evangelism** Pray for the leaders of your nation. Pray for your spiritual leaders. Pray for the tribes and language groups in your part of the world who still need the gospel. Pray for the missionaries and for the evangelization of other nations.

6) **Pray In Other Tongues.** In all this praying — let the Holy Spirit's action come upon you and pray in other tongues (languages) and pray for the interpretation of your prayers in other tongues (I Cor 14:13,14).

7) **Write Down What The Lord Gives You And Do It!** Write down impressions you feel came to you from the Lord during your prayer time. Take obedient action in response to anything God gives you in prayer.

c. How Do Trials Help Us? Peter warned us, "*...think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to test you, as though some strange thing happened unto you*" (1 Pet 4:12).

An elderly minister friend of mine told me some years ago, "Brother Ralph, when you try to go **on** with God, the world will oppose you. When you try to go **deeper** in God, your fleshly nature will resist you. When you try to go up **higher** in God, the demonic principalities and powers of the air will fight you."

Nowhere do we hit resistance like we do when we decide to establish a daily devotional time in which to wait on the Lord. When you get serious about seeking the face of God, expect opposition and trials. They often come.

It is comforting to know that even through trials and tribulation, "*God works all things together for good to them that love the Lord, to them who are called according to his purpose*" (Rom 8:28 rsv).

As we wait on God, He turns on the fire of trials, tests and temptations, and our lives heat up. When we have reached the "boiling point," two things result:

- 1) **Sin And Self Are Purged Away.**
- 2) **God's Power Begins Working In Us.**

God's power begins working in us and through us with exciting supernatural consequences.

When you place a cooking pot of water over fire, the water will eventually boil. You cannot hasten or prevent the boiling by watching the water, by stirring it constantly or by ignoring it. Whatever you do, the water will boil when it reaches the boiling temperature. The boiling is the result of the application of heat to the water, not the result of some action of the water upon itself.

In the same way, when we go through the fire of affliction or tribulation, things happen inside us — with no effort on our part. They are the by-product of God's heat applied to the water of human nature. We experience inner change. Our motives are purified. Our desire to sin is burned away.

"Whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin" (1 Pet 4:1). Yes, it is true, *"...they that wait [for His appointed time with prayer and fasting] upon the Lord will exchange their strength for his."*

Chapter 2

Hear God's Voice

Introduction

Is God still speaking today? Is it possible to hear the voice of God? Christian leaders are confused about this issue.

Some believe that God can guide us and give direction when we need it. Others say God only speaks to us by what we read in the Bible. I believe that God still speaks to us today by His Holy Spirit just as He did in Bible times. What do you believe?

The Pseudepigrapha tells about a sect of the Pharisees that came into existence 800 years (or more) before Christ. This sect taught that all God would ever say was already said through the writings of Moses. Any subsequent prophetic voice or writing was invalid. They accepted only the first five books of the Bible. Nothing more!

It seems many church leaders believe the same doctrine today (with some modification). For example, modern-day "theological Pharisees" teach that God only speaks to us now by what is written in the Bible. Beyond that, God is not speaking anymore.

While the Bible is a finished book, and no one should dare add anything to the Canon of Scripture, the idea that we now serve a DUMB GOD (one who cannot speak) is a great theological travesty.

Many will die to defend what God said (past centuries) but "... *refuse him that speaketh* [presently in our day and time] *from heaven* " (Heb 12:25).

Seven times we are admonished, ' *He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith* [present tense] *unto the churches* "(Rev 2:7; 3:22).

A. THE NEED TO HEAR

Jesus said, "*Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that **proceedeth** out of the mouth of God*" (Matt 4:4). This word "**proceedeth**" speaks of a present-continuing function. That means some thing that happened in the past, is happening in the present, and will happen in the future.

This verse could be translated, ' *Man... lives... by every word that **has been spoken and continues to be spoken by the mouth of God.*** "God, Who spoke in ages past, is speaking in the present and will continue to speak in the future. GOD IS NOT A DUMB GOD!

This is not to say the Bible is still being written and we need to add to it. I do NOT believe that. The Bible does teach us however, that God wants a people to " *dwell in, and walk in*" (2Cor 6:16), "*living epistles, known and read by mankind*" (2Cor 3:2,3).

Oh, how we need to hear His voice! We can only live (have the life and blessing of the Lord in our churches today) by hearing every word that continues to proceed from God's mouth to our hearts.

1. To Know God's Will

Every church leader faces this question: What does God expect me to do, and what am I to leave up to God to do? Where does my responsibility end and God's begin?

On the one hand, the Scripture says, "*Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord*" (Zech 4:6).

Some have suggested this teaches God will do it all by His Spirit and we need do nothing.

On the other hand, Jesus said, "*That servant who knew his Lord's will, ...neither **did** according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes*" (Luke 12:47). This clearly teaches that God holds His servants responsible to know His will and to take action to implement (do) the will of God.

How do we reconcile this tension between God's sovereignty and the church leader's responsibility to implement the will of God?

We can easily resolve this dilemma by examining Jesus' words again, "*That servant **who knew his Lord's will...** neither **did** according to his will, shall be beaten with*

many stripes... "(Luke 12:47). Jesus contrasts this with the servant that knew **not** his Lord's will. That servant "*shall be beaten with few stripes*" (vs 48). Both ways you get a beating. If you **know** — and don't do, and if you **don't know** — and don't do.

God wants church leaders who **know** and **do** their Lord's will. The will of God establishes the limits of our responsibility. If we don't know His will, we will be judged less harshly, though we will still be judged. To do the will of God we **must know His will**. To know His will — **we must hear His voice**. It's that simple!

a. A Personal Testimony. When I was being trained as an evangelist, I used to preach to nearly everyone I met, hoping to find someone who would accept Jesus Christ as their Savior. I had read in one of my books, and it taught me to use the following outline. By giving the sinner these four points, I might lead someone to Christ.

- You are a sinner (Rom 3:23).
- The penalty of sin is eternal hell (Rom 6:23).
- Jesus bore your penalty for sin on the cross (I Pet 2:24).
- Receive Jesus and you will be saved (John 1:12).

Let me assure you, all the above is true. This is all people need to know to be saved. If they believe this with all their heart, they are born from above by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit.

But not one person I talked to was born again during that whole summer. Not one wanted to receive Jesus. What was I doing wrong?

I was relying on a formula, a method, instead of the leading of the Holy Spirit. I was not hearing the Lord's voice of direction and my efforts were fruitless.

Some years later, observing Brother Heeley lead scores of souls to Christ, I found out how wrong I had been in my approach to soul-winning. Everywhere Brother Heeley went he led people to Christ.

When Brother Heeley needed a haircut he would pray, "Lord, lead me to a barber that needs You and **is ready** to receive You." He would get in his car and drive by several barber shops. When he sensed that inward feeling from the Spirit that he had found the right one, he would go into that shop, fully expecting to lead the barber to Christ. He seldom failed.

When Brother Heeley would put air in his bicycle tire, or go to the market for his wife, it was always the same. He would pray for the direction of the Holy Spirit — and then listen for God's voice of gentle direction. He would always find sinners who were ready to receive a Savior as he followed the Spirit's leading.

I asked him one day, "What method do you use when you talk to people. Brother Heeley?" "I don't have one," he replied. "I listen for the voice of the Spirit to direct me in what to say to people. I never say the same thing twice. The Lord helps me to discover their need and talk to them about it in a loving, concerned way that lets them know I care and God cares."

Brother Heeley was born and raised in Canada but never heard the gospel until he was past 40 years of age. He was led to Christ by an itinerant soul-winner who demonstrated a loving concern for him. Brother Heeley does what the man who led him to Christ did. He itinerates all over Canada, showing loving concern for people and leading them to Christ. His secret? He hears and obeys God's voice.

I've tried to emulate Brother Heeley since I met him. I have found God will lead you if you desire He do so. Listen for God's voice and He will gently lead you to people who need salvation and are ready to receive a Savior.

Not only in soul-winning, but in every area of our ministry, we need to hear God's voice. What then hinders us?

B. HINDRANCES TO HEARING

1. Hearts Not Perfect Before God

*"For the eyes of the Lord search back and forth across the whole earth, looking for people whose **hearts** are perfect toward him, so that he can show his great power in helping them "* (2Chr 16:9 tib).

The people in Bible times understood the heart to be the seat of: 1) the emotions or **affections**, 2) the **motives**, and 3) the **intentions** of the person. God is vitally concerned with these things.

a. Worldly Affections. If our **affections** are set on things on the earth rather than things in Heaven, this offends God (I Jn 2:15). The Bible tells us to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength (Matt 22:37).

b. Impure Motives. If our **motives** (or motivations) are impure like the prophet Baalam (Numbers 23) then God will severely judge us. Baalam bartered God-given miraculous gifts for money, fame and prestige.

c. Wrong Intentions. Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5) were pretending to give all their money to the work of the Lord, but were really keeping back much of it for themselves. Because their intent was wrong, God killed them.

Oh! how we need to guard our **affections, motives and intentions** to make sure they are pure. God knows our heart, doesn't He?

*"For man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the **heart**"* (ISam 16:7). We can't hide these things from the Lord. And if we do not keep our hearts right in His sight, we will not hear God's voice.

2. Hardness Of Heart

*"Today, if you want to hear his voice, do not **harden** your **hearts** "* (Heb 4:7). When I and my team go somewhere to preach the gospel, we often fast and pray for God to empower us so we will be able to heal and bless the people. We often set aside a day for fasting and prayer during these times.

It is our custom to select three mature Christian couples (husbands and wives) and form them into a prayer team. We may have five or six prayer teams ministering to the people during the day of fasting and prayer.

The prayer team place their chairs in a circle. Those coming to be prayed for sit in the middle of this circle.

We encourage these teams to pray in the Spirit (in other tongues — I Cor 14:13,14) and expect the Holy Spirit to give them supernatural help for the people who are coming for prayer.

a. Unforgiveness Stops God's Voice. A lady came to the prayer circle my wife and I were part of. She had severe arthritis which was causing her a lot of pain in her back and hands. Her fingers were so curled over with arthritis, she couldn't straighten them out.

She said the Lord had stopped talking to her. She had not heard the voice of the Lord in over eight months.

As the team began praying in the Spirit, a picture started forming in my mind of a corn field from which the harvest had been taken. The ground was hard and dry and the cornstalks withered. As I pondered whether this picture had meaning to the sister's need, I felt the Holy Spirit began to say to me, "This is a picture of this sister's heart. It is hard and dry."

I prayed, "Why Lord?" The Spirit responded, "Her husband has been mistreating her and she hasn't forgiven him. Her failure to forgive has caused this hardness of heart. And because she has not forgiven him, she has not been forgiven. All this has combined to cause tremendous frustration in her heart. This is causing the arthritis which afflicts her."

I am not always sure that I am hearing the voice of the Lord when something like this happens. So, to test out whether it was the Holy Spirit or my own imagination, I told the sister about the picture in my head (vision). I related to her what I thought the Lord had said to me about her situation. Then I asked her, "Is any of this true?" She broke down in tears and replied, "Yes, Brother Ralph, it is all true."

b. Forgiveness Brings A Return Of God's Voice. The compassion of the Lord filled my heart for this dear sister. With tears streaming down my face I said, "Sister, Jesus loves you very much and wants to heal you and wants to speak to you. Verbalize your forgiveness. Just speak out and say, 'I forgive my husband all the evil things he has done to hurt me.' When you do that the Lord will heal you, and your heart will be softened. When you have a tender heart (instead of a hard heart) the Lord will speak to you again."

She did as I suggested and within three minutes all the arthritis was gone. The stiffness and pain in her back was healed. Her finger joints came free and she could bend her fingers like any normal person.

Several days later she told me through tears of joy, "Brother Ralph, the Lord has been talking to me again. He is so good!" I found out later, she was a church leader of a fine church.

This story illustrates how important it is to have our heart right with God. A hard heart, a calloused heart, an unbelieving heart, and scores of other "heart conditions" can prevent us from hearing God's voice.

3. An Unregenerate Condition

I have traveled in more than fifty nations preaching the gospel. One of the big problems I encounter as I travel is unregenerate church leaders, clergymen who have never been born again of the Spirit of God. Is it any wonder they do not hear God's voice?

Over 200 years ago, John Wesley, the founder of one of the greatest revival movements in the world, was sailing back to England from missionary service in the Georgia colony. He had been there trying to relieve some of the inhumane treatment of prisoners.

On the sailing ship, Moravian missionaries from Bavaria engaged John Wesley in conversation. "John Wesley, are you born again?"

"I'm an ordained Anglican clergyman," he responded.

"That is not what we asked you, John. Are you born again of the Spirit of God?"

John replied, "I've been working with prisoners, helping the poor and doing all kinds of good deeds since I graduated from seminary." (John was trying to avoid this "Heaven or Hell" issue.)

The Moravians kept pressing him. "John Wesley! Jesus said, 'ye must be born again.'"

Confronted over and over on this question, John Wesley spent a great deal of the remainder of the voyage re-reading his New Testament. He encountered verses like "*The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God*" (Rom8:16).

He pondered, "*What is Paul talking about? 'The spirit hears witness with our spirit....'* What does that mean?"

He read 1 John 5:10, "*He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself.*"

He mused, "I haven't experienced any witness in my heart like John talks about. Am I born again?"

The more he talked to the Moravians and read his New Testament, the more he became convinced that he did not have "saving faith".

a. Saving Faith Or Intellectual Agreement. One day he read James 2:19, "The demons also believe and tremble." John Wesley began to see there was a difference between "saving faith" and intellectual agreement with the historical facts recorded in the Bible about Jesus. The demons believe the facts but do not have saving faith.

Convinced that his church, his seminary professors and his missionary board had let him down by not making certain he had been born again of the Spirit of God — John began his search for spiritual reality.

A short time after landing back in England, John went into a little nondescript London mission one night to hear the preacher. Sitting there listening to the gospel presented with clarity and simplicity Wesley later testified, "My heart was strangely warmed." He left the mission that night with a peace that passes understanding — joy unspeakable and full of glory!

Finally he knew the joy of being born again of the Spirit. He now knew what Paul, John and James were talking about. He finally knew the difference between spiritual reality and intellectual agreement with the gospel. He spent the remaining years of his ministry showing people and priests how essential it is to know you are born again.

b. You Can Know You Are Saved. What about you? Do you know you've been born again? You can know! Why don't you ask the Lord Jesus to come into your heart?

Pray this simple prayer: *Lord Jesus! I confess You are my Lord. I believe You bore my sins to Calvary's cross to save me from sin. I believe You rose from the dead and are enthroned at the Father's right hand in Heaven.*

I trust You and Your blood alone to be the full payment for my sins. I renounce and turn from my sins. I receive Your Holy Spirit to bear witness with my spirit that I am a child of God. All this I ask in the Name of my Lord Jesus Christ. AMEN!

If you prayed that prayer sincerely, Jesus has come into your heart. Now go and tell someone immediately — "I have received Jesus as my Lord and Savior and I know, I know, I know I am saved and on my way to Heaven."

The Bible says, "*For if you tell others with your mouth that Jesus Christ is your Lord, and believe in your heart that God has raised him from the dead, you will be saved.*"

For it is by believing in his heart that a man becomes right with God; and with his mouth he tells others of his faith, confirming his salvation" (Rom 10:9,10 tib).

Now that you are born again — and you know that you are — you are a candidate for the Lord to start speaking to you. You can hear His voice. Jesus said, *"My sheep **hear** my voice, and I know them and they follow me" (John 10:27).*

When Jesus comes into your heart He cleanses it and sweeps it free from sin and darkness, and takes away the hard heart and gives you a soft and tender heart of flesh so you can hear His voice.

*"Your filthiness will be washed away... . And I will give you a **new heart**— I will give you new and right desires — and put a new spirit within you. I will take out your stony hearts of sin and give you new hearts of love. And I will put my Spirit within you so that you obey my laws and do whatever I command" (Eze 36:25-27 tib).*

4. Disobedience Stops God's Voice

Brother Judson Cornwall said he was fervently praying, asking the Lord to speak to him. The Lord finally said, "Judson, why should I speak to you again, when you haven't obeyed what I told you the last time I spoke to you?" Brother Cornwall got right up and did what the Lord had previously told him to. Then he started hearing the Lord's voice again.

*"So then faith comes by **hearing** the word of God " (Rom 10:17).*

Faith can be defined as **"Obedient action to what God says."** To hear God's voice doesn't mean just to hear with your ears. It means to respond obediently to what He said.

When my son was about nine years old I spoke to him and said, "Son, take this sack of garbage to the waste bin." He said, "OK, Dad!" Thirty minutes later I came back and the garbage was still there. Did he **hear** me? Not in the biblical sense. Until he obeyed me, he had not **heard** me.

I called my son back in and showed him the "board of education" which I was getting ready to apply to his "seat of learning." Then he **heard** me, and took out the garbage.

Faith comes by **hearing**... the word of God — that is, hearing and obediently responding to what God has said.

a. Pride Prevents Obedience. A great hindrance to our obedient response is PRIDE. I heard Oral Roberts say, "Every time I've prepared to pray for the sick, I've had to hang my pride on the cross again — because I know that only a few of those I pray for will be healed."

Despite doubters, scoffers and critical newspaper reporters, Oral Roberts persevered through humiliation to do what he heard God telling him to do. Because of his faithfulness to an unpopular calling, thousands have been healed and the ministry of healing is practiced more widely all the time.

Many of us have been held back from doing what God is saying to us because we fear what others will think of us if we obey the Lord. *"The fear of man bringeth a snare " (Prov 29:25).* The "fear of man" is just another expression of pride. Basically, we don't do what we know God wants us to do because of PRIDE.

Our carnal mind thinks, "If we try what God is saying and fail, what will the people think? My minister friends won't understand me. My denomination will not agree with what God is telling me to do."

All these thoughts have their root in the **fear of man** — PRIDE! Many who desire to do the will of God are held back by fear of man.

I am often asked, "Brother Ralph, how can you be sure God is speaking to you?"

I reply, "I can't always be sure. Often I am not sure. I test it out. I try it. I check out the facts with others it might involve.

"The Bible says '*prove all things*' (I Ths 5:21). The only way you can prove something is to try it. I often fail in the trying — but one of the elements of faith is risk. You have to take the risk of becoming a fool for Christ's sake."

Don't let pride paralyze you. Try to do what you feel God wants you to do. Though you may have some failures — there will be some successes too. Take the risk. Step out on faith and attempt great things for God.

b. Preconceptions Hinder Obedience. One of the most interesting stories in the Bible is in 2 Kings Chapter 5. It vividly illustrates how our preconceptions prevent us from hearing and obeying God's voice.

1) Naaman Almost Misses A Blessing. Naaman was a Syrian general whose Israeli housemaid was a captive from war. Naaman had the incurable disease of leprosy. His maid told him about a prophet in Israel named Elisha who had power from God to heal people.

Through diplomatic channels, Naaman contacted the king of Israel and made arrangements to visit Elisha. When Naaman arrived at Elisha's modest home, the prophet sent out his servant to tell General Naaman what God said he must do. "*Go wash in the Jordan River seven times, and you will be healed of every trace of your leprosy*" (vs 10).

Naaman was angry and stalked away. "Look!" he said, "**I thought** the prophet would have the common courtesy to come out and see me. **I thought** he would call on the Name of the Lord his God, and wave his mantle over the leprosy and I would be healed." (Note his preconception of how he would be healed.)

"If it's rivers I need — I'll go back to Syria to wash in the crystal waters of Abana River or Pharpar River —not down in that muddy Jordan River." With that he left in a rage.

One of his servants pled with him. "Sir! If the prophet had asked you to do some great or difficult thing you would have. So why don't you **obey** (key word) when he has asked you to just go wash and be cured?"

Finally persuaded, Naaman went down to the Jordan River and dipped seven times as the prophet had told him. When he obeyed, his flesh became as healthy as a little child's. Naaman was completely healed.

Naaman almost missed receiving the blessing he sought. Why? Because of a preconceived idea of how God would heal him. His preconception and pride prevented his obedience.

You see, a preconception is rooted in pride. It is in effect a statement that "I know everything. I can conceive things before they happen — as they will happen" (a deific quality).

When things do not happen as we preconceive they will — it undermines our deific (pride-filled) image of ourselves, and we, like Naaman, stalk away angry and resentful because God didn't conform to our preconception of how He would do it.

2) God's Pattern For Your Life. Our theology (a preconception about God) often comes into conflict with the Spirit's guidance in our life — and when it does, we face the grave danger of missing the will of God.

When God began to impress me to become an itinerant preacher I resisted with adamant protest. For eleven years I had been starting new churches and pasturing them. Now God was telling me to do something that would mean giving up pastoring local churches.

I argued, "Lord, it isn't scriptural. Everything You do, or will ever do, You **must** do through a local church." That was my theology at the time. I protested to God, "This idea of itinerant preaching isn't according to the pattern of the Book of Acts. I'm supposed to do all things according to the pattern!" (Hebrews 8:5 was a favorite text of mine.)

One Sunday morning as I was walking to a meeting to preach, the Lord spoke to me:

"Why don't you read the rest of the verse?" I knew what the Lord meant. Read the rest of Hebrews 8:5.

"Lord, why should I read the rest of the verse? I have read it hundreds of times. I have preached from it scores of times. Lord, I know that verse backwards and forwards. Why should I read the rest of the verse?"

The insistent voice of the Lord inside kept pressing, "Read the rest of the verse." I opened my Bible and read, "*See saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern **showed to thee** in the mount*" (Heb 8:5b). Three words struck me like dynamite: "**Showed to thee.**"

"Do ALL things according to the pattern **showed to thee.**"

My theology was based on a pattern showed to Moses, to David, to the early Church — but God was saying:

"You've got to do it the way I show you. Noah built the ark because that was My pattern for Noah. Moses built a tabernacle because that was My pattern for Moses. Solomon built a temple because I told him to. Peter, Paul, James and John all did what I told them. That was the pattern for their lives.

"You must do what I tell you to do, in the way I tell you to do it. That will be My pattern for **your** life."

Finally I understood. I had to hear and obey God's voice. I couldn't do things just because "it has always been done this way." I had to obey God.

And, my friend, that is still the issue, isn't it? God has a plan for each of us. The ministry He gave Billy Graham is like that of John the Baptist of whom the Scripture testifies: "*John didn't do miracles*" (Jo1m 10:41). Kenneth Hagin and Oral Roberts are more like Stephen, who "*...did great wonders and miracles among the people*" (Acts 6:8).

All three of these great evangelists are doing what God told them to do — yet each is very different from the other. Each of us must hear and obey God's voice. That is what will distinguish you from the thousands who will not. Most will not hear and obey God's voice. You must!

Do not let your traditions keep you from doing what God says. Hear and obey the voice of God. Some will despise, oppose and criticize you. Others will doubt and assail you. Your pride will suffer. But whatever! Do the will of God!

3) Experience On Corn Island. In 1962 I was part of a two-man effort to evangelize a little island off the east coast of Nicaragua. A convert from meetings I conducted three years previously had preceded us to this island and started a church.

In the traditional way of evangelists, I had preached fervently for several nights — without seeing one person converted to Christ. My co-evangelist and I were so frustrated and desperate, we announced a prayer meeting for four o'clock each morning. In this way, we could pray with the members before they went out on the early morning fishing and fruit gathering expeditions.

We expected ten or twelve church members to come. To our amazement, the little church building was packed with about 100 people (as many as we had seen in any of the evening meetings).

Now everyone knows you do not have evangelistic crusades at 4 a.m. — but this is what the meeting turned into. God was going to shatter my preconceptions about the way He worked and teach me a lesson about hearing and obeying His voice.

We started the prayer time with a little chorus:

Sweep over my soul, sweep over my soul.

Sweet Spirit, sweep over my soul.

My rest is complete, as I sit at His feet.

Sweet Spirit, sweep over my soul.

After struggling through the chorus a time or two, one of the ladies began to prophesy. Her speech was halting. She stammered as if having great difficulty in getting out the words. It was making me nervous but I thought, "Let the poor soul try — it will do no harm."

Three times she repeated these words, "Take off the shoes from off thy feet, for the ground whereon thou standest is holy ground." All I heard was a woman for whom I felt sorry, stammering out words that seemed totally inappropriate for this moment of low inspiration.

My partner, dear Brother Heeley, heard something quite different. He heard the voice of the Holy Spirit calling sinners to repentance. (I'm glad he had better spiritual hearing than myself.)

He arose and began to speak quietly. "Now folks, I believe the Lord has just spoken to us and we need to respond. I do not know for sure whether the Lord means for us to literally take off our shoes or not. But just in case — it will do no harm for us to do so."

Feeling a little foolish, we dutifully began removing our shoes. Brother Heeley continued, "What the Lord probably means is this. We are to put off the old shoes of a sinful life and step out into a pathway of righteous living. We are to abandon the old life of bondage and rebellion and step into a new life of liberty and obedience to Jesus.

"If you want to do that right now — just leave your shoes there behind, step out and come down to the front of the building so we can pray together."

To my amazement, what all my "supercharged evangelistic sermons" did not produce — Brother Heeley's sensitive spiritual hearing and response to God's voice did. People began coming from all over the little building. Then one of the most amazing things I've ever witnessed took place.

As they came, it seemed there was an invisible line drawn right in the front. When those who were coming to receive Christ passed that line, they fell flat on their faces as if

struck by an invisible angel. These very stoic farmers and fishermen were scattered all over the floor, weeping and sobbing tears of sorrow and repentance for their sins as if their hearts were breaking.

I thought when the first half-dozen had fallen, it would frighten everyone else and they would turn and run out of the service.

But they didn't. They just kept right on coming until almost every sinner in the service had received the gift of repentance and salvation (over fifty came to Christ).

WOW! Who 'ever heard of winning souls that way? Who ever heard of this "method" of evangelism? But you see, the secret was in "having an ear to hear what the Spirit was saying."

I shamefully admit I did not hear the Spirit in what was taking place in the service. But — thank God — my partner did! He obeyed the Lord, and a great revival broke out that shook the island from one end to the other.

Oh Lord! Deliver me from my disobedience, preconceptions, traditions and hardness of heart which prevent me from hearing and obeying Your voice. AMEN!

Chapters 3

Obey God's Voice

"So then faith comes by hearing ...the word [rhema] of God" (Rom 10:17).

A. LOGOS AND RHEMA

There are two Greek words translated as "word" in our English Bibles, "**LOGOS**" and "**RHEMA**" (pronounced as ray-mah). **Logos** often refers to the written or inscriptured "word." **Rhema** often refers to the living or life-giving "word."

[Editor's note: The following examples are not meant as accurate or precise usage of these Greek words. They are given as examples of the **idea** the author seeks to explain related to the words **logos** and **rhema**.]

Jesus said, *"It is **written [logos]**, 'man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word [**rhema]** that proceedeth out of the mouth of God'" (Matt 4:4).*

It was said of the Bereans, *"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the **word [rhema]** with all readiness of mind, and searched the **Scriptures [logos]** daily, whether those things were so " (Acts 17:11).*

These verses illustrate the inseparable bond between the logos and the rhema. They always work together. We must know the Scriptures (logos) to judge whether the word (rhema) that comes to us is really from the Lord — or some other spirit. The Holy Spirit (rhema) and the Holy Bible (logos) always agree.

Jesus said of the Pharisees, *'Your error is caused by your ignorance of the **Scriptures [logos]** and of God's **power [rhema]**' (Matt 22:29).* The Pharisees of Jesus' day knew neither the logos nor the rhema.

Many church leaders know neither the Scriptures nor God's power. Such leaders and churches make God **throw up** (Rev 3:15).

There are other church leaders who know the Scripture, but do not know God's power. They usually **dry up**.

There are also some church leaders who know God's power but do not know the Scriptures. They usually **blow up**.

If you know both the Scriptures and God's power — it will cause you and your church to **grow up**.

1. A Rhema From God

A rhema is usually a communication from God designed and empowered to apply to a specific situation. When we are reading the Bible and a certain verse suddenly strikes us with power, we are receiving a rhema (living-word) for our personal need.

When we have been praying for God's wisdom or God's answer for an insoluble problem and suddenly God speaks the solution into our hearts in clear practical terms which solve the problem, that is a rhema.

When we are in the midst of some ministry-related activity and we have a sudden impression to take some specific action, which results in great blessing, that is a rhema.

[A word of caution: We should not assume every urge, impression or feeling is a rhema. No rhema will ever be contrary to the Scripture (logos). God's eternal Word.]

If I am sick, I can open my Bible and read, "... by whose stripes ye were healed" (I Pet 2:24). I have the Word (logos) to tell me it is God's will to heal me. Yet, I may not be healed when I read the verse.

a. Peter And The Lame Man. The lame man (Acts 3) who had lain at the temple gate for years was not healed by Jesus, Who had passed in and out of the temple many times.

Peter, fresh from his personal Pentecost, went up to the temple to pray. When the lame man asked alms, Peter received a rhema for him. *"Look on me! Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have, give I thee. In the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!"* (Acts 3:6).

Instantly, the lame man leaped up and followed Peter into the temple, walking and leaping and praising God. The lame man may have known the Bible verse, *'I am Jehovah Rapha that healeth thee'* (Exo 15:26). Yet he was not healed until Peter heard God's voice and spoke the life-giving word (rhema) to him.

"So then faith comes by hearing...the word [rhema] of God" (Rom 10:17). When God speaks to you — faith comes. If you will obediently respond to what God has said, miracles will take place for you just like they did in Bible times.

b. Miracle In Mexico. About fifteen years ago I was in Hermosillo, Mexico ministering with Evangelist D' Sousa from Panama. He invited me to go visit a man who was bedridden with sickness. When we got to the sick man's house and started to pray for him, I sensed the Holy Spirit giving me a message for the man.

I said to him, "Unless you repent you are going to die."

Suddenly the man broke down and began to weep uncontrollably. He was praying and crying so hard, the little bed he was lying on was shaking back and forth.

The word of the Lord (rhema) came to me again. "Take the man by the hand and tell him to get up and walk in the Name of Jesus."

I took the man's hand and began to gently pull him from the bed. He slowly got up and stood shakily on his feet. All at once he began to shout and jump all over the room. He had been miraculously healed in a few moments time.

I found out later he was a backslidden church member, who before his conversion had been a notorious gangster and had killed quite a few men.

He had fallen away from the Lord. Back in sin he came down with incurable heart and kidney disease. He was in such bad health the doctors had instructed no one to move him, as it could kill him. (I'm glad I did not know that — I might have been afraid to obey the Lord.)

That night, he was at the evangelistic meeting and gave his testimony. Because he was so well known in the community, the impact of his testimony was dynamic. Many came to Christ for salvation and healing as a result.

B. RELATIONSHIP — NOT FORMULA

We need to realize that God's life-giving word seldom comes in response to religious forms or formulas. Jesus healed one blind man by mixing dust and spittle, forming mud and applying it to the blind man's eyes. The blind man was then sent to the pool of Siloam to wash the mud out of his eyes, and was healed (John 9).

If I mixed dust and spit and put it in blind men's eyes, probably all they would get is mud in their eyes. If God told me to do it (as He told Jesus) then the blind would be healed.

It is not the form or formula. It is hearing God's voice and taking obedient action in response to what God has said. On other occasions, Jesus healed the blind with other means (Matt 9:29; Mark 10:52).

A proper relationship with His heavenly Father was the secret of Jesus' ministry. Jesus said, *"I do always those things that please the Father"* (John 8:29). Because the condition of Jesus' heart was always right with His heavenly Father, He could easily hear and obey His Father's voice.

Jesus made it clear, *"The Son can do nothing by himself. He does only what he sees the Father doing, and in the same way he sees the Father doing it"* (John 5:19tlb).

1. Spend Time With God

Jesus knew the Scriptures. He confounded the wise men in the temple at age twelve with His Bible knowledge. But the secret of His ministry was His sensitivity to the Father's voice — doing what He saw the Father doing, in the same way He saw the Father doing it.

When Jesus needed to hear from the Father, He went away for times of prayer (and sometimes fasting). You remember that Jesus' ministry began with forty days of fasting and prayer. Often thereafter, we see Him spending nights in prayer (as before choosing His twelve disciples). We find Him withdrawing from the multitudes and going into the desert to pray.

Out of that devotional life came the sensitivity to hear the Father's voice. Have you developed your relationship with the Father in times of prayer and fasting? If not, why don't you try it and see what happens? You may be surprised.

C. THE REAL THING — NOT SUBSTITUTES

I wish co-workers' meetings and training materials would place greater emphasis in their curriculum on teaching students how to move in the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, and how to hear God's voice.

1. God's Word And Spirit, Not Academic Knowledge

Thank God for men like Dr. John Wimber, Dr. Peter Wagner and Dr. Donald McGovern, courageous servants of God who stand out in the history of our nation as men

who acknowledged the importance of the Holy Spirit in the work of evangelism and church life.

They were not like their contemporaries who emphasized philosophy, literature, history, psychology and a host of other subjects instead of the Bible. These men taught others to prepare for a spiritual battle with Satan and his demons.

They taught the students how to heal the sick, cast out devils, and preach the gospel with miracles confirming the ministry of the Word. Instead of merely turning out students with theological degrees, they raised up men who were aflame with the Spirit. These could dispel the demonic influence spread over our land.

We need men like Philip, who went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ.

The Bible says, "*The people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, **hearing and seeing the miracles** which he did. For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them, and many that were lame were healed*" (Acts 8:6,7).

Our training should be turning out men of faith like Stephen and Philip — men who will challenge the powers of darkness and triumph in the process. Then we will see "*this gospel of the kingdom preached in all the world, for a witness to all nations*" (Matt 24:14).

2. Faith, Not Pride

If we continue substituting academic knowledge for the rhema of God, we are destined to failure. One of the great dangers of higher education is turning out men of pride instead of men of faith. To paraphrase Paul, "*Knowledge puffeth up, but love buildeth up*" (1 Cor 8:1).

Let us not worship at the altar of worldly knowledge. Let us not put our faith in academic wisdom and technology which can only provide a convenient, but ultimately fruitless, substitute for God's power in our lives and ministry. Rather, let us seek to be hearers and doers of God's Word. Let us learn to hear from God.

D. THE MESSAGE — NOT THE MORTAR

Church leaders in Western nations often compensate for their lack of power and ability to hear the voice of the Lord, by investing millions of dollars in impressive cathedrals and lavish sanctuaries. They think this will impress the world and attract people to their church.

As you study Church history, you discover the more backslidden the church, the more the leaders invested in massive structures which did little to help people or to spread the gospel. These structures likely only served one main purpose — they pandered to church leaders' and affluent church members' pride.

Observing how the Church operates, you would be left with the distinct impression that Jesus' last words were, "Go into all the world and **build cathedrals** for every creature." The top priority of most church leaders is to "build a bigger barn."

1. God's Priority

What Jesus said was this: "*Go into all the world and **preach the gospel** to every creature*" (Mark 16:15). God puts the priority on the **message** — not on the **mortar**. God puts the emphasis on helping people. Man puts the emphasis on more mortar (buildings).

One cannot help but contrast this behavior of church leaders with our Lord. He chose a stable for His birthplace, lived as part of a poor carpenter's family in Nazareth, and told us He had come to preach the gospel to the poor. He had no place to lay His head during the years of His ministry. At His death He was wrapped in a borrowed shroud. His body lay in a borrowed tomb during those hours of glorious conquest over death, hell and the grave. For our sakes He became poor.

From whence then do church leaders receive authority to wantonly waste the resources of the Church on gaudy cathedrals and lavish church sanctuaries when two billion people still wait to hear the gospel?

There is no record of church buildings going up until the third century when Constantine, the first "Christian" Roman Emperor, merged church and politics.

Constantine's influence was spiritually detrimental and disastrous for the Church. Once the Church became respectable and affluent, her power with God was gone. What had been a living organism — spreading life and blessing everywhere — became a dead organization, proliferating "form without the force" — devoid of God's Word and power. Paul admonishes us, "*From such turn away*" (2Tim 3:5).

2. The Church In China: An Example

China provides an interesting case study for what can happen when a church is freed from infatuation with cathedrals and elaborate church buildings.

Since before the changes in 1950 God raised up indigenous works that recognized God's special hand upon China and its culture.

Rather than relying upon the Western way of doing things, they began to see that many aspects of Chinese culture were in harmony with the Scriptures, such as the strength and structure of the Chinese family and the importance placed upon the home as a place of worship.

So even from this time many movements began whereby Chinese believers met in their homes to worship and pray to the Living God as families.

Now too, we can understand why after the changes in 1950 (when all Western missionaries were forced to leave China) millions of brothers and sisters from all over the country have found spiritual fulfillment not through the Western-style cathedrals, but through an ever-growing network of house churches.

After the changes in 1950, the Chinese Christians began sharing their faith with their relatives and friends. Through "relational evangelism" (that is, evangelism that spreads from relative to relative) an amazing miracle of church growth began to take place in the church in China.

After 120 years of Western missionary activity, there were about two million Christian believers in China in 1952. Twenty years later (1972), when China opened up again to the West, it was discovered there were over twenty million Christians in China. Today (1990) knowledgeable sources place the Christian community in China at fifty to sixty million believers.

Why this dramatic growth? Freed from Western missionary money (which is often a controlling influence) and Western missionary ways of doing things, the Chinese church adapted quickly to methods much more compatible with its culture. Shut out of the cathedrals, they reverted back to the New Testament practice of meeting in homes. The believers then began functioning as a family, with dramatic results in evangelism.

Because the church in China was relieved of the economic burden of massive buildings, they could put their money into helping people and spreading the message. The priority became "spreading the message" —not "spreading the **mortar**" (building more cathedrals).

3. Spread The Message

The New Testament does not have **one word** to say about building physical **church** buildings. (Neither does the Old.) Yet that is one of the highest priorities in most Western churches or organizations. In China, they have a better way.

The emphasis in the New Testament is on "spreading the message." *"And the disciples went everywhere preaching, and the Lord was with them and confirmed what they said by the miracles that followed their messages"* (Mark 16:20 tlb).

*"For I am not ashamed of this **good news [the message]** about Christ. It is God's power-filled method of bringing all who believe it into heaven"* (Rom 1:16pph).

*"Yea, so have I strived to **preach the gospel** not where Christ was named... but we **preach Christ crucified**... Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God"* (Rom 15:20; 1 Cor 1:23,24).

Lavish church buildings will not cause sinners to believe or the lost to be saved. Only God's power can save the lost.

Dead religious rituals will not bring men to the living Christ, Who triumphed over death. Hell and the grave. But **fully** preaching the gospel will. Paul wrote, *"... through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God... I have **fully preached** the gospel of Christ"* (Rom 15:19). I want to add: The gospel is not **fully preached** until accompanied by the miraculous displays of God's love through mighty signs and wonders.

4. A Spiritual Graveyard

Years ago, I walked into a great cathedral in Australasia. It had seating for 2,500 people, choir boys who could sing beautiful medieval hymns, a great pipe organ to fill the place with majestic sounds, highly educated ministers who recited the sermons and prayers. On the surface, it was very impressive. There was only one problem — they had everything but people! And this was in a city of over five million.

I attended the regular Wednesday night service in that great cathedral. The choir boys sang, the organist played, the priest read the prayers and the sermon. All in all — it took about one and a half hours.

Beside myself, there were only two other persons in the church building, two very old sweet silver-haired ladies. We three sat through this ritualistic relic of a dead Christianity which pretended to be the representation of Christ. The cathedral occupied land worth multiplied millions of dollars.

It would have been better to sell the whole lot, shut down this spiritual grave-yard and bury this insult to the powerful, living resurrected Christ Whose eyes bum as flames. Whose feet shine as burnished brass, Who holds all power in Heaven and earth and Who promises to vomit out every church system that propagates a lukewarm gospel.

In that same church, a priest was saved and filled with the Holy Spirit. He began conducting healing meetings and hundreds started flocking out to his Tuesday night prayer/healing service. Church law would not allow such meetings in the cathedral. He was refused permission and had to conduct his services in a parish hall — far too small to accommodate the sick and infirm who came for salvation and healing.

5. Re-Prioritize Resources

Church leaders — believe me! It is an unholy infatuation those in the Western church have with cathedrals (be they crystal or otherwise). When they construct elaborate sanctuaries at the expense of spreading the gospel, they are an offense to a God Who commissioned us nearly 2,000 years ago to, "*Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature*" (Mark 16:15). Until we align with that priority, all else we do is "*wood, hay and stubble*" (I Cor 3:12).

Two billion still wait to hear! God says, "*Their blood will I require at thine hand*" (Eze 3:20).

After fully preaching the gospel throughout the Roman Empire, Paul could testify, "*I am pure from the blood of all men*" (Acts 20:26). Are we? I think not! We must re-prioritize our resources to do what God has said in the Bible, and what He is telling us by His Spirit to do.

I am not against modest church buildings for necessary uses. I am against investing dedicated resources for elaborate ego fulfilling projects that could and should be used for helping the poor and spreading the gospel.

E. CONCLUSION

The Africans tell a story about a mouse who teamed up with a lonely elephant. The mouse always rode on the elephant's back, just behind his right ear. There he could sit and chat happily with his friend the elephant, keeping him company as they walked along.

One day they came to a bridge over a river. It seemed sturdy enough, so the elephant stepped out on it, and they crossed the river. When they arrived on the other side, the mouse said to the elephant, "Wow! **We** really shook that bridge, didn't **we**?"

You and I are like the mouse. We have teamed up with an all powerful God. By ourselves — like the mouse — we couldn't shake anything. But working together with God, learning and listening to hear His voice, we can bruise that old serpent, Satan, and set the prisoners of sin, sickness and poverty free (Rom 16:20).

Remember:

1. Academic Knowledge,

while useful in some arenas, **cannot produce saving, healing power of God**, nor the kind of leaders needed in the Church today. Remember that most of Jesus' disciples were described as "*unlearned and ignorant men. But they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus*" (Acts 4:13). So take much time to be with Jesus by prayer and fasting. See what a difference that will make.

2. God's Word (Rhema) And His Plan Are Unique ...

for every situation, person and organization. Patterns, methods, formulas and traditions — unless energized by the Holy Spirit — can be great hindrances to our hearing and obeying God's voice.

3. God's Plan For Your Life Is Much Bigger Than Your Own-

Wait on the Lord in prayer until you have a clear understanding of what God's plan is.

Let us pray

Lord Jesus, I want to hear Your voice. Let faith come to me now by hearing Your voice. I surrender my life, my church, my ministry to You. Guide me by Your —word (rhema) and truth (logos). AMEN!

Now quietly listen! What is He saying to you? You just asked Him to speak to you. Stop and listen for one or two minutes.

Mary, the mother of Jesus, said something we should take heed to. *"Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it"* (John 2:5).

Chapter 4

Patiently Endure

Introduction

A friend of mine, Bob Mumford, was asked by a young preacher, "What is the initial evidence that you are filled with the Spirit and called to the ministry?" With barely a moment's hesitation he replied, "TROUBLE!"

He was on scriptural ground. John the Baptist said of Jesus, *"He will baptize you in the Holy Spirit — and with fire... and burn up the chaff"* (Luke 3:16,17). The "baptism of fire" surely implies trouble, hardships and tests.

A well-known "apostle of China" is quoted as saying, "The first sign of an apostle is one who is still standing when everyone else has fallen down from the pressure, discouragement or hopelessness of a situation."

No doubt this brother picked up this inference from Paul's treatise on spiritual warfare, *"...having done all to stand — stand therefore "* (Eph 6:13,14).

To still be standing when everyone else has fallen down, requires **patient endurance**. This is possibly the single most important characteristic of a great leader. When we read the story of "The Heroes of Faith" in Hebrews 11 we are struck by this fact:

Those who received the highest commendation were those who used their faith to patiently endure extreme hardships and deprivation.

The written record of these heroes is awesome.

"Others trusted God and were beaten to death, preferring to die rather than turn from God and be free — trusting that they would rise to a better life afterwards.

' Some were laughed at and their back cut open with whips, and others were chained in dungeons. Some died by stoning and some by being sawed in two; others were promised freedom if they would renounce their faith, then were killed with swords.

"Some... were hungry and sick and ill-treated — too good for this world" (Heb 11:35-38 tlb). The world was not worthy of such saints.

What dynamic men and women these were. Wouldn't you like to be like them? This chapter will help you to become a "hero of faith" —if you are willing to pay the price.

A. WHO TESTS AND TRIES US?

Who brings tests and trials into the life of the Christian? Is it God or the devil?

It is popular thinking to blame the devil for any pain or suffering we experience as Christians. And sometimes the devil is involved in our tests and trials.

However, King David had a different view of the source of trials that come to leaders in preparation for God's service. *"The Lord testeth the righteous"* (Ps 11:5). We

can all praise God that most often we are not dealing with the devil in our trials and problems. We are dealing with God, or our own misdeeds.

1. Job's Suffering Permitted By God

We can learn an important lesson from Job's sufferings and tribulations. The Bible tells us the devil obtained God's permission to test Job (Job 1). But notice. Job never blamed the devil. He said, *"The hand of God has touched me"* (Job 19:21). *"Though God slay me, yet will I trust him"* (Job 13:15).

Even though Job was being attacked by Satan, he was dealing with his God — not the devil. He refused to acknowledge Satan in any of his trials and tribulations. It is comforting to know that God is on our side. When we place ourselves in His hand, He is always with us, no matter what the circumstances.

"He will keep the temptation [test] from becoming so strong that you can't stand up against it" (I Cor 10:13 tlb). God always *"works all things together for good, for those that love him, and are called according to his purpose"* (Rom 8:28 rsv).

2. Tests And Persecution Promised

Peter tells us, *"Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to test you, as though some strange thing happened unto you"* (I Pet 4:12).

Paul writes to a developing young church leader, *"All they that live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution"* (2Tim3:12).

Jesus said, *"Blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness' sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven"* (Matt 5:10).

I remember how excited I was at sixteen years of age when I finally surrendered my life to the Lord for His service. I thought the Lord and I would set the world "on fire" single-handed.

Not many months passed before I realized I had "a tiger by the tail." It was scaring the wits out of me to hold on, but if I let go it would be certain disaster. God had locked me into a program of preparation for ministry that led to — TROUBLE. And I couldn't escape it. I felt like Paul, *"...a prisoner of Jesus Christ"* (Eph 3:1).

3. God And Eagles

In the midst of the tests and turmoil coming my way, the Lord gave me much encouragement by these promises, *"...they that wait upon the Lord... shall mount up with wings as eagles..."* (Isa 40:31). *"As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: so the Lord alone did lead..."* (Deut 32:11). These two verses helped me through the problems and discouragement.

To fully appreciate the marvelous comfort of these promises, one needs to know something about the mother eagle — and her method of raising and training her young.

The eagle builds her nest in lofty crags, high on the side of a mountain. She weaves together prickly branches from briar and thorn bush to form a strong interlocking structure for her eggs. Soft materials combined with feathers plucked from her own breast line the nest. This forms an inviting shelter for her young.

a. A Comfortable Nest. Once hatched, the eaglets dwell high above all harm in warm comfort. The mother eagle feeds, protects and sees to their every need.

This is the way God treats us as *"babes in Christ."* We come to know the grace, love, forgiveness and abundant provision of a kind and compassionate Father. We enjoy

dwelling in a place of safety, learning from and enjoying the "*sincere milk of the word*" (1 Pet 2:2).

b. Comfort Removed. However, there comes a time in the growing up experience when the mother eagle, "*stirreth up her nest, and fluttereth over her young.*" This means she rips out the soft feathers. Flapping her massive wings, she blows away all the comfortable lining materials. This exposes the eaglets to the prickly briars and thorns.

Try though they may, the eaglets can find no place of comfort. Things are crowded and uncomfortable because several junior eaglets are competing for the same space. Complaints and squawks fill the air. Tests and trials begin to agitate the young eaglets who up to now have known no pain.

Although the junior eaglets do not understand all that is happening to them, mother eagle has a plan. She is making the nest uncomfortable for them, so they will be willing to abandon it for flying training.

In spiritual life as well as natural life there is a principle: "No pain — no gain!"

We are all like those little eaglets. Although the Bible tells us we are on a pilgrimage through a world that is not our home, we love comfort and ease. We love to settle down by our little oasis and enjoy the dates and sunshine. We are comfortable where we are. We do not want to move on through the wilderness experiences with their hardships, to our promised land.

We hear the Word and enjoy the preaching. Sometimes we find it down-right entertaining. Life is good and comfortable. When the Lord speaks to us, we're too distracted by our comfort to hear Him.

But then God decides it is time for us to do some growing up — and things change rapidly. Suddenly problems, pain and suffering hit us. We begin "rebuking the devil," complaining and crying, but all to no avail.

When the pain and suffering has done its work of getting our attention, when we are again willing to wait on Him and listen to His voice. He shows us what is next on His agenda for us. God is going to teach us "*... to mount up with wings as eagles.*"

c. Flying Lessons. The mother eagle "*taketh them, beareth them on her wings.*"

At this point in the training process the eaglet is so happy to get out of the thorny nest, it takes little persuasion to get him to leap on mother eagle's back and fix his talons securely into the pinions of her sturdy wings. Junior eaglet is about to take his first flying lesson.

With Junior firmly fixed to her back, mother eagle leaps from the nest and soars out over the valley. The eaglet is airborne for the first time. Mother eagle catches an updraft and soars up, up and up until she and the eaglet are several thousand feet above the valley below. "Isn't this fun!" thinks the eaglet.

"It's time to fly, little eaglet!" Without warning, mother eagle abruptly executes a diving outside loop and Junior is tossed to the wind to begin flight. Terrified, the little eaglet struggles, clumsily flapping his new wings, trying desperately to control his fate. Down, down, down the eaglet plummets to apparent imminent destruction.

Just when all hope is gone, the eaglet feels the mother's strong back coming up under its talons as she swoops under him, breaking his fall. Again he fastens his talons into his mother's strong pinions, safe once more.

Again mother eagle soars up, up, up to repeat the whole episode again. Each time he falls, the eaglet learns a little more, until finally he can glide and "...*mount up with wings, as eagles.*" How thrilling to fly on his own wings rather than on his mother's back.

Like the eaglets, we respond to God's call to the ministry, "*to mount up with wings as eagles.*" We think this is a wonderful idea. Before long we will be "flying high." But God mercifully hides from us the anxiety, pain and suffering involved in our preparation and training. We do not understand what it will cost.

God allows uncomfortable situations to develop in our secular job or work until the pain pushes us to fully surrender and go to Bible school or seminary.

When we graduate, we optimistically launch out expecting instant success and glory. For a short time things go well; then all of a sudden the bottom falls out. Problems erupt among the brothers and sisters. Everything starts going wrong. People who used to be our friends aren't as close anymore. We discover they withdrew from us "because they didn't want to be identified with a loser." Does that sound familiar?

What is happening? We're learning to fly. These adversities and troubles push us into faith growth and greater reliance on the Holy Spirit. We're learning to mount up above all the adversities. We're learning what Paul meant, "... *having done all to stand, stand therefore.*" When everything is falling around us, we are learning to stand on our Rock, Jesus Christ.

B. WHY DOES GOD TEST AND TRY US?

1. Pressure Produces Enlargement

"*Thou hast enlarged me when I was under pressure*" (Ps 4:1 rsv). This Psalm was written by David after the greatest failure of his life — his murderous, adulterous affair with Bathsheba (2Sam 11).

Because of his sin, the Lord sent severe judgments on David. One of these was administered at the hands of his son Absalom, who usurped the throne and drove David into exile. Having to flee for his life and suffer horrible indignities brought "enlargement" to David.

Even though his problems were of his own making, God graciously used these judgment times to make David a better man for the tasks yet ahead. If we acknowledge our failures and repent (renounce and turn from our sins). God graciously uses the chastisements and sufferings which follow to make us better leaders.

2. Trials Prove And Humble Us

God wants to discover whether we serve Him because we love Him or whether we serve Him for all the blessings He gives us. Jesus discovered that some followed Him "*for the loaves and fishes*" (that is, for what they could get from Him, not because they loved Him).

Moses described God's actions in bringing the children of Israel out of Egypt: "*Who led them through that great and terrible wilderness, where there were fiery serpents, and scorpions and drought, where there was no water, who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint;*

"*Who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee, and that he might test thee, to do thee good at thy latter end*" (Deut 8:15,16).

Why did God allow such severe tests and trials? *"To do thee good at thy latter end."* When God plans to enlarge and bless a minister or a church. He first takes them down into depths of discouragement, into the quagmire of hopeless situations. He does it *"... so you would never feel it was your own power and might that made you wealthy [great]"* (Deut 8:17).

When God gives enlargement, pride often comes in and we think it is because of our own cleverness or gifts that we are enjoying such blessings. Because of God's mercy to save us from pride, He allows very hard times prior to great enlargement and blessing.

This happened in Job's life. The devil told God, "Job only serves You because You have blessed him with so many material blessings. Take them away and Job will curse You." God responded to Satan's challenge by giving Satan permission to take all Job had.

When Satan had killed Job's flocks, herds and children and had destroyed all his property, how did Job respond? Job *"fell down upon the ground and worshipped"* (Job 1:20). Job proved that Satan's accusations were wrong and that his love for God was genuine. He still worshipped God when his animals, his houses, his children and wealth were all taken away. Job said, *"Though God slay me, yet I'll trust him"* (Job 13:15).

In the end God gave back to Job twice as much as he had before (Job 42:10). Job became recipient of the double portion because he proved himself God's loyal friend even in severe times of test and trial.

*"For examples of patience in suffering, look at the Lord's prophets.... Job is an example of a man who continued to trust the Lord in sorrow; from his experiences we can see how the Lord's plan **finally ended in good**, for he is full of tenderness and mercy"* (Jas 5:10,11 tib).

3. Suffering Can Increase God's Power In Us

If you ask for God's power in your life, you must understand what is required to have it. David said, *"He weakened my strength in the way"* (Ps 102:23). When you ask for God's power He responds, "Do you really mean it? If you are willing to be reduced to weakness (total dependence on the Lord), and take the suffering, tests and trials that go with it, I'll give you My power."

a. Paul's Experience. *"I am going to boast only about **how weak I am** and how great God is to use such weakness for his glory.... The experiences I had [of being taken up to Heaven] were so tremendous, God was afraid I might be puffed up [full of pride] by them; so I was given a thorn in the flesh, a messenger from Satan to hurt and bother me, and prick my pride.*

*"Three times I begged God to take it away. Each time he said, 'No. My grace [enablement] is adequate for you. **My power** [strength] shows up best in weak people.'*

*"... Since I know it is all for Christ's good, I am quite happy about 'the thorn,' and about insults and hardships, persecutions and difficulties; for **when I am weak, then I am strong** — the less I have, the more I depend on him"* (2Cor 12:5,7-10 tib).

Paul teaches us several important lessons about tests and trials in the life of a leader. Among them are:

1) Beware Of Pride. Valid spiritual experiences during times of prayer can cause us to be prideful.

2) Depend On God. Our discomfort is less important to God than our character. If our pride needs to be pricked, God will send along a messenger of Satan to make us weak, so we will depend on Him.

3) Rejoice In Trials. Only through humility and weakness can God's power be manifest in our lives. Hence, we can rejoice in tribulation, hardships and persecution, because we know it can result in God's power and glory being revealed in us.

When we start seeking for the power, the glory and the life of the Spirit to be expressed through us, God's response to our petition does not come in the way we expect. We pray for patience, and He sends tribulation. Why? Because "*tribulation develops patience*" (Rom 5:3).

He is answering our prayer, but not the way we thought He would. We must recognize that the buffeting may be "*God... working in us to will and to do of his good pleasure*" (Phil 2:13).

4. Affliction Separates The Chosen From The Called

*"I have **chosen** thee in the furnace of affliction"* (Isa 48:10). In this verse, the word "chosen" is used in the sense of being "graded," as in a school course examination or test.

When we do our lessons and take our tests in school, we are "graded" by the teacher on how well we have performed. If we receive a passing grade, we graduate to the next level or grade, one that is more difficult and challenging.

How does God determine whether to give me a passing grade? He tests my performance in the furnace of affliction. My response to trials and frustrations is graded. God observes how I react to heavy pressure and difficult situations. If I respond appropriately He says, "Well done, My good and faithful servant. Now you are ready to pass on to the next course, the next level of difficulty."

I do not mean to suggest that working for the Lord is constant tribulation and work without rest, respite or reward. Through God's grace, great blessings come to those who give their lives for His service. But, as we learn and grow. He presents us with ever harder tasks and continues to test, to grade, **to choose**.

*"Many are called but **few are chosen**"* (Matt 20:16). Why are few chosen? Because we are graded in the furnace of affliction, and few of us pass the test for leadership.

There is a powerful statement in the Book of Revelation concerning those the Lord Jesus allows to go forth in conquest with Him. *"These shall make war with... the Lord of lords and the King of kings and they that are with him are **called, and chosen, and faithful**"* (Rev 17:14).

Three requirements were essential. You had first to be **called**, then **chosen**, and to have proved yourself **faithful**. Sufferings, trials and tribulations mark the path of those in this company. They've proven themselves worthy to be chosen and have stood faithful to the Lord, even if it meant hazarding their lives for Him.

5. Suffering Teaches Obedience

"Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered" (Heb 5:8).

"Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.... If ye be without chastisement... then are ye bastards, and not sons" (Heb 12:6,8).

"For remember, when your body suffers, sin loses its power, and you won't be spending the rest of your life chasing after evil desires, but will be anxious to do the will of God.

' Don't let me hear of your suffering for murdering or stealing or making trouble or being a busybody and prying into other people's affairs.

"So if you are suffering according to God's will, keep on doing what is right and trust yourself to the God who made you, for he will never fail you"(1 Pet 4:1,2,15,19tlb).

I've often wished there were a way to gain without pain; a way to learn without suffering and chastisement — but there isn't.

We would prefer to enjoy an effective ministry without the suffering which makes it possible. If God used painful suffering to perfect Jesus, how much more will He use trouble in our lives?

Let us then joyfully embrace the Lord's discipline. For by this we know we are sons and not bastards.

[Note: Paul is applying this in a spiritual sense. Under the law, bastards had no right to priestly or kingly ministry (Deut 23:2). New Testament rules of grace decree children born out of wedlock are treated the same as anyone else.]

6. Trials Produce Perseverance And Maturity

*"Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know the **testing** of your faith **develops perseverance**. Perseverance **must finish its work so that you may be mature... not lacking anything** "(Jas 1:2-4).*

Many leaders seem to become "escape artists" when obedience to God's will requires suffering or trials. James teaches us that rather than try to escape the fiery ordeals that come, we should joyfully embrace them.

Notice, *"...perseverance must finish its work so you may be mature.* " This means we cannot speed up the process. Fiery ordeals do not produce **instant results**. When a fiery trial comes we must not only embrace it, we must endure and persevere in it.

a. The Cocoon And The Butterfly. A man once found a cocoon which had dropped from a tree. The butterfly was beginning to emerge, so he stopped to watch. It struggled for about forty-five minutes. In that time only the head and part of one wing emerged free of the cocoon.

Thinking he would help the struggling butterfly accelerate the process, he took his razor-sharp pen knife and cut the cocoon open to release the emerging larvae. To his surprise, he found only the part which had emerged through great effort and struggle was developed. The part he had cut free was still undeveloped and not ready to be exposed to the elements outside the cocoon.

Instead of helping the larvae become a butterfly, he had aborted the process. The half-developed butterfly soon died.

We church leaders are guilty of the same thing. We see brethren wrestling with difficulty. We feel sorry for them and try to help them out, only to discover that they fall back into the same problem again a short while later. Were we to let them suffer awhile, and learn the lesson God is trying to teach them — it would be better for them and the Church.

b. Three Causes Of Trials. Any ill-timed or misdirected effort made in such circumstances will bring about a miscarriage of God's dealings. When people come

crying to us in the midst of an ordeal, let us pray for great wisdom to discern whether this is:

- 1) **dealings of God,**
- 2) **self-induced trouble** they have brought on themselves, or
- 3) **attacks of Satan** not within God's will.

c. Response To Trials

1) **If It Is God's Dealings: Submit.** If it is God's dealings, help them to "*Submit themselves] to God*" (Jas 4:7) and draw on His grace to go through the trial victoriously.

2) **If It Is Self-Induced: Learn.** If it is S.I.T. (Self-Induced Trouble), try to help them learn from the problems they've brought on themselves.

3) **If It Is An Attack Of Satan: Fight.** If it is satanic attack beyond God's will, then go to battle for them and resist the devil. "*He will flee from you*" (Jas 4:7).

7. Trouble Tests Our Faith In God's Word

"Every word of God is purified..." (Prov 30:5 lit). "*The words of the Lord are pure [purified] words, as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times*" (Ps 12:6).

Compare these verses with Psalm 105:19, "*Until the time that his [Joseph's] word came, the word of the Lord tried him.*"

Joseph spent somewhere between ten and twelve years in an Egyptian prison for refusing Potiphar's wife the adulterous relationship she sought. She falsely accused him of trying to rape her. For this, Joseph spent many years suffering for righteousness' sake.

God had promised to make him a ruler. What do you think ten or twelve years in prison would do to a leader who had a promise like that? I know what it would do to me. It would frustrate and distress me beyond belief. Yet, God allowed Joseph's situation. Why? So the word of the Lord to him could be "*tested like silver, tried in a furnace... purified seven times*" (Ps 12:6).

Every great man of God endured a fiery trial as a result of hearing instructions from God. The process of trying to implement what God said became very costly for them.

a. Noah was told to build an ark. It resulted in the people scoffing and mocking him. Only his family and some of the animals were saved.

b. Abram was promised, "*...thou shall be a father of many nations and given the name of Abraham which means 'EXALTED FATHER'*" (Gen 17:4,5). Can you imagine how the neighbors must have laughed at Abraham? "How many children do you have, 'exalted father'?" they would ask in derision. Abraham would have to drop his head in silence. He had none. "We hear you think you are going to be the father of many nations, 'exalted father.' You are ninety-nine years old. When is it going to happen?" they would chide. Abraham had no answer. He was bearing the reproaches that fall on everyone that has a "word from the Lord." Believe me! Every word of God is tried (tested).

c. Moses knew he was to deliver his people from Egypt's slavery. When he tried, even his own Israeli brothers turned on him and he was driven into the desert for forty years.

What do you think went through Moses' mind all those years? I wonder if thoughts like this didn't torture his meditations. "God, in an attempt to obey You, I gave up the claim to Pharaoh's throne. I could, at the least, have been prime minister of Egypt.

But instead, I tried following Your call — and now as a vagabond and outlaw I am wandering in this desert, tending a few of my father-in-law's sheep. God! What are You doing to me?"

Can you imagine what forty years of embracing a vision, that to all appearances would never be fulfilled, would do to the man?

We know his self-confidence had been so shattered, he stammered and stuttered when he talked. He had to have his brother Aaron do his talking for him. This could only have been the result of intense inward emotional conflict and agony.

Had we time and space, we could look at David, Nehemiah, Jeremiah, John the Baptist, Paul and many others. All of them had "the word of the Lord" given them. Then their faith in that word was put to severe tests by adversity, misunderstanding and great trials of affliction.

There is no other path to leadership, my friend. *"If we suffer, we shall also reign with him"*(2Tim2:12).

Paul said, *"It is because I have reached these great truths that I am in trouble here and have been put in jail like a criminal. But the word of God is not chained, even though I am. I am more than willing to suffer if that will bring salvation and eternal glory in Christ Jesus to those God has chosen."*

"I am comforted by this truth, that when we suffer and die for Christ it only means that we will begin living with him in heaven. And if we think that our present service for him is hard, just remember that some day we are going to sit with him and rule with him."

"But if we give up when we suffer, and turn against Christ, then he must turn against us. Even when we are too weak to have any faith left, he remains faithful to us and will help us, for he cannot disown us who are part of himself, and he will always carry out his promises to us" (2Tim2:9-13tlb).

C. MAINTAIN A RIGHT ATTITUDE

Maintaining a positive attitude in the midst of great suffering is the key to the triumphant Christian life. *"Now thanks be unto God, who **always** causeth us to triumph in Christ"* (2Cor 2:14).

1. Recognize God's Hand In Every Trial

Paul did not write these words as a theoretician. He had experienced and practiced what he was talking about.

You will remember that he cast a demon out of a girl at Philippi. This resulted in *"a mob being quickly formed against Paul and Silas, and the judges ordered them stripped and beaten with wooden whips. Again and again the rods slashed down across their bared backs; and afterwards they were thrown into prison. The jailer was threatened with death if they escaped, so he took no chances, but put them into the inner dungeon and clamped their feet into the stocks. "Around midnight, Paul and Silas **were praying and singing hymns to the Lord** — and the other prisoners were listening"* (Acts 16:22-25 tlb).

The Lord, faithful to His promise, had surrounded Paul and Silas with *"...songs of deliverance"*(Ps 32:7).

What happened as a result of singing their *"songs of deliverance"*? The Lord sent an earthquake that set free not only Paul and Silas, but all the other prisoners as well. The

jailer was converted and took Paul and Silas home and made them his house guests. A strong church was established in Philippi as a result.

The grace given to Paul and Silas to pray and sing in such circumstances was a miracle. But He will do the same for you and me if we will walk in the Spirit and not start complaining against God or others when trials and tests come. Recognize God's hand in every trial that comes to you.

2. Don't Murmur Against God

Your response to the circumstances that befall you will determine whether you become bitter or better. God wants you to realize, "*It is no longer I that live, but Christ that liveth in me*" (Gal 2:20).

If you will maintain a "Christ response" to adversity and tell the Lord, "I see Your hand in this. Lord; thank You for moulding me, for teaching me," then you also will receive special grace from the Lord which will take you through in triumph.

Paul recounted five sins which caused Israel's failure in the wilderness. Here is the fifth: "*And don't murmur against God and his dealings with you, as some of them did, for that is why God sent his Angel to destroy them*" (I Cor 10:10tlb).

3. See Troubles As Working For You

When recounting some of his many sufferings for Christ, Paul said, "*For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us afar more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*" (2Cor 4:17).

Paul saw his afflictions "working for him," that is, they were his servants, doing God's bidding, working out "*God's richest blessing on us forever and ever*" (tlb).

Will you who are weary, tested and tried by much affliction realize:

"The troubles will soon be over, but the joys to come will last forever" (2Cor 4:18 tlb). God loves you very much. Great will be your reward in Heaven if you will but endure to the end.

An old missionary, alone on the island of Maui, once wrote:

He's the Lord of the seas, the Lord of the land, The winds are His to command.

He brings down the rain, He pours down the hail, He controls the force of the gale.

Some cry and complain of the storms' fearful pace, as they sail life's troubled race.

Don't fight with the wind, rather count it your friend, your life will enjoy more grace.

'Tis the set of the sail, not the force of the gale, that insures safe passage to home.

The fair haven we'll get, with the least bit of sweat, if our servant, the storms become.

So sail on, weary sailor, your master awaits to welcome to Heaven's fair land.

Keep your eye on the source, don't fret with the force, that prepares for His right hand.

Yes, life's stormy winds can be harnessed by a right attitude. As the wind to the sail, the storms of trials and tests help produce maturity which prepare us for leadership on earth, and our eternal fair haven and home, Heaven.

D. SUMMARY

In summary, we have learned several important principles:

1. Maturity And Training

Trials and tribulations can be the merciful hand of God seeking to mature, mold and train us.

2. God Works Through Us

God works most powerfully through us when we're being proven by times of trials, tests and tribulations.

3. Pass Or Fail The Test

In the fires of affliction some will fail and others will pass the test and be promoted. Those who pass the test are **chosen** to hear those comforting words, *"You've been faithful over little; I'll make you ruler over much."*

Chapter 5

Learn From Joseph's Life

Introduction

Some years ago Brother David Edwards was speaking at a conference on the life of Joseph.

He said, "Joseph's life can be summarized in three words. **Pitted, Potted and Putted.**" These three words form the outline for this chapter.

As a young man, I used to weep uncontrollably when I read the story of Joseph's life (see Genesis 37 through 49). For years I did not understand what was happening or why. Why should the story of Joseph move me so deeply?

Between the ages of sixteen and thirty, my early ministry was developing. During those years, I began to realize that the pattern of my life was much like Joseph's. There was an uncanny parallel, too precise to be dismissed as just coincidental. It was as if God had mysteriously planned my life in a similar mold to that in which Joseph's was cast. Now, at age sixty, I am more convinced than ever, that this is true.

Over the forty years I have been a minister, I have talked to scores of other church leaders who have gone through experiences similar to Joseph's and my own. While there was not always that deep "spiritual empathy" with Joseph that exists in my experience, these leaders were very much aware that inexplicable forces were moulding their life and ministry.

For this reason, I feel a careful examination of Joseph's preparation for leadership is an invaluable exercise. It will help you understand what **has** happened and what **will** happen as God prepares you for leadership and enlarged responsibilities. As you read what follows, I hope you receive as much encouragement from Joseph's life as I have.

A. PITTED

1. An Early Call

Joseph, as I, received revelation concerning his calling as a teenager. At age seventeen, Joseph had a series of dreams which were given him of God. These dreams indicated Joseph was destined to a leadership role that would bring him to prominence, which would result in his being able to help many others.

Also, like myself, Joseph didn't have the wisdom to keep his mouth shut and this got him in big trouble with his brethren. His dreams were not appreciated by them in the least. There may have been a tint of spiritual pride in Joseph, although the Scripture does not plainly say this.

Because he was the son of his father's old age, Israel loved Joseph more than his other sons. He made him a beautiful "coat of extremities." This means the sleeves came to his wrists and the skirt to his ankles. This was like the garment worn by princes in kings' palaces.

By contrast, his brothers all wore the short tunics and trousers of shepherds — the clothing of men of the field. All this combined to make the eleven older brothers resentful and jealous of Joseph's privileged status.

One day Israel, the father, sent Joseph to check up on his brothers and report back how things were with the flocks. When the brothers saw Joseph coming they conspired how to kill him in a way that would make it look like an accident. The oldest brother, Reuben, intervened and suggested they throw him in a nearby pit for awhile. Thus Joseph was **pitted**.

2. Trials And Setbacks

This era in Joseph's life is typical of what many go through who are called to be ministers at an early age. I know in my case, right after graduating middle school, I went and joined "my brethren" in a missionary training school where they were being prepared to go out to preach the gospel.

During my time there, I kept getting into trouble because many of the students were being baptized in the Holy Spirit. Because I came from a "spirit-filled family" I was usually the one they thought was responsible, and was often "called on the carpet" to explain what part I had in what was happening.

The fact was, I only talked to the students who came to me inquiring about the Holy Spirit. Of the dozens who were filled with the Spirit during that year, only three or four had come to me. The rest were filled while out in the mountains praying and seeking God alone. God saw their hungry hearts and filled them.

As time progressed, I worked hard at all my assignments. Because I had experience running printing equipment, I worked many weeks without compensation happily helping in the print shop. My natural aptitude for mechanical things qualified me

to work many more weeks helping remodel a cargo aircraft into a passenger airplane to transport missionaries around the world.

When it came time to review the student graduates for missionary appointment, I was presented a paper to sign. I was being asked to promise never to teach or preach the Baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Of course, I could not sign such a promise. I had to be true to the Bible and God's call on my life. For refusing, I was asked to leave. Heart-broken over this **pitting**, I left discouraged and confused. No one even said "thanks" for all I had done.

Despite all this I loved them. For some years after, I contributed money to the general fund of this mission and helped support their missionaries.

B. POTTED

While Joseph's brothers were discussing what to do with him, a Midianite camel train passed into view. Judah said, "Why don't we sell Joseph to the Midianites?"

"Great idea!" chimed in the rest. So it was done. For twenty pieces of silver Joseph was sold into slavery (the same price for which Judas betrayed Jesus).

In Egypt, at the slave auction, a man named Potiphar, the captain of Pharaoh's guard, purchased Joseph as his slave. It wasn't long after that Potiphar realized God blessed everything Joseph touched. So he made Joseph his chief administrative assistant, and turned over all his business affairs to Joseph to run them.

1. False Accusations

Joseph was a handsome young man, and Potiphar's wife began making eyes at Joseph and pressed him to sleep with her. Joseph protested but she grabbed him and insisted he go to bed with her. Instead, Joseph pulled away to flee. She grabbed his jacket and tore it from him — and Joseph ran out of the house.

That night, Potiphar's wife told her husband that Joseph had tried to rape her. This made Potiphar extremely angry and he ordered Joseph put into prison.

"There in prison, they hurt his feet with fetters, and placed his neck in an iron collar..." (Ps 105:18 tlb). Through the lying intrigue of **Potiphar's** wife he was **potted!**

Can you who reflect back on the early years of your ministry and identify with these problems? Perhaps you are going through a "pitting" or "potting" experience right now. There is a reason for it, you know.

2. God Is In Charge

I find it extremely interesting to note the Bible says, "**God sent Joseph as a slave to Egypt to save his people from starvation**" (Ps 105:17). **God sent Joseph?** I thought his brothers contrived to kill him and sell him as a slave. Yes, that is the story as man saw it. But from the divine viewpoint, God was there all the time — working all things together for good for Joseph and the chosen family.

If only we could understand this when trials, rejection, misunderstanding and injustice come to our life. God is in charge. If we are not guilty of wrongdoing, and are not suffering for willful disobedience — we can know that He will make all the things that seem to be against us, work out for our good and the good of others.

3. A Personal Example

God had to teach me some valuable lessons through being "potted." When I started out as a young preacher, starting new churches, other church leaders made many false charges against me. I had done nothing wrong, but because of certain sacrifices I was making in serving the Lord, it made others suspicious and jealous.

a. Censored. I found I was going to be censored by brothers against whom I had done no harm. I was being betrayed by brothers I trusted. As I fasted and prayed, the Lord gave me these precious promises.

"I will look with pity on the man who has a humble and a contrite heart, who trembles at my word...."

*"Hear the words of God all you who fear and tremble at his words: Your brethren hate you and **cast you out** for being loyal to my name.*

"'Glory to God,' they scoff. 'Be happy in the Lord!' But he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed (Isa 66:2,5 tlb).

From this verse I was convinced of two things. **One:** whatever happened, I must keep a humble attitude and not answer anger and arrogance with the same. **Two:** I was certain I would get the "left foot of fellowship" (be censored by church leaders).

One day the Lord gave me such very specific and supernatural direction that it overwhelmed me. It was a clear and accurate statement about the whole situation — I knew precisely what was going to happen and what I must do. On this occasion, God's message came to me from III John.

This book tells the story of a man named Diotrephes. He is described in these words. *"He not only refuses to welcome the missionary travelers himself, but tells others not to, and when they do, he tries to put them out of the church "* (vs 10 tlb).

With a very sad heart, I sat down and wrote my enemies. I explained that Jesus said, "Love your enemies." I assured them of my love, and why I had no choice but to resign. It was the only way the situation could be resolved peaceably. My resigning brought peace. The turbulent seas calmed.

b. All Hope Gone. But for me it also brought despair and the hopeless feeling that I would never be able to fulfill the calling I had on my life.

For over ten years I secretly clung to the hope that one day my brothers would help me. Under their auspices, I could go out to some unevangelized part of the world and help reach the lost for Jesus. Now — ALL HOPE WAS GONE! This could never happen.

I said to my wife, "There is no way I will ever be able to fulfill the call to preach the gospel in all the world. I must have been terribly mistaken eleven years ago, when I set out to obey what I thought was the call of God. There is no way it can ever happen now." From every natural perspective, that was true.

c. God Had A Plan. It was one of the darkest days of my life. It would be some years later before I would fully understand that, like Joseph and his brothers, some *"thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good... to save much people"* (Gen 50:20).

As I continued seeking the Lord, He let me know that while I had to be careful never to "... *abuse my right in the gospel, I was free from all, that I might be the servant of all*"(1Cor 9:18,19).

At the time, I never dreamed God had such a big plan for my life and ministry. I had no idea the Lord would open doors to train thousands of church leaders.

1) A "Joseph Ministry". I have always tried to revere and honor my brothers who did me wrong despite what happened. Nor do I suggest that what I did in withdrawing should be the course anyone else should take.

Of Joseph it was prophesied, "*The blessings... shall be on the head of Joseph, on the crown of... him that was separate from his brethren*" (Gen 49:26). Joseph was not a "separated brother" by his choice, but by divine providence. Like myself, had he the choice, he would have stayed in the security of the family under the covering of the patriarch — but God had a different plan for Joseph.

The word of the Lord concerning Joseph indicated he was to be "*a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches reach over the wall*" (Gen 49:22). Walls can never enclose a "Joseph Ministry." His branches must always reach over — so that anyone who is in need of shade, or is weary and hungry, can help himself in the cool shade of the fruit-filled branch.

The fruit and shade of a "branch over the wall" is available without charge — for you see, no charge can be put on the fruit taken from a branch that reaches "over the wall."

Under Old Testament custom and Levitical decree, branches and fruit which "reach over the wall" are public domain — anybody may freely partake of it. France still observes these biblical agriculture laws and her farmers are blessed because of it.

The cry goes out as in ancient times, "*Say there! Is anyone thirsty? Come and drink—even if you have no money! Come, take your choice of wine and milk — it's all free!*"(Isa 55:1 tlb).

It was for this "Joseph Ministry" that God was preparing me. But at the time, I did not realize the full implications of what was happening.

The sense of rejection, loneliness and isolation was very difficult for me (just as it must have been for Joseph). But God had put me in the circumstances. There was nothing I could do to get out (unless I would be willing to violate God's will).

4. Tried By The Word

"Until the time that his [Joseph's] word came, the word of the Lord tried [tested] him" (Ps 105:19). Ten or twelve years behind bars with chains on your wrists and an iron collar around your neck will crush the life out of any innocent man.

Joseph was in a structure of circumstance designed by a divine architect. But having no sure knowledge of that made his life seem hopeless beyond description. If only he had known for sure, it might have made the hardships and waiting tolerable.

All he had were the dreams — and nothing had worked out the way the dreams indicated. In fact, everything that had happened so far, was contrary to the revelation he had received from the Lord.

The dreams contained no hint that Joseph would suffer total rejection by his brothers and be thrown into a pit. There was no indication in the revelation from the Lord

that he would be sold into slavery, be falsely accused, and spend endless years in prison. He must have wondered, "What in the world is going on? Why is all this happening to me?"

When the first martyr, Stephen, was giving his dying discourse he recounted Joseph's agony.

*"God... delivered him [Joseph] out of **all his anguish** "* (Acts 7:10). Yes, he had **anguish!** Indescribable anguish!

He had done nothing wrong at home or in Potiphar's house. Yet here he was a slave prisoner with no hope of ever getting out. He had maintained chastity and moral purity. His reward was a life sentence without parole in, a stinking, hot, lice-filled, leach-infested, dung-covered prison dungeon.

Most of us will never come close to knowing the anguish Joseph must have felt during those lonely isolated years. He was living off prison slop for meals, he probably had nothing but dirty Nile River water for quenching his thirst. He was a victim of the dealings and preparations of God.

He, like many of you, was chosen by God for leadership, and this was his training school. Before God was finished with Joseph, he would graduate from the school of the fire of God.

C. PUTTED

I guess the most unbelievable thing to me about Joseph is his resilience — his incredible ability to maintain a relationship with God in such circumstances. That he was free of bitterness, hatred and anger is a strong indicator he was sustained by a marvelous miracle of God's grace (enablement).

1. Faithful Stewardship

About ten years after Joseph was committed to prison, two of the inmates had dreams. Joseph had instant interpretations for both men. Even in that hell-hole of a prison, after so many years, the gift of God was still working in Joseph. How amazing!

It was this unique, faithful stewardship of God's gifts that would ultimately lead to his promotion and exaltation.

Joseph told the chief butler the interpretation of his dream. The chief butler would be restored to his place of privilege in Pharaoh's palace. The butler was restored, thus proving the validity of Joseph's prophetic gift.

Joseph appealed to the butler to speak to Pharaoh and seek a reprieve of his prison sentence. But the ungrateful butler promptly forgot about Joseph. Meantime, the hapless baker had been executed, as Joseph had told him he would when interpreting his dream.

Two years passed. Then one day the word spread through the palace that the Pharaoh had received several dreams that troubled him greatly.

Because no one could interpret them to the Pharaoh's satisfaction, he was threatening to kill all the magicians and sages of Egypt.

The butler suddenly remembered Joseph. Perhaps he could interpret the Pharaoh's dreams. As a result of the Pharaoh's request for an audience, Joseph was bathed, shaved, dressed appropriately and thrust into Pharaoh's presence.

Upon hearing the dreams, Joseph immediately gave the interpretation. It meant seven years of abundant harvest followed by seven years of drought and famine.

Joseph also gave the Pharaoh a fourteen-year plan of action that would minimize the impact of the coming calamity.

2. Promotion

The Pharaoh was so impressed with Joseph, he made him second in command of all Egypt. Only the Pharaoh himself would have greater authority.

"Then Pharaoh placed his own signet ring on Joseph's finger as a token of his authority, and dressed him in beautiful clothing and placed the royal gold chain about his neck and declared, 'See, I have placed you in charge of all the land of Egypt'" (Gen 41:41 tlb).

Finally it happened! Joseph was "**putted**" on the throne of Egypt. His long marriage to pain, loneliness, confinement, chains and irons was over. His day had come — the day when God's word of promise was finally beginning to be fulfilled!

3. Crowning Day

I know that for those who have forsaken all to follow Christ this coronation day awaits another age when we will rule and reign with Him. But believe me, all we go through now determines the extent of our reward on that day.

But I also know that even in this life Jesus promised fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters and even houses and lands to all who had forsaken these to follow Christ (Matt 19:29). There are days of Heaven on earth for those who are **called, chosen and faithful** as Joseph was.

D. CONCLUSION

"Don't be misled; ...a man will always reap just the kind of crop he sows! If he sows to please his own wrong desires, he will be planting seeds of evil and he will surely reap a harvest of spiritual decay and death; but if he plants the good things of the Spirit, he will reap the everlasting life which the Holy Spirit gives him.

"And let us not get tired of doing what is right, for after a while we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't get discouraged and give up. That's why whenever we can we should always be kind to everyone, and especially to our Christian brothers " (Gal 6:7-10 tlb).

"So, my dear brothers, since future victory is sure, be strong and steady, always abounding in the Lord's work, for you know that nothing you do for the Lord is ever wasted..." (1Cor 15:58).

Chapter 6

Avoid Becoming A Casualty

Introduction

God is looking for men to elevate to leadership. Every fresh move of the Spirit has been marked by God raising up new leadership, prepared and chosen for the task. Another such fresh outpouring of the Spirit is at the door. A major change in human events signals this is taking place now.

God needs men who will "*stand in the gap*" for Him and "make up the hedge" (Eze 22:30), men who will know the ways and Word of the Lord and say, "*this is the way... walk ye in it*" (Isa 30:21).

This chapter explains the price and pitfalls that are involved to produce such men. If you want to be one of those chosen to lead in the coming revival, you're going to need to know the principles in this chapter.

Summary Of Previous Chapters

What I share in this chapter is based on the assumption that you have read, understood and started putting into practice the things outlined in the previous chapters.

The FIRST chapter dealt with the need for every spiritual leader to wait on the Lord (Isa 40:31). This is the first priority of a spiritual leader. As you wait, the Lord takes away your strength and replaces it with His own. An exchange takes place.

The SECOND chapter explained the necessity of learning to hear God's voice. A vital principle to a successful ministry is that man lives by *"every word that proceedeth out of [continues to be spoken by] the mouth of God."*

Our heart must be pure and yielded to the Lord before we can hear Him. Then, as we hear and obey Him our faith will grow. As it grows, we will hear Him talking to us of great things He wants to do through us.

The THIRD and FOURTH chapters presented the process by which God uses the troubles we experience to prove and refine His words of instruction and direction to us. Through the furnace of affliction we advance from being "called," to being "chosen." Such refinement is necessary, because through it, He prepares us to face the intense spiritual warfare we will know in spiritual leadership.

In the FIFTH chapter Joseph provides the prime example of this: God had permitted circumstances to bring him into Pharaoh's dungeon to build his character. Then he was released from prison, had an audience with Pharaoh and was made Prime Minister of Egypt.

This change from the hardships of prison to his place of responsibility could have easily given Joseph a false sense of his importance and prominence. But God had worked humility into him in that dungeon and this saved him from the snare of pride.

A. PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY

1. How Long Will It Take?

Right now you're probably asking, "But how long will this process take? Just how long will it take God to prepare me as a leader?"

There is no set length of time. Moses was in preparation forty years on the back side of the desert tending his father-in-law Jethro's sheep. Only fourteen years after his conversion, Paul was released and sent out as a leader (Acts 13:1-3). However, in his case there were many years of training in the Scriptures, before his conversion.

From the time of his dreams until he became Prime Minister of Egypt spanned thirteen years of Joseph's life.

Two things determine how long it will take God to make you a leader:

- The magnitude and nature of the ministry God has prepared for you, and
- The way you respond to His dealings as He prepares you.

a. Mechanic Or Doctor? How much God wants to accomplish through you and how much you want to accomplish for God determine the intensity of His dealings.

The same thing is true in the world: A person can be a good auto mechanic with only a few years of training, but you can't be a surgeon without many years of intense, hard preparation and schooling.

If you want God to use you in a prominent and powerful ministry with lots of miracles and authority, the time of your preparation will be long and painful. The greater your responsibility will be, the more severe your preparation. It takes a lot more heat to refine a vessel made of gold for God's honor than it does to make an earthen vessel, for common use.

b. Stubborn Or Obedient? The second factor is your response to God's dealings as He prepares you. If you are slow to learn what God teaches you, this will lengthen the time and severity of preparation. The blacksmith must apply a heavy hammer and a lot of heat to shape the hard inflexible iron. The jeweler need only apply modest amounts of pressure to shape the pliable gold.

The secret is to be responsive, pliable and obedient to the Lord. When He brings a lesson into your life, learn it quickly. Don't balk or be stubborn. If you do, God will have to use much "heat and hammer" on you to shape you for leadership.

2. Casualties Abound

It is folly to suppose that once you become a leader you have no further need for spiritual growth. Thinking such has led to the downfall of many.

In 1948 there was a great move of the Holy Spirit that swept the United States. The years following on the heels of World War II were times when God was dealing powerfully with His Church.

By 1950, over fifty major prominent ministries had sprung up. Most of them were evangelists in the great healing revival which was then sweeping around the world.

Only a handful survived. But where are the others? Why are there only a few left? The casualty list is long. Many who made it through God's preparation program failed to maintain their calling.

There are more casualties among those who come into prominent leadership than there are in preparation for leadership.

The Apostle Paul knew this. "*I fear that after having preached to others, I myself might be **declared unfit** and asked to stand aside*" (I Cor 9:27).

Many who aspire to leadership think, "Once I make it to a position of leadership, I'll be home free!" Not true! As a leader, a man is much more vulnerable to spiritual attack and failure because of his prominence and visibility.

3. The Price Is High

Preparation for leadership involves a lot of weeping and painful testing (see Hebrews 5:7,8). This is because you are being trained to stand the fierce pressures that befall a leader.

Christian leadership isn't glamorous; it is warfare. You are at war with Satan and the world. You are misunderstood by family members, friends and fellow-Christians. Along with this, you are often times criticized by people motivated by jealousy or fear.

The Bible account of Moses in the Book of Numbers is an accurate picture of what is involved in leadership. Moses was responsible for about two million five hundred thousand people (2,500,000). They were a bunch of grumbling, complaining, back-biting rebels. They would see a miracle and then gripe about something right afterwards. They fomented one rebellion right after another.

Even Moses' own brother and sister were critical of him and challenged his leadership (and were judged for it).

It's little wonder that God prepared Moses for over forty years before he came to his place of leadership. If Moses hadn't spent those forty years on the back side of the desert with his father-in-law's problem sheep, he would never have been the great leader he turned out to be.

Moses and Elijah were the two who appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration with Jesus. From this (and other scriptures) we assume they were the two greatest and most important leaders of the Old Testament.

A measure of the stress that a man of God suffers in leadership is illustrated in the lives of both Moses and Elijah.

a. Moses. Even though Moses had all those years of preparation, the pressures became so great that **Moses asked God to kill him.** A man is not praying this way unless his life is very miserable.

"Moses said to the Lord, 'Why pick on me, to give me the burden of a people like this? Are they my children? Am I their father? Is that why you have given me the job of nursing them along like babies, until we get to the land you promised their ancestors?"

"Where am I supposed to get meat for all these people? For they weep to me saying, 'Give us meat! 'I can 't carry this nation by myself. The load is far too heavy!"

"If you are going to treat me like this, please kill me right now; it will be a kindness! Let me out of this impossible situation!" (Num 11:11-15 tib).

Only those who have been there, know. Leadership has some very heavy burdens that go with it. Moses was so discouraged and depressed with the situation, he wanted to die.

b. Elijah. Elijah also had a low point in his ministry. It came after his greatest triumph, when he had called down fire from Heaven and killed the four hundred prophets of Baal. Unfortunately, valleys of despair often follow mountain-top experiences of great victories.

"When Ahab told Queen Jezebel what Elijah had done, and that he had slaughtered the prophets of Baal, she sent this message to Elijah: 'You killed my prophets, and now I swear by the gods that I am going to kill you by this time tomorrow night.'

*"So Elijah fled for his life; he went to Beersheba, a city of Judah, and left his servant there. Then he went on alone into the wilderness, traveling all day, and sat down under a broom bush and **prayed that he might die.***

"'I've had enough,' he told the Lord. 'Take away my life. I've got to die sometime, and it might as well be now'" (IKi 19:1-4 tlb).

The Lord answered Elijah's prayer and released him. He was taken up to Heaven in a chariot some weeks after praying this prayer.

To me, it is a great statement of the Lord's love and understanding of His leaders, that he honored Moses and Elijah by allowing them there at His transfiguration (see Matthew 17).

Yes, there is a price to pay to be a leader. If the preparation seems hard, just remember: the pressures that go with prominent leadership will be much harder than the training that got you there.

B. OUR OWN WORST ENEMY

The church leader's most dangerous enemy is himself. His own flesh and indwelling sin nature constitute a vicious and deceptive foe. Compared to this, his external foes are easy to combat.

Later chapters will deal extensively with the points that follow, but let's look at them briefly here.

1. The Three Prime Pitfalls Of Leadership

The three areas of sin which are at the root of the downfall of any Christian leader are the **love of women** (illicit sexual immorality), the **love of money** (the desire to become rich), and the **love of position** and prominence (pride).

Experience only confirms the testimony of Scripture: *"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*

*"For all that is in the world, the **lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world**" (I Jn 2:15,16).*

No one is immune to these sins. I don't consider myself immune to them nor have I ever met anyone who did. There is a high rate of failure among Christian leaders because of them.

Every wise leader knows that if he doesn't exercise self-control, he can fall into either one, two or all three of these snares. These are, no doubt, some of the besetting sins mentioned in Hebrews 12:1.

According to 1 John 2:15, a lack of love for the Father leaves room for a love for the world to develop. This makes you especially vulnerable to these areas of attack if you are in leadership.

Proper training and preparation for leadership involves developing an absolute trust in God and His Word. If you walk in faith, you will not be insecure. You will be able to avoid the snares of sexual sin, covetousness and pride. These three areas of sin proceed out of **insecurity** (a lack of faith and trust in the Lord).

a. Immorality. Immorality generally results from an **insecure marriage** that may be failing because of poor self-esteem. This makes you self-conscious, self-centered, and selfish. The unhappy spouse fights back and the leader feels driven out of her affection into the arms of someone who seems more understanding and loving.

1) Family: A High Priority. The leader must fight for time to spend with his wife and children. He must take an active interest in the members of his family. The intense pressures and busy schedule created by church responsibilities and problems will infringe on this very high priority.

2) A Word To The Wife. The wife must also bring concern, sensitivity and support to her husband. He will constantly be battered with the pressures of an ever-expanding job. He may feel inadequate to handle all that it demands of him and get frustrated and frightened, isolated and lonely. At such times, kind words and a tender touch can make all the difference in the world to the harassed church leader. Understanding and support from the wife might save him and his ministry.

3) A Lasting Scar. Moral failure is especially dangerous. Solomon says of someone who falls into fornication, *"a wound and dishonor shall he get and his reproach shall not be wiped away"* (Prov 6:33). It will impede your ministry for the rest of your life.

God's forgiveness and restoring grace never fail to be available, but the "wound and reproach" continue to have an effect. Through moral failure you will lose all you could have gained by the years of preparation in becoming a leader.

b. Covetousness. Covetousness (the love of money) comes from **insecurity about God's provision.** As a spiritual leader you must *"...seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." If you do, Jesus said, "all these things will be added unto you."*

He will add to you the food, clothing, health, housing and transportation you need if you faithfully practice the principle of prosperity found in the Bible. This principle is as follows: *"Give and it shall be given unto you"* (Luke 6:38).

1) Learn To Give. Until you learn to consistently give a tithe (10 percent) of your income to the Lord you will never know God's provision for your needs. You will break the curse of poverty by giving a tithe (tenth) of all God blesses you with.

Give to your missions outreach, to help widows, orphans, the poor around you, and God promises *"I will... open... the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it"* (Mal 3:7-11).

2) Teach Others To Give. Once you have started practicing this, start teaching all the brothers and sisters to do the same. As they learn to bring their tithes to the church, the curse of poverty will be broken from them also.

Giving to the Lord's work breaks the hold of the sin of "the love of money." Practice it regularly and save yourself a lot of heartbreak. Save yourself from poverty. Save your church from poverty by teaching them to give, too.

We have a lot more to teach about the sins of immorality and Covetousness in the next two chapters.

c. Pride. Pride is the result of **insecurity about your call** and your own sense of self-worth. Pride is the easiest of failures for others to see.

It is also the hardest one for us to see in ourselves. It shows itself by a boastful attitude. Boasting broadcasts insecurity. A person who has an effective ministry doesn't have to boast about it. *"Let another praise thee, and not thine own lips"* (Prov 27:2).

If someone feels he needs to advertise he is an apostle, for example, it means that he doubts it himself and doubts others will think so unless he says something about it. Boasting is clear evidence that a person is full of pride and insecurity.

1) A Servant Not A Lord. *"The elders [leaders] who are among you I exhort... do not act as lords over God's heritage, but be examples to the flock"* (1 Pet 5:1,2 pph).

True leaders are not lords. They function as servants of God's people. Church leadership isn't a place of lordship, but it is the place of the lowly servant. God's preparations are to teach us to have the attitude of a servant.

Jesus was the most humble and lowly of all men. Like Jesus, a true leader won't avoid certain jobs because he feels they are below his dignity as a leader. A secure leader is not threatened by menial tasks or humble responsibilities.

Paul wrote of Jesus, *"...although he existed in the form of God, [He] did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped after, but emptied himself, taking the form of a bondservant and was made in the likeness of men.*

"And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross" (Phil 2:6-8). Jesus was so secure in who He was. He didn't need to exalt Himself.

John 13 makes this even clearer: "*Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come forth from God, and was going back to God, rose from supper, and laid aside his garments; and taking a towel, girded himself about. Then he poured water into the basin and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which he was girded*" (vss 3-5).

Notice that word "knowing." Because Jesus **knew Who He was**, He could take the lowliest place of service and not have His "image as a great leader" threatened. Contrast this with present-day church pontiff's regal robes and sometimes ostentatious ways.

Washing feet was one of the basest tasks in the culture of Jesus' day. It was a job usually done by a house slave. Just as we offer a visitor hospitality, so in Jesus' time the house servant customarily washed a visitor's feet.

Washing feet was an undesirable responsibility. The roads were dusty, but the filth of the road was more than dust. The transportation of that day was the camel, the donkey, the horse and the mule.

It takes little imagination to understand that the streets and roads were littered with their manure. The traveler's feet would be covered with this dung as well as being caked with dust.

The washing of feet was assigned to the lowliest slave because it meant handling the filth of the streets. This job was thought to be below the dignity of the "good man of the house."

Yet it was this task to which our Lord of Glory stooped. The violent protests of the disciples are quite easy to understand. How could Jesus do this? How could He, their Master and King, wash dung from His followers' feet?

He could do it because He was secure in Who He was. He knew the Father had given all things into His hands. He knew He had come from the Father and that He was the Son of God and promised Messiah.

He knew He was going back to the Father after He defeated sin, death, Hell and the grave. He didn't have to prove anything to Himself or others. His life had already proven who He was to those who had spiritual perception to see.

2) No Task Too Lowly. It was Friday night. Our annual conference was to begin on Monday. Then the toilet overflowed.

It was about time to quit for the night. A full Saturday of work was ahead of us and the overflowing toilet needed immediate attention. Guess who got the job? You guessed it!

I had to do the job, because no one else was available. All the other men had left to prepare the camp grounds. We couldn't get anyone to dig it up that late on Friday night.

I put on my grubby clothes and began digging up the pipes to find and clear the clog. I was up to my knees in muddy sewage when a key donor from another state came.

He had never been to our office before. Not recognizing me he asked where he might find Brother Mahoney, the Director of this World-Wide Missionary Organization. I replied, "You're looking at him." "You're Brother Mahoney!" he gasped in disbelief. To say he was "shocked" to find me doing such a task, would be a great understatement.

Responsibility required it. The Conferences couldn't start if the work crews did not come in on Saturday! They couldn't work if the toilets were overflowing, so I had to do the job — and I really didn't mind.

A man who isn't prepared to clean a toilet (if the situation demands it) isn't prepared for spiritual leadership. Thinking that such an undesirable task is below your dignity misses the whole point of leadership. If you are not secure enough in God to be willing to clean out a sewage system then Satan will easily dislodge you from your place of leadership.

A leader must be willing to kneel before his followers to wash their feet if he wants to be like Jesus. Being secure in the knowledge that He was God's Son, Jesus was free to serve in any way necessary. This is the opposite of the immature carnal leader's love of position.

3) Reach For Responsibility. Someone well said, "If you see a man reaching for authority, watch him — he will cause trouble. If you see a man reaching for responsibility, promote him — he will be a blessing."

We must reach for responsibility, not authority. In church leadership, the love for position destroys many ministers. Paul says, "*He who desires the office of an overseer desires a good work.*"

However, if your desire is for position and authority and not for responsibility, your downfall will be as certain as Satan's was.

The church leader overcomes because he remains aware of the pride that dwells in him (Rom 7:14-24). He walks in a repentant attitude of heart, seeking to excel in service, and he avoids those things which will tend to make him think more highly of himself than he ought to think.

C. PRIDE: THE ESSENCE OF SIN

1. Symptoms Of Pride

The subtle symptoms of pride are quite easy to spot once you know what they are. Here are two or three indicators:

a. "I'm More Important." Thinking certain people or jobs are "beneath your dignity" or thinking you are more important than others because you have a place of leadership.

b. "I Want To Be Served." Accepting special honor as a leader and being served by others rather than devoting yourself to serving them.

c. "I'm The Best." Paul warns us against "*thinking more highly of ourselves than we ought to think*" (Rom 12:3). Pride is beginning to dominate us if we esteem ourselves more highly than we ought.

These and other similar traits warn us that we have been poisoned by that subtle sin, pride.

God hates pride because it is the essence of sin. Satan fell because of pride. "*Your heart was filled with pride because of all your beauty... Therefore I have cast you down...*" (Eze 28:17).

Eve fell because of Satan's appeal to her pride, "*...ye shall be as Elohim [God]...*" (Gen 3:5). Pride brings our certain downfall. "*Pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall*" (Prov 16:18).

2. Pride Is Dangerous

Pride is dangerous because it is subtle. Pride is like a weed among the crops: It will grow and take over if we don't take positive action to prevent it.

You may begin as a humble leader and presume that you have mastered humility. When you are "proud of your humility, you do not have any humility.

Pride is a destroyer. This is why it is God's will for a novice to take on responsibility a little bit at a time so he can grow into enlarged responsibility without the danger of being destroyed by pride. "*An overseer... must not be one who is newly saved [a novice], lest he become conceited and fall into the same condemnation incurred by the devil*" (I Tim 3:2,6 pph).

3. Avoid The Pitfall of Pride

If pride is so hard to detect and so insidious an enemy, how can we guard against it? How can we protect ourselves from this serpentine sin? Here are some steps we must all take to avoid being trapped by this prime pitfall for leaders:

a. Stay Close To God. Maintain close contact with the Lord Jesus through disciplined daily prayer, diligent study of your Bible and determined meditation on His Word to you. This will keep you focused on His glory and thus help you maintain a sober view of your real importance.

b. Fast And Pray. If there is pride in your life, deal with it. David said, "*I humbled my soul with fasting...*" (Ps 35:13).

c. Stay Close To Others. Leadership isolates you from people. The Bible says we are to "continue in fellowship" (Acts 2:42). Always maintain some close relationships with those you will allow to speak into your life — correctively if need be.

The leader who doesn't receive consistent, honest input from trusted friends may lose his perspective and give way to pride. Since as Jeremiah affirms, "*the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked*" (Jer 17:9), we are sure to stray because of pride if we don't have this protection.

d. Don't Strive For Position. Psalm 75:6 tells us "*promotion comes from the Lord.*" God will promote you to the place of leadership He has for you no matter what your circumstances are. He knows where you are and He will exalt you at the proper time (1 Pet 5:1-6).

e. Seek To Excel As A Servant Of Others. A good servant strives to make those he serves successful. If they succeed, you have already succeeded. If you focus on your own success, pride will easily infect you (see Philippians 2:4).

f. Have A Foot-Washing Service. Whenever a man is licensed or ordained to the ministry, one of his first responsibilities ought to be to wash the feet of those he is going to serve. If it is a large meeting point, then a leadership group should represent the brothers and sisters, and the one being put into a leadership role washes their feet.

Whenever strife breaks out in a church, a foot-washing service serves as the best antidote I've found, as it breaks the pride which is behind contention. Have the women wash the women's feet — and the men, the men's feet.

D. CONCLUSION

To be saved from failing because of pride read this prayer out loud to the Lord right now:

Dear Lord Jesus, You promised that You would lead me in a straight path and protect me from all evil. Make me the servant You want me to be. Keep me from the presumptuous sins of immorality, covetousness and pride.

Search out my heart and reveal any of these sins to me that I am not aware of. Keep me open to any correction others would bring me.

Give me grace to accept Your chastisement. Thank You for making me a humble servant like You. AMEN!

Chapter 7

"Flee Fornication!"

Introduction

The opportunity to serve God as a leader has never been as great as it is today. We are on the threshold of "the eleventh-hour-Harvest" when more souls will be harvested into the Kingdom of God than from the Day of Pentecost until now.

God looks for men who are willing to put aside the "childish things" of this world. Jesus offers the yoke of a disciplined life to those who want to join the ranks of His mighty men.

More men fail once they have become leaders, than from the preparation for leadership. Satan has set himself to destroy anyone in Christian leadership and he has found a willing ally in our fleshly nature.

As God trains men and women to stand victoriously in a place of leadership, He also equips them to do battle with Satan and conquer.

Despite this, many yield to moral temptations and are added to the kingdom's spiritual casualty list. My purpose in this chapter is to show how to avoid this needless tragedy and explain a crucial survival principle for men.

A. IMMORALITY: A LEADER'S DOWNFALL

Moral uncleanness has always been a cause for the downfall of Christian leaders, but it has never been the problem it is today. The attack on the family and the marriage relationship has never been as intense.

The world teaches a morality which excuses adultery, fornication and homosexuality. Sins, which in centuries past destroyed nations and civilizations, are now glorified as the new, liberating lifestyles. In some countries, lewd literature is on sale in so many places that even innocent children can buy it.

A flood of moral uncleanness has come upon the earth. Paul's prophecy, that men would lose natural affection in the last days, has been fulfilled.

Much of the world mocks marriage and preaches cohabitation and sexual promiscuity. Ungodly media men depict sexual immorality as normal. History and the Bible show — a husband and a wife living in marital fidelity is the **only** normal way to live.

All of this increases the pressure on a Christian leader. Because of his position, he is involved in situations which expose him to sexual temptation and failure. The deteriorating moral standards make him even more vulnerable.

1. Causes Of Immorality

a. Personal Insecurity. When a man falls into adultery, it often indicates a lack of proper self-esteem. Personal insecurity (lack of faith and confidence in God) is at the root of much sexual misconduct.

Some men feel they have to prove themselves desirable to the opposite sex by flirting with immorality. The flirtation often leads to the long tragic fall into fornication.

If we are insecure in who we are, or in our calling, we will fall through pride and the lust for prominence. We try to make up for the deficiencies we feel by boasting about ourselves and saying things which we think will give us stature in the eyes of others. Another kind of insecurity causes sexual failure:

b. Marital Insecurity. Moral vulnerability roots in personal insecurity like pride does, only it is an insecurity in our marriage relationship.

There is no mystery why a man or woman of God can fail through sexual sin. It happens time after time, and mostly for the same reasons. Few sins are mentioned as often as this sin throughout the Bible.

Solomon speaks to the "young man," warning him to be careful in his relationship with women. Paul speaks about the need to have a warm, loving relationship with your wife as a way to avoid fornication (I Cor 7:1-7).

Still ministers fail to heed this practical advice and plunge headlong into Satan's trap. Tragically this is happening at the time when the fields of the world need more men to stand strong and bring in the great harvest of souls.

God's will for man is to live faithfully with one wife. Any violation of this is sin. The Bible teaches us we will find great joy, fulfillment and satisfaction in a *properly maintained* marriage relationship. God has designed man and woman to find the emotional bond, companionship and fulfillment they long for, in marriage.

Contrariwise, there is no fulfillment or satisfaction in fornication or adultery. Both are full of fear, guilt, emptiness and disappointment. The love bond and covenant commitment involved in a godly marriage bring the fulfillment denied the adulterer and fornicator.

I need to stress that only a *properly maintained marriage relationship* is fulfilling. One filled with fighting and bitterness is not. Satan easily lays his trap for leaders who fail to properly attend to the needs of a secure home-life.

B. GOD'S PURPOSE IN MARRIAGE

God said, "*It isn't good for man to be alone; I will make a companion for him, a helper suited to his needs*" (Gen 2:18 tb).

1. We Are To Be Helpmates

God ordained marriage because a man and a woman aren't complete without one another. They each need a **helper** to make it possible to survive the rough attacks life brings.

"Two are better than one.... If one falls, the other pulls him up; but if a man falls when he is alone, he's in trouble.... And one standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer..." (Eccl 4:9,12 pph).

This describes what God intended marriage to be, one pulling up another and each helping the other. When God made the woman for the man, it was so she would be a *helper*. Unfortunately, instead of Eve helping Adam to fulfill the purpose of God, she **helped** him to fail.

The devil found a helper in Eve. The devil couldn't destroy Adam directly so he worked through the woman "to help." Eve was a helper — but she helped the devil's purpose rather than God's or Adam's.

I knew a preacher some years ago who had a call and mighty anointing of God upon his life. The Lord opened doors of ministry to him that were unbelievable.

Other nations would be scheduled for his ministry. His ministry was destined to change the course of the spiritual lives of thousands of people.

But over and over, the same pattern repeated itself. About a week before he was to depart, his wife would begin to "raise hell" with him about going. Her attitude would stir up the children and they would join with the wife in a relentless attack on the man until he capitulated and canceled the meeting.

This happened so consistently that eventually, most people began to lose confidence in the dear brother. They thought he was unreliable. He was not a man of his word. He didn't do what he promised.

They didn't know the man was being neutralized by a wife who, like Eve, allowed Satan to use her to stop this powerful ministry. I am sure much still remains under Satan's domain that would have otherwise been conquered for Christ, if the brother had gone out on those great crusades.

I wonder how often husbands have neutralized their wives' ministry, and wives have neutralized their minister husbands' ministry, by unwittingly becoming "helpers" of Satan —for their own selfish reasons.

2. We Are To Share Responsibilities

In his first epistle, Peter writes extensively about the marriage relationship of Christians (I Pet 3). It is of interest that when the Bible deals with marriage, it almost always starts out with the wife's role and responsibility, and then deals with the husband's role.

No doubt this is because *"the woman [Eve] being deceived was in the transgression"* (1 Tim2:14).

Hence, there is some basis for the idea that the wife has a priority responsibility to act properly in the marriage. If she does so, this can insure a more positive and harmonious home in which the purposes of God will more likely find fulfillment. If she doesn't — the devil's will can prevail as it did with Eve. The devil, working through Eve, neutralized Adam's calling and ministry, and Adam failed.

No man should take the above and use it as an excuse for his own wrong-doing, or failure to meet his responsibility in marriage. The man has responsibilities equal to, or greater than, the woman's.

"You husbands must be careful of your wives, being thoughtful of their needs and honoring them as the weaker sex. Remember that you and your wife are partners in receiving God's blessings, and if you don't treat her as you should, your prayers win not get ready answers...."

"You should... be full of sympathy toward each other, loving one another with tender hearts and humble minds. Don't repay evil for evil. Don't snap back or say unkind things. Instead, pray for God's help. If we are kind to others... God will bless us for it" (I Pet 3:7-9 tlb/pph).

Husband and wife both share responsibility to maintain a loving, caring atmosphere in the home. She through her submissive, meek and quiet spirit — and he through taking responsibility to see that all the financial, emotional and practical needs of the family members are being attended to.

C. FAIR GAME FOR SATAN

When the harmony of a marriage is interrupted, the **help** and encouragement the man was to derive from the woman is taken away. Feelings of rejection, insecurity and failure develop. At that point, the partners of that marriage become fair game for Satan.

The following imaginary situation shows how it often happens:

1. Satan Sets His Trap

You are a preacher and God begins to bless. Your ministry expands and grows. Eventually you need to spend more time to keep up with the demands of increasing responsibility. This problem usually arises more quickly for those of us who aren't very good at managing our time and don't know how to delegate responsibility.

You have more and more to do and gradually you find yourself at home less and less of the time. The time you spend at home isn't as relaxing as it used to be either. You are often preoccupied with things which happen in your ministry, or you may be thinking a lot about plans for more successful evangelism or Bible teaching.

a. Pride In Ministry. You are feeling a new satisfaction by what's happening in your ministry. This isn't strange since God designed a man to find much of his personal fulfillment through the work He has called him to do. As you see God use you more and more, you get more personal satisfaction from your work than you ever did before.

Now this isn't as true with women. Although a woman certainly does derive much fulfillment from her work, her greater satisfaction comes from being loved and cared for by her husband.

While you are becoming more involved in your exciting ministry, some serious dangers may begin to arise. There are times when spending less time at home is unavoidable — your responsibility as a leader or teacher requires it.

But pride may begin to play a subtle part in this change in your schedule. You may have begun to feel that you are indispensable for the success of your ministry; that the church cannot run without you. If you've failed in your job of training and equipping others for ministry (Eph 4:11), you will begin to take on more work than it is possible for one man to do.

Here's where you cross a very fine line — a hard one to discern — where a righteous sense of gratification that God is using you turns into pride. You become deceived into believing you are the source of your success. You become proud of your busyness, your self-importance, and your supposed greatness.

b. Less Time At Home. All the while your home situation has begun to change. Not only are you spending less time there —the time you do spend doesn't have the quality it once had.

You may have also failed to recognize that your wife isn't as happy as she once was. Your communication with her has become shallow. When you first married, you loved her deeply and showed it, but now she feels her position has become secondary to other parts of your life.

One day when you arrive home, your wife is angry and complaining and making demands on you. If she's the quiet type, she may become withdrawn and begin sulking. She wants more of your time and your attention.

You haven't realized it but the ministry and place of leadership which was once your mutual joy is now her rival and enemy. She feels she must compete with your ministry for your love and commitment.

c. Rejected By Wife. "She is rejecting God's will!" you may think. Although you try to be kind and loving, from this point on your marriage begins to deteriorate. You feel your wife is an adversary, making unfair demands on you and giving you unjust ultimatums. "Either your ministry or me!" she seems to be saying.

A wise, understanding wife would recognize what is happening. She would try to reassure her husband of her love and support. Then she would explain how much she is hurting, and appeal to her husband to try and understand her need.

Unfortunately, the wife is usually hurting too much to use reason. Instead, she lashes out in anger and rejection — making matters worse. Just when you've come to the place you've both dreamed of and your ministry has begun to prosper, it seems she has turned on you.

Obviously your sexual relationship has begun to deteriorate. You no longer feel secure or needed at home. Home isn't the haven it used to be and it isn't as much fun to be there. Although this causes pain, you can avoid it somewhat by throwing yourself all the more into your ministry.

Soon you find that even the satisfaction you get from your work in the ministry doesn't help the feeling you've been rejected by your wife. Your insecurity grows, so you begin to feel unhappy about your situation in general, and Satan sets his final trap.

As your situation at home worsens, a subconscious thing has begun to happen. Your wife's rejection has wounded your pride; but you find it difficult to see you helped create the problem. You can't acknowledge this is largely your responsibility. As a result you blame your wife's unwillingness to understand you.

You may even feel that she has decided she doesn't love you any more. You are hurt. You need reassurance. You may unconsciously feel the need to reaffirm your manhood and prove that your wife's rejection — as you see it — hasn't canceled out your masculinity.

2. The Trap Is Sprung

As a church leader, you do a lot of counseling. During this extended time of ministry, people share a lot of intimate problems with you. Many of these are women.

a. The Counselee. One fateful evening, it happens! You have seen this young woman from your meeting point a number of times. Although she is one of the more spiritual people in the church, she has been suffering for a long time as the result of an unfortunate, premature marriage to an unbelieving, alcoholic husband.

She has sought your counsel because she needs some help to build her faith and continued maturity in spite of her unbearable home situation. Your counsel has brought her much peace and help.

You've developed such a trusting relationship, you may have even shared some of your pain and problems. In your conversations with her, you have found her to be a very understanding person... even more so than your wife.

b. The Unexpected Happens. Perhaps your home situation was particularly distressful the last few days, or you've been feeling your wife's rejection more than usual. And for some reason this counseling session has been emotionally warmer than usual. For whatever reason, the unexpected happens. Either an inadvertent touch or an understanding, warm glance communicates misunderstood affection, and emotions become aroused.

You are already weak because of your home situation. Your guard is down and you are alone and unprotected. Satan springs his trap and you find yourselves in one another's arms. This becomes the first of several adulterous rendezvous. **You've fallen into sexual sin!**

c. It Can Happen To Anyone. This story is imaginary. It has been drawn from similar stories told by church leaders who've sacrificed a life-time of work on the altar of a fleeting gratuitous sexual relationship. Although the details may not be exact, the principles are true. It can happen to anyone who isn't careful.

The victim of this cruel demonic trap may try to justify himself, blaming his wife or the counselee or any number of things.

If he's wise, he will repent and fix the blame right where it belongs: squarely on his own lust. As in this case, moral compromise usually results from insecurity in your own marriage relationship. This insecurity usually results from your neglect of your wife and family.

D. YOUR MOST IMPORTANT RELATIONSHIP

The most important relationship a church leader has besides the Lord is with his wife. *"For this cause, " God says, "shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall become one flesh " (Gen 2:24).* If God has chosen a man to live with a wife, his first responsibility is to that wife. It isn't God's will for anything to interfere with that relationship.

The same God Who has called you into the ministry gave you your wife, and commands you to love her (Eph 5:25). He commands that your affection for your wife be stronger than anything else, except for Him.

Realize this! That for your wife, it isn't any different if your work steals your love away from her, or if another woman does. She loses your love and your commitment either way and her pain is the same.

1. Love Your Wife As Christ Loved The Church

Not only does God tell us to love our wives. He also tells us how. *"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave himself up for her... that he might present to himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing...."*

"So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church...."

"For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife, and the two of them shall be one flesh" (Eph 5:25-31).

God's original directive was that a man should leave his parents and commit himself to his wife. When a man and woman learn to commit themselves to one another, there is fulfillment in married love that you will find nowhere else.

This means that you and I as church leaders must first lay down our lives for our wives. Laying down our lives for our ministry, our flock, or anything else at the expense of our family will break God's order. This will open a door through which Satan will enter and try to destroy us.

a. Maintain Your Commitment. When you married your wife you promised you would love and cherish her faithfully for the rest of your life. If you break this vow and lose sight of your priorities, you will wound your wife's spirit and embitter her towards you. This leads to your rejection and the temptation toward wounded pride.

However, if you maintain your commitment to your wife, you will find you can build a strong marriage and provide yourself great protection against Satan's strategies to tempt you to moral compromise.

God doesn't want us to pander and indulge our wives' fleshly whims and desires. Both husbands and wives are called to help one another grow in grace and Christian maturity. However, we need to be very careful that in not spoiling our wives, we not fail to love and cherish them as we should.

b. Build A Solid Foundation. Your wife isn't the only one who will benefit when you love her the way Christ loved the Church. You will benefit as well.

A wife loves and respects a husband who loves her. Submission is not as difficult for women who are treated properly by their husbands. Men who love their wives and pay attention to them, and share intimate conversation, build marriages on a solid foundation which make them secure against satanic attack.

"Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and every woman have her own husband" (I Cor 7:2). The husband who loves his wife will have far less trouble with sexual temptation because his sexual relationship with his own wife will be so fulfilling.

Paul knew this and exhorted that men and women live in the fulfillment of committed love. An immoral sexual relationship loses much of its attraction for the Christian leader who is fulfilled in the context of his own home.

Contrariwise, a man or woman who denies the other spouse his or her conjugal rights is inviting trouble in the marriage. Sex should never be used to punish, control or selfishly manipulate your spouse.

E. STEPS TO VICTORY

This all makes sense and we know it is in the Bible. But when ministers experience success in the ministry, and their pride is fed with much praise, a feeling of self-importance can begin to undermine their marriage.

1. Your First Priority Must Be Your Wife

It is at this time you need to remember that the girl you married is still your first priority. No matter how successful or important you think your ministry may be, you will ultimately fail if you forget your God-given responsibility for your wife.

Proverbs is unyielding about this kind of a situation: *"The one who commits adultery with a woman is lacking sense; he who would destroy himself does it. Wounds and disgrace he will find, and his reproach will not be blotted out,*

"For jealousy enrages a man, and he will not spare in the day of vengeance. He will not accept any ransom, nor will he be content though you give many gifts" (Prov 6:32-35).

God will forgive and forget the sin of the leader who falls and truly repents. But, the people will not. They will remember the rest of their lives — and many will never forgive the man who let them down by his moral failure. Such leaders will be haunted day and night by thoughts of "what might have been — had I not sinned."

2. Avoid Moral Compromise

Throughout the Old and New Testaments, men of God have been warned both by word and example that we should avoid moral compromise. The Proverbs repeat this message:

"Any man who toys with sexual sin is a fool, lacking in sense. "

a. Eli's sons... brought God's judgment upon themselves because they sinned with the women who served at the gate of the tabernacle;

b. Samson... failed and wasted his life because of his fornication with Delilah;

c. David... the man after God's own heart, suffered throughout his life because of his adultery with Bathsheba; and even

d. Solomon... the very one who wrote Proverbs and warned us of the painful consequences of adultery and fornication, lost God's favor because of his immorality.

Yet, despite all this, many church leaders fall because they give in to the lusts of the flesh. But you don't have to. There are some things you can do which will guarantee your protection from this sin that destroys careless men of God.

We've already talked about the need to love your wife. This builds the foundation of our fortress against this grievous sin, but there are other materials which makeup the walls.

3. Decide To Stay Pure

Make your **final decision** that you will not commit fornication or adultery... that you will stay pure in your service to God. Men who study psychology say that once a man has firmly made up his mind about something, he will never change it!

The Bible talks about this when it speaks of a *"repentance not to be repented of"* or a *"repentance without regret"* (2 Cor7:10).

Once we make a firm decision to turn from sin to such a degree that we won't change our mind, we've made a *"repentance without regret. "*

Many of us believe that adultery and fornication are sins not to be played with, but we often reserve a small corner in our minds to toy with the idea. We don't totally banish the thought of it from our minds nor do we challenge Satan any time he brings the suggestion to us.

Brethren, in so doing, you are sowing the seeds of your own destruction. No matter how small or insignificant you think those thoughts are, they are large enough to give Satan all the foothold he wants.

4. Guard Your Thoughts

Make a decision positively and decisively not to entertain thoughts about moral uncleanness. The Bible says, "*Watch over your heart [mind] with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life*" (Prov 4:23).

Not only must we set our will to be pure, but we must also "set a sentry" at the gates of our mind to keep out impure thoughts. It has been said that you can't keep the birds from flying over your head, but you can prevent them from nesting in your hair.

If the enemy plants an unclean thought in your mind, reject it outright. "*Gird up the loins of your mind*" (I Pet 1:13). That means to bind up the loose immoral thoughts and exercise control over them. Don't let your mind become the devil's garbage can.

Men of God are often assaulted by unclean thoughts, but they must immediately deal with those thoughts if they will stay pure.

As a man who commits himself to God's service, you cannot afford to entertain thoughts of impurity.

They may enter uninvited, but you must throw them out as you would a thief or a murderer. If we entertain thoughts of impurity and moral compromise, we give Satan a foothold which could one day cause our downfall.

"*For out of the heart [mind] of man proceed... adultery... fornications... these defile the man*" (Matt 15:19,20).

If you are unwilling to make this commitment and won't decide once and for all to "*flee from fornication*," then don't go into the work of the Lord. Do anything else you wish, but get out of the ministry.

5. Flee Temptation

The man of God who desires to protect himself must "*abstain from every form of evil*" (I Ths 5:22). We cannot afford to risk involvement in activities or places where evil is likely to be found.

When God created you, He released a force within you that insures the continuance of the human race. You cannot cope with it outside the legitimate bounds God has laid down for us in His Word. It is foolish to put yourself in a position where you are likely to arouse this dynamic force through your behavior or environment.

Some Christians feel that because of their faith in Jesus they are immune to sexual temptation. This is plain foolishness! We are told to **withstand** the devil and **resist** him, but we are told to "*flee from fornication*" (Jas 4:7; I Cor 6:18).

We have power over all manner of evil spirits, and the demons are subject to those who move in the dynamic power of the Holy Spirit. But God gives clear instruction that when it comes to sexual temptation, we are to turn and **flee** from it.

Joseph is an example of how God wants us to deal with overt sexual temptation. When Potiphar's wife tried to seduce Joseph to commit adultery with her, the Bible tells us he turned and fled from her presence leaving his garment in her hand (Gen 39:12). That is how we are to do it!

Fleeing fornication isn't only running from obvious attempts to seduce us. It also means guarding ourselves in situations prone to sexual temptation. For those of us in Christian ministry, this means the times we counsel with the opposite sex.

a. Never Alone. One evangelist I know will never be alone with the opposite sex. Wherever he goes, he is either accompanied by his wife or a male member of his team.

Preachers who are wise and committed to purity never allow themselves to be found in situations where Satan has easy access to them.

When counseling with the opposite sex, always have someone nearby and never be in a private situation. Keep the door of the room open. Make it impossible for sin to happen, and it won't.

Paul says "*make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts*" (Rom 13:14). This means not to do anything or be anywhere that arouses your fleshly nature and gives it a chance to take control of your behavior.

As I said before, God has put within us a strong drive to reproduce ourselves. He has also created a unique relationship in which that drive can and should be properly controlled. It is foolish to put ourselves in positions where it will be fanned into flame and cannot be put out. If you play with this fire, you are sure to get burned... and badly.

6. Be Accountable

We must realize that every man and woman suffers the same temptations we do. Failure in this area wouldn't be so common or widespread otherwise.

As a minister you will often be discouraged by your job. If you aren't careful, you'll believe that no one suffers the same struggles you do.

This is a lie of the devil. Be smart and protect yourself. Let God lead you to a brother (or sister if you are a woman) in whom you can confide, and come to an understanding to help one another with this battle.

The Bible says that two are better than one. Jesus confirmed this by sending His apostles out two-by-two. Having someone who can help you when you are caught at a weak moment is tremendous protection, especially in an area like this where all have times of weakness.

F. SUMMARY

Failing through sexual sin will destroy your ministry and leave a lasting scar in your soul. Although many fall because of this sin, you don't have to. Let's review the steps you can take to guard yourself against this fiery dart of the wicked one:

1. Love Your Wife

The root of most sexual failure is insecurity in your marriage. Maintain your home-life and learn to love your wife as Christ loved the Church. Don't forget that **you promised you would love her** for the rest of your life. She won't!

2. Guard Your Thoughts

Make up your mind right now that you will never tamper with moral uncleanness. Don't allow thoughts of immorality or moral compromise to enter your mind. If they do, don't let them stay there.

3. Don't Give Satan An Advantage

Stay away from situations in which you are likely to be tempted. Guard yourself from Satan's wiles.

Don't let him take advantage of you in counseling sessions, or at times you deal extensively with the opposite sex. Don't be afraid of these times, but approach them wisely.

4. Seek Help In Difficulties

Let a close friend — someone you trust and respect — be your confidant so you can confide in him when you have difficulty with this area of your life. If you are facing temptation, go to him for prayer and support. It's foolish to face it alone if you don't have to.

Jesus doesn't tempt us. He will always help us in our temptations when we call out to Him. He wants us to be pure and to overcome all wickedness.

G. CONCLUSION

Pray this prayer right now as you commit yourself to keep clean hands and a pure heart in your service for your King:

Dear Lord Jesus — I know You've called me into the ministry and You want me to stay pure. I praise and thank You that You never compromised Your morals and that, though You were tempted in every way — even in this way — You didn't sin.

When You ask me to abstain from fleshly lusts and sexual misconduct, it isn't because You want to deny me joy and fulfillment in life. It is because You want me to know truly abundant living.

Therefore, I receive Your strength and Your righteousness to walk in purity and refuse moral compromise. I will not tamper with sexual uncleanness. I will flee from any form of moral sin. By Your strength and power, I will reject any thought or suggestion of immorality. I choose to walk in Your power and be free from the scars which come from fornication. AMEN!

Chapter 8

Reject Covetousness / Idolatry

Introduction

Money is more likely to cause the downfall of a spiritual leader than anything else. Money is necessary to live. It is a great blessing in the work of the Lord. And yet it is responsible for more evil than any other single thing. How can anything be so good and evil at the same time?

In this chapter, I want to share with you biblical principles of how to handle money. God is concerned about how you use the money He puts into your hands, no matter how much or how little. To a very large extent, how you handle money will determine success or failure as a leader.

A. MONEY AND OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

We must learn to be careful about our use of money because through it Satan destroys many leaders.

Money has great spiritual significance. Jesus taught a great deal about money and how it affects a man's relationship to God.

Possibly the most familiar passage in this regard is, *"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and*

where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also....

"No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other or he will hold to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and Mammon " (Matt 6:19-21,24).

Three things stand out when we read this scripture:

1. Earthly Treasure Is Uncertain

Economic inflation can erode its value and thieves can steal it, be the thief an individual or an agency. Heavenly treasure is the only investment with a guaranteed rate of return for all eternity.

2. Where Are Your Affections?

How we spend our money shows us where our affection is. If we spend all our money only on ourselves, we love ourselves most of all. If we invest 10 percent (a tithe) or more of our money to spread the gospel, we show we love God and the gospel.

3. You Cannot Serve God And Money

You cannot serve God and money at the same time. *"You cannot serve God **and** Mammon [money]."* (But you can serve God **with** Mammon.)

Either Jesus is your Lord, or money is! It's that simple. You cannot have it both ways. The direction of your life and the form of your ministry will be determined either by Jesus or by your relationship with money — one or the other!

"But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction.

"For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith, and pierced themselves with many a pang. But flee from these things, you man of God" (I Tim 6:9-11 niv).

B. MONEY: A SNARE OF SATAN

Money can have a hook in it! If you don't relate to it rightly, you'll be snared by your love for it. Satan, who is the prince of the power of the air, uses money as one of his most effective snares.

1. Mammon: A Pagan God

In Matthew 6:24, Jesus taught about two masters (lords) to choose between: God and Mammon. Mammon was the name of the pagan god of wealth and prosperity. Using the name the way He did, Jesus was also implying there is **a demonic principality who controls much of this world's wealth.**

2. Some Will Sell Their Souls

Once when I was in Nicaragua, I was told a very interesting story by one of the believers. He said that a number of people along the east coast "sold their soul to the devil."

When I asked what he meant by this he explained:

Some who wanted to be rich would pray to the devil and "sell him their soul" in exchange for wealth and prosperity. The way the brother explained it, a demonic spirit would actually appear to them as they prayed to the devil.

This would result in their getting rich. But usually in mid-life, around forty-five years of age, the devil would come to claim what they had sold him, **their soul.**

Those who witnessed the death of such said they would scream, pleading for more years, begging to be spared the flames of Hell. They would bloat up with worms (maggots) and die a horrible death like Herod, who "... *was filled with maggots and died*" (Acts 12:24 tib).

Such are the rewards of those who serve the god, Mammon.

C. BEWARE THE LOVE OF MONEY

Money is necessary. With it we buy things we need to live. Many people, because they don't have enough of it, are hungry, ill-clad and suffer from the ravages of disease. Thus, poverty is a curse, not a blessing. On the other hand, others who have more than they need are often greedy and sometimes cause the suffering of poor people.

But money itself doesn't cause the evil which often results from its use. It is the **love of money** that is the root of all sorts of evil. The danger isn't in having money, but in **loving** it.

1. What We Love, We Will Obey

Jesus said we will obey whatever we love (John 14:15). If we love Him, we will keep His commandments; if we love ourselves, we will obey our fleshly desires and use money for ourselves. It is the well-being and good of whatever we love that determines our decisions.

Romans 6:16 says, "*You are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death or of obedience resulting in righteousness.*" This takes us a step further: Not only do we obey whom we love, we are slaves of whatever, or whomever, we consistently obey.

2. Money Is Controlled By Mammon

Let's look at what all this means. Money in the realm of this present evil age is under the control of a wicked principality, whom Jesus calls **Mammon**. If we love money, we will consistently obey what our love of money dictates to us. If we consistently obey what our love of money says, we will become enslaved to it and come under the control of spiritual wickedness.

It isn't just coincidental that people who love money fall into all sorts of evil. When one loves money he begins to obey the dictates of spiritual wickedness with his flesh. This is why the love of money is the **root** of all sorts of evil.

Some years ago a pastor left his wife to take a woman who was already married to an elder in his church. A friend of mine, who has a strong prophetic mantle on his ministry, was weeping in intercession for this fallen church leader. He prayed, "Lord, why did Andrew (not the real name) fall into this adultery?"

The Lord replied, "Andrew loved money. The love of money is like a tap-root that burrows into the sewer of sin and draws up every other kind of evil into the life. This is what happened to Andrew."

The Apostle Paul warned, "*But people who long to be rich soon begin to do all kinds of wrong things to get money, things that hurt them and make them evil-minded and finally send them to hell itself.*"

"For the love of money is the first step toward all kinds of sin. Some people have even turned away from God because of their love for it, and as a result have pierced themselves with many sorrows" (I Tim 6:9,10 tib).

3. You Cannot Love God And Money

No wonder true spiritual power and great wealth often seem so incompatible. Jesus said, *"How hard it is for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God"* (Mark 10:23).

"It had happened that a certain young ruler of the Jewish people had come to Jesus and asked, 'Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?' And Jesus said to him, 'Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone.

"You know the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not murder, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honor your father and mother.' And he said, 'All these things I have kept from my youth.'

"And when Jesus heard this, he said to him, 'One thing you still lack; sell all that you possess, and distribute it to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come follow me!'" (Luke 18:18-22).

When the young man heard this, he became sorrowful because he was very wealthy. Possibly he had struggled all his life to become rich. Being rich was the thing which most obsessed him.

And now Jesus was telling him that to enter God's Kingdom and inherit eternal life, he had to give it all up: "Dispossess yourself of your wealth and allow me to command you!" The young man was saddened because he loved his money more than he loved Jesus. He presumed he could love Jesus and love his money. He found he couldn't have it both ways.

4. Covetousness Is Idolatry

*"Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and **covetousness, which is idolatry**. For it is because of these things that the wrath of God will come..."* (Col 3:5,6).

We usually think of idolatry as bowing down to idols and images. It is much more than that. Moses said of the idolatrous Israelites, *"They sacrificed to demons who were not God, to gods whom they have not known, new gods who came lately"* (Deut 32:17).

For a person to fall down in front of a statue or idol and worship it is to worship the demon that dwells behind the graven image. This is why idolatry is such a serious sin and why God's wrath comes against it so severely.

When Paul says covetousness is idolatry, he is saying the same thing. Covetousness, or greed, is the love of money. When we love money we worship it and he demon behind it.

The name Mammon is often used synonymously for money or riches. Consistent love of money brings a person into direct obedience to the dictates of that powerful, demonic, spiritual authority.

Being **wrongly related to money** is what constitutes the danger for a Christian leader. Having money does not. Otherwise, to have money at all would be a sin.

5. Money Can Be A Blessing

God blesses His people with money, often giving them abundant wealth to accomplish His purpose in the earth.

When the Children of Israel came out of Egypt, they took most of the silver and gold with them. After ten plagues, the Egyptians were so anxious to see them go, they

gave them *"jewels of silver, and jewels of gold and raiment"* (Exo 12:35). *"He brought them forth also with silver and gold..."* (Ps 105:37).

a. Moses. When Moses built the Tabernacle in the wilderness, it was worth millions of dollars. It was built from the free-will gifts of the men and women of Israel who gave up some of their wealth for its construction.

This is a perfect example of how God desires to finance His projects. He blesses His people with money so they can use it for His purposes.

God has often raised up men and made them very wealthy. **Job** was very wealthy. He owned *"seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, and five hundred teams of oxen and five hundred female donkeys, and employed many servants. He was, in fact, the richest cattleman in that entire area"* (Job 1:3 tlb).

b. Abraham was known throughout the ancient world for his wealth. He even had his own private army.

c. David And Solomon. No one had more wealth than **David** and his son, **Solomon**. Solomon's personal wealth ran into the millions of dollars. God was able to give them wealth because they used it for the Kingdom. Their wealth served them, they did not serve their wealth. They used it for God's purposes, not just their own selfish ends. However, Solomon's heart did go astray later in his life because of his many wives.

6. Important Questions To Ask

What is your relationship to your money? Do you have your money or does it have you? Do you or the Lord determine how you will use your money? Does the amount of money you have determine your happiness... your style of living? How do you use your money?

Are you generous toward God. Only when you have a surplus? If you don't have much money, do you always think about it and dream of having more? Does your desire for money control you? Although these questions make us uncomfortable, they make us aware of how we relate to our money.

This is especially true of those who lead the flock of God. Did you know that covetousness, or the love of money, causes the downfall of many ministers of the gospel? The love of money is one of the three sins that most often cause ministers' downfall (1: Females; 2: Fame; and 3: **Fortune**).

7. Possession Can Be Dangerous

Possessing money can arouse areas of sin and weakness we have failed to deal with in our lives.

a. Sin And Weaknesses Aroused. Paul says of the righteous law of God, *"I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, 'You shall not covet.' But sin taking opportunity through the commandment, produced in me coveting of every kind..."* (Rom 7:7).

"But sin used this law against evil desires by reminding me that such desires are wrong and aroused all kinds of forbidden desires within me!" (Rom 7:8 tlb).

It is the same way with money as it is with the Law. Paul found that a righteous and good commandment of the Law **aroused the sin** that dwelt in him. Money is not bad in itself. But, when we have money, the potential for it to arouse covetousness, selfishness and greed is very strong.

As the Lord begins to bless a church leader, he will minister in the power and grace of God. This blessing usually results in an increased flow of finance into the church.

As this church leader's church continues to receive blessing from the Lord, his sinful nature may become aroused and he may begin to covet and misuse the Lord's money. The money given him for good becomes a temptation for evil and corrupts the ministry and the church leader.

b. Selfishness Revealed. "But," you may ask, "how can I know whether I will have a problem with a lot of money until I have it?" I can tell what a man will do with a thousand dollars by what he does with one dollar.

"He who is faithful in very little is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in very little is unrighteous also in much " (Luke 16:10). How you spend a little money shows how you will spend a lot of money.

In 1950, when I was in training to be a missionary, I moved into a community dormitory at the "missionary boot camp." (That is what they called the place.) There were seventeen of us in that dormitory.

The trainee serving as cook for the week was to buy the food. Each person was supposed to contribute three dollars weekly to a "food fund." This would provide fifty dollars a week for groceries to feed the seventeen students.

After the first couple of weeks, only three of us out of the seventeen trainees continued to contribute to the grocery fund faithfully. All the other trainees had some excuse why they couldn't put in their share. This really impressed me the week it was my responsibility to feed the seventeen. All I had was nine dollars.

During that year, the Lord miraculously provided a large sum of money to us that was divided up among all of the students who were in my dormitory.

Following this, most of the students went into town and came back with cameras, guns and radios. They all reasoned that these things would be necessary when they became missionaries.

But do you know that when we got back to the dormitory routine and our studies, no more were putting their money into the "food fund" than before.

Only three of the seventeen went on to become missionaries. I'll bet you can guess which three. Although they had convinced themselves the reasons they bought their cameras and guns were good, they had proven to everyone else they were basically selfish at heart, and a selfish person will never be a good missionary.

8. Three Weaknesses To Watch

Three weaknesses usually let us know if we have a problem with the love of money:

- selfishness,
- bad stewardship, and
- not giving to God.

a. Selfishness. There are ministers who use the Lord's money to buy expensive motorcycles and houses. "We'll use them for the Lord's service," they rationalize.

It can be exactly the same immature self-centered thinking as the fellows in the boot camp dormitory. Buying a one hundred dollar camera or a ten thousand dollar sanctuary can be the same, different only in the amount of money it takes.

The minister who says, "There is nothing too good for the 'man of God'" as he spends God's money unnecessarily on himself, only justifies his selfishness. In the missionary training school he would have bought a camera rather than put money into the "food fund."

Someone who is faithful in a little, will also be faithful with a lot, and someone who is unfaithful in a little will also be unfaithful with a lot.

Do you want to see how you will handle an abundance of money if the Lord should give it to you? Just look at how you use what you have right now. If you are selfish with that, you would be selfish with a million dollars. Unless you repent, money will always be a problem to you, no matter how much or how little it may be.

b. Bad Stewardship. A second way we can discern that we have a problem with the love of money is our failure to realize that what we possess is not our own. A characteristic of the early Church was, "*not one of them claimed that anything belonging to him was his own*" (Acts 4:32).

What we possess belongs to God and we are stewards of it. "*It is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy*" (I Cor 4:2). One day we are going to give an account to God for the way we have used all He's entrusted to us: Not only money, but our talents, time and relationships will all come under the scrutiny of His Word.

When this grips us as it should, our rationalizations will sound as unconvincing to us as they do to the Lord. It doesn't take very much effort for us to convince ourselves God wants us to spend money the way our carnal, selfish natures want to use it.

But when we realize that we are going to look into His piercing, all-knowing eyes and give account to Him, our excuses begin to seem a little weak. It is very easy for us to think of the things we **want** as being what we **need** and lose the ability to see the distinction. Let's pray that the Lord will help us keep a correct perspective in this regard.

c. Not Giving To God. Finally, it is evident we love money if we fail to learn diligence and discipline in the matter of giving.

We cannot begin to learn how to give at too early an age.

Faithfulness in tithes and offerings is not an option in the Kingdom of God. If you aren't tithing, start right away. Ten percent of everything you receive belongs to God. Be diligent in this because failure to do so is robbing God (Mal 3:8-10). He doesn't bless "thieves" in the ministry.

We often think, "I have so little money and so many needs; I can't afford to tithe." The truth is we can't afford **not** to tithe. The real question according to Malachi 3:9, is "Do I want a cursed 100 percent of my income or a blessed 90 percent?"

Once we have begun to tithe, we then need to start giving additional offerings.

Jesus said, "*For if you give, you will get! Your gift will return to you in full and overflowing measure, pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, and running over. Whatever measure you use to give — large or small — will be used to measure back to you*" (Luke 6:38 tlb).

Jesus was dealing with a very important principle in this statement about giving.

If you give to the work of the Lord by teaspoonfuls, God will bless you by teaspoonfuls. If you give to the work of the Lord by cupfuls, God will bless you by cupfuls. If you give to the work of the Lord by bucketfuls, God will bless you by

bucketfuls. *"Whatever measure you use to give — large or small — will be used to measure back to you. "*

When I was in Papua New Guinea some years ago, I was challenging the preachers to teach their people to give tithes and offerings. "Oh! "they said, "the people are too poor to give."

While Papua New Guinea is not one of the richest countries in the world, it is better off than most. I saw no starvation or hungry people as I have seen in many nations. The people were all nicely dressed — and looked in good health.

I said to the leaders, "The problem isn't financial poverty. It is spiritual poverty. The people are just like you leaders. You have no faith to give, so the people have no faith to give."

D. GIVING: A SOURCE OF GOD'S BLESSING

Giving is a matter of faith, not a matter of what we have. As an example, here is a spiritual principle you will disagree with unless you have faith.

After you have given one dollar in tithe out of your ten dollar income, the nine dollars left — with God's blessing on it — will go farther toward meeting your needs than the ten dollars without God's blessing. (Go back and read it once more.)

No mathematics teacher in the world (unless he is a tithing Christian) would agree with this principle. The natural understanding of man says, "Ten dollars will provide you more than nine dollars." That is true unless the Lord's miracle of multiplication is on the nine dollars which are left. (It will be, if you tithe regularly.)

When the little boy in the Bible gave Jesus a faith offering of his five loaves and two fishes, it was all he had (John 6:9). What happened to the little boy? Did he go hungry? No!

When Jesus got through blessing his offering, it fed five thousand, plus the little boy. Then Jesus took up another offering of the bread and fish left over — and it filled twelve baskets full.

The little boy gave five barley loaves and two fish and got back twelve baskets of bread and fish. That is how God multiplies back blessing and wealth to the giver.

I explained these principles to the church leaders in Papua New Guinea. I asked them if I could preach on giving during one of their services, **after** the offering was taken. They agreed.

They took the offering and about two hundred dollars was given by two hundred people who were present.

1. Faith And Giving

I got up and explained to the people that God asks us to give because He wants to bless us. He isn't poor. He doesn't need our money —but, **we need His blessings.** *"Without faith it is impossible to please him, for he that cometh to God must believe..."* (Heb 11:6).

We will never have His blessings without faith. God asks us to give to teach us faith. It takes faith to give. So when we give, we are exercising faith. This pleases God, so He blesses us.

If you don't need God's blessings, if you don't want God's blessings, then don't give. Keep your money, and the curse that goes with no faith will be yours.

But you can give your money to God and watch Him "... *open the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there will not be room enough to receive it*" (Mal3:10).

a. An Offering Taken. After the message I asked the people, "if I had preached on salvation this morning, what would you expect me to do next?"

They said, "You would give the sinners a chance to get saved."

I asked again, "If I had preached on healing this morning, what would you expect me to do next?"

They replied, "You would pray for the sick and give them a chance to get healed."

I continued, "I've preached on giving this morning — what should I do?"

"Take an offering!" they shouted. So that is what I did.

When it came in and was counted, it totaled **one thousand two hundred dollars**. This was six times as much as the first offering, and it all was given "by those **poor** Papua New Guinea people."

I said to the leaders, "You see! The reason the people are not giving is because they are waiting for you to teach them the Word of God. *'Faith comes by hearing... the word of God'*(Rom 10:17). When their faith is released, they will give."

I repeated this demonstration in a second church in a rural area with the same results. The leaders were amazed how big the offerings were when the people gave in faith.

b. Double Tithe. God challenged me to give a double tithe (20 percent of my personal income) when I was getting about ten dollars a week as a preacher.

Through that experience, I learned the principles I have just shared with you. God kept His word to me. He blessed me, my family and the ministry with so many miracles of His provision — I could not recount them all.

2. The Measure Of Our Giving

The greatest giver in the Bible was a little widow who only had two mites (about one penny) —and she gave it. Jesus said, "... *this poor widow has given more than all the rest of them combined*" (Luke 21:3). God measures our giving by what we have left, not what we put in the offering.

I have seen many church leaders who want their members to give to support them and the church. But they do not tithe or give offerings.

They complain about how short of money they are all the time. No wonder! They will never have the blessings promised to the givers until they practice what they preach.

Covetousness can easily overtake us if we don't learn this important principle in Kingdom economics: "*Give and it shall be given unto you!*"

If we hold on to our lives, we will surely lose them (Luke 17:33), and if we hold onto our money, we will end up losing that too. By giving away what we have we will experience God's increase as never before.

Many of us have very little because we are not generous with what we have. Jesus says, "*give and it shall be given unto you.* " There is no better way to overcome covetousness than by learning to be generous with what you have.

3. Kingdom Principles

Our attitude toward money is all-important. If we are faithful to learn and observe some basic principles of Kingdom economics, we will begin to see our money problems disappear.

a. All Money Is God's. *"The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof!"* (Ps 24:1; 50:12).

"The silver is mine, and the gold is mine says the Lord" (Hag 2:8).

Even the money that the sinners have ultimately belongs to God and will one day be turned over to the people of God (Hag 2:8; Prov 13:22; 28:8). God made everything of value and has never abdicated that ownership.

In this fallen, sin-dominated world, most wealth is controlled by sinners. This is because the world systems are under the control of wicked spiritual authorities. But one day God will speak a word and all of the world's wealth will be poured into God's Kingdom.

b. God Gives The Money. The Lord has promised to take care of His children with all the food, clothing, shelter and other necessities of life they need. We work at our jobs as service to the Lord. God provides our income by giving us the jobs we have.

God gives us money so that we will have enough to accomplish His purpose on the earth. We are to use the money He gives us with the wisdom of good stewards. But we usually get it turned around: He wants us to use money and love people, but we often love money and use people.

Can you imagine what would happen if we all began to submit to the Lord's guidance in the way we use the money God puts into our hands?

If all of us Christians worked hard and earned money so we could practice generosity with one another, there would be no more shortage among God's people, anywhere!

c. Either God Or Our Love Of Money Will Determine How We Live And Minister. Some preachers will preach only because they know they will get paid.

This is what Jesus called a "hireling" in John 10. A "hireling" does what he does for pay. He has no commitment to the sheep under his care. He only cares about the money.

Nothing is more unethical. Nothing is more corrupting than such tactics — and they are very widespread.

Such practices quickly identify the "hirelings" and the "hirers" — and both shall take the mark of the beast. *"...No man might **buy** [hire] or **sell** [hireling] except he that had the mark... of the beast"* (Rev 13:17).

*"And I saw thrones, and they that sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them... who had not worshipped the beast... **neither had received his mark...** and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years"* (Rev 20:4).

1) No Hirelings. There will be no **hirers** nor **hirelings** in (hat holy ruling company. These religious "traders" will be part of the dead who live again when the thousand years are over. They will be raised at that time to give account before Him, *"who judges the living and the dead."*

Paul asked, "Who is qualified to preach the gospel?" He answered his question in these words, "*Only those who, like ourselves, are men of integrity, sent by God, speaking with Christ's power.*"

"We are not like those hucksters — and there are many of them — whose idea in getting out the gospel is to make a good living at it" (2Cor 3:17 tlb).

So many want to make a "trade" of the Word of God.

Zechariah prophesied of a glorious day when "*every container in Jerusalem and Judah shall be sacred to the Lord Almighty; all who come to worship may use any of them free of charge to boil their sacrifices in; there will be no more grasping traders in the Temple of the Lord Almighty*" (Zech 14:21).

Corrupt priests in Zechariah's time made "deals" with local merchants to sell "officially sanctified" animals and boiling pots in which to prepare the sacrifices to be offered in the Temple. The corrupt priests got a "percentage" of every sale.

It was against these corrupt traders that Zechariah (and five centuries later, Jesus) railed.

At no time did Jesus display such anger as He did against those who were "*buying and selling in the Temple.*" He took whips and drove them out. "*My house shall be called a house of prayer... but ye have made it a den of thieves*" (Mark 11:17).

At the beginning and at the end of His ministry, Jesus purified the Temple by driving out the "traders." I believe that is prophetic of the Church age. At the beginning of the Church age, the Lord dealt very harshly with this (Ananias and Sapphira —Acts 5). I expect to see His judgments falling on the "traders" in these last days at the conclusion of the Church age.

So, leaders — BEWARE! "*The times of this ignorance, God winked at, but now commandeth all men, everywhere, to repent!*" (Acts 17:30).

National church leaders and evangelists, don't sell your gift to anybody, no matter what he is willing to pay you. A true man of God will always say to the "hirers," "*Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money*" (Acts 8:20).

2) Seek First The Kingdom God will take care of you. If you will "*seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, all these things [that you need] will be added unto you*" (Matt 6:33).

The laborer is worthy of his hire (wages) — but must never be a hireling. A true shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. A hireling sees the wolf (hirer) coming and forsaketh the sheep (see John 10:12,13).

This isn't limited to church leaders. Many Christians, who aren't leaders, choose where they live and what they do with their lives, by the amount of money offered them. They do not "*seek first the kingdom of God*" nor the will of God in these matters.

According to Jesus, this is the way unbelievers live. It is sin. If you are living this way, you will miss the will of God.

4. God Loves To Bless Us

Jesus said if we seek His Kingdom first, He will **add all the things**. He may test for a while, but He will bless those that put Him and His Kingdom first in their lives.

God wills that we prosper in every dimension of our lives (3Jn 2). However, we often prevent this prosperity from happening in our finances because we violate basic principles in handling our money.

One of the reasons some are poor and needy is their failure to give money to God's work, fearing they will be worse off if they give to help spread the gospel. True financial freedom only comes when we handle our money God's way.

a. Practice Kingdom Principles. On the other hand, church leaders in some of the world's poorest countries are seeing God bless them and their people with money. Why? Because they practice Kingdom finance principles as outlined above, by giving sacrificially and happily.

The way to make this happen is to first start tithing to the local church or evangelist fund. If you do not allow people the opportunity to give, then start.

Change your praying from selfish prayers just for yourself and start praying for God to bless others. Is it not this which James refers to, *"You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures"* (Jas 4:3)?

God will not answer our prayers for more money if we want it only to spend it on ourselves. He will only release greater resource on us when He knows we have repented of our selfishness and have become giving persons.

E. CONCLUSION

Covetousness is idolatry because when we are ruled by greed, we serve our own personal interests first, thus obeying the dictates of our flesh rather than the leadings of the Lord God.

Covetousness is a subtle way of putting something before God in our lives. We put our own interests before His and those of others, and unwittingly become servants of Mammon. We must face it squarely: We are covetous to the degree we let the love of money rule us.

Love of money is the root of all sorts of evil. By letting our money tell us what to do, we refuse to listen first to God. If God isn't the one who teaches us how to handle money, Satan is!

This world's economics are based on Covetousness. Most, if not all, wars are based on the greed of nations. Most crime results from one man satisfying his greed at another's expense.

The major groups of this world's population are divided according to their approach to economics. But the Christian can be free from the world's control of his finances as he is faithful to walk according to God's economic principles. Let's go over them briefly again:

1. Decide To Serve God And Not Mammon!

Jesus made it clear: *"You cannot serve God and Mammon."* You must choose one or the other.

Decide once and for all that you will not allow finances to control any decisions you make. Make your finances as much a matter of prayer as you do any other part of your life and ministry.

2. Deal Ruthlessly With Any Love Of Money That Is In You!

"The love of money is the root of all sorts of evil" (I Tim 6:10). To the degree you allow a love for money to remain in you, evil will be present in your life. When you love money, you open yourself to the activity of the demonic power which lies behind it. Paul admonishes young Timothy, "flee from these things, O man of God" (1Tim6:11).

3. Determine To Live According To God's Principles Of Finance!

Financial freedom can only be known by those who obey the Son, Who sets us free indeed! Begin to walk in the power of the Kingdom by unswervingly following God's principles:

Give! "Give and it shall be given unto you!" Determine once and for all to break the curse of poverty by tithing, whether or not you feel you can afford it.

Ten percent is God's and if you fail to give it diligently, the "devourer" will come in and take it from you — with a collection fee on top of it.

Free-will offerings are another important part of the giving God wants you to practice. Be generous with others and God will be generous with you.

4. Don't Be A Hireling!

Obey the Lord and take your directions from Him and not from those "Hirers" who will corrupt you and your ministry. Don't fail in faith. He is faithful. He will provide all you need.

By no means allow offers of money to determine how you will live or minister. Don't be a hireling! Be a servant of God, not a servant of money!

We can only serve one god! Will it be Jesus or Mammon? You must make the choice because you cannot serve God and Mammon!

Pray this prayer

Lord Jesus, I thank You that You are faithful and have promised to give me everything I need for life and godliness. Thank You for showing me that by serving money, I'm really serving Satan.

I affirm to You right now that You alone are my God. I choose to trust You for all my needs. I know You will provide them all if I will serve You with my money.

Lord, I trust You for the strength and grace I'm going to need to keep this commitment to the will of God. Thank You for these steps toward true financial freedom. In Jesus' Name. Amen!

Chapter 9

Receive The Triple Anointing

Introduction

God wants you to be a leader who gets results and makes an impact on your world! But how can you be that kind of leader?

The previous chapters have focused on many practical areas where leaders must align their lives with the standards of the Bible. This is where we start. We must handle money well, walk in humility, avoid moral compromise. But even with all that, we can still fail to be effective in our ministry.

Neither education nor special skills and abilities will give your ministry the power it must have to transform people's lives. What will? The **full anointing of the Holy Spirit** alone gives the heavenly **unction** you need to fulfill your **function**.

God has made us "*kings and priests unto our God*" (Rev 1:6). He wants us to have the **power of kings** and the **purity of priests**. We must experience His full anointing to have this.

In this chapter, I will show you how "the anointing" will bring deliverance and strength and salvation to God's people.

Christ in Greek (and **Messiah** in Hebrew) means "The Anointed One." Jesus introduced His ministry by proclaiming, "*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he anointed me to preach... to heal... to proclaim deliverance... recover sight for the blind... to set at liberty...*" (Luke 4:18).

Jesus made it plain, it was because the Spirit of the Lord anointed Him that He was able to have an effective ministry. The same rule applies to you and me.

Isaiah spoke of the freeing power of the anointing in these words, "*The yoke shall be destroyed because of the anointing*" (Isa 10:27).

There is a beautiful chorus based on this verse with these words:

By the anointing, Jesus breaks the yoke,

By the Holy Ghost and power, just as the prophets spoke.

This is the day of the latter rain, God is moving in power again,

And the anointing will break the yoke.

Oh! It is true! We must have the Holy Spirit come upon us and impart a full anointing to lead God's people and fulfill the will of God in our generation.

What is this anointing? What does the Bible have to say about it? How has it come upon leaders in past generations?

A. THREE ANOINTINGS

We learn about three distinct anointings from the Old Testament:

- the **LEPER'S** anointing;
- the **PRIEST'S** anointing; and
- the **KING'S** anointing.

1. The Leper's Anointing

Leprosy was the most dreaded disease in ancient Palestine. This horrible condition slowly consumed the flesh of its helpless victim. Eventually the fingers, toes and other extremities would die, rot and fall off.

The unfortunate leper was banned from his community. To prevent others from coming too close, the leper was required to cry out wherever he went, "UNCLEAN, UNCLEAN!" The victim of this dreaded disease could only expect a slow, painful and premature death.

Leprosy is a picture (or type) of sin, a graphic object lesson, by which the Holy Spirit dramatically portrays the consuming, horrible effect of sin on a person's life. Leprosy reveals sin and Satan's true nature. "*The thief [Satan] cometh... to steal, and to kill, and to destroy...*" (Jobn 10:10).

Leprosy, like Satan and sin, will steal our life, eventually kill us and destroy our ministry.

a. Law Of Cleansing. One wonders why Moses laid down such elaborate rules for the cleansing of the leper, and his restoration. After these rules were made, there is not one case of an Israelite being healed of leprosy in all the Old Testament. Why would God have Moses lay down the rules then?

It can only be for the reason that God placed a "hidden" or "spiritual" lesson in these rules He wanted us to learn. Let us examine the details in Leviticus 14.

The rules which were prescribed by Moses to declare the leper clean and cured, are an Old Testament picture of the New Testament cleansing from sin through Jesus Christ. All the elements of our salvation experience are there:

1) Shedding Of Blood. A bird bearing away the guilt of sin, the shedding and application of blood (which portrays Jesus shedding His blood to bear away and pay the penalty for our sin).

2) Repentance And Confession (which portrays what we must do to be justified — or be declared righteous, when we are born again).

3) Running Water (picturing water baptism).

4) Anointing With Oil. The leper's anointing with oil (which typifies the work of the Holy Spirit in our salvation experience).

b. Law Of Cleansing Applied To Our Lives. Therefore, as portrayed in the rules for cleansing the leper, when we believe on Jesus, we should:

1) Repent Of Sins. Repent (turn away from our sin and rebellion and turn toward God and obey His Word).

2) Confess Sins. Confess our sins to God and receive His forgiveness. If we do this sincerely from our hearts, we are saved (healed) from sin.

3) Be Baptized. Then we are to obey Jesus by being baptized in water.

4) Receive The Anointing Of The Holy Spirit. We experience the anointing of the Holy Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are God's children (Rom 8:16).

c. Anointed With Oil. To anoint means to put oil on or to consecrate by applying oil. After the leper had been saved and had obeyed the rules for cleansing, he presented himself to the Levite priest to be anointed with oil.

Oil is an Old Testament symbol of the Holy Spirit! Anointing a person with oil pictures the Holy Spirit coming upon him for a specific, designated purpose.

The leper, once defiled by the dreaded leprosy, when delivered and cleansed from its effects was then anointed with oil to show he has been fully restored to resume his place as a member of the family of Israel.

Every sinner experiences the leper's anointing when he is born again of the Spirit. *"Jesus replied, 'What I am telling you so earnestly is this: Unless one is **born of** water and **the Spirit**, he cannot enter the kingdom of God...'"* (John 3:5,6 tlb).

All who believe in Jesus and submit the way they live to His Lordship, experience a measure of the anointing oil of the Holy Spirit. Romans 8:9 says, *"If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to him."* 1 Corinthians 12:3 adds, *"... and no one can say, 'Jesus is Lord,' except by the Holy Spirit."*

These scriptures confirm that no one can be truly born again without experiencing some measure of the work of the Holy Spirit.

There is a fuller anointing when we are baptized in the Holy Spirit, which we will discuss in more detail later under the subtitle "The King's Anointing". This anointing is distinct from the primary work of salvation. Both, however, involve the work and ministry of the Holy Spirit.

1) Three Areas Of Life Affected. *"The priest shall take the **blood** from the guilt offering and smear some of it upon the tip of the right **ear** of the man being cleansed, and upon the thumb of his right **hand**, and upon the big toe of his right **foot**.*

*"The olive oil... shall then be placed by the priest upon the tip of the man's right **ear** and the thumb of his right **hand** and the big toe of his right **foot** —just as he did with the blood.... The remainder of the oil... shall be used to anoint 'the man's head'" (Lev 14:14-18 tib).*

It is important to note that the blood of the sacrifice and the anointing oil were placed on the **ear, hand, and foot**. This shows us that our salvation and anointing experience (our healing from the leprosy of sin) affects three important areas of our life:

- a) **Hearing** — Our hearing the Lord's voice (our ears);
- b) **Service** — Our service for our Savior (our hands);
- c) **Walk** — Our walk with Him (our feet).

If we do not hear His voice (see Chapter 2), our service will not be fruitful. If we do not follow Jesus in service, our walk with the Lord will not be fulfilling.

We need the blood to cleanse our hearing, our service and our walk. We need the Holy Spirit's anointing to hear, to serve and to walk as we should. Both the blood of Jesus and the anointing of the Holy Spirit are necessary parts of our "*great salvation*" (Heb 2:3).

2. The Priest's Anointing

In Exodus, Chapters 29 and 30, and in Leviticus, Chapter 8, we learn about the consecration of Aaron and his sons to the priesthood.

a. Consecration To Priesthood. As in the case of the leper's anointing, the types and symbols of the plan of salvation are found in the rules that apply to being set apart (sanctified) to priestly ministry.

1) Sacrifice Of Spotless Lamb. Aaron and his sons entered the door of Moses' Tabernacle and stood at the brazen altar. Here they shed the blood of a spotless, blemish-free lamb as a sin offering. By this they experienced forgiveness from the penalty of sin —which is death (Rom 6:23). This corresponds to being born again, or justification.

2) Washing With Water. Next, they moved on to the brazen laver where they were washed all over. Here they experienced release from the **defilement**, habit or **power** of sin. This corresponds to what should happen in the believer's baptism in water.

3) Priestly Garments And Anointing Oil. They then came to the door of the "tabernacle of the congregation" where they received their priestly garments. This ceremony concluded with their being **anointed** with oil. Exodus 30:30 says, *"...and you shall anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them, that they may minister as priests to me."*

b. Anointing To Holiness. Concerning the use of the **holy** anointing oil, verse 29 explains, *"You shall also consecrate the tabernacle and its utensils of worship, that they may be most holy; whatever touches them shall be holy."*

It is clear from these verses that whatever the holy anointing oil touched was holy. When Moses poured oil on the head of Aaron and his sons, they were holy to the Lord.

This was an anointing to holiness — that is — being set apart to God for his service by right living and right behavior. Thus, the priestly anointing teaches us commitment to righteous and holy living after we've been born again.

From that time on, all priests were anointed unto holiness in the same way. There were many things a priest could not do because of the holiness of his office. Because of his anointing, many things would defile a priest which might not defile others.

1) Set Apart To The Lord. This ceremony set Aaron and his sons wholly apart as priests to the Lord. They were sanctified to that office. Where the leper's anointing typified our justification, the priest's anointing pictures our being set apart to the Lord's service and to holy living.

Revelation 1:6 says, He *"has made us kings and **priests** to his God and Father."* 1 Peter 2:9 says, *"...you are... a royal priesthood..."* The believer in Jesus Christ has been called to walk before God as a holy priest.

2) Purity And Power. I heard the godly Bishop Synan say some years ago, "When we start talking to God about POWER, He starts talking to us about PURITY!" How true that is.

We must be saved not only from sin's penalty and guilt but from sin's defilement and force and habit in our lives. *"Thou shall call his name Jesus [meaning 'deliverer'], for he shall deliver his people **from** their sins"* (Matt 1:21).

Some preachers say, "We are saved **in** sin." The Bible says we are saved **from** sin. We are saved —NOT TO SIN!

We are not saved to make a practice of sinning. *"He that makes a practice of sinning, is of the devil..."* (1 Jn 3:8 wms).

Oh, how we need this priestly anointing to holiness! "God, we plead for You to pour it out on us in a limitless measure." If we are not to be destroyed by His power at work in us, we must have His purity expressed through us.

3. The King's Anointing

The third anointing in the Old Testament is the **king's** anointing. The anointing of Israel's first king, Saul, is described in these words, *"Then Samuel took the flask of oil, poured it on his [Saul's] head, kissed him and said, 'Has not the Lord anointed you a ruler over his inheritance?'"* (1 Sam 10:1).

We read about the second occurrence when David was anointed king to succeed Saul. *"So Jesse, David's father, sent and brought him [David] in. Now he was ruddy, with beautiful eyes and a handsome appearance. And the Lord said, 'Arise, **anoint** him: for this is he.'*

*"Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the **Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward"*** (1 Sam 16:12,13).

a. Impartation Of Power And Authority. The king's anointing was to impart the power and authority of the king's office. With this anointing, God's Spirit came upon the king so he could rule God's people, Israel.

The New Testament fulfillment of the authority and power which resulted from the king's anointing is found in Acts 1:8, *"But you shall receive power when the Holy*

Spirit has come upon you." The Baptism in the Holy Spirit is clearly the New Testament counterpart to the KINGLY ANOINTING.

"And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other languages, as the Spirit gave them the words to say... and with great power, gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus... and many signs and wonders were wrought among the people..." (Acts 2:4 weym; 4:33; 5:12).

4. The Three Anointings Speak Of...

These three anointings we've seen in the Old Testament speak of

a. Justification: our being forgiven.

b. Sanctification: purity of heart.

c. Authority And Power.

God wants us to enjoy the fruit of **all three anointings** in our lives and ministries. Let us examine some men in the Bible who enjoyed this "triple anointing" or "full anointing."

B. EXAMPLES OF THE TRIPLE ANOINTING

1. Melchizedek

"Your strength shall be renewed day by day... You are a priest forever like Melchizedek" (Ps 110:3,4 tlb).

Under the Mosaic scheme, one had to be a member of the tribe of **Levi** to be a priest. When Jesus came. He was born of the tribe of **Judah**, the tribe the kings were to come from (see Genesis 49:8-10).

What right then did Jesus (or for that matter — you and I) have to a priestly ministry? He was of the wrong tribe. The Apostle Paul solved this dilemma in his epistle to the Hebrews. He explains that Jesus' priestly ministry (like our own) was based on the precedent set by Melchizedek's priestly order (see Hebrews 7).

Melchizedek is one of the most mysterious characters in biblical literature. His name in Hebrew means "King of righteousness." He was also the king of a city known as Salem (later named Jerusalem which in Hebrew means city of peace). So by translation, he was **King of Peace and King of Righteousness.**

Melchizedek was also the **Priest of the Most High God** who blessed Abraham after his defeat of the kings. Abraham even gave a tithe of the spoils of the war to him (Gen 14:18-20). Melchizedek functioned as prophet-priest and king. As such, he was a fitting example (type or prophetic picture) of the coming King, Jesus.

What made Melchizedek a prophet-priest and king? It was the anointing that was upon him. He "functioned in the unction. " God made Melchizedek who he was by anointing him.

And that is the way Jesus, the High Priest of our confession, operates. That is also the authority by which every spirit-filled man of God operates. We exercise prophetic, priestly and kingly rights only by virtue of the anointing.

2. Moses

Moses was another man who enjoyed this "triple anointing." God used Moses to deliver His people from Egypt. Then through Moses, God gave Israel the Law. Moses ruled over them for forty years. He could do so only because he bore a very special anointing from the Lord. He bore the anointing of both a prophet-priest and a king.

As a priest, he interceded for Israel and instructed them in the way of righteousness. He also ruled over them as a king. A tremendous anointing for prayer and power characterized his life. He bore a full anointing. He was a man who exercised priestly rights of access to the Lord as well as great kingly authority over the people.

Interestingly, Moses is not given the title of "priest" or "king," but he functioned in both capacities.

3. The Judges

The "judges" were also men and women who bore this "triple anointing."

I need to clear up a misconception about the **judges**. They were "saviors" — in that they *saved* the nation from their adversaries. They were "deliverers" — in that they *delivered* Israel from oppressive enemies. They were "judges" only in the sense that they brought their *judgment* and wise counsel to the nation.

They were not "judges" who sit on judicial thrones in court rooms handing down legal decrees.

After Moses died, Joshua and the judges (deliverers) who succeeded him, bore the "triple anointing" to both deliver Israel from their oppressors and to bring them back to spiritual renewal of their relationship to God.

They would often function as priests, bringing the people back to God and God back 'to the people. They functioned as kings by raising up and leading armies who would throw off the yoke of oppressors. They led by righteous rule and decrees. But they were given the title of neither "priest" nor "king" — they just "functioned in the unction" as both.

As the Spirit of God came upon them during times of dire need in Israel, they would implement the actions that God wanted them to take.

This informal method of running things kept the leadership from becoming institutionalized and burdensome to the nation. Institutionalism has usually proven a curse to the common person in the nation or the church.

4. Samuel

Samuel appears to be the last of this long list of men who bore the "triple anointing." For 1,000 years (Melchizedek to Samuel) God had put this "triple anointing" on men to provide leadership for His chosen people.

Like Moses, Joshua and the judges before him, Samuel was raised up by God for a special time of need in Israel. Samuel, in keeping with precedent, didn't carry the title of priest or king. However, the function of a prophet-priest and king was evident in his life.

During the time when Israel needed to hear from the Lord, Samuel was anointed to prophesy. Because the Levite priesthood had become corrupt, Samuel offered sacrifice and interceded for the people. Samuel also provided the leadership Israel so desperately needed.

Like Melchizedek, Moses, and many of the other judges, Samuel ministered under the full anointing of prophet-priest and king.

These anointed men's lives were holy to the Lord, and their ministries bore the indisputable power and authority of kings. They also functioned in priestly ministry as they were anointed of God.

But this millennium (1,000 years) was coming to an end. The winds of change were blowing strong in Israel.

---TIMELINE---

-----OLD TESTAMENT-----

2,000 B.C.

1,000 B.C.

4 B.C.

+ Triple Anointing +

Melchizedek

To

Samuel

+ Divided Anointing +

Saul

To

Christ

Birth
of

Discontent with God's way was undermining public opinion. The people would soon be demanding change that would have dramatic impact on the way the anointing came upon men.

C. A DIVIDED ANOINTING

In effect — the anointing would be divided between men titled "kings" and others titled "priests." The kings would be destroyed by the kingly anointing because of a lack of holiness. The Levite priests would take the priestly anointing and prostitute it, by the absence of authority and power in their lives.

1. Israel Demands A King

One of the saddest chapters in the history of Israel began when Israel demanded a leader who would carry the **title**, king.

God warned Israel through Samuel, *"If you insist on having a king, he will conscript your sons and make them run before his chariots... others will be slave laborers... they will be forced to plow in the royal fields, and harvest his crops without pay...."*

"He will demand a tenth of your flocks, and you shall be his slaves. You will shed bitter tears because of this king you are demanding..." (I Sam 8:10-18 tlb).

The people were in no mood to listen. Samuel had become old and appointed his sons, Joel and Abijam, to judge Israel. *"His sons, however, did not walk in his ways, but turned aside after dishonest gain and took bribes and perverted justice"* (I Sam 8:3).

As a result, the elders of Israel became concerned about the conduct of Samuel's sons. They were unable to believe that God would provide another "triple anointing" leader so they came to Samuel and said, *"Behold, you have grown old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now appoint a king for us to judge us like all the nations"* (1 Sam 8:5).

This request grieved Samuel. But God was most grieved about it. He said to Samuel:

"Listen to the voice of the people in regard to all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them. In that they have forsaken me and served other gods — so they are doing to you also. Listen to their voice and appoint them a king" (1 Sam 8:7,8,22).

The people were pleased that they had prevailed with God. They didn't perceive they had chosen tragedy.

Although Samuel warned them, they refused to listen and God gave them over to the desire of their hearts. God decided to let them have the fill of their own ways. He commanded Samuel, *"Listen to their voice and appoint them a king."*

I've often said, "Sometimes, the greatest judgment God can send on us, is to give us our own way." Sobering! But true.

a. Anointed For Power Only. *"Then Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured it upon Saul's head, and kissed him, and said, Is it not because **the Lord hath anointed thee to be the king** of his people, Israel"* (I Sam 10:1).

Why was Saul later rejected as king? It was because he grew impatient waiting for Samuel, and intruded into the **priest's office** and offered sacrifice (I Sam 13:8-14).

When Saul tried to function in that for which he had received no anointing, he was immediately judged and rejected. This illustrates the point. When Israel

demanded a king, the anointing was divided. The king only had a partial anointing. No longer did Israel's leader have both the prophet-priest and the kingly anointing. He only had the kingly anointing for power — not the priestly anointing for ministry to God with obedience and holiness.

It wasn't God's will for Israel to have a king "like the other nations." **God's pattern for leadership had emerged through Melchizedek, Moses, Joshua, the judges and Samuel.**

He had been faithful to raise up leaders who bore His full anointing and judged Israel as both priest and king. But Israel chose, rather, to have a king "like the other nations." They rejected God's theocratic rule; they turned their backs on God as their king. And God gave them the desire of their hearts.

A true theocratic ruler bears God's full anointing. He rules as both a prophet-priest and king. But with Israel's choice of a king "*like the other nations*," a man began to rule over God's people with a partial anointing, having only the power and authority. It was not restrained by holiness and good character. This dividing of the anointing had never been God's highest will for His people.

b. Lack Of Holiness Brings Failure. God knew that no man would ever be able to reign under a kingly anointing unless it was balanced by the priestly anointing for holiness to the Lord.

Most of the kings in Israel and Judah failed in their leadership because of a lack of holiness in their lives.

The Lord rejected **Saul** from being king for disobedience and intrusion into a ministry for which he had no anointing. Saul ultimately took his own life. **David's** reign was impaired by his immorality with Bathsheba. **Solomon's** reign came to a disastrous end because of unholiness and idolatry.

Israel eventually seceded from Judah and after about two hundred years, went into captivity chiefly because of the sins of her unholy kings. Her kings bore the power of God's authority. They didn't walk in His holiness. This brought divine judgment on the nation resulting in the Israelites' dispersion to the ends of the earth.

Thus the most tragic era in Israel's painful history ended in ignominy and defeat.

2. Priests Without Power

After the people demanded a king, they began to experience a different kind of oppression. An emphasis on legalistic holiness devoid of God's power and authority had replaced the unselfish, merciful, loving leadership of men like Samuel. The Pharisees of Jesus' day were the ultimate extension of this error.

These partially anointed "priests without power" did not stand before God and plead for the people as had Moses. When God threatened to annihilate Israel for her sin and disobedience, Moses' intercession saved the nation (Exo 32:30-35).

Instead, the Pharisee denomination, with all its sectarian pride and legalism, began to assume commanding influence over the religious life of the nation.

a. Legalistic Demands. The Pharisees demanded a strict adherence to the **letter** of the Law. They lost sight of the **purpose** of the Law and grew totally insensitive to human need.

This inflexible legalistic demand for adherence to non-biblical religious rules made them unmerciful, vengeful and arrogant. They lost sight of the fact that all men were sinners in need of God's mercy.

They heaped condemnation and death on anyone they could catch in the act of breaking any of the commandments.

It pushed them into hypocrisy unrivaled in religious history. Jesus directed His fiercest rebukes at these "teachers of the law." They had invented laws they couldn't obey, and condemned others for failing to obey them.

"The scribes and the Pharisees have seated themselves in the chair of Moses; therefore all that they tell you, do and observe, but do not do according to their deeds; for they say things, and do not do them...."

"But they do all their deeds to be noticed by men.... And they love the place of honor at banquets, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and respectful greetings in the marketplaces, and being called by men, "Rabbi" (Matt 23:2-7).

Someone well said, "The gap between what we say — and what we do — is the measure of our apostasy." God help us! But it's true.

b. Spiritual Pride. The Pharisees' "showy holiness" was compounded by their spiritual pride. Emphasizing holiness and biblical knowledge, without the power of God's Spirit in your life to make it work, is a grievous error.

Paul warns us against those religious leaders and denominations who have become ensnared by this failure: *"For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant... unholy, unloving... holding to a form of godliness, without the force [power]. Avoid and withdraw from such men as these"* (2Tim 3:2-5 pph).

The failure of the kings who bore God's power without the priestly anointing for living holy lives brought God's **preliminary** judgments on Israel.

The Pharisaical priests carried a priestly anointing, but were devoid of God's power. This produced a religion based on outward appearance of holiness without an inward change of heart. This oppressive system brought God's **final** judgments on Israel. Both failed to accomplish God's purpose in the earth.

D. TRIPLE ANOINTING RESTORED

God's people had undergone great suffering at the hands of Israel's unrighteous kings. They had experienced God's judgment as a result of their leaders' errors.

1. God's Promise To Restore

Thus, God's promise brought great hope to them: *"I will restore your judges as at the first, and your counselors as at the beginning; after that you will be called the city of righteousness, a faithful city"* (Isa 1:26).

To a people, who for centuries had known only leadership with a partial anointing, this was a promise of glorious restoration. God promised to give them leaders again who would rule with the same anointing as their first judges — men like Moses, Joshua and Samuel.

This recurrent theme was often in Isaiah's message: *"Behold, a king will reign righteously, and princes will rule justly. And they will be like a refuge from the wind, and a shelter from the storm, like streams of water in a dry country, like the shade of a huge rock in a parched land"* (Isa32:1,2).

---TIMELINE---

-----NEW TESTAMENT-----

A.D. 30

1,000 A.D.

2,030 A.D.

+ Triple Anointing +

+ No Anointing +

+ Restored Anointing +

Begin Church Age

To

Dark Ages

To

2nd Coming of Christ

The identity of this righteous king unmistakably emerges as we read further scriptures: *"For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on his shoulders; and his name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.. ."* (Isa 9:6).

This Prince of Peace would also enjoy the prophet-priestly and kingly anointing: *"The Lord will stretch forth **thy strong scepter** from Zion, saying **'Rule** in the midst of thine enemies....' The Lord has sworn and will not change, **'Thou art a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek'**"* (Ps 110:2-4).

He Who was to come would bear the full anointing of God, being both King and Prophet-Priest. He would bear a "strong scepter" and rule as a Righteous King. He would be a "Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek." His anointing would be so great he would be known as "The Anointed One" (Messiah in Hebrew;- Christ in Greek).

2. God's Promise Fulfilled In Jesus Christ

God's promise to restore the full anointing has been fulfilled in Jesus Christ. He was *"anointed with the oil of gladness **more than anyone else**"* (Heb 1:9tlb).

Jesus rules as *"our Great High Priest"* (Heb 3:1) and as *'King of Kings and Lord of Lords'* (Rev 17:14).

He alone bears *"all power and authority in heaven and earth"* (Matt 28:18). He alone *"has been made unto us righteousness, sanctification and redemption"* (1 Cor 1:30).

"For harmony is as precious as the fragrant anointing oil that was poured over Aaron's head, and ran down onto his beard, and onto the border of his robe " (Ps 133:2).

A beautiful illustration and truth is expressed in the above verse. The anointing which came on the high priest ran from the head down to his body.

a. We Are To Bear His Anointing. Now we know we are members of Christ's Body (I Cor 12:27). We know Jesus is the Head and High Priest (Eph 1:22; Heb 3:1). Hence, the "triple anointing" that was poured out on Him flows down to us — the members of His Body. We can partake of the same anointing that was upon Him.

His was the ultimate illustration of the anointing God wants us to have. As church leaders we are to bear His anointing, an anointing to live righteous, holy lives and an anointing to heal the sick, cast out devils, and preach this Good News of the Kingdom to the ends of the earth. In short, an anointing of power.

1 Peter 2:9 says we are *"...a royal priesthood"* [king-priests]. *"We have been made unto our God kings and priests"* (Rev 1:6; 5:10).

3. Steps To Receiving The Triple Anointing

a. Be Born Again. If you haven't been born again, follow the steps outlined in the early part of this chapter.

Then read *"An Unregenerate Condition"* in Chapter 2. Follow those instructions and you will receive the "leper's anointing," the first of the three anointings.

b. Be Baptized In Water. If you haven't been baptized in water, take that step. When you are baptized, recognize that God wants to do a supernatural work in your heart. Expect any lingering sinful habits or besetting sins to be broken as you *"are buried with him by baptism..."* (Rom 6:4).

"Your old evil desires were nailed to the cross with him: that part of you that loves to sin was crushed and fatally wounded, so that your sin-loving body is no longer under sin's control, no longer needs to be enslaved to sin" (Rom 6:6,7 tlb).

In a scriptural water baptism you can receive your "priestly anointing" to walk a new life free from sin's domination. Expect it to happen when you are immersed in the waters of baptism.

c. Be Baptized In The Holy Spirit. Your "kingly anointing" for authority and power comes from Jesus. John tells us "... *the anointing which you received **from** him abides in you...* " (I Jn 2:27). As already stated, it flows down from the head to the body.

John the Baptist said of Jesus: "*I baptize you in water but... **he** shall baptize you **in** the Holy Spirit and... *fire*" (Matt 3:11). John implied that Jesus would baptize the same way he did, only **in** the Holy Spirit instead of **in** water.*

1) Desire Spirit Baptism How did John the Baptist baptize? The candidates came to him desiring water baptism. You must come to Jesus, desiring Spirit baptism.

2) Let Jesus Do The Baptizing. They allowed John to baptize them — they didn't try to baptize themselves. You must let Jesus baptize you in the Holy Spirit. At Pentecost, "... *the Spirit filled all the house where they were **sitting***" (Acts 2:2). The fact they were sitting, made it easy for Jesus to baptize them — they were not in some kind of frenetic religious hyperemotional state trying to baptize themselves.

3) Be Immersed In The Spirit. John baptized them in water. They were immersed **in** the waters of the Jordan River. Jesus will baptize you in the Holy Spirit. Jesus is the Baptizer, the Holy Spirit is the spiritual water Jesus immerses you in.

As at Pentecost, lift your voice in prayer and praises to Jesus and receive the Holy Spirit in Jesus' Name. As you sense the Holy Spirit filling you — allow Him to give you that heavenly language for prayer and praise to your heavenly Father.

As the Spirit gives you words or syllables to say, speak them out in faith to God. You will not understand the words but your heavenly Father will.

"And they began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them the words to say" (Acts 2:4). You do the same right now!

In this baptism, the beginnings of your "kingly anointing" will commence. Then as with all the other anointings of the Spirit, they will grow and increase as you go on, walking with the Lord. HALLELUJAH!

E. CONCLUSION

Through this section we've learned that God wants to train us to wait on Him and to hear His voice. We've been taught how to view trouble as His instrument of refining. We've learned to avoid the traps of pride, sexual sin and the love of money.

We've come to understand that those He calls must be refined and trained by the Holy Spirit in the school of tests and trials. The greater your responsibility, the more intense His dealings with you will be.

1. We Need The Full Anointing

However, if we've learned all these things, but fail to lead God's people with the full anointing we see in Jesus Christ, it is all for nought. Without God's Spirit anointing our ministry we cannot effectively evangelize, teach, preach, work deliverance or healing, or do the "greater works" promised us as church leaders. All we do will be the result of the energy of the flesh with no lasting fruit.

It is most important that church leaders walk in holiness and depend on the Spirit's power. Lasting spiritual power can only be found in a holy life and all who walk in holiness may have God's power in their life.

We must experience both. To stress holiness and separated living while devoid of God's power will make us sterile and legalistic. On the other hand, to ask God for power and yet neglect holiness puts us in the position where the anointing we carry will destroy us (see Matthew 7:21- 23).

2. We Must Maintain The Full Anointing

John tells us, *"The anointing which you received from him **abides** in you.... As his anointing teaches you about all things, and is true... it has taught you to **abide in him**."*

*"And now, little children, **abide in him**, so that when he appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from him in shame at his coming " (1 Jn 2:27,28 niv).*

The word "**abide**" seems to be the key *"Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it **abides** in the vine, so neither can you, unless you **abide** in me."*

*"I am the vine, you are the branches; he who **abides** in me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not **abide** in me, he is thrown away as a branch, and dries up; and they are burned."*

*"If you **abide** in me, and my words **abide** in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you" (John 15:4-7).*

a. Abide In Jesus. How do we best lead with a full anointing? Abide in Jesus! Abide means "to remain; continue; stay; to have one's abode; dwell; reside."

Paul said it this way: *"As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him... firmly rooted and... built up in him and established in your faith... overflowing with gratitude " (Col 2:6,7 niv).*

Independence and self-sufficiency are mature virtues. But they can be harmful in our spiritual relationship with Jesus. He says, "Abide... remain in Me! Depend on Me."

For the branch to **abide** in the vine means that it stays connected, it thus keeps the life of the vine flowing into it. Its fruitfulness depends on this vital connection to the vine. In that same way, we must remain in a close, vital relationship with Jesus. If we do, His life, His anointing will ever flow to us and through us.

Let us be like Mary — who chose to sit at His feet and hear His words (Luke 10:38-42).

Then we will minister out of the full anointing of Jesus' kingly and priestly office. Worship and praise will become our very breath. We will be equipped with His power and gifts to free others into the same liberty.

How deceptive it is — how tragic — for a man upon whom God has laid His hand, to take the anointing and use it for his own purposes. Don't do it! Always be a "Jesus Pleaser."

SECTION A3

THE USE AND ABUSE OF AUTHORITY

By Ralph Mahoney

INDEX TO THIS SECTION

A3.1 - Abuse Of Authority

A3.2 - Limits Of Authority

A3.3 - Leaders Worthy Of Following

Chapter 1

Abuse Of Authority

Introduction

A well-known church leader was quoted as expressing this dangerous viewpoint: "When a 'delegated authority' or 'spiritual authority' provides counsel to those under him, he speaks with God's authority. Whenever God's delegated authority touches our lives. He requires us to acknowledge and submit to it, **JUST AS WE WOULD TO HIM IN PERSON.**"

Another church leader expressed an unbalanced position when he said, "You'll be taught by the Spirit what is involved in... Apostleship — or you'll be left in Babylon. There's no halfway point. The only alternative you have to spiritual submission and to divine order is Babylon."

Let me make it clear. I consider myself to be one who wants to honor all legitimate authority. However, I carry grave concerns about the impact some teachers' concepts have on their "disciples."

In this study, we are going to look at the abuse of authority in the Church, a subject which has brought endless confusion to many of God's people.

As biblical truths are carried to extremes by unbalanced application, they can destroy lives. The Jonestown, Guyana, mass suicide of over 900 followers of Jim Jones illustrates what can happen. He was a church leader from America who demanded total submission to his edicts.

In Romans 13:1, we are instructed: "*Let every soul be subject to the HIGHER authorities. For there is no authority but of God: the authorities that be are ordained of God.*"

Using this verse of Scripture, doctrine on submission has been developed by both Protestant and Catholic groups. These doctrines often go far beyond the scriptural concept of submission taught in the New Testament. It is these unscriptural concepts that we must boldly challenge.

"...*The truth as [expressed] in Jesus*" is always liberating (Eph 4:21). It will set you free to be all the Lord wants you to be. It will not bring you into bondage to some religious hierarchy, that prevents God's will being expressed in your life.

When the Scriptures speak of HIGHER authorities, it is suggesting that there are legitimate levels or stratification of authority to which we are to submit ourselves. It also implies there are times when higher (divine) and lower (human) authority come in conflict, and we have to choose to obey God rather than religious leaders (Acts 5:29).

Of the SEVEN levels of authority that are mentioned in the Scripture, THREE DO NOT pertain to man. These three levels of authority are reserved for God alone.

These are **Sovereign Authority, Veracious Authority** and the **Authority of Conscience**. We will explain the meaning of these later.

Unfortunately, history is replete with examples of religious and political leaders who appropriate to themselves pompous titles, authority and position the Scripture reserves for God alone.

It is to prevent church leaders from usurping unscriptural authority, and church members from wrongfully submitting to human authority, that I dedicate this teaching.

A. THREE LEVELS OF AUTHORITY RESERVED FOR GOD ALONE

1. Sovereign - Imperial Authority

The highest authority is SOVEREIGN or IMPERIAL AUTHORITY. This level is never questioned or challenged. It is absolute, infallible, and authority of the highest magnitude. This authority belongs exclusively to God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Some denominations arrogate to ecclesiastical offices this high honor reserved in the Scripture FOR GOD ALONE. THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO BIBLICAL BASIS FOR CHURCH LEADERS (or any human being) TO EXERCISE SOVEREIGN AUTHORITY.

The Bible warns in no uncertain terms that they who do so are falling into the same sin that led to Satan's fall from Heaven. Lucifer (Satan) tried to arrogate to himself authority that belongs to GOD ALONE.

"How are you fallen from heaven, O Lucifer... For you said to yourself, 'I will ascend to... rule... I will take the highest throne... I will... be like the Most High (Isa 14:12-14 tib).

Satan's fall from Heaven resulted from his trying to usurp to himself sovereign authority reserved for God alone. Let religious leaders be warned. You can fall into the same snare as the devil.

a. Jesus Christ — Only Sovereign Head Of The Church. In writing to the church at Ephesus, the Apostle Paul tells us Jesus alone has the position of sovereign authority in the Church.

"...I pray for you constantly, asking God ...to give you -wisdom to see clearly and really understand WHO CHRIST IS... I pray that you will begin to understand how incredibly great his power is to help those who believe... It is that same mighty power that raised Christ from the dead and seated him in the place of honor at God's right hand in heaven, far, far above ANY OTHER king or ruler or dictator or leader... And God has put ALL things under his feet and made HIM [and ONLY Him] THE SUPREME HEAD OF THE CHURCH... " (Eph 1:16-22 tib).

The Lord Jesus Christ is the only One Who holds the position of a sovereign over the Christian. He is the One Who is enthroned above all principalities and authority.

He has been exalted, *"Far above all... dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come... all things have been put under his feet... HE IS TO BE THE HEAD OVER ALL THINGS TO THE CHURCH, which is his body, the fullness of him that fills all in all"* (Eph 1:21-23, pph).

This position of sovereign authority belongs to the Godhead and, as far as the governance of the Church is concerned, is reserved for our Lord Jesus alone.

Hebrews Chapter One also teaches us that Jesus Christ is in the unique place of being the only sovereign Head of the Church.

"God... hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir [lawful owner] of all things... unto the Son [Jesus] he [the Father] saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever. "...God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness ABOVE thy fellows" (Heb 1:1-9).

This places Jesus over every person in the Church. This simply means that no one, regardless of his position or title, can presume to rise to a position equal to the authority of our Lord. Jesus holds this preeminent position.

He was exalted above the angels, above every other throne for ever and ever. He is given the place of sovereignty in this age as well as that which is to come.

b. Beware Of Those Who Would "Take Christ's Place". Anyone, or any church, who attempts to ascend to this level by making an ecclesiastical office (on earth or in Heaven) equal to or greater than Jesus is bordering on being party to an Antichrist spirit.

The term "antichrist," in the New Testament, does not only mean "against Christ." It also means "in the place of Christ." (Greek = an-tee'; meaning instead of, in the room of. Denotes substitution.)

For example, any religious group like the Catholic Church that recognizes someone "in the place of Christ" is usurping Christ's place.

In Catholic theology, the Pope is "the Vicar of Christ on Earth". "Vicar" comes from "Vicarious" —meaning "to substitute - in the place of."

This is dangerous theology — especially since the Pope's Ex-Cathedra (from the papal throne) pronouncements are considered infallible (without possibility of error or mistake) by Catholic church leaders.

This is what Jesus warned us would happen. He told us, *"Many shall come IN MY NAME [professing Christians] saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many"* (Matt 24:5).

In Revelation 19, the Holy Spirit underscores very clearly that Jesus Christ holds a unique place in the purpose of God. In verse 16, He is described as having written on His robe the words, "KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS."

Above every king, *He is King of kings*. Above every lord, *He is Lord of lords*. To Him alone is given the place of absolute sovereign authority. There is no authority in the Church to whom a Christian should give unquestioned obedience other than our Lord Jesus Christ.

It should be noted that many churches claim sovereign authority for their potentates and leaders. To do so is not only unscriptural but anti-scriptural, as we will show in further detail in later chapters.

2. Veracious Authority

The word "veracious" is taken from the word "veracity" which means "truth," or that which is always true beyond a shadow of a doubt.

For example, when you were in school you were taught in mathematics class the simple truth that "2 + 2 equals 4". Your teacher was speaking with veracious authority at that point.

This simple mathematical formula is a fact that does not have to be arbitrated, argued over or justified. It is true. It is an irrefutable statement of mathematical fact.

As in the above example, anything that is truth has authority by virtue of the fact that it is true. Paul the apostle acknowledged this. *"For we can do nothing against the truth..."* (2Cor 13:8). Truth has authority.

a. Truth Has Authority. To reject truth is to incur judgment. *"That they all might be condemned who believed not the truth..."* (2 Ths2:12).

1) God The Father Speaks Truth. God always tells the truth; thus His words have veracious authority.

"God is not a man, that he should lie... hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" (Num 23:19).

"My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips... I have sworn... that I will not lie..." (Ps 89:34,35).

2) God The Son (Jesus) Speaks Truth. *"Jesus saith unto him, I am... the truth..."* (John 14:6). Because He is **the truth** — everything He says is true and thus is binding. *"... we know that thou art true, and... teach the way of God in truth..."* (Mark 12:14). *"For... truth came by Jesus Christ"* (John 1:17).

Thus, in order to be saved, we must believe what He says. *"... he that believeth not the Son shall not see life: but the wrath of God abideth on him"* (John 3:36).

3) God The Holy Spirit Expresses Truth. The Scriptures ascribe this quality of truth to God, the Holy Spirit. Thrice Jesus describes Him as *"...the Spirit of truth..."* (John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13). In 1 John 5:6, we read, *"...the Spirit is truth."* Thus, the Holy Spirit becomes an expression of veracious authority in the Godhead.

b. The Bible Has Authority. The Scriptures are given by God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit as an expression of Truth and, therefore, they hold the place of veracious authority. This authority is active in the lives of men, even if they refuse to acknowledge it.

We have the *Word of God* expressed not only in the Person of Jesus — the Word Incarnate — that is in flesh (see John 1:1,14), but we also have the Word expressed in the Bible (the Inscriptured Word).

1) Inspired By The Holy Spirit. The Bible was written as a result of the action of the Spirit of God upon men. The Spirit divinely inspired their thought and words. David described this phenomena in these words: *"The spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word was in my tongue"* (2 Sam 23:2).

God breathed into them His words. These *"...holy men of God spake as they -were moved by the Holy Ghost"* (2 Pet 1:21). These men recorded God's words for us.

That which He breathed through men became an expression of our Lord in inscriptured authority. *"All scripture is given by inspiration of God [Greek = **theopneustos**, meaning divinely breathed in]..."* (2 Tim 3:16).

Consequently, when we look at the work of the Holy Spirit in relation to bringing God's truth to men, we know that He inspired or breathed forth through men what we call the Scriptures (the Bible).

God has given us a book inspired by the Holy Spirit called the Bible, and of it He says: *"...thy law is truth... all thy commandments are truth"* (Ps 119:142,151).

Thus, the Bible holds the place of VERACIOUS authority for the Christian (and all mankind). We must judge and determine what is right by what the Bible says.

2) Three Guidelines For The Authority Of Scripture. We live in a day when men have attacked the Scriptures from within as well as from without the Church. Thus, we need to reaffirm that which ancient Church councils established.

Hundreds of years ago, church leaders met to deal with certain problems which were disrupting the faith and practice of the believers. The "Westminster Confession,"

which resulted from this conference, provides us three statements which should serve as a guideline for church leaders in understanding the VERACIOUS AUTHORITY of Scripture. They are:

- a) **"Nothing contrary to Scripture can be true."**
- b) **"Nothing in addition to Scripture can be binding."**
- c) **"Every believer is responsible to God to search the Scriptures** to see if what is being said by church leaders is true."

3) Berean Believers Commended. The Westminster Confession is based on Acts 17:10,11: *"And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews. These [at Berea] were more noble than those at Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so."*

The apostles Paul and Silas brought the message of Christ to the Jews at Berea (who in those days had only the Old Testament Scriptures). They commended the Bereans for two things:

a) *They recognized the authority of Scripture* was greater than that of church leaders (the apostles).

b) *They searched the Scriptures* daily to see if what the church leaders (Paul and Silas) were saying had veracity (was true).

The Bereans were not challenging the apostles in an attitude of rebellion, but they were wanting to make sure that what was taught was in agreement with the Bible.

They were complimented by the Holy Spirit because of their wisdom. They were wise enough to recognize that God has given a book by which every man and his teaching should be judged, no matter if he is an apostle or an angel from Heaven.

If "...an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you, than that which we have preached... let him be accursed [anathema]" (Gal 1:8).

Even if a volcano erupts in the midst of a gospel crusade accompanied with fire and smoke, trumpets and the sound of angelic choirs... if what is taught in that context contradicts the Scriptures, it is invalid.

4) The Final Authority. God spoke through Isaiah: *"Check these... words against the Word of God!... If their messages are different than mine, it is because I have not sent them; they have no light or truth in them"* (Isa 8:20 tlb).

God is telling us through Isaiah that the Bible is to be the final authority for faith and practice. Neither miracle workers, nor church leaders, nor angels have authority equal to the Scriptures.

This principle of the Bible being the final authority of faith and practice was established almost 4,000 years ago when God gave the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Bible) to a man called Joshua, the successor to Moses.

God said to him, *"This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shall meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein..."* (Josh 1:8).

God said to Joshua, "If you want to have success and prosper, take this book and READ it and live by what you read."

That's still God's commandment for those who want to prosper. Take the Bible, live according to it and judge everything by it.

The Bible is VERACIOUS AUTHORITY. It is a higher authority than any office in the Church. It is above any Church official, be he apostle, pope, prophet, cardinal, evangelist, bishop, pastor, priest, teacher or deacon.

The Roman Catholic Church recognizes the veracious authority of Scripture, for even the Pope is not supposed to teach doctrine contrary to the Bible.

David said, "*He [the Lord] hath exalted his word above all his name*" (Ps 138:2). Think of it! God has given Christ a name above every name (PhH 2:9), but He has exalted His Word above even His Name. This places the Bible above every human authority, whether it be religious, political or military.

Every believer is obligated to search the Scriptures to find out if what the church leaders teach is according to the Scriptures. We are never to believe or practice anything contrary to the Scriptures, the Word of God.

Nowhere in the Bible or teaching of the early Church fathers, do we have evidence that church leaders (or any other human being) spoke with veracious authority. This is a level above human authority.

3. The Authority Of Conscience

The third level of authority the Bible teaches us about is the authority of the CONSCIENCE.

Some have argued that it is not possible to know what is right from wrong. However, everyone of normal mental capacity knows right from wrong — everyone! How is that possible?

We all know what we do NOT want other people to do to us. We do not want other people to take unfair advantage of us. We do not want someone to hurt us. We do not want someone to break into our homes and steal all of our goods. We do not want to be murdered, nor our wife or daughter raped or our children committing fornication or adultery.

Thus, we all know right from wrong, even if we didn't have a Bible to tell us. We know what we don't want people to do to us and, thus, we know what we shouldn't do to other people.

This is the principle on which the Ten Commandments in the Bible are based.

The only thing that God has asked us not to do is that which is going to hurt either us or someone else. Therefore, when we live our lives according to the Ten Commandments, we are preserving life — ours and others.

In this way everyone's right to life, peace and pursuit of happiness is preserved.

Now, knowing what we don't want other people to do to us, and knowing what we shouldn't do to them, is what the Bible calls CONSCIENCE.

a. The Apostles Teach About Conscience:

1) Don't Violate It. The Apostle Paul established the authority of the conscience in his writings. An example: In Bible times, there were many religious convictions about certain types of food. He warns us to be careful when we eat not to violate the conscience of:

a) Another, "*But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ*" (1Cor8:12);or

b) Our own, "*For meat [food] destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eats with offense [a guilty*

conscience]" (Rom 14:20). *"And he that doubts is condemned if he eat, because he eats not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin "* (Rom 14:23).

2) Pagans Will Be Judged By It. In the New Testament, the conscience carries tremendous authority. Many times I have been asked, "Brother Ralph, what is going to happen to the heathen who have never heard the gospel?"

The Apostle Paul answered this question, ' *For as many as have sinned without law also shall perish without law... for when the Gentiles [the pagan or unbeliever], which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves;*

"Which show the work of the law written in their hearts, THEIR CONSCIENCE ALSO BEARING WITNESS, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing... In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel" (Rom 2:12, 14-16).

God is going to judge the pagan by his response to his conscience. The conscience is God's law written in the heart and the mind.

Even if a man doesn't have the Bible, he has his conscience. God will judge him by the way he obeys his conscience. The conscience is the pagan's substitute for the "law" (Ten Commandments).

Remember, in God's sight, the conscience has tremendous authority; hence, we are to obey it.

3) We Must Submit To It. The Apostle Paul dealt with many questions of conscience, such as what we eat or drink, or what day we worship the Lord. He writes, *"One man esteems one day above another: another esteems every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind [conscience].*

"He that regards the day, regards it unto the Lord; and he that regards not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it... " (Rom 14:5,6).

How does the person respond to his conscience? For some, observing a certain day is very important. For example, in Israel the Muslims observe Friday, the Orthodox Jews observe Saturday and the Christians observe Sunday.

To violate their sacred day would violate their conscience. I am not suggesting you should observe any special day; I am saying what Paul says, "Whatever your conscience dictates to you is what you must do."

Paul goes on to say, *"Let us not therefore judge another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way"* (Rom 14:13).

As well as being sensitive to another's conscience, Paul reminds us that we are to be sensitive to our own: *"For meat [food] destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure: but it is evil for that man who eats with offense [a guilty conscience]"* (Rom 14:20).

If you hold a conviction that you should abstain from eating certain foods and you overrule your conscience, Paul says for you it is wrong (evil). If it is against your conscience to eat pork and you eat it, it is wrong and you have rejected the authority of your conscience.

The Apostle Paul makes it plain that every one of us shall give account of himself to God. The manner in which we have responded to our own conscience will determine our reward and/or judgment. If we violate our conscience, it becomes sin for us.

Paul teaches us to submit to the authority of our own conscience. Even though our conscience will not allow us to do what others seem able to do, we must obey our conscience.

4) Everyone Is Accountable. He also teaches us not to impose our scruples on others. We must not think them less spiritual than ourselves because they enjoy certain liberties that may be against our own personal convictions.

There are cases when the authority of conscience has not been respected by church leaders. Some have taught, for example, that a wife should submit to her husband even if she is asked to do something which violates her conscience.

This is wrong! God holds every one of us accountable, whether we are man or woman.

Sapphira was held accountable for her complicity in lying to the Holy Spirit. *"Then Peter said unto her. How is it that ye **have agreed together** to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out"* (Acts 5:9). Sapphira died under judgment because she went along with her evil husband's plot to lie to the Holy Spirit.

4. Summary

God's Sovereign Authority, the Scriptures' Veracious Authority and the Authority of our Conscience are higher than any man, regardless of his office or title.

No one on the face of the earth has a God-given right to command you to disobey your conscience, your Bible or your God. These are all above any human office or authority —be it Church, state or otherwise.

The conscience is subject to the Scripture, and the Scripture proceeds from God. Hence, we are to be subject to these HIGHER authorities, even if they come in conflict with the LOWER authority God gives to men.

Chapter 2

Limits Of Authority

Introduction

"Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of HIS GOVERNMENT and PEACE there shall be no end..." (Isa 9:6,7).

Approximately 2,800 years ago Isaiah prophesied of a coming ruler who would be called the *"Prince of Peace."* The fulfillment of this prophecy is found in Jesus.

Commenting on His kingly dominion, the Apostle Paul assured us that Righteousness, Peace and Joy in the Holy Spirit would mark those who accepted His government over their lives (Rom 14:17).

What describes Christ's government? What kind of governance is it?

It most certainly is not humanistic government in which every man is free to do "what feels good or right," regardless of its impact on others. This is what the decadent male, hedonistic philosopher advocates.

It is not freedom to live in sinful, unnatural homosexual or lesbian relationships as advocated by some members of the Western "women's liberation" movement. Neither is it ecclesiastical license which, in the name of the Church and God, imposes autocratic unquestioned authority on mankind.

The government of our Lord Jesus Christ is a government of love, a government that blesses, that joins together and motivates men to a closer walk with God and one another.

It is the purpose of this study to familiarize us with this government of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit which our Lord desires to place over us in His Church.

A. FOUR LEVELS OF AUTHORITY GIVEN TO MANKIND

The four levels of authority reserved for mankind are described in what follows. when properly used, these will bring forth righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. These are:

1. Delegated Authority

The Apostle Paul gives us this instruction regarding our submission to the five ministry gifts of apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher (Eph 4:11). "*Obey them that have the rule over you and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls...*" (Heb 13:17).

The word "rule" does not mean spiritual leaders are to reign as ruthless dictators; that is, forcing their will on others. Rather, it means to give "shepherd-like leadership" to others.

In the biblical sense, a shepherd is one who lays down his life for the sheep, one who is totally dedicated to serving, protecting and feeding. A shepherd is not one who "rules" but, rather, one who "protects, cares for, loves and feeds." "*...the good shepherd gives his life for the sheep*" (John 10:11).

Hebrews 13:17 should be translated, then, "Follow them that exercise shepherd-like leadership, and submit to their care, feeding and loving reproof; for they must give account for your souls to the Chief Shepherd — Jesus!"

a. Limits Of Delegated Authority. The key to understanding the limits of delegated authority is this:

- 1) Delegated authority never extends beyond one's responsibility; and**
- 2) Delegated authority never proceeds out of anything other than responsibility.**

For example, because you have responsibility for your wife and children, you have authority in your home.

Why don't you have authority in the home of the family next door? Because you don't have responsibility for that wife and her children. Authority never extends beyond responsibility — it goes as far as responsibility and no farther.

b. Church Leaders Have Delegated Responsibility. One of the reasons God has established local church congregations is this: It provides a context for the development of working, practical, everyday relationships where people can become responsible for each others' needs.

When a shepherd takes responsibility for the flock, he is given the authority to feed, visit, defend, protect, care for and lovingly discipline God's sheep.

Spiritual leadership functions as God's representatives. As "...*ambassadors for Christ... we beseech you... on behalf of Christ...*" (2 Cor 5:20). "Instead of Christ being here," says Paul, "I'm here representing Him, I'm His agent."

Church leaders only act in delegated responsibility in a given situation, the same way Christ would, were He physically present. They are agents representing Christ's concern for His Church and Its spiritual and moral development.

Perhaps this can be best explained by an example of "agency law."

Some years ago, a church leader was involved in a serious traffic accident in which several people were critically injured. He was the driver of the vehicle. Not only was the church leader sued, but also the denomination to which he belonged.

The Court ruled that the denomination had to pay because, in the view of the Court, the church leader was acting as an "agent" of that organization. Not only was he liable, but the organization as well.

God operates in this way: He appoints church leaders to work in His place, as His agents in shepherd-like authority which arises out of the responsibility assumed. This is called **delegated authority** —the authority to represent another and do as he would do if present. This authority goes only as far as responsibility — no further.

2. Stipulative Authority

This is the authority of contracts or legal agreements. Contracts are drawn up wherein two parties (or groups) agree to carry out specific actions based on mutual benefits if fulfilled and penalties if violated. We'll enlarge more on this later.

3. Authority Of Custom Or Tradition

Where there is an established practice which is accepted in a culture or ethnic group, there develops the authority of custom and tradition. Good tradition is accepted by everyone because it has proven itself over the years to be for the common good.

In the New Testament Paul appeals to the authority of custom when he writes, "*If any one is disposed to be contentious, we recognize no other custom...*" (1 Cor 11:16 pph).

An interesting conflict between stipulative authority and the authority of custom occurs in the relationship between Jacob and his uncle, Laban (Gen 29:9-30).

An agreement was made between them. The contract specified that if Jacob worked seven years, Rachel, Laban's youngest daughter, would become Jacob's wife.

However, when it came time to settle the contract, Laban placed the authority of their custom ahead of his agreement with Jacob. He gave Jacob his first-born daughter, Leah, not his second-born, Rachel.

When Jacob awoke from his wedding night to find Leah at his side, we can well imagine his anger as he demanded to know why Laban had deceived him and broken the contract.

Laban replied, "The custom of marrying the oldest daughter before the younger cannot be violated." If Jacob still wanted Rachel, he would have to work an additional seven years. Reluctantly, Jacob yielded to the authority of custom and tradition which, in this instance, superseded the "stipulative authority" of their original agreement.

4. Functional Authority

a. Arises From Ability. By functional authority, we mean the authority that arises out of one's ability or capability. All of us have ability as a result of:

- 1) **Birth:** Natural ability;
- 2) **Training:** That which we developed through our education;
- 3) **Grace:** That which comes by God's divine enablement; and
- 4) **Experience:** That which comes from what is known as the "school of hard knocks."

How does functional authority operate? Let us assume you have come upon an accident scene. A man is lying mortally wounded by his wrecked bicycle, having been struck by a truck. At the scene are a doctor, a policeman and a mechanic.

Who has the authority to dictate what treatment is given the dying man? Naturally, you reply, the doctor! By his training and skill he has the ability and, consequently, the authority to know what is best in that situation.

The mechanic with his tools would be of no help, nor would the policeman with his badge.

When the traffic was to be diverted around the accident, who would have the authority? The policeman! Why? He's trained and commissioned to do that.

However, when it came time to repair the bicycle, whom would we summon? The mechanic. Why? Because of his ability, his functional authority.

Their respective abilities qualify them to have authority in performing functions for which they have been trained. In most nations of the world, the policeman would be reprimanded for wrongful use of authority if he tried to control the doctor and dictate the treatment for the dying man. His badge of authority gives him only limited authority.

b. Recognized In Scripture. Jesus recognized functional authority when He said, *"...they that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick"* (Matt 9:12).

In the home, Paul tells us that husbands and wives are to submit themselves one to the other in the fear of God (Eph 5:21). In the area of their mutual abilities and training, the wife submits to the husband, and the husband submits to the wife. Both recognize each other's functional authority.

Submission based on love brings a mutual respect for the ability that each spouse can bring to the marriage and home.

These seven levels of authority, properly administered in biblical bounds, are all part of the "... increase of his government and peace...."

B. PROBLEMS WITH HUMAN AUTHORITY

Where do problems begin? In the world in which we live, even in the Church and the home, we have problems with authority. What happens to cause the chaotic conditions?

Why do we often have only an uneasy truce between family members instead of a lasting peace in some homes and churches? It may be a failure to understand authority and its role.

1. Problem 1: Men Exercising Authority Belonging To God Alone

Problems are sure to follow if we take delegated, stipulative, custom or functional authority and lift it to the level of sovereign or veracious authority, or the authority of the conscience.

If men elevate their limited authority to the level of total unquestioned authority, thus making themselves equal to or greater than God and His Word, trouble is sure to follow.

It is so easy for church leaders to "play God" by doing only that which appears right in their own eyes and claiming the authority to do so. This attitude is dangerous at any time, but doubly so when it infects God's people and Church leadership.

It is clear from Scripture that God will not allow His sovereign authority to be usurped.

Jesus said, *"...If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples..."* (John 8:31). We are to subject ourselves to God and His Word. We are never to take a religious, political or military leader and ascribe to him sovereign or veracious authority.

Jesus clearly states that we are His disciples (only) if we continue in His Word. The Bible is the ultimate authority of faith and practice. Jesus made this fact clear when He said, *"...the scripture cannot be broken [disobeyed]"* (John 10:35).

2. Problem 2: Religious Authority And Scripture Come Into Conflict

This point is dramatically illustrated in the confrontation between Ananias the high priest and Paul the apostle. Here's the story: Paul is defending himself in Jerusalem against accusations of certain Jewish religious leaders. *"...Paul earnestly beholding the council, said. Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.*

"And the high priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth.

"Then said Paul unto him. God shall smite you, you whitewashed tomb: for you sit to judge me after the law, and command me to be smitten contrary to the law" (Acts 23:1-3).

—Point One—

Paul appealed to the authority of the Scripture in this situation by letting Ananias know that the Scriptures had more authority than he had as a judge.

"And they that stood by said, Revilest thou God's high priest? Then Paul [apologized and] said, I knew not, brethren, that he was the high priest; for it is written, Thou shall not speak evil of the ruler of thy people" (Acts 23:4,5).

—Point Two—

By his apology to the high priest (based on the scriptural admonition), Paul made it abundantly clear that he also (as an apostle) was subject to the Scripture.

Let's carefully examine this event. Paul was testifying. The high priest Ananias became incensed and ordered Paul to be hit in the mouth — a gesture of censorship.

Paul, not knowing Ananias was a high priest, reacted by calling him a "white-washed tomb" and appealed to the Scriptures for redress. Paul's smiting was contrary to what the Bible said concerning the conduct of judges. In this Paul was right, for the Scriptures have more authority than any religious, political or military official.

However, when Paul was told that he was speaking to the high priest, he immediately apologized.

Why? Because the Scripture told him not to *"... speak evil of the ruler of the people...."* The apostle was subject to the Scripture.

Even though the high priest was on a high level of authority in the courtroom, neither the apostle's nor the high priest's authority was equal to the authority of the Word of God.

By his actions in this story, Paul clearly illustrates that the authority of the Scripture was higher authority than that of high priest or apostle.

God does not give any man authority greater than the Scriptures or equal to Himself. Nor does God give anyone the right to abridge another man's conscience or to ask of anyone unquestioned obedience.

Any and all authority must be examined in the light of God's principles as outlined in His Word.

3. Problem 3: Elevating Custom And Tradition Above The Authority Of The Bible

It is a serious error to practice religious customs or traditions which are contrary to God's Word.

In the Gospel of Matthew, we read, "*...Why do you also transgress the commandments of God by your tradition?*" (Matt 15:3).

Jesus pointed out to the religious leadership of His day that they had taken their traditions and elevated them to a level higher than the Scriptures. As a result, Jesus condemned them as hypocrites.

Mark's Gospel records Jesus' words as follows: "*Howbeit... they... teach for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men...*

"...Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. For Moses said, Honour [give financial support to] thy father and thy mother... But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother. It is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatever you might be supported by me; he shall be free. And you allow him no more to do what he should for his father or his mother; Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition..." (Mark 7:7,8,9,12,13).

The Scriptures commanded, "*...Honor [financially support] your father and mother...*" (Exo 20:12). The Jews' Oral Law [Tradition] said, "If you give the money that belongs to your parents to the temple, you're excused from the commandment of Scripture concerning parental care."

By their traditions, they were cheating their parents out of their retirement income. They were dedicating the money belonging to the parents to the temple.

"...But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments [customs / traditions] of men" (Matt 15:1-9).

We still do that today when we elevate our church practices and traditions above God's Word. It is easy to forget that custom and tradition have value only if they do not contradict the Scriptures. Customs and traditions (no matter how many centuries old) — if unbiblical, if contrary to the Scriptures — must be stopped.

a. Nothing Should Be Added To Christ's Work On The Cross. I filmed Good Friday Easter celebrations in a country some years ago.

"Christian" flagellants cut their backs with sharp glass until the blood came. They mounted crowns of thorns on their heads and marched for miles through the hot tropical sun, flailing themselves with whips.

The ceremonies concluded in a large open field where several, with nails driven through the palms of their hands, were lifted on crosses.

One of them appeared to go into a demonic type seizure or fit when brought down and carried to a nearby house. (It may have been extreme shock — I couldn't tell). He was screaming and flailing about uncontrollably.

This was all being done with the blessings of the leadership of their church — in clear violation of the Scriptures.

To those in the New Testament who trusted in cutting themselves, Paul wrote this warning:

"If ye be circumcised [cut your flesh] Christ shall profit you nothing. Christ is become of no effect unto you... ye are fallen from grace " (Gal 5:2-4).

We fall from grace by trying to obtain merit or blessings through our own works of righteousness. To do this implies that the work of Christ on the cross was not sufficient and we have to add our good works to His work to be saved or blessed. This does not honor the cross. It dishonors it.

While these things have outward religious (and even spiritual) appearance, they clearly interfere with the work of the Holy Spirit in perfecting us.

I don't doubt the sincerity of those who keep relics, burn candles, pray to saints and carry on many other traditions for which there is no biblical blessing or authority. They are very sincere, just as those who flail themselves in Easter celebrations.

But to such, the Apostle Paul issues this serious warning:

"I only wish these teachers who want you to cut yourselves... would cut themselves off from you and leave you alone " (Gal 5:12 tlb).

Paul was very disturbed because the traditions of the Jews were being imposed on the Gentile believers in Galatia. His Epistle to the Galatian believers should be memorized by every sincere servant of God and its solemn warnings heeded.

I appeal to men and women of God everywhere to renounce practices that are unbiblical.

Submit to the authority of God and His Word (the Bible). Do not let religious or other authority keep you bound in unbiblical traditions and practices.

The Holy Spirit has dealt with some of you and you took your stand for the Lord. But now, under pressure from religious leaders, you are turning your backs on what the Holy Spirit told you. Don't do that! Hold true to God and His Word and you will be blessed and approved by God.

"I advise you to obey only the Holy Spirit's instructions. He will tell you where to go and what to do, and then you won't always be doing the wrong things..." (Gal 5:16 tlb).

Chapter 3

Leaders Worthy Of Following

Introduction

A nation (or church) will invariably end up with the kind of leadership it deserves. The Old Testament bears this out. The people who did not accept and follow the God-ordained leadership ended up with profligate and foolish leaders.

Isaiah said, *"And it shall be, as with the people, so with the priest..."* (Isa 24:2).

"The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by doing what they prophesy, and my people love to have it so" (Jer5:31 pph).

Notice that the problem is two-fold. It is a problem of LEADERSHIP (prophet and priest) and the PEOPLE. God doesn't hold just the leadership responsible; He also holds those *"who love to have it so"* responsible. God disciplines His people for following false leaders.

God not only condemns those who sell in the Temple, but also those who buy. If I accept some church leader's offer to pray for me provided I give him an offering of money, I am as responsible as he for thinking I can purchase God's gifts for money (Acts 8:18-23).

A. WE HAVE AN OBLIGATION TO DISCERN PROPER LEADERSHIP

Since God holds all of us accountable, we need to be aware of our obligation to discern proper leadership that is worthy of our following.

1. A Church Or Nation Rises Or Falls By Leaders

The prophet Jeremiah pointed out, *"Many shepherds [church leaders] have destroyed my vineyard, they have trodden my portion underfoot, they have made my pleasant portion a desolate wilderness.*

"They have made it desolate, and being desolate it mourneth unto me; the whole land is made desolate, because no man lays it to heart" (Jer 12:10,11).

God was speaking through the prophet about the religious leadership of the nation of Israel. They had mistreated the people and brought destruction on the land.

The leadership you follow is going to govern what you are and who you are. You will rise or fall depending on the leadership you follow.

2. Spiritual Growth Limited By Leadership

Church leader! Most people will not develop beyond the level of your spiritual maturity. The leadership role is given you by God to set the example for the people to follow.

In discussing leadership responsibilities with Timothy, Paul wrote, *"The farmer must be the first to eat the fruit he raises" (2Tim 2:6 pph).*

This means that, before church leaders call the people to pray, they must be intercessors themselves. If they want the people to be dedicated, they must be dedicated. They must first eat the fruit of which they want the people to partake.

a. Israel Condemned To Wandering. Do you remember Israel in the wilderness? It was the leaders that kept the people out of the Promised Land.

When God called them out of Egypt, He intended for them to enter Canaan forty days later. A fast-walking person could easily travel from Egypt to the Promised Land in a week — but it took them forty years. Why? Because of the leadership.

A leader was chosen from each of the twelve tribes to go in to spy out the promised land and bring back a report (Num 13:2-17).

Of the twelve leaders, only Joshua and Caleb came back with a good report. The other ten refused to believe that God would do what He had promised. Because the giants in the land appeared to be overwhelming, ten leaders gave an evil report — a report that canceled out God's promise.

What result did their denial have upon their 2,500,000 followers?

The Bible tells us, *"Because all those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have put me to the test now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice;*

"Surely they shall not see the land which I swore unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it" (Num 14:22,23).

The leaders sealed the destiny of two and a half million people. They were condemned to wilderness wandering for forty years. God's plan to take His people onward into new and greater blessings was destroyed.

Do you see how important leadership is? Do you now realize how essential it is to know the signs and attributes of a leader worthy of following?

B. HOW TO TELL GODLY LEADERS FROM WICKED LEADERS

1. Do They Reach For Responsibility Or Authority?

A godly leader is one who seeks responsibility. A wicked leader is one who seeks authority.

Leaders who reach for responsibility may be followed, while those who reach for authority are to be avoided.

a. Godly Leaders Seek Responsibility. The Apostle Paul writes, *"But I hope to send Timothy shortly to you, so that I can be comforted by knowing that all is well with you. I have no other leader who has your welfare uppermost in his mind.*

"For most put their own personal interests ahead of Jesus Christ's. But you know that Timothy, as a son with the father, has served with me in the gospel. Therefore I hope to send him to you as soon as I can" (Phil 2:19-23 pph).

Timothy had a sense of responsibility and cared for the people. He was not seeking his own interests, but those of the people of God. He was not seeking pompous titles and prestige, but an opportunity to be of service and take responsibility for God's work and His people.

Some of the saddest words in the Bible are these of Paul, *"I have no other leader who has your welfare uppermost in his mind. For most put their own personal interests ahead of Jesus Christ's."* How sad! Paul only had one church leader he could trust to put the welfare of the people ahead of his own personal interest.

b. Wicked Leaders Seek Authority. The Apostle Peter admonishes leadership who might be tempted to reach for authority. *"Don't think you are a lord over God's heritage, but be examples to the flock" (1 Pet 5:2,3pph).*

Peter's message is clear. Leadership is not lordship. Spiritual leaders are to willingly take responsibility for the flock of God as a shepherd would -for the sheep. *"Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the responsibility thereof; don't do this because you are forced to, do it willingly, not for the money you receive, but because you want to" (1 Pet 5:2,3 pph).*

Church leaders are not appointed by God to exercise autocratic powers over the Church.

c. Two Examples:

1) Diotrefes —Bad Leader. The Apostle John said, *"I wrote unto the church; but Diotrefes, who loveth to have the preeminence, won't receive us."* Here was a leader who was reaching for authority because of the prestige that went with it. So John

warns, *"Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, speaking against us with malicious words: and not being content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbids them that would.."* (3 Jn 9,10).

Have you ever been forbidden to have fellowship with some of God's people in another church and were told that you would be disloyal if you did?

Remember, our first loyalty belongs to God and His Word (the Bible). After that, we owe loyalty to all born-again believers, whether they be found in Catholic, Protestant or Pentecostal churches. We also owe loyalty to our church leaders. If they are not asking us to disobey God, or His Word, or to lessen our commitment to support the whole Body of Christ, we can follow them.

If a leader tells you that you cannot have fellowship with anyone outside your church, you have encountered the "Diotrephes spirit." This is the spirit that won't receive other brethren. If you violate their restrictions on who you can have fellowship with, this kind of leader will try to excommunicate you from the church.

What does John tell the Christians to do about this? "BELOVED, FOLLOW NOT THAT WHICH IS EVIL, but that which is good.... "

You are under no obligation to follow an evil leader. When a leader starts grasping for authority, quit following and he will lose his leadership. Ask God to deal with him and bring him to repentance.

One of the ways God disciplines an erring leader is when the people stop following. "FOLLOW THAT WHICH IS GOOD... He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil has not seen God (3Jn 11).

2) Demetrius — Good Leader. God always provides us with a choice of leadership in the Body of Christ. John commends Demetrius as a leader worthy of following. *'Demetrius hath good report of all men and of the truth itself..'* (3Jn 12).

We have an option to follow good leadership and to reject evil leaders. Don't follow the leadership that is reaching for authority, seeking to dominate those around them.

2. Do They Feed Or Fleece The Flock?

A good leader is concerned about FEEDING the flock.

A bad leader is concerned about "FLEECING" the flock.

a. Godly Leaders Feed The Flock. Jeremiah was a prophet to church leaders. Jeremiah knew that God had promised, *"...I will give you shepherds according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding"* (Jer 3:15). If you are truly a church leader after God's heart, you will be concerned first of all with feeding the flock.

God continues His promise, *" And I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase. And I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them; and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith the Lord"* (Jer 23:3,4).

Those leaders who feed their flocks are the ones we want to follow.

b. Wicked Leaders Fleece The Flock. Jeremiah saw that problems arose as a result of errant leadership. He rebuked bad leaders. We are instructed to avoid those church leaders who mistreat the flock.

"And they were scattered, because there is no shepherd; and they became food to all the beasts of the field, when they were scattered.

"My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill: yea, my flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and none did search or seek after them.

"Therefore, ye shepherds, hear the word of the Lord: As I live, saith the Lord God, surely because my flock became a prey, and my flock became meat to every beast of the field, because there was no shepherd, neither did my shepherds search for my flock, but the shepherds fed themselves, and fed not my flock; therefore, O ye shepherds, hear the word of the Lord;

"Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I am against the shepherds; and I will require my flock at their hand, and cause them to cease from feeding the flock: neither shall the shepherds feed themselves any more; for I will deliver my flock from their mouth, that they may not be food for them" (Eze 34:1-10).

A few years ago, I listened to a message from a well-known religious leader who was teaching the "proper" relationship between pastor and people.

He believed that the people existed to serve the leadership. I remember his exact words, "When I need my house painted, I just call some of my flock in and they paint the house. When I need my fields harvested, I just call some of my flock and they harvest my rice."

I found it difficult to believe that one who had known God's ways and walked in His paths could now say that the flock existed to serve him, rather than he existing to serve the flock.

God says loud and clear, "AVOID THAT KIND OF LEADERSHIP... those that fleece the flock, those that use the sheep to serve their own ends and needs."

The prophet Micah shows how both the spiritual and the political leadership corrupt themselves. *"They build up Zion with blood, and Jerusalem with iniquity. The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money" (Mic 3:10,11).*

The leadership of Micah's day was serving for one thing —money. Watch out when money becomes the motivation and the preoccupation of leadership. The love of money is clearly the root of all evil and whenever that becomes the motive for wanting a leadership role, destruction will follow.

The prophet further pointed out, *".. .yet will they lean upon the Lord, and say. Is not the Lord among us? No evil can come upon us. Therefore shall Zion for your sake be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps..." (vss 11,12).*

God tells us if we allow false leadership to remain in power, both leaders and people will be cast down into destruction. God sends judgment on whole nations for leadership errors.

We are to refuse to follow leaders who fleece the sheep. *"Beloved, follow not that which is evil..." (3Jn 11).*

c. Jesus Established Qualifications. Jesus established the qualifications for church leadership when He said, *"But he that is a hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, sees the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep, and flees: and the wolf catches them, and scatters the sheep. The hireling flees, because he is a hireling, and cares not for the sheep" (John 10:12,13).*

What does the hireling care for? The hire (the money)! That's his only motivation, just what he can get out of it. He doesn't care for the sheep. As far as he is concerned, they are just "dumb sheep" to be taken advantage of. That's the attitude of the hireling.

The true shepherd cares for the sheep, is willing to lay his life down for their protection and go hungry, if necessary, to see that the sheep are fed. He never makes a decision on the basis of how much is in it for him, how much the salary is or how big the title may be.

This doesn't mean that the true and faithful shepherd has no right to receive financial support. The Scripture uses an allegory to teach us our responsibility to give financial support to true shepherds. *"Do not muzzle the ox that treads out the corn."* As oxen work at the treadmill, the Bible gives them the right to eat some of the corn they are treading out.

By this, God teaches us that church leaders must be cared for financially. However, if an ox is eating **everything** he treads out, muzzling him or getting another ox might be the farmer's only alternative. The ox must tread out more than he consumes or the corn grower will go out of business.

d. Satan Tempts Leaders. These things are difficult to say. But, we would be remiss if we did not point out that Satan tempts leadership with four things:

- 1) **Lust for money** (covetousness),
- 2) **Lust for position,**
- 3) **Lust for power** (pride), and
- 4) **Lust for women** (adultery).

It is only the grace of God that keeps leaders from falling prey to one or more of these sins.

A leader should regularly, carefully and prayerfully examine his motives. Then he should allow the Holy Spirit to shed light on areas that need repentance. Victory over these temptations will be the result.

Satan will come in through the open door of false or impure motives and take a leader captive. This fact underscores the need to cover the leadership with much prayer and intercession.

We're instructed to pray for ALL in authority. This includes spiritual as well as secular leaders. *"I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions... be made for... all that are in authority..."* (I Tim 2:1,2).

3. Do They Gather Or Scatter The Flock?

Follow leaders who gather the flock.

Avoid leaders who scatter the flock.

a. Godly Leaders Gather The Flock. *"Behold, the Lord God will come with strong hand... He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall GATHER the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall GENTLY LEAD those that are with young"* (Isa 40:10,11).

That's the picture of the true shepherd — one who will gather the lambs. God wants us to follow those leaders who are devoted to gathering the flock. Take notice: The main attitude of those who gather is gentleness. God's true leaders are gentle people.

David, the great shepherd of Israel, said, *"Thy gentleness hath made me great"* (Ps 18:35). Gentleness and meekness are not weakness.

Gentleness is the capacity to identify and empathize with those who are weak and needy in order to encourage and lift them up and help them become strong.

It was said of our Lord Jesus, "*A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench...*" (Isa 42:3). Why?

He was a gentle Shepherd. If He saw someone who was bruised. He would heal him, not break him. If He saw one who was struggling to get a ministry going. He would come along and fan the smoking flax (which typifies sincere effort) until it began to burn brightly and clearly in truth and purity.

Jesus works with our feeble efforts in ministry to bring them into full maturity.

There are many sincere people who are struggling to express their gifts. They are like smoking flax. Leadership should not quench them. Leaders should fan the smoking flax. This will turn it into a burning flame. That's what is meant by gentle leadership. That's the kind of shepherd who will gather the flock.

b. Wicked Leaders Scatter The Flock. Now, on the other hand, there are bad leaders who scatter the flock. This is what the Lord says of them, "*Woe be unto the shepherds [pastors] that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture:... Therefore thus saith the Lord God of Israel against the shepherds [pastors] that feed my people;*

"Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them: behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the Lord" (Jer 23:1,2).

Every true shepherd gathers — the false shepherd scatters, creates confusion, division and reaction. This kind of leader we must avoid.

4. Do They Recognize God's Claim On The Sheep?

A good leader recognizes God's claim to the sheep.

A bad leader claims the sheep for himself.

a. Wicked Leaders Claim The Sheep For Themselves. The true shepherd recognizes God's claim to the sheep — the false shepherd makes his own claim on the sheep. He claims the sheep are his and issues a warning that they are his private property.

There is absolutely no scripture to support this claim of false shepherds. Instead, the Bible states clearly that the sheep belong solely to God, and not to any under-shepherd.

b. Godly Leaders Know The Sheep Belong To God. The Bible states, "*...we are HIS people, and the sheep of HIS pasture"*(Ps 100:3). Again, "*The Lord is MY shepherd...*" (Ps 23:1).

In a prophecy referring to our Lord Jesus, we read, "*And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd... Thus shall they know that I the Lord their God am with them, and that they, even the house of Israel, are MY people, saith the Lord God. And ye MY flock, the flock of MY pasture, are men, and I am your God, saith the Lord God...*" (Eze 34:23,30,31).

God claims the sheep. They are His alone and He wants us to know that. They do not belong to the church leader or his denomination. They belong to God.

Paul reminds us, "*For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's"* (I Cor 6:20). The principle is simple. Jesus bought us and we are not our own — we belong to Him; therefore we are to glorify God in our bodies and our spirits which now belong to Him.

He has put His claim upon us and marked us with His brand. No one has the authority to put his brand on a sheep who is already branded.

Paul writes, *"I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus"* (Gal 6:17). Paul was glad that he didn't have anyone else's brand on him except the marks of the Lord Jesus. He wanted to be free from all, that he might be the servant of all (1 Cor 9:19). That's the way God wants His people.

True shepherds are those who recognize God's claim. Those who wish to claim the sheep for their own possession are claiming property that belongs to God. That is lawlessness.

c. God Appoints Under-Shepherds. Make no mistake about this: it is certainly within the design of God that we have a church home with a good church leader.

Further, we should faithfully attend the services and pray, work and give to advance the goals and objectives of that fellowship.

God appoints under-shepherds (leaders) but we don't belong to them — we belong to the Chief Shepherd. Peter writes, *"And when the CHIEF SHEPHERD [Jesus] shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fades not away "* (1 Pet 5:4).

d. Sheep Must Follow Their Chief Shepherd. As previously pointed out, the problem isn't just with the shepherds; it is also a problem with the sheep. The sheep frequently seek glory for themselves by identification with some prominent ministry. This prideful attitude breeds sectarianism and division.

Paul rebuked the believers in Corinth for this carnal-minded propensity to want a prideful identity with some prominent leader, *"...there are contentions among you... every one of you saith, I am of Paul,... I of Apollos, I of Cephas [Peter]...Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were ye baptized in the name of Paul? "* (1 Cor 1:11-13).

Paul forcibly reminds the Corinthians that they belong to the One Who paid the price for them. *"... was Paul crucified for you? "* The answer is obvious. NO! Paul didn't die for them, Christ did. Hence, they belong to Him and should follow only Him.

It is a sad commentary on the spiritual immaturity of anyone who would leave Christ to follow under-shepherds.

Paul says to this church in Corinth, *"...I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.*

"For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?

"Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? So then, neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase" (1 Cor 3:2-5,7).

Paul rebukes this propensity in men which seeks a prideful identity with leaders. He calls it carnality and immaturity.

C. WE ARE GOD'S SHEEP

The illustration which follows establishes in allegorical form the relationship between the Chief Shepherd and the sheep. The Lord Jesus is the Chief Shepherd and we are His sheep. (Remember, we are to avoid those who claim the sheep as their own.)

1. The Flock Must Be Gathered Together

In Genesis we read the story of Jacob and his first meeting with Rachel, Laban's daughter.

"Jacob went over to the shepherds and asked them where they lived. 'At Haran,' they said. 'Do you know a fellow there named Laban, the son of Nahor?' 'We sure do.' 'How is he?' 'He's well and prosperous. Look, there comes his daughter Rachel with the sheep.'

"'Why don't you water the flocks so they can get back to grazing?' Jacob asked. 'They'll be hungry if you stop so early in the day!' 'We don't roll away the stone [covering the well] and begin the watering until all the flocks and shepherds are gathered here,' they replied. As this conversation was going on, Rachel arrived with her father's sheep, for she was a shepherdess " (Gen 29:4-9 tlb).

This is the story of Jacob's first journey when he encounters the shepherds and daughters of Laban who were tending the sheep which belonged to their father. Jacob then offered to help with the watering. They said that the flocks first had to be gathered together before they could be watered.

Do you know what is keeping God's sheep from being watered? The under-shepherds are not bringing the flocks together. They are claiming the sheep for themselves. To follow the allegory, they are not recognizing Laban's (the father's) claim to the sheep.

Rachel kept her father's sheep. Even though she was a shepherdess, she recognized that the sheep belonged to her father. Leaders would do well to do the same.

Until all the flocks are gathered together by the under-shepherds, in recognition of God's claim upon them, you will not see the water poured out.

2. God Blesses When There Is Unity

Whenever you find God's flock being gathered together in one place, you will find God's blessing upon them. When you go to meetings where the people come together from many church groups, that are being conducted under the guidance of good leadership, you will find the presence and favor of God.

When God began a fresh outpouring of His Spirit in 1966-67, it was characterized by Protestant and Catholic people coming together. In those gatherings the people met in neutral locations, and God poured out His Spirit in showers of blessings.

Of late, that is not happening so much. The walls of separation are being raised again, and alienation of believers is taking place because leaders are afraid to have their people ministered to outside their denomination.

Unless we reject this trend and repent of this denominationalizing of the revival movement, we will see God lift His blessings completely from the churches. God will by-pass us and start over again unless we repent of our carnality, immaturity and divisive tendencies (making idols of our denominations). God will raise up another people if we do not come together in unity and love. God wants to bring all the sheep together so He can roll away the stone and give them water.

Recognize God's claim on the sheep. Recognize that His banner over us is love. Recognize that when we come together under His leadership. He will cause spiritual and numerical growth to take place by the abundance of His blessings.

When Jacob was dying, he gave this prophecy: *"The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between his feet, until Shiloh [another name for Jesus] come;*

and unto him shall the gathering of the people be" (Gen 49:10). When we gather to Him, the stone is rolled away and waters are made available, and the sheep's thirst is quenched.

Perhaps Gideon of old said it best: *"The men of Israel said unto Gideon, Rule thou over us, both thou, and thy son and thy son's son also; for thou hast delivered us from the hand of Midian; And Gideon said unto them, I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you: THE LORD SHALL. RULE OVER YOU"* (Judg 8:22,23).

Gideon's attitude is the one every leader should emulate. That's the right attitude. Let's follow that kind of leadership. We are God's sheep — bought with a price; we are not our own, or anyone else's —but God's.

SECTION A4

ESTABLISHING A DEVOTIONAL HABIT

By Jack Hayford

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Chapter 1

The Renewal Of Devotional Habit

Introduction

Recently the Lord dealt very forcefully with me about a most important part of our daily walk with God. Three times within one week the Lord awakened me in the night and spoke to me concerning a very serious failure in my life. As a Father with His son. He was very gracious and plain in His counsel to me.

I am always grateful for the Lord's loving correction and discipline. I have a desire to hear and obey His voice. I carefully recorded everything that He brought to my mind, for I realized it was not only important for me as a church leader, but for our church fellowship as well.

Spiritual leaders have a great responsibility before God for their people, since the people look to them for guidance. Our lives speak as loudly as our words, and the flock of God will look, listen and follow in the footsteps of their shepherds.

We who are church leaders can lead our people no further than we ourselves have walked with God. More than this, when we fall and fail, others sadly and badly will be

held back or even crippled in their walk with the Lord. This is true even when our failures may not be planned or even known.

This was certainly true in my own life, for I would never have knowingly done anything that would weaken the spiritual life of the believers.

Therefore I want to share with you the lessons that I learned from the Lord during this special time in my life.

A. PRAYER AND THE EARLY CHURCH

I would like to begin by looking at the early chapters in the Book of Acts. Here we find what the Church of Jesus Christ was like as it was first formed. It began in this way.

1. Prayer Birthed The Early Church

After Jesus' resurrection. He left special instructions for the disciples. They were to wait (**pray**) in Jerusalem until they were endued (clothed) with power from on high as the Father had promised (Luke 24:49).

Luke, the writer of the Book of Acts, tells us what happened next; *"It was not long afterwards that Jesus rose into the sky and a cloud carried him away so the disciples could not see him anymore"* (Acts 1:9).

The disciples were on the Mountain of Olives when this happened. They then walked the one kilometer back to Jerusalem, and met together in a second-floor room. Here they held a prayer meeting that lasted for ten days. Some 120 people were there.

The Festival Day of Pentecost came ten days later. They were still **praying** together, when all at once there was a sound from Heaven like a powerful wind. It filled the house where they were seated... and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit.

Following a powerful sermon by Peter, some 3,000 people were saved. They joyfully joined with the other believers. **Daily** they were taught by the apostles and met together in each other's homes for fellowship, breaking bread and **prayer** (taken from Acts 1:1 -2:42).

The Church was birthed from the womb of prayer. Ten days of prayer produced the Pentecostal outpouring of the Holy Spirit — and most miraculously, 3,000 new converts. The people of Pentecost were a people of **daily prayer**!

2. Prayer —A Powerful Force

Not only did the daily **prayer** life of the early Church produce their Pentecost, but it went on as a powerful force in the unusual days that followed: *"Now Peter and John went into the Temple one afternoon for the three o'clock daily prayer meeting"* (Acts 3:1).

You know the story — that's when the lame man who sat at the Gate called Beautiful was healed! Through that miracle, the number of believers grew to 5,000.

The rulers were unhappy, however, and jailed both Peter and John. The next day they let them go, but warned them not to do any more preaching about Jesus.

How did Peter and John respond to that threat? *'They returned to their own group, and told them everything that had happened. When they heard their report, they all began to pray.*

*"When they had finished **praying**, the place where they were gathered was shaken. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and went on boldly speaking the Word of God"* (Acts 4:23,24,31).

Again in Acts 5:12 we read, "And *the apostles did many wonderful miracles among the people. They regularly met in the Temple area known as Solomon's Hall.*" This was to have their times of prayer together.

Another interesting story is told in Acts 6:1-4. The leaders are facing a problem in their fellowship and they need a solution. Their answer is a wise and practical one. It allows the apostles the time they need to continue in "**prayer and ministry of the Word.**"

In Acts 7:55-60 we learn about Stephen, who was the first Christian to die for his faith. As he is brought to his knees by the stones of his enemies, he cries out in **prayer**. Heaven hears that **prayer**, and the Lord Jesus is seen standing at the right hand of God ready to receive his spirit.

The theme or topic of prayer continues in Acts 8:14,15: "*When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that the people of Samaria had received the Word of God, they sent Peter and John to them. When they got there, **they prayed** for the new believers that they might receive the Holy Spirit.*"

And in Acts 9:10,11 we read: "*In Damascus there was a believer by the name of Ananias. The Lord showed him in a vision [dream] what he wanted him to see. He said, 'Ananias!'*

"And Ananias answered, 'Yes, Lord; I am here.'

"The Lord said, 'Get up! Go over to Straight Street to Juda's house and ask for a man from the city of Tarsus. His name is Saul. You will find him praying there.'"

You will recall that Saul had just met Jesus on the road to Damascus. He had been brought to the ground, and blinded by the bright glory of God. His spiritual eyes, however, had been opened and he was wonderfully born again. Completely changed!

It is likely that Ananias was at prayer when he received his vision. At the same time Saul was also **at prayer**, because he didn't know what to do. Those **prayers** were to have an effect that would reach down through history to our very day!

Yes, the people of Pentecost are a people of **prayer**. When they pray, the Holy Spirit moves in power. There is forgiveness, healing, miracles and guidance! They **pray** all the time, and everywhere, and God is there to do His will.

You might say the Book of Acts is a report of a very special **prayer** meeting. It began at Pentecost by God's Spirit and never did stop.

For the believers in the early Church, **prayer** was a daily practice. It was a habit as natural and important as breathing. Indeed, it was the breath of their new life in the Spirit!

B. DEVOTIONAL PRAYER — A DAILY HABIT

Now, it is this daily habit of devotional **prayer** that God was dealing with me about. He spoke directly and told me I had forgotten the discipline (regular practice) of daily devotions. I had allowed other things to crowd out my daily quiet times alone with Him.

I don't mean to say that I didn't **pray** at all. In fact, I **pray** a lot. I was taught to **pray** as a small boy. It started with a little child's **prayer** which so many people know: "Now I lay me down to sleep, I **pray** thee. Lord, my soul to keep."

After that I would **pray**, "Bless Mommy and Daddy and Loann and Jimmie and me. And Lord, help us to be ready when You come. If I've done anything bad today I ask

You to forgive me and make my heart clean. And bless all our friends and loved ones and help me not to have any bad dreams. In Jesus' Name."

Sometimes there were a few other things, but mostly that was the prayer that I grew up on.

Even today that remains the structure of my **prayer** when I go to sleep. I do not consider myself above such child-like simplicity. I still **pray**, "Lord, I'm laying down to sleep now. I thank You for Your Word that says that those who are at peace with You will sleep safely. Bless Anna, my wife. Bless my children, Becky and Scott, and Jack and his wife. Bless Mark and DeDe, and Brian and Kyle, my grand-kids, and my daughter Christie. "Then I'll name a few other people just quickly and go to sleep.

I think of myself as a **prayer** and worship person. I know you do too.

As a church leader, I will often lead in **prayer** in our church meetings. I frequently **pray** with my people in small groups. I **pray** with individuals who come to me for spiritual help. There are times when God will move me into special sessions of intercessory **prayer** for people around the world and others. Throughout the day I often turn to God for counsel as needs arise.

Furthermore, I have taught on **prayer**. I have written and preached much on the subject. So, I am not a stranger to **prayer** in either understanding or practice. However, I did have a problem: My morning devotional **prayer** time was no longer a daily habit!

It wasn't something that I suddenly stopped doing. Other things—even good things—just seemed to take over my time for daily private **prayer**.

As an example, for me it is much easier to read the Bible every day than it is to **pray** every day. I think most people find that true. Of course, the study of God's Word is important, but the direction and correction I was receiving had to do with my **prayer** life. (People who **pray** more, also read more of God's Word).

The Lord made it very clear that I needed to start a daily habit of personal **prayer** once again. It was a practice which I first began back in my early school days. Somehow, it had slipped to a lesser place of importance in my day with God.

Now He was saying that I needed to learn it all over again. And I did! I went back to school with Jesus. I learned some precious lessons that I want to share with you—from my heart to yours.

As a church leader, the Lord first required that I share my failure with my people. I told them that probably many, if not most, of them didn't have a time of daily devotions either. For some of them their fault could be traced back to their church leader—who had not provided the example.

Then I told them how God had lovingly and wisely instructed me to renew my daily practice of morning **prayer**. I had willingly listened to God and obeyed.

Because I had renewed my own **prayer** life, I was ready to teach them truth that was fresh from God's heart to mine. And that is the purpose of our teaching time in our services at our church as well!

1. How Long Should I Pray?

The first question that comes to most people's minds is how much time they should spend in morning **prayer**. I am going to tell you a rule right now. Don't set a specific time limit. You will defeat yourself right from the start. **Prayer** will become a task or heavy burden rather than a door into a loving relationship with your heavenly Father.

a. Set Aside A Time For Prayer. We need to set aside a time to pray. If we are going to spend more time in prayer, it means we will spend less time doing something else.

Therefore, we must decide what must be removed so that prayer can take its place.

Most of us waste a certain amount of time in the evening with unnecessary things. For instance, I had formed the habit of listening to a late evening news and weather report on the radio before going to bed. I decided to give that up.

Everyone most likely has something they could cut back on in the evening to allow an earlier bedtime. Twenty-five to thirty minutes less at night means we can arise that much earlier in the morning. That is just the time that could be needed to start our practice of daily devotions.

2. Prayer: Fellowship With Jesus

It takes a certain amount of will power to get a habit started. Once the pattern is formed, it becomes a natural part of our life.

We know and feel that something is missing when it is left out. We really miss being with the Lord in that personal and special way. It truly becomes a time of close companionship that is sweet and satisfying.

We know of course that to miss a time of daily devotion with the Lord does not mean the rest of the day is doomed for failure. Our basic trust is in the One to Whom we pray, not just our prayers. God is faithful to help us anytime we turn to Him.

It is true, however, that some things might be avoided, and others more easily overcome when we have been fully prepared through our morning prayers.

We also need to know that while our times of personal devotion are a blessing to us, they also bring great pleasure to the Lord. He really wants to be with us, and cares for us very much.

What a privilege is ours to greet the Lord at the beginning of each new day, and to know He desires to be a part of every detail of our lives. May we daily honor His presence by our prayers.

C. A SIX-FOLD PROGRAM FOR DAILY PRAYER

There are six important areas which I feel should be a part of our daily morning devotions. They are the basis for the following outline on prayer.

I. THANKSGIVING AND PRAISE — OFFERING UP YOURSELF.

- A. Daily purpose in praise.
- B. Present your body.
- C. Sing a new song.
- D. Worship in the Spirit.

II. CONFESSION AND CLEANSING — OFFERING UP YOUR HEART.

- A. Invite a search.
- B. Don't be deceived.
- C. Set a guard.
- D. Keep the goal in view.

III. ORDER AND OBEDIENCE — OFFERING UP YOUR DAY.

- A. Surrender your day to God.
- B. Show childlike need.

- C. Ask for specific guidance.
- D. Obey instructions.

IV. FAMILY AND CHURCH — OFFERING UP THOSE NEAR AND DEAR.

- A. Name immediate family daily.
- B. Open to your extended family.
- C. Remember the Father's family.
- D. Include "the single."

V. THE ROLE OF INTERCESSION IN REACHING THE WORLD FOR JESUS.

- A. A model church for prayer and missions.
- B. Prayer problems: wrong attitudes, motives and methods.
- C. Intercession defined.
- D. Three forces which are at work in spiritual warfare.
- E. Three important concepts in intercession.

VI. FOREIGN COUNTRIES AND NATIONS — OFFERING UP THE WHOLE WORLD.

- A. Intercession for the nations.
- B. Intercession for evangelists.
- C. Spiritual warfare for evangelism.
- D. Intercession for national leaders and peace.

For the rest of this Bible lesson we will follow the above outline in our study together.

Chapter 2

Thanksgiving And Praise (OFFERING UP YOURSELF)

A. DAILY PURPOSE IN PRAISE

The Bible says in Psalm 100:4, *"Enter into his gates with thanksgiving and into his courts with praise."*

There are two basic reasons for which we can praise God:

- For Who He is — truth about God's nature and character.
- For what He has done — gifts, blessings, protection, answers to **prayer**, etc.

1. Praise Him For Who He Is

I can tell you something right now, dear one. Praising God every day for Who He is will change your life!

You might begin by simply saying: "Lord, I praise You today because You are my Savior. You have not only saved me from my sins of the past, but You are also my Savior right now. I know You will save me from many things even today — from fears, doubts and angry words. I really thank You for being such a strong and faithful Savior."

On the next day you can take another side of God's character and think about that "Lord, I praise You because You are almighty. You are stronger than anything that might

come my way today. I can be sure that You will protect and strengthen me no matter what may happen."

Then again you might want to thank the Lord for being the Truth: "Lord, I praise You for being so faithful and true. I can always trust the truth of Your Word — it will never fail. In Your truth is freedom, and I can walk in that wonderful liberty today."

In this way you can continue to praise God for a different part or aspect of His nature every day. I have seen books which give a special name for Jesus for each day of the year. You could make up your own list for a week at a time. I can assure you your praise and worship will become very fresh and meaningful.

2. Praise Him For What He Has Done

Also, praise the Lord for what He has done. There are some past blessings for which we just can't thank the Lord enough. We keep thanking Him over and over again. That is wonderful to do, but also keep up to date. Pick out something special that God did in your life yesterday for which to praise Him. That will keep our prayer-and-praise life bright and fresh.

B. OFFER UP YOUR BODY TO THE LORD

Romans 12:1 tells us to do that. "*Christian brothers, I ask you from my heart to give your bodies to God because of his loving-kindness to us. Let your bodies be a living and holy gift offered to him.*

"He is pleased with this kind of gift. When you think of what God has done for you, is this too much to ask? This is the true and spiritual worship which he desires. "

It is spiritual worship to offer our bodies to God. How do we offer our bodies? One way is to kneel down. If you can't kneel, sit before the Lord with a humble heart. (They were all sitting, when the Spirit first came on the Day of Pentecost.)

It is good, however, to kneel when we can. In this way we show our desire to humbly submit and offer ourselves to God. It is more than just a religious form or ritual. It means we are bowing our hearts before the Lord.

There are many ways to offer our body to the Lord.

This morning I danced before the Lord. It was only for a short time, but I did it with a heart filled with praise and joy. The Scriptures also tell us to lift up our heads and our hands unto the Lord. "*Clap your hands all you people, and shout to the Lord with a voice of victory "* (Ps 47:1).

It does not have to be the same act of praise every day. But do offer your body in some way to the Lord at the beginning of the day.

You will find it much easier to resist the claims of the world for your body if you do. Hands lifted to God in holy praise early in the morning will not so quickly give way to unholy acts of disobedience.

When our bodies are not offered and submitted to God, we can suffer from all kinds of problems. Overeating, laziness and unholy sex are all body sins. Body praise is one way we can become strong in resisting the "*world, the flesh and the devil.*" Let us offer our bodies to God in praise every day!

C. SING A NEW SONG

Psalm 96:1 says: "*Sing unto the Lord a new song.*" How is this possible? From Whom do we receive these new songs? It is from the Holy Spirit and His gifts.

1. Three Ways Of Singing

Paul describes this. "...*I will sing with the spirit...*" (I Cor 14:15). Paul used the Gifts of the Spirit to help him sing new songs. The following verses refer to three ways of singing to the Lord.

"Speaking to yourselves in a) psalms and b) hymns and c) spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord"(Eph 5:19).

"... teaching and admonishing one another in a) psalms and b) hymns and c) spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Col 3:16).

Most of us sing Psalms and hymns. What are "spiritual songs?" These are "new-songs" the Holy Spirit gives us. They are available to all Spirit-filled believers who will use the enablements provided by the Spirit.

2. Singing The Psalms

Great leaders throughout the history of the Church have taught us to praise by singing the Scriptures. I was reading a book recently. It was named, "A Serious Call To A Devout And Holy Life." This book was written in the early part of the 1700s. The author said Christians ought to sing something from the Psalms every morning.

The Psalms are a rich source for songs to sing to the Lord. They also give us an example to follow.

King David was the sweet singer of Israel. How did he begin each day? The answer can be found in the Psalms themselves:

"Morning by morning I lay my needs and desires before you and wait with great hope and expectation " (Ps 5:3).

"I will sing of your strength; in the morning I will sing of your love " (Ps 59:16).

"My heart is set, O God. My heart is set, therefore I will sing and give praise. Wake up, my soul! Wake up harp and lyre! I will awaken the dawn " (Ps 57:7,8).

How long will all of this take? Maybe three or four minutes at the beginning. But as our spirit is joined with His Spirit in joyful song, we will forget all about the time, and wonder how it could have passed so quickly.

Besides the Psalms, other Scripture-passages can be sung as well. Sometimes the Holy Spirit will give us our own tunes.

This is what Paul and Silas experienced in prison. "*And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God... And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone's bands were loosed"* (Acts 16:25,26). What power there is in singing TO THE LORD.

We can be sure of one thing. Whatever effort we make in singing praise to our God will be a sweet sound to His ear.

D. WORSHIP IN THE SPIRIT

"But the hour comes, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him " (John 4:23).

Ephesians 5:18-19 says, "*Be overfilled with the Spirit... sing and make music in your heart to the Lord.*"

Our prayer and singing may be *"in the Spirit"* (ICor 14:14-16). Singing and praying in the Spirit has a special meaning. It means to sing and pray in a tongue or language which comes from the Holy Spirit.

The song or prayer is made up of sounds or speech which has not been learned. This language is not understood by the mind of the one praying or singing. Nor is it usually understood by someone nearby who may be listening. It is, however, understood by God because it is by His Spirit. *"For he that speaks in an unknown tongue speaks not unto men, but unto God..."* (I Cor 14:2).

The Apostle Paul tells us (Rom 8:26,27) that sometimes we don't know how to pray or what to pray for as we should. However, the Holy Spirit can pray to God through us with sounds or a language we don't understand. Paul assures us that such praying is always in line with the will of God.

Often after praying *"in the Spirit"*, we will begin to pray with our native or learned language in great power and wisdom. In 1 Corinthians 14:14-16, Paul refers to this as praying with the "understanding" (or the interpretation of what we prayed in other tongues).

Praying "in the Spirit" can be followed with "praying with the understanding" (referred to as Interpretation of Tongues). *"Wherefore let him that speaks in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret"* (I Cor 14:13).

Praying in tongues is a powerful tool and gracious gift of God's Holy Spirit. It should be an important part of our daily devotional life.

Singing in the Spirit can have a like purpose. Sometimes we just can't put into words how much we love the Lord Jesus. Again the Holy Spirit helps us by giving sounds and songs of praise in a language we don't understand with our minds.

We do know in our hearts that it is an overflow of love, joy and praise to God, and that we are being strengthened in our spirit (I Cor 14:2,4,17,18).

The above teaching explains how we can use the Gifts of the Spirit in our private devotions. In our private devotions we can take great freedom. We will be built up, and the Lord will be pleased. See Section A5.4 for further teaching on this.

Paul is thankful to God that in his private devotions he prays in tongues (languages given by the Spirit) more than anyone else (I Cor 14:18). What a powerful example for us to follow in our own daily life of devotion!

Chapter 3

Confession And Cleansing (OFFERING UP YOUR HEART)

A. INVITE A SEARCH

Along with our bodies we also need to offer our hearts to God. We should ask and invite the Lord to search our hearts. The Psalmist says it with these words: *"Lord, search me and know my heart. Try [test] me and know my thoughts, and see if there be any evil way in me. Lead me in the way that lasts forever "* (Ps 139:23-24).

This is not the **prayer** of a man who at the time was in deep sin or great failure. David experienced such times. Psalm 51 is his prayer of repentance for adultery and murder (sometimes called "the sinner's" Psalm). But this was not the case when David wrote Psalm 139.

In the earlier verses of this Psalm, David speaks of God's loving hand upon his life. He knows that the Lord is with him everywhere, and all the time. He knows that God made him in a wonderful way, and has a wonderful plan for his life.

He goes on to say that the Lord's promises of blessing to him are like the sands of the sea in number. He is aware of God's great love, which is very precious to him in every way.

This Psalm is a picture of a man who is living in fellowship with God. Yet, he is asking God to search his heart, and try his thoughts for some inner evil that he might not know about.

This Psalm tells us in the opening verses that God knows us better than we know ourselves. How wise it is to **invite His search**; to let Him point out any danger areas in our lives that might bring hurt or harm to ourselves or others.

When I was a boy, my dad would give me a list of things that I was to do every Saturday. It was hard work, and usually took four hours or more to finish. Then I could spend the rest of the day playing.

When Dad would come home in the evening, he would take the list and look around to see if everything had been done right. Sometimes he would point out some hidden corner which had not been swept perfectly clean. I would take a little hand brush and finish the job properly right then and there.

Now my dad was not putting me down in some unkind way. He was just helping me to learn how to do a job right the first time. When I would get the job done, he was always ready to say: "That's good work. Son." As you might know, next week when I would sweep the floor I would remember all the "hidden corners" -- places I had not even seen before.

It is possible for all of us to have "hidden corners" in our hearts that need to be swept clean.

I don't say this unkindly, but there are many people who are caught up in sinful habits that they have little awareness of. They will eventually reap what they sow. The results of their sin will bring the harvest of pain and punishment in time. Then they will wonder, "Why did this happen to me?"

Church leaders spend many hours trying to help people with personal problems resulting from hidden sins. They are thinking, saying and doing wrong things and don't even know it.

Very few people come and say, "I just decided I was going to turn my back on God, and live a sinful life." Most of the time they come hurt and wounded on the inside because they don't know how to walk with Jesus, or hear His voice.

If we ask the Lord to show us our hidden sins. He will speak to us, and help us to sweep every little corner of our lives bright and clean.

As we listen for His voice, and seek to obey His Word, we will learn to walk close by His side every day. Then as the night draws near, we too can hear Him say: "That was a good job. Son. I am really proud of you." And that is worth it all!

B. DON'T BE DECEIVED

Deception is believing something is right when it is wrong. 1 John 1:7-10 tells us that as long as we walk in the light of God's love and truth, the blood of Jesus keeps on cleansing us from all sin. It also says, *"If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves. This same beautiful scripture goes on to say, "But if we confess [tell God] our sin, he is faithful to forgive and cleanse us."*

1. Three Areas For Deception

From this we see there are three possible areas for deception:

- a. We Have No Sin.** Thinking we have no sin for which to be forgiven.
- b. We Don't Need To Confess.** Thinking if we do sin, God will either overlook it, or forgive us even if we don't face it or tell Him about it.
- c. We Won't Be Forgiven.** Thinking we cannot, or will not be forgiven even when we do confess our sin.

2. Deception Spoils Fellowship

If we are deceived in any one of the three areas, our fellowship (walk and talk with God) will be spoiled. We will find it hard to **pray**, praise or worship the Lord.

God's Word won't bring the joy and peace it once did. It will be hard for us to look full into the face of our Lord. We may try to act like everything is all right, but deep on the inside we know something is wrong.

a. Hurting Hearts. Those who believe they never sin at all, keep having problems caused by their sin. But they don't know why they have them — or why their heart still hurts.

b. Hardened Hearts. Those who sin but feel they don't have to tell God, because He forgives them anyway, can become hard of heart. After a while they don't even hear the Lord trying to warn them. To walk so far away from God is very dangerous.

Was this the problem of the Pharisees? *"And [some] of the Pharisees... said unto him, Are we blind also? Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye [falsely] say, We see; therefore your sin remains"* (John 9:40,41). The Pharisees were deceived and did not know it. Therefore their sin remained.

c. Heavy Hearts. Those who feel that even though they tell God their sins. He will not really forgive and forget, will always have a heavy heart. They ever walk under a dark cloud of guilt and condemnation.

How good it is to be open and honest and say that sometimes we do fall or fail. God is ever ready, however, to forgive, restore and strengthen us. He also wants to teach us how to walk above the call and fall of sin.

The way to live beyond sin is to come to Him before we sin. It is easier to come to Him beforehand rather than afterwards.

3. Be Sensitive To The Spirit

In our morning devotion we can tell the Lord that we have no desire to be deceived during the day. We really want to walk in the light of His love and truth. We want to know and feel His presence with us all the time. In this way we can serve and obey Him with gladness of heart.

We should ask God daily to make us very sensitive to His Holy Spirit. For He can warn us when we are in danger. He will also let us know very quickly if we sin against His love or truth.

I think we all understand that if we fail God during the day, we don't lose our **salvation**. The littlest sin, however, can quickly spoil our **fellowship** (our walk and talk with God).

We then want to be always ready to ask Him for His forgiveness, because we do not want our fellowship with Him to be broken. We want to please the Lord Jesus in all things, and grieve Him in none!

C. SET A GUARD OVER YOUR MIND AND MOUTH

David wrote, *"Let the words of my mouth and the meditation [thoughts] of my heart be pleasing in your eyes, Oh Lord, my Strength and Redeemer"* (Ps 19:14).

Someone has said that while we can't keep the birds from flying overhead, we can keep them from building a nest in our hair!

1. Guarding Your Mind

a. Three Main Sources Of Thoughts. Thoughts and temptations can come to our minds from many different places. In fact, there are three main sources:

- 1) **The World** — from what we see and hear.
- 2) **The Flesh** — from our old sin nature.
- 3) **The Devil** — from the spirit world.

However, just because a thought comes to our mind doesn't mean we have to dwell on it. Unholy thoughts unchallenged—will lead to unholy words and deeds. We need therefore to cut them off short, and replace them with holy thoughts.

b. Make Jesus Lord Of Your Mind. We can begin the day by asking God to keep our minds.

When a wrong thought arises. He will then quickly let us know. One easy way to stop it short is to say, "Lord Jesus, you see that thought too, and we are not going to give it any more time or attention, are we?"

Talking to Jesus has great stopping power; Our flesh hears it. The spirit world hears it. This keeps us from carrying the thought on, or coming under a false sense of guilt or condemnation.

Every Christian will have wrong thoughts at one time or another, but Jesus can be the Lord of our minds as well as our hearts.

2. Guarding Your Mouth

"Death and life are in the power of the tongue..." (Prov 18:21).

a. Words Are Powerful. We also want to watch our words. Words have feeling and meaning, and are very powerful for good or evil. They can hurt or heal. They can bring joy or sadness. They can build up or fear down. They can minister love or fear — life or death!

Sometimes words may have little effect other than to waste time. *"But I say unto you, That every **idle word** that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment"* (Matt 12:36). Time is life, and to waste one is to waste the other.

b. Know When To Speak. We have all had the Lord warn us about our words at one time or another. Maybe we were about to speak, but the Lord said, "Don't say it; it is not needed right now." Maybe we didn't know at the time how important it was to keep the words to ourselves. But God did!

Other times the Lord might tell us to speak out. He has set something in our hearts from His heart, and He wants His people to hear the word. That is the time to speak out in faith. Words from the Lord will always bring life!

Beginning each day by talking with God will help us to hear His voice throughout the rest of the day. This is an important reason for developing the habit of daily devotions.

D. KEEP THE GOAL IN VIEW

The Apostle Paul speaks of this in Philippians 3:13-14: *"No, dear brothers, I am not all that I should be yet. But I do one thing. I forget everything that is behind me, and look forward to that which is ahead of me.*

"My eyes are on the goal. I press on to win the race and get the prize. That is the purpose for which God is calling us to heaven in Christ Jesus. "

This is a very special verse to me. In fact, I have taken it as my life verse. There is a reason this part of God's Word is so important to me. Let me tell you the story which is behind it.

When I was fourteen years old, I was listening to a woman preacher. Her name was Esther. She was an evangelist who had come to preach in our church.

One night when she was preaching, she told how she had come very close to death's door. She and some other people were in a dry river bed when an unexpected flood of water came rushing down upon them.

They joined their hands together in prayer and stood against the force of the oncoming water. By "pressing against" the power of the rushing river, they were able to stand together, and finally move on to a place of safety.

She told the story to help us understand the words Paul used in "pressing on" to reach God's goal for our lives.

I was deeply moved in my heart that night I told the Lord: "That is me kind of person I want to be. I want to always 'press on' and win the very best that you have for my life in Christ." That still is my long-range goal and life purpose in the Lord.

Long-range goals are reached by completing a series of daily short-range goals. Every day in God's plan for our lives there is a number of little goals to be reached. These are little "jobs" He wants us to do.

During our morning prayers God will bring several things to our mind that will be a part of His plan for the day. (We will discuss this in more detail in our next section.) These are little jobs he wants us to do. When we complete these little tasks in faith and obedience, we will have "pressed on" toward God's greater, long-range goal for our lives.

Every morning during our devotional time, we should give both our lives and the day back to God. We should pray that we "press on" no matter what may come against us. We will not give up in our effort to do God's will.

We can reach our goals in God. We will win our heavenly prize. Come, therefore, let us greet the day with faith, hope and courage in-Christ Jesus!

Chapter 4

Order And Obedience (OFFERING UP YOUR DAY)

A. SURRENDER YOUR DAY TO GOD

"Commit your way unto the Lord. Trust also in him, and he will bring it to pass... Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him to act" (Ps 37:5,7).

The two little words, "commit" and "rest," are of great importance. They form the divine doorway through which you pass into your daily walk with the Lord.

By "committing" the things to God which we are powerless to change and "resting" in the sure knowledge that *"...He will work all things together for our good"* (Rom 8:28), we bring divine order to each day.

We do not shout orders to God.

Come before the Lord each day and say, "Jesus, I want to talk to You about today."

Then you tell Him what you are concerned about. Describe your day to Him point by point — people, places, events, decisions, etc.

There are always things that come our way that we don't expect. That is why we never seem to get everything done that we have planned.

Some days, nothing we planned to accomplish gets done. Then we can feel very frustrated or defeated and upset. Fruitless days can be very discouraging.

I have discovered that with the passage of time, what I thought were "fruitless" days have turned out to be more "fruitful" than I first thought.

It is encouraging to remember that God is never caught off guard by me "unexpected."

Our plans and purposes may fail, but never His. Nothing will ever be a total waste or loss if we give our life and day back to the Lord every morning.

There are days when I have missed my early morning devotional time with God. I failed to order my day before Him. I have been in such a hurry to get going in my **work for the Lord** that I didn't take the time to wait upon the **Lord of the work**.

Usually on such days, by about 10:30 or 11:00 a.m., my day has become very confused. My head feels and sounds like a busy hive of bees with all kinds of things buzzing in and out. Have you had days like that?

I can run into some very thorny and difficult things by 11:00 o'clock in the morning, whether I have prayed or not. To have been prepared by prayer provides real spiritual strength.

To have ordered the day before God gives one the faith that He will wisely guide us in the unexpected problems that arise. It makes a great difference in the day — a very great difference!

I am grateful that God's Throne of Grace is truly one of grace and not of judgment. I am so glad we can readily come to Him even in our failures, and He is ready to forgive and restore.

There are times in the rush and confusion of a prayerless and unordered day that I have dropped to my knees and cried out for God's help and wisdom. To my joy I discovered that although I had failed to wait upon Him, He was still waiting upon me.

It is never too late to **pray**, but we can spare ourselves and others a lot of grief by doing it early in the morning. That is the time to "commit" our day unto the Lord — then we can "rest" in Him.

B. SHOW CHILD-LIKE NEED

"In all your ways look to him, and he will direct your paths. Do not be wise in your own eyes. Fear the Lord and depart from evil " (Prov 3:6,7).

I want you to know how important it is to maintain a childlike dependence on God. As a child needs a father, so we need God. We are totally dependent upon Him. We need Him very much every day.

I have preached the gospel over forty years. But I want to tell you something. Sunday morning when I was praying, I earnestly said:

"Father God, this is Your boy. Jack. I am coming to You as Your child because I need Your help today. I don't want to just follow a familiar religious form in our Sunday service at church, I want to lead Your people into true spiritual worship. Father, I refuse to be 'wise in my own eyes.'"

To be "wise in your own eyes" means to be proud and arrogant — to feel confident in ourselves — that we can do things without God's help.

And, as far as the form or pattern of the church service is concerned, that may be true. However, one can conduct a church service without the people meeting or encountering God.

The success of a meeting is dependent upon the power of God's Spirit. We must ever and in all ways rely upon Him. This is the simple child-like dependence which we must maintain. Let us join David in his prayer: *"Bow down thine ear, O LORD, hear me: for I am poor and needy "* (PsS6:1).

C. ASK FOR SPECIFIC GUIDANCE

"Show me your ways. Oh Lord; teach me your paths. Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation. On you do I wait all the day long" (Ps 25:4,5).

I order my day before the Lord by saying, "Father, all throughout this day I will be looking to You. Show me Your ways. Teach me Your paths." I specifically ask God to guide me on many different matters.

Then as I come to these points during the course of the day, I again turn to Him and say, "Help me here. Lord." In this way I establish a reference point in the morning to which I can relate throughout the day.

Recently, I was just about to say something when I felt a little check or brake in my spirit as if God's Spirit were saying, "Don't say that!" My remark was not ugly or untrue; it was just unnecessary.

I felt like arguing with God: "I know it is not necessary, but I want to say it anyway. It is not going to hurt anything." God simply replied, "Don't say it. Just don't!"

Sometimes we overlook or fail to obey God's little stop-sign, and speak anyway. What we thought was a harmless word becomes a very painful experience for someone. Then we are so sorry we didn't heed the warning signal the Holy Spirit set in our heart.

Even if it seems that our remark caused no harm, we feel a little sad that we went ahead anyway just to satisfy our compulsion to talk.

In this case, I did keep my words to myself, and felt the approval of the Holy Spirit. It is a good feeling to know that our attitude and action was pleasing to the Lord.

The point I want you to get is this: my ability to exercise self-control came from my morning prayer time. I had ordered my day before the Lord, and had prayed, *"May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight"* (Ps 19:14).

If we ask the Lord for specific guidance at the beginning of the day. He will faithfully direct us in all the details that will come our way all day long.

D. OBEY INSTRUCTIONS

Jesus clearly tells us that our heavenly Father will supply our needs:

"Look at the birds of the air, they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them... Look at the lilies in the field, they do not labor or spin, yet even Solomon in all of his glory was not dressed like one of them..."

"If God clothes the grass of the field... shall he not clothe you?"

"...for your heavenly Father knows that you have need of all these things" (Matt 6:26-32).

We don't need to worry about what we will eat or wear. Just as our heavenly Father cares and provides for the little birds and the lilies of the field, even more, He cares and will provide for us.

But do we just sit and passively wait for His provision? Or is there something we are required to do in order to enjoy His supply? The Scripture answers these questions. God is not going to fulfill these promises without our doing what He requires.

The Bible says, *"Ask and it will be given to you... Pray therefore... Give us this day our daily bread [food]..."* (Luke 11:9; Matt 6:9,11).

This is the simple thing God requires. *"Ask and you will receive. "Don't worry, but do ask!"*

Is God saying that if we don't **pray** we won't receive? Yes!

James says, *"...you have not because you ask not"* (Jas 4:2).

Salvation is a good example. It is for all, and it is forever — but only those who ask, receive it.

We receive the gift of eternal life when we ask Jesus to come into our hearts and become our Lord and Savior. But we must ask.

The same truth applies to our daily affairs and needs. We must ask God for our "daily bread." This refers to our material or bodily needs and our spiritual needs as well.

Jesus said, *"...My meat [food] is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work"* (John 4:34).

What does this mean?

Just as the hunger of the body can only be met by eating a meal, the hunger of the heart and soul can only be met by doing the will of God. We can only do God's will by knowing His will.

Our Father has a daily plan and purpose for our lives which we discover each day in our devotions. His will is to become the "daily bread" for which we pray.

The key to knowing God's will is to ask for it — and ask for it every day. That doesn't mean He will reveal every detail of your day before it happens. It does mean that when the day comes to a close. His purpose for your life will have been completed for that day — IF you asked for His will before the day's activities began.

It may not have been your will, but it will have been His. God will work everything together for His good purpose in Christ Jesus. His will for us is to become like His Son. Nothing will be lost, nothing will be wasted (Rom 8:28,29).

You may not even realize what details of God's good purpose were fulfilled in a given day. It may have looked like one of those "fruitless" days that we talked about earlier.

But give God some time to bring forth the harvest. It may take a week» or a year — or even half a lifetime. However, there will come a day when we all can say, "Jesus led me all the way."

Give each day back to God with your life. Order each day before Him. Joyfully ask God for the daily bread of His will for you — and be at peace!

Chapter 5

Family And Church

(OFFERING UP THOSE NEAR AND DEAR)

A. NAME YOUR FAMILY MEMBERS DAILY

"In the land of Uz there lived a man by the name of Job. He was a good man who feared God and avoided evil. He had a large family of seven sons and three daughters... His children enjoyed giving birthday parties to one another...."

"Afterwards, Job would call his children to him and sanctify or purify them before the Lord. He would get up early in the morning and make a trespass [burnt] offering for each of them."

"For Job said, 'Perhaps my sons have sinned and turned away from God in their hearts.' This was Job's regular practice " (Job 1:1-5).

We have talked about offering yourself, your heart and your day to the Lord. Now we want to talk about offering to the Lord those people who are close to you — those who are near and dear.

I am referring to the people who are within our "circle of touch." They include our families, friends, and brothers and sisters in Christ with whom we are personally acquainted.

Of the different areas of prayer in our outlines, this is the one which stirs my emotions the most. I have very tender and loving feelings for those who are close to my heart. I know you do too.

We need to pray for those in our immediate or near family by name every day. This is what Job did. It was his practice to bring his children before the Lord in prayer. He was deeply concerned about their relationship with God.

You should be concerned about your grandparents, parents, spouse, children and grandchildren if you have such members as a part of your family.

Even if you are living alone, there is a small circle of people whose lives are close to yours. They may not be blood relatives, but you think of them as your "family" of friends. That is where we start. Name them in prayer every day.

I would like to share two personal things with you about family prayer.

1. My Daddy's Prayers

The first has to do with my daddy. I have always called my father "Daddy," and I guess I always will. Daddy died in 1979, but I have many wonderful memories of his life.

We have a custom. One day each year, we celebrate a day of thanksgiving to God for His blessings on us. This has always been a very special day for our family.

My wife and I usually have everyone over to our house for a special meal. We set up a very large table for the food and our guests. The whole place is crowded with family and friends. It is a time of joy, fellowship and thanksgiving to God.

Daddy always sat at one end of the table, and I at the other end. Then everyone would tell of some of the lovely things that God had done for them over the last year.

None of us knew in 1979 this was going to be the last Thanksgiving dinner we would have with Daddy. He shared with us how thankful he was that all of his children were serving the Lord, and that our families were blessed. It was a tender time, and we all were moved to the point of tears.

Then Daddy said something I will never forget: "I pray for all of you children seven times a day!" Now I knew my daddy prayed. He was a good man and a godly man. But I never knew he prayed seven times a day.

I don't think he meant that he got on his knees each time to pray, but he had his prayer routine firmly fixed in his mind. I think I know some of the things he would say because I have heard him pray for us out loud many times.

I don't know when he started his daily prayers for our family. He received Jesus when I was a year and a half old. I am sure he prayed for me since the day I was born and probably before — even while I was in the womb of my mother. In the latter years of his life he prayed for me seven times a day.

There is a reason our church has been so richly blessed. It is this. My mamma and daddy were people of prayer, and we all are reaping the benefits of their faithfulness. May they serve as an example for the rest of us.

Pray for your children all the time. They could not receive a better heritage.

2. Praying For My Family

The second thing I want to share with you is the way I pray for my family. I begin by praying for my wife: "Lord, I ask you to bless my dear wife." Then I will pray about some problems and ministry opportunities I know she will be facing during the day. It doesn't take a long time, but I faithfully pray for her every day.

I believe prayer is one of the reasons our marriage of thirty years has been so blessed. I don't mean to say we have never had any problems or difficult times together. We have. But we have learned to grow in the Lord through such times.

Daily prayer strengthens the marriage relationship before God in a beautiful but powerful way. Pray for your spouse.

Then I pray for my oldest daughter and her husband. She loves me very much. She and her husband are part of the leadership team in the church.

About two weeks ago, she opened her heart and shared with me some of the hard things they were going through. Then she came over and hugged me and cried some.

I was glad to be able to pray with her. I have been praying for her longer than any of the other children because she is the oldest. She dearly loves the Lord, her husband and their children. She is very dear to me, and I pray for them a lot — every day — by name.

They are a lovely family, and I am a very proud father. However, good things like that don't just happen. God does it when we as parents faithfully pray.

The Lord has led one of my sons into teaching. The training of young people is a high calling. Public schools offer many opportunities to tell others about Jesus, and I also pray for him and his spouse every day.

Our other son and his wife are preparing for church leadership ministry. Their desire is to help a little church that almost died away for lack of leadership. I admire their zeal and faith and warmly support them with my love and prayers.

Our fourth child (a daughter) is sixteen years old. About once a week we take a walk and she tells me about her interests and problems at school. One thing for sure, she has a daddy who will pray daily for her personal needs and school activities.

Then I pray for my mother, my grandmother and others in our family who are close to my heart.

What a privilege and responsibility we all have to pray for our loved ones whom God has set within our family circles!

B. OPEN TO YOUR LARGER FAMILY

"Don't hide yourself from your own flesh" (Isa58:7).

I didn't understand what this verse meant when the Lord first put it upon my heart some fifteen years ago. He simply told me the whole fifty-eighth chapter of Isaiah was going to come alive in my future ministry for Him.

I came to understand that "your own flesh" means our blood relatives beyond our immediate family. It is a much larger circle by far. For me it involves my "aunties" and their children. I had not been praying for them. I didn't even think of them. Only recently have they become part of my circle of prayer.

My wife is one of nine children. Through her I have over twenty-five nieces and nephews. Many of them- names I didn't even know. Never were they part of my prayers.

I believed that I had married my wife, not her family. They were nice to see once in a while, but apart from that I was happy to be left alone. I didn't dislike them; I just didn't want to be bothered by them. Our relationship was polite, but cool and distant.

In the early years of our marriage God began to deal with me about my attitudes toward my larger family. I was not to *"hide from my own flesh."*

Love will gladly assume the greater responsibility for family prayer that comes with marriage. The Lord changed my heart, and now I am not only learning the names of my nieces and nephews, but praying for them as well.

Now, I can't pray for them all every day as I do for my immediate family, but I do on a weekly basis. This way I don't get tired or burned out with a burden God has not given. I don't know the details of their needs, so specific prayer is not always possible.

However, I can remember them before the throne of God, by name. The Holy Spirit can then pray through me on their behalf. Should one of them need urgent and special prayer, I am sensitive and ready to take on that burden as the Spirit leads.

In this way my prayer life can stay fresh and alive, and can be a powerful force for our larger family circle.

C. REMEMBER THE FATHER'S FAMILY

"I bow my knee before the Father of whom the whole family of heaven and earth is named" (Eph 3:14,15).

The Father's family is the Church. How do we pray for the Church? First of all, we pray for the people that make up the church congregation.

This is different than praying for the "programs" or activities of the church. They are important and should be supported by our prayers.

But without our people we wouldn't have any programs. So it is important to pray for the church family.

I encourage and tell our people that every time they bless their food they should also say: "And Lord, bless our church." This is not a selfish prayer. It is just saying that we are a part of a church family and together we want God's blessing.

We are aware that as we are blessing others, they are blessing us also. We are all seeking God's favor and blessing, that we might better serve Him.

There is another way to pray for the Father's family. It involves close friends within the congregation. These may be people in your home group, or those with whom you work in some other function of the church.

I want to share something with you that I learned from an elder brother in our church. He was in a prayer circle where each one shared a prayer-need.

He was so moved by the Lord about a need that had been shared by someone that he told the person, "I am going to pray for you every day this week." And he did. God answered his prayer and a great victory was won. And he has prayed for many others in the same way since that day.

It is very important to support one another with our love and prayers. Truly this is what it means to "remember the Father's family."

D. INCLUDE THE SINGLE

"A father to the fatherless, a defender of the widows, is God in his holy dwelling. He sets the single — the lonely one — in families..." (Ps 68:5,6).

We live in a very lonely world. It is possible to feel all alone even in the midst of a large crowd. Some of you know exactly what I am talking about, for the basic emotion of your life is loneliness.

There are lonely people all around us. Some of them may be our neighbors next door. They may seem to be doing just fine, but in their hearts they feel unwanted, unneeded and unloved. There are people in this world who have never had anyone who has ever prayed for them.

Can you think what it would be like to live all of your life and never have had anybody bring your name to God in prayer? I was always prayed for. But I know there are those who grew up and nobody ever prayed for them.

If this is true for you, then God wants to make it up to you in two ways. First, He wants you to know what it is like to be loved, cared and prayed for by your family in the Lord. Then He wants to give you a special ministry in prayer for the many lonely, left-out ones whom He will bring across your path.

In fact, God wants all of us to be on the watch for those whom He would have us adopt in prayer. All of us know persons in our neighborhood, church, school or work who seem to be lonely.

Sometimes they may appear to be a little strange or different. They don't seem to fit in well with the people around them. For that reason they are just left alone or pushed to one side. They may want to relate to others and be warmly accepted, but they don't know how to act or respond with social grace.

They need someone who will love and support them. This may or may not mean God wants you to become a special friend. But you can always adopt such a one as a lonely single whom God would set into His family through your prayers.

I can tell you what may happen next. You will find that you begin to love and care for these lonely ones. God will put in your heart the love that is in His heart for that person. And love has a way of wanting to reach out and encourage people who are lonely and hurting.

This was clearly seen in the life of Jesus when He was here on earth. Now, through the grace and power of His Spirit, our hands can become His hands. We become the family into which the Father sets His "single ones."

Chapter 6

Intercession In Reaching The World For Jesus

A. MODEL CHURCH FOR PRAYER AND MISSIONS

We find an outstanding church in the Book of Acts. It was both a praying church and a mission-minded church, and therefore is of special interest to us.

It was located in the city of Antioch on the northern coast of Syria. It was the first Gentile church, and some noted leaders in early Christianity were among its members. Luke tells us something about its special character and ministry: "*There were prophets and teachers in the church at Antioch: Barnabas... Simeon... Lucius... Manaen and Saul. While they were praying, fasting and worshipping the Lord, the Holy Spirit said: 'Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.'* After they fasted and prayed, they laid hands on them and sent them away" (Acts 13:1-3).

These three verses hold six ideas which will help us understand the kind of people God uses in reaching out to the world:

1. They Were A People Of The Word

From the list of prophets and teachers given in verse 1, we know they were a people who were taught and grounded in the Word of God.

2. They Were A People Of Worship

It was their practice to "minister unto the Lord." By their worship they welcomed God into their everyday world. His holy presence in their midst was the source of their spiritual life.

3. They Were A People Who Knew The Discipline Of Fasting

In this they brought the soulish-sensual part of their beings under the control of the Holy Spirit. Fasting is one way of saying, "I am a spirit-being before I am a physical being."

4. They Were A People Who Heard And Obeyed The Voice Of The Holy Spirit

They were in tune with His presence, and sought His direction for their lives and that of the Church.

5. They Were A People Of Prayer

The second reference to prayer and fasting shows that they knew spiritual warfare would be an important part of their missionary ministry. Their missionaries would be backed up with the battle-power of a praying people.

6. They Were A People Committed To Their Missionaries

When they laid hands on them, they linked their lives to those who were being sent out. They would continue to support them in every way possible. Their missionaries would not be forgotten.

This description of the church at Antioch gives us a practical introduction from Scripture to the whole subject of intercessory prayer.

We will develop the theme of intercession by considering a number of its different aspects.

We will also learn how to break down our responsibility for world-wide prayer into parts which we can manage without being overwhelmed. If we feel a task is too great, there is always the danger we won't even begin.

God wants us to share in the same excitement and joy which the church at Antioch felt when Paul and Barnabas returned and told of the many ways in which their prayers had been answered. Answered prayer is a rich reward for faith and obedience.

B. PRAYER PROBLEMS

Praying for the nations is different from the kinds of prayer we have discussed thus far in our series.

The number of countries and extent of their needs requires an approach which is beyond the scope of our daily prayer routine.

1. Wrong Ideas About Prayer

Many Christians find it hard to believe that their "little" prayers could really make a difference in the course of international affairs. It is almost beyond their range of reason.

Much of this kind of thinking comes from weak and wrong ideas about the nature and practice of prayer.

Prayer is not just a good feeling or noble attitude. It is not some vague kind of influence that floats around and hopefully somewhere might do somebody some good.

Prayer is the part we play in focusing God's purpose and power upon a specific point of need. God has given us the privilege and responsibility of working out His will on earth as it is in Heaven. He promises to back up our prayers of faith with His power and authority.

2. Doubt And Discouragement

Without Him we cannot; but without us. He will not.

Because prayer releases God's power, the devil doesn't want us to pray, and will discourage us in any way he can. He wants us to feel our prayers are too short, too weak or too little to have any real effect upon matters so large and far away as foreign affairs.

Furthermore, many people have a fatalistic view about the actions and reactions of foreign nations.

They believe nothing can be said or done that will make any difference. What will be, will be.

This lying doubt of the devil may be hard to lay aside because we don't always have quick and ready answers as we pray for the nations.

When we pray about daily matters close at hand we often see answers rather rapidly. This builds and encourages our faith.

However, the mixed-up matters of the world may require longer periods of time before evidence of God's divine purpose is forthcoming.

Even then, much can happen without our notice because we are so far away from the scene.

Furthermore, God's ways are not always our ways. Divine process and plan are often beyond our limited scope of understanding.

Paul tells us that even the Old Testament prophets didn't fully foresee the mystery of the Church. The idea that Jews and Gentiles were to become one Body in Christ Jesus was totally outside their circle of thought.

Some events in Jewish history must have been very difficult to understand without that revelation. Only in God's time did His purpose become clear.

The principle still applies to us today. God answers our prayers in His way and in His time. Sometimes we know, but sometimes we don't. What we do know is that He has promised to answer our prayers when we pray in faith and obedience.

3. Wrong Motives

Wrong motives can be another source of difficulty in intercessory prayer. If we are praying only out of a legalistic sense of duty, our effort will soon become a lifeless burden. True intercession must come from a heart and mind which is motivated and directed by the Holy Spirit.

Wrong methods can also defeat our desires for prayer. Our enemy would push us to one extreme or another. If he can't keep us from praying, he wants our prayers to be so vague and general we wouldn't know if God answered them or not.

"God bless our family, our nation, the world" isn't really very satisfying to us or to God. That is because faith always seeks to find a focus. With specific prayer comes a sense of definite expectation.

In the other extreme, long lists of specific needs without divine direction or even practical order can become tiresome and boring. Jesus warned against the practice of "*vain repetitions*" in prayer — many words with little purpose or power (Matt 6:7).

When our motives or methods are wrong, we quickly become discouraged and give up. We are then left feeling both guilty and helpless. We just don't know what to do.

For these reasons we will want to spend some time on both the purpose and practice of intercessory prayer. We need to know what real intercession is, and how it works in a personal and practical way.

C. INTERCESSION DEFINED

I now want to give you a simple definition of intercession. Later on we will discuss the concept of intercessory prayer in greater detail.

Intercession may be defined as: "*praying on behalf of others, under the power and direction of the Holy Spirit, knowing there will be divine results.*"

The above statement can be divided into three parts. We shall consider them one at a time.

1. Praying On Behalf Of Others

Intercession means praying for somebody besides yourself. Now the "somebody" may be someone who is near and dear to you. You care very much about his (or her) present welfare, and his eternal well-being. So you earnestly and urgently pray for him.

The "somebody" may be someone you don't even know personally — someone who lives in a far, foreign country. Maybe the "somebody" is a missionary in that country. It could even be the "country" itself. The basic idea in intercession is that it is prayer on behalf of someone else.

2. With The Power And Direction Of The Holy Spirit

Intercession is prayer with the guidance and help of the Holy Spirit. The Apostle Paul tells us the Holy Spirit is ready to help us when we don't know exactly how or for what to pray (Rom 8:26,27).

Many matters are far beyond our understanding. At such times it is a comfort to know we have a Helper Who will direct our prayers according to God's will.

The Holy Spirit will not only direct our prayers, but will also "prompt" our prayers. There are times when God will bring certain people to our mind. We should take such thoughts and impressions seriously. It is the voice of the Spirit saying, "Pray for this person, and pray for him now!" This is your divine call to intercession. Don't put it off.

We see, therefore, that in intercession the Holy Spirit tells when, how and for whom to pray. That is God's part. Our part is to obey and pray.

3. Knowing There Will Be Divine Results

Intercession makes a difference.

Prayer changes things. Intercessory prayer is the cause that produces the effect. There is a divine result to prayer that can come in no other way.

The idea that prayer can really make a difference in our lives and in our world is totally against the natural mind of man. Many pagan religions teach that we are helpless, hopeless victims of our circumstances.

This idea carries over to the world at large with even deeper and darker feelings. Fate is fixed, the future is set and there is nothing we can do about it. We can only submit to world affairs as they are, for they cannot be changed. One cannot fight against a destiny that has already been determined.

Jesus taught exactly the opposite. His life, death and resurrection proved that this world can be redeemed. It can be brought back into God's original plan and purpose. All is not lost. We are not doomed to die, but destined to live. When Christ came to this earth. He exposed the lie of the devil, and called us to a life of faith, hope and love.

Furthermore, He gave to us the right to pray as He did. His prayers were life-changing and earth-shaking in their effect.

This world will never be the same. But first, Jesus had to step in, Jesus had to take a stand and expose the Man of Darkness, and the darkness that was in man. Jesus took that step and made that stand. And so must we!

D. INTERCESSION AND SPIRITUAL WARFARE

1. The Spiritual Forces Involved

When we oppose the devil, we will be involved in a spiritual battle. For us to win, it is necessary for us to know what spiritual forces are at work. There are three:

a. The Spirit Of Darkness

b. The Spirit Of Man

c. The Spirit Of God

2. Man's Relation To Spiritual Forces

a. Man Subject To The Power Of Satan. The Spirit of darkness is headed up by Satan, the devil. We are not dealing with a funny little idea. We are dealing with a cruel and clever personality who is opposed to God and God's purpose.

Since God created man with holy purpose in mind, it is not surprising that man would become the object of Satan's attack. Satan hates everything that reveals anything of God's divine image or plan.

For that reason, the devil deceived Eve and caused Adam to fall from the position of godly character and authority which had been given them.

Since that time, not only has man been subject to the power of Satan, but also to the rule of his own fallen nature.

b. Man Subject To The Power Of The Flesh. The soulish-sensual part of man — the will, mind, emotions and senses of man apart from God's Spirit — is referred to in Scriptures as "the flesh." There is enough ungodly energy in "the flesh" to spoil our lives even without the direct help of the devil. We can do it all on our own!

Man at his best is doomed for decay apart from God. Even his finest earthly achievements finally crumble into dust. Both the spirit of darkness and man's own sinful nature are driving him in but one direction — death and decay.

It is a rather dark and dismal picture if it were not for one bright beam of glorious light — the Lord Jesus Christ.

c. Man Rules Through The Power Of The Holy Spirit. Into this dark world He came, and introduced the gracious gift of God's Holy Spirit. In the power of that life-giving Spirit, man is once again able to rule over the dark forces of death and decay.

When we submit to Jesus Christ as the Lord of our lives, we come under His authority. In the power of that authority we can oppose the evil forces of the world, the flesh and the devil.

Jesus Christ has set us free, that we might act as His agents and bring that same freedom to the lives of others. He has redeemed us — bought and brought us back into God's divine purpose — that we might become ministers of His redeeming grace throughout the whole world.

3. Intercession: A Powerful Weapon

We fulfill this divine calling in two ways — through prayer and ministry — and in that order. Intercessory prayer prepares the way and clears the air for effective ministry. It breaks the power of the devil's lies which darken the hearts and minds of men.

Prayer also supports the missionaries — God's sent ones — who will carry the good news of the gospel throughout the world. They can then touch, love, serve, give, help and minister the life of the living God in the full power and authority of His Holy Spirit.

A successful church is a fellowship of believers who are given to prayer and committed to ministry. And so it was in the church at Antioch.

They had been taught in the ways of God and sought to obey His word and wait upon Him. As they did, God said, "I am going to change the world around you, and I am going to use you to do it."

They realized that change would involve fasting and prayer and the sending forth of missionaries. They obeyed. And the world was changed.

The course of history turned on the basis of that prayer meeting in Antioch of Syria, 2000 years ago. The flow of the gospel westward, which lifted Europe out of pagan darkness, plague, poverty and despair can be traced to that time of intercessory prayer.

People of prayer can actually change the course of human history as they seek the mind of God and become obedient to His will.

So often our salvation is only seen as an escape from a wicked world which is doomed for destruction. God wants to reach the world with His love and grace just as He has reached us. He can only do it, however, through believers who will pray and obey — and by this, make room for Him to work.

E. THREE IMPORTANT CONCEPTS IN INTERCESSION

I would now like to enlarge our definition of intercession with three different words which the Lord gave me. The three words have a very special meaning. They are as follows: **intervention**, **intersection** and **interception**. We will take them one at a time.

1. Intervention

To "intervene" means to step into a situation with divine purpose in view.

Jesus stepped into our world that we might know and experience God's redemptive purpose for mankind. He had the power and authority to do that. And by doing it. He put the powers of darkness under His feet (Matt 28:18).

He now sends us into the very same world with the very same authority:

"As the Father has sent me, so send I you.... Behold, I have given you authority and power to step upon the serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy. Nothing will harm you in any way" (John 20:21; Luke 10:19).

Jesus is saying, "You are members of my Body. If these evil things are to be kept under foot, you need to step in. When you see the evil forces of the world, the flesh and the devil at work, you have the authority to intervene. Don't just let it go."

You say, "But what can we do?" PRAY! Many might respond, "We have prayed, but what can we do now?" Pray! —then OBEY! Intercession is the ground from which divine direction comes.

At Antioch, you recall, they fasted, prayed, heard the voice of the Spirit, and obeyed. After they spoke to God, He spoke to them. People who keep asking what to do may need to check the quality and depth of their prayer life.

2. Intersection

An intersection is the place where two roads meet and cross each other. Sometimes we call it a crossroads. God will bring all kinds of people, places, and events with their needs and problems "across" our paths.

When we bring the victory and power of Christ's cross into such meeting-places, they truly become divine "crossroads." On the cross, Jesus Christ broke all the powers of the world, the flesh and the devil. It was a total triumph — a complete victory!

However, the power of the cross must be personally focused on the crossroads of world need. Prayer is what focuses the power of Christ's cross on to the problem places of our earth.

Christ has done all that is needed for the world to be saved. Now we must do our part. The principle is clearly seen in the plan of salvation. God so loved the world that He sent His Son to die on the cross for our sins.

That was His part.

Our part is to come to God in prayer and confess both our sin and the saving work of God's Son.

The power of the cross will never touch our lives or our world until we bring our lives and the needs of our world to God in prayer. That is our part — to pray, then go and tell others.

There are many in the daily world of our lives who know little of God's love or His power. They do not know how to come to Him in prayer. They need someone who can pray on their behalf. The needs begin in our own neighborhood and reach on out to the whole world.

Perhaps there is a friend that is facing a divorce; someone is in prison for preaching the gospel; the crises which occur in our local and national governments; the loss of personal and religious freedom in whole blocks of nations; world-wide hunger and disease...and the list goes on, almost without end.

These are all crossroads in human experience where your prayer might determine the outcome.

God is raising up a mighty army of prayer warriors throughout the nation and around the world. They are joining ranks by the thousands, tens of thousands and even hundreds of thousands as true soldiers of the cross.

Any time you pray, you become a part of a prayer meeting which is growing in size, and will never end until Jesus comes. This is no small thing, for it is the key to God's end-time revival which is to sweep across the entire globe.

One of the keys of the Kingdom is intercessory prayer. The very gates of Hell cannot prevail against the Church of Jesus Christ when She is upon Her knees.

There may be some who still want to say, "But you have to do more than just pray." That's right. But I have never seen people who "just" prayed and that's all — not if they really prayed.

As at Antioch, prayer and evangelism will always go together.

I must add, however, that I have seen a lot of people who tried to do many "busy things" without prayer. Busy things and busy people without prayer are never very productive. All they do is wear themselves and everybody else out, with little to show for their much effort.

Yes, prayer and missionary-evangelism must always go together.

3. Interception

To "intercept" means to stop, take over and even reverse the direction of something. We see this in certain types of soccer-ball games. The ball is being taken towards one goal. An opposing player stops the ball, takes it over and moves it towards the other goal. What begins as a victory play for one team is changed and — because of the "interception" — the other team wins.

Intercessory prayer does just that. The enemy is coming in as a flood. The situation looks hopeless. Then somebody steps in (intervention); applies the power of the cross through prayer (intersection); the situation is taken over for God, and the tide is completely reversed (interception). What looked like a victory for the devil becomes a triumph for the Lord. This is Kingdom power in action.

When Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch from their missionary trip to Cyprus and Asia Minor, they had many such "interceptions" (victories) to share with those who had faithfully supported them with their prayers.

It must have been a time of joyful celebration (Acts 14:26-28).
The three principles of intercession worked well for them, and they will for us as well.

Chapter 7

Countries And Nations (OFFERING UP THE WHOLE WORLD)

A. INTERCESSION FOR THE NATIONS

"Ask and I will give you the nations for your inheritance [birth right], and the farthest parts of the earth for your possession" (Ps2:8).

The Lord has given us a great promise. He has promised us the nations.

I recently purchased a map of the world. I've found it to be a great help in my intercession for the nations. Here is how it works. I follow a weekly prayer chart for my daily prayers, so I felt I should do the same for the nations of the world.

On a certain day I will pray for Germany. "Lord, today I want to pray for Germany." How do you pray for Germany? Our prayers are for the needs in Germany today.

As I look at the map of Germany I see a note that reminds me there are about 80 million people in Germany. That thought hits me hard. But, the Lord has said in His Word, *"Ask of me and I will give you the nations...."* Such a great promise is almost beyond my understanding, but I choose to believe it.

Now I begin to pray for the multitudes in Germany. I see many places on my map like this: Lower Saxony, Wurtenburg, Bavaria, Westphalia. These are regions.

As I look at these different regions I see names of various cities and towns: Stutgardt, Frankfurt, Munich, Berlin, Cologne, Hanover, Brunswick, Hamburg.

When I put my hands on the map and pray, something begins to happen in me. It will happen in you too. Germany becomes more than just a name; it is a real place with real people and real problems. And I sense that God has a purpose for that place and that people.

"How long do you go on doing that?" you say. Not a long time. Maybe a couple of minutes. Then I say something like this, "Lord, I pray for the people who live in Hamburg. In the Name of Jesus I ask You to send the Spirit of grace and salvation upon them. Lord, I now pray for the whole region of Westphalia."

Why do I do it that way? Because it keeps me from just praying in a vague, general way for Germany. I begin to really identify with the people and their needs.

The Holy Spirit puts His passion in my heart for them, and I am moved to intercede on their behalf. I am now praying with meaning and power; not just reciting a list of names.

If I know nothing about the needs, I use the Gift of Tongues in prayer. The Spirit knows what is needed and makes intercession through me in a language I do not understand.

It is not necessary to cover a big list every day. You may only cover one nation or even a part of one nation, but you have a feeling of fulfillment.

B. INTERCESSION BY AND FOR OUR MISSIONARIES

"I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for you, I am filled with joy..." (Phil 1:3-6).

The missionary Paul wrote to the believers at Philippi. To win them for Christ, he had suffered beatings and imprisonment (Acts 16). He loved them and constantly prayed for them.

This is what Paul was doing from his prison in Rome when he wrote to the church at Philippi. He was reaching out to those who were an extension of his own life. He kept in touch with them and supported them with his love and prayers. Their fruitful lives were a source of great joy to him.

But Paul also counted on the churches he birthed to pray for him. *"Ye also helping together by prayer for us..." (2Cor1:11).*

This biblical pattern is one we should follow.

We are to pray faithfully for our missionaries — our "sent out" ones. I pray by name for all the missionaries we have sent out to establish churches. I start on the East Coast and pray my way across the nation for each church leader and his family and the churches which they shepherd.

May I suggest you pray for your missionaries the same way. They depend upon your prayers, that all God has purposed through their lives and ministry might be joyfully completed in Christ Jesus.

C. SPIRITUAL WARFARE FOR EVANGELISM

"Pray in the Spirit at all times and in all ways. Be always alert and ever intercede for all of the saints everywhere. Pray also for me that I may freely and boldly proclaim the hidden truths of the gospel" (Eph 6:18,19).

Paul tells us in Ephesians 6 that we are to take up our arms and armor for spiritual warfare and then pray for open doors of ministry.

We are to come against the powers and forces of darkness that are at work in the world. As Paul was supported by the intercession of fellow believers, we are to pray for men who are called of God to proclaim His gospel.

Miracles of God's grace don't come just because an evangelist appears on the scene. Any true man or woman of God knows that real revivals are born out of prayer and intercession.

Jesus called Satan the "strong man." *"No man can enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he will first bind the strong man; and then he will spoil his house" (Mark 3:27).*

Before we see victories down here on earth, there must be a battle won in the heavenly realm.

Satan is the prince of the power of the air. The "strong man" must be bound before he will surrender his territory to Christ's claim. That is the reason Paul concludes his words on spiritual warfare with a plea for intercessory prayer. Can we settle for anything less?

D. INTERCESSION FOR NATIONAL LEADERS AND PEACE

"...I urge you that prayers and intercession... be made for... kings and all others who are in authority that we might live peaceful and quiet lives..." (I Tim 2:1,2).

We need to pray in a very responsible way for our national leaders.

"The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD. As the rivers of water: he turns it whithersoever he will" (Prov 21:1). So we need not be timid or fearful, but boldly pray for those in positions of authority. God can turn their hearts as He wills when we pray.

E. CONCLUSION

Remember, intercession is not just for a small group of people who are super-spiritual or extra-holy. There are indeed some who have a special calling to intercessory prayer, but the privilege is for all.

Even those whom we recognize as veteran prayer warriors had to start some where. There is a first time for everything, and most of you are much further along than that. So, start praying and keep praying.

You may say, "Well, I started and then I missed a couple of days and now I feel defeated." If I were the devil, I would try to make you feel defeated too. I would do anything to keep you from going on with your prayer life.

God doesn't have a big scoreboard where He adds and subtracts your days of heavy prayer. If that were true, most of us would be so far behind we couldn't catch up.

Your heavenly Father is waiting for you to come to Him just as you are. If you have some failures to confess, do it and receive His forgiveness. Then get on with your prayer life. This is the way to respond to His ministry of grace.

Jesus said that if we *"ask and keep on asking,"* we will receive (Luke 11:10 amp). He seems to be saying our prayers add up, and therefore we should keep on with our praying.

It is good to know that when we are praying in the Spirit and in faith. God hears our prayers regardless of how we may feel. Prayer brings results; much prayer brings much results!

Some problems and issues may seem to be bigger than our prayers. This may be so, but they are not bigger than the One to Whom we pray! So keep on growing and praying, and keep on praying and growing. God is going to have His army of prayer warriors, and you can be one of them!

START NOW AND GOD WILL BLESS!

SECTION A5

HOW TO BE A PRAYER WARRIOR

By Ralph Mahoney

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Chapter 1

Why Does God Ask Us To Pray To Him?

A. UNDERSTANDING MAN'S DOMINION

For some years, I found it very difficult to understand why the Lord invited and commanded me to pray. Why did we have to pray? God is God, so why doesn't He just do what He wants? Why are we even in the picture? Why are the events on earth related to our prayers at all?

I knew that prayer worked because I saw the effects of my prayers in my everyday life. However, I didn't know why God wanted to involve me in the process. What really was the purpose of prayer?

1. God Gave Man Dominion

John 5:26,27 is a key that unlocked the mystery and answered my perplexing questions about prayer. Jesus said, *"The Father has given him [the Son] authoritybecause he is the **Son of Man.**"*

I thought it should have read, *"because he is the **Son of God.**"* But it doesn't say that. It says, *"The Father has given him [the Son] authoritybecause he is the **Son of Man.**"*

Why was it necessary for Jesus to be the *"Son of **Man**"* in order to have authority on earth? The answer is found in Genesis 1:26. The Lord made man for a divine purpose: *"Let us make man in our image and after our likeness. We will give him dominion [the right to rule] ...over everything that moves upon the earth."*

The whole earth was given over to man's rule or dominion. Man was made for that purpose. God made him the head or chief authority over the earth.

David confirms this in Psalms when he speaks of the special position that man has in God's plan: *"What is man, that you would even think of him? You made man **to have dominion** over the works of your hand, and have put all things under his feet" (Ps 8:4-6).*

Man was created to exercise dominion over all the works of God's hand. He was to rule it all, govern it all, be head of it all. God made man with that intent and for that purpose.

In the New Testament, the idea is taken still further: *"What is man that you should think of him. ...You have crowned him with glory and honor, and set him to rule over the works of your hands. You have put all things under his feet... **he left nothing that is not put under him...**" (Heb 2:6-8).*

There is a holy wonder to these words. They are almost beyond our understanding. Nothing has been left outside of the man's dominion who walks in right fellowship and relationship with God.

a. God Will Not Change His Mind. The Bible says in Romans 11:29 that *"... the gifts and callings of God are without **repentance.**"* This means God will not change His mind about giving man the dominion.

The Greek word for repentance is **"metanoia"**. It means **to have a change of mind.**

The calling to exercise authority would not be taken from man — as long as man would maintain the image and likeness of his heavenly Father. God will not change His mind about His callings. They are without repentance! God will not reverse direction.

Moses said it in these words: "*God is not a man that he should lie, neither the son of man that he should repent* [change His mind]..." (Num 23:19).

The point is clear: God made man and gave him authority and dominion Over all the earth. It was a commitment that He was bound to honor for all time and eternity. He will not change His mind.

His purpose for man from the very beginning will forever stay the same. The man in God's image and likeness has a divine and royal destiny to exercise dominion and authority in this world. He is to be the head of it all.

2. Man Lost Dominion To Satan

We know from Genesis 3 that Satan came into the Garden of Eden and, through deceiving Eve, gained access to Adam.

"...*Adam was not deceived...*" (I Tim 2:14). Adam chose to eat of the forbidden fruit and "...*by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men... death reigned* [Greek = *basileuo*, to rule as king] ...*death ruled as king by one...*" (Rom 5:12,14,17).

That one by whom death reigned was the devil. "... *the devil... had the power of death*" (Heb 2:14).

A careful study of the Greek text reveals this interesting insight to Hebrews 2:14. The verse could be paraphrased as follows: "*Jesus came to render useless and powerless the one through whom the **dominion of death** was channeled, the devil himself.*"

When Adam and Eve surrendered (submitted) to Satan's lie, they came under Satan's dominion, "...*to whom you yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants you are... whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness*" (Rom 6:16).

Thus Adam and Eve lost the right to rule — a right God had given. Satan took over that authority and power, and held it fast.

a. Satan Ruled Through Dominion Of Death. Adam had everlasting life as long as he obeyed God. That added further authority to his empirical rule, since it would go on forever. He ruled through the dominion of the power of an endless life.

In contrast, when Adam sinned and caused "...*death to pass upon all men...*", Satan ruled by becoming the channel for the "dominion of death." The devil used this dominion to intimidate and dominate mankind — forcing compliance with his will.

Man by his sin gave up his head-ship. When man sinned, the image and likeness of God was ruined and his relationship with God was broken.

b. Tempting Jesus Proved Satan's Dominion. The devil tempted Jesus by offering Him dominion to rule and reign over the earth without going to the cross. "*Again, the devil took him up into an exceeding high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And said unto him, All these things will I give you, if you will fall down and worship me*" (Matt 4:8,9).

At this time, Satan had the earthly kingdoms and their glory to offer to Jesus. The devil promised them to Jesus on the condition that Jesus would bow down and worship him. The act of falling (bowing) down and worshipping the devil would be an acknowledgement of Satan's right to rule (in effect, Satan would still be the final one in charge).

As an obedient **Son of Man**, Jesus had to totally rely upon the higher and greater authority of God's Word and God's Spirit to overcome the temptation. These are the same resources available to you and me. Jesus thereby overcame that temptation and became an example for us.

3. Jesus Bought Back Man's Dominion

Man fell from his calling, and the scepter of dominion slipped from his hand. Satan took it and held it until Christ came. Christ would redeem (buy back) that which man had surrendered to Satan. He did this by coming into this world as the **Son of MAN**.

Hebrews 2:14-16 confirms this. He came not only as the Son of God, but also as the Son of **Man**. There is an important reason for this, as is seen in the following paraphrase: "*God's divine Son became the Son of **Man**by being born in human form. He **became a man** like us, that he might die, and through death, render the devil powerless...* [that is — take dominion and authority away from Satan and restore it back to the man recreated in God's image and likeness]."

a. Why The Son Of Man? Let us raise the question again: Why did Jesus Christ come as a **man**? Why did He not come only as the Son of **God**?

The answer is of great importance, because it directly relates to the purpose for prayer.

1) God Will Not Violate His Will. God will not force His way into man's area of authority (our world), and violate the dominion which He has given to man. He made man to have dominion and rule in the earth.

Thus God is bound by His own predetermined purpose —He will not violate His own will, and exercise authority in a realm given to another.

For example, the man next door might be a wonderful painter. But, he is not free to use his skills in your house without being asked. You have authority and dominion in your own home. Others must wait to be invited, before they can legally enter.

In a similar way, God will not come into the earthly realm of redeemed man's dominion without a man inviting Him to do so in prayer.

Christian men and women have a responsibility in this world that God will not assume — a dominion which He will not violate. He cannot and will not violate this principle of "delegated authority."

*"The Father has given the Son authority to execute judgment also, **because he is the Son of man** " (John 5:27).*

2) Jesus Had To Die. The devil had to be confronted and defeated. His dominion was the "dominion of death." Some one who was capable of dying had to come. This is the only way access could be gained into the realm of death.

By entering the realm of death, our Savior could gain the access needed to subdue that realm. Messiah could triumph over death and set those held captive free from death and Hell (Hebrew = **Sheol**. Greek = **hades**).

Here are three translations of Hebrews 2:14 by different Greek scholars.

*"...He became flesh and blood too by being born in human form; **for only as a human being could he die and in dying break the dominion of the devil who had the power of death**" (tlb).*

"He also became a human being, so that by going through death as a man he might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil..." (pme).

"The children of a family share the same flesh and blood; and so he too shared ours, so that through death he might break the power of him who had death at his command, that is, the devil..." (neb).

Jesus died — and by dying gained access to the realm of death. He conquered death! He set the prisoners free. He led a multitude of the righteous dead out of Hades into Heaven.

"When he went up to the very heights he took many captives with him; he gave gifts to men. Now what does 'he went up' mean? It means that first he came down — that is, down to the lower depths of the earth" (Eph 4:8,9 tev).

3) Jesus Restored Dominion To Man. The devil's dominion was finally broken by Christ's triumph over death — on the cross and in the realm of death. Hell (Hades).

It was God's original intent and purpose that man should have dominion over the earth. This could only be if Jesus came and conquered. Then He could say on His resurrection day, *"...All power [dominion] is given unto me in heaven and in earth... and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age. Amen"* (Matt 28:18,20).

Sixty years after His resurrection, Jesus came to John on the isle of Patmos (where John was imprisoned). Here was Jesus' triumphant proclamation. *"I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore. Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death"* (Rev 1:18). What a glorious gospel!

Thus what God set out to do in the Garden of Eden must come to pass. Jesus came in God's image and likeness to reclaim what Adam lost. Jesus came to produce a new family of sons in God's image and likeness — this family would again exercise the authority and dominion over God's Creation.

Jesus Christ, therefore, came as **the Son of Man**. As **the Son of Man** He would totally vanquish Satan. He triumphed over Satan's temptations. He proved His victory over death (by His resurrection). His victory as **"The Son of Man"** regained for all men (who are willing to bear God's image and likeness) the dominion which had been lost in the Garden of Eden by sin.

Now that the dominion has been restored to man. God comes at our request (when we pray) and enters the human realm to fulfill His will (at our invitation).

b. Total Triumph. On the cross He overcame the devil and his messengers — for all time and all people! *"And having disarmed the [devils'] powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross"* (Col 2:15).

He not only defeated them but *"... made a public spectacle of them."* What does that mean?

In Bible times, when a military leader had defeated an enemy, the winning army would force the opposing General and his troops to walk behind the victorious General in a public parade. The people on the sides of the road would heap verbal abuse on them and throw rocks at the defeated.

This is illustrated in the life of King David. His son Absalom drove David from his throne. *"And as David and his men went by the way, Shimei went along on the hill's side over against him, and cursed as he went, and threw stones at him, and cast dust"* (I Sam 16:13).

Paul says this is what was happening in the spiritual realm when Jesus was crucified. Jesus triumphed over all of the powers of the devil and his demons.

Jesus forced the devil and his ruling princes to march in His victory parade for the whole Creation to affirm that — JESUS WON!

He triumphed over Satan's temptations; He proved His victory over death (by His resurrection). His victory as "**The Son of Man**" regained for all men (who are willing to bear God's image and likeness) the dominion which had been lost in the Garden of Eden by sin.

Once again we have been given the power and authority to carry out our Father's will —to establish His Kingdom here on earth. We now have that authority and privilege in prayer.

God's purpose for this world will be fulfilled through the Body of Christ, as we pray. Jesus is the Heavenly Head, but we are the earthly members that make up that Body. God has purposed to work out His will on earth through you and me. Without Him we cannot; without us He will not!

c. God Honors Our Dominion. The above explains why prayer is necessary. God honors the dominion which He has given to redeemed men. He waits for us to come to Him in prayer before He will enter the earthly arena. He respects the "dominion" He delegated to us. That is why He doesn't work or intervene until we ask Him to.

In effect. God will not work in our earth without someone who will work with Him — those who through prayer will discover His will and take the action necessary to implement it on earth.

B. UNDERSTANDING INTERCESSION

Intercession is prayer which flows out of relationship and fellowship with our Heavenly Father. From our "conversations" with Him, we find out (discover) His will. As we fellowship with God, we come to know what He wants (His will).

1. Laborers Together With God

Intercession is asking or inviting God to do what we find out (discover) He wants to do on earth. In this way we become "*laborers together with God*" (1 Cor 3:9).

Prayer based on a knowledge of what God desires is described in the Bible as "*...praying according to the will of God*" (Rom 8:27).

"If we ask anything according to his will, he hears us " (1Jn 5:14).

2. God's Sovereignty — Man's Responsibility

There are two verses in John 5 which bring a beautiful balance *between "...ask what YOU will... "* (John 15:7) and "*asking according to God's will*" [or sovereignty].

In verse 27 you recall that Jesus said, "*The Father has given the Son authority... because he is the Son of **Man**.*" However, in verse 30 Jesus says, "*I can of my own self do nothing.*" Authority is given Him because He is the Son of Man, yet by Himself He can do nothing.

Jesus then goes on to say, '*I judge only as the voice [of the Father] comes to me and my judgment is just, for I seek [consult] not my own will but the will of him who sent me*" (John 5:30).

Jesus always discovered (referenced) the will of God. He always submitted to the will of the Father. The Father, however, depends on Him to be the One through Whom His will shall be done here on earth. The Father would not in any way enter the arena of man's dominion, without being invited in prayer to do so.

In a sense, the Father and the Son chose to be dependent upon one another. The Son had been sent to do a work here on earth. The Father did not and would not work without Him. Nor would the Son do anything apart from the revealed will of the Father.

It is this unique and special relationship between the Father and the Son that becomes a pattern for us in prayer.

Jesus saw what the Father was doing and wanted done. As the Son of Man, He then had the right and responsibility to ask — in a sense invite — the Father to work out His will on earth.

The Father then had a moral right to enter the scene on earth and answer the prayer of His Son. *"Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is [being done] in heaven "* (Matt 6:10).

Prayer, therefore, involves knowing God and His will. It requires that we humbly, but faithfully, ask (invite) Him to bring forth His purpose here on earth.

The world is our God-given realm or domain of responsibility and authority. Therefore, God waits for our prayers before acting on our behalf in earthly affairs.

When we carry out our right to pray and intercede. God has the right to come on the scene to display His purpose and power. Prayer is bringing God into the picture in a responsible way. But He won't come without an invitation!

a. Praying In The Will Of God. Three things happen when we pray in the will of God.

1) We will pray God's prayers.

2) We will feel God's feelings.

3) We will think God's thoughts.

We will be praying His prayers, feeling His feelings and thinking His thoughts.

Therefore, in the pages that follow, we will teach you how to discover God's will. God is waiting for us to invite Him into our world of need that He might work out His will for our good and His glory. Come, let us pray!

Chapter 2

The Breastplate And Scepter Of Righteousness

Introduction

"Put on the whole armor of God [Why? For this reason] that you may be able to stand" (Eph 6:11). When you go to prayer, you are entering the arena of spiritual warfare. You will come under attack. Therefore you need all the armor of God to protect you (the defensive armor) and the sword of the Spirit (your offensive weapon) to win the battle. (You should review Section D9.3, *Prepare To Cast Out Demons*, for instructions on how to put on the armor.)

A. BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

Police in most nations are given a bullet-proof vest. If shot by a low-caliber pistol, the vest stops the bullet from injuring or killing the policeman.

In ancient times, the threat was from rocks, spears or sword. The breastplate provided protection to the upper torso of the warrior against these.

The breastplate of righteousness does the same thing for you and me today. It provides protection in the battle we wage against sin and Satan.

The "breastplate of righteousness" is an important part of our spiritual armor. The breastplate protects and covers our heart (emotions and affections). Both need to be guarded if we are to fend off the temptations of the wicked one.

There are two concepts of righteousness in the New Testament. Both relate to our breastplate.

1. Right Standing — Imputed Righteousness

One is our position of "right standing" before a Holy God. It is the goodness of His character, which becomes ours in Christ Jesus when we believe. It is a gift of His grace, "imputed" (credited to our account) when we put our faith in Christ as Lord and Savior.

The Bible says, "*Abraham believed God, and it was imputed [counted or credited] to him as righteousness...*" (Jas 2:23). It is what we receive when we put all of our sins in one pile, and all of our good works in another; and run from them both to Jesus.

When we totally trust God's grace alone, we are not only forgiven for our sins, but are clothed in the righteousness of Christ.

God sees us in His Son as a sinless person because Jesus took our sins and gave us His righteousness. This is "imputed righteousness."

2. Right Behavior— Imparted Righteousness

a. What God Expects. Romans 6, 7 and 8 describes a second kind of righteousness. Not only does God "impute" His righteousness to us, but He "imparts" (places) His righteous nature within us. By the enabling power of His Holy Spirit, God wants us to express or live a righteous life. We are to:

- 1) have "right(eous)" motives,
- 2) think "right(eous)" thoughts,
- 3) speak "right(eous)" words, and
- 4) do "right(eous)" deeds.

b. When Others See You. This second kind of righteousness is holiness in character and conduct. It is expressing Jesus' life through our life.

It is a very practical kind of righteousness which observant people can see as well as God. It means:

- 1) having pure motives,
- 2) having right attitudes,
- 3) being obedient to authority,
- 4) speaking the truth in love,
- 5) being honest in all of our affairs,
- 6) working on our job as if Jesus were our boss,
- 7) serving others joyfully,
- 8) and much more...!

c. The Holy Spirit Is The Key. We are told in Romans 8 that the key to living a righteous life is the power of the Holy Spirit.

The **standard** for the righteous life is the law, but it cannot help us live it. Only the Holy Spirit can do that. He is, however, a "holy" Spirit.

1) **Grieve The Spirit And Lose Protection.** Whenever we give way to "unholy" desires (lust) or motives (our flesh), He is "grieved" or saddened. His power in

that area of our life is "quenched" or weakened (Eph 4:30; I Ths 5:19). We no longer have the protection we need.

In effect, we have laid aside our "breastplate of righteousness" and have laid open or exposed ourselves to the devil's attack. He will be sure to respond!

2) Live Right And Enjoy Protection. There is protection behind the breastplate of righteousness (**right behaving — right acting**). If we do what is right we will be safe. If we are careful, committed and ethical in all that we do, say and think, we will enjoy protection and victory.

Let us then be pure, clean and right before the Lord and before others in all of our attitudes and actions.

Our motives — the deep purposes of our heart — must ever be to glorify Him and do His will.

Listen to the words of the Apostle John as he writes to the church at Sardis: *"Yet you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their clothes. They will walk with me, dressed in white, for they are worthy."*

"He who overcomes will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never erase his name from the book of life, but will acknowledge his name before my Father and his angels. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches " (Rev 3:4-6).

3. We Are At War

Paul ends his instructions on preparation for war—with these words: *"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit... for all saints "* (Eph 6:18). Make no mistake about it — spiritual warfare is fought in the context of prayer.

And the battlefield is strewn with casualties. Leaders by the thousands around the world, who were once powerful and useful to the work of Christ, are now disapproved. WHY? The absence of the breastplate of righteousness.

Ephesians 6 is the Apostle Paul's great treatise on SPIRITUAL WARFARE. Read the following scriptures from Ephesians 6:

Verse 10: *"Finally my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might."*

Verse 11: *"Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil..." "*

Verse 13: *"Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. "*

Verse 14: *"Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness...."*

Paul was writing this treatise about God's armor to the church in Ephesus. This was a very wicked and evil city. It was filled with sins of sex which were a part of their worship to idols.

It was a place which was ungodly, immoral and unclean. The religious temples were filled with prostitutes and every form of moral vice.

Hence the temptations for Christians in Ephesus were everywhere. To survive in such an environment we must *"... have our loins girt about with truth, and have on the breastplate of righteousness"* (Eph 6:14). This means we must have sexual and emotional appetites under firm control.

a. A Gift Of God's Grace. Our "breastplate of righteousness" is a gift of His grace. It is a means of sure defense. With its protection we can march forth into enemy territory, and bring a bright witness for His glory. Battles can be won, and captives set free. And this is exactly what happened in Ephesus!

God raised up a Christian witness in that wicked city which proved the power of Paul's words. A strong church grew in Ephesus. Some of Paul's greatest revelations were written to the believers there.

They were taught to see themselves as royal sons and daughters in the beloved family of God. They had not only died with Christ, but had been raised with Him to His royal throne in Heaven.

They experienced the grace of God promised in 1 Samuel 2:8: *"He raises the beggar from the dung hill and lifts the needy from the ash heap; He seats them with princes and has them inherit a throne of honor."*

This promise can be experienced even in our times of failure and discouragement. The Psalm writer David went through this in his own personal experience. There was a time in his life when he had failed God and had fallen into great sin.

He repented with deep sorrow, and God in His grace restored him. *"He lifted me up out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; He set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand"* (Ps 40:2).

b. Righteousness Is Essential. How does the enemy get into the life of a leader like David? This is an important question and deserves a frank answer.

The enemy comes in whenever someone dishonors God's laws and defiles themselves with sin. They thus compromise some area of righteousness in their life.

When it comes to prayer, the breastplate of righteousness is especially crucial. King David said, *"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me "* (Ps 66:18). The absence of iniquity (righteousness) is essential to a fruitful prayer ministry. Iniquity deafens God's ears to our prayers, but *"... the effectual fervent prayer of a **righteous man** avails much "* (Jas 5:16).

It is the absence of **righteousness** in leadership that causes more problems for them than anything else. Let us then go on to understand how important it is for us to have on the breastplate of righteousness so we can experience the authority of the scepter of righteousness.

B. THE SCEPTER OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

In the material just covered, we saw how important the **"breastplate of righteousness"** was in protecting us. We learned that "imparted" righteousness is right acting—that is, expressing the holy character of God in our daily lives.

When we wear the breastplate of righteousness, we act righteously, we obey and express the righteous requirements of the ten commandments. We do this by the grace (enabling power) of the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:2).

The breastplate of righteousness is our defense against wrong motives, attitudes and actions. If we lay this piece of armor aside, we will be deceived and destroyed.

1. Righteousness Gives Authority

Righteousness, however, plays another important role in the life of the prayer warrior. Righteous behavior is what gives us authority in prayer before the throne in Heaven and power in the work of the Kingdom of God here on earth.

David spoke these prophetic words about the Son of God: *"Your throne, O God, will last forever and ever. Righteousness will be the scepter of your Kingdom"* (Ps45:6;Heb 1:8).

Adam had been given the "scepter" to rule at the time he was created. He was given dominion (the right to rule) over all of the earth. He had been created in God's image — totally righteous. As long as he maintained the image of God, by equitable righteous behavior, he had authority over all created things.

2. Sin Brings Loss Of Authority

When Adam disobeyed God, and willfully sinned, the scepter of authority slipped from his hand. The daily conversations he had with God came to an end. He was put out of the Garden, and two Cherubim with swords were stationed to make sure he did not enter. He fell from his place of dominion, and lost his right to rule (Gen 3:24).

Why? Because the scepter of Christ's Kingdom is a scepter of righteousness.

Sin spoiled his righteous behavior, and since authority arises from righteousness, Adam lost his right to rule.

In contrast to Adam, Psalm 45:7 says of Christ, *"You loved righteousness, and hated wickedness: for this reason God [the Father], ...has anointed you with the oil of gladness above your fellows. "*

His high "anointing" and high authority was given because He hated what was evil and wrong, and loved what was holy and right. That is why He held the scepter.

Authority proceeds from righteousness (right-behavior). We see this spiritual truth working in the life of Jesus. People were amazed and awed by the authority of His words and works. Demons fled at His rebuke, the sick were healed by His touch, the dead were raised by His word of command, bread was multiplied, storms were stilled, and many other signs and wonders were seen and heard. These were proof He held the scepter of righteousness. If we violate this principle of righteousness (right behavior), we shall limit the display of God's power and authority through our lives.

3. For Power In Prayer

There is a remarkable statement in Hebrew 5:7. *"... he offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears... and was heard because he was godly"* (Heb 5:7). His godliness (god-like-ness) caused his prayers to be heard and answered.

a. Walk Uprightly. If we want power in prayer, we must walk uprightly at other times. Unrighteousness causes the face of the Lord to be against us.

If our relationship with our family is not kept in proper order, this can hinder our power in prayer. *"Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers "* (1 Pet 3:7).

If we want to be powerful in prayer, we must remember what qualifies us to be *"...made... unto our God kings and priests: [and to] reign on the earth"* (Rev 5:10). The Bible says, *"...righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne"* (Ps 97:2). *"Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness..."* (Isa 32:1).

These verses establish these clear principles. God's throne and scepter of authority is with those who walk uprightly and live lives of purity and holiness before God. We only exercise the "kingly anointing" as we *"... cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, and perfect holiness in the fear of God"* (2Cor 7:1).

"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you" (2Cor 6:17).

Cornelius was a righteous man whose prayers were answered. *"There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius... A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, **which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God** always.*

*"He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him... **Thy prayers and thine alms** are come up for a memorial before God" (Acts 10:1-4).*

Note the connection between his alms (charity - altruism) and his prayers. His righteous deeds caused God to hear his prayers. *"For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, **and his ears are open unto their prayers**: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil" (1 Pet 3:12).*

Righteous deeds do not purchase favors from God, but they do cause God to be attentive when we pray. Righteous, ethical behavior are indeed keys to power in prayer.

b. Be Committed To Righteousness. I am not teaching sinless perfection — the state of being above or beyond sin. 1 John 1:8 tells us: *"If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."* We all fail from time to time, but our basic commitment or heart desire is to righteousness.

There is a great difference between the practice of willful sin, and the failure which can occur in a moment of weakness.

If we are committed to righteousness, such failures bring us quickly to repentance and a sorrow for our sin. We want to get "right" with our heavenly Father as soon as we can.

Once when I was visiting a place where they raise sheep, I was explaining the difference between the nature of a pig and a sheep.

When a pig falls in a mud-hole, he just lays there and enjoys himself. He will also return to the same dirty place whenever he can. If a sheep slips into a mud-hole, he will try his best to quickly climb his way out, and avoid the place in the future.

After the meeting, one of the men told me about a personal experience he had on his ranch. The shut-off valve on one of the windmills got stuck. As a result, excess water overflowed the storage tank and soaked the ground. This created a huge mud-hole.

It was some days before he got around to checking all of his windmills. When he did, he discovered one of his sheep had slipped into the mud-hole, trying to get water from the tank.

The sheep had struggled so hard to get out of the mud, it died trying. The rancher then said, "that illustrates the difference between a sheep and a pig, doesn't it?"

The spiritual truth of that little story is plainly stated in Hebrews 12:4: *"In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood."*

Is our level of commitment to righteousness so great we would die rather than wallow in the mire of sin? If the basic drive or motivation in our life is not to sin — no matter what the cost — we will not make an habitual practice of sinning. We will act right, behave right, be righteous.

Yes, we may fall or fail, but we will not remain in sin, or in .condemnation (pain of guilt). 1 John 1:9 firmly tells us that we can always confess our sin.

Because of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross for us. God is faithful and just "...to forgive us our sin, and to cleanse us **from all unrighteousness.**" He will also restore to us the joy of our salvation (Ps 51:11,12).

c. Be Balanced Regarding Sin. Four times in Ephesians 6:10-14, Paul exhorts and tells us to "stand" strong in the Lord. Satan knows that it will be impossible for us to stand if we are off-balance spiritually.

Therefore, he will always seek to take us to one extreme or the other. Satan will try to get us to adopt a casual attitude about sin — or to put us under such condemnation and guilt, we quit following Jesus.

1) Don't Overlook Sin. At one extreme, he would like to get us to use God's grace as an excuse for our sin. Some even say, "The Lord understands I am not perfect, and I am sure He 'overlooks' my faults and failures."

The Lord indeed understands, but for that very reason He does not "overlook" sin. Sin had to be punished. The penalty had to be paid. Do you want to know what God thinks of sin? Look at Calvary. That tells you how much God detests unrighteousness.

The things that happened to Jesus when He was crucified, reveal how angry God was about sin.

"But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people.

"For... no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. ..for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience" (Eph 5:3-6 niv).

Jesus absorbed all God's wrath against sin for us who believe on Him. *"Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him"* (Rom 5:9).

But we dare not treat sin casually. Look at the price Jesus paid to save us from sin. Do we then want to cheapen the value of His death by living lives displeasing to Him?

We dare not overlook sin. We must confess it and receive forgiveness and cleansing from all unrighteousness.

2) Don't Live In Condemnation. At the other extreme, the devil would like us to feel we are condemned (guilty). He would even try to get us to go so far as to doubt our salvation. He can't keep us from Heaven, but he will try to make the trip as painful as possible. Some people live under a constant cloud of guilt and condemnation.

Paul teaches us in Romans 6-8 that our life in the Spirit can bring us into a beautiful balance. We are saved by grace —not by works. There is nothing that we can add to faith in Christ. When Christ cried out on the cross, "It is finished!" He meant just that — the price for our sin was paid in full! *"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus"* (Rom 8:1).

[Note: Some Bibles include in Verse 1 the words "...who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." These words are not in the original Greek text. Translators interpolated (brought them up) from Verse 4. The statement is unconditional. *"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.* " Through the price Jesus paid for us, we can stand before God without fear.]

3) Free To Live As We Ought. This does not mean we can sin without fear of getting hurt, or hurting others. Forgiveness is not freedom to live **as we want.** Forgiveness is freedom to live **as we ought.**

God not only wants to free us from the "penalty" of sin, but also from the "power" or habit of sin. The penalty of sin was paid by Jesus so the power of sin can be broken as we put our full trust in Him as our **Deliverer from sin**. "... *thou shall call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people **from** [not **in**] their sins* " (Matt 1:21).

Sin is ever a possibility, but never a necessity. In other words, we may sin, but we don't have to! Because of Satan and our old nature, sin is always possible. But, because of Jesus and our new nature, it is not necessary. "*Greater is he [Jesus] who is within us than he [Satan] who is in the world!*" (1 Jn 4:4).

C. PUT ON THE ARMOR OF GOD

The true mark of an apostle is this: when everyone else has fallen around him, he is still on his feet.

Paul was such a man. That is why his words carry such weight and power: "*Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers — the authorities and powers — of this dark -world. It is against the spiritual forces in the heavenly realms. Therefore, put on the full armor of God...*" (Eph 6:12,13).

God has provided us with the weapons and the protection we need to engage in spiritual warfare. "*Therefore put on the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to stand your ground **in the evil day...***" (Eph 6:13).

Paul lived, preached and raised up churches within cities of the Roman Empire which were very wicked, evil and unclean. Their worship of idols involved immorality and sex sins of every kind. Men were driven by their desire for power, pleasure and profit.

The mind and body were held in high esteem by the Greeks, but the spirit of man was given little attention. The attitude of the day was either non-godly (no fear of God) or ungodly (against God).

Everywhere men had surrendered to the demonic powers and evil influences of their wicked world.

1. The Mind: Spiritual Battleground

So "*that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, put on the breastplate of righteousness; take the shield of faith, with which you shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation...*" (Eph 6:13-17).

Three important pieces of armor are the "*breastplate of righteousness, the helmet of salvation*" and the "*shield of faith*." These help protect our mind and emotions.

The mind is the battle-ground for the forces of both good and evil. It is the doorway by which both revelation and deception can enter our lives. If we do not "*put on the whole armor of God...* [we will not] *...be able to stand against the wiles of the devil*" (Eph 6:11).

We are not left defenseless against the lies and deceptions of the devil. The "*helmet of salvation*" is to protect our minds from such attacks. The "*breastplate of righteousness*" and "*the shield of faith*" are to protect us from the fiery darts (thoughts Satan would put in our minds). The devil would seek to shoot his fiery darts of doubt, fear, lust, envy and other sinful thoughts into our minds.

The "fiery darts" used in warfare of that day were pitch-tipped arrows set on fire. With bows, these burning arrows could be shot over the city walls. Thatched roofs would quickly catch fire and the whole city could be burned.

a. Thoughts — Satan's Fiery Darts. A godly friend of mine was going through a real battle with unclean thoughts. He truly loved the Lord, and wanted above all else to walk in righteousness. Often it is such people who are bothered in this way.

Satan is no fool; he is going to aim his "fiery darts" towards those who bear the scepter of righteousness. These pose a threat to his kingdom.

One day as this friend of mine was fasting and praying about his problem, the Lord revealed to him what was happening. The devil was giving him unclean thoughts and then accusing him for thinking the thoughts.

The devil would shoot a fiery-dart (unclean thought) into his mind, hoping my friend would accept the thought and fan it into a flame of unholy thoughts. (We can do this by developing the idea in our imagination — where we picture our thoughts.)

My friend refused to do this, so Satan would shoot his next fiery-arrow, which was the dart of guilt, condemnation and accusation. The fiery dart of condemnation (making you feel guilty and discouraged) is not as easy to extinguish, because we feel we deserve it.

The Lord showed my friend that he was not to blame for the devil's darts, but he was responsible for what he did with them. He was not to hold or develop the thought, nor come under condemnation for the thought. Either direction would weaken or waste his spiritual life and time.

b. Our Defense Against The Fiery Darts. The Lord then showed him the defenses he had in the helmet of salvation, the shield of faith, and the sword of the Spirit. By faith, he could quickly bring the presence of Jesus into the battle. "Lord, You saw that thought too, didn't You? ...and we are not going to let it go any further, are we? Get thee behind us, Satan!"

That will end the whole matter rather quickly. We are not to yield to temptation, nor come under condemnation. We won't give time to the thought, nor feel guilty about the dart.

In this way, we can continue to hold the "scepter of righteousness" — spiritual authority in prayer.

2. Jesus: Our Example

We can see these same principles in the temptations of Jesus. He was tempted, tested and tried in all ways, just as we are — yet without sin (Heb 4:15). There are many lessons we can learn from His temptation. Let us study the story together.

Jesus was led of the Spirit into the wilderness — a wild, rocky area in Judea. There He went without food for forty days. At the end of His fast He was met by the devil himself. Three times He was tempted to disobey the word and will of His Heavenly Father.

a. What Did Jesus Rely On? In His humanity, Jesus had to depend on the same resources which we have to overcome the world, the flesh and the devil. He did not rely on His powers of divinity (godly nature), but totally relied upon:

1) the power of God's Spirit; and

2) the power of God's Word.

He won a victory each time, and was totally triumphant! Jesus must have told the whole story to His disciples. He wanted them — and us — to know how to win in our battles with the devil.

b. Jesus Won With The Word! We don't know whether the temptations came by way of words or thoughts. But either way, it was the mind of Jesus that Satan wanted to reach.

The words were real; the temptations were real; the devil was real. Each powerful attack was met by Jesus with **three little but all-powerful words**; "*It is written...*" Jesus won with the Word — the sword of the Spirit. So can we!

Jesus began His study of God's Word as just a boy. I am sure the Holy Spirit helped Him to "*...hide that word in his heart*" (Ps 119:11). The Word would keep Him obedient to His Father's will.

When He was only twelve years of age, Hebrew scholars in the temple were amazed and struck with awe by His wisdom in the Word (Luke 2:46,47).

In later years it was still God's Word which He spoke with power and authority. The people were amazed, and listened in great wonder. It was the Word of God in the power of the Spirit that caused demons to tremble and flee in fear (Luke 4:32-36).

How very much we too need to hide God's Word in our hearts and minds. It becomes a divine deposit from which we can resist the powers of darkness. What an important lesson we should learn from this part of our Lord's earthly life.

3. God's Word: Our Spiritual Sword

Some years ago I had the privilege of sitting under the ministry of a dear elder and father in the Lord. His father encouraged my elderly friend to memorize God's Holy Word when he was a child.

By the time he was twelve years old he had memorized all of the Epistles of Paul. At the age of twenty he had memorized the entire New Testament. When he was forty, large portions of the Old Testament had been committed to memory.

Now he did this by memorizing five verses a day. In a year that is some 1,800 verses. (The longest book in the New Testament is Luke. It has 1,151 verses. The entire New Testament has 7,597; the Old Testament, 22,485.)

This elderly brother made a great impact on my life. He was one of my teachers at the missionary training institute where I was a student. As you might expect, we also were required to memorize the Scriptures.

I found after one short year, that I was committing large portions of the New Testament to memory. Such a reservoir of truth becomes a rich deposit from which the Holy Spirit can draw during times of need or challenge. It is a strong defense against the attacks of the Enemy.

Jesus tells us in John 14:26, "*...the Holy Spirit ...shall... bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.*"

a. Memorize The Word. The Holy Spirit can only bring to us what we remember — what we have read in the Bible or memorized. He can't cause us to remember something we have never learned in the first place. Knowing this should motivate us to memorize God's Word.

Now I realize that the thought of learning such large portions of Scripture can sometimes discourage rather than motivate us. If that task seems too much, one can at least begin by reading the Bible through once each year.

It only requires reading five chapters a day to do this. (Perhaps the New Testament can be read through more often.) The more we read, the more our minds retain

of the foundational truths of our faith. This is what we will need when we face the devil's temptations. *"It is written..."* is our best defense.

b. We Can Be Winners. So many people are not sure of their relationship with God — even the basis of their salvation. Such become weak and unstable, and targets for the devil's darts of doubt and fear.

Let us, therefore, firmly fix on our heads the helmet of salvation, get a strong grip on our shield of faith, and take up the sword of the Spirit —the Word of God — with great confidence.

We have upon our feet the shoes of preparation to preach God's gospel of peace. Therefore, we will stand strong and secure. We can meet any attack of the devil by raising the sword of God's Spirit, which is His Word. With the battle cry of *"It is written..."*, the Enemy will turn and flee. *"...Resist the devil, and he will flee from you"* (Jas 4:7).

"And they overcame him [Satan] by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony [confession]..." (Rev 12:11). We can be winners every time!

D. PRAYER WARRIORS

Paul was very familiar with the nature of this spiritual conflict. In 1 Corinthians 15:32 he tells how he had *"...fought with wild beasts"* in Ephesus. He is referring to the beast-like powers of the wicked and evil spirits which opposed his preaching of the gospel.

1. Demon Spirits Are Real

I have ministered in over 100 regions of the world. Most of them have been pagan (godless) places. Often you can feel the covering of darkness, and sense the presence of evil powers. The art-work in the pagan temples depicts horrible, ugly beast-like creatures. They represent demonic spirit-beings which many of the artists have actually seen.

It is not only Christians who have visions and see into the spirit-realm. Those who serve the devil can see into the spirit-world as well. But instead of seeing visions of the Lord and the holy angels, they see visions of demon powers and evil spirits. They are very real, as anyone who has traveled in those parts of the world can testify.

Evil spirits may not reveal themselves as readily in some places of the world, but they are just as powerful in a hidden way. Sometimes they can be even more dangerous since people are not aware of their presence. We don't have to go around looking for demons, but we need to be aware that we are in a spiritual battle. Then we will always be prepared and on guard.

2. Satan Attacks Prayer

Where do we confront the Enemy most often? Where does he concentrate his attack on us? The most intense conflict comes in the battle to PRAY.

Certainly we are opposed and resisted whenever, wherever and however we seek to advance the Kingdom of God. But of all the things we do, intercessory prayer ministry is opposed most by Satan.

The main purpose of putting on the armor of God (Eph 6:11-17) is to get us ready and prepared for prayer. After we put on the armor, then we're ready to start *"praying always with all prayer and supplication [earnest appeal] in the Spirit"* (Eph 6:18).

WHEN WE PRAY, we are going to be resisted by Satan. Here is where we can expect him to press his attack, and fight most fiercely.

3. Remember Your Armor!

Praying in the Spirit (in other tongues) will bring us into spiritual confrontation with the powers of darkness. For that reason it is important that we go into battle with the spiritual armor and weapons which God has given us. We can be wounded and defeated if we fail to put on the armor.

Now it is true, we always move in faith, not fear. But faith must be directed towards that which we know. God does not want us "... ignorant [without knowledge] of the devil's devices [ways and methods] "(2Cor 2:11).

4. There Is Power In Prayer

Over the past 40 years I have seen the victories God can bring through the power and authority of prayer. It has meant my very life!

Some years ago, the devil tried to weaken and destroy me with cholera. The vaccinations I had taken had not provided me with the protection I needed. In the natural course of the disease I could expect to die within two to four hours.

I laid my life and ministry before the Lord and submitted everything to His will. I was not giving up to a weak faithless attitude, but firmly confessing that God's full will and purpose would be done.

If this was my time to be taken home, then I was ready to go. "*For me to live is Christ; to die is gain*" (Phil 1:21). If God was not through with me, then I would go right on to another region to minister. I firmly decided I would not back down, but take my stand in faith before the Enemy. The armor of God would be my defense!

Once again, I experienced the power of prayer and the authority of God's prayer warriors. The devil was defeated and my life was spared. You can see why, for me, prayer is more than just a topic on which to preach; it is indeed my very life!

Come, dear warrior of prayer. Put on your armor; take up your sword; and defeat the Enemy by the authority of God's Word and the power of living righteously.

If you do, you will know "...*Thy throne. O God, is for ever and ever: a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of thy kingdom*" (Heb 1:8).

"Is not this the fast that I have chosen? To loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that you break every yoke?

"Is it not to deal your bread to the hungry, and that you bring the poor that are cast out to your house? When you see the naked, that you cover him; and that you hide not yourself from thine own flesh?

*"Then shall your light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and your righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard. **Then you shall call, and the LORD shall answer; you shall cry, and he shall say. Here I am**" (Isa 58:6-9).*

a. Do You Lack Prayer Power? If you have been reading this and are aware you haven't been living right, why don't you stop right now and respond to this invitation from the Lord: "*Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him: and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon*" (Isa 55:7).

Your prayer of repentance, your acknowledgement of your transgression to the Lord, your restitution to those to whom you may have done wrong — these are all steps that can cause your fellowship with God to be restored.

You can then have power in prayer. You can have blessed fulfillment of this promise in your life: *"And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear"* (Isa 65:24).

Chapter 3

Power In Prayer By Praying In The Spirit

Introduction

"...for we know not what we should pray for..." (Rom 8:26). As strange as it may seem, power in prayer is only for those humble enough to acknowledge they do not know how to pray.

The Holy Spirit is looking for people like that so He can empower them in prayer.

"...the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express" (Rom :26 niv).

Only if we have the Holy Spirit's enablement in prayer can we obey the command given by Paul in Ephesians 6:18: *"Keep on praying in the Spirit...Be alert—watch and pray!"*

What is "prayer in the Spirit"? How is this different from other forms or modes of praying? I want to explain the difference in this chapter.

A. DIFFERENT FORMS OF PRAYER

There are many ways we can approach the Lord in prayer. All are important and have their place in the Church, and in our walk with God.

1. Contemplative Prayer

Some religious orders have given their whole life to prayer. They are devoted to knowing God, and relating to His will through meditation, quiet thought and prayer.

Their concern for the world is basically brought forth through "intercession"—prayer on behalf of others. This is a noble and important form of prayer. However, those involved in this kind of praying seldom learn to "pray in the Spirit."

2. Prayer Books

Many read their prayers out of "prayer books." We have a prayer book in the Bible; it is called the Book of Psalms. When such prayers are read with a heart that is truly seeking after God, the Holy Spirit can bring the life of the Living Word to the Written Word.

3. Directed Prayers

Others repeat "directed prayers." Many of us have had someone help or direct us in our first prayer. Little children are taught to pray by their parents. We often lead people in saying the "sinner's prayer."

I recently witnessed a heartwarming and humorous event related to "directed prayer" in a church. At the end of the service, a young man asked a visitor if he wanted to receive Christ as his Savior.

"No, I don't believe I am ready yet," was the visitor's reply. The young man then asked, "Would you know what to pray when you are ready?"

"No, I guess I wouldn't," was the visitor's honest response. "Would you like to know?" "Yes! I believe I would."

The young man then said, "Here is the prayer that you should pray. Just repeat it after me." He then led the visitor in a simple "directed prayer" of repentance. He told the visitor what to pray to invite Jesus to come into his heart as his Lord and Savior.

As the visitor repeated the prayer, tears began trickling from his eyes. His face lit up with joy. The Holy Spirit melted his resistance and Christ came into his heart — and he was truly born again!

Yes, God honors all kinds of prayer, if we are sincere and ask in faith. However, as wonderful as this may be — it is not "praying in the Spirit."

4. Shopping-List Prayers

Another form of prayer is what some call the "shopping list" approach. Some of us have a list of needs and desires which we bring to God in prayer. We write them down so we don't forget to keep on praying until we receive God's answer.

The list may include requests for our families, friends, church and pastors. When our motives are right, this too is a form of prayer that results in blessing.

In fact, James 4:2 tells us that sometimes *"we have not because we ask not."*

An example of this is in the story of the "prodigal son" (Luke 15:11-31). The younger brother had asked for and received his inheritance (his part of the family fortune). In rebellion, he then left his father and elder brother and went away to live a sinful life.

Many months later, he repented and returned home. His inheritance was gone; he was homeless and in poverty. His father joyfully welcomed him home, forgave him, and called for a feast to celebrate the return of the prodigal.

The elder brother complained to his father, "You never blessed me with a feast!" The father simply replied: *"You are always with me, and everything I have is yours."* He could have had a feast any time he desired.

The older brother did not ask, so he did not receive. It seems he was living far below his privilege. If he had wanted more, all he had to do was ask. This was his right as a first-born son.

B. THE ABUSE OF PRAYER AND SPIRITUAL GIFTS

There are two mistakes we can make in relationship to prayer. The first is failing to ask. The second is more serious: Asking selfishly for what we want — even if what we're asking is contrary to what God wants.

James talks about both these problems. *"...ye have not, because ye ask not... Ye lust... and desire to have, and cannot obtain... Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss [selfishly, wrongfully], that ye may consume it upon your lusts"* (Jas 4:2,3).

1. Praying Out Of Lust

The word "lust" is a very forceful word in the Greek language of the New Testament. It speaks of any excessive desire on the part of man. Usually it is evil in nature. Paul refers to this in his letters of advice and counsel to Timothy:

- *".. foolish and hurtful lusts"*
(1 Tim 6:9).
- *"...flee youthful lusts"*
(2 Tim 2:22).
- *"... led away into all kinds of lust"*

(2 Tim 3:6).

Lust is wanting something very badly. It is related to "greed" or selfish desire, and "covetousness" which is wanting what someone else has. It expresses itself in many ways: There is the lust for a prominent position, power, money and immoral pleasure.

If we use prayers to serve our lust, we put ourselves in spiritual danger. We will miss out with God because our motives are wrong. We are actually praying from a greedy or lustful spirit.

Some have been taught that prayer is a means of getting anything we want from God. If you have been taught that way, you may not even realize you are praying amiss. Prayer is not to acquire all the material things we can dream of. Our prayers should primarily be to discover what God desires.

Our energies and prayers should be focused on *"Seeking first the kingdom of God and his righteousness."* Then Jesus promised that all of the "things" we need in this life will be added to us (Matt 6:33).

God knows what things we need, and promises to provide them if we seek the Kingdom of God and His righteousness first. If we seek "material things" rather than God's Kingdom, we can move in a direction displeasing to God and spiritually dangerous for ourselves.

2. Praying Amiss

One of the greatest judgments God can send upon us is to give us what we wrongfully insist He give us in prayer. If our prayer arises from a wrong motive. He may withhold the answer for a time. But if we keep asking wrongfully. He may give us what we want — but with the answer comes judgment.

Psalms 106:15 says of the children of Israel: *"So he gave them what they asked for, but sent a wasting disease upon them"* (niv).

The children of Israel grew tired of their daily diet of manna (bread from Heaven). So, they asked God for "flesh" to eat. *"... they lusted greatly in the wilderness and provoked God by their strong desires"* (Ps 106:14).

The Lord finally gave them what they asked, but sent disease and death to their bodies. Praying wrongfully can indeed bring a very sad outcome to our lives!

3. Wrong Motives And Attitudes

We can abuse or misuse the gifts of God. The story of the prophet Balaam is a good example of the abuse of a spiritual gift (Num 22-24).

Balaam had a true Gift of Prophecy. His prophecies are the most eloquent in all the Bible. None of his prophecies failed. The problem with Balaam was not his gift or his ministry; it was his motives. Balaam used his gift to gain fame and fortune for himself.

He was promised gold and glory if he would prophecy for King Balak and curse the people of God. Balaam asked God if he should go to King Balak. *"And God said unto Balaam, Thou shall not go with them; thou shall not curse the people..."* (Num 22:12).

At first Balaam obeyed God and refused to go. As King Balak promised more money and prestige, Balaam kept asking God for permission to go.

Finally, God let Balaam have his way, but placed an angel with a drawn sword in the path to kill Balaam. Balaam was unable to see the angel, although the donkey on which he rode could clearly see. Balaam's lust for fame and fortune had blinded his prophetic vision. Only his faithful donkey saved Balaam's life at that time.

The Bible tells us the reasons God deceives His disobedient servants. *"And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be judged who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness"* (2Ths 2:11,12).

Balaam's motive and attitude were wrong. He was willing to curse God's people for his own fame and fortune. He took *"pleasure in unrighteousness."* Therefore, God sent him a strong delusion. He was on the wrong way and didn't know it. He was so blinded by his unrighteous motives and actions, he couldn't even see the sword the angel was going to use to kill him.

The final outcome of the story was sad and tragic for both Balaam and Israel. Balaam died for his sin (Num 31:8).

Let us be like Jesus: *"...Father... remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done"* (Luke 22:42).

C. THE HOLY SPIRIT HELPS US TO PRAY

Paul calls and encourages us to "pray in the Spirit." As we shall see, this is one sure way to avoid praying "amiss." Paul develops this thought in Romans. He carefully explains to us how the Holy Spirit can help us as we yield to Him when we pray:

"We do not even know how or what to pray for as we should. The Holy Spirit, however, helps us in our weakness. He does this by praying for us and through us with sounds and sighs too deep to put into words. God knows our hearts, and the mind of his Spirit. And the Holy Spirit always prays for the saints according to [or in line with] God's will"(Rom 8:26,27).

Church leaders constantly face circumstances and problems that we really didn't know how or what to pray for as we should.

Sometimes problems can be so large and people's lives so mixed up, we don't know how to help them.

Then too, there are so many different kinds of problems: They can involve decisions, people, places, finances, health and spiritual needs.

Often it seems people's lives are like a fishnet that has become all tangled up in one big bundle. We don't know where to begin trying to untangle it. We want to do the right thing, in the right way, with the right people in the right place for the right reason. But where do we start?

What a comfort it is to realize that the Holy Spirit knows us better than we know ourselves. He knows who we are, where we are, and how we are. He also knows the Father's will and answer for every need. His wisdom and power make up for our lack of knowledge. The Holy Spirit compensates for our weakness and deficiencies in prayer. And more than that, He is ready to put the words we pray in our mouth, so that we pray according to God's will. How does this happen? It happens when we "pray in the Spirit."

1. Praying In The Spirit

This phrase is used in the New Testament to describe a kind of praying that bypasses the limitations of our intellect and knowledge.

In Jude 20 we are encouraged to *"build up ourselves on our most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost. "*

In Ephesians 6:18 Paul tells us to enter the war against principalities and powers by *"..praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit."*

a. Gift Of Tongues Given For Prayer. Paul explains how we pray in the Spirit in 1 Corinthians 14:14. *"If I pray in an tongue, my spirit prayeth.."* One of the primary uses of the Gift of Tongues is to "pray in the Spirit."

"He that speaketh in an tongue, speaketh not unto men, but unto God..." (I Cor 14:2). Using the Gift of Tongues in prayer is one of the blessed side benefits of being baptized in the Holy Spirit.

b. Holy Spirit Enables Us. When we yield to the Holy Spirit's action upon us, we begin "praying in the Spirit." Paul teaches us that three important things take place when we pray in the Spirit (Rom 8:26,27 above);

- 1) The Holy Spirit enables us **to pray God's prayers.**
- 2) The Holy Spirit enables us **to feel God's feelings.**
- 3) The Holy Spirit enables us **to think God's thoughts.**

c. We Must Yield To The Spirit.

1) Praying God's Prayers. In 1968 we were conducting a day of fasting and prayer. An elderly prophetess by the name of Ruth Banks was part of the prayer team I was leading.

To my amazement, when she laid hands on someone's head and started praying, she seemed to know all about them. She prayed for intimate details of their life that no one but the person she was praying for (and the Holy Spirit) knew about.

The persons for whom she was praying would break into sobs of appreciation and thanks to the Lord because they knew Ruth Bank's prayers were born from Heaven. They knew she was "praying in the Holy Spirit." She was yielding to the Holy Spirit's action on her life and praying God's prayers.

These persons were very encouraged to realize God knew all about their problems. He loved them enough to cause one of His handmaidens to pray for the most desperate need of their life.

The Bible tells us this is what should happen when we allow the Holy Spirit to work through us. *"...the secrets of men's hearts will be made manifest, and so falling down on their face, they will worship God and report God is in you of a truth "* (I Cor 14:25).

I asked the Lord that very day, "Dear Lord, let me pray like Ruth Banks prays." I am happy to report that in the years since, the Lord has answered that prayer. I have learned to yield to the Spirit's action on my life.

He will do the same for you if you will spend daily time in His presence, waiting on Him. You can pray God's prayers as you learn to use the Gifts of Tongues, Interpretation and Prophecy in prayer.

2) Feeling God's Feelings. In Romans 8:26 Paul tells us the Holy Spirit makes intercession through us *"with groanings."* The Spirit's action upon us in prayer can bring an agony of spirit that is like labor pains that women experience when giving birth to a baby. The Spirit causes us to pray with deep sighs and sounds we cannot put into words. It is prayer that goes straight from our hearts to God's heart.

The Scriptures tell us there were times when Jesus prayed to the Father in this same way.

"... in the days of his flesh... He offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears..." (Heb 5:7).

In 1960 the Lord led me to the nation of Japan. Supernatural guidance came to me, and miracle after miracle occurred on that missionary journey. One of the most profound experiences of my life took place. I found myself (like the prophet Jeremiah in Old Testament days) weeping almost continuously for the Japanese people. Tears would fill my eyes as God's feelings of love and sadness filled my heart.

God loved the Japanese people very much and He was causing me to feel His love for them. But God's heart was also very sad. This was because the people of Japan had not responded to His love — rather they had rejected Him and the gospel. God was also very sad because of their pride and idolatry.

For weeks, night and day (in private and often in public), nearly uncontrollable weeping would sweep over me like a flood. I would try to find some private place to weep God's tears, but sometimes it wasn't possible. It was embarrassing to me — but I knew God was using me in prayer to break spiritual bondages off the people of Japan. I found out later that many other preachers had a similar experience in Japan.

If we yield to the Spirit's action in prayer, we will feel God's feelings — and Oh! what a difference that can make. We will not judge people so harshly — because we will understand God's love and feelings for them. Then we can help them — because LOVE NEVER FAILS. IT ALWAYS WINS.

3) Thinking God's Thoughts. In Romans 8:27 Paul teaches us "*...the Holy Spirit makes intercession through us and for us according to the will of God because he knows the mind [will] of God.* "

We can avoid praying wrongfully by praying in the Spirit. We will pray according to the will of God. Our ministry to others will be a blessing because it will reveal God's will. This is one important purpose for praying in the Spirit. God often reveals His will through prayer as we minister to others. I want to share some examples with you.

During our co-workers' meetings we set aside one day for fasting and prayer. We then assign leaders to oversee prayer teams of five or six spiritually mature saints. The day is spent in praying for the people who have needs. They come to the prayer teams as husband and wife, or one by one if they are unmarried.

Often God will reveal details about those we are praying for. This is what I mean by the words, "thinking God's thoughts." These insights given by the Spirit enable us to help them repent and quit doing things which may be contributing to their problems.

Also we receive insights from the Lord so we can pray for them in a very specific way. The whole prayer team keeps their hearts and minds yielded to the Holy Spirit for His thoughts and direction.

Each member may receive some part of God's will for the person who has come for prayer. As revelation comes in this way by God's Spirit, the team member shares the thoughts they believe are coming from the Holy Spirit. In this way, others can "check" or verify the authenticity of what is being shared.

We are not "infallible" (beyond making mistakes) when moving in the Gifts (enablings) of the Holy Spirit. There is wisdom and safety in having a "word from the Lord" confirmed or agreed upon by others. When everyone on the team is of the same mind about something, we have assurance we have the true mind of the Lord. Then we can follow through on that revelation in prayer.

This method follows the Bible model: "...*In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established*" (2Cor 13:1). "*Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the others weigh [judge] what is said*" (1 Cor 14:29).

In this way God's will and word unfolds as the team wait upon the Lord and each other for the spirit's thoughts (mind, will).

a) Three Examples:

1> A Spirit Of Infirmary. An example of how the Holy Spirit helps us in our prayers took place at this meeting. A lady came for prayer about a physical problem. She had a powerful ministry in "intercessory prayer" —praying against the devil and his forces on behalf of others. This is the "spiritual warfare" we have talked about in other articles.

As we prayed for her. God showed us that her physical problem had a spiritual cause. When she had been praying against the powers of darkness, she had been wounded by the Enemy with a blow that affected her physical body. An evil power was the cause, rather than just a natural physical cause. She had not known this and had sought help from doctors of medicine.

We faced the devil and his evil forces through the power of prayer and the authority of God's Word. As we prayed in tongues for her, there was a very militant tone that accompanied our praying. We knew we were battling a **spirit of infirmity** that was binding her. We commanded her release in the strong Name of Jesus, and she was set free at once!

Through prayer in the Holy Spirit, God's thoughts (insights), mind and will were revealed to us. He had caused us to pray God's prayers, to feel God's feelings and to think God's thoughts.

2> Released To The Lord. Toward the end of the day, we were praying with another lady who had a difficult problem. She had a husband and three teenage children who required a lot other time and attention. In addition, she had taken her ninety-six-year-old father into the home to care for him.

Because of his advanced age, he was like a baby who needed diapers (napkins) to catch his bodily waste. He was too weak to sit, stand or walk — so his daughter had to give him twenty-four-hour-a-day care.

For lack of sleep and rest, she was on the verge of a total physical and emotional collapse. What was she to do?

The Bible says, "*Honour thy father and thy mother, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee; that thy days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with thee...*" (Deut5:16).

She wanted to obey the Bible — but trying to honour her father was leading her to the brink of self-destruction.

I said, "Let's pray in tongues for a few minutes and see if the Holy Spirit responds to our prayer." As the team prayed, the Lord impressed me with something (made me think God's thoughts). I felt that the Spirit revealed the following:

The Lord had come to take this lady's father to Heaven. When he was dying, she had gotten down beside his bed and rebuked death and commanded in prayer that he live. The Lord said to me, "Because she has taken responsibility for her father, I respect her governance over her father's life. When she rebuked death, and commanded that her father live, I withdrew and left him to live."

I was surprised and shocked by this insight. I had to share this with the lady to see whether these things had happened. This would verify whether these thoughts were of my own mind or from the Spirit. She confirmed that her father had been near death several times. She had prayed as described above.

We then gently counseled her as follows. Go home and talk this over with your husband and children. Decide if you can release him to the Lord. He will be happier in Heaven, released from his near-dead ninety-six-year-old body. You will not have a nervous breakdown.

She did as we counseled. The family then prayed this prayer: "Lord, if You want to take father home, we release him to Your loving care." A few nights later Jesus came and took him to Heaven. The problem was solved.

I would have never thought of these things in a thousand years. But the Holy Spirit had a simple *Word of Knowledge* and *Word of Wisdom* for us to give this lady when we prayed in other tongues (in the Spirit).

3> A Failing Business. I remember another case where a man wanted me to pray for him that God would save his failing business and cause him to prosper financially.

I responded, "I will pray in the Spirit. Then I will ask the Lord to respond to this prayer by causing me to think His thoughts and feel His feelings."

After praying in tongues, I prayed the interpretation:

"Lord, You have brought this trouble to this brother because he has not obeyed You. You prospered and blessed him. But he did not pay tithes or give the money to support Your work that You told him to. Take all his money away. Cause his business to fail until he repents and learns to obey You. AMEN!"

The man was angry with me. But God the Father answered the prayer the Holy Spirit prayed through my lips. It brought the man to repentance. Several years later he came back to thank me. Now he was blessed and prospered because he was obeying the Lord.

D. CONCLUSION

Prayer is the right and responsibility of every Spirit-filled Christian. It is God's way of doing His will here on earth as it is in Heaven. Come, therefore, let us pray at all times and in all ways for God's people everywhere.

Prayer

Our Father in Heaven, I pray for the one who now reads this prayer. I ask You to pour out Your Spirit on him right now so he can begin "praying in the Spirit." Give him his prayer language. Father. Give him the interpretation to what he prays in other tongues. Cause him to be powerful in prayer. Cause him to pray Your prayers, feel Your feelings and think Your thoughts. I ask this in Jesus' Name — believing that You will do it. AMEN!

Chapter 4

Using Tongues And Interpretation In Prayer

A. CALLED TO SHARE CHRIST'S MINISTRY OF INTERCESSION

*"Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because **he always lives to intercede for them**" (Heb 7:25 niv).*

One of the primary ministries carried on by the resurrected, ascended Christ is that of interceding for you and me.

1. Intercession Illustrated

We will gain an insight to what is meant by **intercession** if we look at an event in the life of Moses.

The Lord is angry with the children of Israel and speaks to Moses: *"Now leave me alone so that... I may destroy them. Then I will make you into a great nation.*

"But Moses sought the favor of the LORD his God. 'O LORD,' he said... 'Turn from your fierce anger; relent and do not bring disaster on your people'" (Exo 32:9-12 niv).

God gave Moses what he asked for and spared the people. Moses saved the people by interceding with God (pleading for God to spare their lives). This illustrates two things:

a. Saved From Wrath. This is what Christ's intercessory ministry does for us, in saving us from wrath.

b. Power Before God. You can have power before God's bar (court) of justice when you partner with Christ in His intercessory ministry.

2. The Holy Spirit Helps Us Pray

As members of Christ's Body, it is our privilege and responsibility — our right and duty — to share in His ministry of intercession. Such a high calling is beyond our ability. However, the Holy Spirit is with us to help (empower) us in prayer. Two translations (by Greek scholars) of our key verse follow. Read them carefully and prayerfully.

"We do not know how we ought to pray; the Spirit himself pleads with God for us, in groans that words cannot express.

"And God, who sees into the hearts of men, knows what the thought of the Spirit is; because the Spirit pleads with God on behalf of his people and in accordance with his will" (Rom 8:26,27 tev).

"We do not even know how we ought to pray, but through our inarticulate groans the Spirit himself is pleading for us, and God who searches our inmost being knows what the Spirit means, because he pleads for God's people in God's own way..." (Rom 8:26,27 neb).

a. Praying In The Spirit. God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are all involved in our prayers when we pray in the Spirit. *"... through our inarticulate groans the Spirit himself is pleading for us..."* Note three things from this verse:

1) We Express Christ's Groanings. We are involved in intercession initiated by God. Christ's intercessions are felt and expressed *"...through our inarticulate groans... And we... which have the first/fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves..."* (Rom 8:26,23). Our physical bodies are the channels through which the groanings of Christ are expressed and felt.

2) Groanings Initiated By The Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the One initiating the groanings of God. *"...the Spirit himself is pleading for us..."*

3) God Pleads Through Us. God the Spirit is pleading through us with God the Father, *"...the Spirit pleads with God [the Father] on behalf of his people..."*

These are remarkable concepts understood by few believers. To understand this process, reflect on how your radio works.

b. A Radio Transmitter. A radio station (transmitter) in some distant place sends out a signal. Your radio is compatible with that signal. When you switch on your radio, its electronic components receive the signal and convert it to sound. Your radio was only the receiver, which gave sound and words to the signal received. Your radio was not the originator or source of the sound. It simply echoed what it received.

In like manner, Jesus is like the radio transmitter. Jesus is at the right hand of the Father in Heaven (Acts 2:34; 7:55). He lives to make intercession for us (Heb 7:25). When Jesus intercedes, the Holy Spirit in us receives this transmission and converts that into prayers and feelings — which we (like the radio) give voice and words to. Thus we are praying the prayers of Jesus.

c. Jesus And The Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is identified in a unique way with God the Son (Jesus) in the Bible. Note that the Holy Spirit is referred to as the **Spirit of Christ**. "... the prophets,.. searched intently... trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the **Spirit of Christ** in them was pointing..." (I Pet 1:11). "... Now if any man have not the **Spirit of Christ**, he is none of his" (Rom 8:9).

1) Working Together. Jesus gives us a remarkable insight as to how He and the Holy Spirit will work together after Jesus goes back to Heaven.

"But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes... He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears..." (John 16:13).

Who is the Spirit listening to? Who is giving the Spirit the words He is to speak? I believe the Holy Spirit echoes Jesus' words. The Spirit says what He hears Jesus saying. The Spirit prays what He hears Jesus praying. And the Spirit uses us as the channels through which Jesus' words and prayers are expressed.

In the verse below we see the **Spirit of Jesus Christ** uniquely linked to the prayers of the Philippians as they prayed for Paul. "... *this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ*" (Phil 1:19).

2) Expressing Prayer And Praise Through Us! Jesus (Head of the Body) shares His prayers with the Holy Spirit — Who in turn expresses those intercessions through you and me (the members of Christ's body). "*Now ye are the body of Christ, and members of it... And [Jesus is] the head over all things to the church*" (I Cor 12:27; Eph 1:22).

The Lord Jesus not only gives the Holy Spirit the prayers to pray for us, but desires to use us as His mouth-piece to express His prayers through us!

This is illustrated in another passage of Scripture: "...*in the ...church I [Jesus] will sing praise unto the Father*" (Heb 2:12). How does Jesus sing praise to the Father in the Church? Obviously Jesus has to use our vocal apparatus, our voice, our lips to sing His praises to the Father.

To illustrate the point, consider this: Sometimes the Old Testament prophets spoke in the Person of Christ — as if Jesus Himself were speaking. David said, "*The Spirit of the Lord spoke in and by me, and his word was upon my tongue*" (2 Sam 23:2 amp).

This, illustrates the important point we are seeking to make:

Just as the Old Testament prophets spoke by the Spirit of the Lord in the Person of Christ (as if Christ Himself were speaking) — so by the action of the Holy Spirit upon us, we pray in the Person of Christ just as if Christ were praying.

The **Person of Jesus** is now at the right hand of the Father. The **Presence of Jesus**, however, is with and in each one of us by His Spirit.

The phrase — "*In the midst of the congregation I [Jesus] will sing praise unto you [the Father]*" — is of great interest. Jesus is telling us that He still desires to sing praises unto His Father when we gather together in our church services.

How can Jesus sing His songs of praise to the Father in the Church when He is **personally** with the Father in Heaven?

It can only be done by the **Presence of Jesus**, by His Holy Spirit giving us "songs of the Spirit" which we sing.

We are the congregation or Church of the living God through which the song of the Lord is sung. Jesus sings His praise to the Father through us! The Bible clearly confirms this: "*Speaking... in... spiritual songs* ['spiritual songs' are Jesus' praise to the Father, expressed through us by the Spirit of Christ in us], *singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord*" (Eph 5:19). "*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in... spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord*" (Col 3:16).

The desire of Jesus is to fill us with His never-ending praise and worship of the Father. When we are filled with and yield to the Holy Spirit, Jesus sings forth praises to the Father through our lips, with our voices in our worship services. We become channels through which His songs of praise are expressed to the Father in Heaven. No wonder the Bible calls such inspired worship "*The Song of the Lord*" (2Chr 29:27).

Just as Jesus expresses His songs of praise through us. He desires to express His prayers through us. **Just as Jesus can praise the Father through us. He can also pray to the Father through us.**

3. Members Of His Body

Jesus is the heavenly Head of His earthly Body. We are the members of that Body. It is through the members of His Body that His will can be done on earth as it is in Heaven.

The Lord Jesus still wants to walk, talk, preach and pray as He did during His earthly ministry. "*Then said Jesus to them... as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you*" (John 20:21). He wants to do this through you and me by the mighty power of His Spirit. In the light of this, listen as the Apostle Paul intercedes on behalf of the believers in Ephesus:

"I pray that you will know how... the Father has put all things under the feet of his Son. He has made him the great Head of the Church — which is Christ's body... that body is the completion of him, crammed full of him who crams full the whole universe with himself" (Eph 1:16, 19-23 lit).

4. The Agony Of Intercession

If we are going to share in the prayer life of our Lord, we should learn a little more about how He prayed when He was here on earth. "*During the days of his earthly life, Jesus prayed with strong crying and tears... "* (Heb 5:7).

This is an amazing picture of our Lord. We see Him praying, crying and weeping in great agony of soul. His praying was very intense. "*And being in an agony he prayed*

more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground" (Luke 22:44). Can you imagine prayer so intense it makes you sweat blood?

The Apostle Paul prayed this way also. You recall that in his letter to the church at Galatia he speaks of his deep concern for their spiritual well-being. They were in danger of falling from God's grace by returning to the bondage of the law. They were tempted to add legalistic works to their faith in Christ, hoping by this to merit salvation. To add anything destroys everything. They were about to turn their backs on the complete and perfect work of the cross.

Their danger drives Paul to prayer: "*My little children, of whom I travail in birth gain until Christ be formed in you*" (Gal 4:19). Paul's prayers were like travail or birth-pain agony.

Mothers well understand what it means to travail in birth. Men can only understand the experience by witnessing it. Pressure and pain are usually a part of the birth experience.

Paul uses the birth process to explain his agony in prayer on behalf of the Galatian church. He had become an outreach or extension here on earth of Christ's heavenly ministry of intercession. Jesus was praying a powerful prayer through Paul. And he felt it!

As we said earlier, praying in the Spirit is praying as God prays and feeling as God feels. No wonder Paul says, "*...the Spirit prays through us with sounds, sighs and groans which cannot be put into words*" (Rom 8:26). He was speaking from experience!

Yes, Christ ever lives to make intercession for us and through us according to the will of the Father. Will you be available to the Holy Spirit to be a living channel for prayer and intercession?

a. A Personal Example. Several years ago the Holy Spirit led me to Japan. For six or seven weeks we traveled from village to village. During that time I found myself deeply moved and stirred in my soul. It seemed as if God's heart was broken for the Japanese people. I could feel the grief of Christ's Holy Spirit being poured out through me on their behalf. I could not stop weeping. It was as if God were shedding His tears through my eyes.

God loves the Japanese people, but their sins of pride and idolatry have shut Him out. There is little place for God or His Son in their lives or society. Satan has struck their eyes with spiritual blindness.

"... the god of this world has blinded the minds of them that believe not. Therefore, the light of the glorious gospel of Christ — who is the image of God — cannot dawn upon them " (2Cor 4:4).

Satan's battle ground and dark stronghold is the mind of man. When the light of the gospel breaks into the soul of man, the mind is one of the first things to be set free.

I realize now that my "*strong crying and tears*" was, the intercession of Christ by the action of the Holy Spirit upon me. God was reaching out in love to the Japanese people, through my prayers and tears. He was also placing restraints upon the god of this world (Satan) and his demonic powers (see Psalms 149:5 -9). It was a time of intense spiritual warfare.

Since that time in Japan in 1960, I have discovered that other preachers to that area have had the same experience. They all have spent a good part of their time weeping in intercession for the people of Japan. They too have shared in Christ's ministry of prayer and intercession in a personal and heart-felt way.

B. THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT IN INTERCESSION

Several references have been made in this study to the importance of *"praying in the Spirit."* We have seen how basic it is to intercessory prayer. What Gifts of the Spirit help us in our ministry of prayer and intercession?

1. Primary Ways To Pray In The Spirit

I believe the Gifts of

a. Tongues,

b. Interpretation of Tongues, and

c. Prophecy are the primary ways and means by which we are to *"pray in the Spirit"* (Eph 6:18). We will want to study in some depth what the Bible has to say about the function and purpose of these gifts in our daily prayer life.

The Apostle Paul teaches us principles in using these spiritual gifts in prayer.

2. The Gift Of Tongues

a. For Speaking To God. Commentary on 1 Corinthians Chapter Fourteen:

"For anyone who speaks in an tongue [that is, a language given by the Holy Spirit] does not speak to men, but to God" (I Cor 14:2).

"...Since you are eager to have spiritual gifts, try to excel in gifts that build up the church.

"For this reason anyone who speaks in a tongue should pray that he may interpret what he says.

"If I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit [by the Holy Spirit within me] prays, but my mind does not understand.

"What should I do? I will pray with my spirit [in tongues], and I will also pray with the understanding [interpretation of tongues]. I will sing with my spirit [in tongues], and I will also sing with the understanding [interpretation of tongues].

"If you are praising God with your spirit [in tongues], how can one who finds himself among those who do not understand say 'Amen' to your thanksgiving, since he does not know what you are saying?" (I Cor 14:12-16 niv).

Paul teaches us four ways we use tongues and interpretation of tongues in private devotions and in public meetings:

1) praying to the Lord

2) singing to the Lord

3) blessing the Lord

4) giving thanks to the Lord

Speaking in tongues can be of great value if the speech is interpreted so the meaning is also understood (see verse 5). The Gift of Tongues prepares the Church to receive the interpretation, which should follow the speaking or singing in tongues. The people are alerted and unified in the Spirit to receive and respond to the inspired word of interpretation which follows.

Keep in mind that the primary reason for tongues is to **speak to God**. For this reason, tongues and interpretation will normally take the form of one of the four categories outlined above.

b. In Private Prayer. What is often overlooked, however, is that Paul is placing equal importance on the role of these gifts in our private prayer life. Speaking in tongues is primarily directed towards God, not man. It is a personal man-to-God experience.

Our study in 1 Corinthians 14 reveals four ways in which the Gift of Tongues can be expressed in our personal communion with God:

- 1) **Inspired prayer (vss 14,15)**
- 2) **Inspired song (vs 15)**
- 3) **Inspired praise and blessing (vs 16)**
- 4) **Inspired thanksgiving (vss 16,17)**

The Holy Spirit is the Unceasing (never-ending) Spirit of prayer, song, praise and thanksgiving. It is my belief that all four expressions of the Gift of Tongues are the privilege of every Spirit-filled believer.

c. Vocal Gifts To Be Exercised By All. It was Paul's desire that all might exercise the vocal gifts of:

1) **Tongues.** *"I would like every one of you to speak in tongues..."* (vs 5).
2) **Interpretation.** *"For this reason anyone who speaks in a tongue should pray that he may interpret what he says "* (vs 13). Paul would not instruct us to pray for this gift if God did not want to give it to us.

3) **Prophecy.** *"For ye may **all** prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted"* (vs 31).

Paul's teaching is clear. He wants every believer to speak in tongues. He commands those who do to pray for interpretation. He concludes by telling us that **all** may prophesy.

When people are taught properly, faith will be released in them to receive these gifts.

"Faith comes from hearing the message..." (Rom 10:17 niv).

Receiving and using these three gifts is a matter of your faith levels. If you ask in faith, you will receive.

As we submit in humility, and respond in faith, we can expect the Holy Spirit to manifest Himself through us by His gifts.

3. Gift Of Interpretation In Private Prayer

This brings us to some fresh and exciting principles of prayer which can transform your Christian life. I want to show you how the Gift of Interpretation of Tongues can be used with our spiritual prayer language in our daily devotions. You and I can pray in tongues and interpret in our private prayer times with God.

Paul tells us that he prayed in tongues more than anyone else to whom he was writing. Yet he says he would rather speak five words that were understood (that is, he would rather prophesy) than ten thousand words in tongues in the public worship service (1Cor 14:18,19). It is clear that his ten thousand words in tongues were accomplished in his private times of prayer. (Maybe that is why his five words of prophecy were so powerful.)

a. Needed To Understand God's Will. When we use the Gift of Tongues in prayer, we are speaking to God in a language unknown to us. God understands it because the prayer is the result of the Holy Spirit's action upon us. Such prayers are always in alignment with God's will.

What is the problem then? It is this: While God understands, we do not understand what we are praying when we pray in other tongues. God wants us to understand. The Bible places great importance on our knowing and understanding God's will.

"Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding..." (Ps 32:9). I must confess that, for many years, I was like the horse and mule. I prayed, sang, praised and gave thanks to God in tongues, but I never received interpretation of my prayers. This was because I had not obeyed 1 Corinthians 14:13: *"Let him who speaks in an tongue, pray that he may interpret."*

To interpret, we must obey this scriptural commandment. This is the first rule of the Spirit-filled life. But no one ever taught me to do this. Even though I read this verse many times, for some reason it did not impact my mind enough to cause me to obey this word of instruction.

When asked for Interpretation, God was faithful to give it to me. When that happened I was thrilled to learn that another biblical prayer began to be answered for me.

*"... we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with **the knowledge of his will** through all spiritual wisdom and understanding"* (Col 1:9).

The Lord wants us to know His will. *"And that servant, which knew not his lord's will... shall be beaten..."* (Luke 12:48). There is penalty and punishment for not knowing our Lord's will.

If we do not know God's will, we will wander around without any spiritual goal or purpose. We will do very little for the Lord.

God wants us to know and understand His will so we can obey Him. Then we will go where He wants us to go, do what He wants us to do, and say what He wants us to say.

For this reason I believe Paul placed great importance on the Gift of Interpretation. *"Let him who speaks in an unknown tongue pray that he might interpret"* (1 Cor 14:13). Without interpretation we do not understand what the Spirit is praying through us. Once we start interpreting our prayers, songs, thanksgiving and praise to God — understanding of His will begins to come to us.

It is a comfort to know that the Holy Spirit can intercede through us with power and wisdom when we don't know how (or what) to pray for as we should. Often, those to whom God gives a burden of prayer do not know what they are praying for at the time.

If you feel a burden to pray for some person, but do not know what to pray, just pray in other tongues (languages) by the Holy Spirit. If you ask for and receive interpretation to the prayer in tongues, you may discover what you were praying for. The Holy Spirit knows the need, and inspires us as Christians to pray the prayer needed for those in need.

There are other situations in which God wants us to know the mind of His Spirit. We need to know His will and have His wisdom in specific situations. We need to understand the motives which are behind our attitudes and actions. At such times we can ask God to give us the interpretation to our unknown tongue in prayer.

We are again reminded that when the Holy Spirit makes intercession for us and through us, it is according to the will of God (Rom 8:27). Therefore, we can trust the Holy Spirit to inspire our *"prayer with the understanding" after we have spent some time "praying with the Spirit."*

b. Listen To Your Prayers. I have often come to an understanding of God's will by listening to the prayer that comes from my lips after a time of *"praying in the Spirit."*

Praying in tongues should be an expression of faith, humility, submission and obedience before God and His Holy Spirit. This helps to put our hearts and minds in harmony with His.

In this way we begin to think and feel as God does. Then we can pray forth the interpretation of our prayer in other tongues with understanding.

The same principle applies to singing, blessing and giving thanks with the Spirit. Many of us have experienced times of praising God both in languages given by the Spirit and our native tongue. We switch back and forth from one to the other.

For many years, I didn't realize that my praise in my native language was a response to my praise in tongues. It was a form of interpretation of tongues.

c. Listen To Your Songs. When I awake in the morning, often there will be a little song singing away in my head. For years, I did not take note of the words or the message in the song. One day my home church leader exhorted me to pay attention to those faint little impressions and promptings of heart and mind. I was to be aware of the words of the song, as I would probably need the message in the song later that day.

Often the soft stirrings and gentle pressure of the Spirit can go unnoticed. He is very dove-like in nature and does not force His ministry upon our lives. He wants us to be sensitive to His slightest touch. His "*still small voice*" often comes as quiet thoughts or through a meaningful melody or song.

I decided I would follow my leader's advice. The next morning as I awoke, there was another little song singing away in my head. I gave special attention to the words. I discovered that the words of that little chorus were preparing me for events during the day that I could not have anticipated.

For thirty years I had been ignoring and overlooking this gentle but important ministry of God's Holy Spirit.

There was another way in which I was missing instructions from the Lord. I love to sing and worship the Lord during my morning bath-shower, when I wash my body. I sing and worship both in other tongues and in my native language.

It was my custom to sing in other tongues when bathing. During this time of tongues, my mind would usually be on other important details I had to take care of each day.

Following singing in tongues, I would sing in my known language. But I paid attention to neither. My thoughts were on other things. I was paying no attention to the words. One day this thought occurred to me. "Perhaps I should be paying more attention to my prayers when I bathe my body."

When I started paying attention, I discovered that I was singing in tongues, and without realizing it, I was singing the interpretation to my song in tongues. I was praising in the Spirit followed by praise in my native language.

These Gifts of Tongues and Interpretation of Tongues had both poured through me without my even realizing what God was doing by His Spirit. He was building me up to face the problems of the day before me.

Needless to say, this precious ministry of the Holy Spirit has become a great blessing to me personally over the years. I trust it will be true of your life as well.

4. A Word of Encouragement

The key to the Spirit-filled life is child-like simplicity and faith. Can we be simple enough to believe that there are times — perhaps more often than we realize — when God wants to help us through His Gifts of Tongues, Interpretation and Prophecy?

Can we trust Him to minister to our needs and desires in a personal way through our prayer life?

He knows us better than we know ourselves, and is ever ready to provide the spiritual direction, correction and protection that we need.

May I encourage you in the words of my former leader to pay close attention to your thoughts, prayers and songs following a time of praying or singing in the Spirit? The overflow of God's Spirit will often bring words and songs of interpretation for your edification, understanding and guidance.

I am not suggesting these principles become a method for guidance — by themselves. There needs to be other confirming evidence if an important decision faces you. (See Section D12 on **Guidance**.) People have gone into serious error when they try to "use" God's gifts in foolish ways.

All guidance will be in harmony with God's Word and receive approval or confirmation from wise and godly counselors in the Body of Christ.

Most of you, however, probably have been in the position of not expecting the Holy Spirit to personally move in and through you by His gifts. It is to you that my words of encouragement are directed.

If your heart has been stirred by this message, may I suggest that you bring your desires to the Lord. Ask Him to fill you afresh with His Holy Spirit. Lift your voice in a language of praise as He directs your worship. Every sound we speak in faith, love and obedience will already have been inspired by God's Holy Spirit.

Our spiritual prayer language (speaking in tongues) is composed of sounds and syllables which we do not understand with our minds. They are inspired by God's Spirit. We know they are an expression of praise, prayer or intercession.

By faith we lift our voice and speak forth, knowing that every sound we form with our lips and tongue has been prompted by the Holy Spirit. Sometimes our praise is carried along by a song and melody that flows from our hearts to His. What beautiful gifts God has given!

In a similar way, after a time of praying and worshipping the Lord in other tongues, we can pray and sing forth the interpretation. We simply trust the Holy Spirit to enable us to express the heart and mind of God. We then speak and sing forth the interpretation of the tongues in words we understand.

Sometimes the interpretation of tongues will be worship. At other times it may be prayer by which the Lord may wish to reveal something to us that will be in line with His purpose for our lives. In this way the Gift of Interpretation can bring added power and purpose to our prayers.

Sometimes Interpretation of Tongues brings prophetic insight (a Word of Knowledge) that can help us intercede more specifically for our families, churches, missionaries and even national and world affairs. God's people who are empowered by the Spirit to pray can make a difference in this world!

We are now better able to understand Paul's teaching on prayer. It was born out of his experience as an intercessor with Christ.

May his words become a motto for our daily lives: *"Praying always... in the Spirit... for God's people everywhere"* (Eph 6:18).

C. PRAYER BREAKS THE POWERS OF DARKNESS

It is important for us to know that our prayers are used by God in a very special way to break the powers of darkness. Let us consider this truth in regard to spiritual warfare by reading the Apostle John's words as recorded in Revelation 8:3-5:

*"And another angel with a golden censer came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense to **mix with the prayers of all of God's people**. This was to be offered upon the golden altar before the throne.*

*"The sweet smoke of the incense which was mixed **with the prayers of the saints** rose up before God out of the angel's hand. Then the angel filled the censer with fire from the altar and threw it down upon the earth. Lightning flashed, thunder crashed and there was a terrible earthquake. "*

1. Old Testament Patterns And Heavenly Realities

This is a prophetic picture of how our prayers are used of God to influence earthly events. This heavenly setting as seen above is understood by examining the floor plan of Moses' Tabernacle and Solomon's Temple. Old Testament patterns of worship reflect spiritual realities in the heavenly realm.

a. Ark Of The Covenant. You may recall that the Holy of Holies was the innermost chamber of the temple where the Ark of the Covenant rested. We need to note three things about the Ark:

1) Gold-Covered Box. The Ark was a gold-covered box or chest about .75 meters high by .75 meters wide by 1.5 meters in length.

2) Two Gold Cherubim. Two solid gold cherubim were set on either end of the cover or lid that covered the gold box, as if bowing to each other.

3) The Mercy Seat. The area between the Cherubim was called the Mercy Seat (Throne), and was the place where God's holy presence was enthroned.

4) Sprinkled Blood. It was between the Cherubim (on the Mercy-Throne) that the high priest once a year sprinkled blood for the cleansing and covering of his own sins and that of the Israelites.

b. Altar Of Incense. The Altar of Incense was in the room adjacent to the Holy of Holies. This room was called the Holy Place. These two rooms were separated by the inner veil (a heavy tapestry).

The Altar of Incense, and the incense offered to God on it, form a special picture or type of the ministry of praise and prayer in the Holy Spirit.

Just as the fragrance of the incense wafted its way from the Altar Of Incense in the Holy Place into the Holy of Holies, so our prayers and praise make their way to the Mercy-Throne of God in Heaven.

Incense is a special mixture of perfumed powders which, when burned, releases a sweet smell. It was made up of four substances, which were obtained from crushed plants.

Frankincense —one of the substances — is a white powder. Some believe this white powder represents God's righteousness, which is His part of the incense.

When mixed with the other three parts, which represent man's part, the incense becomes a pleasing offering to God (Exo 30:34).

In the scripture above (Rev 8:3-5), incense is offered with the prayers and worship of the saints. When our prayers are mixed with the righteous purity of God's Spirit, it all comes before Him as a sweet and fragrant odor.

c. A Temple In Heaven. The writer of Hebrews tells us in Chapter 9 that Moses' tabernacle was a pattern (architectural drawing) or a shadow of things as they really are in Heaven.

In other words, there is a Temple in Heaven. In it, there is a heavenly Ark and Mercy Seat (or Mercy Throne — called "Throne of Grace" in Hebrews 4:16). This is where Jesus took His own blood after His death. He sprinkled it on the heavenly Mercy Throne that our sins might be paid for and covered over (read Hebrews 9:19-24).

There is also a heavenly Altar of Incense where a real angel takes our prayers and offers them with heavenly frankincense before the throne of God.

1) God's Power Released. What is the earthly result of all of this heavenly activity? When our prayers are mixed with God's frankincense and cast back into the earth, a powerful display of lightning, thunder and an earthquake result (Rev 8:3-5).

We see this happening in the Book of Acts. *"And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spake the word of God with boldness"* (Acts 4:31).

When we send our prayers by God's Spirit to His throne. He sends them back in a way that can be seen, heard and felt here on earth!

We release the power of God on earth when we give Him something to work with in Heaven. That is one of the reasons why we pray.

2. The Divine Cycle Of Prayer

Praise and prayer sent up to Heaven produce results on earth. This same idea is found in Job 36:27,28: *"He draws up the vapors of water which distill from the clouds as rain. The clouds of heaven pour down their moisture received from the earth and abundant showers fall on mankind. "*

This verse describes the rain cycle. Water vapor from the earth and ocean, lands and lakes rises to form the clouds of the sky. The clouds then release their moisture as rain according to their vapor content. The more moisture in the cloud from the earth, the greater the rainfall of blessing that falls back on the earth.

The same is true of praise and prayer. It goes up to the throne of God and is mixed with heavenly frankincense. It is then hurled into earth as mighty manifestations of spiritual power in our homes, churches, cities and nations.

a. Spiritual "Bombs". The more we pray, the more material we give the angel at the golden Altar to work with. This angel makes "spiritual bombs" that he throws back to earth. These "bombs" blow away the powers of darkness and release the prisoners from their bondages to sin and sickness. The more we pray, the greater is the outpouring of his spiritual power on us and our churches.

This is what happened when Paul was in prison. He sent praise and prayer up! The angel at the altar sent "spiritual bombs" down that shook the earth and set the prisoners free.

*"And at midnight Paul and Silas **prayed, and sang praises unto God:** and the prisoners heard them. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed"* (Acts 16:25,26).

b. No Worship —No Rain! The same truth is found again in Zechariah 14:17: *"If any of the peoples of the earth do not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord*

*Almighty, they will have no rain. " What is the prophet saying? He is saying **no worship, no rain!***

The prophet Joel said, *"In the last days, God will pour out his Spirit on all flesh"* (Joel 2:28). **The amount of worship and prayer which we send up determines the degree we receive this promised outpouring of God's Spirit.** If you want showers of blessing on your church, you must worship God in Spirit and in truth.

The volume of rain we enjoy will be proportionate (related to the amount) of praise and prayer we send to Heaven to be distilled back down on us as showers of blessing.

D. CONCLUSION

The Holy Spirit inspires continuous prayer and worship. Praying in the Spirit enables us to complete the circle of Christ's intercession on our behalf. His Spirit will always move us to pray in line with God's will.

Only through the prayers of God's people can God's perfect will be done on earth as it is in Heaven. We play an important part in the divine cycle of prayer. It begins in Heaven, but is completed on earth. Will you come like the disciple of Jesus? *"...one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray..."* (Luke 11:1).

Chapter 5

Praying By Prophecy

Introduction

The subject of our study in this chapter is "praying prophetic prayers." This story will help you understand what is meant by "prophetic praying."

In 1968 we held one of our conferences. Some 1800 people attended. We set Friday aside as a special day for fasting and prayer. At that time we ministered to the personal needs of the people in the conference. We formed a number of prayer teams, each made up of five or six spiritual leaders. Individuals then came forward for prayer along a railing at the front of the auditorium.

The prayer team of which I was a part included my wife and a forty-year veteran missionary to Africa — as well as Ruth and Alien Banks who were elderly ministers.

I was very impressed with the gentle but powerful ministry of Ruth Banks. She was a beautiful white-haired sister who had walked with God most other life.

She would lightly lay her hands upon the head of each person and begin to pray. It was a pure, prophetic prayer.

Even though most of the people we prayed for were total strangers, Ruth's prayers were specific in addressing the secret needs of each individual. In her prayer, she would mention such personal, painful secrets that they would begin weeping and sobbing.

They suddenly realized that God was aware of the smallest details of their struggles, sorrows and pain. This ministry of God's love and grace prepared their hearts so the prayer team could give any needed counsel and direction.

I listened and watched very carefully. Never once did Ruth Banks fail to minister directly to the specific need of those she prayed for. Her prophetic prayer was always

correct, even mentioning the hidden details of the person's life. I had never seen anyone pray like that before in all of my life.

I told the Lord that I didn't understand everything that I had seen and heard. But I asked Him for the ability and grace to pray as that little handmaiden of the Lord had prayed.

I wanted the Holy Spirit to release me from the limitations of my natural mind and understanding. I cried out for His divine wisdom and knowledge to meet the deepest needs of hurting, lonely people all over the world. I realize now I was just beginning to see the importance of the twin roles of prophecy and prayer.

I can't say I have a ministry just like Sister Ruth today. But I have found that as I yield to the action of the Holy Spirit in prayer. He enables me to pray God's prayers, feel His feelings and think God's thoughts.

Prophetic prayer then becomes far more personal and precise, and is much more effective in the lives of those for whom we pray.

This does not mean we are infallible in our ministry, and never subject to error or mistakes. None of us are so perfect that we don't need the confirming witness or judgment of mature brothers and sisters in Christ. It does mean, however, that prayer joined with the Gifts of Tongues, Interpretation of Tongues and Prophecy can bring the intervention of God into our own personal lives and the lives of others.

1 Corinthians 14:24,25 tells us that the prophetic ministry will reveal the inner secrets of the unbeliever's heart. He will thereby be convicted of his sin, fall down in worship, and confess that God indeed is in our midst. May it be so!

A. WHAT IS PROPHETIC PRAYING?

Prophecy is spontaneous speaking forth of words, given by the Spirit, in the language which we know. They are words we have not thought of in advance of speaking them. They are words and thoughts supplied us by the Holy Spirit which we speak forth to benefit others.

We have a clear example of how prophecy is given by examining an event in the life of Moses.

"And the LORD said unto Moses... Aaron your brother shall be your prophet. You shall speak all that I command you: and Aaron your brother shall speak the words [you give him] unto Pharaoh..." (Exo 7:1,2).

The words Aaron spoke as Moses' prophet were given him by Moses. Aaron did not speak his own words.

This is the way the Gift of Prophecy works. The Holy Spirit gives the words; we speak them to others in prayer. Prophecy may also be used in speaking to others to build them up, stir them up and cheer them up (I Cor 14:3).

Prophetic prayer is the key to opening the doors of Kingdom power and purpose for God's people.

1. Prayer is man speaking to God.

2. Prophecy is normally God speaking to man through man.

3. Prophetic praying is the Holy Spirit speaking through us in prayer to God the Father.

All three are necessary for God's will to be done on earth as it is in Heaven.

As basic and important as our subject is, there is very little teaching to be found on prophetic praying. In fact, I have never heard a message on this specific topic in all of my life.

a. Thinking God's Thoughts. In earlier chapters in this series we learned that three things happen when we yield to the Holy Spirit's action in prayer (see Romans 8:26,27):

- 1) **We begin to pray God's prayers.**
- 2) **We begin to feel God's feelings.**
- 3) **We begin to think God's thoughts.**

We have covered the first two topics in preceding chapters.

Prophetic prayer enables us to "Think God's Thoughts." This will be the central theme of this study. We will discover that prophetic insights and understanding are birthed and expressed through prayer.

I was astonished to discover that the prophetic anointing had as much (or more) to do with praying as with prophesying.

Praying and prophesying are tied together in the lives of all of the prophets in both the Old and New Testaments.

B. PRAYING PROPHETS

1. Simeon and Anna

Simeon and Anna were an elderly prophet and prophetess in the Temple at Jerusalem. They were used of God to minister to Mary and Joseph when they brought baby Jesus to the Temple to be presented to the Lord.

God used Simeon and Anna to bring forth a prophetic word concerning their new-born son. It was also a word of blessing, encouragement and divine purpose at an important time in their lives.

The Scriptures paint an interesting picture of the old prophetess Anna. She was a woman with an unusual life of prayer. Listen to the record:

*"Anna, a prophetess, was also there in the temple that day... She was very old, for she had been a widow for eighty-four years... She never left the temple, but **stayed there night and day worshipping God with fasting and prayer.***

"She came in at that very time and also gave thanks to God. She then told everyone in Jerusalem who had been waiting for the coming of the Savior, that the Messiah had finally arrived " (Luke 2:36-38 tlb).

a. Close Relationship Of Prayer And Prophecy. I noticed something of real interest while studying the lives of the prophets: There is as much said about their life of prayer as there is about their words of prophecy.

In the case of Anna the prophetess, the main witness of Scripture relates to her prayer-life rather than her ministry of prophecy. She was an "anointed" (called of God) prophetess. Nevertheless, the primary direction and expression other "anointing" was in prayer. Her prophetic ministry was mostly prayer. She must have prayed thousands of prophetic prayers. We have only one instance of record where she prophesied to the people in Jerusalem!

This close relationship of prayer and prophecy is also seen in the church at Antioch:

2. Prophets At Antioch

"In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers... while they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for me Barnabas and Paul for the work to which I have called them.' So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them on their way" (Acts 13:1-3).

This passage in Acts would lead me to believe that the prophets and teachers at Antioch spent much time in the ministry of worship, prayer and fasting. It seems this was a common custom or function in the life of that church.

For years it was my thought that the primary function and duty of the prophet was that of proclaiming or speaking the word of the Lord. In Scripture, however, we find they spent much more time in prayer than in prophesying.

3. Jeremiah

For instance, when we study the life of the prophet Jeremiah in the Old Testament, we see that his primary role was that of praying, not speaking. In other words, he spent more time speaking to God than speaking to man!

"Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people" (Jer 9:1).

I believe there is a truth here which we have missed. There is a prophetic dimension in prayer which we have failed to understand. Yet without it the full power and purpose of the prophetic anointing or calling cannot be expressed.

a. Prayer And Prophecy Must Go Together. Sadly, there has been a separation of these twin truths in modern times.

There are many who will stand and speak: "Yea, yea, thus saith the Lord!" Their words, however, are often empty — without the true ring of an anointed prophet. Why? Their ministry has not been empowered by prayer. Often their lives have been filled with non-spiritual or even unspiritual activities.

One cannot rush into prophetic ministry without the proper preparation in prayer. Without it, words of so-called "prophecy" are shallow, subject to much error, and even spirits of deception.

May I suggest that for every minute of prophecy there should be many hours of prayer. It is only out of the womb of prayer that a true word of God is brought to birth.

4. Elijah: A Model

Let us look to Elijah as one of God's model men of prophecy and prayer. There is much we can learn from one who was *"subject to like passions as are we,"* but who, nevertheless, earnestly prayed very effective prayers (Jas 5:16-18).

a. Powerful Prayers. He had the same problems and human weaknesses that we struggle with, but his prophetic prayers still produced powerful results!

James describes his prayer-life: *"Elijah prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain for three and a half years. And he prayed again, he prayed and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops" (Jas 5:17,18 niv).*

These are two powerful prayers. Let us study the story in the Old Testament. Powerful prayers should produce powerful words and powerful works!

The story is a dramatic one. Elijah is proclaiming the word of the Lord to Ahab, the most wicked king Israel ever had. Listen as he speaks:

"As the Lord, the God of Israel lives, whom I serve, there will be neither dew nor rain in the next few years except at my word" (1 Ki 17:1).

b. Powerful Prophecy. This was a very strong word of judgment to a very wicked king. But it was the prophetic word of the Lord by a righteous man of prayer. That is the reason James could later record, "*Elijah prayed earnestly that it might not rain... and it rained not.* " It was Elijah's prayer that gave birth to this powerful prophecy!

c. A Right Time To Speak. There is a time for both silence and speaking. The writer of Ecclesiastes tells us: '*There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven... There is a time to be silent and a time to speak* ' (3:1,7).

Our story of Elijah now takes a very interesting turn. After he had faithfully spoken the word of the Lord to King Ahab, the land of Israel soon became very dry. Several years passed without rain.

All went well with Elijah for a while. God had directed him to a brook where he could drink. God also sent ravens to bring food to Elijah every morning and evening. It was a fairly peaceful picture. Elijah was eating, while others were starving, during this time of drought and famine.

However, in time the brook itself finally dried up, and Elijah became a victim of his own prophecy! Dry bread with no water is not a very pleasant picnic, and he could well have been tempted to re-open the heavens. If he had acted on that desire, he clearly would have been outside of God's will. God's word for rain had not yet been given.

If Elijah had spoken when he should have been silent, one of two things could have happened:

1) Asking Amiss. God would not have honored the word, for he had "asked amiss" — that is, apart from the divine will (Jas 4:3). Elijah would have become a wordless and powerless prophet.

2) Asking Too Soon. God would have honored the word, but that would have ended the whole story. Elijah would have missed the "fire-from-heaven miracle," and found himself with "*leanness in his soul* "(I Ki 18:30-39; Ps 106:13-15).

The devil tempted Jesus to turn stone into bread when He was fasting (Matt 4:3). Like the Lord Jesus during His temptation in the wilderness (Matt 4:1-4), Elijah waited for the word of God to come.

God is faithful. The record simply reads: "*Then the word of the Lord came to Elijah: 'Go at once to Zarepheth of Sidon and stay there. I have commanded a widow in that place to supply you with food'*" (I Ki 17:7-9 niv).

Because both Elijah and the widow obeyed the word of the Lord, both were rewarded by the blessing and provision of a wise and loving God.

Their need became the opportunity for the Lord to perform the "oil and meal" miracle which saved their lives. Elijah could have missed it by speaking when he should have been silent; or by being silent when he should have spoken. It truly pays to prayerfully wait for — and then speak — God's word!

d. Wait For God's Word. "*After a long time, in the third year, the word of the Lord came to Elijah: 'Go and present yourself to King Ahab, and I will send rain on the land.' So Elijah went...* " (I Ki 18:1,2).

Elijah went to overthrow the evil empire of King Ahab and his wife Jezebel. Their reign was supported by the Baal worshippers and the prophets of Baal.

For the idolatry, child sacrifice and immorality that were part of Baal worship, God had sent the famine. Now the time for overthrow had come.

God had clearly instructed His people, *"Thou shalt not bow down to their gods, nor serve them, nor do after their works: but thou shalt utterly overthrow them, and quite break down their images"* (Exo 23:24).

"And ye shall overthrow their altars, and break their pillars, and burn their groves with fire: and ye shall hew down the graven images of their gods, and destroy the names of them out of that place " (Deut 12:3).

So the day of confrontation is arranged. You can read the whole story in 1 Kings 18. Elijah throws out the challenge.

"...How long halt ye between two opinions? If the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word" (I Ki 18:21).

Then follows the second challenge. *"... the God that answereth by fire, let him be God And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken"* (I Ki 18:24).

The prophets of Baal called on their God. *"And they cried aloud, and cut themselves... with knives and lances, till the blood gushed out upon them"* (IKi 18:28). But no fire came down.

At the time of the evening sacrifice, here is what happened:

*"At the time of sacrifice, the prophet Elijah stepped forward and prayed: 'O LORD, God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant and **have done all these things at your command.***

"Answer me, O LORD, answer me, so these people will know that you, O LORD, are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again.'

"Then the fire of the LORD fell and burned up the sacrifice, the wood, the stones and the soil, and also licked up the water in the trench.

' When all the people saw this, they fell prostrate and cried, 'The LORD — he is God! The LORD — he is God!

"Then Elijah commanded them, 'Seize the prophets of Baal. Don't let anyone get away!' They seized them, and Elijah had them brought down to the Kishon Valley and slaughtered them there" (I Ki 18:36-40 niv).

All 450 of the false prophets of Baal were killed that day. Pay attention, however, to the prayer which backed up this mighty display of God's power:

*"...let it be known today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant and **have done all these things at your command"*** (I Ki 18:36).

1) Do What God Says. The key to Elijah's great victory is found in the little phrase, *"according to your command* [word]. **" What does a servant do? He does only what his master tells him — nothing more, nothing less!**

He doesn't go to do his own will in a self-serving way. He does not give out his prophecies for a price (as did Balaam [Numbers 22] to the sorrow of all involved). He simply did what God had said and that was all. And, because it was God's will and word, it worked—in great power, it worked!

We, like Elijah, should only speak and move in faith "according to God's word of command!"

Some people don't act when God speaks—that is unbelief. Other people act when God hasn't spoken — that is presumption (going beyond God's will). The prayer warrior listens for God's word and then speaks and acts in simple faith and obedience.

The prophet Elijah only spoke and acted in line with the word of the Lord.

e. Prophetic Word Brought To Birth. After the great victory over Baal, Elijah told King Ahab, *"Get up, eat and drink; for there is a sound of abundance of rain"* (1 Ki 18:41).

God has said that He was going to send rain upon the land. Elijah, therefore, prophesied to King Ahab that there was going to be an abundance of rain. Now notice what Elijah does after he prophesies: *"...Elijah climbed to the top of Carmel, bent down to the ground and put his face between his knees "* (vs 42 niv).

1) Earnest, Persistent Prayer. The Apostle James tells us he prayed earnestly (Jas 5:17). The Old Testament record (1 Ki 18:43) says he prayed seven times. This would indicate persistence as well as earnest fervency. This was a strong, urgent prayer on Elijah's part.

Elijah's posture for prayer was somewhat unusual. It was the position which the women of the Middle East took when they were about to give birth to a child. It was the position for travail — the painful pressure necessary for birth.

In the same way, the Holy Spirit often causes us to travail in prayer so that God's word and purpose can be brought to birth.

Elijah earnestly prayed seven times before there was a sign in the sky that God's word was about to be fulfilled. It first came in the form of a *"little cloud the size of a man's hand"* (1 Ki 18:44).

There comes a time in the process of birth when nothing will stop a baby from being born. Elijah had travailed in prayer, and now God was about to make His move!

Elijah tells Ahab to hitch up his chariot and get on his way before the rain overtakes him. The story now becomes most dramatic: *"Meanwhile, the sky grew black with clouds, the winds rose, a heavy rain came on and Ahab rode off to Jezreel. The power of the Lord came upon Elijah, and tucking his cloak into his belt, he ran ahead of Ahab all the way to Jezreel"* (1 Ki 18:45,46 niv).

2) We Have A Responsibility. God wants us to understand: There is a direct connection or tie between prophecy and prayer.

Many people have received a prophetic word for their lives, but failed to see it come to pass. Why? They didn't fulfill their part by birthing the divinely prophesied purpose from the womb of intercession.

Prophecy must be conceived, received and birthed in prayer and intercession.

"That which is born of the Spirit is spiritual..." (John 3:6).

Both the prophet who speaks the word, and the one who receives the word, have a responsibility before the Lord.

When the word of the Lord came to Mary, the mother of Jesus, it had to be received and nourished in her before it could be birthed. *"But Mary kept all these things [Greek = **rhema** meaning **living words**], and pondered them in her heart"* (Luke 2:19).

Mary brought the word of the Lord to birth by prayer, praise, patience and faith.

Mary was a woman of praise and prayer. After the Holy Spirit came upon her, she prophesied.

Praise, prayer and prophecy were all three expressed through her in a beautiful and powerful way at the home of Elizabeth and Zacharias (Luke 1:35-38; 46-55).

Mary becomes a model for all of us to follow in our walk with God.

We are then responsible to nourish and bring the word spoken to us to birth by our prayers and intercession. Like Mary we must say, *"Let it be unto me according to your word."*

C. PROPHETIC PRAYERS

I would like to give you one more example of prophetic prayer in action. Pastor Rick Howard in Redwood City, California, has taught his people the principles of prophetic prayer.

Every Saturday night they form prayer teams for intercession in their church. This is a form of prayer in which the Holy Spirit specifically leads them in their intercession.

1. Guidelines To Follow

They usually follow a pattern for prayer which is based on the following six guidelines. Use these for your prayer team.

a. Yield To The Holy Spirit And Jesus. They prayerfully acknowledge and yield their spirits to the presence of the Holy Spirit and the Lordship of Jesus.

b. Bind Powers Of Darkness. They bind the powers of darkness and deception that might try to hinder their prayers or influence their thoughts.

c. Keep Mind And Spirit Open. They open their own minds and spirits to allow the rivers of life-giving water to flow from their innermost being (John 7:37,38).

d. Be Empowered By The Holy Spirit. They pray that God's Holy Spirit of love and truth will then specifically empower their prayers.

e. Pray In Tongues. Each team then prays in tongues, expecting God to reveal to them what, how and for whom they are to pray.

f. Pray The Interpretation. Then they pray about what the Spirit may have made them aware of by thought. God's Word or spiritual vision.

2. The Spirit Will Direct

After completing the "Six Guidelines," the team should keep praying in tongues until one (or more) of the team feel an impression from the Spirit as to what the team is to pray for. Expect the Holy Spirit to reveal to you the will and mind of the heavenly Father that your prayers may have a specific direction.

The direction may come in the form of a thought, vision (mental picture) or Scripture text. It might involve people, places, events related to one's church, city, nation or some foreign field.

Often God's Spirit will move the team to pray concerning one (or more) of the power structures of society — the so-called "mind-molders":

*** Science * Media * Business**

*** Church * Arts * Government**

*** School * Home * Military**

a. Each One Adds A Part. Usually one or more persons in the group will sense a direction to take in prayer. The entire group then should begin praying softly in the Spirit, relying on the Gifts of a Word of Knowledge, a Word of Wisdom, Discerning of Spirits, Tongues, Interpretation of Tongues and Prophecy.

As different ones pray forth in faith, God will reveal what and how to pray. Each one adds a part of God's revelation as they are allowed their time to pray.

This is what Paul was referring to when he said that if revelation comes to another who is sitting by, he should be allowed to speak... that all may prophesy one by one (I Cor 14:30-31).

b. Partners With Jesus. This is true prophetic prayer in action. In this way God can bring forth a complete revelation of His will for a given situation. We are actually completing the circle of His purpose through prayer and intercession.

I am amazed and awed by what the Spirit brings forth during such times of prayer. **As the spiritual tide rises, and faith mounts, prayer becomes more real than the problems and needs for which we pray.**

During one of our conferences, we had ten prayer teams praying this way. Remarkably, on repeated occasions during that day of prayer, five or six of the teams were impressed to pray about the same burden of the Lord.

The various teams did not know this until we called for a testimony time. The team captains then shared what the Spirit impressed them to pray about and the results.

Over and over, others would stand and say, "The Lord told us to pray about the same thing in our team."

What joy and comfort this brings when we realize we are partners with Jesus in His ministry of intercession.

3. A True Story

In one such session, after they had prayed in other tongues, the Lord began to put a feeling in the heart of one sister. She said, "I feel there are some missionaries in the Philippines who are in great danger."

As they kept praying, someone else received a picture in their head (mind): "Yes, I see them in a prison."

Another was given further insight by the Spirit. She saw the prisoners holding the missionaries hostage with knives.

They kept praying. Another prayer team member saw the prisoners taking the missionaries into a van — so they could use the vehicle to escape. This sister cried out in horror, "They must be stopped! If they get them outside the prison, they will kill them all and flee in the van!"

They then began to urgently and earnestly pray. Two and a half years later Pastor Howard found out from the author of this chapter that those events received by revelation through prophetic praying had literally happened.

The very night they were praying in California, because of the time difference, it was Sunday morning in the Philippines.

Sister Olga, a well-known missionary to the prisoners in Bilibid Prison in the Philippines, and four coworkers had been taken hostage by prisoners. The prisoners had indeed held long, sharp knives to their throats.

Sister Olga's white van was demanded by the prisoners to be used as a means of escape. As they neared the prison gate, the van motor quit running. Despite every effort to restart the engine, it could not be started.

This gave the guards time to capture the prisoners and rescue the missionary and coworkers. God came to their rescue, and their release to safety was nothing less than a miracle.

After they were set free from the prisoners, they tried starting the motor of the van. It started immediately with no problems.

How were they spared? Intercessors in California tuned in to the mind of God. By revelation they were able to pray prophetically, and God saved the lives of five missionaries. As ministers of the Gospel, it should be of great encouragement to know that there are intercessors who are supporting us by a ministry of prophetic prayer!

4. A Word Of Encouragement

May I encourage you, dear reader, to seriously consider this ministry of prophetic prayer. God wants to move by His power in our families, churches, governments and in the many nations of the world.

Exercise the Gifts of the Spirit in your prayer life. Listen for God to speak, and then let that word be brought to birth through the power of travelling prayer.

It is both a great privilege and responsibility for God's handmaidens and men-servants everywhere to earnestly pray prophetic prayer as the Holy Spirit gives them the prayers to pray.

Chapter 6

Forming A Prophetic-Prayer Team

Introduction

I want to share with you the purpose, power and protection which teamwork in prophetic prayer provides. We will also consider how such a prayer team is formed and functions — how it is put together and works.

A. POWER / PURPOSE OF A TEAM

Jesus is speaking: *"Again I say unto you, if **two of you** agree on earth in prayer about anything, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where **two or three** come together in my name — because they are mine — I will be right there with them "* (Matt 18:19,20 niv).

Jesus taught there is something special about praying together. Team prayer has greater power than when we pray by ourselves — alone. There is a mystery here which we don't fully understand.

Private prayer is important and necessary. However, Jesus is telling His disciples that He will be with them in an unusual and powerful way when they come "together" in prayer.

1. Strength In Unity

In unity there is strength. In spiritual unity there is spiritual strength! This is an important principle or truth. When we are of one heart and one mind in the Spirit of the Lord, He will move with great power and purpose on our behalf.

"One can chase a thousand, two will put ten thousand to flight. " (Deut 32:30).

When God is the force behind the action, two are ten times more effective in prayer than one.

The principle of "unified" strength is true for great good or great evil. The power of a people is multiplied when they get together for a common purpose. God broke up Babel for that reason.

"Behold, they are one people and of one language. This is only the beginning of what they will do. Now, nothing they think of will be impossible for them" (Gen 11:6).

This same concept of "together power" can be found and followed in the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. Surely this is a principle which God wants us to put into practice when we pray. Jesus was teaching His disciples a very basic and important truth.

It has always been my approach in ministry to work as a team. I don't think that people with an independent attitude can build up the Body of Christ in the best way. Let us see how this works when it comes to forming a prophetic-prayer team.

a. Love Produces Unity. Jesus said we can expect the blessing of His presence when we come together in His Name. How do we get a team working together?

The way people can really work together as a team is through the unity produced by the Holy Spirit. *"God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us"* (Rom 5:5). Love produces unity. The Holy Spirit fills our heart with the love of God — so we love one another.

b. Pride Produces Dis-unity. Dis-unity is the result of pride. *"Only by pride cometh contention [quarrels]..."* (Prov 13:10). The Enemy will do his best to break up your team-prayer ministry by discord and strife.

If you see that happen, the best solution I know is to have a service where the members of the team wash one another's feet. This breaks the pride. *"If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet: you also ought to wash one another's feet"*(John 13:14).

2. God's Will Revealed/Confirmed

The Holy Spirit will reveal the will of the Father to us when we humble ourselves before Him and each other. As we yield to the action of the Holy Spirit in prayer, He will bring us into a harmony of heart and unity of mind.

We will begin praying, thinking and feeling what is on the heart and mind of God. As revelation begins to come, we will have several members confirming what is received.

You will find that the same revelation will be given to more than one member of the team. When this happens, it provides confirmation that we are receiving the mind of the Lord as a result of our praying.

Prophetic-prayer teams provide a sound and powerful way to intercede for others and discover God's will. It is a means of allowing the Holy Spirit to minister through His gifts in wisdom and in power.

There is opportunity for His word and will to be expressed in a balanced way with other brothers and sisters in Christ. The prophetic word or prayer is in a setting where it can be proven and judged by others.

Let us turn to 1 Corinthians for our teaching text: *"You may all prophesy, one by one, that everyone may learn, and all may be encouraged"* (I Cor 14:31).

3. Training In Use Of Spiritual Gifts

We have to learn to use the Gifts of the Spirit. Church leaders must take responsibility to provide occasions for the believers to learn to pray prophetic prayers. Joining those learning to use the Gifts of the Spirit with more experienced believers on prayer teams is a good way to train others.

Paul encourages the Corinthian believers not only to seek after the spiritual gifts, but to "excel" in them (verse 12). To "excel" means to become more effective, or better in our efforts. This involves learning by experience.

a. God's Will/Man's Choice. It is God's will to give His gifts (I Cor 12:7-10) to those who earnestly seek and strongly desire them (I Cor 12:31; 14:1; 14:39).

God responds to our desire for His gifts when our motives are to build up and bless the Body of Christ.

It is true that God has the right to give gifts according to His own will and desire. Everything begins and ends in Him. However, God has given man the freedom to desire and ask to be a part of His wonderful plan.

' *Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled*" (Matt 5:6). God gives His gifts to us when we "... *hunger and thirst.* "

As we delight to do His will. He places His desires in our heart (Ps 37:4,5). As we pursue those desires in faith and obedience, God chooses us and prepares us for doing His will.

From our position, it is as if we can choose to be chosen. **Without Him we cannot; without us, He will not!** Herein is the balance between God's sovereignty (right to do what He wants) and man's freedom of choice.

Paul encourages us to seek after the Gifts of the Spirit in faith, and develop them in obedience. It is through God's gifts that His love can reach out to a sick and hurting world. Love is the motive, and prayer is the means by which our witness and work in the world begins.

Let us now consider the practical steps which we will need to follow in the formation of teams for prophetic prayer.

B. PRINCIPLES/GUIDELINES FOR A TEAM

God's Word gives us the principles by which a prophetic-prayer team can function in a safe and sound way. The Apostle Paul gives us mature counsel in 1 Corinthians 14:29:

"Let two or three prophets speak, while the others judge and weigh what has been said."

1. Three Principles

There are three principles or practical truths expressed in this verse:

- a. "Let—prophets speak"** — that is liberty!
- b. "Two or three "** — that is boundary or limitation!
- c. "Let the others judge"** — that is responsibility!

2. Why Are These Principles Necessary?

a. Liberty. First of all, it is important to allow the spiritual gifts to be expressed. Without this liberty, the Holy Spirit is "grieved and quenched." We can stifle or silence His voice in our church (I Ths 5:19; I Cor 14:39).

b. Limitation. Secondly, leaders are to set sensible limits to the number of prophetic prayers given by any one person. The thought in Paul's mind is to prevent one person from dominating the prayer meeting.

If the prophetic ministry is going forth to the congregation (as opposed to ministry conducted in a small circle of prayer) — there is the danger we may weaken the impact of prophetic prayer if so many are given that people's attention is lost (I Cor 14:40).

c. Responsibility. Thirdly, leaders must judge and weigh the spirit and content of a prophecy or prophetic prayer in a responsible way. This is necessary because no one is "infallible" — that is, beyond the possibility of making a mistake.

If someone prays something that is not fitting or untrue, leaders have to give gentle correction. By doing this, the believer will learn to properly use the gifts.

If a prophetic prayer "hits the target" — leaders also need to affirm this fact. This will encourage the one learning.

3. Six Guidelines

The following guidelines have been developed over the years from practical experience with prayer teams around the world. They are not binding rules, but practical suggestions which are based on sound spiritual principles. I believe you will find them helpful:

a. Mature Believers. Select six or eight mature believers. These should be persons who are baptized in the Holy Spirit and have learned to use the Gift of Tongues (or prophecy) in prayer. Two married couples plus one single man and one single lady make for a good mix. Add those in training to a team like this only after the team has gained experience in prophetic praying.

b. In A Circle. Have them sit down in a circle.

c. Acknowledge Christ. Have them pray this prayer: "We together confess Jesus is Lord. We receive His presence among us in the person of the Holy Spirit. We ask the Holy Spirit to anoint us right now for prophetic prayer." (Remember, your righteousness is based on the cross of Christ and His shed blood.)

d. Armor Of God. Then have them speak these words of command: "Lord, You said whatever we bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven. We now bind the powers of darkness that would seek to oppose or disrupt this prayer ministry in the strong Name of Jesus.

"We put on the helmet of salvation by which we shut out of our minds any wrong thoughts. We put on the breastplate of righteousness and take the shield of faith as our defense against wrong feelings or doubts. We open our hearts to receive the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God — which we now expect to receive as we pray. Just as the word of the Lord came to the prophets of old. Lord, we expect You to send Your word to us now, so Your mighty will and works will be displayed among us" (Eph 6; Ps 107:20; Gen 15:1,4; ISam 15:10 etc.).

Doing these things prevents the devil from spoiling your prayers with his lying thoughts or ungodly purposes.

e. Holy Spirit In Charge. Then pray this prayer: "Holy Spirit, we submit our minds and hearts to You. Put Your prayers on our lips. Your thoughts in our minds, Your feelings in our soul. We submit to Your Lordship, for where the Spirit is Lord, there is liberty" (2 Cor 3:17).

f. Pray In Tongues. Release the rivers of the Holy Spirit by beginning to pray in tongues together. Let this be an expression of your faith, love and obedience to God. Your desire is to become of one heart and one spirit with the Lord and each other.

4. Praying For Others

After going through the above steps, it is time to pray for others. During training and learning times, the senior church leader or elder should act as captain of the prayer team. Also, for clarification, we will call those to be prayed for *the candidate[s]* in the instructions below.

a. Candidate In The Middle. If the team is preparing to pray for candidates who have come with special needs, have one candidate (and their spouse when possible) come and sit in the middle of the prayer circle.

b. One Person Lead Out. If the person is a man, have one of the male members of the team (or vice-versa if a woman) lead out in prayer for that person. At this point, trust the Lord to give a prophetic prayer.

Listen carefully to the prayer, because there may be revelation of hidden secrets mentioned in the prayer. Knowing these can enable you to be of more help to the person.

c. Interview Candidate. If there is no guidance given by the Spirit on what to do next, then have the team captain briefly interview the person as follows:

1) Why Have They Come? Ask the person, "What have you come for? What are you expecting to receive?" As they answer, team members may hear confirmation of something they received from the Spirit during the prayer.

Keep talking to the person, just as Jesus did when ministering to the woman at the well in Samaria (see John 4:4-30). Do not let the interview go more than three to five minutes.

2) Share Spiritual Insights. If some of the team feel the Spirit has given them something to share, this is the time.

Sometimes a picture will form in your head. The Spirit can cause you to know what it means. Other times, the Spirit will give you a verse of Scripture that addresses the need.

Other times, the Spirit will give a faint impression of something you would have no way of knowing about. If so, at some appropriate time, tell the prayer team and the candidate what you feel you received from the Spirit.

Then ask the candidate, "Is this true?" If they reply, "No — it is not true," then respond, "I'm sorry. The thought must have been from my own mind." If they say, "Yes, it is true," then proceed as you feel led of the Spirit.

3) Whole Team Prays. If you do not have guidance as to how to proceed, have the whole team lay their hand lightly on the shoulder or head of the candidate (depending on local custom) and pray in the Spirit together.

Trust that during this prayer time, members of the team will receive something from the Lord. If so, share what you received. If no one feels they have anything from the Lord, then the team captain ought to pray a concluding prayer (trusting that the Holy Spirit will cause it to be a prophetic prayer).

There are times when it seems the Spirit gives us little or nothing to share. Do not force something to happen. If the Spirit is not giving anything, do not try to make up something. Tell the candidate, "Jesus loves you and I love you too." If custom allows, give them a warm, loving embrace and a heart-felt "God bless you!"

C. PROBLEMS/DANGERS IN PROPHETIC PRAYER

As we consider the ministry of prophetic-prayer teams, we need to talk about some dangerous problem areas. God's gifts of grace can be abused in most ungracious ways. We are not to fear our Enemy, but we are to be aware of his clever and tricky ways (2Cor 2:11).

We should not be surprised that something as powerful as teams of prayer would come under his attack. The reason we might expect problems to arise concerning prayer

is clearly pictured for us in Proverbs 14:4: *"Where no oxen are, the crib is clean: but much increase is by the strength of the ox "* (Prov 14:4).

This proverb shares a simple principle for us to see. Where there are no oxen, it is easy to keep the barn clean. There is no mess that needs to be removed.

Where you have the oxen, you have their dung dropping and thus a dirty crib. But there is also a big harvest. It takes the strength of the ox to plow the field, to produce an abundant harvest.

The truth is very clear. If we want the power of the ox and the gain of the harvest, we are going to have to put up with some messy problems.

If we want the power and results that the Gifts of God's Spirit bring, we are going to have to face the problems — and problem people — that come with it.

It is possible to sweep aside the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, and have a clean but very sterile (lifeless) stall. Dead oxen and quiet, clean barns go together. Dead churches are lifeless, powerless and praiseless — and without harvest!

Adolescence (teen-age years) has its own special problems. It is the borderline time between being a child and being an adult. It is a time when a little knowledge and a lot of energy wants to run far ahead of wisdom and experience!

This is true in our growth and life as Christians as well. Many problems can arise when our knowledge about the Gifts of the Spirit is not balanced by the maturity of Christian character and experience.

We have seen that when the utterance (speaking) of Gifts of Tongues, Interpretation of Tongues and Prophecy are accompanied by a Word of Wisdom, a Word of Knowledge or Discerning of Spirits, they play an important role in the ministry of prophetic-prayer teams.

(For further understanding of these Gifts, see Sections D1 and D2 of the **Leaders Training Guide**.)

What are some of the special problems which can arise in the practice of prophetic prayer?

1. Personal Guidance Needs Balance

One of the dangers is to look to the Gifts of the Spirit as a sort of "magic means" of obtaining God's will for personal guidance on a weekly or daily basis. Such a "misuse" of gifts could almost be likened to going to a fortune-teller.

God will never allow us to escape from a walk of faith. Faith operates in a confidence that God is keeping His word of promise: *"And the LORD shall guide thee continually..."* (Isa 58:11). Let me assure you that if you are not in rebellion, it is difficult to miss God's will.

The Lord, at times, is merciful to us and gives strong prophetic confirmation to us through those who pray for us. However, do not let this be a substitute for your own relationship with the Lord. He can speak directly to you, if you learn to listen in your times of private devotion.

There must always be a balance between the following:

- a. God's Word** — Biblical principles and special words.
- b. God's Spirit** — Inner witness, dreams, spiritual gifts.
- c. Body of Christ** — Confirmation by counsel and prophecy.
- d. Circumstances** — As arranged and/or rearranged by God.
- e. Our Attitude** — Personal humility, faith and obedience.

God wants our faith and trust to be in Him. Guidance should come out of our relationship with God and one another in the Body of Christ. When these relationships are in right order, then we can expect the Lord to guide and direct us in a safe, sure way.

To move outside of this divine balance is to open ourselves to false, foolish and even dangerous directions and influence.

For a more detailed study on *Guidance*, see Section D 12 in this **Leaders Training Guide**.

2. Humility, Not Pride

Humility is our safe-guard for human error. The Gifts of the Holy Spirit are ever subject or open to human error. We can all make mistakes in this regard.

There is always a certain risk when God allows His perfect word to be spoken through imperfect men.

But God has provided a way to protect both His servant and His word. There is great safety in humility!

Humility in the Gifts of the Spirit is expressed in two ways:

a. Willingness to admit we can make mistakes.

b. Willingness to receive correction when we do make mistakes.

Let me give you an example of what I mean. Pastor David Schoch from Long Beach, California, USA has one of the most powerful prophetic gifts I have ever witnessed in the forty years of my ministry. He spends a great deal of time in prayer and intercession.

As I have already said, such preparation is necessary for prophetic ministry. He guards his prophetic calling in a very responsible way. The years have proven the maturity and accuracy of his ministry.

In 1965 I was in a meeting where hundreds of people from all over the nation had gathered. David was ministering. By the Spirit's revelation (Word of Knowledge) David was pointing to different people (who were strangers to him) and describing their physical problems, and describing their sickness.

To confirm that he was accurate in what he said, he always asked the person he pointed to if what he described was an accurate description of their need. If they said "Yes!" — then he would pray for them. There were many people healed. Then something unusual happened.

He called out to one woman and began to describe her condition. He then asked her if she were suffering from that problem. She replied, "No! I don't have the condition you described."

David's response before that crowd of six to seven hundred people was one of true humility. He didn't argue or make any excuses. He simply said, "I'm sorry sister, I must have made a mistake." He acknowledged he was capable of making a mistake, and was very sorry. He then stopped the healing ministry and went back to preaching his message.

At the end of the sermon some 45 to 50 minutes later, he invited people forward who needed prayer. To everyone's surprise the lady who had denied her need ran up to the front. She then confessed that because of embarrassment she had lied about not having the problem David had described. Before all of the people she asked for God's forgiveness and apologized to Brother David.

In light of this, I was most impressed by Brother David Schoch's gracious response to her first denial.

Even though he was right, and she was the one in error, he didn't try to defend himself or challenge the lady's statement. He made no claim to being infallible, but admitted he could be wrong. What a noble example of humility for all of us to follow!

If you are going to form a prophetic-prayer team, you must have people with humility. They must not be those who will defend themselves or their gift. If others do not accept their revelation, they must have the humility to acknowledge, "I may be wrong; I'm sorry if I was."

3. False Prophecy

There is an important principle of spiritual balance which I want to discuss.

"Do not put out the Spirit's fire; do not treat prophecies with contempt. Test everything. Hold on to the good. Do not despise prophecy or take it lightly. Prove or test all things; hold on to that which is good" (1 Ths 5:19-21 niv).

a. Prove All Things — Hold On To The Good. We are told in this Scripture to appreciate the value of the prophetic word. However, we are also told to prove or test that word — whether it be right or wrong.

Only then can we firmly hold on to that which is good, and discard that which is in error.

What is the way to prove whether a prophecy is right or wrong? The Bible gives us a simple, clear word on the matter:

"You may say to yourselves, 'How can we know when a message has not been spoken by the LORD?'

"If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the LORD does not take place or come true, that is a message the LORD has not spoken. That prophet has spoken presumptuously. Do not be afraid of him" (Deut 18:21,22 niv).

The answer is very simple: **A true prophecy will come to pass and agree with the Bible.**

Sadly, some "prophetic" ministries never submit their prophecies to proof. They do not ask for confirmation of the accuracy of what they say "by revelation." Some even believe they have reached a place of being infallible — never wrong.

There have been some tragic results for both the prophet and the people because of this lack of responsibility.

b. Judge The Prophet. A way to judge a prophet is to see if he is responsible for his prophetic words and their effects. Are they words of truth and life, or do they produce confusion, fear, division and disappointment? (See also Section D2.)

I was teamed up with a prophet, praying for a couple (man and wife). The man we were praying for was a dentist. God had blessed him with a nice home which he used once a week for a large prayer/ministry gathering. He could accommodate over 100 people in a large room at the back of his house.

God was saving, healing and filling people with the Spirit every week in those meetings. The presence of God was on his home, and people were drawn by the Spirit to come and receive help.

Then someone came to his meeting and prophesied to the dentist that he should sell his home and go out into a traveling ministry. Desiring to do the will of God, he put his home up for sale. His wife became distraught. She had no peace. The dentist was also very upset, because there were no invitations to minister anywhere and no doors were opening. This couple came to us seeking help and confirmation.

We knew nothing of the circumstance just related above. The Lord spoke to the prophet I was praying with: "Prophetic Bondage!"

The prophet saw by the Spirit that a wrong prophecy had been given them which had brought them to spiritual confusion.

The prophet and I joined in prayer, and broke that "prophetic bondage" and freed them to hear God's voice for themselves. They both wept profusely as the peace of God flooded their spirits. They were overflowing with joy — as they realized the Lord had spared them from making a very serious mistake.

This illustrates why we need to be very careful and humble when we minister to others. Otherwise, we can speak words that bind, instead of words that liberate.

Let us pray to be like Jesus. He said, *"The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound"* (Isa61:1; Luke4:18).

Jesus came to liberate, not to put us in bondage.

D. CONCLUSION

Yes, there is special purpose, power and protection in the ministry of prophetic-prayer teams. To experience it is to know it! It is a ministry which God is restoring to His Church world-wide.

It is encouraging to know that the prayers of each team are being joined by the prayers of many other teams in the Body of Christ. There is a bond of love in prayer which unites our hearts together as brothers and sisters in the great family of God.

We are all on the same Team with the same desire — that our Father's will may be done on earth as it is in Heaven.

"Again I say unto you, if two of you agree on earth in prayer about anything, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in my name — because they are mine — I will be right there with them" (Matt 18:19,20).

Section B

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SECTION B1

VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN LIVING

By Ralph Mahoney

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Chapter 1

The Devil Is Destroyed

Introduction

You will never walk in victory until you know your enemy is defeated!

As Christians, we do not move from defeat into victory. We do not move from doubt into faith. The Scriptures tell us, however, that there is a way of faith which leads to greater faith "*from faith to faith*" (Rom 1:17).

Likewise, our starting point for victory is not one of defeat, but victory —Christ's victory. "*But thanks be unto God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ*" (I Cor 15:57).

We must begin in victory if we are going to have victory. Doubt, defeat and despair are not the kinds of stuff from which we can build a strong victorious life.

We can never be a winner as long as we see ourselves as helpless, hopeless victims of the devil. Satan no longer has the power or authority to defeat the sons and daughters of God's royal family. However, he does have the ability to deceive the children of God if they do not understand who they are in Christ Jesus.

When I was a young Christian, I developed a real fear of anything which was satanic or demonic. I don't know how or when such a fear began. As a boy, I was always interested in preachers and what they were doing. Perhaps some of their stories of demonic power may have sown a seed of fear in my mind without my realizing it. Later on, I learned that many other Christians have the same problem.

I was saved and filled with the Holy Spirit when I was in my teen years. As I grew in the Lord, I developed a real desire to have authority over demonic power. I told the Lord that if I ever came across a demon, I wanted to be able to cast him out.

I worried so much about whether I or the demons had greater power, that I would even dream about such an encounter or meeting. In my dream, I would see myself trying to cast out a devil, but unable to do so. It was a very serious point of fear (problem) for me at the time.

However, the heavenly Father saw my desire to be a strong and faithful son in the family of God. He met my need and solved my problem in an unexpected way.

I would have thought He might have used mighty angels or great lightning bolts to meet my need for power. But He didn't! I have power and authority over demon forces today, but it didn't come in that manner. God had a better way — a way which I now want to share with you.

God chose to meet my need for power over demonic forces by way of a revelation. In a revelation God shows or "reveals" to us a truth from Scripture which we had not seen or known before.

Such truth is always centered in Jesus, and it has the power to set us free from our fears. *"You shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free... If the Son therefore shall make you free, you shall be free indeed"* (John 8:32,36).

I have found that a revelation which sets me free can be given to others. The truth will work in their lives as well as it did in mine. Therefore, allow the Holy Spirit to open your heart to God's Word — and God's Word to your heart.

A. FREED FROM FEAR OF DEATH AND THE DEVIL

"The children in a family share in the same physical nature. Therefore, Jesus— as our Redeemer Brother — took upon himself our human nature.

*"He did this that he might die. By dying, he gained access to the realm of death to **destroy** the one who had the power of death. That one is the devil. Jesus did this to release us from fear of death. We were slaves to that fear; now we are free"* (Heb 2:14,15 smf). (Note: smf = simplified.)

1. The Devil Is Destroyed

Jesus died that the devil might be **destroyed**. This is a strong, sure statement which is absolutely and totally true. It rests upon the full authority of Scripture. **The devil IS destroyed!**

a. **"To Destroy."** Now that does not mean the devil no longer exists. He is still around, as we well know.

The Greek word for "destroy" is **katargeo**. It means to:

- 1) **make powerless;**
- 2) **bring to naught;**
- 3) **reduce to zero, make inactive;**
- 4) **make of no effect;**
- 5) **paralyze.**

Through His death, Jesus not only paid the penalty for our sins. He made the devil powerless, reduced him to zero and paralyzed him.

Therefore, we no longer need to fear **the devil or the judgment which follows death** (Heb 9:27, 10:27).

2. Death Lost Its Sting

Through His death, Jesus also showed us we need not fear **the physical effects of death**. It cannot destroy the soul or spirit of man. We will even have a glorified body like that of the Lord Himself when Christ returns in resurrection power.

"O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?... But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Cor 15:55,57).

3. Christ Reigns

Yes, the death and resurrection of **Jesus has released us from the fear of the devil and of death.**

The devil himself was stripped of his earthly authority. His right to rule over Creation was taken away by the crucified Christ. The scepter or royal symbol of authority was stripped from his hand. After defeating the devil, the Lord Jesus took His rightful place upon the throne.

B. HOW IT ALL BEGAN

This is an amazing story, however, which can only be understood by going back to the very beginning of Creation.

Join me as we review what was in the heart and mind of God at the very dawn of history.

1. Man Was Created For Dominion

*"Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness. **Let them rule and have dominion... over all the earth...**' " (Gen 1:26 smf).*

*"What is man that you are mindful of him? And the Son of Man that you care for him? You made him for a little time lower than the angels... **You made him to rule and have dominion over all the works of your hands...**' " (Ps 8:4a-6 smf).*

"You... have put everything under his feet" (Heb2:8). •

The above scriptures show us that God had a plan for Adam and Eve. To that first family was given the right to rule or have dominion over all of Creation.

They had authority over every living thing on the face of the earth. For a time, they ruled wisely and well. Everything was peaceful and in divine order.

The lion and the lamb laid down together in perfect harmony. There were no thorns or thistles. Fragrant flowers and delightful fruit trees grew everywhere. It was a wonderful and lovely world in which to live. Sadly, the divine beauty of those sinless days was not to last.

2. Man Lost Dominion Through Disobedience And Deception

The Bible teaches that Satan had originally been created as a beautiful and anointed cherub or angel. He was probably the choirmaster of Heaven. He had great ambitions to rule the world. But God gave this privilege to Adam and Eve.

Through pride and rebellion he fell from his heavenly position of beauty, authority and power. Jesus said, "*I saw Satan fall as lightning from heaven*" (Luke 10:18; see also Ezekiel 28:11-17 and Isaiah 14:12-15).

He next appeared in the Garden of Eden in the form of a beautiful serpent. There was an evil purpose, however, in his coming. In a wise and clever way, he sought to take away from Adam and Eve the right to rule — the dominion which had been given to them as co-regents over the Creation.

Now, he could not overpower or force himself upon the first members of God's earthly family. Adam and Eve had authority or rulership over every living creature, and that included serpents. The only power Satan had was the power of influence. All he could do was seek to influence their behavior through lies and deception.

Therefore, he came to Eve when she was alone. In a very sly and subtle way, he planted seeds of doubt in her heart about God's love, honesty and authority. He finally got her to believe that he was right and God's word was wrong.

As a result, she chose to eat of the tree of knowledge instead of the tree of life. Adam was not deceived, but chose to follow Eve into her fallen state (1 Tim 2:14).

a. The Sad Results. Three very sad and tragic things happened as a result of their doubt and disobedience:

1) Lost The Covering And Authority Of God. They came out from under the covering and authority of God, and the image of God was marred.

2) Lost The Right To Rule. They lost their right, therefore, to rule over God's Creation.

3) Came Under A New Authority. They then came under the authority of Satan himself.

Satan was very quick to pick up the scepter that slipped from their hand and the crown which fell from their head. These symbols of authority were now rightfully his.

The devil had taken over the dominion of the earth as he had desired. He had won not by force, but by deception. The right to rule over God's Creation had shifted from man to the serpent — the devil himself.

3. God Planned To Restore Dominion

Satan not only deceived others, but was under a deception himself. He thought he was right when he was wrong. He really believed he had won a victory over both God and man.

There was, however, an aspect of God's nature he knew nothing about. It is called grace.

It is based on an unselfish love that seeks to redeem that which was lost, no matter what it might cost. One redeems or buys back only things which are of value.

In the case of man's life, the price would be the death of another man — one called the Son of Man! I am sure Satan had not counted on God going so far as to give His only begotten Son, Jesus, for fallen man. Yet that gift had been given even before man had been created. The Bible says that Jesus was "*...the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*" (Rev 13:8). This means that God, in His foreknowledge, saw

that man would sin and need a Savior. So Jesus was chosen for this purpose before man was created.

"God paid a price to save you from the empty way of life... However, you were not redeemed with something that will pass away like silver or gold. You were bought back with the precious blood of Christ — a pure and perfect lamb.

"Christ was chosen for this purpose before the world was made. But he was revealed and shown to the world in these last times for you " (1 Pet 1:18-20 smf).

When man fell, God did not change His mind about His plan for a beloved and royal family. It was still His purpose to fill the whole earth with sons and daughters whose lives would reflect the beauty of their God.

Through their love and obedience, the glory of God's Kingdom would yet cover the whole earth as the waters cover the sea. Yes, the scepter would again return to the hand of man.

a. Seed Of The Woman. As soon as man sinned and fell from his place of royal authority, God's plan of redemption was set in motion. It is of some interest that this plan was first revealed to Satan himself. From the record it would appear that Adam and Eve were also there. The word of the Lord, however, was spoken directly to the serpent:

"And the Lord God said to the serpent, 'Because you have done this, you are cursed above all the animals... From now on you and the woman will be enemies. This will also be true of all of your seed [offspring] and her Seed [Jesus]. You will strike his heel, but he will crush your head'" (Gen3:14,15smf)».

The "Seed of the woman" refers to the family line from which Jesus would come in His humanity. The serpent is told he would strike at His (Jesus') heel, but the wound would not be fatal in a final way. This is a reference to the death and resurrection of Jesus. Death could not keep Jesus in the grave!

The Seed (Jesus) would use the occasion of His death to crush the serpent's head. This refers to a fatal wound from which there would be no recovery. The defeat and death of the serpent would be final.

The phrase "crush your **head**" has an added meaning of **great importance** to our theme of authority. The term "head" includes the thought of **headship or governmental authority (covering)**. Paul so uses the term in setting forth the lines of spiritual authority and responsibility:

"Now, I want you to know that the head [governmental covering] of the woman is man. The head of man is Christ and the head of Christ is God " (1 Cor 11:3 smf).

Our story in the Garden of Eden now becomes most dramatic. God Himself is telling the devil that someday the Seed of the woman (Jesus) would wrench the scepter from the devil's hand. Through the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, man would be redeemed, Satan would be defeated, and dominion would be restored to the family of God.

b. Royal Redeemer. God's Son—as the Son of Man — would regain for redeemed man the authority to govern that which he had lost through sin.

The Kingdom of Heaven will one day rule the earth through God's family of sons and daughters. Jesus, our Redeemer Brother, is the "first-born" of that glorious family. Through Him we have a victory which will last forever.

This theme of restored righteous government through God's royal Seed can be traced all through Scripture. Listen to Paul's Letter to the Galatian churches:

*"When the right time had come, God sent his Son to be **born of a woman** and live under the law. He did this to redeem those who were also under the law. In this way we were bought and brought back into God's family as his very own children*

' For this reason he sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts. From our hearts to his, the Spirit now cries out, 'Father, dear Father.' No longer are we slaves, but God's beloved children. As his children, everything that belongs to him now belongs to us too" (Gal 4:4-7 smf).

Clearly, Paul is linking the birth of the Lord Jesus to the promised Seed in Genesis 3:15. Jesus Christ came to this earth, **born of a woman**.

He came for the purpose of redeeming mankind, and restoring him (man) to a place of authority in the family of God. Jesus fulfilled the prophecy given the serpent in the Garden of Eden. When the right time came, through the cross of Christ, Satan was defeated and dethroned.

The authority which he had cleverly taken from the first family has been returned to the redeemed sons and daughters of God.

4. Satan Tried To Avert The Plan

This truth helps us understand what was happening in the temptations of Jesus at the outset of His earthly ministry. The devil first seeks to challenge the source of Jesus' divine authority by questioning His divine Sonship. *"If you are the Son of God..." (Matt 4:3 smf).*

a. Satan Tempts Jesus. It is the last temptation, however, that brings the issue of authority and dominion into sharp focus.

' Then the devil took Jesus to the top of a very high mountain. There he showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to him, 'All these things I will give to you if you will fall down and worship me.'

"But Jesus said to him, 'Away with you, Satan! For it is written. You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.' Then the devil left him, and angels came and ministered to him" (Matt 4:8-11 smf).

It is interesting to note that we come under the authority of the one we worship. **Actually, what we worship becomes our authority.** What the devil was really saying was this: "If you will come under my authority, I will give you rulership over all the kingdoms of earth." Jesus saw through the deception and refused.

1) Temptation Was Real. There is another important point here which gives further understanding of the main theme of this study.

Was Satan's offer for real? Did he truly have that kind of authority to give? If he did not, then his offer to Jesus was not a valid offer. Thus there would have been no real temptation involved.

If I were to say to you, "I will give you \$10,000,000 if you will fall down and worship me" — most of you would laugh. Why? Because you know I don't have that much money. It wouldn't be a real temptation.

Not so with Jesus. His temptations were real. The devil was offering Jesus a way to avoid the cross — but at the cost of disobeying His Father in Heaven. It took real strength to resist. Jesus' struggles with these temptations were so stressful, angels had to come and help Him recover.

2) Satan Had Authority. Yes, at that point in time Satan actually had dominion and authority over the kingdoms of this earth. It was the authority which he

took from Adam when he disobeyed God in the Garden of Eden. When Adam and Eve submitted themselves to the lies of the devil, they came under his authority and gave up their own.

It was this authority and dominion which Jesus came to regain for the true worshippers of the one true God. Jesus knew that — and Satan did too. God had told Satan this back in the Garden of Eden.

Since that time, the devil had sought to destroy the line from which that royal Seed would come.

b. Satan Tried To Destroy Jesus. He tried to destroy Jesus at His birth. Satan stirred up King Herod to kill all the infants under two years of age. Only a demon-possessed man would do such a thing as that.

What was Satan after? He was seeking to destroy Jesus —the Seed of the woman. Satan knew that when Jesus became a man there would be a battle for the power and authority which had been in his possession since the fall of man.

When the use of force failed, the devil tried to cause Jesus to sin, the same way he had tempted Adam and Eve. He sought to get Him to move apart from the will and word of His Father. He hoped Jesus would act in His own self-interest.

Yes, Satan was aware that Jesus Christ was the "Seed of the woman" Who had come to take away his dominion — his right to rule. Satan's offer of world authority was an effort to avoid that loss by bringing Jesus under his very control first.

c. Satan Didn't Understand The Cross. While Satan knew his kingdom and power was threatened by Jesus, it is possible he didn't know the method and means Jesus would use to defeat him.

The Apostle Paul tells us that the plan of man's salvation through the cross was not understood by the rulers or princes of this world.

"None of the rulers or princes of this world understood it. If they had they would not have killed the Lord of glory on a cross " (I Cor 2:8).

Since the Bible calls the devil *"...the god of this world "* (2Cor 4:4), most Bible scholars believe 1 Corinthians 2:8 is referring to the devil and his ruling princes.

Earthly rulers are agents who serve under demonic princes. The demonic princes and powers behind these earthly rulers were not aware of the power and purpose of the cross.

Jesus was fully aware that He must first suffer before entering into His glory (Luke 24:26). He was *"the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world"* (Rev 13:8). Calvary and the cross must come before the kingdom and the crown. The devil's offer of world dominion would have been a temptation for Jesus to rule the world without the pain and suffering of the cross.

C. THE POWER OF THE CROSS

The cross has power to redeem man and restore him to his divinely appointed place of authority. This is a wonderful truth that threads its way all through the Holy Scriptures. We already have seen that God's plan for a sacrificial lamb (as an offering for sin) was in His purpose before the world began.

1. The Cross Pictured In The Passover

The Passover played an important part in bringing about the release of the children of Israel from the bondage of Egypt. They had suffered as slaves for some 400

years. God was going to use Moses to set them free from the authority and dominion of the Egyptians.

The devil, sensing this, stirred up Pharaoh to kill all the male children of the Israelites (Exo 1:15,16) —just as he would do some fourteen centuries later before the birth of Christ.

It is of note that the Egyptian Pharaoh wore a gold crown. On the front of it was the image of a deadly cobra serpent, poised, ready to strike death. This shows us Pharaoh and the people in his kingdom were under the crown of Satan (governed by the devil).

This is an accurate picture of how the whole world lived until Jesus came. We were slaves of sin, in bondage and under satanic government.

a. Satan: The Destroyer. Through Moses, God told each Israelite family to kill a lamb and place its blood upon the I frame of the door which led into their house. Then Moses said:

*"When the Lord goes through the land to strike down the Egyptians, he will see the blood upon the top and sides of the doorframe. The Lord then will pass over that door. He will not allow **the destroyer** I to come into your houses and kill your first-born"* (Exo 12:23 smf).

Satan is the "destroyer." From the fall of man to the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the power of death was in the hands of the devil. In Revelation 9:11 he is called Abaddon (Hebrew) and Apollyon (Greek). Both terms mean "destroyer." In the words of Jesus, *"The thief [the devil] comes only to steal and kill and destroy"* (John 10:10).

The Pharaoh had refused God's words of warning, and therefore Egypt faced a terrible judgment. Through it they would be made willing to let the Israelites go.

That "passover" night. God was going to use the devil's power of death for His own purposes. It was to be a dark night indeed — a night of death and destruction.

b. Blood: The Protection. The presence of the Lord protected those "under the blood" from the destroyer.

When the Lord saw the blood on the doorframe of a house, the Lord Himself "passed over" the door. His presence overshadowed the family within and kept them from all harm.

One wonders how each family member must have felt that night as the evening shadows cast a deathly gloom across the land. Perhaps the Psalmist best expressed it in his words some centuries later:

"He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High, will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, 'He is my refuge and place of safety — my God, in whom I will trust.' Surely he will save you... from deadly danger.

"He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge... You will not fear the terror of night, nor the dangers of the day..."

"Though a thousand fall at your side and ten thousand at your right hand, it will not come near you. Only with your eyes will you see the punishment of the wicked" (Ps 91:1-8 smf).

Yes, for the Israelites, protection from the destroyer on that dark night of death was blood — the blood of a perfect, little lamb! Its blood was splashed on the door-frame in the form of a cross. It was a symbol of death, but it also was the gateway to life.

What a vivid picture of our salvation. Jesus is God's sacrificial lamb for us, and His cross becomes our doorway to eternal life.

Truly, the blood and the cross provide all the protection we will ever need against all the forces of evil. The devil's power over our lives has been broken at Calvary. Christ has won the victory, and we need no longer fear.

2. Jesus Has All Power And Authority

After His resurrection, Jesus plainly put this truth in these words: "*All power in heaven and on earth has been given unto me. Therefore go and make disciples in all nations.*"

"And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matt 28:18-20 smf).

The word "power" means power to rule, to take authority and have dominion. Now if Jesus has **all** power and authority, that means the devil has none.

Through His death on the cross, Jesus dethroned the devil and took away his power of death. Jesus strongly stated this truth again to the Apostle John in his heavenly vision.

"Don't be afraid, I am the first and the last. I died, but see, I am alive for evermore. I have the keys [authority] of death and the grave" (Rev 1:17,18 smf).

D. WE CAN LIVE IN VICTORY!

1. Jesus Gave His Disciples Authority Over The Devil!

Not only does Jesus have all power and authority, but He has given that power to His disciples —of all ages!

"The seventy disciples returned with great joy. 'Lord,' they said, 'even the demons submit to us when we use your name.'

"And Jesus said to them, 'Yes, I saw Satan falling from heaven like a lightning flash. And I have given you authority over all of the power of the enemy. You have power to crush underfoot scorpions and serpents [demonic powers]. Nothing shall harm you'" (Luke 10:17-19 smf).

"These signs shall follow those who believe: They shall use the authority of my name to cast out demons... " (Mark 16:17 smf).

"Submit yourselves to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you " (Jas 4:7).

2. Don't Retreat!

Yes, we are sons and daughters in the family of God. We have the privilege and authority of Christ's Name. Why then are so many Christians living defeated lives? Where is our victory in Christ? The words sound good, but where are the works?

The answer can be found in one of Peter's Epistles. He was writing to those who soon would be facing a time of great distress and severe testing. His words, therefore, are very personal, powerful and practical;

"Be watchful and careful. Your enemy the devil prowls and roams around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour — to tear apart and eat. Be firm in the faith and resist him..." (I Pet 5:8,9 smf).

a. A Phony Lion. Carefully note that the above scripture does not say the devil is a roaring lion. It says he roams around **like** a roaring lion. In other words, he is acting like something he is not. Actually, he is only a fake or phony lion. Or, as the Chinese would say, "a paper tiger."

Who is the **real** lion? **Jesus is!**

The Scriptures refer to Him as *"the Lion of the tribe of Judah"* (Rev 5:5). Because we abide in Him, and He in us, we also share in His "lion-nature": We who believe on Jesus become "lion-like."

"The wicked flee when no one is chasing them. The righteous, however, are as bold as a lion " (Prov 28:1 smf)

"Now when the Council saw the boldness of Peter and John, they were amazed. They could easily see that they were common men without learning. Then they realized that they had been with Jesus" (Acts 4:13 smf).

b. Don't Give Him Power. What are we trying to say? Simply this: **The devil can have only as much power over our lives as we allow him to take.** He no longer has the authority to control our attitudes and actions for his own purposes.

He will, however, take as much control as we will let him have. He cannot overpower us anymore than he could have overpowered Adam and Eve. He will seek to deceive us, however, in the same way he tempted them.

No, the devil is not a real lion. His roar, however, can be very loud and very long. A roar cannot bite, but it can scare you.

If we retreat every time the devil roars, we will never learn how to stand firm in the faith and resist him. If we never resist the devil, we will never see the tail-end of the devil heading over the nearest hill.

c. Run Toward The Roar. A preacher from Africa told this story about lions. When the lions go hunting, they are very clever. All the younger, strong lions gather down-wind from the herd of animals they are going to attack. In this way, the animals do not pick up the scent of the lion.

The old worn-out lions, whose teeth are almost gone, and who cannot run fast enough to catch prey, are put upwind where their scent and roar will frighten the animals. Those who are frightened by the roar, run toward the young lions.

The animals who "run towards the roar" are safe and cannot be hurt by the old lions. The animals who flee from the roar run into the trap and are injured or killed by the strong younger lions.

The point is obvious. Don't run from your adversary the devil and his roarings, Run toward the roar. Resist him and he will flee from you.

d. Seeds Of Deception. How does the devil roar his way into our daily lives? **He does so by way of our thoughts and feelings.** He sows seeds of doubt and fear into the ground of our hearts and minds. If he can tempt us to cultivate or nurture these seeds — they will grow into very large weeds. When they do, our Christian life can be greatly weakened, or even destroyed.

There are all kinds of seeds which the devil sows: seeds of doubt, fear, disobedience, greed, lust, jealousy, pride, anger, resentment, self-pity and many more.

He will try to sow the same seed over and over again until some take root and grow. Once the roots grow deep, it's hard to pull the weed out.

The devil will even deceive us into thinking it is a natural part of our life. We then give in and put up with it, even though it may be painful to us — and to others. When we do, the enemy has taken control over that part of our lives, even though he has no authority to do so.

3. Resist The Devil!

a. Stand Firm In Faith. How then can the watchful Christian stand firm in the faith and resist the devil? The same way Jesus did in His humanity while here on earth:

1) By the authority of God's Word;

2) By the power of God's Spirit.

We now know that the devil no longer has dominion or the right to rule over our lives. The scepter is now in Jesus' hand, not that of the enemy. As we, by the Spirit, speak out our confession of faith, "JESUS IS LORD!" — Satan must bend his knee and bow his head. It is demon powers who will tremble in torment when we face them in the mighty Name of Jesus.

b. Speak The Word In Faith. As we submit and come under the authority of God's Word and God's Spirit, that authority comes upon us. We then speak that word as follows:

1) To God in prayer;

2) In the confession of our mouth;

3) To the devil in reproof.

The Spirit Himself then moves to energize the word, and the enemy flees — along with his lying thoughts and feelings.

We submit to God by filling our minds with His Word and our hearts with prayer. For every wrong, evil, negative thought the enemy would sow into our minds, there is a right, good, positive thought from God's Word.

The Scripture says we can "*overcome evil with good*" (Rom 12:21). Every time the devil seeks to give us a push in the wrong direction, we need to push him back—twice as hard—with the truth and power of God's Word.

c. The Laugh Of Faith. It is true, we should not take our enemy lightly or under-rate his ability. He is both smart and strong. Apart from God's Spirit and His Word we will lose every battle. Satan can outsmart us every time. The Scripture says that we are always to be aware of his clever tricks and schemes (2Cor 2:11).

However, while we are to respect the devil, we are not to fear him. In fact, we can boldly oppose him in the strong Name of Jesus and be assured of victory.

Our enemy has a loud roar, but his is a big bluff. He will act like he is not hurt, and even mock the Name of the Lord, hoping we will give up. **If we respond with the royal laugh of faith and press our attack, he will flee in fear.**

There is a sense in which every Spirit-filled saint ought to have a gift of contempt for the devil. He is very proud, and greatly dislikes being looked down upon. When we really know who we are in Christ Jesus, we are in a position of high authority, and the enemy is truly beneath our feet.

I believe Martin Luther came to a place in faith where he looked upon the devil in that way. The story is told of how he awoke in the middle of a very dark night. There wasn't even a candle in his room. As he turned over in his little cot, he saw the devil standing in the corner.

Now, what would you do if you awoke tonight and found that Satan had come to visit you? I asked that question of a fellow one time and he replied, "I would call the preacher!"

That really wasn't the best answer he could have given. Martin Luther's response was much different. He simply said to the devil, "Oh, it's you!" and rolled over and went back to sleep.

d. Putting Principles Into Practice. A good friend of mine tells of a personal experience which shows us how these royal principles work in practice. Here is the story in his own words:

"After the Lord divinely healed me when I was a young Christian, I have always been very healthy.

"However, one day about ten years ago I suddenly felt a terrible pain in the upper part of my body.

"The pain grew worse, and I actually heard the voice of the devil saying, 'Cancer, cancer, cancer.' For about six hours that was all I could hear: 'Cancer, cancer, you have cancer!' I was terrified.

"I finally went to the Lord in prayer and said, 'Lord, do I have cancer?' The Lord didn't answer me. Again I cried out, 'Lord, do I have cancer?' Then I heard the Lord laugh. He was really laughing. He showed me how I had been fooled and deceived by the devil. Satan had sown a lie in my heart.

"The next time I heard the word 'cancer,' I really got angry. I rose up and I said, 'Devil, I smite you with that cancer!' I have never had that pain again in my life. This is the word of the Lord, friends. This is for real!"

e. You Are Free. Yes, faith rises up and resists, but unbelief gives up and accepts the lies of the devil.

I am reminded of a little parrot at a Bible school in Argentina. His name was Arturo. He was brought to the school when he was just a young bird. He was tied to his perch by a little leather strap from his leg.

As Arturo grew into a full-sized bird, he would stretch his wings and try to fly into the heavens. However, he could go no farther than the length of the strap before being jerked back to his perch again. Arturo kept this up for several months. One day, he finally gave up and folded his wings for the last time. He never tried to fly again.

At that time, Arturo's leather strap was cut. He was really free to fly away into the heavens like any other bird, but he did not know this. He was deceived, and did not believe or accept his freedom. Because of this, the story has a rather sad ending.

If only we could have gotten the truth of his freedom down into his little bird brain, he might be alive today. As it was, an angry caretaker came after him with a club for a foul deed he had done. Still thinking he could not fly away from his perch, Arturo did not try to escape, and was struck dead!

How much more tragic is the truth of this story as it relates to some of us as Christians. At Calvary, Jesus Christ —the Lion of Judah — defeated the devil and stripped him of his power. We were set free from his dominion and given a place of authority in the royal family of God.

Many, however, are so used to living in fear, doubt and defeat they can't accept the freedom which is rightfully theirs. They allow the one Jesus destroyed, to destroy them.

Rise up and fly away, oppressed one. The heavens watch in wonder and amazement that you submit to that which you should resist. Your strap of bondage has been severed. Fly free!

E. CONCLUDING CHALLENGE

Perhaps, dear reader, your heart has been touched by the truth of these words. For the first time you are beginning to believe that life can be different. And it is true, your lot in life is not forever fixed. Things can change, and you can play a part in that change.

You don't have to give in and give way to the lies of the devil. In Christ Jesus you have the power and authority to stand firm and resist his attacks on your heart and mind.

You are a son or daughter in the beloved family of God. The Lord does love you, and desires that you take the scepter in your hand and confess the liberty which is rightfully yours. No longer do you need to shrink back in fear or hang your head in shame. Jesus came to set you free, and he whom the Son sets free **is free indeed!**

"...the devils also believe, and tremble" (Jas 2:19). It is demon powers who tremble when you stand fast and confess the Lordship of Jesus.

It is the devil who bends his knee and bows his head, for Christ has won the victory. The power of the enemy has been broken forever. **THE DEVIL HAS BEEN DESTROYED!**

Chapter 2

Demons Are Powerless

Introduction

In this chapter I want to show how Christ's conquest of Satan (which rendered him powerless) also gives us power over demons and freedom from fear of demons.

Most of the problems we have as Christians are not from demons or the devil. They are problems we are dealing with inside ourselves. Our "inside" enemy is our own flesh or selfish desires. We will deal with this subject in another chapter.

Our "outside" enemies are the devil and his demons. We will deal with our "outside" enemies in this chapter.

Review

In the previous chapter, we saw how the victory of the cross brought defeat to the devil. His dominion (or right to rule) over "born-again" men was taken away. No longer does he have power or authority to rule our lives.

We are sons and daughters in the mighty family of God. Christ and His family are chosen to rule and reign over ALL the earth. This is our destiny and divine calling. We are being trained and prepared to rule and reign with Christ.

The only power Satan has now is the power of INFLUENCE. He still tries to deceive through lying words, works and wonders. He seeks to persuade Christians into thinking he is still in command.

This is a great danger to us. We must beware! Satan will try to encroach and rob us of as much of our blessings as we allow him to.

The truth which is in this chapter will set us free and keep us free from the devil's influence, which produces fear.

A. FREEDOM FROM FEAR OF DEMONS

Demons are spiritual beings who are agents of the devil. They cooperate with him and do his work. Their evil actions are against God and man. Some students of Scripture believe demons are wicked angels who fell from Heaven with Satan after he rebelled against God (see Isaiah 14:12-14).

At any rate, their presence and activity are plainly seen in the Bible. (See Section D9 for expanded teaching about what the Bible says about demons.)

As I said in the first chapter, when I was a young Christian, the very thought of demons filled my heart with fear. Many Christians are afraid of demon power and activity.

Now it is most important that we be set free from such fear. And the reason is this: **Fear is to the devil what faith is to God.**

1. Fear Attracts Evil Powers

Let me explain. Faith brings God into our daily lives. It acts as a magnet and draws or attracts the power of God into our lives. Faith brings His life into ours!

Now, fear acts in the same way. It too is a very "attracting" force. It attracts evil powers of darkness. These are "deadly" forces because that is what they produce — death! They can **kill** our joy and peace in the Holy Spirit.

If life in God speaks of love, joy, peace... then death speaks of hatred, sadness, distress...! Fear opens the door of our heart. This allows all kinds of dark, evil thoughts and feelings to come in. **When our emotions are filled with fear, this can lead to slavery and bondage to fear.** We will end up serving what we fear!

2. Faith And Fear Do Not Mix

God spoke repeatedly to the leaders of Israel about faith and fear. They were firmly told to trust God, and show no fear to other gods or their enemies: '*Be strong and of good courage... Fear not the gods of the Amorites*' (Josh 1:9; Judg 6:10).

Like oil and water, faith and fear do not mix. If we start with faith and express it by resisting the devil, our enemy will flee from us (Jas 4:7). If we cower in fear, the powers of darkness (the devil and demons) will enslave us and faith will flee from us. It is just that simple.

3. Balanced Truth Sets Us Free

The devil seeks to deceive us by either hiding the truth or by taking a part of the truth and carrying it too far. In regard to demons, he would like for us:

- **to think they are inactive or don't even exist, or**
- **to see a demon behind every problem in our life.**

In recent years, some have talked so much about demons, that many people have been brought into a place of great fear. Instead of being set free from their problems, they have the added weight of worry. Any doctrine or teaching can be harmful and dangerous if emphasized too much or taught in a manner that is not true to the Bible.

I knew a lady a few years ago who almost lost her mind for fear of demons. She became very fearful from sitting for a whole week under a certain evangelist's teaching.

The teaching she heard led her to believe her home was filled with devils. She was afraid every room, closet and hallway had hidden demons who were waiting to bring her harm.

It took a couple of weeks of teaching from Scripture to bring her out of fear and back into a place of faith. We all need to know the truth and live in the freedom which it brings.

B. DEMONS ARE NOT LIKE GOD

Like the little lady above, some people are afraid of demons because they believe the demons possess abilities or traits which they do not have.

1. Demons Are Not All-Knowing The devil and his demons do not know everything, nor can they read our minds. They don't know how we will react to thoughts or feelings they may put in our minds and hearts. They must wait and see what we do. In time they may become familiar with our patterns of behavior, but they cannot foresee or determine our actions.

Satan certainly did not foresee the outcome of his attack on Job. Nor did he expect the victory which would come to Jesus through the cross.

2. Demons Are Not Present Everywhere At Once

Certainly they were most disturbed to be around Jesus. They also quickly left the scene when they faced the apostles in the Book of Acts.

3. Demons Are Not All-Powerful

When David sang songs to King Saul, the evil spirit which troubled him would depart. Powerful praise and worship of the Lord will drive demonic forces away!

4. Traits That Belong Only To God

As we shall see, even new believers — when submitted to God — can cause the enemy to flee. Actually, the above traits belong only to God.

He alone is:

a. Omniscient: all knowing;

b. Omnipresent: present everywhere;

c. Omnipotent: all powerful.

5. An Open Door To Demons

The devil and his demons may attack us. They cannot, however, enter our lives unless we open the door by way of

a. doubt

b. disobedience or

c. deception.

They do not possess the attributes of almighty God. **In fact, the enemy is no match for an informed Christian who is walking in faith and obedience.**

The sooner we accept this truth, the sooner we will move from fear to faith, and from defeat to victory. These are, indeed, basic principles for the victorious Christian life.

C. DEMONS WERE DEFEATED BY JESUS CHRIST

Our victory over demon powers is clearly stated in Scripture. One of the key verses is found in Paul's Letter to the church at Colossae: *"God disarmed and defeated the principalities and powers — ruling demonic spirits. He made a public display of them. God won the victory through Christ and his cross"* (Col 2:15 smf).

In this passage we are told that God has disarmed and defeated the ruling powers in the world of evil spirits. This refers to powerful demons in the forces of Satan. They were stripped of their arms and authority. They are now defenseless and disgraced.

The language used in this verse describes a military custom of the Roman armies. After a great victory, they had a parade. The conquering general put iron manacles and chains on the defeated leader. He then tied the defeated leader to his chariot with a chain.

The defeated armies were forced to march, bound in chains, behind the triumphant general.

This is a vivid picture of Christ's victory parade in which the defeated enemy (the devil and his princes) are put to public shame. It is a victory which was won by the Lord Jesus Christ at Calvary, when He was crucified.

1. Authority Surrendered

Some years ago I stood on the deck of the battleship Missouri. Thirty years before, on the exact spot where I stood, the Japanese representative surrendered to General MacArthur of the United States. The surrender ceremony took place in 1945 in Tokyo Bay. The Japanese had just been defeated by the Chinese and allied military forces.

The ceremony was most dramatic. The Japanese General boarded the Battleship Missouri in his full dress uniform. With him were men of high rank in both government and military circles.

The General came representing the commander-in-chief of the Japanese Armed Forces. General MacArthur then boarded the ship with men who represented the government and the Armed Forces of the United States. It was a personal, face-to-face meeting.

General MacArthur reached out and removed all of the General's military medals, ribbons and decorations. He then reached up and took the emblems of authority from his shoulders. He was reduced to a man of defeat and disgrace without power or authority. The surrender ceremony was finalized by the Japanese General taking the sword at his side and handing it over to General MacArthur.

When the General surrendered, it was not just his own personal defeat. All the combined air force, army, navy and military forces of Japan surrendered and were rendered powerless. It was a moment of victory and triumph for the United States and her allies. It was total defeat and surrender for the Japanese generals and their troops. The war had been won!

This is what happened at Calvary! Satan and all of his demons were totally defeated. They were put to an open display of shame and disgrace on that first resurrection Sunday morning.

The words of Robert Lowry's famous hymn tell the story in a most beautiful way:

*"Up from the grave He arose
With a mighty triumph o'er His foes
He arose the Victor from the dark domain
And He lives forever with His saints to reign
He arose! He arose! Hallelujah!
Christ arose!"*

2. Authority Transferred

Christ now holds in His hands forever the keys of Hell and death. He holds them because He was victorious over sin, Satan, demons and death. He was totally triumphant—over the devil, over all principalities and powers. He won it all!

Not only was the victory His, but ours as well. General MacArthur's victory was not just for himself. It was a victory that all the people of the United States, China and her allies enjoyed. Jesus' victory is the same for all of us who love and serve Him.

Jesus experienced the shame of dying like a criminal on a cross that we might live

in victory. We must see that. We must know it. We must walk in the light of that revelation. It is our key to victorious Christian living!

a. No Authority Over Believers. It is important to know that when the devil was defeated, so were all of his demon forces. They have no authority or power over our lives except that which we allow them to have.

The story is told of an army sergeant who was imprisoned in a Japanese prisoner-of-war camp. After Japan surrendered, the Japanese general in charge of the camp kept his command. He was expecting a high ranking officer from the United States forces to arrive and take over. He was to learn that a defeated general has less authority than a sergeant, if the sergeant belongs to the army who won the war.

Upon hearing of the surrender of Japan, the sergeant quickly informed the Japanese general that he and his men would now take charge. There was no need to wait. With the signing of the surrender papers, the change of command reached down to the lowest ranking soldier. Even a lowly sergeant in the army could command a high ranking officer, if that officer was a member of the defeated forces.

What a powerful picture this is of the believer's authority. It is ours when we come under the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ.

D. BELIEVERS HAVE AUTHORITY OVER DEMONS

Christ's triumph over Satan on the cross of Calvary means we are now in charge also. Every Christian who is living under the authority of God has the right to assume command and take over his part of the world. He has the authority and legal right to tell the devil (and his demons) where to go and what to do.

1. Authority Through Submission

We are taught to resist the enemy and see him flee. The Apostle James uses a military term in explaining this truth in his Epistle:

"Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you " (Jas 4:7).

The word "submit" means to be under obedience to a higher rank, or **come under authority** (that is, be totally obedient to the Lord).

When we come under the authority of God, His authority comes upon us. Under that authority we can stand up and firmly resist the devil and his demons. When we do, they will turn in fear and run away.

This principle of gaining authority by being under authority is illustrated in the ministry of Jesus. A Centurion came to Jesus wanting his servant healed.

Jesus agreed to go to the servant and heal him. The Centurion responded, *"...it isn't necessary for you to come. If you will only stand here and say, 'Be healed,' my servant will get well!*

*"I know, because **I am under the authority** of my superior officers and **I have authority** over my soldiers, and I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes, and to another, 'Come,' and he comes, and to my slave boy, 'Do this or that,' and he does it. And I know you have authority to tell his sickness to go —audit-will go!"* (Matt 8:5-9).

The Centurion had authority, because he was 'a man under authority. In the same manner, when we submit to God, we come under His authority. Then, when we resist the devil, the devil flees from us.

2. Headship And Authority

The headship of Christ and the Christian's authority is an important truth to understand. As we have said, it is the key to victorious Christian living.

a. David And Goliath: The Characters. There is a familiar and interesting story in the Old Testament that clearly explains this idea. It is the story of a young Jewish warrior named David and a great Philistine giant named Goliath (1 Sam 17).

The characters and armies in this story fall into four main types:

- 1) **David represents or is a type of Christ.**
- 2) **The Israelite army is a type of the believers in Christ's Body.**
- 3) **Goliath represents or is a type of Satan.**
- 4) **The Philistine army represents Satan's demonic agents.**

b. David And Goliath: The Story. With these allegories in mind, let us review the story and see what meaning it brings to our warfare in the spiritual realm.

1) **The Challenge.** Goliath came forth from the Philistine army roaring like a lion. What did the people of God do? They reacted like many Christians do today when they face the devil and his demons. They were dismayed and greatly afraid. Therefore, they turned and fled in terror. They had no faith to resist.

A young shepherd boy (probably no more than 15 or 16 years old) then appeared on the scene. His name was David. He knew God as his good and great Shepherd. He had come to bring food for his brothers who were in the army of Israel.

He had recently been chosen by God for a special purpose. The godly prophet Samuel had anointed David with oil to be the next king of Israel. David came, therefore, as the "anointed one" to visit the Israelite camp. No one knew at that time, however, that he would one day be their king.

Upon seeing Goliath, and hearing him shout out his insults upon the armies of Israel, David said in anger, *"Who is this heathen Philistine, anyway? Why is he allowed to defy and insult the armies of the living God?"* (1 Sam 17:26).

There was no fear or timidity in the heart of David. The anointing which he had just received was powerfully at work in him. While everyone else drew back in dismay, David boldly stood his ground and made ready to meet Goliath face to face.

He chose not to use the armor and weapons of King Saul. Rather, he would rely upon five smooth stones from the brook and his shepherd's slingshot. He decided the best defense is a strong offense. So, he strode forth to respond to the challenge of Goliath.

2) **The Victory.** The battle was over almost before it began. One well-aimed and Spirit-directed stone struck mighty Goliath in the center of his huge head. As he fell to the ground, David rushed up, took Goliath's own sword, and cut off his head.

At once, the entire Philistine army fled in great fear. Goliath had been their champion — their head and mighty leader. He was a symbol or sign of their military power and authority. When he fell, they realized they were defeated and fled.

You will recall from our first chapter that "headship" refers to dominion, power and authority over others.

When David attacked and cut off Goliath's head, he not only defeated Goliath, but the entire Philistine army. Goliath's "headship" was destroyed. All his power and authority and that of his Philistine army were made of no effect. The Philistines were left powerless before David's powerful victory over their leader. No wonder they fled in fear!

This story illustrates the powerful victory of Christ over Satan and his armies of demons.

c. Jesus: Our Anointed Shepherd-Savior. Genesis 3:15 foretold that one day the "seed of the woman" would fatally wound (bruise) the head of the serpent. In due time a "greater One than David" appeared on the scene. His Name was 'Jesus Christ' which means. **The Anointed One Who Saves.** He is our anointed. Shepherd- Savior. At Calvary, He engaged that old serpent, Satan, in the conflict of the ages.

The "five wounds" of the cross (like David's five smooth stones) brought down the devil and all of his demon forces.

Satan's headship and dominion were destroyed by Jesus when He died on the cross, descended into Hades, conquered all the forces of Hell and arose from the grave, triumphant over death.

Therefore, the devil's troops (demons) no longer have any power or authority over believers who are under the headship of Christ Jesus. When His Name is spoken in authority, they tremble and must bow their knee in submission to His Lordship.

This response of demon powers to the presence of Jesus was clearly seen throughout His earthly ministry. We will want to study this a little more. It is a truth which is worthy of our attention, for it has the power to set the fearful Christian free.

E. DEMONS FEAR JESUS

Nowhere in Scripture does it ever say that Jesus faced demonic power with fear and trembling. In fact, it was just the other way around. It was the demons who cried out in fear:

"There was a man in the synagogue with an evil spirit. And he cried out, saying, 'Let us alone! What have we to do with you, Jesus of Nazareth? Did you come to destroy us? I know who you are — the Holy One of God'" (Mark 1:23,24 smf).

' When Jesus stepped out onto the land, he was met by a man with demons... and when he saw Jesus, he raised a terrible cry and fell down in terror before him.

"Shouting at the top of his voice he said, 'What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God. Please, I beg you don't torment me...

"Jesus asked him, 'What is your name?' 'Legion,' he replied, because thousands of demons had gone into the man. And the demons begged him repeatedly not to order them into the bottomless pit" (Luke 8:27-31 smf).

*"You believe there is one God? Good! But remember, the demons do too — so strongly that **they tremble in terror**" (Jas 2:19 smf).*

It is interesting to note that the Greek word for "tremble" is **phrisso**. It means to shiver or shudder in terror and horror. It refers to the kind of fear which causes the hair on one's skin to bristle or stand on end.

No, it wasn't Jesus Who was terrified by the presence of demons. It was the demons who were struck with fear by the power and presence of the Lord. They knew He had come to strip Satan of his power and authority.

1. Jesus Has All Power

After His resurrection, Jesus plainly put this truth in these words:

*"**ALL power** in heaven and on earth has been given unto me. Therefore go and make disciples in all nations. ..And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age " (Matt 28:18-20 smf).*

The word "power" in the scripture above means power to rule, to take authority and have dominion. **Now if Jesus has ALL power and authority, that means the devil**

has none. Through His death on the cross, Jesus dethroned the devil and took away his power of death.

Jesus strongly stated this truth again to the Apostle John in his heavenly vision.

"Don't be afraid: I am the first and the last. I died, but see. I am alive for evermore. I have the keys [authority] of death and the grave" (Rev 1:17,18 smf).

2. Jesus Gave Power To Believers

Not only does Jesus have all power and authority, but He has given that power to His disciples — of all ages!

"The seventy disciples returned with great joy. 'Lord,' they said, 'even the demons submit to us when we use your name.'

*"And Jesus said to them, 'Yes, I saw Satan falling from heaven like a lightning flash. **And I have given you authority over all of the power of the enemy.** You have power to crush underfoot scorpions and serpents [demonic powers]. Nothing shall harm you!'"(Luke 10:17-19 smf).*

"These signs shall follow those who believe: They shall use the authority of my name to cast out demons... " (Mark 16:17 smf).

In the light of the above scriptures, it is plain that we have no reason to fear demonic forces. Their power and authority have been taken away. It is they who tremble in our presence when we stand strong in the victory of Calvary, submitted to the conquering Christ.

Let us now consider how to put the truth of God's Word into action. Principles must be proven in practice.

F. THE POWER OF GOD'S PRESENCE

"The Lord their God is with them. The shout of the king is among them. God brought them out of Egypt. Israel has the strength of a wild ox.

*"**No curse can be placed on them, and no witchcraft can be done against them.** See what wonders God has done for them.*

"These people rise up like a lion that will not rest until it has destroyed and eaten its prey... " (Num 23:21-24 smf).

In the above passage we have a picture of what we enjoy as believers in Christ. God's presence is with us, and His protection rests upon us. We are victorious over our enemies.

1. Demons Cannot Harm Believers

It is of special interest to note that no curse can be placed on us and no evil magic can be done against us. Even witchcraft is of no effect as long as we submit to the royal rule of our God. When we walk in faith and obedience, no power of the enemy can harm us.

This is a truth which is for God's people of every age. It rests upon the principle of divine dominion. As said before, **when we come under God's authority, His authority comes upon us.** Then we can resist the devil and his demons in the authority of His Name and by the power of His Word. They will flee from us.

There are places in the world where this truth is of great importance. Many people live their whole lives in fear because of witchcraft. I have seen them completely set free in Christ Jesus.

When they understand that the devil was totally defeated at Calvary, they lose their fear. They quickly begin to move in their authority as royal sons and daughters in the family of God. They are not afraid to face and defeat demon powers wherever they find them. It is beautiful to see "the wonders which God has done for them."

2. A Personal Experience

Some years ago I was teaching in a large church in Guiana, South America. One night after the meeting, the local missionary took me to the home of a family that belonged to the Episcopal Church. Their son was demon-possessed and deeply disturbed.

He would wildly thrash about, trying to bash his head against sharp objects. He had been examined by medical doctors in the capital city of Georgetown. But there was nothing they could do for him.

His condition was becoming steadily worse. He hadn't eaten anything in many days, and was barely drinking enough water to stay alive. They were expecting him to die at any time.

The local Episcopalian priest had placed a crucifix on the wall and sprinkled "holy water" around. He had failed, however, to meet the basic spiritual need of the family. Even though they were members of the church, they had never found a personal relationship with Jesus as then Lord and Savior.

I opened the Scriptures to them and explained the "good news" which God had for their family:

"If you confess with your mouth that Jesus Christ is Lord, and believe in your heart that God has raised him from the dead, you will be saved... you and your household" (Rom 10:9; Acts 16:31).

It was my joy to bring them into a personal knowledge of their living, loving Lord. I explained how Christ was the true Passover Lamb for their family. He died as the Lamb of God to provide His blood for their protection against the destroyer. At the cross, the devil and all his demons had been defeated; their power had been destroyed. (See Section C10.2 on Passover.)

The blood of Jesus was their protection and deliverance now, as the blood of the lamb had been to the Israelite families in their day. If they would put their full confidence and trust in the blood of Jesus shed on the cross for them, and apply it by faith to the door of their hearts, the presence of God would come.

The presence of the Lord would be protection to them. He would cover them like a hen covers its little chicks. This covering would protect them from the attacks of the demons that were tormenting their son.

They knelt down for prayer. With tears of joy running down their faces, they gladly received Jesus into their hearts, and were gloriously saved (born again).

I then told them the reason their boy had become demon-possessed. They had been without the protection which our mighty Savior provides. The blood of Christ had not been applied to their hearts in faith. Now that they had the covering of God's divine presence, they need fear no more.

We then went into the boy's room to complete God's work of grace. I explained to them that evil powers had no right or authority to afflict their son. The demons would have to submit to the authority of God's Word and God's Son. We then laid hands on the boy (who was asleep at the time). I bound the demons' powers, and commanded them to leave the boy in the Name of Jesus of Nazareth.

There was no response at the time — not even a flicker of an eyelid. I told the parents that from that very moment the child had been set free. "How do you know?" they asked. "On the basis of God's Word it is done," I replied. "Now you go to sleep. The word of faith has been spoken. It is finished. From this moment your child is well!"

They lay down on either side of the child and went to sleep. About three o'clock in the morning the boy woke up. He let out a scream that shook the room. The moment he awoke, the demons cried out as they left his body.

The boy then sat up in bed and said, "Mama, I'm hungry." She jumped out of bed and quickly prepared him a meal. At once his strength began to return, and in a short time he was completely restored to health.

The next day all the neighbors came rushing in to see what had happened. Their hearts were deeply touched by this miracle of God's grace and power. As a result, some forty people came to know the Lord Jesus as their Savior.

G. CONCLUSION

For all of us involved in the story above, the following scripture took on a fresh new feeling and meaning:

*"And the seventy returned with great joy and said, 'Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name. 'And Jesus said to them, 'I saw Satan falling from heaven like a lightning flash. You see **I have given you power to stomp on serpents and scorpions. Indeed, I have given you authority over all the power of the enemy. Nothing shall in any way harm or hurt you!**'" (Luke 10:17-19 smf).*

God wants us to walk in the joy of His presence, power and protection. He hasn't given us the spirit of fear, but of power, love and a sound mind (2Tim 1:7).

Let us live therefore in faith and rejoice in our freedom from fear. Truly, we are beloved sons and daughters in the royal family of God.

Chapter 3

Keeping The Victory

Introduction

Jesus Christ has given us perfect victory over the devil and his demon powers. That was His part. Our part is to enforce and keep the victory and live our lives as victorious Christians. The purpose of this teaching is to help us do this.

We have seen how important it is that we know who we are in Christ Jesus. When we received the Lord Jesus into our hearts, we were born into the beloved family of God. Our names were written in the records of Heaven.

Because of this, we have a divine authority which we may exercise to control our enemy (the devil and demons) here on earth. This is an exciting and important truth which we will now study in more detail.

A. A DIVINE AUTHORITY

Do you recall the story in Luke 10, of the seventy disciples whom Jesus sent out to preach the good news of the Kingdom? They were very excited when they returned.

They joyfully reported how even the demons had to obey them when they spoke in the Name of Jesus.

The Lord responded to their report with these unusual but very important words: *"It is not just your power over demons which should bring you joy, but rejoice because your names are written in heaven"* (Luke 10:20 smf).

1. Relationship Gives Authority

The source of their authority was not merely by speaking Jesus' Name, **but in their relationship with Him** (as their Lord).

We dare not put our faith in a "magical formula" of words. It takes more than right words to face and fight the devil; it takes a right relationship with Almighty God.

When we confess Jesus as our Lord and Savior, our names are recorded in Heaven. We are given the authority which belongs to royal sons and daughters of God. This relationship with Christ is the source of our authority over the enemy.

The firstborn son of Queen Elizabeth of England has a great deal of influence and authority in the kingdom of Great Britain. When the Queen sends him to represent her, his relationship with her would cause this son's words to carry great authority. Why?

Not just because he says, "I come in the name of Queen Elizabeth!" His authority would be the result of his relationship (heir apparent to the throne) — not just the words he said.

If I stood in the British House of Parliament and said, "I speak to you in the name of Queen Elizabeth," I would be scorned and laughed at. Why? Because I have no right to speak in her name. I am not related.

For these same reasons, our words spoken to the devil or demons have power only if we are rightly related to Jesus — Who triumphed over all the powers of death and Hell. Even the demons know whether you are related to Jesus.

There is a dramatic story in the Book of Acts which confirms and supports this concept. The Apostle Paul had great success in releasing people from demonic powers.

a. Seven Sons Of Sceva. A Jewish man by the name of Sceva had seven sons. They decided to try Paul's "method" of casting out demons using the Name of the Lord Jesus. Coming across a demon-possessed man, they spoke these words, *"In the name of Jesus, whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out!"*

The evil spirit answered them, *"Jesus I know and Paul I know, but who are you?"* The demons were angry at this false claim to Jesus' Name because these boys had no relationship with Jesus.

The demons then empowered the possessed man with great strength. He attacked all seven boys. He severely beat them and drove them out of the house naked and bleeding (Acts 19:13-16).

They used right words, but they didn't have a right relationship with Jesus. Their names weren't written in Heaven.

2. Names Written In Heaven

It is interesting to note that the names of Jesus and Paul were known by the demons. It seems God has a bulletin board in Heaven. On it are posted the names of all who are His children. Demon powers check this record. They know who is there and who is not.

If your name is there, and you are walking in faith and obedience, you have the authority and power to resist the devil and make him flee.

If your name is written in Heaven, it will be known in Hell!

Yes, the names of the righteous are written in Heaven. But the names of the wicked are also recorded somewhere:

"O Lord, the Hope of Israel, all that turn away from you will be disgraced and put to shame. Those who leave you will be written in the earth. They have turned away from the Lord, the Spring of Living Water" (Jer 17:13 smf).

Our name is recorded in one place or the other. It is possible to have a name on earth and be unknown in Heaven. Like writing in the sand, our lives then will be as a brief memory which soon fades with time. Earthly power and position are but for a moment when compared to eternity.

As Christians we can rejoice, for our names are written forever in the Lamb's Book of Life. We are a part of God's eternal purpose, and He has given us the power to evangelize this earth.

Our names written in Heaven gives us authority here on earth. **The devils know, believe this and tremble. We should know, believe this and rejoice!**

3. Childlike Faith

' Then Jesus rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, 'I thank you Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from those who are wise in the eyes of the world. Instead you have shown them to the little children — those who have a simple childlike faith. Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure'" (Luke 10:21 smf).

Jesus also said in another place, *' Whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall not enter in at all" (Mark 10:15 smf).*

In other words, the key to Kingdom power and authority is simple childlike faith. As children of the King, we have dominion over the devil and his demons. Not because we are somebody great —but because we are related to Somebody great. We are children of God! Because of this, we are not to be a people of fear, but of faith.

God delights in using His children to defeat the enemy. He chose a young shepherd boy to slay the great giant, Goliath. Paul tells us that God has chosen what the world calls poor, weak and foolish to shame the rich, mighty and wise (I Cor 1:25-30).

This means God can defeat the devil through any of His children, if they know who they are in Christ and act in the authority of His Name. Indeed, our heavenly Father finds great joy and delight in seeing His sons and daughters put the devil in his place.

B. DECEPTION: THE DEVIL'S WEAPON

If the devil and his demons have been stripped of their authority by Christ's victory on the cross, why are there so many defeated Christians? The answer is in one word: **deception**. The devil tricks or deceives us into believing that a lie is the truth; that something is real when it isn't; that wrong is right, and right is wrong.

If we believe his lies, he has gained a foothold in our lives. He will then take as much room as we will give to him. He has no legal right to do this, but he will if we allow him to.

Jesus said that the purpose of a thief is to kill, steal and destroy (John 10:10). Satan is a thief. He seeks to steal and destroy that which is not legally his.

We have the power and authority to stop him every time. However, he will try to make us think that we do not. He will seek to look and act as if he is in command.

He wants us to think and feel like we are weak, helpless victims under his power and control. If he can deceive us, the devil knows we will fall back in fear and not resist him in faith.

If the devil can't deceive us in large ways, he will try to deceive us in smaller things. Sometime ago a friend of mine was dealing with a demon-possessed man. As he sought to cast the devil out in the Name of Jesus, the devil boldly rebuked him. "You can't cast me out, because you haven't fasted!"

What would you do if a demon accused you of not fasting? Would you feel you weren't ready for such a situation?

This, of course, was an attempt of the devil to get my friend to put his faith in his fasting rather than the Lord.

At first my friend was dismayed because he realized that he hadn't fasted beforehand. He was almost tricked into backing down and leaving the man as he was.

Then he realized what the devil was doing. Therefore, he firmly replied, "You lying devil, I haven't fasted, but Jesus has. Now you come out in Jesus' Name!" And the devil did — at once!

1. Accusation And Condemnation

The Scriptures tell us that we are to be aware of the deceptive tricks and tactics of the devil (2Cor 2:11). What, therefore, are the methods by which the enemy seeks to weaken our faith through fear? Two important ways are through **accusation** and **condemnation**.

Satan first **accuses** — charges or blames — a Christian for some fault, failure or weakness in his life. The charge may be true or false. In either case, if we accept it, we will feel guilty and unfit. We have been brought under the fear of judgment or **condemnation**.

a. Conviction Versus Condemnation. We need to be able to discern or know the difference between:

- 1) the "conviction" of the Holy Spirit and**
- 2) the "condemnation" of the devil.**

The Holy Spirit will "convict" us of sin by clearly pointing it out to us. Once we see our guilt, we repent (turn from our sin). True repentance causes us to be sorry that we have sinned against the law and love of our heavenly Father.

The Spirit will then move us to confess our sin and receive God's forgiveness. In this we are restored to the joy of our salvation.

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness — wrong thoughts, words and actions" (1 Jn 1:9smf).

"Against you and you only have I sinned and done evil in your sight... wash me and I will be whiter than snow... Hide your face from my sins, erase them from your sight... Create in me a clean heart, O God and renew a strong, right spirit within me... Restore to me the joy of your salvation and give me a willing spirit that wants to do your will" (Ps 51:4,7,9,10,12 smf).

Satan, however, will "accuse and condemn" us for both our sins and our weaknesses. Sometimes we are not even guilty of the things for which we are charged.

In either case, however, his purpose is to bring us into feelings of both doom and despair. He wants us to think that God has cut us off and that we have little hope for the future. If he can't take us this far, he will seek to keep us under an uneasy cloud of divine

disapproval. His desire is to so weaken our faith, that we will feel we aren't strong enough spiritually to face him in warfare.

This is what the Apostle John teaches us: *"If our hearts condemn us not, then we have faith towards God"* (1 Jn3:21). If our heart is heavy with condemnation, our faith will be weak or we will be without any faith. **Without faith, we will not fight!** That is what the devil wants — a Christian who will not fight or resist.

b. False Accusations. The name "devil" means one who accuses or falsely blames another. More Christians are defeated by accusation and condemnation than anything else.

Satan's method of attack is well known to most of us, although we may not be aware who is behind it. In fact, we will be the victim of a double deception if we cannot recognize either the liar or his lies!

For example, we all at one time or another have spoken to someone more harshly or sharply than we should have. Even though we may have quickly confessed our fault to the Lord, the devil will still seek to drag us under a cloud of condemnation. He will remind and accuse us again and again of our un-Christ-like conduct.

We repent over the same sin repeatedly, but can't seem to get free from our feeling of guilt. It spoils our prayer life and hinders our worship. It robs us of our peace and joy and weakens our faith.

We are afraid to engage in spiritual warfare for ourselves or on behalf of others. Satan will be very quick to tell us that we are at his mercy because we have failed in our Christian walk. Sound familiar?

2. Evil And Lying Thoughts

Another way the devil attacks us is to shoot evil thoughts as "fiery darts" into our minds. They may even come at some special time, as during prayer, worship or even holy communion.

If the enemy can tempt us into developing the thought into evil words or actions, he will. If, however, we are quick to resist that temptation, he will try another tactic — that of condemnation. He will accuse us of having an evil mind and an unholy heart. He will tell us that other Christians never have such thoughts.

He may even go so far as to say we are in danger of losing out with God altogether. He will take his work of condemnation as far down the line of our life as he possibly can.

If we accept these lies of the devil, we will be left helpless, hopeless and faithless. The devil's fiery darts have produced the faith-consuming flames of doubt and fear.

Then when we come up against a spiritual problem, we don't have the faith to come to God or resist the devil. So, we give in, give way and give up. No wonder Peter says:

"Be awake, and on guard, because your adversary, the devil, prowls around as a roaring lion looking for someone to eat and destroy " (1 Pet5:8 smf).

C. OUR DEFENSE AGAINST THE DEVIL

1. Three Basic Principles

How do we deal with this problem of condemnation? How can we face the lies and accusations of our deceiver, the devil? The answer involves three basic truths or principles:

- a. **Agree with your adversary quickly;**
- b. **The "Yes —But!" response;**
- c. **Turn to Jesus as your refuge.**

2. The Principles In Detail

Let us study these three truths in more detail. Together they form a strong defense against the attacks of our adversary (enemy), the devil.

a. Agree With Your Adversary. It was Jesus Who said: "*Agree with your adversary quickly...*" (Matt 5:25). He was speaking of an enemy who seeks to accuse someone before a court of law.

Our "adversary" is the devil. He ever seeks to accuse us not only to our face, but also before the throne of God.

At first it might seem wrong to agree with such an enemy. However, if his charges are true, we are not going to win by trying to defend ourselves. If we really did fall or fail in the eyes of the Lord, it will do no good to deny the fact.

Our authority over the devil is not based on our holiness or good works. Sometimes we do sin and come short of God's holy purpose for our lives in Christ.

Jesus didn't say to argue with the devil and defend ourselves. He said to agree with him and to do it quickly. What did He mean by that, and how does it work? Let us consider a possible example.

b. "Yes — But!" The devil has just accused you of having a dark, evil thought. You respond by saying, "**YES**, devil, you are right, and I was wrong. **BUT...**" Now comes the response which will leave the devil totally defeated. "**YES, you are right, BUT the blood of Jesus Christ has cleansed me from all sin.**"

You can't stand on the ground of your own righteousness by trying to deny your failure. You know you have failed, and so does the devil. If you try to argue with him on that point you have lost before you start. No, the ground for our faith is not our goodness, but the righteousness of Christ with which we are clothed.

c. Turn To Jesus. What do we do then, when the enemy seeks to make us retreat by firing at us his big guns of accusation and condemnation? We quickly agree with him and turn at once to Jesus for our refuge. He is our fortress for safety.

When we try to face the enemy on the basis of our holiness or righteousness, we are being led away from our refuge in Christ. The moment we do, we will be defeated.

Outside of Jesus we have no defense. In Christ Jesus, however, we are not only safe and secure, but also sure of perfect victory.

1) No Condemnation In Christ. Yes, condemnation is a powerful weapon in the hands of Satan. He is very clever in his use of it. He may even come to us as an "*angel of light*" (2Cor 11:14). When he does, he will seek to deceive us into thinking that our feeling of condemnation is from God.

As we said above. God does convict us of sin. The purpose, however, is to bring us to repentance and forgiveness. After we've repented and made restitution (if our sin was against someone else), any leftover feelings of guilt are not from God — they are the condemnation of the devil.

God will never condemn us when we sin or fail, if we repent and confess our sin to Jesus (1 Jn 1:9).

He will firmly reprove and correct our lives, but always in love. Never will His correction carry even a hint of rejection. Correct us, YES. Reject us, NO! We have been forever accepted in the righteousness of Christ.

"Who dare accuse us, when God has chosen us for his own? Will God? No! He is the one who has forgiven us and given us right standing with himself.

"Who then will condemn us? Will Christ? No! He is the very one who died for us, and was raised to the right hand of God where he pleads for us...

' "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus!"
(Rom 8:33,34; Rom 8:lsmf).

Satan is the source of our condemnation. He will find a weak area in our life and bring it before us over and over again. He will use it to hammer into our hearts feelings of guilt, fear, doubt and despair.

Through his lies he will seek to draw us away from our refuge in Christ — our righteousness in Him. If he succeeds, he knows we will not resist or oppose him in faith.

This is the reason we must know what has been taught above. Otherwise we will not be victorious, happy Christians.

2) Righteous Standing In Christ. Through Christ's death on the cross we have been saved from the guilt and penalty of our sins. We stand before God JUSTIFIED. (Which means **just (as) if I'd** never sinned.)

More than that, we have also been "sanctified" —**made holy and righteous in Christ.** When God looks upon us. He doesn't see our sins, weakness or failures, but the righteousness of His Son. We are accepted in Him, and have been given the goodness of His life!

We not only stand in Christ before a holy God without fear, but we can also stand up to every evil spirit without fear. Our righteous standing in Christ is the ground of our victory over the devil.

3. A Threefold Defense

Satan knows this, but he doesn't want us to know it — or live in the power of it. For him, it means defeat.

Therefore, he will seek to destroy our faith and our will to resist him— by using the heavy club of condemnation. No wonder Paul tells us that *'we are to be aware of his clever and tricky tactics'* (2Cor 2:11 smf).

We see, therefore, that our defense against the condemnation of the devil is three-fold:

- a. We agree with our adversary, but**
- b. claim the righteousness we have in Christ, and**
- c. turn to Jesus as our refuge.** Now we are ready to press on into victory.

4. The Sword Of The Spirit

Jesus is our example for the victorious life. His victory over the devil and demon powers was won by using the Word of God. During His temptations and testings in the wilderness, Jesus refuted and defeated the devil with Scripture. To every temptation He responded, *"It is written. "*

To "refute" means to prove someone's word is wrong by speaking the truth. Jesus refuted the words of the devil by speaking the Word of God. **Jesus won with the Word, and we can too.**

D. OVERCOMERS ARE VICTORIOUS

The final casting down of Satan is described in the Book of Revelation. Our role as overcomers is also explained. The two-fold basis for our victory over the devil is of great interest:

"Then I heard a loud voice shouting across the heavens, 'It has happened at last! God's salvation and the power, rule and authority of his Christ are finally here.

"The accuser of our brothers has been thrown down. He accused them day and night before our God.

"And our brothers overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony — the spoken word of truth..." (Rev 12:10,11 smf).

1. Two Keys To Victory

The two keys to being an overcomer are these:

a. The Blood Of The Lamb — which has washed away our sins so. we are accepted by God (just as if I'd never sinned).

b. The Word Of Their Testimony — which is our speaking forth words which agree with what God has said in the Bible.

2. Using The Keys

a. By The Blood Of The Lamb. How do we overcome by the "Blood of the Lamb"? I am sure you understand that "the Lamb," as used in this scripture, refers to Jesus.

You remember that when John the Baptist saw Jesus coming to be baptized, John said:

"Behold THE LAMB OF GOD who bears away the sin of the world" (John 1:29,36).

When John's disciples heard Jesus referred to as "The Lamb of God," they left John and followed Jesus.

As Israelites, they well understood the significance of this. The Israelites experienced forgiveness and **atonement** through the following process. (**At-one-ment** means to be made "at one" with God.)

God had prescribed that a lamb be brought as a sin offering to the brazen altar in the temple. The sinner would then lay his hands on the head of the lamb as it lay on the altar and confess his sins. Through this process, the sins of the confessor would be transferred to the lamb.

Because the penalty for sin was death, the lamb then had to die on the altar. The lamb didn't die because it sinned. The lamb was slain in place of the sinner (the one who really deserved to die). The lamb became a substitute sacrifice for the sinner — dying in his place.

1) Jesus Shed His Blood For Us. This illustrates what Jesus was doing on the cross for you and me. We were the ones who deserved to die for our sins. But Jesus (the Lamb) died as our substitute — in our place. I should have been hanging there on that cross — but Jesus took my place (and yours). Thus I can be "**at-one**" with God. I am forgiven and enjoy a standing before God "**just as if I'd**" never sinned.

Our sins are "forgiven and forgotten" because Jesus shed His blood on the cross for us (as the Lamb). Therefore, the devil hates the blood of Jesus.

2) Jesus' Blood Is Powerful Against The Enemy. That cross and the blood Jesus shed there for us defeated the devil and the demons, so they hate the blood of Jesus.

My first attempt at casting out a demon was in 1948. I was a young Christian who had more zeal than knowledge or wisdom. In trying to cast the unclean spirit out of this man, I was attempting something far beyond my spiritual development and experience.

However, in the attempt, I learned something that has stayed with me all my life. When I spoke to the demon and told him to come out of the man, the demon screamed out, "The blood of Jesus is swine's (pig's) blood!" The demon repeated this terrible profanity over and over. It made chills run up and down my back.

From this, I realized how powerful the blood of Jesus is against the designs and devices of Satan and his demon followers.

The "Blood of the Lamb" kept Satan (the destroyer) out of the Israelites' homes on Passover night in Egypt (see Chapter 1 of this section).

The blood of the sacrificial lambs of the Old Testament kept Satan from claiming the believing righteous. In death, those who were "saved by the blood" went to paradise —out of Satan's reach and claim (see Luke 16:19-26).

The blood has frustrated the devil's plans all through the centuries. No wonder the New Testament writers spoke so enthusiastically about the blood of Jesus.

"... You were redeemed... with the precious blood of Christ.... He [Jesus] loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.... He redeemed us to God by his blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation..." (I Pet 1:18,19; Rev 1:5; 5:9smf).

3) Plead The Blood. A good friend named David told me the story of his father. His father had been an Anglican who was soundly converted and filled with the Spirit and became a Pentecostal preacher in England.

He had his funny ways —one of which was to go around all of the time humming and whispering, "Under the blood. Lord! Under the blood!"

David asked his father one day, "Why do you do that. Dad?" With a very loud voice his father responded, "Well, do you know anything else that it would be better for an old man to mutter about?"

David didn't answer, but in his mind he thought, "No! I guess not, old man. I can't think of better words than that to fill my surroundings." So David decided to pick up the habit and frequently walks around muttering the same thing. What about you? What do you mutter?

"And our brothers overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony — the spoken word of truth..." (Rev 12:10,11 smf).

When you come up against the enemy in prayer, say these words: "Powers of darkness, I plead the blood of Jesus against you — I command you to release this person in the Name of Jesus. Jesus' blood purchased this person's freedom, and I command you to come out, to release your grip on this life right now."

This kind of praying and confession of faith will cause the demons to tremble and flee. Use the blood of Jesus in prayer. It is a strong spiritual weapon.

b. By The Word Of Their Testimony

1) Our Salvation. There is power in what we say — our testimony or confession. We know that man's part in salvation is to:

a) believe in his heart, and

b) confess with his mouth.

"If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved" (Rom 10:9 smf).

When we both believe and confess that Jesus died — shed His blood — for our sins, and confess that God then raised Him up from the dead, we are saved and enter into the victorious Christian life.

2) Our Confession. It is one thing to enter into the victory of Christ's life, but how do we keep on walking in victory over Satan? Well, we get the victory and keep the victory the same way — by the confession of our mouth.

Many of us consider our problems, thinking thoughts of doubt, fear and despair. We should resist the enemy by speaking forth words of faith, hope and love. The word **confession** means "to say the same as" or "to agree with."

When we confess our sins, we are agreeing with God that they are wrong. They are harmful to us, and grievous to Him. We don't deny or excuse our sins, but we say the same thing that God says about them. **That is the negative part or sad side of our confession.**

We not only confess our sins, but we also confess what God says in His Word (the Bible) about our salvation, financial provision, healing and blessing. When we are sick we confess:

"I am the Lord thy God who healeth thee... "

"... He healeth all my diseases... "

"By his stripes I am healed... " (Exo 15:26; Ps 103:3; Isa 53:5 smf).

This is God's Word and we agree with Him that it is right and true — for us! **This is the positive part or glad side of our confession.**

3. Victory In The Court Of Heaven

The Bible says that Jesus is "the High Priest of our confession " (Heb 3:1). That means He works with what we say to enforce victory for us. *"He lives to make intercession for us "* (Heb 7:25 smf).

There is a legal side to our salvation which is related to our confession. Jesus is our advocate (attorney, lawyer, barrister). If He is to be successful as our lawyer, it will depend largely on our confession (what we say).

Satan visits Heaven regularly to accuse the brethren (see Job 1 and 2 and Revelation 12:10). When he does, how is Jesus going to answer and refute Satan's accusations? By your testimony — **by what you say.**

a. Three Things Said. A famous American evangelist explained it this way. When the devil is accusing you before God, there are three things said:

1) What the devil says;

2) What the Bible (God's Word) says;

3) What you say!

If you agree with God's Word, and say what God's Word says, your testimony will be used by Jesus to refute the devil's accusations.

b. Four Roles Played. Capture this picture of the court of Heaven. There is God's great bar of justice. Four different roles can be seen in such a scene:

1) There is the "Judge" Who decides who is guilty and what the penalty will be.

2) **There is the "prosecutor"** who will try to prove that the one who is accused is guilty as charged.

3) **There is the "defendant"** who has been accused and needs someone to defend him from the charges.

4) **There is the "Defender"** Who will seek to prove that His client is not guilty as accused.

c. Who Are The Players? Who plays these various roles in the court of Heaven? They are as follows:

1) **The Judge is God Himself** Who is altogether wise and just.

2) **The prosecutor is the devil**, also known as the '*accuser of the brethren.*'

3) **The defendant is the Christian believer** (you or me) who has come under the condemnation of the devil.

4) **The Defender is Jesus Christ**, our lawyer (advocate) and intercessor (1 Jn2:1).

d. The Trial The prosecutor speaks first, pressing his charges against us before the Judge. Some of his accusations are true and some of them are false. His case is so convincing we may feel mixed up and afraid. If we do, we will likely stand there with our heads bowed and say nothing. Or worse yet, we may try to defend ourselves and even deny the charges that are true. This could lead to our loss, for our Defender must present our case on the basis of what we confess.

Jesus plainly but powerfully put it in these words: "*You will have whatsoever you say!*" (Mark 11:23 smf).

How much wiser to agree with our adversary — the prosecutor — where we may have been wrong. But also to state that the penalty for our wrongdoing has already been paid by our Defender —with His own blood.

We then turn our defense over to Jesus. He will take our confession of sin and salvation, and plead before His Father, and our Judge, His own death upon the cross.

On the basis of the cross and His shed blood, justice has been satisfied. The Judge declares us pardoned and we are set free without penalty. The prosecutor has been defeated. He has no further grounds for his charges. **He was overcome by the blood of the Lamb AND the word of our testimony!**

Moreover, once we have been cleared of all of his accusations, we are in a position to charge him for every lie he used in trying to bring about our defeat.

By confessing the truth, not only are we set free, but eventually he will be put in the very prison (Hell) which he had planned for us.

E. REVIEW THE PRINCIPLES

We have linked together five basic principles in the study of the victorious Christian life. They are worthy of our review:

1. Reject Condemnation — Accept Conviction

2. Agree With Your Adversary Quickly

3. Turn To Jesus As Your Refuge

4. Use The Sword Of The Spirit — The Word Of God

5. Give Jesus A Good Confession Of Faith To Defend You With

May these truths be set in our hearts and fixed in our minds. With them we can be winners every time. They are a sure and strong defense against the attacks of the devil. No longer can he use his weapons of accusation and condemnation to weaken our faith and our prayers.

We will stand up, speak forth, and deliver ourselves and others with the sure Word of the Lord.

VICTORY IS OURS NOW AND FOREVER.

Chapter 4

FREE! To Marry Another

Introduction

There is a war which rages within me and which causes far more trouble than any conflict I face without. My number one problem is not the devil and his demons, but myself. My own sinful nature is my greatest enemy.

As we have seen in our earlier chapters, we have both internal and external — inside and outside — enemies. Our **outside** enemies are the devil and his demons.

We have studied the principles by which these foes can be overcome. The purpose of this chapter is to deal with our **inside** enemies.

For years I blamed everything on the devil and his demons. Then I found out that most of my spiritual battles were with myself. I didn't have to look far to find my greatest foe.

I found that I face him in the mirror every morning.

I discovered that I am not the only one who faces this problem. It is true of every Christian everywhere.

Now a problem this great and so widespread needs a strong solution. God has that answer. He knows us better than we know ourselves, and has provided a remedy for us in Christ Jesus. Accepting this remedy provides us sure and certain victory.

A. OUR TWO NATURES

There is a mental disorder which is called "schizophrenia." The term means a **dual-mind**. It refers to a mental problem in which a person may display symptoms of a "dual-personality."

They will think and act like two different people. At one time they may speak and respond in a normal way, but at another time their behavior will be just the opposite.

There is a kind of "spiritual schizophrenia" for the Christian. We suffer from what sometimes seems to be a dual-personality within.

At one time we display in our lives the lovely qualities of Christ's life. We are joyful, peaceful, kind and gracious.

At other times, to our dismay, we may be sharp-spoken, short-tempered and hard to live with. We don't want to be this way, but we are.

Even though we try to be sweet, nice and wonderful, we end up being sour, mean and miserable. We know it — and others know it. It seems we are being pulled in two

different directions at once. We feel as if there is a great war being waged within, and we are often on the losing side.

"What is going on?" we may ask ourselves. "Do I have a dual-personality?" The answer is simple: "Yes, you do!"

When you received Christ into your life, you received a new nature — His nature.

The Holy Spirit came into your life as the Spirit of Christ. He took up His home in your heart. The Bible refers to this new nature as the "*new man*."

Your old nature apart from Christ is called the "*old man*."

Sometimes our old nature is called the flesh, the carnal man (carnal=flesh), the old Adamic nature or simply the self. It is the same nature that the first man Adam had, after he sinned and was separated from the Tree of Life (see Genesis 3).

All of the above terms refer to an immature and non-spiritual way of life. If we fail to live our life in the power and motivation available to us from God's Holy Spirit (Romans 5 through 8), we will express "Adamic Nature" life in the terms explained below.

We can chart these terms in a simple way as follows:

Old Adamic Nature

Old Man
Old Self-life
Flesh (Carnal)
Sinful Nature
Soulish Man
Carnal Mind

New Christ Nature

New Man
New Christ-life
Spirit (Spiritual)
Righteous Nature
Spiritual Man
Spiritual Mind

Sense And Reason

Apart From God's Spirit

Sense And Reason

Under The Spirit's Control

1. The Conflict

Now the old man (our flesh) and the new man (the Spirit) are opposite in nature. They live in the same house, but have very different desires. The old man is very self-centered, while the new man is very Christ-centered. These two natures conflict and are at war with one another. This is the cause of our problem.

God foresaw the conflict which would arise within our lives after accepting His Son as our Lord and Savior. He has, therefore, a powerful remedy for our problem. His answer centers in the life and death of His Son. It involves a truth which, when understood and acted upon, will give us victory over our enemy within.

2. The Victory

The Apostle Paul seeks to explain the basis for living in victory. He compares it to the relationship of marriage.

Here is the idea in his own words:

"Brothers, all of you understand the law of Moses. So surely you know the law rules over a person only when he is alive. For example, a woman must stay married to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, then she is free from the law of marriage.

"But if she marries another man when her husband is still alive, the law says she is guilty of adultery. But if her husband dies, then the woman is free from the bonds of

*marriage. If she marries another man after her husband dies, she is not guilty of adultery. In the same way, my brothers, **your old selves** [husband] **died as it were with Christ on the cross**, so you are no longer ruled by the law.*

"Now you can be married to Another, which is Christ who was raised from the dead. In him you have new life and can bring forth fruit for God" (Rom 7:1-4 smf).

a. Our First Husband. In Paul's example above, the unredeemed (unsaved) person is like a wife married to a cruel husband.

This cruel husband is the laws given to Moses — which condemn. If you broke Moses' law (under Old Testament rules) you could be stoned — put to death. The law condemned us for sin, but gave us no power to live a holy life.

When the law said "...*thou shall not covet,*" the Apostle Paul said this law made him want to covet more. The commandment did not deliver him from coveting, but made him super-covetous.

Have you ever seen a sign which says, "WET PAINT — DO NOT TOUCH!" What do most people do who see such a sign? You are right. They reach out and touch it, to see if it is wet paint. The commandment, "thou shalt not touch," produces the opposite behavior from what it commands.

That is the way our old nature is. It always wants to do what we are commanded not to do. The law only enforces and amplifies this tendency.

Hence our marriage to the law (commandments), which amplified our sinful nature, must be dealt with if we are to be victorious Christians. Otherwise, we will be violating God's commandments (which as Christians we do not want to do).

b. Our New Husband. Paul explains (in the verses above) the way the wife can be free from the marriage to (law of) this husband. She is free if the husband dies. Only then is the wife free from the marriage.

Our first husband, then, is a picture (type or metaphor) of our "old man" or sinful nature, which is stirred up and motivated to sin by the law (the commandments of God through Moses). How are we to get free from this husband (the law and its motivation of our old man)?

Paul explains the answer in Romans 7. Our "old man" (husband) was crucified with Christ. Our old man was nailed to the cross with Christ, and died with Him. Hence we are free from this husband (our old sinful nature and the law) to be married to Another (Christ).

1) Crucified With Christ. I want to tell you a story to help you better understand how we were crucified with Christ.

A friend of mine was asking Jesus (in prayer) to show him how he was crucified with Christ. In answer to his prayer, the Lord gave him a vision.

In the vision, my friend saw Jesus dying on the cross. Then the vision changed, and it was as if the body of Jesus on the cross became transparent or clear like glass.

Inside Jesus, my friend saw himself. Jesus spoke to him and said, "You were inside Me when I was crucified, so you were crucified with Me." Then my friend understood. Yes! I was crucified with Christ.

You see. God the Father chose me "in Christ" before the foundation of the world (Eph 1:4). The Father looked ahead to Sunday night, October 12th, 1947 and saw : that Ralph Mahoney would repent that night and receive Jesus as his Lord and Savior.

Seeing this by His foreknowledge, the Father said, "Ralph cannot live in victory unless I crucify (put to death) that old sinful nature he will be born with."

Turning to Jesus (the second Person in the Godhead) the Father said:

"Jesus, when you go into the world to die on the cross, I am going to place Ralph Mahoney IN you, because he is going to believe on you." Jesus sorrowfully agreed to this.

He was sorrowful because to do this, He — Who had never known sin, disobedience and rebellion — would have to be made like Ralph and take Ralph's sinful nature into Himself. Even though this would cause Jesus indescribable pain and agony. He loved me so much He was willing to do this.

He would not only pay the price for the **penalty** of my sin by dying; He would deliver me from sin's habit, force and control in my life **by letting me die IN Him**.

2) Free To Marry Christ. Thus, my old sinful nature and its tendency to want to disobey God's law died on the cross.

Because my "old man" (husband) is dead, **this leaves me free to be married to Christ** — to come under His authority and control.

In that relationship, Christ will give me the power of the Holy Spirit, so I not only **WANT TO** obey God's laws but I **WILL** obey them. The Holy Spirit will give me the power to OBEY.

We who have believed on Jesus are no longer wedded to our "old man" or Adamic nature (the nature we received from our sinful forefather Adam), but to Christ Jesus.

He has become our new Husband, and we are His bride. We now share in His life and nature. He is our Master; no longer are we under the control of our "old man."

B. OLD TESTAMENT EXAMPLE

1. Three Main Characters

There is a story in the Old Testament which illustrates the Apostle Paul's teaching in Romans Chapter Seven. It is found in the twenty-fifth chapter of 1 Samuel. The story involves three main characters:

a. Abigail: a very lovely married woman;

b. Nabal: the rich but evil husband (old man) of Abigail;

c. David: an anointed man chosen by God to be the next king of Israel.

2. The Characters In Detail

a. Abigail. The Scriptures describe Abigail as being a wise and beautiful lady with a generous and humble heart. There was a lovely prophetic anointing upon her life. Truly she was a most noble and gracious woman of God.

Sadly, she was married to a man who was a blemish on her grace, beauty and character.

b. Nabal. Abigail's husband, Nabal, was a mean, rude, inconsiderate, stubborn fool, who was often intoxicated from drinking too much wine.

It is a sad picture indeed. Moreover, Abigail was bound to her husband by the laws of marriage — until separated by death. Only then would she be free to marry another.

c. David. Unlike Nabal, David was a man after God's own heart. He had been anointed by Samuel to be the next king of Israel. There was a tender, sensitive side to David's life which is beautifully revealed to us in the Psalms.

He was a man of faith, courage and power. He would one day become Israel's mighty warrior king. Marriage to David would be a royal marriage indeed.

3. Spiritual Meaning Of The Characters

Let us now approach our story from a fresh and interesting view. There is a sense in which the characters involved speak of our two natures and our relationship with Christ. They are listed as follows:

a. Abigail Married To Nabal: a type of our condition under the law — married to our old nature.

b. Nabal: a type of our old sinful nature — to whom we are married by parental grant.

c. David: a type of Christ, the anointed One — to Whom we want to be married. Who will give us a new nature, and motivation to express righteousness.

With this spiritual application in mind, let us review the background to the story we are about to study.

4. The Story — 1 Samuel 25

In the opening scene, David is found fleeing for his life from King Saul. Though anointed to be king, David will go through many years of trials and tests before becoming king. Saul has lost favor with God. He is jealous of David and seeks to take his life.

David and his men fled to a desert place : to escape from Saul's death threats. Here they came across some of Nabal's shepherds. David protected Nabal's shepherds and sheep from roaming robbers and nomadic raiding parties that frequented the area. David and his men often risked their lives to protect Nabal's property.

a. Nabal Insults David. Springtime eventually came. This was the sheep-shearing season. This was a happy occasion of feasting and celebration. David sent ten of his young men to Nabal with the request that they be invited to share in the sheep-shearing festival.

Instead of showing gratitude to David and his men for the protection they had provided, Nabal rudely refused the request. David and his men were insulted.

In anger, David took 400 of his men with their swords and marched toward Nabal, intending to kill him and take the sheep they had spared from the robbers. In this way they would take revenge.

b. Abigail Meets David. One of Nabal's young men found Abigail and told her about, her husband's rude and foolish action. Realizing David would destroy her wealthy estate, she arose at once and (without telling Nabal) rode forth to intercept David and his men.

She brought with her many gifts of bread, wine, meat, grain, raisins and figs as an offering of peace. She intended to give David far more than he had asked.

Our story continues as Abigail and her men meet David and his army at the bottom of a mountain trail.

Abigail quickly got off her donkey, fell on her face and bowed before David. She accepted all the blame in the matter and pleaded with David to overlook her wicked, foolish husband's actions.

She gently suggested that her actions were directed of the Lord to prevent David from avenging himself by way of murder. This would displease the Lord — and be a stain on David's reputation.

She then brought forth a beautiful prophetic word: *"The Lord will surely reward you with a royal household that will live forever. God will do this because you are fighting his battles. Evil will never be found in you throughout all your days.*

"Even when you are chased by those who seek your life, you are safe in the care of the Lord your God. The lives of your enemies will be scattered as a stone from a sling.

"The Lord will fulfill all his good promises and make you king over all Israel... When all this comes to pass, please remember me "(I Sam 25:28-31 smf).

Truly, Abigail was a lovely, gracious woman with great wisdom and prophetic insight. She alone within the household of her husband saw the special anointing which rested upon David.

In her heart was a deep longing for that day when David would ascend the royal throne. She was a sweet, sensitive person in whose heart there was a godly hope for a better day. There is a tender touch of pathos in the almost wistful words, *"Please remember me."*

c. Nabal's Death. When she returned home, she found that her husband had forgotten all about David. Even her absence has been of little concern to him. He had thrown a big party and was roaring drunk. What a sad picture Nabal is of our old sin nature. There was no awareness of spiritual things or divine purpose.

The Scripture says Nabal was holding a feast at home like that of a king. He was playing the role of ruler and making merry. The real king (David) had wanted to be a part of the celebration, but he wasn't welcome. Nabal had willfully shut David out of his life, and was only concerned about his own desires and pleasures.

Abigail wisely waited until morning before talking to Nabal. By then he was sober, and she told her wicked husband how close he had come to being completely wiped out and killed by David and his army.

The Scripture says that when he heard her words, *"his heart failed him and he became like a stone. "*

Nabal had an evil heart and a carnal mind. This was the character of his inner nature. The name "Nabal" means **foolish** and **vile**. Like his name, Nabal was a fool at heart, and gave no thought to the ways of God.

Sobered and shocked by the truth of Abigail's report, both his heart and mind failed and he became as motionless as a stone — paralyzed. (He apparently suffered both a stroke and a heart attack.)

Ten days later, *'the Lord struck Nabal and he died"* (vs 38). The set of his life was centered in himself. It could never change.

What might have been would never be. He lived without God or His Spirit. He came under the judgment promised in Romans 8:13, *"For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die..."*

What a clear but tragic description of our old self-life! There was only one solution to the problem of Abigail's "old man"—DEATH!

And that, my friend, is the only solution to our old sinful nature. It had to be crucified. It had to die.

d. FREE! To Marry Another. Our story now takes a brighter and more positive direction. Until the death of her husband, Abigail had been bound to him by the laws of marriage. Now that he was dead, she was free to marry another. We don't have to go far in the record to discover who the "other" was:

"When David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, 'Praise be to the Lord! He has paid Nabal back for his wrong against me'... Then David sent word to Abigail asking her to be his wife...

"She responded at once to David's messengers with humility and grace: 'Here is your maidservant, ready to serve you and wash the feet of the servants of my lord. '

' She quickly arose, got on her donkey, and with five of her maids followed after David's messengers — and became his wife " (1 Sam 25:39-42 smf).

C. ONLY ONE ANSWER

Can you understand how Abigail's story describes our dilemma as Christians?

Blessed with a lovely anointing, God was using her; but what a burden she bore. She was married to an unclean, uncouth, smelly drunkard who wouldn't be kind to her or anybody else.

1. Our Old Nature Must Die

Like Abigail, we want to be under a husband like David. But we have a problem: we are married to Nabal, our old, Adamic sin-nature — the flesh. Moreover, by the laws of marriage, we are bound to him as long as he lives. There is hope, however, for there is a David in our story. As we stated earlier, he is a type of Christ.

Our true desire is to be married to Him, to be the *"bride of Christ"* (Rev 19:7-9).

We want our Abigail personality to come to the forefront and be loved and motivated to divine purpose by being married to another — David (type of Christ).

We want to be sweet and gracious, but Nabal — our old sin nature — always shows up and makes it difficult. So much of the "flesh" seems to be seen and found in our marriage to our old nature.

Sometimes we fight against the devil and want to blame him for our fleshly displays. But he is not our problem; we are! It is our old sin nature which we received from our forefather — Adam.

No matter how hard we try to live a life that will be pleasing to God, we fail sooner or later. The harder we try, the greater our failure. We just can't get free from our old "Nabal-nature," nor can we change him. Nabal cannot and will not be reformed.

There is only one answer to our problem with Nabal. It is death. God must kill Nabal. Nabal must die!

2. We Cannot Do It Alone

Some Christians try to do away with Nabal themselves. They go about trying to crucify their own flesh. It is, however, an impossible job. There are not enough "free hands" to get the job done.

When you try to crucify yourself, you find that you may nail your feet to the cross. You may even nail one hand to the cross. But how can you nail that last hand? Partially crucified with two feet and one hand already nailed to the cross, you can't! You do not have another free hand with which to drive in the nail through your last hand. You cannot crucify yourself. It must be done by Another (God).

Self-crucifixion is a painful effort and always ends up half-done. Our sinful Nabal-nature soon recovers from self-inflicted wounds and we are worse off than before. I know... I tried it many times in my life as a young Christian.

I even tried to starve old Nabal to death by fasting. I felt sure, if I fasted long enough and often enough, I could overcome the desires of the flesh.

I soon found that instead of getting rid of my old Nabal nature, he exerted his influence over my life all the more. He got meaner and nastier by the day. Each and every day I fasted, I got harder to live with. I'm sure you know what I am talking about.

My next approach was to try to destroy old Nabal by hitting him on the head with the two stone tables of the law. I memorized the ten commandments and tried to live a life of "shall nots." You shall not do this; you shall not do that.

However, the more I said, "You shall not!" old Nabal replied, "I will too!" His "I wills" were stronger than my "You shall nots." The law didn't help me.

The law cannot destroy our old sinful nature. All it can do is expose our sin, amplify our carnal desires and condemn us. The law cannot free us from sin. If we are to be free, God Himself will have to do it. And, praise God, He has!

3. God Provides The Way

Only God could justly kill Nabal. And He did. The same is true when it comes to the old Nabal-nature in our lives. **And He has!**

The death of our old, Adamie sin-nature is both drastic and dramatic. It is included in God's gracious plan of redemption — through Christ Jesus — for you and for me.

We were crucified with Him on His cross so our old man (called the body of sin in Romans 6) might be destroyed. This freed us to be married to Another — even Christ!

When Adam sinned in the Garden of Eden, his whole nature became sinful. The sickness of sin was passed on to all the future generations of mankind. We all have received the same sinful nature from our father, Adam.

We are not sinners only because we sin; we sin because we are born as sinners. Before we believed on Jesus we were part of the devil's family. We were born into this world outside the family of God.

The only way into God's family is by a new birth. When we receive Jesus as our Lord and Savior, we are born again — into the family of God. Through teaching like we're receiving in this chapter, faith comes to appropriate (receive the benefit of) our freedom from the law, and its motivating force to sin (which results in death).

By accepting the facts told us in the Bible — that we were crucified with Christ, that our old husband (sin-nature) is dead — we are free to be married to Christ.

His righteous, obedient nature can now be expressed in us if we yield our emotions and bodily members to Him.

The Bible explains this truth in these words:

"Sin entered the world through one man, [Adam], and death through sin. In this way death came to all men. Because we were all in Adam, it brought the results of his sin on us all. And all have sinned" (Rom5:12smf).

a. Born In Sin. Let me ask you a question. Where were you when your forefather Adam sinned? The Bible teaches that you were IN ADAM — that is, you were in his loins (the place where the male sperm cells are kept which produce offspring). Since we are all the offspring (children, descendants) of Adam, we were all IN ADAM.

This means that when Adam sinned, I was made a sinner with him — because I was IN ADAM. His sin made the whole human race sinners — because the whole race was IN ADAM when he sinned.

Our destiny was all bound up in Adam's obedience and disobedience. When he sinned, you and I were made sinners. When the sentence of death (the penalty for sin) was passed on Adam, you and I (in him) were also sentenced to death.

So, I was born in sin, under the sentence of death. Because of this, I needed someone to save and deliver me from marriage to Adam's nature — the sinful nature.

Let us now read some verses from the Bible and rejoice at what God has done to save us from our unhappy condition and destiny with death and Hell.

' But God showed his great love for us while we were yet sinners, by sending Christ to die for us...

"Adam's sin brought punishment [death] to all. But Christ's act of righteousness [taking our punishment on the cross] makes men right with God, so they can live...

"All who receive him [Jesus] shall be given the right to become the sons and daughters of God... Truly, all who believe on the Son have eternal life... They become new creatures in Christ Jesus — with a new nature within. They are not the same any more; everything is fresh and new" (Rom 5:8, 18; John 1:12; 2Pet 1:4; 2Cor 5:17 smf).

b. Nailed To The Cross. Yes, when we receive Jesus into our hearts as our Lord and Savior, we receive His life and His nature.

We have a new nature all right, but what about our old sinful nature? Can David and Nabal peacefully live in the same house? Can we truly be married to Christ while Nabal is still alive?

This is where the cross of Christ does something for us that not many Christians fully understand. It is a powerful truth which can lay old Nabal to rest forever. It is worthy of our most careful attention. Paul clearly explains it in this way: *' Don't you know that all who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were also baptized into his death... Your old sin-loving nature died with him upon the cross. Its power was broken...*

"When God the Father raised him from the dead in glorious power, you were raised to new life too...

"Because you are one with him, when he died, you died — when he arose, you arose... You now know, therefore, that your old sinful nature was nailed to the cross with him and died. Your sin-loving body is no longer under the power and control of your old sinful nature — you are free! " (Rom 6:3-7 smf).

c. Union With Christ. What an amazing truth! God has done it all! By His omniscience (ability to know everything) He looked through the past and future centuries and found all those who would believe Him. He gathered them all up and placed them IN CHRIST as He died on the cross. There IN CHRIST we were crucified with Him! Praise God!

We have worn ourselves out trying to crucify our "old man," when he is already dead. Just as sure as we were in Adam when Adam died for **his** sin, we were in Christ Jesus when Christ died for **our** sin.

With Him we arose from death and Hell to a new life with a new nature — His life and His nature. This is what union in Christ means — we abide in Him and He in us. What He is, we are!

Our union with Christ is a gracious work of the Holy Spirit. As the Spirit of Christ, He is the member of the Godhead Who causes the life and nature of Christ to be formed in us. The Holy Spirit brings a new heart and a new relationship!

'He who is united with the Lord is one spirit with him" (I Cor 6:17 smf). "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you. I will remove from you your heart of stone [hard and rebellious] and give you a heart of flesh [soft and obedient]. And I will put my Spirit in you, and cause you to follow my laws and keep my commandments... You will be my people, and I will be your God" (Eze 36:26-28 smf).

4. Victory Is Ours

We are dead to our old sinful nature, and it has no power over our life. The only time our old nature can rise from his "death-coffin" is when we are walking in non-belief, unbelief or disobedience. When we are obeying God's Word, and being motivated by God's Spirit, we are expressing our new nature.

The devil does not want us to believe this truth, for it has the power to set us free. If we are not aware of the work God finished for us through the work of Christ on the cross, we will be walking in non-belief.

The desires of the flesh will seem real, and we will feel powerless to resist. The "ghost" of old Nabal will be quick to exert his influence and appetites in our life. The same is true if we doubt God's Word in the Bible or disobey what He says to us.

To do so grieves the Holy Spirit Who dwells within us. This will weaken His work within our lives, and His witness through our lives. At such times, the old sin-nature can seem pretty strong.

The answer, as we have seen, is not to try to crucify the flesh through self-effort. The flesh is already dead when we reckon it so. (Reckon means to count it done — to see and confess it as already accomplished.)

Therefore, we should quickly confess our sin whenever the Holy Spirit convicts us. Then we should rise up in faith, and believe and obey God's Word. His Spirit gives us the power to do so.

a. Know And Believe. Paul says we must KNOW that our old man is crucified with Christ (Rom 6:6). We are crucified and risen with Christ. If we do not know, or are unsure of this truth, we will find the flesh acting as if it is very much alive. We will submit to our old nature even though it is no longer alive.

Paul tells us repeatedly that we don't have to submit to our old sin-nature any more. We can daily accept and believe the truth of what Christ did for us on the cross, and live victoriously in the power of the Holy Spirit.

b. Live By The Power Of The Holy Spirit. *'If by the power of the Holy Spirit you put to death the evil deeds of the body — the old sin-nature — you will live" (Rom 8:13 smf).*

We need the Holy Spirit both to die and to live! (To die to our selfish desires —to live for Christ.) The Holy Spirit's ministry, therefore, is two-fold:

1) He will honor the work of the cross concerning the death of our old nature.

2) He will lead us into a life of victory through our new nature.

c. Believe And Confess. The Holy Spirit will apply the truth of our crucifixion on the cross with Christ, by making it so real that we will confess it with our mouth. We will say it is so. This is what Paul meant when he said:

"Reckon and consider yourselves to be truly dead unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Do not let sin rule in your bodies anymore. Do not give in to its sinful desires " (Rom 6:11,12 smf).

The word "reckon" means to simply **believe and confess that something is so**. In other words, we are to acknowledge and confess (say it out loud) that our old sin-nature is dead to us. We also are to acknowledge and say that we are dead to our old sin-nature.

This is so because God's Word says we died in Christ on the cross. It is finished, and we are free! *"I am crucified with Christ..."* (Gal 2:20 kjv).

Not only are we dead to sin, but alive to God. We have a fresh, new inner resource. We can choose to be married to Christ Who gives us His new nature. By doing so, we can be led (driven, motivated) by God the Holy Spirit.

When we see who we are and where we are in Christ — that's real victory. It means we have won in our fight with the flesh. The war is over; the victory is ours. With the words of Christ from the cross we can boldly say, *"It is finished!"*

D. MARRIED TO ANOTHER

Nabal is dead. He is no longer our master; the marriage bond has been broken. We have our new David-Christ husband-nature and are free. For what? Listen to these words from Paul's pen:

"Your old sin-nature died with the body of Christ on the cross and you are free from the law. This happened that you might be married to Another. I am speaking of Christ who was raised from the dead — that we might bring forth fruit unto God" (Rom 7:4 smf).

Married to Another. Who is Paul talking about? Jesus! You have been freed from Nabal that you might be married to the Lord. You are a true spiritual Abigail — the Bride of Christ!

1. Live To Please Christ

The Scriptures have a great deal to say about the marriage relationship because it is a picture of our relationship to Christ.

We have not been set free to live on our own as we might wish. We have been set free to live with Another and respond to His great love for us.

Because of that love, we can trust Him completely and seek to please Him in every way. Jesus said, *"If you love me, you will keep my commandments."* The Apostle John adds, *"...and it is not a grievous and difficult duty"* (John 14:15; Un 5:3 smf)

Seeking to please the Lord in all things means we will happily obey Him.

Because He is the Head and Husband of His Church — and we are the Bride of Christ — we will want to submit to His covering and authority.

Paul deals with this relationship in his Letter to the Ephesians: *"Wives, submit yourself to your husband's leadership in the same way you submit to the Lord. For the husband is the head of his wife as Christ is the head of his Bride, the Church. He gave his very life to be her Savior."*

"As the Church obeys Christ, so should a wife submit to her husband. Husbands, however, must love their wives as Christ loved the Church —his Bride —and gave up his life for her" (Eph 5:22-25 smf).

We clearly see that we have been set free that we might love and serve Christ and one another. Christ is the perfect husband, and it is our glorious privilege to be His bride. We should seek to serve and please Him in all that we say and do.

Paul goes on to describe what this means to him personally in his Letter to the church at Corinth:

"I am free in every way from the control of anyone. However, I have made myself a servant to everyone that I might win them to Christ" (I Cor 9:19 smf).

Paul was free from all to be a servant of Christ to all. He wanted no earthly relationships which might keep him from Christian service to anyone, anytime, anywhere. Paul's great desire was not to please himself or even others, but the Lord alone.

This is Paul's anxious and deep concern for us as well. He states it strongly and with great feeling when writing to the Corinthian church:

"I have a great concern for you with a divine jealousy. I have promised to give you to Christ alone. He must be your only husband. I want to give you to him as a pure and holy bride " (2Cor 11:2 smf).

2. Wedding Vows Renewed

Dear reader, this too is my concern for you. I have sought in this study to show you how you have been released from your Nabal-nature to be married to Another. As Abigail became David's bride, so you are the Bride of Christ. As your divine Husband, He is forever yours, and you are forever His! As Abigail of old, may you ever seek to be a loving and loyal servant in the Kingdom of your Lord.

I feel this would be a right and proper time for us to renew our wedding vows to our Lord Jesus Christ.

We can follow the pattern which is found in Romans 6:11:

"I reckon [declare as so] myself to be truly dead unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ my Lord."

We will repeat these vows phrase by phrase as outlined below. Please picture yourself as looking right into the eyes of Jesus and speaking to Him from the depths of your heart:

I, (your name), reckon and declare myself...

To be dead unto sin...

But alive unto God...

Through Jesus Christ my Lord...

Who is my heavenly Husband...

Now and forever. Amen!

One can almost hear a voice from Heaven say: **"I now pronounce you man and wife."**

No wonder the Scriptures say there is great rejoicing in Heaven among the holy angels when one sinner repents (Luke 15:10). Another member has been added to the Bride of Christ! It is a time of joyful celebration, as it was when Abigail was married to David.

We too have found our David in Christ Jesus. One day our joy will be complete as we sit together at the "marriage supper of the Lamb."

And the Scriptures promise us — with divine assurance — that we will all live together, happily ever after!

Always remember — and never forget: **YOU HAVE BEEN SET FREE TO BE MARRIED TO ANOTHER.**

SECTION B2

KEYS TO SPIRITUAL AUTHORITY

By Leo Harris

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Chapter 1

The Key Of The Authority Of Christ

About the author: The author of this teaching was the founder and senior leader (apostle) of a very successful fellowship of churches in Australia. The practical wisdom contained in this training material can make you a much more powerful church leader. Read it prayerfully and carefully.

Introduction

One night early in 1949 I experienced the first of a series of severe problems in my ministry. Looking back over the years, these times of trouble seem to fit into a pattern.

These crises have formed the foundations on which my ministry has developed. Finding God's solution to these problems birthed the message the Lord has entrusted to me.

I was in a period of dissatisfaction. I had a sense of inadequacy in facing the problems and demands of the ministry. I retired to my bed, but there was no sleep for me that night.

Arousing a friend who stayed in our home at the time, I asked him to join me in prayer. For several hours we read and claimed the Word of God and committed the whole situation to the Lord in faith.

While I was still in prayer, the Spirit of God began, to move upon me. It was so real and definite that I checked the time with my watch. It was 4:20 a.m. Within moments it seemed that the Word of God was thundering within my heart and mind: "*All authority is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore...*" (Matt28:18,19).

It seemed as though the words came from the risen and enthroned Christ Himself. I found myself repeating them over and over. My friend seemed merely to share the "mercy drops," but he knew that the Spirit of the Lord was mightily present.

To me it seemed that the heavens had rolled apart and that I had gained an entirely new concept of the authority of the risen and glorified Christ.

I saw that authority in relation to my self personally and my ministry for the Lord. I saw it in relation to the Church.

I saw that authority in relation to Satan and his works. I saw it in relation to the personal return of Christ when all nations shall bow the knee to Him. I saw the authority of Christ demonstrated in the fulfillment of the entire plan and purpose of God.

These words in print cannot possibly convey the significance of this experience in my ministry. I had been in full-time ministry for almost 10 years throughout Australia and New Zealand. I had established a church in Adelaide, and during the previous year had seen almost 100 people baptized in the Holy Spirit. Yet the experience of that night touched off in my heart a new, vital faith in the authority of Christ. I was given a key to an effective ministry which has blessed many in Australia and other lands.

Later that morning, I showered and dressed and drove to the homes of two of our church leaders. One was having breakfast prior to leaving for his work. The other was still in bed.

However, I poured out the conviction and concept that the Lord had burned into my soul that night. I told these brethren I believed we had the key to a New Testament revival.

Later that day we held our regular weekly prayer meeting. I related my experience to the people that filled that room. The Spirit of the Lord descended once more. Without announcement the people dropped to their knees in praise and worship.

In that service we had the first experience in our Adelaide ministry of delivering a person from a demon.

I continued to preach and unfold this revelation of the authority of the risen Christ. From that time onward, we saw the tide of revival-blessing rise in our services.

Week by week I became more and more convinced that the Holy Spirit had placed in my hand a key that would release captives from their bondage and bring a Christ-exalting revival.

Many and varied have been our experiences in the years that have followed. Many problems have had to be faced and many difficulties overcome. Yet through it all, there has remained in my heart and in my ministry this strong conviction and bold faith. The Lord Jesus Christ has absolute authority.

This presentation of the authority of Christ has aroused the power of Satan and his demons to a degree that we had scarcely anticipated. But it has also provided us with a powerful weapon with which to overcome the enemy and deliver those who are bound.

Let us consider a few aspects and implications of this first essential key to an effective ministry and a successful church — the authority of Christ.

A. THE AUTHORITY OF CHRIST

1. Was Given By The Father

The Greek *exousia* means a delegated authority, and that is the word that was used by Jesus in Matthew 28:18: "*All authority [exousia] is given unto me in heaven and in earth.* "

We see that authority exercised by Jesus in His earthly ministry. "*But when the multitudes saw this, they were filled with awe, and glorified God, who had given such authority to men* " (Matt 9:8). It was the authority with which Jesus spoke and ministered that amazed the people.

Yet Jesus said that both His words and His **works** were given to Him by the Father (John 14:10,11).

2. Encompasses Heaven And Earth

Having died on the cross and been raised by God to the right hand of His throne, Jesus is given *"all authority in both heaven and earth."*

Paul declares in Philippians 2:10 that every knee in Heaven, in earth and under the earth must bow to the Name of Jesus. Every tongue will confess that He is Lord.

He has been eternally the Son by nature. But there has also been vested in the Son the authority of the Godhead. *"For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell"* (Col 1:19). *"For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily"* (Col 2:9).

a. Authority Over Angels. In Hebrews Chapter 1, Christ is set forth in His exaltation above the angels by virtue of both His divine nature and His glorious office. Thus we read, *"And let all the angels of God worship him. "*

To none of the angels has God said at any time, *"Sit on my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool."* But Christ will reign until the last enemy is destroyed and all things are brought into subjection unto Him. The angels do His bidding.

b. Authority Over Principalities And Powers. We read in Hebrews 4:14 that Jesus *"passed into the heavens. "* A more literal translation reads that in His ascension He passed *' through all the heavens."*

How many heavens are there above us? Some say three, some say seven. However many there may be, Christ has passed through them all to be enthroned in the highest seat of authority in the whole universe.

That is why Paul could say that God raised Christ from the dead *"and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power [authority], and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world [age], but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under his feet, and have him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all"* (Eph 1:20-23).

Although Satan is the *"god of this age "* and the *"prince of the power of the air, "* he is located beneath the feet of Jesus and must submit to the authority of the exalted Christ. Did not Christ, in His atoning death, spoil principalities and powers and make a public victory parade of them (Col 2:15)? Did He not defeat Satan and his hosts by shedding His blood and rising from the domination of death with the keys of authority in His hand?

This same Christ is today seated on the throne of universal dominion with all authority given unto Him.

c. Authority Over The Church. In Colossians 1, Paul sets forth the preeminence of Christ over all Creation. This includes that which is seen and unseen, in Heaven and in earth. He has authority over thrones and dominions and principalities and powers. Then Paul boldly declares, *"He is the head of the body, the church. "*

A similar picture is presented to us in the Scripture from which we have already quoted (Ephesians 1), but with one significant difference!

In Ephesians we are told that Christ has been made *' the head over all things to the church which is his body. "* So we see that Christ is not only the authorized *"head of the church, "* but that He is also head over *all things for the church's benefit.*

Not only is the Church compelled to submit to the authority of Christ; it is also privileged to share the results of Christ's dominion over all things in Heaven and in earth. Should not the Church on earth mirror (reflect) this supreme authority of Christ?

How tragic to behold a Church defeated, ineffective and powerless before the onslaughts of Satan.

The true Church is actually the visible Body of the enthroned Christ Who holds universal authority and dominion!

Should we not accept the challenge to be faithful ambassadors and true representatives of the King of kings?

d. Authority To Save And To Judge. Jesus declared that the Son of Man had authority on earth to forgive sins. Peter proclaimed: "*There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved*" (Acts 4:12). Yet this same Christ has authority also to judge all men.

Believers will stand before Him at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Unbelievers will face Him as He sits on the Great White Throne in the final judgment.

"For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father" (John 5:22,23).

Again in verse 27, the Father *"hath given him [the Son] authority to execute judgment. " Hear Paul preaching at Athens: "Because he [God] hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by **that man** whom he hath ordained [Jesus]; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead"* (Acts 17:31).

What awesome authority has been delegated to the Son of God!

B. WE MUST BELIEVE IN CHRIST'S AUTHORITY

The five points outlined above are but a few glimpses, a few facets of this brilliant diamond of truth. As a doctrine, all Christians accept the authority of Christ. Intellectually, all believers give their assent to it. But the key is not in our knowledge of the authority of Christ, but in the revelation of it, in the inward conviction of it, in the burning passionate faith in it.

It must illuminate our hearts and spirits as well as our minds. It must fire us with a zealous dedication to its truth and a wholehearted application in our lives and service for the Lord.

1. It Can Bring Victory

Our faith in the authority of Christ should be an incentive to victorious living. It should inspire us to successful service. It should make all God's promises effective in our lives. It should challenge the Church to a victorious revival.

Little wonder that the Apostle John on the isle of Patmos *"fell at his feet as dead."* He saw the risen Lord and heard His triumphant words:

"Fear not; I am the first and the last; I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death" (Rev 1:17,18).

May the authority of Christ become the key in the hands of His people that will drive out the enemy and release God's glorious power.

Chapter 2

The Key Of The Authority Of The Believer

Introduction

For six days two leaders and myself had been seeking the Lord in prayer and fasting. We had been invited to use a partly-built house near a beach some 20 miles from Adelaide. This was during the winter of 1951.

All three of us had felt the need to draw aside from our pastoral activities. We wanted to seek God for a fresh anointing of His Holy Spirit on our ministries. Day after day we ministered to each other through the Word, studied together, prayed together and often roamed over the sand hills. We also enjoyed times of personal fellowship with the Lord.

We were conscious of the blessings of God in our hearts. We were building up our spiritual life.

But now the last night had come. We were to leave for home the next morning. I felt that I had not received all that I had been looking for.

We retired to our beds. I soon found that, instead of sleeping, my mind became alert to certain truths in the Word of God. Hour after hour the entire Book of Ephesians came to my memory. The great truths in that thrilling book were powerfully impressed upon me.

I knew Ephesians well, and loved to preach from it. But this time old truths came with a new significance. New truths leapt into my heart and mind under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Next morning my friends, who had slept in another room, asked me what had happened to me during the night. Apparently, my frequent prayers and praises had disturbed them!

Next Sunday when we met in our services, I said to the people: "Many of you know that we have been away seeking the Lord through the past week. You expect me to open my bag and bring out a revival! That is exactly what I intend to do."

I produced a bag, opened it and pulled out my Bible and declared: **"It's all here. Here is the secret of revival and victory and power with God. All we need do is receive it, believe it, and act upon it. We need to know who we are, what God says about us, and what our authority is in Jesus Christ."**

Let us briefly survey some of these precious truths the Lord burned into my soul that night. These truths have prominently characterized my ministry ever since, proving to be another key to revival and Christian victory.

A. OUR POSITION AND CONDITION IN CHRIST

The Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians falls naturally into two sections: the first three chapters is a **positive presentation of the believer's position in Christ**. This section concludes with this inspiring promise of blessing...

"Now to him who is able to do exceeding abundantly" beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen" (Eph 3:20,21).

The second three chapters deal with practical considerations in the believer's life.

We might say the first section sets forth **our legal standing** before God, the second the **actual state** (condition) of our Christian life.

The first deals with **our wealth**, the second with **our walk**.

The first shows us **our rights**, the second **our responsibilities**. The first is doctrinal, the second **practical**.

1. There Is A Divine Order

It is important that we observe the divine order: **first** our **standing**, **then** our **state**.

So many Christians are trying to perfect their state in order to gain a right standing with God. This is contrary to God's method. First He gives us a right standing and asks us to believe it; then He gives us power to live accordingly.

Our **standing**, our **position**, our **wealth**, our **rights** and **privileges** in Christ are all by the grace of God alone. They represent the favor of God upon all believers.

2. We Must Accept Our Position

If we want to care for our **state**, our **walk**, our **responsibilities** in our daily life, we must first accept what we have become when we were placed in Jesus Christ.

We must truly believe this divine revelation, as set forth in the **first three chapters** in Ephesians. This will give us the power to *"walk worthy of our vocation to which we are called"* (Eph 4:1), as required of us in the **second three chapters**.

Friends, this is the way God always encourages and helps us. **First** He shows us what we are in Christ. He gives us the bold declarations of His grace (enabling power). **Then** He tells us, "if you will believe, then what I have declared will become a practical reality in your life." This is the way faith works. We believe before we see.

Sanctification and holy living by any other means becomes a natural law of works. **Even the good works of the flesh are fleshly**. The only works that are pleasing to God are those that spring forth as a fruit of His grace (divine enabling) operating through our faith in His Word.

Let us see how this truth shines forth in Ephesians.

B. GOD'S GOOD WORD

In Ephesians 1:3 we have a verse that is a favorite of many...

' Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. '

There is a deep truth hidden in this verse. The words *"blessed"* and *"blessing"* come from a Greek word from which we get our word *"eulogy."*

This same Greek word is in Romans 15:29 where Paul says: *"I shall come in the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ, "* or literally, *"the fullness of the **good utterance** of the gospel of Christ. "*

In Romans 16:18 we have the same word used, but this time in insincerity. Paul speaks of those who *"by good works and **fair speeches** deceive the hearts of the simple."*

However, God's *"fair speeches"* concerning us are genuine and sincere. Now read Ephesians 1:3 with a better translation of its meaning...

*"**Well spoken** of be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who hath **spoken well, or highly**, of us with every good utterance in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. "*

Yes friends, this is the startling truth! God eulogizes (speaks complimentary words of) us as He sees us in Christ. He speaks highly of us. He makes good utterances concerning us.

1. God Speaks Well Of Us

God does not eulogize us in our unregenerate, Adamic state; but inasmuch as we have accepted Christ, God sees us in His Son and speaks highly of us.

a. Adamic Nature Dead. He declares that our Adamic nature is dead, crucified with Christ (Rom 6:6-11).

b. New Creatures In Christ. He declares that we are new creatures in Christ. Old things have passed away and all things have become new (2Cor 5:17).

c. Raised With Christ. He declares that we are raised with Christ and enthroned with Him in heavenly places (Eph 2:6).

d. Complete In Christ. All that Christ did was not for Himself, but for us. God now sees us complete (whole, perfect, without blemish) in Christ.

2. God Encourages And Helps Us

This is God's method of encouraging and helping us. It has always been the same. **He gives His Word and calls upon us to believe it and act upon it.**

a. Don't Be Deceived By The Devil. The devil borrowed this method. We see him using this approach in Genesis 3. When he gave his lying word to Eve, he enticed her to **believe it, and act upon it.**

If Eve had **believed God's Word and acted upon it**, she would not have fallen, nor dragged the human race into her ruin.

b. Follow God's Way. God still approaches man in this way:

- 1) **He gives us His good Word; and**
- 2) **calls on us to believe it with all our hearts; and**
- 3) **act accordingly.**

c. God's Word Has Power. In fact, if we do believe God's Word sincerely. He gives us power to act accordingly. God's Word contains life in itself and has power to materialize (become what has been spoken).

A seed that is planted in the ground will spring forth with life and form as God designed it. The seed of God's Word received into our hearts will also bring forth life and form in us.

That is why God eulogizes us as He sees us in Christ. **He knows that if we will receive and believe His Word, it will materialize (be seen in visible ways) in our lives.** This is the divine formula for Christian victory.

C. OUR UNION WITH CHRIST

Apart from Christ we are dead in trespasses and sins. However, God calls upon us to **picture (envision) ourselves as being in His Son.**

He then asks us to believe that we are crucified with Him, buried with Him, and raised with Him. This union of the believer with Christ is seen in two aspects: our legal position (as a relative of His), and our vital indwelling.

1. Our Legal Position

This is our legal standing before God. The moment we accept Christ as our Savior and Lord, we are justified. We are given a judicial position, **a legal standing before a holy God.**

In Ephesians 1:15-23, Paul prays that we might be spiritually enlightened concerning our legal standing in Jesus. Paul prayed:

"I pray that you will begin to understand how incredibly great his power is to help those who believe him.

"It is that same mighty power that raised Christ from the dead and seated him in the place of honor at God's right hand in heaven, far, far above any other king or ruler or dictator or leader.

"Yes, his honor is far more glorious than that of anyone else, either in this world or in the world to come. "

Then in Chapter 2 Paul declares that God has '*quickened us [raised us from the dead] together with Christ, and has taken us up to heaven and enthroned us together in the highest heaven in Christ Jesus*' (vss 4-6 lit).

In the mind and purpose of God, when Christ died —**we died in Him**; when He was raised —**we were raised in Him**; and when He ascended to the Father's right hand — **we also ascended and sat down with Him on the throne at the right hand of God the Father.**

These are some of the "*good utterances*" of God concerning us. They represent a divine declaration of **our legal union and privilege** because of being with Jesus Christ.

Paul urges us to "*reckon [count it as done] ourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive **unto God** through Jesus Christ our Lord*" (Rom 6:11).

The natural mind rebels against such supernatural revelation. It is only as we partake of the mind of Christ that we can grasp these truths.

Then they become the way to power and personal victory over problems, sin, disease and demons.

2. Our Vital Indwelling

God has given us legal standing in Christ (which we must accept by faith). He has also produced **a vital experience** in us by His Spirit.

Writing to the Galatians, Paul says: *'Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father'* (Gal 4:6).

Our Adamic nature is dead to God. But, since our new birth, we are indwelt by the Spirit of divine Sonship. Paul says, *"He that is joined unto the Lord is **one spirit**"* (1 Cor6:17).

Again the Apostle Paul testifies in Galatians 2:20: *"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, **but Christ liveth in me**: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."*

Paul did not live his day-by-day life nor conduct his tremendous ministry by personal power or wisdom. He functioned by the divinely inspired concept that Christ lived inside him by His Spirit.

The Apostle John also understood this truth: *"Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world"* (Un 4:4). The same apostle wrote in John 1:16: *"**Of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace**"*. This means that we believers are indwelt by the full potential of the life of Christ. He puts His love. His joy. His peace. His long suffering, His gentleness, His goodness. His faith. His meekness and His temperance (or self control) inside us (Gal 5:22,23). All these are the fruit of His indwelling Spirit.

By faith, we accept the legal standing that is reckoned to us by God (that is, our legal standing in Christ). The indwelling Spirit of Christ responds to our faith and produces the nature of Christ in us.

In these two ways — [1] our believing and [2] the Spirit's enabling — our union with Christ interacts. These empower us to live in such a way that others see Christ in our lives.

In the midst of the turmoil and pressures of this world, let us never forget that we have within us an "inner sanctuary." Christ dwells there. From Him we derive resources that are more than adequate for every need and every situation. Thus *"in all things we are more- than conquerors through him that loved us "* (Rom 8:37).

D. OUR AUTHORITY IN CHRIST

Because we are declared by God to be in Christ, all that is said concerning Christ is said also concerning us.

In eulogizing Christ, the Father eulogizes (says very complimentary things about) us in Christ.

1. Authority Over The Power Of The Enemy

Christ has all authority (Matt 28:18). Therefore we have authority (Luke 10:19):

"Behold, I give unto you power [authority] to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power [ability to do damage] of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you. "

2. Authority Over Satan

Satan was bruised (fatally wounded) beneath the feet of Christ (Gen 3:15). **Satan is also bruised beneath our feet:** *"The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly"* (Rom 16:20).

Satan is legally placed beneath the feet of Christ — that is, subject to His authority (Eph 1:22). **And Satan is placed legally beneath our feet, too.** The psalmist declared, *"Thou shalt tread upon the lion and the adder: the young lion. and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet"* (Ps 91:13).

3. Authority As Christ's Ambassadors

As Christ was sent into this world, **so are we**. Jesus said to the Father: *"As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world"* (John 17:18).

Thus we are ambassadors of Christ, going forth with His authority, speaking and acting in His behalf (2Cor 5:20).

There is given unto us the power of attorney — that is, ***the authority to act in behalf of Jesus Christ.*** With ***His*** authority we preach the gospel. With ***His*** authority we lay hands on the sick. With ***His*** authority we cast out devils.

4. Authority In God's Kingdom

Jesus is heir of all things, **and we are** *"heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ"* (Rom 8:17). We share His throne-rights here and now, and shall rule with Him in His Kingdom in the coming age.

5. Take God At His Word

Friends, surely here is a key that can transform your life. Believe this. It will open to you the inexhaustible resources of the Kingdom of God.

In Chapter 1 we considered the key of **The Authority of Christ**. Here now is a second key. It is the authority of the believer in Christ — or, should we say, *the authority of Christ in the believer.*

Let us cease justifying failures and let us convert our excuses into testimonies. *Let us lay hold of the key that is offered to us, believe it, use it, and prove it.*

From the time these keys were deeply impressed upon me that night in 1951, I have never ceased to thank God for this key of authority. I have continued to urge every believer to dare to take God at His word and exercise the privilege of being a relative of Christ.

This is your privilege. Exercise it!

Chapter 3

The Key Of The Authority Of God's Word

Introduction

How can we make God's Word come to pass? How can we make it WORK? This was the problem that was pressing upon my heart and mind during the winter months of 1953.

As mentioned in our previous chapters, we had experienced seasons of great blessing in our ministry. Yet I was to face another crisis — another period of dissatisfaction and feeling utterly inadequate and frustrated.

Again and again I would read the startling promises and declarations in the Word of God concerning us as believers — our position in Christ, our victory, our power, our freedom from the carnal nature, the promises of healing and deliverance and of the supply of all our material needs.

But were they happening in my life? In brief — the New Testament portrayed a life of glorious reality in Christ. I was personally confronted by a lack of supernatural power in many facets of my own life and ministry.

As a pastor, I was too well aware of my own inability to meet the challenging needs in the lives of many people in my assembly.

If only the mighty truths of the Word of God could be made to work, all this would be changed.

A. THE WORD WORKS BY FAITH

For weeks this debate went on in my heart and mind. I would stop, pick up my New Testament, and read — and read again. I would then lift my heart to the Lord and ask, "Why doesn't it work?"

I would awake during the night, take up my Bible and read again the tremendous promises and declarations for every believer and for the Christian Church in general. Then I would hold the Bible up toward Heaven and ask the Lord why His Word was not working in my life and in the lives of my congregation.

Then one night, after I had left my bed and was pacing the floor with my Bible open on my desk, I was asking the same old question — "Why, why, WHY?"

Suddenly, something changed inside of me. A river of faith and assurance seemed to well up from my innermost being. A veil seemed to be torn away from my understanding. From my lips broke forth, not the old question of unbelief, but the expressions of faith and conviction:

"The Word works! It works by faith, and I HAVE faith! What the Word says about God is TRUE! What the Word says about ME is true! What the Word says I am in Christ, I AM! What the Word says I can DO through Christ, I CAN DO!"

And so, in these and similar expressions, I gushed forth the deepest convictions of my heart. I believed, and I KNEW I believed. God had given me a Gift of Faith (of believing) (I Cor 12:9).

What a difference it was to preach now. I wanted to open my Bible and shout from the housetops. With boldness I could say to the people:

"What God says about you is true — you are born of God, a new creature in Christ, indwelt by Christ, and you can do all things through Christ!

"Your feelings may tell you that you are defeated, frustrated, struggling against overwhelming odds. But the WORD says you are more than a conqueror, a devil-defeater, master in all circumstances, and standing on the threshold of unlimited possibilities — in Christ — and through faith in the WORD."

Instead of looking to the old Adamic nature with its hopeless futility and frustration, and asking "WHY doesn't the Word work," I now had a picture in my head of myself as a new creature in Christ. Taking hold of the immeasurably vast and powerful declarations of God concerning my standing in Christ, I boldly cried: "AMEN! Thy Word is TRUTH! Hallelujah!"

And how true it is that "*faith comes by hearing the Word of God*" (Rom 10:17), for the preaching of the positive truth of God's Word wrought mighty results in the lives of those who heard it.

B. FUNDAMENTAL FACTS

Now let me set forth a few of the great fundamental facts concerning the Word of God and how it works for all who choose to believe it.

1. The Word Has Divine Authority

In Genesis 1, God spoke authoritative words: "*Let there be...*" and there "*was.*" This earth about us is the product of **the authority of the Word**. The Theory of Evolution is not so much a challenge to God's power and ability as it is to the authority of His Word.

God made man and brought him immediately under the authority of His Word: "*And the Lord God commanded the man*" (Gen 2:16).

In the coming age, Christ will rule by the authority of the Word: "*Out of his mouth goeth a **sharp sword**, that with it he should smite the nations*" (Rev 19:15), and "*he shall smite the earth -with **the rod of his mouth**, and with **the breath of his lips** shall he slay the wicked*" (Isa 11:4).

Between Eden and the Millennium (thousand-year reign of Christ on earth), there is being waged a fierce contest over the authority of God's Word. Satan asked Eve, "**Hath God said?**" (Gen3:1). Today, in this hour of earth's deepest spiritual darkness, that question is well established in the minds of the masses. It is a subtle, satanic challenge to the authority of the word of God.

But the authority of God's Word is backed by His very being. His very character, His eternal throne. It stands unshaken and unshakeable by the onslaughts of devils or men. Though heaven and earth pass away, the Word of God will prevail throughout countless ages to come (Luke 21:33). Hallelujah!

2. The Word Has Divine Power

Not only did the atoms come together at the authoritative command of God, but they stay together by the power of that Word: "*By him, all things consist... [hold together]*" (Col 1:17).

Molecular scientists have confirmed that the smallest known atomic particles have no negative-positive element. This is what is needed to hold things together. From a scientific point of view, the whole Creation should be flying apart. The Bible says Jesus holds it together!

Behind all Creation there is the mind, thought, word, power and life of God.

Note the words of the angel to Mary (Luke 1:37): "*For with God nothing shall be impossible.*" The literal translation is: "**No Word of God shall be void of power.**"

Little wonder Mary responded, "*Be it unto me according to thy WORD.*" The angel had declared a promise requiring supernatural fulfillment, but the "*Word of God*" has in itself the supernatural power to materialize (that is, bring into existence) that which has been spoken!

3. Jesus Spoke The Word Of Authority And Power

When Jesus cast out the unclean spirit from the man in the synagogue, the people were amazed and exclaimed: "*What a word is this! For with **authority and power** he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out*" (Luke 4:36).

The words of Jesus contained not only the **authority** of God, but the power, life, energy and ability of God. We see the **divine authority** of His words when He cursed the fig tree — and it obeyed and died. Again, when He commanded the wind and waves to hush and be still — and they obeyed and gave place to a great calm.

Then we see **the power of His words** when He took the five loaves and two fishes — sufficient only for a little boy's lunch — and said to His disciples, "*Give ye them to eat!*" (Luke 9:13). Acting on those words, which were so powerful and pregnant with creative energy, the bread and fish multiplied, and the disciples found sufficient to feed five thousand men. Afterwards, they gathered up twelve baskets full of leftovers!

Jesus claimed both **authority** and **power**. As He looked down upon the palsied man. He said: "*Which is it easier to say... Thy sins be forgiven thee [authority], or to say. Arise, take up thy bed and walk [power]?*" (Mark 2:9).

Yes, Jesus personified the divine Word of authority and power.

4. Believers Are Given The Word Of Authority And Power

Jesus spoke God's words: "*The words I speak unto you, I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works*" (John 14:10).

Moreover, Jesus **gave** those authoritative, powerful words of God to us: "*For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me*" (John 17:8).

What words do we speak?

Jesus said: "*Man shall not live by bread alone, but by **every word of God***" (Luke 4:4).

Solomon said: "*A man's belly shall be satisfied with the fruit of his **mouth**; and with the increase of his **lips** shall he be filled. Death and life are in the power of the **tongue**: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof*" (PIOV 18:20,21).

Again Jesus said: "*For by thy **words** thou shall be justified, and by thy **words** thou shall be condemned*" (Matt 12:37).

Jesus lived and ministered by the power and authority of the words the Father gave Him. Little wonder, then, that the people were amazed and said, "*What a **word** is*

this!" And in awe and bewilderment the officers of the chief priests and the pharisees, sent to seize Jesus, came back and said, "**Never man spake like this man**" (John 7:46).

My friend, these words of God are given to us. We, too, may speak them. We, too, may *live* by their authority and power.

As those words of God dwell in our hearts and are spoken by our lips, they become bread and fruit to us. We shall be filled with their power. We shall be changed and transformed by them. They will justify us, heal us, empower us, and give us victory.

5. When We Accept The Authority Of God's Word We Prove Its Power

Why doesn't the Word of God work? Surely the question should now be — "**How does the Word work?**" "Why" seems totally irrelevant! Almost like an echo from Eden: "*Hath God said?*"

That night, as I paced the floor with an open Bible, it seemed God was saying to me: "The moment you unreservedly accept the **authority** of My Word, you will experience its power."

Mentally I accepted the authority of the Word, but my heart had struggled and staggered before its challenge.

But now I knew that the moment our hearts unreservedly accept the **authority** of the Word, it **will work!** It may not immediately materialize (be fulfilled), but it immediately becomes a creative and productive factor in our lives.

The God Who, with authority and power, said "**Let there be light, and there was light...**" has also said:

"*If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature*" (2Cor 5:17). I am in Christ — therefore I am "a new creature!"

"*Old things are passed away: behold, all things are become new*" (2Cor 5:18) — **and it is so!**

"*I am crucified with Christ... Christ liveth in me*" (Gal 2:20). I accept the Word of God to me — **and it is so!**

"*And they that are Christ's [and I am Christ's] have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts*" (Gal 5:24). I accept the authority of the Word of God and I experience its power!

Yes, my friend, the God Who said "**Let there be a firmament... and It was so**" (Gen 1:6-7), has also said: "The prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up" (Jas 5:15).

"*They shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover*" (Mark 16:18).

"*I am the Lord that healeth thee*" (Exo 15:26).

And the God Who said "**Let the earth bring forth grass... and it was so**" (Gen 1:11) has also said:

"*The God of peace shall bruise Satan beneath your feet shortly*" (Rom 16:20).

"*We are more than conquerors through him that loved us*" (Rom 8:37).

"*I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth*" (3Jn 2).

And so, on and on, promise after promise, declaration after declaration, assurance after assurance, truth after truth, revelation after revelation!

Bow humbly before the authority of the Word. Then arise and go forth in its power. God declares that your "*old man*", "the old sinning nature, with all its bondage, limitations, deception and defeat, *is dead, crucified with Christ.*"

Believe it! **It is so.**

God declares that you have been **raised to new life in Christ, complete in Christ, indwelt by Christ.** Believe it! **It is so.**

God declares that you can do **all things** by the in-wrought power of Christ. Believe it! **It is so.**

A thousand thoughts may arise in rebellion against the authority of His Word... but God said... **it is so!**

This is the key to victory, to healing, to deliverance, to the supply of all your needs.

No longer ask, "Why doesn't God's Word work?"

Wholeheartedly accept its authority, "And God said... "

You will surely prove its power: "**AND IT IS SO!**"

Chapter 4

The Key Of The Authority Of The Ministry

Introduction

We have considered three important keys of authority, namely:

- the authority of Christ,
- the authority of the believer, and
- the authority of the Word of God.

These represent our **authority of access** to the abundant provision of God for all believers, and our **authority over Satan and his works of darkness.** We can release captives from the works of the devil.

All believers in Christ have the privilege of using these three keys of authority. However, there are certain ones whom the Lord has called and equipped for a specific ministry, both to the Church and to the unsaved.

A call to a ministry-gift is more than being a personal witness. It is the ministry of Christ in and through certain chosen vessels. Through these, Jesus continues to build His Church and prepare a people for the day when He will come again.

Every person called by God to a ministry-gift must sooner or later acknowledge this: "I need to be equipped with supernatural power from Heaven to fulfill my commission and the purpose of God in my ministry."

Faced with this challenge, the church leader will either harden his heart and close his ears to the cries of the bound, or he will seek from the Lord the supernatural ability that he needs to reproduce the ministry of Christ and to set the captives free.

Such a challenge came to my own life in 1955.

I had been seeing some encouraging results in the ministry. Many testified to the reality of God's healing power. Some had been delivered from demons which had afflicted the body and tormented the mind.

Yet it seemed that whichever way we turned, we were confronted with people whose problems seemed to defy solution. For their deliverance we seemed to lack the necessary power.

In those days we had people staying with us in our small rented home, so that we could minister to their needs. Consequently, I could not escape the challenge. I came face to face with it day by day. I met with it at meal times, when people whose lives were bound sat at the same table.

It was at this time in 1955 that the Lord so wonderfully provided for the purchase of a larger house, so we might have enough space in which to conduct this work and enlarge our ministry.

Yet, despite the blessings of God and His miraculous provision for the work, I continued to live each day under the pressure of the needs of men and women. I was continually aware of the inadequacy of my ministry.

Looking back at that time, it seems that for more than a year I spent as many meal times away in my "den" seeking the Lord, as I spent at the meal table. I spent as many nights in that "den" as I did in my bed.

It was not a matter of counting meals missed or nights spent in prayer, but a question of how to live with the burden. It was a burden I did not seek nor even desire; but it seemed to be laid upon me by the Spirit of God.

It was obvious to me that one could not live in this state of pressure indefinitely. Very necessary work had to be completely neglected. The demands placed upon me by a rapidly growing work of God had to be deliberately ignored.

It was apparent that this was yet another crisis in my ministry. Looking back over the years, I clearly see how the Lord was preparing me- to receive another key of authority. This was not only for myself, but also to share with others in the Lord's work.

The eternal truths of the Word of God which were unfolded to me and impressed deeply on my spirit during those hours and days spent alone in my "den" have become a part of my ministry since.

Space forbids a detailed exposition of all these gems of truth. Neither is it possible to tell of the probing and exacting tests that I was called upon to embrace. I cannot tell you the rash vows I made to the Lord in hopes He would honour the ministry he had given. I begged God to make it an effective force for His glory.

A. DIVINE AUTHORITY OF MINISTRY-GIFTS

I am sorry space does not allow me to tell of the very real conflict with the powers of darkness and of the glorious victories. We won them through faith in the Word of God, by the anointing of the Holy Spirit. But one thing I must share is this: **the divine authority of the ministry.**

I am not referring to a professional ministry, nor of a self-appointed ministry, nor of mere skillful preaching or great oratory. I am speaking of the authority of the ministry that is **appointed by Christ** in His Church today.

This concept of the divine authority of every God-called ministry was impressed deeply upon me during those hours and days spent alone with the Lord.

What follows is a little of this revelation of the authority which God has vested in the gifts of ministry. These have only been imparted to the true servants of God in the Church of Jesus Christ.

This is not authority over people's lives, nor authority of office in an organization, but the authority of Christ over the devil and all his works. This is the authority to do the

works of Christ, to build His Church, to perfect the saints and prepare them for the day they will be presented to the Lord.

It is an authority that makes the ministry effective and productive. It is an authority that makes each different kind of ministry fruitful in its own sphere.

1. Ministry-Gifts Given By Christ

These Christ-given ministries are listed for us in Ephesians 4:11 as follows: *"And he gave some, **apostles**; and some, **prophets**; and some, **evangelists**; and some, **pastors and teachers**."*

Here we have a complete list of the ministry-gifts of Christ bestowed on certain persons in His Church. There are many other gifts which may be received by leaders. Some of these may serve to equip them.

But this list covers the major types of ministry which stem from Christ Himself for the benefit of His Church.

Let us consider them in a little more detail.

a. Apostles. The word means "a special messenger," a pioneer, one who is called of God to restore some new facet of truth, to inspire a new vision, and to establish and oversee local Christian churches.

b. Prophets. This ministry conveys the mind of God to the Church in order to meet the needs of specific occasions, exercising the gifts of the Word of Wisdom and the Word of Knowledge, and exhorting the Church with inspired utterance.

c. Evangelists. Those who bear this ministry-gift are called to proclaim the gospel of Christ, bringing men and women to salvation, with a message usually confirmed by supernatural signs.

d. Pastors and Teachers. These ministry-gifts are so closely linked together that some consider them to be one gift. Whether one gift, or two closely allied gifts, these ministries are effective in shepherding and instructing local churches.

While these gifts overlap and dovetail with one another, each is distinct in its own nature and each is the impartation of divine enablement by the living Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit.

These gifts of ministry represent the full orb'd ministry of Christ Himself, that His works might be continued and His blood-bought victory enforced over Satan and all his evil power.

2. Ministry-Gifts Were Won By Christ

Now these ministry-gifts were won for us at Calvary. This is what we read in Ephesians 4:8-10: *"Therefore it says, when he ascended on high, he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men.*

"Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things. "

Thus it was by His death and burial, by His invasion of Satan's domain and by His rising again with the keys of death and Hell, that Christ gained the victory. He now shares that victory with men by means of the ministry-gifts. He distributes these gifts to those whom He has called to His service.

Verse 8 is a quotation from Psalm 68:18. Examining this verse will provide us with a better understanding of the truth that is presented.

It is a picture of a warrior-king who, having won a mighty victory, returns in triumphal procession to the hill of Zion.

He is dragging in his train a host of captives, some bound in chains, others tied to the wheels of the chariots, all showing miserable and fearful evidence of their defeat. Now seated on the conqueror's throne, the warrior-king calls to him those who shared in the pain and blood of battle, and to them he distributes the spoil he has gained.

All this is applied to our Warrior-King, Jesus Christ, Who ventured forth into the enemy territory of sin, sickness and the curse of death itself; Who shed His blood in death but rose again, saying: *"I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for ever more, amen; and have the keys of hell and of death"* (Rev 1:18).

The angels of Heaven, baffled by the mysteries of His redemptive work, gathered in their myriads to welcome the Victorious Warrior back to Heaven's throne.

Satan and his hosts of demons and all their destructive works are bound by the cords of Christ's "blood-bought" authority, defeated by the One Who achieved the victory at so great a price.

But with whom does He share the fruits of victory? Not with the angels, for they have no part in the battle. The spoils are shared with none other than those who by faith have publicly confessed Jesus as their Lord (Rom 10:9,10). He shares the spoils with those who fought the battle with Him.

But we were not there! We had no part in His sufferings or His victory — except for the grace of God which placed us in His Son. This is the marvel of divine grace!

All that Christ did was not for Himself, but for us. It was in our name that He died. In our name He was buried and rose again.

The victory He won was on our behalf. He was the representative man going forth as our substitute to defeat our enemy and to win our victory.

For this reason He calls on us to share the spoil, to sit with Him in the conqueror's chair, to be a partaker of His authority over the enemy and all his power.

3. Ministry-Gifts Bear The Authority Of Christ

Some have assumed that the words *"he led captivity captive"* (Ps68:18) mean that Christ led captive souls from Hades to Heaven at His resurrection.

Whether or not that actually happened is difficult to know from this verse. The Amplified New Testament translates the verse this way: *"Therefore it is said, when he ascended on high, he led captivity captive — he led a train of vanquished foes — and bestowed gifts on men."*

The A.N.T. has this footnote quoted from Matthew Henry: **"He conquered those who had conquered us; such as sin, the devil and death."**

This is consistent with the allegory presented to us in Psalm 68, from which this verse is quoted. Therefore, those to whom the gifts are given share the victory of Christ. They possess His delegated authority over all the foes of mankind — the devil, demons, and all their evil works.

It is an authority to loose men from sin and from sickness. Jesus gives church leaders this authority to release those in prison or bondage to demonic powers in which they are held illegally.

It is a key to unlock prison doors and to announce freedom to those who have been enslaved by the enemy.

It is the privilege of heralding the good news of deliverance throughout the land.

The devil hates and fears a ministry of authority.

It is now time that every bearer of a ministry-gift of Christ, every apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor or teacher, should recognize the authority of his ministry and go forth as one who is an ambassador of our conquering Warrior-King.

B. PURPOSE OF MINISTRY-GIFTS

Not only is this authority enjoyed by those possessing ministry-gifts. In a measure, it is shared by all the saints of God.

Ephesians 4:12 tells us that the ministry-gifts of Christ are *"for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ."*

Modern translations have presented a clearer understanding of this verse. The verse is made to read: *"For the perfection of the saints for the work of the ministry..."*

1. Reproduction Of Ministry

So it becomes clear that the ministry-gifts are not given for the purpose of monopolizing the ministry, but rather for the **reproduction of ministry**.

They are to train and equip the members to minister to the Lord, to one another and to the world.

Military officers are chosen and trained that they may later train other soldiers of an army. In that same way. God has selected certain persons and imparted to them fragments of the supernatural ministry of Christ, that these men might in turn prepare and equip the saints of God to do the work of the ministry.

So the authority of Christ is channeled through the ministry-gifts to the entire Body of Christ.

Men and women of God, let us arise in faith. Let us grasp this concept of the authority of our ministry. Let us lay hold of the key that is offered us from the hand of Christ. Let us go forth enforcing His "blood-bought" victory and bring deliverance to men and women bound in the captivity of Satan.

What a wonderful key of authority is offered to the Church in the ministry-gifts of Christ! May God raise up a powerful ministry of authority that will in turn produce a victorious Church.

Chapter 5

The Key Of The Authority Of Christ In The House Church

Introduction

It seems that it is in times of difficulty and testing that God breaks into our understanding with a new concept. We receive a new insight on an old familiar truth. The pressure of problems and adverse circumstances causes us to lay bare our hearts before God.

In such times the Spirit of God has opportunity to impart to us a deeper understanding of the plan and purpose of God.

For many years I have held to the New Testament revelation of the Church. I believe it is a universal, living organism, organized in house churches which are self-governing and self-propagating.

However, it was during a time of adversity in the work that God had raised up under my leadership in Adelaide, South Australia, that the Lord showed me **the authority of Christ in the house church.**

A. CHRIST AND THE HOUSE CHURCH

The Lord let me see how the church in one locality may be used as a key to revival.

1. God's Plan For The New Testament Church

My personal desire was to go out into evangelistic ministry in Australia and overseas. Instead, the Lord compelled me to continue in His work to establish this great principle of the New Testament Church: every house church must be an autonomous center of revival. Not independent, but rather interdependent, using its freedom in a dedicated unity and coordination of activities.

It was at this time that I received the five rules for revival in the house church. This five-point program has since become an inspiration to many other house churches.

In Revelation 1, the Apostle John records his vision of seven golden lampstands, with the risen Christ standing in the midst. These seven lampstands, we are told, symbolized the seven house churches of Asia Minor.

Moreover, seven is the number symbolizing totality or completeness. The lampstands also represent **the entire Church on earth.**

In Exodus 25 we read that Moses was told to make a seven-branched lampstand, beaten out of **one piece of gold.** This symbolized the witness of Israel in the Old Testament.

Israel was chosen to be a united, centrally governed nation, a seven-branched lampstand of one piece of metal.

In the New Testament, however, the Christian Church is symbolized by seven **individual lampstands.** God never intended the Church to be a universally organized and centrally governed institution. God planned the Church to be an association of locally governed congregations.

2. Christ Deals Directly With House Churches

In Revelation 2 and 3 we read the messages of the Lord to the seven churches, and we discover that He deals directly with each church, commanding, exhorting, rebuking, warning and rewarding. So it is today.

The Lord does not deal with the Church as organized denominations, nor as a universally organized body. He sees His Body as comprising all Spirit-born believers, visible in the form of house churches.

In the house church He has established government, ministry, fellowship and discipline.

The Church Universal is likened in the New Testament to a building into which we, as "lively stones," are built. It is described as a household in which we have the rightful privilege of sons. It is called the Body of Christ, of which we are members in particular.

But how can one enjoy his privileges and bear his responsibilities as a member of this Universal Church except as he takes his place in the house church?

3. The Church Universal And The House Church

In Matthew 16:18 Jesus said, "*I will build my church*" — referring to the Church Universal. The Church World-wide is comprised of all who, like Peter, receive and confess that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God.

In contrast to this, Jesus taught in Matthew 18:15-17 that if a person has been offended by another, he should seek reconciliation alone. If this fails, then with witnesses. If there is still no success, then tell the matter to "the church."

But which church is this? Surely not the Church Universal, and certainly not any particular denomination, but obviously **the house church**. It is there that we find fellowship and the disciplinary measures necessary to maintaining fellowship and harmony.

Thus we see that in the first mention of the Church in the New Testament, it is a reference to the Church Universal which Christ is building.

But in the second reference to the church it is the house assembly.

And these are the only two ways in which the word "church" is used in the Bible: either the **Church Universal** of all born-again believers, or the **house church** into which such believers are organized.

Turning back to Revelation 1: Observe that John makes only a passing reference to the seven golden lampstands. Then he takes four verses to eloquently describe the glories of "*one like unto the Son of Man*" standing in the midst of the lampstands.

It was not the glittering gold of the lampstands that impressed John, but the indescribable glory of Christ, the risen High Priest, walking among them.

4. Christ's Victory Seen In The House Church

And so it is today. Jesus, the glorified Head of the Church Universal, walks among the house churches, ministering to them, commanding, rebuking, correcting and blessing.

And the Christ Who moves among the house churches is the same One Who said to John that day on the isle of Patmos:

"Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore. Amen: and have the keys of hell and of death " (Rev 1:17,18).

Every house church stands as a witness to the risen, triumphant and glorified Christ.

He has died and risen from the grave. He ascended into Heaven.

All authority is given unto Him in Heaven and in earth.

He has defeated the devil on what was his own territory. Christ snatched from the devil's hands the keys of Hell and death, and Christ is now enthroned in victory. His authority is supreme.

He it is Who turns to each lampstand — that is, to each house church. Like the priests in the temple, Jesus is ready to pour in new supplies of oil, to clean and trim the wick, that a bright and constant lamp may illuminate the glorious victory and supreme authority of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Every house church can have victory. Every house church can have revival. Christ knows each house church and speaks to each one and ministers to each one.

Let us visualize this world dotted with golden lampstands, with the risen High Priest, Jesus Christ, walking among them. That is Heaven's view of the Church on earth.

There are three ways in which the house church can give faithful witness to the victory of Christ.

a. In The Unity Of Believers. Great emphasis is laid upon unity in the New Testament. Even before He ever mentioned the Church, Jesus said:

"Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother hath something against you; leave there your gift before the altar, and go your way; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift" (Matt 5:23,24).

In His first reference to the house church in Matthew 18:15-17, Jesus speaks of the need for reconciliation among brethren and of discipline for those who refuse to be reconciled.

The Apostle Paul exhorts the house church at Rome *"to be like minded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: that you may with one mind, and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ"* (Rom 15:5,6).

To the Philippians he wrote: *"Stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel"* (Phil 1:27).

And so, throughout the New Testament, we find repeated exhortations to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the house church. *Without it the Holy Spirit is grieved, and the glorious victory of Christ cannot be experienced or demonstrated.*

b. In The Love Of Believers. The word for love in the Greek is a word that expresses **a divine love**, a supernaturally imparted love.

And so we find the Apostle Peter writing: *"Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, show pity, be courteous: not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing; but contrariwise blessing, knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing"* (I Pet 3:8,9).

It is in the house church that we find opportunity to give expression to the love of God. We do not find the same challenge and incentive to demonstrate this divine love as members of the Church Universal. We are too far removed from the vast majority of fellow members. **But it is a different situation in the community of a house church.**

In 1 John 3:14 we read: *"We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren."* Many of us can read those words and say "amen." We love the brethren. The bigger the crowd, the happier we are! We enjoy the fellowship!

But then we complete that verse and read these words: *"He that loveth not his brother abideth in death."* You see, it is impossible to love the brethren if we fail to love **a particular brother.**

And we shall most likely meet that particular brother in the house church!

We may be able to forget about him if he is on the other side of the earth, or even on the other side of town. But we shall have to learn to love him with the divine love of God in our hearts if we meet with him every week in the house church!

The love of God is shed abroad in the hearts of believers, and as it permeates the atmosphere of the house church, the power of Christ is revealed, and the glorious victory of Christ is demonstrated in the midst.

c. In The Authority Of Believers. I shall never forget the time when the profound truth of Matthew 18:19,20 was strongly impressed upon me by the Lord. Jesus

said: *"Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."*

Christ was not referring to a casual, superficial agreement between brethren that a certain thing should be done or a particular need should be met.

People have come to me at times and said, "Would you agree with me that this or that should be done?"

I have usually replied that I cannot agree with them unless I share their deep conviction and am uniting with them in faith.

The word "agree" is from the Greek **sumphoneo** which means **symphony**, or a perfect blending of thoughts, hearts and purposes.

A friend of mine recently told me that he once played in the symphony orchestra of a certain city in New Zealand.

The conductor stopped the music and mentioned that a certain violinist was not playing a particular note properly. The violinist protested that he was playing according to the music.

Again the conductor stopped the orchestra and told the same violinist that he was out of tune on a certain note. Finally the conductor checked the music and found that the copy this violinist used had a misprint. Although the right note was being played according to the music, it was out of harmony with the rest of the orchestra! Such was the sensitive ear of this brilliant conductor.

How much more sensitive is the ear of our Father in Heaven, Who not only hears our words, but knows the motives of our hearts.

Jesus said that if two or more can find a perfect harmony of spirit and mind, desire, motive and purpose, the " Father will spontaneously respond.

But how can this be done? Verse 20 tells us: *"For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."*

This is what someone has called the mastermind of Christ. When the minds of two or three or more believers are in a perfect blending with each other and in accord with the mind of Christ in the midst, the answer to their request is inevitable.

Here is the secret of authority and of successful prayer and of spiritual achievement, which should be discovered and exercised in every house church. Here is a key that is placed in the hands of leaders and members of every house assembly.

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SECTION C1

THE CANON OF SCRIPTURE

**By Bob Weiner, Founder, Maranatha Campus Churches,
Gainesville, FL**

Chapter 1

How Does A Book Become A Part Of The Bible?

A. CANONIZATION

Which books belong in the Bible? How was it decided?

Canonization is the process by which the books of the Bible receive their final approval and acceptance by the church leaders. How did the books of the Bible come to be accepted as part of the canon of Scripture?

How would one recognize an inspired book if he saw it? What are the characteristics which distinguish a divine declaration from a purely human one? Several criteria were involved in this recognition process. The people of God had to look for certain earmarks of divine authority.

1. The Principles For Discovering Canonicity

False books and false writings were not scarce. Their ever-present threat made it necessary for the people of God to carefully review their sacred collection.

a. Two Categories Of Sacred Writings. Two categories of sacred writings had to be examined:

- 1) Books accepted by some believers, but not others; and**
- 2) Writings once accepted but later questioned.**

(In previous centuries these were thought to be inspired by God, but are now thought to be of questionable origins.)

Manuscripts from both categories were examined by church councils to verify whether they should be part of the Bible.

b. Five Basic Criteria

1) **Authoritative.** Is the book authoritative? Does it claim to be of God?

2) **Prophetic.** Is it prophetic? Was it written by a servant of God?

3) **Authentic.** Is it authentic? Does it tell the truth about God, man, etc.?

4) **Dynamic.** Is the book dynamic? Does it possess life-transforming power?

5) **Accepted.** Is this book received or accepted by the people for whom it was originally written? Is it recognized as being from God?

2. The Five Basic Criteria In Detail

a. The Authority Of A Book. Each book in the Bible bears the claim of divine authority. Often the explicit "thus says the Lord" is present. Sometimes the tone and exhortations reveal its divine origin. Always there is divine pronouncement. In the more didactic (teaching) literature there is divine pronouncement about what believers should do.

In the historical books the exhortations are more implied and the authoritative pronouncements are more about what God has done in the history of His people. If a book lacked the authority of God, it was not considered canonical and was rejected from being included in the Bible.

Let us illustrate this principle of authority as it relates to the canon. The books of the prophets were easily recognized by this principle of authority.

The repeated, "And the Lord said unto me," or "The word of the Lord came to me," is abundant evidence of their claim to divine authority.

Some books lacked the claim to be divine and were thereby rejected as non-canonical. Perhaps this was the case with the Book of Jasher and the Book of the Wars of the Lord. Still other books were questioned and challenged as to their divine authority, but were finally accepted into the canon, such as Esther.

Not until it was obvious to all that the protection and therefore the pronouncements of God on His people were unquestionably present in Esther was this book accorded a permanent place in the Jewish canon. Indeed, the very fact that some canonical books were called into question provides assurance that the believers were discriminating. Unless they were convinced of the divine authority of the book, it was rejected.

b. The Prophetic Authorship Of A Book. Inspired books come only through Spirit-moved men known as prophets (2 Pet 1:20,21). The Word of God is given to His people only through His prophets. Every biblical author had a prophetic gift or function, even if he was not a prophet by occupation (Heb 1:1).

Paul argued in Galatians that his teaching and writings should be accepted because he was an apostle, "*not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father*" (Gal 1:1). His book (epistle) was to be accepted because it was apostolic — it was from a God-appointed spokesman or prophet.

Books were to be rejected if they did not come from prophets of God, as is evident from Paul's warnings not to accept a book from someone falsely claiming to be an apostle (2Ths 2:2), and from the warning to the Corinthians about false apostles (2Cor 11:13).

John's warnings about false messiahs and trying the spirits would fall into the same category (Un2:18,19; 4:1-3). It was because of this prophetic principle that Peter's second epistle was disputed by some in the early Church.

Until the fathers were convinced that it was not a forgery, but that it really came from Peter the apostle as it claimed (1:1), it was not accorded a permanent place in the Christian canon.

c. The Authenticity Of A Book. Another hallmark of inspiration is authenticity. Any book with factual or doctrinal errors (judged by previous revelations) could not be inspired of God. God cannot lie; His Word must be true and consistent.

In view of this principle, the Bereans accepted Paul's teachings and searched the Scriptures to see whether or not what Paul taught them was really in accord with God's revelation in the Old Testament (Acts 17:11). Simple agreement with previous revelation would not by itself make a teaching inspired. But contradiction of a previous revelation would clearly indicate that a teaching was not inspired.

Much of the Apocrypha was rejected because of the principle of authenticity. Their historical anomalies and theological heresies made it impossible to accept them as from God despite their authoritative format. They could not be from God and contain error at the same time.

Some canonical books were questioned on the basis of this same principle. Could the Letter of James be inspired if it contradicted Paul's teaching on justification by faith and not by works? Until their essential compatibility was seen, James was questioned by some.

Others questioned Jude because of its citation of inauthentic Pseudepi-graphal Books (vss 9,14). Once it was understood that Jude's quotations granted no more authority to those books than Paul's quotes from the non-Christian poets (see also Acts 17:18 and Titus 1:12), then there remained no reason to reject Jude.

d. The Dynamic Nature Of A Book. The fourth test for canonicity was not as evident as some of the others. This was the life-transforming ability (dynamic) of the writing.

"The word of God is alive and powerful " (Heb 4:12).

As a result it can be used *"for teaching, for correction, and for training in righteousness "* (2Tim 3:16,17).

The Apostle Paul revealed that the life-transforming ability of inspired writings was involved in the acceptance of all Scripture; 2 Timothy 3:16,17 indicates this. Paul wrote Timothy, *"The holy scriptures... are able to make thee -wise unto salvation"* (vs 15 kjv). Elsewhere, Peter speaks of the edifying and evangelizing power of the Word (1 Pet 1:23; 2:2).

Other messages and books were rejected because they held out false hope (IKi 22:6-8) or rang a false alarm (2Ths 2:2). Thus, they were not conducive to building up the believer in the truth of Christ. Jesus said, *"You will know the truth, and the truth will*

make you free" (John 8:32). False teaching never liberates; only the truth has emancipating power.

Some biblical books, such as Song of Solomon and Ecclesiastes, were questioned because they were thought by some to lack this dynamic edifying power.

Once they were convinced that the Song was not sensual but deeply spiritual and that Ecclesiastes was not skeptical and pessimistic but positive and edifying (e.g., 12:9,10), then there remained little doubt as to their canonicity.

e. The Acceptance Of A Book. The final trademark of an authoritative writing is its recognition by the people of God to whom it was initially given.

God's Word given through His prophet and with His truth must be recognized by His people. Later generations of believers sought to verify this fact. For if the book was received, collected and used as God's Word by those to whom it was originally given, then its canonicity was established.

Communication and transportation being what it was in ancient times, it sometimes took much time and effort on the part of Church fathers to determine this recognition. For this reason the full and final recognition by the whole Church of the sixty-six books of the canon took many, many centuries.

The books of Moses were immediately accepted by the people of God. They were collected, quoted, preserved and even imposed on future generations.

Paul's epistles were immediately received by the churches to whom they were addressed (1 Ths 2:13) and even by other apostles (2Pet 3:16).

Some writings were immediately rejected by the people of God as lacking divine authority (2Ths 2:2). False prophets (Matt 7:21-23) and lying spirits were to be tested and rejected (Un 4:1-3), as indicated in many instances within the Bible itself (Jer 5:2; 14:14).

This principle of acceptance led some to question for a time certain biblical books such as 2 John and 3 John. Their private nature and limited circulation being what it was, it is understandable that there would be some reluctance to accept them until it was established that the books were received by the first-century people of God as from the Apostle John.

It is almost needless to add that not everyone gave even initial recognition to a prophet's message. God vindicated His prophets against those who rejected them (e.g., 1 Kings 22:1-38) and, when challenged, He designated who His people were. When the authority of Moses was challenged by Korah and others, the earth opened and swallowed them alive (Numbers 16).

The role of the people of God was decisive in the recognition of the Word of God. God determined the authority of the books of the canon, but the people of God were called upon to discover which books were authoritative and which were not. To assist them in this discovery were these five tests of canonicity outlined above.

3. The Procedure For Discovering Canonicity

We should not imagine a committee of Church fathers with a large pile of books and these five guiding principles before them when we speak of the process of canonization. The process was far more natural and dynamic. Some principles are only implicit in the process.

Although all five characteristics are present in each inspired writing, not all of the rules of recognition are apparent in the decision on each canonical book. It was not always immediately obvious to the early people of God that some historical books were "dynamic" or "authoritative." More obvious to them was the fact certain books were "prophetic" and "accepted."

One can easily see how the implied "thus says the Lord" played a most significant role in the discovery of the canonical books which reveal God's overall redemptive plan.

Nevertheless, the reverse is sometimes true; namely, the power and authority of the book are more apparent than its authorship (e.g., Hebrews).

In any event, all five characteristics were involved in discovering each canonical book, although some were used only implicitly.

Simply because a book was received somewhere by some believers is far from proof of its inspiration. The initial reception by the people of God who were in the best position to test the prophetic authority of the book is crucial.

It took some time for all segments of subsequent generations to be fully informed about the original circumstances. Thus, their acceptance is important but supportive in nature.

The most essential principle supersedes all others. Beneath the whole process of recognition lay one fundamental principle — the prophetic nature of the book.

If a book were written by an accredited prophet of God, claiming to give an authoritative pronouncement from God, then there was no need to ask the other questions.

The question as to whether inauthenticity would disconfirm a prophetic book is purely hypothetical. No book given by God can be false. If a book claiming to be prophetic seems to have indisputable falsehood, then the prophetic credentials must be re-examined. God cannot lie. In this way the other four principles serve as a check on the prophetic character of the books of the canon.

Chapter 2

Books Not Included In Canon Of Scripture

A. THE APOCRYPHA AND PSEUDEPIGRAPHA

The term Apocrypha is used to designate a collection of ancient Jewish writings that were written between about 250 B.C. and the early Christian centuries. The Apocryphal books have come to be regarded as inspired Scripture in the theology of the Roman Catholic Church; but the historic Protestant and Jewish viewpoint ascribes no real inspiration to them.

1. Why Protestants Reject Them

While Protestants study the Apocrypha for the light it throws on the life and thought of pre-Christian Judaism, they reject it as inspired Scripture for the following reasons:

a. Not Used By Jesus Or First Century Church. The Apocryphal Books were not a part of the Old Testament used by Jesus and the first century Church. The threefold division of the Old Testament: The Law, The Prophets and The Writings, still used in Hebrew Bibles and Jewish versions of the Old Testament, does not include the Apocryphal Books and never did.

While the Apocrypha was known to Jesus and His disciples, they never quote from it as authoritative Scripture.

b. Never Quoted As Scripture. Ancient Jewish writers who used the Greek Bible, notably **Philo and Josephus**, were acquainted with the Apocrypha but never quote it as Scripture. The Apocryphal book of **II Esdras** mentions twenty-four books, corresponding to the Hebrew Bible as it is known today, and seventy other writings which are mysterious in nature (II Esdras 14:44-48).

It is significant that this Apocryphal book confirms the acknowledged Old Testament canon as used in the Jewish synagogues and in the Protestant churches.

c. Church Fathers Recognized A Difference. Church fathers who were familiar with the Hebrew canon clearly distinguish between Canonical and Apocryphal writings. The writings of **Melito** of Sardis, **Cyril** of Jerusalem, and **St. Jerome** show a recognition of the difference between inspired Scripture and Apocrypha.

d. Not Declared Authoritative Until The 16th Century. The Apocryphal Books were never declared to be authoritative Scripture until the Catholic **Council of Trent** (A.D. 1546). At that time the following Apocryphal books were declared canonical: Tobit, Judith, The Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch (including the Letter of Jeremiah), I and II Maccabees, the additions to Esther, and the additions to Daniel (viz. Susanna, The Song of the Three Young Men, and Bel and the Dragon).

Many Roman Catholic scholars distinguish between proto-canonical books (our Old Testament) and deuterocanonical books (the Apocrypha).

e. Contain Numerous Inaccuracies. Most scholars feel that the Apocryphal books represent a lower level of writing than that of the canonical Scriptures. They contain numerous historical and geographical inaccuracies and anachronisms, and do not breathe the prophetic spirit so evident in canonical writings.

2. The Apocrypha Is Seldom Used By Protestants

The Westminster Confession (1643) written by Protestant leaders states that "the books commonly called Apocrypha, not being of divine inspiration, are no part of the Canon of Scripture, and therefore are of no authority in the Church of God, or to be any otherwise approved or made use of than other human writing."

The Reformed Churches have not encouraged the use of the Apocrypha, and as a consequence it is seldom used in contemporary Protestantism.

The Anglican Church (of England) in its Thirty-nine Articles takes a mediating position, holding that "the Church doth read (the Apocryphal Books) for example of life and instruction of manners; but yet doth it not apply them to confess any doctrine."

3. Pseudepigrapha

In addition to the books commonly called Apocrypha there is a wide variety of other ancient literature, both Jewish and Christian, to which the name **Pseudepigrapha** is often applied.

Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, sectarian literature from the Qumran Caves, and a wide variety of other ancient writings provide helpful material for understanding the world of the New Testament and the early Church. While not on a par with inspired Scripture, such writings merit examination.

B. THE BOOKS COMMONLY TERMED APOCRYPHA

1. I Esdras (Vulgate, III Esdras)

The first book of Esdras relates a series of episodes from Old Testament history, beginning with the passover celebrated in Jerusalem by Josiah (circa 621 B.C.) and ending with the public reading of the Law by Ezra (circa 444 B.C.).

It reproduces the substance of **The Three Guardsmen**. Three young men who were acting as bodyguards to King Darius were keeping themselves awake by debating what was the strongest force in the world. One said wine, because of its peculiar power over men; another suggested the king, with unlimited power over his subjects; and the third (**Zerubbabel**), affirmed that woman, who gives birth to man, is strongest, but truth is victor over all things.

The king, who was asked to decide the winner, favored Zerubbabel's answer and offered him any reward he might choose. Zerubbabel asked permission to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the Temple.

The section ends with a description of the Jews departing from Babylon on route to Jerusalem. Most scholars suggest that I Esdras was composed in Egypt some time after 150 B.C.

2. II Esdras (Vulgate, IV Esdras)

The core of II Esdras (chapters 3-14) purports to describe **seven apocalyptic revelations** granted to Ezra in Babylon. They are concerned with the problem of Israel's suffering and attempt "to justify the ways of God to man."

The author was evidently a Jew who looked forward to the advent of Israel's Messiah and the period of blessedness that he would bring. The introduction (chapters 1 and 2) and the conclusion (chapters 15 and 16) contain additions written from a Christian viewpoint.

The core was probably written in Aramaic toward the end of the first century A.D. About the middle of the second century an introduction was added (in Greek), and a century later the concluding chapters were written. Oriental versions and many of the best Latin manuscripts contain only the core of the book.

3. Tobit

Tobit is a book of **religious fiction**, probably written in Aramaic during the second century B.C. It tells the story of a pious Jew of the tribe of Naphtali in Galilee who, with his wife Anna and their son Tobias, was taken to Nineveh by **Shalmaneser** (circa 721 B.C., II Kings 18:9-12). In the land of exile they scrupulously obeyed the Jewish Law.

When **Tobit** lost his eyesight he sent his son to Rages in Media to obtain payment of a debt. An angel led him on to Ecbatana where he fell in love with a beautiful widow whose seven husbands had successively been killed on their marriage day by an evil spirit.

Tobias married the virgin-widow and escaped death by burning the inner part of a fish, the smoke of which put the evil spirit to flight. As an added blessing, the gall of the fish was used to cure the blindness of the aged Tobit.

4. Judith

The story of Judith was probably written in Hebrew by a Palestinian Jew during the years following the Maccabean revolt. It tells how Judith, a Jewish widow, delivered her people from the Assyrian commander **Holofernes** who was laying siege to Bethulia.

Risking great personal danger, Judith made her way to the tent of Holofernes where she beguiled the Assyrian with her charms. Getting him into a drunken stupor, Judith took the sword of Holofernes, cut off his head and brought it back to Bethulia as evidence that God had given His people victory over the Assyrians. Judith may be compared with biblical Jael who killed the Canaanite general Sisera (Judg 4:17-22).

5. Additions To The Book Of Esther

During the second or first century B.C., an Egyptian Jew translated the canonical Book of Esther into Greek, and at the same time interpolated a total of 107 verses into six places where he felt that a religious note should be added.

These pious insertions mention the Name of God and prayer, neither of which appear in the canonical Esther.

The Apocryphal additions add ten verses to Esther 10, and six additional chapters, numbered 11 to 16. In the Greek Septuagint, however, the supplementary verses are distributed through the text so as to make one continuous narration.

6. The Wisdom Of Solomon

An Alexandrian Jew, some time between 150 and 50 B.C., composed an ethical treatise which he named The Wisdom of Solomon in order to gain for it a wider reading. He sought to protect the Jews in Egypt from falling into skepticism, materialism and idolatry. He wanted to teach his pagan readers the truth of Judaism and the folly of heathenism.

The book begins with an exhortation to the rulers of the earth to seek wisdom and follow righteousness. Its theology is based on the Old Testament, with modifications derived from Greek philosophical ideas current in Alexandria.

Unlike the Old and New Testaments which honor the body, the Wisdom of Solomon regards it as something that "weighs down the soul," a mere "earthly tent" which "burdens the thoughtful mind" (9:15). The preexistence (8:19,20) and immortality (3:1-5) of the soul are maintained, although the Hebrew-Christian doctrine of bodily resurrection is absent.

7. Ecclesiasticus

(Or the Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach.)

Ecclesiasticus, an ethical treatise extolling the virtue of wisdom, was written in Hebrew between 200 and 175 B.C. by a pious scholar from Jerusalem, Jesus the son of Sirach.

The author's grandson, an Alexandrian Jew, translated the work into Greek and added a prologue (circa 132 B.C.). It is the longest of the Apocryphal Books, and the only one with a known author. Like the canonical Proverbs, Ecclesiasticus deals with a wide variety of practical subjects — everything from diet to domestic relationships!

The longest continuous section of the book (chapters 44 to 50) is the **Praise of Famous Men** which briefly characterizes a long series of Hebrew worthies from **Enoch**, **Noah** and **Abraham**, down to **Zerubbabel** and **Nehemiah**, and finally the **High Priest Simon**, a contemporary and friend of the author.

8. Baruch

The Book of Baruch, ostensibly written by Jeremiah's friend and secretary (Jer 32:12; 36:4; 51:59), is a composite work which was not completed until the first century B.C. or later. Although the final recension was written in Greek, some sections may be traced to Hebrew originals.

The book **begins** with a prayer of penitence, recognizing that the tragedies which befell Jerusalem are the just recompense for her sins (3:8).

A **second** poetical section explains that Israel's misfortunes are due to her neglect of Wisdom (3:9 to 4:4). This Wisdom, whose praises are sung by a philosophically minded writer, is equated with God's Law (4:1-3).

The **third** section of the book, also poetic, is a message of comfort and hope for distressed Israel. The enemy will be destroyed and the children of Jerusalem will return in triumph! Baruch is the one book of the Apocrypha which breathes something of the fire of the Old Testament prophets, although it is lacking in originality.

9. The Letter Of Jeremiah

Some time about 300 B.C. or thereafter an unknown author wrote an impassioned sermon based on Jeremiah 11:10. In it, he showed the utter impotence of gods of wood, silver and gold.

This sermon, known as The Letter of Jeremiah, was originally written in Hebrew (or Aramaic), although it is extant only in Greek and translations derived from the Greek.

Since many Greek and Syriac manuscripts, as well as the Latin version, attach the Letter of Jeremiah to the Book of Baruch, it appears as the sixth chapter of Baruch in most English translations of the Apocrypha.

The Letter has no relation to Baruch, however, and some ancient codices place it after the biblical Book of Lamentations.

10. The Prayer Of Azariah And The Song Of The Three Young Men

(These are additions to Daniel, inserted between 3:23 and 3:24).

Some time during the second or first centuries B.C. the three "additions" to canonical Daniel, which exist as separate books of the Apocrypha, were written by unknown authors.

The **first** of these. The Prayer of Azariah and the Song of the Three Young Men, was probably written in Hebrew by a pious Jew during the period when his people were suffering at the hand of **Antiochus Epiphanes** or in the period of the **Maccabean revolt** which followed.

During the ordeal of the fiery furnace, Azariah is represented as praising God, confessing his people's sins, and praying for national deliverance.

The angel of the Lord then came into the furnace and drove out the fiery flame so that the youths were unharmed. Then from the furnace they sang their praises to God in the Song, which is reminiscent of Psalm 148 as to content, and Psalm 136 as to antiphonal form.

11. Susanna

It is uncertain whether the original of Susanna was written in Hebrew or Greek. Its unknown author lived sometime during the second or the first century B.C., but we are ignorant of other details concerning his life. Yet the book itself is recognized as one of the great short stories of world literature.

It tells how two immoral elders threatened to testify that they had found Susanna, the beautiful wife of an influential Babylonian Jew, in the arms of a lover, if she would not submit to them. When she repulsed them, they charged her with adultery, and at the mouth of two witnesses she was convicted and sentenced to death.

A young man named Daniel, however, interrupted the proceedings and questioned the two witnesses separately. He asked each to identify the tree under which he had seen Susanna and her supposed lover.

Betrayed by their own inconsistent answers, the guilty elders were put to death and Susanna was saved. In the Septuagint, the Story of Susanna precedes the canonical Book of Daniel; in the Vulgate it follows it.

12. Bel And The Dragon

The stories of Bel and the Dragon were probably written in Hebrew toward the middle of the first century B.C., and added to the Book of Daniel by its Greek translator. In the Septuagint it directly follows Daniel, while in the Vulgate it comes after Susanna.

The **story of Bel** is one of the world's oldest detective stories. It tells how Cyrus, the Persian king, asked Daniel why he did not worship **Bel, the god of Babylon**.

Cyrus told Daniel how much flour and oil and how many sheep the god Bel consumed each day. Thereupon Daniel persuaded Cyrus to deposit the usual provisions in the temple, and then to close and seal the temple doors. In the meantime Daniel scattered ashes over the temple floor.

When morning came the food was gone and the floor was covered with footprints of the priests, their wives and children, who had used a secret entrance under the table to come by night into the temple and consume the provisions.

The king, convinced of the trickery of Bel's priests, ordered them slain and their temple destroyed.

The Dragon is really a serpent which the king worshipped until Daniel killed it by feeding it lumps of pitch, fat and hair.

The Babylonians, furious at the destruction of their god, demanded that Daniel be put to death. Reluctantly the king consented and Daniel was placed in a den of lions (cf. Dan 6:1-28).

The lions did not molest Daniel, who was miraculously fed by the prophet Habakkuk who was caught up by an angel in Judea and taken to the lion's den in Babylon.

On the seventh day the king took Daniel from the lion's den and cast his enemies into it, whereupon they were immediately devoured. The stories of Bel and the Dragon were intended to ridicule idolatry and discredit heathen priestcraft.

13. The Prayer Of Manasseh

This was probably written sometime during the last two centuries B.C. by a Palestinian Jew. Scholars are uncertain whether it was composed in Hebrew, Aramaic or Greek. The Prayer is ascribed to Manasseh, the king of Judah who, according to 2

Chronicles 33, was taken to Babylon where he repented of the idolatry that had characterized the years of his reign.

Mention is made of a prayer offered by Manasseh (2Chr 33:19), and a pious Jew appears to have attempted to write such a prayer as Manasseh would have uttered.

The Prayer is typical of ancient Jewish liturgical forms. It opens with the ascription of praise to the Lord Whose majesty is seen in Creation (1-4) and in His mercy toward sinners (5-8). This is followed by personal confession (9-10) and supplication for pardon (11-13). The prayer concludes with a petition for grace (14) and a doxology(15).

14. I Maccabees

I Maccabees is a valuable historical record of the forty years beginning with the accession of **Antiochus Epiphanes** to the Syrian throne (175 B.C.) and ending with the death of **Simon the Maccabee** (135 B.C.). It was probably written by a Palestinian Jew, in Hebrew, about 100 B.C.

The book gives us our best account of the Jewish resistance to Antiochus, and the Maccabean wars which ultimately brought independence to the Jewish state. Mattathias was the priest who defied Antiochus and sparked the revolution.

It relates the exploits of three of the sons of Mattathias: **Judas** (3:1 to 9:22); Jonathan (9:23 to 12:53) and Simon (13:1 to 16:24).

The annual Jewish festival of Hanukkah, celebrated at the same season as Christmas, commemorates the **rededication** of the temple as a result of the bravery of the Maccabees. The festival is mentioned in the New Testament as "**the feast of dedication**" (John 10:22).

15. II Maccabees

II Maccabees is in the main parallel to the first seven chapters of I Maccabees, covering the period from 175 to 160 B.C. It professes to be an abridgement of a five-volume history written by **Jason of Cyrene** (2:19-23), whose identity is a matter of conjecture.

The author of II Maccabees was evidently an Alexandrian Jew who wrote in Greek. He may have written as early as 120 B. C. or as late as the early first century A.D.

II Maccabees is less historical and more rhetorical than I Maccabees. It is written from the Pharisaic viewpoint and stresses the miraculous and the marvelous in contrast to the more prosaic and objective I Maccabees.

SECTION C2

THE CHURCH WORLDWIDE

Researched/Adapted by Ralph Mahoney from several sources

Chapter 1

A Comparison Of Denominations

A. UNDERSTANDING THE CHRISTIAN DENOMINATIONS

1. The Charismatics

In 1985, the author of the massive *World Christian Encyclopedia* said over 177 million people today are practicing members of the "Charismatic renewal". This term is used to describe those Christians who may not like being called "Pentecostal" but who believe in and experience signs, wonders and miracles.

The following breakdown shows the size (worldwide) in 1985 of the various major Protestant denominational groups.

Major Protestant Groups -1985

Pentecostals	58,999,900
Anglicans	51,100,100
Baptists	50,321,900
Lutherans	44,900,000
Presbyterians	43,445,500
Methodists	31,717,500
Holiness	6,091,700

Pentecostals & Charismatics

Denominational Pentecostals	58,999,900
Active Charismatics	16,800,000
Inactive Protestant Charismatics	40,000,000
Inactive Catholic Charismatics	43,000,000
Chinese Pentecostals	19,000,000

Total Pentecostal Charismatic Christians in 1985 177,800,000

These projections indicate that in 1985 over ten percent of all the Christians in the world were of the Pentecostal or Charismatic type. Barrett projects a rate of growth to the end of the century which will place the number of Pentecostals and Charismatics at 300 million persons, or fifteen percent of world Christians.

This projection is all the more remarkable when one considers that before January 1, 1901, this category of Christians did not even exist.

A 1979 poll indicated that eighteen percent of all Roman Catholics over eighteen years of age in the United States *consider themselves* Charismatics. In the same poll, among Lutherans, Methodists, Baptists and Presbyterians, from sixteen to twenty percent considered themselves Charismatics.

A December 1985 News Service report stated that 22 of the nation's 336 Catholic bishops, and over 1,500 parish priests, consider themselves Charismatic. About five percent of the nation's Episcopal clergy describe themselves as Charismatic.

These "Charismatic leaders" (evangelists, pastors, teachers) are usually associated with a local church. Many members of Protestant and Catholic congregations experience personal conversion to Christ through the Charismatic renewal.

In this sense the renewal is thoroughly evangelistic, reaching members of denominational historic churches who have not experienced regeneration (the new birth, salvation).

It is a renewal and reforming movement within mainline Protestant and Catholic churches— very different from Pentecostalism, which has its own denominations (for example, *The Assemblies of God*).

a. Areas Of Church Life Affected. In order to understand this renewal which began in the early 1960s, we must look at what the Charismatic renewal has accomplished. In most denominations, the Charismatic renewal has affected five areas of church life.

1) Worship. The Charismatic renewal has introduced new forms of worship by using dance (like King David in 2Sam 6:14), innovative hymnody and (in some instances) singing in tongues. Alive, joyful music is one of the most significant contributions the Charismatic movement has made to the Church.

2) Physical Setting. The Charismatic renewal has led the way in establishing less formal settings for Christians to fellowship. Many meet in small groups in homes of believers, where lay persons are trained for ministry.

3) The Holy Spirit. The Charismatic renewal has stimulated a revival of interest in the ministry of the Holy Spirit. In most mainline denominations, Charismatic theology no longer raises the animosity it used to. Being Charismatic is no longer controversial.

4) Denominationalism We now find Charismatic theologians among the Reformed, Lutherans, Catholics, Baptists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians and so on.

In the United States, almost every mainline denomination has recognized Charismatic renewal organizations, such as the Episcopal Renewal Ministries, the International Lutheran Renewal Center, the Presbyterian and Reformed Renewal Ministries and the National Service Committee of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal.

5) Personal Spiritual Disciplines. The Charismatic movement helped renew interest in personal disciplines like prayer, Bible study, meditation and fasting. Many Charismatics, though staying in their church denominations, have formed parachurch groups (approved by church leadership) in which they practice the Charismatic Gifts.

2. The Evangelicals

One obstacle to unity in the church has been labels: who are evangelicals and what are their subgroups? Evangelicals are a diverse group.

The term 'evangelical' describes the broad spectrum of Christians who limit religious authority to the Bible and who stress the New Testament doctrines of conversion (new birth), and justification by grace through faith alone. Evangelicals hold to the full inspiration of the Bible as the Word of God.

Under this broad definition, evangelicals include Pentecostals, Charismatics, fundamentalists and conservative evangelicals. Evangelicals are sprinkled throughout mainline churches and concentrated in Pentecostal denominations, smaller conservative evangelical denominations and independent Bible congregations.

3. The Liberals

Liberals are those who do not believe the Bible is inerrant (without error). Liberals frequently reject the authority of the Bible and may not believe the miracles in the Bible are true accounts. Not understanding conservative evangelicals' beliefs, liberals often throw them together with their less tolerant "fundamentalist" cousins.

But this is a mistake, because conservative evangelicals as a group are more open to new ideas and relationships than are fundamentalists (see below).

4. The Conservative Evangelicals

Conservative evangelicals are a sub-grouping within evangelicalism that is noncharismatic but not necessarily antiCharismatic.

Charismatics and conservative evangelicals hold every major point of the Christian faith in common. Conservative evangelicals aggressively refute the influences of theological liberalism.

For conservative evangelicals, Charismatics offer spiritual renewal, a deeper experience of God's working directly in their lives.

Theology is *very* important for conservative evangelicals. Therein lies an obstacle to understanding signs and wonders; part of conservative evangelicals' theological heritage denies that the gifts (Greek = pneumatikos) function today. (See Section C4, "*Signs And Wonders Today*" in the *Leaders Training Guide*.)

Perhaps other things will help conservative evangelicals accept the Spirit's power. One may be a different model of how the Charismatic gifts should function, such as in "power evangelism".

Dr. C. Peter Wagner (Professor at Fuller Theological Seminary School of World Missions in the United States) reflects this thinking when asked if he considered himself a Charismatic or Pentecostal:

I see myself as neither a Charismatic nor a Pentecostal. I belong to Lake Avenue Congregational Church. I'm a Congregationalist. My church is not a Charismatic church, although some of our members are Charismatic.

However, our church is open to the way the Holy Spirit does His work among Charismatics. For example, our pastor gives an invitation after every service for people who need physical healing and healing of their emotions (a broken heart, etc.) to come forward. These go to the prayer room to be anointed with oil and prayed for. We have teams of lay persons who know how to pray for the sick.

We like to think that we are doing it in a way that is in keeping with our Congregational traditions; we're not doing it the same way the Charismatics or Pentecostals practice. But we're getting the same results.

5. The Fundamentalists

Fundamentalists differ from conservative evangelicals. While they affirm the miracles in the ministry of Jesus and the early Church fathers — they hold the cessation theory and totally reject the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, the Gifts of the Spirit, and most miraculous works of the Holy Spirit.

Some fundamentalists even say these manifestations of the Spirit are the work of the devil. This viewpoint borders dangerously close to blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. "*Wherefore I say unto you... whosoever speaketh ...against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come!*" (Matt 12:31,32).

6. The Baptists—Largest Protestant Denomination

The London Confession of 1689 was adopted substantially by American Baptists in the Philadelphia Confession of 1742. Generally, most Baptists in the world would support the following six basic principles:

- The supremacy of the Bible
- Believer's baptism by immersion only
- Churches composed only of believers
- The priesthood of all believers
- Congregational church government
- Separation of church and state.

The foregoing statements place the Baptists in the mainstream of evangelical Protestantism. Although there are important doctrinal differences between Baptists and other Protestant groups such as Methodists and Presbyterians, there are few major differences in their liturgies (church services).

Largely absent from modern Baptist doctrinal formulations are any mention of signs and wonders or the Gifts of the Spirit. Some early Baptist statements seem to indicate an openness to manifestations of the Spirit, however.

From England early American Baptists received a tradition of laying on of hands after water baptism "for a further reception of the Holy Spirit of promise, or for the addition of the grace of the Spirit..." for "the whole gospel was confirmed in primitive times by signs and wonders and divers miracles and Gifts of the Holy Ghost in general."

Baptist historian Edward Hiscox points to early records of the Philadelphia association where there are indications that various Gifts of the Spirit were in operation in the churches of that area about 1743.

7. The Church Of God In Christ — Largest Pentecostal Denomination

The United States has a large population of Afro-Americans. Most are the descendants of slaves imported from Africa between the years 1600 and 1800.

The largest and oldest Pentecostal denomination in America is the Church of God In Christ — which is over 95 percent black (African).

The 20th-century Pentecostal explosion owes much of its beginning and growth to the late nineteenth-century Holiness movement in the Southern states (former slave states). These roots are also grounded in the culture and history of the American blacks.

a. The Early Beginnings. The story of this church in its early years is largely that of two prominent church leaders: C.P. Jones and C.H. Mason.

Charles Harrison Mason, born in 1866 in Bartlett, Tennessee, was the son of former slaves. He grew up in a Missionary Baptist Church and as a young man felt the call to preach.

In 1893 he entered Baptist College to study for the ministry but was soon grieved by the liberal teachings he heard. He left school after only three months because he felt that there was "no salvation in the schools or colleges."

In 1895, he met Charles Price Jones, another young Baptist preacher who was to affect his life greatly. Jones was then serving as pastor of the Mt. Helms Baptist Church.

Later that year, Jones and Mason traveled to a meeting where they preached the Wesleyan (Methodist) doctrine of entire sanctification as a second work of grace.

Initiating Holiness revivals in local Baptist churches, the two fiery preachers were soon disfellowshipped and forbidden to preach in the churches of the local Baptist associations.

They thereupon opened an historic revival campaign in a cotton gin in February 1896 and saw the first local congregation formed.

The name for the new group came to Mason in March 1897 while walking the streets. **The Church of God in Christ** seemed to be a biblical name for the new Holiness church. The teachings of the new group were the typical perfectionist doctrines of the turn-of-the-century Holiness movement.

Those receiving the *sanctification experience* were thenceforth holy and known as saints. These Holiness people neither smoked tobacco nor drank alcohol. They dressed modestly, worked hard and paid their bills.

They praised the Lord fervently with shouting and spiritual dancing. Among them the poorest peasant-farmer could be a preacher of the gospel and even become a bishop in the church.

In 1897, the Church of God in Christ was legally chartered, the first Pentecostal church in America to obtain such recognition. After this, the headquarters of the church became the site of the annual convocation, a huge rally of thousands of the faithful.

The church continued peacefully for several years with dual leadership. Though Jones was the leader of the church. Mason was the dominant personality. They were a fine and harmonious team.

Mason was known for his godly character and preaching ability, while Jones was known for his hymns, many of which became popular throughout the nation.

b. News From Azusa Street. The tranquility between Mason and Jones was broken, however, when in 1906 word came of the new Pentecost being experienced in Los Angeles, California in a little mission on Azusa Street.

The pastor of the mission was a black man, William J. Seymour, who preached that the saints, although sanctified, had not received the Baptism in the Holy Spirit until they had spoken in tongues.

It was said that all the Gifts of the Spirit were being restored to the church at Azusa Street and that white people were coming to be taught by blacks and to worship together in love and as equals.

The news from Azusa Street met with a divided response in the Church of God in Christ, which by then had spread widely into many states.

Jones was cool to the new teaching, while Mason was eager to travel to Los Angeles to investigate the revival.

Mason for years had claimed that God endowed him with supernatural characteristics, which were manifested in dreams and visions. In the end. Mason prevailed on two fellow leaders to accompany him on a pilgrimage to Azusa Street. In March 1907 Mason, along with J.A. Jeter and D.J. Young, traveled to Los Angeles.

What they saw at Azusa Street was powerful and convincing. In the words of Frank Bartleman, "the color line was washed away by the blood." People of all races and nationalities worshipped together in striking unity and equality.

The Gift of Tongues was matched by other Gifts such as Interpretation, Healing, Words of Knowledge and Wisdom, and Exorcism of Demons. In a short time Mason and Young received their Baptism in the Spirit, spoke in tongues and returned home eager to share their new experience with the rest of the church.

When they arrived, they were surprised to find that another Azusa Street pilgrim, Glen A. Cook, a white man, had already visited the church and preached the new Pentecostal doctrine.

Many of the saints had accepted the message and were speaking in tongues. But not everyone accepted Cook's message. C.P Jones, who in 1907 was serving as the general overseer and presiding elder of the denomination, rejected Cook's teaching on the Baptism in the Holy Spirit.

c. Church Split. A struggle for the future of the church ensued as the new Pentecostal party led by Mason vied with Jones for the leadership of the church. By August 1907 the issue came to a head in the general assembly of the church.

After a very lengthy discussion, which lasted three days and into the nights, the assembly withdrew the right hand of fellowship from C. H. Mason and all who promulgated the doctrine of speaking with tongues "as the initial evidence of being Baptized in the Spirit." When Mason left the assembly, about half of the ministers and members left with him.

In September 1907, the Pentecostal group gathered another convocation where the Church of God in Christ became a full-fledged member of the Pentecostal movement.

In 1909, after two years of struggle, the courts allowed the Mason faction to retain the name Church of God in Christ. A Pentecostal statement was added to the articles of faith, which separated the Baptism in the Holy Spirit from the experience of Sanctification. It stated that "the full Baptism in the Holy Spirit is evidenced by speaking in other tongues."

Although tongues were thus welcomed and accepted in the church, other manifestations of the Spirit's presence were also commonly seen as evidence of the indwelling Holy Spirit, such as healing, prophecy, shouting and "dancing in the Spirit." Today, The Church of God In Christ may be the largest predominantly black denomination in any Western nation.

SECTION C3

WHY GOD MADE MAN

By Ralph Mahoney

Chapter 1

God's Purpose In Mankind

A. A TRIUNE GOD REVEALED

This is one of the most important verses in the Bible in understanding God's eternal plan for mankind:

"And God [Elohim] said. Let US make man in OUR image..." (Gen 1:26).

1. Revealed By His Name

Elohim is a plural noun and the first of the seven covenant names of the Creator-God found in the Bible. This plural form suggests the Trinity: God the Father, God the Son and God the Spirit. (Note 'us': plural form used of God in Genesis 3:22.)

2. Revealed In His Actions

In Matthew 3:16,17 God the Father speaks from Heaven — as God the Spirit descends on God the Son.

In this incident, God's three 'Persons' are clearly seen. A tri-partite God presents intellectual difficulties to monotheists (we who believe there is ONE God).

Men have sought for centuries to explain the mystery of how God is ONE (Deut 6:4) —yet revealed in THREE Persons. The triune Godhead can never be adequately explained to the satisfaction of our carnal curiosity; However, some help does exist.

3. Revealed In His Creation

The Apostle Paul teaches us that we can understand the Godhead by the things that are made (Rom 1:20). So we will look at some illustrations from God's Creation.

a. Man. God made man in His likeness. Man is three in one. Man is spirit, soul and body —yet one (I Ths 5:23).

b. Water. Water is one — yet when frozen, becomes ice; when warmed, becomes liquid; when heated, becomes vapor (steam) — yet all three are one.

c. Egg. An egg is three parts, yet one. It consists of the shell; the white; the yoke — three, yet one.

B. MAN CREATED FOR DOMINION

"And God [Elohim] said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let THEM have DOMINION..."

1. The Inheritance Of All Mankind

God created mankind (THEM) to be federal or sovereign head over His Creation. *'What is man? ... Thou madest him to have- dominion over the works of thy hands... Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet... he left nothing that is not put under him'* (Ps 8:5; Heb 2:8).

This wasn't just for Adam and Eve, but their offspring as well. It was the inheritance of all mankind who would maintain God's image (character) and likeness (authority).

Adam and Eve, as co-regents of Creation, represented the model for this dominion to be expressed in family and marriage: *"... heirs together"* (1 Pet 3:7). This wonderful inheritance would later be stolen from mankind by deception and guile.

2. A Shared Dominion

The words *"let THEM have dominion"* implies clearly it was ultimately to be a SHARED dominion—not one-man rule, nor dictatorship or imperialistic rule.

We must keep a clear distinction between the satanic desire to rule (by himself alone) and the biblical promise of SHARED authority through a corporate body, made in the image and likeness of God.

Satan said, *"I will exalt my throne above the stars of God... I will be like the Most High"* (Isa 14:13,14). Satan convinced Eve *"...you shall be as God [Elohim]..."* (Gen 3:5) if she would eat of the forbidden fruit. Note the singular form in both these passages of Scripture. *"I will..."* ; *"You [singular] shall..."*

To want dominion by one's self alone, separate from others, is to rebel against God. It is satanic, carnal and evil.

To desire dominion that emanates out of union with Christ and obedience and fellowship with Christ and His Body (the Church) is spiritual, scriptural and right.

God's purpose through a many-membered Body (I Cor 12:27) is that THEY (plural — meaning together) share His image and likeness (character and ability). To the extent WE do, there can flow out from US tremendous spiritual power. *"And with great power gave the APOSTLES [note plural form] witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them ALL "* (Acts 4:33).

To seek God's power for one's own selfish, singular purpose will lead to spiritual disaster. Note the following:

a. Moses: Shared Authority. Moses refused to have God's power by himself alone, praying that God kill him rather than make him a great ruler apart from the people (Exo 32:32,33; Deut 9:14). Moses understood the principle of corporate or shared authority.

b. Kings: Do Not Share Authority. Kings were never God's perfect will (Judg 8:23; I Sam 8:7). They did not represent SHARED dominion.

c. Jesus: Shared Authority. Jesus took great joy in knowing His ministry would be carried on through many. *'Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith... a body hast thou prepared me'* (Heb 10:5).

Jesus SHARED His power and authority with a team (body). *'Then he called his TWELVE disciples together, and gave THEM power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases. And he sent THEM to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick... After these things the ' Lord appointed other SEVENTY also, and sent them TWO and TWO... into every city... to... heal the sick'* (Luke 9:1; 10:1,8,9).

The minimum Jesus worked through was TWO. Shared authority (team ministry) keeps us from falling into the snares of the devil. *"Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labor"*(Eccl4:9).

d. Believers: Will Share Dominion. Those that are faithful in this present life will SHARE DOMINION with Christ throughout eternity. *"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne... and shall reign with him a thousand years... and they shall reign for ever and ever "*(Rev 3:21; 20:6,22:5).

e. Believers: Will Share Glory. The faithful followers of Jesus who suffer, because of doing His will, SHARE their glory TOGETHER. *"...if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified TOGETHER"* (Rom 8:17).

3. Shared Dominion Protects From Deception

Many (who even profess to be followers of the God of the Bible) go astray because their pursuit of dominion is carried on in a lawless, selfish, unbiblical way. They boast in their PERSONAL power (or their hope for future personal power). Such pursuits lead to deception, just as it did for Eve (I Tim 2:14).

The Spirit of truth will cause us to ask God for His power, and pray for it together and receive it together with other believers. In this way, we are protected by the principle of SHARED dominion.

"THEY lifted up THEIR voice to God with one accord, and said... grant unto thy SERVANTS, that with all boldness THEY may speak thy word. By stretching forth thine

hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus.

"And when THEY had prayed, the place was shaken where THEY were assembled together; and THEY were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and THEY spake the word of God with boldness... THEY had all things common " (Acts 4:24,29-32).

God made man to have dominion. If dominion is given us, it is to be expressed by walking in close fellowship with others (1 Jn 1:7), constantly submitting to God, as we resist the devil (Jas 4:7).

SECTION C4

SIGNS AND WONDERS TODAY

Researched/Adapted by Ralph Mahoney from several sources

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Chapter 1

Were Signs And Wonders Temporary?

Introduction

Since the fourth century A.D. some theologians and clergymen have taught that the "CHARISMATA" (Supernatural enablements of The Holy Spirit — referred to as "spiritual gifts" in 1 Corinthians 12:1) were only for the "Apostolic Age."

Among theologians and historians we find a variety of perspectives about this theory.

There are at least four or five positions held by modern Christians about signs and wonders in post-biblical history.

A. CESSATION THEORIES AND OTHER VIEWS

1. Signs And Wonders Ceased At The End Of The Apostolic Age

Some proponents of this theory say the "Apostolic Age" ended about A.D. 100 with the death of the Apostle John, the last survivor of "... *the twelve apostles of the Lamb*" (Rev21:14).

One "Reformed" theologian thought the supernatural gifts "were confined to the apostolic age, and to a very narrow circle then."

Their purpose was to establish the authority of the apostles; once accomplished, the Charismatic gifts were done away with.

According to this position, signs and wonders reported after that time were either spurious or did not occur by divine means.

This is a "circular" argument, in which a theological judgment is made that signs and wonders are impossible after the first century, forcing the conclusion that historical evidence is fraudulent.

The great weakness of that position is this: There is a total absence of Scripture to support the contention that divine miracles ceased upon the death of the twelve apostles of the Lamb and their generation. No Scripture passage either states or implies this position. (For a discussion of 1 Corinthians 13:10, see below.)

2. Signs And Wonders Ceased Because They Belonged Only To The Earliest Centuries Of The Church

According to this theory, they were no longer needed to validate the gospel. The Church, once widely established and officially sanctioned, was enough to certify the authenticity of the Christian message. The cutoff date is the time of the completion of the canon, usually recognized to have been at the Council of Carthage in 397.

This argument accepts second- and third-century documentation of signs and wonders, arbitrarily assigning their early cessation. But why a particular cutoff date?

When was the Church widely established and officially sanctioned? Is 397 when the canon was closed? (Many church historians would dispute that conclusion.) Where does Scripture teach this? This argument is left without biblical or historical support..

3. Signs And Wonders Faded As Leaders Of The Organized Church Opposed Them

This argument, which contradicts the church establishment theories above, has some merit. In fact, as faith for miracles wanes among church leaders, miracles decrease in frequency. Also, when unusual signs and wonders have occurred —these often threaten the "Lords and Governors" of the church hierarchy and the status quo of the church. For this reason, church leadership has tended to oppose them.

As will be proven later, there have been waves of signs and wonders throughout Church history, and the hierarchy has alternately retarded or encouraged their ebb and flow.

But the main point of the argument — that the Gifts have completely ceased — cannot stand up to the historical test. It cannot be documented that the Gifts have ceased for any significant period of time in Church history, and especially not today. Miracles in the church are commonplace worldwide.

4. There Never Were Signs And Wonders

After the advent of nineteenth-century theological liberalism, church leaders resisted signs and wonders. They denied the possibility of supernatural intervention in Creation. These "theological secularists" deny the possibility of even first-century signs and wonders. They are, sadly, "*...false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves* " (Matt 7:15; Acts 20:29), materialists cloaking their philosophy with religious language.

5. Signs And Wonders Have Never Ceased

They have occurred from the apostolic age until now, in varying degrees. This last position is supported by Scripture and Church history.

B. IS THE CESSATION THEORY WRONG?

Let us examine this on two grounds:

- The Biblical Evidence and
- The Historical Facts of Events in the Church.

1. Scriptural Basis Of The Theory

The biblical text most often used by proponents of the cessation theory is found in 1 Corinthians 13:8-10.

"Love never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come then that which is in part shall be done away. "

The explanation of these verses is said to be as follows:

a. What Will Happen?

1) Prophecies shall fail;

2) Tongues shall cease.

b. When Will This Happen?

1) *"... when that which is perfect is come..."*

"... that which is perfect" is said to be the BIBLE.

When we have the Bible — then prophecies shall fail and tongues shall cease.

c. Conclusion. Since we now have the Bible, those who believe this theory tell us that tongues and all other "CHARISMATA" have been removed from the Church.

2. What's Wrong With This Theory?

This theory collapses when a careful examination of the context is considered. Let us re-examine this interpretation in the light of the context:

a. What Will Happen? (NOTE: Paul said THREE things would happen.)

1) Prophecies shall fail

2) Tongues shall cease

3) *Knowledge shall vanish away.*

If we are to be consistent with our interpretation, we must then conclude that when the canon of Scripture was finished, KNOWLEDGE — along with prophecy and tongues — was removed from the Church.

Yet, no one will accept that the church exists in a "NO-KNOWLEDGE" vacuum. Quite to the contrary, the theologians arrogate to themselves non-existent knowledge — to prove this weak, unbiblical position.

b. When Will This Happen?

1) *when "that which is perfect is come..."*

"... that which is perfect" does NOT refer to the BIBLE. In the context, *"... that which is perfect"* is not an object (such as the Bible) — it is a **condition** which you and I as believers will experience as a result of the Second Coming of the Lord.

"But when we have been made perfect and complete, then the need for these inadequate special gifts will come to an end, and they will disappear... but someday we are going to see HIM in his completeness, face to face" (vss 10, 12tlb). "... but once perfection comes, all imperfect things will disappear" (The Jerusalem Bible).

c. Conclusion. Tongues, prophecy and limited human knowledge have no continuing value when Jesus appears and we see Him face to face. That is when these things — tongues, prophecy and knowledge — will vanish and NOT BEFORE.

3. What Did The Apostles Think?

"... you will not be without any of the gifts of the Spirit while you are waiting for our Lord Jesus Christ..." (I Cor 1:7—The Jerusalem Bible).

*"... every grace and blessing; every **spiritual gift and power** for doing his will are yours during this time of waiting for the return of our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Cor 1:7 lib).*

"Then Peter said unto them. Repent, and be baptized... and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (Acts 2:38, 39).

a. Gifts Remain Until Second Coming. These Scripture promises give no hint that the work and power of the Spirit were a temporary phenomenon limited to the First Century Church. Rather, they make clear that these were for "... as many as the Lord our God shall call. "

b. Conclusion. The apostles expected ALL the Spiritual Gifts to remain in the Church until the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Should we expect anything less?

C. WHAT DO CONSERVATIVE EVANGELICALS THINK?

As mentioned already, the most popular conservative evangelical cessation theory is based on an interpretation of 1 Corinthians 13:10: *"...but when **perfection** comes, the imperfect disappears. "*

1. "Perfection" = The Bible

Conservative evangelicals teach that "perfection" in the verse refers to the completed canon of Scripture (the New Testament), recognized at the Council of Carthage in 397.

"The imperfect" refers to the Charismatic Gifts, and they have "disappeared" or ceased.

a. Reasons For The Gifts. Referring to the supernatural gifts, one author writes: "These [miracles, healings, tongues, and interpretation of tongues] were given to certain believers in the early Church.

"Before the Scriptures were penned, the purpose was to authenticate or confirm God's Word when it was proclaimed. These sign gifts were temporary.... Once the Word of God was inscriptured, the sign gifts were no longer needed and they ceased."

b. Reasons Why "Perfection" = The Bible. The argument for equating "perfection" with the closing of the New Testament canon has two parts:

1) Neuter Noun. The word "perfection" in Greek is a neuter noun, and must refer to a thing, not a person. Since "Scripture" is a thing and is neuter in gender, it follows that the Bible is the "perfect" to which Paul is referring.

2) Context. This interpretation, they assert, fits well with verses 8,9,11 and 12 of the same passage in 1 Corinthians 13: *"... where there are tongues, they will be stilled.... When I was a child, I talked like a child.... Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. "*

In this line of reasoning, tongues are childish, while Scripture is mature.

2. Weaknesses Of This View

a. Doctrine Built On One Passage. There are several weaknesses with this interpretation, not the least of which is this: a major doctrine is being built on a passage of which the meaning is unclear. Where else in Scripture is there a hint of this teaching? No place.

b. Neuter Noun Not Necessarily Limited. Beyond this, while "perfection" (Greek = *teleios*) is a neuter noun, in Greek there is no warrant for limiting its reference to another neuter noun.

A neuter noun or pronoun can be used to describe masculine or feminine things or persons.

Examples:

1) **Teleios.** In Ephesians 4:13; Phillippians 3:15; Colossians 1:20; and James 1:4,3:2, the same word (*teleios*) is used of a mature state to which God calls the believer to aspire.

2) **Teknon.** Examine the Greek word translated "child" (*teknon*). Though neuter in gender, this noun may describe a little girl or boy. The point is that in Greek — much like English — gender is grammatical, not sexual.

3) **Pneuma.** The word "Spirit" (*pneuma*) is also a neuter noun, and Scripture is clear that the Spirit is not a thing but the Third Person of the Trinity (Godhead).

c. Leaves Context To Interpret. Perhaps a bigger problem is that this interpretation requires leaving the immediate context of 1 Corinthians 13 to determine the identity of "perfection."

Instead, they jump to 2 Timothy 3:15, 16, where "Scripture" is neuter. This is an arbitrary jump.

3. A More Plausible Interpretation

British scholar F. F. Bruce offers a more plausible interpretation of what "perfection" refers to. It refers to the Second Coming of Christ. This interpretation appears to fit well within the overall context of 1 Corinthians, especially 1 Corinthians 1:7: *"Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."*

a. Conclusion. The Second Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ is the point when tongues, prophecy and other spiritual gifts will cease, not until. That was Paul's expectation. It should be every believer's.

Chapter 2

Signs And Wonders In Church History

Introduction

Though only a sampling, the following material documents signs and wonders throughout Church history. Sources have been limited to major personalities and movements, with a few illustrations of lesser-known people.

For this analysis, Church history has been separated into four ages: patristic, medieval. Reformation-modern and the twentieth century.

A. THE PATRISTIC ERA, 100—600 A.D.

1. Justin Martyr (c. 100 - 165)

Justin was a Christian apologist who had studied all the great philosophies of his ay. In his *Second Apology* (circa 153), Justin, in speaking about the names, meaning and power of God and Christ, writes concerning exorcism and healing:

For numberless demoniacs throughout the whole world, and in your city, many of our Christian men exorcising them in the Name of Jesus Christ... have healed and do heal, rendering helpless and driving the possessing devils out of the men, though they could not be cured by all the other exorcists, and those who used incantations and drugs. ¹

a. Spiritual Gifts In Use. In his *Dialogue with Trypho* (a learned Jew), Justin refers to the current use of spiritual gifts:

For the prophetic gifts remain with us, even to the present time. And hence you ought to understand that the gifts formerly among your nation have been transferred to us.

...I have already said, and do again say, that it has been prophesied that this would be done by Him after His ascension to Heaven. It is accordingly said, "He ascended on high. He led captivity captive, He gave gifts unto the sons of men."

And again, in another prophecy, it is said, "And it shall come to pass after, I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and on my servants, and on my handmaids, and they shall prophesy."

Now, it is possible to see amongst us women and men who possess Gifts of the Spirit of God... ²

In (circa) 150 Justin Martyr founded a disciple-training school over a house in Rome and documents current 'signs and wonders' (exorcisms, healings and prophesyings), and writes:

The first apostles, twelve in number in the power of God, went out and proclaimed Christ to every race of men.

There is not one single race of men, whether barbarians, or Greeks, or whatever they may be called, nomads, or vagrants, or herdsmen dwelling in tents, among whom prayers and giving of thanks are not offered through the Name of the Crucified Jesus.

He was martyred at Rome. ³

2. Irenaeus (140—203)

Irenaeus was the bishop of Lyons. He documents recent charismata (exorcisms, visions, prophecies), and teaches that Antichrist will be a Jew of the tribe of Dan, and that Christ will inaugurate a literal millennium of 1,000 years.

a. Argues For Spiritual Gifts. His five books *Against Heresies* are devoted to the heresy of Gnosticism. In refuting it he says:

For some have foreknowledge of things to come: they see visions, and utter prophetic expressions. Others still, heal the sick by laying their hands upon them, and they are made whole. ⁴

The historian Eusebius quotes Irenaeus:

Some (believers), indeed, most certainly and truly cast out demons, so that frequently those persons themselves that were cleansed from wicked spirits believed and were received into the Church.

And, moreover, as we said before, even the dead have been raised and continued with us many years...

As we hear many of the brethren in the Church who have prophetic gifts, and who speak in all tongues through the Spirit. Others also bring to light the secret things of men for their benefit, and expound the mysteries of God. ⁵

Rebuking those who opposed Phrygianism (Montanists), Irenaeus wrote:

In their desire to frustrate the Gifts of the Spirit which have been poured out according to the pleasure of the Father upon the human race in these times, they do not accept that aspect [of the evangelical dispensation] presented by John's Gospel, in which the Lord promised that He would send the Paraclete; but set aside at once both the Gospel and the prophetic Spirit.

Wretched men indeed! Who wish to be pseudo-prophets, forsooth, but who set aside the Gifts of Prophecy from the Church....

For, in his Epistle to the Corinthians, Paul speaks expressly of prophetic gifts, and recognized men and women prophesying in the Church. Sinning, therefore, in all these particulars, against the Spirit of God, they fall into the irremissible sin.

1) Spirit's Coming Is Evident. Irenaeus' argument in this excerpt is especially applicable to the current debate over the contemporary exercise of the pneumatika.

First, he argues by implication that the coming of the Spirit prophesied in John 14 and 15 is not merely the promise of a highly personal, individualized and silent experience deep in the individual's heart. Rather, Irenaeus suggests that there is something visible about the coming of the Spirit, something powerful, something evident. This is certainly borne out by the Book of Acts.

2) Fundamental Element. *Second*, Irenaeus argues from 1 Corinthians that the experience of the Spirit, particularly in prophecy, is to be a fundamental element of Church life.

First Corinthians is recognized as authoritative, and what Paul has written is accepted at face value. He makes no attempt to "explain it away."

3) Unpardonable Sin. *Third*, Irenaeus makes a connection between the rejection of the supernatural ministry of the Holy Spirit and the unpardonable sin (Matt 12:31), which parallels precisely the teaching of Jesus on this subject. He, too, like the Phrygians (Montanists), was accused of ministering miracles by another spirit.

We hear a familiar echo in the popular objection to the *pneumatika*: "Speaking in tongues is of the devil."

3. Montanism (circa 120-175)

Montanism's rise took place under a new convert named Montanus (c156) in Phrygia. It was a puritanical, prophetic, Charismatic, millennial, apocalyptic movement claiming to be called to birth a new age of the Holy Spirit's power.

a. A Pentecostal Experience. Montanus had a Pentecostal experience at his baptism in water: He spoke in tongues and began prophesying, declaring that the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit promised in the Gospel of John, was using him as his mouthpiece.

In 206, Tertullian joined the Montanists. In 230 the movement was excommunicated by the Synod of Iconium but, though persecuted, continued as an "under-ground" movement until (circa) 880. ⁶

Wesley, along with many others of later centuries, believed the Montanists were a genuine "revival movement" much maligned by jealous, callous, backslidden church leaders of the era — who opposed manifestations of the Spirit's power (see John Wesley below).

4. Tertullian (circa 160—220)

Not many details are known concerning Tertullian's life. He was reared in the cultured paganism of Carthage. He became a Christian and joined the Montanist group about 206. He was a prolific writer. In his work *To Scapula*, Chapter 5, he gives this account of expelling demons and healing:

All this might be officially brought under your notice, and by the very advocates, who are themselves also under obligations to us, although in court they give their voice as it suits them. The clerk of one of them who was liable to be thrown upon the ground by an evil spirit, was set free from his affliction; as was also the relative of another, and the little boy of a third.

How many men of rank (to say nothing of common people) have been delivered from devils, and healed of diseases! Even Severus himself, the father of Antonine, was graciously mindful of the Christians; for he sought out the Christian Proculus, surnamed Torpacion, the steward of Euhodias, and in gratitude for his having once cured him by anointing, he kept him in his palace till the day of his death. ⁷

He also writes: 'Christ commanded them to go and teach all nations. Immediately, therefore, so did the apostles.' 'The blood of the martyrs is seed.' 'There is no nation indeed which is not Christian.' ⁸

5. Novatian (210—280)

Novatian of Rome is noted for two reasons: he was the antipope of the puritan party in the church, and he gave the Western church its first full-length treatment of the Trinity. In Chapter 29 of *Treatise Concerning the Trinity* he writes of the Spirit:

This is He who places prophets in the Church, instructs teachers, directs tongues, gives powers and healings, does wonderful works, offers discrimination of spirits, affords powers of government, suggests counsels, and orders and arranges whatever other gifts there are of *charismata*; and thus makes the Lord's Church everywhere, and in all, perfected and completed. ⁹

6. Antony (circa 251—356)

Our knowledge of Antony depends largely on his biography, written by Athanasius. Chapter 40 of this biography shows Antony's work with the supernatural, especially in dealing with demons:

Once, a very tall demon appeared with a procession of evil spirits and said boldly: "I am the power of God, I am His providence. What do you wish that I grant you?" I then blew my breath at him, calling on the Name of Christ, and I tried to strike him. I seemed to have succeeded, for, immediately, vast as he was, he and all his demons disappeared at the Name of Christ.

7. Hilarion (circa 291—371)

Hilarion was an ascetic, educated and converted at Alexandria. By the time he had been in the desert for twenty-two years, he became widely known by reputation throughout the cities of Palestine. Jerome in his *Life of Saint Hilarion* tells of a number of the miracles, healings and expulsions of demons that occurred during his ministry:

Facidia is a small suburb of Rhinocorura, a city of Egypt. From this village, a woman who had been blind for ten years was brought to be blessed by Hilarion. On being presented to him by the brothers (already there were many monks with him), she told him that she had bestowed all her substance on physicians.

To her the saint replied: "If what you lost on physicians you had given to the poor, Jesus the true Physician would have healed you." Whereupon she cried aloud and

implored him to have mercy on her. Then, following the example of the Savior, he nibbed spittle upon her eyes and she was immediately cured.¹⁰

Jerome concludes the section he devoted to telling of Hilarion's life by stating:
There would not be time if I wanted to tell you all the signs and wonders performed by Hilarion... ¹¹

8. Macrina The Younger (circa 328-380)

Macrina was the sister of Basil, bishop of Caesarea, and also of Gregory, bishop of Nyssa. Gregory tells of the following healing:

There was with us our little girl who was suffering from an eye ailment resulting from an infectious sickness. It was a terrible and pitiful thing to see her as the membrane around the pupil was swollen and whitened by the disease.

I went to the men's quarters where your brother Peter was Superior, and my wife went to the women's quarters to be with St. Macrina. After an interval of time we were getting ready to leave but the blessed one would not let my wife go, and said she would not give up my daughter, whom she was holding in her arms, until she had given them a meal and offered them "the wealth of philosophy."

She kissed the child as one might expect and put her lips on her eyes and, when she noticed the diseased pupil she said, "If you do me the favor of remaining for dinner I will give you a return in keeping with this honor." When the child's mother asked what it was, the great lady replied, "I have some medicine which is especially effective in curing eye disease."

We gladly remained and later started the journey home, bright and happy. Each of us told his own story on the way. My wife was telling everything in order, as if going through a treatise, and when she came to the point at which the medicine was promised, interrupting the narrative, she said, "What have we done? How did we forget the promise, the medicine for the eyes?"

I was annoyed at our thoughtlessness, and quickly sent one of my men back to ask for the medicine, when the child, who happened to be in her nurse's arms, looked at her mother, and the mother, fixing her gaze on the child's eyes said, "Stop being upset by our carelessness." She said this in a loud voice, joyfully and fearfully. "Nothing of what was promised to us has been omitted, but the true medicine that heals diseases, the cure that comes from prayer, this she has given us, and has already worked; nothing at all is left of the disease of the eyes."

As she said this, she took our child and put her in my arms, and I also then comprehended the miracles in the gospel which I had not believed before, and I said, "What a great thing it is for sight to be restored to the blind by the hand of God, if now his handmaiden makes such cures and has done such a thing through faith in him, a fact no less impressive than these miracles."

9. Ambrose (circa 339—397)

A layman, Ambrose was acclaimed the bishop of Milan by his enthusiastic followers. When ordained as a bishop his first act was to distribute his wealth among the poor. He was an outstanding preacher and teacher and very outspoken. Ambrose in *The Holy Spirit (Fathers of the Church)* states that healings and tongues were still given by God.

In his writings he documents current healings and glossolalia (speaking in other tongues by the Spirit). He later teaches the Second Coming of Christ will be preceded by the destruction of Rome and appearance of Antichrist on Earth. ¹²

Behold, the Father established the teachers; Christ also established them in the churches; and just as the Father gives the grace of healings, so the Son also gives it; just as the Father gives the Gift of Tongues, so the Son also has bestowed it. ¹³

10. Augustine (354—430)

AUGUSTINE, the most famous of all the early Church fathers, wrote:

We still do what the apostles did when they laid hands on the Samaritans and called down the Holy Spirit on them in the laying on of hands. It is expected that converts should speak with new tongues. ¹⁴

Augustine served as Bishop of Hippo. He was baptized by Ambrose in Milan on Easter, 387. At the close of his life, he wrote *The City of God* (circa 413-427). He argues that the ones that happened and were recorded in the New Testament are "absolutely trustworthy." Then he writes in Book 22, Chapter 28, of the miracles that were occurring in his day:

It is sometimes objected that the miracles, which Christians claimed to have occurred, no longer happen. The truth is that even today miracles are being wrought in the Name of Christ, sometimes through His sacraments and sometimes through the intercession of His saints.

a. List Of Miracles. Augustine then tells of the miracles that happened: ¹⁵

A blind man whose sight was restored. ¹⁶

The Bishop Innocent of Carthage healed of a rectal fistula. ¹⁷

Innocentia in Carthage healed of breast cancer. ¹⁸

A doctor in Carthage healed of gout. ¹⁹

An ex-showman of Curcubis healed of paralysis and a hernia in the scrotum. ²⁰

The healing of Hesperius, one of Augustine's neighbors, whose diseases were caused by "evil spirits." ²¹

A demonized boy cured, after the demon ripped out his eye and left it "hanging by a tiny vein as by a root. The pupil which was black, turned white." ²²

A young girl in Hippo delivered from demons. ²³

Florentius of Hippo who prayed for money and received it. ²⁴

The resuscitation of a nun. ²⁵

Augustine's friend's son who was raised from the dead. ²⁶

Augustine ends his narrative of miracles by telling his readers that there are too many miracles to list. "It is a simple fact," Augustine writes, "that there is no lack of miracles even in our day. And the God Who works the miracles we read of in the Scriptures uses any means and manner He chooses."

b. Opposed The Cessation Theory. He opposes the emerging theory of the cessation of Charismatic Gifts, as an overreaction to what some thought were excesses of Montanism. He opposed the idea that miracles and charismata (Gifts of the Holy Spirit as in 1 Corinthians 12) ended with the Apostolic age. ²⁷

11. Gregory Of Tours (circa 538—594)

Gregory was a bishop and historian. He was a prolific writer, whose works provide invaluable knowledge of sixth-century Church life. ²⁸

There are many accounts of healings that occurred in Gregory's time. They are to be found in his *Dialogues*, where he also relates the expelling of a demon and his own healing:

Eleutherius, whom I mentioned previously, abbot of the Monastery of St. Mark the Evangelist adjoining the walls of Spoleto, lived with me for a long time in my monastery at Rome and died there. His disciples say that he raised a dead person to life by the power of his prayer. He was well known for his simplicity and compunction of heart, and undoubtedly through his tears this humble, childlike soul obtained many favors from almighty God.

I will tell you about a miracle of his which I had him describe to me in his own simple words. Once while he was traveling, evening came on before he could find a lodging for the night, so he stopped at a convent. There was a little boy in this convent who was troubled every night by an evil spirit. So, after welcoming the man of God to their convent, the nuns asked him to keep the boy with him that night. He agreed, and allowed the boy to rest near him.

In the morning the nuns asked him with deep concern whether he had done anything for the boy. Rather surprised that they should ask, he said, "No." Then they acquainted him with the boy's condition, informing him that not a night passed without the evil spirit troubling the boy. Would Eleutherius please take him along to the monastery because they could no longer bear to see him suffer. The man of God agreed to do so.

The boy remained a long time in the monastery without being troubled in the least. Highly pleased at this, the old abbot allowed his joy at the boy's healthy condition to exceed moderation.

"Brothers," he said to his monks, "the devil had his joke with the sisters, but once he encountered real servants of God, he no longer dared to come near this boy." That very instant, hardly waiting for Eleutherius to finish speaking, the devil again took possession of the young boy, tormenting him in the presence of all.

The sight of it filled the old man's heart with grief, and when his monks tried to console him he said, "Upon my word! Not one of you shall taste bread today until this boy is snatched out of the devil's power."

He prostrated himself in prayer with all his monks and continued praying until the boy was freed from the power of the evil spirit. The cure was complete and the devil did not dare molest him any further.

He places detailed planning of organized missions to all heathen among his major objectives, because of the imminence of the Last Judgment. 29

12. Gregory I (The Great) (540—604)

Gregory the Great was pope from 590 to 604. His *Dialogues* (593—94) were described by the author himself as stories of "the miracles of the Fathers which were done in Italy."

The *Dialogues* contain supernatural tales, which divide neatly into three classes: stories of visions, stories of prophecies and stories of miracles.

The following, a summary of one of Gregory's stories, is taken from Frederick Dudden's seminal work on the life of Gregory:

One day at Subiaco, the little monk Placidus, the future Apostle of his [Gregory's] Order in Sicily, went to the lake to draw water, but overbalanced himself and fell in.

Benedict, who was sitting in his cell, was supernaturally aware of the occurrence, and cried out hastily to his disciple Maurus: "Run, Brother Maurus, for the child who went to fetch water has fallen into the lake, and the stream has carried him a great way." Maurus ran down to the edge of the lake, and then, "thinking still that he went on dry land, he ran on the water," caught the drifting boy by the hair and brought him safely back.

It was only when he stood again on the firm ground that Maurus realized that a miracle had taken place, and "much astonished, he wondered how he had done that which knowingly he would not have dared to venture." 30

B. THE MEDIEVAL ERA, 600—1500

1. St Vladimir - Prince Of Rus (Circa 988)

The following account illustrates how a miraculous sign led to the conversion and Christian baptism of VLADIMIR, prince of Rus (which later became Russia). These events took place just about the end of the first millenium of Christianity.

By divine agency, Vladimir was suffering at that moment from a disease of the eyes, and could see nothing, being in great distress. The princess declared to him that if he desired to be healed of this disease, he should be baptized with all speed, otherwise it could not be cured.

When Vladimir heard her message he said, "If this proves true, then of a surety is the God of the Christians great," and gave order that he should be baptized. The Bishop of Kherson, together with the princess's priests, after announcing the tidings, baptized Vladimir, and as the bishop laid his hand upon him, he straightway received his sight.

Upon experiencing this miraculous cure, Vladimir glorified God saying, "I have now perceived the one true God." When his followers beheld this miracle, many of them were also baptized. 31

2. St. Francis Of Assisi (1181—1226)

St. Francis was the founder of the Franciscan order. He had an extensive healing ministry. The following selections are taken from a vast number of miracles that occurred in the ministry of Francis:

Once when the holy man of God Francis was going about through various regions to preach the Kingdom of God, he came to a certain city called Toscanella.

There, when he was sowing the seed of life in his usual way, a certain soldier of that city gave him hospitality; he had an only son who was lame and weak of body. Though he was a young child, he had passed the years of weaning; still he remained in a cradle.

When the father of the boy saw the great sanctity of the man of God, he humbly cast himself at his feet, begging from him health for his son.

But Francis, who considered himself useless and unworthy of such great power and grace, refused for a long time to do this. But finally overcome by the insistence of his petitions, he prayed and then put his hand upon the boy and, blessing him, raised him up. Immediately, with all present looking on and rejoicing, the boy arose completely restored and began to walk here and there about the house.

Once when the man of God Francis had come to Narni and was staying there for a number of days, a certain man of that city, Peter by name, lay in bed paralyzed. For a period of five months he had been so deprived of the use of all his limbs that he could not

rise at all or move himself even a little; and thus having completely lost the use of his feet and hands and head, he could only move his tongue and open his eyes.

When he heard that Francis had come to Narni, he sent a messenger to the bishop of that city to ask him for the love of God to send the servant of the most high God to him, confident that he would be freed from the illness from which he suffered at the sight and presence of Francis.

And so it happened that, when the blessed Francis had come to him and had made the sign of the cross over him from his head to his feet, he was immediately healed and restored to his former health. ³²

3. Waldensian Community

This was a movement in the Middle Ages whose characteristics included evangelical obedience to the gospel, rigorous asceticism, aversion to recognizing the ministry of unworthy priests, belief in visions, prophecies and spirit possession. ³³

A. J. Gordon in his book *The Ministry of Healing* quotes the following doctrine of the Waldensians:

Therefore, concerning this anointing of the sick, we hold it as an article of faith, and profess sincerely from the heart that sick persons, when they ask it, may lawfully be anointed with the anointing oil by one who joins them in praying that it may be efficacious to the healing of the body according to the design and end and effect mentioned by the apostles; and we profess that such an anointing performed according to the apostolic design and practice will be healing and profitable. ³⁴

4. Vincent Ferrer (1350—1419)

Vincent was a Dominican preacher who was born in Valencia. Known as the "Angel of the Judgment," he preached across Europe for almost twenty years. The *New Catholic Encyclopedia* records the following:

Vincent was disillusioned; he became gravely ill. In a vision, he was commissioned by me Lord... "to go through me world preaching Christ" After a year had passed Benedict permitted him to go.

In November 1399, therefore, he set forth from Avignon and spent 20 years in apostolic preaching. As the Spirit moved him or as he was requested, he visited and revisited places throughout Spain, southern France, Lombardy, Switzerland, northern France and the Low Countries.

With fiery eloquence he preached the need of repentance and the coming of the Judgment. He seldom remained in any one place for more than a day, and then only when the people had been long neglected or when heresy or paganism was rife. Miracles in the order of nature and of grace accompanied his steps. ³⁵

The *Catholic Encyclopedia Dictionary* also notes: "He is said by some to have had the Gift of Tongues . ³⁶

5. Colette Of Corbi (d. 1447)

The following is recorded about Colette in *The Lives of the Saints*:

In 1410, she founded a covenant at Besancon; in 1415, she introduced a reform into the convent of the Cordeliers, at Dole, and in succession into nearly all the convents in Lorraine, Champagne, and Picardy. In 1416, she founded a house of her order at Poligny, at the foot of the Jura, and another at Auxonne.

"I am dying of curiosity to see this wonderful Colette, who resuscitates the dead," wrote the Duchess of Bourbon, about his time. For the fame of the miracles and labours of the carpenter's daughter was in every mouth. ³⁷

C. THE REFORMATION AND THE MODERN ERA, 1500—1900

1. Martin Luther (1483—1546)

In Luther: *Letters of Spiritual Counsel*, the following letter of Martin Luther is recorded:

The tax collector in Torgau and the councilor in Belgern have written me to ask that! offer some good advice and help for Mrs. John Komer's afflicted husband. I know of no worldly help to give. If the physicians are at a loss to find a remedy, you may be sure that it is not a case of ordinary melancholy. It must, rather, be an affliction that comes from the devil, and this must be counteracted by the power of Christ with the prayer of faith.

This is what we do, and what we have been accustomed to do, for a cabinet maker here was similarly afflicted with madness and we cured him by prayer in Christ's Name.

Accordingly you should proceed as follows; Go to him with the deacon and two or three good men. Be confident that you, as pastor of the place, are clothed with the authority of the ministerial office. Lay your hands Upon him and say:

"Peace be with you, dear brother, from God our Father and from our Lord Jesus Christ."

Thereupon repeat the Apostles' Creed and the Lord's Prayer over him in a clear voice, and close with these words: "O God, almighty Father, Who has told us through Thy Son, 'Verily, verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My Name, He will give it you'; Who has commanded and encouraged us to pray in His Name, 'Ask, and ye shall receive,' and Who in like manner hast said, 'Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me';

"...we unworthy sinners, relying on these Thy words and commands, pray for Thy mercy with such faith as we can muster. Graciously deign to free this man from all evil, and put to nought the work that Satan has done in him. Honor Thy Name and strengthen the faith of believers; through the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee, world without end. Amen."

Then, when you depart, lay your hands upon the man again and say, "These signs shall follow them that believe; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." Do this three times, once on each of three successive days. ³⁸

In *Luther's Works*, concerning prophecy he says, "If you wish to prophesy, do it in such a way that it does not go beyond faith so that your prophesying can be in harmony with the peculiar quality of faith." He goes on to write that "one may prophesy new things but not things that go beyond the bounds of faith ... " ³⁹

"Dr. Martin Luther was a prophet, evangelist, speaker in tongues and interpreter in one person, endowed with all the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. He prayed for the sick and cast out devils. He was a Pentecostal Lutheran." ⁴⁰

2. Ignatius Of Loyola (1491—1556)

Ignatius was the founder of the Society of Jesus. He was wounded in the Spanish Army in 1521. While recuperating he read the *Life of Christ* by Ludolph of Saxony. This inspired him to become a "soldier" for Christ. He entered a monastery and spent nearly a

year at ascetic practices. Here he composed the essence of *Spiritual Exercises*. In them he writes the following about the Spirit:

The Spirit of God breathes where He will; He does not ask our permission; he meets us on His own terms and distributes His charisms as He pleases. Therefore, we must always be awake and ready; we must be pliable so that He can use us in new enterprises.

We cannot lay down the law to the Spirit of God! He is only present with His gifts where He knows that they are joined with the multiplicity of charisms in the one Church. All the Gifts of this Church stem from one source—God.

What Paul says in the twelfth chapter of his First Epistle to the Corinthians is still true today! This should give us the strength to overcome every form of clerical jealousy, mutual suspicion, power-grabbing, and the refusal to let others — who have their own Gifts of the Spirit — go on their own way.

That is what the Spirit wants from us! He is not so narrow-minded as we sometimes are with our recipes! He can lead to Himself in different ways, and He wants to direct the Church through a multiplicity of functions, offices and gifts.

The Church is not supposed to be a military academy in which everything is uniform, but she is supposed to be the Body of Christ in which He, the one Spirit, exerts His power in all the members. Each one of these members proves that he really is a member of this Body by letting the other members be. ⁴¹

3. Teresa Of Avila (1515—1582)

Teresa, a Carmelite reformer, mystic and writer, was born in Spain and educated by Augustinian nuns. In her autobiography there are frequent accounts of the ecstasy she experienced from God. In it she writes:

"What I say about not ascending to God unless He raises one up is language of the Spirit. He who has had some experience will understand me, for I don't know how to describe this being raised up if it isn't understood through experience." ⁴²

She refers to this kind of speech again when talking about prayer: ⁴³

I don't know any other terms for describing it or how to explain it. Nor does the soul then know what to do because it doesn't know whether to speak or to be silent, whether to laugh or to weep. This prayer is a glorious foolishness, a heavenly madness where true wisdom is learned; and it is for the soul a most delightful way of enjoying. In fact five or even six years ago the Lord often gave me this prayer in abundance, and I didn't understand it; nor did I know how to speak of it.

4. The Huguenots (Formally organized in 1559)

Huguenots was a nickname for the French Calvinists. Henry Baird writes in his book *The Huguenots* the following concerning some of the phenomena of this religious group:

Respecting the physical manifestations, there is little discrepancy between the accounts of friend and foe. The persons affected were men and women, the old and the young. Very many were children, boys and girls of nine or ten years of age.

They were sprung from the people — their enemies said, from the dregs of the people — ignorant and uncultured; for the most part unable to read or write, and speaking in everyday life the patois of the province with which alone they were conversant.

Such persons would suddenly fall backward, and, while extended at full length on the ground, undergo strange and apparently involuntary contortions; their chests would

seem to heave, their stomachs to inflate. On coming gradually out of this condition, they appeared instantly to regain the power of speech.

Beginning often in a voice interrupted by sobs, they soon poured forth a torrent of words — cries for mercy, calls to repentance, exhortations to the bystanders to cease frequenting the mass, denunciations of the church of Rome, prophecies of coming judgment.

From the mouths of those that were little more than babes came texts of Scripture, and discourse in good and intelligible French, such as they never used in their conscious hours.

When the trance ceased, they declared that they remembered nothing of what had occurred, or of what they had said. In rare cases they retained a general and vague impression, but nothing more. There was no appearance of deceit or collusion, and no indication that in uttering their predictions respecting coming events they had any thought of prudence, or doubt as to the truth of what they foretold.

Brueys, their most inveterate opponent, is no less positive on this point than are the witnesses who are most favorable to them. "These poor madmen," he said, "believed that they were indeed inspired by the Holy Ghost. They prophesied without any (ulterior) design, without evil intent, and with so little reserve, that they always boldly marked the day, the place and persons of whom they spoke in their predictions." ⁴⁴

a. Calvin Defends Tongues. Calvin, in referring to tongues, wrote:

"At present great theologians... declaim against them with furious zeal. As it is certain that the Holy Spirit has here honored me use of tongues with never-dying praise, we may very readily gather, what is the kind of spirit that actuates these reformers, who level as many reproaches as they can against the pursuit of them...."

"Paul, nevertheless, commends the use of tongues. So far is he from wishing them abolished or thrown away."

5. Valentine Greatlakes (1638)

David Robertson writes in his article "From Epidauros to Lourdes: A History of Healing by Faith" about an Irishman named Greatlakes:

He was a Protestant in Catholic Ireland and fled to England in 1641 at the outbreak of the Irish Rebellion. For a time he served under Cromwell. In 1661, after a period of depression, he came to believe that God had given him, a mere commoner, the power to cure scrofula.

When he began trying to cure the king's evil, his friends and acquaintances were astounded to find that he did indeed seem able to produce a regression in this disease.

This stunning achievement led him to try his hand at other illnesses like epilepsy, paralysis, deafness, ulcers, and diverse nervous disorders, and he found that his touch was efficacious in these cases as well.

Soon word of his uncanny ability spread far and wide and he was besieged by multitudes of sick people. The crowds that came to him were so great that he could not accommodate all of them even if he worked from 6:00 in the morning until 6:00 at night.

⁴⁵

6. The Quakers (1640—to Present)

The Quakers' origins are traced back to English Puritanism in the 1640s. The first leader was George Fox, who preached a message of the New Age of the Spirit. They were opposed by both the Puritans and Anglicans.

The typical Quaker meeting was characterized by the people waiting for the Spirit to speak through them and by the people "quaking" as God moved among them. The following are some excerpts from Fox's *Journal*:

In the year 1648, as I was sitting in a friend's house in Nottinghamshire (for by this time the power of God had opened the hearts of some to receive the word of life and reconciliation) — I saw there was a great crack to go throughout the earth, and a great smoke to go as the crack went; and that after the crack there should be a great shaking. This was the earth in people's hearts, which was to be shaken before the seed of God was raised out of the earth.

And it was so: for the Lord's power began to shake them and great meetings we began to have, and mighty power and work of God there was amongst people, to the astonishment of both people and priests. ⁴⁶

7. The Moravians (circa 1700-1760)

Count Van Zinzendorf established a city of refuge near Dresden, Germany called Herrnhut. Persecuted Christians came from all over Europe to make this home.

The following is a brief account of a special visitation of the Spirit that came to the village in the summer of 1727. From this, a prayer meeting started that lasted without ceasing, twenty four hours a day for over 100 years.

a. Baptized Into One Spirit. Firmly believing it to be the will of God, Zinzendorf had thus begun to mold a divided band of refugees of different denominations into a united and witnessing Congregation. But all through the summer, the people seemed to be waiting and preparing for a visitation from the Lord.

Sunday 2 July was a day of great blessing; the Count preached in Herrnhut... The whole neighborhood was ablaze with thanksgiving to God ...

On 16 July he prayed among the young people. Besides the obligatory night watch, small groups of the single Brethren held night-long vigils of prayer and meditation. These proved a real repose in God and Zinzendorf often joined in.

From 22 July to August 4, Zinzendorf was on a visit to Baron Gersdorff in Silesia. In the Library he chanced upon the *Ratio Disciplinae* and from the Preface learned of the early ecumenical vision of the ancient Irenic Church.

He drew up an extract in German from the *Ratio* and on his return he gave it to the prayer teams in Herrnhut. Immediately they recognized the similarity between this church and what God was doing among them.

Wrote one Moravian: "We discovered therein the finger of God, and found ourselves, as it were, baptized under the cloud of our fathers, with their spirit.

"For that *spirit* came again upon us, and great signs and wonders were wrought among the Brethren in those days, and great grace prevailed among us, and in the whole country."

There was indeed a great grace prevailing in Herrnhut. There was a contagious and a holy expectancy. It would seem as if the people of Herrnhut were being led inevitably, step by step to the Pentecost of 13 August. This would be the very crown of that golden summer. Glorious Christian unity was to follow.

While conducting the afternoon service at Herrnhut on 10 August, Rothe was so overcome by the nearness of God that he sank down into the dust before him. The whole congregation followed the pattern of the pastor and they continued together until

midnight, praising God and covenanting with one another, with many tears and earnest supplications, to dwell together in love and unity. ⁴⁷

8. The Jansenists (circa 1731)

"The expectation of miracles and other supernatural signs had become almost an integral part of the Jansenist worldview by the end of the seventeenth century," writes Robert Kreiser in his book *Miracles, Convulsions, and Ecclesiastical Politics in Early Eighteenth Century Paris*.

One such miracle that he records is the cure of Pascal's niece in March 1656. Marguerite had been suffering for a long time from a serious and disfiguring lachrymal fistula in the corner of her eye.

She was healed when a holy thorn was simply touched to her eye. The miracle was supported by substantial medical evidence and made a profound impression on the public.

9. John Wesley (1703—1791)

John Wesley was the founder of the Methodist Church. In his *Journal* he writes:
Wednesday, August 15, 1750 — By reflecting on an odd book which I had read in this journey. *The General Delusion of Christians with Regard to Prophecy*, I was fully convinced of what I had once suspected:

* That the Montanists, in the second and third centuries, were real, scriptural Christians; and

* That the grand reason why the miraculous gifts were so soon withdrawn, was not only that faith and holiness were well nigh lost, but that dry, formal, orthodox men began even then to ridicule whatever gifts they had not themselves, and to decry them all as either madness or imposture.

a. Gifts Are For Today. Wesley wrote a letter to Thomas Church in June 1746 in which he states:

Yet I do not know that God hath anyway precluded Himself from thus exerting His sovereign power from working miracles in any kind or degree in any age to the end of the world.

I do not recollect any Scripture wherein we are taught that miracles were to be confined within the limits either of the apostolic or the Cyprianic age, or of any period of time... I have not observed, either in the Old Testament, or the New, any intimation at all of this kind.

St. Paul says, indeed once, concerning two of the miraculous Gifts of the Spirit (so, I think, that test is usually understood), "*Whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease.*"

But he does not say that these or any other miracles shall cease till faith and hope shall cease also, till they all be swallowed up in the vision of God...⁴⁸

Praying over a young lady with a demon:

"We interrupted her by calling upon God... We continued in prayer till past eleven, when God in a moment spoke peace into the soul... She joined in singing praise to Him Who had stilled the enemy and the avenger."

Page 130, "I called at the house of William Shalwood. He and his wife both sick in bed, and with small hopes of recovery of either. Yet (after prayer) I believed they would not die, but live and declare the loving kindness of the Lord. Next time I called he was sitting downstairs, and his wife was able to go abroad."

Page 146. "When I left Smeton, my horse was so exceedingly lame... he could scarcely set his foot to the ground. By riding seven miles, I was thoroughly tired, and my head ached more than it had for months. I then thought, 'cannot God heal either man or beast, by any means, or without any?' Immediately my weariness and headache ceased and my horse's lameness in the next instant. Nor did he halt any more either that day or the next." ⁴⁹

10. The Baptists (circa 1740s)

From England early American Baptists received a tradition of laying on of hands after water baptism "for a further reception of the Holy Spirit of promise, or for the addition of the grace of the Spirit..." for "the whole gospel was confirmed in primitive times by signs and wonders and divers miracles and Gifts of the Holy Ghost in general."

Baptist historian Edward Hiscox points to early records of the Philadelphia association where there are indications that various Gifts of the Spirit were in operation in the churches of that area about 1743.

11. Well-Known Evangelists (circa 1820—1920)

Nineteenth-century instances of tongues-speaking may be traced to a revival in Port Glasgow, Scotland, led by James and George MacDonald, men of unimpeachable character.

In 1830 Dr. Thompson, a lay member of Regent's Square Presbyterian Church in London, carried news of this revival to his pastor, Edward Irving. People in Irving's church sought and received a Pentecostal experience of the Baptism in the Spirit, and began to speak in tongues and prophesy in public services.

The revival spread to Sweden, Ireland and Armenia. The London congregation was soon divided by controversy and forced to form a new denomination, the Catholic Apostolic Church. Self-appointed "apostles and prophets" soon usurped living's authority and interrupted his preaching and Communion.

a. Charles Finney. Charles Finney stated, "I received a mighty Baptism of the Holy Ghost. No words can express the wonderful love that was shed abroad in my heart. I wept aloud with joy and love, and I do not know but I should say, I literally bellowed out the unutterable gushings of my heart."

b. Charles H. Spurgeon. From the book *The Life of Charles Spurgeon* by Russell H. Conwell: ⁵⁰

Page 77, The days of prophecy are not passed, neither is the period of miracles closed.

Page 102, He taught a Sunday School class, which grew out of all proportion to the rest of the school, but he reduced it by urging the scholars to go out and become evangelists, in distribution of tracts, caring for the poor, and praying for the sick.

Page 173, When asked whether he believed all persons could be healed by the use of sincere prayer by persons who believed in Christ and whose lives were righteous, he announced, "...no man probably in England or America in this century (19th) has ever healed so many people as did Mr. Spurgeon, although he was not a physician."

Thousands of cases were healed in answer to prayer, among them, partial paralysis, rheumatism, mental affliction and contagious fever. He regarded himself as the mere agent of Divine power, and spoke of himself in two instances, as unworthy of possessing the Gift of Healing.

c. Dwight L. Moody. From the book *The Life of Dwight L. Moody* by his son. ⁵¹

An intense hunger and thirst for spiritual power were aroused in him by two women who used to attend his meetings and sit on the front seat.

At the close of the, services they would say to him, "We have been praying for you." Moody would reply, "Why don't you pray for the people?" The women said, "Because you need the power of the Spirit."

In relating the incident years later Mr. Moody said, "I need the power? I thought I had power! I had the largest congregations in Chicago, and there were many conversions. But right along these two godly women kept praying for me, and their earnest talk about anointing for special service set me to thinking.

"I asked them to come and talk with me, and they poured out their hearts in prayer that I might receive the filling of the Holy Spirit. There came a great hunger into my soul. I did not know what it was.

"I began to cry out as I never did before. I really felt I did not want to live if I could not have this power for service."

While Mr. Moody was in this condition the city of Chicago was laid in ashes by a fire that nearly destroyed the city. His church was burned to the ground. Then the fire crossed the river and the Moodys had to flee in the night as the flames engulfed their home also.

As soon as his wife and family were safe with friends, Mr. Moody devoted himself to relief work. He went to the East to raise money for the homeless and also for a new church.

During this time the hunger for more spiritual power was still upon Mr. Moody. "My heart was not in the work of begging money," he said. "I could not appeal; I was crying all the time that God would fill me with His Spirit."

1) Baptized In The Spirit. "Well, one day, in the city of New York — oh, what a day! — I cannot describe it, I seldom refer to it; it is almost too sacred an experience to name. Paul had an experience of which he never spoke for fourteen years.

"I can only say that God revealed Himself to me, and I had such an experience of His love that I had to ask Him to stay His hand.

"I went to preaching again. The sermons were not different; I did not present any new truths, and yet hundreds were converted. I would not now be placed back where I was before that blessed experience if you should give me all the world — it would be as the small dust of the balance."

In TRIALS AND TRIUMPHS OF FAITH, 1875, ⁵² Dr. Richard Boyd, a friend of Moody, wrote:

"When I got to the rooms of the Y.M.C.A., I found the meeting on fire. The young men were speaking in tongues and prophesying. What on earth did it mean? Only that Moody had been there addressing them that afternoon."

From MOODY AND HIS WORK,⁵³

At a meeting in Los Angeles, Dr. Torrey told how in one of Mr. Moody's big services in London, as he arose to read the Scripture, he began involuntarily to speak words that neither he nor his congregation understood.

12. Azusa Street (1906)

In 1905, Charles Parham moved his school from Topeka, Kansas, to Houston, Texas. There William J. Seymour, a black evangelist, joined the school. He embraced the "teaching on tongues" but did not experience this in Houston.

In 1906, Seymour was invited to speak in a small black Nazarene Church in Los Angeles. On April 1, 1906, Seymour spoke in tongues. The small group soon outgrew the little house on Bonnie Brae and moved into an old livery (horse) stable at 312 Azusa Street.

Seymour was the central figure of the Azusa Street revival. The revival continued for three and a half years at Azusa Street. Services were held three times daily —morning, afternoon and evening.

Speaking in tongues was a central attraction, but healing of the sick was not far behind. Seymour was the pastor of the congregation, which was made up of both blacks and whites, until his death in 1929. Pilgrims to Azusa were common and came from all parts of the world. ⁵⁴

Here we have testimonies of Irenaeus, Augustine, Luther, Wesley, Finney, Spurgeon, Moody and many others. These all prove the cessation theory wrong.

Read Section E4 on SOUL-WINNING to see how you can have signs and wonders in your ministry.

END NOTES

- (1) Coxe 6:190
- (2) Coxe 1:243
- (3) D Barren, 700 plans, App B
4 D Barren, 700 plans, App B
- (5) Eusebius' Ecclesiastical History, pages 186-187.
- (6) D Barren, 700 plans, App B
- (7) Coxe 3:107
- (8) D Banett, 700 plans. App B
- (9) Coxe 5:641
- (10) Coxe 15:254-255
- (11) Coxe 15:262-263
- (12) D Barrett, 700 plans, App B
- (13) Deferrari 44:150
- (14) Tongues The Dynamite Of God, Leonard Darbee, page 22
- (15) Deferrari 24:431-432
- (16) Deferrari 24:433
- (17) Deferrari 24:433-437
- (18) Deferrari 24:437-438
- (19) Deferrari 24:438-439
- (20) Deferrari 24:439
- (21) Deferrari 24:439
- (22) Deferrari 24:440-441
- (23) Deferrari 24:441
- (24) Deferrari 24:441-442
- (25) Deferrari 24:444
- (26) Deferrari 24:445
- (27) D Barratt, 700 plans, App B
- (28) Douglas 1974, page 436
- (29) D Barrett, 700 plans, App B

- (30) Dudden, vol. 1,1905, 334
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SECTION C5

THE FIVE LEADERSHIP GIFTS

By Ralph Mahoney

Chapter 1

The Leadership Gifts Jesus Placed In The Church

A. WHY JESUS GAVE LEADERSHIP GIFTS TO THE CHURCH

After dying for our sins on the cross, our Lord Jesus ascended up to Heaven to be enthroned at the right hand of our heavenly Father (Acts 1:9-11; Eph 1:20-22). From that place of authority He gave leadership gifts to the Church. He gave apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers for perfecting (equipping) the saints (Eph 4:11,12).

The Greek word translated '*perfecting*' in Ephesians 4:12 means to '**repair**' the damage found in new believers (caused by sin); '**prepare**' and '**equip**' the believers to do

works of service in the Church. Leaders train the church members so the members can do the work of the ministry and thus fulfill Christ's will for the Church. Leaders are to equip (train) members to:

1. **Minister To The Lord** (Acts 13:1,2);
2. **Minister To One Another** (Acts 2:44-46); and
3. **Minister To The World** (Acts 2:47; Mark 16:15-20).

This insures the spiritual and numerical growth of the Church.

B. DESCRIPTION OF THE FIVE LEADERSHIP GIFTS

1. Apostles

a. There Are Three Groups. The New Testament specifies three groups of Apostles.

1) "**Twelve apostles of the Lamb**" (Matt 10:1-5; Rev 21:14) have a special relationship to the nation of Israel (Rev 21:12). In the age to come, they will sit on twelve thrones judging Israel (Matt 19:28).

2) "**Ascension apostles**" have a special relationship to the Gentile church. Those mentioned in the New Testament are Paul and Barnabas (Acts 14:14), Andronicus and Junia (Rom 16:7), James (Gal 1:19), Silas and Timothy (I Ths 1:1, 2:6) and others (I Cor 9:5; 2Cor 8:23).

3) "**False apostles**" are those who make boastful public claim to being apostles (2Cor 11:13). "... *thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars* " (Rev 2:2). A sign of a false apostle may be this boastful claim to being an apostle. A true apostle will not be concerned with being recognized as an Apostle, but will humbly serve as a bondsman (Greek=*doulas*) of Jesus (Rom 1:1; I Cor 1:1; et al).

b. Signs Of True Apostles

1) **Godly Character** (2Cor 12:12);

2) **Signs, Wonders And Miracles.** The signs, wonders and miracles that accompanied their work of evangelism and starting new churches (Acts 2:43; 4:30; 5:12; 14:3; Heb 2:2-4);

3) **Preach The Gospel.** Their commitment to preach the gospel to those who had never heard the gospel (Rom 15:20; 2Cor 10:16); and

4) **Willingness To Suffer.** Their willingness to suffer, endure persecution and hardships, and even die for their Lord (Acts 9:16; I Tim 1:16; 2Cor 11:18-28).

The company of apostles (collectively) were responsible for the doctrine of the Church (Acts 2:42; 15:1-35; I Cor 14:37), correct practices in the Church, the spiritual life and purity of the Church. However, their teachings were subject to comparison with the Scripture and rejected if not scriptural (Acts 17:10,11).

Apostles are 'set' in the Church along with prophets, teachers, administrators and other Gifts of the Spirit (I Cor 12:28), just as members are 'set' in the Body of Christ (the Church — I Cor 12:18).

The Greek word for set [*tithemi*] is translated in Hebrews 1:2 as **appointed**. "*Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed [set or established] heir of all things...* " One can see Jesus' **appointment** as heir was not temporary, but permanent.

c. Apostles Are Here Today. Neither was God's "setting or appointment" of the five ministry-gifts (including apostles and prophets) a temporary first-century phenomena as some theologians claim.

There is no biblical support for the teaching that the apostles' and prophets' ministry ceased after the first century of Church history. Quite to the contrary, Church history is replete with examples of apostolic ministry.

Furthermore, the author has traveled in over 150 nations in the twentieth century and observed the work of many 'ascension apostles' in many different church groups all over the world.

2. Prophets

a. Work With Apostles. The following verses seem to imply that the apostle and prophet would work closely with each other.

"... I will send them prophets and apostles. .." (Luke 11:49). "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets... " (I Cor 12:28).

"And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets... " (Eph 2:20). "Rejoice... you holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her" (Rev 18:20). The prophetic ministry is kept in balance by working with an apostle.

b. Foretold Events And Warned Of Danger. By the revelation of the Holy Spirit (John 16:13), New Testament prophets like Agabus foretold events before they happened (Acts 11:28); and gave illustrated prophecies, warning of dangers to come (Acts 21:10,11). Other New Testament prophets were Judas and Silas (Acts 15:32).

c. Confirmed What God Had Spoken. Paul said we are not to despise prophecy (I Ths 5:20). Yet he refused to be governed or guided by prophets or prophecy (cf. Acts 20:23; 21:4; 11-14). The New Testament prophets' primary ministry was to confirm something God had ALREADY spoken to the individual believer. *".. .separate me Paul and Barnabas for the work for which I have [past tense] called them... " (Acts 13:1,2).* The Lord had already called them. The prophets only confirmed this call.

d. Their Words Should Be Examined. Therefore the words of prophets are to be carefully examined (Deut 18:22; Jer 28:9; ICor 14:29; IThs 5:19-21) as they may be wrong. If the word spoken by the prophet disagrees with the words written in the Bible, these words of the prophet must be rejected (Deut 13:1-5). See the notes on 1 Corinthians 12 and 14 (Gifts of the Spirit) for an explanation of the difference between simple prophecy and the prophetic office.

3. Evangelists

These are individuals who are gifted in the preaching of the gospel and help others accept the Lord Jesus as Savior. Philip is the only one identified as an evangelist in the New Testament, hence we conclude he is the 'pattern evangelist' (Acts 8:5-13; 8:26-40; 21:8).

a. Signs Of An Evangelist

1) Travels. He travels to many places and preaches Christ (Acts 8:5) with

2) Signs, Wonders And Miracles (Acts 8:6-13).

3) City-Wide Meetings. He holds city-wide meetings (Acts 8:5).

4) Personal Evangelism. He does personal (one on one) evangelism (Acts 8:26-40).

5) Equips Believers. He (along with the other four leadership gifts) equips church members for works of service (Eph 4:11,12).

4. Pastors

The word pastor is the same as shepherd. Pastors (like shepherds) guard, guide and feed sheep. Pastors care for, discipline, pray for, love and minister to the local congregation of believers under their charge (Acts 20:28). They should meet the qualifications in 1 Timothy 3:1-13 and Titus 1:5-9.

5. Teachers

Teachers are enabled by the Holy Spirit to help others understand God's Word (the Bible) and God's plan. The gift of teaching is often combined with the role of pastor or elder (I Tim 3:2, Titus 1:9).

C. SUMMARY

1. The Five "G's"

- a. **Apostles GUARD** the Church from false doctrine and practice.
- b. **Prophets GUIDE** the Church in evangelism and missionary outreach.
- c. **Evangelists GATHER** in the unbelievers through preaching the Word with the accompaniment of healing, exorcism and miracles.
- d. **Pastors GROW** believers until they reach spiritual maturity.
- e. **Teachers GROUND** me believers on the solid rock Christ Jesus.

2. Jesus, Our Model

In all of these Jesus is our model. He is called:

- a. **Apostle** (Heb 3:1),
- b. **Prophet** (Luke 24:19; John 4:19; Acts 3:22-26),
- c. **Evangelist** (Luke 4:18),
- d. **Pastor** (John 10:2; Heb 13:20; I Pet 5:4) and
- e. **Teacher** (John 3:2).

3. Job Descriptions, Not Titles

Church leaders may be combinations of the above. Some are evangelist-pastors. Others are prophet-pastors. Still others may be pastor-teachers or apostle-pastors.

In the New Testament, these terms were not used as titles. They were used as job descriptions, to describe the function or gifts a man had. They were used in the same way we would describe a carpenter, a painter, an electrician or a fanner.

Church leaders must avoid giving themselves titles of honor (Matt 23:8-12). Those called to church leadership are just servants of the Lord and of His flock (Rom 1:1; Tit 1:1).

Let us follow the example of Peter, "...even as our beloved **brother Paul** also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you" (2Pet 3:15). He chose his words wisely when he referred to another leader as "brother Paul," not "Apostle Paul." Shouldn't we do the same?

SECTION C6

THE RESTORATION OF THE CHURCH

Chapter 1

The Feasts Of The Lord-Patterns Of Restoration

By Ralph Mahoney

Introduction

A study of Section C10 prior to studying what follows will greatly assist you in understanding the points made in this chapter.

A. THE SEASONS OF THE FEASTS

"These are the LORD'S appointed feasts... which ye shall proclaim in their seasons " (Lev 23:4).

The Tabernacle of Moses gives us an earthly pattern of things in the heavens (Heb 8:5).

The Festivals (Feasts) of the Lord give us insight into God's Calendar —the sequence in which He has done things in the past (and will do them in the future).

Three Major Festivals were observed annually. Passover and Tabernacles (also known as Booths or Temporary Shelters) each had **Minor Festivals** observed at the same time —one after the other. Pentecost came fifty days after Passover, and had no minor festivals associated with it.

1. Three Seasons

The following outline summarizes the Seasons, Names and Parts of the Festivals.

There are three seasons in which the Festivals are observed:

a. April (Abib) — Passover (followed by **Unleavened Bread** and the **Firstfruits** Sheaf Offering).

b. June (Sivan) —Pentecost.

c. Sept/Oct (Ethanim) — (Trumpets and The Day of Atonement preceded)

Tabernacles.

This is what is meant by the Feasts being observed "in their seasons."

2. Spiritual And Natural Seasons

There are spiritual seasons which correspond to these natural seasons.

"Repent therefore, ..that seasons of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord" (Acts 3:19 niv).

In a spiritual sense, there are seasons or time-periods during which the spiritual realities (revival or seasons of refreshing) spoken of by the Festivals are experienced. This has happened in Church history when a particular emphasis comes to the whole Church. Let us look briefly at how this "seasonal" fulfillment of the Festivals has occurred in Church history.

B. SPIRITUAL RESTORATION IN THE CHURCH

1. The Feasts Restored

By the 4th Century A.D., the Church had lost the spiritual power and grace so evident in the New Testament.

A great spiritual famine settled upon the Church for about 1,000 years called "The Dark Ages."

a. Passover Restored. Finally, men like Martin Luther brought back to the Church the truth of **justification by faith** — faith in the work Christ did on the cross in making amends (payment of the penalty) for our sins.

He proclaimed that *"the just shall live by their faith"* in Christ's work and not their own works, or penances, or personal sacrifices.

Luther taught that we are saved *"by grace through faith "* —and even this faith is not our own; it is a gift of God (Eph 2:8). In Luther's time. God was RESTORING the FEAST OF PASSOVER to the Church!

Luther saw that the innocent, flawless Passover Lamb (Christ) shed His blood that it might be sprinkled on the doorposts of our hearts. This blood saves us from the destroying death-angel (the devil).

God sees the blood and passes over us as our covering, protective canopy. He spares us from judgment and death. Our sins are covered by the blood.

It was not our works of righteousness but His blood that saved and spared us. Oh, what a Passover we have — if we accept His salvation as a free gift!

b. Unleavened Bread Restored. Later came John Wesley — founder of the Methodist Church and holiness movement. He taught that God wants not only to FORGIVE us our sins — but also to SAVE US FROM THE POWER OF SIN.

Luther taught God's remedy for the PENALTY and GUILT of sin. Wesley taught God's remedy for the POWER and HABIT of sin.

Luther taught us our glorious POSITION — we are acceptable to God through the atonement of Christ (the making amends for our sin and paying the penalty).

Wesley taught that God wants our righteousness to be evident in our ACTIONS. Wesley taught that God wants to bring our thoughts, words and actions into agreement with our legal standing of righteousness before God.

He taught that it is important that we LIVE RIGHTEOUSLY because we have been given righteousness as a gift. In Wesley, God was RESTORING THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD.

In the Bible, leaven is a symbol (or type) of sin or wickedness. *"Therefore let us keep the Festival, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and wickedness... "* (I Cor 5:8). To put all leaven out of our life is to put away sin from our life.

Therefore the **Feast of Unleavened Bread** speaks to us of the Bible truths related to holiness of life and ministry.

c. Pentecost Restored. At the beginning of the 20th Century (1900), God began to RESTORE THE FEAST OF PENTECOST (Harvest Firstfruits). As a result, most Christians now realize that the Pentecostal experience is still in God's plan for the saints.

The Pentecostal Movement has rapidly grown in every part of the world during this century. The greatest Harvest of souls in the history of the Church has been gathered since the turn of the century, mainly by the Pentecostals.

An even greater Harvest is to come as THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES (Ingathering / Main Harvest) finds fulfillment in the years immediately before us.

2. Consequences Of Restoration

As each of these festivals was restored, two things happened:

a. Division in the Church. The Church in general became divided on whether these great restoration movements were in fact from God.

b. Super-Saint Attitude. Some people who embraced the truths of restoration considered themselves to be God's "super-saints" — who were better than the rest of the Church.

Both these reactions were wrong. In the first case: We should always accept the seasons of refreshing He sends. We should partake of the fresh manna from Heaven.

In the second case: God does not want us to become elitist, exclusive and sectarian, thinking more highly of ourselves than others. This is a spirit of pride that can hinder the onward flow of restoration in our lives and churches.

3. All The Feasts Will Be Restored

God is restoring ALL the FESTIVALS TO THE CHURCH!!!

Don't get stuck in one wave of restoration and resist the ONWARD FLOW OF REVELATION. *"And the LORD said unto Moses... speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward"* (Exo 14:15).

Perhaps you've come into a rich Baptism in the Spirit. For you the Feast of Pentecost has come. But remember, *"There remains yet much land to be possessed "* (Josh 13:1). We still await the full manifestation of TRUMPETS, DAY OF ATONEMENT AND TABERNACLES.

Keep following the Cloud of Glory. *"... when the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the children of Israel went onward in all their journeys"* (Exo 40:36).

The Holy Spirit is moving through the Church in the world. Wherever there is a freshness and holy power —there you will find Him speaking a message of Restoration that matures the members and prepares them to do the work of the ministry (Eph 4:11,12).

This Restoration taking place in the Church is following the timetable of the Festivals of the Lord. Section C10 will provide you in-depth insights into the coming glory forecast by Trumpets, Day of Atonement and Tabernacles.

Chapter 2

Lost And Restored

By Aimee Semple McPherson

Introduction

by Ralph Mahoney

"Remember not the former things, neither consider the things of old. Behold I will do a new thing..." (Isa 43:18,19).

God has promised to do a new thing in the last days. We are living in the most exciting time in the history of the Church.

As we look back over Church history, we are dismayed over the spiritual condition that is found in the Church in centuries past. Isaiah describes it in these words: "From head to foot you are sick and weak and faint, covered with bruises and welts and infected wounds, unanointed and unbound.

"Your country lies in ruins; your cities are burned; while you watch, foreigners are destroying and plundering everything they see.

"You stand there helpless and abandoned like a watchman's shanty in the field when the harvest-time is over — or when the crop is stripped and robbed" (Isa 1:6-8 tib).

This graphic language accurately describes the condition of the Church through much of its history after the first century.

Is God doing a new thing? Yes, He is! In our day, He is visiting the Church to restore it to its beauty and glory. The Psalmist describes accurately the condition of the Church for which Christ will soon return. *"The King's daughter is all glorious within. Her clothing is of wrought gold.*

"She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework: the virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto thee.

"With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought: they shall enter into the king's palace" (Ps 45:13-15).

Are you one the Lord Jesus has chosen to lead His flock and be a minister of righteousness among God's people? If so, it is important for you to understand this. The Lord is doing a work of restoration in the Church today by this present outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

To help you comprehend something of the magnitude of God's work in the Church in our day, we are including a message given under a great prophetic anointing.

This message was delivered in London, England when one of the Lord's handmaidens, Aimee Semple McPherson, was on her way to China as a missionary.

As the Spirit of the Lord came upon her in the 5,000-seat Royal Albert Hall, she began to prophesy and see a vision. What follows is her own testimony concerning what the Lord showed her.

She saw the face of a large clock, but where the hours should be were ten circles, each describing a stage in the deterioration, and then eventual restoration, of God's life and blessings in the Church (SEE THE ILLUSTRATION ON PAGE 44) over nearly 2,000 years of Church history.

This vision has its biblical counterpart in the prophecy of Joel, where he describes a wanton wasted harvest.

"That which the palmerworm hath left hath the locust eaten; and that which the locust hath left hath the cankerworm eaten; and that which the cankerworm hath left hath the caterpillar eaten" (Joel 1:4).

Later on Joel calls, *"Let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare thy people, O LORD, and give not thine heritage to reproach... wherefore should they [the unbeliever] say among the people, Where is their God?" (Joel 2:17).*

Out of this time of repentance and humiliation the Lord gives this marvelous promise of restoration:

"Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice: for the LORD will do great things...

"And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and me caterpillar, and the palmerworm, my great army which I sent among you" (Joel 2:21,25).

Here then is the vision given Aimee McPherson.

A. CIRCLE I - FIRST OUTPOURING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT



This healthy tree full of fruit represents the ushering in of the dispensation of the Holy Spirit accompanied by mighty signs and wonders.

On the Day of Pentecost, described in Acts 2, some 3,000 souls were saved. Shortly after, Peter and John were going up to the Temple to pray. They passed a lame man at the beautiful gate who was begging.

Peter answered:

"Silver and gold have I none [I do not think the true believers ever were or ever will be overly blessed with silver or gold]; but, such as I have give I thee; In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk" (Acts 3:6).

The lame man was healed instantaneously. He went into the Temple walking, leaping and praising God.

In Acts 5:16 we see the multitudes bringing sick folks and those who were vexed with unclean spirits, out of the cities round about Jerusalem, and they were healed every one.

Sick were brought into the streets of Jerusalem, and laid on beds and couches. If the shadow of Peter passed over them, they were healed.

Signs and wonders were wrought everywhere by the hands of the apostles, true to the word of Him Who had said, *"...greater works than these shall ye do; because I go to my Father "* (John 14:12).

1. Full Pentecostal Power

While the tree seen in Circle I stood in its perfection, the Church stood blazing with the full Pentecostal power and glory of the Holy Spirit. Jesus' words were fulfilled in deed and in truth.

These common ordinary men who had been humble fishermen were endued with power from on high. Timid Peter, who had feared a little girl when asked if he knew Jesus, was timid no longer. Illiterate men and women were turned into flaming evangelists (Acts 4:13).

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit was not for the Jews alone, but also for the Gentiles. In Acts 10 we see Peter preaching Jesus to the Gentiles. *"While Peter yet spake... the Holy Spirit fell on all that heard the word,*

"The Jews who came with Peter were astonished that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gifts of the Holy Spirit, for they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God" (Acts 10:44,46).

Again in those wonderful days of the early-rain (springtime-rain) outpouring of the Holy Spirit, we see Saul, on his way to Damascus to persecute the Christians. He was slain and prostrated in the road by the power of the Spirit. He heard the voice of Jesus saying: *"Saul, Saul, why persecutes! thou me?"*

Later we find Paul not only converted and baptized in the Holy Spirit with the consequence of speaking with other tongues (I Cor 14:18), but preaching salvation and the Baptism in the Holy Spirit.

In Acts 19 Paul visited The First Baptist Church of Ephesus. He asks them whether they have received the Holy Spirit since they believed. They tell him "No!" They have not even heard whether there was any Holy Spirit. *"And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied" (Acts 19:6).*

This marvelous manifestation of speaking in other tongues accompanied the infilling of believers with the Holy Spirit everywhere.

2. A Tree With Perfect Fruit

Every gift and fruit of the Spirit was manifested in this early Church. The nine gifts and nine fruit of the Spirit hung as 18 perfect apples upon the perfect tree.

"For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;

"To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues" (I Cor 12:8-10). The sick were healed, miracles wrought, and when other tongues were spoken in the assembly, someone gave the interpretation (I Cor 14:27).

Each of the nine Fruits was in the Church: Love, Joy, Peace, Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, Meekness and Temperance.

So we have the perfect picture visualized in "Circle I" of the Chart. Thus ends the era of early Church history. The tree is rooted and grounded in the faith of Jesus, every limb, branch, leaf and fruit in perfect power and strength.

B. CIRCLE II – THE PALMERWORM AT WORK

"That which the palmerworm hath eaten... " (Joel 1:4).

What glorious days of harmonious love and unity the early Church enjoyed. They were days when none called what he had his own. They were days when the children of the Lord had all things in common.

They were days when they were beaten and imprisoned, days when prison bonds were broken. They were days when signs and wonders were wrought. How we have often wished they might have continued.

These puny minds of ours only feebly grasp events of the past, and are utterly unable to probe the depths of mystery shrouding the future.

Unlike us, however, the great mind and eye of the Almighty God beholds the future as clearly as the past.

Before His burning eyes of fire and the glory of His presence, darkness turns to day and the deepest mists are rolled away.

1. God's Warnings

Looking thus ahead with clear, unerring eye. God saw, and moreover prophesied through the prophet Joel, that the Church would not always retain this glorious state of power.

Joel saw that the palmerworm and the caterpillar were going to rob, strip, mutilate and destroy this perfect tree with its gifts and fruits. He saw that the Church, or tree, was going to gradually lose more and more, until it would be left desolate, barren and despairing (Joel 1:7).

Not only did Joel see this, but Jesus saw it and sent His servant John to warn the Church.

"Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love.

"Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place; unless you repent" (Rev 2:4,5).

The **first works** mentioned here refer to the supernatural works done by the Church. The Greek word is *ergon*. This word is used by Jesus repeatedly in reference to the miracles He did (see John 5:20,36; 6:28; 10:25).

He used this word when He promised, "*Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the [supernatural] works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father*" (John 14:12).

Jesus was clearly calling the Church back to the anointing, blessing and power in which it was birthed.

2. Perfect Fruit Destroyed

The Church did not heed this call. The falling away (backsliding) and destruction of the perfect tree did not occur in one day. It was a gradual deterioration accomplished day by day and stage by stage.

One day the palmerworm appeared, eating and destroying as it went, until as the years went by the Gifts and Fruits of the Spirit began to disappear from view.

Not so many sick were healed as before, not so many miracles were performed. Faith was on the wane. When someone in the assembly spoke in tongues, there was no one who interpreted. Prophecy was not so frequent as before.

The fruits of unselfish love and joy and peace were also attacked by the palmerworm who grew bolder and bolder day by day.

Gradually the 18 apples began to disappear from the staunch and upright tree. The Church had stood covered with gifts and fruit for many years after the Day of Pentecost.

This state of fruitlessness was indeed a condition worthy of lamentation, but the pity of it all is that the devastation did not stop with the havoc wrought by the palmerworm.

Other years and other worms took up the work of destruction where the palmerworm had left off, until "*that which the palmerworm hath left hath the locust eaten*" (Joel 1:4).

C. CIRCLE III - THE LOCUST AT WORK

"That which the palmerworm hath left hath the locust eaten..." (Joel 1:4).

The work of the locust is of course wrought upon the leaves. Sweeping over vast territories of country, he strips and lays barren all that he touches.

1. Infilling Of The Holy Spirit Is Lost

Thus not only were the Gifts and Fruits of the Spirit lost sight of by the vast majority of believers, but the personal infilling of the Holy Spirit accompanied by speaking in other tongues was also in a great measure lost sight of.

The earnest prayer and praise meetings were disappearing. Formality and sectarianism were taking their places.

As humility, godliness and the manifestations of the Holy Spirit vanished, persecution and reproach vanished also.

As meetings of the older order were converted into dignified services of a more orthodox form, the Holy Spirit as a gentle dove was quenched and grieved and stifled until He silently withdrew His wonder-working manifestations. Joy and gladness were withheld. "*Is not the food cut off before our eyes, Joy and gladness from the house of our God?*" (Joel 1:16).

Because it meant too great a sacrifice, too much emptying out and humbling in the dust before God, too much seeking and waiting, the Baptism in the Holy Spirit was not received as of old.

2. Professors Not Possessors

Then came men who professed to be filled with the Holy Spirit in a new way; that is, without the Bible seal of speaking with other tongues. This simplified matters greatly, and the professor no longer needed to be a possessor.

Thus the Baptism in the Holy Spirit was lost sight of by many, though there always was a remnant, a faithful few Spirit-filled saints through whom God manifested Himself in a supernatural way.

It was a sad day when the leaves were thus stripped from the tree and the locust had done its work; but days that were still more sad were to follow, for we read: "*That which the locust hath left hath the cankerworm eaten*" (Joel 1:4).

D. CIRCLE IV - THE WORK OF THE CANKERWORM

"That which the palmerworm hath left hath the locust eaten; and that which the locust hath left hath the cankerworm eaten..." (Joel 1:4). After the fruit and the leaves had been destroyed, the cankerworm immediately, made his appearance and began his work upon the branches and tender shoots of the tree.

1. Holiness Is Lost

This destructive insect is an allegory of those who depart from their God-fearing walk of holiness. They no longer live above the world and sin. They no longer walk the narrow path, so long enjoyed by the children of the Lord.

As the sap, the life of the tree, was consumed and the branches rotted more and more, things that used to seem sinful appeared sinful no longer.

The sinning saints that used to be barred outside the doors of the Church now leaned back in comfortable contentment in the cushioned pews, or sang in the choir.

Christians lowered the high standard of holiness unto the Lord which they had been holding aloft. Now it trailed bedraggled and unnoticed in the dust. Quickly upon the trail of the cankerworm followed the caterpillar, and we read that "*that which the cankerworm hath left hath the caterpillar eaten*" (Joel 1:4).

E. CIRCLE V - THE WORK OF THE CATERPILLAR

"That which the palmerworm hath left hath the locust eaten; and that which the locust hath left hath the cankerworm eaten; and that which the cankerworm hath left hath the caterpillar eaten " (Joel 1:4).

We are now nearing the bottom of the large circle. The perfect tree is perfect no longer. The tree is stripped of her fruits, denuded of her leaves, her branches rotted and the bark peeled away.

It was not long until the trunk and the roots began to decay and the caterpillar made his nest in the decayed and rotted hollows of the tree.

No tree can survive without leaves through which to breathe and branches and limbs through which the sap and life courses through its veins.

For a believer to live without the Holy Spirit — the breath of life — or without the holy life of Jesus coursing through his veins, is to live a meager, barren existence.

1. Justification By Faith Is Lost

And now in Circle V (five) we see the tree in the most lamentable condition yet described: fruit gone, leaves gone, branches bare, trunk decayed and rotten, a nest for the caterpillar.

In other words, the Gifts and Fruits of the Holy Spirit gone, separation and holiness gone, justification by faith gone.

Well might the angels look down from Heaven and weep. The noble Church, the perfect tree which had once stood clad with power and the glory of the Holy Spirit, now had nothing left but a **name**, not even a remnant of her former splendor, as she entered into the DARK AGES.

"... I know your reputation as a live and active church, but now you are dead"
(Rev3:1 niv).

F. CIRCLE VI - THE DARK AGES

No wonder they are called the Dark Ages. Ah, dark indeed is the night without Jesus! He is the Light of the world.

When the Church lost sight of justification by faith, lost sight of the atonement through the blood of Jesus, there was a total eclipse.

The face of the sun of righteousness was obscured, and the years that followed are known as the Dark Ages.

1. Works Not Faith

Men and women groping in this gross darkness tried to win their way to Heaven by doing penance, by locking themselves up in dungeons, walking over red-hot coals with their bare feet, and inflicting unnameable tortures upon themselves and upon one another. Blind and ignorant, they tried by some work or deed to pay the debt that had already been paid on Calvary's rugged cross. They had lost sight utterly of the fact that:

*"Jesus paid it all,
All to Him I owe,
Sin had left a crimson stain,
He washed it white as snow."*

They forgot Him Who promised, *"...though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool"* (Isa1:18).

The great arrow you see in the chart had been steadily turning down and down and down, pitilessly and relentlessly downward until it seemed as though it would never reach the bottom. And then it had struck the bottom: the visible institutional Church had lost all; the tree was dead.

Angels might have wept, mortals might have wrung their hands, and their souls have failed within them in utter despair.

2. Restoration Promised

But GOD - Hallelujah! - looking on ahead into the future, spoke through the prophet Joel, saying:

"I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, my great army which I sent among you" (Joel 2:25).

Oh beloved, **do you see it?** Then shout aloud and praise Him! **ALL!** Think of it! **ALL that has been lost** was to be restored. Hallelujah! What is impossible with man is possible with God.

Now the Church had not lost all this at **one** time. The restoration came the same way it was lost — as line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little, till **today** we are nearing the completion of this restoration.

Jesus is coming soon to take His perfect Church, His Bride, His fruit-laden tree unto Himself, where transplanted from earth to Heaven the tree will bloom and yield her fruit by the great River of Life, forever.

No, God did not restore to the Church all at once what she had lost. He was willing to do so to be sure, but they did not have the light at that time.

Therefore, the last thing that had been lost was the first to be restored. They had a reputation as a live and active church, but they were dead. They must therefore repent and do their first works over again before taking any higher step (Rev 3:1).

G. CIRCLE VI - YEARS OF THE CATERPILLAR RESTORED

"And I will restore to you the years that the caterpillar hath eaten..." (Joel 2:25).

Just before the arrow began to ascend, and the work of restoration began, we see the scene of ruin depicted by Joel in all its awfulness.

In Chapter 1, verses 9, 10, 17, 18, 20 we read: *"The meat offering and the drink offering is cut off... the field is wasted... the corn is wasted: the new wine is dried up... garners are. laid desolate, the barns are broken down...*

"the beasts groan! the herds of cattle are perplexed... the flocks of sheep are made desolate... the rivers of water are dried up, and the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness. "

1. Justification By Faith Restored

Then one day amidst all this desolation, God began to move. The treading of His footsteps was heard. In Circle VII we see the roots of the tree again sinking deep into the earth, and justification by faith restored.

This is the way it all came about: One day **Martin Luther** (1483-1546) was walking up the steps of the cathedral on hands and knees, over broken glass, endeavoring to do penance, thereby seeking to pay for his sins.

As he was toiling painfully and laboriously up the steps in this manner, blood trickling from his hands and knees, cut by broken glass, he heard a voice from Heaven saying:

"Martin Luther, the just shall live by faith."

At the words, a great light fell from Heaven. It banished the darkness and doubts. It illuminated the soul of Martin Luther, and revealed the finished work of Calvary and the blood that alone can pay for sin.

"For nothing good have I, Whereby Thy grace to claim, I'll wash my garments white In the blood of Calvary's Lamb."

The days that followed were eventful days, epoch-making days, fraught with self-sacrificing and suffering. The Lord had spoken, and promised that all the years that had been eaten should be restored.

Out of the seas of travail and suffering that followed the preaching of justification by faith, there was born a little body of *blood-washed, fire-tried* pilgrims, willing to suffer persecution for His Name's sake.

Perhaps you have read how Martin Luther and his followers were turned out of the churches, spoken against falsely, and accused of all manner of evil. Many were

burned alive, tied to a stake — because they would not renounce their faith in the blood shed on the cross for them.

2. The Saints Suffer Persecution

As Martin Luther, Calvin, Knox, Fletcher and many other blessed children of the Lord stood firm for the truths of salvation and a sinless life, they suffered all manner of persecution.

God's Word says, "*They that shall live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution*" (2Tim 3:12). If you or your church profess to live godly and yet never suffer persecution, if you have become popular and the shame and reproach of the cross is gone, there is something radically wrong somewhere, for those who live godly still suffer persecution.

As the noble tree again put down her roots of justification into the fertile soil of faith, as life again began to surge through the trunk and the limbs of the tree, every demon in hell seemed to be raging and howling against those who saw and accepted the light of salvation.

Martyrs were stoned to death, swung from public scaffolds, and suffered the tortures of the Inquisition. Their eyes were put out with hot irons, they were beaten till great gashes were cut in their backs, salt was rubbed into the wounds and they were cast into the dark dungeons, still true and unflinching for Jesus.

They were tortured in unspeakable ways, beheaded, and sent to the guillotine. The Covenanters were driven from hill to hill and often had to hide themselves in caves in order to pray or sing the praises of the Lord. They were hunted and harassed at every turn.

But God had said, "*I will restore the years that have been eaten.*" And in spite of the burning stake, in spite of the blood and fire and the deep waters of tribulation, in spite of the raging of the demons of hell, the great arrow that had so long been going down had at last started upward, and was never to stop until it reached the top and the tree was again restored to its perfection.

Persecution cannot stop God. Floods cannot slow His step. Fire cannot delay His progress.

So, line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little (Isa 28:10-13), the work of restoration has been going on.

Not only did the Lord restore the years the caterpillar had eaten, but years the cankerworm had eaten.

H. CIRCLE VIII- THE YEARS OF THE CANKERWORM RESTORED

"And I will restore to you the years that the... cankerworm has eaten..."
(Joel 2:25).

1. Holiness Restored

Entire consecration, and holiness unto the Lord were preached; God called out a still more separated people with a deeper realization of what it meant to live a life wholly given up and consecrated to the Lord.

The people a step lower always seem to fight the people a step higher. Nevertheless, as the work of sifting and separation went on. God led His people forth to higher heights.

As one church grew cold, lost their first love or fought higher truths, they lost out spiritually.

As soon as one creed (group) would refuse to walk in the light as given by the Lord, or begin to organize and set up man's rule, the Lord simply stepped over their walls and left them to their forms and ceremonies and took with Him the little "called out, out of a called out" flock.

In many instances the recording angel had to write upon the door of the fashionable churches:

"...thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead" (Rev 3:1), or "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof..." (2Tim 3:5).

But the work was not stopped; some where people were praying, somewhere hungry hearts were meeting in little home prayer meetings, or on the street comers, and the tender shoots and branches were being thrust forth On the tree.

Consecration and holiness were being preached, and the years the cankerworm had eaten were being restored.

2. A Separated People

John Wesley (1703—1791) was a man with a message for the Church and the world in the 1700s. He too suffered persecution. Preaching on the street comers in those days, faithful followers were stoned, and pelted with rotten eggs. They were fought, but not defeated. The power of God was manifested in the dear old Methodist Church.

Also in **Charles Finney's** meetings (American Revivalist of the 1800s), men and women were slain under the power of God. At times the floors were strewn with the slain of the Lord.

Signs and wonders accompanied those who preached and brought the *"food in due season "*(Ps 145; 15).

While these churches lived godly, prayerful, mighty lives in Jesus, they suffered persecution. But when they too began to drift into the same cold, formal state as the others before them, the power and manifestation of the Spirit began to lift from their presence.

When **supper rooms** take the place of **upper rooms** and concerts the place of prayer meetings, the Spirit is grieved away.

As each body of believers began to organize and throw up walls of difference, God simply stepped over their walls and called out another separated people, willing to suffer and sacrifice for Him.

Then came the day when **William Booth** (founder of The Salvation Army) was called upon to decide whether he would compromise or would follow the greater light God gave him. As he hesitated a moment, his wife called from the balcony of that thronged church: "Say no, William!"

And William Booth said "No!" and, refusing to compromise, went forth preaching the message that had been given him.

In the early days of the Salvation Army, they were unpopular, a peculiar people who suffered persecution, just as the others before mentioned had been in the beginning.

They too were stoned and imprisoned. Some were even martyred. But neither the devil nor his agents could stop God and His work of restoration.

In these early days of the Army it was nothing uncommon to see men and women slain under the power of God. Some of their number received the Holy Spirit and spake with other tongues.

All-night prayer meetings, dancing before the Lord and mighty power were manifested in their midst. True to prophecy, while they lived separated holy lives, they were persecuted and unpopular with the world.

Then came the **Holiness Churches**, wonderfully blessed of God, and the Lord moved in their midst in a mighty manner.

Many of these dear people thought that the Lord had now restored all He was going to restore to the Church, and believed that they had all the Lord had for them. *But not so!* God had said, "*I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm...*" (Joel 2:25). This necessarily meant ALL that was lost would be restored.

Now so far only the years eaten by the caterpillar and the cankerworm had been restored. What about the years eaten by the locust and the palmerworm? When God says "All," does He mean all or only half? Why, He means all, to be sure. Therefore, next:

I. CIRCLE IX- THE YEARS OF THE LOCUST RESTORED

*"And I will restore to you the years that **the locust has eaten...**"* (Joel 2:25).

1. Infilling Of The Holy Spirit Restored

In all centuries of Church history, a small faithful remnant of saints had received the Holy Spirit and spoken in tongues as in Bible days. Yet upon the Church at large, the years which the locust had eaten in Circle III (the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and Gifts of the Spirit) had not been restored in any great measure.

Therefore this was the next to be restored. Peter, in quoting from the prophet Joel, says, "*...in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh...*" (Acts 2:17). Joel says "*Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God: for he hath given you the former rain [at Pentecost] moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former [Pentecostal] rain, and the latter [Tabernacles] rain in the **first month***" (Joel 2:23). The "first month" in this verse refers to the season when the Feast of Tabernacles (or Feast of Ingathering) was observed. See Section C 10 for further understanding of this.

2. The Latter Rain Falls

It was just a few years ago that this latter rain began to fall. Perhaps you recollect the great Welch Revival, where under the preaching of Evan Roberts, the fire fell.

Many were saved and baptized with the Holy Spirit. Those who received the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, spoke with other tongues.

In Muki, India, a missionary, Pandita Ramabai, was praying with a band of Hindu girls. They had spent days and nights in prayer, when suddenly the Spirit was poured out in their midst as He had been on the Day of Pentecost.

Visible fire is said to have been seen upon one girl's bed, and when the other girls went for water to extinguish the fire, it was discovered that this was the fire of the Holy Spirit, such as Moses saw in the burning bush that was not consumed.

These dear Hindu girls who received the Holy Spirit, spake with other tongues given by the Holy Spirit. One girl spake in the English language (which she had never learned), and this is the message that was spoken through her: "**Jesus is coming soon, get ready to meet Him.**"

And the great revival spread on and on. Almost simultaneously the Spirit was poured out in the United States of America, in England, in Canada, in Africa, in China, and in the islands of the sea.

Never was such worldwide revival known to spread so quickly and simultaneously. The Spirit was poured out upon praying bands in numberless places, who had never heard before of the infilling of the Holy Spirit.

In every instance, without exception — those who received the Holy Spirit spake in other tongues exactly as those who had received in Bible days. The latter rain was falling on the earth.

In order to receive the Holy Spirit, one had to be empty and humble. Poor and rich, black or white, the mistress and the maid alike received the Holy Spirit when they humbled themselves and sought with all their hearts.

Those who received, praised the Lord and magnified His Name, as no one but Spirit-filled saints can do.

Waves of glory, floods of praise swept over assemblies who had received the Holy Spirit. There was no way of stopping this great revival, it seemed.

3. Outpouring Of The Holy Spirit Condemned

Just as demons and men had fought the restoration of the years eaten by the caterpillar and cankerworm, with renewed vigor they then fought the restoration of the years that had been eaten by the locust.

Again history repeated itself, and the saints a step lower, unwilling to humble themselves, fought those who had gone a step higher, and many refused to walk in the light.

They failed to realize that God really meant what He said when He promised to restore "ALL" that had been lost.

They lost sight of the fact that the Lord was coming for a perfect Church clad with all power and glory of the Spirit.

Some even declared that the Baptism of the Holy Spirit was not for these days, and did not understand that we are still living in the dispensation of the Holy Spirit and will be until Jesus comes.

Preachers jumped to their pulpits and began to condemn those who had received the Holy Spirit in the Bible way. They cried "Wildfire! Emotionalism! Hypnotism! False Teaching!" All sorts of names were flung at them.

Oh, the blindness of these dear persecutors' eyes! They who themselves had been persecuted for the light and truth restored a few years previous, were now themselves persecuting those who were moving on into greater light.

Papers were printed to condemn the outpouring of the Spirit, great preachers mounted their platforms and denounced it; but they could no more stop God from restoring the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and pouring out the latter rain than the former persecutors had been able to stop the restoration of salvation and holiness unto the Lord.

Those who fought the Holy Spirit barred their doors or put up umbrellas of unbelief. They began to dry up spiritually, immediately. The moment assemblies and churches that once were on fire for God and preaching "*...holiness without which no man shall see the Lord*" (Heb 12:14) — the moment they rejected the Holy Spirit, they began to lose their power.

Oh, why could they not see that this latter-rain outpouring of the Spirit was just what they needed and had been asking for! Why could they not just have humbled themselves and let the Spirit Who had been **"with"** them now come **"in"** them, making them the Temple of the Holy Spirit! (John 14:17).

4. Outpouring Cannot Be Stopped

The fighting and persecution, however, were unable to quench the outpouring of the Spirit upon those who sought earnestly with pure and humble hearts.

To fight the outpouring of the Holy Spirit was just like a man with a broom in his hand endeavoring to sweep back the tidal waves of the Pacific Ocean. While he is sweeping it back in one place, the waves roll in, in countless other places.

Moreover if he remains long where the full tides are rolling in, and does not withdraw, the waves will soon flow over him and he will be "one of them." Hallelujah!

A broom cannot stop the tide of the ocean; neither can fighting stay the falling of the latter rain, for God hath spoken it. ' *In the last days I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh.* "Oh, stop fighting God and open up your hearts to receive and welcome His gift, the Holy Spirit.

During the past ninety years, hundreds of millions of hungry seekers have been baptized in the Holy Spirit.

Thus in Circle IX (9) on the chart, I saw in my vision the leaves which had been eaten by the locust were again restored to the tree.

Just as many in Circles VII (7) and VIII (8) had believed that when the Lord had restored full salvation and holiness they had all there was for them, so many who had received the Baptism of the Spirit believed that they had all the Lord had for them.

They conscientiously believed that once they had been filled with the Spirit and had spoken with other tongues, they really had all the Lord had for them, and stopped seeking for more.

This, however, had not been all the Church had lost, and was therefore not all that was to be restored.

J. CIRCLE X - THE YEARS OF THE PALMERWORM RESTORED

*"And I will restore to you the years that **the... palmerworm has eaten...**"*
(Joel 2:25).

1. Gifts And Fruit Being Restored

Just as the Father bestowed the gift of His only Son Jesus to the world, and just as Jesus bestows the Gift of the Holy Spirit, the promise of the Father, upon the believer, so now in turn, the Holy Spirit has gifts to bestow upon those who receive Him.

The nine Gifts and Fruits of the Spirit seen in Circle One are again being restored to the tree. Many blessed children of the Lord stop short at salvation and consecration and fail to receive the Holy Spirit.

2. Seek The Gifts

Also, many who have received the Holy Spirit stop short and fail to *"Covet earnestly the best gifts"* (I Cor 12:31).

In seeking more of God's will to be wrought in our lives after having received the Holy Spirit, do not ask for more of the Holy Spirit, because if you have received Him you have received all of Him. He is not divisible.

Either you have, or have not, received the Holy Spirit. Therefore if He has come in and taken up His abode and spoken through you with other tongues, as in Acts 2:4, pray that you may be more yielded to the Spirit Who dwells within.

Someone says, "Oh, do not seek me gifts, seek the Giver." But beloved, if you have received the Spirit you have received the Giver, and Paul says, "...*covet earnestly the best gifts... seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church... Let him who speaketh in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret... that the church may be edified, covet to prophesy...*" (I Cor 12:31; 14:12,13, 39).

There is a real genuine Gift of Prophecy — even though the enemy has tried to counterfeit it. Discerning of Spirits is needed; Gift of Healings and all the other Gifts should be in manifestation in our church services.

The Gifts And Fruits are again appearing upon the tree.

"To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit,

"To another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit,

"To another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses" (I Cor 12:8-11).

In Circle X (10) we see the fruit not yet fully mature. But as we pray and yield ourselves to the Spirit, He will allocate gifts to every member of the Church as the Spirit chooses. He will cause the Gifts and Fruits of the Spirit to be visible in our midst.

3. Press On To Perfection

Jesus is coming soon, coming for a perfect Church, clad in power and glory. Jesus is coming for the perfect tree with every gift and fruit hanging in luscious, mellow, developed perfection upon her branches.

Oh, let us wake up and press on to perfection! The winter is over and gone, the spring with its former rain has passed, the summer is passing and the latter rain has long been falling. The Harvest is at hand and the Master is searching for ripened, developed fruit.

Praise God for the roots and trunk of salvation! Praise God for the firm, strong limbs and branches of holiness and consecration! Praise God for the green leaves of the Holy Spirit. But the Master demands fruit from His tree these last days before His coming. Not green, immature fruit, but perfect fruit. He is whispering just now: ***"I Will Restore All the Years That Have Been Eaten."***

Dear ones, there is land ahead to be possessed. Let the fruit of Love be wrought out in your life, with Joy, Peace, Longsuffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, Meekness and Temperance.

Let us get back to Pentecost, and on to the fullness of Pentecostal power and glory recorded in God's Word, for Jesus is coming soon, very soon, for His perfect, waiting Church, His Bride, unspotted with the world. Jesus is coming for His tree with its unblemished and perfect fruit.

Soon He will lift us up and transplant us to the heavenly garden where our leaves shall not wither, neither shall the fruit decay.

The arrow is almost to the top now. The hour when Jesus will burst the starry floor of Heaven and descend for His beloved is at hand. The great clock of time has almost reached the appointed hour.

Let nothing hinder the work of preparation in your life. Let us beware that we quench not the Spirit.

Watch that we do not fall into the same snare which other people formerly used of God have fallen into: snares of formality, of coldness and organization, building walls about ourselves and failing to recognize the other members of our body — *"for by one Spirit are we all baptized into ONE BODY"* (I Cor 12:13).

If ever we put up walls and fall into these snares of formality. God will step over our walls and choose another people as surely as He did before.

Press on therefore to perfection; do not stop short of God's best. If you lay down your crown, another will take it up, the number will be complete, none will be missing; only those who have pressed on all the way to His standard will be caught up.

If you have been doubting God, doubt no longer. He is waiting to restore all the years that have been eaten, and cause you to stand forth in that glorious "perfect-tree-company," ready and waiting for Jesus.

SECTION C7

THE DOCTRINE OF ETERNAL SECURITY

(Once Saved, Always Saved)

By Ralph Mahoney

INDEX TO THIS SECTION

7.1 - Can A Person Be Lost After Having Been Justified?

7.2 - A Right Kind Of Faith

Chapter 1

Can A Person Be Lost After Having Been Justified?

Introduction

Forty years ago I was studying in a missionary training school. There I met a great man of God. He was a fifth-generation Presbyterian pastor. Even though I was just 18 years old, he be-friended me. I came to greatly respect him as a minister of the gospel. He was a wonderful Christian.

He came from a family who had great regard for the Bible. He memorized five verses a day.

By the time he was twelve years old he had memorized all of the Epistles of Paul. At the age of twenty he had memorized the entire New Testament. When he was forty, large portions of the Old Testament had been committed to memory.

Now he did this by memorizing five verses a day. In a year that is some 1,800 verses. (The longest book in the New Testament is Luke. It has 1,151 verses. The entire New Testament has 7,597; the Old Testament, 22,485.)

This profound knowledge of Scripture made a deep impression on me.

Despite his great knowledge of the Scripture, I still had many disagreements with him about doctrinal issues. We would sit for hours in friendly discussion about these differences. He believed the doctrine commonly called "eternal security." I did not (nor do I now) believe this doctrine as he taught it.

Ours was a friendly difference, not a hostile or angry relationship. He could quote chapters of the Bible that he felt supported what he believed. I had scores of verses that I believed refuted what he taught.

In examining this doctrine, let us approach it in this loving manner. Let those of differing viewpoint not hurl accusations of "heresy" at the other. Rather let us examine the Scripture in the attitude so eloquently described by the Apostle James. *"But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated..."* (Jas 3:17).

Remember, the person who has a differing viewpoint is convinced the teachings of the Bible are on his side. So let us be charitable and loving toward those holding a different viewpoint. Let us all be good 'Bereans' *"...who searched the scriptures daily, whether these things be so"* (Acts 17:11).

A. TWO DIFFERENT VIEWPOINTS

1. First Viewpoint— We Are Saved By Our Own Works Or By Faith And Works

About four hundred years ago, many church leaders saw the church in desperate need of change. Indulgences (a concept that the church could sell and the devout could buy favors from God) were being sold all over Europe to raise money to build St. Peter's Cathedral in Rome.

Flagellism (the practice of self-inflicted whipping of one's body) was practiced by millions of "Christians." The flagellists sought to obtain a righteous standing before God by this pagan practice.

People walked on their knees for miles, to pray before a statue of the Virgin Mary, thinking thereby they could obtain forgiveness and absolution from their sins. They were seeking salvation through the merits of these, and far worse, religious fallacies.

Corruption was widespread in the church. The popes subjugated the kings of Europe and threatened them with eternal damnation if they did not obey papal decrees.

The "Christian" kings were forced to lead wars against the political rivals of the pope. It was indeed "the dark ages" — in which the light of the gospel was very nearly extinguished.

As the theologian-preacher John Calvin and the reformer Martin Luther grappled with these unbiblical practices, they began to see the powerful truths taught by the Apostle Paul in his epistle to the Romans.

(NOTE: It was not by accident that Paul wrote this letter to the church at Rome. The Holy Spirit knew that in future centuries the Roman church would desperately need to understand what Paul had to say.)

2. Second Viewpoint — We Are Saved By Grace Through Faith Alone

a. Five Doctrinal Truths. The REFORMATION, which began about four centuries ago, birthed the Protestant churches.

Five great foundational, doctrinal truths undergirded this movement:

- 1) **Scripture alone.**
- 2) **Faith alone.**
- 3) **Grace alone.**
- 4) **The Sovereignty of God.**
- 5) **The Priesthood of every believer.**

These were considered essential if the church was to break free from the shackles of spiritual darkness and religious bondage so pervasive in the church of that time. This discussion involves the second and third of these five foundational doctrines.

B. THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH

Calvin, Luther and hundreds of others were visited by the Lord. They received the miracle described in Luke 24:45. *"Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures."*

It was a great revelation to them when they read in their Bible, *"Behold... the just shall live by his faith "* (Hab 2:4).

"The righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, The just shall live by faith" (Rom 1:17).

"But that no man is justified by the law [that is, by observing commandments, religious rules, etc.] in the sight of God, it is evident; for. The just shall live by faith" (Gal 3:11).

"Now the just shall live by faith..." (Heb 10:38).

But what did this four-times-repeated statement mean?

1. Paul's Answer

The Apostle Paul set forth three arguments to answer this question.

a. Every Gentile Is A Sinner — In Need Of The Savior, *"...for we have... before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin;*

"As it is written, There is none [no Gentile] righteous, no, not one; "There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.

"They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one...

"Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness;

"Their feet are swift to shed blood; "Destruction and misery are in their ways; And the way of peace have they not known;

"There is no fear of God before their eyes" (Rom 3:9-18).

This accurately describes the total depravity of the Gentile — *"...having no hope, and without God in the world"* (Eph2:12).

b. Every Jew Is A Sinner — In Need Of The Savior, *"...for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin;*

"As it is written, There is none [no Jew] righteous, no, not one "(Rom 3:9,10).

"Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law [this refers specifically to the Jews, who were under the Old Testament law]; that every mouth may be stopped [from boasting in any self-righteousness], and all the world become guilty before God" (Rom 3:19).

Conclusion: It is abundantly clear from these verses that everyone in all the world (whether Gentile or Jew) is a sinner, in need of the Savior.

"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom 3:23).

c. Neither Gentile Nor Jew Can Be Justified By The Law.

2. Explanation Of Terms

To understand Paul's thesis, we must define the words he uses and explain their meaning.

a. Justified. This is a-legal term used in a secular court of criminal law. To be "justified" in a court of law means to be acquitted, declared innocent, declared not guilty.

In the Bible it means even more. It means to be declared righteous, to have "righteous standing" before God. In the sight of God I am "**just(as)if-ied**" (just as if I had never sinned).

This is illustrated in the time of the exodus when Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt. The Israelites came out of Egypt under the "*covering of the blood of the lamb*" (Exo 12:13). "*.. And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea*" (I Cor 10:2).

In the wilderness they were not acting like baptized saints. They complained and provoked both the Lord and Moses. At one point God talked of destroying them (Deut9:14).

Yet, when the 'prophet-become-soothsayer' Balaam was hired by King Balak to curse Israel, he uttered this remarkable prophecy: "*He [God] hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel...*" (Num 23:21).

How could this be said of the children of Israel? The Bible record is replete with stories of their failure and sin.

Balaam was expressing the view God has of people who have taken advantage of the "blood of the lamb." The blood brought God's protection and covered their sins. God could not see their sin. God saw them as sinless. They were justified. They had righteous "**standing**" before God even though they were in a complaining, rebellious "**state.**"

"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered" (Ps 32:1). That which is covered cannot be seen. Thus, when we are justified, our sin is forgiven and forgotten, "*...for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more*" (Jer 31:34). "*As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us*" (Ps 103:12).

Sin covered! Sin forgiven! Sin forgotten!

This is what "*...the LORD the Judge...*" (Judg 11:27) decrees for any sinner who will meet His conditions for being justified. These conditions will be explained later.

b. The Law And The Commandments. "The law" refers to the first five books of the Bible. These were written by Moses on parchments and were identified as "the book of the law."

"And it came to pass, that Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book...

*"...Moses commanded the Levites... Take this **book of the law**, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God..." (Deut 31:24-26).*

*' And he said unto them... that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in **the law of Moses**, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me*" (Luke 24:44).

"The law" contained "the (ten) commandments."

The "commandments" were originally written on two tables of stone by the finger of God. Moses transcribed them from the stone tablets and included them in "the book of the law."

"And... He wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments " (Exo 34:28).

"And he gave unto Moses... two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God" (Exo 31:18).

"There was nothing in the ark [of the covenant] save the two tables of stone, which Moses put there at Horeb... " (I Ki 8:9).

The ten **commandments** define our duty toward God and mankind. They are the moral guidelines for human behavior.

The law applied these commandments in practical ways to insure domestic tranquility and justice among the Israelites. **The law** was for the nation of Israel. The ten **commandments** were universal moral and spiritual principles for all mankind.

"The law" and "the commandments" need to be distinguished when reading the New Testament. Paul refers to them as distinct (not synonymous) terms.

*"Wherefore **the law** is holy, and **the commandment** holy, and just, and good"* (Rom 7:12). In most cases, these terms do not mean the same thing.

NOTE: During the thirteen centuries from Moses to Christ, the Jewish people developed a complex set of commentaries and interpretations of the Pentateuch (the law). They refer to these writings as "the oral tradition." By Jesus' time, the Pharisees made the "oral traditions" as binding on the people as the Scriptures themselves. (Refer to the section **Between the Old and New Testament** for expanded comment on this.)

Jesus rejected the authority of **tradition** when it contradicted the **commandments** or the clear statement and intent of "**the law**."

Jesus said to the Jews, *"For laying aside the **commandment of God**, ye hold the tradition of **men**, in the way you require the washing of pots and cups...*

*"And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the **commandment** of God, that ye may keep your **tradition**.*

"Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition " (Mark 7:8,9,13).

3. Problems Understanding Paul's Answer

The Apostle Peter warned about problems in understanding what Paul wrote: *"...even as our beloved brother Paul... hath written unto you... some things **hard to be understood**..."* (2 Pet 3:15,16).

The purpose of Paul's epistles to the Romans, Galatians and Hebrews was to answer the difficult question asked by Job 4,000 years ago: *"...but how should man be just with God?"* (Job 9:2).

We're now going to explain Paul's answer. To understand Paul's epistles, you will need to refer back to these definitions.

a. How Can A Sinful Man Be Justified? The Jewish people venerated Abraham as the great patriarch of their nation. It was his faith-filled obedience to the voice of the Lord that caused the son of promise, Isaac; to be born. To Isaac was born Jacob (whose name was changed to Israel — Gen 32:28). To him were born twelve sons whose offspring became the twelve tribes of Israel.

Paul asks the question: **How was Abraham justified?**

1) Not By Works (his own righteous deeds). But By Believing God.

"What then shall we say that Abraham our forefather discovered in this matter? If, in fact, Abraham were justified by works, he has something to boast about...

"What does the Scripture [Old Testament — Gen 15:6] say? 'Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness'"(Rom 4:1-3 niv).

Paul makes it very clear, it is *"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us..."* (Titus 3:5).

Thus we are not justified by what we do, but by what Christ did at the cross. Like the passover lamb in Egypt, He gave His blood to provide a covering for our sin. *"...being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him"* (Rom 5:9).

2) Not By Circumcision. Abraham was not justified by circumcision — even though he was circumcised.

".. for we say that faith was credited to Abraham as righteousness. Under what circumstances was it then credited? Was it after he was circumcised or before? It was not after, but before.

"And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness that he already had by faith while he was still uncircumcised.

"So then he is the father of all who believe, but have not been circumcised, in order that righteousness might be credited to them " (Rom 4:9-11 niv).

Circumcision (like water baptism for the believer) was not the **reason** for Abraham being justified; it was the **outward** sign (evidence) of his faith, by which he was already justified (before he was circumcised).

3) Not By Keeping "The Law". Abraham was not justified by keeping "the law." It was impossible for Abraham to be justified by keeping the law and the commandments because these were not given until 430 years after Abraham.

"...the law, introduced four hundred and thirty years later, does not set aside the covenant previously established [with Abraham] by God..." (Gal 3:17 niv).

"Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight..." (Rom 3:20).

"Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law" (Rom 3:28).

"For Christ is the end of the law so there may be righteousness for every one who believes " (Rom 10:4 niv).

"We [Jews] know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ... because by observing the law shall no flesh be justified" (Gal 2:16).

"But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident; for, the just shall live by faith" (Gal 3:11).

4) By Faith Alone. Paul makes it clear — we cannot have it both ways. Either we believe the Scripture concerning justification by faith, or we are in unbelief, lost, without any hope. *"But Israel, who pursued the law of righteousness, has not attained it. Why not? Because they sought it not by faith..."* (Rom 9:31,32 niv).

Paul explains the purpose of the law. It was **not to make men holy**; it was to teach them how unholy they were. *".. for by the law is the knowledge of sin "* (Rom 3:20). *"...I had not known what sin was, but by the law..."* (Rom 7:7 niv).

The law would cause mankind to know they needed someone to save them — and thus they would believe on Christ as their Savior.

"Now we know that what things soever the law says, it says... that ...all the world may become guilty before God" (Rom 3:19). "So the law was our tutor [put in charge] to lead us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith" (Gal 3:24 niv).

To try to find right standing before God by the law is to "fall from grace." *"Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace "* (Gal 5:4).

Let us therefore pile all our good works in one pile, and all our sins in another — and flee from them both to the cross of Christ, where forgiveness is offered the penitent. By **faith alone** in His blood (Rom 3:25) can we be justified.

Chapter 2

A Right Kind Of Faith

Introduction

As a young reformer, Martin Luther rejected the Epistle of James and thought it should be removed from the canon. Later in life he changed his position because he saw his followers living wicked lives. They professed to be justified by faith, but their lifestyle gave no proof they had the **right kind** of faith.

"They professed that they knew God; but in works they denied him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate " (Titus 1:16).

Luther's followers fell into the error Paul warned against. After clearly establishing the basis of justification, Paul alerted the believers against wrongly interpreting and applying his revelation.

"What shall we say then? Shall we go on sinning, that grace may increase? God forbid...!

"...we are buried with him by baptism [in water] that... we may live a new life.

"...Knowing this, that our old self is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be rendered powerless, that we should no longer be slaves to sin — because anyone who has died has been freed from sin... In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin...

"For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace " (excerpts Rom 6:1-14 niv).

A. PAUL VS JAMES = NO CONTRADICTION

The English Bible does not clearly translate James. As a result, many have thought James contradicted Paul. There is no contradiction between Paul and James, when James is properly understood.

In fact, James makes it abundantly clear how hopeless it is to try and be justified by the law. *"For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all"* (Jas 2:10).

Has anyone ever lived (except Jesus) that was not guilty of one sin? Consider this awesome argument of James: Just one point of offense is just as bad as breaking ALL the commandments, multiple times.

One lie makes me a liar. In the same way, one sin makes me a sinner, under the penalty of death. *"For the wages of sin is death..."* (Rom 6:23). *"The soul that sinneth, it shall die..."* (Eze 18:20).

Hence, it is hopeless to think we can save ourselves by the law, circumcision or good works. We need a Savior (someone to save us apart from what we can do). Praise God! He provided that for me in His Son, Jesus! My Savior.

B. WHAT IS SAVING FAITH?

"What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he have faith, and have not works? Can faith save him?" (Jas 2:14 kjv). Unfortunately, this translation is incorrect. It should read, *"... can **that kind of faith** save him?"*

It is not a question of whether we are saved by faith or by works. Rather, what **kind of faith** is it that saves? Intellectual agreement with the facts of the Bible about God is not the kind of faith that saves.

"Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well; the devils also believe, and tremble" (Jas 2:19).

1. Saving Faith Acts And Obeys

James points out that demons believe the facts about God, but there is no obedient action in response to what God says. Faith **always** ACTS and OBEYS.

The kind of faith that justifies and saves us from sin is a faith that produces a loving obedience to God's commandments. *"But wilt thou know, O vain man,, that faith without works [obedient action] is dead?"* (Jas 2:20).

Faith is "**obedient action(s)** in response to what God has said."

a. Saving Faith Illustrated. Like the emperor of Japan, the Roman emperors of New Testament times proclaimed themselves gods — to be worshipped.

The Greek word '**Kurios**' (translated as 'Lord' in our Bible) was reserved by Roman law. '**Kurios**' was to be used only for the **Caesar**. To the Romans, Caesar was "Lord." **To use this word for any other, brought the death penalty on the transgressor.**

Paul wrote the believers in Rome (the capital city and throne of Caesar)...

*"That if you will confess with your mouth '**Jesus is Lord**', and believe in your heart that God has raised him from the dead, you will be saved.*

*"For with **the heart man believeth** unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation"* (Rom 10:9,10).

Paul wrote two powerful truths about the kind of faith that saves:

1) It Will Live Or Die For Jesus. Saving faith is the kind of faith that makes you willing to live or die for Jesus. To confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord', before witnesses, was to put your life at risk. It was the death penalty if you were reported to Roman authorities by the witnesses.

2) It Will Obey Jesus. Saving faith was more a matter of the **heart** than the head. *"For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness..."* (Rom 10:10). *"For by grace [unmerited favor] are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it [me grace and the faith] is the gift of God: Not of works..."* (Eph 2:8,9).

Romans 16:26 speaks of *"...obedience of faith."* The kind of faith that doesn't produce obedient action in response to what God has said, is NOT the kind of faith that saves and justifies.

James' probing question is this: *"Can the kind of faith that does not produce obedient action save?" The answer is a resounding NO! "For we... are created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them"* (Eph 2:10).

Conversely, do good works, circumcision, the law or the commandments save us? No! Only by God's unmerited favor (grace) and mercy can we have any hope of salvation. By believing with our heart (like Abraham of old), our faith is credited to us as righteousness.

2. Saving Faith Is A Gift From God

*"I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for **he hath clothed me** with the garments of salvation, **he hath covered me** with the robe of righteousness..."* (Isa 61:10). It is the clothing and covering He freely "gifts" to us that make it possible to stand before God as sinless, justified, *"...it is the **gift** of God, not of works..."* (Eph 2:8,9).

Apart from God's action to save us, *"...we are all as an unclean thing, and all **our** [self] righteousnesses are as filthy rags... and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away"* (Isa 64:6).

Isaiah makes it clear. The best we can produce by our own efforts and religious works are as "a menstruous cloth" (literal Hebrew) which, if touched, made one ceremonially unclean and unfit to approach unto God.

"And if a woman have an issue... in her... blood, she shall be put apart seven days: and whosoever toucheth her shall be unclean..." (Lev 15:19).

Editor's note: That such a woman could touch Jesus, and be healed, and be accepted by Him with loving compassion, shows the superiority of the New Covenant over the Old (cf. Luke 8:43-48 with Hebrews 7:22, 8:6, 12:24).

We honor the cross of Christ and the work He completed for our salvation when we quit trying to save ourselves or add to His work by our own righteous deeds. *"For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his"* (Heb 4:10).

In the Old Testament, Ruth was taught how to break out of her poverty and widowhood, and marry the 'lord of the harvest', Boaz.

*"Then Naomi her mother-in-law said unto her, My daughter, shall I not **seek rest for thee**, that it may be well with thee?"*

"And now is not Boaz of our kindred... Wash thy self therefore, and anoint thee, and put thy raiment upon thee..."

*"And it shall be, when he lieth down... thou shall go in... and **lay thee down**; and he will tell thee what thou shall do"* (Ruth 3:1-4).

All Ruth had to do was prepare herself for the relationship and go in to Boaz and lay down (rest). Boaz took care of the details — and Ruth was saved from widowhood, starvation and want.

So it is with us. We are called to rest — while our Lord of the Harvest, Jesus, takes care of the details of our salvation.

Let Jesus complete the work He has begun in you. Quit struggling to save yourself by your own good works. Then you will be a happy Christian.

"Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil 1:6).

If we struggle to save ourselves —we will be frustrated, fearful and insecure.

C. WHAT IF A BELIEVER SINS?

Some teach that if you sin after you believe, you are lost until you repent and receive forgiveness.

Scripture does not support this position. The Bible says, "*Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity*" (Ps 32:1,2).

"David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:

"Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him" (Rom 4:6-8 niv).

These verses show us that when we are justified, when our sins are forgiven, sin is no longer charged against us. Our sins are all charged to Christ, and His righteousness is credited to us.

1. Jesus Will Defend Us

What happens then when a believer sins? The Apostle John teaches us, "*My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense — Jesus Christ, the Righteous. He is the one who paid the full price for our sins...*" (I Jn 2:1,2 niv).

John does not encourage us to sin. He pleads with us not to sin. But he assures us that if we do sin, Jesus stands ready to defend us against any accusation of Satan. He paid the penalty for our sin, so that there could be no condemnation to those in Christ Jesus (Rom 8:1).

The translation of **1 John 3:6-9** in the King James Version of the English Bible has led some to believe that those who believe on Jesus live a sinless life.

This idea contradicts 1 John 1:8-10: "*If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.*

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness

"If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."

1 John 3:5-9 is translated rightly in English by Dr. Williams: "*You know that Jesus appeared that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin. No one who abides in him makes a practice of sinning. No one who makes a practice of sinning has seen him or known him... No one who is born of God will make a practice of sinning...."*

The issue is not one of sinless perfection. However, it is evident that Christ came "*...to save his people from their sin*" (Matt 1:21), and thus, if someone keeps on **making a practice** of sinning or has an habitual addiction to sin — such a one may not have saving faith.

2. A True Believer Will Not Want To Sin

It is a matter of understanding our "old nature" and our "new nature." Our old nature is like that of a pig, who loves to wallow in slime and mud. Our new nature is like that of a sheep, who if it falls or slips into slime, will struggle until it dies to get out of it.

"That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man [nature],

"And that ye put on the new man [nature], which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph 4:22,24).

A true believer will not want to sin, nor *"wallow in the mire"* of sin. One who has saving faith will not make a practice of premeditated sin. But if the believer is overtaken in a fault, yields to temptation or falls into sin, the Lord is right there to defend the believer against the accusation and condemnation of the devil. The key is whether the believer desires to be free from sin.

3. A True Believer Will Be Disciplined

When a child disobeys the parents, the fellowship is broken — not the relationship. Appropriate discipline is what restores the child to obedience and fellowship. During this process, the relationship is NOT broken. The disobedient still remains the child of the parent.

However, it should be noted that strong discipline can follow serious sin.

"For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons..." (Heb 12:6,7).

If you can sin and not be chastised, it is to be questioned whether you are a true believer or not. *"But if you are not disciplined, then you are illegitimate children and not true sons"* (Heb 12:8 niv).

a. David's Sin And Judgments. King David fell into the terrible sin of adultery, followed by the savage sin of murder (2Sam 11). This unleashed a series of judgments that haunted David the rest of his life.

Among David's judgments (chastisements) listed in 2 Samuel 12 were these:

1) War And Death. Because he killed an innocent man (Uriah), the sword would never depart from his house. War and death would plague him until he died.

2) Child's Death. The child born of his adultery with Bathsheba would die.

3) Calamity Upon His Household. Because he violated the sanctity of Uriah's marriage, calamity would come upon and from his own household. David's wives and children would become involved in the worst forms of immorality, including rape, incest and fornication.

4) Child Against Child. David's son Absalom would kill his half-brother Amnon for his rape of Absalom's full-sister Tamar.

5) Child Against Father. Absalom would overthrow David and drive him from the throne. To David's awful shame, Absalom would take his father's concubines and have sexual relations with them.

6) Cursed By His Subjects. David would be cursed by his subjects as he fled from Absalom.

7) Death Of Favorite Son. David's son Absalom would finally be murdered by one of David's generals named Joab.

8) A Broken Heart. David's heart would be crushed and broken as these calamities fell on him and his family.

"And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept: and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

"...the king covered his face, and the king cried with a loud voice, O my son Absalom, O Absalom, my son, my son!" (2Sam 18:33,19:4).

God loves His children too much to let them sin without punishment. He does not exempt us from the painful consequences of our sin.

"...the way of transgressors is hard" (Prov 13:15). "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal 6:7).

But He does not condemn us with the world. *"His mercy is everlasting, enduring to all generations" (Ps 100:5).*

b. Three Levels Of Judgment. There are three levels of judgment at which the believer's sin can be dealt with. Each one is more severe than the previous.

1) Self Judgment. *"For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged" (I Cor 11:31).* When a believer does wrong, the Holy Spirit is right there to reprove and make him strongly aware that he needs to make the matter right. If the sin is against another person, he must make apologies and/or restitution. If he does, the matter is over.

2) Judgment By Believers. If you fail to judge yourself, the Lord will send a believer to you, as the Lord sent the prophet Nathan to David. David responded and repented. His prayer for mercy and restoration is recorded in Psalm 51. While he was severely chastened for his sin — that ended the matter.

3) Judgment By Unbelievers Or By Satan. If we fail to respond to God's dealings at the first or second level — the most severe judgment follows.

"It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have sexual relations with his father's wife " (I Cor 5:1).

The Corinthians would not judge or discipline this unrepentant believer who was committing this sin. Paul gave sobering instructions as to what was required of the Corinthian church.

"In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (I Cor 5:4,5).

Sin is a very serious matter for the believer.

4. Encouragement For The Believer

The believer who does not want to sin should take encouragement in the promises of Romans 8.

*"What shall we then say to these things? **If God be for us, who can be against us?***

"He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"

*"Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? **Shall God** that justifieth?"*

*"Who is he that condemneth? **Shall Christ** that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us?"*

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" (Rom 8:31-35).

All these wonderful truths give us strong assurance and hope. There is wonderful security in Christ. God is on our side — fighting for our salvation. Christ and the Holy Spirit are involved in intercession and legal representation on our behalf. To prove His desire that we be saved, God gave His only Son for us. All this gives us a sense of security and consolation.

"Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath.

"God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope offered to us may be greatly encouraged.

"We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the Holy of Holies behind the curtain" (Heb 6:17-19 niv).

D. IS IT POSSIBLE TO BE LOST AFTER BEING JUSTIFIED?

Many who believe the truth of justification by grace through faith, believe the doctrine of "eternal security." They conclude from all the wonderful truth outlined above, they can never be lost.

If one wants to be kept safe and secure, I do not believe there is any danger of being lost. The Lord has made too many provisions to keep us safe and secure. Jesus reinforces this. *"And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.*

"My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand" (John 10:28,29).

1. Serious Warnings

But we have serious warnings in the New Testament which we ignore at personal peril.

My Presbyterian friend (mentioned in the beginning of this section of the **Leaders Training Guide**) believed the doctrine of eternal security. Yet he acknowledged that some verses troubled him. Among them Romans 8:13: *"If you live after the flesh, you shall die.... "*

The word "die" is the same root word in the Greek text as used to describe the end of the unbeliever who will experience "the second death" — a reference to eternal judgment, *"...for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24).*

A fleshly (carnal) lifestyle can lead one into deception. *"But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin" (Heb 3:13).* Sin and carnality sear the conscience and harden the heart.

Because the judgment and discipline of God is not always immediate, the carnal are deceived into thinking there are no consequences for sin. Unbelief begins creeping in. Unbelief is expressed by disobedience to God's commandments.

"They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being... disobedient..." (Titus 1: 16).

2. Unbelief Puts Us In Jeopardy

What is it then that may cause one who was once saved to be lost? It is unbelief that resulted from carnality and sin.

"But without faith it is impossible to please God: for he that cometh to God must believe..." (Heb 11:6). It is going back into unbelief that puts one in jeopardy.

"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him " (John 3:36).

The word "believeth" means to believe and keep on believing. It is present-continuing tense in Greek grammar. After believing, one must keep on believing.

"Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God" (Heb 3:12). Notice this warning is to "brethren. " This identifies those being spoken to as believers.

"But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

"For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end" (Heb 3:13,14).

I think that says it so clearly; it should settle the argument. If we keep on believing, we are secure. If through unbelief (the result of sin and disobedience) we depart from the living God, I believe we are in jeopardy.

3. Can Believers Turn Back To Unbelief?

I asked my Presbyterian friend this question: "If you knew someone who had believed — but now say they no longer believe — would you give them hope of salvation?"

He thought for quite some time, then solemnly replied, "I would never give anyone hope of salvation who said he did not believe. However, I do not believe it possible for one who has truly believed — to go back into unbelief, and thus be lost."

The argument came down to this.

I believe it is possible to go back into unbelief and thus be lost — even after having believed. My friend did not believe this. It was not a matter of "works versus faith" — it was a matter of believing (by which we are saved) or unbelief (by which we are lost). Why would God warn us about this if it is not possible?

a. Hebrew Believers Who Turned Back. It is said that many of the Jewish believers in the first century were turning away from Christ after having believed. There was great pressure and persecution against Jewish Christians.

They were discriminated against in employment. They couldn't get jobs. They were discriminated against in education. Their children would not be allowed in school. They sometimes were not allowed to buy from the local Jewish businesses.

To gain acceptance back into the Jewish community, it is said the Hebrew Christian had to draw a sign of the cross on the ground, pour blood on it, and then trample it under his feet. This signified he was renouncing the blood and cross of Christ.

To such, the Book of Hebrews was written. "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.

"For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward;

"How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation... ? " (Heb 2:1-3).

"He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses:

"Of how much worse punishment... shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden underfoot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?" (Heb 10:28,29).

These are sobering words of warning!

"But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak" (Heb 6:9).

"But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.

"And above all things have fervent love among yourselves: for love shall cover the multitude of sins " (I Pet 4:7,8).

SECTION C8

TITHING / GIVING

By Ralph Mahoney

Chapter 1

Tithing, Other Giving And Stewardship

A. WE ARE STEWARDS OF GOD'S RESOURCES

Every believer is a steward of everything he possesses. *"As every man hath received... even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God"* (I Pet 4:10). *"Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful"* (I Cor 4:2).

A steward is one who manages, administers and takes care of that which belongs to someone else. Since God is the One Who gives every material blessing, we acknowledge His ownership, *"...for all things come from you, and of your own have we given back to you"* (I Chr 29:14).

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father..." (Jas 1:17).

1. God Asks Us To Tithe

From what He has given, He asks me to give a tithe (10 percent): *"And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD'S: it is holy unto the LORD"* (Lev 27:30). *"You shall truly tithe all the increase of your seed, that the field bringeth forth year by year"* (Deut 14:22).

Jesus commended tithing, *"...for ye tithe... this you should do..."* (Luke 11:42).

2. God's Purposes For Tithing Seen In The Old Testament

a. To Support The Poor And Needy In Israel. Among the Israelis, the harvest of every sabbath (seventh) year was reserved for the poor. *"But the seventh year you shall let your fields rest and lie still: that the poor of your people may eat: and what they leave the beasts of the field shall eat. In like manner you shall deal with your vineyard, and with your oliveyard"* (Exo 23:11).

"For the poor shall never cease out of the land: therefore I command you, saying, You shall open your hand wide unto your brother, to your poor, and to your needy, in your land" (Deut 15:11).

The gleanings of harvest were to be given to the poor and aliens. *"And you shall not glean your vineyard, neither shall you gather every grape of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and alien: I am the LORD your God"* (Lev 19:10).

b. To Support The Levites. The Lord required a special 'third year' tithe for the Levites, the orphan, the widow and the aliens.

"At the end of three years you shall bring forth all the tithe of your increase the same year... And the Levite, ...and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, which are within your gates, shall come, and shall eat and be satisfied; that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hand which you do" (Deut 14:28,29).

"Then you shall say before the LORD your God, I have brought away the hallowed things out of my house, and also have given them unto the Levite, and unto the alien, to the fatherless, and to the widow, according to all your commandments which you have commanded me: I have not transgressed your commandments, neither have I forgotten them" (Deut 26:13).

3. God's Purposes For Tithing Seen In The New Testament

a. To Support The Poor And Needy In God's Family. *"Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold. And laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.*

"And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, which is, being interpreted, the son of consolation, a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus, Having land. sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet "(Acts 4:34-37).

"For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem" (Rom 15:26).

b. To Support Teachers And Preachers. The leaders and teachers in the Church were to be supported from the tithes and offerings given by those to whom they ministered.

"Let him that is taught in the word share with him that teaches in all good things" (Gal 6:6). ' Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel " (1 Cor9:14).

When Paul went out as a missionary to preach the gospel to those who had never heard it, he was supported by the church at Philippi. *"...as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only;*

"For even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid again and again when I was in need. Not that I am looking for a gift, but I am looking for what may be credited to your account.

"...I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God" (Phil 4:15-18). To the generous Philippians, the Lord made this promise. "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus "(Phil 4:19).

4. God's Special Promise

To those who give, God makes a special promise. *"Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye give, it shall be given back to you again " (Luke 6:38 niv).*

This passage teaches us that we control the flow (amount) of God's blessing and provision to our need. If we give spoonfuls to the Lord, He will pick up the same spoon we used and use it to spoon out what we ask for. If we have faith to give shovelfills to the Lord, He will pick up the same shovel and use it to shovel back to us what we need in much more abundant blessing.

I was taught to give 10 percent (tithe) of the money I earned to the Lord when I was a child. When I was twenty-two years old, I was starting new churches. We had the least amount of money we ever had in our life. During that time, the Lord taught me to double-tithe (give 20 percent) of my limited amount of money to the Lord.

One tithe was to support the spread of the gospel in the nation in which I lived. The second tithe was used to support the spread of the gospel in other nations where people had not yet heard about Jesus.

This released a miraculous flow of God's blessing on me and my family. I found out God does what He says. If we give, it will be given back to us in proportion to our giving.

5. Tithing Is A Privilege

Several centuries before the law was given on Mount Sinai, Abraham gave a tithe (tenth) to a representative of God (Gen 14:18-24; Heb 7:1,2). Jacob promised to give a tenth of all God blessed him with (Gen28:22). Jesus said we should not neglect the tithe (Matt 23:23). Hence giving and tithing should not be understood as Old Testament law or a religious obligation. Rather it is a privilege of those who choose to exercise their faith to give.

6. Tithing Expresses Faith

Tithing and giving offerings does not **buy** God's blessing, but it does **release** His blessing upon our lives.

"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it" (Mal 3:10).

Those who tithe are expressing their faith in God in the most practical way possible. They are saying, "I believe the 90 percent that I have left after tithing, has God's blessing on it. With God's blessing, the 90 percent can purchase more than the 100 percent would, without His blessing." It takes faith to believe that.

God allowed His people to tithe money, oil, wine, flour, fruit, wood, animals and other possessions.

7. Other Giving In Addition To The Tithe

Beside the 10 percent, the Old Testament saints were encouraged to give the following:

- a. Firstborn of man and beast** (Num 18:6,15);
- b. Firstfruits of their crops** (Num 18:13; Deut 18:4);
- c. Offerings at the set Feasts** (2Chr 31:3; Numbers 28 and 29);
- d. Offerings at new moons** (Neh 10:32-39);
- e. Wood offering** (Neh 10:34);
- f. Tithe of tithe** (Neh 10:38);
- g. Heave offering** (Numbers 18);
- h. Vows** (Numbers 30);
- i. Freewill offerings** (Lev 22:21; Ezra 3:5);
- j. 3rd-year tithe** (Deut 26:12);
- k. Offerings for the poor, widow, orphan, alien** (Deut 15:1-11);
- l. Special projects** (Ezra 8:24-36; Neh 7:70-72).

8. Be A Generous, Cheerful Giver

The Bible teaches us we are to give willingly and cheerfully, from a spirit of generosity. *"Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering: of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take my offering" (Exo 25:2).*

"Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.

"Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver" (2Cor 9:6,7).

God does not measure our giving by the amount we give. He rewards us according to what is left after we give. Jesus said the tiny amount given by the widow was greater than all the others because it was "*all she had*" (Luke 21:1-4).

Generous giving is proof of our love, faith and maturity (2Cor 8:24; 9:6, 8,13). A generous believer causes others to give thanks to God! (2Cor 9:11,12).

The poor need to give because they need God's blessing to break the curse of poverty.

The Macedonian Christians were in great poverty (2Cor 8:2), yet they gave liberally. They had learned obedience in giving. They had learned that giving brings blessing and breaks the curse of poverty!

Jesus Christ, our ultimate example, became poor in order to bless us (2Cor 8:9).

To refuse to be a faithful steward, by giving, is an act of robbery and rebellion toward God (Mal 3:8-12). But to yield to His purpose in giving is to receive an "open Heaven" and abundant blessing and protection from want and famine.

SECTION C9

WOMEN IN MINISTRY

By Drs. T.L. and Daisy Osborn, with Ralph Mahoney

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Chapter 1

Women In Leadership And Ministry

Introduction

*"The Lord gave the word: great was the **company of those WOMEN** that published it" (Ps 68:11).*

The word COMPANY is translated from the Hebrew word **tsaba**. Strong's Concordance says it is feminine in gender and means "*a mass of women organized for warfare [an army].*"

This verse then clearly establishes a prophetic promise of a day when women would be liberated to publish (preach) the gospel and do the work of the Lord along with men.

The verse then is rightly translated, *"The Lord gave the word: great was the mass of women organized for warfare that published it."*

What follows is written in defense of this special force of women.

The object of this section, then, is two fold: (1) to release women to find their rightful place in God's work, so they can fulfill their ministries for His glory; and (2) to change the attitude of male church leaders so they encourage women to fulfill their God-given calling.

"And it shall come to pass in the last days, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy... Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days" (Acts 2:17,18 niv).

Three things are required to get anything done in this world. These are time, **people** and money.

The devil has used a very successful strategy to stop the Church from fulfilling the Great Commission to evangelize the world. Half the people (women) are often denied participation in the process by many church groups.

Can you imagine any army being successful which will prevent half the soldiers from fighting in the war?

A. GOD'S PURPOSE FOR MAN AND WOMAN

Let's go back to the book of beginnings (Genesis) and look at the creation of woman: *"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them."*

"And the Lord God said, It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him" (Gen 1:27; 2:18).

"And God blessed **them**, and God said unto **them**, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion... "(Gen 1:28).

1. Rulers Together

These verses make clear that God's original intent for man and woman was they be co-regents (rulers together) over the renewed Creation. This means that an equality of position and authority was God's intent. They were to rule together.

This unique partnership is confirmed in the New Testament. *"But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man: and the head of Christ is God"* (I Cor 11:3).

"...the head of every man is Christ." This teaches us that the relationship that exists between Christ the Son and (Adam) the man, was the same relationship God intended between the man (Adam) and the woman (Eve), *"...and the head of the woman [Eve] is the man [Adam]."*

This verse also confirms that the role and relationship that exists between God the Father and Christ the Son, was the model the Scripture uses to illustrate what God intended the relationship between the man and the woman to be. Just as *"the head of Christ is God"* — so *"the head of the woman is the man."*

If we are to understand the biblical role of man and woman, we must examine the relationship of God the Father to Christ the Son.

2. Full Participation

"Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do; for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise " (John 5:19).

Just as the Son depended on the Father for approval and authority to act, the woman acts in consort with the man. The Son does whatever He sees the Father doing in the same manner as He sees the Father doing it. So God intended the woman to fully participate in what the man does.

"For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth, and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel" (John 5:20).

"For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it" (John 5:21 niv).

3. Responsibility Of Judging

*"For the Father... hath committed all judgment unto the Son " (John 5:22). The word **judgeth** is the Greek word **krino**. It means "to decide (judicially); to punish, avenge, judge, act as lawyer (barrister)."*

This illustrates God's intent for woman as co-regent with the man.

The Church is the Bride of Christ. Paul says, *"I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him" (2Cor 11:2).* The Bride (the Church) relates to the husband (Christ) just as God the Son relates to God the Father.

"For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones... This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church " (Eph 5:30-32).

As the Bride of Christ, the members of the Church are called to *"judge angels and men "* and *"things pertaining to this life" (I Cor 6:3).* This feminine role given the Bride of Christ, the Church, is consistent with God's original intent for the woman to rule and exercise dominion with Adam. The woman is to also be empowered to exercise dominion in loving harmony with and in submission to the man.

4. Submission And Obedience

But Adam and Eve sinned, and God told Eve, *"Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee" (Gen 3:16).* So women were told to obey their husbands. That's the way it has remained, even into our New Testament times when the Apostle Paul told Christian wives, *"...submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord" (Eph 5:22).*

But even though a woman was to obey her husband, she was not inferior to him. It just means that she should be willing to let him lead. In fact, Paul called for submission on the part of both the husband and the wife: *"Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God" (Eph 5:21).*

In another letter, Paul clearly stated that there is no difference of status in Christ between a man and a woman. *"There is neither Jew nor Greek, " he writes, "there is neither bond nor free, there is neither **male nor female**, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:28).*

This means we need then to understand the role outlined in the Bible for the woman. It is wonderful and glorious.

Chapter 2

The Role Of Women In The Old Testament

Introduction

In ancient Israel, women were considered to be members of the "family of faith." As such, they could enter into most of the areas of worship.

The Law directed all men to appear before the Lord three times a year. Apparently the women went with them on some occasions (Deut 29:10, 11; Neh 8:2; Joel 2:16), but they were not required to go. Perhaps women were not required to go because of their important duties as wives and mothers.

For instance, Hannah went to Shiloh with her husband and asked the Lord for a son (I Sam 1:3-18). Later, when the child was born, she told her husband, *"I will not go up until the child be weaned, and then I will bring him, that he may appear before the Lord, and there abide forever"* (vs 22).

As head of the family, the husband or father presented the sacrifices and offerings on behalf of the entire family (Lev 1:2). But the wife might also be present.

Women attended the Feast of Tabernacles (Deut 16:14), the yearly Feast of the Lord (Judg 21:19-21), and the Festival of the New Moon (2Ki 4:23).

One sacrifice that only the women gave to the Lord was offered after the birth of a child:

"And when the days of her purifying are fulfilled, for a son, or for a daughter, she shall bring a lamb of the first year for a burnt offering, and a young pigeon, or a turtledove for a sin offering, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, unto the priest" (Lev 12:6).

Several Old Testament women were famous for their faith. Included in the list in Hebrews 11 are two women, Sarah and Rahab (Gen 21; Josh 2; 6:22-25).

Hannah was a godly example of the Israelite mother: She prayed to God; she believed that God heard her prayers; and she kept her promise to God. Her story is found in 1 Samuel 1.

A. MIRIAM

Miriam, the older sister of Moses, was a most remarkable woman.

1. Saved Moses' Life

The Pharaoh had ordered all the Israelite male children killed. The baby Moses' life was in danger, so his mother *"took for him an ark of bulrushes... and put the child in it; and she laid the ark in the reed bushes by the river's edge"* (Exo 2:3).

This was a perilous moment for Moses. But his courageous older sister MIRIAM, even though a child at the time, stayed nearby *"...to watch what would be done to him"* (Exo 2:4).

When Miriam saw Pharaoh's daughter rescue Moses, she immediately presented a plan of action. *"Then said his sister [Miriam] to Pharaoh's daughter, Shall I go and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee?"* (Exo 2:7).

Miriam arranged for Moses' mother to nurse him. Thus Miriam's quick, courageous action saved Moses. We owe the woman Miriam a lot. What would the world be like today had we not had the ministry of Moses?

2. Worship Leader And Prophetess

After Pharaoh's army was drowned in the waters of the Red Sea and the Israelites were safely in the desert, a great worship-celebration took place.

"And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances.

"And Miriam answered them, Sing ye to the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea "(Exo 15:20,21).

The praise-music ministry is best led by those with a prophetic anointing upon their life. This was true of Miriam. She had a lovely prophetic and musical gift that made her an ideal praise-leader and prophetess.

Like David some 500 years later, she sang the song of the Spirit. Her song was a prophetic song. Her worship ministry was the result of the prophetic anointing that was upon her.

Other Old Testament women were also used in the music ministry and worship. In King David's time, *"...God gave to Heman... three daughters. All these were under the hands of their father for song in the house of the LORD, with cymbals, psalteries, and harps, for the service of the house of God, according to the king's order..." (I Chr 25:5,6).*

David established a divine order of praise and worship for the people of God that extends down even to the New Testament church (see Acts 15:16). Hence it is still right that women should participate in praise, worship and music ministry as did Miriam and the daughters of Heman.

3. Leader With Moses And Aaron

"For I brought thee up out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed thee out of the house of slavery; and I sent before thee Moses, Aaron, and Miriam" (Mic 6:4).

Miriam is mentioned right along with Moses and Aaron as one of the trinity that delivered and led the Israelites out of Egyptian slavery. This illustrates the authoritative, highly influential leadership role she exercised.

Dare we deny a similar role to women whom the Holy Spirit similarly anoints in our day and time?

4. Acted Presumptuously

"Remember what the LORD thy God did unto Miriam by the way, after that ye were come forth out of Egypt" (Deut 24:9).

Miriam, Aaron and King Saul illustrate a dangerous trap into which leaders can fall. Leaders can try to exercise authority beyond their office and anointing. Both women and men must be aware that exercising leadership authority can lead to arrogance and pride which can destroy.

In what appears to be a racist motive, Miriam wrongfully challenged Moses' authority. *"And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married..." (Num 12:1).*

The Lord immediately called Miriam to account. *"And the cloud departed from off the tabernacle; and, behold, Miriam became leprous, white as snow..." (Num 12:10).*

"And Moses cried unto the LORD, saying, Heal her now, O God, I beseech thee. And the LORD said unto Moses... let her be shut out from the camp seven days... And Miriam was shut out from the camp seven days: and the people journeyed not till Miriam was brought in again" (Num 12:13-15).

Every leader, man or woman, needs to respect the limits of their ministry. They should not intrude presumptuously into areas for which they do not have responsibility.

Miriam made her mistakes just as other great leaders. Like Moses and David, she was severely disciplined, and thus found forgiveness and restoration to the fellowship of the people of God.

B. DEBORAH

*"And Deborah, a **prophetess**, the wife of Lapidoth, judged Israel at that time.*

"And she dwelt under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in mount Ephraim: and the children of Israel came up to her for judgment" (Judg 4:4,5).

1. Prophetess And Judge

Deborah, a married woman, held two offices: One as a Prophetess (female prophet), and one as the ruler or judge. This latter role is consistent with John 5:22 discussed above.

Under Deborah's leadership, the children of Israel were delivered from a twenty-year-long occupation by an alien army.

Through prophetic insight, the prophetess Deborah called for the Israelite General Barak to go out with 10,000 men against a superior force of Canaanites who had 900 chariots of iron. Barak led the battle against the Canaanite army led by General Sisera, and defeated them.

As General Sisera fled, he sought refuge in the tent of a nomadic family whose matriarch was **Jael**. Unknown to Sisera, they were Israelis. Jael offered hospitality. When the General was fast asleep, she took a tent stake and small sledge-hammer. With one mighty blow she drove it through Sisera's head. He died instantly.

Thus, **two women** were the primary participants in this dramatic deliverance of Israel from oppressors.

2. Fulfilled Ancient Purpose

Later, Deborah would sing this prophetic song: *"Then... the LORD **made me have dominion over the mighty**" (Judg 5:13).*

She fulfilled the ancient purpose of God for man **and woman**, to have dominion (Gen 1:28). Someone said, "When the Lord has a man's job to do. He always has a woman to do it."

Why then, when biblical precedent exists for women fulfilling an important role in God's purpose, does the male church leadership arrogate to itself rules against women ministering?

C. HULDAH

*"So Hilkiyah the priest... went unto **Huldah the prophetess**, the wife of Shallum... keeper of the wardrobe... and they communed with her" (2Ki 22:14).*

1. Prophetess Of Reformation

During the reign of King Josiah, the book of the law was discovered in the Temple. When the priests began to read it, they realized the nation had departed far from the way of God. They knew the nation was in jeopardy of judgment.

To find out what to do, they went to this outstanding prophetess who gave specifics of a coming judgment already determined in the counsels of Heaven.

Because Josiah repented, Huldah said the judgments determined would not come during his reign, but later.

Huldah inspired King Josiah, the high priest and the other leaders of Israel to implement the most sweeping moral and spiritual reforms ever recorded. A virtual tidal wave of revival and repentance resulted.

Read 2 Kings 22 and 2 Chronicles 34 for the details on the amazing results of Huldah's ministry as a prophetess. No prophetic ministry of record ever produced such a sweeping change in the nation of Israel in so short a time.

D. ISAIAH'S WIFE

Another prophetess is mentioned in the Old Testament. *"And I went unto the prophetess; and she conceived, and bare a son"* (Isa 8:3). This was the wife of Isaiah.

We have no biblical comment on her ministry, but one wonders if she did not contribute significant prophetic insights to the extensive writings of Isaiah.

No other Old Testament prophet is said to have been married to a prophetess. Could this explain why Isaiah so accurately foretold the sufferings of Christ? The Bible does say, *"Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour"* (Eccl 4:9).

It is not hard to believe that Isaiah's marriage to a prophetess gave him a distinct advantage over other prophets not similarly blessed. No wonder Isaiah's writings are often called "The Fifth Gospel."

E. THE VIRTUOUS WOMAN OF PROVERBS 31

Read Proverbs 31. It describes her as:

1. Diligent, Skilled Crafts Person

Verses 13,19,22 — a diligent, skilled (thus trained and educated) crafts person.

2. Landowner And Business Woman

Verses 16,23 — a landowner and successful business woman.

3. Benefactor Of The Poor And Needy

Verse 20 — A philanthropist (one who gives away money) and benefactor of the poor and needy. Thus she controlled considerable sums of money necessary for these activities.

4. Wisdom And Opinion Respected

Verse 26 — Her wisdom and opinion is sought and respected.

F. CONCLUSION

Thus, the biblical model for the woman is in conflict with the role afforded her in most of the world. The Bible teaches us the necessity of elevating the role of women.

An old Jewish story demonstrates how important the woman was in Israel. The story says that a pious man once married a pious woman. They were childless, so they eventually agreed to divorce.

The husband then married a wicked woman and she made him wicked.

The pious woman married a wicked man and made him righteous.

The moral of the story is that the woman's influence determines the spiritual life of the family and nation. To a large degree, she was the key to a successful family or the cause of its failure. She could have an incalculable influence on her children, her husband and her nation.

Women then need the liberty, respect and recognition to allow all their God-given talents, anointing and gifts to be expressed.

Chapter 3

New Testament Women In Ministry

Introduction

By New Testament times, the Jewish women had stopped being active in temple or synagogue worship. Talmudic traditions (sometimes referred to as the Oral Law) had relegated women to an inferior and sometimes subservient, and certainly an unbiblical, role.

Although there was a special area at the temple known as the "Court of Women," women were not allowed to go into the inner court.

Extra-biblical sources tell us that women were not allowed to read or to speak in the synagogue; but they could sit and listen in the special women's section. The women may have been allowed to enter only the synagogues that were operating on Hellenistic principles.

The Jewish temple of Jesus' day emphasized ethnic and male-female class distinctions in their religious practices. There were six separate courts and rooms:

- On the outside. The Court of Gentiles for foreigners;
- The next Court, where no Gentile could enter without death, which included
 - * the restricted **Court of Women**, and
 - * the Court of Israel for male Jews;
- The Court leading to the Holy Place restricted to Priests;
- The Holy Place; and
- Holy of Holies.

A different picture unfolds in the ministry of Jesus. Luke 8:1-3 indicates that Jesus welcomed some women as traveling companions. He encouraged Martha and Mary to sit at His feet as disciples (Luke 10:38-42). Jesus' respect for women was something strikingly new, and in stark contrast to that of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

In the redemptive work of Christ, all of those partitions were broken down; and every believer, regardless of race, sex or other distinction, has equal access to God. *"For he is our peace, who hath made both [Jew and Gentile] one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us"* (Eph2:14).

The new Christian Dispensation ushered in a new era. In Christ, all divisions were obliterated between Jews and Gentiles, between men and women and between priests and laymen (Rev 1:6).

"For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:27,28).

A. WOMEN IN THE LIFE OF CHRIST

1. Mary; Mother Of Christ

Jesus' mother Mary was a good and godly woman. In fact, Mary must have remembered Hannah's example, for her song of praise to God (Luke 1:46-55) was very similar to Hannah's song (1 Sam 2:1-10).

*"But when the fulness of the time was come. God sent forth his Son, **made of a woman, made under the law** " (Gal 4:4).*

It is true that the woman, Eve, yielded to the temptation of sin first, and then tempted her husband.

But let us not forget that it was a **woman, Mary**, who was the obedient vessel through which Christ was conceived of the Holy Spirit. It was through the woman that the Savior of the world was born. So if we blame a woman, Eve, for the fall of man, let us hail a woman, Mary, for being the vessel through which mankind received the Savior.

2. Anna: A Prophetess

The New Testament opens with the remarkable story of Jesus' birth. At Mary's purification ceremony (Lev 12:1-6), **a prophetess named Anna** makes a dramatic appearance.

*"And there was one Anna, a **prophetess**... And she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day" (Luke 2:36,37).*

Anna was used to confirm that Jesus was the expected messiah-deliverer for whom Israel had waited. Thus a woman had a significant prominent role in Jesus' birth and dedication. We will see later that women also had a very prominent role in events surrounding His crucifixion and resurrection.

3. Forgiven Woman: An Evangelist

In the Bible, both men and women followed Christ. Women were blessed, forgiven and healed the same as men.

A woman who had five husbands, and who was living with another man (to whom she was not married), was blessed and forgiven of all her sins.

As proof that Jesus never held the sins of this woman against her, the very day she was converted she became one of His evangelists (John 4:28,29,39). She brought a whole village to Christ.

4. Women Supported Jesus

The only record of financial support given Jesus is in Luke. *"And certain women... ministered unto him of their substance "*(Luke 8:2,3).

It is obvious these women were empowered with discretionary money (something denied women in many pagan cultures). Otherwise they would not be able to give it to Jesus. In Western Christian cultures, 80 percent of the support for the Lord's work still comes from women.

Those same churches in Western nations which deny women a leadership or ministry role eagerly solicit their money, send women as missionaries to other nations and command their silence in the church as well as teach unbiblical views of the role of women.

5. Women At The Cross

"Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene" (John 19:25). The last person at the cross was a woman (Mark 15:47).

a. Where Were The Men?

1) Disciples Fled. *"Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled"* (Matt 26:56).

2) Peter Followed At A Distance. *"But Peter followed him afar off unto the high priest's palace, and went in, and sat with the servants, to see the end"* (Matt 26:58).

3) Peter Denied Him. This resulted in Peter denying that he knew Jesus (Matt 26:72).

4) Mark Ran Away. Mark (the writer of the Gospel) ran for his life. *'And there followed him a certain young man [Mark], having a linen cloth cast about his naked body; and the young men laid hold on him: And he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked'* (Mark 14:51,52).

The above causes men to hang their heads in shame for cowardice. Brave women were willing to risk their lives for Jesus. Fear-filled men fled to save their lives.

6. Women Announce The Resurrection

a. First At The Tomb. The first person at the tomb was a woman (John 20:1).

b. First To Announce. The first person to proclaim the message of the resurrection was a woman (Matt 28:8).

It was a woman who preached the first sermon on the resurrection. And she preached it to the apostles themselves. **Jesus told her to do it!** (John 20:17,18).

Today, women are often told not to preach or teach, yet Jesus sent a woman with a message, *"Go tell my brothers, that I am risen."*

Where were those **"brave men"** on the morning that Jesus rose from the dead? A woman was there!

It appears that the men were discouraged after the unexpected reproach of the crucifixion, and according to John 21:3, they returned to their fishing nets; but the **women** went to the tomb. They were there the morning Christ arose from the dead!

The resurrected Christ appeared and spoke first to a **woman!**

It is strange that the women are told to be quiet today, that they may not preach or teach the gospel. Jesus sent a woman to deliver the first news of His resurrection.

His death and resurrection lifted woman from her fallen state and restored her to her rightful place in His Kingdom. She was now free to stand alongside her husband — equally worthy to give out the New Testament message of Christ to all the world.

B. WOMEN AND THE GREAT COMMISSION

When Jesus commanded, *"Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature,"* that Commission was for every believer, regardless of sex, color, race or culture.

1. Miracle Signs To Follow Both Sexes

When He categorized the miracle signs that would accompany the ministry of evangelism. He specified, *"These signs shall follow THEM THAT BELIEVE"* (Mark 16:17). That included both sexes.

Jesus said: *"He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also"* (John 14:12).

That included both men and women, and many great women leaders have been strong and courageous enough to prove it.

John 14:12-14 is for both sexes. It includes women, IF WOMEN HAVE ENOUGH FAITH TO BELIEVE IT AND TO ACT UPON IT.

If I were a woman I would claim John 15 in a personal way. Otherwise, only men can be saved.

2. Women Empowered To Witness

Among the first to be endued with the power of the Holy Spirit, in order to become witnesses for Christ, were women (Acts 2:4; 1:8).

After Jesus ascended into Heaven, several women met with the other disciples in the Upper Room to pray.

Even though Scripture does not say so specifically, these women probably prayed audibly in public.

When Jesus said in Acts 1:8, "*Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you,*" that promise was **for the women too**. "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, **WITH THE WOMEN.**"

There is no question. Among those who attended the first prayer meeting to receive the promised power were women (Acts 1:14).

"*And they were ALL filled*" (Acts 2:4). What for? To fulfill Acts 1:8 — "And ye shall be witnesses unto me." That included both sexes.

When we reflect upon the suppressed state of women under the Jewish Temple system of New Testament times, and the fact that they were not even allowed near the worship area but restricted to the outer women's court, it is no accident that the Holy Spirit specifies they were in "*prayer and supplication, WITH THE WOMEN,* and "*they were ALL filled,*" so that they could ALL do the work of evangelism.

Both men and women gathered at the home of John Mark's mother to pray for the release of Peter (Acts 12:1-17).

Both men and women prayed regularly in the New Testament churches. That's why the Apostle Paul gave instructions to both men and women about how to pray (and prophesy) in public (1 Cor 11:2-16).

C. GENTILE WOMEN AND THE GOSPEL

The first persons to receive the Christian missionaries in Europe — Paul and Silas — were members of a women's prayer group. "*And on the sabbath —we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was being made; and we sat down, and spoke to the women which were there*" (Acts 16:13).

These women became the founding members of the church at Philippi. Read Philippians 4:1-3 in this regard. Here, the women are mentioned who "...labored with Paul in the gospel." Undoubtedly, the dispute that arose among these women was conflict arising from their leadership roles.

1. Lydia

The story of this remarkable woman is worth considering. She was the first European convert. "*And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us, whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul*" (Acts 16:14).

She was a woman who apparently was quite wealthy. She had a home large enough to accommodate her own family, as well as guest rooms for Paul and Silas. "*And*

when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying. If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there... " (Acts 16:15).

Later in the ministry in Philippi, Paul and Silas were jailed. The earthquake set them free. Lydia welcomed these beaten, wounded apostles into her home for rest and recuperation.

"And they went out of the prison, and entered into the house of Lydia, and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed" (Acts 16:40).

The historian Eusebius indicates in his writings that she led the Philippian church for a time. It may be Lydia was one of those to whom this verse refers: *"And I entreat thee... help **those women which labored with me in the gospel...**"* (Phil 4:3).

As a seller of purple (the color of royalty in Western nations), it has been suggested she had wide contacts among the most influential European families of the Roman Empire. She used that advantage to spread the gospel to these wealthy families who had great political influence.

Lydia was indeed like the virtuous woman of Proverbs 31.

2. Priscilla

She is said to have explained to the powerful preacher Apollos *"...the way of God more perfectly"* (Acts 18:24-28).

This is quite amazing when Apollos is described as *"...an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures..."* (Acts 18:24). It is even more amazing when the modern day Church will not allow women to even speak in some churches.

3. Philip's Four Daughters

"...we that were of Paul's company... came unto Caesarea...to the house of Philip the evangelist... and abode with him. And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy" (Acts 21:8,9).

Apparently Philip did not know that women were not allowed to pray and prophesy, as the modern-day Church teaches. His lovely family was a model of spirituality and godly order.

I am sure Philip must have known the promises: *"... I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring "* (Isa 44:3).

*"And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your... **daughters shall prophesy...**"* (Joel 2:28).

*"And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and... **your daughters shall prophesy...**"* (Acts 2:17).

*"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized... for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For **the promise is unto you, and to your children...**"* (Acts 2:38,39).

No doubt Philip accepted these biblical promises for his daughters, and a lovely prophetic anointing came on them. These daughters of Philip did what the Bible said — they prophesied.

4. Phoebe

In the church at Cenchreae there was a deaconess named Phoebe, who Paul said *"...was a helper of many"* (Rom 16:2). The historian Eusebius says she oversaw two churches and traveled extensively in ministry.

5. Junia

Junia is a feminine name in Greek. She was called an apostle. *"Salute Andronicus and Junia... who are of note among the apostles..."* (Rom 16:7).

Note that the Greek word HOS, translated WHO, includes the masculine and feminine gender. So when Paul says, *"WHO are of note among the apostles,"* he is including Andronicus AND JUNIA.

The Greek word has is used in this verse: *"For after this manner in the past the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves..."* (I Pet 3:5).

This is convincing evidence that one of the 22 apostles mentioned in the New Testament was a woman.

6. Euodia And Syntyche

Euodia and Syntyche were spiritual leaders at Philippi. Paul said, *"...help those women which labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellowlabourers..."* (Phil 4:3).

When Paul speaks of these women as *"my fellowlabourers,"* it implies they were doing a work similar to that done by Paul.

7. The Elect Lady

"The elder unto the elect lady and her children, whom I love in the truth..." (2Jn 1:1).

When one meditates on the Apostle John's letter to this elect LADY, it seems evident she was a spiritual leader of some prominence and authority.

The word "LADY" is from the Greek word KURIA, the feminine form of KURIOS — meaning as a respectful title "supreme in authority" (in this context probably referring to her as the senior pastor of the church in her home).

John charges her with the responsibility to guard the doctrinal integrity of herself (and by implication, the church that met in her home). *'If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed'* (2 Jn 1:10).

This would be the role normally associated with an ELDER in the church (Acts 20:17; 28-31). One can only conclude, then, that she filled the role of a senior elder or pastor.

8. Jezebel, The False Prophetess

The church at Thyatira received a stern warning from the risen Christ: *"Notwithstanding I have a few things against you, because you tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols"* (Rev 2:20).

We can learn several lessons from this incident.

a. Rebuked For Immorality. If Jesus and the apostles did not allow women to be "prophetesses" in the Church, why did this church have one? The rebuke is for her immorality and association with idolatry, not for the claim of being a prophetess.

b. Rebuked For Wrongful Teaching. If Jesus and the apostles did not allow women to **"teach"** in the Church, why did Jezebel teach? The rebuke is for her wrongful teaching, not for the fact that she taught the Church.

D. CONCLUSION

From all the evidence, one can only reach the following conclusion. The preponderance of leadership in the Bible was masculine (men). However, anointed,

consecrated, chosen women of God were never denied leadership roles or the right to function in a God-given gift or calling.

Dare we arrogate our church traditions against this mountain of biblical evidence and deny women their rightful, biblical expression and liberty?

Some of the "problem passages" in Paul's letters will be dealt with in the next chapter.

Chapter 4

Problem Passages About Women In Ministry

A. GOD'S DESIGN FOR MAN AND WOMAN

1. The Woman As Helper

God said to man, *"It is not good for you to be single [alone]."*

Apparently, it was never His design that a man should live alone. From the dawn of human history. God's design for man included a woman-helper at his side; that they share with each other, work and live together, side by side — one unit under God.

That is companionship. It implies cooperation, working side by side, worshipping and praying together, serving together, ministering together, winning souls together.

"I will make him a helper..."

Let Christian men learn that their wives are their "helpers" in life — not their slaves or servants, but their partners, sharers, companions.

"And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept, and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof.

"And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh" (Gen 2:21-23).

That is the way a man should feel about his wife; he should love her as his own flesh (Eph 5:28,29).

"Adam said... 'She shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of the Man.' Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Gen 2:23,24).

That is God's will for man and woman! It is a loving companionship. Marriage is the happy state of one man and one woman, sharing life together in love. That was the way God intended it to be.

2. The Woman As Sexual Partner

"Therefore shall a man... cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Gen 2:24).

It is against the biblical Law for an unmarried woman (or man) to have sexual relations. She is to remain a virgin until after the marriage ceremony. In Old Testament times, if anyone could prove that she was not a virgin when she married, she was brought to the door of her father's house and the men of the city stoned her to death (Deut 22:20,21).

In New Testament times, Jesus showed mercy to those who transgressed the moral laws. He forgave, and restored them with this admonition: "...Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more" (John 8:11).

But sex was a very important part of married life. God had ordained the sexual relationship to be enjoyed in the proper place and between the right people — marriage partners.

The Jews felt so strongly about this that a newly married man was freed from his military or business duties for a whole year so that he could "...cheer up his wife which he hath taken" (Deut 24:5).

The only restriction was that the husband and wife were not supposed to have sexual relations during her menstrual period (Lev 18:19).

Sex was to be enjoyed by the wife as well as the husband. God told Eve, "...your desire shall be for your husband" (Gen 3:16).

In the Song of Solomon, the woman was very aggressive, kissing her husband and leading him into the bed chamber. She expressed her love for him over and over, and she urged him to enjoy their physical relationship (Song 1:2; 2:3-6; 8:10; 8:14).

In New Testament times, there was a disagreement in the Corinthian church about the role of sex. Some people, it seems, held to hedonistic values (whatever one wanted to do sexually should be all right — including fornication, adultery, prostitution and homosexual acts).

Other people thought that sex was somehow evil and that one should not have any physical relations at all, not even with one's husband or wife (see 1 Corinthians 7).

Paul reminded the Corinthians that adultery and homosexuality were sins and should be avoided (I Cor 6:9-11).

But he said husbands and wives should enjoy God's gift of sex together. Paul instructed that "...the husband should give to the wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband...."

"Do not refuse one another except by agreement for a season, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, lest Satan tempt you through lack of self-control" (I Cor 7:3,5 rsv).

3. The Ideal Marriage Is Lost

Adam and Eve were contented. They loved each other. They were one flesh. But then, that first man and that first woman disobeyed God, and their sin brought upon them the penalty of His law: "*The soul that sinneth, it shall die...*" (Eze 18:20).

They were driven from the Garden of Eden, because they could not live in God's presence after they had sinned.

They became the Slaves of Satan whom they had obeyed. "*Don't you know, that to whom you yield yourselves slaves to obey, his slaves you are, whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?*" (Rom 6:16). Thus, Adam and Eve had a new master, and that is where the trouble began.

In the heart of man and woman, lust began to take the place of love. Greed and evil took the place of good. Evil passions were unleashed.

As centuries passed, because man had a larger physique and stronger muscles, the evil in his heart made him turn the woman into his slave.

Instead of a loving help-meet and companion to protect and care for, he reduced her to an inferior physical medium for the satisfaction of his own lust.

4. Recovery Provided

But like all of the evil consequences of sin, thank God a recovery has been provided from this fallen state of the (man and) woman — a redemption through which she has been restored to her rightful place at man's side.

That remedy was in the death and sacrifice of Jesus Christ our Lord. He came to suffer the consequences of all of our sins — those of women as well as those of men. He came to ransom all of us back to our position with God and with each other.

B. CHURCH TRADITION

In Matthew 19:3-9 Jesus set forth His standard for man/woman relationships. The Jews of Jesus' time had a standard that had been lowered by Moses and later Talmudic interpretation and teaching.

Jesus made it plain that these traditions did not nullify God's original intent for the man and woman. He came to establish God's original intent and purpose. *"He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so."*

1. Women Forbidden To Speak

Theologians have not emphasized the fact that Christ's redemptive work was to restore God's original intent and to return woman to her original place by man's side. So they often forbid women to speak in the church.

It has been almost 2,000 years since Jesus elevated women; yet today, church tradition often forbids women to preach or to teach.

Theologians' support for this restriction is based on some practical apostolic instructions given by Paul to remedy certain abuses among newly liberated (and largely uneducated) women. Paul was simply reinforcing basic rules of etiquette and civility.

The freedom for women to pray and prophesy in religious gatherings was so new that it caused some problems within the churches where Jews and Gentiles comingled.

It was not easy for those early Jewish Christians to accept this new spiritual equality for women. The idea of them taking part in religious ceremony was so remote as to be downright sacrilegious. Women were not even allowed in the court of worship in the Jewish temple.

Those Jews who had been converted to Christ clung to old customs. Jewish believers still held to the Old Testament food laws (read the Section, *The 500 Years Between Testaments*).

They continued the practice of circumcision, and even had Jewish teachers going out among the Gentiles, insisting the Gentiles be circumcised. Hence, women being allowed expression in the church was certainly not the least of their annoyances.

The Jewish tradition forbade women to speak in the synagogues. While no biblical authority existed for such rules, believing Jews still insisted on adherence to their religious traditions.

2. Special Seating Arrangements

Their seating arrangement in their meeting places was a direct hangover from the tradition at the Jewish Temple. There had always been a restricted Women's Court, so the women were limited to the rear sections of synagogues where their gossip and babbling would not disturb the sacred worship.

The men, who had always been the holy instruments of God, occupied the principal section where they could exercise spiritual worship, conduct their meetings, debate and discuss current issues, business affairs and problems, and officiate in their ceremonies.

(Churches in some countries, Egypt as one example, still seat the women separately.)

As far as the women were concerned, in Paul's day they were generally regarded as little more than human chattel; usually uneducated, uncultured and unsophisticated.

In the new Christian revolution, male Jews who were converted grudgingly conceded the fact that women could be saved.

But considering their prejudices against lowly females, it was mental agony to integrate them into the sanctuary, and it was out of the question for these "inferior creatures" to speak or teach. Male superiority could not tolerate that degree of indignity.

The woman's new-found liberty in Christ was in direct conflict with the old Jewish system, and the result was the hangover of a distinct male-female barrier among those early Christians.

3. Order And Dignity Needed

To make matters worse, women were not usually educated, and they tended to flaunt their new freedom like any suppressed people who are suddenly emancipated.

They had always been kept out in the Women's Court. Now, they could come inside the building where they could see and hear everything.

This was intriguing. It fired their spirits. Some were outspoken; others were boisterous and clamorous; others were insatiably curious and inquisitive. This was a new dimension. But their presence and palaver was an offense to Jewish men already strained to the limit by this new liberty that allowed females inside the assembly of worshippers.

When these women overheard discussions in the church, some of them could not resist yelling at their husbands, asking for explanations; or one might object to an issue, or enter into the discussion, or propose a question, or even give a prophecy or an interpretation — and usually in a disorderly manner, calling from the women's section, clamoring to be heard by the men.

Remember, this agitation was the expression of the world's first emancipated women. They were not trained or disciplined in their new role of freedom in Christ. To sit inside the church and to hear and see everything for the first time was an overwhelming experience. They had not learned to restrain themselves, so they blurted out whatever they thought or felt.

Paul was trying to establish some order and dignity in this new Christian freedom. It seemed entirely inappropriate to him for those women to flaunt their new freedom and yell out from the rear "Women's Court." It was not good decorum for them to ask questions, or assert their new freedom by giving prophecies or arguing doctrine. It was not customary for women to teach the men ideas which they felt had been revealed to them.

With children crying and women clamoring for the attention of the men, it was a shameful display, an embarrassment to those newly converted Jewish males. Paul knew something had to be done. Those women were exploiting their new liberty, and they had to learn to cope with their new emancipated role in Christ.

This is the situational context in which Paul gave his instructions concerning the behavior of women in a church gathering.

It was not gracious or suitable for those energetic and untrained women to stand up and disturb the assembly. Some of them were impulsive enough, in their unconventional state, to take issue with the men publicly, to argue or persuade public opinion by teaching their point openly.

Imagine the turmoil and agitation a strong-willed village woman could cause in a situation like that.

I can understand this because I have been in many countries where women are still shackled by tribal customs, bought and sold like animals, owned and used by men. In many areas, women are forbidden to participate in heathen rites or to attend a sacrifice. They are oppressed and have no free expression.

In many countries today, when those people are converted and when those women discover their new freedom in Christ, it takes time for them to adjust to their new role as a free Christian woman.

In underdeveloped areas, I have seen the same confusion that Paul experienced. I've had to tell rowdy, uneducated village women to be quiet, to wait until they were home to discuss the matter. It was inappropriate for bare-bosomed women to stand up and argue a point with a nursing baby hanging to a breast while they gestured in unsophisticated marketstyle.

In some Moslem areas where women are veiled because of the disgrace to them for any man, except their husband, to look upon their naked face, they are ill at ease in public.

Oft times I have told Moslem men to bring their wives, which is a strange experience for those women.

I've seen them get so excited about the gospel message that they would disturb our meetings by loud discussions, spontaneously yelling out questions to their husbands, asking for explanations about what I had said.

This is the situation Paul confronted, and he had to give some practical remedy to save the church from division and ignomy.

C. PROBLEM PASSAGE # 1: FORBIDDEN TO SPEAK

One passage used to silence women is found in 1 Corinthians 14:34, 35. In the King James Version it reads: *"Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak, but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home."*

If this was intended by Paul to be an absolute injunction against any woman opening her mouth or using her voice in any way in a church service — it would be a clear contradiction of Paul's instructions a few chapters previous.

In Chapter 11 of this same epistle, Paul gives clear instructions on the mode and demeanor in which women (and men) should pray and prophesy.

After these clear instructions regarding the participation of women in the church service, does Paul now turn around and revoke those instructions and seal the mouth of all women to a status of dumbmutes in the church? Of course not! That makes no sense at all.

1. Three Words Explained

Three words in the above passage need explanation if we are to understand what Paul was teaching the Corinthians. These three words are women, speak and saith.

a. Women. The word **women** in this passage is the Greek word *gune* which means a wife (not just any female). These are specific instructions for wives.

b. Speak. The word **speak** is the Greek word *laleo*, which means an extended or random harangue; to boast and call out (to someone across the room, for example) without proper decorum or respect for others.

c. Saith. In contrast to the word *laleo* the word **saith** comes from the Greek word *lego*, which means to "lay" forth (an idea or doctrine) in words usually of systematic or set discourse ("*...as also saith the law* ").

Lego was encouraged. *Laleo* was discouraged.

An expanded translation of the two verses, then, would read like this: '*Let the wives abstain from [laleo] interrupting the meetings of the church with an extended or random harangue full of prideful boasting or calling out to others in a way that is without proper decorum or respect for others in the churches, for it is not permitted unto them to speak [laleo — interrupt with an extended or random harangue or calling out to others], but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith [lego — to set forth (an idea or doctrine) in words of systematic discourse] the law. And if they desire to enquire about anything, let them ask their husbands at home, for it is a shame for them to speak [laleo] in the church.* "

2. Civil Behavior Is Needed

I was in Israel many years ago ministering in an Arabic-speaking congregation. Part-way through the sermon, a woman began shouting across the room to another lady. Back and forth they talked for several minutes. I had to stop and wait for them.

I said to my interpreter, "What are they talking about?" "Oh!" he replied, "She is asking the price of eggs and different vegetables at the market today. The other lady is answering her."

Well, at that point, I interrupted the lady and kindly asked her to sit down and keep quiet. Then I commanded this Arabic church, "Let your women keep silence in the church. If you don't, I must ask you to leave. You are interrupting the sermon and showing disrespect for God's Word and the others in the meeting."

As a result of this experience, I perfectly understood the problem Paul was dealing with in the Corinthian church.

He was not denying women appropriate expression of ministry in prayer, prophesying, healing or other ministries.

He was attempting to bring civility to uneducated, unsophisticated Gentile women whose mannerisms were patently offensive to the erudite Jewish members of the church and visitors who might be in the meeting. "*If the whole church meets... and there come in those that are unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad?*" (I Cor 14:23).

Paul had a concern for public opinion. Proper and civil behavior needed to mark the public meetings of the Corinthians. These Corinthians were so uncouth, they even got drunk in their observance of the Lord's supper (see 1 Corinthians 11:20-26).

These problems of lack of manners, civility, common courtesy and propriety were the issue in Paul's teaching. He was not dropping a muzzle over women so they could not speak or participate in the church service.

3. A Woman's Translation

Montgomery is the only woman I know of who has produced a translation of the entire New Testament from Greek into English. She gives an interesting translation of the problem passage above.

Verses 34 — *"You Corinthians say, 'Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law'"*

It is Montgomery's view that when Paul wrote verses 36 and 37, he was challenging the teaching of the Corinthians and commanding them not to teach this. Paul was challenging the concept of women being kept silent.

Verse 36 — *"What? came the word of God out from you? or came it unto you only?"* (Do not these questions imply Paul is challenging this teaching?)

Verse 37 — *"If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord"* (1 Cor 14:34,36,37). In other words, Paul is saying, "Do what I command; do not teach wrong doctrine about women speaking in church."

I personally believe the Greek text supports the first thesis which explains the word *laleo* — translated **speak**.

However, Montgomery's opinion may have some validity. Both explanations shed interesting light on a passage that has been misunderstood and wrongfully applied in the churches.

D. PROBLEM PASSAGE # 2: FORBIDDEN TO TEACH

In another letter, Paul wrote, *"But I suffer not a woman to **teach**, nor to usurp authority over the man; but to be in silence"* (1 Tim 2:11,12).

1. Actual Meaning

The word teach is the key to understanding this problem passage. The Greek word is *didaskaleo*, which means to instruct or teach doctrine.

a. Women Were Not To Establish Doctrine. Women were not authorized to establish the doctrinal standards. That was a function handled by the apostolic councils (see Acts 15). *"And they continued steadfastly in the **apostles' doctrine** and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers"* (Acts 2:42).

The apostolic councils set the doctrinal standards, and the women who ministered were to respect those and not teach to the contrary. This rule was not just for women, but for men as well.

"...Hymenaeus and Philetus... Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some" (2 Tim 2:17,18). These two men departed from the apostles' doctrine and were condemned.

A prophetess in the church at Thyatira did likewise (Rev 2:20). The church was rebuked for allowing this departure from the apostles' doctrine.

Given the above, let us see how an expanded translation of this problem passage would read.

"But I suffer not a woman to teach doctrine contrary to that established by the apostles, and thus usurp authority over them; but to remain undisturbed" (1 Tim 2:11,12).

It would appear Paul had some concerns that women establishing doctrine could lead to deception, whereas men might be less prone to this. *"And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression"* (1 Tim 2:14).

b. Women Were Not To Be "Over The Man". Another translation of this verse would support the above interpretation. *"But I suffer not a woman to **teach over the man** nor to usurp authority **over the man**..."* (I Tim 2:11,12). This translation is accurate if the comma (,) is left out of the verse (as in the kjv). The issue is **over the man** — that is, exercising authority (Greek=*exousia*) over the man. For further commentary on this, read 1 Corinthians 11:1-5.

2. Women Should Share In Ministry

In concluding this point consider this: However one may view this, it is certain that the idea of women sitting in meetings and not participating is totally inconsistent with the great body of Scripture already presented which proves the contrary.

Women should share the ministry of winning souls. Prayer, prophecy, miracles and witnessing for Christ is for the women too. I see no scriptural difference between men and women in ministry, if both observe the doctrinal boundaries explained above.

This is important because women constitute an enormous army of soulwinners to share the Christ-commissioned ministry of evangelism.

In many church organizations, women are forbidden to speak or teach, due to the interpretation of certain statements made by Paul. These practical instructions were needed because of circumstances entirely foreign to most churches in our generation.

a. Women As Teachers. Paul wrote Titus and instructed him on the role women had as teachers.

Instruct *"The aged **women** likewise, that they be... **teachers** of good things; That **they may teach** the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed"* (Titus 2:3-5).

It is of note that the word **teach** used in this instruction to women is the same Greek word (*didaktikos*) used when spelling out the qualifications for a Bishop or Elder (see 1 Timothy 3:2; 2Timothy 2:24) who must be *"apt to teach [didaktikos]"*.

b. A Mistranslation. Biblical scholar Don Rousu sheds light on this passage also. His research supports strong evidence that 1 Timothy 2:11, 12 has been mistranslated.

The mistranslation hinges on the Greek verb, *authentein*. The problem is that this verb is found nowhere else in the Bible.

Translators learn the meaning of a word by studying it in other Bible passages. When there are no other occurrences of the word in the Bible they look to comparative secular Greek literature of the same time period.

Most translators have interpreted *authentein* to mean "to usurp authority" over a man, or "to have authority" over a man. Such a translation violates both the context of Paul's writing and the first-century usage of the word in other literature.

Research shows the meaning of *authentein* changed dramatically over a period of 1,100 years. It is first found in the classical literature six centuries before Christ. Then it meant "to initiate or to be responsible for a murder." 900 years later in 300 A.D. this word usually meant "to claim ownership of property" through fraud. It could also mean "to usurp power" or "take power that did not rightfully belong to the claimant."

At the time Paul wrote Timothy the most common meaning was "to be, or claim to be the author or the originator of something." This appears to be the authentic translation of the crucial verb in 1 Timothy 1:12 as you will see later.

c. The Cultural Context Considered. Timothy was in Ephesus — the world center of paganism governed spiritually by the female deity Artemis whom the Romans called Diana.

The cult of Artemis taught the superiority of the female and advocated female domination of the male. It espoused a doctrine of feminine procreation teaching that this goddess was able to bring forth offspring without male involvement.

The cult was characterized by sexual perversions, fertility rites, endless myths, and elaborate genealogies, traced through female rather than male bloodlines. Magic and all manner of demonic activity flourished in the cult.

Ephesus also had a group of Jewish gnostics who were teaching a distortion of the Old Testament record of Adam and Eve. They said Eve was the illuminator of mankind and the first to receive "true knowledge" from the Serpent, whom gnostics saw as the savior and revealer of truth.

Gnostics believed Eve taught this new revelation to Adam, and being the mother of all, was the progenitor of the human race. Adam was Eve's son rather than her husband. This belief reflected the gnostic doctrine that a female deity could bring forth children without male involvement.

These doctrines of the gnostics and the followers of Diana were infiltrating the church. Paul was writing Timothy to admonish him to confront these heresies and forbid false teachings. He wanted Timothy to encourage the true believers to turn away from these myths and endless genealogies and warn people from these doctrines of demons.

d. What Paul Really Said To Timothy. In light of the mistranslation and cultural context we can now better understand what Paul said to Timothy. *"I am not allowing [present tense — meaning this was specific to this situation and circumstance] a woman to teach or to proclaim herself the originator of man [authentain]."*

Can you now see how this translation counters the false doctrines of the gnostics and followers of the sex goddess, Diana, Timothy was struggling with?

"... she must be in agreement" meaning in agreement with the Scriptures and with the Apostles doctrine.

Paul continues in this vein, *"Adam was first formed, then Eve."* This statement militates against the teaching that Eve was the progenitor of the human race.

"Adam was not deceived, but the woman was! And sinned!" This directly refutes the notion that Eve was the "illuminator" and carrier of true revelation.

Don Rousu concludes that this translation is probably the most legitimate because it fits the social context, is true to the Greek and lines up with all of Paul's other teachings and practices concerning women.

e. Conclusion. Women should share the ministry of winning souls. Prayer, prophecy, miracles and witnessing for Christ is for the women too. I see no scriptural difference between men and women in ministry, if both observe the boundaries explained above and continue in the Apostles doctrine as recorded in the New Testament.

This is important because women constitute an enormous army of soulwinners to share the Christcommissioned ministry of Evangelism.

E. WOMEN OUTSIDE CHURCH SERVICES

If your church insists the primitive muzzle must be kept on modern Christian women "in the churches," there is no traditional or scriptural restraint on the ministry of

Christian women OUTSIDE THE SANCTUARY, and that is where the ministry of soulwinning is most effective anyway.

The wife of a prominent evangelist asks the following:

"Why should the women feel limited in their ministry just because they are muffled inside the church?"

"The Christian message and testimony and ministry of women is needed a million times more outside the sanctuary than inside."

1. The Whole World Is Our Field

"Women need not feel deprived when not allowed to speak **inside** the church. Women's ministry and message count most OUT WHERE THE SINNERS ARE.

"So, rather than complain about the little comers where we are restricted, let us, as women, lift up our eyes and look on the fields of the WHOLE WORLD, where traditional interpretation of Paul's restrictions do not apply."

2. Where Are The Limits?

"If we feel obliged to obey restrictions **inside the church meetings**, should we not feel equally obliged to obey our Lord Jesus Christ **outside** the sanctuary? Should we give greater obedience to tradition than to Christ?"

So, where do we propose to establish the limits for women?

Tradition says: "It is all right for a woman to teach a Sunday school class, or in some groups to even stand in the church and witness of what Christ has done for her. Others allow women to be a missionary to a foreign country, or to minister in a house, but she must not preach or teach."

But we must be careful lest we begin to split hairs inconsistently. For example: If a woman can go outside the church and witness, may she include Scriptures in her witness? If so, how many, before she would be considered to be preaching?

If she may witness, to what level may she raise her voice before her witness would be termed preaching?

If she may witness to one sinner, suppose a group gathers. May she witness to ten, or to a hundred, or to a thousand? At what point does her witness exceed the limits for a woman? How many may congregate before she must fall silent and call for a man to take over?

If she may witness to a sinner in a subway or in a private house, may she witness to one on the sidewalk, in a park, or under a tent which she might decide to erect? At what point must her witness be forbidden?

If she may witness along a footpath, suppose a group gathers. May she step up on a boulder, so that others can hear? Suppose she witnesses on a sidewalk. May she mount some nearby steps and speak louder, so that others can hear?

If so, may she mount a box or a chair or a platform? Precisely how loud may she speak or how high may she stand before she crosses the forbidden limits for a woman and intrudes the sacred domain of man?

If she may pray with one sinner, may she pray with two, or ten, or a hundred at a time? How many is too many for a woman?

If she may **witness**, may she **teach** or **preach**? What is the difference? Who is willing to split these hairs between **witnessing, preaching, teaching, evangelizing** or **speaking**, so that the women can know whether they should obey Jesus Christ OUTSIDE THE SANCTUARY as much as they should obey tradition INSIDE the sanctuary.

Should today's army of cultured, educated, qualified Christian women continue to remain silent in evangelism because of two instructions given by Paul to a group of uncultured, uneducated women who were yelling to their husbands from the rear of the assembly about matters they were at that time unqualified and untrained to discuss?

Must modern Christian women be restrained by archaic custom?

To me, it seems irrational to handcuff an army of Christian women. It seems we are condemning lost souls to Hell by restricting women from the worldwide ministry of evangelism. To muzzle their dynamic witness for Christ, when this 20th Century is decaying so fast, is a tragedy.

3. Encourage Them To Go

Thousands of strong Christian women would gladly go forth and do exploits for God if not held back by this formidable restraint. How can we, the Christian men, then answer for the blood of millions of lost souls, who would be saved through the evangelizing ministries of gallant women of God, if they were encouraged to go forth?

I can't help but ask myself the question: How much of a sin would it be for Christian women to go outside the church building to evangelize and win souls — hundreds or even thousands of souls — even if Paul's orders to those uncultured, loudmouthed women should be applied to modern educated women of this century?

I prefer to challenge the women to launch their outreaches for Christ in the same way that women organize and operate business affairs.

And if it is a sin before God for them to win so many souls, then let their sin be laid to my charge. And I believe there are many other Christian leaders who feel the same.

Let us unite in prayer for an army of spiritual women to sweep the world for Jesus.

4. Jesus Chose A Woman

One of the most significant scriptures in the New Testament is in John 20:18. The "Living Bible" translation says: *"Mary Magdalene found the disciples and told them, 'I have seen the Lord.' Then she gave them his message."*

I don't know why the **men were not** there the morning that our Lord had risen. They had heard His words. He had told them He would be raised. But they were too scared and too doubtful.

But Mary Magdalene was there. She saw Him and He called her by her name. She visited with the Risen Lord.

Jesus chose a woman to be the first person to proclaim the resurrection. Mary Magdalene preached the first sermon announcing that Christ was risen.

The message of the resurrection is the heartbeat of Christianity. *"If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins"* (1 Cor 15:17). Romans 10:9,10 ties the salvation of every person to the belief *"that God hath raised Jesus from the dead"* and to the confession of that fact to the world.

The RESURRECTION is the greatest message of the Church, and Jesus ordered a woman to be the first to carry that message. He said, *"Go to my brothers and tell them that I ascend to my Father and your Father; and to my God and your God"* (John 20:17).

Just think: Jesus sent **a woman** to proclaim the greatest message of the Church, **TO THE APOSTLES THEMSELVES.**

Can we forbid women to do what Jesus told a woman to do?

Shall we set limits on a woman's witness for Christ when Jesus chose a woman to bear the first message of the Church after His resurrection, the most vital and powerful message in Christianity — that "CHRIST IS RISEN"?

Dare we stifle Christian women or limit the number of people to whom they may witness, when Christ used a woman to proclaim the fundamental message of Christianity to the apostles themselves — leaders of the Church? Mary Magdalene "**gave them Christ's Message.**"

5. If I Were A Woman

Can Christian women continue to be silent when so many women in the Bible were messengers for God?

Do Christian women use Paul's words as an excuse for doing little or nothing in the ministry of evangelism? Is it a **convenience** for their own lack of consecration and soulwinning courage?

Are Christian women willing to accept so many limits in God's ministry of Evangelism, when women of the world are asserting their influence and effectiveness in business, science, medicine, politics and government?

If I were a woman, I would want to obey Jesus Christ **outside** the church at least as much as I would obey tradition **inside** the church.

If I were a woman, I would want to be considered a Christian, a believer, a follower of Christ, a witness for Him, a messenger of the resurrection, a soul-winner.

If I were a woman, I would want to do the work of a Christian. I would want to realize that Christ lives in me; that He serves through me; that He speaks through my life; that He loves and ministers through me; that my body is His body; that He wills to continue His ministry THROUGH ME; that "*as God sent Christ into the world, even so Christ sends me into the world*" (John 17:18; 20:21 paraphrased).

If I were a woman, I would want to do the things Christ told believers to do, even if I had to suffer persecution for doing it. My Lord suffered for me. I would be willing to suffer for Him.

If I were a woman, I would want to be one of the wise persons who "*heard the sayings of Christ and DID them*" (Matt 7:24), building my soulwinning ministry upon the rock of **faith and action**.

If I were a woman, filled with the Holy Ghost (Acts 1:8), I would want to be Christ's WITNESS "*both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*"

If I were a woman, I would rejoice because the prophet Joel said, '*I will pour out my Spirit upon ALL flesh; and your sons AND YOUR DAUGHTERS shall prophesy*' (Joel 2:28), and because the Apostle Peter preached that "*on my servants AND ON MY HANDMAIDENS will I pour out in those days of My Spirit; and THEY shall prophesy*" (Acts 2:18).

I would be so glad that the Hebrew word used by Joel means:

"Speak or sing by inspiration; to predict or to give a discourse"; and that the Greek word used by Peter means: "To speak under divine inspiration; to exercise a prophetic office; an inspired speaker."

If I were a woman, I would rejoice that Jesus never made a difference between the sexes. I would be impressed by the different women who were associated with His life and ministry.

I would want to be like the lowliest one from Samaria who, as soon as she believed on Him, dropped her water pot and evangelized a whole city for Jesus. John 4: The people "*went out of the city and came unto him ...and many of the Samaritans of the city believed on him*" because of the testimony and evangelistic ministry of A WOMAN (vss 30, 39).

6. Unlimited Ministry

Women have a divinely privileged role in life. They bear much responsibility of their home, and are always to be subject to their husbands, in the Lord. They also exercise an unequalled influence upon their husband and the entire home.

Someone has said, "The hand that rocks the cradle is the hand that rules the world."

Motherhood is a privileged sanctity of life which exceeds the rewards and joy of anything a man may ever experience.

The natural grace and influence of a woman is excellent and rewarding beyond all virtues.

Women have an unlimited ministry, if they want to do what Jesus said to do: to witness, to win souls, to evangelize; their field is THE WORLD.

Let no woman be preoccupied by restrictions imposed upon her ministry in the little corners of our world called the church buildings, when there are no limits imposed upon us OUTSIDE THE SANCTUARY.

The ministry which Jesus discharged to His followers when He went away can only be exercised outside of the churches. Fortunately for women, there are no traditions or scriptures forbidding their ministry there.

So, the message of this section is addressed to women and men alike, to get **out where the sinners are**; to get ON THE GO OUTSIDE THE SANCTUARY, out on the busy boulevards and crossroads of society, out in public halls, cinemas, parks, in tents, in houses, in mobile homes, under trees, in theaters, and to tell the world, "*I have seen the Lord' then SHE GAVE THEM HIS MESSAGE*" (John 20:18 tlb).

SECTION C10

THE SEVEN FEASTS OF THE LORD

By Ralph Mahoney

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Chapter 1

Introducing The Feasts

"These are the feasts [festivals or fiestas] of the Lord, the sacred assemblies you are to proclaim at their appointed times" (Lev23:4niv).

A. THREE FESTIVAL SEASONS

The Lord ordained three Festival seasons to be observed every year by the Children of Israel.

"Three times a year you are to celebrate a festival to me.

*"Celebrate the Feast of Unleavened Bread [**Passover**]; for seven days eat bread made without yeast, as I commanded you. Do this at the appointed time in the month of Abib for in that month you came out of Egypt. No one is to appear before me empty-handed.*

*"Celebrate the Feast of Harvest [**Pentecost**] with the firstfruits of the crops you sow in your field.*

*"Celebrate the Feast of Ingathering [**Tabernacles**] at the end of the year, when you gather in your crops from the field" (Exo23:14-16).*

Three Major Festivals were observed annually. Passover and Tabernacles [also known as Booths or Temporary Shelters] each had **Three Minor Festivals** observed at the same time—one after the other. Pentecost came fifty days after Passover, and had no minor festivals associated with it.

The following outline summarizes the Seasons, Names and Parts of the Festivals.

1. April (Abib) — Passover (followed by Unleavened Bread and the Firstfruits Sheaf Offering).

2. June (Sivan) — Pentecost

3. Sept/Oct(Ethanim)—(Trumpets and The Day of Atonement preceded) Tabernacles.

B. THREE ASPECTS OF THE FESTIVALS

The Seven Old Testament Festivals are like a calendar covering 3,500 years of spiritual history—from the time of Moses until the Second Coming of Christ. They show us:

- how God dealt with His people in the past;
- what He wanted them to do in the present; and
- how He would work with them in the future.

They are a divinely prepared Timetable of God's Dealings with His people and mankind.

In this study we shall see how God has already proved the importance of these Festivals. We shall go on to show something of how God will use the Festivals as a Timetable in the future.

As stated, these festivals have three major aspects:

1. Past (Historic) Aspect

They are observed in memory of something that God **has done**. God leaves **memorials** to His miraculous deeds. They are important, to be respected and not destroyed.

a. Passover points **backward** and reminds us of the events related to Israel's deliverance from Egypt.

b. Pentecost memorializes the events at Sinai — when God appeared to give Moses the ten commandments, "*...there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled*" (Exo 19:16).

c. Tabernacles was to remind the Israelites of the years they dwelt in temporary shelters in the wilderness — that in a spiritual sense "...they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth " (Heb 11:13).

2. Prophetic (Future) Aspect

They pointed to something **God was going to do**. For example, Jesus was crucified on **Passover**, raised from the dead at the Festival of the **Firstfruits** Sheaf Offering, and poured out His Spirit on the waiting disciples fifty days later at **Pentecost**.

These were not accidents. They were divinely appointed times and seasons, fulfilling the prophetic aspects of the Festivals. The prophetic aspects of **Tabernacles** will come in the near future at the consummation of the Church age.

3. Personal Aspect

The meaning of these festivals is to find fulfillment **in our lives**. For example, Christ must be received as our **Passover** Lamb — our deliverance from sin and Hell.

*"...For even **Christ our Passover** [Lamb] is sacrificed for us" (1 Cor 5:7).*

We all need to be baptized in the Holy Spirit and experience our own personal Pentecost. Jesus never sent anyone to preach or minister that He did not first command to be empowered by the Spirit.

*"And, being assembled together with his disciples, **commanded them** that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father..." (Acts 1:4).*

We will learn more about the meaning of **Tabernacles** later in this section.

C. WHY WERE THE FESTIVALS OBSERVED?

In English we use the word 'feast' to describe a big meal of celebration, like a wedding feast. This is not the only way the word is being used in the context of the Festivals of the Lord.

The Old Testament Festivals of the Lord were also holy, sometimes solemn gatherings, of all the male Israelites. "*All thy males shall appear before the Lord*" (Exo23:17).

Each of the Festivals brings understanding to particular spiritual realities fulfilled in the New Testament and Church age.

In the Old Testament, these realities are described symbolically, in religious acts and rituals. The rituals are just "shadows", "types" or "illustrations" that spoke prophetically about something God was going to do in the future.

1. A Relationship Is Honored

The Festivals were not just jovial parties. They were also serious and important occasions in which Israel honored the Lord for His relationship with them.

The Israelites formed a unique nation with a special relationship to God. The Festivals were a way of reminding them of this.

As stated above, **Passover** was an eternal reminder of how God protected them and delivered them from Egypt. **Pentecost** was a reminder of the giving of the Law and the events at Mount Sinai. **Tabernacles** recalled the years they lived in temporary

dwelling places (tents, brush , shelters, temporary dwellings — as Gypsies do today) in the wilderness.

2. A Need Is Acknowledged

Also, the Festivals were related to the agriculture seasons —the harvests and the rains. At Festival times, Israel acknowledged their need for God to bless their crops, flocks and herds.

(Pagan nations offered human sacrifices, had "rain-dances" and performed other rituals for similar purposes.)

The Israelites were instructed to make certain offerings of their harvests as a statement of faith (or their faith declaration) that God was the provider of their needs.

D. FESTIVALS IN NEW TESTAMENT TIMES

From the first Passover in Egypt in Moses' time until Jesus came was about fourteen centuries (1,400 years).

1. Observed By Devout Men

By New Testament times, the Jews were scattered all over the world. At the first observance of **Pentecost** after Jesus' resurrection, the Bible confirms that there were "*DEVOUT men from every nation under heaven*" (Acts 2:5) in Jerusalem for this **Feast of Pentecost**.

This shows that most Jews were no longer observing the command to come up to Jerusalem. Only the DEVOUT were making the costly, dangerous journey from distant lands to honor God's commandment concerning the feasts (festivals).

Whenever these Festivals were observed, they were a **prophetic pageant** pointing to something God would do.

There were long centuries before and during Israel's captivity in Syria and Babylon when these Festivals were **not** observed regularly at Jerusalem. Under Ezra and Nehemiah the observance was restored, but they noted sadly, "*This had not been... since the days of Joshua*" (Neh 8:14-17). That was over five hundred years of non-observance.

The observance of the feasts was a statement of faith — faith in action. They were a confession that the Sovereign Lord had a plan for Israel and the Gentile nations. In His time (the appointed seasons) God will act and "*... who can hinder him ?*" (Job 11:10).

The vast majority of Israel did not understand the far-reaching significance of the Festivals they celebrated.

The DEVOUT men, however, would continue to obey and honor God in their observance.

2. Prophetic Significance Revealed

Some sought to know what these things meant, "*...the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow*" (1 Pet 1:10,11).

Imagine the sense of joy and thrill when Peter stood up on that first Christian Pentecost and said, "*This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel...*" (Acts 2:16).

Under divine direction, **Moses** had instituted the Festival of Pentecost (Harvest). **Joel** spoke of its prophetic significance. **Peter** announced the fulfillment of this great prophetic pageant at the first Pentecost Festival after Jesus' resurrection.

A great veil was taken away, and the prophetic significance of Passover and Pentecost was suddenly revealed to the crowd of devout Jews in Peter's audience. It resulted in a repentance that was more than just sorrow for sin. The believing Jews began to see their whole Jewish heritage in a new light. They saw that Jesus was the central figure about Whom the Prophets had spoken. *"Wasn't it clearly predicted by the prophets that the Messiah would have to suffer all these things before entering his time of glory?"* (Luke 24:46 tlb).

The Church was born on that Day of Pentecost. At that moment men saw with the *"eyes of their spiritual understanding"* that Jesus was the Passover Lamb of God (John 1:29; I Cor 5:7). *"Then they that gladly received his [Peter's] word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls"* (Acts 2:41).

E. SPIRITUAL SEASONS OF REFRESHING

*"These are the LORD's appointed feasts... which ye shall proclaim **in their seasons**"* (Lev 23:4).

It is this same Spirit of revelation that has brought us to look at the Festivals of the Lord once again.

Perhaps it is time for a modern-day Peter to rise again and say, *"This is that which was spoken by the prophets"* — to set our hearts aflame with an awareness that we are again celebrating the PROPHETIC ASPECT of some of the Feasts in their spiritual season!

There are three seasons in which the Festivals are observed:

1. Passover

2. Pentecost

3. Tabernacles

This is what is meant by the Feasts being observed "in their seasons."

*"Repent therefore... that **seasons of refreshing** may come from the presence of the Lord"* (Acts 3:19 niv).

In a spiritual sense, there are seasons or time-periods during which the spiritual realities (revival or seasons of refreshing) spoken of by the Festivals are experienced.

This has happened in Church history when a particular emphasis or revival experience comes to the whole Church. Examples of this will be given later in this study.

(NOTE: Section C6 contains expanded commentary on this. The Feasts portray the historic progression of the restoration of many doctrinal truths lost during the Dark Ages.)

For now, let us examine in more detail each of these seven Festivals of the Lord. Let us discover their PAST, PROPHETIC and PRESENT reservoirs of rich truth.

Chapter 2

The Feast Of Passover

Introduction

"This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: the first month of the year to you... In the tenth day of this month Israel shall take to them every man a lamb... for a house.

"You shall keep it until the fourteenth day... and the whole assembly of the Congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening.

"They shall take of the blood and strike it on the two sideposts and on the upper doorposts of the houses, wherein they shall eat it. I will pass through Egypt this night... when I see the blood... I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you when I smite the land of Egypt" (Exo 12:2,3,6,7,12,13).

A. THE MEANING OF PASSOVER

"This month shall be unto you the beginning of months..." (Exo 12:2).

Four hundred years before, "Jehovah told Abram, *"Your descendants will be oppressed as slaves in a foreign land for 400 years. But I will punish the nation that enslaves them, and at the end they will come away with great wealth"* (Gen 15:13,14 tlb).

1. Deliverance For Israel

The four dark centuries had now passed. It was time to come out of slavery into wealth, out of bondage into liberty, out of oppression into freedom, out of darkness into light. Egypt would be behind them, the promised land flowing with milk and honey before them.

What a picture this is of our own salvation through Christ. Passover perfectly portrays *"...our great salvation"* (Heb 2:3). Our deliverance from slavery to sin and bondage was prophetically portrayed in these events some 3,400 years ago in Egypt.

The Pharaoh wore a crown with a Cobra serpent at its front. The serpent was the symbol of Satan (Gen 3:1-14; Rev 12:9).

This crown of Pharaoh symbolized the ruling principality (in the spiritual realm) over Egypt.

God's time had come to take them out from under the despotic satanic rule of Pharaoh into God's benevolent Kingdom under Moses.

Just as Satan ruled through the Pharaoh, God would extend His rule through Moses and his shepherd's staff. *"But take this staff in your hand so you can perform miraculous signs with it"* (Exo 4:17 niv).

Pharaoh would not give up his slaves without a battle. Ten terrible plagues would fall upon Egypt before the Pharaoh and the people of Egypt would plead, *"...Leave us: please go away, all of you: go and serve Jehovah as you said. Take your flocks and herds and be gone..."* (Exo 12:31,32 tlb).

God told Moses that the last of the ten plagues would be the destruction and death of ALL the firstborn of animals and men.

To save His people. God made provisions to PASS OVER them — and thus PASSOVER came to be. *"This month shall be unto you the beginning of months..."* God was going to give all the Israelites a **new beginning**.

2. Deliverance From Sin

Just as Passover was the end of slavery, hardship and poverty for the children of Israel, so when we come to our Passover Lamb, Christ, we have a NEW BEGINNING.

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2Cor5:17).

The sins, faults and failures of the past no longer bind us. We are part of a new family, with a new genealogy, with a new covenant, and a better, more wonderful Deliverer than any could ever imagine.

Of our Deliverer the Bible says, "... *and thou shall call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins*" (Matt 1:21).

Moses' deliverance was wonderful. He saved from slavery and its bondage. Jesus' salvation is more wonderful. He saves from sin and its penalty. Praise Him! We start a **new life** with a **new beginning** when we come to Christ.

a. Household Salvation. *"In the tenth day of this month Israel shall take to them every man a lamb... for a house"* (Exo 12:3).

A wonderful promise for parents is included herein. Household salvation is a biblical concept..Not only can you enjoy salvation; by acts of faith and obedience, you can bring salvation to your whole household.

To Zacchaeus, the sinful tax collector, the Lord said: "...*This day is salvation come to **this house**...*" (Luke 19:9). Zacchaeus' faith to follow Jesus brought salvation to his household.

To the Philippian jailer, Paul and Silas said, "*Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, **you and your household**... then immediately he and **all his family were baptized**... he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God — he and **his whole family**"* (Acts 16:31,33,34 niv).

Ask the Lord to use you to lead your relatives, your children and your parents to saving faith. You must tell them how to receive Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

Remember, it was "...*a lamb for a house.*"

B. JESUS: OUR PASSOVER LAMB

"You shall keep it until the fourteenth day... and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening" (Exo 12:6).

1. Examined For Purity

Notice that the Passover lamb was set aside on the TENTH day of ABIB (April). They had to examine the lamb fully before they killed it on the FOURTEENTH day of ABIB. The lamb had to be "...*without blemish.*"

Luke 19 records Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem a few days before His crucifixion.

At this very same time, the people were bringing their sacrificial Passover lambs to the priests for examination.

Jesus, the Lamb of God, was also coming before both people and leaders for close examination before His suffering and glory.

He too, as "...*the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world,*" had to be declared "...*holy and blameless, unstained by sin, undefiled by sinners*" (John 1:29; Heb 7:26 niv).

a. Examined By Religious Leaders. On the tenth day of Abib, Jesus presented Himself for this inspection. This is clear from Matthew 22:15-46. This incredible passage shows Him being examined by the **Herodians, Sadducees, Lawyers and Pharisees.**

The Pharisees sent disciples of the Herodians to try and trick Jesus.

Then the Sadducees tried to trip him up on the doctrine of the resurrection.

"But when the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together" (Matt 22:34).

"Then the Pharisees took counsel how they might entangle him in his talk... " (Matt 22:15). A lawyer of the Pharisees tried Him on the question of the greatest commandment.

Then they asked who the father of Messiah was. Jesus asked them:

"Since David called him Lord, how can he be merely his son?" They had no answer. And after that no one dared ask him any more questions" (Matt 22:45,46).

The conclusion of this time of testing and examination is found in Matthew 22:46: *"And no man was able to answer him a word. "*

b. Examined By Civil Authority. *"Then the... officers of the Jews took Jesus, and bound him... Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment: and it was early; and they themselves went not into the [Gentile - Roman] judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover" (John 18:12,28).*

(Note: Entrance by Jews into a Gentile court at Passover would have defiled them so they could not eat their Passover lambs which were being examined for the feast at this moment.)

Caiaphas wanted evidence to present to Pilate on which he could condemn Jesus. He found nothing, and had to answer Pilate's enquiry with the statement:

"If he were not a criminal, we would not have delivered him up to you" (John 18:29,30).

After extensive examination of the Lamb of God, Pilate himself pronounces that Jesus is qualified to be the Passover lamb: *"I find in him no fault at all" (John 18:38). "...I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him" (John 19:4).*

This legal, civil verdict was given at the very time the Passover lambs were being examined and declared faultless by the priests. Pilate declares Jesus faultless three times (John 18:38,19:4,6).

Pilate did not understand how important this declaration of innocence was. He did not know that Jesus was the Lamb of God being presented to him for inspection. Pilate knew little of the divine decree some fourteen centuries before: *"Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male..." (Exo 12:5). "But if there is a defect [fault] in it... you shall not sacrifice it to the LORD your God" (Deut 15:21).*

In his final decree, Pilate's words are absolutely prophetic: *"...Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify him: for I find no fault [blemish] in him" (John 19:6).*

Without realizing it, Pilate was declaring the worthiness of Christ, the Lamb of God, to die as God's Passover lamb for sinful humanity.

Yes, after four days of careful examination, Jesus was sacrificed. The REAL MEANING of Passover had been achieved.

At the same time the sacrificial Passover lambs were slain and spilling their blood at the Temple altar, they took Jesus out and crucified Him.

Passover's PAST (HISTORIC) ASPECT remembered the deliverance from Egypt. Passover's PROPHETIC ASPECT was fulfilled on Calvary.

2. A Protective Covering

Jesus became a protective covering for all who would receive Him as their Passover Lamb. *"... and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you..." (Exo 12:13).*

"But he paid for you with the precious lifeblood of Christ, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God" (1 Pet 1:19 tib).

a. Blood On The Doorposts. *"On the evening of the fourteenth day of this month, all these lambs shall be killed, and their blood shall be placed on the two side-frames of the door of every home and on the panel above the door. Use the blood of the lamb eaten in that home" (Exo 12:6,7).*

It was no accident that the blood on the panel above the door dripping down formed a vertical line — like the center shaft of the cross. When you connect the blood on the two side-frames of the door with a horizontal line — you have A CROSS.

This pointed prophetically to the future to the coming of Messiah, the Lamb of God Who would die on a cross.

"Drain the lamb's blood into a basin, and then take a cluster of hyssop branches and dip them into the lamb's blood, and strike the hyssop against the lintel above the door and against the two side panels, so that there will be blood upon them, and none of you shall go outside all night.

*"For Jehovah will pass through the land and kill the Egyptians; but when he sees the blood upon the panel at the top of the door and on the two side pieces, **he will pass over that home** and not permit **the Destroyer** to enter and kill your firstborn"* (Exo 12:22,23).

Notice the Scripture says that when God sees the blood, *"He will pass over that home..."* (vs23).

For years I thought this meant that God would **skip over** Israelite houses in the sense that one bypasses or misses one person standing in a line.

Now I see that there is a more beautiful fact here. When the Bible said, *"God will pass over your home..."* —this means that God placed Himself over the Israelite houses as a covering. He was there protecting them from the destroying angel that he had sent among the Egyptians.

b. The Crucified Christ. The blood on the doorposts is then clearly speaking of the crucified Jesus standing at the door of the believers' homes as a Savior, Protector and Deliverer.

Psalms 91 describes the protection we enjoy when the blood of the Passover lamb is applied to the door of our heart.

*"He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most high shall abide **under the shadow of the Almighty...** SURELY he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler... **He shall cover thee** with his feathers and **under his wings** thou shalt trust..."*

Satan is the destroyer — the death angel. *"And he opened the bottomless pit [Hell].... Their king is the Prince of the bottomless pit whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek, Apollyon (and in English, **the Destroyer**)" (Rev 9:2,11 tib).*

Everyone who accepts the shed blood of the Lamb and hides behind the cross will find perfect protection from the Destroyer (Satan).

There is PERFECT PROTECTION from the works of the destroyer who is our adversary. *"For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil" (1 Jn 3:8).*

Many believers scripturally and rightfully declare, "Satan cannot touch me or harm me as long as I stay under the blood of Jesus. There I have perfect protection from Satan and all his demons."

Every person needs to experience their own PERSONAL PASSOVER if they are to stand strong against the adversary of their life.

The blood on the doorposts brought God's presence which rendered the Destroyer powerless in that home. This is stated in Hebrews 2:14: "*Jesus... rendered powerless, him that had the power of death... namely the devil.* "

The crucified Christ standing at the door of your life renders the devil powerless over you. What freedom! Hallelujah!

Truly, "*if the Son sets you free, you are free indeed — you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free*" (John 8:36,32).

c. A Personal Experience. I had my PERSONAL PASSOVER. I used to be very fearful of the devil when I was a young Christian. I used to dream that I was trying to cast out demons but with no success. This fear produced paralyzing unbelief. Then God set me free. He delivered me by His truth.

After I had been set free from this fear, I had a wonderful experience in British Guyana, South America.

There was a family there who were members of a church which did not preach the gospel. They had a demonized son who had been out of his mind for four months.

Neither the parents nor their parish priest were born-again.

The priest had brought a crucifix and placed it above the bed of the demonized child. The priest also sprinkled holy water around the house. But this had not prevented the demon from causing the boy to smash his head against sharp objects.

The parents had taken the boy for X-rays of the brain. The doctors could find nothing wrong with him.

The boy had not eaten for five days and was resisting drinking water. The boy could not be helped by the crucifix or the powerless ritual of the priest. He needed the LIVING GOD, the LIVING JESUS, to come and stand over him.

I sat down with the parents and introduced them to the truths of Romans 10:9,10:

"If you will confess with your mouth that Jesus Christ is Lord, and believe in your heart that God has raised him from the dead [not left Him hanging on the cross as that crucifix suggested], you WILL be saved."

1) Conditions For Total Deliverance. I explained to them that the Greek word used here for 'saved' is 'sozo'. It means 'to be delivered, to be made whole, healed, all the benefits of **total redemption**.' I explained that the conditions for receiving this TOTAL DELIVERANCE were:

a) CONFESS with your mouth that JESUS CHRIST IS LORD;

b) BELIEVE in your heart that GOD RAISED HIM FROM THE

DEAD; and

c) RECEIVE: God promises YOU WILL BE SAVED... (SOZO).

Though these people had been churchied, they had never heard this Bible truth about how God saves. They opened their hearts to God and experienced their PERSONAL PASSOVER.

By confessing their new faith in Christ as Lord, and trusting themselves to Him as Deliverer, they were saved (sozo).

2) Set Free From Demons. A short time later, a brother who was with me joined me in binding the evil spirit tormenting the boy. We commanded the demon to leave the lad in the strong Name of Jesus.

Their son was asleep at the time and showed no outward sign that anything had happened. I encouraged the parents to accept in faith the fact that the covering of God's presence was over their home and their lives through their faith in the God Who **passes over**.

Later that night they went to bed. The father lay down on one side of the bed with the little boy in the middle. The mother lay down on the other side of the bed.

About 2:00 a.m. (in the early morning) the boy awoke. The demon immediately left with a piercing scream. The evil spirit departed out of him, leaving him completely free. He was made whole the moment he awoke from sleep.

Demons cannot stay where

- God comes and passes over a home of believing parents, and
- where the word of command has been spoken against demons by anointed

servants of God.

d. Jesus — Our Covering. Thus far I have sought to explain the Passover significance of the Blood of Christ as a covering that protects the believer.

Passover's PERSONAL ASPECT must be fulfilled in every reader's life. Every one of us must see and receive Jesus the Lamb of God Who takes away our sin.

Passover is the first feast in the Divine Calendar. It happens in the First Month Abib.

The PERSONAL PASSOVER of each person comes at the beginning of his establishing a relationship with God.

We dare not skip over the message of Passover. We must see the awesome purity of God's sacrificial Lamb. We must invite Him to place Himself over us. He becomes the covering, prepared by our heavenly Father, for all who would be right with God.

Jesus IS the garment of Righteousness that PASSES OVER our head as we "*put on Christ*" (Rom 13:14).

When we have received Him as our Passover Lamb, we can be sure we are safe from the devil and the demons. This promise becomes true: "*No curse can be placed on Jacob, And no magic will work against him*" (Num 23:23 tlb).

Chapter 3

The Feast Of Unleavened Bread

"...and the fifteenth day of the first month is the feast of unleavened bread unto the Lord: seven days ye must eat unleavened bread.

".. ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruit of your harvests unto the priest and ye shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted for you, on the morrow after the Sabbath [Sunday]" (Lev 23:6-11).

A. MEANING OF UNLEAVENED BREAD

Unleavened Bread extended from the fifteenth to the twenty-second day of Abib (April). No bread baked with yeast was to be eaten. All yeast was to be cleansed out of the house.

This use of unleavened bread spoke of the haste in which Israel left Egypt. They did not have time to make leavened bread. It took too much time for the yeast to rise.

They were departing in haste. They slept with their shoes on. *"And thus you shall eat it: with a belt on your waist, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. So you shall eat it in haste. It is the Lord's Passover"* (Exo 12:11 nkjv).

In the middle of the night, Israel was released to go. The women packed the unleavened dough still in the kneading troughs, and Israel departed in haste (Exo 12:8-11, 14-20,31-39).

It was their basic food during that exciting time of travel out of Egypt, down through the waters of the Red Sea, and into the wilderness.

God had forewarned them to mix the dough without leaven so that it would not go stale during that critical time of departure (exodus).

B. A SPECIAL SABBATH

The Prophetic Aspect of the Feast of Unleavened Bread is that it speaks of the burial of Jesus. As the Passover Festival pictured His death on the cross, so the observance of Unleavened Bread pictured His burial.

In Matthew 12:40, Jesus says that *"as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."* These were days measured in the Jewish way.

Genesis 1:5 shows that the Israelites measure days as *"...the evening and the morning..."*, etc. The Jewish day ends and begins at sunset. (In Western nations the day ends and begins at midnight —12:00 a.m.)

How could Jesus have been three days and three nights in the heart of the earth (Hades-Hell)? He could not have been, if He were crucified on Friday as is commonly supposed.

If He were buried as Friday was ending at sunset and Saturday was beginning — and if He rose just after sunset Saturday, as Sunday was beginning — that would only be **one** night and **one** day, NOT **three** days and **three** nights as Jesus said.

John mentions that Jesus was crucified the afternoon before a special 'high day' or 'holy day'. *"And it was the preparation day before the Passover, and about noon time... Jesus said, 'It is finished.' With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. Now it was the day of preparation, and the next day was to be a special Sabbath..."* (John 9:14,30,31 niv).

This **special sabbath** was the first day of Passover — **not** the Saturday Sabbath. It was a special Feast day.

This 'high day' was the first day of Unleavened Bread. *"In the first day [of unleavened bread] ye shall have an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein [it was a "no-work" special sabbath] "* (Lev 23:7). It was not a Saturday Sabbath, but was observed as a special sabbath.

SEE ILLUSTRATION ON PAGES 104 -105 OF THIS SECTION

Jesus' body was laid in the tomb just minutes before sunset Wednesday. The first day of Unleavened Bread began at sunset (which was Thursday).

At sunset that evening. He was laid in the tomb; it was now THURSDAY (in the Bible and Jewish way of reckoning days). In the Western nations' way of time, it was WEDNESDAY evening.

The Jewish Sabbath ends on SATURDAY evening at SUNSET. Sometime after sunset on Saturday, Jesus rose triumphant from that tomb... which was the FIRST DAY of the week.

This was the exact day on which the FIRSTFRUITS offering of a SHEAF of grain was to become a wave offering. The Feast of Firstfruits is God's prophetic picture of Jesus' resurrection. (See the next chapter for more amazing details.)

How marvelously Jesus fulfilled this Divine Timetable.

Permit me to warn you against being contentious about these details. They are not important enough to argue with others about.

The important thing is this; *"...I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day..."* (I Cor 15:3,4 niv).

C. WHY UNLEAVENED BREAD

The obvious historic reason for the Feast of Unleavened Bread is that Israel was required to eat bread without yeast or leaven in it.

This is because yeast is a symbol of malice and wickedness. *"Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast — as you really are. For Christ, our Passover Lamb has been sacrificed.*

"Therefore let us keep the festival [Feast] not with the old yeast of malice and wickedness, but with bread without yeast, the bread of sincerity and truth" (I Cor 5:7,8 niv).

Paul teaches us that our old sinful nature (typified by leaven) was buried with Christ in our water baptism. *"Your old sin-loving nature was buried with him by baptism when he died..."* (Rom 6:4).

Just as the Children of Israel went down into the Red Sea with unleavened bread to sustain them in their new life under Moses — so it is with us and Christ.

"For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact... that our forefathers ...all passed through the sea. They were all baptized into Moses... in the sea" (I Cor 10:1,2 niv).

D. SAVED FROM THEIR SINS

The Personal Aspect of this Feast is that of getting rid of the malice and wickedness in our lives. Passover speaks of Jesus dealing with the PENALTY of our sin. Unleavened Bread speaks of Jesus dealing with the PRACTICE of sin.

Matthew records the angel saying, **"you shall call his name Jesus** [meaning **Jehovah saves**]*for he shall save his people FROM their sins"* (Matt 1:21).

Some branches of the Christian Church call this 'sanctification.' Unleavened Bread speaks to us PERSONALLY about dealing with any malice or wickedness in us. We must purge it out, giving ourselves to righteousness and not to sin.

This was the message that Paul was preaching to the Corinthian church. They needed to PERSONALLY experience the Feast of Unleavened Bread. They had great faith and many Gifts of the Spirit, but were being defiled by unrighteousness in the community.

1. There Is Victory

This problem is not unique to the Corinthian church. Wherever there are people, there are sin problems. BUT there IS a path to VICTORY along which people can rise up out of the power and habitual practice of sin.

These sin problems called 'works of the flesh' must not be considered the inevitable, unconquerable chains of being human. There is a way of dealing with our 'fleshly nature,' our 'lusts of the flesh.'

First, understand that you don't cast the works of the flesh out as if they are all the work of demons. Some would like to think we could deal with all our bad habits and bad character by getting someone to cast the demons out of us.

Next, God's answer to the works of the flesh requires that we understand more clearly what happened to Jesus on Calvary. Calvary exposes GOD'S PUNISHMENT for sin.

2. A Sin Offering

We see not only God's love for sinful mankind, but also His terrifying wrath against sin.

Isaiah describes Jesus in death as *"...so marred more than any man..."* (Isa 52:14). The force of the Hebrew suggests that He was beaten up beyond recognition. *"All my bones are out of joint"* (Ps 22:14).

These passages describe what happened when Jesus was made sin for us, not just as a substitute identifying with sinners, but as a sin-offering bearing the wrath of God against sin.

2 Corinthians 5:21 says, *"Jesus was 'made sin' [or a 'sin-offering'] for us."* This happened because *"Jesus became like his brothers in every way... that he might turn away God's wrath, by paying the full price for sin in taking upon himself the sins of the people"* (Heb 2:17,18 pph). This is what is meant by Christ's act of atonement or reconciliation — or becoming the propitiation for our sins.

Romans 3:25 says of Jesus: *"Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation [full payment for sin] through faith in his blood..."* This means He paid the full price for our sin so He could turn away (or deflect) God's wrath from us.

God was angry at Calvary, angry with sin. He vented His full anger about our sin on Jesus, His Lamb-Son.

Calvary was not just 'play-acting' an unreal drama acted out by Jesus as an actor would act a part. He experienced real suffering.

Isaiah described it thus: *"But it was the Lord's good plan to bruise him and fill him with grief. However, when his soul has been made an offering for sin, then he shall have a multitude of children, many heirs. He shall live again, and God's program shall prosper in his hands."*

"And when he sees all that is accomplished by the anguish of his soul, he shall be satisfied: and because of what he has experienced, my righteous Servant shall make many to be counted righteous before God, for he shall bear all their sins" (Isa 53:10,11 tlb).

It was a horrific reality in which Jesus experienced Hell FOR US and saw His Father forsake Him in anger against the sin which Jesus had become.

We have to see sin as God sees it: A hated thing. We have to see that God could deal with the works of the flesh only one way. He had to judge sin, he had to kill sinful Adamic nature. He had to kill thesin-nature in us.

Chart of the Feasts of the Lord

Modern Month	APRIL			MAY
Hebrew Name	ABIB (or NISAN)			ZIF
Jewish Religious Year	1st MONTH			2nd MONTH
Jewish Civil Year	7th MONTH			8th MONTH
FEAST	Passover	Unleavened Bread	Firstfruits	None
DAY	14th ABIB	15-22nd ABIB	18th ABIB	
HARVEST			BARLEY	
PAST/HISTORIC ASPECT	Deliverance from Egypt	Haste to leave Egypt	The Barley Harvest Celebrated	
PROPHETIC ASPECT	The Crucifixion of Jesus	The Burial of Jesus	The Resurrection of Jesus	
PERSONAL ASPECT	Redemption and Deliverance from the power of sin.	Haste to leave the PRACTICE of SIN. Baptism in water.	First signs of Christ's Character in us: New nature; works fitting repentance.	

The Jews have **TWO MAIN** calendars:
a. The RELIGIOUS
b. The CIVIL

The chart is based on the Religious Calendar. The months are not identical to the Modern Calendar months.

JUNE	JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER			
SIVAN	TAMMUZ	AB	ELUL	ETHANIM			
3rd MONTH	4th	5th	6th	7th			
9th MONTH	10th	11th	12th	1st			
Pentecost		None	None	None	Trumpets	Atonement	Tabernacles
50 Days after Firstfruits					1st Ethanim	10th Ethanim	15-22 Ethanim
WHEAT/Early Rains	DRY MONTHS			NO RAIN			FRUIT and OIL/Letter Rains
The Giving of the Law at Sinai. The Wheat Harvest Celebrated.	The Wilderness Wanderings			Calls Israel together to the Tabernacle.	Yearly atonement for the Nation & cleansing of the Sanctuary.	The Harvest of fruits celebrated.	
The Outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Church.	The Dark Ages of the Christian Era			a) Restoration of Israel b) Prophetic voice calling the Body to Unity & Rightness.	Cleansing and Preparation of the Body for the End of the Age.	End-Time Harvest of people celebrating in the Presence of God. Body Completed.	
The Personal Experience of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit.	Back-sliding and rebelling against the Lordship of Christ. (Not necessary, as the 40 years wandering for Israel was not necessary.)			Hearing the call to join responsibly to the Body of Christ.	Understanding our POSITION in CHRIST—Our victory and the holy walk.	The Perfection of Holiness. The Joy of Harvest.	

This Chart represents an approximate relationship between the Modern Calendar and the Jewish Religious Calendar.

3. Crucified With Christ

Paul understood this. He said, *"I have been crucified with Christ: and I myself no longer live, but Christ lives in me. And the real life I now have within this body is a result of my trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me"* (Gal 2:20 tlb).

Calvary does not just mean death for Jesus. It means death to sin for everyone who puts their trust in Him. Calvary deals with our old self.

"For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be rendered powerless, that we should no longer be slaves to sin — because anyone who has died has been freed from sin" (Rom 6:6,7 pph).

When we see and know that we died with Christ on Calvary, we can confidently expect to experience Romans 6:11; *"...count yourselves dead to sin but alive to GOD in Christ Jesus."* Verse 11 can't happen until we have truly understood and implemented verse 6.

God rendered the body of sin powerless when Christ died on Calvary. He broke the power of sin when our old nature died with Christ on Calvary.

Because that happened, we can confidently count ourselves dead to sin. This means we must consider it as already accomplished that we are in fact no longer dominated by sin's power.

Faith comes into action when we place confidence in this God-revealed fact that we died with Christ and that we must now start counting ourselves dead to sin and alive to God.

Paul says: *"Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God"* (2 Cor 7:1).

a. A New Lifestyle . This personal commitment to perfecting holiness is not a return to living under the Mosaic Law. Rather it is receiving a new lifestyle provided by our Father God and our Savior Jesus.

Perfecting holiness only happens when we develop the same hatred for sin and love for righteousness that God has.

We have the very precious promises of our salvation as a free gift of God's grace, but we need to move on, not taking advantage of God's grace by living in sin.

Let **us** cleanse out the old leaven of malice and wickedness. Let us see that our old self with its self-centered desires and lust died with Christ.

Let **us** by faith confess that death of self whenever we are challenged to resurrect the old nature by acts of ungodliness.

Let **us** recognize that the only way to deal with a dead body is to bury it. Baptism by immersion in water is a strong symbol of the old nature being buried, and a new creation in Christ's likeness being raised to a new Christ-like life.

b. In Christ. I want finally to explain how we all died in **Christ** on Calvary. In Hebrews 7, we read that Levi (who was not yet born) paid tithes to Melchizedek **in Abraham**.

How could this happen?

"One might even say that Levi himself, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, for he was still in the loins of his ancestor when Melchizedek met him " (Heb7:9,10niv).

Just as the whole nation of Israel (including Levi) was **in the loins** of Abraham when he paid tithes to Melchizedek, so the whole Body of the Church was **in Christ** when He died on the cross.

Because we were IN HIM, when HE died, WE died — when HE was buried, WE were buried. When HE was resurrected, WE were resurrected to a new life. Let us live this new life then, without the leaven of malice and wickedness.

Chapter 4

The Feast Of Firstfruits

Introduction

".. you shall reap the harvest, then you shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruit of your harvests unto the priest and you shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted for you, on the day after the Sabbath [Sunday]" (Lev 23:10,11).

"... Bring to the priest a sheaf of the first grain of your harvest, he is to wave the sheaf before the Lord so it will be accepted on your behalf... on the day after the Sabbath [Sunday]" (Lev 23:10,11).

As the Feast of Unleavened Bread pictures Jesus' death and burial, so the Feast of Firstfruits portrays and foretells His resurrection.

A. WHAT IS MEANT BY FIRST-FRUITS?

In Palestine, the main harvest (ingathering) is during the 7th Jewish month at the Feast of Tabernacles (September / October).

One April (*Abib*) I was driving through beautiful wheat fields in Jordan. I saw stalks of wheat standing high above the main harvest. I asked a local brother the reason for this.

He explained that this was wheat that matured before the main harvest. It was the firstfruits. It was planted with all the rest but grew, became ripe and matured in the springtime ahead of the main harvest — which came later.

Up until A.D. 70 (when the temple was destroyed) this early wheat would be plucked and collected into a sheaf and presented at the temple as the firstfruit. The priests waved it before the Lord as a wave-offering. Suddenly the Feast of Firstfruits became clear to me.

1. Paul As Firstfruits

I remembered Paul spoke of himself as *"...one born out of due season"* (1 Cor 15:8). He saw himself as a firstfruits of the main Harvest of Jewish people who will be saved when Jesus appears the second time (see Zechariah 12:10).

Firstfruits are like that. They are a harvest that matures out of season.

The weather patterns in Israel produce this strange phenomena. Many of the crops produce a small harvest in springtime. The normal season for harvest is summer or the fall months. This small harvest out of season is called firstfruits.

2. Jesus As Firstfruits

You remember that Jesus said, *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit"* (John 12:24).

The purpose of planting a sack of rice seed in the ground is to see it multiply into millions of other seeds (kernels of rice) just like the one planted.

After the seed dies, there is a resurrection. *"But some of the seeds... yielded thirty times as much as had been planted — some of it even sixty or a hundred times as much!"* (Mark 4:8 tib).

In His death and burial, Jesus was planted as a seed. Not only would Jesus rise from the dead — but a firstfruits of the main resurrection to come in the last days (see Revelation 20:4-6) would also rise from the dead.

Isaiah prophesied in the person of Jesus concerning His resurrection. *"Your dead shall live; Together with my dead body they shall arise..."* (Isa 26:19 nkjv).

When He died, Jesus descended into Hell (Hades) and opened the prison doors and released multitudes who were in the captivity of death. *"... the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. ...He also descended to the lower, earthly regions... I will free your prisoners from the waterless pit... He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and brake their bands in sunder... For he hath broken [down] the gates of brass..."* (Matt 12:40; Eph 4:9; Zech9:11; Ps 107:14,16 niv/kjv).

But, do you remember His promises, *"After three days I will rise again... will swallow up death in victory... I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death... I say unto you. The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live"* (Matt 27:63; Isa 25:8; Hos 13:14; John 5:25 niv/kjv).

Matthew records the fulfillment of these amazing prophecies. *"At that moment [of Jesus' death] the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks split.*

"The tombs broke open and the bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life.

"They came out of the tombs, and after Jesus' resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many people" (Matt 27:51-53 niv).

This describes the firstfruits of the resurrection. When Jesus invaded Hades (the place of the dead), the bodies of many holy people experienced the mighty resurrection power of God!

They were like the sheaf of wheat that matured out of season. They were like the wheat that matured in springtime. These stalks of wheat were waved in worship and triumphant praise before the Lord in the temple as a firstfruits offering to God.

These were raised long before the main harvest. These firstfruits give a powerful prophetic forecast to the certainty of the great, main resurrection Harvest coming in these last days.

These words describe that last great resurrection Harvest: *"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall be resurrected first... In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised imperishable..."* (I Ths 4:16; I Cor 15:51).

3. Joseph's Bones

How many of us have read-the story of Joseph and wondered at his strange request? *"And Joseph said to his brethren, 'I am dying... God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here.'*

"So Joseph died... and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt" (Gen 50:24,25 nkjv).

Some 300 years later in Moses' time we read: *"And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for Joseph had placed the children of Israel under solemn oath, saying, 'God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here with you'"*(Exo 13:19 nkjv).

Why did Joseph want his bones carried back to the promised land from Egypt?

Some have conjectured that Joseph was a prophet. He foresaw the coming events some eighteen centuries in the future. Joseph foresaw Messiah coming, and in His triumph over death, raising many from the grave.

So Joseph wanted to be buried there in the promised land so he would be raised as part of the firstfruits.

I think it is possible that because of the prophetic spirit upon Joseph, he understood something of God's purpose for firstfruits... and Joseph wanted to be a part of the firstfruits resurrection! What do you think?

4. Sown As A Seed

In John 12:24 Jesus says, *"...except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone. But if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."*

Jesus was talking about Himself. He was explaining to His disciples why He had to go to the cross to die and be buried. It was that He might be sown as a seed. In resurrection the seed would yield a Harvest of fruit like Himself.

Jesus is described as the firstfruits. *"But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep"* (I Cor 15:20).

The firstfruits is the early Harvest that witnesses to the latter Harvest of the same fruit. James 5:7 says: *"...Be patient therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. Behold, the farmer [God] waits for the precious fruit of the earth..."*

B. FIRSTFRUITS OF CHRIST

As Unleavened Bread speaks of our fleeing in haste from the PRACTICE of sin, Firstfruits speaks of those first signs of Christ's **character** in us.

Before our Passover, there was no Christlikeness in us at all. AFTER our Passover, there may be little Christ-likeness in our **behavior** UNTIL we move on into Unleavened Bread and Firstfruits.

1. Fruit Of The Spirit

These Firstfruits of Christ in us are described in Galatians. *"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control"* (Gal 5:22,23).

Jesus taught us: *"Remain in me, and I will remain in you. **No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. "Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me...***

*"If a man remains in me and I in him, he will **bear much fruit**; apart from me you can do nothing.*

*"This is to my Father's glory, **that you bear much fruit**, showing yourselves to be my disciples.*

"My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. You are my friends if you do what I command" (John 15:4,5,8,12,14 niv).

Firstfruits are those first signs of the fruit of the Spirit. They are recognized by practical loving actions (behavior) on behalf of Christ and His Church.

As Unleavened Bread takes us out of sin through death and burial, Firstfruits takes us into Love through resurrection and life.

"We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers. Anyone who does not love remains in death" (1 Jn3:14).

God wants us to MOVE ON from Unleavened Bread — into the love of Firstfruits.

2. Renewed In His Likeness

Too often our desire to leave sin behind becomes self-righteousness. We develop an unloving, judgmental attitude. God calls us ON, after purging out the leaven of malice and wickedness, INTO the positive loving action of FIRSTFRUITS!

When we experience firstfruits, the likeness of Jesus is being formed in us. In spirit we are already like Him, for we have received His Spirit into our hearts through faith and have been born again, as sons of our Father.

In **soul** (affections, will and intellect) we are being renewed and fashioned in His likeness as we submit to the Lordship of the Spirit in our lives (see Romans 12:2).

In **body** we will be like Him at the last great Harvest resurrection in the end of the Church age. *"...Listen, I tell you a mystery: we will not all sleep but we will all be changed — in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet.*

"For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.

*"And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from Heaven (1 Cor 15:51, 52, 49). Won't that be a wonderful day? **Hallelujah!***

But for now, enter into your experience of firstfruits. "Clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.

"Throw off your old evil nature — the old you that was a partner in your evil ways — rotten through and through, full of lust and sham.

' Now your attitudes and thoughts must all be constantly changing for the better.

"Yes, you must be a new and different person, holy and good. Clothe yourself with this new nature" (Rom 13:14 niv; Eph 4:22-24 tlb). AMEN!

Chapter 5

The Feast Of Pentecost

"...From firstfruits count off fifty days up to the day after the seventh Sabbath, and then present an offering of new grain before the Lord. From wherever you live, bring two loaves made of two tenths of an ephah of fine flour, baked with yeast, as a wave-offering of firstfruits to the Lord" (Lev 23:15-17).

A. THE PAST (HISTORIC) ASPECT

The past aspect of the Feast of Pentecost deserves mention. There were three major occasions on which the Israelites were to present themselves before the Lord (Exo 23:14-17). The **first** was **Passover**, which also included Unleavened Bread and Firstfruits. These three all took place within a period of eight days to two weeks.

The **second** occasion was to celebrate the Feast of **Pentecost** (also called the Feast of Harvest). This transpired fifty days after the waving of the firstfruit sheaf at the end of Unleavened Bread.

The **third** great festival season was called the Feast of **Tabernacles** (Ingathering) at the end of the year when the Israelites gathered their fruit from the field.

This festive time started the first day of the seventh month with the Feast of Trumpets. On the tenth day of this month was the Day of Atonement, followed on the fifteenth day by the Feast of Tabernacles.

This happened in September/October... *"Three times a year all men are to appear before the Sovereign Lord"* (Exo 23:17).

Deuteronomy 16:9-12 describes the Feast of Pentecost, saying: *"Count off seven weeks from the time you begin to put the sickle to the standing grain [Firstfruits], Then celebrate the Feast of Weeks [Pentecost] to the LOUD your God by giving a freewill offering in proportion to the blessings the LOUD your God has given you.*

"And rejoice before the LORD your God at the place he will choose as a dwelling for his name [Jerusalem]—you, your sons and daughters, your menservants and maidservants, the Levites in your towns, and the aliens, the fatherless and the widows living among you. "

B. PROPHETIC ASPECT FULFILLED

The prophetic aspect of the Feast of Pentecost was fulfilled in Acts 2.

"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come... they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages as the Spirit gave them the words to say" (Acts 2:1,4 Weymouth).

This is a very clear example of how God uses the Festivals as a Timetable for human history.

What happened in Acts 2 demonstrates again how the prophetic symbols of the Feast of Pentecost were fulfilled.

1. New Grain Offering

"Count off fifty days [Pentecost]... and then present an offering of new grain to the LORD" (Lev 23:16).

The new grain-offering prophetically portrayed the small company of people gathered in that Upper Room. They were the dedicated 120 that were waiting for the promise of the Father about which Jesus had spoken.

They were fully dedicated to Jesus and were waiting for what He had promised them. Jesus said that they would be baptized in the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4,5,14).

They were the dedicated few who were truly committed to Jesus Christ as their Lord, and who had sacrificed their own ambitions in order that they may be a part of Christ's purpose.

They were like the free-will new grain offering. They gathered in one accord (unity), presenting themselves freely to the Lord, prepared to pay the price of identification with Jesus.

The Feast of Pentecost has great power in it, but to experience it there is also a great price to be paid. It is the price of yielding ourselves completely and freely to the Lordship of Jesus Christ to serve Him "... whether it be by life, or by death" (Phil 1:20).

The price of Pentecost was explained clearly by Jesus in Acts 1:8. "*But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses [Greek **martus** meaning a martyr] unto we..*" (Acts 1:8).

According to historians, eleven of the twelve apostles to whom Jesus spoke these words were martyred.

Do you remember this event? Before Jesus was martyred, "There came unto him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on his head...

"For in pouring this fragrant oil on my body, she did it for my burial" (Matt 26:7,12 niv). At Pentecost we are anointed for burial and martyrdom.

The same Greek word **martus** is translated (in the English Bible) as martyr in the following two verses:

"And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed..." (Acts 22:20).

"...even in those days when Antipas was my faithful martyr who was slain among you..." (Rev 2:13).

In this personal aspect of Pentecost, this new grain offering is a free-will offering of ourselves as a living sacrifice prepared for anything God wants to do in or with us.

New grain has a symbolic lesson of being planted in death, the death of self-sacrifice and submission. Out of this meekness and yielded will comes a Harvest of life.

2. The Two Loaves

It is significant that the two loaves offered in this feast are baked with yeast. This speaks of the character of those who experienced Pentecost.

God did not require great academic achievement or moral perfection before He baptized the 120 with the Holy Spirit. A few weeks before, the twelve had shown themselves weak and afraid.

"Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled" (Matt 26:56).

Note where Jesus found the eleven after His resurrection.

"...the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews..." (John 20:19). Huddled in fear behind closed doors —that is where Jesus found them.

a. Empowered By The Spirit. It was here He told them that the Spirit would so empower them, they would no longer be afraid. They would boldly proclaim the gospel — even to martyrdom.

And that is what Pentecost did for twelve fear-filled apostles. It changed their fear into faith; the closed doors swung open, and they were out on the streets preaching Jesus in the face of arrest, imprisonment and martyrdom.

"And as they spoke unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them, And they... put them in jail until the next day... And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus"

(Acts 4:1,3,18). How did these disciples respond to such an edict?

First they prayed. *"And now. Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word"* (Acts 4:29).

Then they preached. *"And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus... Then the high priest rose up... filled with indignation, and put them in the common prison.*

"But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said. Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life.

"And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ" (Acts 4:33; 5:17-20,42).

Pentecost is for those who **hunger and thirst** for God's presence and power, those willing to be made bold (though in themselves fearful) so they can proclaim Christ — even if it means prison or death.

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled" (Matt 5:6)

"O God, thou art my God: early will seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is;

"To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary" (Ps 63:1,2).

"My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the LORD: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God" (Ps 84:2).

"For he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness" (Ps 107:9).

"He will fulfill the desire of them that fear him; he also will hear their cry, and will save them" (Ps 145:19).

"... how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" (Luke 11:13).

C. RECEIVE THE GIFT

The legal definition of a gift is this: An **offer** and an **acceptance** without **price or consideration**.

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit is described as THE GIFT promised by the Father (Acts 1:4; 2:38).

God's gifts are given because of His gracious nature, not because of our worthiness. The power of Pentecost was God's gift to a community that was not perfect.

The tragic story of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5 teaches us that to desire the POWER or PRESTIGE without the PURITY of the Holy Spirit is to misunderstand one great function of the Holy Spirit.

He comes into us not BECAUSE we are perfect but because we NEED to be perfect.

1. A Divine Encounter

If you have not received your personal Pentecost — read **Section DI** of this Leaders Training Guide. Follow the instructions there. You can be empowered and enabled to do God's will and God's work.

Exodus 23:17 says... *"Thou shalt appear before the Lord."* This speaks to us about the divine encounter with God.

The encounter with God recorded at the first New Testament Pentecost (Acts 2) certainly changed that small group of people who were waiting prayerfully in the Upper Room.

They became a powerful witnessing community, certain of the God they had encountered on the Day of Pentecost.

2. A Stone Of Stumbling

The personal aspect of this feast is still powerfully relevant today. There is still the need for the free-will offering of ourselves to God. A great many people in the Church desire the power of Pentecost, but not in the same way that it happened back in Acts 2.

Many Christians feel there is some thing unnecessary or embarrassing about speaking in tongues. Theological theories are constructed to explain away this clear biblical experience.

I have noticed that whenever God moves in a new way. He always puts a "stone of stumbling, a rock of offense" in what He does! Speaking in other tongues by the Spirit is like that for some.

They fail to receive their Baptism in the Holy Spirit. *"Why? Because they sought it not by faith... For they stumbled at that stumblingstone"* (Rom 9:32). To these the Gift of Tongues is *"... a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient..."* (1 Pet2:8).

The claim and message that came from Jesus Christ had a stone of stumbling in it. The religious leaders could not understand Christ's incarnation and became very angry when Jesus spoke about His divinity. Jesus was the stone the builders rejected and refused (Acts 4:11; Ps 118:22).

Paul teaches that the crucified Messiah was another major stone on which the Jews stumbled (I Cor 1:23).

They could not receive the fact that the Messiah came to die an ignoble (dishonorable) death. They thought He would drive away the Roman soldiers that occupied their land and set up a glorious kingdom.

It did not fit in with how they understood things; there was no glory in the cross — only shame and disgrace. The cross speaks of shame and offense — for only criminals were crucified.

It takes revelation to see the deep truths of the crucified Messiah. The natural mind cannot receive it. Jesus was not a criminal, but He was made a criminal by bearing my sins and your sins. *"...the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity [sin, lawlessness] of us all"* (Isa 53:6). *"God took the sinless Christ and poured into him our sins"* (2 Cor 5:21 tlb).

In the Feast of Pentecost, speaking in tongues is a similar stone of stumbling. There is a similar pride problem in receiving the Gift of Tongues. There is a reproach that some do not want to bear.

Just as a crucified Messiah was irrational to the Jews, so speaking in an unknown language seems irrational to many Christians.

But no denomination put the stone of stumbling in the Feast of Pentecost. God put it there — a stone on which we must fall in meekness and submission, lest it fall upon us.

"Whosoever shall fall upon this stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder" (Luke 20:18).

3. Baptism Of Fire

"John [the Baptist] answered them all, I baptize you with water. But one more powerful than I will come [Jesus]... He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire" (Luke 3:16).

Pentecost is also the Feast of the Baptism of Fire. Fire is a symbol of purging. You will find that identification with this Feast will test your relationships at home, at church and in general life.

Pentecost was an occasion when all Israel appeared before the Lord. They appeared so that He might work upon their heart, putting something of His own character into them. That happened for the 120 assembled in the Upper Room in Jerusalem at Pentecost.

The power of Pentecost will change us. We must not approach it just out of curiosity or as an experiment. It is wrong to come to Pentecost in the same way that we would approach anything else about which we are curious.

All too often the precious things of God are preached so casually that hearers receive no sense of the awesome presence of God before whom they are appearing.

Often the gospel is preached with all the emphasis on the blessings available, and none on the repentance required.

Some teach that Pentecost is an exciting source of power. These teachers usually fail to emphasize that the Spirit of God is, above all, the **HOLY** Spirit of God. Pentecost is an encounter with God. Every encounter with God changes us.

4. To Reflect His Glory

A godly Bishop once rightfully said, "When we start talking to God about power, He starts talking to us about purity."

It reminds me of 2 Corinthians 3:17,18: *"...where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit" (niv).*

Here we see the work of the Spirit Who removes the veil from our hearts so that we may reflect the glory of the Lord. The result of reflecting His glory is that we are changed: *"transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory. "*

Pentecost is the power of God that changes us into His likeness. That change is not an immediate happening in one moment of time. It happens as we continue to offer ourselves as a freewill offering to the Spirit of God, willingly bearing any reproach resulting. In this way we are transformed from one degree of glory to the next, step by step, day after day, as we live out our Pentecost.

As already stated, the Festival of Pentecost commemorated the events at Sinai. One remarkable thing that happened is described in this verse:

"Moses came down from Mount Sinai. As he came down from the mountain with the two tablets of the covenant in his hand, Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God" (Exo 34:29 nrsv).

Moses' shining face caused fear so he put a veil on his face. *"Until Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil on his face; but whenever Moses went in before the LORD to speak with him, he would take the veil off, until he came out... the Israelites would see the face of Moses, that the skin of his face was shining; and Moses would put the veil on his face again, until he went in to speak with him"(Exo 34:33-35 nrsv).*

Moses' Pentecostal experience caused him to spend much time beholding the Lord. This impregnated his very countenance with God's glory—which reflected from his shining face.

Let us clear the steps to the Upper Room, and go in to pray and spend time in God's presence until we too *"reflect the Lord's glory."*

Chapter 6

The Feast Of Trumpets

Introduction

"..In the fullness of time, God sent forth his Son" (Gal 4:4). "...when the day of Pentecost had fully come.." (Acts 2:1).

These two scriptures demonstrate this truth. God has specific dates on His Divine Calendar. Some prophetic words have been awaiting fulfillment for thousands of years. They cannot happen until they are scheduled to happen on God's Calendar.

So far we have dealt with festivals that have ALREADY had their prophetic fulfillment. The remaining festivals did not occur in the early church era, nor can they UNTIL THE FULLNESS OF TIME appointed for them. But the time in which we are now living is very probably the time.

With those few words, let's press into an understanding of the Feast of Trumpets.

*"Say to Israel, 'On the first day of the **seventh month** you are to have a day of rest, a sacred assembly commemorated with trumpet blasts. Do no regular work but present an offering made to the Lord by fire'" (Lev 23:23-25).*

A. PAST AND PROPHETIC ASPECTS

The Feast of Trumpets marked the beginning of the third great festival season observed by Israel. It came at the time of the third, final and greatest of the harvest seasons.

1. The "Ingathering"

You remember, there was a tiny harvest at Firstfruits and, a larger springtime harvest at Pentecost; but the greatest harvest came in the late summer. It was called the "ingathering." *"And thou shall observe...the feast of ingathering at the year's end" (Exo 34:22).*

This has great significance for those of us doing the Lord's work, Jesus told us *"...the harvest is the end of the age..." (Matt 13:39).* So we can expect more people to respond to the gospel in the time of the Feast of Trumpets than any time in the history of the world. I believe we are now entering this time.

2. From May Until October

There is quite a long period of time between Pentecost and Trumpets. Prophetically this is important. There is no New Testament record of the Feast of Trumpets being fulfilled.

However, if God fulfilled Passover, Unleavened Bread, Firstfruits and Pentecost, He will surely fulfill the rest. The question is when?

Could not this long separation between Pentecost and Trumpets suggest this? Just as Pentecost was observed at the springtime harvest and the Feast of Trumpets many

months later at the final ingathering — so God began something at Pentecost that He will complete in the last days at the time of the Second Coming of our Lord.

Of Pentecost, Peter says, "*But this is **the beginning** of that which was spoken by the prophet Joel*" (Acts 2:16 amp). What the early Church experienced was the beginning of what would find its finale in our day and time.

3. Trumpets At His Coming

What accompanies Jesus' Second Coming? "... *They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory.*

*"And I shall send forth my angels [messengers] with the sound of a **mighty trumpet blast**..."* (Matt 24:30,31).

*"Listen, I will tell you a mystery! We will not all die, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at **the last trumpet**.*

*"For the trumpet will sound, **and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed**"* (ICor 15:51,52 nrsv).

*"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with **the trumpet** of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first"* (I Ths 4:16).

All this suggests that the Feast of Trumpets has much to do with events at the end of the Church age — the day and time we now live in.

B. THE SEVENTH TRUMPET

"Speak to the people of Israel, saying: In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall observe a day of complete rest, a holy convocation commemorated with trumpet blasts" (Lev 23:24 nrsv).

1. Time Of Rest

The character of the Feast of Trumpets is that it is A TIME OF REST. Jesus teaches us that since Adam and Eve fell into sin, God has not been resting. He works to save and deliver.

Moses sought to bring the Israelites he led out of Egypt across the Jordan into the promised land — the place of rest.

However, Hebrews 4:8,9 says that rest never came in the days of Moses, OR Joshua. In fact... because Israel failed to obtain (appropriate) the promise, the promise remains for us today.

"There remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from his own work just as God did from his.

"Let us therefore make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will fall by following Israel's example of disobedience" (Heb 4:9-11).

This New Testament statement declares that this Sabbath Rest, this Feast of Trumpets Rest, has still to happen.

In other words, in New Testament days, it has not yet been fulfilled. The Church age is now almost 2,000 years old. I believe we are near the blowing of trumpets.

The work of God must progress in our day by the power of God, not only by human effort and work. A dear elderly saint told me some years ago, "When we strive and work to make things happen in our strength and power, GOD RESTS. When we rest, and pray, and depend on His Spirit to work mightily through us, HE WORKS and we rest." I believe that.

a. Body Of Christ Completed. The story in Revelation 10:7 tells us what will happen when the seventh and **last trumpet** is about to sound. The message of God at this Trumpet is this: the **mystery of God** is now to be completed.

Ephesians 3 teaches clearly that **the Church is the mystery of God** (Eph 3:2-12). The mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow-heirs with the Jews, having been united in Jesus Christ. The mystery is that Jew and believing Gentile are being formed together into a single Body.

Now the Body of Christ has been in the process of formation since the beginning of the Church on the Day of Pentecost. It has not yet been completed.

When a normal human birth takes place, the head comes first. So it is with the Body of Christ. Jesus, the Head, came forth first, and the birth process of the Body is at present being brought into completion.

Paul describes the process in these words: *"But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits [at the beginning of the Church age]; afterward [in the last days — at the end of the Church age] they that are Christ's at his coming"* (I Cor 15:23).

The completion of the Body of Christ is the mystery that is going to be finished at the Seventh (and last) **Trumpet**. This Body will have great power and authority.

This is illustrated in the "man-child" in Revelation 12. The man-child represents the Body, with Christ as its Head, that will ultimately rule all nations.

b. Daniel's Prophecy And Vision. Daniel describes this royal ruling Body. *"But the saints of the most high shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever"* (Dan 7:18).

Yet it is clear that Jesus is the Head of this ruling Body or Family. *"I saw... one like the Son of Man [Christ] come with the clouds of heaven. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed"* (Dan7:13,14).

Daniel had a vision of a huge statue with a head of gold, shoulders and breast of silver, thighs of brass, legs of iron and feet of part iron and clay. Daniel is told (in Chapter 2) that this statue represents the present and future political kingdoms of the world.

It was a symbol and prophetic forecast of coming Gentile world powers and kingdoms. It is an alternative body that does not have Christ as its head, but seeks to rule the world without God.

But in Daniel 2:44 we read that God's Kingdom will triumph when the age of man's rulership of the earth ends.

The gold head of this statue represented the man ruling in Daniel's day in the person of Nebuchadnezzar. He was the head of gold.

The feet of the statue made of iron and clay represent the last of these Gentile world powers who will be ruling in the last days.

c. The Church In The Last Days. Just as the statue represented a progression of events starting with the head and ending with the feet — so it is with the formation of Christ's Body. It started with the Head, Christ, and ends with the feet. The feet come last. Thus we conclude that the feet must represent the Church in the last days at the time Jesus comes again.

This is illustrated in Joshua's conquest of Canaan. "...*Joshua called... and said unto the captains of the men of war... Come near, put **your feet** upon the necks of these kings. And they came near, and put **their feet** upon the necks of them*" (Josh 10:24).

By putting their feet on the necks of these kings, they were subduing and demonstrating their dominance over them and their kingdoms.

"*Behold, I give unto you power to tread [with your feet] on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you*" (Luke 10:19).

"*And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under **your feet**...*" (Rom 16:20).

God will bring all things into submission under Christ's **feet**, namely under the Body of Christ... Hallelujah!

In the days of the seventh **trumpet**, the Body of Christ will be fully revealed. At that time all God's purposes for the natural descendants of Israel and the Spiritual Israel (the Church) will be fulfilled.

With this concept, we are able to look at the Word of God from a new perspective altogether. It is as if the veil has been pulled away.

For instance, Ephesians 2:11 -22 clearly explains this unity between the natural descendants of Israel and the Body of Christ.

Romans 9-11 also comes into sharp focus, explaining the relationship between the sons of Abraham by flesh and those who are Abraham's children by faith (Gal 3:6-14).

This Galatian passage does not deny that Israelites are sons of Abraham. Rather, it emphasizes that those who believe in Jesus Christ become sons of Abraham through their faith in Christ.

Clearly a spirit of wisdom and revelation (Eph 1:18) must come upon us if we are to understand this truth. It is essential if we are to sense what God is doing in our age.

It is my firm conviction that this is the day that the FEAST OF TRUMPETS is starting to be fulfilled, when the mystery of God is coming to its fulfillment and its consummation.

Look for and expect a great increase in true prophetic voices in this time of blowing of trumpets. The trumpet is God's chosen symbol of a prophetic voice, crying out warning and instruction.

C. THE SEVENTH MONTH

Numerology is the study of the meaning of numbers in the Bible. Seven is the number of completeness and rest. For example, "...*on the seventh day God ended [finished or completed] his work... and he rested on the seventh day from all his work...*" (Gen 2:2).

There is good reason to believe the six days of Creation and the seventh day of rest are prophetic in this sense. They lay out God's timetable for His plan of redemption for mankind.

1. Prophetic Time Measurement

When the Bible says, "...*that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day*" (2Pet 3:8) —this gives us a rule of measurement for prophetic time.

By this rule, six days would be six thousand years.

From the fall of Adam until Christ came was approximately 4,000 years (four days).

From Christ until the present is approximately 2,000 years (two days).

So we are near the end of the sixth day (4 days + 2 days = 6 days).

The seventh day is about to begin. The seventh day was a day when God's work was completed and He rested.

2. Three Major Eras Symbolized

There are several passages in the Bible that imply there will be three major eras as outlined above. Let us briefly examine them.

a. The Tabernacle of Moses. When you calculate the dimensions of the Outer Court, the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies, you note this pattern:

The Outer Court was 100 cubits long by 50 cubits wide surrounded by a white linen hanging five cubits high (Exo 27:18). When you add 100 + 100 (the two sides) and 50 + 50 (the two ends) the result is 300 cubits (the horizontal distance around the outer court).

Multiply this by the height of 5 cubits (300x5) and the result is 1,500. At 1 cubit per year, this was the approximate number of years from Moses to Christ. This represented the Dispensation of Law.

The Holy Place was 20 cubits long, 10 cubits wide and 10 cubits high (Exo 26:1-37), which equals 2,000 square cubits. This represents the Dispensation of Grace (the Church age), which would be 2,000 years (a cubit for a year).

The Holy of Holies was 10 cubits long, 10 cubits wide and 10 cubits high (Exo 26:1-37), which equals 1,000 square cubits. This represents the Millennium, which would be 1,000 years (a cubit for a year).

b. Hosea's Prophecy. Hosea is speaking in the person of Christ. Christ came and was rejected by His own Jewish people and returned to Heaven. Hosea, by the spirit of prophecy, describes this:

5:15: *"Then I will go back to my place [Jesus' ascension back to Heaven] until they admit their guilt. And they will seek my face; in their misery they will earnestly seek me."*

Then Hosea describes the national repentance of Israel in the latter days, and God's mercy to Israel at that time:

6:1: *"Come, let us return to the LORD. He has torn us to pieces but he will heal us; he has injured us but he will bind up our wounds."*

6:2: *'After two days he will revive us: on the third day he will restore us, that we may live in his presence' (niv).*

The phrase **After two days** signifies a 2,000-year period (the Church age or Dispensation of Grace).

The reference to the **third day** refers to a 1,000-year period when all is restored. This could be nothing else but the Millennium.

c. Jesus' Words. King Herod was looking for Jesus to kill Him. The people warned Jesus to flee for His life. Instead, *"He said to them, Go and tell that fox for me, 'Listen, I am casting out demons and performing cures today and tomorrow, and on the third day I finish my work'"* (Luke 13:32 nrsv).

When Jesus said He would continue to cast out demons and heal the people for two days (today and tomorrow). He was speaking of His work that would continue through the Church for two thousand years (two prophetic days).

He then said He would perfect or finish His work the third day (1,000 years). This is undoubtedly a reference to the Millennium.

This day (1,000-year period) is spoken of in the Bible. "And he [Jesus] laid hold on... Satan, and bound him a thousand years... Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection... they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years" (read Revelation 20:2-6).

This 1,000-year period, when the "blessed and holy" are given the privilege of reigning with Christ, is called "the Millennium" by theologians.

Most Bible students believe this is the time when ancient prophecies such as Isaiah's will be fulfilled.

"In that day the wolf and the lamb will lie down together, and the leopard and goats will be at peace. Calves and fat cattle will be safe among lions, and a little child shall lead them all.

"The cows will graze among bears: cubs and calves will lie down together, and lions will eat grass like the cows.

"Babies will crawl safely among poisonous snakes, and a little child who puts his hand in a nest of deadly adders [snakes] will pull it out unharmed.

"Nothing will hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain, for as the waters fill the sea, so shall the earth befall of the knowledge of the Lord.

"In that day he who created the royal dynasty of David will be a banner of salvation to all the world. The nations will rally to him, for the land where he lives will be a glorious place" (Isa 11:6-10 tlb).

This ties in with our study of the Feast of Trumpets. This **seventh-month** feast is a prophetic pageant of events taking place at the end of the Church age (sixth day) and the beginning of the Millennium (seventh day). If we understand this connection, then many things become understandable in the Bible.

D. A PROPHETIC PAGEANT

Of the Feast of Trumpets the Bible says, "...*On the first day of the seventh month you are to have a day of rest, a sacred assembly commemorated with trumpet blasts*" (Lev 23:23-25).

1. Symbolism Of The Trumpet

a. Message Of Warning. A trumpet symbolizes an urgent **prophetic** message from God (usually a warning) through one of His servants. God says to the prophet Isaiah, "*Cry aloud.... lift up your voice like a trumpet and show my people their transgressions*" (Isa 58:1,2).

In Ezekiel 33, God makes the **prophet** Ezekiel a watchman to the house of Israel. Ezekiel is appointed to speak to the nation in warning.

"If anyone hears the trumpet but does not take warning, ..his blood will be on his own head" (Eze 33:4).

b. Message Of Mobilization. The trumpet was also used by the military to communicate a message to mobilize to a large number of soldiers. This concept is found in Paul's letter:

"For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?" (1 Cor 14:8).

2. Prophetic Ministries In Last Days

Two things to keep in mind are these: [1] This Feast is fulfilled as the Church age is ending, [2] Trumpets speak of PROPHETIC-ministries.

I then conclude from this that the consummation of the Church age will be marked by strong prophetic voices raised up by God for these days.

Further, the Scriptures seem to clearly indicate as much.

a. Foretold By Jesus. Jesus said, *"This is what God says about you: I will send prophets and apostles to you, and you will kill some of them and chase away the others"* (Luke 11:49 tlb).

*"Wherefore, behold, I send unto you **prophets**... and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye... persecute from city to city"* (Matt23:34kjv).

After being up on the Mount of Transfiguration, Jesus is having a discussion with His disciples. They ask Him an important question about Malachi's prophecy some 500 years previous to Jesus' time: *"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD"* (Mal 4:5).

Note the disciples' question about this and Jesus' answer: *"And the disciples asked him, Why, then, do the scribes say that Elijah must come first? "*

"He replied, Elijah is indeed coming [pointing to a future fulfillment] and will restore all things; but I tell you that Elijah has already come [a present fulfillment], and they did not recognize him...Then the disciples understood that he was speaking to them about John the Baptist" (Matt 17:10-13 nrsv).

Prophecies can have multiple fulfillments. They often are not exhausted in one occurrence. This is certainly true of Malachi's prophecy concerning Elijah.

Elijah's anointing (mantle) rested first upon Elijah, then upon Elisha (2Ki 2:9-14), then upon John the Baptist. It will rest in the future upon another. I believe that day is not too far distant. The trumpet will again sound (that is, a prophetic voice will again be heard).

Matthew 17 is a little-understood but extremely important passage of Scripture, as it relates to understanding events that happen as the sixth day ends and the seventh begins (the time we are living in now).

I think it worthy of time and space to clearly explain this passage word by word and verse by verse. It gives us a key to understanding the day in which we live.

Matthew 16:28: *"I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom."*

Jesus was going to show His inner circle of three what would be happening when the "Son of Man comes in his kingdom. "What follows is the explanation of how this happened.

Matthew 17:1: *"After six days [Why after six days? This is prophetic time. What they saw in vision, will happen. It will be at the end of the Church age — after six days] Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. "*

This inner circle of highly committed followers of Jesus will be the ones who are drawn by the Spirit into a place where they are alone with the Lord.

Most believers will be too caught up with "...the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, which choke the word..." (Matt 13:22).

For these reasons, they will not respond to the call, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this" (Rev 4:1 nrsv).

They will not heed the prophetic admonition, "Let us know, let us press on to know the LORD; his appearing is as sure as the dawn; he will come to us like the showers, like the spring rains that water the earth" (Hos 6:3).

Oh, my friend, hear the call to the high mountain to be alone with Jesus until He unfolds the glorious revelation of Himself and His purposes to you!

Matthew 17:2: "There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. "

Matthew 17:3: "Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus. "

This is the essence of "...the Son of Man coming in his kingdom." It is Jesus in His glory communicating with the great prophetic ministries that will appear "...in the end of the age..." (Heb 9:26).

John saw a similar scene in Revelations 8:2: "And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them."

Neither time nor space allows us to comment except on the seventh of these angels.

"Then the [seventh] angel whom I saw standing on the sea and the land raised his right hand to heaven and swore by him who lives forever and ever...

"There will be no more delay, but in the days when the **seventh angel is to blow his trumpet**, the mystery of God will be fulfilled, as **he announced to his servants the prophets** " (Rev 10:5-7 nrsv).

We learn several important things from this passage:

1) Angels Are Involved. Angels (special messengers) are involved in the Feast of Trumpets. Seven trumpets sound — the seventh announces the consummation of the Church age: "...the mystery of God will be consummated, accomplished and fulfilled" (read Ephesians 3:1-11).

2) Secrets Revealed. The prophetic ministries will receive revelation about the specifics of what is to be. This is consistent with what the Lord told Amos: "Surely the Lord GOD does nothing, without revealing his secret to his servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7).

See how point [2] on the preceding page is confirmed as we continue with John's revelation of these days:

"These two prophets... have power to shut the skies so that no rain will fall [Elijah's ministry] during the three and a half years they prophesy, and to turn rivers and oceans to blood, and to send every kind of plague upon the earth as often as they wish [Moses' ministry]" (Rev 11:4-6 niv).

Does this sound like what the three disciples saw on the mount with Jesus? The essence of "His kingdom coming with power" was Jesus in His glorified Body — and Moses and Elijah with Him.

The outcome of this is described in verses 11-17: "For just then the **seventh angel blew his trumpet**, and there were loud voices shouting down from heaven, 'The kingdom

of this world now belongs to our Lord, and to his Christ; and he shall reign forever and ever.'

"And the twenty-four Elders sitting on their thrones before God threw themselves down in worship, saying, 'We give thanks, Lord God Almighty, who is and was for now you have assumed your great power and have begun to reign'" (Rev 11:15-17).

b. Will Announce End Of The Age. It is clear to me that the seventh day (when Christ's reign begins) will be ushered in by powerful prophetic ministries.

In Jesus' first visit to earth, His coming was preceded by a strong prophetic voice in the person of John the Baptist. The religious people did not recognize Elijah (in the person of John the Baptist).

I believe it could be that way again. These great prophetic anointings will fall on persons around the world. But only those who have eyes to see by the Spirit's revelation will recognize whose prophetic mantle has fallen on the prophetic ministries.

The Festival of Trumpets (powerful prophetic voices) will announce the end of this age and the beginning of the next. What glorious days are these!

E. HOW TO EXPERIENCE THIS FEAST

Numbers 10 teaches us a vital truth about this. It explains what was to happen when the trumpets are blown: *"When the priests shall blow with the trumpets, the congregation [nation of Israel in the wilderness] shall assemble themselves at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation"* (Num 10:3).

1. Gather Together As One

Visualize this: In the wilderness, three tribes were located to the North, three to the South, three to the East and three to the West. All Israel was camped around the tabernacle of Moses in their tribal groups. But when the trumpet began to sound, they gathered together **as one people** to the tabernacle.

In Ephesians 1:9,10 we read that Jesus is going to do something similar. *"He has made known to us the mystery of his will... that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times he might gather together in one all things in Christ. "*

Christian Church denominations today are rather like the tribes of Israel. Each has a name they are proud of and distinctives they think make them superior to others. In the Feast of Trumpets there is to be a gathering together. It is God's purpose to bring about this unity.

I am not condemning the tribalism and distinctives of our denominations. I am emphasizing that there are times when God's purpose for the whole Body of believers being together is more important.

God is blowing the trumpet and the Body is gathering together. It is time to see that this is what God is doing in our age. It is time to cooperate with God's purpose.

We need to demonstrate a higher loyalty to the Head of the Body, Jesus the King of our Kingdom, than to our denomination (if the two conflict).

2. Be Baptized In The Spirit

What experience is bringing this higher loyalty into operation in the Church? It is the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. Saints must experience Pentecost BEFORE TRUMPETS.

This Baptism, when genuinely and honestly received, is uniting people regardless of their denominational background. They come back to their tribe (denomination) speaking in tongues... it is not long before the tribe notices the difference.

Many tribes and clans (local churches) are trying to prevent this happening to their members. It is like trying to stop the sun from rising! God is doing it; no one can stop it.

The trumpet is sounding, and all over the world men and women are coming together in Holy Spirit conferences and renewal meetings. These meetings are like being called by the Trump of God to assemble together **at the door** of the tabernacle.

"I am the door..." (John 10:9). It was prophesied of Jesus in the Old Testament, *"...unto him shall the gathering of the people be"* (Gen 49:10). We are gathering to the door — JESUS! "Now we beseech you, brethren, by... our Lord Jesus Christ, and **by our gathering together unto him** (2Ths2:1).

In the past we came together around doctrinal statements, experiences and great causes. But today Jesus says, *"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me"* (John 12:32).

A major phenomenon of the Church in this age is the HUGE number of people being baptized in the Holy Spirit regardless of their denomination. They are experiencing Pentecost, and then being drawn to other Spirit-baptized believers.

This work of God has brought more people together than any other Protestant denominational group, evangelical alliance or tribe. No one can stop God pouring out His Spirit with the accompanying consequence of *glossa-laleo* (meaning: speaking in a naturally unacquired tongue or language by the Spirit).

The trumpet is blowing, calling us to work together and prepare for the feast of ingathering [Tabernacles] that follows — when the greatest Harvest of souls in human history will be brought into the Church.

3. Move Forward With God

Another use of the Trumpet is found in Numbers 10:5,6: *"...when ye blow the alarm [with the trumpets], then the camps that lie on the east parts shall go forward."*

There is a tremendous sense that God is moving forward — in a progressive, maturing work in the Church. God does not stand still. He has not revealed all the truth to the Catholic Church, the Reformation stream churches or the Pentecostal groups that began in the beginning of the 20th century. There are truths we can only learn when we come together.

God is calling the whole Body into a deeper and more meaningful knowledge of Himself.

We cannot tell God that our denominational constitution contains all that God has to say. He has much more He wants to do and say to us. *"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth... and he will shew you things to come"*(John 16:13).

He is blowing the trumpet and **sending us forward**. We are like Israel in the wilderness. When they saw the Shekinah (Glory cloud) pick up and start moving from their encampment, they packed up and moved on with God (Num 9:17-23).

This trumpet blast that moves God's people on is called the "alarm." There is a sense of urgency about it.

When God wants His people to move forward, we need to be prepared to move quickly. This is the way it was in Moses' time. *"...you left Egypt in such a hurry that there was no time for the bread to rise. Remember that day all the rest of your lives!"* (Deut 16:3).

Let us be careful lest we become a casualty rather than a conqueror. *"He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the Word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the Word, and he becometh unfruitful"* (Matt 13:22).

We see in Hebrews 11:13 that we can only live as pilgrims and aliens to this world and its allurements if we have a hunger for God and a sensitivity to His voice. We must have a listening ear and a yielded heart.

Often a denomination or a local church is like a refreshing oasis like Elim, where there were twelve wells and seventy palm trees (Exo 15:27).

In such a comfortable place we can become settled and satisfied with the level of our spirituality — even to becoming smugly self-righteous.

Then if we hear God blowing the alarm calling us to move on, we block up our ears and drive in the tent-pegs a little deeper in the desert sand.

Progress always involves change, and change is unsettling. Most find change very difficult. Because they have become settled, they cannot believe that change is progress.

4. Walk In Unity And Love

When those who have an *"ear to hear"* realize the TRUMPET alarm is sounding — they start packing up to move on. Those who do not want to follow the cloud of Glory will shout "you are causing division!"

But when the cloud moves, when the alarm sounds and we sense that God is moving us on, we must be prepared to move.

The most tragic division is when God moves and His people don't follow and so become separated from Him — and each other. Because they were too comfortable and settled, they failed to move on.

Some even think that the Baptism in the Holy Spirit is the pinnacle of spirituality. The Baptism in the Holy Spirit is the Feast of Pentecost.

Beyond that there is the Feast of Trumpets, Day of Atonement and Tabernacles. Our pursuit of the Lord's presence must ever be in the spirit of "my utmost for God's highest."

The aged Apostle Paul put it in these words: *"No, dear brothers, I am still not all I should be, but I am bringing all my energies to bear on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead,*

"I strain to reach the end of the race and receive the prize for which God is calling us up to heaven because of what Christ Jesus did for us" (Phil 3:12-14 tib).

The Spirit-filled believer must hear the trumpet! He must see that God is calling him to be one with all the Body of Spirit-filled believers. He must see that God wants to put him into his own place as a member of the Body of Christ.

The Spirit-filled believer must not be content to enjoy his personal Pentecost alone by himself. *"We were baptized by one Spirit INTO ONE BODY"* (I Cor 12:12,13).

The Trumpet is calling the Body together to the door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation! God says, *"there will I meet with you."*

Let us move on from the Feast of Pentecost, into the unity and love of the Feast of Trumpets. Then, on further into God's plans and purposes — together! Let us lay aside our denominational, tribalistic sectarianism and become one with Christ and ALL the members of His Body — the true Church.

Chapter 7

The Feast Of The Day Of Atonement

Introduction

We must stop and study the meaning of the word atonement. It is the word kaphar. As defined in the Hebrew dictionary, it means **to cover**. King David uses this concept when writing in Psalms.

"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered" (Ps 32:1).

*"Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people, thou **hast covered all their sin**" (Ps 85:2).*

Further, the Hebrew dictionary goes on to define at-one-ment as: **to placate, appease, forgive, pacify, make reconciliation for.**

The idea is making at-one those who were enemies. The blood of the sacrifice covers or pays for the transgression — which separated the parties being reconciled. *"...when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son..." (Rom 5:10).*

The events of this Day of Atonement give phenomenal insights into what Jesus would do *"...to make reconciliation for the sins of the people" (Heb 2:17).*

We can never fully understand our great salvation until we are intimately acquainted with details related to the Day of Atonement.

A. PAST (HISTORIC) ASPECT

The Day of Atonement was the 10th day of the 7th month of the Jewish religious calendar.

The Day of Atonement followed a strict pattern of events. It was the **only day of the year** when anyone was permitted into the Holy of Holies (Heb 9:7).

It involved great danger for the high priest. Death was the penalty for any deviation from the rules.

The sons of Aaron were slain in the Holy Place (the room before the Holy of Holies) for using unauthorized fire in their censors (Lev 10:1).

The Lord said to Moses, *"Warn your brother Aaron not to enter into the Holy Place behind the veil, where the Ark and the place of mercy are, just whenever he chooses. The penalty for intrusion is death. For I myself am present in the cloud above the place of mercy [mercy seat]" (Lev 16:2).*

The words mercy seat should be translated mercy throne. God was enthroned between the cherubim above the mercy throne. King David's Psalm confirms this: *"But you are holy, **enthroned** in the praises of Israel" (Ps 22:3 nkjv).*

1. God's Provision For Sin

This solemn entrance to the Holy of Holies happened only once a year. Twice on this holy day, the high priest entered with the blood of a sacrifice. First, he went in for his own sins, then for the sins of the people.

a. The High Priest. The high priest took the blood of bulls and goats and sprinkled the blood on the mercy throne.

*"Therefore... fix your thoughts on **Jesus... our high priest** whom we confess.*

"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are —yet was without sin.

"Let us then approach the throne of grace [mercy] with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need" (Heb 3:1; 4:15,16).

How wonderful that we have Jesus as our High Priest.

b. The Mercy Throne. The mercy throne was the lid on a gold-covered box (about the size of a coffin) called the Ark of The Covenant.

You remember that *"...the ark of the covenant [was] overlaid round about with gold, and contained [1] the golden pot that had manna, and [2] Aaron's rod that budded, and [3] the tables of the covenant [on which the Ten Commandments had been written with the finger of God]" (Heb 9:4).*

On the lid of this Ark were two golden Cherubim facing each other with their wings stretched upward and forward, forming a holy canopy under which God Himself appeared above this Mercy Throne.

c. The Sprinkled Blood. *"...without shedding of blood is no forgiveness of sins" (Heb 9:22 nrsv).*

2. Two Aspects Of Sin

The Day of Atonement was given to deal with BOTH aspects of sin:

First, there is a PENALTY for which PAYMENT must be made. Second, there is the GUILT and MEMORY which must also be dealt with.

a. The Penalty. The penalty for sin is clear: *"The soul that sinneth, it shall die..." (Eze 18:20).*

To Adam and Eve God said, *"But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shall not eat of it: for in the day that you eat thereof you shalt surely die" (Gen 2:17).*

The New Testament confirms this: *"For the wages of sin is death.." (Rom 6:23).*

Under the Old Covenant [Testament] on the Day of Atonement, the high priest *"Aaron is to offer the bull for his own sin-offering to make atonement for himself..." (Lev 16:6).*

He must sprinkle the blood of this bull on the Mercy Throne in the Holy of Holies for himself BEFORE going in for the sins of the nation.

"But only the high priest entered the inner room, and that only once a year, and never without blood, which he offered for himself [the first time he entered on the Day of Atonement] and for the sins the people had committed in ignorance [the second time he entered on the Day of Atonement]" (Heb 9:7 niv).

The details are found in Leviticus: *"And he shall bring some of the blood of the young bull and sprinkle it with his finger upon the east side of the mercy throne, and then seven times in front of it" (Lev 16:14 tlb).*

After the offering for his **own sin**, the high priest then offered for the **sins of the people**.

The sacrifice for the people consisted of two one-year-old goats. One was killed before the Lord. The blood of the dead goat went into the Holy of Holies to be poured out on the Mercy Throne.

"He shall slaughter the goat of the sin-offering that is for the people and bring its blood inside the curtain, and do with its blood as he did with the blood of the bull, sprinkling it upon the mercy throne and before the mercy throne" (Lev 16:15 nrsv).

This blood was the EVIDENCE God required —that the PENALTY for sin had been PAID. When God saw the blood, he knew a life had been given. The penalty was paid — hence he could then be at-one (reconciled) with the sinner.

"For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given you the blood to sprinkle upon the altar as an atonement for your souls; it is the blood that makes 'at-one-ment' because it is the life" (Lev 17:11 lib).

b. The Guilt And Memory. *"How much more shall the blood of Christ... purge, purify and cleanse your conscience...?" (Heb 9:14 amp).*

How we need this miracle in our lives as well. It is wonderful to know our sins can be **forgiven** because a blood sacrifice was made to pay for our sins.

But we also need to know our sins are **forgotten** so we do not live under the heavy burden of guilt, shame and condemnation that comes from sinning.

It is hard to have faith in God if we have a guilty conscience. *"But, dearly loved friends, if our consciences are clear, we can come to the Lord with perfect assurance and trust" (1 Jn 3:21 tlb).*

God's plan of making us sinners "AT-ONE" with Him provides a solution to this problem of a guilty conscience.

It required a second goat on the Day of Atonement to teach us about God's solution to this second aspect of sin. The GUILT and MEMORY of sin must also be dealt with.

The second goat was called in Hebrew Azazel, literally meaning *the goat of departure or the goat to disappear* (translated scapegoat in English). This goat would have the sins of the nation placed on it and **depart** into the wilderness — making their sins **disappear**, so they would not be remembered anymore. The GUILT and MEMORY of sin vanished, carried away by the live goat into the wilderness.

*"The high priest is to lay both hands on the head of the live goat and confess over it all the wickedness and rebellion of the Israelites — all their sins — and **put them on the goat's head**. He shall send the goat away into the desert in the care of a man appointed for the task.*

"The goat will carry on itself all their sins to a solitary place; and the man shall release it in the desert" (Lev 16:21,22 niv).

This metaphor is used by John the Baptist some 1,400 years after God first initiated the Day of Atonement: *"The next day John saw Jesus coming unto him, and said, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh [bears or carries] away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).*

3. Two Goats Illustrate Redemption

God used two goats because it required two to illustrate both aspects of our redemption.

a. First Goat Dies For Sin. Jesus had to die for our sin so that His blood may be presented before His Father at the throne in Heaven. So the first goat had to die to provide the blood taken into the Holy of Holies and sprinkled on the Mercy Throne — and thus could not be used for the second purpose.

b. Second Goat Carries Away Sin. The second goat illustrates that Jesus was also required to bear away our sin to be remembered no more. God not only forgives our sins, but He also forgets them— Hallelujah! *"Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more" (Heb 10:17).*

The scapegoat illustrates how God forgets our sins, driving them from His memory, and even heals our memory from the most painful aspect of sin. (See Section D6, *Heal The Wounded Soul*, for more on this.)

B. JESUS BECOMES THE FULFILLMENT

To illustrate God's great plan of making peoples At-ONE with Himself, He had to use three object lessons: [1] Aaron, the high priest; [2] The Sacrificial Goat that gave His blood to pay for sin; [3] The AZAZEL (scapegoat) to carry away our sins to the wilderness to be remembered no more.

But when Jesus came. He became ALL THREE — IN ONE. He became [1] our High Priest and [2] the One Who would shed His blood to pay for our sins and [3] the One Who would also bear away our sins to be remembered no more.

In the Old Testament, the Holy of Holies — the sacred place of God's presence — could not be entered without the blood of atonement; and only once a year — by the high priest.

1. The Veil Is Removed

When Jesus died on the cross — **a great change took place**. *"Then Jesus uttered another loud cry and dismissed his spirit. And the curtain in the temple was split apart from top to bottom"* (Mark 15:37,38).

This curtain was a very heavy tapestry that veiled the Holy of Holies. It separated the Holy Place from this holiest room of all.

When that veil split apart from top to bottom. God was miraculously confirming that the world had moved into a new dispensation (era) — one in which a judgment throne covered with blood now became a Mercy Throne.

A veiled room that was a place of death for all who entered (except the high priest once a year with the blood) now became an open place of life and blessing for all who would believe that Jesus is their Lord and Savior.

The invitation now goes out, *"Let us therefore approach the throne of grace [mercy] with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need"* (Heb 4:16).

"And so, dear brothers, now we may walk right into the very Holy of Holies, where God is, because of the blood of Jesus.

"This is the fresh, new, life-giving way that Christ has opened up for us by tearing the curtain — his human body — to let us into the holy presence of God.

"And since this great High Priest of ours rules over God's household, let us go right in to God himself, with true hearts fully trusting him to receive us because we have been sprinkled with Christ's blood to make us clean and because our bodies have been washed with pure water" (Heb 10:19-22 niv).

2. The Final Sacrifice

Jesus has opened the way to the Mercy Throne. His blood was offered once for all time because His eternal life was sufficient to pay for the sins of the whole world. He does not have to offer Himself again every year as they did in Old Testament times. He has been offered for sin once, and forever.

"For it is not possible for the blood of bulls and goats really to take away sins.

"That is why Christ said as he came into the world, 'O God, the blood of bulls and

goats cannot satisfy you, so you have made ready this body of mine for me to lay-as a sacrifice upon your altar" (Heb 10:4,5 tlb).

3. Our Great High Priest

After dying for our sins on the cross — He became our great High Priest. He took His own blood to sprinkle in the Holy of Holies in Heaven — of which Moses' tabernacle (and later the temple at Jerusalem) were just earthly replicas.

Do you remember Jesus telling Mary in John 20:17, "*Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to my Father...*"? Jesus had to take His blood and sprinkle it in Heaven — to give proof to God that the price for sin had been paid. And that is what He did.

"...He went into that greater, perfect tabernacle in heaven, not made by men nor part of this world, and once for all took blood into that inner room, the Holy of Holies, and sprinkled it on the mercy seat; but it was not the blood of goats and calves. No, he took his own blood..." (Heb9:11,12tlb).

"For God sent Christ Jesus to take the punishment for our sins and to end all God's anger against us. He used Christ's blood... as the means of saving us from his wrath..." (Rom3:25 tlb). What a GREAT salvation we have!

C. A DAY OF SOUL AFFLICTION

We gain tremendous understanding of the Book of Hebrews by studying the Day of Atonement. This old proverb is true: "The New Covenant was in the Old, contained — The Old Covenant is in the New, explained."

But there is another aspect of the Day of Atonement that is vital in the life of each believer and the Church as a whole: The final days of human history before the return of Christ are to become more and more difficult.

This was forecast in these words related to the Day of Atonement: "*...in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, ye shall afflict your souls...*" (Lev 16:29).

Further commandments concerning the Day of Atonement can be found in Leviticus 23.

"Anyone who does not spend the day in repentance and sorrow for sin shall be excommunicated from his people. And I will put to death anyone who does any kind of work that day" (Lev 23:29,30 tlb).

Isaiah described the way the day was being observed some centuries later, "*...a day for a man to humble himself... for bowing one's head like a reed and for lying on sackcloth and ashes...*" (Isa 58:5 tlb).

It was a solemn day of **soul affliction**. The word *afflict* used in Leviticus 16:29 is the Hebrew word *anah*, which expresses the idea of looking down on or browbeating oneself. Other meanings: abase self, chasten self, deal hardly with self, humble self, etc.

1. Spiritual Sanity Restored

Why would God call for such a time in the midst of what was otherwise a generally festive, happy harvest season?

Remember, this was the season of the final ingathering of rich harvests — when the ancient people had more money, food, wine and the material things of life.

In times of such blessing and prosperity, it is easy to forget God and feel self-reliant. Such an attitude is dangerous and can lead to grave consequences.

Moses warned the children of Israel of this tendency. *"When the Lord alone was leading them, And they lived without foreign gods, God gave them fertile hilltops, rolling, fertile fields, honey from the rock, And olive oil from stony ground!*

"He gave them milk and meat — choice Bashan rams, and goats —and the finest of the wheat: they drank the sparkling wine.

"But Israel was soon overfed; Yes, fat and bloated: Then, in plenty, they forsook their God..." (Deut 32:12-15 tlb).

In such times of backsliding, the Day of Atonement was a practical means by which God hoped to bring the people back to their spiritual sanity.

2. A Call To Repentance

Jesus used seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3 to describe the seven stages the Church would go through. The last describes the Church in the last days — just before the Coming of the Lord. This church fell into the trap described by Moses. They prospered and fell away from God.

Here is what the Laodiceans said about themselves: *"...I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing..." (Rev 3:17).*

This church was overtaken by *"...the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things which enter in, choke the Word, and it becomes unfruitful" (Mark 4:19).*

Further, the divine view was quite different from the self-deception the Laodiceans fell into. God said, *"You know not that you are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (Rev 3:17).*

When such spiritual problems develop, God usually has a Day of Atonement, a day of soul affliction that He releases on such churches. God hopes they will repent and heed the prophetic call, *"...it is time to seek the LORD, till he come and rain righteousness upon you" (Hos 10:12).*

To a church that will respond and humble themselves and break before the Lord, He makes this amazing promise: *"The inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, 'Let us continue to go and pray before the LORD, And seek the LORD of hosts. I myself will go also.'*

"Yes, many peoples and strong nations shall come to seek the LORD of hosts... And to pray before the LORD" (Zech 8:21,22).

Revival will break out and the glory of God will come to the Church. Hundreds will be saved, healed and sent out to do the Lord's work.

David said, *"Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now have I kept thy word" (Ps 119:67).* A Day of Atonement is good for us. May we embrace them as they come. They keep us pressed close to the heart of God.

D.THE THRONE-PRESENCE OF GOD

The Day of Atonement also foreshadows a time of trouble in the days just before the coming of the Lord.

Jesus taught this very clearly. *"Then there will be strange events in the skies — warnings, evil omens in the sun, moon and stars; and down here on earth the nations will be in turmoil..."*

"The courage of many people will alter because of the fearful fate they see coming upon the earth, for the stability of the very heavens will be broken up.

"Then the peoples of the earth shall see me, the Messiah, coming in a cloud with power and great glory" (Luke 21:25-27 tib).

1. A Battle Rages

The age into which we have come is one of spiritual warfare directed at mankind. Humanity is destined to be redeemed or damned, and a battle rages for every life, for every family, for every town, for every nation.

The Church of Jesus Christ needs desperately to experience the authority of God so that we may win the day in our own personal circumstances and also in the wider affairs of men.

What each believer desires is that somehow he may be able to speak to his problems with the authority of Jesus. We do not just need authority, but also the profound wisdom of God. We need to UNDERSTAND OUR CIRCUMSTANCES, then receive AUTHORITY OVER THEM.

Access to the throne-presence of God is what we need. At the Mercy Throne is all the wisdom and authority we need, for there Christ sits enthroned. From the throne Christ reigns.

If we can experience His *throne-presence* in our lives, we will receive authority and wisdom.

2. Enthroned With Christ

Ephesians 2:4-10 teaches that we have been raised with Christ and enthroned with Him in Heaven.

This passage stresses that this awesome privilege came through God's grace or mercy.

The mercy of God is not sentimental pity. We receive God's mercy because the blood of Jesus Christ was shed for us at great cost. And He now pleads our cause before the throne.

In Ephesians 2, Paul informs us of our tremendous privilege to be enthroned with Christ. God wants us to believe with all our heart that this information is accurate. He wants us to let the Holy Spirit really explain and communicate this reality.

Remember, the Day of Atonement was the most holy day of rest for Israel; no work was to be done.

Understand that we do not have access to this glorious place of authority and wisdom through any works of our own or through any personal qualifications.

We enter through the grace of God which is able to reach us because Jesus Christ presented His blood on our behalf.

Without that blood, we would be beyond the reach of God's grace and banned from the Holy of Holies. We are invited to enter boldly. This is a holy boldness, not an irresponsible casualness.

The view we get of our circumstances is entirely different from the throne-presence of God. It is from this position that we are able to look with faith and confidence at our trials and problems.

Understanding our access and place in the throne-presence is essential to receiving the brokenness, humility and soul affliction out of which revival is birthed.

3. Seek The Lord

If you feel you are in a dry and thirsty land, seek the Lord. Observe a Day of Atonement — and see Him come and fulfill His word of promise.

"They that sow in tears shall reap in joy" (Ps 126:5). "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him" (Ps 126:6).

"For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground, I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring" (Isa 44:3).

"Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near" (Isa 55:6). "And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart" (Jer 29:13).

"Seek ye the LORD, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the LORD'S anger" (Zeph2:3).

Chapter 8

The Feast Of Tabernacles

"Say to the Israelites: 'On the fifteenth day of the seventh month the Lord's Feast of Tabernacles begins, and it lasts for seven days'" (Lev 23:34).

A. THE HISTORIC AND PROPHETIC ASPECTS

As you know, our Old Testament was originally written in the Hebrew language. Translators have a difficult time bringing concepts from this ancient language into modern languages.

This is true of the Hebrew word *cukkah* (pronounced sook-kaw), from which we get the word "tabernacles." It could be translated as shelter, pavilion, tabernacle or tent.

1. Temporary Shelters Used

During the Festival of Tabernacles, temporary shelters (or booths) made with tree branches were set up on the flat roofs or in the street.

Even now, if you go to Israel during the Feast of Tabernacles, you will see these temporary dwellings erected all over Jerusalem.

Perhaps it is best described in Nehemiah. *"...Jehovah had told Moses that the people of Israel should live in tents during the Festival of Tabernacles to be held that month.*

"He had said also that a proclamation should be made throughout the cities of the land, especially in Jerusalem, telling the people to go to the hills to get branches from olive, myrtle, palm, and fig trees and to make huts in which to live for the duration of the feast.

"So the people went out and cut branches and used them to build huts on the roofs of their houses, or in their courtyards, or in the court of the temple, or on the plaza beside the water gate, or at the Ephraim Gate Plaza.

"They lived in these huts for the seven days of the feast, and everyone was filled with joy!" (Neh 8:14-17 lib). This procedure had not been carried out since the days of Joshua.

This feast was a reminder to Israel of their tent-dwelling days in the wilderness.

2. A Great Harvest Ahead

This feast was also called the Feast of *Ingathering* (Exo 23:16). This was because it occurred in October after all the crops had been gathered in. It was a **Harvest Festival**.

For us who are now living in the closing days of the Church age, this has great importance. You remember Jesus said: "*The harvest is the end of the age*" (Matt 13:39).

This clearly implies that Tabernacles represents the fulfillment or great conclusion that God plans for human history as we know it.

And this will be a time of great Harvest — so great, we cannot contain it in traditional methods used in past generations.

B. A RETURN TO THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH MODEL

Specifically, we will have to abandon the "Cathedral-Concept" of Western churches and return to temporary shelters as in the New Testament. (For more discussion of this important concept see Section E3, *Breaking The Babylonian Barrier*.)

During the Feast of Tabernacles, the people lived in temporary housing as pilgrims — who have no certain dwelling place. The world is not our home. We are just passing through on our way to Heaven.

The church in China has discovered this dynamic truth. God has blessed them. Most of their cathedrals have been taken away and put to other use.

So what have they done? They returned to the New Testament church model. This is the only model that can work in Harvest Time — when millions of people are turning to Christ.

This model is followed in most countries where great Harvest is coming in. Among these are Brazil, Chile, Korea and China.

1. What Is This Model?

A story will illustrate the concept. An evangelist from America arrived in the African country of **Ghana** in 1959. At that time, most of the churches were small. Years of missionary activity had produced only a relatively small community of believers in the nation.

This evangelist had a ministry like Philip in the Bible. "*Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Christ there.*

"When the crowds heard Philip and saw the miraculous signs he did, they all paid close attention to what he said.

"With shrieks, evil spirits came out of many, and many paralytics and cripples were healed. So there was great joy in that city" (Acts 8:5-8 niv).

As a result of power evangelism like that described above, upwards of 150,000 persons a night were attending the meetings in Ghana. Of these, some 25,000 each week were receiving Jesus as their Lord and Savior — and thus being born again.

There was an apostle in **Ghana** who immediately realized something had to be done quickly to conserve the Harvest. Otherwise, this great Harvest of souls would be lost.

He went to the evangelist and shared his concerns. The evangelistic crusade was to last ten weeks; 25,000 a week were believing on Christ for salvation. At the end of the ten weeks, there would be 250,000 new believers — all needing someone to care for these "*newborn babes in Christ*" (1 Pet2:2).

Just as natural-born babies need care, so newly spiritually re-born babes need care also. The Apostle Paul described this experience with his Converts at Thessalonica: *"But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her own children"* (I Ths 2:7).

So the evangelist asked the apostle, *"What should we do? I get them saved and healed—but I don't know what to do with them after that. I cannot stay here—I have great crusades planned for many other nations."*

a. A Look At The New Testament. The apostle said, *"We will do what Paul did in the Bible. We must immediately start training home church leaders, who will continue ministering to these new babes in Christ after the evangelist leaves."*

Now keep in mind what the Bible says about the Church: *"You are... members of the household of God, **built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets...**"* (Eph2:19,20).

What does this mean? To find out, let us go back to the evangelist Philip in Samaria for a moment.

1) Apostles At Samaria. After Philip got the Samaritans to believe on Jesus and be baptized in water (Acts 8:12-17), the apostles from Jerusalem immediately showed up to establish them in fellowship with one another, and make sure they were filled with the Holy Spirit. In this way, the churches were built (established) on *"the foundation of the apostles and prophets."*

This method was followed throughout the Book of Acts (read Acts 11:19-27).

2) Apostles At Antioch. As in Samaria, a great revival comes to Antioch. Hundreds or maybe thousands came to the Lord.

How did they conserve this Harvest? *"When the church at Jerusalem heard what had happened, they sent **Barnabas** [who was an Apostle - **Acts 14:14**] to Antioch to help the new converts. And in these days came **prophets** from Jerusalem unto Antioch"* (Acts 11:22,27 tlb). Thus, the Church was built (established) on "the foundation of the apostles and prophets. "

3) Training Elders. After this, the pattern was to appoint elders to feed, guard and minister to the needs of the new believers (see Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5).

Now, in New Testament times, keep in mind that there were devout Jewish people in all the cities of the Roman empire. Paul went to many of these cities with the gospel.

Like Jesus before him, Paul would go into the synagogues (where the devout Jews gathered for prayer and the teaching of the Old Testament) and preach Jesus to them.

"And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues..."

"And when they [Barnabas and Paul] were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews" (Matt 4:23; Acts 13:5).

This usually resulted in many Jewish converts, who were already well taught in the Scriptures. From these, with a minimal amount of training and teaching, elders for the churches could be appointed.

b. Africa Is Different. But in **Ghana**, West Africa, in 1959 — it was different. Most of the converts knew little or nothing about the Bible. The challenge of raising .up church leadership within a matter of weeks to oversee the flock of God was no small obstacle.

Assuming each "elder" would be responsible for 100 believers, it would take over 2,000 "elders" to care for the more than 200,000 converts expected in ten weeks of power evangelism.

But when there is an apostolic ministry present, there are always practical answers for the situation. The apostle has a foundational gift —he knows how to lay foundations so that the church can stand solid.

So here is what the apostle in Ghana, Africa did. He proposed a simple plan to conserve a Harvest of 200,000 souls. It consisted of the following:

1) Sign A Form. He designed a form on which trainees could write their name, address, occupation and education, etc.

2) Provide A Place. To qualify for home church leadership training, the trainee had to be able to provide a place (his own home or some alternative) where 75 to 100 people could gather for a church service.

Those who could meet this qualification would likely have natural leadership traits that could be developed.

In Ghanaian society, for a person to have a place to accommodate this many people would usually mean that the individual had more material assets (money, property, etc.) than most. If so, it was likely (s)he could lead a group of others.

3) Attend A Seminar. The trainees would be required to attend a Saturday morning training seminar, every week for eight weeks.

During each four-hour training session, a Bible study would be displayed. The trainees would copy this Bible study outline into their notebooks. The apostle would prepare and teach these Bible studies to the trainees.

Topics such as: How to lead someone to Christ, How to cast out a demon. How to heal the sick. How to prepare a sermon or Bible study — all these and more would be taught.

This would prepare them for the first Sunday's meeting after the evangelist was gone.

4) Provide A Map. Maps were printed up of the city of Accra, Ghana. These maps identified the location of each house church led by one of the 2,000 trainees. Services would start at all these locations the first Sunday after the crusade ended on Saturday night.

The people coming to the crusade were told this: "The crusade will not end when the evangelist leaves. It will continue in 2,000 locations in the city in smaller groups of about 100 people.

"The gospel will be preached, the demons cast out, the sick healed and times of joyous worship will be enjoyed by all attending one of these house churches."

In the last week of the ten-week crusade, the people were given the maps and told to report to one of the house churches next Sunday morning.

When the count was taken from the 2,000 home church leaders — who all reported their results and attendance to the apostle — it was found that over 170,000 people had attended on this first Sunday after the crusade ended.

The offerings received at these house churches provided immediate financial support for the house church leaders. Even though Ghana is a poor country, no money from overseas was needed.

That was the beginning of a movement that spread all over the nation of Ghana. Today, this fellowship has over one million members nation-wide and is going strong for the Lord.

2. Western Methods Usually Wrong

This model works in time of Harvest. In Harvest-time, there will never be the time, money or personnel to do the things the way churches in Western nations do. Western methods are usually wrong. Here are a few of the foolish methods of Western Christianity.

a. Kept In School. They keep trainees in schools, three to fifteen years. What is the result?

By the time the trainee gets out of training, the people are saying, "*The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved*" (Jer 8:20). Harvest is lost that is not reaped when it is ripe.

b. Academics Emphasized. They put much emphasis on academics and so little on the power of God. This produces powerless, lifeless, arrogant, incompetent, impractical leaders. For most of these, seminary becomes a cemetery, spiritually and practically (see 1 Corinthians 8:1).

c. Money Spent On Buildings. They build expensive "barns for the sheep" that cost upwards of \$2,000 for each seat in their sanctuary.

Mercifully, God did not give the believers in the Church in the New Testament this kind of money — nor are most of the believers in the world today endowed with money to waste like that.

3. The Bible Way

During the Feast of Tabernacles, inexpensive, temporary accommodations are the order of the day. This world is not our home. We're just-a-passing through. Our treasures should be laid up — somewhere beyond the blue (sky — in Heaven).

So let us go back to the New Testament way: housing the sheep in modest accommodations — in the homes of the believers where possible and practical.

a. House Churches — Not Cathedrals. Note the following:

1) The Church Began In A House. "*And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting*" (Acts 2:2).

2) The Church Grew In Houses. As it grew, the Church continued to utilize houses.

"*And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and **breaking bread from house to house**, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart*" (Acts 2:46).

"*And daily in the temple, and **in every house**, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ*" (Acts 5:42).

3) Filled With The Spirit In A House. The Apostle Paul was converted, healed and filled with the Holy Spirit in a house.

"*And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou earnest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost*" (Acts 9:17).

4) Gentiles Saved In A House. The first Gentile family to receive the gospel was the result of the head of the family praying in a house.

"*And Cornelius said, Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour **I prayed in my house**, and, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing*" (Acts 10:30).

5) Apostle Prayed On A House. The gospel went first to the Gentiles because an apostle was praying on a house.

*"...Peter went up upon **the housetop to pray about the sixth hour**" (Acts 10:9).*

Here he received a vision that resulted in his going to the house of Cornelius — a Roman Centurion.

6) Holy Spirit Fell On Gentiles In A House. The Spirit was first poured out on the Gentiles in a house (that of Cornelius) where Peter was preaching. *"And the Spirit bade me go... and we entered into **the man's house**" (Acts 11:12).*

"While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word" (Acts 10:44).

7) Many Other Examples. Time and space do not permit me to tell you about the house of Mary, the mother of John (Acts 12:12), the Philippian jailer's house church (Acts 16:15-32), the **house** of Lydia, Jason and Crispus (Acts 16:40; 17:5; 18:8).

Further, the epistles are replete with references to how the early Church spread from house to house.

Some of these were Philip the evangelist; Paul's house; the house churches of Chloe, Stephanas, Priscilla and Aquila; Nymphas, Onesiphorous, Philemon, and the elect lady of 2 John (Acts 21:8; 28:30; I Cor 1:11; 16:15,19; Col4:15; 2Tim 1:16; Phile 2).

This is the Bible way. It is the most inexpensive, practical, cost-effective solution of how to conserve and celebrate the mighty Harvest coming in the Feast of Tabernacles (temporary shelters).

It is the only workable pattern for most nations in these days of unprecedented Harvest. Almost any other method is doomed to failure — especially the hopeless Western method of building expensive cathedrals to shelter sheep.

In the Book of Revelation, we read a description of this Harvest as the time when the Bride has made herself ready (Rev 21:2). Surely all this is in anticipation of His coming for a glorious Church (Eph 5:27).

C. THE PERSONAL ASPECT

The Feast of Tabernacles can be experienced now before the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

I have been in revival movements in various nations that already have some thing of the spirit of the Feast of Tabernacles.

1. Revival In Argentina

I was in Argentina, South America, where I was very aware of God's strong presence over the nation. There, people from very many denominations tightly packed into an auditorium that could seat about 1,800.

In one accord they began by rising to their feet to worship the Lord. Heavenly praises and power-filled worship in the Spirit caused the presence of God to fill the place.

God's glory was so powerfully present that I wondered whether I was in fact standing on the floor or not! I looked down to confirm that I was. I felt as if I were literally floating up to Heaven.

Sinners were getting saved and others healed and filled with the Spirit while the saints were worshipping. It was much more than Gifts of the Spirit in operation. It was God Himself manifesting Himself in that place.

This was a spiritual fulfillment of the Scripture: "*Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and they shall dwell with him and be his people, and God himself shall be with them and be their God...*" (Rev 21:3).

The Lord opened my spiritual eyes to see that we were experiencing the joy and wonder found in the Festival of Tabernacles.

The Feast of Tabernacles is experienced by the awesome and exhilarating presence of God Himself coming among His people. His presence was so great there in Argentina that bondages and shackles just fell away.

There was a mighty liberty, yet a beautiful order. In one corner, fifty people with their arms around each other were dancing around. In another area, a group was weeping and embracing each other. The love of God was all-conquering.

All man-made divisions could not resist this presence of God.

Three other characteristics marked this revival. The **first** was the tremendous love of Jesus. The **second** was the conviction that Jesus truly is Lord. The **third** was the concept that the Lord is building only one Church — and thus all believers ought to be in fellowship with each other.

The leaders recognized that the Church is meeting in hundreds of congregations under all kinds of names, but in reality there is ONLY ONE Church and Jesus Himself is the Builder.

Because of this, the church leadership in Buenos Aires, Argentina, came (under the Spirit's prompting) together in loving fellowship which crossed all denominational barriers.

A group of Baptists would join a group of Pentecostals and Presbyterians for worship. It was glorious.

2. Revival And The Feast Of Tabernacles

Revival associated with the Feast of Tabernacles has its precedent in the Bible. One of the most fascinating accounts is in the Books of Nehemiah and Ezra. This account describes God visiting a people in mighty power, during the Feast of Tabernacles.

"The clan leaders and the priests and Levites met with Ezra to go over the law in greater detail.

*"As they studied it, they noted that Jehovah had told Moses that the people of Israel should live in tents **during the Festival of Tabernacles** to be held that month"* (Neh 8:13,14).

"Then Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God, and all the people said, 'Amen,' and lifted their hands toward heaven; then they bowed and worshipped the Lord with their faces toward the ground.

"As Ezra read from the scroll... the Levites went among the people and explained the meaning of the passage that was being read.

"All the people began sobbing when they heard the commands of the law.

"Then Ezra the priest, and I as governor, and the Levites who were assisting me, said to them, 'Don't cry on such a day as this! For today is a sacred day before the Lord your God — it is a time to celebrate with a hearty meal and to send presents to those in need, for the joy of the Lord is your strength. You must not be dejected and sad!'

"And the Levites, too, quieted the people, telling them, 'That's right! Don't weep! For this is a day of holy joy, not of sadness.'

"So the people went away to eat a festive meal and to send presents; it was a time of great and joyful celebration because they could hear and understand God's words" (Neh. 8:6-12).

"And they celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles..."

"... the priests put on their official robes and blew their trumpets; and the descendants of Asaph crashed their cymbals to praise the Lord in the manner ordained by King David.

*"They sang rounds of praise and thanks to God, singing this song: 'He is good, and his love and mercy toward Israel will last forever ' **Then all the people gave a great shout, praising God** because the foundation of the Temple had been laid.*

*"But many of the priests and Levites and other leaders — the old men who remembered Solomon's beautiful Temple — wept aloud, while **others were shouting for joy!***

*"So the shouting and the weeping mingled together in **a loud commotion that could be heard far away!**" (Ezra 3:4,10-14).*

Can we believe — to once again see revival days like those described in our Bible? Lord, send the rain of revival! Send the floods upon the dry ground! We're thirsty. Lord —visit us, we pray. AMEN.

3. A Time To Rejoice

Tabernacles is a time of great rejoicing. Take care when criticizing those who pray, worship and praise the Lord with great emotion. Evaluate it carefully and correctly.

True rejoicing in God is going to be free and exuberant. There will be shouts of joy; there will be dancing; there will be laughter. Do you remember Christ's triumphal entry and the spontaneous joy and noisy praise of the people?

*"... the whole crowd of disciples began **joyfully to praise God in loud voices** for all the miracles they had seen;*

"Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus,

"Teacher, rebuke your disciples!" I tell you, 'he replied, 'if they keep quiet, the stones [in the wall around Jerusalem] will cry out'" (Luke 19:37,39,40).

4. A Time For Informality

As stated numerous times already. Tabernacles takes place in temporary dwelling places.

All over the world, believers are coming together temporarily in renewal conferences, often in public halls or outdoors.

It seems there is often a greater freedom for the saints Outside the walls of their churches (which are often ritualistic, liturgical and lifeless).

Many godly saints who are repressed and inhibited in their churches feel the need to go to a convention or conference where they can celebrate the greatness of their God.

This liberating celebration takes place very easily in these short-term meeting places. It seems easier to be free there than in the more conservative atmosphere of some churches.

In Nehemiah 8 there is an account of the celebration of Tabernacles. They found it written in the law that they should celebrate Tabernacles with branches of trees.

Trees are mentioned in Isaiah 61:3 as "trees of righteousness."

There are many different types of trees involved in constructing the temporary shelters.

Perhaps that speaks to us of many different denominations being represented in Tabernacles.

The modern phenomenon of getting together in Holy Spirit renewal conferences so often releases this spirit of Tabernacles.

Many church leaders do not feel able to identify with them. But we cannot stop them from happening. They are part of what God is doing. They are providing spiritual food for many hungry souls and spiritual liberation for some who are bound.

It is almost impossible to keep sheep out of a field full of green grass. If people are not getting spiritual food for their souls, they will go where they can get it.

Many are so hungry for the Word of God, they will travel hundreds of miles for a Tabernacles celebration.

While I do not approve of all that happens in some conferences, I do recognize that God is doing something fresh today that is drawing His people together.

5. An Authentic Indicator

I believe there will be **one authentic indicator** of which of these gatherings have God's seal of approval.

Nehemiah 8:9-10 (tib) highlights a prophetic word during that Tabernacles feast *"For today is a sacred day before the Lord your God — it is a time to celebrate... and to send presents to those for whom nothing is prepared."*

This Commission is part of the spirit of Tabernacles. God says: *"Do not just rejoice — carry the blessing and the message of liberty in Jesus Christ throughout the world."*

Obey the Great Commission and *"...Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature "* (Mark 16:15).

Tabernacles communicates this selfless sense of responsibility and caring which is so much a part of the Spirit of Jesus. Will you embrace this responsibility along with the blessings? Only then will you have a genuine, authentic Feast of Tabernacles. Anything else has all the elements of selfish insincerity.

Chapter 9

Keep The Festivals

"Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (1 Cor5:8).

A. A SHADOW OF THINGS TO COME

Some believers feel they must literally keep these festivals as in Old Testament times. That is not what the New Testament teaches.

The Apostle Paul's letter to the Colossians contains clear instructions about this. Permit me to share two translations of this.

Both were done by translators who believe in the inerrancy of the- Scripture (an important doctrine for translators to believe).

- *"Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day.*

"These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ" (Col 2:16,17 niv).

- *"So don't let anyone criticize you for what you eat or drink; or for **not celebrating** Jewish holidays and feasts or new moon ceremonies or Sabbaths.*

"For these were only temporary rules that ended when Christ came. They were only shadows of the real thing — of Christ himself" (Col 2:16,17 tib).

We must understand this metaphor used by Paul when he calls the Feasts, the Tabernacle of Moses and the Old Testament sacrifices *"a shadow of the things that were to come."*

If you go out on a sunny day at sunrise and walk with your back to the sun — you will see your shadow on the ground. The shadow bears a resemblance to you, but it is not you. It is only a shadow of what was coming down the path, which is you.

If you walked up to thin white fabric with the sun behind you, someone on the other side could tell from the shadow of your body on the fabric that a person was on the other side of the fabric. They would know it was not a cow or a monkey.

If you stood sideways so the shadow of your profile was cast on the fabric, the shadow would reveal something of how tall you were, how big you were and whether you were a man or a woman. Someone who knows you well might be able to look at the shadow and say, "I know whose shadow that is."

If you were a mother, one of your children seeing the shadow might call out, "Mommie, Mommie." But that child would not hold on to the shadow. The child would want you — the reality — the real flesh and blood mother who loves her little child.

Paul says the Feasts, the Tabernacle of Moses and the Old Testament sacrifices are that way. They provide a profile, an outline without enough form to recognize what they portray. They show us the blessings Christ was to bring to those who would believe on Him.

However, when the reality (of which the shadow was but a profile) came — we would all want the reality (Christ) more than the shadow.

B. DOERS OF THE WORD

So Paul says we are not obligated to observe these Feasts as in Old Testament times. But we do want to observe **WHAT THEY TEACH US**.

So we keep the Feasts by doing what we are taught by them. We become doers of the Word — not hearers only.

*"Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. **Do what it says.***

"Any one who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like.

"But the man who looks... not forgetting what he has heard and seen, but doing it — he will be blessed in what he does" (Jas 1:22-25niv).

Jesus told a famous story contrasting **hearers** and **doers** of the word. He tells of a house built on sand and one built on rock. The house built on the sand fell down; the one built on the foundation of the solid rock stood.

Jesus said that those who built on the rock were the same as those who heard His words and DID them.

All the hearers may well have been blessed by Jesus' parables and illuminating teaching. They may have been stirred emotionally and enthusiastically by His clear way of teaching, "*as one who speaks with authority and not as the scribes*" (Matt 7:29).

Receiving a message enthusiastically is not sufficient. If we only hear and do not do what we hear — we will be like the house built on the sand. It had no foundation. When the rain and storms came, it fell down and was washed away (Matt 7:26,27),

If we receive the Word with joy, but do not do what the Word says, we will be like the seed that fell on stony soil. Hearing the Word only, even with joy and enthusiasm, is not what God is looking for (read Matthew 13:20,21).

C. PERSONAL APPLICATION

The message of the Festivals has a personal **application** (DOING) for each one of us. Let us take the opportunity of thinking about our lives. Relate the message of each feast to your own life, and ask the Holy Spirit to show you exactly where you are in God's timetable for your life.

1. Passover...

speaks of Christ's sacrifice for you. You are delivered from sin, death. Hell and the power of the devil. These blessings are yours through believing that Christ is your Passover Lamb Who died for you. You cannot have salvation through your own works or religious rituals. Have you experienced your personal Passover?

2. Unleavened Bread...

speaks of burying our old self-centered attitudes, and putting malice and wickedness out of our lives. Have you purged your life of things that offend the purity of Jesus? If not, do it now with haste.

3. Firstfruits...

speaks of the resurrection life of Jesus that causes us to walk a life free from the practice of sin. If overtaken in a fault or temptation, do you quickly acknowledge and confess your sin? Do you exhibit a true love for the community of born-again Christians? Are you unconcerned about your Christian brothers and sisters or do you love them dearly?

4. Pentecost...

speaks of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. God designed this to bring power for ministry, godly living and a freedom from the fear of death. Pentecost makes us willing to be martyrs for Him. Have you experienced this vital infilling of the Spirit? Do you still resist it or doubt its relevance or importance?

5. Trumpets...

speaks of the strong prophetic anointing available in these last days. Are you willing to be like a trumpet, warning and winning the lost? Are you ready to receive the work of the Holy Spirit with all His gifts and fruits? Are you willing to lift up your voice

like a trumpet to warn and to win others who do not know about Jesus? Are you willing to suffer for preaching God's Word — even to those who will reject and despise you?

6. Atonement...

speaks of victorious living through deep soul-searching and regular times of fasting and repentance. This will produce the faith that sees and accesses our position in the throne-presence of God. There we can enforce His Victory. Are you seeing the Holy Spirit work to answer your prayers of faith?

7. Tabernacles...

causes us to get involved in the great "Harvest ingathering" of souls. As we do, we experience that exhilarating sense of God's presence. This brings reconciliation, healing, peace and completeness to the worshipping community of saints.

We are willing to endure the inconveniences of temporary dwellings for the joy of the souls won and established in the Church. We are working to train many for the Harvest, so that it will be conserved and not lost. Is this happening in your life and church?

D. SUMMARY

I trust this timetable will help you see where you are in God's dealings. If you are lacking, begin to appropriate what you need by seeking the Lord with prayer and praise.

As a pastor or leader, you can apply these questions to the group in which you serve the Lord. Has your church or group experienced its Passover, Unleavened Bread, Firstfruits, Pentecost, Trumpets, Atonement and Tabernacles? If not — start teaching them these truths.

"Faith will come to them to receive these blessings as they hear the word of God" (Rom 10:17pph).

Finally, these Festivals cannot be experienced in spiritual power except through God's response to your faith as a leader. You cannot make these experiences happen in your own power.

When you have honestly assessed where you are in God's timetable, you will see the need to move on into another feast. Begin to wait on the Lord IN FAITH.

It IS His Will for you and your flock to move into maturity, *"and if we ask anything according to his will, we know that he hears us. If we know that he hears us, we know that we have that which we desire of him"* (I Jn 5:14,15).

It is FAITH that brings that which we have RECEIVED in Heaven down into this earthly realm where you and I live and work for our Lord. Teaching is the means by which we receive faith and release it in others.

So teach God's Word to your people. Use this material to bless them and cause them to *"...grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen"* (2Pet 3:18).

Do not get weary and lose heart as you wait in faith. Keep thanking God for what you have received for yourself and your flock. Continue firm in your faith and God will bring the Festivals upon you.

He will come! Hallelujah!

SECTION C11

THE 500 YEARS BETWEEN TESTAMENTS

Chapter 1

What Happened In Centuries Between Old/New Testament?

Introduction

The four hundred years between the prophecy of Malachi and the advent of Christ are frequently described as "silent," but they were in fact crowded with activity.

No prophet whose writings are included in the Bible arose in Israel during those centuries. The Old Testament was regarded as complete.

But, events took place which gave to the Jews of Christ's time their distinctive ideology. This era providentially prepared the way for the coming of Christ and the proclamation of His gospel.

A. PERSIAN EMPIRE CONTROLS JUDEA

About 100 years before this era, the Jews had been carried away into Babylonian (Persian) captivity (2 Ki 24:15; Jer 20:6). Ancient Persia was made up of areas which today are in the nations of Iraq and Iran.

The Jews fared quite well during their captivity of seventy years under Persian rule. At the end of this seventy years, Cyrus, Prince of Persia, had given them permission to return to Jerusalem and rebuild their temple (cf. Jer 29:10 and Dan 9:2).

Although they met opposition from the inhabitants of Palestine, the temple was completed and dedicated during the reign of Darius the Great (Ezra 6:1-14).

Ezra the scribe and Nehemiah the layman sought to strengthen the Palestinian Jewish community and encourage their loyalty to the Law of God (see Ezra 10).

For about a century and a half after Nehemiah's time, the Persian Empire exercised control over Judea, and the Jews were permitted to observe their religious institutions without interference.

Judea was ruled by high priests who were responsible to the Persian government, a fact which insured the Jews a large measure of autonomy. At the same time, however, it made a political office of the priesthood and sowed the seeds of future trouble. Contests for the office of high priest were marked by jealousy, intrigue and even murder.

Johanán, son of Joia da (Neh 12:22), is reported to have slain his brother Joshua within the temple precincts.

Johanán was succeeded as high priest by his brother **Jaddua**, whose brother Manasseh, according to Josephus, married the daughter of **Sanballat, governor of Samaria**.

1. Samaritans Build Temple

It was at this time that a Samaritan temple was built on Mount Gerizim. This temple, rather than Zion, was regarded as sacred by the Samaritan community. For a time, this reinforced the substitute religious system. This had been started by Jeroboam several centuries previously, following the death of King Solomon (I Ki 12:25).

The sanctuary on Mount Gerizim was destroyed by the Hasmonaean ruler **John Hyrcanus** (134-104 B.C.). As late as the mid-twentieth century, a remnant of Samaritans (about 300 in number) still regard the mount as sacred.

The woman by the well of Samaria wished to dispute with Jesus concerning the merits of the rival holy places. Jesus the Savior chose to emphasize the spiritual attitude of the worshipper rather than the place of worship (John 4:20).

The Sanballat of Josephus cannot have been the same individual as the man of the same name mentioned by Nehemiah (4:1). Josephus does, however, appear to reflect a valid tradition, for a temple seems definitely to have been built on Mount Gerizim about this time.

Persia's failure to vanquish Greece encouraged other conquered peoples to seek their independence. Egypt was constantly attempting to throw off the Persian yoke. Judea, geographically between Egypt and Persia, could not escape involvement.

2. Jews Migrate

During the reign of **Artaxerxes III** many Jews were implicated in a revolt against Persia. When it failed, the Persians deported them to Babylonia and the southern shores of the Caspian Sea.

Jews had fled to Egypt in the time of Jeremiah, a century or more before. Following the murder of Gedaliah, the prophet Jeremiah was forced to join a group of refugees who sought asylum at Tahparihes in the eastern Delta (Jer 43:4-13). Other Judeans doubtless found their way to Egypt to avoid capture by **Nebuchadnezzar**.

Migration continued during the Persian Period, and by the fifth century before Christ a Jewish colony of mercenary soldiers was located at **Elephantine Island**, near modern Aswan, at the First Cataract of the Nile.

Contrary to the Mosaic Law, these colonists built a temple for themselves and they combined their devotion to the God of their fathers with pagan elements (Jer 44:15-19). The Elephantine Jews had correspondence with the Samaritans as well as the Judeans.

B. ALEXANDER THE GREAT

Persia never succeeded in subduing the Greeks, but an heir of Greek culture, **Alexander of Macedon**, eventually brought to an end the Persian Empire.

Alexander was not simply a power-mad despot. A pupil of the philosopher Aristotle, he was thoroughly convinced that Greek culture was the one force that could unify the world.

In 333 B.C. he passed from Macedonia into Asia Minor and defeated the Persian armies stationed there. Then he moved southward through Syria and Palestine to Egypt.

Tyre and Gaza each offered stubborn resistance, but delays did not discourage Alexander; they simply strengthened his determination to win.

1. A Friend Of The Jews

There was no need for a campaign against the Jews and, indeed, legend makes Alexander a friend of the Jewish people. Jaddua, the high priest, is said to have come out to meet Alexander, telling him of Daniel's prophecy that the Greek army would be victorious (see Daniel 8).

Although historians do not take the story seriously, it does illustrate the friendly feelings between the Jews and the Macedonian conqueror.

Alexander permitted the Jews to observe their laws, granting them exemption from tribute during Sabbatical Years. When he built **Alexandria** in Egypt (331 B.C.), he encouraged Jews to settle there and gave them privileges comparable to those of his Greek subjects.

2. Defeated Persians

Alexander was welcomed into Egypt as a deliverer from Persian oppression.

His victorious armies retraced their steps through Palestine and Syria, then moved eastward. The cities of Babylon (Iraq) and Persia (Iran) fell to Alexander, and he pressed on east as far as the Punjab region of India.

3. Legacy Of Greek Culture

Although mighty in battle, it was Hellenistic culture rather than Macedonian rule that was Alexander's legacy to the Middle East.

He determined to found a new city in each country of his empire which would serve as a model for the reordering of the life of the country as a whole along Greek lines.

Materially speaking, this meant the erection of fine public buildings, a gymnasium for games, an open air theater, and whatever would approximate the life of a Greek city-state.

Individuals were encouraged to take Greek names, adopt Greek dress and the Greek language — in short, to become Hellenized.

The material aspects of Hellenism must have seemed attractive for large segments of the population.

Trade and commerce brought wealth to the new merchant class. Libraries and schools were welcomed by the scholar. Better housing and better food brought about a rise in the standard of living.

Many in Israel, as elsewhere, were glad to accept this veneer of Greek culture. If idolatry had been the stumbling block to Israel in the pre-exilic period, Hellenism was the great post-exilic temptation.

A third century B.C. writer observed, "In recent times, under the foreign rule of the Persians and then of the Macedonians, by whom the Persian Empire was overthrown, intercourse with other races has led to many of the traditional Jewish ordinances losing their hold."

Many Jews took Greek names, accepted a school of Greek philosophy, and tried to combine the wisdom of Greece with the faith of their fathers. Others resisted Hellenism and became more and more engrossed in the study of their Law.

At the age of thirty-three, Alexander died in Babylon.

For a number of years the future of the Near East was uncertain, but the generals succeeded in dividing the Empire among themselves and the tide of Hellenism increased.

While the Ptolemies of Egypt and the Seleucids of Syria fought among themselves for land and power, they were in complete agreement concerning their social and cultural mission.

The historian W. W. Tam says that Alexander "so changed the world (that) nothing after him could be as it was before."

C. THE PTOLEMIES

Following the death of Alexander, Judea was first subject to Antigonus, one of his generals. But it quickly fell to another general, **Ptolemy I**, whose surname Soter meant "Deliverer." He seized Jerusalem on a sabbath day in 320 B.C.

1. Jews Prospered

Ptolemy, whose kingdom centered in Egypt, dealt kindly with the Jews. Many of them settled in Alexandria — which continued to be an important center of Jewish thought for many centuries.

Under **Ptolemy II** (Philadelphus) the Alexandrian Jews translated their Old Testament into Greek. This translation was later known as **the Septuagint** (which translated means "seventy").

This name came from the seventy Jews who were sent from Judea to produce the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures. Actually there were seventy-two — six from each of the twelve tribes.

The Jews in Palestine enjoyed a period of prosperity during Ptolemaic times. Tribute was paid to the government in Egypt. But local affairs were administered by high priests who had been responsible for governing their people since Persian times.

The greatest figure among the Jews of the Ptolemaic period was **Simon the Just**, the high priest. He is the subject of highest praise in the Apocryphal Book of Ecclesiasticus, which calls him, "Great among his brethren and the glory of his people."

He is credited with rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem which had been demolished by Ptolemy I. It is said he repaired the Temple and directed the excavation of a great reservoir to provide fresh water for Jerusalem in times of drought and siege.

In addition to his reputation as high priest, Simon is also regarded as one of the great teachers of ancient Judaism. His favorite maxim was, "The world rests on three things: the Law, Divine Service and Charity."

The identity of Simon the Just poses a historical problem, however. A high priest known as Simon I lived during the middle of the third century, and Simon II lived about 200 B.C. One of these is doubtless the Simon the Just of Jewish tradition and legend.

2. Rivalry Develops Between Priestly Families

During Ptolemaic times the priestly families of **Onias and Tobias** became bitter rivals. The house of Tobias was pro-Egyptian and represented the wealthy class of Jerusalem society. The Tobias family may have been related to Tobiah the Ammonite (Neh 2:10; 4:3, 7; 6:1-19) who gave so much trouble to Nehemiah.

A papyrus from the time of Ptolemy II speaks of a Jew named Tobias who was a cavalry commander in the Ptolemaic army stationed at Ammanitis, just east of the Jordan River.

Archaeologists have discovered a mausoleum from the third century B.C. at 'Araq el-Emir in central Jordan, with the name "Tobiah." The Tobiahs are thought to have been tax collectors, occupying the same function as the New Testament publicans.

Josephus states that Onias II refused to pay Ptolemy IV twenty talents of silver, which was evidently the tribute demanded of the high priests. By refusing payment, Onias seems to have renounced allegiance to Ptolemy.

Joseph, a member of the house of Tobias, then succeeded in having himself appointed "tax farmer" for the whole of Palestine, The tax farmer had to go to Alexandria

each year to bid for the renewal of the license to gather taxes. Joseph held this influential post for twenty years, under the Ptolemies and after the victory of Antiochus III, under the Seleucids.

D. THE SELEUCIDS

The Syrian rulers of this period are termed Seleucids. This is because their kingdom, one of the successor states to Alexander the Great's empire, was founded by **Seleucus I** (Nicator).

Most of the early rulers bore the name of Seleucus or Antiochus. They ruled from the city of Antioch on the Orontes River.

1. Greek Culture Enforced On Jews

The ambitious ruler Antiochus III, surnamed "the Great", waged a series of battles with Egypt. In 199 B.C. he wrested Palestine from the Ptolemies after the Battle of Panion, near the sources of the Jordan River.

This marked the beginning of a new era of Jewish history. While the Ptolemies had been tolerant of Jewish institutions, the Seleucids determined to enforce Hellenism upon the Jews.

The crisis came during the reign of **Antiochus IV**, better known as **Antiochus Epiphanes**. He found allies in the Hellenistic party in Judea.

In the early days of the reign of Antiochus IV, Jerusalem was ruled by the high priest Onias III, a descendant of Simon the Just, and a strictly orthodox Jew.

2. Priesthood Goes To Highest Bidder

The Jews who looked with favor on Greek culture opposed Onias and espoused the cause of his brother Jason. By promising larger tribute to Antiochus, **Jason** succeeded in having himself appointed high priest.

Although Antiochus looked upon the high priesthood as a political office which he had a right to fill as he pleased, pious Jews thought of the priesthood as divine in origin and considered its sale to the highest bidder a sin against God.

Jason encouraged the Hellenists who had sought his election. A gymnasium was built in Jerusalem, Greek names became commonplace and Hebrew orthodoxy was considered obscurantist and obsolete.

Yet Jason argued with his close companion and fellow-Hellenist, Menelaus, of the tribe of Benjamin. According to the Old- Testament Scripture, only Levites were to be priests.

Menelaus the Benjamite offered higher tribute to Antiochus than that paid by Jason, and had himself installed as high priest.

3. Orthodox Jewish Faith Attacked

The orthodox Jews, who had been scandalized when Jason was named high priest, were more deeply disturbed when Menelaus, a Benjamite with no claim to priestly office, was installed.

Jason raised an army to back his claim to the high priesthood, and Menelaus courted the favor of Antiochus.

The Syrians, who were campaigning against Egypt, felt it essential to maintain effective control of Palestine. Thus, Antiochus Epiphanes staged a sneak attack on

Jerusalem one sabbath day (when the orthodox would not fight), and slaughtered a large number of the enemies of Menelaus.

The city walls were destroyed and a new fortress, the Akra, was built on the site of the citadel.

Antiochus determined to remove all traces of orthodox Jewish faith. Israel's God was said to be the same as Jupiter, and a bearded image of the pagan deity (perhaps in the likeness of Antiochus) was erected on the Temple altar, where swine were offered in sacrifice.

Jews were forbidden, under penalty of death, to practice circumcision, sabbath observance, or the celebration of the three annual festivals of the Jewish calendar. Copies of the Scriptures were ordered destroyed.

The laws were enforced with the utmost cruelty. An aged scribe named Eleazar was flogged to death because he would not eat swine's flesh.

By force of arms Menelaus continued as high priest and the Hellenizing party gained a victory. Yet the Hellenizers had gone too far, and their very zeal to annihilate the old order proved their own undoing.

The orthodox were willing to die for their faith, but all were not convinced that they should die passively.

E. THE MACCABEAN REVOLT

The oppressed Jews were not long in finding a champion.

1. Mattathias Leads Revolt

When the emissaries of Antiochus arrived at the village of Modin, about fifteen miles west of Jerusalem, they expected the aged priest, **Mattathias**, to set a good example to his people by coming forward to offer a pagan sacrifice. When Mattathias refused, a timid Jew came forward to perform the sacrifice.

The enraged priest approached the altar and slew both the apostate Jew and the emissary of Antiochus. With his five sons, Mattathias destroyed the heathen altar and then fled to the hills to avoid reprisal.

Others of orthodox persuasion joined the family of Mattathias in waging guerrilla warfare on the Syrians and the Hellenistic Jews who supported them.

The orthodox would not fight on the sabbath day, with the result that they were at a distinct military disadvantage. On one sabbath a band of the orthodox was surrounded and slaughtered, for they would not defend themselves.

Following this episode Mattathias suggested the principle that fighting in self-defense is permissible on the sabbath day. Reality has a way of tempering impractical theology.

2. Judas "The Maccabee" Leads To Victory

Soon after the beginning of the revolt, Mattathias died. He had urged his followers to choose as military leader his third son **Judas** known as "**the Maccabee**," a word usually interpreted to mean "the hammer."

The choice was a good one, for more and more Jews rallied to the cause. The Maccabees, as the followers of Judas were called, were able to hold their own against a series of Syrian armies thrown against them.

By a surprise night attack, Judas annihilated an army of Syrians and Hellenistic Jews at Emmaus, and then marched toward Jerusalem with the booty he had seized. The Maccabees entered the city and conquered everything except the Akra.

They entered the Temple and removed all the signs of paganism which had been installed there. The altar dedicated to Jupiter was removed and a new altar erected to Israel's God. The statue of Jupiter was ground to dust.

Beginning with the twenty-fifth of Kislev (December) they celebrated an eight-day Feast of Dedication known as Hanukkah, the Festival of Lights.

(Note: Christians would later appropriate this festival date and observe it wrongfully as the birthday of Jesus).

In this way they marked the end of the three-year period during which the Temple had been desecrated.

3. Syrians Regain Control

Peace was short-lived, however. The Syrian general Lysias defeated the Maccabees in a battle near Jerusalem, and besieged the city itself. During the siege, however, Lysias learned of trouble at home and made an offer of peace to the Jews.

The laws against the observance of Judaism would be repealed and Syria would refrain from interference in the internal affairs of Judea. Menelaus was to be removed from office and the high priesthood given to a mild Hellenizer named **Alcimus**.

Lysias promised that Judas and his followers would not be punished. The walls of Jerusalem would be razed, however.

A council comprising Maccabean army officers, respected scribes and elders of the orthodox party was convened at Jerusalem to determine the action to be taken.

Against the counsel of Judas the peace terms were accepted. Alcimus became high priest; Menelaus was executed; and Judas left the city with a few followers. The fears of Judas proved correct, however, for Alcimus seized and executed many of the orthodox party.

4. Civil War Renewed

Loyal Jews again turned to Judas and the civil war was renewed. Judas, with an ill-equipped army of eight hundred men, met a large Syrian army and died in battle. Thus the first phase of the Maccabean struggle was ended.

Jonathan, a brother of Judas, fled across the Jordan with several hundred Maccabean soldiers. They were illequipped to wage battle, but the next victories were in the field of diplomacy.

Two pretenders to the Syrian throne each sought help from the Jews. They saw in Jonathan the man best able to raise and lead a Jewish army. By playing a delaying action, Jonathan was able to support the winning candidate and at the same time make treaties with Sparta and Rome.

Before the war was over, Jonathan was high priest, governor of Judea, and a member of the Syrian nobility. His brother **Simon** became governor of the Philistine coastal area. Jonathan was able to promote the internal prosperity of Judah, and when he died his brother Simon succeeded him as ruling high priest.

Simon was advanced in years when he came to the throne. His major victory was in the field of diplomacy. By recognizing **Demetrius** as rightful king of Syria, he secured

for the Jews immunity from taxation which amounted to an acknowledgment of independence.

Simon was able also to starve out the Syrian garrison at the Akra and to occupy the cities of Joppa and Bethsura. In recognition of his wise rule, the leaders in Israel named Simon "leader and high priest for ever, until there shall arise a faithful prophet."

Simon was the last of the sons of Mattathias, and this act legitimized a new dynasty which is termed **Hasmonaean**, presumably derived from an ancestor of the Maccabees named Asmonaeus or, in Hebrew, Hashmon.

In 134 B.C., Simon and two of his sons were murdered by an ambitious son-in-law. A third son, **John Hyrcanus**, managed to escape and succeed his father as hereditary head of the Jewish state.

F. THE HASMONAEANS

The Syrians recognized the government of John Hyrcanus on condition that he on-sider himself subject to Syria and promise help in Syrian military campaigns.

Certain coastal cities annexed by Jonathan and Simon were also to be relinquished. The efficient rule of Hyrcanus, however, quickly effected the reconquest of these cities and the addition of **Idumaea** (Old Testament Edom) to Judean territory.

These conquests insured the use of ancient trade routes by the merchant class, but they posed problems to the religiously oriented Jews.

1. Hyrcanus Extends Borders Of Jewish State

Hyrcanus compelled the Idumaeans to become circumcised and accept the Jewish faith, a practice which later Judaism disavows. There is something ironical in the thought of a grandson of Mattathias forcing religious conformity on a people conquered by Jewish arms!

Hyrcanus also campaigned in Samaria where he destroyed the temple on Mount Gerizim. The success of Jewish arms might be applauded by the nationalistic element in Judea, but the religious fervor of the earlier Maccabees was no longer evident.

Before John Hyrcanus died in 104 B.C., the borders of the state had been extended on every side. The Maccabean struggle was by this time nearly ignored and new rivalries developed.

a. Rise Of Sadducees. The older Hellenists were discredited, but their ideas were perpetuated in the party of the Sadducees. The orthodox of Maccabean times became the Pharisees of pre-Christian Judaism and the New Testament.

Hyrcanus, himself, was devout and law-abiding, but his children had little sympathy with traditional Hebrew thought. They numbered themselves among the aristocrats, and they came to look with disdain on the rigidly orthodox Pharisees. Ironically these heirs of the Maccabees became thoroughly Hellenized.

2. Expansion Of Judean Territory Continues

The death of John Hyrcanus precipitated a dynastic struggle among his children. His eldest son, who preferred his Greek name **Aristobulus** to his Hebrew name Judah, emerged as victor. He cast three of his brothers into prison—two of whom are thought to have starved to death. Another brother was murdered in the palace.

In the short reign of but one year, Aristobulus pushed the borders of Judea north to Mount Lebanon and took the title of king to himself. His life was cut short, however, by drink, disease and the haunting fear of rebellion.

At the time of Aristobulus' death he had but one brother living, and he was in prison. Although his Hebrew name was Jonathan, history knows him by his Greek name Alexander Jannaeus. Under Jannaeus the policy of territorial expansion continued. The frontiers of Judea were extended along the Philistine coast toward the Egyptian frontier and in the Transjordan region.

By this time, the Jewish state approximated the territory controlled by Israel in the days of David and Solomon. It included the whole of Palestine and adjacent areas from the borders of Egypt to Lake Huleh, north of the Sea of Galilee. Perea in Transjordan was subject to Jannaeus, as were the cities of the Coastal Plain except for Askalon.

The territories incorporated into the Hasmonaean kingdom were, for the most part, quickly Judaized.

The **Idumaeans** came to exercise an important place in Jewish life, and **Galilee** became an important center of Judaism.

The **Samaritans**, however, continued to resist assimilation and cities such as Apollonia and Scythopolis (Old Testament Bethshean), with only a small Jewish element in their population, kept their non-Jewish character.

a. Pharisees Rebel. Partisan strife, however, marred the reign of Alexander Jannaeus, who showed open contempt for the Pharisees, precipitating civil war. The Pharisees accepted aid from the Syrians in their conflict with Jannaeus and for a time Jewish independence was in the balance.

When the Pharisees felt that they had gained their point, they withdrew their alliance with Syria and hoped for a Jewish state that would be both free of foreign control and tolerant of their viewpoint. Jannaeus, however, sought out the leaders of the rebellion and crucified eight hundred Pharisees.

3. Salome Alexandra Rules

Tradition says that Jannaeus repented on his death-bed, instructing his wife **Salome Alexandra** to dismiss his Sadducean advisors and reign with the help of the Pharisees. This tradition may have little historical basis, but Alexandra did turn to the Pharisees for support.

Salome Alexandra had been married successively to Aristobulus and to Alexander Jannaeus. The widow of two Hasmonaean rulers, she reigned in her own right for seven years. She was a woman of seventy when she came to the throne, dividing royal responsibilities among her two sons. **Hyrchanus (II)**, the elder son, became High Priest, and his brother **Aristobulus (II)** received the military command. Her brother, **Simeon ben Shetah**, was a leader among the Pharisees, and this fact may have disposed her to seek peace between the opposing factions of Judaism.

a. Pharisees Gain Power. Under Alexandra, the Pharisees had their opportunity to make a constructive contribution to Jewish life. In many areas, particularly education, they were eminently successful. Under the presidency of Simeon ben Shetah, the Sanhedrin (the Jewish Council of State) decreed that every young man should be educated.

A comprehensive system of elementary education was inaugurated so that the larger villages, towns and cities of Judea would produce a literate, informed people. This education was centered in the Hebrew Scriptures.

The wounds of earlier strife were not healed during Alexandra's reign.

Although the Pharisees were happy in their new-found recognition, the Sadducees were resentful of the fact that they had lost power. To compound the problem, the Pharisees sought to avenge the massacre of their leaders by Alexander Jannaeus. Sadducean blood was spilt and the makings of another civil war were in the air.

The Sadducees found in Aristobulus, the younger son of Jannaeus and Alexandra, the man they could support as Alexandra's successor. He was a soldier and appealed to the party that dreamed of imperial expansion and worldly power.

Hyrchanus, the elder brother and rightful heir, was acceptable to the Pharisees. With the death of Alexandra the partisans of the two sons were ready for a showdown.

b. Sadducees Rebel. When his mother died, **Hyrchanus (II)**, who had been serving as high priest, succeeded to the throne, but his brother **Aristobulus** led an army of Sadducees against Jerusalem.

Neither Hyrchanus nor the Pharisees were ready for war, and Hyrchanus surrendered his honors to Aristobulus (II) who became king and high priest.

Hyrchanus and Aristobulus thereupon vowed eternal friendship, and Aristobulus' eldest son Alexander married Hyrchanus' only daughter, Alexandra.

Peace between the brothers was short-lived, however. Hyrchanus had to flee and Antipater, governor of Idumaea, espoused his cause. With civil war threatening, **Pompey** appeared with his Roman Legions to insure the peace of Judea and further the aims of Rome.

G. THE ROMANS

When Pompey suspected Aristobulus of planning to rebel against Rome he besieged Jerusalem and, after three months, breached the fortifications, entered the city, and reportedly slaughtered twelve thousand Jews.

1. Jewish Independence Lost

Pompey and his officers entered the Holy of Holies in the Temple, but he did not touch its costly furnishings and allowed Temple worship to continue. Jerusalem, however, was made tributary to the Romans and the last vestige of Jewish independence was removed.

Judea was incorporated into the Roman province of Syria and it lost the coastal cities, the district of Samaria and the non-Jewish cities east of the Jordan.

Hyrchanus was named Ethnarch (ruler) of Judea, including Galilee, Idumaea and Perea, and was confirmed again as high priest. A yearly tribute was due Rome.

Aristobulus and a number of other captives were taken to Rome to grace Pompey's triumph. During the voyage, however, Aristobulus' son Alexander escaped and attempted to organize a revolt against Hyrchanus. With the aid of the Romans, however, Hyrchanus was able to meet this challenge to his authority.

2. Antipater: Power Behind Jewish Throne

During the years of strife between **Aristobulus (II)** and **Hyrchanus (II)**, the Idumaeen governor **Antipater (or Antipas)** took a lively interest in the politics of Judea.

Antipater Was bitterly opposed to Aristobulus, partly through fear and partly because of his friendship for Hyrcanus. It appears that Hyrcanus relied much on Antipater, and that he was virtually the power behind the throne of Judea.

The Jews resented the influence of Antipater almost as much as they smarted under Roman sovereignty. Although the Idumaeans had been incorporated into the Jewish state by John Hyrcanus, they had never been assimilated and ancient rivalries were not forgotten.

In the crisis that followed the murder of **Julius Caesar**, Antipater and his sons showed loyalty to the new regime of **Cassius** by zealously collecting tribute. **Herod**, a son of Antipater, was given the title Procurator of Judea with the promise that he would one day be named king.

When **Anthony** defeated Brutus and Cassius at Philippi, Asia again fell into the hands of a new regime. Herod, however, quickly changed loyalties and bribed his way into favor with Anthony.

The eastern part of the once mighty Persian Empire was occupied by a people known as **Parthians** who had never been subdued by Rome. In 41 B.C. they attacked Jerusalem and made **Antigonus**, son of Aristobulus II, both king and high priest.

3. Herod Named "King Of The Jews"

Herod, the son of Antipater, who had inherited the throne of Judea at the death of Hyrcanus, was forced to flee to Rome. There he won the favor of Anthony and was officially named "King of the Jews." The title would have meaning only after the Parthians were driven out of Jerusalem. Herod returned to Judea with Roman arms and triumphantly entered Jerusalem as king.

Herod's rule spanned the eventful years from 37 B.C. to 4 B.C. He is best known as the king who feared the birth of a rival "King of the Jews" and caused the murder of infants in Bethlehem at the birth of Jesus.

While that act of Herod cannot be documented from secular records, his other Jppenedin Centuries Between Old/New Testame nt? atrocities are well known. He had ten wives in all, and the **Emperor Augustus** is reported to have commented of his family life, "I'd rather be Herod's hog than his son."

The hog was an unclean animal, and would not be butchered, but Herod's wives and children were violently removed when they interfered with his plans or were suspected of disloyalty.

a. Sought To Win Jews' Favor. Although detested by his Jewish subjects, Herod did seek to win their favor. He built and rebuilt cities throughout the land: Samaria became Sebaste in honor of Augustus; Straton's Tower became Caesarea with a harbor protected by a mole and a wall with ten towers. Fortresses, baths, parks, market places, roads and other luxuries of Hellenistic culture were part of his building program.

In the eighteenth year of his reign (20-19 B.C.), Herod began the work of rebuilding the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem. The main edifice was built by priests in a year and a half.

But the work on the entire complex of courts and buildings was not completed until the procuratorship of **Albinus** (A.D. 62-64). This was less than a decade before it was totally destroyed by the armies of **Titus** in A.D. 70 as prophesied by Jesus (Luke 19:41-44).

b. Died Shortly After Birth Of Jesus. Herod's death followed quickly the birth of Him (Jesus) Who was to challenge Herod's right to the title "King of the Jews." With the death of Herod—which no one mourned—the period between the Old and New Testament comes to an end and we move into the New Testament period.

H. THE JEWISH SECTS DESCRIBED

The Pharisees, Sadducees, Herodians and Zealots, who play so important a part in the gospel records, all have their origin during the two centuries before the birth of Christ.

They represent different reactions to the continuing clash between Hellenism and Jewish religious life. While the Maccabean struggle had settled the political problem of the relationship between the Syrian Seleucids and Judea, it forced upon Judaism the necessity of determining its own relationship to the outside world.

1. The Pharisees —Legalistic

A party bearing the name of Pharisee is first mentioned during the reign of **John Hyreanus** (134-104 B.C.), and it is evident that even then there was an antagonism between the "orthodox" Pharisee and the more open-minded Sadducee.

The word **Pharisee** means "**separated one**." The name probably meant, in the first instance, one who had separated himself from the corrupting influence of Hellenism in his zeal for the biblical Law.

The historian Josephus says that the Pharisees "appear more religious than others, and seem to interpret the laws more accurately."

Pharisees were exacting in observing the laws regarding ceremonial purity. For this reason they could not purchase items of food or drink from a "sinner" for fear of ceremonial defilement.

Nor could a Pharisee eat in the house of a sinner, although he might entertain the sinner in his own home. Under such circumstances the Pharisee would provide the sinner with clothes to wear, for the sinner's clothes might be ceremonially impure.

With a sincere desire to make the Law workable within the changing culture of the Greco-Roman world, the Pharisees developed systems of tradition which sought to apply the Law to a variety of circumstances.

a. Two Schools Of Legal Thought. During the first century before Christ, two influential Pharisaic teachers gave their names to two schools of legal thought.

1) Hillel was the more moderate of the two, ever considerate of the poor and willing to accept Roman rule as compatible with Jewish orthodoxy.

2) Shammai, on the other hand, was more strict in his interpretation and bitterly opposed to Rome. His viewpoint ultimately found expression in the sect of **Zealots** whose resistance to the Romans brought on the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

The Talmud preserves the record of 316 controversies between the schools of Hillel and Shammai.

b. Tradition Becomes Law. Tradition, in Pharisaic thought, began as a commentary on the Law but it was ultimately raised to the level of Law itself.

To justify this teaching it was maintained that the "**oral law**" was given by God to Moses on Mount Sinai along with the "**written law**" or **Torah**.

The ultimate in this development is reached when the **Mishna** states that oral law must be observed with greater stringency than the written law, because statutory law (i.e., oral tradition) affects the life of the ordinary man more intimately than the more remote constitutional law (the written Torah).

In addition to the charge that Pharisaism involved little more than a concern for the trivialities of the Law, the New Testament affirms that tradition had largely neglected the real intent of the Law (Matt 15:3).

As in many worthy movements, the early piety of those who had separated themselves from impurity at great cost, was exchanged for an attitude of pride in the observance of legal precepts.

Men such as **Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea, Gamaliel** and **Saul of Tarsus** (after conversion to Christ, he became Paul the apostle), represent some of the nobler souls from the Pharisaic tradition in the New Testament.

To Saul, the Pharisee represented the epitome of orthodoxy, "*the most strict sect of our religion*" (Acts 26:5). Pharisaism began well, and its perversion is a constant reminder that self-complacency and spiritual pride are temptations to which the pious are particularly susceptible.

2. The Sadducees —Materialistic

Although Pharisees and Sadducees are frequently denounced together in the New Testament, they had little in common save their antagonism to Jesus.

The Sadducees were the party of **the Jerusalem aristocracy** and the high priesthood. They had made their peace with the political rulers and had attained positions of wealth and influence. Temple administration and ritual was their specific responsibility. The Sadducees held themselves aloof from the masses and were unpopular with them.

The Pharisaic attempts at applying the Law to new situations were rejected by the Sadducees who restricted their concept of authority to the Torah, or Mosaic Law. Sadducees did not believe in resurrection, spirits or angels (cf. Mark 12:18; Luke 20:27; Acts 23:8). Their faith was largely a series of negations with the result that they left no positive religious or political system.

While the Pharisees welcomed proselytes (Matt 23:15), the Sadducean party was closed. None but members of the high priestly and aristocratic families of Jerusalem could become members.

With the destruction of the Temple in A.D. 70, the Sadducean party came to an end. Modern Judaism traces its roots to the Pharisees.

3. The Essenes — Ascetic

Essenes and Pharisees both trace their roots to the orthodox leaders of Maccabean times who stood their ground against Hellenism. Pharisees maintained a strict adherence to the "oral law" within the framework of historical Judaism. They maintained their separation from defilement, but not from the Jewish-community itself.

Even though the temple worship was conducted by Sadducees, the Pharisees esteemed it a basic part of their religious inheritance. While the Pharisee might hold himself aloof from "sinners," he lived among them and coveted their esteem.

A more extreme reaction against the influences which tended to corrupt Jewish life was taken by a sect which the ancient writers Philo, Josephus and Pliny call the Essenes.

The Essenes seem to have lived for the most part in monastic communities such as the one which maintained headquarters at Qumran, near the northwest corner of the Dead Sea.

(Note: Qumran is where the famous "Dead Sea Scrolls" were found in a cave in the mid-twentieth century. Presumably the Essenes stored them there in the pre-Christian era.)

In seeking to explain Judaism to the Greek-speaking world, Josephus spoke of three "philosophies"—those of the Pharisees, Sadducees and the Essenes.

The term "Essene" seems to have been used in many different ways. Different groups of monastically minded Jews held to and practiced varied religious practices. Yet they were all referred to as Essenes.

Pliny says that the Essenes avoided women and did not marry, but Josephus speaks of an order of marrying Essenes. The excavations at Qumran indicate that women were enrolled in the Qumran community.

Ancient writers speak favorably of the Essenes, who lived a life of rigor and simplicity. Members of the community studied Scripture and other religious books. Each Essene was required to perform manual labor in order to make the community self-supporting.

Community of goods was practiced, and strict discipline was enforced by an overseer. Those groups which renounced marriage adopted boys at an early age in order to inculcate and perpetuate the ideals of Essenism. Slavery and war were repudiated.

The Essenes welcomed proselytes, but the novice was required to undergo a period of strict probation before he could become a full-fledged member.

Numerically the Essenes were never large. Philo says that there were four thousand of them, and Pliny speaks of a community north of En Gedi, corresponding to the Qumran area. That there were other settlements is clear, for we are told that all members of the sect were welcome in any of the Essene colonies.

Nothing certain is known of the early history of the sect, for like all reform movements it traces its origins back to remote times. Philo states that Moses instituted the order, and Josephus says that they existed "ever since the ancient times of the fathers."

It is certain that the Essene movement was at one time an extreme protest against the corruptions which were apparent in pre-Christian Judaism, and that ultimately many members withdrew from the Palestinian community life and sought spiritual purification in places such as the Qumran area.

To those who are students of Church history, it would seem evident that Essene influence extended itself right on down to the twentieth century. Many of their practices were incorporated into various religious "orders" of the Orthodox and Catholic branches of Christianity.

It is possible that Paul was referring to certain Essene doctrinal influences when he warned of some who held "*doctrines of devils... Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods...*" (1 Tim4:1-3).

Regarding themselves as **the only true, or pure Israel**, the Essenes refused to cooperate with what they believed to be the corrupt religious observances at the Jerusalem Temple. The carefully regulated life at the Essene center seems to have served as a substitute for the temple in the eyes of pious Essenes.

The strictness of Essene discipline and the rigidity with which the Law was enforced are stressed by all who write about them. Josephus says that they were stricter than all Jews in abstaining from work on the sabbath day.

A passage in **the Damascus Document** (which seems to be Essene in origin) says that it is unlawful to lift an animal from a pit on the sabbath day. Such a view was considered extreme even by legalistic Pharisees (cf. Matt 12:11).

The absence of Essenes from the main streams of Jewish life doubtless accounts for the fact that they are not mentioned in the New Testament or in the Jewish Talmud. Although the high morality of the Essenes is indeed commendable, the teaching and practice of Jesus was diametrically opposite to the legalism and asceticism of the Essene teaching.

Although the Essenes considered that contact with a member of their own group of a lower order was ceremonially defiling, Jesus did not hesitate to eat and drink with "*publicans and sinners*" (Matt 11:19; Luke 7:34).

Although obedient to the Mosaic Law, Jesus had no sympathy with those who made of the Law a burden instead of a blessing. The sabbath, according to Jesus, was made for mankind's benefit. It is lawful to do good on the sabbath day (Matt 12:1-12; Mark 2:23-28; Luke 6:6-11; 14:1-6).

Jesus denounced abuses in the Temple and prophesied its destruction. But He did not repudiate the Temple services. He came to Jerusalem for the great Jewish feasts; and after His resurrection, disciples still made their way to the Temple at the hour of prayer (cf. Acts 3).

While asceticism and monasticism gained a foothold in Christian thinking, Christianity in its earliest period was in no sense an ascetic movement. The ministry of Jesus was largely to the "common people" who were rejected by Pharisee and Essene alike. Because Jesus freely associated with the people of His generation, the self-righteous called Him a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners (Matt 11:19).

He did not fit into the legalistic mold of the Pharisee, the ascetic, monastic practices of the Essene or the materialistic politicizing of the Sadducee. Of Him it was said, "*...And the common people heard him gladly*" (Mark. 12:37).

4. Other Sects

The New Testament mentions **Herodians** (Mark 3:6; Matt 22:16) and **Zealots** (Luke 6:15), groups of Jews at opposite ends of the political spectrum.

The **Herodians** appear to have been Jews of influence and standing who were well disposed to the Herodian rule and, as a result, to the Romans who supported the Herods.

The **Zealots**, on the other hand, were super-patriots who determined to resist Rome at all costs. Their fanaticism brought on the war during which the army of Titus destroyed Jerusalem and its Temple (A.D. 70).

For further information on the period between the Old and New Testament see the sub-section called *The Apocrypha* in Section CI titled *The Canon*. See also the **Chronology Between The Testaments**, below.

Chronology Between The Testaments

<u>Date B.C.</u>		<u>Date B.C.</u>	
612	Nineveh destroyed by Medes and Babylonians	175-163	Antiochus (IV) Epiphanes rules Syria; Judaism is proscribed
587	Jerusalem destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar	167	Mattathias and his sons rebel against Antiochus; beginning of Maccabean revolt
559	Cyrus inherits kingdom of Anshan; beginning of Persian Empire	166-160	Judas the Maccabee's Leadership
539	Babylon falls to Cyrus; end of NeoBabylonian Empire	160-142	Jonathan is high priest
530-522	Cambyses succeeds Cyrus; conquest of Egypt	142-135	Simon is high priest: founds Hasmonaean dynasty
522-486	Darius I ruler of Persian Empire	134-104	John Hyrcanus expands holdings of independent Jewish state
515	Second Temple completed by Jews in Jerusalem	103	Aristobulus' Rule
486-465	Xerxes I attempts the conquest of Greece; time of Esther	102-76	Alexander Jannaeus' Rule
480	Greek naval victory at Salamis; Xerxes flees	75-67	Salome Alexandra rules; Hyrcanus II high priest
464-424	Artaxerxes I rules Persia; age of Nehemiah	66-63	Dynastic battle : Aristobulus II and Hyrcanus II
334-323	Alexander of Macedon conquers the East	63	Pompey invades Palestine; Roman rule begins
311	Seleucus conquers Babylon; beginning of the Seleucid dynasty	63-40	Hyrcanus II rules, subject to Rome Antipater exercises increasing power
223-187	Antiochus (III) the Great , Seleucid ruler of Syria	40-37	Parthians conquer Jerusalem; establish Aristobulus II as high priest and king
198	Antiochus III defeats Egypt, gains control of Palestine	37-4	Herod the Great , son of Antipater, rules as king; subject to Rome

Section D

HOW LEADERS CAN....

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D1.2 - The Holy Spirit And The Believer

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SECTION DI

RECEIVE BAPTISM IN & GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

By Gerald Rowlands, Australia

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Chapter 1

The Holy Spirit

A. WHO IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?

The Holy Spirit is probably the least known member of the Godhead. There is a sad lack of knowledge about Him even within the Church. There are several strong reasons why this should not be so:

1. The Holy Spirit Is God

As the third member of the Godhead, He is coequal with God the Father and God the Son. It is fitting, therefore, that equal reverence, respect and honor should be ascribed to Him. We should never treat Him as some inferior person. We should know as much about Him as we do about the other two members of the Divine Trinity.

The Holy Spirit is not only a PERSON; He is a DIVINE BEING. He is GOD.

a. The Bible Calls Him God. *"Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Spirit? ...thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God" (Acts 5:3,4).*

b. He Possesses The Characteristics That God Alone Has

1) He has an *eternal* nature (Heb 9:14).

2) He is **OMNIPRESENT** (Ps 139:7-10). He is capable of being everywhere at one time.

3) He is **OMNISCIENT** (I Cor 2:10, 11). He knows ALL things.

4) He is **OMNIPOTENT** (Luke 1:35). He has the power to do anything.

c. He Is Associated With The Father And Son On Equal Status. "*Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit*" (Matt 28:19).

d. The Bible Has Much To Say About The Holy Spirit. With the exception of the 2nd and 3rd Epistles of John, every book in the New Testament contains references to the person and work of the Holy Spirit.

e. He Is Essentially Active In God's Plan Of Redemption. He convinces the world of sin, righteousness and judgment (John 16:8). True children of God are "*born of the Spirit*" (John 3:5,6).

2. The Holy Spirit Is A Person

Many Christians seem to feel that the Holy Spirit is merely an impersonal power or influence. They treat the Holy Spirit as though He were electricity or some other form of power which they can switch on and off at will.

This concept is far from the truth. The Holy Spirit is a Person. He is a Person who **possesses great** authority and power, but He is much more than the power which He possesses. He is eminently worthy of the respect and honor that we reserve for Almighty God.

a. The Personal Pronoun Is Used For Him. "*That HE may abide with you forever*" (John 14:16). "*HE dwelleth with you, and shall be in you*" (John 14:17).

"*HE shall testify of me*" (John 15:26).

"*Howbeit when HE, the Spirit of truth, is come, HE will guide you into all truth, for HE shall not speak of HIMSELF; but whatsoever HE shall hear, that shall HE speak; and HE will show you things to come. HE shall glorify me*" (John 16:13,14).

b. He Possesses The Basic Characteristics Of Personality

1) **Intellect**: The ability to think and reason.

2) **Sensitivity**: The ability to feel things.

3) **Will**: The capacity of choice and decision.

c. **Expressions Of His Personality**. A mere power or influence would not be capable of feeling those things which the Holy Spirit is said to feel.

For example, we are exhorted not to "*grieve*" the Holy Spirit (Eph 4:30). Ananias and Sapphira "*lied against the Holy Spirit*" (Acts 5:3, 4).

Now a *power* cannot be grieved. You cannot grieve or vex electricity. Neither can you lie to it or tempt it. An impersonal power is incapable of such feelings.

But a *person* can be grieved and vexed, and lied to and tempted.

Notice some expressions of personality attributed to the Holy Spirit:

1) **He can feel** (Eph 4:30).

2) **He can comfort** (Acts 9:31).

3) **He can think** (Rom 8:6).

- 4) **He can speak** (Acts 13:2).
- 5) **He can pray** (Rom 8:26).
- 6) **He can teach** (John 14:26).
- 7) **He can exercise His will** (I Cor 12:11).
- 8) **He can forbid** (Acts 16:6).
- 9) **He can work miracles** (Acts 19:6).

d. He Is Not Impersonal. All these things are expressions of personality, which an impersonal power does not have.

One of the reasons why many regard Him as merely a power or force is because of certain names which are ascribed to Him in the Scriptures to symbolize His ministry. He is called Wind, Rain, Oil, Fire, Clothing, etc. —all symbols of various ministries He performs; but He is much greater than any or all of the ministries He performs.

3. This Is The Age Of The Holy Spirit

He is the "other" Comforter, Who has taken the place of Jesus (John 14:16). This present period of history is the *Time of the Latter Rain* (Zech 10:1) or the time of the greatest activity of the Spirit that the Church has known. Therefore we need to know as much as possible about the Holy Spirit.

B. THE OUTPOURING OF THE SPIRIT PREDICTED

In the Old Testament, we find the Holy Spirit *upon* and *within* certain key people. These people seem to be the exceptions rather than the rule.

However, God predicted, through His prophets, that a new day would come.

1. His Spirit Would Be Within And Upon ALL Of His People

"And it shall come to pass afterwards, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young shall see visions; and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit" (Joel 2:28,29).

*"And I will put my Spirit **within** you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them.."* (Eze 36:27).

"For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground; I will pour my spirit upon thy seed; and my blessing upon thine offspring" (Isa 44:3).

2. God's Promised Messiah Would Be Spirit-Filled And Empowered

"Behold my servant whom I uphold; mine elect in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my Spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles" (Isa 42:1).

"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of prison to them that are bound" (Isa 61:1). (This was fulfilled in Luke 4:18.)

3. Several Terms For The "Fullness Of The Spirit"

Experiencing the fullness of the Holy Spirit is described in several ways in the Scriptures. We shall look briefly at several of these terms.

a. Receiving The Holy Spirit. A **gift** is defined as "an offer and an acceptance (act of receiving) without consideration." A **gift** is not completed until someone **receives** that which is freely offered.

This is the phrase most commonly used in the New Testament to describe the experience of which we are speaking.

*"The Holy Spirit, which they that believe on him should **receive**" (John 7:39).*

*"**Receive** ye the Holy Spirit" (John 20:22).*

*"But ye shall **receive** power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you" (Acts 1:8).*

*"And ye shall **receive** the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38).*

"Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Spirit" (Acts 8:15).

*"Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have **received** the Holy Spirit as well as we?" (Acts 10:47).*

*"He said unto them, Have ye **received** the Holy Spirit since ye believed? " (Acts 19:2).*

b. Being Anointed With The Spirit. The "anointing" is a term with which we are very familiar, because of its use in the Old Testament (Exo 28:41; 29:29; Ps 2:2; 92:10). There were three principle anointing. The Leper's anointing; the Priestly anointing; and the Kingly anointing. (See Section A2.9 for full explanation.)

The anointing oil was poured upon the recipient (I Sam 10:1). Thus the Spirit is "*poured upon* " the believer.

This particular phrase is used to describe the Spirit upon Jesus Christ. The word *Christ* means the *Anointed One* [or *Christened One*]. "*How God **anointed** him with the Holy Spirit and power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed of the devil, for God was with him "* (Acts 10:38).

c. Being Filled With The Spirit. This phrase describes the effect which the Spirit has within believers: They are "**filled**" *with the Spirit!* It is employed on the Day of Pentecost. "*And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance"* (Acts 2:4).

The process of being filled with the Spirit begins by an initial infilling. Then there are subsequent experiences of being filled. Thus the process is an ongoing one.

Paul speaks of it in Ephesians 5:18, employing the continuous tense: "*Be continuously **being filled** with the Spirit"* (lit). In order to maintain the fullness of the Spirit, we need to drink daily from the source of supply.

d. Being Baptized In The Spirit. This is a somewhat controversial phrase which nevertheless has firm scriptural backing. It occurs four times in the Gospels and twice in the Book of Acts (Matt 3:11, Mark 1:8, Luke 3:16, John 1:33 ,Acts 1:5,11:16).

To baptize means to "*thoroughly immerse* " or to submerge into. It has an even deeper meaning, which is to "*submerge into an element which has the power to change that which it envelops.*"

A good example of this is the dyeing of a garment, which is submerged into an element which radically transforms the garment. To be baptized in the Spirit, therefore, is to be immersed, submerged, buried, completely surrounded by, enveloped wholly by the Holy Spirit.

e. The Release Of The Spirit. This is a term which is not actually employed in the New Testament, but is definitely implied therein. It describes the release of the human spirit which takes place when the human spirit is made alive by the Holy Spirit: "*Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom [release]*" (2Cor 3:17).

It is the release of one's personality from bondage into liberty, from dryness into rivers of living water, from barrenness into fruitfulness. It surely describes the release of rivers of living water from within the spirit of the believer. "*For the Scriptures declare that rivers of living water shall flow from the inmost being of anyone who believes in me*" (John 7:38 tlb).

This probably describes most accurately what is transpiring today among so many thousands of believers. Hence this concept is finding increasing acceptance within the Church.

C. THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

1. The Initial Evidence Of The Baptism In The Spirit

We now consider: "What will be the initial evidence (first sign) that one has received the fullness of the Spirit?" Let us bear three things in mind.

a. Initial Sign. We are concerned at this point with the *INITIAL* sign. It is agreed that there are subsequently many other signs and evidences of the Spirit's fullness.

However, what we are seeking to determine at this moment is that evidence which is most likely to be the *first* sign that one has experienced this new dimension of the spirit's power.

b. Scriptural Sign. We are seeking for the *SCRIPTURAL* sign. Therefore we are not concerned with personal experience or human tradition. Rather, we seek what the Scriptures reveal as the basic common denominator of those who experienced this Baptism in the Spirit in Bible days.

c. Biblical Experience. It is the *BIBLICAL EXPERIENCE* of the Baptism in the Spirit, rather than man's idea of what the Baptism is, that we are interested in.

There are many spiritual experiences which men have loosely called the 'Baptism in the Spirit.' These include: The Second Blessing, Entire Sanctification, the Holiness Experience, etc.

These may be valid and scriptural experiences, which we neither despise nor deprecate. Nevertheless, it is that work of the Spirit which the Bible defines as the Baptism in the Spirit with which we are concerned in this present study.

2. Scriptural Accounts Of The Baptism In The Spirit

The main source of evidence is the Acts of Apostles, in which there are five recorded instances of people receiving the fullness of the Spirit.

a. The Day Of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4). This is the fullest account we have in Scripture. Exactly fifty days after the resurrection of Christ, the promises made concerning the coming of the Spirit were fulfilled. The Holy Spirit came to a company of disciples waiting in Jerusalem. This was the commencement of an entirely new work of the Spirit as foretold by the prophets. There were several evidences that the Spirit had come to them:

1) Wind From Heaven. There was a wind from Heaven—a mighty, rushing wind. In both Hebrew and Greek, the word for "spirit" also means "wind." So it was significant that there should be a mighty rushing wind as a herald of the Spirit's arrival. Wind speaks of life, power, movement, force—all typical of the Holy Spirit.

2) Flames Of Fire. The symbolic fire was also extremely significant. John the Baptist had foretold that Jesus would baptize with *'The Holy Spirit and fire'*. Fire symbolizes purging, purifying, cleansing, burning up the chaff and dross.

Both of these factors occurred BEFORE the disciples were said to be filled with the Spirit. So they cannot truly be said to be evidences of the infilling of the Spirit.

3) Speaking In Other Tongues, as the Spirit gave them the words to say.

The evidence which came immediately after the disciples were filled with the Spirit was this: They *"...began to speak with tongues as the Spirit gave them the words to say "* (Acts 2:4 weym).

There were 120 disciples in the Upper Room at that time. We are clearly told that they were ALL filled with the Holy Spirit and ALL began to speak with tongues.

The clear **evidence** of every disciple on this occasion was the supernatural ability to speak in languages which they had never learned.

Of the three manifestations which occurred that day, only one was later seen to be a consistently recurring part of being filled with the Spirit. It was the speaking with other tongues.

b. The House Of Cornelius (Acts 10:44-48). Peter was supernaturally instructed to visit the Gentile household of Cornelius, a Roman Centurion.

Peter said he went only because *"the Spirit told me to go..."* (Acts 11:12 rsv). Peter was still persuaded that the blessings of God were for the Jews alone.

Nevertheless, he found himself confronted with a Gentile audience eager to hear *"...all the things which God had commanded him"*(Acts 10:33).

Peter began to speak to them about the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 10:34-43). While he was still speaking, the Holy Spirit fell on all them that heard the Word.

Peter's Jewish companions were initially unwilling to believe that this could actually happen to Gentiles (Acts 10:45). But they were all convinced because *"they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God"* (vs 46).

This sign also prompted Peter to say: *"Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Spirit as well as we? [or 'in the same manner or fashion in which we received Him']"* (Acts 10:47).

When Peter returned to Jerusalem, he was called to give an account of what had happened at Caesarea. The leaders were actually upset with Peter (Acts 11:2).

He therefore had to defend his actions by explaining that *"as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them, just as on us at the beginning"* (Acts 11:15).

He further confirms: *"Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us at the beginning"* (Acts 11:17).

His argument is that God had blessed the Gentiles with the Gift of the Spirit in **exactly the same way** that He had blessed the Jewish believers on the Day of Pentecost.

The main reason for Peter's confidence was that the Gentiles also had spoken in tongues. *"When they heard these things, the elders held their peace and glorified God"* (Acts 11:18).

c. Paul At Ephesus (Acts 19:1-7). Here we have a third extremely clear account. On his missionary journey, Paul came to the Greek city of Ephesus where he found some disciples of John the Baptist.

In response to his question, *"Have you received the Holy Spirit since you believed?"* — they affirm: *"We have not even so much as heard whether there be any Holy Spirit."*

Paul therefore explains the gospel concerning Christ more clearly to them, after which they were baptized in water. Paul then proceeded to lay hands upon them, whereupon the *"Holy Spirit came upon them and they spake with tongues and prophesied."*

We have seen in these three instances that the Baptism in the Spirit is a concise, definite, instantaneous happening.

In each of these occasions, the one factor which is consistent is that ALL the recipients, on ALL of the occasions, were said to speak with tongues as a direct result of having been filled with the Spirit.

We therefore suggest that speaking in tongues is a genuine and reliable initial evidence of receiving the Spirit.

There are two other accounts in Acts of believers receiving the Spirit. Let's examine these also.

d. The Revival At Samaria (Acts 8). In this particular account, it is not specifically stated that the recipients of the Spirit spoke in tongues. However, there are some interesting circumstances which imply that something like this must have happened.

Firstly, there was a genuine response to the preaching of Philip, the immediate results of which were: *"The people, with one accord, gave heed to the things which Philip spake"* (8:6); *"...there was great joy in the city"* (8:8); *"when they believed... they were baptized..."* (8:12); *"...as yet, the Holy Spirit was fallen upon none of them"* (8:16).

Secondly, when Peter and John laid their hands upon them, they received the Holy Spirit. Simon, the magician, saw something happen as a direct result of their receiving the Spirit.

Whatever it was, it occurred suddenly, dramatically and in a visible way.

Simon desired the ability to make this phenomenon happen. Much has been surmised and written about what Simon actually saw.

No one can say for certain. But is it not reasonable to assume that Simon saw the same sign that had occurred on the Day of Pentecost? Otherwise these Jewish apostles might have been reticent to believe that the Samaritans were true believers.

It is highly probable that the Samaritans received the Spirit in the same way as all the other people who were baptized in the Spirit in Bible days.

e. Saul Of Tarsus (Acts 9). After Saul's dramatic conversion experience, the Lord sent Ananias to visit Saul. Ananias said: "*Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus has sent me that you might regain your sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit*" (9:17). We know that he did regain his sight. The Bible record says: "*And immediately there fell from his eyes as if had been scales; and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized*" (9:18).

We may be sure that the other promise given by Ananias was also fulfilled. Of a certainty, Saul was filled with the Holy Spirit.

It does not say that Paul spoke in tongues when Ananias laid hands on . him; but we know that he did so at a later date. When writing to the Corinthians to correct a misuse of this Gift of Tongues, Paul confessed: "*I thank my God, I speak in tongues more than all of you*" (I Cor 14:18).

In the same chapter he also declared: "*I would like every one of you to speak in tongues...*" (I Cor 14:5 niv); and finally: "*forbid not to speak in tongues*" (I Cor 14:39).

On the basis of the foregoing evidence of biblical experience, we humbly affirm that speaking in tongues is the only consistent scriptural evidence of the Baptism of the Spirit.

We also affirm that there are many other scriptural evidences which should follow this first evidence, without which the experience is incomplete.

This conclusion is not to undermine or invalidate any experience you may have already had — especially if it resulted in the Spirit's power coming into your life in a helpful way. Let me encourage you to "*...hold that fast which you have...*" (Rev 3:11).

Keep your heart open, and keep asking the Lord to give you this wonderful Gift of Tongues, this gift of a prayer language. It will enrich your ministry so much. Remember:

"...how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" (Luke 11:13).

Chapter 2

The Holy Spirit And The Believer

A. THE HOLY SPIRIT HELPS THE BELIEVER

Salvation (being born again) is the first work of the Spirit in our lives. Power for holy living and service is the Spirit's second purpose for being in us.

1. To Bring Us To Salvation

a. He Brings Conviction (John 16:8-11). An important aspect of the Holy Spirit's work is to convict, reprove and convince unconverted people about sin, righteousness and judgment.

Without the Spirit's work of conviction, we would remain ignorant of our sinful and lost condition.

He makes us aware of the sinfulness of sin, of how far short we come of God's standard of righteousness, and of the awful judgment which awaits every sinner.

b. He Produces Conversion And Regeneration. Regeneration means spiritual rebirth, spiritual renovation and restoration.

"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3:5).

"And you hath he made alive who were dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph 2:1).

"It is the Spirit that makes alive" (John 6:63).

c. He Liberates Us From The Power Of Sin And Death, So We Can Be Holy. *"For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (Rom 8:2).*

d. He Gives Us An Inward Assurance Of Salvation. *"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (Rom 8:16).*

"And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth" (I Jn 5:6).

"For there are three that bear witness... The Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one" (I Jn 5:8).

2. To Give Us Power For Holy Living

a. He Guides Us Into Truth. *"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth; for he shall not speak of himself: but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak, and he will show you things to come" (John 16:13).*

b. He Teaches Us All Things. *"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14:26).*

"But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you; but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him" (I Jn 2:27).

c. He Gives Life To Our Physical Bodies. *"But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also give life to your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you" (Rom 8:11).*

The word "mortal" means "bound to die" and refers to our physical bodies. The Spirit imparts life. Therefore the promise of this Scripture is this: When the Spirit dwells within us. He will impart life, strength, health and vigor to our bodies. Living in the Spirit is a health-promoting exercise. It will increase our physical strength and our life-span.

d. He Gives Us Power For Service. *"But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto me..." (Acts 1:8).*

Jesus used the Greek word "dunamis" (translated "power"), from which we derive our word "dynamo." A dynamo is a machine which generates a consistent and continuing supply of power.

Thus the power of the Spirit within us generates power to enable us to be witnesses (martyrs) for Christ. Not only are we enabled to bear witness of Jesus, we actually become witnesses unto Him.

e. He Empowers Our Prayers. *"Praying in the Holy Spirit"* (Jude 20).

"Praying always, with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit" (Eph 6:18).

"In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will" (Rom8:26,27niv).

f. He Inspires Praise And Worship To God. *"We do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God"* (Acts 2:11).

"For we heard them speak with tongues and magnify God" (Acts 10:46).

"We who worship God, by the Spirit of God" (Phil 3:3 niv).

"Be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (Eph 5:18,19).

"God is a spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24).

g. He Produces The Fruit Of The Spirit In The Believer's Life. *"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law"* (Gal 5:22,23).

The Fruit of the Spirit cannot be produced by the natural man—no matter how refined or educated he may be. God's character is seen in us, only when God the Holy Spirit lives in us who believe.

B. RECEIVING THE HOLY SPIRIT

1. You Must Receive Christ As Your Savior

The **first** qualification necessary to be a candidate for the Baptism in the Spirit is that you must have received Jesus Christ as your Savior. If you are a child of God, then you may receive the Gift of the Holy Spirit.

2. You Must Desire The Blessing

The **second** requirement is that you must deeply desire this blessing. Jesus expressed it this way: *"If any man THIRST, let him come unto me and drink"* (John 7:37). Are you thirsty for the water of the Spirit? If you are, then you may come unto Jesus and drink. It is just as simple as that.

Remember that you do not have to earn this blessing. If you did, then it would no longer be the "gift" of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38). You could never earn or merit this wonderful blessing, nor do you have to. It is yours as a free gift.

3. Four Simple Words

I would like to suggest four simple little words which could enable you to receive this precious blessing.

The words are RENOUNCE, RELAX, RECEIVE and RESPOND. Let us look at them briefly together.

a. Renounce. Paul wrote to the converts in the wicked city of Corinth: "*You have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty...*" (2Cor 4:2).

The Greek word *apeipomen*, translated *renounce* means "to disown, separate and depart completely from."

*"But have renounced the **hidden** [concealed, private, inward, secret] things... "*

*"But have renounced the hidden things of **dishonesty** [shame or disgrace]..." "*

In light of the above, it is important to make sure we have fully repented (turned away) from all known sin —especially sin involving witchcraft, ancestor-worship, worship of idols, ouija boards, sorcery, tarot cards, tea leaves, fortune telling (or tellers), charms, amulets and such like.

The Bible says God has given "*...the Holy Spirit... to them that **obey him***" (Acts 5:32). God commands us to renounce and separate completely from the concealed, secret, dishonest, disgraceful things when we ask for His HOLY Spirit.

"Many of the believers who had been practicing black magic confessed their deeds, and brought their incantation books and charms and burned them at a public bonfire" (Acts 19:18,19 tlb). This is the first important step.

Say this prayer to the Lord: "Lord, I renounce [name the following, and other things applicable to your life, **that you have done**] witchcraft, ancestor-worship, worship of idols, ouija boards, sorcery, tarot cards, tea leaves, fortune telling (or tellers), charms, amulets and such like."

b. Relax. So often people become tensed up when it comes to receiving the Spirit. There is no need for that to happen. It will hinder you rather than help you.

First, therefore, let me encourage you to relax. Relax physically, and this will help you relax spiritually and emotionally. Why not sit down somewhere comfortably. The disciples were sitting on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:2). So this is a good scriptural posture for receiving the Spirit. Sit back and relax. You are in good hands — the hands of Jesus. He is the Baptizer with the Holy Spirit.

c. Receive. It would be good, right now, for you to ask Jesus to baptize you in the Spirit. The Bible says: "*...your heavenly Father gives the Holy Spirit to them that ask him*" (Luke 11:13).

Ask simply, quietly and in faith.

Do not begin to beg or plead. You do not have to shout or moan. If the action of the Holy Spirit is compelling you to do so, there is no prohibition against this. But some develop spiritual habits that hinder. Jesus is right with you. He will baptize you in His Spirit if you will relax and let Him. He can hear your prayer.

When you have quietly asked Him to fill you with the Spirit, then in faith you must believe that He has answered your prayer and RECEIVE THE SPIRIT BY FAITH.

Remember that the Greek word translated *spirit* is also the same word for *breath*. Why not just open your mouth, take a deep breath, and breathe in the Holy Spirit?

This is what Jesus referred to as "drinking" of the Spirit. Just as you open your mouth to drink water, you can also open your mouth to drink in the Spirit. Open your mouth and breathe in; and as you do this, believe that the Holy Spirit is coming into your life in a new way.

Do it in faith. *"What things soever you desire, when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you shall have them"* (Mark 11:24). You are doing this by faith.

Remember, it is not feelings. You may not feel any emotional response. This is not an emotional experience. It is a spiritual experience. There may or may not be an emotional accompaniment. If there is, relax and enjoy it. If there is not, then do not worry about it. Emotions are very erratic and unreliable.

The important thing is not what you feel. It is what you believe. Believe that you have received the Spirit. This is the first step. Then, "breathe in" the Holy Spirit

As you do it, begin to give joyful thanks and praise to God for filling you with the Spirit. Let your heart begin to reach out to God in praise, and keep drinking ever more deeply of the Spirit.

d. Respond. Now we come to the fourth step — your response to the Spirit Who is now beginning to fill your whole being.

Having breathed in, you must also speak out. You breathed in the Spirit; now you must speak out praises to God, in faith, for His blessing.

When you do this, do not speak in your own native tongue. Praise God, but believe that the Holy Spirit will enable you to do it in a new language which the Spirit will give you.

The Bible says: *"They all began to speak in other languages as the Spirit gave them the words to say"* (Acts 2:4 weym). Note first: *"They... began to speak..."* THEY were doing the speaking. That is our part. It was their voice, their vocal chords, their lips and mouth that THEY used. Note second: *"the Spirit gave them the words to say."* That is the Spirit's part. When the Spirit does His part, we must RESPOND by doing our part.

Speaking in tongues is a miracle. The words are given to us supernaturally by the Spirit. This does not mean that it is difficult to do. It simply means that you must cooperate with God, and speak what the Spirit gives you to say.

This is well illustrated by the story of Peter walking on the water (Matt 14:29). Jesus called out to Peter: *"Come!"* and then we read: *"And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus."*

When Peter walked on the water he was not consciously doing anything supernatural. He was walking just as naturally as though he were on solid ground. The miracle was not that he was walking. The miracle was that he did not sink!

It is like this when we begin to speak in tongues. Just as Peter used his legs and muscles to walk, we use our tongue and lips in just the same manner that we always do to speak.

The miracle is not in the physical act of speaking. The miracle is in the language that we are given to speak. In other words, it is not *HOW* you speak, but *WHAT* you speak, that is a miracle.

Speaking is a natural act, just as walking is. When you speak the words given in another tongue, the physical part of it is just as natural as any other time you exercise your powers of speech.

The miracle occurs when the Holy Spirit gives you words to speak in a language which you have never learned and possibly never even heard before.

I must emphasize this matter of the ease of speaking in tongues. When children receive this teaching, they do it so easily. But many adults have a problem at this point. They make it hard for themselves. They believe that it is too difficult for them to do. Some become tense instead of nicely relaxed.

Many people are so sincere in their desire that it "should not be themselves, but God." It is you speaking, but the Spirit Who is giving the words. Don't sit like a wooden carving, waiting for God to take over your vocal cords and speak through your lips. Do your part.

Please notice again in Acts 2:4: "*They*" (the disciples) are the subject of the sentence. It was therefore the disciples who were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and **they** (the disciples) who "*began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them the words to say.*" **They** began to speak.

When you begin to speak in tongues, it will be YOU who will initiate it. YOU will speak the words. But the Holy Spirit will give them to you. The Holy Spirit will furnish you with sounds, words, phrases in your mind.

These will sound very strange to you. It is a language which you have never heard before — very probably an angelic or heavenly language which sounds very different from any earthly language that you have ever heard.

As the Spirit gives you these words in your mind, speak them out. Speak them forth boldly. Do not be afraid. Initially you may only have one or two words. You may find yourself repeating them over and over.

Just do that. You're like a baby learning to speak a heavenly language given by your heavenly Father.

Even Isaiah the prophet described this process: "*For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak...*" (Isa 28:11). We may start out stammering, but eventually more words come. We speak better the longer we practice, just like a child.

As you speak them out boldly in faith, the Holy Spirit will increase your vocabulary. The flow of words will increase until rivers begin to flow forth from your innermost being (John 7:38).

Determine, therefore, that when you have breathed in the Holy Spirit, you will follow that by speaking out praise to God.

Determine to do it with your voice, but not with your native language. Expect the Holy Spirit to give you a new tongue at that very moment. Then, by faith, begin to speak forth that new language.

Speak out forcefully whatever the Spirit puts into your mind. You may sense your lips beginning to tremble and feel that your mouth is full of strange sounds. Speak them out loudly. Once you begin to speak, keep it up.

Do not stop. Let it keep flowing. The more it flows, the freer you will become. Do not worry what it sounds like; that is the Holy Spirit's business. He will give you the particular language He desires you to have. Later He may give you other languages — because it is the Gift of Tongues (plural — meaning more than one). As you continue to exercise the Gift of Tongues, you may go from language to language, for there are different kinds of tongues (I Cor 12:10).

Once you have spoken in tongues, you can then exercise this gift whenever you wish. It will depend on your decision and initiative. Paul says: *"What is it then? I WILL pray with the Spirit, and I WILL pray with the understanding also"* (I Cor 14:15).

Whether with the understanding, or with the Spirit, you pray when YOU WILL.

Exercise this ability every day and several times each day. Whenever you do, it will strengthen and bless you, for Paul tells us: *"Those who speak in a tongue build up themselves..."* (I Cor 14:4 rsv). You build yourself up spiritually every time you speak and pray in the new language.

This is one Gift of the Spirit which builds up the one who exercises it. All the other manifestations of the Spirit are for building up (edifying) others. This one is to enable you to *"build up yourself in your most holy faith"* (Jude 20).

C. WHY SPEAK IN TONGUES?

What is the purpose or benefit in speaking in languages which one does not understand?

The following is a brief list of some of the benefits of communing with God in languages given by the Spirit.

1. It Is A Consistent Scriptural Initial Evidence Of The Baptism In The Holy Spirit

"And they all began to speak with tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:4).

"For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God" (Acts 10:46).

"The Holy Spirit came on them, and they spake with tongues, and prophesied" (Acts 19:6).

2. It Is God's Will For Us

God says (through Paul): *"I would that ye all spake with tongues"* (I Cor 14:5). Paul also said: *"I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all"* (I Cor 14:18).

Notice the intimate emphasis: *"I thank MY God..."* Speaking to God in languages of the Spirit increases and strengthens the awareness of one's personal intimate relationship and fellowship with God. Paul thanked God for the:

ABILITY to speak in tongues, for this can only be given by God, through His Spirit.

PRIVILEGE of speaking such sacred and intimate mysteries (I Cor 14:2).

AVAILABILITY of this rich blessing — that any time, anywhere, under any circumstance, one may intimately commune with God. We may pray, sing, give thanks, bless God in the Spirit. Our mind at this time is in neutral (I Cor 14:14); thus I am relaxed, refreshed and edified by this spiritual exercise.

3. It Is A Therapeutic Means Of Cleansing And Release

In Romans 8:26, Paul tells us that one of our human weaknesses is that we do not always know what to pray for as we should.

Sometimes we are conscious that we need help and assistance, but we do not understand what is really wrong nor how to pray about it.

However, the Spirit overcomes this inadequacy for us. He searches our heart, and discovers just where we are and what is amiss. He also knows what is the "mind of the Spirit" —the will of God for us.

He then begins to pray for us "according to the will of God," thus bringing us into harmony with that will. He prays out all the complexes, inhibitions and negative thoughts which have hindered us; and He prays us into the positive, powerful, beneficial purpose of God for our life.

This kind of praying is one of the most powerful means of "renewing the spirit of our mind."

4. It Is A Source Of Personal Edification

"He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifies himself" (I Cor 14:4). It is from the word "edify" that we derive our word, "edifice," or building. To edify, therefore, is to "build up."

Whenever we speak in tongues, though the words may be a mystery to our human intellect, we are building ourselves up spiritually. We grow a little stronger every time we exercise this ministry.

5. It Is A Realm Of Intimate Spiritual Communion With God

"For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries" (I Cor 14:2). The primary purpose of this spiritual exercise of speaking in tongues is not that we speak unto men, but rather that we may speak to God.

Communing with God in this manner, we are freed from the limitations and restrictions of our finite mind. We are not restricted to speak only of those things which we have learned by our intellect.

We are released to speak also of things which we are taught intuitively by the Spirit of God (see 1 Corinthians 2). We commune with God about deep things, which remain a mystery to our finite mind.

This is the depth of communion of which David spoke. *"Deep calleth unto deep"* (Ps 42:7). The depth of our spiritual being communes with the depths of God's being, and vice-versa.

6. It Keeps Us Conscious Of The Holy Spirit Within

Whenever we speak in tongues, we are immediately aware of the Holy Spirit's movement and activity within us. Our intimate awareness of the Spirit within us is increased as we commune with God in those words which the Spirit is speaking through us. We are channels or vehicles which the Spirit uses to convey worship and praise to the Father.

7. It Helps Us To Learn To Trust God More Completely

Developing in the life in the Spirit is a walk of faith. Every expression in tongues is an act of faith. As God begins to bring us from the realm of personal edification to the sphere of Body edification (I Cor 14:6), every new phase is a fresh step of faith.

8. It Is A Release Of Positive Emotion

The Baptism in the Spirit is not an emotional experience; it is a spiritual one. Nevertheless, our emotions inevitably respond to this experience and become involved in it. Our emotions are frequently stirred by the Spirit, and we give expression to them at the Spirit's instigation.

This is not a harmful or negative thing. On the contrary, it is health-giving and beneficial.

Too many Christians seek to completely deny or suppress their emotions, as though there were something evil or sinful about emotional expression. This is not so. We are emotive beings. God made us that way. In order for us to function fully, there must be emotional expression from time to time.

When that expression is induced and encouraged by the Spirit within us, we can be sure that this is the healthiest and finest emotional expression possible. It will cleanse and release us. It will strengthen and edify. Do not be afraid of it. Give vent to such expressions. You will be healthier and happier for the exercise.

9. It Is An Opportunity To "Give Thanks" To God Acceptably

Have you ever felt unable to adequately express your thanks and appreciation to God? Do your own words seem too weak to express the reservoir of thanks you feel within? Then here is a fulfilling way to do it.

Paul says we can "*give thanks well*" (I Cor 14:17) by speaking our thanks to God by the Spirit, in the language He gives. Giving of thanks in this way, using the Gift of Tongues, is superior to anything that our human mind could think or say. It breaks through our limitations, and ministers to God in the Spirit (John 4:24).

10. It Enables One To Pray "In The Spirit"

"What is it then? I will pray with the Spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also" (I Cor 14:5).

"But the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God" (Rom 8:26,27).

"But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit" (Jude 20).

11. It Is A Source Of Rest And Refreshing

*"For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people. To whom he said. **This is the rest** wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and **this is the refreshing**"* (Isa 28:11,12).

Communing with God in tongues is a most relaxing and refreshing experience. The body and mind can relax completely. We do not have to think what to say next or how to say it. The Spirit flows through us in perfect communion with the Father, and we receive the benefit of that beautiful communion. It is a tonic for spirit, soul and body.

12. It Is A Ministry Of Praise And Worship To God

"we do hear them speak in our tongues THE WONDERFUL WORKS OF GOD" (Acts 2:11).

"For they heard them speak with tongues, AND MAGNIFY GOD" (Acts 10:46).

"Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, [songs which the Spirit gives], singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (Eph 5:19).

Very often, when we speak in tongues, the Spirit is worshipping, praising and eulogizing God. The Holy Spirit is magnifying the wonderful works of God through us. What a privilege and joy that He would use our lips to speak forth such high praise to God!

13. It Includes Singing In The Spirit

"I will sing with the Spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also" (I Cor 14:15).

"... spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (Eph 5:19; see also Colossians 3:16).

14. It Is A Scriptural Means Of Maintaining The Fullness Of The Spirit

"But ever be filled with the Spirit (wms); Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs" (Eph 5:18,19). Ministering to God in other tongues is a valid means of keeping filled with the Spirit. Therefore we ought to do this every day, and many times each day.

15. With Interpretation, It Is A Means Of Edifying Others

"Greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the Church may receive edifying" (I Cor 14:5).

Our personal, devotional tongue or prayer language is edifying to the one who exercises it. He alone is built up by the use thereof. However, this tongue may be a blessing to others also if it is interpreted for them. So the one who speaks in tongues should pray also that he may interpret, that other believers may receive edification too (I Cor 14:12,13).

16. It Is A Key To Bringing In The Mind Of Christ Over Our Own Mind

(Jas 1:26,3:1a)

James teaches that the tongue is the "control center" of a man. It is like a ship's rudder, and the bridle in a horse's mouth (Jas 1:26, 3:1-18). When we offer our control center to the Holy Spirit, He begins to bring our conversation under Christ's control.

Our surrender to the Holy Spirit in the Gift of Tongues is a release of the sweet water of life. God's words. By regular daily use of this gift, we will find strength to resist negative and critical talk — what James calls *"bitter water"* (Jas 3:11).

It is a means of producing Christ's mind in us, so that we speak only those things that are useful to build up ourselves and our hearers (Eph 4:29). Speaking in tongues purifies and renews our mind, which is the source of our conversation and way of life.

Chapter 3

Gifts Of The Holy Spirit

A. THE GIFTS DESCRIBED

The great spiritual revival which is sweeping the world at this time has often been called the "Charismatic Revival."

This phrase has been employed to describe an extremely important aspect of this revival. The Gifts (Greek = charisms) of the Spirit are being restored to the Church. These produce the supernatural manifestations which were so powerfully obvious in the New Testament Church.

These manifestations, or Gifts of the Spirit, have been noticeably absent from the Church for many centuries. In the past fifty years, God has been restoring these, and His restoration program has been accelerated greatly in the last 20 years.

The Charismatic Renewal has penetrated every part of the Christian Church, bringing new life and power to the Body of Christ. The restoration of these blessings creates a great need for teaching on these important subjects.

Paul told the church at Corinth: "*Concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant*" (I Cor 12:1). God certainly does not want believers today to be ignorant either.

1. Categories Of Gifts

There are many Charismatic gifts mentioned in the Bible. The main areas of reference are: Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:8-10,28-30; Ephesians 4:11.

For the purpose of this study, we will limit ourselves to a consideration of the nine manifestations listed in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10. To simplify our study of them, we will classify them in three categories:

a. Gifts Of Speech

- 1) Tongues
- 2) Interpretation Of Tongues
- 3) Prophecy

b. Gifts Of Revelation

- 1) A Word Of Wisdom
- 2) A Word Of Knowledge
- 3) Discerning Of Spirits

c. Gifts Of Ability

- 1) Gift Of Faith
- 2) Gifts Of Healings
- 3) Working Of Miracles

2. Whom May The Spirit Use In The Operation Of Such Gifts?

a. Any Member Of The Body may be used (I Cor 12:7,11; 14:26,31). No member should come behind in any gift (I Cor 1:7).

b. We Should Be Filled With The Spirit (Eph 5:18).

c. We Must Be Desirous Of Being Used in this way (I Cor 12:31).

d. We Should Not Be Ignorant concerning the operation of the gifts (I Cor 12:1).

e. We Must Be Desirous Of Spiritual Gifts (I Cor 14:1-6).

f. We Should Be Motivated By Genuine Love for the Body (I Cor 13), and a pure desire to edify the Body (I Cor 14:12).

g. We Should Seek To Excel in the operation of the Gifts (I Cor 14:12).

3. The Gift Of Tongues (I Cor 12:10)

a. Two functions. This manifestation of the Spirit has two functions:

Firstly, as "devotional tongues," the purpose of which is to edify the person using it.

Secondly, as the Gift of Tongues which, used in conjunction with the companion Gift of Interpretation of Tongues, is for the edifying of the whole Church, as well as the individual's understanding.

b. Guidelines For The Use Of Tongues In A Public Assembly:

1) Its use should be motivated by love (I Cor 13:1).

2) It should be accompanied by interpretation (I Cor 14:5,13,28).

3) It should be confined to three utterances from one individual in any large gathering (I Cor 14:27).

Any believer who has ever spoken in tongues is capable of edifying the Church through speaking forth in tongues. You should therefore be prepared to do so at any time.

Seek to be yielded to the Spirit. Be relaxed in your mind and be open to the Holy Spirit. Develop a sensitivity to what the Spirit is seeking to do or say in any particular service.

When the Holy Spirit wants to bring a tongue utterance through you, there will generally be an inner awareness of this for some time before you actually speak.

This is often a gentle stirring in your spirit, a growing excitement and anticipation. This develops into a deep awareness that the Spirit is going to give you words to speak forth in the meeting, and that this utterance is within you.

You do NOT have to speak out immediately. The spirit within the prophet is subject to (the control of) the prophet (I Cor 14:32). You can wait quietly for the right moment to speak. The Holy Spirit will prompt you clearly at that time. He will not interrupt what is already happening in the service. He will never cause confusion, for He is not the author of confusion (I Cor 14:33).

Remain calm and relaxed; and when the Spirit prompts you, speak in a normal but clearly audible voice. You do not have to shout or bellow. You can speak in a normal voice, at a measured pace, seeking all the time to quietly flow with the Spirit Who is giving you the words to say.

When the message is complete, you must wait upon God for the interpretation. Pray that you may interpret (I Cor 14:13).

Occasionally, some other believer will be given the interpretation. But when this does not happen, then the one who has spoken in tongues must remain quiet and not speak further if no one is given the interpretation (I Cor 14:1-33).

4. The Interpretation Of Tongues (I Cor 12:10)

This is the companion gift to that of Tongues, and is always used in conjunction with that gift. It is the supernatural enablement, by the Holy Spirit, to interpret tongues into the known language of the congregation.

It is NOT the gift of translation. The interpreter does not understand the tongue employed in the utterance which was given.

The interpretation is just as supernatural as was the utterance. However, by this Gift of the Spirit, we are enabled to give the hearing of what was spoken in the unknown tongue. In this way, the congregation may understand and be edified by it. They may receive it and be edified.

a. Who May Use This Gift? The interpretation of tongues is given "*as the Spirit wills*" (I Cor 12:11). Any Spirit-filled believer may be chosen and anointed by the Spirit to manifest this gift. All who speak in tongues are clearly told: "*Let him who speaks in a tongue, pray that he may interpret*" (1 Cor 14:13). Here again, we must seek to develop a sensitivity to the Holy Spirit.

While you are worshipping God in a gathering of believers, keep your mind and spirit open to the Holy Spirit. Frequently, you will sense beforehand that someone is going to speak in tongues and that God is giving you the interpretation of it.

When that person speaks in tongues, wait quietly until it is concluded. When you begin to speak, you may only have the first sentence of the interpretation and a brief idea of what is to follow. Like all other Gifts of the Spirit, this one operates by faith too.

As you commence to give forth what the Spirit is giving you, speak in a normal, clear, audible voice. Take care not to speak "*beyond the proportion of your faith*" (Rom 12:6).

Avoid letting any personal thoughts, feelings or ideas creep into the interpretation. Let your own thoughts be in neutral, and your mind be a clear channel for the Holy Spirit to flow through.

When the interpretation is complete, and you sense that the Spirit has finished all He wishes to say, then stop! Do not then seek to interpret the interpretation. In other words, do not begin to tell the people what you "think" the interpretation means. Leave that to the people to allow the Holy Spirit to apply the exhortation or comfort given to themselves.

Having delivered the interpretation, keep quiet while the utterance is judged by those who sit by. If there are any believers present who are regularly used in the vocal gifts, they should try to evaluate whether the words are truly from God (I Cor 14:29).

The standard by which one may judge is similar to that which we would use for judging prophecy, which is the next manifestation that we will consider.

5. The Gift Of Prophecy (ICor 12:10)

Simply translated, the word prophesy means "to utter inspired words." According to 1 Corinthians 14:31, all believers may exercise this gift at some time, as the Spirit wills. Everyone may prophesy, one by one, and not more than three times in any one gathering where many have the gift and are waiting to exercise it (ICor 14:29-33).

a. Its Purpose. The purpose of such prophetic utterance is to:

- 1) **To Edify.** This means to build up, strengthen the believers.
- 2) **To Exhort.** Stir up the believers. Confront and challenge them.
- 3) **To Comfort.** To speak encouragingly, words of comfort.

Oftentimes a prophecy may include all three of these elements.

b. Three Misunderstandings About Prophecy:

1) **It Should Not Be Confused With Preaching.** Many today insist that the Gift of Prophecy is the ability to preach well. However, preaching and teaching are usually the result of prayerful meditation in the Word of God.

By careful preparation of his mind and spirit, a preacher can minister understanding to the people.

In contrast, the Gift of Prophecy is not the result of careful study. It is usually an unpremeditated, spontaneous speaking forth by the Spirit.

2) **The Gift Of Prophecy Is Not For Foretelling The Future.** This gift is for "forth-telling" rather than foretelling. Its purpose is for edification (building up), exhortation (stirring up) and comfort (cheering up), and not for seeking to predict future events (see I Corinthians 14:3).

Whenever there is an element of prediction within a prophecy it is usually because there is another gift (Word of Knowledge or Wisdom), working along with it.

3) **This Gift Is Not For Personal Guidance.** If we are in need of personal guidance, we should ask Jesus Himself for it (Jas 1:5).

We may also seek such guidance in the pages of God's Word, the Bible. If a prophetic utterance comes to us with instructions for the future, it should only be to confirm what God has already shown us personally.

c. Scriptural Teaching On The Gift Of Prophecy:

1) **Prophecy Is For Speaking Supernaturally To Men (I Cor 14:3).** It conveys the mind of the Lord to the Church. The prophet is speaking on behalf of God, to the believers for their edification, exhortation and comfort.

2) **Prophecy Requires No Interpretation.** The Gift of Tongues requires an interpreter, but prophecy does not.

3) **Prophecy Convinces The Unlearned (I Cor 14:15, 16).** Through the operation of the Gift of Prophecy, the unbeliever will:

- * Be convinced of all.
- * Be judged of all.
- * The secrets of his heart will be made manifest.
- * Fall before God in humility.
- * Acknowledge that God is truly amongst you.
- * Worship God.

4) **Prophecy Functions So That Believers May Learn (I Cor 14:31).** This does not refer to the teaching which normally comes from the exposition of the Word of God through the ministry of a teacher. Rather, it is learning of spiritual truths

through the anointing of the Spirit. Such teachings should be tested by the written Word of God before being digested.

This verse also means that those newly come to faith in Christ may learn how to use the Gift of Prophecy. There should be learners' meetings — just as there were schools of the prophets" in the Old Testament.

5) Everyone Should Desire And Covet This Gift (I Cor 14:1, 39). By such means we may be used of God to the encouragement of His people.

6) The Person Operating The Gift Is Responsible For Its Use Or Abuse (I Cor 14:32). Prophecy is NOT an uncontrolled utterance. Nor is the prophet under any kind of trance or mind-control. He is neither doing anything nor saying anything against his will. The Gift of Prophecy is subject to the prophet. It is the prophet who is speaking, on behalf of God; and the prophet has control, at all times, of all that he or she is saying.

7) Because Those Who Prophesy Can Make Mistakes, Prophecy Must Be Judged (I Cor 14:29; note Deut 18:20-22; Jer 14:14,15; 23:30). See Section D2 for more on this important teaching.

8) Guidelines For Judging A Prophecy:

a) It Should Never Contradict The Written Word Of God.

Therefore every prophetic utterance should be "tested" by the Word of God. God would never tell you, by prophecy, to do anything which His Word forbids.

b) It Should Always Exalt Jesus Christ, And Never Denigrate Him.

c) It Should Edify, Exhort And Comfort The Believers. It should never leave them confused, distressed, uncertain.

d) It Should "Witness" With The Majority Of Believers Present — especially the more mature ones, who are themselves frequently used in the operation of vocal gifts.

e) It Should Not Break The Spirit Of The Meeting, Though It May Change The Course Of It.

f) It Should Come To Pass, If There Is A Predictive Aspect

g) It Should Pass The "Fruit Test" (Matt 7:16). Speaking of false prophets, Jesus declared: "Ye shall know them by their fruit. "We should guard the flock from any so-called prophecy coming from one whose life and practice are a reproach to the cause of Christ.

9) How To Prophecy. Be relaxed. Do not be under a strain.

Quietly wait upon the Lord in your spirit. Keep your mind open to His voice. When you feel the prompting of the Spirit within your spirit, commit yourself to God afresh as a channel for Him to flow through. Remember that the Gift operates by faith.

Begin to speak out whatever God gives you. Keep it simple. While you are speaking, be waiting upon Him quietly for the remainder of the message. Do not prophesy beyond the proportion of your faith (Rom 12:6). Discern when the Spirit has finished speaking, and stop!

6. A Word Of Knowledge (I Cor 12:8)

DEFINITION: A Word of Knowledge is a fragment or small item of God's knowledge, given to a person by the Holy Spirit.

It gives us certain facts and information through the supernatural revelation of the Holy Spirit. This information was previously unknown to the person, and the knowledge could not be gained by any natural means. It is supernaturally imparted.

a. Examples From Scripture:

1) In The Ministry Of Jesus. Jesus knew certain facts about Nathaniel before He ever met him (John 1:47-50). Jesus knew many facts about the woman of Samaria, although He had never previously seen her (John 4:18-20).

She was amazed by the accuracy of His knowledge concerning her past and present life. The exercise of this Word of Knowledge eventually brought about a great revival.

2) In The Early Church. Ananias received specific information in great detail about Saul, whom he had never met before. He knew exactly the street and house in which Saul was staying. He knew that Saul was presently praying, and that when he, Ananias, laid hands upon him, he would receive his sight (Acts 9:10-20).

3) In The Old Testament. In 2 Samuel 12:1-14, God revealed to Nathan certain facts and details regarding David's transgression.

b. Distinction. A Word of Knowledge is distinct from human knowledge gained by natural means.

A Word of Knowledge cannot be gained by intellectual learning. It cannot be gained by studying books or pursuing an academic course of study in college or university. Nor is it the ability to study or understand or interpret the Bible.

c. Its Employment In Scripture

1) To Uncover Sin (2Sam 12:1-10; Acts 5:1-11).

2) To Bring People To God (John 1:47-50; 4:18-20).

3) To Give Guidance And Direction (Acts 9:11).

4) To Minister Encouragement In Periods Of Despondency (I Ki 19:9-18).

5) To Impart Knowledge Of Future Events (Acts 11:27,28).

6) To Reveal Hidden Things (I Sam 10:22).

d. The Operation Of This Gift

1) It is supernatural in character — not obtained by logic or deduction, reasoning, etc., nor by the natural senses, but by supernatural revelation through the Holy Spirit.

2) It operates by faith. The person receiving the revelation does so by faith.

3) The revelation is received in one's spirit — not in the intellect or the emotions.

4) It is not essentially a vocal gift. It may be received quietly within the person's spirit or audibly on occasion (Acts 9:11).

5) **It may become vocal when shared with others** (John 4:4-7; 18).

6) **Any Spirit-filled Christian who is willing to hear God's voice may experience this gift.**

7) **It is an invaluable asset in the ministry of counseling.**

8) **Obedient action and response is essential** to the continuing function of this gift in one's ministry.

9) **Frequently manifested in conjunction with the Word of Wisdom.**

This is the divinely imparted wisdom to know what to do about a Word of Knowledge and how to apply it correctly and wisely.

7. A Word Of Wisdom (I Cor 12:8)

This gift stands at the head of the list in terms of its importance. It enables us to speak and act with divine wisdom, and thus ensures the correct use and application of other gifts.

When the Word of Wisdom is absent, the other gifts can be used wrongly, which causes much confusion.

a. Definition. The Word of Wisdom is a fragment of divine wisdom supernaturally imparted by the Holy Spirit. It supplies one with the immediate wisdom to know what to say or do in a given situation.

God frequently gives it together with the Word of Knowledge, so that believers can know how to apply that Word of Knowledge correctly. God revealed to Ananias the whereabouts and condition of Saul through a Word of Knowledge. He also showed him, by the Word of Wisdom, what he should do in this difficult situation.

Note: *It is a word (logos) of wisdom, and not the gift of wisdom.*

b. Illustration. A man gets into legal difficulties and consults his lawyer. The lawyer does not give his client all the wisdom and knowledge he has. He extracts the word, or portion, of his knowledge that applies to his client's needs, and imparts that word. Likewise, God (Who knows all things) extracts, from His infinite store of wisdom, the particular portion of wisdom needed for one of His children. He sends this by the Spirit.

c. Distinction

THE WORD OF WISDOM

1) **Is not natural wisdom.**

2) **Is not the wisdom gained from academic achievement.**

3) **Is not wisdom gained from experience.**

4) **Is not even the wisdom to understand the Bible.**

5) **Is supernatural in character.**

6) **Is given as the Holy Spirit wills** (1 Cor 12:11).

7) **Is given for a specific need or situation.**

8) **Is not the gift of wisdom, but the word of wisdom.**

d. Some Biblical Examples

1) **Luke 4:1-13.** Jesus, tempted in the wilderness. The replies which Jesus gave to Satan were words of wisdom imparted by the Holy Spirit.

2) **Luke 20:22-26.** The Scribes tried to trap Jesus; but the Word of Wisdom, given by the Spirit, confounded them all.

3) **John 8:3-11.** Again the Scribes and Pharisees sought to trap Jesus, but His wise words and handling of the situation confounded His adversaries.

4) **Acts 6:1-5.** Giving wisdom in church administration.

5) **Acts 15:28.** Solving a church crisis.

6) **Acts 27:23-24.** Gave Paul control of the situation, resulting in the salvation of many lives.

e. Notice. The Word of Wisdom is promised to all Christ's disciples. *"Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what you shall answer. For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to contradict or resist"* (Luke 21:14,15).

f. Observation. The Word of Wisdom is not essentially a vocal gift, but rather a gift of revelation. It is received quietly within one's mind or spirit. It is often given when counseling, preaching or prophesying, or when a command of God is given, so that we know how to respond to the command.

8. Discerning Of Spirits (I Cor 12:10)

Discerning of Spirits is a more important subject than we generally realize. If this spiritual gift were used more frequently when casting out demons, many problems we face would be minimized.

Discerning of Spirits is the third of the *revelation gifts* (the Word of Wisdom and the Word of Knowledge are the other two). It is imparted by the Holy Spirit so that we can see into the spiritual realm to distinguish between the spirit of Satan (evil spirits), the Spirit of God and the human spirit. By this gift, we can discern the origin of certain actions, teachings, circumstances, etc., that have been inspired by spirit beings.

This gift is more limited than the other two revelation gifts. The revelation given in this instance is limited to the origin of the behavior in question. Nonetheless, Discerning of Spirits is just as supernatural in its operation as are any of the other gifts. It supplies us with needed insights available in no other way.

a. The Function Of The Gift. The Gift of Discerning of Spirits gives one a supernatural understanding of the nature and activity of spirits. It enables one to distinguish between the divine, satanic and human origin of spiritual activity, and reveals the nature of the spirits themselves.

It is easy to confuse the works of the spirit of Satan with those of the Spirit of God: Satan always tries to counterfeit the works of the Holy Spirit. Satan is known as the deceiver, the father of lies, and the serpent. All these titles signify the subtle, crafty deceptiveness which he uses to bring about evil whenever he can.

Many times, his counterfeit looks so much like the real thing that we could be deceived. If someone is present who functions with the supernatural Gift of Discerning of Spirits, they will know that the work is of Satan and not of the Holy Spirit.

If demon activity were always so obviously reeking with evil and wicked intent as we tend to imagine, there would be no use for this Gift of the Spirit.

In the account of the girl with the spirit of divination in Acts 16, Paul challenged the spirit which might easily have deceived other servants of God.

The girl gave a perfectly true statement when she said:

"These men are servants of the most high God, who show to you the way of salvation," but the spirit speaking was an evil spirit.

Why would an evil spirit advertise the apostles in that fashion? Because it was of no credit or help to the gospel or its ministers to have such a person following them and no doubt causing many to think she was one of them.

b. The Operation And Need For The Gift Today. The Gift of Discerning of Spirits is experiencing its own revival in much of the-world today. It can be seen in action in the ministry of many men of God in the present renewal.

It is absolutely essential that this gift operate if the Church is going to accomplish her full mission and destroy the works of the devil.

There are as many demons in the world today as there were when Jesus walked the earth and in the days of the early Church. Their purpose is still as avowedly evil.

This supernatural gift is especially necessary for missionaries and workers in lands where spiritism, satanism and occultism abound.

c. How The Gift Of Discerning Of Spirits Operates. The first and most obvious function of this gift is to reveal the presence of evil spirits in the life of people or churches. However, it also functions to evaluate the source of a prophetic message, a particular teaching, or some supernatural manifestation. The person functioning with this gift will be able to tell whether the source of the message or act is demonic, divine or merely human.

If the source is discerned to be demonic, the person functioning in this gift will also usually be able to reveal:

1) The Nature Of The Demon. This is what his work is, whether lying, causing infirmity (such as cancer, blindness, dumbness, etc.), unclean behavior and the like.

2) The Name Of The Demon. This is usually revealed with the nature of the demon, although it isn't at all uncommon to reveal a demon's proper name.

3) The Number Of Demons. This happened in the case of Legion (Mark 5:1-9) and the seven devils which Jesus cast out of Mary Magdalene (Luke 8:2). It is not at all uncommon for a person to be demonized by more than one spirit at a time. This is part of the information revealed by the Gift of Discerning of Spirits.

4) The Strength Of Particular Demons. Often during an encounter with an evil spirit, the one who functions with the Gift of Discerning of Spirits will know by revelation which of several demons is strongest and has greatest authority.

5) Getting Information. Often, demons will give much information verbally *themselves* to one they know has supernaturally discerned their presence and who has power to cast them out.

However, since demons can be counted on to lie, it is a good idea to treat the information they give with suspicion, and count on insights and understanding supernaturally given by the Holy Spirit.

d. Discerning Of Spirits Doesn't Always Give One The Faith To Expel

Demons. Although the Gift of Discerning of Spirits is essential for effective deliverance, it is not sufficient by itself. It must work in concert with the Gifts of Faith and Miracles. It is those people who function with those gifts that usually have the greatest success in casting out demons.

9. The Gift Of Faith (I Cor 12:9)

Faith often deals with the future, the unseen and things not physically possible. The Gift of Faith is the special endowment given to someone God is calling upon to take impossible action-steps because of what God has spoken to them.

God supernaturally empties us of any doubt, and fills us with special faith that enables us to accomplish God's purpose despite every contrary and contradictory circumstance of life.

The Gift of Faith is a special dispensation of faith which God grants a Spirit-filled believer when the task He has given that believer requires more than ordinary or *general* faith.

The Gift of Faith has a function which is vastly superior to that of *general* faith. General faith grows from the original seed of saving faith which God has planted in our hearts (see Romans 12:3). The degree of general faith varies with the stage of development of the believer ("*little faith*," "*great faith*," etc.; see Matthew 14:29-31 and Luke 7:2-9, for example).

General faith grows as a result of feeding on the Word, being exercised through the circumstances of life, and the like. It can develop to a very high degree. However, the Gift of Faith has a superior function to even the highest degree of general faith.

Some translators refer to the Gift of Faith as "special faith." This indicates a faith bestowed by the Holy Spirit to meet our need in special and extenuating circumstances. This suggests further that the Gift of Faith is not permanently resident in any believer, but rather that each manifestation is a *separate* Gift of Faith.

An episode in Elijah's life illustrates this. He declares to King Ahab that there will be no rain until he speaks the word, and that it will rain again only at his word (1 Ki 17:1). His Gift of Faith produced the miraculous fulfillment of that prophecy.

Contrariwise, this extraordinary faith was lacking when Elijah sat under the juniper tree, fearful, discouraged and wanting to die. The *Gift* of Faith was not needed at that time (1 Ki 19:4). He had not lost his general faith in God or His Word. His own faith was strengthened when God told him He had 7,000 other faithful followers in Israel.

God wants you to know that you can minister with confidence, knowing that when special demands are made upon you, He will supernaturally give you special faith to enable you to fulfill His purposes.

a. How Does The Gift Of Faith Work? The Gift of Faith seems to operate in a rather passive manner, but this is not always so. Daniel's protection from the lions is a passive instance of the Gift of Faith.

Contrast this with Samson's slaying of the lion, which is an example of the Working of Miracles. The Gift of Working of Miracles involves man's active involvement in the manifestation of the power of God. This impression that the Gift of Faith functions passively is because it often works in cooperation with more dramatic gifts (e.g., the Working of Miracles, the Gifts of Healings, etc.).

The Gift of Faith also operates through the speaking of words of command and words of faith: "*I believed, therefore have I spoken*" (2Cor 4:13). Those words a man of God speaks when inspired by the Spirit are backed by God *as His own word*.

The results are not always immediate, but they are sure. And this gift can function in many ways (e.g., for blessing, for cursing, for creating, for destroying, etc.).

There are some notable examples of the Gift of Faith working through the spoken word:

1) Joshua Commands The Sun And The Moon To Stand Still

(Josh 10:12-14).

2) Elijah Controls The Weather By His Word. "*There shall not be dew nor rain these years but according to my word... and it rained not upon the earth for the space of three years and six months*" (I Ki 17:1; Jas 5:17).

3) Paul Silences Elymas: "*You shall be blind, not seeing the sun for a season*" (Acts 13:8-11).

4) Peter Speaks God's Judgments On Ananias And Sapphira (Acts 5).

The Scriptures teach the principle of the Word of Faith: "*...he shall have whatsoever he saith...*" in relation to the injunction, "*have faith in God*" (Mark 11:22-23) and "*Thou shall decree a thing, and it shall be established unto thee*" (Job 22:28).

10. Gifts Of Healings (I Cor 12:9)

The three references to this gift in 1 Corinthians 12 are in verses 9, 28 and 30. In each of these, the original reading is *charismata iamaton*. Both words are plural, making the correct translation of this phrase: "*Gifts of Healings.*"

Gifts of Healings operate supernaturally to heal diseases and infirmities without natural means of any sort. It is the power of the Holy Spirit which comes upon a person's body, dissolving their disease and driving out their pains to heal them.

The use of the plural nouns here illustrates that there are many Gifts of Healings for different diseases. Some with a Gift of Healing may have great success with blindness; others may have success with deafness or cancer, etc.

Jesus will deliver from every sickness, weakness, plague, deformity and affliction. There is a great variety of the manifestations of this gift (I Cor 12:4-7).

The exercise of the Gifts of Healings does not give the gifted an ability to heal all the sick all the time. Some have misunderstood this, and have asked why we do not go into hospitals and heal all that are sick.

Even Jesus did not do this. He went only once to a place where many lay sick and infirm. He went to the pool of Bethesda where there were multitudes of sick people; yet even there He chose only one from all of them and healed him (John 5:1-9).

Many times we read of great crowds of sick folk who came to Jesus, and we are told He "healed them all. " An important principle of divine healing is that the person must usually **come** to Jesus as an exercise of faith and cooperation.

a. The Purpose Of Gifts Of Healings

1) To Deliver The Sick And Suffering and to destroy the works of the devil in human bodies (I Jn 3:8; Acts 10:38; and Luke 13:16).

2) To Prove Christ's Claim To Be The Son Of God (John 10:36-38).

3) To Confirm The Word (Mark 16:17-20; Acts 4:29, 30, 33).

4) To Attract People To The Sound Of The Gospel (Matt 4:23,25).

5) To Bring Glory To God (Mark 2:12; Luke 13:13, 18:43; John 9:2,3).

The Holy Spirit gives Gifts of Healings to the servant of God to pass on to whomever the Lord desires to heal for His own purpose.

Like all other gifts, the Gifts of Healings not only have to be *given*, but also must be *received*. Just as there is a principle of faith which regards how to minister these gifts, there is also a principle which deals with how to receive them.

Hezekiah had difficulty receiving the Gift of Healing which God sent him. His faith had to be built up in a special way by the miracle recorded in 2 Kings 20:8-11 (see also 2 Kings 5:10-14).

Naaman had difficulty receiving the Gift of Healing which God had sent him through Elisha.

Healing often requires a double act of faith: faith to receive and faith to administer the Gift of Healing.

Although there are exceptions to this rule, it is always God's desire to heal. However, sometimes the normal channels through which His healing virtue would flow are not working too well. This may require that God send a special gift of healing.

Sometimes God communicates Gifts of Healings through the *normal* healing channels (e.g., laying on of hands — Mark 16:18). At other times extraordinary means are used, according to His will (e.g., Peter's shadow — Acts 5:15).

11. Working Of Miracles (I Cor 12:10)

A miracle happens when God intervenes in the ordinary course of nature. The Gift of the Working of Miracles comes when God endues us with power by the Holy Spirit to do something completely outside of the range of human ability.

He gives it to us at a specific time for a special purpose.

All the Gifts of the Spirit are miraculous, but the use of the word *miracle* in this instance refers to *acts of power*.

a. Miracles Give Undeniable Proof Of The Resurrection. If Jesus were not alive. His Name would have no power to heal the sick and work miracles (Acts 4:33).

Peter convinced the unbelieving Jews of the resurrection of Jesus Christ and their need of repentance on the strength of the fact that Jesus' Name still had power to heal the sick and work miracles.

b. The Working Of Miracles In Jesus' Name Accomplished The Following:

1) Gave Boldness. It gave boldness to the believers to preach Christ (Acts 4:29, 30). People recognized that they had been with Jesus — the miracle worker (Acts 4:13).

2) Encouraged Prayer. It made believers pray to have more of God (Acts 4:29-31).

3) Convinced Of Sin. It convinced and convicted men of their sins (Acts 5:28, 33).

4) Converted Five Thousand. Five thousand were converted in one day through one miracle (Acts 4:4, 5:14).

5) Glorified God. All men glorified God for what was done (Acts 4:21).

6) Spread The Gospel. It spread the gospel quickly (Acts 5:14-16).

Before Jesus started to work miracles, no one followed Him anywhere. He must have preached often in the synagogue, for Luke 4:16 says it was His custom.

But when the miracles in Luke 4:33-35 took place, *"His fame went out into every place of the country roundabout"* (Luke 4:37). From then on, the multitudes pressed in upon Him to hear His words and to see His miracles: *"A great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles which he did on them which were diseased"* (John. 6:2).

c. Everywhere The Disciples Preached, Healed The Sick, Cast Out Demons And Worked Miracles, Multitudes Turned To Christ:

1) In Samaria. Samaria gave heed to Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did (Acts 8:6).

2) In Saron and Lydda. All the inhabitants of Saron and Lydda turned to the Lord when Peter told Aeneas: *"Jesus Christ maketh thee whole; arise and make thy bed. And he arose immediately"* (Acts 9:34,35).

3) In Joppa. Many people in Joppa believed when Peter raised Dorcas from the dead (Acts 9:42).

4) In Lystra. The people at Lystra thought the gods had come down to them when they saw the crippled man walk and leap at Paul's word (Acts 14:8-18).

"And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people... and believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.

"Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets and laid them on beds and couches that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them.

"There came also a multitude out of the cities round about Jerusalem, bringing sick folk and them that were vexed with unclean spirits, and they were healed every one" (Acts 5:12-16).

5) The Book of Acts. The Book of Acts closes with a profusion of miracles (Acts 28:8,9). When the people saw Publius' father healed, they believed that if God would heal one, then He was able and willing to heal *everyone* that had need. When people think and believe right about God, then they get from Him what He wants so much to give them.

d. Miracles In The Lives Of Believers. The Working of Miracles is an enabling of the Holy Spirit. It gives the believer the ability to work a miracle. This is in contrast to God working miracles in the life of a believer. Thus many who have never received the Gift of Working of Miracles have experienced astounding miracles which God has wrought on their behalf.

1) **Deliverance.** Miracles of deliverance such as the apostles' in Acts 5:17-20 and Peter's in Acts 12:1-10. Also Paul and Silas in Acts 16:15-30.

2) **Transportation.** Miracles of transportation (Acts 8:39): *"The Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more."*

These, and many other instances, are miracles performed by God in the lives of believers, sometimes even without the cooperation of the believer. These are not, therefore, instances where the Gift of Working of Miracles was operating. In contrast now are three instances where this gift was in operation.

e. Miracles Worked By Believers

1) **Acts 19:11.** "And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul.

2) **Acts 9:40.** Peter raised Dorcas from the dead.

3) **Acts 20:9-12.** Paul restored Eutychus to life.

f. Practical Operation Of The Gift

1) **The Anointing Of The Holy Spirit** to create special confidence and authority.

2) **A Word Of Faith** and authority. Elijah said that the God Who answered by fire should be Israel's Lord. The fire which came down was an example of the Working of Miracles (see 1 Kings 18:21-39).

3) **A Bold Act Of Faith.**

SECTION D2

LEARN TO JUDGE PROPHECY

By R. Edward Miller, Argentina

Chapter 1

The Biblical View

I have found an increasing interest in the wonderful and powerful operation of one of the Gifts of the Spirit: the Gift of Prophecy —that ecstatic utterance of the Spirit through the mind and lips of a man or woman. I feel that a brief 'question and answer' study would be beneficial and timely.

A. IS PROPHECY ALWAYS PERFECT?

1 Corinthians 13:9, 10 teaches: *"For we know in part, and we prophesy in part."* The Word teaches that prophecy is in an imperfect state and is *"in part."*

1 Thessalonians 5:20,21 says: *"Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; holdfast that which is good."* To despise not prophesyings is a direct word of command. But the words that follow, *"Hold fast that which is good,"* clearly imply that there will be some which will not be good, and is therefore not to be held fast.

We are not to despise the gift nor its operations; yet we are to recognize the imperfect channels through which it comes.

Prophecy, therefore, must be carefully proved and judged before it is accepted as an accurate and true word from the Spirit of God.

B. WHAT ARE SAFE REALMS OF PROPHECY?

1 Corinthians 14:3 states: *"He that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort."* These are the three usual realms of prophecy in which the learner may practice his gift with all humility and without fear, yet in holy reverence: to edification, exhortation and comfort.

1 Corinthians 14:31 says: *"For ye all may prophesy one by one, that all may learn..."* Obviously there is something to learn. It stands to reason that when one is learning, he will inevitably make some mistakes. These mistakes need not be stumbling-blocks to anyone who, in humility and sincerity, desires to follow the Lord.

The learner should remain within the learning realms of:

1. Edification

(the building up of the hearer in faith and love and the Holy Spirit);

2. Exhortation

(the urging of the hearer to press toward the mark with greater love and spiritual activity);

3. Comfort

(the bringing of solace and consolation to the weary, the buffeted, the afflicted).

C. IS CONDEMNATION FROM GOD?

John 3:17 teaches that *"God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world."* Romans 8:1 states: *"There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. "*

When instead of comfort there is condemnation, it should be rejected. Romans 8:34 asks the self-answering question: *"Who is he that condemneth ? Shall Christ that died?"*

He bore all our condemnation on the cross.

So the prophecy of condemnation can never be the work of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit may rebuke, exhort and chide; yet He does it with great tenderness, always influencing one into repentance and love, ever showing the way out of the problem. The Holy Spirit never leaves one in a deep hole of depression and condemnation, with neither mercy nor hope to lift him out again into the loveliness of His tender forgiveness.

Such condemnatory prophetic utterances, which are usually harsh of tone and devastating to the hearer, should be recognized as from another spirit, and not the Spirit of Christ.

D. WHAT IS THE SOURCE OF PROPHECY?

The Scriptures clearly teach that prophecy may be prompted by one of three sources:

1. The Human Spirit

— one speaking out of his own heart (Eze 13:2,3).

2. A Lying Spirit

from the evil one (2Chr 18:21).

3. The Holy Spirit

The true spirit of prophecy from above, prompted by the Holy Spirit.

4. A Mixture Of All Three

Or a prophecy may be a mixture of any of the above three.

There is the classic example of the Apostle Peter speaking the inspired Word of Knowledge when he said:

"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. "

Jesus testified that flesh and blood had not revealed it to him, but the Father. The source of that utterance was the Father.

Then, a few minutes later, Jesus turned and rebuked Satan speaking through the lips of the same apostle.

Jesus was showing how easily and quickly the wrong spirit could speak through the lips of one who loves the Lord, and the person not even be aware of it.

That which Peter spoke was most kind-sounding to the unwary ear. Jesus caught its deadly intent to inject self-pity.

E. WHEN SHOULD CAUTION BE EXERCISED?

There are three other realms of prophecy which are more open to deception; and because of their very nature, we should be cautious. These three realms are:

1. When It's A Word Of Knowledge

"The secrets of the heart made manifest" (I Cor 14:25) — an operation of the Word of Knowledge.

2. When It's Foretelling...

things to come — an operation of the Word of Knowledge.

3. When It's Guidance —

an operation of the Word of Wisdom. Because wrong "guidance" can work the most havoc in the lives of God's children, it is the realm which wrong spirits most delight to enter.

1 Samuel 10:1-10 clearly shows the operation of these three prophetic realms.

Samuel first revealed the secret of Saul's heart — that he was seeking the lost asses.

He then gave a foretelling word — three signs which would shortly come to pass:

- Saul would meet two men who would say, "The asses are found."
- He would then meet three men with three kids, three loaves and a bottle of wine. They would give him two loaves.
- Then Saul would meet a company of prophets coming from the high place with psaltery, tabret, pipe and harp, who would prophesy. The Spirit of the Lord would come upon Saul and he would prophesy.

All the signs were fulfilled. Then came the obedience to the guidance Samuel had given:

"Go down to Gilgal; seven days shall thou tarry there till I come down to thee."
Saul obeyed the guidance when all the other signs had come to pass.

F. IS PROPHECY ALWAYS HELPFUL?

Many lives have been injured and brought into confusion by the wrong use of prophecy; yet the Word clearly tells us: *"Despise not prophesyings"* (1 Ths 5:20). It is up to us to find the right path up this glorious mountain.

I have witnessed some most amazing benefits wrought through the precious Gift of Prophecy. It is no wonder that through counterfeit utterances the enemy wishes to deceive, and to cause this beautiful operation of God to fall into disrepute.

G. WHAT DOES OUR REACTION TO PROPHECY REVEAL?

If the personal prophecy unveils a future ministry of great importance, and our ego is inflated by it, then there is something wrong in our heart. Pride is there. And *"Pride goeth before destruction."* We should flee to the Lord for deliverance from it.

But where the personal prophecy unveils a future ministry of great importance, and this causes us to fall at the feet of the Lord in deep humility — that prophecy can be a help and blessing.

When the Lord spoke a prophetic word to Saul on the road to Damascus, Saul fasted and prayed three days (Acts 9:3-11; 26:13-18).

The heart condition of lowliness is ever the safe place. Satan said; *"I will ascend"* (Isa 14:13,14). Ascending is ever the direction Satan takes.

Jesus first descended (Eph 4:9); therefore His Father exalted Him. Jesus always descended (Phil 2:7,8).

"Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, " He says, "for I am meek and lowly in heart" (Matt 11:29).

Neither the lion nor its whelps have ever walked in that path (Job 28:8).

H. WHO SHOULD CONFIRM PROPHECY?

"In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established" (2Cor 13:1). The law of confirmation is an important "must" in the judging and proving of a prophetic word. God is ever ready to confirm His Word, even with signs and wonders.

No important prophetic word — especially that which deals with guidance or which would affect our life — should be accepted without full confirmation by:

1. Those Not Acquainted With The Prophecy;

2. The Scriptures;

3. Another Word From God.

The following scripture illustrates prophecy confirming what God has said:

"Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have [already — past tense] called them." This implies that there was a prior word to them (Acts 13:2).

I. WHO SHOULD JUDGE PROPHECY?

The prophetic word should be open for judgment by those who are established as prophets and men of God. We are solemnly warned: *"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world"* (I Jn 4:1).

The Scripture says: *"Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge"* (I Cor 14:29).

It stands to reason that one who does not have or use the prophetic gift is unqualified to judge, save on the basis of the tests already mentioned and the written Word.

But the spirit of the utterance had better be left to the judgment of men qualified in the field of prophecy.

J. WHEN SHOULD PROPHECY BE REJECTED?

It is always a sign of warning if someone refuses to have his word of revelation, prophecy or utterance brought to judgment and to confirmation by the written Word of God.

It is better to reject it immediately; for regardless of how good the prophecy might sound and how wonderful the ecstasy of the moment, if it be contrary to the Word, then do not receive it under any condition.

The true man of God welcomes judgment. The Spirit of Christ within him makes him *"easy to be entreated"* (Jas3:17).

He is ever ready to acknowledge that he is imperfect in his flesh and is not at all infallible. At best, we only know "in part" and prophesy "in part."

K. CONCLUSION

Let us not despise nor shun this tremendous operation of the Spirit of God —but let us be *"wise as serpents."* Let us not enter into controversy or squabbles; yet let us not

receive any or all utterances which are purported to be God's infallible Word without proper confirmation.

Let no one take authority over you by saying: "Yea, yea, thus saith the Lord." If God has spoken, then He has spoken; I need not fight to prove it. And if God has not spoken, all my saying "Thus saith the Lord" does not in any way force Him to say what I claimed He said.

So then, brethren, let us be wise and lowly and seek to glorify our God, neither despising prophesyings nor ignoring and shunning them. Let us enjoy their mighty blessing and power in all wisdom of the Holy Spirit. In great humility of mind, let us "*go on unto perfection*" (Heb 6:1).

SECTION D3

MAKE THEIR FAITH GROW

By Ralph Mahoney

Chapter 1

How Does The Mustard Seed Grow?

Introduction

One of the reasons the Lord appoints teachers is to enable them to deal with unbelief. When Jesus went to Nazareth, the city of his boyhood and young manhood, the Bible says: "*He could do no mighty works there because of **their** [corporate] unbelief*" (Mark 6:5).

There is such a thing as corporate or community unbelief that prevents Christ working. Following this commentary in the sixth chapter of Mark is the forthright statement: "*Jesus went about their villages teaching.*" Why? Because teaching is the antidote for unbelief.

We don't love people out of unbelief; we teach them out of it. Thus, we need to be taught on faith: on the potential of faith that is in us; on the principles governing the growth of faith; and particularly, on how to increase our faith.

When Jesus talks about faith. He always relates it to our relationship to others. If faith is going to grow, it involves our relationship to other believers.

In Luke 17:3,4 Jesus teaches the disciples, saying: "*Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent, thou shalt forgive him.*"

In response to this teaching on forgiveness and human relationships, the apostles beseech the Lord: "*Increase our faith*" (vs 5).

It takes faith to get along with contrary saints. As the poet put it some years ago: "To live above with the saints we love, O that will be glory. To live below with the saints we know — well, that's a different story!"

When Jesus starts talking about "living below with the saints they know," immediately the apostles recognize their need for an increase of faith.

A. FAITH GROWS IN STAGES

The next verse, Luke 17:6, is probably the most misunderstood passage on faith in the Scriptures: *"And the Lord said. If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you."*

The parallel passage in Mark 11:23 mentions not only trees but mountains: *'If you say unto this mountain, Be thou removed and be thou cast in the sea, it shall obey you.'*

Not many of us are rearranging the topography (moving mountains), so we have "spiritualized" this concept of mountain-moving faith. When we can't make a scripture work, we "spiritualize" it, bringing God's Word down to our experience rather than our experience up to God's Word.

God wants His Word to work. He says in Jeremiah 1:12, *"I will hasten my word to perform it,"* or in a better translation: *"I will stand behind my word to make it work."* We need to find this kind of faith that "speaks" and things happen.

The point is this: There is "speaking-faith" available to God's children — "a faith that saith."

Bible expositors have interpreted Luke 17:6 thus: "it just takes a little bit of faith to do big things." The problem with this kind of doctrine is this: It doesn't work! "Little" faith has never accomplished "big" things.

1. Mustard Seed Faith

Some years ago, I found that Weymouth's translation says: *"If you had faith **that grows as a grain of mustard seed...**"* When I read that, the Spirit caused me to understand Jesus' teaching in a new way. It was a way I had never heard anyone explain faith before.

Jesus was not telling us that all we need is a tiny bit of faith, as a tiny mustard seed, and then we can move trees and mountains. Rather, the Lord was teaching us that **faith that GROWS as a grain of mustard seed** can heal the sick, cast out demons and see signs following it (Mark 16:17-20).

We have a divine commentary on how a grain of mustard seed grows in Matthew 13:31,32. It is the Lord's own words: *"Another parable put he to them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field: Which indeed is the least of all seeds: **but when it is grown, it is the greatest ...and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.**"*

Now, the mustard seed is small; but Jesus said that **when it is growth**, it is the greatest among herbs and becomes a tree big enough for lodging birds.

When we understand that it is not **little** faith but **growing** faith that does big things, that is a radically different concept of faith. Little faith will do some things; and

big faith will do bigger things, but faith that grows was the ideal Jesus was teaching. It is from "*faith to faith*" (Rom 1:17) that we progress toward ultimate, mature faith.

2. Mountain Moving Faith

In 1 Corinthians 13:2, Paul comments on faith that moves mountains: "*And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have ALL faith, so that I could remove mountains...*"

Paul recognized that it took **all** or total or full-grown faith to move mountains. You don't move mountains with seed faith; you move mountains with *all* faith. It takes fully developed faith to relocate a mountain! Paul recognized this and Jesus taught it.

In Matthew 17, we read that Jesus is up on the Mount of Transfiguration with Peter, James and John.

During this time, there came to the other nine apostles waiting below, a certain man who had a son who was lunatic. This caused him to fall into the fire and into the water.

These nine apostles tried exorcism, but with no success. The man came to Jesus upon His descent from the mountain and said: "*I brought him [my son] to thy disciples and they could not cure him*" (Matt 17:16). What an indictment! They could not cure him!

"And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very how. Then came the disciples to Jesus apart and said, Why could not we cast him out?"(Matt 17:18,19).

The disciples said, in effect: "Lord, we gave that fellow the full 'Charismatic treatment': we shook him, we said 'In the Name of Jesus,' we did all these things, and that devil didn't come out. Why?"

The King James version says, "*And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief...*" (Matt 17:20). However, that word is not "unbelief in the original Greek, but rather "little faith" or "undeveloped faith."

Jesus was not talking about unbelief (a negative force). These disciples would not have tried to cast out devils if they had been in unbelief.

Unbelief is a negative thing that disbelieves, whereas the problem of these nine apostles was "little faith."

They were trying, but with not enough faith, to do the job. So, then, the disciples were not unbelieving; they simply did not have sufficiently developed faith to cope with the problem. They had "seed-faith" and a "tree-sized" problem.

Jesus went on to teach them that even though their faith was undeveloped, if they would allow it to grow as a grain of mustard seed, they could eventually "*say unto this mountain. Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove and nothing shall be impossible unto you*" (Matt 17:20).

In other words, nothing shall be impossible to you if you have developed faith, faith that has grown — and continues to grow!

Growing faith is a scriptural concept. In Paul's writings he talks to us in this metaphor: he says that we are changed "*from glory to glory*" and "*from faith to faith*" (I Cor 3:18; Rom 1:17). Faith grows in a series of steps or seasons.

3. God Gives Faith

Paul writes in Romans 12:3: "*For I say through the grace given...God hath dealt to every man the **measure** [or seed] of faith.*"

Faith starts with God giving to every one of us the measure of seed-faith. The word "measure" comes from the Greek word *metron*, meaning "a limited portion." This seed (limited portion or measure) is God's gift to every believer.

There is no Christian who can say "I don't have faith," because the Scripture says that God deals to **every** man the measure, or seed, of faith. Further support for this is found in Ephesians 2:8-9: "*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it [faith] is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.*" If you are a born-again believer, that seed, measure and gift has been given to you.

4. Two Kinds Of Faith

There are two kinds of faith. We need to distinguish between them.

a. Gift Of Faith. One is the "Gift of Faith" mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:9. This is the **sovereign** impartation of a Gift of Faith from God to you.

b. Developed Faith. The other is the **developed** faith in you. In **developed** faith, if you start out with "5-cent" faith and it grows to "75-cent" faith — then you can deal with any situation that you encounter up to 75-cent faith.

On the other hand, if your faith has not progressively grown, but you have only known a sudden gift or "impartation" of faith on some singular occasion, your faith development might still be at the 5-cent level.

Some Christians are still recounting the one great moment of faith when a miracle took place through them, perhaps twenty years ago; but their faith hasn't grown from that day until this.

Sovereign faith can come to you in a given situation, and a great miracle will take place. But when the situation is past, for which you needed that Gift of Faith, the faith that took you through it may not reside in you any longer. Developed faith is something that will stay with you and work for you in any situation in which you find yourself. As long as the problem does not exceed your level of faith-growth, you will always be triumphant.

But if, like the disciples, you come up against a problem bigger than your developed faith, you may experience defeat.

B. FAITH GROWS BY OBEDIENCE

We must now discover how faith can grow in the life of the believer. We go (or grow) from "*faith to faith*" and "**glory to glory**."

A scriptural precept to remember is this: You will know the glory of God in your life only in proportion to the development of faith in your life. Developed faith will bring an increase of God's glory resting on your life and ministry.

1. Potential In A Seed

The principle of growing faith can be illustrated in a story of King Tut's tomb.

King Tut (abbreviation for King Tutank Hamon) was a famous Egyptian pharaoh buried about 1357 B.C. in an extremely elaborate pyramid-grave. His tomb was

discovered completely intact in 1922 by an English archaeologist. Inside, among its treasures, was found honey, wheat and corn.

Curious to see what would happen after 3,279 years, the archaeologist had the wheat and corn planted in fertile ground by the Nile River. There it would receive proper moisture and nourishment from the soil.

Within the normal maturation period, a harvest of wheat and corn sprang up — a harvest from seed over 3,000 years old.

Though it lay dormant for three and a half millennia, in that seed was the **potential** to produce and to reproduce a notable harvest. All it needed was the proper environment in which to grow.

2. Three Essentials To Growth

The natural law of growth teaches us spiritual things. A grain of wheat in the wrong environment will never grow. However, given the right conditions, it **will not only grow** — but through the replanting of each successive harvest, it will eventually reproduce thousands of bushels of wheat.

This same tremendous potential is locked up in the seed of faith which God has dealt to every man. What we do with it determines whether it **grows** or stays a **seed**.

In order to grow, the seed must have **nourishment (fertile soil), water** and **sunshine**. These are the **three essential elements** to natural and spiritual growth.

Metaphorically, the seed of faith, in order to grow, must be **nurtured** in the soil of God's Word [not the letter but by the Spirit of revelation (Eph 1:17) upon the Word], **watered** by obedience to the Word, and bathed in the **sunshine** of the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit (Rom 5:5; Gal 5:6).

a. Soil—Hearing God's Word. When we speak of **God's Word** as being the soil in which the seed of faith grows, we're not referring only or solely to the Holy Bible. Romans 10:17 says: "*Faith cometh by hearing... the word [Greek = rhema] of God.*"

In the Old Testament prophetic books, we find the frequent expression: "*The word of the Lord came unto...*" — unto Jeremiah the prophet, or unto Ezekiel the priest, or unto Hosea, etc. This means that God's voice or word was communicated from Heaven to a man on earth, just as Romans 10:17 implies.

In Ezekiel 33:7, God says: "*O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore, thou shall hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me.*" God didn't give to Ezekiel a verse of Scripture; rather. He imparted to him a revelation, a "*word*" **that he was to declare unto the people**.

By the same token. God's word can be communicated to you subjectively (in your spirit, mind and thoughts), in such a way that He causes you to know that He's spoken specifically to you.

He may do it through the Scriptures, by making some verse bum in your heart or become like a living thing inside of you — full of meaning, comfort or direction to you.

Or He may do it, as is recorded in the Scriptures, by direct communication, by vision, by dream, by angelic visitation.

God may speak to you by an audible voice, or by a still, small voice, or simply by imparting an inward assurance to you. In any one of these ways. God can and will communicate His word to you!

We've established three things:

- God has given a measure or seed of faith to every one of us.
- Faith comes (is increased) by hearing God's word to us.
- God can communicate His word to us.

How can we hear that word and get that seed to grow in the soil of the word of God?

b. Water—Obeying God's Word. First of all, we have to understand what it means to hear. Paul says in Romans 10:17: "*So then faith cometh by **hearing** the word of God.*"

Paul is not talking about the passive act of listening to a sermon preached from the Bible. He is not suggesting we go to church five times a week in order for faith to grow. What Paul is saying is that faith comes by **hearing** what God says to you.

Hearing in this instance does not signify audio perception (hearing the sounds and words) only. The concept goes further, meaning "to hear and to act upon what has been heard."

Faith comes, grows and is demonstrated and expressed by hearing and then acting upon what you've heard. In the Greek, it literally means: "*faith comes by hearing and obeying [acting upon] the word of God*" (Jas 1:22).

When God speaks, there is always an imperative command in what He says; you either act on it or disobey it.

For example, a father can say to one of his children: "Son, there's a sack of garbage in the kitchen. Please take it outside and throw it in the garbage can."

The child, however, continues to play with his toys, and five minutes later the door slams as he runs out to play. The sack of garbage is still in the kitchen.

Did he **hear** the word of his father? He had audio perception (his ears picked up the sound and the words) of what was said. But, in the biblical sense, he didn't hear, because he didn't "act upon" or "obey" what was said to him.

1) Disobedience Hinders Growth. Often we're that way when God speaks to us. We go right on with whatever we're doing and do not take action as a result of what God has said to us. And then we wonder why we don't have a growth in faith. Faith has not been released and cannot grow until it has been acted upon.

Each time you hear and act, you take another step in faith. The moment you disobey God's word to you, your growth in faith stops at that level. God will always bring you back to deal with you again at that level before He takes you on in your development of faith.

In other words. God always asks you to go back to where you left your first love, to pick it up and to go on from there. He says, in effect: '*He that has my word, and keeps it [and acts on it], he it is that loves me.*' Thus your faith cannot grow beyond your obedience. This is an immutable law of faith!

Remember, you go from *glory to glory* and from *faith to faith*. So you need to begin where you are, with what you have now.

2) Begin Where You Are. You don't cast out a legion of devils until you've cast out one. That is to say, you don't reach out to do something beyond your faith development, trying to go from seed-faith to full grown faith in one big leap. It doesn't work that way.

Faith grows by a series of progressive steps. The Apostle Paul had to have 14 years for his faith to grow, so that he could go out in that higher realm of faith and fulfill God's call (Gal 2:1). His faith development had to be made equal to the problems and challenges he was to face in his missionary ministry.

As your faith grows, your ability to trust God grows. Years ago, my wife and I began to live "by faith," trusting God for \$8.00 a week for our needs. Our faith has grown over the years by progressive steps; and today, in our missionary commitment at World MAP, we trust the Lord for **millions of dollars** to sustain the worldwide ministry. We started where we were with what we had (less than ten dollars) and trusted God. Then our faith began to grow, as we acted upon His word to us.

3) Don't Imitate Others. A word of caution here: never try to act on God's word to somebody else. You cannot imitate another man's faith. Some have tried to imitate great healing ministries, with hapless and often tragic results. Others have tried to follow someone else's step of faith, and have tripped and fallen flat.

However, when the word of the Lord does come to you and you act upon it, things can and do happen.

A few years ago I was down in Mexico working with a Panamanian brother, Noel de Sousa.

One day he took me to a backslidden man's home to pray for him. As we were praying for this man, the word of the Lord came to me: "Either he repents or he dies."

What a message to give to a man lying there sick! But that was the word of the Lord — "repent or die" — so that is what I told the man.

Now I didn't know that his wife had been praying for him for years to repent and return to the Lord. But when the word of the Lord came to him, he broke down and melted and began to cry like a baby, repenting and imploring the Lord to come into his heart — and He did!

Next, the word of the Lord came to me saying: "Tell him to rise and walk in the Name of Jesus."

Brother de Sousa translated the word of command into Spanish. As I reached down and lifted him up, he came off that cot, raised his hands and danced around the room — rejoicing and praising the Lord!

I later found out that this man's condition was so grave and so extreme that the doctor had said that if he so much as turned over in his bed, he would die. I probably would have been too fearful to obey the Lord and lift him off that cot had I known. But the word of the Lord came, and I was obedient — and that man came off his cot healed!

Had I reached down and lifted that man in presumption or on someone else's faith, I would have killed him on the spot.

We can see, then, that an obedient spirit is an invaluable key to growing in faith.

We have noted that faith cannot grow beyond obedience. Inasmuch as "*faith cometh by hearing, and hearing...the word of God,*" we cannot grow in faith until we have heard and acted upon what God has spoken to us.

We have pointed out that God neither expects nor wants us to go from seed-faith to faith that moves mountains in one giant leap, but by a series of developing steps. Thereby we move from *faith to faith*.

God starts with us where we are, with the measure of faith which He has freely given to us. Trust and act upon the word of the Lord to you with an obedient spirit. Then you will see that seed of faith that is in you *grow as a grain of mustard seed* into a beautifully developed tree of faith bearing much precious fruit.

c. Sun—Loving God. Another of the basic essentials for the growth of faith is love. The Apostle Paul says in Galatians 5:6: "*For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but **faith which worketh by love.***"

We have already discovered in Romans 10:17 that "*Faith comes by hearing and obeying the word of the Lord.*" So we summarize the three ingredients for the growth of faith as follows: hearing, obedience and love.

1) Obedience: The Test Of Love. In John 14:21, Jesus deals with the relationship of love to obedience: "*He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.*" Obedience is the test of love and the proof of love.

Jesus goes on to say: "*And he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.*" Verses 23 and 24 conclude: "*If a man love me, he will keep my words...He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings...*"

We hear His word to us, and because we love Him, we act on what we have heard. If we don't obey, we don't love; and then faith does not work. Without the exercise of faith, there is no growth of faith. Faith, therefore, grows by obedience, which flows out of our love for Jesus, in response to hearing the word of the Lord.

C. FAITH GROWS BY HEARING

When the Scripture says "*faith comes by hearing the word of God,*" it is referring to the subjective experience by which God speaks to us. Whether it be from an actual verse in the Bible or whether it be as He spoke to the prophets of old; He does speak.

The prophets either heard audibly, inwardly, by dream, by vision, by angelic visitation, or through the mouth of an anointed servant; but in any case. God communicated with them. This communication is what the Bible calls "*the word of the Lord.*"

1. God Spoke Then

a. The Written Word. There is the enscriptured (written) Word of God; and

b. The Spoken Word, the living word of the Lord. We need to know the distinction between them in order to further understand what is meant by hearing the word of the Lord.

Paul is not talking just about the written Scriptures when he says "*faith comes by hearing the word of God.*"

Acts 17:11 supports this point: *"These were more noble...in that they received 'the word' with all readiness of mind, and searched 'the scriptures' daily, whether those things were so."* As used in this verse, "the scriptures" refer to the Old Testament books, from Genesis to Malachi. They didn't have the New Testament yet. That came more than a century later. Thus, "the word" and "the scriptures" in this context are not the same thing. "The word" was the anointed message brought by the apostles. "The scripture" was the Old Testament. They *"received the word — and searched the scriptures."*

In 1 Thessalonians 2:13, we see a further example of the spoken word of God as distinct from the written Word: *"...when ye received 'the word of God' which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, 'the word of God'..."*

Here, "the word of God" refers to that which was preached and proclaimed through the mouths of men anointed of God. And it was received as a living word directly from God.

When Peter said to the lame man at the Gate Beautiful in Acts 3:6, *"... such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk,"* he spoke a living word which brought healing to that man. To the lame man it became "the word of the Lord" through the mouth of a human instrument, an anointed servant of God.

2. God Speaks Today

God still speaks today by the Holy Spirit through His written Word, through His anointed servants, and through such supernatural means as dreams, visions, inward assurance. Divine Providence, or circumstance.

God **never** speaks to us in any subjective experience in contradiction to His written Word. All such experience must be judged by and agree with Holy Scripture.

We need to open our hearts to receive the word of the Lord not only from the Bible, but through the other channels by which God speaks.

a. Listen To His Voice. The seven- times-repeated warning in Revelation 2 and 3 is for us to heed in this day: *'He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.'* Note the use of the present continuous tense — **saith**, meaning "to hear what the Spirit says and continues to say."

This same tense is used by Jesus in Matthew 4:4: *"...Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth [present continuous tense] out of the mouth of God."*

We live not only by what God said in His written Word, but by the word that (present tense) *"proceeds and continues to proceed out of the mouth of God."*

We walk in life by hearing and obeying the proceeding word of the Lord by whatever means He chooses to speak that word to us.

When we refuse to accept that God can speak to us through other than the written pages of the Bible, we may cut ourselves off from communication with Him, and spiritual death begins to set in.

b. Don't Refuse His Voice. When God spoke to the Israelites, Hebrews 12:19 points out that *"...they that heard [the voice of words] intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more..."* When they rejected the voice of God, they lost faith and they were shut up under law.

Hebrews 12:25 therefore warns: *"See that ye refuse not him that speaketh [present continuous tense]. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven."*

Many today are bordering on this very danger of refusing "*Him that speaketh*" (the suffix "**eth**" means "speaks and continues to speak").

Some teach that the days of miracles are past. They're trying to live by what God said, and refusing to hear what **He is saying**. So they've rejected the God of miracles.

Such as these will abide in undeveloped faith because they try to bring the Scriptures down to their experience rather than their experience up to the Scriptures.

If we are going to grow in faith, our hearts and our ears must be open to Him. We must believe that the word of the Lord can come to us today. We must accept guidance by the Spirit's voice, and in accord with the Scriptures which communicate His will to us.

If we do not refuse His voice (like the children of Israel), but hear it and obey it, faith will be increased in our lives.

c. Be Ready For His Voice. Now we needn't strain to hear His voice. We need not go through all kinds of ritual and ceremony for God to speak to us. God can and often does speak to us when we are least expecting it.

One of the most important words of the Lord to me came one morning in New Mexico. It was in a restroom, while I was bending over the basin to wash my hands and face for breakfast! Suddenly, God's voice came to me.

On another occasion I was leaving a Sunday morning service. My mind was thinking about the trip home. Unexpectedly, God gave me a "word of wisdom" for a member of the church which resolved a serious problem in her life.

d. Tune In To His Voice. There is the capacity in God to speak to us through His Holy Spirit direct from Heaven. And there is in us the capacity to hear through our spirit when He speaks.

Paul refers to man as spirit, soul and body (1 Ths 5:23). The spirit is that inward part of man that is God-conscious. The soul (intellect, will and emotions) is that inward part of man that is self-conscious. The body (responding through the senses) is that part of us that makes us world-conscious. So, then, because we are a spirit and God is a spirit, we can have communication.

For example, a room is filled with hundreds of sound signals beamed out from radio and television stations. But we can't hear them unless we turn on a radio or TV set.

As soon as we tune the set to the station, those sounds are transmitted into something audible or visible.

In the same way, we can "tune in" to God and receive His signals, some of which are audible and visible!

1) Fasting Sharpens Your Hearing. One of the ways we can sharpen our receptivity to God's signals is through fasting. This is like fine-tuning a radio.

When Jesus taught His disciples about their need for growing faith. He made clear (Matt 17:21) that prayer and fasting was often a key to greater faith.

Fasting is an aid to increasing faith when our motive is to draw closer to God so we can better hear the word of the Lord to us.

2) Fasting Can Be Dangerous. The concept that one can twist God's arm by fasting, and force Him to do something that He's unwilling to do, is totally wrong.

If fasting is self-willed and of questionable motivation, you can open yourself to the wrong spirit. Remember that during His forty-day fast, Jesus encountered the devil. If you are fasting and praying for power so you will be famous, or for other wrong reasons — you are at risk of demons of deception coming upon you.

However, Jesus was not in the wilderness through His Own self-will to fast forty days. It was not because He decided to force His Father to display supernatural power to show the world His dynamics.

He was there because He had been clearly driven by the Spirit into the wilderness and into fasting. Mark 1:13 tells us that "*the angels ministered unto him.*" You need the ministry of angels on a forty-day fast!

I know of three people who have died on a forty-day fast. No doubt this was because they were not led by the Spirit, but by human self-will. No extended fast in Scripture was ever initiated by human will, but always by divine providence.

For example, Moses (Exo 34:28) and Elijah (IKi 19:8) both fasted forty days and nights; but God initiated it, they didn't.

Some have survived a forty-day fast but had no more faith at the end of it than when they started. I know of others, on the other hand, whom God led into a forty-day fast. Because they were responding to a divine initiative, they were preserved. They met God and thereupon entered into a genuine ministry of the Holy Spirit.

A very real danger of the forty-day fast, if it is self-willed and self-centered, is that demon contact can result. Wanting power and anointing for self-advancement, the person will open himself to any spirit contact (right or wrong) and, subsequently, to Satan's power.

The human spirit tunes in easier to the Holy Spirit's communication during fasting. But you're also more susceptible and sensitive to wrong spirits as well as the Holy Spirit. However, you are on safe ground if your motive is to draw closer to God.

If led of the Spirit, you can often press in to God in shorter fasts. The fact that you will draw aside for a week or two or three to pray and wait on God, will help you.

To abstain from food in order to get into His presence without distraction, opens the channels of communication.

3) Fasting Needs Right Motivation. The motivation in fasting, then, must be carefully weighed. Some press in for power and anointing prematurely and are destroyed by it. The road of the ministry of miracles is strewn with the wreckage of men who pressed in (out of self-will) to receive power. But they had no preparation in their heart to deal with it and to handle it after it came. So it eventually destroyed them. The anointing is a very dangerous thing!

If we had unlimited power available to us, we'd go out and do a lot of things that God didn't want done, violating all kinds of divine principles and doing a lot of foolish things that would destroy us and the work of God in the process. When God speaks, it's always an expression of His will. When we know what He wants done, faith comes by hearing the word of God. This is safe faith.

D. FAITH GROWS BY SPEAKING

Safe faith is based on **hearing, obedience and love**. We open our spirit to the voice of the Lord by having an open, responsive heart to hear and to obey because we love Him and He loves us. It is because of that love that faith works. Otherwise, faith is stifled and ceases to grow.

Hearing, obeying and loving, then, are the three central ingredients to the growth of faith. To these we now add a fourth essential ingredient — **saying**.

1. The Faith Of God

In Mark 11:22 and 23, Jesus, teaching His disciples, says: "...*have faith in God.*" The literal translation is: "*Have the faith of God... For verily I say unto you, that whosoever shall say unto this mountain...*" The implication here is that the faith of God is a **faith that speaks**.

In the first chapter of Genesis, God said: "*Let there be light: and there was light.*" "God **said** "*Let there be...*" — and there was! The faith of God is **speaking** faith or **saying** faith.

Saying faith is a higher faith than asking faith. It takes faith to ask, but there is a faith that goes beyond asking to a faith that **speaks**. "*For verily I say unto you, that whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.*" The original Greek says: "*Whosoever believes that those things which he says have already come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he says.*"

2. Speak What God Says

The progression and growth of faith is related to what you say or speak forth with the very words of your mouth.

Proverbs 4:20-22 states: "*My son attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings. Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart. For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh.*" If you get God's words and say them, they become life and health to you.

The Spanish translation of Proverbs 6:2 aptly declares: "*Thou art lassoed with the words of thy mouth...*" ("snared" or "taken" in kjv).

Solomon makes it plain that what we say can curse us or bless us, and states directly in Proverbs 18:21: "*Death and life are in the power of the tongue...*"

Having emphasized in Proverbs 10:11 that "*the mouth of the righteous man is a well of life,*" Solomon tells us that we can be snared by the words of our mouth or we can be released and delivered by the words we speak.

Faith finds its expression as we begin to say: "*This is what God has said.*"

Revelation 12:11 speaks of a company of saints that "*...overcame him [the devil] by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony...*" — that is, their spoken confession. The devil is thwarted every time we confess what God says.

Paul knew the power of the spoken word, and reminds us in Romans 10:8-10 that "*... The word is nigh thee, **even in thy mouth**, and in thy heart: that is, the **word** of faith, which we preach. That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and **with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.***"

The word "saved" in verse 9 is the Greek word *sozo*, translated "Thou shalt be made whole." In another passage in the New Testament, this same word means... "Thou shalt be healed"; and in another, "Thou shalt have thy sins forgiven thee."

Sozo is a word that the Holy Spirit chose to express all the redemptive benefits that are available to us as children of God. All that Calvary provides is appropriated by our confession.

3. Believe What You Speak

We have what we say. The moment that we face a situation, the response in our heart is expressed by our mouth and we speak what we believe.

Jesus admonished the Pharisees on this account in Matthew 12:34-37: "*...out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh...For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.*"

At the first symptom of sickness, we confess it, we don't doubt it, we believe it — and we get it! Some lonely, sad people use sickness to get sympathy and attention. Their whole life is built around the attention that they get in a particular sickness. They possess it by faith and hold on to it by faith, confessing it day in and day out.

On the positive side, this can work for us, too, when we understand this principle. If we confess with our mouth what God says, and believe it in our heart, we'll have what we say.

If God's word finds lodging in our heart and we embrace it, we immediately confess victory instead of defeat when the challenge comes. Then we have what we say — victory!

4. Examples Of Speaking Faith

a. Abraham We can see this principle of the positive confession of faith in the biblical record of Abraham in Romans 4:17-22.

God had promised to make Abraham the father of many nations. Although Abraham was close to 100 years old and beyond bringing forth a progeny, he was not weak in faith. Nor did his faith falter at the deadness of Sarah's womb. "*He staggered not at the promise of God, through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God.*"

This means he went about positively praising God for all the things that He had promised him, confessing what God had said and giving Him the glory.

Abraham had heard God's word; "*and being fully persuaded that what he had promised, he was able also to perform,*" Abraham gave verbal expression of that word which was in him.

He probably said, "Hallelujah! God's promised me a son and I'm going to have a son. Even though I'm 100 years old and Sarah's 90, still I'm going to have a son. Glory to God!"

Because Abraham confessed the word of God instead of circumstances, "*...it was imputed to him for righteousness*" (vs 22).

b. God. In Romans 4:17, we have this commentary on God: "*...he makes the dead alive, and calls those things which be not as though they were.*" When God says that something "is," though it appears "not to be," He believes that it "is." God has no doubt in His heart, and thus exactly what He says happens!

If God does this, shouldn't we? Should not we, who are God's children, do as God does? If His word has come to us, we may.

c. Jesus. At this very moment, Jesus Himself is sitting in faith, calling those things that be not as though they were. God the Father said unto our Lord Jesus: "*Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool*" (Ps 110:1).

Jesus has had that promise from eternity. The Bible says that He is seated at the right hand of the Father, **expecting in faith** that His enemies be made His footstool.

Continuing in a ministry of faith. He is seated in rest and repose, knowing that He will see the fruit of His faith manifested on this earth, though the outworking of the promise has spanned centuries.

5. Take Your Stand In Faith

You, too, can take a stand in faith by what you say and speak in faith. When you know God's will, you can call some things that "be not" as though "they were." Ultimately, you can see them fulfilled in your life.

If you accept God's word to you, you can stand and confess that word (like Abraham) in the face of devils, opinions, circumstances, and all manner of contrary things. God "... *will stand behind his word to perform it*" (Jer 1:12). God is waiting for you to get the word in your mouth and speak it forth, believing it in your heart!

a. Your Advocate. The key to understanding the power of the spoken confession is in Hebrews 3:1: "*Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus.*" ("Profession" is the same Greek word as "confession" or "testimony.")

Jesus is the High Priest of what you say! When I discovered this truth one day while reading in Hebrews, I suddenly saw the scene in Heaven. Jesus was there in the presence of God as High Priest of what I said.

The scene enlarged, and I saw before me a courtroom with God the Father, the Judge of all the earth, seated behind the bench. On either side of the witness-stand stood the prosecuting attorney and the defense attorney, listening intently to the testimony of the defendant.

Each attorney then rested his case with the final Judge, based on the statements made by the defendant.

b. Your Accuser. Now the prosecuting attorney is the "accuser," or the devil. In Revelation 12:10, he is described as accusing the brethren before God day and night.

In the first chapter of Job, Satan came along with the sons of God before the Lord, just waiting for the chance to accuse Job. In all the torments and trials that Job suffered as the devil was accusing him, he never charged God foolishly, nor questioned His wisdom, nor sinned with his lips (Job 2:10).

When everything that Job had was taken away, he fell down on his face and worshipped God. He never once gave the devil any wrong confession to undermine God's purpose in the testing.

c. Your Helper. In this courtroom scene, Jesus is the Defense Attorney. 1 John 2:1 states: "...*if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.*"

This word for "advocate" is "lawyer" in modern English. It is the Greek word *paraclete*, that is translated "comforter" in John 14:16, meaning "one called alongside to help."

Jesus said in John 14:16-17: "*I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter [lawyer], that he may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth.*" This means we not only have a lawyer with the Father in Heaven, "*Jesus Christ the righteous,*" but we also have one with us here on earth, the *Holy Spirit*. We're well represented in God's courtroom.

d. Your Testimony. Now we can apply this courtroom scene. Sitting in the witness chair is the **defendant** — **YOU**; **Jesus** is the **Defense Attorney**; **Satan** is the **prosecuting attorney**; and God the Father is the **Judge**. All present wait to hear what **YOU** will say — your testimony.

In pleading your case, your testimony is the greatest weapon which the Defense Attorney (Jesus) has against the accuser (the devil). What you say determines the outcome of the case.

Your Attorney presents His case before the Judge based on your positive, sound testimony. The prosecuting attorney, by the same token, presents his accusations to the Judge based on any contradictory statements on your part.

Both the defending (Jesus) and the prosecuting (Satan) attorney work with what you say. You should give Jesus, the High Priest of your confession, a testimony that He can repeat for your defense.

Your profession should be a good confession of faith. If you give a negative confession, you load the devil's gun to shoot in the face of God.

God the Judge can acquit, preserve and protect you only by hearing you say what He Himself says. What God says is always true. If you say what God says, your testimony is true. As a just Judge, He then stands behind His Own word to perform it.

6. Victory Is In Your Mouth!

You say what God says, and you will overcome the devil "*by the blood of the Lamb and the word of [your] testimony.*" Paraphrasing: "*If thou shalt confess with thy mouth, thou shalt be delivered; thou shalt be saved; thou shalt be healed.*" All these wonderful things that are in redemption are yours through your confession.

There is real power in what you say — your confession leads you to victory!

E. CONCLUSION

As you repeat God's word and learn to walk by faith, not by sight, your faith increases.

Faith comes by hearing God's word, obeying what you've heard out of a heart of love for Him, and confessing in the face of adversity exactly what His word says.

We have learned from this study that we increase faith by these four essential elements: **hearing, obeying, loving** and **saying**.

Let us join together with Abraham, and "*...be strong in faith, giving glory to God, being fully persuaded that what he says he is able to perform*" (Rom 4:20, 21).

Abraham's faith was not asking faith, but *saying* faith. He heard the word of the Lord which had been spoken to him. He acted in obedience. He obeyed out of love. He spoke those things that "*...be not as though they were*" — and **they were!** Let us stir up our faith, and make it grow by continually practicing these principles: **Hear! Obey! Love! Say!**

SECTION D4

USE POWER OF FAITH CONFESSIO

By Ralph Mahoney

Chapter 1

There Is Power In What You Say

Introduction

Three millenniums (3,000 years) ago, when the flower of Israel had blossomed into its brightest bloom, wise Solomon wrote: "*Thou art snared **with the words of thy mouth...***" (Prov 6:2). He realized the power of what you say! For there is power to snare, power to deliver, power to cure, power to kill in your mouth. There lies power beyond your imagination in what you say!

A. GOD SAID IT FIRST

A "greater than Solomon" (Jesus) exalted the mystery of the power of **confession** (what you say) when He fearlessly proclaimed:

*"I say unto you, that -whosoever shall **say...**and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that **those things which he saith** shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith"* (Mark 11:23).

Oh, I know we have equivocated about this; we have doubted, even disbelieved this; but **God's Word is true!**

This declaration of fact needs no equivocation, no explanation by us modems; it needs no compromising nor qualifying.

God's Word needs to be yea — rather, it **must simply be believed**, "*...let God be true, but every man a liar...*" (Rom 3:4).

B. OUR CONFESSION

"Oh, Brother Mahoney," you say, "this can't be literally **true.**" **But it is! There is power in what you say.** "*You shall have whatsoever you say*" — if you believe.

1. Brings Negative Results

Tragically, this mighty truth is finding fulfillment even in our **unbelief.** For example, your little seven-year-old Susie comes in sniffing. Immediately you say, "Oh dear! Susie is coming down with the flu." You have no proof she has flu but upon **confessing** that your little Susie has flu, you open the door to this disease **by what you say** and, sure enough, Susie gets the flu. When you said it, you didn't doubt it and **you got what you said.**

2. Brings Positive Results

If this works in the negative — and it does — why cannot we Christians become absolutely positive in our **confession** (what we say) of God's Word, and see the provisions of that Word in our daily life and home? **You can, my friend!**

To reverse the above example: Little Susie comes in sniffing. Immediately you say: "*...[Jesus] **himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses** [and] by [His] **stripes ye were** [past tense] **healed**" (Matt8:17; 1 Pet2:24). In the face of **what you say**, the infirmity must loose its hold on little Susie, and **you have what you say!***

Brother T. L. Osborn told me a secret of healing many years ago that illustrates this truth. I've never forgotten it. He said: "There are three things to be considered in sickness: **FIRST**, what the symptoms say; **SECOND**, what God's Word says; and **THIRD**, what you say! If you say what God says, the sickness has to go. **If you say** what the symptoms say, you **have what you say!**" I've found this to be true.

C. THE ANSWER IS "IN THY MOUTH"

Paul Henry, the Spirit-filled attorney who is a member of the World MAP Board of Directors, told me the following story a short time ago, and it has helped me:

"There was a little boy who was looking for some candy eggs at Easter time. His mother had hidden them, and promised him that the candy eggs were in the room, but he must find them.

"Well, he started looking —first under the chair in the corner, then under the couch, then behind the table, under the rug and behind the seat cushions. His mother prompted him: 'Timmy, you're getting near, you're getting very near, oops! No you're far away,' etc. Well, Timmy kept looking for a long time, periodically getting close and then further away, but he just couldn't find those Easter eggs.

"Finally, he stopped and indignantly put his hands on his hips and looked up at his mother in disappointment. She exclaimed, 'Timmy, you're real close, you're real close!' Surprised, he looked down, only to see that his hands were near his slightly agape coat pockets. He thrust his hands into his pockets, and there were the candy eggs — right in his coat pocket."

This illustrates the way many of us pray. We are trying to find God and the answer to our need by "*ascending up to heaven*" in our searching, or "*descending into the deep*" in our seeking.

We search, we pray, we fast, we seek (all of which are scriptural); but what saith the Scripture? The thing you are looking all over for "*...is nigh thee, **even in thy mouth** ...the word of faith...*" (Rom 10:8).

D. SPEAK IN FAITH

God is just waiting for you to **begin to speak in faith** so you can have what you say! ' "*That if thou shalt **confess with thy mouth... thou shalt be SAVED***" (Rom 10:9).

This word "saved" is the Greek word "*sozo*." Strong's Exhaustive Concordance and Greek Dictionary gives this definition: "to save, i.e., to deliver or protect, heal, preserve, do well, make whole."

It is an **all-inclusive** word which the Holy Spirit chose to show you the power of what you say! This agrees with Mark 11:23: "*...he shall have whatsoever he saith.*" "*Whatsoever!*" "*Be saved!*" Both, when understood, say the same thing.

That which you are praying, seeking and searching for is (like the candy eggs in the little boy's pocket) in your mouth. Speak it right now, out loud! Shout it! (Ps 47:1). Tell your neighbors about it! Deliver thyself with thy testimony! Try it!

This mighty truth will work for you. "*They [the manchild company] **overcame him** [the devil] **by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony** [what they said]...*" (Rev 12:11).

E. JESUS: HIGH PRIEST OF OUR CONFESSION

We, of course, must acknowledge: "*It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy*" (Rom 9:16). It is because **God is involved** in our testimony, in our **profession**, in our confession, in what we say — that things happen.

The Lord gave me an understanding of Hebrews 3:1 not long ago that came as a mighty revelation. Read carefully now: "*...consider the Apostle and **High Priest** of our profession* [confession, testimony], *Christ Jesus.*"

Like a flash of divine light, it dawned on me for the first time that Jesus is **High Priest** of what we say.

I had readily acknowledged His High Priestly ministry. I knew that "...we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God..." (Heb 4:14).

I knew that "...Christ sitteth on the right hand of God... ever living to make intercession..." for us (Col 3:1; Heb 7:25).

What His High Priestly ministry involved, I did not fully understand. But, suddenly, I saw it: Jesus Christ is "... **High Priest of our profession** [confession — what we say]..." (Heb 3:1).

F. ON TRIAL

See the picture in Heaven. Our heavenly Father is sitting on the throne. Jesus is sitting on the right hand of the Father.

1. Our Accuser

But there is someone else before the throne of God. Who is it? The Scriptures give the answer: "*There was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them*" (Job 1:6). See it, child of God! Satan is 'before the Lord' among the sons.

The Scriptures further indicate that "...*the accuser of our brethren* [Satan] ...*accused them before God day and night*" (Rev 12:10). So we see Satan there before the throne in Heaven accusing the brethren.

2. Our Advocate

But **thank God!** "...we have an advocate [lawyer] with the Father..." (Jn2:1)—even Jesus, Who is pleading our cause against the accusations of Satan.

3. Our Testimony

With what is He pleading our cause? What is He High Priest of? My friend, **catch this mighty truth!** He pleads with that of which it is said He's High Priest. Jesus is there pleading what you say! He is using **your confession** against the accusations of the devil. He is **High Priest of our confession** (what we say).

Oh! Now do you see the importance of what you say? Are you giving Jesus a good confession to plead against Satan's accusations?

a. Brings Defeat. Just picture this scene with me in your mind. Ralph Mahoney is going through a hard place, a real trial of faith, a real period of testing.

The devil is watching that he might have whereof to accuse Ralph before the Father. Jesus is bending low to hear what Ralph is saying.

If Ralph is grumbling, complaining and charging God foolishly for allowing this test, Jesus has nothing with which to combat "*the accuser of the brethren.*"

Instead, Ralph has loaded Satan's cannon and given him the ammunition to blast forth his accusation before the Father. The result: The trial and test drags on and on because Ralph has accepted defeat and given the devil authority before God to keep him in defeat.

b. Brings Victory. But now, let us reverse the situation. Ralph Mahoney is brought to a hard place, a real trial of faith, etc. Jesus bends low to hear the victor's testimony. Ralph is confessing: "*Thanks be unto God which always causeth us to triumph in Christ. ...God whom we serve is able to deliver us...but if not, we will not serve... or worship the golden image....Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him...*" (2Cor 2:14; Dan 3:17,18; Job 13:15).

Jesus picks up these promises and **our confession**, and begins to present them before the Father. What is the effect in Heaven? The accuser of the brethren is cast down. We come into victory and keep it.

Job's experience can be ours, because *"In all this did not Job sin with his lips"* (Job 2:10). The latter end of the matter is more blessed than the beginning. The double portion is poured out in restoration for all that was taken away in the trial. *"So the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning..."* (Job 42:12).

G. CONCLUSION

Oh, Hallelujah! My friend, here is your way to victory. **Confess, proclaim, speak a testimony of faith right now!**

You may be thinking: "No one is present to hear it." Oh yes, there is! Jesus is waiting to hear it, that He might become High Priest of your **confession**. The devil will hear it and tremble. God will hear it and bring you the victory over the devil, and bring you right into Jesus' victory. So shout it out for all the host of Heaven to hear it.

"The word is very nigh unto thee [even] in thy mouth..." (Deut 30:14). The word of your victory! The word of your healing! The word of your deliverance! Speak it, and it shall be established unto you. Proclaim it far and wide, and it will bless you. Tell it wherever you go, and it will happen to you — for **our God will stand behind His word to perform it**, even while you are yet speaking. *"...while they are yet speaking, I will hear"* (Isa 65:24).

Calvary's victory belongs to you. Enter in now and be saved (sozo) (Rom 10:9).

SECTION D5

HEAL SICK BODIES

By Gerald Rowlands

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Chapter 1

Sickness: Its Origin And Causes

About the Author

Gerald Rowlands is well qualified to write on healing, having been used of the Lord extensively around the world in this ministry. About five years ago, the Lord visited Gerald and told him to go to Africa.

Shortly after arriving in Africa, Gerald and his co-workers began outdoor evangelistic campaigns. Outstanding miracles of healing began taking place. Lameness were walking, blind were seeing and the poor were hearing the gospel just as in Bible days.

You, too, can enter into such a ministry if you will seek the Lord for His mighty Baptism in the Holy Spirit until you are filled to overflowing.

Then, by exercising faith and believing the Word of God as explained in this section, you, too, can lay hands on the sick and they will recover.

Introduction

The ministry of healing is a key part of the gospel of the Kingdom. The great truth that God heals runs all throughout the Bible. Both Old and New Testaments give witness to God's provision for the healing of our sicknesses and diseases.

A large portion of Christ's earthly ministry was concerned directly with ministering physical healing to the sick and afflicted. The history of the early Church is full of accounts of great healings and miracles, done in the Name of Jesus. It was only in the Dark Ages, when the Church went into apostasy, that the great healing river became a tiny stream.

The Reformation in the Church, about 500 years ago, restored lost truth to the Church. One of the great truths which the Spirit restored was that of divine healing. All over the world, Christians are discovering the reality of God's healing power.

This section is dedicated to every Christian minister. Our prayer is that it will inspire all who read it to seek God earnestly for a healing ministry.

It is not intended to argue the cause of healing with those who would dispute its validity, nor does it claim to be a comprehensive treatment of this important subject. It is merely a sincere effort to help those who have not as yet witnessed God's healing power in their ministry.

As you read, may the Holy Spirit increase your understanding and faith to receive God's healing power on behalf of suffering humanity. If the inspiration and instruction you receive results in the healing of even one person, it will have been worthwhile.

Rise up! Claim your inheritance! Let God release His supernatural power through you to heal others.

A. WHERE DID SICKNESS ORIGINATE?

1. Adam: Created Spiritually Perfect

Adam and Eve were created sinless, blameless and guiltless. Created in the image and likeness of God (Gen 1:26), they enjoyed untainted fellowship with God. They were innocent. Free from all sense of moral wrong, they enjoyed inner peace and harmony.

They knew no fear. Nor were they plagued by inhibitions or complexes. They were not self-conscious in any harmful or destructive sense. They were naked, but had no guilt or shame about it (Gen 2:25). All these factors contributed to their condition of perfect health.

Fresh from the hand of their Creator, they were perfect beings — spiritually, physically, mentally and emotionally. They were a splendid product of God's creative genius, created in the image and likeness of Jehovah (Gen 1:26).

2. Adam: Created Psychologically And Emotionally Perfect

God gave Adam the task of naming all the animals of the Creation (Gen 2:19,20). He also gave him the task of governing and having dominion. The general impression conveyed is that Adam was psychologically competent, respected and enjoyed by God. There is no record of emotional disquiet until the moment that they knew their sin. At that point, their hearts were filled with fear, and they hid themselves (Gen 3:7-10).

3. Adam: Created Physically Perfect

God personally designed and created every detail of Adam's body. God looked upon His whole Creation and declared that everything was very good (Gen 1:31). Years later, King David spoke for all of us when he said that man was "*Awesomely and wonderfully made...*" (Ps 139:14).

4. Perfection Of The Total Man

God has always been committed to the "Total Man." He created us perfect, and His saving power in Jesus Christ has vital importance for the "Total Man." As this message develops, you will see that the healing power of God is still vitally rooted in God's concern for the "Total Man."

5. What Went Wrong...?

There was a moment in history when man stood on the edge of tragedy. A single act of disobedience plunged the human race into a long, dark fall from the presence of God. The original couple had access to every tree, herb and fruit in the garden. The only exception was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God said: "*Of every tree of the garden, thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die*" (Gen 1:16,17).

God warned them that if they ever disobeyed Him, they would die — spiritually. As a direct result of that spiritual death, they would ultimately die physically, too.

God (literal) said: '*In dying, thou shalt die.*' Because you die spiritually, the law of death will become active within you, and you will eventually die physically.

Physical death was the direct result of the spiritual transgression which caused Adam and Eve to be driven from the presence of the Lord. Since they were cut off from the presence of God, Who was their life-source, the law of sin and death began to operate within them. A process of deterioration began.

This would never have come upon mankind had he remained in right relationship with God. The process of deterioration is called sickness and aging. It has plagued man ever since the tragedy in Eden.

This single act of disobedience introduced into the world every negative thing which curses mankind today — spiritually, psychologically and physically. It is the source of:

DIS-EASE,
DIS-ORDER,
DIS-ABILITY,
DIS-TRESS,
DIS-COMFORT,
DIS-ASTER,
DIS-CORD,
DIS-COURAGEMENT,
DIS-HARMONY,

DIS-INTEGRATION.

All of these negative attitudes and emotions, which are harmful to good health, stem from disobedience. They are known as "catabolic emotions." They are destroyers of health.

6. Spiritual Tragedy Of The Fall

Man lost his innocence, and instead inherited guilt and condemnation. Man lost the precious communion with God. He was driven from the Divine Presence for the rest of his days.

Man lost the eternal life of his spirit. This was his God-consciousness.

Man lost God's image and likeness. Man lost his dominion. This true dominion depended upon his being in the image and likeness of God.

Man was God's representative in the Creation. Ever since, man has been striving to reassert his dominion over the Creation. All Adam's descendants were to have inherited God's likeness. Instead, they inherited the likeness of Adam's fallen humanity (Gen 5:3).

7. Psychological Tragedy Of The Fall

Man lost his intellectual perfection. Man strives to regain the knowledge that will give him mastery. Truth depends upon right relationship with God, for God is the Author of truth.

Man lost emotional wholeness. Since the Fall, mankind has never been free from sorrow, suffering and hardship (Gen 3:15-19).

Man lost his psychological freedom. He sold himself to the devil. The devil became the god of this world (2Cor 4:4). Adam mortgaged all his God-given rights and privileges. From that time, mankind has been the prey of the devil and his demonic hosts.

8. Physical Tragedy Of The Fall

"And unto Adam, God said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying: Thou shall not eat of it:

"Cursed is the ground/or thy sake; in sorrow shall thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee;

"And thou shall eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it thou was taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return" (Gen 3:17-19).

Fallen mankind inherited an earth which was cursed, from which man would have to struggle by the sweat of his brow to gain a living. Thorns and briars would be prolific, adding to men's labors. He was driven from God's presence and from the tree of life. He was doomed to death. *"Unto dust thou shalt return."*

As for Eve, she also inherited a particular woe which she would pass on to women of all generations. This included sorrow, pain and travail in childbearing, and subjection to the rule of her husband.

Man lost his health and inherited sickness.

The present scourge of sickness which afflicts all humanity has its origin in the tragedy enacted in Eden. Sin entered the world then. With sin came sickness. Death is the ultimate result of unrestrained sickness. If Adam had not sinned, mankind would never have known suffering and disease. He chose to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good

and evil. Sickness is part of that evil. So all sickness comes indirectly from Satan. God is not the author of sickness.

We will now discuss the several ways by which we become sick.

B. HOW PEOPLE BECOME SICK

Let me summarize some of the causes of sickness and disease.

1. Sickness Entered The World When Adam Fell

It is part of the curse which came upon mankind as a direct result of disobedience. Therefore, directly or indirectly, sin is the root cause of all sickness. Sickness is part of the "*wages of sin*" (Rom 6:23).

DIS-ease suggests lack of ease, lack of peace. This was the state of Adam's mind and emotions after his transgression. The weight of conviction, guilt, condemnation and shame which he inherited left him open and vulnerable to disease.

We have good reason to believe that until the Fall, there were no destructive viruses, organisms or germs in the world. At the conclusion of His creative work, God saw that "*everything was very GOOD.*"

He would not have said this if there were already present tuberculosis, cholera or smallpox, cancer cells, and a whole host of disease-carrying viruses and bacteria. These dreadful destroyers must have come with the curse.

2. Sin Still Causes Sickness

Since sin is basically the rejection of God's rule, which isolates us from the life of God, we may see that this alienation is still the major cause of sickness.

In the coming manifestation of the Kingdom of God, when all rebellion is put down, there will no longer be any sickness, sorrow or death (Rev 21:4).

3. Demonic Powers

Evil spirits can sometimes be the direct cause of sickness and affliction.

In Matthew 9:32,33, we read about a "*dumb man possessed with a devil.*" When Jesus cast out the dumb spirit, the man was immediately able to speak. His vocal cords had obviously been held in bondage by the dumb spirit.

In Mark 9:17-27, the story is told of a young man who was brought to Jesus, having a dumb spirit (vs 17). This spirit was actually causing both deafness and dumbness. Jesus cast out the deaf and dumb spirit (vs 25), and the young man was delivered.

In Luke 13:11 -16, we have the account of a woman who '*had a spirit of infirmity for eighteen years.*' Her spine was curved, her face was bowed towards the ground. Today, doctors would say she had a "chronic curvature of the spine." Jesus loosed her from her spirit of infirmity; immediately her spine was made straight, and she glorified God for her deliverance.

There are several occasions in the Scriptures where persons were said to be afflicted with spirits of infirmity. The only way for them to be healed was for those spirits to be cast out by the word of command. Once the spirit has been cast out, the symptoms then disappear. Such persons can never be healed through any means other than a deliverance ministry.

4. Neglect of Health

We must face the fact that our health can suffer if we neglect various basic factors of health and vitality. To stay in health, a proper diet must be maintained. There are

certain nutrients and vitamins which must be included in our regular diet. Deficiencies and lack in the diet will ultimately cause a breakdown of health.

Inadequate rest and sleep will also adversely affect the condition of health. Too much work and too little time for rest and relaxation will take its toll upon one's health. This can be particularly true of ministers.

Epaphroditus (Phil 2:25-30) was one example of this. He came very close to death; the cause of his condition was that of overwork in the service of the Lord and His people.

Many chapters of the Bible deal with food laws —telling us what is healthy for us, and what is not (Lev 11:1-47; Deut 14:3-21).

The New Testament does not require that we observe these laws, but good health does (Rom 14:2, 3, 14, 15). We should not be preoccupied with our food, but we should eat a diet of food that will keep us healthy (Heb 13:9).

5. Natural Aging Reduces Physical Strength

When one is young, there is a youthful vitality which is conducive to good health. The Bible speaks of the "*Dew of youth*" (Ps 110:3). David also speaks of "*Renewing one's youth, like the eagle*" (Ps 103:5). Isaiah makes it clear that this refers to renewing of our youthful strength (Isa 40:31).

Jeremiah tells us that "*It is good that a man should bear the yoke in his youth*" (Lam 3:27). The early part of life is the time for hard work. It is the prime of life and the peak of physical strength.

Solomon describes so graphically the limitations of advancing years. He urges us: "*Remember thy creator in the days of thy youth*" (Eccl 12:1).

Love God and serve Him while you still have strength and vitality to do it vigorously.

It was considered remarkable that Moses, when he reached more advanced years, still had good eyesight and physical strength (Deut 34:7). The usual thing is that strength diminishes and eyesight deteriorates once the prime of life is passed.

Does this mean that we cannot expect to have health and strength in advancing years? Does it mean that we cannot expect physical healing in later years?

Certainly not! God promises; "*As thy days, so shall thy strength be*" (Deut 33:25). I believe this teaches that we can expect to have good health all throughout our life. I have met many Christians, advanced in years, who have thought that signs of physical deterioration have indicated that God is no longer interested in them.

Sometimes they worry that perhaps they have committed some sin, and their bodily weakness is a judgment upon them.

Oftentimes sincere Christians come under great condemnation in this regard, feeling they must have committed some terrible, unforgivable sin.

It has helped them enormously to realize that there is a natural process of physical deterioration in advanced years which affects Christians and non-Christians alike. The later years of one's life also have their compensations, and are not to be despised.

Chapter 2

God's Provision For Healing

A. THE REDEMPTIVE NAMES OF GOD

We begin to understand something of God's concern for the total man — spirit, soul and body — when we consider the redemptive names, or titles, of Jehovah.

"Jehovah" means "the Self-existent One Who reveals Himself." It is used with special reference to the redemptive work of God.

There are seven compound names in the Scriptures which are used in conjunction with the name Jehovah. Each one of them reveals a particular aspect of the redemption which He has provided.

1. Jehovah Jireh (Gen 22:14): "The Lord Will Provide"

Thus Jehovah announced Himself to Abraham on Mount Moriah. Faced with the awful prospect of sacrificing his only well-beloved son, Abraham heard the voice of the Lord cry: '*Lay not thine hand upon the lad.*' God had provided a sacrifice in the bush nearby. *"And Abraham called the name of that place, 'Jehovah Jireh.'"* How wonderful to know that God has committed Himself to provide for us a Redeemer — One Who dies in our place!

2. Jehovah Rapha (Exo 15:26): "I Am The Lord That Healeth Thee"

Shortly after God had brought His people out from Egypt, He revealed Himself to them as their Healer. He had already proven Himself to them as their Savior and Deliverer. Now He reveals Himself also as their Healer.

The Old Testament clearly shows healing as an integral part of redemption. Paul tells us that the New Covenant is a "better covenant," superior in every way. If the Old Covenant made provision for the total man, surely the New Covenant would not do less.

3. Jehovah Nissi (Exo 17:15): "The Lord Our Banner Or Our Victor"

This revelation came immediately after God had given a great victory to Israel over the Amalekites.

Moses stood with hands outstretched towards God, and the Lord destroyed all their enemies before them. A great victory was won. Moses built an altar to the Lord, and called the place Jehovah Nissi: *"The Lord who has spread the banner of his victory above us."*

4. Jehovah Shalom (Judg 6:23): "The Lord Our Peace"

This redemptive title reveals to us the glorious privilege of knowing and possessing the peace of God through the redemption which is ours in Christ.

It is a fullness of peace which literally means: *"the possession of all things needful for one's peace."*

The Scripture says of Christ: *"He is our peace"* (Eph 2:14). The word "peace" (Hebrew = *Shalom*) means "well-being, wholeness, for our completeness, our total well-being."

5. Jehovah Raah (Ps 23:1): The Lord My Shepherd"

This Psalm of David describes the bliss and security of one under such a shepherd as the Lord. The Lord as Shepherd emphasizes His caring concern.

Since we are the sheep of God's pasture, it is wonderful to know that Christ's redemption has afforded us the protection of so thoughtful and kind a Shepherd.

6. Jehovah Tsidkenu (Jer 23:6): "The Lord Our Righteousness"

Jesus made it possible for us to become the righteousness of God in Christ. He accomplished this by becoming sin for us and bearing the penalty and judgment of God in our stead.

Christ's redemption does not only "save" us; it declares us righteous before the Father.

*"For Christ has been made unto us wisdom, **righteousness**, sanctification and redemption" (1 Cor 1:30).*

7. Jehovah Shammah (Eze 48:35): "The Lord Is Present"

The presence of God has been restored to our life through Jesus. Adam was driven out from God's presence, but we have been brought back into His presence through Christ. As His redeemed people, we have the blessing of His presence continually.

Each of these redemptive names reveals the various blessings God has made available to us through Christ.

Healing is not the special privilege of a favored few; it is a redemptive right of all who fulfill the covenant requirements. God was **Jehovah Rapha** to Israel, and He declares: *"I am Jehovah, I change not"* (Mal 3:6).

B. JESUS CHRIST, OUR HEALER

Every blessing we receive from God comes to us through Christ's victory at Calvary. This includes healing.

The word "atonement" means to make AT ONE with God. The purpose is to heal the alienation and restore us to fellowship with God, and to restore all that man lost as a result of the Fall.

One of the things mankind lost was health and strength. So health is restored through the atonement.

1. Healing Through God's Atonement

Sin and sickness are the double curse which came on mankind. Jesus provided a double cure for the double curse. Isaiah tells the story so graphically (see Isaiah 53).

*"Surely he hath borne our **griefs** and carried our **sorrows**"* (Isa 53:4). Scholars of the Hebrew (original language of the Old Testament) have pointed out that the word *choliy*, which is translated "griefs" (in some languages), is most frequently translated "sickness." It is derived from the word *Chalah*, which means "to be weak, sick or afflicted." Also, the word translated "sorrows" (*Makob*) is generally rendered "pain."

With this in mind, we can understand Matthew's comment on Isaiah 53:4: *"He himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses"* (Matt 8:17). Matthew's translation is a more accurate one, and it supports the fact that physical healing is through the atonement of Christ.

There are two verbs in Isaiah 53:4 which have great significance. The first one, "borne" (Hebrew = *nasa*), is the same verb that is employed in Isaiah 53:12: *"He **bore** the **sins** of many."*

Since the same verb is used in both verses, we understand that Christ "bore" our sicknesses in the same manner in which He bore our sins. We know that He bore our sins by suffering as our substitute. This must also be true of our sickness. Christ suffered them for us.

Because He bore my sins as my substitute, I am free from them. Because He also bore my sicknesses, I am free from them, too. Christ bore both our sins and our sicknesses in Himself, so there is forgiveness and healing for all who will accept them by faith.

The second verb, "carried" (Hebrew = *cabal*), can mean "to bear something, as a penalty." It is used in Isaiah 53:11 where we read: "*For he shall bear their iniquities.*" In both instances, the same Hebrew verb is used with respect to our sins and our sicknesses.

The glorious conclusion is: If Christ bore the penalty of my sins, I do not have to suffer it. If Christ bore my sicknesses, I do not have to bear them.

2. Healing Was Purchased At Calvary

We are clearly justified in believing that Christ's atonement on the cross provides a perfect remedy for the whole man — spirit, soul and body. Christ purchased wholeness (perfect soundness) for mankind through His death.

The Greek New Testament confirms the conclusion that our redemption in Christ includes healing as well as forgiveness.

The common verb for "save" is "sozo," which conveys the idea of wholeness, or perfect soundness. The word translated "saved" in Romans 10:9, "*Thou shalt be saved,*" is the same word which is translated "whole" in Mark 6:56: "*As many [sick persons] as touched him [Christ] were made 'whole.'*" The word "sozo" is used in both cases.

No Christian would deny that Christ's sufferings still atone for our sins today. Why then should we imagine that healing is not for today?

Since He was a healing God in the Old Testament, He is still a healing God today. He is still Jehovah Rapha, the Lord our Healer (or Physician). He changes not! God is consistent. His character, nature and disposition are unchanging. Therefore, His will is unchanging also.

3. Christ's Ministry Of Healing

Jesus Himself is our best guide to the ministry of healing. The true heart and nature of God is most clearly seen in Jesus Christ.

Philip asked: "*Lord, show us the Father, and that will be enough for us.*" Jesus answered: "*Don't you know me, Philip? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father... Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves.*"

"I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father" (John 14:8-12 niv).

This passage teaches us that Jesus came to show us, by His life and ministry, what God is like in His unchanging nature. Jesus shows so clearly that He is interested in the "total man."

He healed when healing was needed. He fed the multitude when food was needed. He showed the Father's love for man as He had created him — spirit, soul and body.

We also learn something about how Jesus valued His miracles. For Him, miracles confirmed the truth of His words. We are also encouraged to believe for Christ's healing power in our own ministry, "*.. for anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing.*"

4. Why Did Christ Heal?

a. To Fulfill His Prophetic Ministry. When the great crowd gathered after the healing of Peter's mother-in-law, Matthew tells us: "*He healed them all, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah, the prophet, saying, 'Himself took our infirmities and carried our sicknesses'*" (Isa 53:4-6, Matt 8:16, 17).

b. To Express His Compassion. Numerous scriptures mention the compassion of Christ motivating Him to meet the needs of the people. Jesus was "...moved with compassion, and healed their sicknesses" (Matt 14:14; 20:34; Mark 1:40,41; 5:19; 9:22).

c. To Convey The Mercy Of God. Speaking of Epaphroditus, Paul says: "For...he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not only on him, but on me also...." Paul must believe that this means the Lord healed Epaphroditus (Phil 2:27).

d. To Prove That God Had Truly Sent Him. The miracles and healings which attended the ministry of Jesus were signs or credentials to prove that God was with Him.

Peter calls Him "a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you" (Acts 2:22).

e. To Destroy The Works Of The Devil. "For this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil" (I Jn 3:8).

"How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all who were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him" (Acts 10:38).

"That he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil" (Heb 2:14). Sickness is a work of the devil, and Jesus was manifested to destroy it.

f. To, Manifest The Works Of God. Jesus and His disciples one day saw a man who had been blind from birth. The disciples were curious to know the cause of this man's blindness. Was it the result of his sin, or that of his parents?

Jesus, however, was interested in something else. He said:

"That the works of God should be manifest in him, I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day" (John 9:3,4).

He then proceeded to heal the man, showing clearly that one of the reasons He healed the sick was to make manifest the works of God.

g. To Manifest The Glory Of God. The mighty works of God were performed by Jesus, that His Father might be glorified. Standing before the tomb of Lazarus, Jesus said to Martha:

"Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?" (John 11:40).

In Luke 13:10-17, we read the story of the woman bound by a spirit of infirmity for eighteen years, and how Jesus loosed her from her infirmity.

Verse 13 tells us: "And he laid his hands upon her; and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God." Notice that it was after she was healed that she glorified God.

5. Some Methods Jesus Employed To Heal

Jesus did not employ only one method to heal the people. He ministered to them in a variety of ways. Let us consider briefly a few of those ways:

a. He Spoke The Word Of Authority. The Roman officer who approached Jesus (Matt 8:5-13) on behalf of his servant, recognized Christ's word of authority. As an army officer, he was accustomed to both giving and receiving orders.

He knew that a true word of authority gained immediate response. So impressed was he with Christ's authority, that he besought Him:

"Speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed" (vs 8). Later he discovered that his servant was actually healed at the very hour that Jesus spoke the word.

We also have authority in Jesus' Name. Christ Himself said: *"Whosoever shall say unto this mountain, 'Be thou removed and be thou cast into the sea,' and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass, he shall have whatsoever he saith"* (Mark 11:23).

b. He Laid Hands Upon The Sick. Jesus frequently laid hands upon the sick to minister healing. Because of their cultural background, people had great faith in the laying on of hands.

Jairus besought Jesus that He would come and lay hands on his daughter, who lay at the point of death (Mark 5:21-23).

When Jesus came to Nazareth, His home town. He *"laid his hands upon a few sick folk and healed them"* (Mark 6:5). In Luke 4:40, many came to Jesus suffering from all manner of diseases, and *"He laid his hands on every one of them and healed them."*

c. He Rebuked Sickness. Jesus actually verbally addressed sickness at times, rebuking it and commanding it to leave. Luke records two interesting incidents in the fourth chapter of his Gospel.

The first concerns a man in the synagogue who had an unclean spirit. Jesus rebuked the spirit, commanding it to *"hold your peace, and come out of him."* The spirit obeyed immediately and left the man (Luke 4:33-37).

Jesus and some of the disciples went straight from the synagogue to Peter's house, where Peter's mother-in-law lay sick with a fever. Luke tells us that Jesus "rebuked" the fever, and it left her, and immediately she arose and ministered unto them (see Luke 4:38,39).

The interesting thing is that the word for "rebuke" is the same in both instances. Jesus treated the fever just as He had treated the spirit. He rebuked them both verbally, commanding them to leave, and they did so.

d. He Touched People. *"And Jesus put forth his hand and touched him, saying 'I will, be thou clean.' And immediately his leprosy was cleansed"* (Matt 8:3).

*"Then **touched** he their eyes, saying 'According to your faith, be it unto you'"* (Matt 9:29).

When Peter smote the servant of the High Priest and cut off his ear, we read: *"And Jesus **touched** his ear, and healed him"* (Luke 22:51).

There are many other instances where Jesus touched people and healed them.

e. People Touched Him. *"And when the men of that country had knowledge of him, they sent out into all that country round about, and brought unto him all that were diseased; and besought him that they might only **touch** the hem of his garment; and as many as **touched him** were made perfectly whole"* (Matt 14:35-36).

*"And a certain woman, which had an issue of blood twelve years...came behind him and touched his garment, for she said, 'if I may **touch** but his clothes, I shall be whole': and straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague"* (Mark 5:25-29).

Chapter 3

Ways And Means Of Healing: Part I

God has many **ways** to make His healing power available to us today. He can work in any way He chooses. Do not make the mistake of trying to dictate to Him which way He is to heal. He knows best. Let Him do it His way. Let us look at some of the **means** through which He may choose to work.

A. NATURAL HEALING: THE RECOVERY POWERS OF NATURE

One of the reasons why I personally am convinced that God is a healing God, is the natural law of healing and recuperation which He has built into the human system. The body has amazing resistance and recovery powers. Given a chance, it will restore itself to health.

Think for a moment of a wonderful substance God has placed in the blood. Fibrin is a protein in the bloodstream. It is soluble, and travels around the circulatory system continually without causing any problems.

However, if a person is wounded and the blood begins to pour from the wound, the fibrin begins to stick together and form a clot.

On contact with the air, this fibrin (which is like white thread) begins to form a mesh of white fibers, and a clot is formed. This stops the flow of the blood from the wound.

If a cloth or bandage is held over the cut for a while, the fibrin protein will go to work forming a clot to stem the bleeding. The bandage can then be taken away, and the flow of blood will have been halted by the clot.

White blood cells are also part of the body's wonderful defense mechanism. They are the defense force of the body. When unfriendly disease-causing organisms enter the body, the brain immediately sends a signal to the white corpuscles. They quickly rally to the point at which the bacteria have entered and begin to attack and devour the foreign organisms.

As the white corpuscles overcome the invading army, the dead bodies of the enemy begin to pile up. This is essentially what a boil is — the building up of bad bacteria which the white blood cells have defeated.

Eventually the boil bursts and the body casts off the remains of the enemy which unsuccessfully tried to infect the system.

There are many other defense mechanisms within the human body. Together, these constitute the marvelous immune system which gives us resistance to disease. The immune system seeks to protect the body at all times from enemy invasions, and to preserve the condition of health which God has ordained for it. Remember that sickness is abnormal. Good health is God's normal condition for His wonderful creation.

B. DIETARY AND GENERAL CARE OF THE BODY

Inadequate care of the body can lead to a condition of ill health. When this happens, the body not only requires a physical healing; it also requires some changes to take place which will provide adequate care and attention in the future.

I am not suggesting that we Gentiles should follow the Jewish food and health laws to the letter. I am saying that we should learn from them the necessity of giving due care and consideration to the matter of diet and hygiene.

When a person is suffering from malnutrition (the consequence of an inadequate diet), there is really only one cure: a definite improvement in the diet.

One needs to ensure, to the best of one's ability, that the diet is balanced and food is nutritious, containing the proteins and vitamins which the body requires to maintain good health. In many countries this is not easy.

Serious food shortages make it difficult and some times impossible to obtain a variety of food products to keep healthy. However, even in countries where there is plenty of food in great variety, people often fail to recognize the great importance of nutrition.

Some even feel that they cannot afford to spend the money to eat properly. Unfortunately, they will eventually have to spend the money for medical treatment. It is much better to spend money on nutritious food than on doctors, drugs and hospital bills.

1. Nutrition

For good health, the human body usually needs nutrition from the four main food groups:

a. Proteins. Meat, fish or poultry. (Lentils and some varieties of dried beans or nuts can be substituted.) Four to six ounces of one of these daily.

b. Vegetables. Carrots, celery, peas, corn, broccoli, bean sprouts, potatoes (and scores of other similar vegetables). At least three or four of these daily.

c. Fruits. Oranges, grapes, apples, tomatoes, mangoes, bananas, pineapple (and scores of other similar fruits). At least one or two of these daily.

d. Grains. Wheat, rice, barley, etc. (preferably brown, **not** white —white rice and white flour have most nutrients taken out of them); and products made from whole (brown) grain, such as bread, pastas, etc. Two servings or more daily.

2. Habits And Hygiene

At the other extreme, there are people who damage their health through overeating, or eating too much of the wrong foods.

They eat too many fatty foods and too much starch. This creates fat tissue instead of energy. Such people become overweight, and their health suffers as a result.

It has been said that many people today are "digging their graves with their teeth." Their eating habits are causing ill-health and even premature death.

There is a need for discipline in such matters. Our bodies are no longer our own. They have been bought with a price. They now belong to God, and we are to glorify God through the proper care of them (1 Cor 6:20).

Likewise, we must be aware of the necessity for proper hygiene. Washing the body and cleaning the eating utensils is essential. Food residue breeds germs, and germs breed disease. The saying, "Cleanliness is next to godliness," has a good deal of truth in it.

A good bath for the body — at least once daily — is a good rule to follow. *"Then washed I thee with water..."* (Eze 16:9). *"Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having...our bodies washed with pure water"* (Heb 10:22).

C. MEDICAL ADVICE AND CARE

In cases where the body's health has deteriorated through inadequate attention to the natural laws of health, it is frequently necessary to have medical advice and care. No doctor can heal. Only God can heal. Medical science cooperates with the laws of God in order to help the patient recover.

A famous French physician once said: "I tend, but God heals." That is a true statement. Since God is essentially against sickness and disease, ethical doctors are

therefore cooperating with God towards the fulfillment of His purposes. Properly run hospitals are "houses of mercy," helping to combat the great plague that is in the world because of sin.

D. PSYCHOLOGICAL AND EMOTIONAL HEALING

1. Correct Attitudes And Thoughts

One of the important developments in medical science recently has been in diagnosing and treating "psychosomatic" sickness. By this we mean physical sicknesses which are the result of emotional condition and mental thought.

These are not imaginary sicknesses. The person is actually experiencing symptoms of being physically ill. They are symptoms of a physical ailment which the person does not in fact have — but thinks he has. The patient's problem has been produced originally by his state of mind or emotion.

Solomon touched on this principle when he said: "*As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he*" (Prov 23:7). Whatever a man allows his mind to dwell upon, he will become!

If a person is afraid of sickness, and always morbidly contemplates the possibility of becoming ill, those very thoughts can produce the actual ailment of which he is afraid.

Job was also very much aware of this principle. It seems that even though he was healthy and extremely prosperous, he continually harbored negative thoughts that one day he would lose everything.

Perhaps he would think to himself: "This is too good to last. Things are going too well for me. I cannot expect this to last forever." Whatever his specific thoughts were, it appears they were negative and pessimistic.

When tragedy did overtake him, and he became so ill he wished he had never been born, he said: "*For the thing which I greatly feared has come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me*" (Job 3:25).

Job realized that the fears which he had allowed to captivate his thoughts had attracted into his life the very things he had feared.

"*Fear has torment,*" the Bible says (1 Jn 4:18). Fear is a destroyer. It is destructive of both mental and physical health. This is one reason why Jesus admonished: "*Fear not, believe only*" (Luke 8:50).

We are made for faith, not fear. Faith strengthens and fortifies us. Fear demoralizes and destroys.

2. Uncontrolled Emotions

Negative emotions which are not brought under control are also destructive to health.

Many Christians allow themselves to be controlled by their emotions instead of ensuring that they control their emotions. They depend too much upon "how they feel." If they are a little depressed, they allow that depression to rule them.

Every small disappointment, upset or reversal plunges them deeper into despondency. Such lack of emotional discipline ultimately undermines one's health, and can cause serious sickness. Christians were never intended to be ruled by their emotions. Rather, they were meant to rule over their emotions, imaginations, moods and feelings by faith in the Word of God.

God's Word is reliable; our emotions are unreliable. If we feed regularly on the Word, it will stabilize the emotions. The Word-filled believer is no longer tossed to and

fro. He becomes as steady as the Word is. The Word adds qualities of strength, purpose and fortitude to the mind and heart.

Certain reliable medical authorities have said that more than 30 percent of all physical sickness originates initially in the mind or emotions. Such mental and emotional attitudes as worry, fear, anxiety, insecurity, morbid introspection, nervous tension, jealousy, frustration, anger and pessimism are powerful and destructive forces. If left unchecked, they will tear into pieces the fabric of one's health.

These are the main causes of many of the most serious physical ailments. High blood pressure, heart problems, circulatory diseases, asthma, stomach ulcers and chronic headaches are but a few of the many illnesses that may be induced by wrong mental and emotional attitudes.

When a person's sickness is psychosomatically induced, they not only need the physical sickness to be healed; they also need an inner healing of their emotional and mental processes. It is a simple thing for God to heal the physical symptoms; but if the mental attitude is not radically altered, the person will soon be ill again with the same or a similar sickness.

For instance, it is a simple matter for God to heal a stomach ulcer. What can be more difficult is the inner healing of the mental attitudes which caused the ulcer.

If the person concerned insists on carrying a great burden of mental stress, worry and anxiety, those attitudes will quickly cause another ulcer.

David gives an effective formula for healing such chronic problems.

3. How To Receive Emotional Healing

a. Cast Your Burden On The Lord. He encourages us to "*Cast your burden upon the Lord, and he will sustain you*" (Ps 55:22). "*Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you*" (I Pet 5:7).

This entails the casting of every anxiety, worry, fear or negative attitude upon the Lord.

Before we can do this, we must surrender our life completely to the Lord. When a life is totally yielded to God, it becomes His personal property. He is then responsible for the upkeep of it. He will maintain it in good health and strength.

It is only as we are willing to get rid of those burdens by casting them upon the Lord, that He is able to sustain us. If we insist on carrying those cumbersome burdens, not even God can sustain us in health!

Some years ago, I was carrying a great burden. A brother in the Lord said to me: "*God is only able to keep that which is committed to him*" (2Tim 1:12).

Commit this burden to the Lord. Let Him worry about it. He will keep and take care of it." Well, I did just that. I said: "Lord, I commit this whole problem to You. I can't do anything about it. You please take care of it — in Your own way."

I was rid of the worry and problem. The Lord produced a miraculous outcome seven years later.

b. Meditate On God's Word. David also describes the blessing of the man who meditates on God's Word, day and night. "*He shall be like a tree planted by rivers of water. He shall bring forth fruit in his season; his leaf shall not -wither; and whatsoever he does will prosper*" (Ps 1:3).

Meditating on God's Word has great therapeutic value. Solomon, son of David, further states that God's Word "*is health to all our flesh*" (Prov 4:20-22).

c. Bring Your Thoughts Into Captivity. Every thought can be brought into captivity to Christ. Sometimes there are troublesome thoughts that never leave us alone. They are like satanic strongholds in our mind (2Cor 10:3-5).

There is no reason to remain ruled by these thoughts. Tackle them with the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. Take passages of Scripture that are the God-given solution and fight against the fear. *"God has not given to me a spirit of fear. He has given me a spirit of power, of love and of a sound and well disciplined mind"* (2 Tim 1:7).

Don't repeat it just once. Meditate on it. Let God make you powerful and victorious. Confess it aloud. Strengthen your heart in it. The strongholds of the enemy will come tumbling down!

d. Fix Your Mind Upon God. *"Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing can make them stumble"* (Ps 119:165). The peace which comes to one through constant love for God's Word is a healing peace. The mind is kept *"in perfect peace, as it is stayed upon God, trusting in him implicitly"* (Isa 26:3).

God wants His people to be completely free from every mental and emotional problem, and also from the various sicknesses which are ultimately caused by the retention of those wrong attitudes.

4. Releasing The Human Spirit

At rebirth, eternal life is restored to the human spirit. This life is not an impersonal force. It is the Holy Spirit Himself Who comes to dwell within (I Cor 6:17). He is the life of God that we receive.

Sadly, many believers are untaught in the things of the Spirit or, tragically, taught incorrectly. Many have been taught that the age of miracles has passed. Many have been taught that the Gifts of the Spirit were only for the Apostolic Age. Many are ignorant of the power there is in the Word of God.

Because of this ignorance, their spirit is like an innocent man in jail. There is nothing wrong with the human spirit of man, but ignorance and error have blinded and stunted spiritual growth.

As the mind is renewed by the Word of God (Eph 4:22-24, Col 3:10, 16), this revelation sets the human spirit free and growth takes place.

Those who minister the Word in the power of the Spirit are God's instruments to bring this spiritual release.

Jesus said: *"If you hold to my teachings, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free..."* *"So if 'the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed"* (John 8:31,32,36). *"But when he, the Spirit of Truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth"* (John 16:13). *'Now the Lord is the Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom"* (2Cor 3:17).

The Holy Spirit uses people who yield to Him as His instruments to bring spiritual release and well-being. When this release takes place, we move into real spiritual health. This is the foundation of total-man well-being.

Correct teaching helps people to avoid many of the pitfalls and traps that produce sickness and trouble. A primary objective in teaching the Word is to strengthen the influence of the God-conscious reborn spirit. In other words, develop the spiritual senses or sensitivity of the saints.

So many Christians are unable to distinguish between their natural judgment and the counsel of God in their hearts. This is like spiritual malnutrition. By being fed on the Word of God, they will learn to identify the voice of God.

They will recognize that it harmonizes with their knowledge of the Word. This brings spiritual release and consequent health to the total man.

God's concern is for the total health and well-being of man. Physical healing is a vital way of producing this health. God-inspired teaching is another vital way of producing this divine health.

Chapter 4

Ways And Means Of Healing: Part II

A. EVANGELISTIC HEALING

This is the ministry of healing which follows the preaching of the gospel. It is one of the five evidences Jesus promised would always follow those that believe (Mark 16:17,18). Several things are required in order to see the manifestation of this kind of healing.

1. Preach The Gospel

The command which preceded the promise was: "*Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature*" (Mark 16:15). This tells us we are to conduct evangelistic ministry. We are to go into new territory and proclaim the gospel to the unconverted.

Paul followed this rule. He sought to preach the gospel where Christ had not yet been made known, rather than building upon a foundation which someone had already laid (Rom 15:20). As a result, his ministry was approved by God with "*...mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God...*" (Rom 15:19). The result was that the Gentiles were made obedient to the gospel by "word and deed" (Rom 15:18).

2. Proclaim Physical Healing

The proclamation of the gospel in the New Testament setting included an emphasis upon physical healing as well as the hope of eternal salvation.

A great portion of the ministry of Jesus was taken up with ministering to the sick and afflicted. They came to Him in multitudes, and we are told that on occasions, "*He healed them all*" (Matt 8:16).

In a similar manner, crowds of sick people came to the apostles. On at least one occasion, the shadow of Peter falling upon the sick as he passed by brought healing and deliverance (Acts 5:15,16).

Many wonders, signs and miracles were wrought by the apostles (Acts 5:12). It was largely as a result of such signs that great multitudes were subsequently added to the Church (Acts 5:14).

3. Lay Hands On The Sick

The laying on of hands was also a specific command related to evangelistic healing (Mark 16:18). Consider the significance of this act.

In the cultural setting of the people, the laying on of hands was frequently used in order to confer something upon a person. Usually, it was the conferring of an honor or a

blessing, a privilege, etc. Thus, those upon whom hands were laid would traditionally be expecting to receive something.

Notice what Jesus said about this matter. It is *"they that believe"* (vs 17) who should lay hands on the sick. It must be done *"in the name of Jesus"* (vs 17).

The believer's hands must be stretched out towards and laid upon the sick. Jesus declared: *"They shall recover"* (vs 18).

By reaching out our hands towards the suffering, we identify ourselves with them. We do so *"in the name of Jesus"* (see Acts 3:6). As we do this in faith, we become an extension of the hands of the Lord. God has no hands but our hands with which to reach a needy world.

Preaching the gospel and laying hands on the sick is a command of Christ. We must be obedient to Him. We must do it in faith, believing they will be healed.

When you touch the afflicted ones, claim the promise of God at that moment. Jesus said: *"They shall recover"* (Mark 16:18).

Recovery is not necessarily an immediate, instantaneous healing. It may be a process. It begins at the moment of contact, but it may be some time before it is finally complete. Do not lose faith. Do not start to doubt. Maintain an attitude of positive faith in God's statement. His Word is true. It cannot fail.

This ministry of healing should accompany every evangelist. That is the promise implicit in this commission. It should accompany every **believer**: *"these signs shall follow them that believe."*

B. ECCLESIASTICAL HEALING

Evangelistic healing is primarily a ministry to the unconverted, to convince them of the truth and reality of the gospel. Ecclesiastical healing is a ministry within the Church.

The scripture which forms a basis for our consideration of this channel of healing is James 5:14-16: *"Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the Church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord;*

"And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he has committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

The instructions in this passage are addressed specifically to Christians: *"Is any sick among you?"* - clearly indicating that James is addressing those in the Church. The instructions that follow are quite different from those in Mark 16:15-20.

1. Call For The Elders

The sick one is to *"call for the elders of the Church."* The initiative is with the sick one. They are to make the request, calling for the elders to minister to them.

2. Confess Sins

There is to be a confession of faults. If any sins have been committed, they are to be confessed also.

We have already considered the fact that a great deal of sickness begins on the inside. It may be that there is sin or disobedience in there.

Perhaps there are wrong attitudes. Oftentimes there are harmful thought-patterns and detrimental emotions. These are spiritual diseases which also produce physical ailments. There must be an acknowledgement and a confession of these sins.

Confession brings these hidden destroyers into the open. There can never be a healing of these inner problems until they have been confessed, renounced and forsaken.

Many people find it hard to acknowledge that they have any faults. Consequently, they never obtain healing for their faults or their physical infirmities. We must be willing for God to search the heart and put His finger upon any attitude or thought which is displeasing to Him.

Be open and honest before God. He is a loving Father Who wants to heal you; not a dreadful monster who wishes to punish you. He does not want to uncover these problem areas to embarrass or shame you. He wants to get them out of your heart and mind because they are poisoning and destroying you.

If God makes you aware of some sin or resentment which is out of harmony with His will, confess it to the elders (leaders).

It is better for this to be done in privacy rather than before a group of believers. *"Confess your faults one to another..."* (Jas 5:16). However, there are times when a confession to the whole body of believers is required. This is encouraged if the sin has been committed against the Church. Otherwise, the confession should be received by the elders privately, and the details should remain confidential to the elders.

Though the confession is made in the presence of the elders, we are actually making our confession to God. We may have offended our brother, but it is God against Whom we have sinned. We must earnestly seek His forgiveness.

Confession should also be made to the person we may have sinned against or offended. We should confess in a spirit of humility, sincerely seeking his or her forgiveness.

Under the Old Covenant, God required a trespass offering to be made in respect to an offense against a brother (Lev 6:17). One of the requirements of that offering involved repaying the full value of damages, plus 20 percent (Lev 6:5).

The principle here is that we must seek to make a generous restitution to the one we have offended. We should try to make up to him for the harm or hurt we may have caused him by our actions.

3. Anoint With Oil

"...let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord..." (Jas 5:14). Oil is symbolic of the Holy Spirit. When we anoint someone with oil, we are symbolically calling upon the Holy Spirit to manifest His presence and power in the situation. We are beseeching the Holy Spirit to come upon this person for whom we are about to pray.

The disciples evidently used this method quite frequently. In Mark 6:13, we read: *"And they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick, and they were healed."*

Oil also symbolizes light. The lamp on the lampstand in the Holy Place was actually an oil lamp. It was oil set on fire, therefore, which gave light in that Holy Place.

Thus, when we anoint someone with oil, we are also saying: "Father, we recognize that we are performing this act in the light of Your presence. We understand that nothing is hidden from You.

"You know all things. Therefore, help us to be totally honest in this situation, for nothing dishonest or insincere will escape Your attention.

"If this sick person now seeking You has any faults of which he is genuinely unaware, may the light of Your presence reveal these things that they might be dealt with."

Oil, further, is symbolic of healing. It contains healing properties. It is probably the oldest medicine known to man. It has a soothing, healing effect.

The man rescued by the good Samaritan had oil and wine poured into his wounds (Luke 10:33,34). The wine was to cleanse the wounds; the oil was to heal them.

When we anoint with oil, we are not applying it as a medicine, but as a symbol of healing — looking to the Holy Spirit to impart His healing to this sick one.

4. Pray The Prayer Of Faith

Having anointed with oil, the elders must now pray the prayer of faith. James says: "*The prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up*" (Jas 5:15).

a. The Prayer Of Faith Is Based Solely On What God's Word Declares. The foundation upon which the prayer of faith stands is the integrity of God's Word alone. The prayer of faith does not look to any other source for confirmation or encouragement. It believes implicitly that God's Word is the only source of ultimate truth. "...*Let God be true, and every man a liar...*" (Rom 3:4).

Biblical faith has its origins in God's Word. "*Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*" (Rom 10:17).

It follows that if we are to pray the prayer of faith, we must familiarize ourselves thoroughly with what God's Word says about healing.

We must KNOW, from His Word, that it IS His will to heal. There must be a sound foundation of faith deep within us, built upon God's Word alone.

b. The Prayer Of Faith Knows The Will Of God. A leper once said to Jesus: "*If you will, you can make me whole*" (Matt 8:1-4). This leper had no doubt whatsoever as to the ability of Jesus to heal his condition. His doubt was in the area of whether or not **it was His will** to do so.

Jesus settled this immediately when He replied: "*I will; be thou clean, and immediately his leprosy was cleansed.*"

We must also be firmly settled in our heart that it is God's will to heal. If any uncertainty or doubt within causes us to conclude our prayer with "if it be Thy will," then we have NOT prayed the prayer of faith.

In addition to knowing from the Word that it is God's will to heal the sick, we should also seek God earnestly to know His will specifically for the person for whom we are praying.

In other words, while it is always God's desire to heal, sometimes His healing is delayed or hindered for certain reasons. We need to ascertain that it is indeed God's will to heal this person right now.

Sometimes when we seek this specific knowledge, God reveals some hindrance which is blocking the manifestation of His healing power.

We can then seek to rectify that problem, and clear the way for healing to take place.

James goes on to make clear that such a doubting person shall receive nothing from the Lord (Jas 1:6,7).

The prayer of faith is, therefore, totally committed to the confidence that God is going to answer prayer and heal the sick one.

There is no room for doubt, uncertainty or hesitancy. This prayer is one of supreme, committed confidence.

c. The Prayer Of Faith Has A Definite Objective. Jesus asked: "*What wilt thou, that I should do unto thee?*" (Mark 10:51). In modern terminology He was asking: "WHAT is your specific desire? What is the specific nature of your requests?"

Christians are often so unspecific in their prayers that they would not even know afterwards whether God had answered their prayer or not.

If we pray vaguely, we shall not receive anything. We must define specifically what it is we are believing God to do, and make that request known to Him in prayer with thanksgiving.

A blind man to whom Jesus addressed such a question replied immediately: "*Lord that I might receive my sight*" (Mark 10:51). He stated his desire definitely, specifically and concisely. Jesus responded to his request at once, and the man received his sight.

d. The Prayer Of Faith Asks And Receives. Many sincere Christians have failed to understand that the prayer of faith is both asking and RECEIVING. To ask and keep on asking indefinitely can some times be an indication of our unbelief.

Jesus said: "*Ask and if shall be given you*" (Matt 7:7). So when we have asked Him, we need then to receive our request from His hand with appropriate thanks giving (see Philippians 4:6).

e. The Prayer Of Faith Has A Right Motive. James explained two main reasons why we sometimes do not receive the answers to our prayers (Jas 4:2,3).

The **first** is that we sometimes simply do not ask! The **second** reason is that we pray, but with the wrong motive. James says "*we ask amiss*" for selfish reasons.

So we ought to ensure that our motives are pure. Do we want this request for the right reason?

The right reason is that God should be glorified and His Name exalted. Anything less than this is frequently suspect in its motivation.

Many people desire things for extremely selfish reasons. God does not generally respond to self-centered prayers. It is good to clarify one's motives and make sure they are worthy ones.

The minister whom God may use to impart healing must also ensure that his motives are worthy ones. Some pray for the sick because of vain and superficial motives. Too many ministers begin to think that the power comes **from** them instead of **through** them. Many are puffed up with pride because God is using them. They frequently disqualify themselves from greater effectiveness through this carnal attitude.

Still others would seek to use the gift of God for personal gain. In doing so, they pervert that gift. The principle is: "*.. freely you have received, freely give...*" (Matt 10:8).

f. The Prayer Of Faith Has A Bold Confession. A positive confession is essential to the functioning of faith. "*I believed, therefore have I spoken*" (2Cor 4:13). "*For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation*" (Rom 10:10). "*Let us hold fast to the profession [confession] of our faith without wavering, for he is faithful that promised, who also will do it*" (Heb 10:23).

Jesus explained the relationship between our confession and receiving what we ask of God. "*For verily I say unto you, that whosoever shall say unto this mountain, be*

*thou removed and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe **that those things which he sayeth** shall come to pass, he shall have whatsoever he **saith***" (Mark 11:23).

If your confession does not agree with the Word of God, then it is not faith speaking. Faith always agrees with God's Word.

The literal meaning of the verb "to confess" in New Testament Greek is "to agree with," "to say the same thing." If we are to pray the prayer of faith, without doubting, then our conversation and confession must also harmonize with our prayer.

g. The Prayer Of Faith Acts In Agreement With Our Confession. Our faith confession is a verbal statement which agrees with the attitude of faith we hold about the healing of this sick person.

We must go somewhat further than speaking words of faith. We must take faith actions. These are actions which agree with the faith statements we have made. This is literally acting upon God's Word.

James says: "Faith without works is dead" (Jas 2:20). If we profess to believe something, but do not act upon it, then our profession is empty.

So often Jesus demanded faith action from those whom He healed. "*Rise, take up your bed and walk,*" He commanded the lame man (Mark 2:11). It is usually at this precise moment, when one begins to act in faith, that a miracle takes place.

In contrast, many do not receive healing, because at the moment at which they should act in faith, they fail to finally act on the promise.

h. The Prayer Of Faith Continues Steadfastly. Hebrews 10:23 says: "*Let us holdfast the profession of our faith without wavering, for he is faithful that promised.*" Very often, our faith is tested because what we ask and believe for is not immediately manifest. This is a very critical and important factor in the exercise of faith.

True faith has an enduring quality which continues to believe steadfastly, even when the results are not immediately evident. True faith does not "*...cast away its confidence, which has great recompense of reward*" (Heb 10:35,36).

Bible faith relates solely to what God's Word declares. It does not depend upon feelings, symptoms or evidences discerned by the natural senses. It believes, confesses and acts upon the Word of God.

So when there is no apparent change or improvement, it just goes on believing that God's Word is true. Faith always confesses that the Word is true, and acts accordingly.

For Abraham, this process went on for years. While he waited for God to do what he promised, Abraham "*...was strong in faith, giving glory to God*" (Rom 4:18-21).

With **faith** and **patience**, he inherited the promise (Heb 6:12).

i. The Prayer Of Faith Gives The Glory To God. Abraham is well known as a man of great faith. His example in this regard is both inspiring and instructive. Romans 4:16-21 contains helpful principles concerning the operation of his faith. These include the fact that Abraham was careful to give the glory to God.

The trouble with many Christians is that God cannot trust them with great exploits of faith, because they would take the glory to themselves. They would make themselves appear to be someone great.

God is extremely jealous of His glory. He will not share it with another. We also need to be mindful of this fact. Always be careful to give honor and glory to God for wonderful things which He accomplishes.

It is not your faith which has performed the miracle; it is God's **faith**, fullness and power. Your faith, at best, has been but a channel for God's power to flow through.

C. HEALING THROUGH THE LORD'S SUPPER

In 1 Corinthians 11:23-32 we have a clear indication that participating properly in the Lord's Supper meal will result in healing and health.

Paul maintains that improper participation has resulted in many of the Corinthians being ill and some of them actually dying prematurely. *"For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep"* (vs 30). It follows therefore, that proper participation will promote good health. Let us look together at this important matter.

1. The Lord's Supper Is Based On The Passover Meal

When Jesus first instituted The Lord's Supper, it was at the time of the celebration of Passover (Matt 26:19). The disciples who gathered around Him that night were keenly aware of the implications of this meal.

They were mindful that it was observed in memory of the original Passover some 1,400 years previously. They remembered the covenant which God had made with their fathers. He had brought their ancestors out of Egypt on the first Passover.

They experienced a glorious deliverance from Egypt and all its bondage. They were brought out from slavery by the mighty outstretched hand of God.

The original Passover meal in Moses' time was composed of a roast lamb and unleavened bread. The blood of that lamb had been applied to the doorposts and lintels of their homes.

That blood was a sign to God. *"When I see the blood, I will **pass over** you,"* He told them (Exo 12:13).

They came out through those bloodstained doorposts into the freedom of salvation. The blood was for their redemption.

God also told them to roast the lamb with herbs and eat every part of it before they commenced their journey into freedom.

This nourishing meal was to strengthen their bodies in preparation for the arduous journey. It was to minister physical strength to them. *"...There was not one feeble person among their tribes"* (Ps 105:37). Thus, the Passover meal was for salvation, healing and health.

2. The Lord's Supper: A New Covenant

As Jesus shared the bread and wine with them that night. He was making a New Covenant with them. The wine symbolized His blood, soon to be shed for their salvation. The bread typified the body of the passover lamb to be eaten for healing and strength.

Paul shares some meaningful principles relating to our partaking of The Lord's Supper.

a. The Lord's Supper Is To Remember Jesus. Jesus said: *"Do this in remembrance of me"* (I Cor 11:24). As Jesus sat at the table with them that night. He was the embodiment of human perfection. Throughout His life, Satan had tried — in every way — to attack and destroy Him. He had sought to seduce Him (Matt 4:1- 11). I am sure that he had tried to put many dreadful diseases upon Him.

Jesus moved among so many sick and diseased people during His ministry. Many of them would have had contagious diseases, and I am sure that Satan would have sought to contaminate Jesus with them. But every effort of Satan had failed miserably.

At the close of His earthy ministry, Jesus was able to say: *"The prince of this world [Satan] cometh, but hath nothing in me"* (John 14:30). Despite all the efforts the devil had made, here was Jesus sitting in their presence, robust with health.

A perfect specimen of manhood, Jesus was saying: "When you celebrate this meal in the future, think about me! Picture me in your mind as I am this night: healthy and strong — kept by the power of God, preserved from all evil and all sickness by the Father's protection and providence. Realize that the Father wants you to be like this, too — abounding in good health and strength."

b. The Lord's Supper Is To Celebrate His Death. As He passed around the bread and wine, Jesus said: *"This is my body which is broken for you... This cup is the new testament in my blood."*

Paul says: *"As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death"* (I Cor 11:24-26).

In the deepest sense. The Lord's Supper is a celebration. Of course there is some sadness as we remember that it was our sins which nailed Him to the cross. However, as we meditate on Christ's death, we cannot remain sad for very long.

Calvary was not a defeat; it was Christ's greatest triumph. Through His death *"...he conquered him that had the power of death, that is the devil"* (Heb2:14).

As we celebrate that victory, we rejoice to remember that Jesus has purchased perfect freedom for us from sin and all its evil effects. He has delivered us from Satan and every foul thing he would desire to put upon us. Jesus has restored to us everything that Adam lost. We are complete in Christ (Col 2:10). He has restored us to wholeness through His triumphant victory.

c. The Lord's Supper Is To Discern His Body. Here is the essence and focus of the whole matter. It is the failure to properly discern His body when celebrating the Lord's Supper, which has resulted in much sickness among Christians (1 Cor 11:27-32). So, what does it mean to discern the body of the Lord?

1) His Body Was Healthy. First, it means to understand that the body of Jesus was healthy and strong, and that God wants us to enjoy that same quality of health.

2) The Bread Is His Body. Second, we are to understand that as we eat the bread, it is the body of the Lord (1 Cor 11:24). Inherent within it is the life, health and strength of Jesus. We should eat in faith, appropriating for ourselves the measure and quality of health which is in Jesus.

3) The Church Is His Body. Third, we are to discern the mystical Body of Christ. I believe this is possibly the deepest and most significant aspect. This is the very point at which so many Christians fail.

Paul calls the **whole** Church the Body of Christ (Eph 1:22,23). Every born-again person is a member of that Body. As we discern our relationship to Christ, so we must recognize our relationship to every other child of God.

Failure to do so is called "eating and drinking unworthily." Partaking of that holy meal, while refusing to properly recognize the oneness of Christ's mystical Body, is participating unworthily.

Please notice that the word "unworthily" is an adverb, something we "do." It does not refer to the worthiness or unworthiness of the persons themselves. It refers to whether or not this act of taking the Lord's Supper is done in a worthy or unworthy **manner**.

There is both cleansing and healing at the table of the Lord. We should celebrate this meal regularly and do so in a worthy manner, rightly discerning the Body of the Lord. In so doing, we shall enjoy the glorious blessing of divine health in spirit, soul and body.

Chapter 5

New Testament Evangelism And Healing

Introduction

We have seen clearly in preceding chapters that:

God is a Healing God: *"I am the Lord that healeth thee"* (Exo 15:26).

Christ is a Healing Christ: *"By whose stripes ye were healed"* (I Pet 2:24).

The Word is a Healing Word: *"He sent his word and healed them"* (Ps 107:20).

The New Testament Church Was a Healing Community: *"And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people"* (Acts 5:12).

God wants His Church to be an instrument of healing today!

A. NEW TESTAMENT EVANGELISM INCLUDED MIRACULOUS HEALING

When we speak of New Testament evangelism, we mean that type of evangelism which is inspired, anointed and empowered by the Holy Spirit and attested to by the same signs, wonders and miracles which followed the ministry of the early Church.

Unfortunately, many ministers in Western nations rely upon talent, training, personality, organizational ability, publicity, etc., and place little dependence upon the Holy Spirit. Hence, the scarcity of miraculous signs accompanying their ministry!

The early Church had so little of the things which many put their faith in today. They enjoyed no prestige or standing in the community. They did not have magnificent buildings, colleges and universities. They had very little of the social refinements which come from education, culture and social position. Instead, they were the social outcasts of their society.

Despite all these apparent disadvantages, they succeeded in *"turning the world upside down"* for Christ (Acts 17:6). If we employed the principles evident in their ministry, we would see the same results today!

Signs, wonders, miracles and healings were an essential factor in the growth of the early Church. The Acts of the Apostles is full of great miracles which Christ did through those early believers.

The Book of Acts is not only an historic account of that period; it is the divine blueprint for the Church in all ages. God never intended the miraculous to disappear with the death of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. Miracles were not only for the early Church; they are for our day too! Let us look at the dynamic effect of miracles in the program of the early Church.

B. THE DYNAMIC EFFECT OF MIRACLES

1. Miracles Attracted Great Crowds

This was true in the ministry of Jesus.

"Many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did" (John 2:23).

"And a great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased" (John 6:2).

It was also true in the ministry of the early apostles. The miracle wrought at the Gate Beautiful (Acts 3:1-16) resulted in 5,000 people turning to Christ (Acts 4:4).

"And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people..."

"And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women" (Acts 5:12,14).

"There came also a multitude out of the cities round about Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one" (Acts 5:16).

2. Miracles Confirmed The Message

Jesus predicted that supernatural signs would attend the preaching of the true gospel. *"These signs shall follow them that believe"* (Mark 16:17, 18). One of those five signs was: *"They shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover"* (Mark 16:18).

"And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did" (Acts 8:6).

The inference is clear. The people were impressed by Philip's authority when they saw the miracles attending his ministry, and consequently gave close attention to what he had to say. So great was the response that great joy filled the city (Acts 8:8).

3. Miracles Met The Real Needs Of Communities

There was always a tremendous crowd around the apostles because so many sick folk wanted to be healed. They came for the healings. Many left with far more — they received the Kingdom.

Healing and miracles always attract great crowds. This is as true today as it was in Bible days. It is often hard for people to admit they are sinners in need of a Savior, but it is not difficult to convince a sick person that he needs healing. He is very much aware of this need.

True New Testament evangelism meets the physical needs of man as well as the spiritual needs.

4. Miracles Proved The Resurrection Of Christ From The Dead

Many disputed the facts of Christ's resurrection. The many miracles which God began to perform in the Name of Jesus convinced the multitudes of the reality of the resurrection. If Christ were still dead, then His Name would have no power.

When Peter spoke to the elders concerning the healing of the man at the Gate Beautiful, he said: *"Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that **by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, WHOM GOD RAISED FROM THE DEAD, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole"***(Acts4:10).

Peter was obviously referring to the miracle in order to prove to them that Christ was indeed risen from the dead.

5. Miracles Brought Glory To God

We read the following concerning the blind man who was healed: *"And immediately he received his sight, and followed him, glorifying God; and all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God"* (Luke 18:35-43).

On another occasion, Jesus healed a man who was sick of the palsy. *"And immediately he arose, lookup the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, 'We never saw it on this fashion'"* (Mark 2:12).

Concerning the healing of the lame man at the gate, we read: *"For all men glorified God for that which was done"* (Acts 4:21).

6. Miracles Established Converts In The Power Of God

Paul told the Corinthians that he had come, *"Not with enticing words of men's wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit and power, that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God"* (1 Cor 2:4,5).

When the gospel is accompanied by the supernatural power of God, the converts are established in and by that power. The wisdom of men (philosophy, logic, rationale) can never establish men and women in the Christian faith.

C. EARLY CHURCH PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES THAT PRODUCED HEALINGS

1. They Preached The Word Of God

Peter's sermon on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:14-36) and Stephen's address (Acts 7) are fine examples of the biblical content of the preaching of the early Church.

Preaching the Word of God carries a divine weight of authority. God always stands behind His Word.

"I will hasten [watch over] my word to perform it" (Jer 1:12).

Preaching the Word of God will also create faith within the hearers as nothing else will. *"Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God"* (Rom 10:17).

Their preaching exalted Jesus Christ. He was the grand theme of their message. They quoted all the prophecies which related to Him. They showed how God's Word had predicted His coming and how He had fulfilled all the prophecies. They showed clearly that Jesus was indeed the Son of God.

Their preaching clearly announced the Lordship and authority which God had placed upon Jesus.

The title, "Lord Jesus Christ" featured strongly in their preaching and teaching. They taught that God had made Jesus the ultimate authority over all things. "Jesus Christ is Lord" was the underlying theme of all their teachings.

He is Lord over all things.

Lord of Creation.

Lord of Redemption.

He is Lord over Satan, having spoiled principalities and powers through His death on the cross.

He is Lord over fear, sickness, disease and demons.

The people were helped to see that when Christ's Lordship was established in their lives, it was also established over their circumstances.

2. They Exercised Spiritual Authority

These leaders of the early Church had a deep awareness of the authority which God had placed upon them through Jesus.

Christ had clearly told them: *"Whatsoever you shall ask IN MY NAME, will be done for you by the Father"* (John 16:23). He had conferred upon them the "power of attorney," a legally constituted right to act in His Name. This means to act in His behalf.

Faced with a pathetic cripple, lame since birth, they had their first opportunity to use their newly given authority. *"Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk"* (Acts 3:6).

Peter later made it clear to the astounded audience that it was through the authority in the Name of Jesus, and by faith in that Name, that the cripple now stood before them whole (Acts 3:16; 4:10).

Jesus had commanded them to go forth in His Name and to use the authority of His Name (Mark 16:17, 18; John 14:12-15; 15:16). This authority is still vested in the Church.

The early disciples knew who they were and what their authority was. They had no confidence in their natural abilities or resources; they had supreme confidence in the authority which lay in the Name of Jesus. They knew that the power of God's throne was behind that Name. God has made all His power and authority available to mankind, in the Name of Jesus.

There is healing and wholeness in the Name of Jesus. As we speak in that Name, demons have to obey us. Sickness has to retreat before the might and authority of that Name.

Jesus has given you the authority of this Name. He wants you to go forth and exercise that authority. Speak in His Name. Command sickness to go in that Name.

3. They Encouraged People To Be Healed

Peter reached down, took the cripple by the hand, and began to lift him to his feet. It was at that precise moment, as the man began to rise in faith, that the power of God went through his body and completely healed him (Acts 3:7).

Without the active encouragement of Peter, the miracle might never have happened. Ministering healing involves much more than instructing the sick one, giving only verbal encouragement.

Having spoken to him with spiritual authority, in the Name of Jesus, Peter now actively assisted him to do what he could not do before.

This faith action released the power of God into the man's crippled limbs. His feet and ankles received strength, *"And he, leaping up, stood and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking and leaping and praising God"* (Acts 3:8).

4. They Spoke By The Power Of The Spirit

In the Upper Room, the disciples had been filled with the Holy Spirit. It was a life-transforming experience. They were different men when they emerged from that room.

One of the more remarkable changes that occurred was the new boldness they manifested. Peter was a prime example.

Prior to Pentecost, he had been fearful and acted in cowardice; frightened to even confess that he knew Jesus; afraid of admitting to a young servant girl that he was a follower of Jesus.

Now he emerged, filled with new confidence and a holy boldness. He immediately began to release that boldness as he preached Christ to the multitude.

These were the very people who had crucified Jesus, and of whom he had been so afraid. Now he proclaimed to them the Lordship of Christ with great authority and boldness.

Acts 4:8 is an example of bold speech inspired by the Holy Spirit: *"Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them..."*

Much modern preaching lacks this quality of boldness. Instead, it is apologetic and weak. One reason is that preachers often present their own ideas and thoughts instead of faithfully proclaiming the Word and the counsel of God.

Another reason is that they rely on their powers of oratory instead of the anointing of the Holy Spirit. They preach with the enticing words of men's wisdom rather than demonstrating the power of the Spirit.

Paul declined to do this. He, above all others, had the ability to do so. His education and religious training afforded him the ability to speak with the wisdom of men, but he chose instead to rely wholly on the inspiration and anointing of the Spirit.

5. They Acted With Boldness

People marveled at the boldness of Peter and John, and recognized this quality of boldness as a result of their having spent time with Jesus (Acts 4:13). It had the same marks as did the boldness of Jesus.

It was not the brashness of self-confidence, but the quiet authority of those who know that God is with them to confirm and attest His Word in their mouth and actions.

When the local authorities strictly forbade them to speak or teach in the Name of Jesus, their response was to seek God earnestly in prayer for an even greater measure of boldness (Acts 4:29).

Bold action is born in one who knows his divinely-given authority and acts within the areas prescribed by it. In the healing ministry, such action is the result of:

- a. Knowing that God has made a healing covenant.**
- b. Having a thorough understanding of the Word of God relative to healing.**
- c. Knowing God's will in the matter of healing.**
- d. Possessing an assurance of faith that God will heal this person.**
- e. Believing that God will confirm His Word with signs following.**

6. They Performed Many Signs And Wonders Among The People

The early Church had a tremendous entrance into the local communities through the great ministry of miracles which God was granting them (Acts 5:12).

Miracles dramatize the presentation of the gospel. Miracles confirm the truth of the message.

Miracles attract the multitudes (Acts 5:14).

Miracles convince the unconverted that this work is truly of God.

This emphasis on miracles, signs and wonders was one of the vital keys with which the Church opened the doors to the heathen world.

The gospel spread rapidly during those years because of the authority evident in a ministry confirmed by miracles.

Such miracles are still an essential part of the gospel. Some say that miracles no longer attract or convince people. The people have become too sophisticated. This is not true!

The sections of the Church today which are making the greatest impact and experiencing the most rapid growth are largely those groups who are exercising the ministry of the miraculous.

7. They Consistently Taught Jesus Christ

The message of the early Church was a relatively simple one; they preached and taught Jesus Christ (Acts 5:42).

Their message was not complicated by denominational emphases. It was not diluted and compromised by modernistic doctrine. Their teaching was not composed of theological theories.

They did not teach a doctrine; they introduced a Person. They did not teach the "letter of the law," which kills. They ministered the Spirit of the Word, which gives life (2Cor 3:6).

Their teachings were not restricted to the temple area. They also taught daily in every home. Jesus was introduced into the practical reality of their daily life. He was not contained in a small religious closet marked "Open on Sunday only."

When they taught Jesus Christ, they exalted Him as Supreme Lord (Acts 2:36).

They introduced Him as the only Savior (Acts 2:38; 4:12).

They represented Him as the Mighty Healer (Acts 3:6-8,16).

They presented Him as the Baptizer in the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38).

They constantly and consistently exalted Him in their preaching and teaching.

Their ministry was inspirational as well as instructive. It was faith-inspiring. The Bible says that "*Faith cometh by hearing...the Word of God*" (Rom 10:17). Unfortunately, faith "leaveth" under much modern preaching.

Many preachers today tend to undermine and destroy faith rather than create and strengthen it.

The consistent emphasis upon the miraculous in the ministry of the early Church encouraged the emergence of Charismatic leadership.

Both Stephen and Philip were originally appointed as deacons to assist in administration (Acts 6:1-7).

The next time we hear of Stephen, he is preaching a tremendous message to a great crowd of people (Acts 7).

The next reference made to Philip describes his miracle ministry in Samaria: "*He preached Christ unto them*" (Acts 8:5).

The scope of his message, and the indication of matters he mentioned in preaching Christ, is revealed in those things which began to transpire among his hearers.

In Acts 8:12, Luke says that Philip preached '*the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus*' (and all that the authority of that Name could mean to them). What glorious subjects! What scope he had, preaching on these great themes, to proclaim the fullness of the gospel of Christ.

In the atmosphere of faith created by the Holy Spirit and the Word of God, miracles began to happen. "*Unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed. And there was great joy in that city*" (Acts 8:7,8).

Philip is the only person in the New Testament who is specifically designated an "Evangelist." His mission to Samaria must, therefore, be recognized as an example of the ministry of an evangelist.

It included preaching Christ, but also the ministry of healing and exorcism. The impact made upon Samaria could never have been so great without the miraculous elements in his ministry.

God's purpose and desire for the Church of our day is that it might also make a tremendous impact upon the heathen world. This can happen only as we believe God for a great restoration of His miraculous power upon the Church.

The Holy Spirit is working throughout the earth to accomplish this. May our hearts and minds be open to the Spirit, that He may accomplish His purpose in us!

D. THE CHALLENGE BEFORE US

Despite the rapid and remarkable progress of medical science in recent years, the amount of sickness in the world remains extremely high.

While effective treatments and cures are discovered for one type of disease, another variety of sickness appears on the scene. There remains a tremendous need for healing. Surely the plight of sick and suffering humanity presents a great challenge to the Christian Church!

That challenge is being answered to some degree by skilled Christian doctors and nurses. They give themselves tirelessly, seeking to relieve the infirmities of humanity.

Ministers must also face this challenge. Christ has commissioned His servants to "Preach the gospel and heal the sick." He has charged us to alleviate the sufferings of mankind. How can we meet this solemn challenge?

1. Our Responsibility

The gospel is the "Good News" of deliverance and healing in the Name of Jesus. This deliverance and healing is for the total man. Every church leader and every church must maintain this as a primary goal.

We must seek, by faith in Jesus, to see physical healing taking place in our community. Our teaching should bring healing to people's minds and spirits.

We can measure the fruit of this ministry by the growth of love and faith in the local church. Then the church itself will minister healing to the needy and the lonely.

Not every church leader will have a healing ministry to attract thousands. Every church leader, however, must be able to see definite evidence of healing according to the biblical understanding of healing for the total man.

Church leaders are servants of Christ. It is our task to do for others what Christ Himself would do. He would bring healing to sick bodies, sick souls and sick spirits. What can the average church leader do to bring this healing into the community?

2. How To Bring Healing

a. Preach The Word. Paul tells Timothy: *"Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine"* (2Tim 4:2).

The Word Of God has therapeutic and healing qualities.

"He sent his word and healed them, and delivered them from all their destructions" (Ps 107:20).

We should *"...fully preach the gospel of Christ"* as Paul did (Rom 15:17-21).

"Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom 10:17).

b. Teach The People. Our teaching ministry should have a special emphasis on healing. Teach those subjects which have a special bearing on healing. Teach on forgiveness, right attitudes, right relationships.

Give special teaching on harmony in the home and the biblical structure of the Christian family. Educate people in right thinking and believing. Tutor them on the Fruits of the Spirit.

These attributes are anabolic — i.e., they build up the emotional life and character. (In contrast, the works of the flesh are catabolic — i.e., they tear apart and destroy one.)

Let your teaching emphasis be positive. Do not major on minor issues and negative concepts.

c. Make The Lord's Supper A Healing Service. Teach your congregation the correct way to participate in the Lord's Supper. Partaking worthily will bless and strengthen them.

This particular service, above all others, can be a true healing service. Give it high priority. Your people will benefit enormously— spiritually, psychologically and physically.

d. Encourage The Ministry Of Elders. Encourage the healing ministry of elders as described by James, as part of the program of your church. Encourage your people to call for the elders when they are sick.

This ministry can function in your worship service. Let the sick come forward; anoint them with oil in the Name of the Lord.

Lay hands upon them; pray the prayer of faith on their behalf. Expect to see God work miracles of healing in your midst.

E. CONCLUSION

The program of the Church, according to James, is to announce:

Release to the captives;

Recovery of sight to the blind (also recovery of mentality, sobriety, dignity, etc.);

Deliverance for the oppressed (Luke 4:18).

Let this kind of ministry function in your church to the glory of God. May He grant many wonderful signs, wonders and miracles to follow your ministry (Heb 2:3, 4; Mark 16:20).

SECTION D6

HEAL THE WOUNDED SOUL

By Ralph Mahoney

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D6.1 - Spirit, Soul And Body

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Chapter 1

Spirit, Soul And Body

Introduction

"May your spirit, soul and body be kept safe, sound and without blame..." (I Ths 5:23 smf).

God wants us whole (that is, without mental illness, emotional wounds or physical sickness). He desires wholeness in our spirit, soul and body. Sin damages us. Sin damages others — often those we love. Sin can cause illness of spirit, soul and body. Only God can heal these three different parts of our lives (**spirit, soul and body**) and make us whole again.

What hope and comfort Jesus' words bring to the broken soul when He says:
"Go in peace, your faith has made you whole" (Luke 7:50; 8:48 smf).

Yes, God wants to heal the broken and bruised parts of our lives. The Holy Spirit wants every part of our beings to be safe, sound and strong. He desires to bring life and power to our spirits, restore our souls and bring healing to our bodies. These are the blessings which "our great salvation" provides for each one of us.

A. SPIRIT, SOUL AND BODY: THERE IS A DIFFERENCE

It will help us in understanding the topic of this section "**Healing For The Soul**," if we first study the three parts of man.

The **spirit** relates upward to God. The **soul** relates inward to itself. The **body** relates outward to the world.

For three-part man to be whole, each part must be in harmony with the others. Every part has a special role or function to play in the well-being of every person.

Some Bible students believe there is no difference in meaning between the words "spirit" and "soul." They say both terms refer to that part of man which is not physical or material.

1. What Scripture Shows

It is true that some Scripture verses use either term in that general way. However, in other verses each of these words is used with a special and distinct meaning.

The writer of the Book of Hebrews plainly states that there is a difference between the spirit and the soul of man:

"The word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than a sword with two cutting edges. It can cut deeply and swiftly. In so doing, it divides or separates the soul from the spirit..." (Heb4:12. smf).

Note that the Word of God *divides... soul...from... spirit*, making them separate and distinct entities within us.

Paul points out the difference between the two terms in his first letter to the Corinthian church:

*"The **natural [soulish]** man does not receive the things of God's Spirit. To him they are foolish. He cannot understand them because they can only be judged **spiritually**... Only the **spiritual** man can make such judgments..."* (I Cor 2:14,15 smf). Note the distinction between the **soulish** man and the spiritual man.

2. What Language Shows

Let us look at the Greek terms in the New Testament for spirit, soul and body.

a. Pneuma. The Greek word for "spirit" is *pneuma*. It means "breath." The lung disease "pneumonia" takes its name from that term.

b. Psuche. The Greek word for "soul" is *psuche*. "Psychology," therefore, is the study of the soul (mind) of man.

c. Soma. Finally, the Greek term for "body" is *soma*. "Psychosomatic" (soul-body) diseases are disorders of the body which are caused by mental and emotional (soul-related) problems.

These three Greek terms have been carefully traced through the New Testament Scriptures. In regard to man's makeup, they are used as follows.

B. SPIRIT, SOUL AND BODY: HOW THEY FUNCTION

1. Spirit (pneuma) —

The "spirit" is that part of man which is aware or conscious of God — God-awareness. It is made "alive" by God's Spirit at salvation. It is "energized" by God's Spirit when we are filled with the Spirit.

The functions of man's spirit include the following:

- a. Revelation** from God
- b. Prayer** to God
- c. Communion** with God
- d. Worship** of God
- e. Witness** to man (world)
- f. Conscience:** to judge (discern)
- g. Fellowship** with God (church)
- h. Discernment** of spirits (spiritual senses)
- i. Spiritual warfare**
- j. Seedbed** for the fruit of the Spirit
- k. Reception area** for the Gifts of the Spirit.

2. Soul (psuche) —

The "soul" is that part of man which is aware or conscious of himself — self-awareness. It is the center of the ego or personality. The functions of the soul can be outlined as follows:

- a. Memory:** to recall (remember, reflect)
- b. Curiosity:** to inquire (explore)
- c. Perception:** to interpret (sense and understand)
- d. Reason:** to think (meditate, conceive)
- e. Imagination:** to create (envision, dream)
- f. Emotion:** to feel (have passion, affection)
- g. Volition:** to will (decide)

3. Body (soma) —

The "body" is that part of man which is aware of and reacts with the outside world — world-awareness.

The functions of the body can be out-lined as follows:

a. Reception. Information is received from the world by way of the senses (eyes, ears, touch, etc.).

b. Reaction. The body reacts through the motor (muscle) system by words and actions.

c. Expression. The body can express to the world the thoughts, feelings and decisions of the soul.

C. SPIRIT, SOUL AND BODY: HOW THEY RELATE

We might put these thoughts together in the following way:

1. Soul And Body

Our body **receives** information (through seeing with our eyes, hearing with our ears, smelling with our nose) by way of its physical senses.

This information is then **perceived** by the soul. (To "perceive" means to interpret, judge and understand what we have received. To do so, we must rely upon our **reason** and our **memory**.)

How we **think** and **feel** about a situation will determine what action we will take. In other words, our **will or volition** now comes into play.

We then will do something or say something (**a body response**). So our soul works with our body and our body with our soul.

2. Spirit And Soul

These relationships of man's three-part being are understood as follows:

The spirit of man is not fully functional because of sin. Before being born of the Holy Spirit (born-again), man's spirit is incapacitated—that is, it doesn't function properly in harmony with God's Spirit.

When man repents and receives Christ as his Savior, his spirit begins to respond and interact with God's Spirit.

By being baptized in the Holy Spirit, he receives the spiritual **power** (or spirit power) that he now needs to live his new life in Christ.

3. Holy Spirit And Soul

*"The **natural** [soulish] man does not receive the things of God's Spirit. To him they are foolish. He cannot understand them because they can only be judged **spiritually**" (I Cor 2:14 smf).*

It is God's purpose that all the functions of man's soul come under the Lordship (governance) of the Holy Spirit. The fruit, gifts and graces given by the Holy Spirit enable the newborn babe in Christ to grow up in the Lord and start obeying God and His Word.

If we grieve the Holy Spirit by natural, soulish ways of living, we will hold back the flow of God's Spirit through our lives. We then fall back into our old (soulish-sensual) way of life.

The Bible calls this being "carnal," or in the "flesh" (see Romans 8:5; Galatians 5:16-26).

D. SPIRIT, SOUL AND BODY: WHAT GOD HAS DONE

Apart from the work of the Holy Spirit in our spirit, we will follow the desires or lusts of the flesh. This is the mark of the "natural" or "soulish" man.

Our desire, however, is to be like Jesus. In His humanity He was the perfect man. He was "**spiritual**."

Because He was like us — totally man in spirit, soul and body — He can relate to us in our human needs and sorrows.

1. Our Relationship To God

On the cross. He completed ' *our great salvation.* '

When He cried out, ' *It is finished,*' the work of the redemption was done.

Salvation was secured for the spirit, soul and body of man:

a. Justified. Our **spirits** have been "justified" —made right with God.

b. Sanctified. Our **souls** are being "sanctified" — made holy before God.

c. Glorified. Our bodies shall be "glorified" — made eternal by the Spirit of God.

Yes, our salvation in Christ covers our total life experience — past, present and future.

2. Our Relationship To Sin

a. We were saved from the "penalty" of sin.

b. We are being saved from the "power" of sin.

c. We shall be saved from the "presence" of sin.

E. CONCLUSION

The following passage by Paul now takes on added interest for us:

"The body that is sown in death is a natural [psuche] body. However, it will be raised a spiritual [pneuma] body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body" (1Cor 15:44 smf).

Paul is telling us that the bodies we now live in here on earth are "soul-bodies." The bodies we will have in Heaven will be "spirit-bodies."

Jesus was raised from the dead by the Holy Spirit. His body after His resurrection was probably a spiritual (pneuma) body. He said, *"Behold I live and am alive forever more"* (Rev 1:18). By that statement He meant He would never die. He had a (pneuma) spiritual body — one that would live forever.

At our resurrection, we too will have a (pneuma) spiritual body, and our whole being — spirit, soul and body — will be made perfect in Christ Jesus.

The above should explain all we need to know about spirit, soul and body. Let us now go on to our topic — "**Soul Sickness.**"

Chapter 2

Soul Sickness

Introduction

The meaning of the Greek word *sozo* (salvation) includes the idea of health, healing and wholeness for spirit, **soul** and body.

Sickness of the soul is a common problem of mankind. Soul sickness or soul injury is referred to by the term "brokenhearted." This term is used to describe the inner hurts of the soul.

Jesus said: *"...the Spirit of the Lord is upon me... to heal the broken-hearted [wounded soul]"* (Luke 4:18).

We are told in the Twenty-third Psalm that the Good Shepherd of our lives will "restore" our souls.

This is an important topic, for whatever destroys the soul can finally destroy the body. Sickness of soul can produce sickness of body. A breakdown of the emotions and mind will lead to a breakdown in the body. We truly need to have our souls restored.

As we have seen, the functions of the soul include our mind, emotions, imagination and even our memories.

Many Christians suffer from scars on their souls. They retain many painful memories from the past.

As a result, they doubt the present and fear the future. They may have answers in their heads, but it is hard to think straight when one's heart is hurting.

I think we all would agree that many of us need an "inner healing" of the soul. Our minds, memories and emotions need to be made whole. I have called this the "release of the soul."

A. GOD WANTS US WHOLE

Healing of the whole man is a process. It begins by meeting Jesus as our Savior and our Baptizer in the Holy Spirit. This results in our having a new heart and a free spirit.

God always starts at the center of our being —that is, in our spirit. He first touches our spirit with His Spirit. After our spirit is **released**, our soul can be **restored**.

God begins in our spirit (sometimes called the inner-man or innermost being; see John 7:37,38). Then He desires to work His way into our soul to heal and restore it.

He wishes to bring His life and healing power to our spirit, soul and body — that we might be "blameless" (sound and complete) when He comes.

1. Spirit, Soul And Body: Our Health

As we have said, the functions of the spirit, soul and body are related to one another. A healthy "spirit" is the sound foundation for a healthy "soul." A healthy "soul" favors a healthy "body."

It works the other way as well. It is difficult to be at our best spiritually if we are emotionally or physically sick. If we are ill in mind or body, it can affect our work and witness for God. Our relationship with God's Spirit is safe and secure, but the flow of His Spirit through our lives to the world can be limited.

We have been created to function as "whole" persons. I believe the Apostle John refers to this truth in one of his letters:

"Dear friend, I pray that you may prosper and be in health even as your soul prospers" (3Jn 2 smf).

This verse teaches us that physical health is related to the well-being of one's soul. In other words, a healthy soul-life is necessary for a healthy body-life.

2. Spirit, Soul And Body: Our Healing

Our bodies tend to follow the lead which is taken by our souls. And our souls follow the lead taken by our spirits.

Spiritual (spirit) problems produce mental and emotional (soul) problems; these in turn produce physical (body) problems. The links between our spirit, soul and body truly form an unbroken chain.

One cannot solve a psychological (soul) problem by treating the body alone. Likewise, one cannot solve a spiritual problem by dealing only with the mind or emotions.

This is why some treatments by doctors and psychologists fail. The root reasons in the soul and or spirit which are producing the problems have not been rooted out.

This is true even of healing prayer in some cases of bodily disease. After prayer, the person may seem to be healed. Body pain and physical symptoms may be gone for a time. However, if deep needs of the soul (emotions) and spirit have not been met, physical problems may soon show up again.

I have seen this happen many times in the ministry of the healing-evangelists. Many people have been totally healed and have never suffered from their physical problems again.

However, others have kept coming back for prayer. They kept "losing" their healing after a short period of time.

Many in the ministry are not aware of the deeper levels of need in the souls of the people.

Yes, God wants us well. He wants us to be whole in spirit, soul and body. But there must be a total work of healing — one which moves from within to without (starting in the spirit, continuing into the soul and expressed finally in the body).

Otherwise, only a limited or partial healing occurs which will not last. For this reason, we wish to study the kinds of hurt which can damage the soul of man.

B. SOUL SICKNESS

There are many things which can place lasting injury upon our souls.

1. Caused By...

a. Our Parents. For example, many children suffer because of the faults and failures of their parents.

The Scriptures tell us that children are to be taught and trained in love (Eph 6:4). Unkind, unfair or unwise words and actions can cause either fear or anger in the hearts of children.

1) Physical Abuse. Some parents are very harsh and critical. They never praise or encourage their children. Some even resort to physical abuse and cruel beatings.

In such cases, it is not just the body which suffers. The soul (personality and emotions) can be severely damaged as well. These inner-scars are often carried into adult life.

2) Emotional Abuse. Far worse than the welts and wounds of physical abuse are the unseen wounds of overly critical parents which injure the soul.

Those who have been hurt in this way grow up and become adults with many emotional problems. It affects their relationships with other people — in the family, at school and work, and even within the church.

Many children thus suffer from a very low sense of self-esteem. They cannot picture themselves being successful at anything. They are afraid to take on new duties, or even prepare themselves for a better position in life.

They have been put down (berated or criticized) so many times, they have lost hope. They live under a cloud of self-doubt and personal insecurity.

Everyone has a few feelings such as these from time to time. However, some have been damaged so badly, they cannot live a normal life.

b. Our Sins. God's laws of love and morality were given for our well-being. They came from His Father-heart because He cares for His children. He gave us the rules (laws)

to keep us from injury, hurt and pain. When we break His moral laws, this results in our hearts (soul) being broken. When you break God's laws, you end up with a broken (injured, wounded) heart (soul).

Not only do we suffer, but others suffer as well. Our sins affect others, and their sins affect us. The consequence (result) of breaking God's law is often hurt and pain for innocent children. They are not to blame at all for their pain and suffering.

Did you have a parent who drank alcoholic beverages to excess? Such parents sometimes beat and injure their children in their drunken stupor. The child suffers (though innocent and guilty of no wrong-doing).

1) Sexual Sins. Moral sin and compromise also injure and damage the soul. The Old Testament strongly stated the truth in this way:

*"Whoever commits adultery with a woman is a total fool, for **he is destroying his own soul. He will be both wounded and disgraced**—and his shame will never be wiped away" (Prov 6:32, 33 smf).*

a) What Society Says. Sadly, modern society wants to lift all moral limits in regard to sexual relationships. Some modern-day "fools" say that as long as no one objects, any kind of sexual activity is all right.

Adultery, homosexual activity, sex with children, and other shameful practices are not seen as wrong. They are all within the personal "rights" of each individual. Such activities are called marks of "maturity" and personal "freedom" by these modern-day moral lepers.

b) What God Says. God's Word plainly forbids such immoral behavior, and warns people of the painful results — both to the individual and to society.

God's principles of morality are for our well-being and personal happiness. They are also for the good of society as a whole.

To violate or break the laws of God does not bring true freedom. In fact, we come under a bondage which in the end will only lead to death and destruction.

In the downward process, there will be much pain at every level — spiritually, mentally, emotionally and physically. This is true for the individual and for society as a whole.

c) Results. Modern society is already beginning to reap a horrible harvest from the sinful seeds it has sown: Broken homes, hearts and marriages; confused and abused children; unwed mothers and abortions; dread sexual diseases.

And God grieves because man hurts. It is a pain which is produced by man's rebellion against God's divine laws of love. To ignore this truth is to invite tragedy — because all this immorality wounds and destroys the soul.

2) Other Sins. Further light on the causes of soul injury can be found in these words from the pen of the Apostle Peter:

a) What Scripture Says. *"Dear friends, you are only visitors in this world. Therefore, I beg you to resist and remove yourselves from the strong desires and lusts of the flesh. These things war [are the enemies which will destroy and fight] against your soul" (I Pet 2:11 smf).*

Peter is saying that if we give in to the strong desires of the flesh, these sins (like enemy warriors) will seek to destroy our emotions, mind and thinking ability. As a result, the soul will be injured, bruised and broken.

b) Results. Our inner life rests upon a foundation of reason and emotion. When our emotions have been damaged, it is difficult to think properly. Painful memories are woven into our hearts and minds. We can't clearly see or understand ourselves or others. The future is filled with fearful images.

Our **imagination** holds mental pictures or "images" of what is going to happen. The color and character of these pictures is controlled by the well-being of our soul life.

When "it is well with our soul," the future is bright and filled with hope and faith.

However, if our minds, memories and emotions are still scarred by painful events of the past, the scene is quite different. The picture will be painted with the dark colors of fear, doubt, resentment, jealousy and self-pity.

No wonder a God of love gives us divine guidelines by which to live. He knows the pain we will suffer if we follow our own fleshly desires or lusts.

3) Works Of The Flesh. In his letter to the Galatians, Paul lists some of the works of the flesh which can so severely damage the soul. We might do well to give them special attention (Gal 5:19-21):

- a) *Adultery* — sex with someone other than your spouse;
- b) *Fornication* — sex with unmarried persons;
- c) *Uncleanness*—impure thoughts, words and deeds, homosexuality;
- d) *Lasciviousness* — selfish and shameless behavior;
- e) *Idolatry* —worship of idols and false gods;
- f) *Witchcraft*—the use of magical demonic power;
- g) *Hatred* — bad temper;
- h) *Variance* — trouble-making, fighting;
- i) *Emulations*—being jealous;
- j) *Wrath* — anger;
- k) *Strife* — arguing;
- l) *Seditions* — causing divisions;
- m) *Heresies* — false teaching;
- n) *Envyings* — wanting what someone else has;
- o) *Murders* — killing people;
- p) *Drunkeness* — using strong drink (liquor/whiskey);
- q) *Revelings* — wild and wasteful parties.

2. Effects On...

a. Ourselves. The works of the flesh are planned by the devil to damage the soul. We will be left weakened and wounded within. Our lives will be robbed, wasted and even destroyed. A nation which permits and encourages such "soulish" activities through magazines, newspapers and cinema films is committing social suicide. It is sowing the seeds of death and destruction among its people.

b. Our Society. At the personal level, the final results are mental, emotional and physical breakdowns. At the social level, moral standards fall and the crime rate rises.

This is the sad state in which we find much of our world today. Hospitals, prisons and other social institutions are filled to overflowing. When the people of a nation are sick in their souls, all of society suffers as well.

3. We Have A Choice

Jesus warned His disciples that the devil has come to *"steal, kill and destroy."* He then declares: *"But I have come that you may have life —full and overflowing "* (John 10:10 smf).

a. Life Or Death. The choice is clear: It is one between life and death —the fruit of the Spirit or the works of the flesh. When a society ignores or willfully breaks God's laws, it is opening the doors to the devil himself. The results are tragic at every level of life — whether it be the individual, family, community or nation.

"Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord..." (Ps 33:12). How sad it is when a nation founded on godly principles shuts God out of its public life. When moral values are lowered in the schools and on television, there is a price to pay. Sin is not cheap — it costs a great deal to serve the devil.

b. Draw Near To God. When we draw near to God, He draws near to us (Jas 4:8). When we shut God out of our lives, we shut ourselves off from the protection of His presence. He will honor our choice and give us over to our wicked ways.

"God shows his anger from heaven. His anger is against evil and wicked men who push away the truth. ..So he gives them up to the fleshly lusts which dishonor their body... He gives them over to their evil ways...that they might get paid in their own souls and bodies the terrible penalty which they deserve" (Rom 1:18,24,26,27 smf).

C. CONCLUSION

Yes, we see all around us the results of man's wicked ways. Sin is like a sword which pierces deep within the soul of man.

But there is hope. It is found in God's Word. In His grace, He has provided healing for man's sin-scarred body and soul. He wants us well for both our good and His glory.

Chapters 3

Healing The Soul

Introduction

There are two processes of healing for the body: natural and supernatural (divine). Medical doctors know they cannot heal. They only assist the "natural" healing powers already in the body.

But Jesus is greater than other physicians. By His supernatural power, sick bodies can also be healed. The divine power for such healing comes directly from God.

A. TWO SOURCES OF HEALING

The same two sources for healing also apply to the soul. It is said that time heals. This natural healing that occurs with the passage of time does help us outgrow some of the inner hurts which were such problems during our younger years.

1. Natural

We find out in time that not everybody is stronger, smarter and better looking than we are. Most of us learn to relate to others and succeed in our fields of work. We gain the respect of our families, friends and fellow workers.

As we grow in years, we face grief, sorrow and losses with understanding. Even those with mental illness often recover by themselves over a period of time. It seems the soul has natural healing powers, as does the body.

Some people, however, do not outgrow their problems of early life. They carry their painful scars on into adulthood. All of us probably have some hurts we recall from the past which affect our present attitudes and actions.

For some, however, the carryover is so great, they can hardly function in a normal way. Many such people have suffered mental or emotional breakdowns. When wounds are deep, the results may be lifelong.

Psychologists and psychiatrists are doctors who treat mental and emotional disorders. They seek, through medicine and counsel, to assist the natural healing powers of the soul.

However, just as there are physical diseases which cannot be cured, so there are sicknesses of the soul which cannot be helped in natural ways. To "restore" such a soul would take a "miracle" — a supernatural healing.

I know of young people who have "burned" their brains and damaged their souls on drugs. At one time they were bright, healthy youngsters with much to look forward to in life.

Now they are broken in spirit, mind and body. Is there any hope, or is it too late? Only a miracle can meet such a need. Praise God, there is hope.

Our Lord is the mighty God of miracles and mercy!

2. Supernatural

Let us look at these gracious words from the prophet Isaiah:

"Share what you have with the hungry. Meet the needs of those who are afflicted — who suffer the inner pain of being rejected. Then your light shall rise in the darkness, and your night will be as the noonday" (Isa 58:10 smf).

The pain of being rejected (or put away — divorced) can be healed only by love and acceptance. God desires to reach out to the "afflicted" through you and me — through our hearts and hands.

a. David Experienced Healing. David spoke for us all in his hour of inner pain when he cried out: *"Lord, have mercy on me. **Heal my soul**, for I have sinned against you" (Ps 41:4 smf).*

David knew personally about this healing love of God, or he could never have written the Twenty-third Psalm: *"The Lord is my shepherd... He has **restored [healed]** my soul."*

Later on, the Psalmist speaks of God's grace in these beautiful words:

*"The Lord **heals the brokenhearted** and binds up their wounds — curing their pains and their sorrows...Great is our Lord and mighty in power. His understanding is without limit. He lifts up the humble — those who have been put down..." (Ps 147:3,5,6 smf).*

b. Jesus Brought Healing Then. There is a special passage in the gospels which I have seen in a new light. I should like to share it with you, for it speaks of the nature of our Lord's healing ministry:

"Jesus went about all of Galilee preaching the gospel of the kingdom... and he healed every kind of disease and sickness. The report of his healing power spread throughout Syria. Therefore, they also brought to him people with many different

diseases and torments. Others suffered from demon possession, epilepsy, and paralysis. And he healed them all" (Matt4:23, 24 smf).

It is of interest to note that the Scriptures say that Jesus healed "every kind" of sickness and disease (vs 23). This included spiritual, mental, emotional and physical problems. Verse 24 names some of the diseases related to each part of man's total being:

- 1) **Spiritual** sickness — demon possession;
- 2) **Emotional** sickness — torments;
- 3) **Physical** sickness — paralysis.

c. God Heals Today. Jesus went about making men and women completely whole. Wherever sin had broken into — spirit, soul or body — Jesus forgave, cleansed and brought the healing power of God's love.

I think of my good friend, Costa Deir. When God found him in the depths of sin, he was a hopeless case. Alcohol had damaged his brain, liver, heart and digestive system. Satan had robbed him of his friends and family. The devil had destroyed his body, and was after his soul.

He was spiritually, mentally and physically sick — and about to die. Then he met the greatest physician in the entire world — the Lord Jesus Christ.

And what did Jesus do? He made him completely whole — a new creature — in spirit, soul and body. Hallelujah! No wonder he now wants to tell the whole world about the healing power of God's love.

B. FIVE STEPS TO HEALING THE SOUL

Yes, God wants us well. But what is the process by which "inner healing" can come to our lives? I believe there are five important steps we can prayerfully take in faith.

The first three of the five steps for healing of the injured soul can be found in these words of hope and comfort by Jesus:

* *"Come to me, all you who are weary and under a heavy load, and I will give you rest.*

* *"Take my yoke upon you, and*

* *"Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly. Then you will find rest [restoration] for your souls" (Matt 11:28, 29 smf).*

1. Come To Jesus

The first step for inner healing (or healing for the soul) is this: Come to Jesus! Jesus invites us to come to Him.

If we go anywhere else, or look to any other source, we will be let down and disappointed. To whom do you turn in your time of need? Jesus says: 'Come unto me...'

Yes, Jesus waits with open arms and bids us to come to Him. There is also a welcome for the lost sinner.

As said before, we need to be forgiven, and set free from the heavy load of guilt and condemnation. This is where "inner healing" begins. We all must come to Jesus as our Savior. Without this first step, we can never take the second. We must **repent** if we want to be **restored**.

2. Take His Yoke

The yoke of Christ refers to His governance (control) over our lives. He must not only be our Savior, but also our Lord and Master.

The devil wants to deceive us with a lie. He wants us to believe that we will lose our "freedom" when we give our life to the Lord. He will never tell us that his yoke of sin becomes heavier and more painful the longer we carry it. In the end, we will fall beneath its weight. Only God's grace can truly set us free.

Many Christians suffer under the weight of a yoke of their own making. It is the weight of a self-willed life. They have confessed Christ as their Savior. They want to go to Heaven when they die. However, they also want their own way in many areas of their life here on earth.

God sometimes lets us have our way to teach us a lesson. We soon will find that it becomes a very injurious road. To walk in the "flesh" includes many painful falls. Each one leaves a scar on our souls, as we have already seen.

Clearly, this kind of inner pain can be healed only as we turn to Jesus and confess Him as the **Lord** of our life. To our joy, we will find that His yoke is easy and light — as feathers are to a bird.

Total submission of our lives to Jesus means a total healing of our lives by Jesus. Moreover, it is the only way to true spiritual freedom.

When our faith, hope and plans for the future are linked with the Lord, our inner strength will be renewed and restored. Then we can freely soar without tiring — as on the wings of an eagle! (Isa 40:30,31).

3. Learn Of Him

When Jesus is the Lord of our lives, we become His disciples. A disciple is one who watches, listens and learns from his teacher. What is it that we can learn from Jesus about the healing of our soul (inner healing)?

We might wonder: Was Jesus ever in circumstances (places) where His soul was injured and wounded? If He was, how did He respond to such pain? How was His soul restored?

a. He Suffered. Jesus is the perfect pattern or model for our life. If we can discover how He — in His humanity — met such problems, we can find the solution for ours. Let us turn to God's Word for our answers. The scene of Jesus' wounding begins in the Garden of Gethsemane:

"And he took with him Peter, James and John. Soon he began to show great grief and distress of mind — and was deeply depressed.

"Then he said to them, 'My soul is very sad, and my heart is almost breaking with sorrow. I feel as if I am about to die. Please stay with me and watch and pray'" (Matt 26:37, 38 smf).

The awful hours that followed on Calvary were described by the prophet Isaiah. He speaks of our Lord's body being beaten, that our bodies might be made whole: *"By his stripes we are healed"* (Isa 53:5).

I believe He also suffered in His soul — that our souls might be healed. Listen to these further words from the prophet's pen: *"He shall see the travail and suffering of his soul, and be satisfied... for he has poured out his soul unto death..."* (Isa 53:11,12).

As said above, this terrible prophecy was fulfilled during the events of Christ's crucifixion. Not only did He suffer in body, but His soul was hurt as well. He was forsaken by His disciples and rejected by the Jews.

They mocked Him, pulled His beard and slapped His face. He was laughed at, spat upon and brought to a place of open shame before the people. The religious leaders of the day loudly jeered, while He suffered in pain.

What more could have been done to make His agony of soul any worse? Just one thing — to be forsaken by His heavenly Father! There could be no greater hurt to a human heart. Yet it had to be. It was the price He had to pay for the penalty of our sin.

Not only was the heart of His Son broken, but so was the heart of the Father in Heaven. *"The sinless soul of God's Son became sin —for he took our sin – that we might become right and holy before God"* (2Cor 5:21 smf).

How terrible must have been this cry from the lips of Jesus as it echoed from earth to Heaven: *"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"* (Mark 15:34). Truly, when the sword was thrust into the side of Jesus, it was more than just blood and water which poured forth:

*"For he poured out his **soul** unto death..."* (Isa 53:12). Yes, the Lord Jesus offered His soul, that we might have healing for ours. Without a doubt, He experienced every hurt known to the soul of man.

b. He Forgave. The stress and strain on His soul during those awful hours must have been terrible. How did He keep His inner being in victory? What was it that protected His soul from destruction?

I believe the answer can be found in His response to His "tormentors" —the cruel leaders and soldiers at the foot of the cross: "Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34 smf).

What was it that protected and restored His soul? It was **forgiveness!** Truly, this is what we must learn from Jesus — how to forgive. It is the main key to inner healing.

c. We Must Forgive. Do you remember the story Jesus told about the man who had been forgiven a large debt by his master? Yet he himself would not forgive someone who owed him a much smaller debt.

His master was very angry when he learned about his unforgiving spirit. Therefore, he had him thrown into prison to be "tormented" by his jailers.

Jesus applied the story in a very personal way: *"So shall my Father do to you, if in your heart you refuse to forgive your brothers"* (see Matthew 18:30-35).

What did Jesus mean by this? If we fail to forgive another, a root of resentment can begin to grow in our souls. In time, it will bear very bitter fruit. If we hold on to "hard or hurt feelings" towards someone, our souls will suffer.

In time, the pain will bring torment to all parts of our life — a life that becomes a hell on earth. Forgiveness is the key that unlocks the cell in that hell.

The Psalmist was speaking of Jesus when he said: *'You will not leave my soul in hell, or let your Holy One see decay and destruction'* (Ps 16:10 smf).

Our souls can actually rot and decay in the Hell of unforgiveness. Hell couldn't hold the Lord Jesus, because He already held the key of forgiveness in His nailscarred hand.

If you are suffering from the soul sickness of resentment, look to Jesus for the grace of forgiveness. It is a sure, fast remedy that can bring healing to your soul.

Speak out these words: "Father, forgive them — and forgive me — right now, for Jesus' sake and in His Name, I pray. Amen." It shall be so!

4. Come As Little Children

After forgiving those who have hurt and injured us, we are ready for our next step toward inner healing. We are to come to Jesus as little children.

Our support from Scripture comes from Mark's gospel. Parents were bringing their little children to Jesus, to be touched and blessed. The disciples were upset by this action because it was robbing them of their time with Jesus.

Therefore, they reproved the parents and tried to send the little children away. Jesus was very displeased with their action, and spoke these words to the disciples:

"Let the little children come to me, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as they. Don't send them away. Indeed, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall not enter in at all" (Mark 10:14,15 smf).

There is healing power, for the whole person in the Kingdom of God. Jesus showed that throughout His earthly ministry. However, to receive that healing power we must come as little children.

a. Early Memories Need Healing. Many of the scars on our soul came from events in our early years as children. To these were added other injuries which we received as we grew up into adulthood.

I believe that becoming as a little child includes going back in our memories to our early years. What we are, and how we feel and think today, is a product of all of our past years added together.

Many of us have shadows from the past that darken our present-day lives. They can be traced to painful soul-injuries that occurred in years gone by. They have so damaged our mind and emotions, it is difficult to fully enter into our new life in Christ.

b. Holy Spirit Brings Healing. However, we now have a new Spirit within, which can bring the healing power of Jesus to those places of inner hurt.

With the help of the Holy Spirit, picture yourself in your mind as a little child with Jesus. See yourself walking back through memory lane with the Lord. You don't have to be afraid to face anything, any place or anyone when Jesus is by your side. He doesn't want to hurt you, but to heal you from painful events that occurred in the past.

He will show you why you feel and act as you do when faced with certain situations.

We often have reflex feelings when we face something which reminds us of a hurtful or shameful part of the past. Some times we are not directly aware of the cause, but the emotional response is still there. We feel the same way each time.

The Lord wants to reach the roots of those painful reflexes. He desires to heal those memories with His love and understanding. Sometimes we recall the people who caused the wound in our soul. It could be a parent or other family member. Teachers and other authority figures sometimes abuse their right to rule over the lives of others.

It helps to understand that many times such people are sick in their own souls. They too have been hurt in the past. So they use the power of their position to build up their own low sense of self esteem.

In such cases, the Lord assures us of His love for us, and the special place we have in God's family. Then He reveals to us how much He wants to bring His love and forgiveness to everyone.

To be touched with that kind of love brings healing to our hearts. We are able to receive His forgiveness and be set free from feelings of resentment or self-pity. Moreover, that love enables us to forgive and release others to God's grace and mercy.

c. Forgiveness Brings Healing

1) The Story Of A Young Wife And Mother. I recall a young wife and mother in one of our World MAP Summer Conferences. She was driven by a wandering, gypsy spirit. At times, she would suddenly leave her husband and children and drive the family automobile miles from home.

Once, she had gone over a thousand miles before she was found and placed in the ward of a local hospital. Finally, it was arranged for her to come to one of our meetings for prayer.

The Lord gave one of our team leaders a Word of Knowledge (revelation knowledge from the Holy Spirit) into the cause of her behavior. She had lived through a series of events in her girlhood which had seriously damaged her soul.

a) *She Suffered.* She had been born in Europe during World War II. Before the age of six, she had been physically and emotionally abused by both her mother and father. Later, the starving parents abandoned her to take care of herself.

The war was a fearful period of time in her life. She lived through many bombing raids, not knowing whether she would live or die. She searched through garbage cans for food, and slept wherever she found some form of shelter. She finally joined a gypsy group and went with them as they wandered from place to place. The gypsy "spirit" took hold of her.

b) *She Forgave.* In the course of time, she came to America, found the Lord, and was married. Still, she was tormented by bad dreams, and driven by these sudden and strange desires to wander like a gypsy without reason or notice. It took a revelation from the Lord to uncover the cause of her soul-injury.

After prayer, counseling and ongoing support, she was able to forgive those who had abused her. Over a period of time, the hurt in her heart was healed. God restored her soul and removed the pain from her tragic past. She became a nurse, ministering to the sick and suffering. Praise the Lord!

2) Lessons From The Life Of Joseph. As we have seen, the role of forgiveness is most important in receiving inner healing. A beautiful example of inner healing and forgiveness is found in the Old Testament story of Joseph (see Genesis 37-46).

a) *He Suffered.* You recall that he was given special favor and attention by his father, Jacob. As a boy, he was told by God in a dream that one day he would be a great ruler. His brothers were very jealous, and finally sold him as a slave into Egypt. The wife of his master failed in an attempt to lead him into sexual sin. In her anger, she lied about his conduct, and had Potiphar, her husband, put Joseph in a dungeon.

Joseph began as a boy with the promise of a bright future. He ended up as a hopeless man in a dark prison. The Scripture says he was put in chains of iron: "*and the iron entered into his soul*" (Ps 105:18 amp).

Betrayed, sold into slavery, falsely accused, forgotten in a prison, he was tried by the Word of the Lord. In the natural, he had every reason to be angry, bitter, resentful and even destroy himself by self-pity and despair. But he didn't.

Such situations will either make us "bitter" or "better." It depends on how we respond. The choice is ours. How did Joseph respond?

b) *He Forgave.* We know-the rest of the story. Joseph was given important duties even while in prison. After thirteen years in prison, he was the only

person in Egypt who could interpret Pharaoh's dream. As a result, he was placed by Pharaoh in a position of great authority and power. He became a ruler over all of Egypt.

God then brought his brothers back to him. What did he do? Rise up in anger? Destroy them in a fit of rage fired by years of resentment? No, he fed them and forgave them!

What brought forth such a noble response on the part of Joseph? I don't believe Joseph's action was hasty or by chance. It wasn't something that just happened because it seemed like a "good idea" at the time. It was an action born out of his character — and it takes years to build a character like that.

When Joseph saw his brothers, he had been in Egypt for some twenty-three years. He was a lad of seventeen when he arrived. That's plenty of time to become "bitter" or "better."

d. God Means It For Good. I believe that Joseph held on to God's word and dream for his life. That was his hope. He had a divine destiny. Therefore, all things would finally work together for that good purpose. That revelation kept him faithful and forgiving. You recall his words of divine wisdom to his brothers:

'Don't be afraid, for I am not in God's place as a judge. You meant to harm and hurt me, but God meant it for good. His purpose was to bring life to many people. So don't be afraid, I will take care of you and your children.' In this way Joseph comforted them, and spoke kindly to their hearts" (Gen 50:19-21 smf).

1) Joseph Trusted God. There is yet another truth about inner healing that we can learn from Joseph's life. After his rise to power in Egypt, he was given Asenath, the daughter of **Potiphera**, to be his wife. You will note that the name of his wife's father is very similar — both in meaning and sound — to that of his former master, **Potiphar**.

a) God Healed His Memories. Any leftover hurt or resentment in Joseph's heart concerning Potiphar could easily have become a great problem. Just the sight of his father-in-law — or even the mention of his name — could have brought to Joseph's mind the painful years of his unfair punishment in prison. How many people suffer from this kind of "carry-over" from the past?

In God's grace, Joseph had been healed from all of the cruel and unfair pain of his past. This is clearly seen in the names of his first two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim (Gen 41:51,52).

Manasseh means "making to forget." Joseph explains the choice of this name with these wonderful words: *"For God has made me forget all the pain, toil and trouble of my youth — and my father's household"* (vs 51 smf). God had healed the memory of Joseph.

Now this doesn't mean that these memories were totally blocked out. It does mean that the pain in those memories had been removed. God had restored Joseph's soul. Joseph could recall the past without pain or sorrow. The loss of his family and the hardship of prison life had been real. But it had not destroyed his soul!

b) God Made Him Fruitful. Ephraim — the name of his second son — means "fruitful." Joseph adds these thoughts from his heart: *"For God has caused me to be fruitful in the land of my pain and affliction"* (vs 52 smf).

God had not only removed the pain from Joseph's memories; He did something else. He actually took the evil events in Joseph's life and turned them into great good —

for Joseph and for God! God's eternal purpose was being worked out in time through Joseph's life. Nothing was lost or wasted. God can make you fruitful in your land of pain and affliction. Allow Him in to heal you.

5. Commit Your Soul To God

God wants not only to heal our past hurts, but also to give us a bright hope for the future. We can trust Him to protect us from the kinds of inner injury which would damage our souls in the days to come.

The ready grace of His forgiveness can quickly put out the fires of anger, resentment, jealousy, fear and self-pity — before they can hurt us or harm others. Our soul can be at peace, and we can rejoice in His great love for us. In this we can find a true sense of self-worth. Like Joseph, we too have an eternal destiny — in Christ Jesus.

Perhaps, dear reader, your heart has been greatly moved by a hope for healing deep within your own soul. Accept this as the gentle work of the Holy Spirit preparing you for the release you so deeply desire.

a. Jesus Will Reveal. You may have tried before, on your own, to search out things from the past. But because it only led to deeper depression, you set it all aside. This time, try coming to Jesus — **and let Him do the searching of your soul.** He is wise, loving and very gentle. He can bring to your mind the parts, places and persons of your past which need His healing touch. Again, we say Jesus wants to restore your soul and make you whole. Do not fear.

b. Jesus Will Heal. A member of our ministry team. Dr. Robert Frost (who left this life to walk with Jesus in 1992), tells this story:

"I speak these words from personal experience. I once tried to uncover the hurts of my past in my own strength and wisdom. It only made matters worse.

"I finally came to the Lord and simply said: 'I am going to trust You, Holy Spirit, to reveal to me what I need to know. Do it in Your way, and in Your time.'

"Three days later, the Lord brought something to my mind that I had long forgotten. I saw myself as a little boy in the midst of a very sad situation. I had been rejected, and put aside in a most unkind and unloving way.

"I saw myself under a dark stairway at school with tears running down my face. I was looking to God for help, because I had been hurt and wounded within. "In faith, I brought the Lord Jesus right into that part of my past. I asked Him to heal that painful memory. I pictured Jesus in my mind coming in love to that little boy. I saw Jesus put His arm around me as His little brother and heal my pain. In His strong arms I felt safe, secure, and most of all — loved.

"That inner healing has given me a great love for others who have deep scars in their soul. That is why I can say with great feeling — and with great faith: Come to Jesus just as if you are a little child. Take His yoke of love upon you, and learn of Him. Let Him bring forgiveness and healing to your heart even now."

C. CONCLUSION

This biblical prayer can help you;

"Intimately examine me, O God, and know my innermost emotions: [soul]; investigate and test me as metal that is being refined, and know my thoughts, memories and opinions;

"And see if there be any mental pain, sorrow or painful toil in me, as I have walked the course of my life; and govern, guide and lead me in my journey and manner of living, always and without end" (Ps 139:23,24 lit amp).

If the Lord shows you *"any mental pain, sorrow or painful toil,"* bring it to Him. Let Him heal your soul. Jesus promised:

"Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest[oration] unto your souls" (Matt 11:29).

SECTION D7

AVOID PRESUMPTION IN HEALING

By Larry Parker

Chapter 1

Faith Versus Presumption

Editor's Note: Often faith and presumption are thought to be one and the same. They are not.

Just taking a verse of Scripture and saying "I believe this" — and then taking a presumptuous leap off the pinnacle of the temple — can bring disaster to you or others. (Read Matthew 4:5-7.)

The devil gave Jesus a verse of Scripture (Ps 91:11,12) and then asked Him to do a presumptuous act. If Jesus' heart had been filled with pride (as some of our hearts are), He might have been tempted. But He knew the difference between faith and presumption. This testimony is given to teach you this difference.

Introduction

I am writing this testimony with the hope and prayer that somehow I can share with you a lesson I have learned at great expense. It is only by the grace of God, and the never-failing, all-encompassing love of Jesus Christ our Lord, that my wife and I have been able to come through this trial.

A. OUR MISTAKE

We took our diabetic son Wesley forward in our church to be prayed for according to James 5:14: *"Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord."*

Subsequently, we believed that faith for his healing required that we not give him any more medicine. We decided to stand on the Scripture in Isaiah 53:5 and 1 Peter 2:24, *"by whose [Jesus] stripes ye were healed."*

After three days of prayer, fasting and great suffering —physically on our son's part and mental anguish on ours — Wesley died.

We didn't realize we had done anything wrong. In our minds, we felt that the only reason for Wesley's death was for a greater miracle; as in Lazarus' case (John 11), the Lord delayed the healing so that He could raise Wesley from the dead.

When that did not happen, we were stunned and did not know what to think. We knew in our minds that Jesus never fails, and yet our son was dead. How could this be? Who could we turn to?

It was then that John 6:68 came to our minds. *"Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."* Although we were greatly confused, we knew that we had to keep our faith in Jesus Christ our Lord.

After a few months, my wife was able to accept the fact that Wesley was to stay with Jesus; but for me, it took three years.

B. GOD'S REPROOF

In the following months, the Lord dealt with us in a most loving, kind and gentle way. His reproof was filled with compassion as He revealed to us, one step at a time, our tragic error.

In a meeting with a prophet about a month after Wesley's death, the Lord spoke to us. This prophet knew nothing about who we were, or the tragedy we had gone through. The prophet asked us to stand. Through him, the Lord spoke these words: *"Not everything you did was right."*

Oh how loving and gentle are the ways of the Lord. He taught us first, that we had done wrong; and second, just what was wrong about it.

We wanted to see our son healed, but went about it the wrong way. Because our actions were wrong, we actually bound the Holy Spirit (Matt 18:18), and kept Wesley's healing from fulfillment.

We learned that any action that is contrary to Scripture, will bind the Spirit of God from working in that area of a person's life. At the same time. God saw the intent of our hearts to do what was right; to trust Him for Wesley's healing. And so, through it all He comforted us; and when Wesley died, Jesus took us to the twenty-third Psalm for comfort for our broken hearts.

C. GOD'S COMFORT

Over a period of months, the Lord was able to reveal to my wife that while our love for Wesley was no less than the love which all parents have for their children, it did lack the divine love that never fails (I Cor 13:8).

This did not come about without a great deal of mental, emotional and spiritual pain and anguish. Doctors give patients an anesthetic to relieve pain. The Holy Spirit had to anesthetize us.

It was this anesthesia that allowed us to maintain our sanity. Even this emotional numbness had to be recognized for what it was. We couldn't understand the peace we were having in the midst of such severe trial.

We found the answer in Philippians 4:7: *"And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep [guard] your hearts and minds [thoughts] through Christ Jesus."*

One night, while my wife was praying, the Lord showed her just how much He was protecting us.

She asked the Lord; "What's wrong with me? Why can't I express the grief that I know I have for my son?" In answer. He lifted His peace for a moment. The following

mental, emotional and spiritual pain was so excruciating that she couldn't release it through any amount of crying.

The grief, with the realization of the knowledge that she was responsible for her own unhappiness, became a physical pressure that burst within her chest. It would have driven her insane had she not asked the Lord to remove it. She learned she had to cast all her cares upon Him (I Pet 5:7). *"Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows"* (Isa 53:4).

D. GOD'S REVELATION

Another terrible blow hit us. The people who enforce the law charged us with involuntary manslaughter and felony child abuse. We could be sent to jail for a long sentence. We were crushed.

It was during our court trial, for involuntary manslaughter and felony child abuse, that my wife felt she could tell me what the Lord had shown her. She told me that our love, because it was lacking, failed Wesley, and that God's Word says: *"Love never faileth"* (I Cor 13:8).

When she first told me that, I rejected it completely. We loved Wesley. How difficult to accept that love was lacking.

A few days later, I was reading Corrie Ten Boom's book *Marching Orders For The End Battle* and I read this statement: "When the devil cannot keep us back, he tries to push us so fast that we exaggerate. Then we are in danger of forgetting to love."

1. We Put Faith Above Love

I knew then that we **had allowed what we thought** was faith to cause us to forget to love. As we prayed for Wesley and saw him in obvious pain, our love for him wanted to give him the insulin that we knew would stop his suffering.

However, we felt that it would be a lack of faith, and would cost him his healing. We learned that our actions were contrary to what the Scriptures say. God's Word says that love is greater than faith (1 Cor 13:13). Not only were we wrong in putting faith above love, but the faith that we were attempting to exercise was the wrong kind of faith. Had it been the right kind of faith, Wesley would have been healed (Matt 17:20).

The trouble lies in the fact that **we confuse faith and belief**. We think that if we believe hard enough, the healing will take place. We tie healing to some ability on our part **to believe enough** — that is, to have enough faith.

I heard a brother say something we found to be true: "God doesn't send healing; it is already there. He reveals it. As we seek the Healer, the healing will come."

2. There Is A Faith That Heals

There are many kinds of faith — faith in Jesus for salvation, faith for financial problems, faith for emotional problems, faith for healing and healing faith.

Most kinds of faith are tied to belief, as is faith for healing. But the faith that actually heals is not. We can have faith and believe that God will heal, but **that is not healing faith**. When Jesus applies healing faith to us, we are healed!

Until God reveals the healing, He expects us to do everything on our part to ease pain and suffering. To withhold medicine, especially life-giving medicine, is a very presumptuous act on our part, that actually hinders the Spirit of God from His work.

In Matthew 8:5-13, the Centurion had faith in Jesus and believed that his servant would be healed when Jesus spoke the word. Jesus marveled, and pronounced it : a great faith.

As in Hebrews 11:1, he had **the evidence** that his servant would be healed; but at that moment he had an unmanifested healing.

And what did the Centurion do with the faith that he had? Did he declare his servant healed in spite of what he saw, and stop doing what he could to ease his suffering? No! He took his faith to Jesus.

The healing did not take place with the kind of faith that the Centurion had. It was Jesus Who gave the Centurion **healing faith** when He said to him: '*So be it done unto thee.*' When the healing faith was given to the Centurion by Jesus, the healing took place *"in the self-same hour."*

3. We Must Have Compassion

The Lord said to the Pharisees: *"They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick"* (Matt 9:12). We neglected this important principle and ignored what the physicians had prescribed to keep our son alive.

Then Jesus asked the Pharisees what He meant when He said: *"I will have mercy [compassion] and not sacrifice"* (Matt 9:13). He repeats the same question in Matthew 12:7 when He reminds the Pharisees: *"But if ye had known what this means, I will have mercy [compassion], and not sacrifice, you would not have condemned the guiltless."*

Can you see it now? In withholding medicine from Wesley after he was prayed for, my wife and I were offering up a sacrifice (a very difficult one) of faith. But in so doing we "condemned the guiltless" (our own son) to a premature death before his time.

We did the very same thing that the Pharisees were doing. Jesus condemned this attitude and behavior.

We were applying Scripture without the very important ingredient of love. We offered up sacrifice without mercy —just the opposite of what the Lord wanted. What the Lord approves is *"...faith which works by love"* (Gal 5:6).

Through our experiences, we have learned that medicine which preserves life is good. God is interested in preserving life. Joseph said: *"...for God did send me before you to preserve life"* (Gen 45:5).

To withhold good is evil. *"Do not withhold good from those who deserve it, when it is in your power to act"* (Prov 3:27). Romans 12:9 reads: "Hate that which is evil; cling to that which is good.

4. Not All Are Healed

I don't really know how to explain faith, or why some people are healed and others are not. I do not know why a great man of faith like Elisha died of a sickness. *"Now Elisha was fallen sick of his sickness whereof he died..."* (2Ki 13:14). He had a life filled with miracles (twice as many as Elijah).

I can't explain why the Apostle Paul was able to heal many but wrote to Timothy and said: *"... Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick"* (2Tim 4:20).

The Apostle Paul prescribed treatment for Timothy. *"Stop drinking only water, and use a little wine because of your stomach and your frequent illnesses"* (I Tim 5:23 niv).

Perhaps Paul learned about treating illness from Doctor Luke, the physician who traveled with Paul (2Tim4:11;Col4:14). But the above makes it apparent that God uses

both healing prayer and healing remedies to help people. We should remember this. I do know that Jesus does healing miracles, that He does love us, that He died for us, and that He arose again that we might be saved.

5. Love Is The Measurement For Action

I do know that one day I'll see my son again in Heaven. Through my tragic error, I have learned that in all areas of life the measurement for action is love, and that all the commandments hang on love.

"Jesus said unto to him. Thou shall love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment.

"And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Matt. 22:37-40).

6. Don't Be Presumptuous

My wife and I know what it's like to believe that the use of medicine (after we have prayed for, and are believing for, healing) shows doubt and unbelief. We don't believe that anymore.

But as we strive to be doers of the Word, it is important to remember that if the way we apply one scripture to our lives is contrary to any other scripture, then that application is wrong, and God cannot honor it.

So do not be guilty of presumptuous acts as we were. People will needlessly die if you do.

E. DON'T WITHHOLD MEDICINE

Trust God for healing. Pray for the sick. But until evidence of the healing is confirmed by the doctors, **DO NOT WITHHOLD MEDICINE** from those who need it. When Jesus healed someone. He often sent them to the medical examiners for confirmation of their healing.

"And it came to pass, as he [Jesus] went to Jerusalem, that he passed through Samaria and Galilee. And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers..."

*"And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. And when Jesus saw them, he said unto them, **Go shew yourselves unto the priests.** And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed" (Luke 17:11-14).*

If you read Leviticus 13, you will find that God appointed the priests to be the medical examiners in Israel. He told them what the symptoms of disease looked like and what the cured person's body would be like.

Jesus sent the lepers to these unbelieving medical examiners, so they could confirm the healing. If the doctor confirms you are healed, then you can stop taking the medicine he prescribed. Otherwise, it may not be right to do so.

SECTION D8

AVOID EXTREMES IN HEALING

By Dr. Charles Farah

Chapter 1

Bad Theology: A Cruel Taskmaster

Editor's Note: Dr. Charles Farah led the Oral Roberts School of Theology for many years. He had a great passion to train young ministers to be balanced in their ministry. He gave himself selflessly to causes related to spreading the gospel in all the world. He was a scholar of great intellectual gifts.

Introduction

The young man seemed somewhat subdued. His church, though it had a good spirit, was much the same way. There was little praise in the morning service, and there were no manifestations of the Spirit.

Since it was a classical Pentecostal church, I was somewhat surprised. Don had been a good student at our graduate School of Theology and had shown a great deal of concern for others.

A healing evangelist had taken a series of meetings in his church. Some people had been helped. This evangelist taught without qualification that "confession is **always** possession."

A Spirit-filled professor in the congregation was a known diabetic. The evangelist persuaded him to go off the insulin on Thursday. By Sunday night he was near death.

The healing evangelist heard how sick he was, rushed into the room and found the wife almost in a frenzy. He rebuked the demon of fear he felt was in her, then turned to the man and said: "You're going to be all right. Just hold on."

Finally, Don could stand it no longer. He called an ambulance. At the hospital, the doctors told Don the man had one hour to live. Because of that incident, Don almost left the ministry. The church nearly foundered and split.

A. THEOLOGY OF HEALING: AVOID EXTREMES

1. Beware Of Bad Theology

Bad theology is a cruel taskmaster, and he flogs his children with tragic consequences. He cripples those who receive him as surely as the torture cages of Vietnam.

a. It Cripples. I was talking to a man not long ago whose mother was crippled all her life by four words of bad theology. A preacher had told her four words that crippled her life and turned her into a dull, miserable, joyless old woman long before her time.

The four words that wounded her and gave her bitterness for joy were these: "You're living in adultery."

b. It Opposes The Holy Spirit. A while back, a young man had been sitting in a chair in a prayer meeting asking for healing. Suddenly he was aware that his problem was a demon. The demon began to speak through his voice. The people continued to pray in consternation. Finally, the spirit left.

My friend was healed. But their theology did not permit my friend to have a demon, so they told him that what happened did not really occur. Now my friend is ostracized from the group, partly because their theology taught that a Christian could not be under bondage to a spirit of infirmity.

Bad theology is indeed a cruel taskmaster. For the past twenty years I have studied theology, and I am convinced that nothing is more rigid or more opposed to the Holy Spirit's moving than bad theology.

I think that is why most theologians don't like the Book of Acts. The Holy Spirit keeps upsetting their theological apple cart.

Bad theology says miracles cannot occur in our century. Bad theology says every Spirit-baptized believer **must** speak in tongues. Bad theology says no Christian can be tormented by a demon. Bad theology says the only reason a person is not healed is because of his lack of faith.

c. It Changes The Facts. In fact, bad theology is like the cruel giant, Procrustes, the highwayman from Attica.

When visitors arrived at his castle, he stretched them out on a carefully prepared iron bed. If they were too long, he cut off their legs. If they were too short, he stretched them to fit.

That is what bad theology does. If it doesn't fit the facts, cut off the facts. If the facts are contrary to the theology, bad theology says that's easy enough —just stretch the facts.

2. Beware Of Minimal Theology

On the other hand, the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement must be equally wary of theological reductionism. In reductionism, the focus is on areas of faith and practice where Christians can agree with certain central, but minimal, affirmations of faith.

a. It's Too Simplistic. For example: One simply praises the Lord and all is well. One casts out demons and the personality is made whole. One claims his healing and it always happens. One gets baptized in the Spirit and this solves all his problems.

b. It Doesn't Face Conflicts. Let's face it squarely. We are always confronted by problems. We are never finally delivered from our problems in this life. Even Paul says: "*Oh wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from this body of death?*" (Rom 7:24).

Conflict is the name of the game. As long as we live we are never out of trouble. That is why Paul's favorite picture of the soldier is so apt. There may be a lull in the battle, but there's never a lull in the war. There is no single simple solution that will solve all our problems.

3. Strive For Balanced Theology

a. Avoid Extremes. A theology of healing has a very difficult task. It must walk a hairline. On the one hand, it must avoid the error of presumption; on the other hand, it must avoid the cynicism of unbelief.

b. Better Too Much Than None At All. I was talking recently to that grand old saint, Norman Grubb. He had practically no experience at all with people falling into the sin of presumption. His problem was getting people to have any faith at all.

If we in the Charismatic community have people too zealous for a faith that's not always according to knowledge and that is sometimes presumptuous, better we should curb the excess than deal with those who don't believe enough to venture out in faith at all!

It's easier to steer a rolling stone than to budge a lodged boulder. If we must err, let us err on the side of a bold, positive faith.

True faith faces the problem of Luther's drunken peasant. He mounts his horse but falls, first off on one side and then the other. Somehow, there has to be a balance between presumption and unbelief. Somehow, God must give us a balanced theology of healing.

B. FAITH OR PRESUMPTION

1. Presumption: Satan's Weapon

There is only a slight difference between bold faith and presumption. One man's faith is another man's presumption. So great is this temptation that even our Lord Jesus was tempted by it. Let us turn to Matthew 4:5-7.

a. Against Sincere Christians. Presumption is something which particularly tempts sincere, courageous people who desire to do something for God. Thus, in all the arsenal of possible temptations, one of the three most powerful, one of the three most likely to bring the Son of God into Satan's realm, was presumption.

b. Against Jesus. You recall in the Matthew account that Jesus was taken to the top of the temple which was 170 feet (60 meters) above the floor of the valley of Kidron. The pinnacle was on a series of arches which were called Solomon's Arches. There Satan tempted Jesus with presumption.

Last summer I was in the valley of Kidron. As I looked up that sheer wall, it was easy to imagine the scene. With Jesus' white garments fluttering in the breeze against that blue sky, the populace below could very well see Him.

And after Jesus had their attention, if He had jumped and then been saved, it would have been an instantaneous miracle, a shortcut to success. He would have gained immediate access to those people who saw Him, because they would have believed He was indeed a great miracle worker.

2. God's Word: Our Weapon

You remember that in the previous temptation, Jesus answered Satan with Scripture.

So Satan thinks: *"Aha, Jesus' strong point is the Scripture. If that's the weapon He uses, I'll do the same."* So he developed his "biblical" thesis.

a. Satan Twists Parts. "Jesus, there is a fast way to gain allegiance. You want to help people. There is a shortcut to fame. Let men see this great miracle, how God favors You, and You will win the world.

"Defy the law of gravity and watch God. Let me quote a scripture from Psalm 91:11,12." He almost quoted it perfectly. He said, "If you are the Son of God, if you are what you say you are," putting Jesus on the defensive, *"if you're actually the Son of God, then prove it."*

But in Satan's quotation he left out a phrase so insignificant I read it over several times before I saw Satan's twist on it.

This scripture actually says: *"He shall give his angels charge over you to keep [guard] you in all your ways"* (Ps91:11). In other words, in the ordinary business of life, the angels guard you.

But by omitting the exact quotation, Satan twists the promise from one of our passively trusting God to care for us, to make it sound like we can take active leaps of presumption and be safe. Just cast yourself down, and trust God to take care of you.

God never does miracles to prove He is God to the scoffers. Jesus refused the Pharisees who said, "Show us a sign." God does miracles to meet the needs of His people.

b. Jesus Uses The Whole. Now what was Jesus' response? "*Jesus said to him, Again it is written, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test'*" (Matt 4:7 rsv).

It is a great fact of Scripture that not only is "it written," but "again it is written." We do not base our understanding of God's will on just one verse. We must have not only one scripture, but the whole counsel of God.

3. Testing Or Proving God

Scripture is like a gyroscope. It has a self-balancing power. Jesus says: "'Again it is written, *'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'*"

Some think that Jesus is saying: "I am the Lord thy God, Satan, and you have no right to tempt me." But this is not what Jesus is saying at all. Jesus is saying:

"No one has the right to presume on God, to tempt God. No one has the right to put God presumptuously to the test, not even the Son of God. No one has the right to force God's hands."

a. Moving When God Has Not Spoken. You see, the Father was silent and the Son did not presume. What was the presumption? The presumption was to take the general provision of God's Word and to make it apply to a specific situation where God had not spoken.

There is a vast difference between tempting God and proving God. Israel went through the Red Sea and she proved God. The Egyptians did exactly the same thing and they died for their presumption. What was the difference?

b. Moving When God Has Spoken. Israel heard a word which was spoken from God and Egypt did not. Israel moved forward at the spoken word of God, THE RHEMA. God spoke and they obeyed. But God did not speak to the Egyptians and they perished. Israel's faith was Egypt's presumption. Throughout the Old Testament, quite a lot is told about sins of presumption.

C. GENERAL WORD VS SPECIFIC WORD

Now let us come to an understanding of this difference between the **general** Word of God and the Word of God which is **specific** — that which is spoken to you.

1. Logos Vs Rhema: How They Differ

In the Greek language there are two words for the word *word*: the word *logos* and the word *rhema*.

a. Logos

1) Is Expression Of Thought. Logos denotes the expression of thought — not the mere name of an object, but the concept or an idea by God. It is used about the gospel, the Ten Commandments, the sum of God's utterances. It is God's speech, His discourse.

2) Is Personified By Jesus. The ultimate meaning of Logos is the incarnate Word of God, Jesus Christ. He is the Word which ends all words. "*Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever.*" Jesus is the eternal Word of the eternal God.

There He is! Jesus is God's last Word to man. "*Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, but in these last days he **has spoken to us by a Son...***" (Heb 1:1,2 niv). There — in Jesus — the Word of God took final and absolute form.

Who is the Word of God? Jesus is the Word of God. Whether anyone in the world believes or not, Jesus is the Logos, the Word of God objectified. The personal *Word*, the title of the Son of God.

As Scholar of Greek, Vine says, "He is the reality and totality of human nature. His was the Shekinah glory in open manifestation. The only begotten Son Which is in the bosom of the Father; He has declared Him. Thus, the Word, the Logos, is the personal manifestation, not a part of the divine nature, but of the whole Deity."

3) Is Divine In Origin. It is a Word from the Lord, delivered with His authority and made effective by His power (Acts 10:36). Sometimes, it also refers to doctrine (Matt 13:20).

I did not find a single reference in the New Testament which did not point Logos back to God, whether its origin was the Father or the Son concretized in Jesus Christ or the Holy Spirit.

Thus the Logos is divine in origin, and this is the way it is most often used in the New Testament.

b. Rhema. But there is another word, *rhema*. Rhema denotes that which is spoken, what is uttered in speech or in writing. It can be from God, but not in all cases. It's not necessarily divine (Matt 12:36).

1) Is For A Particular Occasion. It's often a word spoken for a particular occasion. The emphasis with rhema is not on the thought or its objective quality, but on the actual word spoken.

2) Is Heard And Acted Upon. Often, it's a word that is heard and acted upon (Acts 13:42) — a word to take action on. It's a personal word, "*the word that is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart*" (Rom 10:8).

How many of you have heard the gospel more than once before you responded? Was it not Logos the first time you heard it? Of course it was. But as you listened, there was one wonderful day when it became *rhema* — a personal *word* to you.

That was the day you received Christ, and suddenly the Logos of God, eternal and uncompromising, became Jesus' wonderful *word* of freedom to you. That was rhema.

That is precisely what Romans 10:17 is talking about. "*So then faith cometh by hearing [literally] a word of God.*" Paul uses the word *rhema* here, not *logos*. It is a word that is heard and acted upon (Rom 10:17). It is a special occasion word. It is a particular word to you. It finds you.

3) Is The Sword Of The Spirit. In Ephesians 6:17, we read: "*...the sword of the Spirit, which is the word [rhema] of God.*" It's not the whole Bible which can be used as a sword, but a particular word you use skillfully for that particular occasion.

4) Is Not Always Divine. Rhema is not always divine in origin. It often denotes a word that is spoken so a particular action can be taken.

"*But I say unto you, That every idle word [rhema] that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment*" (Matt 12:36).

c. Summary. Idle words [rhema] accounted for, this is rhema; thus, we may summarize:

1) Divine/Human. Logos is divine while the rhema may be a human word.

2) Universal/Particular. The Logos is universal, while the rhema is particular.

3) Objective/Subjective. The Logos is objective while the rhema is subjective — a word spoken for a particular occasion.

4) Eternal/Contemporary. The Logos is eternal while the rhema is often contemporary.

2. Logos Vs Rhema: Not Always Clear Now, here is what this means. When we come to look at the Bible and what it has to say, we must be careful to distinguish between the *rhema*, the word which is spoken for that particular occasion, and the *Logos*, the Word which is eternal.

a. Scripture Use Varies. This distinction between *logos* and *rhema* does not hold true in every Bible passage.

Throughout the Bible, the differences in the ways these words are used vary greatly.

Not only are there differences among the ways these words are used in the Septuagint and the New Testament, but New Testament writers themselves used these words in different ways.

For example, John uses *logos* to exhibit the universal, the eternal. But Peter, on at least one occasion, uses *rhema* exactly the way John would have used *logos*. Peter says, "*But the word [rhema] of the Lord stands forever*" (I Pet 1:25).

Naturally we should expect Peter to use *logos*, not *rhema*, to express this thought. But, in fact, he uses *rhema* instead of *logos*.

Since the Scriptures, therefore, do not teach a clear and unambiguous distinction between tense words, let us use the distinction as a theological construct.

b. A Theological Construct. A theological construct is a tool of analysis that enables us to see God's truth more clearly without necessarily having comprehensive scriptural endorsement.

For example, it is popular in most evangelical circles to refer to man as a tripartite being, composed of body, soul and spirit.

Yet often the Scriptures use the terms for soul and spirit interchangeably.

It is useful at times to conceive of man in these three parts, but Scriptures do not verify this distinction. It is a theological construct.

3. Logos Vs Rhema: Know Your Master's Voice

In Matthew 14:22 and following, we have an example of the difference between God's Word, the *Logos*, and God's word to you, the *rhema*.

a. They Didn't All Walk On Water. You recall the incident when Jesus appeared suddenly at sea and the disciples said it was a ghost. Peter, as usual, is the first to speak.

Jesus bids him come. Now that was a word, that was a *rhema*, to Peter. The other apostles did not leap out of the boat and begin running on water. It was something spoken specifically to Peter.

Since this incident, Christian scholars haven't read this passage and said: "Bum the boats, boys, we don't need them anymore. From now on we're walking on water." Everyone can see that it was a particular word spoken at a particular time to a particular man, Peter.

b. Never Mind About John. But an even clearer example appears in John 21:18-22 (niv). Let us read that.

"I tell you the truth, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and some- one else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go. "

"Jesus said this to indicate the land of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, 'Follow me!'

"Peter turned and saw that the disciple whom Jesus loved [John] was following them... When Peter saw him, he asked, 'Lord, what about him?'

"Jesus answered, 'If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? You must follow me.'"

You see what Jesus is saying? He is saying to Peter: "Peter, I have a rhema for you and I have a rhema for John. But the rhema I have for John is none of your business."

One of the best qualities of the sheep is that he knows his master's voice. Jesus is saying: "I want each of My sheep to be in such relationship with Me that they not only hear Logos, the whole Word of God. I desire that they also hear the rhema, or particular word which is spoken for them." Jesus said that sheep hear the shepherd's voice (John 10:27).

D. HEALING: PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL

Let us look at how this relates to the doctrine of healing. The dictionary defines health as being whole or hale and sound in body, mind or soul, especially freedom from physical disease or pain.

1. Spiritual Healing Most Important

But, in my opinion, the dictionary leaves out the most important part of health: **health for the spirit**. When the spirit is sick, the body and the mind (soul) both suffer.

a. Sin Is Hardest To Cure. I do not believe it is possible to be sick in your spirit and be considered healed. It is the hardest kind of healing to obtain because the sickness of the spirit is what the Bible calls sin.

Sin is the hardest thing of all to cure. I used to wonder when I heard it said: "Spiritual healing is the main thing and physical healing is secondary." Were they correct?

I am convinced they are. I believe that the hardest healing by far to obtain is healing of the spirit. After all, sin is the only ultimately fatal disease.

b. Spirit Is Hardest To Heal. For example, as I was preparing this teaching, a stricken mother called. Her son is facing ten years in the state prison and then, after that, five more years in the federal prison. He looks awful. He cannot sleep. He has recurring dreams of being murdered.

The last time he was with his mother he said: "Mother, in the last year or two, all of my dreams have come true."

Imprisoned men kill for the most trivial reasons. Someone steals his milk and the man kills. Someone refuses a proper helping of food and he kills.

1) We Need To Be Forgiven. But this young man's real problem is not the prison or his dreams. His real problem is his father. His father, from the time he was a baby, was jealous of the time his mother gave to him. He had never really forgiven him.

Yes, he is a Christian; but this sickness of the spirit, if it is not dealt with, may be a factor in a murder. The son can never be free until the father sets him free by forgiving him. To gain health here is very difficult indeed.

2) We Need To Forgive. Or take the young lady in our church who was vainly trying to receive her Baptism in the Spirit. As she was struggling, suddenly a piercing thought burst into her head. She had to forgive her father. Forgive her father? It was hard to do.

He had violated her when she was twelve years of age and, even then, was sitting in a mental institution. By God's grace she forgave him and immediately was baptized in the Spirit. She felt a freedom and a joy she had never known before. This was on a Wednesday.

On Friday her sister called. She said: "Guess what? I visited Dad on Wednesday. He seemed so much more free and cheerful than I have seen him in a long time." You see, the power of forgiveness had set both of them free.

2. Physical Healing Is In The Atonement

One of the most crucial questions that is asked is this: Is healing in the atonement? If so, why are all that are prayed for not healed? Isaiah 53:4 literally says: *"Surely our sicknesses he himself bore and our pains he himself carried. Yet we ourselves esteemed him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted."*

a. God's Ideal Purpose. There is little question that physical healing is placed under the sign of the cross. It is an integral part of the redemption process. Theologian Leslie Weatherhead says: "It was God's ideal purpose for every man to enjoy perfect health of body, soul and spirit."

In other words, if healing is not in this passage, neither is anything else. Neither is the atonement here.

Andrew Murray (well-known church leader from South Africa) points out that healing is strongly taught in this passage.

b. Faith Not The Only Factor. Faith is certainly a factor, but not the only factor.

Many a time I have seen some wonderful saints who have walked with God for many years, not receive a healing. I have also seen some old rascal roustabout who hadn't been inside a church for fifty years. He had come to the healing meeting to scoff. He was utterly without faith, but suddenly and miraculously is touched by the grace and mercy of God.

What a lovely Savior! As Weatherhead points out: "What is done for man is not done by his faith, but by Christ, through his faith. Faith is rather the psychological frame of mind in which alone God can get near enough to man to do His work."

c. Prayer Of Faith. Is the will of God against healing? Jesus never prayed: "If it be Thy will, heal." Neither should we. The only kind of prayer that satisfies God is the positive prayer of faith. The only kind of prayer the Bible shows is the positive prayer of faith.

In James 5 it doesn't say: "Pray the prayer of **perhaps**. Pray the prayer of **maybe**." It says: "Pray the prayer of faith." It is a prayer relying on the will of the Lord expressed in the Word [Logos] of God. God does not will sickness. He wills health. He permits sickness.

d. God's Ways Not Our Ways. If, then, healing is in the atonement and God wills total health for His children, and we should pray positively for healing, why are not all healed?

I can answer that in three easy words: I don't know. I do know one thing. We box God in with our silly syllogisms (a formal argument, consisting of a major premise and a minor premise, leading to a conclusion). God will not dance to our tune.

1) God Is Sovereign. If anything has become apparent to me in healing, it is that we must again proclaim the "Godness" of God. I rest easy in the sovereignty of a God Whose ways are not my ways. Whose thoughts are not my thoughts, and Who works in mysterious ways His wonders to perform.

God will not bow to our little syllogisms.

Major Premise: Healing is in the atonement.

Minor Premise: Faith is the key to healing.

Conclusion: Therefore, those who are prayed for in faith will be healed. It just isn't that easy. There is always a factor "X" (unknown factor) in healing, an unknown which God does not always reveal.

2) God Doesn't Follow Formulas. I believe that this mystery of God's dealings with men is the great reason why theologians, in general, avoid the Book of Acts like the plague. It is because they want to get God in a box, and God sets a trap for them.

They start off with Acts 2:38. Now this is the way it's done and they give their formula. First you repent. Then you get baptized in the Name of Jesus. Then you receive the Gift of the Spirit.

But then there is Acts 9:3-6, 17-18. That's troublesome. There Paul is converted in a dynamic way on the Damascus Road. Then he is healed and filled with the Spirit. Only after that is he baptized with water.

And then along comes Acts 10:44-48 and that is really a mind-blower. Think of it; without any instruction, without a salvation call, without Peter even finishing his sermon, he is interrupted by a divine intersection of history. With no human instrument except the apostolic message, these people are sovereignly saved and baptized in the Spirit and they speak in tongues. Only after that are they baptized with water.

And then there's Acts 19:3-6 where there's first John's baptism into repentance; then there's belief in Jesus and there is a second water baptism into Jesus' Name. Then there is a Spirit baptism by the laying on of hands whereby all are filled with the Spirit and speak in tongues and prophesy.

Is it any wonder that theologians don't enjoy Acts? They can't get their formulas to work. Do you think that perhaps the Holy Spirit has a sense of humor, a light touch? I think that He just might.

3) God Doesn't Tell Us Everything. One of the worst questions to ask in healing is the first one most theologians ask: Why doesn't God heal them all?

Why are not all healed? Why are not all saved? Why, if so many are called, are so few chosen? One question is as good as the other, and both of them have no answer.

Calvin's "secret counsels of God" is not an attempt to escape facing difficult questions. It is a fundamental fact of biblical theology. There are many things we just do not know or have answers for.

3. Healing: Logos Vs Rhema

The Logos teaches that healing is in the atonement; but the Logos doesn't always become a rhema. God's word to you. And those who teach "confession is **always** possession" teach a theology of presumption, not faith.

a. Confession Not Always Possession. The Psalmist says: "...keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins; let them not rule over me"(Ps 19:13).

For example, there was a young friend of mine who had newly come into the Spirit and sincerely believed that confession was the same thing as possession.

He had heard of a young child dying of leukemia and immediately he went to the home. He spoke a number of words he later regretted. He said: "There is no doubt about it, the child will be healed. It is not a thing to worry about or be anxious about. God said it in His Word. It's got to be true."

So he prayed and they all rejoiced and left. A few days later the child was dead.

This sent my friend Tom into a tailspin spiritually. Wasn't it in the Word? Did it not say that healing was present for us? Yes, it was *Logos*, but it was not yet *rhema* to him. It was **legal** but was not **experiential**. There is a great difference between the **legal** provision and the **experiential** appropriation.

b. Wait For The Rhema. It isn't wrong to pray for people in faith. What is wrong is to tell people they are healed when you don't really have a word [*rhema*] from God.

I don't tell people they are healed when nothing comes from God. I don't say throw away your glasses when, in fact, their driver's license demands that they wear glasses. I don't say throw away your insulin when they are known diabetics.

E. CONCLUSION

A Theology of Healing must be related to a Theology of Prayer. The Bible is very positive about healing. There is not a doubting prayer in the Bible concerning healing.

As we move toward the second century of God's great outpouring of the Spirit, let us pray that God will give us New Testament power and a glorious faith to fulfill His Son's Commission.

Let us again dedicate ourselves to His Commission: "*Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons; freely you have received, freely give*" (Matt 10:8).

SECTION D9

CAST OUT DEMONS

By Ralph Mahoney, with extensive excerpts from writings of Missionary Charles Haupt (South Africa) and Evangelist T.L. Osborn (Tulsa, OK, USA)

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Chapter 1

Demons: Learn To Recognize Them

Introduction

This is not intended to duplicate the clear teaching outlines found in Sections C2 and C5 in the Topical Concordance of The Shepherd's Staff. Study that for further insight and understanding of Demonology.

The following is intended to give you a clear answer to these questions:

- What / Who Are Demons?
- How Do We Recognize Demonic Oppression?
- What Power Do Demons Have?
- What Do Demons Do To People?
- How Do You Recognize A Demonized Person?
- How Do You Cast Out Demons?
- What Is The Judgment Of Demons?

A Christian can become a devil-master at once by receiving a clear understanding of the work of demons, and of their legal defeat at Calvary. You should review Section B 1, *Victorious Christian Living*, near the beginning of the **Leaders Training Guide**, for a full understanding of this. Once you understand how totally powerless demons are against believers, you will never be afraid of demons or the devil again.

Every believer can have authority over the devil and demons. Learn about the believer's authority and exercise it by faith in the Word of God.

Scripture Reading

"After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, where he himself would come.

"Therefore he said to them, into whatever city you enter... heal the sick that are there" (Luke 10:1,8,9).

"And the seventy returned again with joy, saying. Lord, even the devils are subject to us through your name.

' And he said to them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. Behold, I give you power to tread on serpents and scorpions [two scriptural symbols of devils], and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

"Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject to you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven " (Luke 10:17-20).

The last verse (vs 20) makes it clear that being saved is a greater cause for rejoicing than to cast out demons in Jesus' Name. The main objective of our ministry is not to cast out devils, but to preach the gospel to the lost.

But in order to preach the gospel in a way that people respond and get saved, we must work in the power and demonstration of the Spirit (I Cor 2:4). It is vital that we have authority over satanic evil, and that we exercise this authority.

Two great powers are engaged in a life-and-death struggle over human beings. Peter and John described them:

Peter said: *"Your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking whom he may devour" (I Pet 5:8).*

But John said: *"The Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil"* (1 Jn 3:8). Jesus calls us to join Him in His work of destroying the works of the devil.

Before we describe demons, it will be helpful if we understand a little about Satan.

A. WHO IS SATAN?

Satan is the god of this world (2Cor 4:4). He was the prince of nations (Matt 4:8,9). He is the author of all our miseries and sorrows, of our diseases and pains, of death itself. He is the king and ruler of all demon spirits. He rules the dark hosts of Hell. His chief desire and design is to destroy human life and, therefore, to bring sorrow to the heart of God, our heavenly Father.

We can better understand who Satan is by the names given to him in the Bible:

1. The Devil

In Matthew 13:19, he is called *"the wicked one."* In verse 39, he is called *"the enemy"* and *"the devil."* Devil means "accuser," "defamer" or "slanderer."

2. The Accuser

In Revelation 12:10, he is called *"the accuser of believers."*

3. The Adversary

In 1 Peter 5:8, he is called *"the adversary"* and is compared to *"a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour."*

4. The Dragon

In Revelation 20:2, he is described by a group of names almost too hideous to contemplate: *"the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil, and Satan."*

5. The Father Of Lies

In John 8:44, he is called by Jesus *"a murderer, a liar, and the father of it [lies]."*

6. The Tempter

In Matthew 4:3, he is called *"the tempter."*

7. The Prince Of The Devils

In Matthew 12:24, *"the prince of the devils."*

8. The Prince Of The Power Of The Air

In Ephesians 2:2, *"the prince of the power of the air."*

9. The Prince Of This World

In John 14:30, *"the prince of this world."*

10. The Corrupter Of Minds

In 2 Corinthians 11:3, *"the corrupter of minds."*

B. WHO ARE DEMON SPIRITS?

Some say there are no such things as demons today, that the title is merely a figure of speech; but this is not true. The Bible is as clear and definite in its teachings about demons as it is about angels. Both are actual and real today. Both should be understood.

Demons are wicked, hateful and destructive. Demon spirits are personalities, just like human spirits are personalities. Demons are spirits without bodies in which to dwell. We are spirits with bodies. Our spirits are from God. Demon spirits serve Satan and are sent from him.

1. They Belong To The Devil

Demons belong to Satan, who is the ruler of the demons. Jesus speaks of them as "... *the devil and his angels*" (Matt 25:41). The Greek word Diabolos (devil) means "accuser" or "slanderer." It is always used in the singular in the New Testament.

The words *daimon* and *daimonion* are used both in the singular and the plural and are not interchangeable with diabolos, since there is but one *diabolos*, the devil, but many *daimonion* or *daimon*, demons.

2. They Are Fallen Angels

Demons are fallen angels, "*who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode*" (Jude 6). When created, they were perfect and were given the power of choice. Demons are angels who chose to disobey God and do the will of Satan.

a. Some Are Imprisoned. First, those who sinned and are now imprisoned in "*chains of darkness*" (2Pet 2:4) waiting for the judgment of angels (I Cor 6:3).

b. Some Are Free. Second, those who fell, and whom God has allowed to continue to serve Satan and his kingdom. The reason for this is one of God's secrets (Deut 29:29). Satan is not omnipresent (i.e., everywhere at once — like God), but he has a multitude of demons or disembodied spirits, who do his will so thoroughly that it seems as though he is present everywhere.

C. WHAT ARE DEMON SPIRITS?

1. Difference Between Body and Spirit

I **have** a body, but I **am** a spirit. My spirit dwells in my body. I express myself (my spirit) with the faculties of my body. You can see my body, but you cannot see me because **the real me is a spirit living inside my body.**

My body is simply the house my spirit lives in. Someday my body will die and return to the dust, but I (my spirit) shall never die. I shall return to God from where I came: "*... the spirit shall return unto God who gave it*" (Eccl 12:7).

I (my spirit) am a personality. I express myself with my body. If my body were taken away, I (my spirit) could not express myself. Sever my tongue and my spirit could not talk. Destroy my ears and I could not hear. Blind my eyes and I could not see. Even though my eyes would be blind, my ears deaf and my tongue removed, my spirit would still be there; but it could not see, hear or speak.

Amputate my legs and arms, destroy my sense of smell and my vocal chords, and still you would not have destroyed my spirit. But my spirit could no longer express itself. My spirit would still have a body, but its faculties of expression would have been destroyed.

Now you can understand what I mean when we talk about the difference between my spirit and my body, or the difference between me and my body.

2. Spirits Without Bodies

Demons are evil spirits without bodies with which to express themselves in this world. Since they have no bodies of their own, they must wander through the land, seeking a body into which they can enter and find expression to carry out their mission of evil (Matt 12:43).

Since demon spirits are actual personalities, they manifest their own personalities in the persons whom they enter.

There are various classes, or types, of demon spirits just like there are different types of people, a few of which we shall discuss later.

D. WHAT IS SATAN LIKE?

Satan is your adversary. Demons are your enemies. They resent your legal rights over them and are jealous of your heritage.

Learn to recognize your enemy; spot him, study his tactics of warfare, and be skilled in ability and faith to drive him out. This is done by reading and knowing the Bible. The information following is designed to help you understand what the Bible says about this topic.

"The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to pull down the strong holds of Satan" (2Cor 10:4).

This verse tells us we are at war, and have spiritual weapons that are empowered by the Spirit to enable us to pull down the fortresses in the minds blinded (made stupid) by the devil or demons (2Cor 4:4).

"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Eph 6:12).

1. He Is Evil

Everything evil, destructive, discouraging, malicious and binding is of Satan. The works of the devil are, and always have been, to *"steal, and to kill, and to destroy"* (John 10:10) the spirits, minds and bodies of God's Creation, in whole or in part.

2. He Opposes God And His Family

He opposes us. He despises us. But we have been warned to be on the alert. Satan, your adversary, is always present to challenge your faith, your integrity and your covenant rights. Satan always leads an open rebellion against God and His family.

But Jesus Christ *"was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil"* (I Jn 3:8).

E. WHAT ARE DEMONS LIKE?

1. Demons Talk

They talk through a person's mental and speech faculties, in the same way that your spirit (the real you) talks through your own tongue and vocal cords.

"And unclean spirits, when they saw him, fell down before him, and cried, saying, 'You are the Son of God'" (Mark 3:10,11).

"And devils also came out of many, crying out, and saying, 'You are Christ, the Son of God'" (Luke 4:40,41).

"He [Christ] taught them as one that had authority... And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, saying, 'Let us alone; what have we to do with you, Jesus of Nazareth? Are you come to destroy us? I know you who you are, the Holy One of God.' And Jesus rebuked him, saying, 'Hold your peace, and come out of him'" (Mark 1:22-25). These scriptures show us how demons spoke and talked to those who had come to cast them out.

2. Demons Know Their Future

Jesus met two demon-possessed men coming from among the tombs. When He was about to cast them out, they cried out, *"What have we to do with you, Jesus, Son of God? Are you come to torment us before the time?"* (Matt 8:29).

What did the demons mean by saying, *"are you come to torment us before the time?"* Of what time were they speaking?

Demons know that Hell was prepared for the devil and his angels. They know the day will come when the devil will be *"cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever"* (Rev 20:10) *"...together with the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars"* (Rev 21:8) and with *' whoever was not found written in the book of life"* (Rev 20:15).

Demons know that the day is coming when they shall be tormented, day and night, forever and forever. They know that then they will no longer be able to torment humanity, because their time will have come.

Therefore, knowing this, they trembled before Jesus and cried out: *"Are you come to torment us before the time?"*

3. Demons Resist Surrender

The eighth chapter of Matthew, the fifth chapter of Mark, and the eighth chapter of Luke set forth the story of Jesus casting out the legion of demons from the maniac.

The context of these scriptures reveals the following:

First: The demons actually professed to worship Christ, evidently seeking to prevent the Lord from being too stern with them (Mark 5:6).

Second: Jesus commanded them to come out of the man (Luke 8:29; Mark 5:8).

Third: The demons begged Him that He would not torment them; but when Jesus spoke to them, the demons became fearful (Luke 8:28).

Fourth: Christ demanded of them, *"What is your name? "* (Luke 8:30).

Fifth: The demons responded, *"My name is Legion: for we are many"* (Mark 5:9).

Sixth: When Jesus insisted that they depart, the demons, shocked at being expelled from their habitation in the man's body, *"begged him much that he would not send them away out of the country"* (Mark 5:10).

Then the legion of demons, which had possessed the maniac, tried to bargain further. If they were to be forced out of their human possession, the next best place to settle would be the herd of swine which was feeding nearby.

"All of the devils begged him, saying, 'Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them'" (Mark 5:12).

Seventh: *"Immediately Jesus gave them permission. And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea [they were about two thousand], and were choked in the sea"* (Mark 5:13).

This remarkable story shows how demons resent surrendering their place of possession, yet how they must yield to the authority of God's servants. To us Christ has said: *"I give you power and authority over all devils"* and *"in my name you shall cast out devils"* (Mark 16:17; Luke 9:1; Luke 10:19).

4. Demons May Call For Reinforcements

Jesus taught a most revealing lesson about demons in the twelfth chapter of Matthew:

"When the unclean spirit leaves a person, he walks through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none. Then he says, I will return to my house from which I came out; and when he is come, he finds it empty, swept, and garnished.

"Then he goes and takes with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that person is worse than the first" (Matt 12:43-45).

It is possible for demons, which have been cast out, to call other demons for reinforcement and to re-enter the person out of whom they have been cast. This happens when the person delivered fails to fully consecrate his life to Christ.

Therefore, the demon called on other spirits, more wicked than himself; they entered and settled there; *"and the last state of that person was worse than the first."*

Jesus said to the crippled man who had been healed, *"Sin no more, lest a worse thing come to you"* (John 5:14).

5. Demons Recognize And Obey Those Who Have Power Over Them

When Jesus was met by those who were demon-possessed, the demons would often cry out: *"We know who you are. You are the Son of God."*

Demons have never changed.

Instances such as these happened in Paul's ministry: *"Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, 'We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preaches.'*

"And the evil spirit answered and said, 'Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?' And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of the house naked and wounded" (Acts 19:13-16).

Demons know who have power over them. They knew Jesus and they knew Paul. The demons mocked and completely overpowered those seven sons of Sceva who tried to cast them out just for the money they would receive.

"God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost" (Acts 10:38). It was the Holy Ghost Who said, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them" (Acts 13:2).

The two persons whom the devils acknowledged were both anointed with the Holy Spirit, the power of God. The devils know such and obey them.

But this case is a clear warning to unbelievers not to play with devils. Every believer has been given power and authority over all devils and should never fear nor hesitate to execute this authority.

Jesus said, *"These signs shall follow **them that believe**; In my name they shall cast out devils" (Mark 16:17).*

Mary Magdalene was possessed of **seven devils**; yet one man, anointed of God, cast out **all seven devils**.

On the contrary, there were **seven men**, none of them God's anointed servants, and **all seven men** could not cast out even one devil; but the one devil overcame **all seven men** so that they fled naked and wounded. What a comparison!

It proves that all of our natural strength and wisdom is helpless before the devil; yet all the devils in Hell are helpless before one believer who is anointed of God.

F. WHAT IS GOD LIKE?

1. He Is Good

Everything good, blessed, lovely, kind and pure is of God. *"Every good gift and very perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father..."* (Jas 1:17).

2. He Gives Life

God *"...has given us all things that pertain to life..."* (2Pet 1:3).

"The Son of man is not come to destroy our lives, but to save them" (Luke 9:56).

We have concluded that Satan is bad and God is good. Good things are from God and bad things are from Satan.

G. WHAT ARE WE LIKE?

1. We Have The Armor Of God

We have been given a full armor with which to resist Satan. Jesus, before going back to the Father, conferred upon every believer the right to use His Name against the devil.

The Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, is ours to use against Satan.

Our feet are shod with the gospel.

The helmet of salvation is on our head, and the shield of faith is our defense with which we shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked (Eph 6:13-18).

2. We Have Power Over The Enemy

Jesus, our Captain, says: *"Behold, I give you power over all the power of the enemy"* (Luke 10:19).

"He gave them power and authority over all devils" (Luke 9:1).

"In my name they shall cast out devils" (Mark 16:17).

Chapter 2

Demons: Their Power

A. WHAT ARE SYMPTOMS OF DEMONIC BONDAGE?

1. Physical

a. Vacant Look. A person who is under the power of an evil spirit very often has a glazed, vacant look about him.

b. Trance State. Sometimes people fall into a trance. Their eyes are closed and when you open their eyelids their eyeballs roll back and the white parts show.

c. Extreme Strength. As with the demon-possessed man of the Gadarenes (Mark 5:3,4), even the most timid and harmless housewife can become as strong as an ox and act violently if demonic power is in her life.

d. Intestinal Disturbances. Some people suffer from organic disturbances — especially in the stomach region. For example, "something" will move strongly up and down in the person's stomach.

e. Strange Reactions. Small children react strangely under the influence of a demonic force. I have seen children under the power of the 'monkey god' screw up their faces to look like that of a monkey, and jump up and down on the tables and chairs.

f. Heightened Sexuality. Many people with demonic bondage experience heightened sensual sexuality.

g. Feeling Of Suffocation. When an unclean spirit is active, the victim may feel as if he is being strangled or suffocated or feel a tightness around his chest.

h. Vocal Noises. Evil spirits can cough, sneeze, speak, laugh, threaten, cry, plead, lie etc. (See Mark 5:5, 7, 9,10.)

i. Active/Passive Resistance. The evil spirit in the person may cause him to fall down and act as if he is dead. The spirit may also swear, shout or laugh at the believer.

Note: This is an attempt of Satan to discourage you and to make you doubt your authority in Christ over his power (see Luke 4:35; Luke 9:39 and Mark 9:18, 20,26). Ignore this and use your authority in Christ!

j. Violent Actions. They may also try to bite, scratch, kick or hit you. One person learned the hard way not to cast out devils with his eyes closed. He got an unexpected blow full in the face!

k. Bad Odors. At times a bad odor, like sulfur, will come from the person that is under demonic bondage.

2. Emotional

a. Depression. A person who is under the power of an evil spirit is often depressed and driven by thoughts of suicide. [King Saul — "...an evil spirit from the LORD troubled him... Therefore Saul took a sword, and fell upon it" (1 Sam 16:14; 31:4).]

b. Guilt. These people are also usually filled with thoughts of guilt, unforgiveness and bitterness.

Note Simon, who had a spirit of sorcery: "*For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness*" (Acts 8:23).

c. Violent Temper. Some of them also have a violent temper and are easily upset. "*And the evil spirit from the LORD was upon Saul... And Saul sought to smite David even to the wall with the javelin... and David fled, and escaped that night*" (1 Sam 19:10).

3. Intellectual Conflict And Confusion

People with demonic bondages often suffer from mental conflict and confusion. "*In whom the god of this world hath **blinded** [greek = **poroo**, to render stupid] the minds of them which believe not...*" (2 Cor 4:4).

4. Spiritual

a. Resistance To God's Word. There is usually a resistance present in the person against God's Word and prayer.

b. Seeing Demons. Some people in Africa say they see "the small little man," the so-called "tikoloshe."

B. PRACTICAL/SPIRITUAL HELP

The apostles Paul and John give us some practical tips on how to recognize demonic influence or spirits.

1. Pay Attention To Language And Tone Of Voice

"*Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed*" (1 Cor 12:3). Often the language used and tone of voice can be enough to know you are dealing with another personality (demon).

2. Test Their Confession

When the person is under the control or influence of the spirit, this test will work: "*Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God;*

"Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God;

"And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God" (1 Jn 4:1-3).

3. Study The Gifts Of The Spirit

Study Section D1.3, *Gifts Of The Holy Spirit*, in **The Leaders Training Guide**; especially the part about the Gift of Discerning of Spirits. This is invaluable when seeking to identify the spirit you are dealing with.

C. WHAT CAN DEMONS DO?

(Read Mark 5:1-20.)

1. Demons Can Give Great Physical Strength To Men

"... There met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit... and no man could bind him, no, not with chains. He had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been broken by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any man tame him" (Mark 5:2-4).

This demon-possessed man (vs 2) had the physical strength of many men. When Jesus asked the demon his name, he replied, *"My name is Legion; for we are many"* (vs 9).

A Roman legion consisted of three to six thousand troops, and this man had the strength of a legion of demons.

2. Demons Can Work Miracles

John wrote, *"And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs... they are spirits of demons, performing signs" (Rev 16:13, 14).* Satan and his demons can thus deceive 'sign seekers' (2Ths 2:9). Don't follow signs. Let signs follow you (Mark 16:16).

a. They Are Lying Wonders. We must be like Moses and Aaron. When the powers of darkness are on display, we show that God's power is greater.

"Then Pharaoh also called the... sorcerers. .. For they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents; but Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods" (Exo 7:11,12).
"...Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world" (1 Jn 4:4).

3. Demons Can Inspire And Control Men

Do not be intimidated by occult groups, false religions, or even merely professing Christians. They all have one thing in common: they deny the deity of Jesus Christ.

a. One True Test. John said, *"Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ [the Messiah] has come in the flesh [that Jesus is the God-Man] is of God."* All other religions are satanically inspired and demonically controlled.

You can identify false teachers; all you need to do is ask them if they believe that Jesus is God (John 1:1,14). If they answer "No," they are false prophets.

They may be leaders of large congregations and even thought to be outstanding Christian leaders, but if they deny the deity of Jesus they are not of God.

4. Demons Can Give Supernatural Power To Men

Do not seek or accept the services of witch-doctors, sorcerers or fortune tellers.

Our Lord calls all believers to *"come out from among them and be separate... Do not touch what is unclean"* (2 Cor 6:14-18). God says we are not to touch the following:

a. Divination— those who claim to have secret knowledge of the future (fortune-tellers). This practice is demon-controlled (Eze 13:6-8).

b. Witchcraft — Witches will be on the increase in the last days. During Saul's reign one even had the ability — and permission — to bring up the dead (I Sam 28:7-20).

c. Mediums — those who claim to have familiar spirits (demons). *"For all who do these things are an abomination to the LORD"* (Deut 18:12).

God warned Israel, as they entered the Promised Land, to beware of spiritist mediums, saying: *"You shall not learn to follow the abominations of those nations"* (Deut 18:9-14).

d. Idolatry — They were not to worship Molech, who required human sacrifice of young children; the Lord called this demon-religion an "abomination." Even Solomon sinned in erecting an altar to Molech (I Ki 11:7).

5. Can Seduce And Defile Disobedient Christians (Eze 16:20-23)

However, *"If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land"* (Isa 1:19). Those who left Egypt "under the blood of the Lamb" have this promise:

"Surely there is no enchantment [witchcraft that will work] against Jacob, neither is there any divination [sorcery that will work] against Israel..." (Num 23:23).

Do not fear the demons. Remember, *"Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world"* (I Jn4:4).

D. WHAT DO DEMONS DO TO PEOPLE?

The Greek word **daimonizomai** is translated in the English Bible, "to be exercised by a devil; have a devil; be vexed with or **possessed** with devil(s)."

Some feel the English word **possessed** is too strong a word to accurately convey the meaning of the Greek word **daimonizomai**. A more accurate rendering would be **demonized**.

1. They Torment And Harass

To be demonized is to be vexed (tormented emotionally, mentally or morally).

a. Emotional Torment, *"...my daughter is grievously vexed [Greek = daimonizomai] with a devil"* (Matt 15:22).

b. Mental Vexation. *"Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is lunatic, and sore vexed: [Greek = pascho – painful sensation] for often he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water'... And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him..."* (Matt 17:15,18).

c. Emotional Harassment. *"And they that were vexed [Greek = ochleo - to harass] with unclean spirits... were healed"* (Luke 6:18).

d. Moral Vexation. *"There came a multitude out of the cities... bringing them which were vexed with unclean [Greek = akathartos - impure, lewd, foul] spirits: and they were healed every one"* (Acts 5:16).

2. They Cause Disease And Affliction

This fact, shown clearly in the Scriptures, will, when fully understood, serve as a great source of strength to your faith in God for divine healing.

(Note the next chapter. **Prepare To Cast Out Demons**. This explains other sources of physical problems. All sickness is not the result of being demonized.)

A minister who was present on a certain night when I preached on the relation of demons to disease said, "Knowing that disease is Satan's attack on our bodies, rather than God's blessing, I am ready to resist Satan's work, rebuke him, and take dominion over him."

Every disease has a life — a germ or virus causes it to grow. That evil life in the germ did not come from God, because it kills and destroys human life. It is from Satan. It is that evil life, or *spirit of infirmity*, that gives life to the disease, or growth, just as your spirit gives life to your body.

When the spirit leaves your body, it dies (Jas 2:26). So when a *spirit of infirmity* is cast out, the disease dies and disappears.

Many human sicknesses and diseases begin from a tiny germ, an evil satanic life, sent to live in and possess the human body and to destroy it. As long as that life, the *spirit of infirmity*, exists in the body, the growth or disease lives and continues its destructive work.

For example, a cancer is caused by renegade cells that reproduce faster than the friendly cells can kill them. The life in the cancer may be satanic. Doctors all agree that if one could remove the life from the cancer, the effects of that cancer would disappear from the body.

But there are two "life sources" warring against each other: the evil life of the cancer and the divine life from God which is in your body.

Any medical method of destroying the life of the cancer, kills many healthy cells in the body in which the cancer lives.

Jesus said, '*In my name they shall cast out devils.*' In the Name of Jesus Christ, we as believers have the authority to expel the spirit or life of the cancer.

When the life of the cancer, which is from Satan, has departed, the cancer is dead and its effects disappear.

When I first heard this explained, the evangelist demonstrated it by praying for the people. Many were instantly healed.

E. WHAT ARE THE RESULTS WHEN DEMONS ARE CAST OUT?

1. People Are Healed

Now you can understand this Scripture: "*They brought to him [Jesus] many that were possessed with devils*" [notice, this was the only class of people specified who were brought to the Lord]: "*and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick*" (Matt 8:16).

This verse implies that some of the sicknesses which Jesus healed were caused by devils. He cast out the devils and healed the sick.

Peter said the same thing when he wrote, "*God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost... who went about healing all that were oppressed of the devil*" (Acts 10:38).

a. The Woman Bowed Over. In Luke 13, Jesus "*was teaching in the synagogue, and there was a woman who was bowed together and could not straighten up.*"

The Bible says she had "*a spirit of infirmity*" (Luke 13:11).

Was it a blessing from God?

Jesus said, "*Satan has bound her*" (Luke 13:16).

Had a medical doctor been asked to diagnose that woman's case, he would not have said, "A spirit of Satan has bound her." Doctors would call it arthritis of the spine, displaced vertebrae, or some other medical term. They would be correct as far as medical science is concerned.

But the real source of the trouble was *"a spirit of infirmity from Satan had bound her."* Cast out the spirit. Rebuke Satan's oppression, and she is healed. That is what Jesus did.

Some spinal afflictions are still caused by Satan.

b. The Blind And Dumb Man. *"Then was brought to him one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb"* (Matt 12:22). When the devil was cast out, the blind could see and the dumb could speak.

A blind spirit caused the blindness in that man. Blindness can still be caused by Satan.

c. The Deaf And Dumb Boy. *"He rebuked the foul spirit, saying to him, 'You dumb and deaf spirit, I charge you, come out of him, and enter no more into him'"* (Mark 9:25).

Then, and now, those who are deaf and dumb may be in the grips of a deaf and dumb spirit.

d. The Unclean Man. *"There was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he [the demon] cried out... "*

And Jesus rebuked him [the foul spirit], saying, 'Hold your peace, and come out of him'" (Mark 1:23,25; Luke 4:35).

Here was an unholy man in the synagogue, and his condition was caused by a foul, lewd, unclean spirit. The cause of an unholy, lewd character can still be a devil.

2. Medical Vs Spiritual

Doctors may call it arthritis, but a spirit of infirmity may be the real cause.

The scientific term may be undeveloped vocal cords and dead nerves in the ear, but the real trouble in some cases is a deaf and dumb spirit that should be cast out in Jesus' Name.

The specialist may say it is glaucoma or cataracts, but they may be caused by a spirit of blindness.

Sickness is still of Satan, and can be caused by spirits of infirmity. When these spirits are cast out in Jesus' Name, the sick still recover.

Chapter 3

Prepare To Cast Out Demons

How do you go about delivering people from the rule and power of the devil?

A. SELECT THE DELIVERANCE TEAM

In the Bible, demons were cast out by Jesus and by anointed, empowered disciples chosen by Him to help in this ministry.

An Old Testament example of ministering to a demonized person is Saul and David. After David was anointed by Samuel the prophet (1 Sam 16:13), his music drove the evil spirits from King Saul (1 Sam 16:14,23).

In the New Testament, we see many casting out demons. In the four Gospels these included Jesus, the twelve apostles, the seventy and one other (Luke 9:1; 10:17; 9:49).

In Acts, we see the apostles Peter and Paul and the evangelist Philip involved in "emonic encounters resulting in the demons leaving (Acts 5:16; 8:7; 16:18; 19:12).

Peter was a fisherman; Paul was a theologian; and Philip started out by serving tables. This leads one to conclude that since most leaders in the early Church were laymen —this ministry is for all who believe (Mark 16:17).

It is usually wise to follow the example of Jesus in Mark 6:7: "*Calling the twelve to him, he sent them out two by two and gave them authority over evil spirits.*"

There is power in spiritual agreement (see Matthew 18:19). Deliverance teams (two to six) may have more success than one person alone. When the Lord is with you, "*one [will] chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight...*" (Deut 32:30). This indicates two are ten times more powerful than one. Thus, we recommend that you train deliverance teams.

1. Select A Team Leader

Review Section A1, *How To Train Church Leaders*, for help on training a team. The principles outlined in that section are very appropriate to selecting a team leader. The team leader is one of the most important aspects of a successful deliverance ministry in a local fellowship of believers, or to lead a traveling evangelistic-healing team.

If possible, select one man and one woman for training. In many cases, it is best to use a team of women to deal with women's problems and a team of men to deal with men's problems.

Deliverance teams frequently have to exorcise unclean spirits that drive the demonized persons to deviant or abnormal sexual behavior. There may be occasional exceptions, but it is usually more fitting in such cases to use persons of the same sex to help the demonized.

2. Select Team Members

The team leader's most important task is to find men or women who meet qualifications similar to his own.

The following qualifications are based on 1 Timothy 3:1-12.

3. Qualifications For Leaders And Members

a. Must Be Above Reproach. The team leader and his team must be above reproach.

He must not be a polygamist. He must be temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money.

He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil he may be trying to cast out.

He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, not pursuing dishonest gain, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap.

EXAMPLE: The following story will illustrate the importance of these qualifications.

I was helping a team cast out an unclean spirit from a man who was involved with homosexuality and fornication.

A young man who was observing the team presumptuously joined in (uninvited) to cast out the demon. He began to command with a loud voice, "I demand you come out of him, you unclean spirit."

The unclean spirit immediately spoke out of the demonized man, "Why are you trying to cast me out when you do the same things as I make this man do?"

That young man's face turned ashen- white with shock and embarrassment as he leapt to his feet and fled out of the room.

"...*a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of thy kingdom*" (Heb 1:8). A **righteous scepter** is the only one the devils will respond to. (Review the story in Acts 19:13-17 with your candidates.)

Spiritual authority should only be exercised in Christ's Kingdom by those living morally clean, righteous lives. Choose team members carefully.

b. Must Have Faith. Choose team members who have demonstrated they have faith.

One of the first evidences of faith is one who consistently and persistently seeks the Lord in prayer. *"And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him"* (Heb 11:6).

If there is lack of faith on either the part of the person praying for the deliverance or the one desiring deliverance (even though they're believers), the person will not be set free (see Mark 9:18b, 19,23,24; Matthew 17:19, 20).

NOTE THIS EXCEPTION: If the person needing deliverance is a child or mentally ill or incapacitated, then the parent or the one(s) responsible for caring for them can exercise faith on behalf of the one needing deliverance.

The Name of Jesus and faith in it are closely related. *"By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him that has given this complete healing to him, as you can see"* (Acts 3:16).

B. TRAIN THE DELIVERANCE TEAM

Once you have selected candidates for your team(s), you must train them. Refer to *How to Train Church Leaders* in Section A1 of **The Leaders Training Guide**. Here are a few practical points.

1. Put On The Armor Of God

Without the full armor (see Ephesians 6:13-18), you are powerless.

Have the trainee open his Bible to Ephesians 6 and read verses 13 through 18. As he comes to each piece of armor he should say, "Lord, I put on this piece of armor." Then he should visualize doing just that.

a. Truth. Read the first verse aloud: *"Stand therefore, having your loins girded with truth..."* (Eph 6:14). This means you bring your sexual desires under the **rule** of the Holy Spirit and exercise the fruit of the Spirit, self-control.

The trainee then says, "Lord, I gird up my loins with the truth of Your Word which says, *'Let not sin therefore reign [rule] in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof'*" (Rom 6:12).

This verbal declaration is armor against the demons who may seek to use their influence to cause heightened sensuality when you start to cast them out. Your armor protects you from yielding to this temptation and demonic influence.

b. Righteousness. *"The breastplate of righteousness."* The breast is the seat of the emotions. The emotions of love, affection, anger etc. must all find righteous expression for reasons explained in the section about selecting team members.

c. Gospel Of Peace. *"And the readiness to announce the Good News of peace as shoes for your feet"* (tev).

If the team member is not ready to share the gospel, he is not ready to be involved in exorcism.

d. Faith. *"The shield of faith."* The purpose is explained, *"to stop the fiery arrows aimed at you by Satan."* This is particularly essential in exorcism.

e. Salvation. *"And take the helmet of salvation."* **Salvation** comes from a root Greek word **soteria** from which can be translated **deliverance**.

This is particularly appropriate when approaching a demonized person. The **helmet of deliverance** protects you and your mind from Satan's influence and the demon's lies.

f. Word Of God. *"The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."* This is the **only offensive weapon** given. The sword of the Spirit, **the word of God**, means the **word of command** or **word of authority**. Continue reading the section that follows for enlarged meaning of this vital weapon by which you will cast out the demon.

Before proceeding, make sure you have trained the team members to put on the **defensive** armor piece by piece as outlined at the beginning of this section. The verbal declaration appropriating each piece of armor is vital. Otherwise the team is not ready for battle.

2. Use The Word Of Command

"And they were astonished...for his word was with power" (Luke 4:32). *"And they were all amazed, ...saying, What a word is this! for with authority and power he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out"* (Luke 4:36). *"...He rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, you dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him"* (Mark 9:25).

Use the **word of command** with faith. Faith is your shield and protection against the onslaught from the evil one. *"... and he [Jesus] drove out the spirits with a word..."* (Matt 8:16). *"What is this teaching? With authority and power he gives orders to evil spirits and they come out!"* (Luke 4:36).

3. Have The Anointing Of The Holy Spirit

For **the word of command** to bring deliverance to demonized people, you must have the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

(Be sure your trainees have studied the section on *The Baptism In The Holy Spirit* in **The Leaders Training Guide**.)

It is **the anointing** that breaks (destroys) the yoke of Satan over a person's life (Isa 10:27).

Jesus says in Luke 4:18, *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to... proclaim deliverance to the captives, and... to set at liberty..."* (Luke 4:18).

He also says in Matthew 12:28, *"...I drive out demons by the Spirit of God..."* The anointing of the Holy Spirit works closely with us as we use our authority in Jesus Christ.

"God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil: for God was with him" (Acts 10:38).

4. Be Flexible In Method

Note that although there are many lessons we can learn from the ministry of Jesus about deliverance, no specific methods have been put down.

The reason for this is summarized in 1 Corinthians 12:11: *"All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them [gifts] to each one, just as he determines."*

We need to be governed and guided by the Spirit's actions and impulse upon us when involved in exorcism.

5. Watch Out For Pride

Luke 10:20 is a warning that will keep trainees from stumbling into pride as a result of success in exorcism. *"However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."*

6. Know When To Use Prayer And Fasting

Trainees should remember that some demons can only be driven out by prayer and fasting (see Matthew 17:21 and Mark 9:29).

Do not conclude from this scripture that every case of lunacy, dumbness, deafness or epilepsy must be ministered to by fasting and prayer. Fasting and prayer are only applicable to special stubborn cases, or where there is undeveloped faith. To solve the "little faith" problem, see Section D3 in **The Leaders Training Guide** entitled *Make Their Faith Grow*.

7. Seek The Lord's Guidance

The team must pray and seek the Lord's guidance before praying for the person in need of help. The Holy Spirit will give you insights (Discerning of Spirits and a Word of Knowledge) to help in casting the demon(s) out (see John 8:47a, 1 Corinthians 12:1-11).

Make sure the trainee understands that lunacy, dumbness, deafness and some cases of epilepsy can be caused by injuries, inherited physical defects, brain damage, brain tumors, old age and disease, as well as from demonic oppression.

As a young believer I was part of an untrained team trying to cast out a demon from an epileptic. We had no success. He died about four months later.

The autopsy discovered that a large brain tumor was causing the seizures. Our prayers were not answered because they were born of youthful zeal rather than the direction and revelation of the Holy Spirit.

Depending on what part of the world you are in, the cause of these problems can vary. In some countries where the gospel is well established, only a small percentage can be attributed to demonic oppression.

In other nations, where only a few Christians exist, a large percentage of these symptoms can have their source in demonic oppression.

That is why we need those on our deliverance teams who have the Gifts of Discerning of Spirits and for a Word of Knowledge.

(See Section D1.3, *Gifts Of The Holy Spirit*, in **The Leaders Training Guide**.)

If the cause of the problem is a physical cause and you are trying to cast out a demon, it is unlikely you will have any success. This mistake will often generate undue fear in the person who is sick. The induced fear can cause the sick person even further complications. (See Section D9.2-A, *What Are Symptoms Of Demonic Bondage?*)

If your trainees understand the above, they should be ready to help more experienced believers in bringing deliverance to those that are in bondages caused by demons.

C. PREPARE THOSE NEEDING DELIVERANCE

Those needing deliverance in attendance at evangelistic crusades, street meetings and other public gatherings should be invited to attend teaching sessions. This prepares them to receive their deliverance.

There are biblical accounts of "spontaneous" exorcisms. In such cases, the Scriptures indicate that the Holy Spirit came strongly upon the apostle or evangelist before casting out the spirit.

In Paul's case, note the following: *"...as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us... The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, 'These men are the servants of the most high God, which show unto us the way of salvation.'*

"And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, 'I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.' And he came out the same hour"(Acts 16:16-18).

Note: It was **many days** before Paul cast out the spirit. This is not to suggest you should wait many days — but public exorcisms are usually only done when the Holy Spirit strongly comes upon you and spontaneously gives you the **word of command** to cast out the spirit.

Usually it is better to prepare the demonized person for deliverance by the suggestions that follow.

1. Attend Bible Teaching Sessions

If a demonized person is willing to attend Bible teaching sessions, this indicates that their desire for deliverance is probably intense enough for them to be helped.

To cast spirits out of persons who do not strongly desire to be free of them can open the door in their life to greater problems. Review Matthew 12:43-45 with those adults asking for help. Make sure they have a strong desire for deliverance. See Section 6 or 7 below.

In the case of parents bringing children, test the parents' resolve to follow the way of the Lord by confirming whether they will accept the teaching that you give to prepare them for deliverance.

Faith comes by hearing the Word of God taught. *"And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them.*

"And he marveled because of their unbelief. And he went round about the villages, teaching" (Mark 6:5,6). Unbelief hindered Jesus' ministry, so He taught. Teaching is what breaks the bondage of unbelief. It prepares the people to receive from the Lord.

The first teaching session should cover Chapter 1 found in Section B1, **Victorious Christian Living**, in **The Leaders Training Guide**. The following is also useful instruction:

2. Break Off Contact With Mediums

If a person has been involved with mediums, it is essential that all contact with them be broken off.

"Do not turn to mediums or seek out spirits, for you will be defiled by them. I am the LORD your God" (Lev 19:31); "...diviners see visions that lie; they tell dreams that are false, they give comfort in vain. Therefore the people wander like sheep oppressed for lack of a shepherd" (Zech 10:2).

3. Destroy Charms / Talismans

If a person has been involved in love/hate magic, see if they are wearing a ring, necklace or amulet (charm or talisman).

Remove and destroy it in the Name of Jesus. Otherwise it can obstruct the person's deliverance and walk with God.

4. Destroy Articles Of Witchcraft

Destroy all articles of witchcraft — e.g., idols (like Buddha images), bangles and footrings (especially, amongst African people, those made of thin rubber), ash, cords around their wrists, arms, ankles, legs and midriff.

5. Ask God For Forgiveness

Have the person ask God for forgiveness for being involved in such things. Have him acknowledge and renounce any oaths and offerings he has made and any curses he has uttered. *'Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective'* (Jas 5:16).

"Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: 'Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree.' He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus..." (Gal 3:13,14a).

6. Renounce Everything Of Sin And Satan

Ask the person to say a prayer in which he relinquishes and renounces everything of sin and Satan he was involved with. *"Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception..."* (2Cor 4:2).

7. Receive Salvation

It is necessary that the person either be led to Christ, or brought back to Him if he is in a backslidden state. Tell him to confess his sin (I Jn 1:9). Counsel him to stay free in the future by immediate acknowledgement and confession on any occasion of sin.

If a person does not want to accept Christ, it is better not to deliver him as this could make his condition worse. "When an evil spirit comes: out of a man, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it.

"Then it says, 'I will return to the house I left.' When it arrives, it finds the house swept clean and put in order.

"Then it goes and takes seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that man is worse than the first" (Luke 11:24-26).

You waste your time and energy if you try to deliver an adult who is not really interested in being free.

a. There Is Power In Christ's Blood. The person's deliverance is possible because of the blood of Jesus Christ that was shed on the cross. It is His blood that gives power to the Name of Jesus.

I always remind Satan of the power of Jesus' precious blood. Demons always react strongly to the mention of Jesus' blood.

The blood dissolves all Satan's legal rights of ownership on the one who is demonized.

*"In whom we have redemption through his **blood...**"* (Col 1:14). '**Redemption**' means '**to buy back.**' We are under new ownership, and the price that was paid for us was the shed blood of Jesus.

"...the church of God, which he **bought** with his own blood" (Acts 20:28; see also I Corinthians 6:19,20; I Timothy 2:6).

That is why the demons have to come out when commanded by an anointed servant of God. They know they have no legal right to stay in one who is purchased and owned by another.

*"And they overcame him [Satan] by **the blood of the Lamb...**"* (Rev 12:11),

For further study on this important point, refer to the **New Believers Training Manual** and Section E1 of **The Topical Concordance**.

8. Memorize Scriptures

The following scriptures should be given to the demonized persons to memorize prior to their being prayed for: Numbers 23:21-24; Hebrews 2:14,15; Luke 10:17-19; Mark 16:17; James 2:19.

Confirm that they have memorized them, understand them and believe them. Section B1, **Victorious Christian Living, in The Leaders Training Guide** explains these verses.

When the verses have been memorized, the teaching session has been completed and the steps outlined above have been taken, the ministry to those oppressed by demons can begin.

Chapter 4 Conducting The Deliverance Session

A. WHERE?

1. Room Or Location

a. **Away From Crowds.** Do not cast out demons where a crowd is present (especially if they're non-Christian). Jesus quickly rebuked the evil spirit and cast it out when He saw an inquisitive crowd approaching.

"When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, 'You dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him'" (Mark 9:25).

b. Physically Safe. There are cases known where an unclean spirit has left one person and entered into an inquisitive unbelieving onlooker. Some church leaders prepare a room with carpet or quilts on the floor and pillows around the wall. This padding prevents the demonized persons from physically injuring themselves. Often the demonized writhe and flail about when demons depart.

B. HOW?

1. Start With Praise And Worship

When involved in deliverance, it is good to start with praising and then worshipping God in the Spirit (John 4:23,24).

Praising God builds your faith. *"He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God"* (Rom 4:20).

Declare the victory you have over Satan. *"And they overcame him [the devil] by the blood of the Lamb, and **by the word of their declaration** [testimony —confession]..."* (Rev 12:11).

(Review Section D4 of the **Leaders Training Guide** entitled *Use Power Of Faith Confession*).

Worship brings the manifest presence (the anointing) of the Holy Spirit into the situation. Sing worshipful choruses and songs to prepare the room for God to come.

Anointed musicians playing their instruments and singers worshipfully adoring Jesus can create an atmosphere where the Holy Spirit's will can be more readily implemented.

"But now bring me a minstrel. And it came to pass, when the minstrel played, that the hand of the LORD came upon him [Elijah]" (2Ki 3:15).

2. Declaration Of Faith By Demonized Person

Have the demonized person kneel and acknowledge (say it with his mouth); "My deliverance comes only through Jesus Christ and His victory over the devil and his angels. I believe Jesus is Lord! I bow my knee and I confess this with my mouth and I declare: *'That at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, in heaven [the angels and saints], and on earth [those that believe on Jesus], and under the earth [the demons]'*" (Phil 2:10).

"...I know the truth, and the truth will set me free ...So if the Son sets me free, I will be free indeed" (John 8:32,36).

3. Use The Name Of Jesus Christ

Use the Name of Jesus Christ to enforce the victory He gained over Satan and his forces: *"...God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name..."* (Phil 2:9). Mark 16:17 says, *"...In my name they will drive out demons..."*

4. Speak With Authority

Remember point C.7 in the last chapter. It is as a result of the shedding of the blood of Jesus on the cross that you have the victory over Satan and his forces (Rev 12:11). With this in mind, talk to the demon with words of command (authority) and tell the demon exactly what it must do. Believe that your words will result in the devil(s) releasing their grip of bondage on the person concerned, and leaving.

The grip is **"on"** the person when the devil is oppressing him from the outside, and **"in"** the person when the evil spirit(s) has come into his body, soul or spirit and bound him physically, emotionally, mentally or spiritually.

Do not ask God to deliver the person. All His authority has been given to you (Luke 10:19; Eph 1:19-23). You are now the one to act in the place (or stead) of Christ.

5. Rebuke And Command Spirits To Leave

Rebuke the devil and command the unclean spirit(s) to leave the person: *"...Jesus ...rebuked the evil spirit. 'You deaf and dumb spirit,' he said, 'I command you, come out of him and never enter him again'"* (Mark 9:25); *"...Paul... turned around and said to the spirit, 'In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!' At that moment the spirit left her"* (Acts 16:18).

6. Keep Sessions Short

When a person falls into a trance, it may be more difficult to drive the spirit out. You can spend hours and tire yourself out. This may be because the evil spirit is not prepared to leave his victim.

However, if a person is prepared for deliverance (by proper teaching and following the steps outlined above), everything can be over within minutes.

I would recommend a time limit of about twenty minutes per exorcism session. See the section. *Additional Sessions May Be Needed*, on the next page.

The author assisted in delivering a tormented child in Guyana, South America. The child never woke up during the time we spoke the words of command.

We told the demon(s) to leave and never come back again. Because the child was asleep, we had no way of knowing whether the demons had obeyed or would obey.

When the child awoke from sleep some four hours later, a loud scream and gagging signaled the departure of the demon. This indicates that when the words of command are spoken in faith, the demons must depart — if not immediately, then upon the person regaining consciousness.

7. Do Not Lay Hands On The Demonized Person

Remember, unless directed explicitly by the Holy Spirit to do so, do not lay your hands on a person when you drive out demons.

Jesus and Paul drove out demons with a commanding word of authority.

You lay hands on people to bless them (Gen 48:14-16; Matt 19:14,15); to heal the sick (Mark 6:2,5; Mark 16:18b; Luke 4:40; Luke 13:13; Acts 19:11,12); to impart the Gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:17; Acts 9:17 and Acts 19:6); to impart Gifts of the Holy Spirit (I Tim 4:14 and 2Tim 1:6); and to put a public seal of approval on faithful servants of God (Num 27:18-23).

But you normally do **not** lay hands on demonized people. While there is no direct scriptural command against this, Paul may be implying this in 1 Timothy 5:22: *"Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands, and do not share in the sins of others. Keep yourself pure."*

Sometimes by laying hands on a person who comes to be delivered, you may be catering to the demon's demand for attention and acceptance.

I recall an instance where a woman with an unclean spirit (a spirit of lust) came to a group of untaught and inexperienced Christian businessmen for prayer. Their laying hands on her stimulated deviant sexual fantasies, resulting in orgasmic contractions. She neither wanted nor received deliverance.

Identifying with a demon in that way contaminates your spirit, especially if you are not walking in total uprightness in your own life. In such cases, it is best to have women minister to women, and men to men.

C. FOLLOW UP AFTER DELIVERANCE

1. Make Sure The Exorcised Person...

a. Memorizes Scripture. It is important to give the exorcised person suitable portions of Scripture to memorize so he can resist the devil if and when he tries to return and attack him (see Luke 11:24-26; Galatians 5:1).

Teach the person to follow Jesus' example when Satan tried to destroy Him. Jesus quoted Scripture to defeat Satan (Matt 4:4,6,7,10).

b. Understands The Believer's Authority. Teach the person about his authority as a believer and how to put on the full armor of God (Eph 6:10-18 and 2Cor 10:3-5).

c. Affirms His Deliverance. Have the person read John 8:36 aloud. Encourage the person to verbally affirm (speak with his own lips) that he has been delivered and Jesus has set him free, just as He promised.

"If you will confess with your mouth [acknowledge the truth of God's Word] .. you will be delivered" (Rom 10:9; see also I Corinthians 15:57; Colossians 2:15).

d. Lives A Holy Life. Teach him that it is essential to live a clean, holy, separated life of total commitment to God.

"Therefore, I urge you brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God — this is your spiritual act of worship.

"Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

"Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is — His good, pleasing and perfect will" (Rom 12:1,2).

e. Forgives Those Who Wrong Him. It is very important that a person through his own free choice walks in a life of total and continual forgiveness.

Teach the person the importance of forgiving, and continuing to forgive, anyone who has harmed him in the past.

Satan will try to bring back thoughts of wrong done to him, to induce an unforgiving spirit. If Satan succeeds, this gives demons legal grounds to further oppress the person. Here is how to defeat Satan's strategy and frustrate the devil (teach the following to the demonized):

Take every occasion of remembering a wrong to forgive. When you remember a wrong, say out loud, "Thank you, Satan. for causing me to remember. I forgive (name the transgressor) the wrong committed against me" (see Matthew 5:21-26; Matthew 6:14, 15).

This will frustrate the devil so much, he will quit harassing the person. Stress that if the newly delivered person fails to do this, he has opened a door for Satan to come back in and torment him (see Matthew 18:21-35).

2. Additional Sessions May Be Needed

Many years ago in Asia, a woman who had a spirit of adultery received Jesus as her Lord and Savior. However, the demonic bondage was not broken. She was like Mary Magdalene in the Bible. She would have sex with up to six men a day. She was deeply distressed and wanted to be free.

During the first exorcism session, she went on the floor, hissing and writhing like a snake as the demons began to leave. After fifteen minutes we saw she was physically and emotionally exhausted, so we sat her up.

When she gained her composure, we set a time for her to attend a second teaching session and gave her more Scripture to memorize.

After the first session, her obsessive sex drive was broken and she stopped her immoral lifestyle.

However, she still had no natural, scriptural affection for her husband. *"Unto the woman God said, ...your desire shall be for your husband..." (Gen 3:16).*

When she was ministered to the second time, the hissing and writhing continued, but not as severe as the first time. More demonic bondage was broken. She went home from the second session with freedom to love and live with her husband in a normal way, completely healed. It took two sessions, but her freedom was complete.

If three sessions do not totally free the person, then either his desire for freedom is not strong, or you are lacking the spiritual authority and faith.

In such cases, have the person and the deliverance team commit themselves to seven days of fasting and prayer, then try again.

Ask the Lord to show what the hindrance is. When He does, ask for a Word of Wisdom as to what is required to remove the hindrance. Then do what the Holy Spirit says.

D. DELIVERANCE IS NOT...

1. Promoting Vomiting

Deliverance is **not** to give the person coffee, tea or water to drink so that he can vomit up the devil!

2. Giving Baths

Deliverance is **not** to bathe the person in icy cold water so that the unclean spirit must leave him!

3. Whipping Or Beating

Deliverance is not to tie him to a tree and beat him with a stick or whip to drive out the evil spirit.

4. Striking Back

Do not assault the person or attack him if he gets violent with you. Remember, it is in reality not him, but the demon in him. Let others help restrain him.

5. Verbal Torture

Deliverance is **not** to say to the devil, "I torture or torment you with the blood of Jesus Christ."

These five practices may sound strange and comical to you, but many such unscriptural practices of deliverance take place around the world. Such can do more harm than good and bring discredit to the Name of Jesus.

E. BE ENCOURAGED

When you involve yourself in spiritual warfare and deliverance. God says: "*Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their forefathers to give them*" (Josh 1:6).

And let your reply be: "*Whatever you have commanded us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go*" (Josh 1:16).

1. Christ Has Won The Victory

Our salvation, our deliverance and our redemption from all the works of Satan have been accomplished by Christ for us.

When He uttered those words, "*it is finished,*" it was like hoisting the flag of the victor over a liberated land where the battle had been fought, where the enemy has been conquered and forced to surrender.

Christ, the "*captain of our salvation and the author and finisher of our faith*" (Heb 2:10; Heb 12:2), came to this world and defeated our enemy, Satan.

Jesus stripped him of his authority, carried away our pains and our defeats, and arose from the grave, triumphant over the devil. He declared those triumphant words: "*It is finished.*" "

Christ, the Captain of our salvation, has fought our battle for us and has liberated us from the power and dominion of the enemy.

2. Demons Have No Legal Rights

But why, then, are so many still oppressed by spirits of infirmity, sickness and disease?

Because, though our property has been liberated from the enemy, though Satan's reign has been destroyed by Christ, though Satan's power over our lives has been taken from him, there remains a host of demons who continue to resist our freedom and resent our victory.

Demon spirits have no legal right to continue oppressing and afflicting believers with disease and infirmity. But demons are aware that most people do not know that Satan has made a surrender and has been defeated.

Even most Christians do not know that Satan's forces have no rights over them at all. So demons continue their illegal opposition to believers' heritage in Christ, and they defeat many.

As long as people do not know about Satan's legal defeat, he can operate unhindered. But our business is to read and believe the record of Satan's complete defeat, and share the good news with others.

"Forasmuch then as we are flesh and blood, Jesus also took upon himself flesh and blood; that through death he might destroy [render powerless] him that had the power of death, that is, the devil" (Heb2:14).

This tells us the devil has been rendered powerless.

We can resist the devil, steadfast in the faith, and he will flee from us (Jas 4:7; I Pet 5:9).

3. Demons Will Be Judged

"Do you not know that we [the saved] shall judge angels?" (I Cor 6:3).

God's Word says, *"We shall judge angels."* Satan and his angels have already been judged, and sentence has been passed.

Some fallen angels are already chained in darkness, awaiting execution of the judgment (Jude 6). Others, including Satan, have been allowed to continue their evil work of accusing the brethren, buffeting the saints and opposing the will of God (Job 1:6-11).

a. By Christ And His Bride. The Lord's final act, executing judgment on Satan and his demons, will be shared with His Bride, the Church. We will have a part in implementing the sentence that has already been passed on the devil and his angels (Matt 25:41).

Jude 6 tells us that the execution of the sentence will judicially be carried out at *"the judgment of the great day."* The *"great day"* is *"the day of the Lord"* (Isa2:12-22).

1) On The Day Peace And Righteousness Are Instituted. It will be a day of instituting peace and righteousness. *"Then the King will say to those on his right hand, 'Come, you blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world'" (Matt 25:31-40).*

2) On The Day Of Judgment. It will also be a Day of Judgment. *"Then he will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels'" (Matt 25:41 -46).*

This is the beginning of the *"judgment of the great day."*

The end will not come until the world has enjoyed righteous government for a thousand years. Simon Peter tells us ' *that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day*' (2Pet3:8).

3) After The Millennium. For a thousand years, Satan will be bound and cast into the bottomless pit. When the thousand years are finished, he will be released and will go out to deceive countless thousands who were born during the millennial (thousand-year) reign of Jesus Christ, but who were never born again (Rev 20:1-3, 7-9).

4) Before The Great White Throne Judgment. The judgment of fallen angels will precede the Great White Throne judgment of the wicked dead, after the thousand years (Rev 20:10). Therefore, it is in harmony with the Scriptures to conclude that Satan and all evil angels will be judged by Christ and believers at the end of the thousand-year kingdom age, just before the Great White Throne judgment. Remember, Jesus said that Hell was "*prepared for the devil and his angels*" (Matt 25:41).

"He said to them, 'Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation... And these signs will accompany those who believe; In my name they will drive out demons'" (Mark 16:15,17 niv).

SECTION D10

USE SPIRITUAL WEAPONS

By Ralph Mahoney

Chapter 1

The Victorious Church

Introduction

"... Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt 16:18). What does it mean that "*the gates of hell shall not prevail against*" Christ's Church? I used to erroneously imagine the conflict between the Church and Satan as a game of cat and mouse. Satan was the cat and the Church was the mouse. Satan was big and powerful; the Church small and weak, always on the defensive.

But that's not what the verse about the gates of Hell means. Far from it. The picture instead is of a victorious Church laying siege to Hell and breaking down its gates to release its prisoners.

Gates are for defense. The "*gates of hell*" are for the defense of Hell. Jesus promised He would have a Church so courageous and full of power — that Church would attack manifestations of Hell wherever it found them. His Church would fulfill this glorious messianic prophecy of David:

"When the LORD shall build up Zion [the Church], he shall appear in his glory. He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer.

"This shall be written for the generation to come [the Church Age]... For the Lord looked down from... heaven... to behold the earth;

"To hear the groaning of those which are bound [by Hell]; to release those that are appointed to death" (Ps 102:16-20).

The gates of Hell cannot- and will not hold back a church of those who believe they are united (one) with Christ. Jesus said: *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised [crushed, wrecked, cracked or torn]" (Luke 4:18).*

This study is dedicated to those who want to partner with Jesus in attacking the gates of Hell.

A. OUR ADVERSARY

Peter warned us to *"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (I Pet 5:8).*

1. Is An Imposter

Peter did not intend to cause us to be afraid of the devil. The key word is *as*. Satan only goes about *as* a lion. He is not a lion. Jesus is the lion of the tribe of Judah (Rev 5:5). Satan is only an imitator and impostor — roaring *as* a lion to try to frighten and intimidate.

2. Is Powerless Against Christ

His warfare against us is purely psychological. He is, in truth, rendered powerless by Christ's victory over him at Calvary, and he cannot do us any real harm (see Hebrews 2:14; Luke 10:18, 19).

3. Is To Be Resisted

"Yet Michael, one of the mightiest of the angels, when he was arguing with Satan about Moses' body, did not dare to accuse even Satan, or jeer at him, but simply said, 'The Lord rebuke you'" (Jude 9).

Like Michael, the mighty angel, we respect the place of Satan in God's plan. However, we are clearly instructed to resist him.

For years, whenever I encountered a **demonized** person, I would get scared. After all, it's often a noisy affair with people frothing at the mouth and screaming — not the sort of thing to make you feel at ease.

But all this noise is really only one of the devil's psychological weapons of warfare. All the noise is intended to distract you from the fact that there is no real danger — if you are a child of God.

The devil and the demons know they are powerless. That's why demons scream so loudly. But all we have to do is resist him. *"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (Jas 4:7).* Remember to first submit yourselves to God, and then resist the devil.

4. Is Not To Be Feared

Should church leaders be afraid of witch doctors, voodoo priests, enchanters and other devilish practitioners? Numbers 23:23 says: *"Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, surely there is no divination against Israel."*

I don't care what kind of JuJu or curse the witch doctor is going to put on you; it won't work. It may work against unbelievers, but if you are a child of God through faith in Christ, you are blessed and protected.

Numbers 23:23 applies to you. The Bible says: "*Behold, my people shall rise up as a great lion...*" (Num 23:24). We who are followers of Christ take on the nature of Him Who is the lion of the tribe of Judah. We rise up like a lion and resist the devil. When we do this, the Bible says: "*...the devils... tremble*" (Jas 2:19).

Other people may get sick, suffer misfortune or even die as the result of a curse; but not you. As one of God's children, you rise up like a lion and roar back at devils if they try to bother you.

That's why it disturbs me to see God's people tremble when a demon manifests itself. Christians should never tremble — it is the devils who tremble. I used to be afraid until I learned the truth. But since then, I have never been frightened or intimidated in the face of demons.

5. Should Be Pursued And Attacked

When I hear people ask for prayer because the devil's after them, I want to say: "Wait a minute! The devil shouldn't be after you — you should be after the devil!"

Well, you say, that's all very nice. The Church should be triumphant, always on the offensive. But, in fact, it is not. How, exactly, are we to make all this happen? It seems a big job.

It is a big job, but by faith in Christ all things are possible (Mark 9:23).

B. OUR WEAPONS

1. Are Effective

A few years ago I encountered a demonized child in a church. The demons made such a scene. I thought half the congregation was going to jump up and run out. They weren't convinced that their spiritual weapons were effective against Satan.

The first step, then, is to become convinced. On one occasion I stood every morning for two weeks and confessed to God: "*The weapons of my warfare are mighty through God to the pulling, down of strongholds.*" I was absorbing the truth of 2 Corinthians 10:3,4.

2. Are Mighty

My weapons are not mighty in themselves but rather **through God**. To illustrate: If I get very close to a microphone and whisper, my voice travels through the amplifier and comes out very loud.

Similarly, my weapons — feeble and weak of themselves — pass through God and become mighty enough to tear down strongholds. Through God they are amplified, made strong and become mighty to tear down demonic strongholds.

3. Can Release Captives

The prisoners we seek to release must have a change of mind. Do you know what the word **repentance** (Greek = metanoia) means? It means a change of mind; a reversal of position. Most of us know people whose minds are set against God. To be set free, they need to change their minds. But how? The weapons of our warfare can do it — through God.

C. OUR WARFARE

Often, I think, we wrongly plead with God to save souls of our lost loved ones— when in fact, He has already done everything He needs to do for them to be saved.

1. Battle Assigned

God has entrusted to **us** the **ministry of reconciliation** and the **word of reconciliation** (2Cor 5:18,19). God wants us, the members of His Body, the Church, to reconcile men to Him.

2. Battle Defined

I don't mean that we operate independently of God. But, when we move in the Spirit, we learn to make proper use of the weapons of our warfare.

a. Example #1. I had some co-workers who had been praying for eight years for "**God to save**" an unsaved friend. They were skeptical about this idea. They were not sure that their spiritual weapons could be used to fight for her and bring her to repentance. But together we decided to try using the principles of warfare outlined below, to see if they would work.

1) The Battle. Instead of praying that God would convert her, we spoke these words in faith: "Our heavenly Father, in the Name of Jesus, we move as warriors in battle against every barrier of sinful decay and corruption in that mind. Because these sinful thought-patterns exalt themselves against the knowledge of God, we assault these barriers and demolish them. We do this so her mind is freed to obey Christ. We do this on the authority of God's Word."

2) The Victory. For about three weeks, we did this kind of spiritual warfare on behalf of the woman for whom we fought the fight of faith. Toward the end of this time, she bowed her knees in repentance and came back to God, and was gloriously saved and delivered from being an alcoholic.

b. Example #2. On another occasion I met a woman whose sister was an alcoholic and dope addict. This woman had been praying for her sister for three-and-a-half years: "Lord, save my sister!"

Prior to that time, her sister had known God; but, as the result of an auto accident, the sister became addicted to narcotic pain-killers and alcohol. Now her husband was ready to divorce her. The sister had three small children. Disaster threatened the family, if she was not set free from behind the gates of Hell.

1) The Strategy. As this woman poured out all this information to me, she wept. It was evident that she loved her sister very much and wanted desperately for her to be released. So I said: "Stop praying for her! Begin instead to wage warfare on her behalf. Use the weapons God has given you — the ministry and word of reconciliation. The devil has no authority to stop you."

"Each day," I continued, "move in against the powers of darkness that have attached themselves to your sister's mind. Drive them back with Christ's authority a day at a time. It may take several days; but keep at it, using your weapons."

And then I added one further point: "Once you have captured this ground in your sister's mind from the enemy, then occupy it by a declaration of faith... telling the enemy he must not come back. Jesus told us to '*occupy until he comes*' (Luke 19:13). This will prevent reentry by enemy forces."

2) The Victory. Together, that night, the woman and I began to take authority against the influence of Satan over her sister's mind. We spoke words of faith against every barrier of sinful decay and corruption. In Jesus' Name, we cast down the workings of Satan in her thoughts, the thoughts which the enemy had built up in her mind as his barriers of sinful decay and corruption.

I met that woman only three weeks later. Her face was aglow. She came up to me. "Do you know what's happened to my sister?" she asked.

"I can guess," I replied.

"After I started doing spiritual warfare for my sister, she began to change. Within two weeks she had come to Christ in full repentance and found complete deliverance from drugs and alcohol. She's reunited with her husband and with the church and she's been filled with the Holy Spirit!"

3. We Must Fight

God gives certain things to us to do. He never fails to do His part. It's we who have to be careful to remember our part. We must look at the cross and see Satan's defeat. Then we must move out on that basis to do battle as the Lord directs.

Our task is not to pray for God to save those we are concerned about. Jesus has already shed His blood to save them. Now, He has given to **us** the **word** and **ministry** of reconciliation. Thus, we must use our weapons to save the lost. Let us go out and do it.

a. Another Battle. A friend from Argentina, South America told the story of a young woman in a Bible Institute. She had been wonderfully saved and gloriously filled with the Holy Spirit. But after that, she had been badly disappointed in a romance and became bitter about it. She cut herself off from God and everyone else. In time, her rebellion and anger began to affect the entire school.

1) The Fight. Finally, one night, the dean of students came to the founder of the Bible School. "Brother," he said, "we're going to have to expel this girl. She causes too much trouble."

"One question first," the founder replied. "Did God send that girl here?"

"Yes, I believe so."

"Well, then, I don't intend to surrender her to the jaws of the devil. When David's flock was threatened by a lion or a bear, he killed the lion and the bear by rending their mouths and defended his sheep from harm. He was brave because he trusted God.

"We're going to do the same for this girl," the founder continued, "and we'll see her come to release at the evening service — in about three hours from now. Now excuse me, please. I have to pray."

With that, the founder withdrew into his prayer closet. There, for the next three hours, he spoke against the forces of darkness that had attached themselves to the girl. He commanded the barriers of rebellion to come down. He commanded every spiritual force to be broken. He drove them out with words of command spoken in the Name of Jesus. He commanded that her thoughts be brought into obedience to Christ.

2) The Victory. That evening, a remarkable thing happened in the service. The young woman for whom the founder had done battle was sitting there as sullen as ever. She was a girl of considerable size and strength.

But not far from her was another little girl of slight stature who began to be stirred by the Spirit. This little girl began to rejoice and dance before the Lord. Soon she danced right over to the large, sullen girl and pulled her up out of her chair.

This was doubly remarkable because the angry girl was large and stout, weighing perhaps seventy-five kilograms, while the happy girl was very slight and slender.

The angry, sullen, large girl struggled to get away, but the little girl got a hammerlock on her head and began to dance her round and round. In a few moments the

backslidden girl fell in a heap on the floor in convulsions of weeping and tears of repentance.

The Holy Spirit had cast down her rebellious thoughts, changed her mind and started to heal the hurt that had caused it. The founder's faith and his willingness to exercise it by doing battle had produced a glorious victory for Christ's Church. Indeed, the gates of Hell had not been able to stand against the spiritual weapons of a spiritual warrior.

b. We Are Not Helpless. No ministry excels that of intercessory prayer. In fact, I don't want people to stop praying. Instead, I want us to refocus our thinking so that we realize God has given us weapons to employ in a battle.

We don't have to stand by helplessly when our friends and loved ones are threatened or taken captive by the enemy. No, we are equipped to tear down the gates of Hell and bring them out.

Jude tells us to: '*Save some by snatching them as from the very flames of hell itself...*' (Jude 23 tib).

It is my job and your job to do the saving and snatching. Christ has shed His blood to save sinners. He intercedes on our behalf incessantly. Our part is to pick up our weapons and go out against the powers of darkness and drive them off the land.

c. Our Weapons Will Work. Christ bought us with His own blood — we belong to Him. And so, by the same token, do all men. John said that Jesus' blood "*...is the expiation [full payment] for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world*" (1 Jn 2:2).

No person is exempt from Christ's work of salvation. What remains is for us to work with God — to fight the good fight that loosens Satan's hold on lost men and women and compel them to come into the banquet hall.

Do you believe that the weapons with which God has equipped you are effective? Do you believe that merely speaking the word of reconciliation by faith, in utter dependence on the Holy Spirit, will cast down barriers of corruption and decay? Will your weapons of war cast down sinful strongholds in the mind — and bring down these things that exalt themselves against God? Do you believe that your weapons can and will bring minds — rebellious minds — to obey Christ? They will!

I challenge you to put this to the test. Surely there are those you love, whom you want to see saved.

Stop praying for God to save them, and begin in the Name of Jesus to take authority, to speak in faith against the influence Satan has in their minds. This is the only way that you will satisfy yourself that what I am saying is true.

Let us challenge Hell's gates. Let us break them down in order to bring out the captives that they might serve Christ and know true freedom.

4. A Warfare Prayer

Make this your prayer: "*Lord, in the Name of Jesus, I come against the strongholds Satan has erected in the mind of [use the person's name]. I cast down those strongholds and every high thing in that mind which exalts itself against the knowledge of God. And I release that mind to obedience to Christ. I loose it to be reconciled to God. Amen.*"

Now try that for a month — see what happens. I'm convinced you will go from faith to faith and victory to victory.

SECTION D11

TRUST GOD FOR MONEY

By Ralph Mahoney

Chapter 1

The Lord, Our Provider

Let's not dodge the issue! It takes money to travel to other nations to minister — lots of money. Where does it come from? "How can you do it, Brother Mahoney?" I have been asked this question more than any other as I have traveled around the world. I am going to give you a strong, frank answer.

A. CALLED BY GOD

In the spring of 1949, shortly after I was saved, the Lord dealt with me over a period of several months about surrendering my life for missionary ministry.

I had plans for my life worked out in my own mind for years ahead, and it was not easy for me to see them change.

But God has a way of getting His way! As the old song says, "He doesn't make you go — He only makes you willing to go!"

1. Covenant Made

When I finally surrendered my life to His call, it was with this statement and condition: "Lord! I'll go to the North Pole and preach to the Eskimos; I'll go to the South Pole and preach to the penguins, if You desire; but one thing I won't do, I won't go out and beg and ask for money to go. If You want me to go. You will have to provide the money." With this, my consecration and calling were sealed.

Little did this novice heart of mine realize how this call and consecration would be tested, tried and refined ere I set foot in another country many years later.

2. Calling Tested

"Until the time that his word came: the word of the Lord tried him" (Ps 105:19). When you have a clear revelation of God's will for your life — then the trying (testing, proving) of that revelation begins. It was so of Joseph — it was so of me!

a. Rejection. Immediately upon leaving high school, I enrolled in a missionary training school. Feeling I would be a missionary in another country before my twentieth birthday, I pursued the training course with diligence.

At the climax of the year, the administrator of the school presented the following proposition: "Ralph!" he said, "you must promise me that you will not teach or preach on the Baptism in the Holy Spirit." It hit me like a thunderbolt!

This was an interdenominational school. How could they refuse to give me approval on such grounds? It was impossible to agree to this, so my relationship with this mission agency was terminated.

"Lord, I thought You called me to be a foreign evangel," I prayed. "Why this difficulty and rejection?" (No answer!)

b. Walking By Faith. After joining a Pentecostal denomination, a new sphere of ministry began. Out in the piney woods of northern Louisiana in a community which had no Full Gospel witness, my wife and I pitched a tent.

Young, enthusiastic, full of zeal, but oh! so ignorant of God's ways — we began the meetings. From the two weeks' evangelistic campaign, souls were saved and the nucleus for a church gathered together. The first rainy winter was spent in a tent.

At the same time, a little tar-papered frame house served as our domicile. It rained almost as much in the house as outside. We couldn't gather together enough pots and pans to catch all the drips and streams of rain pouring through the leaky roof.

However, the rain served one useful purpose. I didn't have to go quite so often the quarter mile distance for water, which a generous neighbor supplied for our portable barrel.

From the beginning of our ministry, my wife and I began to learn the walk of faith. One month during our tenure in this community, our gross income was \$8.53. But we generally averaged about \$10 or \$12 a week.

Amazingly, we were able to give a larger percentage of our income back to the Lord's work than at most any other time in our lives. We were learning that "*they that gathered little had no lack*" (Exo 16:18).

In order to get material for our church building, we cleared the ground where the church was to be built and hauled the trees to the sawmill for the lumber.

A church member located sunken logs, which had been abandoned by loggers years before, in a nearby river. In the days back near the turn of the century, a log that wouldn't float down the river to the sawmill was considered worthless and was cut away from the float.

I always felt that the Lord knew we would need them fifty years later, so He stored them on the bottom of that river for us. Diving down into water six to ten feet deep, I fastened the grappling hooks to them and winched the logs out of the silt. The logs were tied to the side of our small barge and floated to a landing. They were trucked to the sawmill, where they were cut, cured and finished "on halves." We got the knotty half, and the sawmill got the clear half. Despite the sawmiller's perverse ways, the church building was completed.

Surely now, we thought, the Lord will open the door and send us to some foreign field. Others from the same area were finding acceptance with the denominational board and, by itineration, were raising their support. Why couldn't I?

c. A Prisoner Of Jesus. Ah! the covenant made with the Lord was binding and restraining me. As surely as Joseph, I was fettered in a prison from which there was no escape! (Ps 105:18). Others could raise their support and go, but not this *prisoner of Jesus*.

The hours stretched into days. The days and long sleepless nights (when visions of foreign fields filled my mind) dragged into months. The months became seasons and the seasons stretched into years.

Years of closed doors! Years of being hedged in! Years of frustration, fear and torment that I had somehow missed the will of God. Where? What? Why?

These questions arose to torment my troubled mind, and cast long shadows of doubt over my soul, which longed to thrust in the sickle and reap.

I would read the story of Joseph over and over and, each time, my eyes would fill with tears and a cry would go up to the Father: "Lord, is this what is happening to me? Am I being prepared for a day, hour and year in the divine purpose? Or, Lord, have I missed You? Have I somehow erred from the path and gotten lost, and now am wandering, forsaken, in a waste, howling wilderness?"

d. Waiting For A Time. Questions! Baffling, searing, soul-searching, heartrending perplexities washed in endless tides over my every waking hour. But again God's Word: '*Until the time that his word came; the word of the Lord tried him*' (Ps 105:19).

Now I see it! Lord, "*until the TIME...!*" There is a time! I am waiting for a time! "*When the fullness of TIME was come, God sent forth...*" (Gal 4:4). With these thoughts, my spirit would soar in fresh hope and faith. But, with the passage of further years and further fears, my soul would again become disquieted.

Like sand slowly sifting its tiresome way through the time glass, it seemed my own life was ebbing by without purpose and fulfillment. Deep down there was an awareness of a divine call, a divine commission and a divine purpose that must find its expression through this earthen vessel. But why the seemingly endless delay?

e. All Hope Gone. Then it happened! That which I greatly feared came upon me. My Pentecostal denominational peers called me in one day to notify me that, if I did not "willingly" withdraw, they would put me out!

What was my crime? I had cooperated with and sponsored Brother T. L. Osborn, a renowned missionary evangelist, in a citywide campaign in our town. He did not belong to my denomination. It turned out this was against the rules.

The day I "willingly" wrote my letter of withdrawal to the officials of the organization, I stood and faced the Lord and said: "Lord! All hope of my ever getting to a foreign field is gone." With no denomination, no mission board, no fellowship or friends able to send me, I, indeed, felt this was the end. In this darkest, most difficult trial of my twelve years of waiting,..! never knew greater despair.

Little did I know that this was now the beginning. Jesus had drawn me to His side and revealed His Name OMEGA (the end).

3. Covenant Kept

But soon He was to draw apart the darksome veil and show Himself as the ALPHA (the beginning). For in the end of every human way. God was to begin to show me the higher, divine way. He was to show me that He is the covenant keeper, El Shaddai (the-all sufficient One)! Hallelujah!

a. Provision. Before six months had passed, a businessman drove 100 miles one day to see me. Shortly after greetings were exchanged, he bluntly said, "Ralph, I hear you are planning on going to the foreign field!"

With incredulity, I replied, "I am? ...Er ...oh ...I mean — I am!" "Well, you're going to need some money, aren't you?" "...Uh, ...I guess I am!"

My heart began to flutter, skip, palpitate and jump all at the same time. "Lord, You mean that, after all this time, I am going to the foreign field?"

That is how it all began. From that day, the money specifically designated for my personal overseas ministry started to come.

b. On The Field. Honestly, at that time, I could not have bought a one-way ticket on the bus across town when the money started coming in. But, within the year, I was in Nicaragua, Central America, preaching to night crowds of over 2,000. We saw hundreds respond to the altar call, and miracles of healing I could scarcely believe.

Before I returned home, the missionaries of the same denomination that had asked me to withdraw, requested I be the night speaker at their national camp meeting in Nicaragua. I happily accepted.

c. God Meant It For Good. Again the words of Joseph came back to me:

".. ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people..." (Gen 50:20).

I could not find it in my heart to hold aught but love for my brethren who had rejected me. They were mercifully fulfilling the will of God for me, though neither of us understood it at the time.

Groping as the blind, I was led according to His promise: *"...I will bring the blind by a way that they know not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known; I will make darkness light... and crooked things straight... and not forsake them"* (Isa 42:16). Praise God! I know it is true.

J. Hudson Taylor, founder of the China Inland Mission, put it this way: "God's work, done in God's time, in God's way, will NEVER lack God's provision." I believe it! Don't you?

d. God Is Faithful. Though these feet of mine have trod the sod of every Latin American country save one; though they have gone as His beautiful feet (Isa 52:7) to traverse the Orient, most of the U.S., Canada, Africa, and the isles of the sea — they have never taken one step toward a pulpit or down an aisle to ask, or take, an offering for **personal** overseas ministry or **my own support**. So, in reality, this is not just my testimony; it is the testimony of God's faithfulness to supply the needs of those whom He calls and chooses to do His work.

If we have any boast, it is in the Lord! All glory to His faithfulness! We have found that *"...the just shall LIVE by HIS FAITH!"* (Hab 2:4). *"Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay; but by the law of faith...the faith of the Son of God..."* (Rom 3:27; Gal 2:20).

Day by day, with full trust in Him Who called us, we make known our requests unto God, and He bountifully supplies the needs.

B. A NEW CALLING

Lest I leave any wrong impression, permit me to share something else that may help you. I wrote all that precedes what you are now reading over 25 years ago. After that, the Lord called me to assume much more responsibility than just for my own personal travelling ministry.

He called me to minister to church leaders of all Christian denominations in the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America. That I've been faithful to do since 1969.

1. A New Covenant

As of 1992, we have trained over 75,000 church leaders in our week-long Spiritual Renewal Seminars. We have offered training materials to over 500,000 leaders, and regularly supply about 80,000 of them with regular training by mail (correspondence).

This requires millions of dollars. When I started this ministry of training church leaders, I wanted to operate on the same basis as I had in my **personal** ministry of travelling as a missionary-evangelist.

The Lord wouldn't let me do that. He told me:

"I am requiring of you that you let other members of the Body of Christ help support what I want you to do. I made a covenant of provision with you for your personal ministry, but with this new calling — to the whole Body of Christ — it must be different."

Then the Lord showed me His way. *"Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering; of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take my offering"* (Exo 25:2).

2. Three Principles

When the Lord had a great work for Moses to do. He gave him three principles to observe:

a. Share The Vision. *"Speak unto the children of Israel..."* Moses had to share the vision God had given him with the people. He had to let others know what God wanted to do.

b. The Offering Is For God. *"Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me [the Lord] an offering..."* Now, let it be clear, the offering was NOT for Moses. The offering was for the Lord — for His work and His purpose. It is wrong for me to ask people to bring an offering — if the offering is for me.

But if God has a work He wants done, and tells us about it — as leaders — it is right to share this with the people. It is right to give them the opportunity of giving money to support what God wants done.

c. Given Willingly. *"...of every man that giveth it **willingly with his heart** ye shall take my offering."*

There was to be no coercion, no threats, no teaching people that they should "give in order to get" something, in return. It was to be an offering of their own free will. God wants money only from those who give it "willingly with his heart.

"Don't force anyone to give more than he really wants to... For God loves a cheerful giver" (2Cor 9:7 tlb/kjv).

So, then, let us practice these things in our life. Never appeal for money for personal reasons; but, always be willing to give people an opportunity to give to support something that God wants done.

When the people see your righteous motives, dear saints of His choosing will respond to His voice. They will give their offerings for the various ministries and works that have the print of God's finger upon them.

I have found Him, indeed, to be EL SHADDAI (the all-sufficient One). Cast yourself on Him also, dear friend; He is all you need!

SECTION D12

OBTAIN GOD'S GUIDANCE

By Ralph Mahoney

Chapter 1

Seven Lights

Introduction

One of the great blessings of moving out in faith realms is that things start to happen in your life. As you yield totally to God and begin acting in obedience to the Word of the Lord that was given to you, blessing and growth and increase come. As you walk faithfully with God, you find yourself in need of His divine guidance in making decisions relative to what He is saying to you

The Scriptures contain many promises that God will direct our paths. Isaiah 58:11 plainly states, "*The Lord shall guide thee continually...*"

Seeing that this promise is ours, we need to know how to act on it, how to discern and obtain God's guidance.

A. WE MUST HAVE BALANCE

We can be steered wrongly even while sincerely seeking God's will. To avoid going astray, we must have a balance between the extremes of relying only on human reason (intellect-objectivity) on one side and mere feelings (intuition-subjectivity) on the other.

1. Objective Vs Subjective

The former extreme rejects all subjective Christian experience, doing nothing unless it is logical, rational and intellectually plausible. The latter borders on dangerous mysticism.

The totally **objective** person would never walk on the water like Peter. It is not rational for people to walk on water. On the other hand, the **subjective** mystic may not eat fruit for breakfast unless a voice from Heaven gives permission. (Either of these positions is extreme and dangerous for a church leader who wants to do God's will.)

Once you really begin seeking God with your whole heart, there are ditches you can fall into if you don't have a balance between these two. There are intuitive, subjective experiences that most people experience. For example, Paul says in 1 Corinthians 14:10, "*.... there are many kinds of voices in the world and none of them is without significance.*" All kinds of "voices" speak to you. You must test them to discern what is God and what is not.

On the other hand, we can dismiss the subjective and be so reasonable and so logical that we reject one of the elements of faith, which is that of taking a risk. Steps of faith (faith is obedient action in response to God's voice) are always essential for success.

2. Faith Vs Presumption

When you act in obedience to God's voice and a miracle results, the ingredient that produced the miracle is faith. When it comes to guidance, faith has to be based on something clearly of God; otherwise we can act out of presumption, not faith, and stumble off the path.

B. WE MUST ACT IN FAITH

1. Elijah: An Example

The inter-relationship between faith and guidance is clearly illustrated in the life of Elijah. Elijah told the people, *"And call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the LORD: and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God "* (1Ki 18:24).

When the time for the confrontation with the prophets of Baal came, note Elijah's prayer: *"Elijah the prophet... said, 'LORD God... let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word'"* (1 Ki 18:36).

What produced the overthrow of the Baal-worshippers?

- a. **God Initiated.** God initiated the confrontation.
- b. **God Communicated.** God communicated to Elijah what He wanted done.
- c. **Elijah Obeyed.** Elijah took obedient action in response to God's guidance.
- d. **The Miracle Happened.** How then may we obtain God's guidance?

C. WE MUST USE GOD'S "GUIDING LIGHTS"

God has given us "guiding lights" to clearly direct our paths. In order to know how to recognize these guiding lights, let's look at an illustration.

1. They Keep Us On Course

A large cargo ship coming in from the open seas at night sends for a pilot to come out from the port of arrival to take command of the ship. He replaces the ship's captain because he knows the channel and how to steer the ship through dangerous waters to bring it safely to berth.

To help the pilot keep the ship on course, a series of navigation lights have been installed in the harbor and on the land adjacent to the harbor.

Before entering the narrow deep harbor channel, the pilot must get these lights lined up in a straight line. The lights confirm that the ship is in the center of the channel. Thus, by looking down the line of lights and keeping them lined up, he won't run aground or afoul of something that could bring the ship to a disastrous end.

2. There Are Seven Lights

These navigation lights are an illustration of things that God gives us to help us keep lined up and on course in our Christian experience. God has given us seven guiding lights by which we can have divine guidance and keep from running aground. These seven lights are:

- a. **An Inward Conviction;**
- b. **Confirmation In Scripture;**
- c. **Prophetic Confirmation;**
- d. **Godly Counsel;**
- e. **Circumstantial Evidence;**

**f. The Peace Of God; and
g. God's Provision.**

Let's consider each carefully.

3. The Seven Described

a. Inward Conviction. The first guiding light is what I will describe as an inward conviction. Some call this a "witness of the Spirit."

In Acts 16, Paul was trying to go into Asia and God wanted him to go in some other direction. The Spirit had twice stopped him from going into Asia. Then the Spirit of the Lord brought to him a vision. He saw a man of Macedonia crying, "*Come over and help us.*" Verse 10 states, "*...assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel unto them.*" Paul came to an **inward conviction**, an inward assurance that God wanted him to go to Macedonia.

1) Must Come First. That was where his guidance started: an inward conviction. You must first have some inward assurance of what God wants before anything else can follow. God puts the responsibility first upon you to determine what He wants for your life.

2) Comes From Waiting On God. Obtaining this inner knowing of what you feel God wants you to do can be achieved by times of waiting on God, fervently praying and seeking the face of God 'til there comes to your spirit a conviction of God's will. You may not be absolutely sure about it, but this is where the starting point needs to be.

Some run to a prophetic ministry to get a "word from the Lord," as if going to a soothsayer or a fortune-teller. This is a wrong concept. If you get your direction from others before you hear from the Lord, you're going to end up in confusion. Prophetic gifts in the Church are for **confirmation** of God's direction —not to set the direction for your life.

b. Confirmation In Scripture. After 40+ years of walking with God, I put inward conviction first in seeking God's guidance. This inward conviction must line up with the second light, the objective confirmation of Scriptures. Subjectively (inside myself), I say that I feel this is what God wants me to do; but objectively (things outside myself), I must measure that in the light of scriptural principles.

1) Scriptural Warning. Isaiah 8:20 gives an important warning with respect to this: "*To the law and to the testimony [the Scriptures]; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.*" An inward conviction, or a voice, or a prophecy can lead you astray if it is not in agreement with the Scriptures.

For example. God does not lead a man to divorce his wife and marry another woman. This is contrary to the Scriptures.

2) No Contradiction. There is no leading of God that will ever contradict His Word. And remember. God makes no exceptions; He is no respecter of persons.

c. Prophetic Confirmation. You can't navigate by one light, and you will seldom keep on course with two lights; so there is a third light which God may give: prophetic confirmation by prophecy.

1) Examples From Scripture. The Bible has a number of cases where the Lord used prophecy to confirm His leading in a life.

In Acts 21:11, the prophet Agabus confirmed something that Paul already knew: *"...he took Paul's girdle and bound his own hands and feet, and said, 'Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'"*

Prior to this, in Acts 20:23, Paul had already said, *"...the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me."* Again, in Acts 21:4, we find disciples *"...who said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem"*

Here we have three Scripture passages dealing with prophetic confirmation against Paul's going up to Jerusalem. Each one confirmed the other.

This teaches us that there is confirmation available to us through prophecy if given by those speaking by the Holy Spirit. Such prophecies **must** confirm the inward conviction which has come to us, and which, in turn, has lined up with God's Word.

2) Warning. Let me warn you: do not get this order reversed! Lots of people start out trying to make their leading by prophecy come to pass. Then they try to find some Scripture to support it, and then convince themselves that is what God wants them to do.

The **first** obligation in finding God's will is between you and God and no other human intermediary, except by some rare exception when God might, in His sovereignty, set aside this principle.

d. Godly Counsel. The fourth light of guidance is one rejected by many. As a result, they are spiritually making shipwreck of their lives and ministry. This is the light of godly counsel. Solomon said, a thousand years before Christ, *"...in the multitude of counselors there is safety"* (Prov 11:14).

1) Some Teach Error. Some teach wrong principles based on the following verse: *"...the king's business requireth haste"* (1 Sam 21:8). They teach that whatever you do, do it in a hurry. If you read this verse in context, you'll find that David was defending his unarmed condition. He had left his weapons of war behind in his haste and was thus, ill-equipped to face the enemy. This is not a happy condition to be in.

Any time there's a pressure, a haste in your spirit, and you can't wait for godly counsel, then watch out! You're probably getting ready to be hit by the enemy with no weapons to win. Isaiah the prophet said, *"He that believeth shall not make haste"* (Isa 28:16).

2) Seek Respected Elder. When we speak of godly counsel, we do not mean going to a novice (someone newly come to the faith), or a teen-ager going to a teen-ager. We are speaking about godly counsel from a respected elder, one with spiritual understanding who knows the ways of God and has been walking with God for many years. You will be wise to consider the godly counsel of such a man or woman, and receive it as one of God's lights to help you find the course to take.

e. Circumstantial Evidence. In seeking divine guidance, God gives us a fifth light, **confirming circumstances**, which we might call "circumstantial evidence."

When you're walking in the center of God's will, having an inward conviction, and perhaps prophetic confirmation and godly counsel, all lining up with Scripture, you will often begin to see definite confirming circumstances. God will begin to give circumstantial evidence that you are on the path of His will.

1) Personal Example. For example, when the Lord spoke to my wife and me about making a move from the southern part of the United States to the West Coast, we went to the real estate people to try and get help in selling our home.

They, and everybody we talked to, said, "Oh, Brother, it'll take at least eighteen to twenty-four months to sell that house. This is a depressed market; people are out of work; it's recession time, etc., etc."

However, I said to my wife, "God's spoken to us, so I'm sure that He can help us sell this house in a reasonable length of time — like two weeks!" And that's exactly how long it took. We had four prospective buyers for the house.

We didn't give it away either, but gave the person who bought it a fair buy at market value. And, in addition, the buyer paid cash for an equity of over \$4,500 on a \$9,000 house. Now that, to us, was God's circumstantial evidence, confirming that we were going forward in His will.

2) There May Be Exceptions. There may be exceptions to this point at times in God's dealing with you. There are times in walking with God when God speaks and, though every circumstance be against you, you know that God has spoken so that you have to go straight forward.

When the priests came to the Jordan and put their feet in the water, the waters parted. Sometimes God says, "despite the circumstances, go forward. Put your feet in the water." IF God has said this, you can walk right up to the Jordan River in flood stage and put your feet in the water and see it part.

If God has not spoken, if you are not moving in scriptural order and in adequate counsel, you can also walk right up to the river, dive in and drown. That's not faith — that's presumption!

f. The Peace Of God. The sixth light of guidance is the peace of God. Peace **with** God and the peace **of** God are two different things.

Romans 5:1 says, "*Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*" When you are saved, justified, born again — use whatever term you prefer — you have peace **with** God.

The peace of God is quite a different thing. The peace of God comes by walking in obedience to the will of God.

Paul writes in Philippians 4:6,7: "Be anxious for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God."

1) Is Your Umpire. The key is in Verse 7: "*And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*" "Keep" is the key word. It means "shall act as an umpire." The peace of God which passes all understanding shall act as an umpire.

The purpose of the umpire in rugby or baseball is to watch and control the athletic contest so the rules are followed. So, then, the peace of God must act as an umpire to tell us whether we've "struck out" or whether we're "in safe at home plate."

For example, you're at the crossroads of a decision and you don't know whether to take the left fork or the right fork. You need an umpire to tell you which is right.

2) You Must Make A Decision. Let me give you a simple word of wisdom here: when you face a decision, make one! A lot of people stand for ten years at a crossroads and never make a decision.

After you've submitted yourself to God and brought it to the Lord in prayer, then make your decision.

When a decision has to be made, this is where the peace of God acts as an umpire. You pray and commit your way to God and say, "All right Lord, I'm going to take the left fork." The moment you start to go that way, suddenly you feel the peace of God leave you and you're wondering, "Where did God go?"

When God's peace leaves you, that's the time to stop and examine the situation. Take note of where you lost your peace, back up and say, "Lord, I made the wrong decision." Then take the right fork and, in so doing, the peace of God comes back. You now know that you're walking the right road and, in so doing, are in the will of God.

g. God's Provision Now, for the seventh light: provision. Look for God's provision in the direction in which you're headed. Hudson Taylor said, "Where God guides, God provides." He went on to say, "God's work, done in God's time, in God's way, will never lack God's provision." That's an immutable law and worth remembering.

1) Don't Neglect Your Family. Christian workers who leave their wife and children destitute while traveling about doing "the work of God" are in serious error. 1 Timothy 5:8 clearly states, "*But if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith and is worse than an infidel.*"

There are times when you can walk in faith without knowing where your provision is coming from. In such instances, your steps of obedience will normally produce miraculous results. If you have a definite, solid word from God, you can walk on water, as Peter did. But if you don't, you might drown.

Now I am not talking about the suffering a family may experience from persecution. A husband may be called to preach the gospel; for preaching, he is thrown in prison and cannot provide for his family.

That is different from the irresponsible behavior some exhibit by traveling far and wide "preaching the gospel" — while their wives and children are hungry and destitute at home.

If the husband is in prison for preaching the gospel, the other believers in the church should step in and give financial help to the wife and children thus deprived of the husband and father.

I made a contract with the Lord some years ago. He was calling me to preach but I did not want to preach. Finally, I surrendered to the Lord and said, "All right, Lord, I will go anywhere, anytime, any place, on one basis: YOU provide and pay the bills and I will go."

The Lord responded, "Thank you! I accept your offer. Sign your name to the contract, indicating your agreement to this for the rest of your life."

God has held me to that contract. He has been more than faithful to His part of it. I have traveled hundreds of thousands of miles in over 125 nations. God has always provided the money to go and money for my family to have adequate material provision while I am gone.

2) Sometimes He Doesn't Provide. Watchman Nee said that provision is one of the first ways God has of restraining His over-zealous servants who are going beyond His will for their lives. God stops providing for them!

For twelve years God held back the money from me. He kept me so poor that I couldn't buy a ten-cent bus ticket across town. That's the truth!

But when God opened the windows of Heaven's provision for me. He also opened the doors of ministry opportunity. When His time to release my calling and ministry had come, then HE made provision.

Had I the money, I would have run off trying to minister years ahead of God's time. The Lord knows, I tried it. In fact, I've got bruises all over me from running into the closed doors I've tried to knock down! God used the lack of provision all those years to keep me where He wanted me, in order to prepare me.

4. Summary

So then, we have seen that God has seven guiding lights to keep us on course in our Christian walk. We spoke of having an inward conviction of what God wants you to do; of the necessity of that conviction lining up with Scripture; of prophetic confirmation to give direction; of the wisdom of godly counsel; of confirming circumstances; of the umpiring peace of God; and finally, of God's provision.

All these are lights along the pathway of God's will for your life.

D. GOD GUIDES IN DARKNESS

But there is yet another way in which God guides. We find it in Isaiah 42:16: *"I will bring the blind by a way that they have not known; I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things I will do unto them, and not forsake them."*

Verse 19 continues, *"Who is blind, but my servant? or deaf, as my messenger that I sent? Who is blind as... the Lord's servant?"*

There are times in the dealings of God when you won't know which way is up, down or sideways. Have you ever been there?

You may be in the chastening and disciplines of the Lord. You may find yourself like Joseph, in Pharaoh's prison, unable to find a single light for direction, not knowing what in the world is going on, or which way to go.

1. Hang On In Faith

What do you do in such dark valleys? Hang on in faith! If your life is committed to God and you're not walking in willful rebellion against the will of God, then GOD IS GUIDING. He leads us by light, or He may lead us by blindness, but either way. He leads.

2. He's Always There

Looking back on the deepest, darkest valleys in my life when it seemed God was far away, I now see He was there all the time.

"When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shall not be burned: neither shall the flame kindle upon thee" (Isa 43:2).

"And the LORD shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not" (Isa 58:11).

SECTION D13

PREPARE A SERMON / BIBLE STUDY

by Gerald Rowlands

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Chapter 1

Homiletics

Introduction

Preaching the Word of God is among the greatest privileges entrusted to man. It is also one of his greatest responsibilities.

Through the foolishness of preaching (1Cor 1:21), God has chosen to reveal Himself to men. This knowledge of God, conveyed through preaching, is able to lead men to eternal salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. It is also able to transform them into the image and likeness of God (2Cor 3:18).

These pages are the simple basic principles of preaching. They are intended primarily for those thousands of fine church leaders whose circumstances have denied them the training to develop their latent skills.

The notes were originally prepared for the students of the "**Africa Christian Training School**" in Harare, Zimbabwe.

I would also like to acknowledge the insight and inspiration I received from reading "Notes on Homiletics" by Aaron Linford (England).

Seven years of ministry in Africa has brought me into contact with thousands of pastors and church leaders; most have never had the opportunity of any formal training in the art of preaching and teaching. They have not been able to study the principles of preaching; consequently, their abilities and skills are largely undeveloped.

Their limitations in this area have impoverished congregations. An adequate preaching ministry is essential to the growth and spiritual development of a congregation. It is to these fine men that this simple training is lovingly dedicated.

The art of preaching is called "HOMILETICS," derived from the Greek words *homileo* and *homilia*, which mean "to be in company with, i.e., to converse, and communicate".

Acts 20:11 is based on *homileo*. Note how it is translated in The Living Bible: "*They all went back upstairs and ate the Lord's Supper together; then Paul preached [homileo] another long sermon -- so it was dawn when he finally left them!*"

Homiletics involves the study of everything related to the art of preaching sermons. Good sermons (communication) are birthed out of good communion (companionship) and fellowship.

There are two distinct aspects involved in preaching: **Firstly**, the divine; **secondly**, the human. Homiletics is the study of the human aspect!

A. HOW TO BE EFFECTIVE

Preaching is the art of communicating divine truth through **human** personality. A preacher is essentially a communicator. He receives truth from God and communicates it effectively to men.

God gives the revelation; man provides the presentation.

In order to do this effectively, he must learn to do several things well.

1. Wait On God

Firstly, he must learn how to wait on God. The preacher must learn how to be still in the presence of God, and discern the voice of the Lord speaking within his own spirit. (See Sections A2.1 and A2.2 for more instructions on this.)

Every worthwhile sermon begins in the heart and mind of God, Who is the source of all truth. He is the fountain of all knowledge. The effective preacher's first task is to learn to receive the thoughts of God. Rarely will he ever hear an audible voice of God.

Divine truth will distill quietly in his spirit like the morning dew. The prospective preacher must wait patiently in the presence of God. There he will receive the precious thoughts and truths that God is always willing to share with those who seek Him diligently.

It is good to make a habit of spending time in God's presence. Set aside some portion of every day to enter the presence of God and wait patiently on Him. You will soon learn how to perceive the voice of God speaking quietly in your spirit.

We should not enter God's presence with the sole idea of "getting a sermon." We need to enter God's presence firstly to expose ourselves regularly to the scrutiny and counsel of God.

Rushing into His presence with an urgency which "needs a sermon for tomorrow" is certainly not an attitude of heart that can receive the wonderful truths of God. We should allow truth an opportunity to have its effect on us before we endeavor to share it with others.

2. Study The Bible

Ideally, the preacher should come before God with his Bible in hand. Make time to sit quietly and patiently before God in this way. Ask for illumination and inspiration on His Word.

Prayerfully seek out the counsel, wisdom and instructions of the Lord in His Word. Spread out the Bible before you and read it in His presence.

Sometimes it is good to follow a regular pattern of reading, beginning where you left off the previous day. This helps you to go consistently through the Bible, instead of reading here and there and neglecting large portions of the Scriptures.

At other times, you may seek some prompting of the Spirit as to where you should read. In this way, you do not get into a rut.

3. Keep A Notebook

A notebook in which to record the thoughts and ideas that come to your mind in these times of quiet waiting is essential. It is amazing how quickly one may forget the most wonderful truth, if the thought is not recorded while it is fresh in your mind.

Practice writing down every significant thought which comes to mind as you prayerfully read the Scriptures. If a theme suggests itself to you, follow it through as far as you can, and jot down everything you can on the subject. In this way, you will soon develop a good source of sermon material.

Read through the notebook every once in a while. The thoughts will begin to expand in your heart. You will find that some themes will occupy your mind for weeks, expanding continually as you meditate on them.

Get into the habit of talking to the Lord about His Word. When there are things you do not understand, ask the Holy Spirit to reveal the meaning to you. Ask for the spirit of revelation (Eph 1:17).

Then learn to wait quietly and patiently before God as He gently directs the answers into your spirit. Record them as they come to you. Get the truth down in your notebook. Don't trust them merely to memory. Even the best memory is strengthened by writing things down.

4. Be Cleansed By The Word

Try to avoid the attitude that seeks a word from God so that you can preach about it on Sunday morning. Do not always be looking for spiritual bullets that you can fire at someone. Recognize the primary need of your own heart. Let God deal with your heart through His Word and by His Spirit. Let the Word wash and cleanse you first.

Sharing what God has spoken to you about in the way of cleansing and correction is some of the best preaching there is.

It is important for you to feed your own soul. One of the traps that preachers can fall into is this: they are so intent on finding food for their congregation that their own spiritual welfare is neglected.

This is one of the hazards of the ministry. The thought is expressed this way in Song of Solomon 1:6: *"...they made me the keeper of the vineyards, but mine own vineyard have I not kept."*

Sometimes a pastor may be so involved in looking after the spiritual welfare of his flock that he sadly neglects his own spiritual well-being. This is one of the prime reasons that ministers fail. A minister cannot afford to neglect his own spiritual life.

Let the Word of God take root in your own heart and spirit. Let it grow strong in your personal life and experience. Then, when you preach, you will minister out of experience. You will not be speaking as one with a theory but rather, sharing things which you yourself fully comprehend and have experienced.

The following verse teaches us this. "*The hard-working farmer must be first to partake of the crops*" (2 Tim 2:6 nkjv). What you plant and harvest (in a spiritual sense), you must partake of (experience) before feeding it to others. You should never feed others what you have not first eaten. You should not try to guide others down paths and trails you have not first walked yourself.

As the Word of God becomes incarnate (that is, indwells you), **you** will then become a message from God. You will not be one who merely recites sermons, but one whose very life and lifestyle ministers life, blessing and strength to those who know and hear you.

B. TWO FALSE IDEAS ABOUT HOMILETICS

There are at least *two common mistakes* that people tend to make in regard to homiletics.

1. "Preparation Unnecessary"

The first mistaken idea is that preparation is unnecessary and indicates a lack of faith. People who take this view tend to feel that real faith disdains any attempt to prepare the mind, and merely stands before the people -- believing that God will then supply the words to speak.

A favorite scripture of such people is Psalm 81:10: "*...open thy mouth wide and I will fill it.*" The context of the Psalm reveals that this verse has nothing to do with preaching! This tendency to ignore the biblical context of a scripture is rather typical of this kind of person. It betrays an irresponsible and naive attitude. This type of person is often known to speak nonsense. We would not wish to blame God for this person's words.

There undoubtedly is a place for inspiration, but there is also a valid place for preparation.

2. "Human Ability Is Enough"

The second mistake goes almost to the other extreme. In this instance, a complete confidence is placed in preparation and human ability. There is little or no dependence on the Holy Spirit, but a self-confidence which is the result of training and the development of natural ability.

Such training can certainly produce a very interesting and convincing talk. However, it is only the anointing of the Spirit on the message that can minister the life of God to the people.

The truth is that an effective ministry needs both the divine and human aspects. God can certainly bless and anoint thoughts which have been diligently prayed over and carefully considered.

Let your preparation consist of thoughtful preparation and earnest prayer. Determine to be the very best you can, but make sure your confidence is in God and not yourself. Always trust Him for His essential anointing and blessing on your preaching.

C. FOUR AREAS OF HOMILETICS

There are four major areas with which homiletics is concerned:

1. Concept

This has to do with obtaining the original theme for the message. It is the art of knowing how to receive a message from God. It deals with how to get the initial idea and theme for a sermon.

Frequently, a seed-thought is sown in the mind, and may remain there for months before it develops to the size and proportion suitable to be shared with others. Through experience, one is able to develop the ability to recognize a line of truth suitable for sharing with God's people.

As you meditate on the Word, there comes an inner quickening of a particular aspect. Something suddenly lights up for you. It almost seems to leap from the page. A sense of excitement is aroused within you. It is as though you have discovered a large gold nugget! You can scarcely wait to break it open and investigate its value!

2. Composition

Having received inspiration on a particular truth, you must now begin to analyze it to discover all which that truth contains. Your notebook is important right here! As you prayerfully meditate, write down carefully every thought that comes to mind.

At this stage, you may simply make a list of every idea that your subject suggests to you. Stay with it until you feel you have exhausted the theme and uncovered every possible area of truth contained in your subject.

Don't worry about neatness and order at this stage. You frequently need to write very quickly to keep abreast of the flow of inspiration you are getting. Just make sure you get everything down on paper. You can sort it all out later.

3. Construction

Having exhaustively analyzed your subject material and listed every aspect of truth you can find within it, you must now begin to assemble those thoughts in an orderly fashion. This is essential so that you can give further prayerful consideration to the subject.

Getting the material into some proper sequence will help you enormously in this regard. It will also assist you greatly in your presentation of the subject to others. Sharing a developing progression of thought helps others to understand and follow your line of reasoning. If your presentation is all jumbled up, it makes it very difficult for people to absorb your message. Sermon construction aims to make it as simple as possible for your listeners to grasp.

This is the essence of sermon construction. It is very important for every preacher to develop this.

4. Communication

Finally, we come to the presentation of the message:

- * The clear and effective communication of the truth.
- * How to present your subject in a manner which will captivate the minds of your hearers.
- * How to develop your thoughts in such an orderly manner that your audience can easily follow the line of truth you are seeking to convey.

* How to motivate your listeners to appropriate actions, for we are to be "*doers of the word and not hearers only*" (Jas 1:22).

These concepts comprise the essential aspects of sermon preparation. We will be dealing with each of them more fully later in this study.

D. THREE TYPES OF SERMON PREPARATION

1. The Written Sermon

This is a method which demands a great deal of time in preparation. It involves very copious notes. Sometimes the whole message is written out beforehand. The preacher knows exactly what he wishes to say and how he wants to say it. Every thought is written out in full.

This often involves several pages of notes. It gives attention to great detail, the construction of a sentence and the correct word to use. Every aspect of the proposed sermon is considered in meticulous detail.

This method has advantages and disadvantages. An advantage is that the whole sermon has been the subject of very careful attention to detail. Thus, there should be an adequate coverage of every important area of relevant truth. Nothing has been left to chance. This style should ensure a complete and comprehensive treatment of every subject.

The disadvantage in the presentation of this type of sermon is that it often comes across as uninteresting and does not capture the listener's attention. This style of presentation can easily become extremely boring.

2. "Skeleton-type" Notes

This is the most commonly used method, and the one which I feel is the most effective. Notes are kept to a minimum, affording sufficient outline of the message to prompt the memory.

The brief notes form the "skeleton" of the message. They are the bones which give shape and structure to what the preacher desires to say. As he speaks, he puts "flesh" on the bones and a "body" to his sermon. He amplifies the thoughts that his brief notes have stimulated.

This method allows the preacher much more flexibility. He is not tied to his notes so much. He is more open to the inspiration that will often come to him while he is actually preaching. His delivery is more spontaneous and interesting, but the framework of his message keeps his mind on track. He is able to give an adequate, well thought-out coverage of his subject, but his presentation is not hard to listen to.

3. The Extemporary Sermon

This style of preaching is spontaneous, and usually presented without notes at the time of delivery. The subject is often given a good deal of careful thought beforehand, and the mind and heart are filled with the vital aspects of the message.

This style is often used to deliver the more inspirational type of sermon. Evangelistic messages can be presented very effectively in this way. The sermon flows from the heart and often carries a strong emotional involvement.

This kind of preaching can be exciting and stimulating when presented by a capable and experienced preacher. It stirs the emotions as well as informing the mind.

There are two potential weaknesses in this style. The first is that it often lacks meaningful content, and the spirits and minds of the hearers are not edified. The second is that the delivery may become over-emotional, and become irrational and unconvincing.

4. Summary

I would suggest that the use of skeleton-type notes combines the better features of both the other styles. The notes are not so heavy that the preacher tends to get bogged down in them. He has room to be flexible, and his mind remains open to fresh inspiration - even while he is preaching.

On the other hand, he does have an orderly format of thought before him. He does not stand before his audience and talk randomly about disconnected concepts.

Skeleton-type notes are suitable for both teaching and preaching. The teaching mode usually requires a fuller treatment of the subject, so some form of notes is almost essential. It is difficult for a teacher to adequately cover his subject without the aid of some notes.

I would, therefore, encourage you to concentrate mostly on mastering the skeleton-type notes approach. Use this method in your study times. As you meditate on the Bible, practice making short, cryptic notes on the inspiration and revelation you receive.

This will help you also when you come to the construction of your message. Familiarity with this style of note-making will help you immensely when you stand to preach. It helps train your mind in orderly patterns of thought. This also makes you more articulate and easier to listen to.

E. SEVEN KINDS OF SERMONS

I want to introduce you now to seven different kinds of sermons. I will try to explain briefly the idea behind each kind, and how you can use it.

A pastor should become familiar with each type. This will give added variety to his ministry, and make it much more interesting for a congregation who may be listening to him week after week.

Over a period of time, it will help him present a much wider coverage of Bible truths. The ministry of any preacher is enriched by versatility.

1. Textual

This style is usually based on one relatively short portion of Scripture. In fact, as the name suggests, it usually concentrates on one Scripture "text."

It involves choosing an appropriate statement of Scripture. Then you investigate it, analyze it, and discover all the truth it contains. Then you present that truth in an orderly and progressive manner that is easy for the hearers to assimilate.

2. Topical

Here the preacher aims to present a specific topic to his congregation.

For example, he may take the subject of "justification." His aim would be, firstly, to discover everything the Bible has to say on this enthralling subject.

He would then arrange all the Scripture references and thoughts he gets into an orderly format. He then develops his theme as fully and faithfully as possible. His objective is to tell his audience everything they should know on this important subject.

Of course, he may not be able to do this in one teaching session; so he will then prepare a series of messages or teachings on that same subject. This ensures a much fuller treatment of the topic.

The **Topical Concordance** in *The Shepherd's Staff* is of immense value when preparing such a message. There, one can quickly find every scripture reference relating to the topic concerned. A good reference Bible is also helpful. This will also enable you to follow a given theme throughout the Scriptures.

3. Typical

This is the art of uncovering and communicating truth which is hidden beneath the surface of the various "types" in the Bible.

A "type" is a person, object or event which is prophetically symbolic of someone or something yet to come. It is similar to, and characteristic of, that person or event.

In its biblical application, it refers to a Bible character or event which foreshadows some future one.

For example, the Passover Lamb in Exodus is a type of Christ. Every detail of that paschal lamb spoke prophetically of the redemptive role Christ would fulfill as the "*Lamb of God*" (John 1:29). Every prophetic symbol was fulfilled when Christ died for the sins of the world.

Biblical types are often referred to as "*shadows of things to come*" (Heb 8:5; 10:1). Such persons and events are like a person walking with the sun behind him. His body casts a shadow into the future, before him, portraying the shape of things to come.

The Law of God was a shadow of the good things to come. It represented, and was a shadow of, the better things which were to come in Christ (Heb 10:1).

The "holy days" of the Old Covenant were also shadows of things to come (Col 2:17). Those holy days were not complete in themselves. Part of the purpose of their fulfillment was to project a prophetic picture of things which were yet to come.

The interpretation and exposition of Bible types is a rather specialized task; it deserves the skill of those who are mature and knowledgeable in biblical subjects.

Novices should avoid attempting to preach from the more profound types, since unskilled interpretations can lead into all kinds of unfortunate error.

A deep and thorough knowledge of the whole Bible is essential to those who seek to expound the meaning of the types. Such teachings should be substantiated and undergirded by the whole Bible.

a. Principles For Use. When you first attempt to teach from biblical types, please try to keep the following principles in mind:

1) Use Simpler Types. Begin with the simpler types, in which the implication is very obvious.

2) Keep To Broader Interpretation. Never try to interpret every tiny detail of the type. Keep to the broader outline of truth.

3) Don't Be Dogmatic. Avoid being dogmatic as to what the type teaches.

4) Illustrate Doctrine. Never base your doctrinal position on the teaching of types. Types should illustrate doctrine, not initiate it.

5) Be Open To Correction. Remain open to correction from those of greater maturity than yourself.

4. Expository

By this method, we endeavor to expound the meaning and truth contained in a particular passage of Scripture. We seek to bring out the truth which is often hidden beneath the words on the page. This is an excellent method of teaching the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27).

You may take a book of the Bible and explain the meaning of it chapter by chapter. Perhaps you may take one chapter each week - and go through it, verse by verse, explaining the significance and truth as you go. This may develop into a series of Bible studies that may take weeks or months to complete.

Thus, over a period of years, your congregation will become familiar with every part of the Bible, and be exposed to all the truth God wants to convey to them for their enrichment and spiritual equipping.

5. Biographical

A biography is a life story of a person. Therefore, this method involves the study of the lives of the many characters we encounter in the Bible. Every biography recorded in the Bible holds important significance for us. Every life has something to teach us.

The study of Bible characters is very enthralling and absorbing. Choose a particular person. Read every reference to that person that occurs in the Bible. Make notes of every thought that comes to mind.

Begin to assemble those thoughts into chronological order -- the order in which they occurred:

- * Study the birth of the person.
- * Consider the circumstances of his upbringing.
- * Focus upon the dealings of God in his life.
- * How did he react to God's dealing?
- * What did he learn from it?
- * If he were a success in life, what made him successful?
- * If his life ended in failure, where did he go wrong?
- * What can we learn from his life?

These are all interesting and informative things we can learn from the rich lives of the men and women we meet in the Bible.

6. Analytical

This type of sermon relates to the detailed analyzing of a subject in order to extract the greatest amount of truth from it. From this truth, you can then teach the underlying principles involved.

7. Analogical

Much of the Bible is written in the form of analogy. It teaches a truth from a parallel case. The writers often use a natural subject from which to teach a spiritual truth. It involves the comparison of similar functions, and the process of reasoning from parallel cases. The analogical sermon endeavors to communicate truth contained in an analogy.

Chapter 2

The Textual Sermon

I would like us to examine more closely the preparation of a textual type of sermon. I have previously defined this method as an analysis and exposition of a brief portion of Scripture, usually a single verse or text.

A. ADVANTAGES OF HAVING A TEXT

1. Captures Interest

The announcement of an interesting text immediately captures the interest of your audience, thus giving you an attentive congregation. They are intrigued to see how you will deal with it. They want to know what thoughts and implications you will bring forth out of your text. The minds of your listeners are stimulated and alert, affording you an interested congregation.

2. Prevents Wandering

A specific text helps to prevent the preacher from wandering from his subject. It is difficult for an audience to retain active interest in a speaker who wanders in his presentation.

Having a particular text - and a context from which you have taken your subject - helps to avoid such wanderings, and to retain the active interest of your hearers.

3. Keeps Sermon Biblical

Centering your talk on a specific portion of Scripture helps to keep you (the preacher) biblical. Having presented text directly from the Bible, your message is obviously biblically-based. The tendency is then to substantiate your theme from other relevant parts of the Bible.

Conversely, if your announced topic is other than a biblical one -- whether it be psychological, social, cultural, etc. -- then the substantiation for your theme will generally be obtained from a similar source. That is not good. We are commanded to "*Preach the Word!*" (2Tim 4:2).

4. Increases Boldness

Preaching directly from the Bible increases the boldness and authority of the proclamation. When you specifically preach the Word of God, there is a special anointing of the Spirit upon it. God anoints His Word.

Statements taken directly from the Bible can be presented with great feeling and conviction. This is because you are not presenting your own ideas; you are telling the people what God has to say on the matter. It carries enormous weight and authority when you declare, "The Bible says!" and then read or share the verse and give the meaning.

It was when the disciples went forth "preaching the Word" that God worked with them, confirming the Word with signs following. The Lord "*worked with the word*" (Mark 16:20).

5. Aids Recall Of Message

A good text helps to fix the message in the minds of your listeners. They will remember it long afterwards. When they recall your message, it will frequently be the Scripture on which you based your talk which will be remembered most vividly.

B. CHOOSING A TEXT

1. Read The Bible Regularly

If you wish to become a capable and effective preacher, you must read your Bible regularly. Determine to develop good habits in respect to Bible reading. Have a special time each day to read the Bible. Carry a small Bible with you so that, if you have spare moments, you can spend them profitably in reading the Scriptures.

2. Study The Bible

Do not merely read it superficially. Dig beneath the surface. Meditate diligently on the things you read. Toss them around in your mind. Look at them from every point of view. Practice analyzing what you study. Take it apart in your mind and put it together again.

Learn to "ruminate," which means to "chew the cud." When a cow feeds, it chews the grass, swallows it, and then brings it back from the stomach to the mouth to chew on again.

So when you ruminate in your mind, you keep bringing the thoughts back to think about them again. Meditate on them. Ponder over them. Keep bringing them back to mind for further and deeper consideration.

The more your mind is filled with the Word of God and biblical meditations, the more you will have to draw upon when you stand to minister. "*The Holy Spirit will bring all things to your remembrance*" (John 14:26), but you must have them in your mind for Him to do so.

3. Always Have A Notebook With You

Whenever you read your Bible, get into the habit of having pen and paper with you. Form the good habit of making brief notes of every bit of inspiration you receive. Try to avoid doing this on loose pieces of paper, as you will tend to lose these.

If you use a notebook, it will become like a spiritual diary. Months afterwards, you will be able to go back over your notes and draw fresh inspiration from them. The more you meditate on them, the more revelation you will receive. This will also create a

file of thoughts on numerous subjects, from which you will be able to prepare many fine sermons at the appropriate time.

4. Maintain A Prayerful Attitude

This does not mean that you must be on your knees all the time. It is the attitude of heart to which I refer, not the posture of your body.

Ideally, prayer is a spiritual conversation with God. It is a two-way conversation. You speak to God, but He will also speak to you. As you learn to discern His voice, you will discover a continuous flow of inspiration.

God longs to reveal His truth. He waits for hungry, attentive hearts who can recognize and discern His voice. He wants to share His secrets with you.

5. Seek The Holy Spirit's Illumination

Place a high value and priority on the illumination the Spirit can bring upon the Word of God. The Holy Spirit is a Sensitive Person Who can be grieved and driven away.

You must cultivate the quiet, humble, sensitive spirit with which He loves to associate. As your fellowship with the Holy Spirit develops, He will introduce you to many wonderful new truths which will enrich your life and ministry.

6. Your Text Should Be:

a. Biblically Authoritative. It should harmonize with what the consensus of the Bible teaches. It is possible to take a verse out of its context, and teach from it something which the Bible does not substantiate. It has been said that "a text without a context is merely a pretext."

Always study your text in the light of its context. Never try to make your text say anything which is not confirmed by the verses which precede and follow it. Always endeavor to interpret your text in the light of what the whole Bible teaches on the subject.

b. Complete. Your text should always form a complete statement of truth. Some preachers merely take a phrase from a verse and use it, regardless of context. This is dishonest! It is called "*handling the word of God deceitfully*" (2Cor 4:2). This must be avoided at all costs. It will lead to a dishonest and unbiblical treatment of your subject. In consequence, you will be misled and will mislead your hearers.

c. Reasonably Brief. A textual sermon should be founded on a reasonable, brief statement of Scripture.

d. Comprehensive. Although brief, your text should also be comprehensive. It should be a brief but adequate summary of what you wish to share.

When you read your text to the congregation, they should then gain a reasonable idea of the area of truth you are going to present. You should then seek to remain within the boundaries of what your text announces.

C. YOUR APPROACH TO THE TEXT

1. Thoroughly Digest Its Words

Read the text over many times. Ponder it in your heart. Meditate on it. Memorize it. Speak it out to yourself. Become thoroughly familiar with it.

2. Determine Its Language

Is it to be taken literally, or is it intended to be figurative? Does the writer mean what he says in a literal sense, or are his words to be taken as a figure of speech?

3. Analyze Its Message

It will help you greatly to dissect the verse. Separate it into three or four main parts. Discover exactly how much this verse contains and what it has to teach.

4. Investigate The Words

Try to discover what the words were originally meant to convey.

If you are fortunate enough to have a Greek or Hebrew lexicon, look up the word in the original language of Hebrew or Greek. Is there some special significance attached to it? Did the writer have a special reason for using THAT word? This study will help you understand any special application the writer may have wished to convey.

5. Discover Its Development

What line of truth was the writer seeking to develop? What was he ultimately trying to convey? How does he accomplish this?

Try to follow his lead and develop it in a similar fashion.

6. Consider Its Context

a. Biblical Context. What do the preceding and following verses say? Consider the verse in relation to the whole chapter from which it comes. Consider it in the light of the whole Gospel or Epistle in which you find it.

Make sure your understanding of it is faithful to the overall truth conveyed in the book. To do this, you must study the basic theme and premise of the book.

b. Cultural Context. Did the culture of that time influence what was written? Would the people to whom the words were originally written gain a different view of what was said than we would in our situation? If so, what would be the equivalent significance now?

c. Historic Context. When was this statement written? Did what was transpiring at that time influence what was written? Do events at the time of writing have specific bearing on what was said?

d. Geographic Context. Where was the writer when he wrote these words? Where were the people to whom he wrote? Does their geographical location have any bearing on what was said?

e. Total Biblical Context. *"All Scripture is given by the inspiration of God"* (2Tim 3:16). Each part must be faithfully interpreted to agree with the whole.

No Scripture should be removed from its context; it must be interpreted by what the whole revelation of the entire Scripture teaches. Scripture must interpret Scripture, and our exposition of one text should always agree with what the Bible as a whole teaches.

D. ARRANGING YOUR MATERIAL

The orderly arrangement of material is a distinct advantage, both to the preacher and to those who will hear him. For the preacher, it affords the clearest grasp of his

subject. His thoughts are not muddled or confused. It also helps him to ensure the most adequate treatment of the subject.

As for his audience, it will obviously assist them greatly in their grasp and comprehension of the sermon.

1. What An Outline Does For You

A good outline is the best and simplest way to organize your material.

a. It makes you carefully analyze your subject and the material you have gathered. In doing this, you ultimately select only the best of your material.

b. It reveals any weak areas in your treatment of the subject and the development of your presentation.

c. It enables you to get the most out of your material, because you reduce it to its most relevant and essential substance.

d. It makes it easier for you to remember all you want to say, and to present it in a progressive and orderly fashion, with the least obvious dependence on your written notes.

e. It makes it easier for your listeners to follow the development of your presentation, because it is communicated in the most orderly and logical fashion.

2. Concerning Your Notes

a. Keep Them Brief. Train yourself to use the "skeleton-type" notes which you can take in at a glance.

b. Make Them Orderly. You need to be able to follow them easily at all times.

c. Let Them Be Comprehensive. Endeavor to cover every aspect on which you intend to speak.

d. Concentrate On Ideas. Condense your thoughts into brief sentences. Learn to crystallize your thoughts and express them in terse sentences. Practice reducing and expressing a concept in one sentence.

e. Make Condensed Notes. Remember that the notes are there to prod your memory. Even one significant word can remind you of some instance you wish to recall and share with your audience.

f. Make Them Easy To Read. If you possess a typewriter, you may find typed notes easy to read. If not, then print your notes as clearly and legibly as possible. Never scribble out your notes so that you need to ponder over them in the pulpit in order to decipher what you have written.

E. THE STRUCTURE OF A TEXTUAL SERMON

The outline of your sermon will usually contain three major elements:

- * The Introduction;
- * The Main Statement Of Truth;
- * The Conclusion And Application.

Let us examine these in greater detail.

1. Introduction

Your introduction may well be the most important part of your message, for if you do not win your listeners' attention in this initial period, they may pay little attention to the remainder of your sermon.

The introduction often takes the form of a condensed version of your subject. You tell your listeners briefly what you plan to speak about and the area you intend to cover.

You may also explain just how you plan to treat this subject. In this manner, you endeavor to whet their appetites and make them keen to hear more.

a. What Your Introduction Should Accomplish:

1) Capture Interest. It should immediately capture the interest and imagination of your hearers.

2) Establish Rapport. It should establish a rapport between you and your audience.

3) Afford Acceptance. It should afford you an acceptance from them. You need to win their interest, confidence and esteem.

4) Inform. It should inform them of what your subject is and how you intend to deal with it.

5) Convince. It should convince them of the importance of your topic, and win their careful attention for the remainder of your talk.

Never open your introduction with an apology. Never say: "Unfortunately, I have not had sufficient time to prepare my sermon, and I am afraid that it will not be a very good one!" If that is the case, the unfortunate people will find out soon enough. They will not need to be told! Such an apology will only lessen your own confidence in your abilities, and it will certainly not increase the people's confidence in you.

b. Characteristics Of A Good Introduction:

1) It Does Not Promise More Than You Can Deliver! Sometimes a preacher may make a most dramatic introduction to his sermon. He excites the audience for what is to come. He promises them a wonderful and enlightening exposition. If his message does not then reach the level he promised, it will be an anti-climax. His audience will be disappointed. They will also lose confidence in him.

2) It Should Not Be Too Sensational. Do not set a pace which is impossible for you to maintain. Rather, let your introduction be modest, and then your audience will be pleasantly surprised when they discover the sermon to be much more interesting than they anticipated.

3) It Should Not Be Too Long. Remember, this is only your introduction, not the sermon.

4) It Should Bear Obvious Relationship To Your Theme . The introduction should lead into your theme, so it must always be vitally related to your subject. It may be a condensed version of the subject matter you intend to share. It may be a story which illustrates the truth of what you plan to say.

5) It Should Be Carefully Prepared. Since your introduction is vitally important in winning the attention of your hearers, it surely deserves careful thought and preparation.

Try to put yourself in the place of your audience. Ask yourself: What would successfully gain my attention? Of all that I propose to say, which particular aspect would really capture my interest? By using your imagination in this manner, you can determine the best style your introduction should take.

6) It Should Provide A Natural Transition Into Your Theme . When properly presented, it should be obvious to your listeners just where the introduction concludes and the sermon begins.

This is applicable to all your message. It should be in several distinct sections or points. All points should relate to the central theme or text.

2. The Main Body Of Your Message

I would suggest that you divide the main part of your subject matter into three major sections. These sections need not all be the same length. There should be a natural, logical and smooth progression from one point to the next.

These divisions do not have to be obvious when you present them. Sometimes it is helpful to say, "Now, my third point is...." Perhaps the sections might take a form like this:

A. STATE THE TRUTH.

- 1. Declare It.*
- 2. Explain It.*
- 3. Clarify It.*

B. AMPLIFY THE TRUTH.

- 1. Develop It.*
- 2. Substantiate It.*
- 3. Prove It.*

C. CLIMAX.

- 1. Present Your Conclusion.*
- 2. What May We Learn From This?*
- 3. How May We Practically Apply It?*

3. Conclusion

Appeal to the mind. Summarize your talk. Restate it briefly. Appeal to the will. Seek to persuade. Appeal to the emotions. Try to motivate.

F. HOW TO PREPARE YOUR SERMON

1. Prepare A Rough Plan First

An outline affords the most effective means of properly organizing your material. Once you master the art of producing a good outline, you will find it much easier and more convenient to organize your talk.

As you begin to examine and evaluate your subject material, write down every thought on a large piece of paper. Don't worry at this stage about getting things into their correct sequence. Simply write down every valid thought which occurs to you as you consider the subject.

2. Select Your Main Thoughts

It is generally easier to find three main thoughts.

* What are the three most important statements you have written on that large sheet of paper? Get them into a natural sequence.

* Which statement should come first?

* What is the foundation statement which needs to be laid? Make it your **number one heading**. WRITE IT OUT IN CAPITAL LETTERS AND UNDER- LINE IT!

Now ask yourself: "Which statement naturally follows on from the first?" Make that **main heading number two**. Now you are left with one more main thought which should be a conclusion of the matter. This will now be **main heading number three**.

Set them out on paper like this:

A. MAIN HEADING NUMBER ONE

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

B. MAIN HEADING NUMBER TWO

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

C. MAIN HEADING NUMBER THREE

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Now begin to go through the rest of your material on your ROUGH PLAN. Get those thoughts into order under the particular headings you have designated. Let each of these be placed under the appropriate main heading: A, B, C. Each thought then becomes a "minor heading." Designate them 1, 2, 3, etc.

All your thoughts and material are now coming into an orderly arrangement. This makes it easier for you to study the subject further.

3. Sermon Examples

a. Example 1. Allow me to illustrate this method from one of the best-known verses in the Bible, John 3:16: *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."*

INTRODUCTION

The world has known many people who are said to be great lovers. But I wish to speak about the One Who is, without doubt, THE greatest lover of all. It is God Himself!

He loves the greatest number of people, with the highest quality of love, which prompted Him to make the greatest possible sacrifice.

A. GOD'S GREAT LOVE FOR THE WHOLE WORLD

1. He created the world and all mankind.
2. He loves every person in the world equally.
3. He wants every one of them to live eternally.

B. LOVE CAUSED HIM TO GIVE HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON

1. How precious the Son is to God the Father. No earthly father loves his son so much.
2. How great was God's sacrifice!
3. God gave Jesus freely for whosoever (everyone in the world).
4. He gave Him to die to pay the penalty for our sin and guilt.

C. WHOEVER RECEIVES CHRIST NEED NOT PERISH

1. This wonderful offer is available to all.
2. God loves even the worst of men.
3. Salvation is a free gift through faith in Jesus.

CONCLUSION

God now offers you the greatest possible gift...eternal life in Christ! How foolish you would be to reject or neglect so wonderful a gift. Accept Christ now without delay!

b. Example 2. Now, let us consider a simple narrative from the Gospels. In Luke 8:41-48, we find the story of a woman who, after twelve years of chronic suffering, came to Christ and was immediately healed. She went away with a deep peace in her heart and mind.

Our text could be a phrase from verse 48: "*GO IN PEACE.*" (This could also be the title of your message!)

INTRODUCTION

Surely every person desires to possess inner peace and security. There are many factors in life which may rob us of such peace. One of these is sickness. It is difficult to maintain inner peace when one is plagued by serious illness. The mind is filled with uncertainty and despair.

Here is a story of just such a person. She had been sick for twelve years. Though she had visited many doctors, none had been able to help her. In fact, she even became worse.

Then one glorious day, she met Jesus Christ. Through this wonderful encounter, she was instantly healed of her long-standing sickness. She was also blessed with a deep sense of inner peace.

This same Jesus can also bless your life today. Let us look into this story, and discover how she received her healing - and how you too can be healed!

A. THIS WOMAN HAD NO PEACE

1. She had been constantly ill for twelve years.
2. She had spent all her money. Now she was penniless!
3. She was disappointed and frustrated.

4. She was tempted to despair. It seemed that none could help her. How typical she is of so many today who are lonely, frustrated and insecure.

B. HOW SHE CAME TO CHRIST

1. She heard what He had done for someone else.
2. She determined that she, too, would seek His healing.
3. She encouraged herself in faith. She said within herself: *"If I can but touch the border of his garment, I shall be healed"* (Mark 5:28).
4. She overcame many obstacles.
5. She came to Christ.
6. She touched Him by faith.
7. His life flowed into her. Immediately she was made whole!

C. HER SALVATION

1. The disciples could not help her. They did not even know her need. There are times when no human being can help us. Only God is able to meet our deepest needs.

2. Christ required her confession. *"Who touched me?"* He already knew who had touched Him, but He wanted her public confession. Romans 10:10 says: *"With the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."*

3. Christ called her *"daughter."* He accepted her as a member of God's family.

4. He told her to *"Go in peace."* From that moment, she knew real peace. Uncertainty and anxiety were banished, and the peace of God filled her heart and mind.

5. It was her faith which made her whole (Luke 8:48). God desires everyone to be whole: perfectly sound in spirit, soul and body.

CONCLUSION

She went away a transformed person. You too can be transformed if you come to Christ in faith!

4. Summary

Practice dissecting and analyzing such incidents from the Bible. Try to discover the three main thoughts or sections of the story.

Once you have determined the three main thoughts, begin to analyze each of them separately and break them down into their component parts.

There may be four or five smaller truths within each main statement. Analyze the various parts. Get them into sequence and order. Then, arrange them progressively.

This is excellent practice for you. It may not come easily at first, but persevere. Determine to master it. After a while, it will become easy for you.

I often liken the construction of a sermon to the building of a house:

- * The introduction is like a path leading up to the house. It takes you from the front gate to the door by which you may enter.
- * Each main heading is like a room in the house.
- * The minor headings are the furnishings in each room.

* Illustrations are windows built into each room to throw light on the furnishings in that room. (Illustrations are simple examples which help us to understand profound truths.) Keep this analogy in mind when you are preparing your sermons.

Chapter 3

Expository Preaching

Here, we deal with the art of expounding a passage of Scripture. To expound means to interpret and explain; to set forth a matter in detail.

For example, you may decide to go through the Gospel of John, chapter by chapter. Commencing with the first chapter, you would seek to interpret and explain the meaning and significance of it, verse by verse.

You might deal with one chapter each week -- and thus, over a period of weeks, finally go through the whole book.

A. ADVANTAGES OF EXPOSITORY PREACHING

This is an excellent method of teaching the Bible. It has many distinct advantages, and is a good style to cultivate. Here are some of the obvious advantages of this method:

1. It Is A Biblical Method

Jesus Himself frequently used this method. He would take a portion of the Old Testament Scripture and interpret the meaning of it to His hearers.

Peter also used this method on the Day of Pentecost. He took some of the Old Testament Scriptures referring to King David, and explained the true meaning of them to the great crowd. He carefully showed the prophetic implications of those Scriptures and how they pointed to Christ, and proved Him to be the Messiah.

Again, we find Stephen using this method of expository preaching in Acts 7. The Bible is literally filled with fine examples of expository preaching.

2. It Produces Bible Preachers And Bible-Oriented Congregations

Expounding the Scriptures ensures that there is plenty of Bible content in your ministry. As you proceed through a chapter, verse by verse, your congregation is being filled with the Word of God.

3. It Invites Holy Spirit Reinforcement

The Spirit of God always agrees with the Word of God (1Jn 5:7). Therefore, the more Bible content we preach, the more of the Spirit's anointing there will be upon the proclamation. The Holy Spirit delights to confirm the Word of God. He does so many times with signs and wonders (Mark 16:20).

4. It Encourages Deeper Interest In The Bible

The more of the Bible you share with people, the more hungry they become for it. They will soon begin to study it for themselves at deeper levels. Their lives will be transformed. They will be strengthened and reinforced by the Word. You will have a Bible-oriented church.

B. SUGGESTED PROCEDURE

1. Carefully Choose An Appropriate Passage Of Scripture

Make sure the passage is one which will minister life and strength to your hearers. Do not choose a subject merely because it interests or intrigues you. Never select a subject which engenders dispute, division and strife.

You are seeking to be a channel for God, that He might speak His Word to His people through you. You are therefore responsible to get the mind of God for the people over whom He has given you responsibility. This ministry is one of the greatest privileges given to mortal man. It is also one of the most awesome responsibilities!

2. Seek A Theme Relevant To The People's Present Situation

God always has "present truth" that He wants to speak to His people (2Pet 1:12). There is a constant progression and development of God's purposes among His people. He has a specific purpose for each body of believers.

Every congregation should be moving forward in the particular purpose of God that He has defined for them. In order to accomplish this, it is essential that His specific word of truth is ministered to them consistently.

It is sometimes a useful exercise to ask yourself: "If this were to be my last chance to speak to this people, what is the most important thing they need to hear?"

Preaching with this kind of thought in mind helps you. It will ensure that your topics are relevant and vital to the development and maturing of the people in the purposes that God has for them.

3. Study The Passage Carefully From Every Angle

Read it through several times until you begin to become very familiar with it. Then study it carefully, verse by verse. Whenever there is an obvious link with some other passage of Scripture, read that portion, too.

If you have access to any reference books, then by all means read them. But above all, keep your mind open and alert to the Holy Spirit, to glean whatever thoughts He may share with you.

4. Endeavor To Thoroughly Understand Your Theme

Always seek to discover the underlying theme of the passage. What was the Holy Spirit seeking to convey when He inspired this passage? What is at the very heart of this teaching? What is it that God would say to His people through this?

5. Have A Definite Objective In Mind

Your objective should be in complete harmony with God's objective.

Having discovered what you sense He is wanting to communicate through this Scripture, your task is to be as faithful to that as possible. So, you need to soak yourself in the message.

It is not sufficient to mentally comprehend what God is saying. You need to feel what He is feeling. He wants to communicate His heart as well as His mind. So His Word must flow through your heart as well as your mind.

You are to be God's instrument to convincingly relay His message to His people. You are His mouthpiece!

You are not called to share YOUR mind with the people. You are called to share HIS mind with them. This awareness should be your motivating factor. It should be the compelling reason for your preaching.

6. Speak From Your Own Experience

In order for you to effectively communicate truth, it should be something which God has worked out in your own life first.

Many preachers present theories. They preach platitudes which sometimes have no practical relevance. No man can convincingly preach a "born-again experience" unless he has experienced it himself.

You must know the experience as a reality in your own life before you can effectively share it with others. The preacher is called to be a living epistle. He is not only required to preach the truth; he is also required to practice and demonstrate it. He is to be a living example of all he preaches.

7. Make It Meaningful

Exegesis means "to bring out the true meaning." You are responsible to ensure, to the best of your ability, that the true meaning and significance of the Scripture becomes clear to your listeners.

Always endeavor to make your subject simple. This is obviously what Jesus did. This was an important reason why His ministry was so powerful and effective. He took profound issues and made them so simple.

Many modern preachers do the very opposite. They take the simplest subjects and make them so profound and complicated that their audience understands little of what they hear. Remember this: the simpler, the better!

8. Make It Practical

Always try to clearly show the practical applications your message may have for the people. A grave danger among Christians is often "too much knowledge, too little practice."

Many Christians have listened to sermons for years. Yet, there is little change in their lives or practical expression of the teaching.

Do not be content to merely speak to people. Make your conclusions abundantly clear. Endeavor to make practical suggestions as to how the people may meaningfully respond to God.

Follow up your messages with practical programs in which people may become involved in order to be doers of the Word and not hearers only!

C. GATHERING RELEVANT MATERIAL

In addition to studying the passage of Scripture, how do we collect additional relevant material? Here are a few questions to ask yourself:

1. What Have I Ever Heard Or Read On This Subject?

Begin to stir up your memory. Perhaps you once read a good book on this subject. What was the book? What did it say on this matter? Push your memory until the thoughts come back to your conscious mind.

Perhaps you once heard someone preach on this subject. What was said? How was it presented? Frequently something that was said will become a seed-thought in your mind. From this, a whole train of new thoughts will come.

2. What Has The Holy Spirit Ever Shown Me On This Subject?

This is where the benefit of keeping a notebook is realized.

Sometimes months or even years previously, God had given you some interesting thoughts and insight on this very theme. If you did not write down those thoughts, you may have a problem recalling them again.

But if you have a notebook in which your devotional thoughts are recorded, you can go back to it again to familiarize your mind with what the Spirit showed you then.

If you have not been keeping such a book, get away somewhere quietly so your mind can dwell on the subject without interruptions. Meditation will help you recall those things you were taught by the Spirit.

3. What Have I Ever Observed That Relates To This Theme?

Frequently, we have observed things which throw light on the subject we are considering. We may recall incidents from our experience which illustrate some aspect of truth we are now considering.

Sometimes it is a thing we have observed in nature which confirms a principle we are studying in the Word of God.

Illustrations from nature often bring tremendous light to a Scripture. African preachers are usually very adept at this. I have often been thrilled listening to an African preacher illustrating Bible truth from those things he has learned about nature. The God of nature is also the God of the Bible!

4. What Thoughts Have I Ever Had On This Subject?

Many of our previous thoughts on a given subject are now buried in the subconscious mind. They need to be brought to the surface again. This can often be accomplished in a time of deep meditation.

As we sit quietly, focusing our minds on the Bible, buried thoughts will float to the surface again. I often tell my students: "Push your memory; make it work. You will not damage it by making it work for you. You can only improve it." Never be afraid to do this.

Sit and concentrate. **Will** to remember what your thoughts were. Refresh your mind with them again.

5. Who Or What Can I Consult On This Subject?

Discussing a biblical topic with a fellow preacher is always a stimulating and valuable experience. If you have opportunity to do this, then seize that chance! It will be edifying and enlightening for all concerned.

This kind of exercise should take place every time preachers are together. Engaging in discussion on edifying Bible subjects would do a tremendous amount of

good and foster true fellowship and unity. I feel very sad for many of my minister friends who have no reference books. But they do have each other!

Share your knowledge and experience with each other. Pool your Bible knowledge through good discussion and frequent conversation. Don't waste those golden opportunities when you come together.

D. PREPARATION OF YOUR MATERIAL

Having found a suitable, relevant passage, deal with it as follows:

1. Be Open-Minded About It

Put aside your preconceived ideas on the subject. Let your mind be open and unbiased to receive and learn something new.

Someone has said that if we really want to grow spiritually, then we must read all those parts of the Bible which we have NEVER underlined.

Frequently, we have firmly established concepts; and we tend to see only those things which confirm what we already believe. We must approach God's Word with openness and honesty. Don't nullify or make of "*no effect*" the Word of God because your religious tradition has shut off your mind to anything other than what you presently believe (see Mark 7:13).

You certainly do not have the sum total of all the knowledge God wants to impart to you. Be ready to learn whatever new truth God may have to share with you.

2. Investigate It Thoroughly

Analyze the passage. Interrogate it! Take it apart and examine it thoroughly. Do this with your mind open to the Holy Spirit. Anticipate fresh thought and revelation from God. Expect to discern truth which you have never noticed before.

The Word of God is like a mine shaft. The deeper you go, the more precious the deposits you find. Many people are content to dig around the surface. Their conclusions are always superficial. They are able to share only what others already know.

A secret of effective teaching is to investigate those areas of truth which have not previously occurred to people. In this way, you can share fresh and refreshing truth with them.

3. Do Some Original Thinking About It

Do not let your mind stay in the ruts you have created. Trust the Holy Spirit to illuminate your mind. I am sure He will share something with you that you have never known before.

Check it out with the rest of the Bible. No "truth" ever contradicts the whole body of truth revealed in the Scriptures. Check it, too, with a fellow preacher - one who knows more about the Bible than you do, and not one that you know will always agree with you!

Do not be afraid to have some original thought. Let the wind of the Spirit blow the cobwebs from your mind!

4. Approach It Creatively

God is a Creator. His Word is a creative Word. Everything which God made, He created by His Word! The Word of God should not be bound. It is still a creative and powerful Word. When released into redeemed hearts, it will create and transform.

Always be aware of the creative potential of God's Word. Handle it with an attitude of faith and expectancy. Always be mindful that it is filled with creative ability.

It has far more energy and ability than you will ever understand. It is always capable of producing far more than you could comprehend.

Remember, it is a miracle Word. God is in His Word. His creative genius is in it. Your ministry should be aimed at releasing this creative ability into the lives of your hearers.

5. Treat It Constructively

Remember that you are a laborer together with God. You are involved in CONSTRUCTING something, not destroying it. Your task, under God, is to build up the Body of Christ. Therefore, your messages should be constructive, not destructive.

Sometimes your emphasis may be very searching. The word you deliver may bring your listeners to heart-searching and repentance. Their reaction may be brokenness and tears, but they should not be left like that!

Consider Ezra and Nehemiah (Neh 8:5-12). God had delivered a very heavy word to the returned exiles. As they listened to the exposition of the Law, they realized how far they had gotten away from it during the years of exile.

This caused them to weep, bowing their faces to the ground in repentance. The prophets allowed them to do this for a while. Then they interrupted their weeping and mourning and got the people on their feet again.

They said: "...go...eat...and drink... neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the Lord is your strength" (vs 10).

Do not constantly bring the people under condemnation. Your ultimate goal is to see them built up, strengthened and edified. To accomplish this, you must minister constructively.

6. Study It Comparatively

Scripture must be compared with Scripture. It must always be interpreted within the total context of the Bible. This demands a maturity of understanding of the whole Bible.

You must study the Bible consistently *"to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that does not need to be ashamed, rightly `applying' the word of truth"* (2Tim 2:15 pph).

7. Conclude It Practically

All effective Bible preaching and teaching must have a practical conclusion and application. Ministry is not merely to inform the mind, but rather to form the life. You should always have a practical conclusion to make. Suggest to your audience some meaningful response. People need to respond to the word you have brought.

E. DELIVERING THE EXPOSITORY MESSAGE

1. Turn To Passage

Have your congregation turn to the appropriate passage in the Bible.

2. Read Passage Aloud

If you plan to expound a particular chapter, read it out to the people. Perhaps the congregation may share the reading with you, each one reading out a verse or two.

3. Introduce Your Theme

Explain how you intend to deal with it. Explain your purpose and intention, so that the people may cooperate with you. They will then understand where you are heading and will be able to follow along with you.

4. Read Passage Aloud Again

You may then decide to read the chapter through again, one verse at a time, making a suitable commentary on each verse.

F. SEVEN PRINCIPLES

At this point, I would like to introduce to you seven vital principles which are extremely important, particularly in expository preaching. Remember them, and seek to cover them whenever you expound the Word of God.

1. Clarity

Make sure that your commentary is easily understood. Do not try to be too profound or mysterious. The aim of effective expository preaching is to make the relevant passage as easy to understand as possible.

Do not try to be clever or to display your knowledge. Try to break the Bread of Life in such a way that your entire audience is able to easily follow the emphasis you are making.

2. Consistency

Keep your comments consistent with the theme you are expounding. Avoid the temptation to wander off down various devious pathways which may occur to you. By keeping faithful to your subject, you reinforce it in the minds of your audience.

Do not be afraid of some repetition. A certain amount of it is necessary in order to fix a truth into the hearts of the people.

3. Coherence

To "cohere" means to hold together. So be sure your thoughts have a clear unity. A person speaking incoherently is one whose speech is lacking in unity. It is often impossible to connect to the point he is trying to make.

Let the expression of your thoughts have obvious unity. Do not wander from thought to thought. Be clear and concise. Make sure your thoughts have cohesion and hold together well, each supporting and complementing the other.

4. Continuity

There should also be a clear progression of thought. Your statements should be continually moving your audience towards the proposed objective. Each point should follow clearly the previous one.

Your comments should flow freely from one to the next, with unity and clear development and progression. Keep moving forward smoothly to your ultimate goal.

5. Concise

Aim to be brief. It is far better to have your audience wishing that you would continue, than to have them wishing you had finished twenty minutes previously.

Avoid the temptation to speak for the sake of speaking. Don't get into the habit of rambling on. It only confuses your audience. A good piece of advice was once offered to preachers in this form:

STAND UP! SPEAK UP! SHUT UP!

6. Comprehensive

This point may seem to contradict the previous one in which I advised brevity. To be comprehensive means to cover the subject as fully as possible. But there is no contradiction.

It is certainly possible and desirable to cover a subject comprehensively and yet as briefly as possible.

Being comprehensive does not necessitate speaking at so great a length that your audience becomes tired of the sound of your voice. Try to balance the two!

7. Conclusive

Here is the most important point. What is the conclusion of all you have said? What is the end result? What will your words achieve?

The desired conclusion should dominate your mind from the commencement. You should be moving relentlessly towards it. Minister in faith, expecting God to bring to pass His desired objective.

Remember that it is not your responsibility to achieve the desired result. That is God's task. You must keep looking to God, not to the people. Confidently expect Him to give the increase.

Chapter 4

The Biographical Sermon

A. ADVANTAGES OF THE BIOGRAPHICAL SERMON

I have intimated previously that this type of sermon relates primarily to teaching from the lives and examples of Bible characters. It entails the detailed study of such characters in order to learn as much as possible from their lives.

An interesting feature of the Bible is the manner in which the men and women who form the narrative are presented just as they are. There is no attempt to cover up their weaknesses and reveal only their strengths and virtues.

Many of the great heroes of the Bible have their human flaws. We are very much aware that they are flesh and blood as we are. They faced temptations common to all men; frequently, their response was little different from that of the average Christian today.

In all the narrative of Bible history, there is only one truly perfect man - the man Christ Jesus! Even the great heroes of faith are manifestly human. This certainly helps us identify with them.

The art of expounding truths learned from studying the lives of these men and women is an extremely valuable one. It is a style of preaching which may be used to great effect by a pastor.

1. Deals With Realities Of Life

It deals with the realities of human life, with its strengths and weaknesses. We can frequently learn so much from the struggles, triumphs and failures of those who have gone before us.

2. Are Examples To Learn From

They are examples for our benefit - that we might learn from them, rather than from our own painful experience.

B. HOW TO BEGIN

1. Choose Characters From The Bible

You could begin this style of preaching by studying some of the greater characters of the Bible such as Abraham, Moses, Joshua, David, Paul and Peter.

These are men whose deeds illuminate the history of God's dealings with mankind. There is SO MUCH to learn from their lives. There are many great women in the Bible, too, whose lives have a special message to convey.

2. Study Their Lives

Begin by reading the narrative which tells of the birth of the person. Find out the meaning of his or her name, for most Bible names have tremendous significance. Study the circumstances of his or her upbringing. Pay special attention to the purpose of God in his or her life.

a. What did God want to accomplish through him (or her)?

b. How did He make His purpose known?

c. What was the reaction of the person?

d. What can we learn from the dealings of God in his (or her) life?

e. Are there some dangers we should be aware of?

f. What was the secret of his (or her) success?

g. What was the conclusion of his (or her) life?

C. EXAMPLE OF A BIOGRAPHICAL SERMON

There are so many lessons we can learn from these great characters.

1. The Life Of David

Let us look briefly into the life of David to give a simple example of a biographical sermon.

TITLE: DAVID, A MAN AFTER GOD'S HEART (Acts 13:22).

INTRODUCTION

His name means "Beloved of God." He is called a man after God's heart. Why did God call him this? What was it that appealed to God's heart? There is obviously much we can learn from this man!

A. A MAN AFTER GOD'S HEART

1. David had a special place in God's heart.
2. It is wonderful that God finds such delight in a human being.

B. WAS NOT A PERFECT MAN

1. His weakness became known to all. Yet this did not alter God's feeling about him.
2. We too are far from perfect, yet God can find delight in us.

C. WAS A VERY "HUMAN" PERSON

1. Typical mixture of strengths and weaknesses.
2. Longed to please God, yet so often grieved Him.
3. Longed for God's rule in his life, yet did his own thing.
4. Ascended to great heights... descended to sad depths.
5. David was not a superman. He was truly human as we are!

D. CHOSEN FOR SPECIAL TASK

God chose him from among his older, outwardly more impressive brothers.

E. HE HAD TO BE TESTED

1. Every man called of God must be tested and proven.
2. Jesus was tested in the wilderness (Matt 4:1-11).
3. *"Don't think it strange when you are tested"* (1Pet 4:12).
4. *"After you have suffered a while, God will make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you"* (1Pet 5:10).

F. DAVID TESTED THROUGH BATHSHEBA (2Sam 11)

1. **He was spiritually "off guard"**... Was now fifty years old...Had been king for 20 years. How easy to drop one's guard!
2. **Was overly self-confident.** Never trust the arm of flesh!
3. **Idle moments led to his downfall.** Should have been at battle-front. Satan takes advantage of idle time.
4. **Material prosperity bred sensuousness.** Paul disciplined his flesh to ensure he was not disapproved (1Cor 9:27).
5. **Failed to overcome temptation while it was still in mind.** All temptation begins in thoughts. This is the easiest place to defeat it. Cast down thoughts and imaginations (2Cor 10:5). Failure to do so may lead to disaster.

G. HIS REPENTANCE (Ps 51:1-10)

It was David's sincerity in repentance which endeared him to God.

- 1. He acknowledged his transgression.** Did not try to blame someone else.
- 2. Repented thoroughly of his iniquity.**
- 3. Sincerely sought forgiveness.**
- 4. Cried out for cleansing.**
- 5. Sought a clean heart and right spirit.**

H. HIS SUFFERING (Ps 32:3,4;77:2-6)

1. Heavy conviction day and night.
2. Tears of remorse.
3. Bones waxed old.

I. WHAT GOD SOUGHT TO ACCOMPLISH (Ps 51:6, 10, 17)

- 1. Truth in the inward parts.**
- 2. Clean heart and right spirit.**
- 3. Broken spirit and contrite heart.**

J. THAT HIS SERVANT MIGHT BE:

- 1. A meek and humble soul.**
- 2. A truly joyful person.**
- 3. Sustained by God's free Spirit.**
- 4. A man after God's own heart.**

This is a brief and simple example of a biographical sermon. Determine to spend some time studying some of the great characters of the Bible so that you can teach important truths from their lives.

Chapter 5

The Preacher

I mentioned previously that effective preaching is largely the product of two factors, one divine and the other human. Both are necessary - for "without man, God will not, and without God, man cannot." It is the human aspect with which we are dealing primarily in these studies.

A. PERSONALITY GUIDELINES

An elderly preacher was once asked by a group of young ministers: "With regard to the human aspect of preaching, what is the most important factor?" His immediate reply was: "Personality!" "But tell us," they persisted, "what is personality?" "Ah," he said, "if only I knew!"

Preaching involves communicating divine truth through human personality. So the development and proper use of personality is important.

Someone has analyzed effective public speaking (I refer to public speaking as distinct from preaching) in this manner:

An effective speech is composed of:

- * 50% subject matter;
- * 20% psychology of approach and conclusion;
- * 20% effective delivery;
- * 10% personality.

Yet, that 10 percent "leavens" the whole speech! It can make the difference between a boring talk and a fascinating speech. I have, therefore, felt it desirable to devote some space to the matter of the preacher's personality. The following are some simple guidelines.

1. Be Yourself

Be relaxed, natural and unaffected. One of the most important aids to effective speaking is to be relaxed.

Tension creates nervousness. Under tension, the memory does not function well. Speech does not flow fluently. Your nervousness will be communicated to the audience, and they too will feel tense.

The best way to relax is to commit your message to God. Do the best you can and leave the results to God.

2. Try Not To Copy Others

God chose YOU because He wants to use YOU. You have some special features peculiar to you alone, and God has a purpose for them.

It is a great mistake to try to copy any other preacher. No matter how effective that person may be, it will not enhance your ministry to try to copy him. To do so would be like David trying to wear Saul's armor. It just did not fit him, and would have been more of a hindrance than a help (see 1 Samuel 17:38,39).

If you are endeavoring to copy or imitate someone, your listeners will quickly become aware of this. They will realize that your preaching is not wholly sincere and genuine. It communicates shallowness or superficiality.

You will never be completely relaxed and at ease, if you are not yourself. Your ministry will be stilted and artificial. Determine to be yourself, and be the best that you can be!

3. Be True To Yourself

Integrity and honesty are essential for a preacher. You are a channel for God - a mouthpiece, that He might speak to mankind through you. Therefore, He wants a vessel which is honest, free from hypocrisy and guile.

4. Be A Clean Vessel

It is unlikely that your hearers will rise higher than you. If your life is polluted, you will pollute your hearers. If there is bitterness in your spirit, you will communicate it to your listeners.

If you are critical, this will come through your preaching, and your congregation will become critical, too. If you allow yourself to be controlled by negative attitudes, the people will also become negative.

You will always reproduce after your kind (Gen 1:12, 21). You have a grave responsibility to BE the kind of person God wants to reproduce. The fruit of your ministry will be of that variety as well.

5. Be Sincere

Sincerity means to be free from pretense or deceit. It means to be the same person in reality as you are in appearance. Do not try to appear to be in public what you are not in private. Be genuine, honest and sincere.

Many preachers develop a public image. They have a religious facade. Please avoid this - it is religious hypocrisy and an abomination to God. God is certainly unimpressed by such a false image, and people are not fooled by it for very long either.

6. Have A Clear Purpose And Objective

The personality is properly shaped and developed when one has a real objective in life. If your life is truly dedicated to becoming an effective minister of God's Word, your personality will be developed to that end. It will take the shape best suited to a communication of truth.

Such dedication will foster the development of your personality in the best manner suitable to be a spokesman for God.

Do not allow preaching to be a hobby for you. It is the highest calling of God available to man. If God has called you to declare His glorious truth, devote yourself wholeheartedly to pursue the ultimate development of that calling. It is the most important thing in your life. Never allow it to be relegated to a secondary position.

7. Be Wholehearted

Nothing worthwhile is ever achieved by half-hearted people. Nothing of value is ever obtained without cost. Give yourself wholeheartedly to the great task of preaching.

Let this goal be uppermost in your mind. Study everything you can on the subject. Let it absorb and motivate you. Make it the most important thing in your life; determine to be, in every way, worthy of the high calling God has put upon you.

B. PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT IN PREACHING

1. Naturalness

Be relaxed and be yourself. God wants to use YOUR personality as a channel to communicate His Word. That is why He chose and called YOU. Do not be overly critical of yourself. Accept yourself. God has accepted you. No one can be YOU nearly as well as YOU!

2. Originality

Let your message and the manner in which you present it be your own unique product. God has made us different one from another. He enjoys our uniqueness and the variety this gives to the human race.

Use the unique personality God has given to you, and allow Him to express His mind through your life in the special and unique way He has desired.

3. Simplicity

There is something extremely attractive and appealing about simplicity. Don't try to be overly complicated or profound. You don't have to impress people. You are there to minister to them, not to impress them

4. Attractiveness

I am convinced that the most winsome and attractive personality this world has ever seen is Jesus Christ!

I don't mean particularly in physical appearance. Isaiah said: "...when we see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him" (Isa 53:2).

The attractiveness of Christ was not primarily in His physical appearance. It was His character and personality which were so appealing.

The average people of His day responded to Him with great enthusiasm. The Bible says: "...the common people heard him gladly" (Mark 12:37).

They flocked to Him. They were drawn like steel filings to a magnet. There was a sweet graciousness about Him which gave Him an enormous appeal. It was partly this personal magnetism which drew huge crowds wherever He went. The Holy Spirit can develop a similar attractiveness in you!

5. Spontaneity

Don't act unnaturally. Be free and unimpeded, doing things naturally. Spontaneity means that things happen easily without being forced or coerced. Don't develop a religious style which is heavy and unnatural. Let your style of communication flow freely and naturally. Don't let yourself be bound and restricted.

6. Adaptability

A good preacher must learn to be flexible and to adapt to many different circumstances.

Every gathering you preach in will be different in some way from others. You need to be able to discern in each situation what the Holy Spirit is desiring to accomplish.

God has a specific objective to achieve in every gathering of believers. The preacher is a very important key to the accomplishment of that purpose.

Try not to be too rigid or orthodox in your mental approach to a preaching occasion. Endeavor to keep your mind flexible and open. Learn how to wait on God continually in your spirit. Keep your spirit open to His still small voice within you.

This can make all the difference between a very ordinary church service and a dynamic encounter with God through His Word.

The Holy Spirit can create many different kinds of moods in meetings. Sometimes they will be joyful and lively; at other times they will be quiet and reverent. The skill to recognize this, and take advantage of the unique situation created by the Spirit, can enable you to reap the results desired by God.

The key to success in Christian service is to "discern the way in which God is moving, and move with Him."

7. Dynamic

There is a mysterious dynamic in preaching which is quite unique to this particular function - a dynamic expression of authority which can be quite awesome to witness.

Peter illustrates this awesome dynamic on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2). Up until this time, he had shown himself to be fearful and afraid. His cowardly denial of Christ had proven this. His refusal to acknowledge Christ even before a mere serving-maid reveals his timidity and insecurity.

But he was transformed on the Day of Pentecost. We see a very different Peter as he stood to preach that morning. There is something glorious to behold about this man as he fearlessly proclaims the Word of God to a vast crowd.

There is a majesty which thrills the soul as we witness such a preacher in action. Who can explain just what constitutes this phenomenon?

I clearly recall some of the times when I have been privileged to hear Dr. Billy Graham. What power and authority is released through the preaching of this man! It is a combination of the power of God and the cooperation of man.

He is an example of how wonderfully a human being can become a channel for the wisdom and counsel of God to be brought to men.

Truly, preaching is a high and holy task. A person called to this work must feel honored indeed. Anyone called to fulfill this role should surely dedicate himself wholeheartedly to ensure the highest possible level of effectiveness.

C. VITAL EQUIPMENT

I would like to speak to you now about three things which are vital to effective preaching: VISION, VOCABULARY AND VOICE!

1. Vision

Every preacher needs a vision. By this I mean a concept of what his ministry can achieve in God.

Our vision is that concept of the ultimate achievement towards which we move through life. You could say it is a dream of what you can ultimately be for God and the function you can fulfill to His glory.

Every preacher needs such a vision to motivate him. He needs a definite, ultimate goal to move towards - something to strive for, something to achieve; something for which it is worth sacrificing; a goal which will bring out the best in him.

Most preachers encounter plenty of discouragement one way or another. They need something which will counterbalance this and eventually make everything worthwhile. Unless you have an inner awareness of God's ultimate purpose for you, you could be overcome with discouragement and fail to achieve your divinely-appointed goal.

2. Vocabulary

A preacher's vocabulary is composed of the number of words he knows and with which he is familiar. Obviously, words are the tools which a preacher employs in the

pursuit of his calling. The more words he knows and understands, the more fluent and expressive he can be.

Words are to the preacher what brush and paint are to the artist. A preacher can paint vivid pictures with words. As he describes a scene, his audience can almost see what he describes. Words are so important to an effective communicator. A preacher without words is a tradesman without tools.

As a preacher, you must be interested in words. Try to read widely, for reading good literature will enrich your vocabulary. Whenever you encounter a word you are not familiar with, investigate it. Find out what it means. Add it to your collection. Begin to use it in its right context and application.

Build up your vocabulary; you will become more fluent as you do. People will listen to you with much more interest, if you can adequately communicate your topic.

3. Voice

Surely the voice is a preacher's greatest natural asset. Therefore, you should endeavor to take good care of it. You should always be aware of your voice and seek to improve your use of it.

D. PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC SPEAKING

Here are a few principles about which a public speaker should be mindful:

1. Breathing

Correct breathing is extremely important for a speaker.

- * Practice breathing through your nose.
- * Breathe deeply right to the bottom of your lungs.
- * Practice filling your chest and lungs with air.
- * Hold it and then breathe out slowly. Control the expiration.
- * Let the air come right up from the bottom of your lungs, through your larynx (voice box) and hit the roof of your mouth. The roof of your mouth should act as a sounding board. When you bounce your voice off your palate, it will gain extra resonance. Learning to do this correctly will strengthen your vocal chords.

2. Articulation

Articulation is the art of uttering speech clearly. An articulate person speaks very clearly. He is easy to understand. He pronounces his words well.

Every preacher should aim to become adept in this skill. He ought to be easy to listen to. It should not impose strain to listen to him; it should be a pleasure. Even in everyday conversation, he should practice speaking clearly.

3. Inflection

Inflection in speech has to do with the pitch of your voice.

The human voice has a very wide range of tones. If you speak at the same pitch and on the same tone all the time, your voice can sound very boring. You must develop the ability to modulate your voice.

As a singer can go up and down the scale - giving forth a good variety of tones - so can the public speaker.

If your voice tends to be naturally rather high-pitched, practice speaking in the lower registers. Develop a variety of pitch in your voice.

4. Speed Of Delivery

Some people tend to speak at the same rate all the time. This, too, can become rather boring. You should endeavor to vary the speed at which you speak. Most of your message will be delivered at a moderate rate which is easy to listen to. From time to time, however, you should quicken or slow down the pace to give variety and added emphasis to your presentation.

5. Volume

This is another factor of importance. Varying the volume of your voice can give added emphasis to a point you wish to make.

The major part of your message should be delivered at a conversational volume. This ensures that it is loud enough for all to hear, yet not so loud that it assaults the ears of your audience.

Some preachers seem to feel it necessary to preach so loudly that they hurt the ears of their hearers. Try to avoid this.

If the whole of your message is delivered with loud volume, it is difficult to give special emphasis to those sections which are the most important.

Endeavor to begin your message at conversational volume. Only turn the volume right up when you have a special point to emphasize strongly.

If you occasionally drop the volume, this will also serve to give special emphasis. Your congregation will give special attention when you drop the volume. They will endeavor to hang on to every word.

6. Pausing

Don't be afraid to pause once in a while. This can also give added emphasis to some point you make.

Some preachers are frightened of quiet spots. Their delivery pours forth like a river, without any pause. This can be difficult for people to absorb.

Don't race through your message, keeping up a fast tempo and hardly pausing for breath.

Your congregation needs time to think and consider what you have said. This helps to really absorb the truth of your message.

You need to inform the mind as well as stir the emotions. The mind can absorb things only at a steady rate. If you preach too quickly without suitable pauses, you will leave your hearers behind.

7. Repetition

A certain amount of repetition can be good. It helps to emphasize your point and fix it in the minds of your listeners. This is the kind of emphasis which you purposely give. You are aware that you are doing it, and have a good reason for doing so.

Try to present the same point in a variety of ways. You want the truth you are sharing to become part of the thinking and action of the people. In order to accomplish this, the mind needs an adequate exposure of truth and must be convinced.

E. SIMPLE TIPS FOR PREACHERS

1. Be Yourself!

Don't try to project some image that is insincere. Being yourself is the only way to be completely relaxed. If you try to imitate some other preacher, this will be communicated to your audience. They will sense the artificiality of your preaching. Be the very best that you can be, but always be natural and be yourself.

2. Forget Yourself!

Self-consciousness can be a real hindrance in public speaking. It may produce hesitancy and uncertainty.

Chronic self-consciousness can even make a person "tongue-tied." It can severely restrict your flow of speech. Your actions and demeanor will also be restricted. You should prepare yourself as thoroughly as possible in every necessary way.

- * Let your study of the subject be adequate.
- * Let your notes be comprehensive and clear.
- * Be "prayed up" and filled with the Spirit.
- * Be filled with the word of truth you intend to share.

Pay attention to every area of preparation you are aware of; but when you stand to speak, forget about yourself. Be completely absorbed in what you have to share. Be aware of your audience rather than of yourself.

You are a channel for God's Word to flow through. Just seek to be utterly yielded to Him, aware only of God and the people to whom you are speaking on His behalf.

3. Don't Develop A "Religious Voice" When You Are Preaching

Some preachers do this, and it is most disconcerting. Their pulpit voice is so different from their normal one.

This conveys a sense of insincerity. It is almost as though this person is "acting out a part." It also sets him apart from his congregation; they tend to see him as a different breed or species.

It almost seems as though he belongs to a different world than they. This makes it difficult for them to identify with him.

Practice preaching in a normal voice - the same voice, accent and tone that you use every day in the normal communications of life. This conveys a sense of reality and sincerity.

4. Do Not Speak Too Softly

Make sure that everyone in your audience can hear you clearly. Don't make them strain to hear your every word. If necessary, ask the crowd; "Can everybody hear me clearly?" It is pointless to proceed with your message if part of your audience cannot hear well enough to follow you. This would be wasting your time and theirs.

5. Do Not Shout

Endeavor to speak with a normal conversational tone and volume, which may have to be increased somewhat according to the size of the crowd and whether or not you have the use of an amplifying system.

6. Remember To Vary The Speed And Pitch Of Your Delivery To Avoid Monotony

7. Get The Audience To Accept You

Win their confidence. If they do not accept you, they probably will not accept your message either!

8. Dress Appropriately

Your appearance should never detract from your ability to communicate with your audience. Ideally, you should dress rather modestly, in a manner which is not likely to offend anyone.

What is the point of antagonizing your audience by your manner of dress? Your aim is to win and influence your listeners, not to antagonize them.

Your clothing should not draw undue attention to you. If possible, you should be neatly, suitably and modestly attired. Certainly, your dress should not be offensive to the culture of your audience.

9. Learn To Stand Properly

On most occasions it is proper to stand when addressing an audience. You should stand firmly on both feet, giving yourself a good solid stance.

Stand upright, facing your audience. Avoid leaning on anything. If there is a pulpit or rostrum, by all means use this to place your Bible and notes on, but don't use it to lean on. Standing upright will help your breathing. It will also engender a feeling of quiet confidence as you face your audience.

10. Learn To Move Naturally

Your body conveys a message as well as your voice. It is important how you conduct yourself while speaking.

The key to proper movement is to let it be natural. Avoid unnecessary physical gesticulations. If you are verbally describing something, it is natural to also convey the idea with your hands.

Let such descriptions come naturally and spontaneously. You can emphasize a point very forcibly with your hands. All hand movements should be appropriate to what you are emphasizing.

11. Establish And Maintain Eye Contact With Your Audience

Your eyes convey a message too! Don't stare into space or above the heads of the listeners. Look directly at the people you are addressing.

Let your glance rove around the congregation, so that everyone feels that you are speaking to THEM. By this means, you will establish a good contact and rapport with the people.

12. Remember That Facial Expressions Are Important, Too!

The look on your face conveys a message very eloquently. Avoid any extreme facial expressions unless you are emphasizing some particular point. Above all, let your

facial expressions be natural, and let them be appropriate to your theme and topic. Be happy and confident, unless your subject is a sad or serious one.

These suggestions are made with respect to the natural art of public speaking.

Obviously, the factor of greatest importance in preaching is the presence and anointing of God upon your life. However, God can bless and anoint a person who is well-prepared and has some understanding of the principles of communication.

Never despise such skills. But, on the other hand, do not depend on them either.

Ultimately, only God can accomplish what you are seeking to attain through your preaching.

Let your confidence be placed firmly in Him. Understand that the only really worthwhile development in your preaching abilities is that which God accomplishes.

While reading and studying the upcoming section, **HOW JESUS BUILDS HIS CHURCH**, you may want to refer to this diagram.



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SECTION EI

THE THREE PARTS OF THE CHURCH

(Every Member A Minister)

A TEACHING FORMAT FOR THE PASTOR

By Dr. Robert Frost and Ralph Mahoney

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PART 1: THE FOUNDATION OF THE CHURCH

Chapter 1

God's Plan Revealed:

Creation

Introduction

A few years ago, a group of concerned church leaders set aside several days for prayer and consultation. They met to answer this question: "What is the irreducible minimum of biblical understanding a Christian worker needs to succeed in soul-winning (evangelism), church planting and pastoral ministry?"

The Table of Contents (Index) above was the answer to that question. Nine things are needful. These are the minimum biblical concepts required to carry on ministry. We commend them to you for prayerful consideration.

A. GOD DESIRES A FAMILY

God the Father desires a family of sons and daughters who will be like Him and will exercise dominion over the Creation.

The way in which God intended to produce this family was a divine mystery (or secret) revealed to the Apostle Paul by God Himself.

Paul speaks of this wonderful revelation in his letter to the church at Ephesus. Here is what God planned for us:

1. His Children

"Before the world was made, God chose to make us his children through Jesus Christ... "

2. Joined Together

"He planned that all things in heaven and earth would be joined together under his power."

3. One Body

God purposed to do this by making Christ *"...to be the head of the church — which is his [Christ's] body."*

4. One People

"In that body, both the Jews and non-Jews have become one people... For through Christ all may freely come to the Father..." (Eph 1:5,10,22,23; 2:14-16,18 smf). [Note: smf means the author *simplified* the scripture, while writing this material, to aid the student's understanding.]

The word for "church" in the Greek New Testament is *ecclesia*. It refers to all who have been "called out" of the world to become members of our heavenly Father's

family (the Church).

The same Spirit which "baptizes" or places us in Christ's Body also "births" or brings us into the family of God, which makes us members of the Church of God and citizens of the Kingdom of God.

B. GOD REVEALED HIS PURPOSE

1. Revelation: Beyond Science And Philosophy

How can we understand God's purpose for us in His plan? Divine purpose is heavenly, eternal and spiritual. As sinful humans, devoid of God's Spirit, we cannot know the mind of God.

Neither the "sense" method of science nor the "reason" method of philosophy can bring us to God.

"...the world by wisdom knew not God... Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men... For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God..." (I Cor 1:21,25; 3:19).

2. Revelation: From The Holy Spirit

Man cannot know God by his limited intellect. It takes the Holy Spirit to make us understand God and His purposes.

Jesus said the same thing in these words: *"I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth. I praise you, because you have hidden these things from those who are wise and smart. But you have revealed them to those who are like little children"* (Matt 11:25,26 smf).

These verses make it very clear. We cannot find God by our own efforts — or know Him by our reason alone. God has chosen to reveal Himself to man by His Spirit and through His Son.

The revelation of God comes as we are willing to submit our spirit to His Spirit in simple childlike faith.

Paul was speaking from personal experience. He was wise in the ways of the religious world.

"If any other man thinks that he has a basis for trusting in the flesh, I more; I was circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee" (Phil 3:4,5).

He was a man aspiring to be a member of the Sanhedrin (the ruling body of Jewish leaders). However, he had to humble his heart and mind before the Lord like a little child, before he could learn the ways of God.

Paul was eventually lifted beyond the limits of his time-bound mind and earth-bound body.

"Fourteen years ago I was taken up to heaven for a visit. Don't ask me if my body was there or just my spirit, for I don't know; only God can answer that. But anyway, there I was in paradise. And I heard things so amazing, that they are beyond man's power to put into words..." (2Cor 12:2-4 tib, smf).

The revelation he received had been hidden in the heart of God the Father before time began. God revealed to Paul His purpose for the ages.

From that point on, Paul saw everything from a different point of view. He was a changed man, as we readily see from the results of his life.

Because of his own experience, Paul teaches us that we need revelation given by the Spirit. That is the only way we can know and understand the wonderful inheritance that is ours in Christ.

"As the Scriptures say, 'God has prepared wonderful things for those who love him — things that go beyond what man can see, hear or even imagine.'

"Moreover, he has — through the Spirit —shared his secret with us. For the Spirit searches out and shows us the hidden things of God's own heart.

"For this reason God has actually given us his Spirit... that we might know all that he has planned for us in his grace" (I Cor 2:9-12 smf).

Let us then pray *"that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto us the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him" (Eph 1:17).*

C. WE ARE PART OF THE FATHER'S FAMILY

The picture of God's love for His Son is a marvel to behold. From this divine love-relationship, Paul saw God's plan of the ages unfold. And, wonder of wonders, we are a part of that plan!

1. Many Sons And Daughters

It was the Father's great desire to further express His image and dominion — through a family of many sons and daughters. Each member of that family was to become like Jesus in both life and character.

Listen carefully as Paul seeks to put the marvel of this mystery into words:

"Long ago — even before he made the world — our dear heavenly Father chose us to be his very own. He planned to do this through what Christ would do for us.

"Father decided then to make us holy in his eyes, without a single fault. We would stand before him covered with his love.

"Yes, our Father's unchanging plan has always been to make us his children. This has ever been the desire and pleasure of his heart" (Eph 1:4-5 tlb, smf).

*"From the very beginning our dear Father God knew those who would choose to love him. **He decided then that they should become like his Son. It was God's desire that his Son would be the first in a family of many sons "** (Rom 8:29 smf).*

2. The First Family

Paul's revelation brings much added meaning to the story of Creation. We can see in the Genesis record that God's desire for a family (who were like Jesus) was there from the very beginning:

" 'Let us make man in our likeness. And let them rule over all of the creatures of the air, land and sea. 'So God created man in his own image... male and female he created them.

"Then God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number. Fill the earth and subdue it. You are to rule over every living thing in the air, land and sea'" (Gen 1:26-28 smf).

The first family of God's Creation was a man and wife with whom He had sweet communion in the cool of the day (Gen 3:8).

They were also a royal couple, for He had given them kingly power and authority. They had the right to rule over all of the earth. God's will was to be done on earth — through them.

What pleasure and delight this hope must have brought to the heart of their Father-Creator. Sadly, however, an evil shadow now appears.

The lovely scene which we have just painted will not last for long. Within that dark shadow lies a sly and beautiful serpent. And within that serpent moves the evil spirit of Satan himself.

Chapter 2

God's Plan Ruined: Rebellion

A. MAN: CREATED IN GOD'S IMAGE

Yes, God made man in His own image to have dominion.

1. Free To Choose

It was the Father's desire that Adam and Eve would love, honor and obey Him in all things.

The Father wanted man to trust His great love, wisdom and power. He longed for him to receive and return His love — even as the Father and the Son loved one another.

Love, however, by its nature must be freely given. It cannot be forced. You can't make or compel anyone to love.

The same is true of honor, respect and worship. Worship is related to "worthship." We love, honor and respect what we feel is of great value or "worth."

Love is a choice. Worship is a choice. We choose to love and worship that which we feel is of great value to us personally.

God is sovereign. This means God can do whatever He wants to do. He chose to create man in His own image that man might bring a loving dominion to the Creation. This meant giving man a freedom of will. This means man was given the right to choose. Because of his free will, man can choose to love, worship and honor God, or choose to sin and dishonor Him.

When God gave man this freedom of choice, however, it was with some risk. It meant that man could choose good or evil — right or wrong. Man could choose whom he would worship and obey.

2. Created To Worship

Everybody worships! We love, honor and respect whatever we feel is most "worthwhile" for our lives. It is not a question of "whether" we are going to worship, but "what" we are going to worship.

God created man to worship Him. Man will love, serve and obey that which he worships. It will determine his character and conduct — his attitudes and actions.

No wonder Jesus said, *"put the kingdom of God first in your life,"* for when we do, everything else falls into its rightful place (see Matthew 6:33).

God allowed man to make his choice for worship by placing two special trees in the Garden of Eden. One was called the "tree of life." Hidden within the mystery of that tree was the Author of Life — the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

The other tree was the "tree of death." It was called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Man was warned not to eat of that tree. He was not to set standards of good and evil — right and wrong — for his life apart from God's wisdom.

"There is a way which seems right to the mind of man, but it only ends in death" (Prov 14:12 smf). Hidden in the mystery of that tree was the author of death — Satan himself!

B. SATAN: EVIL IN HIS HEART

Satan, in the form of a graceful serpent, now appears on the scene. He is wise in the ways of evil, and there is evil purpose in his heart. Where did he come from? Why is he there? What will he seek to do? Let us again turn to the Scriptures for our answers.

The Bible uses earthly settings and people to teach us about heavenly and spiritual

things.

1. Works Through Men

The prophet Ezekiel tells us about a certain king of Tyre who was very wicked. Satan's control over the king was so complete that the story reveals an amazing picture of Satan himself.

"You were most perfect in your wisdom and beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God. Your clothing was covered with precious jewels... all in beautiful settings of finest gold. They were given to you on the day you were created.

"I chose you to be the anointed guardian cherub. You had the right to come to the holy mountain of God. You walked among the stones of fire.

"You were perfect in all you did from the time you were created. Yes, you were perfect until that day when evil was found in you. Your great wealth filled you with evil power, and you sinned....

"Your heart was filled with pride because of your beauty. You used your wisdom in wrong ways for your own proud purposes. Therefore, I cast you out, and threw you down to the earth" (Eze 28:12-19 smf).

The same kind of picture is painted by the prophet Isaiah. With powerful words, he reveals the evil character of the wicked king of Babylon. Again, the prophet shows us the evil picture of Satan working through a man.

"How you have fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son-of-the-morning! You have been cut down to the earth — even though you were mighty against the nations of the world.

"For you said to yourself, 'I will arise to heaven and rule the angels. I will take the highest throne. I will rule from the top of God's holy mountain. I will climb to the highest heavens and I will be like the Most High.' But instead, you will be brought down to the lowest pit of hell" (Isa 14:12-15 smf).

Five times Satan crosses "God's will" with "his own will." (It is worthy to note that Christ's body bore five wounds upon the cross — by which the will of Satan was totally destroyed.)

2. Created With Free Will

Satan — and all the other angelic beings — were created with a free will to love, honor, worship and serve God. As we have said, to create beings with freedom of choice brings risk. There is the danger of rebellion. Such beings have the right to make wrong choices.

The results of those wrong choices can be tragic. To reject God's love, truth and goodness is to reap the results of hatred, error and evil. To reject one is to choose the other. Just as when you flip a coin — one side or the other will turn up. Sadly, Satan made the wrong choice!

The Scriptures in Ezekiel and Isaiah show that Satan had been created by God for a high and noble purpose. He was perfect in his beauty and wisdom. He had been given great power and authority.

The account in Ezekiel implies that Satan was the choir-master of Heaven. He possessed unusual musical gifts, by which to lead the worship of God.

Satan ruled the hosts of Heaven. It seems he was the "overseer" of the heavenly host.

3. Blinded By Pride

Because of his beauty and position, pride entered Satan's heart. Paul uses Satan as

an example to illustrate what can happen when pride comes into our heart.

"An overseer must be without blame in every area of his life....He must not be a new believer, or he may become blinded with pride and come under judgment as did the devil" (I Tim 3:2,6 smf).

Pride and the desire for power became his downfall. He found more pleasure in his own beauty than in the glory of God; He became lifted up in his own eyes, and sought the honor and power which belong only to God.

Satan wanted the authority of God's throne. And he was willing to rebel against the Most High God to get it. Sadly, a large number of the angelic host joined Satan in his rebellion (see 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6).

One wonders why Satan and his host thought they could succeed in their rebellion against God. The Scripture even says that he was "full of wisdom."

As we have seen, however, there is a "blindness" in pride. Deception is believing something is right when it is wrong — that it is good when it is evil!

With pride comes deception. Satan was truly deceived. He was far too smart to try something that was plainly doomed for failure. He really thought he would win!

4. Doubted And Disobeyed

No one had ever disobeyed God before. His power and authority had never been tested. The results of rebellion had never been seen. Death was unknown. Moreover, this was the first time the powers of good and evil came in conflict with one another. The battle of the ages was about to begin!

Unlike God, Satan was not "omniscient" — all-knowing. As a created being, all he had to go on was God's word.

With pride comes deception. And with deception comes doubt. Satan began to doubt God's word, and as a result decided to disobey God's word.

The links in the chain of evil can now be clearly seen: PRIDE — DECEPTION — DOUBT — DISOBEDIENCE — and finally the link of "DEATH!" *"...and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (Jas 1:15).*

5. God Knew All Along

The Scriptures show that God chose to achieve His purpose in Creation through creatures of freewill. The angels (and later man) were made with a freedom of choice.

As said before, this involved a great risk. There was the danger of wrong choices and the evil results that would follow. God foresaw that possibility, but rested in His knowledge that in the end:

- a. GOOD would overcome EVIL**
- b. LOVE would overcome HATE**
- c. LIGHT would overcome DARKNESS**
- d. TRUTH would overcome ERROR**
- e. RIGHT would overcome WRONG**

Moreover, these noble qualities of God's character would be expressed through those who chose to love, honor and obey Him.

In Heaven, it would be achieved through those angels who chose to remain loyal to their Creator.

On earth, it was to be through a family of God's sons and daughters. The "Firstborn" of that family would be the Lord Jesus Himself.

6. Cast Out Of Heaven

It is possible that Satan was jealous of the love, honor and worship which was given to God by the heavenly host. Satan's rebellion was an attempt to take God's place and receive the worship that belonged to Him.

Do you recall how the devil offered Jesus the kingdoms of this world — in an attempt to get Jesus to worship him in the wilderness (see Luke 4:5-8)? This incident shows us that the devil desired the worship belonging to God alone.

In opposing God, Satan drew the battle lines for the age-long conflict between good and evil.

Satan was not able to gain a victory in Heaven. He and his host of fallen angels were cast out. What they lost in Heaven, however, they would later try to gain on earth in the Garden of Eden.

7. Deceives Eve

God made the first man and woman and told them to subdue the earth — and fill it with a family of loving children who would be loyal to Him.

It is to this earth and that family, therefore, that Satan now comes. The battle that began in Heaven now reaches into God's new creation. Satan seeks to rob the first earthly family of their heritage, by tempting them to commit the same sin which caused his downfall from the heavenly heights — pride and rebellion!

He comes to Eve in the form of a wise and beautiful serpent. He cannot overpower her, for she has been given authority over all of the creatures of the earth.

He has only one way in which he can reach her with his evil purpose — lies and deception!

You can see why Jesus spoke of Satan in these terms: "... *the devil... was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him... for he is a liar...*" (John 8:44).

The Apostle Paul refers to this deception in his second letter to the Corinthian church. Listen to his words of warning:

*"I fear for you. I am afraid that your **minds** will be led away from your pure love and loyalty to Christ. This is what happened to Eve when she was **deceived** by the devil — that sly and clever serpent"* (2Cor 11:3 smf).

Yes, Satan used the "tree of knowledge" (the arrogant mind of man) as his way of reaching their lives. You recall that God had told them not to eat of that one tree. Let us again listen to His words of warning:

"You may freely eat from any of the trees in the garden. However, you must not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The day that you eat of it you will surely die!" (Gen 2:16,17 smf).

a. An Evil Chain Is Forged. Satan now begins to forge his chain of evil: pride-deception-doubt-disobedience-death. Let us study each link in the chain as it is found in the record itself:

"Now the serpent was more clever and crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, 'Did God really say, "You must not eat from any tree in the garden?"'"

"The woman said to the serpent, 'God said we could eat from any of the trees in the garden except the tree [of knowledge of good and evil] which is in the middle of the garden. We were told not to touch it, or we would surely die.'

"You will not surely die,' the serpent said to the woman. 'God knows that when

you eat of it your eyes will be opened. Then you will be like God, knowing the difference between good and evil.'

"Then the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food, and pleasing to the eye. It was something to be desired, for it would make one wise. So she took some of the fruit and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who ate it as well" (Gen 3:1-6 smf).

Satan told them that the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil was not something to be feared, but truly to be desired. Instead of dying as God had said, they would really begin to live.

In fact they would become like God, and be able to decide what was good and evil — right and wrong — for themselves. They didn't need God to direct their lives. They could know themselves, be themselves, and become their very best — all by themselves. Then the kingdom, power and glory would be theirs —alone! If God really loved them. He would have told them that Himself.

It is easy to see how Satan first sowed the seeds of pride and selfish desire. Then he deceived them into doubting God. He got them to doubt God's Word, God's love, and His power and authority. Their doubt led to disobedience — and their disobedience led to death!

C. MAN: DISOBEYED AND LOST EVERYTHING

In seeking to find his life apart from God, man lost everything. Sadly, the lie worked as well on earth as it had in Heaven. In believing the lies of Satan, the woman disobeyed and came under judgment. Although Adam was not deceived, he too chose to sin — and by so doing marred the image and likeness of God.

Without God-likeness (righteousness — right acting) the dominion was lost. *"...a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of thy kingdom "* (Heb 1:8).

But Satan was quick to take up the scepter which fell from Adam and Eve's hands. The authority which had been given to man was now taken over by Satan. Man found himself under the authority of the kingdom of darkness and death.

It seemed as if a timeless tragedy had set in. Many things were lost as a result of Adam's sin and disobedience:

- 1. He lost his relationship as a beloved son.**
- 2. He lost his divine covering and God-given authority.**
- 3. He lost the beauty of God's image in his life.**
- 4. He lost his destiny in God's divine purpose.**
- 5. He lost his very life — spirit, soul and body.**

It looked as if God's divine plan was all over before it even began. How Satan must have rejoiced in this defeat of God's holy purpose! Satan believed that the battle lost in Heaven had been won on earth.

Now he was the prince of this world. And as long as he ruled the earth, the glory and power of God's Son would never reign in the hearts of men.

There was, however, an aspect of God's character which Satan knew nothing about. It was His grace! Satan did not know the strength of God's love — how far it would go that man might be saved and restored.

We will want to carefully study God's great plan of salvation, for in it is man's hope for restoration —to regain his losses.

PRIDE



DECEPTION

DOUBT

DISOBEDIENCE

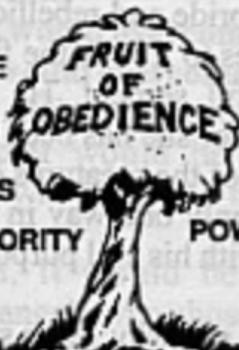
SATAN'S CHAIN OF EVIL

LOVE

WISDOM

GOODNESS

AUTHORITY



TRUTH

POWER

REBELLION

My will, not yours, be done; The Kingdom,
Power and Glory will be mine — forever!

DEATH

Chapter 3

God's Plan Restored: Redemption

A. WE ALL NEED TO BE SAVED

Before we study God's great plan of salvation, we must fully understand our need to be "saved." We all need to be saved from both the penalty and power of sin — because we are all sinners. We are sinners by "nature" and by "practice." The Scriptures make this two-fold basis for sin very plain:

1. Sinners By Nature

"Sin came into the world [human race] through one man — Adam. The result of sin was death. Therefore death spread to all men because [in Adam] all have sinned" (Rom 5:12 smf).

As head of the human race, Adam infected — like a disease — all mankind with his own sin. Therefore, we are sinners at birth and by nature. We are born with a sinful nature. Children do not have to be taught to sin. They are natural-born sinners (like their parents).

2. Sinners By Practice

"All we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned each one to our own way.... Truly, all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Isa 53:6; Rom 3:23 smf).

We are not only all sinners by nature, but also by choice and by practice. We have all done acts of sin. We have all chosen our own will and way apart from God.

3. Death: Penalty Of Sin

God's way is the only way to eternal life. All other paths lead to death. Apart from God we have no hope. We have lost everything — forever.

The Apostle Paul puts this truth most plainly — but also gives us the hope we need:

"For the penalty of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom 6:23).

4. Grace: A Gift Of God

Grace is a gift which we have not earned. Mercy is a kindness we do not deserve. God by nature is full of grace and mercy. These are qualities of His love.

God is love, but He is also holy and just. Because God is holy and just, He cannot overlook man's sin.

If I sin (break the law) and am brought before a just (righteous) judge, he will uphold the law. I will not be able to buy freedom with a bribe. He will impose the penalty prescribed by the law for my crime.

When an earthly judge is put in office, he must swear that he will uphold the law. Unfortunately there are judges who break their vow — they are unjust or unrighteous judges.

God is a righteous judge. If God did not demand that the penalty for sin be imposed (paid), He would be an unrighteous God. What, then, is the penalty for sin? And who will pay it?

As we have seen, the penalty is death. *"The sinning soul shall surely die!"* (Eze 18:4,20 smf). And the sinner is the one who deserves to pay that price. Only in this way can the justice of God be satisfied.

Once the penalty has been paid, we are "justified" or made "right" in the eyes of

the law. This is the only way we can be "forgiven" of our sins.

To **die** for our sins means separation. Physical death means separation from our bodies. Spiritual death (which is the result — penalty for sin) means separation from God.

Our heavenly Father created us for fellowship in His family. Our sin spoils that beautiful relationship, not only for us, but for Him as well.

Is there any possible way that this relationship of love and life can be restored? Must both God and man suffer the pain of sin's penalty forever? Is there any way which will bring man back into God's plan and family fellowship? Praise God, the answer is yes. It is called "redemption!"

5. Redemption: God's Grace In Action

"May you ever be thankful to the heavenly Father. He has prepared many wonderful things for his people who walk in the light. And he has made us able to have them all.

"Father did this by setting us free from the power of darkness, and bringing us into the kingdom of his beloved Son. Yes, we have been redeemed — bought and brought back — by his blood. In Jesus we truly have forgiveness for our sins" (Col 1:12-14 smf).

To "redeem" means to buy and bring back something which has been lost. God, in His grace and mercy, has come to man's aid, for man could not redeem himself.

Christ Himself died in man's place and paid his penalty, so that the demands of a broken law and God's justice have been satisfied.

Now man can be "justified" before the law. He can be restored to "righteous standing" before God and forgiven of his sin. His record can be clean. No fault will now be held against him if he asks Jesus to forgive his sin. Man can then stand before God's holy law without fear.

Yes, the penalty for your sin has been paid, and when you receive His grace your guilt is gone. Christ died on the cross in your place. You and I should have died for our own sins, but *"...Christ died for us"* (Rom 5:8).

The price for our "redemption," however, was not cheap. To buy and bring us back into His family. God Himself had to pay the penalty for our sin. It cost Him the life of His own Son.

Jesus Christ came to this earth in the form of a man to die for the sins of the world as a man, that we might be redeemed. The pure, holy, sinless Son of God took upon Himself our sin and died upon a cross.

He did this that we might be made right before God and once again find our place in His family. He died that we might live. This, indeed, is the grace of God!

I am sure Satan had not counted on God going so far as to send His own Son to die for our sins.

"For God so loved the world [of sinners] that he gave his one and only Son. Whoever believes in him shall never perish or die. Instead, he will live forever" (John 3:16 smf).

6. Restoration: The Result Of Redemption

God was not caught by surprise by man's sin. The gift of God's Son was given even before man had been created:

"Christ was chosen to die for you before the world [or man] was made. But he was revealed and shown to the world in these last times.

"God paid a price to save you from the empty way of life given to you by your

fathers. However, you were not redeemed with something that will pass away like silver or gold. You were bought and brought back with the precious blood of Christ — a pure and perfect Lamb" (I Pet 1:18-20 smf).

"Restoration" is the return of something to its original place and condition — where and how it was at first.

When man fell, God did not change His mind about His plan for a beloved and royal family. It was still His purpose to fill the whole earth with sons and daughters whose lives would reflect the beauty of their God.

Therefore, as soon as man sinned and fell from his place of royal authority, God's plan of redemption was set in motion.

a. Redemption Plan Revealed. It is of some interest that this plan was first revealed to Satan himself after the fall. From the record, it would appear that Adam and Eve were also there. The word of the Lord, however, was spoken directly to the serpent.

"And the Lord God said to the serpent, 'Because you have done this, you are cursed above all the animals.... From now on you and the woman will be enemies. This will also be true of all of your seed [offspring] and her Seed [Jesus]. You will strike his heel, but he will crush your head' " (Gen3:14, 15 smf).

There were **two primary promises** made by God; both were directed at Satan:

1) You Will Strike His Heel. *"You [the serpent] will strike his [the seed of the woman's] heel..."*

Satan was to *"strike the heel"* of the *"Seed of the woman."* This was a prophecy referring to Jesus.

"...God sent forth his Son, made of a woman..." (Gal 4:4). Jesus was the "Seed of the woman."

The serpent was told he would strike at His (Jesus') heel, but the wound would not be fatal in a final way.

This refers to Jesus' death on the cross and resurrection following. Satan — who took the power of death from Adam — could not keep Jesus in the grave!

Jesus went to the cross to die (and thus pay the penalty) for my sin. But He died with this promise from His Father: *"...thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither will you suffer your Holy One to see corruption"* (Acts 2:27). Jesus knew He would rise from the dead, triumphant over Satan.

2) He Will Crush Your Head. He (the Seed-Jesus) would crush Satan's head (or crush the "headship" — that is, the right to rule). This refers to a fatal, final wound from which there would be no recovery. The defeat and destruction of the serpent's right to rule would be total. The phrase "crush your head" is of great importance. The term "head" refers to the right to rule with power and authority.

Our story in the Garden of Eden now becomes most dramatic. God Himself is telling the devil that someday the Seed of the woman (Jesus) would wrench the scepter of world governance back from his grip. Through the death of Christ on the cross, man would be redeemed and Satan would be defeated and rendered powerless.

Dominion would be restored to the family of God. God's Son — born as a Son of Man — would regain for redeemed mankind the authority to govern that which he had lost through sin.

The Kingdom of Heaven will one day rule the earth through God's family of royal priests. Jesus, our royal Redeemer-Brother, is the "First-born" of that glorious family.

Through Him, we have a victory which will last forever.

7. Accept God's Gift

Truly our "redemption" is a great wonder of God's grace. The gift of God's Son reveals His great love for sinful man. However, even though God has done all of this for us in Christ, we can miss it all.

A gift has no value to the receiver unless it is accepted. If someone gives us a cup of cold water, it will do us no good unless we drink it. We must accept God's gift of grace by "receiving" Jesus Christ into our hearts as our Lord and Savior. We too must confess that we are sinners and need to be saved from the penalty of our sin. To miss God's love is to lose eternal life — forever!

"God has shown his great love for us in this way: Christ died for us while we were still sinners....

"And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the Father, we too shall walk in newness of life....

"For God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life. But he who has not the Son of God has not life!...

"Therefore, only those who receive the Lord Jesus as their Savior are given the right to become the children of God" (Rom 5:8; 6:4; I Jn 5:11,12; John 1:12 smf).

B. TWO SIDES TO SALVATION

We can readily see from the above that there are two sides to our salvation: God's side and our side. He has a part to play which we cannot. But we have a part to play which He will not. We can review these thoughts as follows:

1. God's Part In Our Salvation

He will confront and convict us of our sin. In other words, God will face us with our faults. He will prove that we are guilty, and show us the penalty that we must pay for our sin — death! He will do this by His Word and by His Spirit. The key word is GUILT!

He will then reveal to us how we can be "saved" from the penalty for our sins and find our place in His family. He will do this by bringing us to Jesus — His Son and our Savior. His death on the cross proves that God is not only holy and just, but loving and merciful. The key word is GRACE!

2. Our Part In Our Salvation

We must respond to our guilt and God's grace by confessing our sin and God's Son. To "confess" means to agree — to say the same thing. We must agree with God that we are sinners and need a Savior. The key word is CONFESS!

We must then repent and receive Christ as our Savior. To "repent" means to change our mind. Therefore, we now choose God's will and way for our lives rather than our own. We do this by asking Jesus to come into our hearts as both Savior and Lord. We respond to God's love by faith in His Son and obedience to His Word. The key words are REPENT and RECEIVE!

C. THE RESULTS OF SALVATION

The results of our salvation are conversion and restoration. To "convert" means to turn from one way and go another. By God's grace, we have turned from our way of death to His way of life. The key word is CONVERSION!

We once were "alienated" or separated from Him by our sin and disobedience. In Christ, we have been "restored" or brought back into fellowship with God's beloved and royal family. The key word is RESTORATION! (The main thoughts in our outline above

are reviewed in the chart on the next page.)

Yes, we must receive Christ into our hearts as our Savior to be forgiven of our sins — and to have eternal life. But there is even more to our great salvation. Not only are our sins forgiven in Christ, but we also receive many other benefits and blessings. We are given:

1. A New Spirit

"I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my ways and to keep my laws" (Eze 36:27 smf).

2. A New Life

"This is the record: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son" (I Jn 5:11 smf).

3. A New Name

"You will be called by a new name given by the mouth of the Lord.... And the disciples were first called 'Christians' in Antioch " (Isa 62:2, Acts 11:26 smf).

4. A New Nature

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ Jesus, he is a new creation [has a new nature]. Old things are gone; see, all things have become new"(2Cor 5:17 smf).

5. A New Heart

"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you" (Eze 36:26 smf).

6. A New Mind

"And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; put on the new man [nature] which is holy and righteous like God.... For we have the mind of Christ" (Eph 4:23-24; I Cor 2:16 smf).

7. A New Authority

"And I [Jesus] have given you authority over all the power of the enemy.... Resist the devil and he will flee from you" (Luke 10:19; Jas 4:7 smf).

8. A New Family

"To all those who received him, Jesus gave the right to become the children of God" (John 1:12 smf).

9. A New Destiny

"You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation — God's special people. Yes, he has called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Therefore, you are to declare and display [show and tell] his praise and glory —now and forever!" (I Pet 2:9 smf).

Truly, as Christians we have been redeemed and restored. We have been bought and brought back into Father's beloved and royal family. God's plan of the ages has not changed. Through His Son Jesus, He has forgiven our sins and set us again in a place of power and authority.

The first family failed to fulfill their divine calling.

Because of Christ's victory over Satan at the cross. God's "new family" will succeed. This is our glorious hope; this is our divine destiny — as sons and daughters of the Most High God!

D. A THREE-POINT PATTERN

As we review "The Foundation Of The Church," a three-point pattern can be seen:

1. God acts;

2. Satan reacts; and then

3. God counteracts.

The working out of God's will begins with His word, which is followed by an action. His word works! He speaks and it is done! With His word goes the power of His Spirit, and His divine purpose is performed. We see this in the story of Creation: "*Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light*" (Gen 1:3). He spoke and it was done!

Satan then "reacts" to God's word and work. He seeks to spoil God's purpose by denying His word and opposing His work. He comes against God's "action" with his own "reaction."

If the story ended here, Satan would win the war of words and works. His evil purposes would prevail, and God's will would not be done. But this is not the end of the story, for God now "counteracts."

God always has the last word and the final action. Evil shall be overcome by His good will and purpose in the end. But it takes time and process. God has chosen to speak and work out His will through His Son and through His family.

As we have seen, we find our place in God's family through His Son. As we do, the power of Christ's Spirit will speak and work through us. God's royal family in Christ Jesus will one day rule over all Creation. This is God's will from the very beginning — and it shall be done. This is our hope; this is our destiny!

E. DEFINITION OF TERMS

The three-point pattern we have stated above is outlined below. We shall define each of the terms, since you will need to understand the concepts to follow the teaching.

<u>GOD ACTS</u>	<u>SATAN REACTS</u>	<u>GOD COUNTERACTS</u>
Creates	<i>Ruins</i>	<i>Redeems</i>
Plans	<i>Destroys</i>	<i>Restores</i>
Generates	<i>Degenerates</i>	<i>Regenerates</i>
Forms	<i>Deforms</i>	<i>Reforms</i>
Covers	<i>Uncovers</i>	<i>Recovers</i>
Conciliates	<i>Alienates</i>	<i>Reconciles</i>

1. Redemption

To "redeem" is to buy and bring back something that has been lost or taken over by another. God's purpose for man at Creation was spoiled or ruined when man disobeyed God's word.

By his sin, he came under the control of the devil and became his slave. The price of man's redemption was the life of God's Son. We were "redeemed" by the blood of Jesus from the power of the devil.

2. Restoration

To "restore" is to return something to its original (first) position or condition after it has been put down or torn up.

Man fell from his position of ruling and reigning, and lost the image and likeness of God when he disobeyed. God's holy purpose for mankind was destroyed by the devil when Eve and Adam sinned.

Through Jesus, God provided a way to restore man to his rightful place of honor and authority.

3. Regeneration

To "regenerate" is to bring back to life something that has died. When man sinned, he lost his life with God. On the cross, Christ saved us from the power of Satan, sin and death. When we receive Christ into our lives, we receive the benefits of His death and resurrection. He died for us that we might be brought to life in Him. He is our life — now and forever!

4. Reformation

To "reform" is to bring something back to its first form or appearance after it has been spoiled, marred or damaged. Man was created in the lovely image of God. Sin spoiled the beauty of that picture. It never was able to develop as God planned.

However, by the power of Christ's Spirit within, we can once more grow in His glory and grace. The faults and flaws of sin have been removed. The lovely image of Jesus again shines forth with ever brighter and greater beauty.

5. Recovery

To "recover" is to regain something that has been lost. We were created to be under or "covered" by God's light, love and authority. When man sinned, he came out from under that covering and plunged into darkness. In so doing, he was exposed to God's wrath and judgment against sin.

When Jesus shed His blood and died for us, the penalty for our sins was paid. He died that our sins might be covered by His blood. When by faith we submit to Christ as our Savior, we regain our covering of God's light, love and authority.

6. Reconciliation

To "reconcile" is to bring someone back into a friendly relationship. God created man for fellowship. Like Abraham, we are to be "friends" with God (Jas 2:23). Sin broke that friendship and we became His enemy. The former relationship of love was lost. God still loved us, but we chose not to love or obey Him. We shut Him out of our lives.

To "conciliate" means to make a friend. When God made man, He made him to be a friend. To "alienate" means to withdraw from a friend. The separation destroys the friendship.

Man's sin separated him from fellowship with God. In His grace, God — through the death of His Son — has reconciled us to Himself. Fellowship has been restored!

Yes, God's Kingdom shall come; His will shall be done — on earth as it is in Heaven. And it shall come and be done through God's very own people. They are a special people — who have been redeemed, restored, regenerated, reformed, recovered and reconciled. This is His word. And He always has the last and final word!

F. IMPORTANT SALVATION CONCEPTS

The "Foundation of the Church" rests firmly on our great Savior, Jesus! There are several other terms regarding salvation which have been used in this article. Because of their importance, it would be good to list and define them at this time.

1. Salvation

This refers to the work of God's grace in Christ by which we are:

a. Saved "from" the penalty, power and future presence of sin.

b. Saved "for" God's purpose and placed in His family in which we express the likeness of His Son.

When Christ died on the cross for our sins. He became our Savior. He died in our

place and paid the price (penalty) for our sin. When we by faith receive Him as our Savior, we also receive the power of His resurrection life. As this new life flows into us, it brings wholeness (healing) for our spirit, soul and body.

To be "saved" means to be forgiven, healed, released, made whole (or complete) and restored. We are safe, sound and set free. We are free to become everything God has called us to be.

2. Regeneration

The term "generate" means to create or produce life. Regeneration, as we learned above, refers to the return or restoration of life after death.

We are "dead" in our sins. Therefore we must have a "new input" of spiritual life (be born again) to be brought back into the family of God.

There is only one way we can be born into an earthly family. That is by the impartation or input of natural life. This occurs through the process of biological reproduction. The germ or sex cells bring together the life that is needed to produce a new little baby boy or girl.

The same is true when it comes to being "born" into the family of God. There must be an input of spiritual life — a divine seed. That "Seed of Life" is a Person — and that Person is Jesus. When we receive Christ into our heart, He is the Life which brings us to birth in God's holy family. Therefore every Christian has had two births: a natural birth and a spiritual birth. This is what it means to be "born again."

3. Atonement

The word "atone" means to become "at-one" with another (at-one-ment). It speaks of agreement and peace which is the result of making wrongs right

Sin is a wrong against God. Therefore it separates or "alienates" us from God. We need to be "reconciled" or brought back into fellowship with Him.

The only way the results of sin can be made of no effect is by justification (counting a sinner righteous). Justification is not the act (as some suppose) of overlooking sin or blindly ignoring transgression. A holy and just God cannot overlook sin.

Sin can be canceled, covered or put aside only if the penalty of sin has been paid. Only then can justice be satisfied and the sin be blotted out. When the penalty for the wrong has then been fully paid, fellowship can be restored.

The penalty for sin is death. Jesus, in His grace and mercy, paid that penalty for us when He died on the cross for our sins. In this way, we can say that His blood has covered and canceled our sin. ("Cancel" means to make of no effect.) Atonement, then, is God's action — through Christ's death — by which our fellowship is restored. We are made "at-one" with God.

4. Righteousness

This refers to the holy character of God. He is ever "right" in thought, word and deed — in attitudes and actions. He is right, good and true in all ways and in all things.

This is the "righteous" standard of the law. Whatever is not righteous is wicked, evil and wrong — in short, sinful. For this reason, sinful man can never stand before a holy God. Righteousness and unrighteousness are forever against one another. There is no basis for fellowship.

For this reason, God sent His Son to "atone" for our sins. When we accept Christ into our hearts as our Savior, our sins are covered and canceled. God no longer sees us in our sins, but in the righteousness of His Son. Not only is He in us, but we are in Him.

This is called "imputed" righteousness. The word "impute" is a legal term. It means that something has been put to our account by another. What is theirs now also belongs to us. Their position and possession becomes our position and possession. It is a joint account.

The righteousness of Jesus has become our righteousness. The position of Jesus at the Father's right hand has become our position (see Ephesians 1:20-22; 2:4-6).

Besides "imputed" righteousness which is our legal position, there is an "imparted" righteousness. "Impart" means to put something in. When we became Christians, something was "put into" our lives. Not only are we "in Christ" in the legal sense, but Christ is "in us" in a personal and practical sense.

In receiving Jesus, we also receive His holy, righteous nature. We have a new nature — a new source of inner power — by which we can now begin to live a "righteous" life.

Our "old nature" died with Jesus on the cross, which gives us the right and freedom to express our "new nature."

5. Justification

To "justify" means to make right before the law, and therefore make free from guilt or condemnation.

To "condemn" means to judge someone guilty before the law. Sin is breaking the laws of God. Therefore all sinners are guilty before God. The penalty for our sin is death. The demands of the law cannot be satisfied without the penalty for sin being paid. "Justice" cannot overlook sin as if it didn't happen.

In God's plan of redemption, mercy and justice can join hands in only one way. And it is this: The Judge (God) not only passes the sentence, but also pays the penalty (Christ's death) Himself. The guilty party is now "justified" and made right before the law.

The sinner can now go free because his Judge was not only just (which required Him to enforce the penalty of the law), but also full of mercy (since He paid the penalty that His justice required He impose upon the sinner).

This is what God did for us in Christ's death upon the cross. Sin was judged. The penalty was paid. And we were forgiven and set free! We were thus JUSTIFIED.

Chapter 4

Our Great Salvation

Introduction

"How shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation?" (Heb 2:3 smf).

If you are not interested in your great salvation, prophets and angels are.

The Old Testament prophets were very interested in God's great plan of salvation. They longed to know the details of God's plan for man. They wanted to know the particulars of how our great salvation would be paid for through Christ's death and burial, and how it would be assured through His resurrection. They did not know how He would triumph over sin, Satan and the grave.

But it wasn't just the prophets who longed to know what is now revealed to us. The ANGELS themselves earnestly longed for understanding of this great plan that was just for you!

But it wasn't for the Old Testament prophets (God did not even include the ANGELS in this plan); He reserved it all for YOU!

Peter puts this thought in these words:

*"The **prophets** searched carefully and tried to learn more about this great salvation. The Spirit of Christ was in these **prophets**, and he was felling them about the things that Christ would suffer — and the glory which would follow.*

"They wanted to know when and for whom these things would be. Then they were shown that the revelation would not be fulfilled in their day. But they were speaking of the grace which was going to come to us.

*"Yes, it was for us in our time. We have received the good news of salvation from preachers who were moved by the same Holy Spirit —sent from heaven. The wonder of this salvation is so great, **the angels themselves long to know more about it!**" (I Pet 1:10-12 smf).*

The Old Testament prophets would have given everything to know what the Bible tells us about this fantastic, tremendous plan God has for you!

However, if we don't know what great riches we have in our salvation, this lack of understanding will leave us in a place of spiritual bondage and poverty.

So that this would not happen, the Father sent us His very own Holy Spirit to teach us who we are — and what Father has given to us and planned for us — in the Lord Jesus. The Apostle Paul said: "...we have received God's Spirit that we may know and understand what he has freely given us " (1 Cor 2:12 smf).

Many Christians are earnestly praying for things which God has already given to them. I did that for years. When you pray for what is already given — you waste your time and God's.

The Holy Spirit is given to you so that you will know the things God has already given to you in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Let us, therefore, study with care the important role which our salvation plays in God's great plan of the ages.

A. THE CONDITION OF SIN

The first problem which our "great salvation" must solve is the question of sin. It is our sin which separates us from God's holy will and purpose for our lives.

We must understand why we are sinners and why we sin if we are to understand the greatness of our salvation.

This then raises two important questions:

- **Are we sinners because we sin?**
- **Or, do we sin because we are sinners?**

Theologians and Scripture scholars have been debating these questions for centuries. Most people are slow to answer these questions because they are not sure themselves. Yet a question this important should be clearly answered in the Bible.

1. Sin Entered The World By One Man

The key to understanding the relationship between sin and the sinner can be found in Romans Chapter Five. Paul is talking about the origin of sin and how it affects each one of us. Listen to his words:

*"Sin came into the **world** [human race] through one man — Adam. The result of sin was death. Therefore, death spread to all men because [in Adam] all have sinned"*

(Rom 5:12 smf).

The word "world" is the same as found in John 3:16: *"For God so loved the world..."*

It is from the Greek word "kosmos," and refers to the human race. Paul is saying that as the head of the human race, Adam **infected** all mankind by his own sin. The result of this terrible infection by sin was both spiritual and physical death.

Paul explains this truth in this way:

Between Adam and Moses no one was judged guilty for their sins, for the law had not yet been given. However, they still died. Their death, therefore, could not be due directly to their sins, since there was no law. *".. for where no law is, there is no transgression "* (Rom 4:15).

So, Paul reasons, their death must have been due to Adam's sin. We were "in Adam" when he disobeyed God. Therefore, we suffer the penalty of that sin because we are members of the Adamic race.

Here is the story in Paul's own words:

"Sin was in the world before the law of Moses was given. However, no one is judged guilty without the law. Even so, men died during that time although none of them sinned in the same way Adam did... One man's sin [Adam's] allowed death to rule all mankind... Because one man disobeyed God, many were made sinners..." (Rom 5:13,14, 17, 19 smf).

a. A Killer Disease. An example will help us understand. There is a terrible incurable disease spreading rapidly through Africa and Western nations called AIDS. (The doctors call it **Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome**.)

As you know, cuts and bruises that break the skin let germs into your blood and flesh that can cause terrible infection and sickness.

Normally your body can resist disease and infection that come into your body from germs. That is because you have an **immune** system.

However, if you have AIDS, your body's immune system quits working — and as time passes, terrible boils, sores and infections penetrate every part of your body, and in a few years you will die.

But what is the worst thing about AIDS? If your parents have it, you will be infected in the womb of your mother. You will be born with it — **AND YOU TOO WILL DIE** from it, in just a short time.

Sin is like that! The first man to ever live — our forefather **ADAM** — sinned. His sin infected not only him, but all his descendants. You and I were born infected with sin — and we will die spiritually and physically if someone doesn't miraculously save us.

2. In Adam All Sinned And All Died

The truth is plain: we were all born sinners because of Adam's sin. Apart from any act of sin on our part, we are heirs to Adam's sin — and his sin-nature.

Even if we had never once sinned, we would still be sinners, under the penalty of death.

*"By the offense of one, judgment came upon all" (Rom 5:18). "Death came through one man... For **in Adam** all die..."* (I Cor 15:21,22 smf).

In Adam we all sinned; **in Adam** we all died. This concept or idea of being "**in Adam**" is an important truth to understand.

As we shall see, the same thought carries over to our relationship of being "**in**

Christ," and will be one of the truths by which we will come to understand our great salvation.

a. An Example From Nature. This idea of being "**in another**" can also be seen in an example from nature.

In trying to produce better rice, agricultural scientists expose rice seeds to high-energy rays. Such radiation is able to change the genetic make-up of the seed.

By this high-energy radiation, the **nature** of the rice seed is changed. The way it grows and survives is altered.

Most changes made by radiation of genes (heredity material) are harmful, but sometimes the changes turn out for the better. The changes that come from the radiation can be known only by planting the seed — and seeing what the harvest it produces is like.

One seed will produce a stalk with many seeds. Each of those seeds will carry the genetic changes — whether they be for better or worse. This will hold true for all the generations of that rice seed which follow.

As the seeds are planted, and planted again, there can come forth in a few years a great harvest of rice. Each plant will have the same character and quality as was "fixed" in that first radiated seed.

If the genetic changes were for the better, they have a harvest of high-quality rice. But where did that great harvest of higher-quality rice come from? It came from that first seed! Many bushels of better rice were all "**in the one seed.**"

The same is true if the genetic change was for the worse. **In that one bad seed** exists the potential for many bushels of poor-quality rice. The results of radiation will be passed on to all the following generations.

No radiation of subsequent generations of the poor rice seed is needed to carry on the harmful results produced in the first seed. When it was altered for the worse, the nature of the rice was changed for all future generations of that altered seed!

b. In The Loins Of Adam. Now we can better understand what Paul meant when he said that "in Adam" we were all made sinners. When Adam sinned, we were in the loins (body) of Adam.

The seed from which you and I came was **in** Adam from the very beginning. What then happened to you and me (who were in Adam) when Adam sinned? We became what he became — sinners! "*By the offense of one, judgment came upon all*" (Rom 5:18).

David was very aware of this truth. He clearly stated the idea in one of his Psalms: "*Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me*" (Ps 51:5 niv).

David is confessing that he was born a sinner. He was made a sinner — like every other human being — **in Adam**.

He knew he needed a clean heart and a new spirit not only because of his sins, but because of the sin-nature that he was born with.

Yes, like David, we all have been born as sinners because we were all in Adam. We sin because we have a sin-nature. It shows itself very early in life.

Those of us who are parents have seen this in our own children. We didn't have to teach them to sin; they just came by it naturally from their parents. They quickly learned how to exert their will in unrighteous ways.

Whenever their wills were crossed, their little sin-natures got louder and stronger. That streak of sin seemed to grow faster than they did.

Why was this so? Because we all take after our forefather Adam.

"When Adam sinned, many [all his descendants] were made sinners" (Rom 5:19).

We were all in Adam from the very beginning.

3. Natural-Born Sinners

Now it is also true that you are a sinner because you sin.

Yes, we were all born sinners. However, we have proven this by our many and repeated acts of sin. Paul tells us most plainly that there is *"none righteous, no, not one... All have sinned and come short of the glory of God"* (Rom 3:10, 23).

Therefore, if someone asks us, "Do we sin because we are sinners?" we would have to say "Yes."

If they also ask us, "Are we sinners because we sin?" we would have to say "Yes" again.

Both are true. It is not either/or.

We were born sinners, and everyone has proven that fact by their many sins. Therefore, we have been judged as sinners on both counts — by our sinful ancestor (Adam) and by our sinful actions. They are two sides to the same coin.

Yes, we are all natural-born sinners. However, many religious people still do not see their need of salvation. They do not consider themselves to be sinners.

They live good, honest lives. They attend a church or go to a pagan temple regularly, and support it with their finance. They pay their bills and don't get drunk on alcohol or curse. They try to keep the Ten Commandments and believe they will make it to Heaven — by their own works of righteousness.

This is a tragic error to make. For they are wrong — dead wrong! We are all sinners — twice over — by birth and by deed. It is a fact of history — and of life.

There's nothing in ourselves that we can do about it. No amount of good deeds will change our sin-nature, or cancel the penalty for our sins.

The Scripture says that at the very best *"our righteousness is as dirty rags"* (Isa 64:6 smf). We cannot hope to cover our sin by our "good works."

In the bright light of God's holiness, we can only be seen as the sinners we are. Our hope can never be in our goodness — only in God's grace. We must know we are sick unto death because of Adam's sin and our own before we can receive His cure!

B. THE PENALTY FOR SIN

We have seen that the condition of sin is "universal." By that we mean **everybody, everywhere** is a sinner! Moreover, the penalty for sin is universal. Everyone is doomed to die because of their sin. *"All have sinned... and the wages [penalty] of sin is death"* (Rom 3:23; 6:23 smf).

1. On Death Row

The Bible describes every human being as being on "death row" — under the sentence of death. Apart from God's grace, no one is excepted. We all face the same dark destiny: Death!

From the very beginning, the sentence for sin has been the same. God firmly and clearly warned Adam and Eve that to disobey meant death.

"You must not eat from the tree... for when you eat of it, you will surely die" (Gen 2:17).

The prophet Ezekiel further affirms the death penalty for sin in these simple but

very strong words: *"The sinning soul shall die"* (Eze 18:4, 20 smf).

Nothing could be more certain. The wages or outcome of sin is death. By nature and by deed we are sinners. We have chosen to go our way rather than God's way. *"All we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned each one to our own way..."* (Isa 53:6).

What is the result of getting our own will and going our own way? *"There is a way which seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death"* (Prov 14:12 niv).

The way of man is a dead-end street! It couldn't really be otherwise. Jesus said, *"I am the way, the truth and the life. No man comes to the Father but by me"* (John 14:6 smf).

The Father's will and way to life centers in His Son. Any other way leads to death. When we choose to disobey God and go our own way, it will lead in only one direction — downward to destruction.

Sin can be defined as opposing God's will and way with our own. By its very nature, disobedience can only lead to death. This is the reason that all sinners are doomed to die. We have all willfully chosen the wrong road.

It began "in Adam" when he chose to disobey God. Not only were we victims of that choice, but we have nurtured that choice by our own acts of disobedience. Apart from God and His grace, we are in this world without hope. Death is our destiny!

C. GOD'S PROVISION FOR THE SINNER

Every sinner is without God and without hope in this world. It is indeed a dark night of despair. But against this black background shines the bright light of God's love.

The Bible tells us that *"where there is great sin there is even more of God's grace"* (Rom 5:20 smf).

We can be so grateful that there is a second part to the verse that declares, *"the wages of sin is death..."* The second part goes on to bring a message of hope and love: *"...but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord"* (Rom 6:23).

1. Eternal Life: The Gift Of God's Love

We are told of this great gift of God's love in a very familiar passage from John's Gospel:

"For God so loved the world [of sinners] that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish [die] but have everlasting life" (John 3:16 smf).

a. Definition Of A Gift. The legal definition of a gift involves three necessary parts. These elements are as follows:

1) An offer;

2) An acceptance;

3) Without payment.

A gift is something that has been freely offered and accepted without any thought of payment.

b. God Made His Offer. God made His **offer** when He gave His Son. However, His **offer** is not legally a gift until it is **accepted**.

You recall that *"Jesus came unto his own, but his own did not receive him"* (John 1:11).

Because the Jews living in Jesus' time did not **accept** Him — they did not receive the benefit and blessing of God's offer.

"Those who did receive him were given the right to become the children of God"

(John 1:12).

c. Salvation: A Gift Freely Given. A gift is something which is freely offered. No payment can be involved, or the "gift" becomes a "purchase" — something which has been bought.

God's **gift of salvation** was freely given. He doesn't offer us something we have to buy — He offers us a gift.

*"All have sinned and fallen short of God's glory. But anyone can be justified or made right with God by the **free gift** of his grace... through Jesus Christ"* (Rom 3:23, 24 smf).

Some don't fully understand that God's gift of salvation was freely given. They will try, therefore, to turn the gift into a purchase by earning their way into God's favor.

In Southeast Asia there is a group of people who have taken their efforts to a tragic extreme. They are called "flagellists."

On the "Good Friday" before Easter, they beat their backs bloody with whips. Some go so far as to have nails driven through their hands on a cross.

Why would people do such awful things in the name of Christianity? It is because they do not understand that their salvation is a gift. Eternal life is a gift from God.

There is nothing we can do to earn or work our way into God's favor. We are saved by grace, not by "works" (Eph 2:8,9). If salvation were by works, we could boast in what we do to save ourselves. *"Then what can we boast about doing to earn our salvation? Nothing at all. Why? Because our acquittal is not based on our good deeds; it is based on what Christ has done and our faith in him"* (Rom 3:27 tlb).

Our salvation was "paid in full" at Calvary. When Jesus was dying on that cross. He said, *"It is finished [Gk = teleo — meaning paid in full]"* (John 19:30). Our faith, then, is totally in the work Christ finished (completed) upon the cross. He paid the full price and penalty (death) for our sin by dying for us. We can add nothing to it or take anything from it. What He did for us was complete — paid in full.

Now these people in Southeast Asia are sincere. I talked to a number of them. But they are ignorant. They do not know or understand the greatness of God's salvation.

They are seeking to be saved, but are going about it in their own way. They are indeed very zealous, but zeal and sincerity will not save us. We can be sincere and wrong at the same time — dead wrong.

Paul refers to such religious zeal in his letter to the Romans:

"I know the zeal they [the Jews] have for God, but it is not based on knowledge. They were ignorant and did not know the righteousness that comes from God. They tried to make themselves right with God in their own way. They would not accept God's way of becoming right by believing in Christ" (Rom 10:2-4 smf).

What can we conclude? Are such people sincere? Yes. Zealous? Yes. Wrong? Yes. Lost? Yes — through ignorance!

There is no way we can obtain right standing with God by our own efforts or works. Trying to save ourselves is not God's way to eternal life.

Salvation is a gift given to us — not something we purchase. It cannot be bought by anything we do. The work of salvation has already been done by Christ upon the cross. Our part is to receive the gift which has been so freely given. There is no other way.

Many people have accepted Christ as their Savior and have eternal life. There are those, however, who feel that they must add something to the finished work of Christ

upon the cross. They wouldn't physically beat their bodies, but they often beat themselves in other ways.

They work hard to gain God's approval, but never feel fully accepted; they are always striving to reach greater goals, but forever falling short.

They then harshly whip themselves with feelings of guilt and condemnation. Sincere? Yes. Zealous? Yes. Wrong? Yes. Lost? Yes! They have not lost their salvation, but the joy of their salvation — through ignorance!

d. The Gift Must Be Accepted. Billy Graham (the most famous evangelist in the twentieth century) once shocked many people by saying, "One of the great mysteries of redemption is this: While many bad men will go to Heaven, many good men will go to Hell!"

Why will bad men go to Heaven? Because, like the guilty thief who died on a cross adjacent to Jesus, they accepted God's gift of eternal life.

1) The Thief On The Cross. Do you remember the one thief on the cross next to Jesus? In his dying moments he said, "*Remember me when you come into your kingdom!*" (Luke 23:42).

That simple prayer was pregnant with faith. It contained all the elements of saving faith. What are these?

a) He believed Jesus was King (Lord).

b) He believed the King would have a Kingdom.

c) He asked to be included in that Kingdom.

Jesus responded, "*This day, you will be with me in Paradise*" (Luke 23:43). Jesus accepted the thief because the thief accepted Him as Lord and King.

Why will many good men go to Hell? Because they refused God's gift and trusted in their own "good works."

Jesus put the same truth in this way to the Pharisees — who were very religious, but very lost: "*Truly, I tell you, tax collectors and harlots will enter the kingdom of God before you will*" (Matt 21:31 smf).

Why would such sinners enter the Kingdom and the Pharisees be left out? The Pharisees were very religious men who went to the temple; prayed and paid tithes; had fast days and feast days; and kept the Sabbath (Luke 18:9-14).

Why would Pharisees go to Hell and harlots go to Heaven? Because the harlots received God's gift, and the Pharisees would not.

Instead, they sought to secure their salvation by their own works of righteousness. The Divine Way to eternal life stood right before them, but they chose to take their own path.

Paul said the self-righteous Jews would not "*submit to God's righteousness*" (Rom 10:3). To "submit" refers to accepting God's gift of salvation in Christ Jesus.

For many of us, it is difficult to "submit" to anything. Something within rebels against any kind of authority — even that of a wise and loving God.

Ralph Mahoney (founder of World MAP — the ministry that supplies *The Shepherd's Staff*) once recalled how God dealt in his own life as a proud teenager:

"I am amazed that I could have been filled with so much self-righteous pride. The hardest thing for me to do was submit to the gift of God's righteousness. I guess I wanted to save myself and brag to God how I had done it!

"What is it in the human heart that makes us so proud and stubborn? We would

rather die — trying to make it on our own — than receive God's gracious gift of righteousness. It would have been easier for me to walk across America on my knees, than go thirty feet and humbly kneel at a prayer bench in repentance.

"I am so glad my heavenly Father was patient with me during those early years. I finally came to the end of my road and looked for His way out. Finally, I submitted my life to His will, and received His gift of eternal life. I have never once been sorry for making that choice!"

D. THE FATHER-HEART OF GOD

There is a beautiful story in the Old Testament that clearly illustrates God's Father-heart of love. In this story, God reveals Himself not only as a Father-Creator, but as a Father-Redeemer.

Isaiah the prophet saw this two-fold revelation of God's character. *"But now, the Lord who **created** you, O Jacob, and he who formed you, O Israel, says this: 'Fear not, for I have **redeemed** you. I have called you by your name. You are mine'"* (Isa 43:1 smf).

The God Who creates also redeems. To buy and bring man back into God's purpose cost the Father the life of His only Son. His life was given, as a sacrificial lamb, to buy us back — to redeem us.

1. Abraham And Isaac: A Prophetic Picture Of Redeeming Love

"Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham. He said to him, 'Abraham!' And he replied, 'Here I am.' And God said, 'Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah. You are to offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains which I shall show you.'

"So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey. He took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son. Then he split the wood for the offering and went to the place which God had told him. "On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place afar off. Then Abraham said to his young men, 'Stay here with the donkey. The lad and I will go yonder and worship and return again to you.' So Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on the back of Isaac his son. He took the fire in his own hand, and the knife, and the two of them went on together.

"Then Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, 'My father!' And he said, 'Here I am, my son.' And Isaac said, 'Look, the fire and the wood are here, but where is the burnt offering?'" (Gen 22:1-7 smf).

At this point in our story, we might wonder why God would ask a man to offer up his only son as a sacrifice. Isaac, which means "laughter," was a miracle baby when he was born. Both Abraham and Sarah were well beyond the age of having children when God gave them Isaac.

However, God had promised Abraham a son, and He had kept His word. Abraham had waited twenty-five years for that promise and was overjoyed when Isaac was born. Now, after some twenty years or so, God tells Abraham to offer up his only son as a sacrifice. Would God really do such a thing, and if so, why?

There is a divine purpose for this story being in the Bible. The purpose is to reveal an important truth. The story is a prophetic picture of God's plan of redemption. He wants us to clearly understand the roles which the Father and the Son must play in obtaining our salvation.

a. Isaac — The Obedient Son. We know that Isaac was an obedient son. As such,

he is a type of the Lord Jesus.

The wood for the burnt offering was laid upon Isaac's back, as they climbed the mountain. Two thousand years later, God's only Son will carry a wooden cross upon His back as another mountain is climbed — Mount Calvary!

We sometimes overlook the fact that Abraham is a type of God the Father. One can only wonder at the pain that must have been in his heart as he carried in his hand the knife and bore the fire for the sacrifice.

God had promised Abraham that through Isaac would come a family as large in number as the stars in the sky. How could such a promise be fulfilled if Isaac should die — unless there was the hope of a resurrection? But Abraham in fact was willing to offer Isaac as a sacrifice because he believed God would raise him from the dead (Heb 11:17-19).

b. The Two Of Them Together. There is a very tender touch to our story when we read *"and the two of them went on together."* Side by side they walked in silence; a loving father with his son, and a loving son with his father.

Father Abraham moves with the steady steps of faith and obedience, but there is a great ache in his heart. It is softened only by the hope which he has in God's promise.

Finally the quiet is broken by a question from the lips of Isaac:

"Where is the lamb?"

Hidden in the answer is a beautiful prophetic picture of God's great redeeming love:

"And Abraham said, 'God will provide himself [as] a lamb for a burnt offering.' So again the two went on together" (Gen 22:8 smf).

The word "together" appears the second time in the record, and is filled with great meaning. It speaks of their love for one another; it also speaks of their faith and obedience to God.

Abraham must have told Isaac of God's will for his death — and God's promise for his life. Both of them are willing to submit to the word of the Lord. Isaac was a strong young man, and easily could have resisted his elderly father.

What a prophetic revelation of God's love this is: a father willing to sacrifice his beloved son — a son willing to submit to that sacrifice. We can but watch in silent amazement.

We know the ending to our story, of course. At the last moment God did provide a sacrifice in the form of a ram which was caught in a nearby bush. Isaac's life was spared, and God renewed His promise to Abraham. Through Isaac would come a people who were destined to bless all the nations of the earth.

2. Two Thousand Years Later: The Same Story

Two thousand years later, we see the same story unfold. Only this time there is no last-minute rescue of the One Who submits His life for sacrifice.

a. Jesus — The Beloved Son. We are speaking of God's Son Who gave Himself as the "Lamb of God." Abraham and Isaac are a beautiful type of the Father-Son relationship within the Godhead.

The first time an important word or concept appears in Scripture, it sets a pattern for its further usage. The setting in which that word is found, therefore, carries very special meaning.

With this in mind, it is of note that the first time the word "love" appears in the

Bible, it is in reference to the love of a father for a son. More specifically, it was the love of Abraham for Isaac.

"Take... your son, Isaac, whom you love..." (Gen 22:2).

The word "love" in the New Testament first occurs in the synoptic Gospels in this notable phrase: *"You are my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased!"* (Matt 3:17; Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22 smf). If Abraham loved his only son, how much more did God love His one and only Son!

John's Gospel is the Gospel of God's love. What is the first reference to God's great love in this special Book? When we see what it is, we are moved to much wonder and humble amazement:

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not die, but have everlasting life!" (John 3:16 smf).

b. They "Walked Together". Yes, the Father has ever loved His Son; from all eternity past He has loved Him (John 17:24). Indeed, how much they loved One Another! But we are included in that love, too. Jesus tells us that the Father loves us as He loves His Own Son (John 17:23).

It was from before the foundation of the world that the Lamb of God was slain (Rev 13:8).

It is almost beyond our understanding, but the Father and the Son planned in love for our redemption before the world was even created. They "walked together" in that love — for you and me.

More than that, they "worked it out together" on the cross.

Many of us have had the false idea that the Father was strangely apart from His Own Son during that horrible hour in which He was "forsaken." It is true, a Holy God cannot look upon sin. And Christ took upon Himself our sin there upon the cross.

"The Father made his own Son — who knew no sin — to become sin for us, that in him we might become right before God" (2Cor 5:21 smf).

But that does not mean the Father felt any less pain than did the Son in His agony upon the cross.

When the clean, pure, sinless Son of God took upon Himself our sin, something terrible happened. For the first time in all eternity past, His fellowship with the Father was broken!

Sin separates, *"...your iniquities have separated you from your God"* (Isa 59:2).

Spiritual death is separation from God. As the Son of Man, He paid in full the penalty for our sin — alone upon a cross.

But the Father felt the pain of that penalty in full measure as well. When fellowship is broken, both parties share in the awful hurt. They walked that painful road together — to the end.

Paul is reaching into the meaning of this awful — yet wonderful — truth in these words to the Corinthian church:

"God the Father was personally present in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. No longer would he count men's sins against them" (2Cor 5:19 smf).

This is a part of the mystery of the Holy Trinity. Jesus said, *"I am in the Father and the Father is in me"* (John 14:10,11).

When Jesus was born of the virgin, we are told in Matthew 1:23 that *"they shall call his name 'Emanuel' — which means — 'God with us.'"* John the Baptist, upon seeing

Jesus, declared: "*Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!*" (John 1:29).

c. "I Will Die In Their Place". We recall that Abraham told Isaac, "*My son, God will provide **himself** [as] a lamb for a burnt sacrifice*" (Gen 22:8). God came down from Heaven in Christ, robed in humanity, and provided **Himself** as "*...the lamb of God who would bear the sins of the world.*"

These prophetic words present a beautiful picture of God's personal love for us. God provided "Himself as a sacrificial lamb for our sin. He made Himself responsible for our salvation.

A holy and righteous God declared, "*The soul who sins shall die*" (Eze 18:4). And with that, the Judge of the entire earth doomed the whole human race to death. It was the only thing that justice could do.

However, the mighty Creator of the universe and the Judge of all mankind is also a Father-Redeemer. He looks with love and mercy upon a sinful world and makes a most wonderful — yet terrible — decision:

"I will die in their place. I will pay the penalty that justice demands — that they might live. I love them that much!"

And that is what God did. He was in Christ Jesus reconciling the world unto Himself (2Cor 5:19). In His Son, He gathered up the whole human race — and died on a cross. Now this passage from Paul's letter to the Romans becomes alive with much meaning:

"Through one man's [Adam's] sin, the penalty of death came upon all men.

"In the same way, through one Man's [Christ's] righteous act, the free gift of life came to all men. They were made right with God in him.

"By one man's [Adam's] disobedience many were made sinners. But by one Man's [Christ's] obedience, many will be made righteous...

"Sin once ruled through death. Now grace rules by making us righteous in Jesus Christ our Lord. Therefore, we shall live forever" (Rom 5:18,19,21 smf).

All praise be to our God for His love, grace and mercy in Christ Jesus!

E. TODAY IS THE DAY OF SALVATION

Now this does not mean that all men are saved without personally coming to Christ for His gift of salvation. We recall that a gift is not a gift until it has been accepted.

We are told in Romans 5:17 that we must personally "receive" God's gracious gift of life in Christ Jesus. If it isn't received, it doesn't do us any good. The offer has already been made, but it must be accepted. Only those who receive the Lord Jesus as their Savior will enjoy everlasting life.

"Please listen! NOW is the right time. Behold, today is the day of salvation" (2Cor 6:2 smf). God calls you today to do only one thing: Receive His Son as your Savior. Nothing else really counts.

Charles Wesley wrote the beautiful hymn, "Nothing in my hand I bring, only to Thy cross I cling." And he said it all.

Andrew Murray put it this way: "Every human being should put all of their sins in one pile, and all of their good works in another. Then they should flee from them both to Jesus!"

"Yes, the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus

Christ our Lord...

"He came unto his own, but they received him not. Yet, as many as did receive him —and believe on his name —to them he gave the right to become the children of God" (Rom 6:23; John 1:11,12).

Hallelujah, what a Savior! What A GREAT SALVATION we have — in Him!

1. A Salvation Prayer

"Dear Lord Jesus, I receive You as my Lord and Savior. I open the door of my heart to You, and ask You to come in and live in me. I believe in my heart that God raised You from the dead. I am sorry for my sins and truly repent. By Your help and by Your Spirit, I will seek to live a life which is pleasing to You. AMEN. "

"If you believe in your heart that God raised Jesus from the dead, and if you say with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, then you will be saved" (Rom 10:9 smf).

Now go tell someone, "I have just received Jesus as my Lord and Savior!"

F. CONCLUSION

In Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4, we have briefly studied the biblical foundations of the Church. We have seen how God's plan was revealed, ruined and gloriously restored. In Chapter 5, we are ready to consider the role and function of the leaders in the Church.

PART 2: THE LEADERS OF THE CHURCH

Chapter 5

The Leader's Character: Spiritual Fruit

Introduction

What is the character of Christ really like? What is the nature of His life? We want to answer these questions in this Chapter. The "person" of Christ is now at the right hand of the Father in Heaven. But by His Spirit, His "presence" can be in you and in me — and in every believer throughout the world.

"You are no longer controlled by the flesh [old sin-nature]. The Holy Spirit dwells [lives] within you" (Rom 8:9 smf).

A little baby receives from its parents the nature and character of the family. That nature will develop as the child continues to grow.

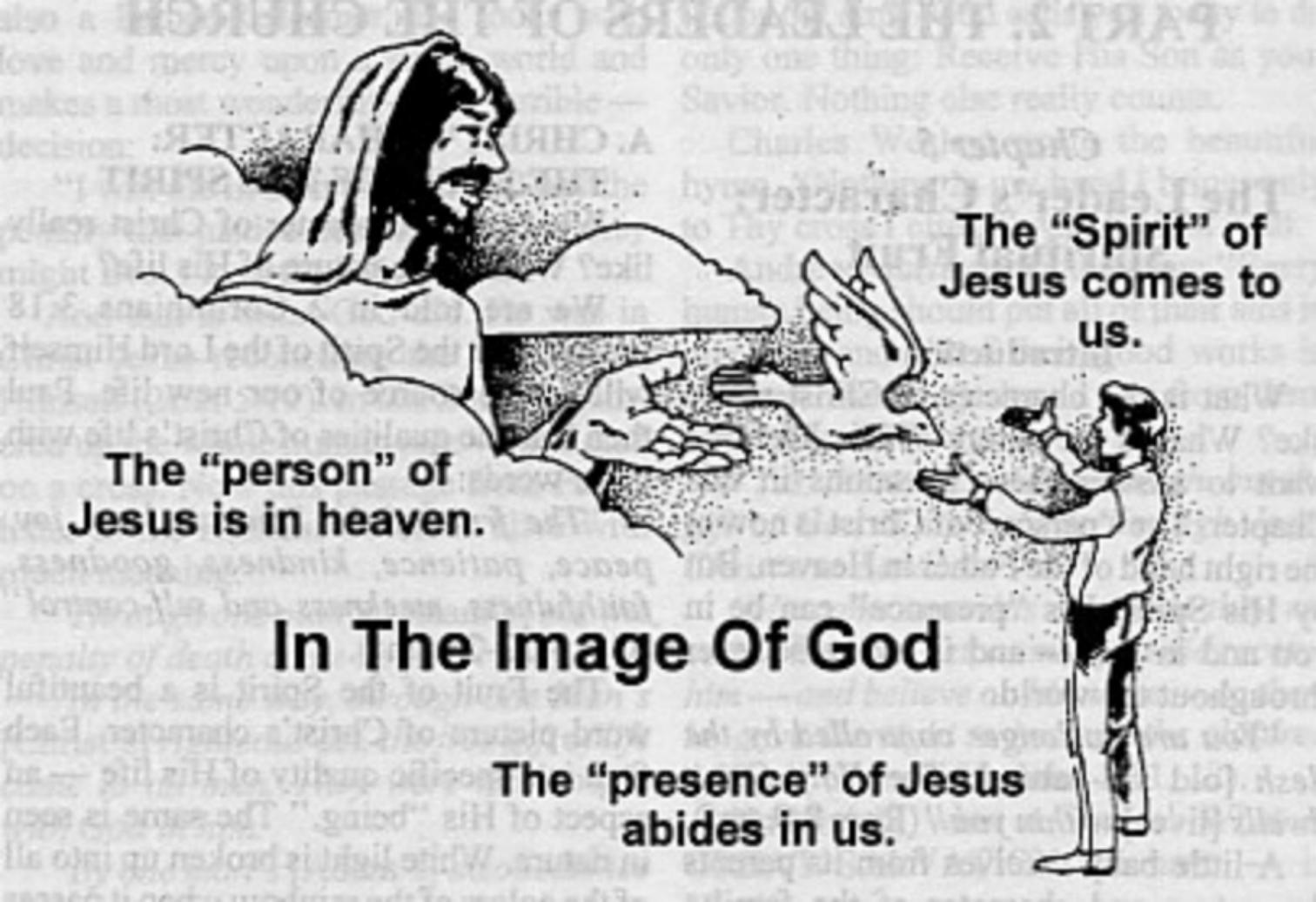
Many physical traits soon appear: eye, skin and hair color. Bone size and height take a longer time to develop; but the "image" of the family is readily seen. Sometimes we say, "that child is truly the 'picture' of its parents."

The same is true in the family of God. When we were born into God's family, we received Christ's life — and His nature. We too are to develop into His image. The nature and character of His life is to grow in us as we grow in Him.

This is our divine destiny —to become like Jesus! This glorious hope is plainly stated in Scripture:

"Because our faces are not covered, we can reflect — like mirrors — the glory of the Lord. We are being changed into his image [likeness] from glory to more glory. This change comes from the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor 3:18 smf).

Yes, we are to become like Jesus — in nature, word and deed.



The "person" of
Jesus is in heaven.

The "Spirit" of
Jesus comes to
us.

In The Image Of God

The "presence" of Jesus
abides in us.

A. CHRIST'S CHARACTER: THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

What is the character of Christ really like? What is the nature of His life?

We are told in 2 Corinthians 3:18 (above) that the Spirit of the Lord Himself will be the source of our new life. Paul then lists the qualities of Christ's life with these words:

"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness and self-control" (Gal 5:22-23 smf).

The Fruit of the Spirit is a beautiful word-picture of Christ's character. Each fruit is a specific quality of His life — an aspect of His "being." The same is seen in nature. White light is broken up into all of the colors of the rainbow when it passes through a glass prism. The Fruit of the Spirit is the rainbow colors of Christ's life.

The Fruit of the Spirit speaks of the beautiful aspects of Christ's life. We might therefore outline the Fruit of the Spirit as follows:

1. Inward Blessings

- a. Love** — being lovely within
- b. Joy** — being joyful within
- c. Peace** — being peaceful within

2. Outward Blessings

- a. Patience** — patient with others
- b. Kindness** — kind to others
- c. Goodness** — good to others

3. Upward Blessings

- a. Faithfulness** — faithful to God
- b. Meekness** — humble before God
- c. Self-control** — controlled by God

One readily sees that the "blessings" above easily cross over one another. If we are lovely within, we will be loving to others and to the Lord as well. It does show, however, how the Fruit of the Spirit reaches out in all directions to bring great blessing. The above list includes many of the important traits of Christ's life, but there are others as well. Paul gives these nine fruits as examples for us to study.

B. KEYS TO A FRUITFUL LIFE

1. Being Versus Feeling

It is important for us to see that the Fruit of the Spirit tells us what Christ "is." These are qualities of His "being."

Christ is not only lovely; He **is** love. He is not only joyful; He **is** joy. He is not only peaceful; He **is** peace. When we have Christ within, we have the love, joy and peace that Christ **is**. Therefore, as a result of what we have and are in Him, we too can be lovely, joyful and peaceful.

Let us take the fruit of joy as an example.

We have joy whether we feel like it or not, because we have Christ within. He said He would never leave us or forsake us — nor will His joy. The feeling or emotion of joy follows our faith in that fact. It is the emotional response to the spiritual reality. The joy of the Lord **is** the Lord!

The fruit of joy can be expressed in different ways. Sometimes it can be very bright, loud and lively. People may sing, shout, dance and laugh:

"You have turned my mourning [grief] into dancing. You have changed my clothes

of sadness to those of joy. My heart will sing to you and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give thanks to you for ever” (Ps 30:11,12 smf).

At other times, the joy of the Lord may run as a strong, quiet river. It can even lead into the fruit of peace, as one color in the rainbow blends into the next.

2. Difficulties Bring Forth The Finest Fruit

This brings us to another truth about the Fruit of the Spirit. It grows best from the difficult ground of our daily lives.

We face many things every day that are opposed to our life in Christ. Instead of love, we face hatred and hostility. Instead of joy, we meet sadness, sorrow and grief. Instead of peace, we find pressure, tension, discord and strife. These dark forces work their way into the people, places and events of our earthly affairs.

Sometimes we wish we could run away and escape from it all. Usually we can't; and even if we could, it might not bring the relief we want. This would be very true if part of the problem is a result of our own attitudes and actions.

God does have an answer, however. Most of our problems — within or without — are caused by forces which oppose the Fruit of the Spirit. We can call these forces the fruit of the "flesh" — our old sin-nature.

<u>Fruit of Spirit</u>	<u>FRUIT OF THE FLESH</u>
Love:	Hatred, Selfishness, Jealousy, Resentment
Joy:	Sadness, Grief, Depression, Self-pity
Peace:	Worry, Fear, Strife, Conflict, Tension
Patience:	Impatient, Hasty, Short-tempered
Kindness:	Cruel, Rude, Harsh, Pushy, Heavy-handed
Goodness:	Evil, Wicked, Immoral, Stingy, Greedy
Faithfulness:	Careless, Unreliable, Dishonest, Disloyal
Meekness:	Proud, Dogmatic, Judgmental
Self-Control:	Unruly, Undisciplined, Messy

Jesus always produces the Fruit of "life" —Fruit of the Spirit. Satan always produces the fruit of "death" — fruit of the flesh. We choose whom we will yield ourselves to.

In times of pressure, we are often tempted to react in line with our old sin-nature. If we do, we are yielding to the wrong influence. It will only bring a cloud of darkness and death over us – and others. Moreover, the more we yield to the flesh, the worse we get.

In time, these deadly traits get fixed into our character. When this happens, we look and act more like the devil than like the Lord.

The saddest picture in the world is that of a defeated Christian. He has the life of Christ within, but God's Spirit is greatly grieved. As a result, the glory of the Lord no longer shines upon his face; only shadows can be seen.

The story can be different — very different!

Times of trouble can also be times of great growth in Christ. If we look to the life and power of His Spirit within, we can become strong in our areas of weakness.

Light always overcomes darkness. The dark can never put out the light. One candle can drive out the darkness of an entire room.

TREE OF LIFE



FRUIT OF THE FLESH



The same is true in the realm of the Spirit. The light of God's love can always drive away the dark shadows of fear, anger and grief. In fact, the finest Fruit of God's Spirit can develop in the most difficult times. From the ground of our weakness, He perfects His strength. His love grows best when we are in an unlovely setting.

Our natural reaction in bad times is to fight back in anger or fear. The Holy Spirit, however, seeks to overcome evil with good.

As we submit to His Spirit, God's love grows strong within our lives. We become better Christians and more like Jesus in our character. His glory rests upon our lives, and we become a blessing — to God, others and even ourselves!

a. Paul's "Thorn". This truth about building Christian character is seen in the life of the Apostle Paul. He had been given a "thorn in the flesh" to keep him humble. Whatever it was, it brought him much pain and difficulty.

Three times he asked the Lord to remove it, but was refused each time.

Why would God allow something so painful to be a part of Paul's life and ministry? Why didn't He remove it when Paul prayed? The answer is simple: God had something better in mind — something upon which Paul's future ministry could securely rest. Paul sets this truth before us in these words:

"Then God said to me, 'My grace will be more than enough. My strength will be made perfect in your weakness.'

"Therefore, I will gladly glory in my weakness. It is then that Christ's power rests mightily upon me... For it is when I am weak that he makes me strong!" (2 Cor 12:9,10 smf).

The principle of growing fine fruit is clearly seen. It is best grown from the ground of "contrary conditions" — people and places which are opposed to the Fruit of the Spirit.

It was from the ground of Paul's "weakness" that the fruit of God's "strength" could develop.

It is from the ground of others' hatred of us, our sorrow and turmoil that the fresh, fine fruit of love, joy and peace can come.

b. Our Good/His Glory. Yes, God allows a certain amount of pain, suffering and trouble to reach our lives. But He has promised that none of it will be wasted. It will all be worked together for our good and His glory.

That "good" and that "glory" is the character of Christ. Our ministry to Him, to the Church and to the world truly requires the Fruit of the Spirit in our lives.

Lack of Christian character is the main reason for failure in the ministry of the Church. A leader may be "called," highly "gifted" and even "successful" in his ministry — for a time. But it will not last long apart from Christian character.

The Fruit of the Spirit is the foundation for a strong, steady, solid ministry for God. It was true for the Apostle Paul; it is true for us today!

"We can rejoice, therefore, when we run into problems and trials. We know they are good for us — they help us to learn to be patient. And patience develops strength of character in us. In this way we learn to trust God more and more.

"Finally, our hope and faith become strong and steady. Then we are able to hold our heads high no matter what happens. We know that all is well, and that God dearly loves us. We feel his warm love within because God has filled our hearts with his Holy Spirit" (Rom 5:3-5 tlb,smf).

Let the Fruit of the Spirit grow on your branch. If you do, you too will be fruitful in ministry to the Lord, to others and to the world.

Chapter 6

The Leader's Power I: Baptism In The Holy Spirit

A. JESUS: THE BAPTIZER IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

It is one thing to have the Holy Spirit, but something else for Him to have us — to fill our whole being. We need not only the "life" of Christ within, but the "power" to express that life without. We need to be "*filled and flowing*" with both the life and power of God.

It is possible to have a life relationship with Jesus as our "Savior" and still be very weak Christians. We also need to know the Lord Jesus as the mighty "Baptizer" in the Holy Spirit. This is our source of power to be living witnesses for the Lord.

John the Baptist "baptized" his converts in the waters of the Jordan River. The word "baptize" means **to place into**. John's converts were placed into the River Jordan. Their entire bodies were covered (flooded) by the water. John uses this as a picture of being baptized in the Holy Spirit by Jesus: "*Truly I baptize you in water. But someone [Jesus] is coming soon who is more powerful than I... And he will baptize you in the Holy Spirit and fire*" (Luke 3:16 smf).

Jesus also spoke of this mighty Baptism in the Holy Spirit just before He returned to Heaven. He told His disciples they needed the full power of God's Spirit in their lives to be His witnesses in the world:

"I am going to send the promise of my Father [the Holy Spirit] upon you. So wait in Jerusalem until you are clothed [covered] with power from heaven...."

"For John baptized in water, but you will soon be baptized in the Holy Spirit... And you will receive power after the Holy Spirit has come upon you. Then you will be my witnesses..." (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4,5,8 smf).

And Jesus truly kept His word by sending the promise of the Father — for it happened on the Day of Pentecost just as He said:

"And when the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. All at once from heaven there was a sound like a mighty rushing wind.... And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak in tongues or languages they had not learned" (Acts 2:1,2,4 smf).

There were many Jews in Jerusalem at that feast of Pentecost. They soon formed a crowd which watched and listened in great wonder. Peter then explained to them what had happened. The Holy Spirit had been poured out just as foretold by the prophet Joel. Joel had predicted that God would do this in the last days.

(Editor's note: The "last days" in this context means the time beginning with Jesus' ascension to Heaven and ending with His Second Coming back to earth.)

Moreover, it was because Jesus (Whom the Romans and Jews had crucified) had risen from the dead and been taken up to Heaven. Then He poured the Spirit out on the praying disciples in the Upper Room.

Peter spoke to the assembled multitudes in the power of that Spirit. As a result, the Jews were struck with fear and guilt, and asked what they should do. Peter answered with these important words: "**Repent, and be baptized in the name of Jesus that your sins**

might be forgiven. Then you will **receive** the gift of the Holy Spirit. This promise is **for you and your children. It is for all people everywhere** whom God will call in these last days" (Acts 2:38-39 smf).

B. THREE-POINT PATTERN FOR SPIRITUAL LIFE AND POWER

In Peter's response in Acts 2:38-39, we find an important three-point pattern for spiritual life and power. It is one which was followed by the early Church throughout the Book of Acts. We can outline this pattern by using the words "repent," "be baptized" and "receive" as subtopics:

1. REPENT (A sermon outline on repentance)

a. Turn From Sin And Submit To God. *"Repent! Change your heart and turn to God. He will wash your sins away and refresh you in the Spirit of the Lord"* (Acts 3:19 smf).

b. Believe In Jesus As The Savior. *"... Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shall be saved, and thy house"* (Acts 16:31).

c. His Spirit Of Life Will Come In. *"The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God"* (Rom 8:16).

"Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of His Spirit" (I Jn 4:13).

d. You Are Reborn Into God's Family. *"The Spirit we have makes us children of God"* (Rom 8:15 smf). *"You are all children of God by faith in Christ Jesus... and therefore, clothed with him "* (Gal 3:26,27 smf).

e. And Baptized Into Christ's Body. *"For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body — whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free — and we were all given the one Spirit to drink"* (I Cor 12:13).

f. His Spirit Will Produce Fruit In Us. *"He that lives in me — and I in him — will bring forth much fruit.... And the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace..."* (John 15:5; Gal 5:22-23 smf).

2. BE BAPTIZED (A sermon outline on water baptism)

a. Be Baptized In Water. *"Repent, and be baptized in the name of Jesus that your sins might be forgiven..."* (Acts 2:38-39 smf). *"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved..."* (Mark 16:16).

b. Do It In Faith And Obedience. *"Noah's [faith and] obedience in building an ark and being saved in water is a picture of our salvation. And this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you..."* (I Pet 3:20, 21; see Hebrews 11:7 smf).

c. Do It As A Witness Of Your Faith. *"Noah's obedience in building an ark and being saved in water is a picture of our salvation.*

*"And this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you — **and shows** [publicly] that we too have been saved from death — **by Christ's resurrection...**"* (I Pet 3:20, 21 smf).

d. Receive Cleansing From Sin When You Are Baptized. *"In water baptism, we show that we too have been saved from death... It is not because our bodies are being washed clean by water. It is because we are turning to God and asking him to cleanse our hearts from sin "* (1 Pet 3:20,21 smf).

"...through his death, the power of your sinful nature was shattered. Your old sin-loving nature was buried with him by baptism..." (Rom 6:3,4 tlb).

e. Accept Baptism As A Resurrection To New Life. "...when God the Father, with glorious power, brought him back to life again, you were given his wonderful new life to enjoy. For you have become a part of him... and now you share his new life and shall rise as he did" (Rom 6:4,5 tlb).

"In baptism you were not only buried with him, but also raised to new life with him. This is so because you believed in the power of God who raised him from the dead" (Col 2:12 smf).

f. See It As Preceding Holy Spirit Baptism. "I [John] baptize you in water, but he [Jesus] will baptize you in the Holy Spirit" (Mark 1:8 smf).

3. RECEIVE (A sermon outline on receiving the Spirit)

a. Receive The Father's Promise. "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father... John baptized in water, but you will be baptized in the Holy Spirit in a few days... "

b. Be Filled With The Holy Spirit. "And when the day of Pentecost finally came.... They were all filled with the Holy Spirit... an outpouring from above" (Acts 2:1,4,33 smf).

c. Be Baptized In The Spirit By Jesus. "...he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, 'Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth in the Holy Ghost'" (John 1:33).

d. Receive The Power Of God's Spirit. "You will receive power after the Holy Spirit comes upon you..." (Acts 1:4,5,8 smf).

e. Witness To The World. "You will receive power after the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses..." (Acts 1:8 smf).

f. Excel In The Spiritual Gifts. "Eagerly desire spiritual gifts.... But seek to excel [do well] in them that you may build up the church — in love" (I Cor 14:1,12 smf).

C. A THREE-FOLD BAPTISM

It is interesting to note that this three-point pattern involves a "three-fold" baptism. Each "baptism" is related to the others. They all play an important role in God's great plan of salvation.

They form the foundation for our redemption in Christ Jesus. They find their meaning in Jesus as our Savior and Baptizer. It is in Christ — and by His Spirit — that we receive life-giving power (the ability to impart salvation and healing and help to others).

The Fruit and Gifts of His Spirit flow into us as we pursue a loving relationship with Christ.

1. Three Things In Common

All three "baptisms" have three things in common:

a. The Candidate. This is the new convert or believer who is ready for baptism.

b. The Baptizer. This is the person who will baptize the new believer.

c. The Medium. This is the element into which the believer is being baptized.

As we shall see, the BAPTIZER and the MEDIUM are different for all three baptisms.

2. The Three-Fold Baptism And Salvation

The three baptisms are related to the three-point pattern for salvation as follows:

a. REPENT (Baptism Into Christ's Body). "We were all baptized into one Body

by one Spirit. We all share together in that same Spirit" (I Cor 12:13 smf).

When we repent and turn to Christ as our Savior, we are raised up from our condition of spiritual death and receive His transforming life.

By His Spirit, we are baptized (placed) into His Body. Therefore we become members of the Body of Christ, Who is our Head.

The Holy Spirit is the BAPTIZER. The Body of Christ is what we are placed into. We call this the MEDIUM — that which the baptism placed us into.

b. BE BAPTIZED (Water Baptism). *"Therefore, go and teach all peoples everywhere. And baptize them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit" (Matt 28:19 smf).*

Jesus ordered His disciples to baptize new believers in water. The disciple is the BAPTIZER. The water is the MEDIUM — that which they are placed into.

e. RECEIVE (Spirit Baptism). *"I [John] have baptized you in water, but he [Jesus] will baptize you in the Holy Spirit" (Mark 1:8 smf).*

This is the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. Jesus is the BAPTIZER. The Holy Spirit is the MEDIUM — that which we are placed into.

3. The Three-Point Pattern In The Book Of Acts

The pattern for salvation outlined above can be followed in the ministry of the apostles as recorded in the Book of Acts:

a. Philip In Samaria. *"Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ.... When they **believed** [repented]... they were **baptized** in water.... Peter and John then came and prayed for them that they might **receive** the Holy Spirit, for he had not yet fallen on any of them. So they laid hands on them, and they all received the Holy Spirit" (Acts 8:5,12,14-17smf).*

Note the order:

1) Repentance

2) Baptism in Water

3) Baptism in the Holy Spirit.

b. Paul In Ephesus. *"While in Ephesus, Paul found some disciples or followers of John the Baptist. He asked them, 'Did you **receive** the Holy Spirit when you **believed**?' And they replied, 'We have never even heard of the Holy Spirit.'"*

"Paul then asked, 'What kind of baptism did you have?' They said, 'It was the baptism which John taught.'

"Paul replied, 'John's baptism in water was for repentance — changed hearts and lives. John then told the people to believe on someone who would come after him.

*"That someone is Christ Jesus.' When they heard this, they were **baptized** in the name of Jesus. Then Paul laid hands on them, and the Holy Spirit came on them. And they all spoke in tongues and prophesied" (Acts 19:1-7 smf).*

Note the order:

1) Repentance

2) Baptism in Water

3) Baptism in the Holy Spirit.

There are other places in Acts where this pattern can be found (see Acts 8:20-39; 9:17-18; 10:35-38,44-48; 11:1-4,15-18).

4. God's Divine Purpose

Behind divine pattern is divine purpose. God's purpose is that we be set or rooted

in the life and power of His Spirit. This is the basis for our work and witness in the Body of Christ. It is as important in the life of the Church today as it was then. Only the power of God's Spirit can fulfill God's divine purpose!

The following teaching will help us to move into a deeper experience with God to fulfill His purpose.

There may be some readers who wish to personally receive the power of Pentecost in their own lives. By following the outline below, you should be able to experience your own Baptism in the Holy Spirit.

D. THE PATHWAY TO POWER WITH GOD

1. The Promised Gift Of The Father

a. A Personal Word. God has promised to baptize every Christian in the power of His Holy Spirit. The purpose of this baptism is to enable each believer to share the life and love of Jesus with others. He is not only our Savior, but also our mighty Baptizer.

b. Scripture Verses. *"And John said to them all. Truly, I baptize you in water. However, there is one far greater than I who is coming soon. ...And he [Jesus] shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit and with fire"* (Luke 3:16 smf).

*"Before going back to heaven... Jesus told his disciples not to leave Jerusalem. They were to wait for **the promise of the Father** which Jesus had told them about. 'John the Baptist baptized in water, but in a few days you will be **baptized** in the Holy Spirit'"* (Acts 1:4-5 smf).

*"You will receive **power** after the Holy Spirit has come upon you. And you will be my witnesses — and speak about me — in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth "* (Acts 1:8 smf).

c. Personal Question. How can I have this baptism of power by Jesus in the Holy Spirit? The pathway to power with God is found in the Scriptures. It involves three simple steps which are outlined next.

2. Ask In Humility

a. A Personal Word. The heavenly Father knows the need and desire of your heart. The power of the Holy Spirit in His fullness is His gift to you. Jesus paid the price for that wonderful gift upon the cross. All you must do is ask God for His gift and submit to Jesus as your Baptizer.

b. Scripture Verses. *"Whatever you ask in my name, I will do it for you. In this way the power and glory of the Father will be seen in the Son..."*

"Yes, I will ask the Father and he will give you another Helper — the Holy Spirit. He will be with you forever as the Spirit of truth" (John 14:13,16,17 smf).

*"So I say to you, **ask** and God will give it to you... Truly, if a person keeps **asking**, he will receive... If a son were to **ask** an earthly father for bread...fish...or an egg, would he receive a stone...snake... or a scorpion?"*

*"No, of course not! Even bad fathers know how to give good gifts to their children. Surely, therefore, the heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit to those who **ask** him!"* (Luke 11:9,11-13 smf).

e. Personal Prayer. *"Heavenly Father, I am coming to You as Your child. And I humbly ask that I might be filled with the power of Your Holy Spirit.*

"Dear Lord Jesus, baptize me right now into Your mighty Spirit of power, love and praise.

"Blessed Holy Spirit, I invite You to become my ever-present Helper and inner source of power. I want my life to be a daily witness of Christ's love and truth. "

3. Receive In Faith

a. A Personal Word. Jesus said that if you would ask, you would receive. As soon as you come in faith to Him as your Baptizer, He will begin baptizing you in the Holy Spirit.

You will be filled from within and flooded from without. The Holy Spirit Himself will bring a warm inner sense of His presence. When we release our faith, we will feel God's peace, rest, power and joy within.

b. Scripture Verses. *"Christ has paid the penalty which the law demands for our sin... that we might **receive** the promise of the Spirit by **faith**" (Gal 3:13,14 smf).*

"In the last day of the great feast, Jesus stood and cried out with a loud voice, 'If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink.'

*"'Everyone who **believes** in me— as the Scriptures say — will have rivers of living water flowing from his inner being.' He was speaking of the Holy Spirit which every **believer** should **receive**" (John 7:37-39 smf).*

c. Personal Prayer. *"Heavenly Father, thank You for the gift of Your Holy Spirit in His fullness. I receive Him now in childlike faith.*

"Lord Jesus, I thank You for baptizing me into the mighty river of Your Holy Spirit. Cause the power of Your Spirit to flow into me, to work in me and witness through me.

"Blessed Spirit of God, thank You for filling me right now with the love, joy, peace and power of Jesus."

4. Express Praise

a. A Personal Word. Faith always responds to the presence of the Holy Spirit. Your first response to the infilling of God's Spirit should be the overflow of praise. As seen in Scripture, it can take the form of divinely-directed prayer or song. This will be in a tongue or language of the Spirit.

Such speech or song is made up of sounds and syllables not understood by the mind. It is, however, pleasing to God and strengthens you spiritually. It is a divine sign of God's power in your life — for your good and His glory!

b. Scripture Verses. *"The mouth **speaks** from the fullness of the heart. A good man brings forth good things from the good treasure of his heart" (Matt 12:34-35 smf).*

*"They were all filled with the Holy Spirit. **Then they began to speak** in unknown tongues or languages as the Spirit gave them the words to say" (Acts 2:4 smf).*

*"While Peter was speaking, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard his words. And they... were amazed... because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out on those who were not Jews. But it was so, for they heard them **speak** with tongues and glorify God" (Acts 10:44-46 smf).*

*"When Paul laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them. And they **spoke** with tongues and prophesied" (Acts 19:6 smf).*

*"He that **speaks** in an unknown tongue does not **speak** to men, but to God. No one understands what he is saying.*

*"However, in the Spirit he is **speaking** divine truth. Whoever **speaks** in an unknown tongue builds himself up in the Lord..."*

*"Therefore, what should I do? I will **pray** in the Spirit [tongues] and also the*

*interpretation. I will **sing** with the Spirit [tongues] and also sing the interpretation" (I Cor 14:2,4,15 smf).*

*"Therefore, let us continue to offer the sacrifice of **praise** — the fruit of our lips — always giving **thanks** to his name" (Heb 13:15).*

c. Personal Prayer. *"Heavenly Father, I now release my faith and actively respond to the presence of Your Holy Spirit. He is faithfully filling me with praise, worship and thanksgiving — this very moment.*

"Dear Lord Jesus, receive my worship. I now lift my voice in divinely-directed speech or song. I will respond to the Holy Spirit within by speaking or singing forth sounds and syllables of praise and worship.

"Holy Spirit of God, I now submit my most unruly member — my tongue — to Your control. I know You will perfect not only my prayer, but my whole being — that I might forever live to the praise of His glory!"

d. Personal Response. At this point, stop praying in your native language. Begin speaking or singing forth in tongues — even if it is only a few little sounds or syllables at first. Do not stop, for the Holy Spirit is faithful. You will not receive a "stone" when you have asked for "bread."

The more you pray or sing in your new language of the Spirit, the more easily it will flow.

Do not doubt the promise of your Father, but give Him praise and glory — in the Name of Jesus — and in the power of His Spirit!

If at first you do not find a full release in your new spiritual language, do not be discouraged or feel let down.

Keep on speaking and singing His praises, for He is faithful. Moreover, our praise comes before Him as sweet incense. Our worship in the Spirit is a sacrifice which is pleasing in His sight. In this we find our freedom in His Spirit.

Do not doubt God's inner work in your life. Expect the Holy Spirit to move in new ways by His Gifts through you. As you respond to God's Spirit in faith and obedience, you will see more and more of God's power at work in your life.

In Chapter 7, we will deal with the Gifts of the Spirit and how you can receive them. Be prayerfully expecting new things in your life and ministry, as the Holy Spirit wants to give you new power and authority to do the work of the ministry.

Remember, your ministry as a church leader is to equip your members to minister to the Lord, to one another and to the world.

Chapter 7

The Leader's Power II: Gifts Of The Spirit

Introduction

Receiving the Gifts of the Spirit is a natural result of being baptized in the Spirit. When believers were baptized in the Spirit in early Church (New Testament Church) times, they spoke with other languages as the Spirit gave them the words to say (Acts 2:4).

Thus they began their walk with the Lord with the Gift of Tongues [languages] (I Cor 12:10). We can expect the same thing to happen to us when we receive our Baptism in the Spirit (see Acts 2:1-6; 10:44-46; 19:1-6).

If you have not received your Baptism in the Spirit, go back and review Chapter 5. It will help you receive the Holy Spirit.

A. THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT: THEIR PURPOSE/POWER

The Christians we read about in the Book of Acts moved forth in the power of their Pentecostal experience. As they did, the Gifts of the Spirit became active in their work and witness for God.

Prophecy and speaking in tongues (unlearned languages) were recorded in the Bible passages above. Other Gifts — the Word of Wisdom, Discerning the Activity of Evil Spirits, Faith, Healing, Miracles etc. — are found all throughout the Book of Acts.

The **Fruit of the Spirit** enables us to become like Jesus in His "**character.**" His character relates to His "**conduct.**"

The **Gifts of the Spirit** enable us to become like Jesus in His "**power.**" His power relates to **supernatural displays of "ability"** (e.g., healing, casting out demons, etc.).

The Apostle Paul talks about Spiritual Gifts in his first letter to the church at Corinth (see 1 Corinthians 12-14). A study of his writings clearly shows that these Gifts are not enhanced natural or mental abilities. They may work through or with the mind of man, but they are from the Holy Spirit — and by His power. They are Gifts from God, given to His servants, for His people.

1. The Gifts Are Given By God

a. For A Specific Purpose

b. At A Specific Time

c. Through Specific People

d. For Specific People

The Gifts are given to us to use to bring glory to God and help people.

We can stir them up and bring them into activity (2Tim 1:6). However, we should always exercise them in submission to the Holy Spirit's Lordship.

We should always keep Gifts given us by God in submission to God. If we do, God will be glorified and the people's needs will be met by these supernatural abilities given us.

They are not "rewards" for people who live good and holy lives. They are "Gifts" of God's grace which will work through men of faith.

2. Danger: Power Without Character

Sadly, this means God's Gifts can sometimes be used in wrong ways or for wrong reasons. Samson is a good Old Testament example. Samson's character was faulty. He lived with a harlot — and she brought about his downfall and destruction. Such misuse will bring God's judgment and reproof.

The results can be very serious for such a minister — and his ministry. This is why the character of a man is so important.

The **Fruit** and the **Gifts** of the Spirit should always work together. God's "**character**" and "**power**" should always be close friends — sticking together. Men destroy with their character what they build with their Gifts.

3. Many Gifts

There are many different Spiritual Gifts. Paul lists some of the more common Gifts in his first letter to the church at Corinth:

'Each person is given a spiritual gift that it may be used for the good of all.'

"The Spirit gives one person the word of wisdom. To another he gives a word of knowledge. To someone else the same Spirit gives a word of faith. To still another is given the gifts of healings, or the gift of miracles. The Spirit gives some the gift of prophecy, while others receive the ability to discern between good and evil spirits. Some receive the gift of speaking in other tongues [unlearned languages] and others the ability to interpret [explain] the tongues.

"The same Spirit does all of these things. He decides who will receive which gift"
(1 Cor 12:7-11 smf).

B. AN OUTLINE OF THE SPIRITUAL GIFTS

The Gifts of the Spirit listed in 1 Corinthians 12:7-11 enable the Christian to become more like Jesus in (1) thought, (2) word and (3) deed.

This will be the basis of the outline that follows.

1. Gifts Of Revelation (Thought)

a. Word Of Knowledge. By this Gift, God causes us to know about events or things of which we have no knowledge. It is supernatural, and is usually given to us through a gentle impression on the mind, a picture which forms in our head or a feeling inside our soul (heart). (See John 1:48; 4:17-19; Acts 5:3-5; 21:10, 11.)

b. Word Of Wisdom. A Word of Wisdom defines the action we should take in light of what we know by a Word of Knowledge. When God reveals something to us, we need to know the "how," "when," "where" and through "whom" His will and plan can be implemented. We need practical wisdom on how to apply the Word of Knowledge (Matt 22:18-21; Luke 12:12; Acts 15:13-31).

c. Discerning Of Spirits. This is the divine ability to tell if the spirit force behind supernatural activity is

- 1) heavenly,**
- 2) human or**
- 3) hellish.**

By the Gift of Discerning of Spirits, we can know what kind of spirit is manifesting itself through the human instrument who is under its power or influence.

For example, a spirit of divination (or sorcery) can imitate the Word of Knowledge (cf. Acts 16:16-18 and I Cor 14:24,25). A spirit of infirmity can mask its presence in a person's body as a normal sickness. A spirit of uncleanness (immorality, etc.) can often be perceived as love — instead of lust.

2. Gifts Of Speech (Word)

a. Prophecy. This is spontaneous Holy Spirit-induced speaking (and sometimes preaching) which usually "forth-tells" God's words. Its purpose is to edify (buildup), comfort (cheer up), and exhort (stir up) God's people. The Gift of Prophecy is like a flowing river, down which may come floating a Word of Knowledge which "foretells" or predicts the future (Acts 11:28; 20:23; 21:4,10,11; I Cor 14:3,24,25).

b. Tongues. This is supernatural speech in another language which is in the form of sounds and syllables unknown to the speaker.

It is usually words of prayer to God, blessing the Lord and giving thanks. These three expressions are sometimes accompanied by melody given by the Spirit, so they come forth as singing or songs to the Lord.

Sometimes the speaking forth in other languages can contain a message from the

Lord for God's people, filled with spiritual power and purpose.

This Gift prepares the hearts of God's people for the "Interpretation." It may also be a "sign" of God's presence to the unbeliever (I Cor 14:22).

c. Interpretation Of Tongues. It is usually the equivalent (in a known language understood by those present) of what was spoken in another language (tongues). Its purpose is to explain or repeat the words spoken in the unknown tongue to us.

It may be like a translation of what was spoken in tongues. If the speaking in other languages was a prayer, the interpretation could be a prayer. Sometimes the interpretation is brought forth accompanied by a melodic song, or spoken praise, or thanksgiving to God, or an exhortation to the congregation (I Cor 14:5, 6,15).

3. Gifts Of Power (Deed)

a. Faith. This is a supernatural faith (or "knowing" — without a doubt) that causes you to declare God's word (*rhema*) and will. This results in a manifestation or display of the miraculous power of God. It goes beyond the sense and reason of man's mind (Heb 11:1; Matt 21:19-21; Acts 3:4-9,16).

b. Gifts Of Healings. In the Greek it is plural — "Gifts of Healings." These are divine works of God by which sick souls and bodies are made whole.

Some feel there is a specific Gift of Healing for each kind of disease. Because of this, each personal need of sick persons can be met (Matt 8:16,17; Mark 16:17,18; Acts 28:8,9).

c. Miracles. These are divine wonder — works of power in the realm of nature. They are "supernatural" events — beyond physical law. Their purpose is to reveal God's power and authority (Matt 14:16-21; Mark 16:17-20; Acts 19:11-12; 28:1-6).

C. CONCLUSION

It will be of much interest to you to study the Gifts of the Spirit in more detail. See Section D for a complete study of the Gifts of the Spirit. At this point, however, it is clear that both the "Fruit" and the "Gifts" of the Spirit are needed for church leaders and church members to become like Jesus in both character and power.

Moreover, as we shall see, they are also necessary for us to be fulfilled in our ministry or "calling." This will be our next topic in Chapter 8.

Chapter 8

The Leader's Calling: Ministry Gifts

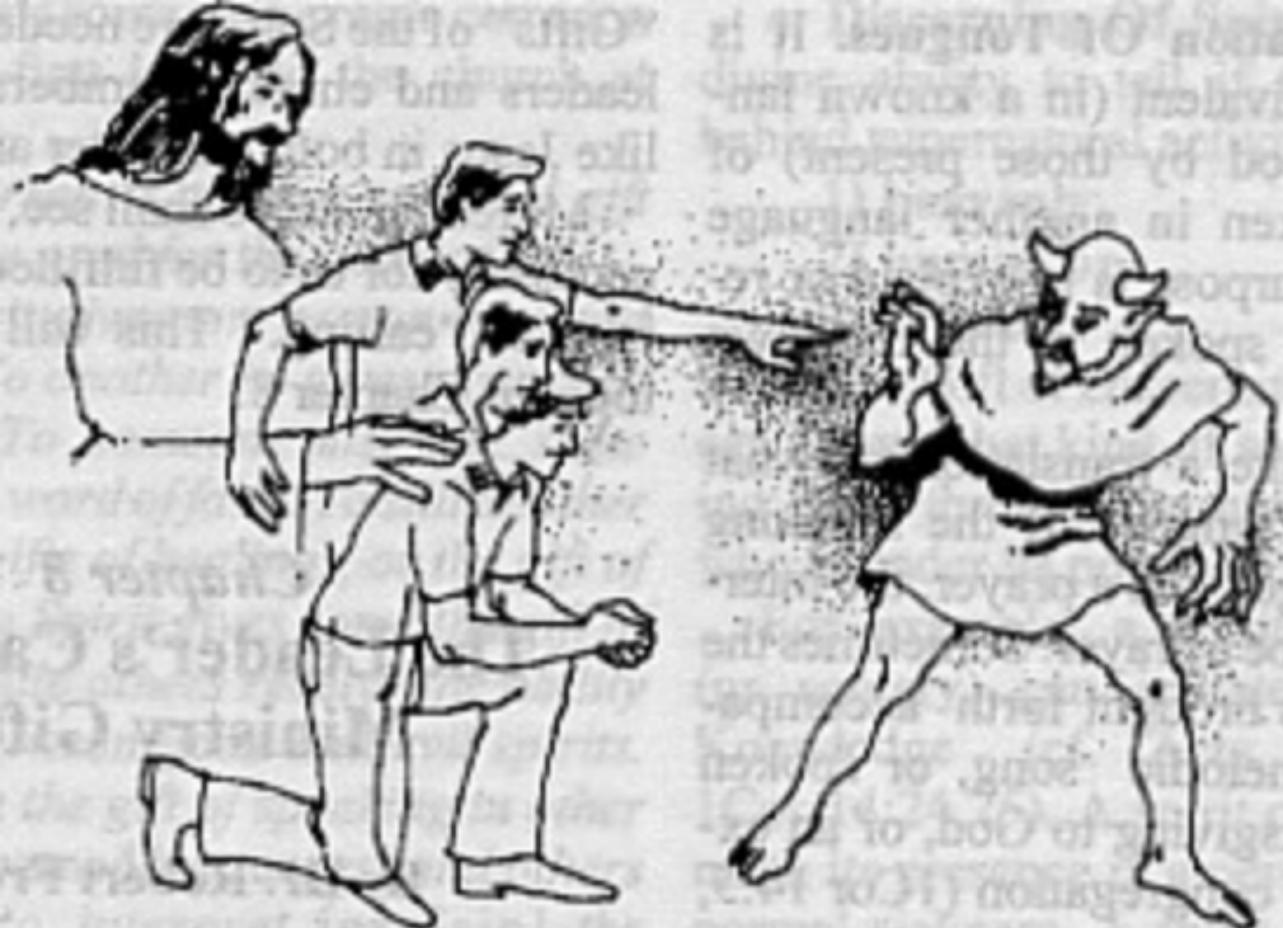
By Dr. Robert Frost

Introduction

God's program for the Church involves equipping all members so they become ministering members. According to Ephesians 4:11,12, the leadership gifts of apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher are given to equip the members of the Church so **the members** do the work of the ministry.

The Fruit and Gifts of God's Spirit enable church leaders to fulfill their "calling" or ministry in the Body of Christ. As already stated, the leader's main job is to train and equip the members to become ministering (serving) members. So that we leaders can do that, God makes available the power and authority to carry it out.

The Holy Spirit comes upon us to give us power and authority, in fact the little word "upon," when related to the Holy Spirit, nearly always refers to divine duty and



"THE MINISTER'S AUTHORITY"

authority.

A. THE MINISTER: HIS SPIRITUAL POWER AND AUTHORITY

1. Jesus: Head Of The Church

The Head of the Church and church leaders is the Lord Jesus Christ. The authority of the church leader comes from his Head. Jesus said that all authority — in Heaven and on earth — had been given to Him (see Matthew 28:18).

Notice from the following scriptures how Christ's divine authority and power is related to the presence of the Holy Spirit "**upon**" Him:

*"And the Spirit of the Lord will rest **upon** him: The Spirit of wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge and fear of the Lord. His delight will be to obey the Lord. He will not judge by what he sees and hears, but by that which is right and fair. He will defend the poor and helpless" (Isa 11:2-4 smf).*

*"See my servant, whom I uphold. He is my chosen one and I delight in him. I have put my Spirit **upon** him. He will bring forth justice and truth to the nations.... He will bring justice to all who have been wronged" (Isa 42:1, 3 smf).*

*"The Spirit of the Lord is **upon** me. He has anointed and called me to bring good news to the poor and those who suffer wrong. He has sent me to comfort those with broken hearts; to release those who are bound; to open the eyes of the blind... For I, the Lord, love justice" (Isa 61:1, 8 smf).*

*"And the Holy Spirit came down **upon** him... Then Jesus went back to Galilee full of and under the power of the Holy Spirit... And the people were amazed at his teaching, for his word was with authority and power... With that authority and power he told evil spirits to come out — and they came out!" (Luke 3:22; 4:1,14,36 smf).*

The Holy Spirit in the verses above and below is pictured as a royal robe — or mantle — **upon** Jesus. He was "wrapped in" (clothed with) power and authority.

2. Clothed With Power From On High

Luke 24:49 (rsv) is a wonderful promise to you and me: *"And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised; so stay here in the city until you have been **clothed with power from on high.**"*

The "shoulder" in the scripture verse below refers to divine responsibility and authority — the right and ability (authority and power) to rule: *"And the government shall be **upon his shoulder**... His rule of peace will increase and never end" (Isa 9:6-7 smf).*

*"And I will **clothe him with your robe** and fix your belt around him. I will give your authority and royal rule into his hand. And the key [government] of the House of David will lay **upon his shoulder**... Yes, they will lay **upon** him honor and the full weight of royal duty for his father's house" (Isa 22:21, 22, 24 smf).*

It was this kind of glory, honor and power which was given to Adam and Eve at Creation. They had been created in God's image and "clothed" with divine authority. Under God, they were to rule over all of the earth.

However, when they fell into sin they lost their "royal robes" of righteous authority. Satan took over their right to rule, and reigned over the world — until Jesus came.

At the cross, Satan was stripped of his power and brought to defeat. Christ was the victor, and won back man's right to rule over the earth (see Hebrews 2:14,15).

Jesus firmly fixed this truth in the minds of His disciples after His resurrection

with these words: *"All power and authority in heaven and earth is [now] given unto me... As the Father has sent me, so send I you... Truly, I will send the promise of my Father upon you. So wait in Jerusalem until you are **clothed with power** from on high... For you shall receive power after the Holy Spirit comes **upon** you"* (Matt 28:18; John 20:21; Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8).

3. Under Authority

By the Word of the Lord and the power of His Spirit, we have been given authority over evil spirits and even the devil himself (see Luke 10:19). James plainly explains this truth in his epistle: *"Submit yourselves to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you"* (Jas 4:7).

The word "submit" in the Greek language of the New Testament is a military term. It means to "rank under" — come under the authority of an officer of higher rank. Those **in** authority must first be **under** authority.

When we come "under" authority, that authority comes "upon" us. We speak and act in the power of that authority, not our own.

The same truth applies to spiritual authority. When we come under the authority of Jesus, His authority comes upon us. When we speak His words and obey His orders, the power of His Spirit backs up our actions. We are speaking and acting on His behalf. He is speaking and acting through us. No wonder the devils tremble and flee!

B. HOW TO DISCOVER AND DEVELOP YOUR MINISTRY

God offers to every leader He calls, the power and authority needed to fulfill his ministry or calling.

The question is: "How do we discover and develop our ministries and those of our members? How do we find our calling? How can we best prepare for it? Where can we begin to put it into practice?" These are good questions and deserve good answers.

1. Called By God

Our ministry in the Body of Christ is chosen by God — not by ourselves or by others (see Hebrews 5:4). The Spirit Himself will set a calling within our hearts. As it develops, God will notice and give approval and promotion. David said, *"For promotion and power come from nowhere on earth, but only from God"* (Ps 75:6,7 tlb).

God sets within His Church local leaders who are to be shepherds of His flock. Shepherds (pastors) are called to protect, direct, correct, feed, teach and care for the sheep. Such oversight is needed for the ministries of members to develop in a balanced and healthy way.

2. The Local Church

This means that believers should be related to the Body of Christ in a local church setting (i.e., as members). If there are local shepherds who are wise, loving and full of the Holy Spirit and faith, the local church is the wisest and safest context in which ministries can grow and develop.

Much pain, many problems, and wasted time and energy can be avoided by members who can find wise and loving leaders. Are you one?

This is God's plan for His people. For God's plan to work, He needs pastors who are loving, loyal, faithful and committed to the Lord and His flock.

No local church is perfect. The Lord doesn't require leaders who are perfect. He uses imperfect leaders to train and equip imperfect members.

If the Lord has brought you into a local church with a senior pastor, then honor the authority of the leader as you would Christ's very own authority. Do your best to help him in every way possible. Do double duty for the senior pastor as you would for the Lord Himself.

3. Leaders' Priorities

Our ministry in the Lord begins with those who are a part of our circle of life. Our lives touch many others every day. We should start, therefore, with the people of our own little world —our family members, our church, the nearby school, those we work with, those living in our community.

Our desire is to share the life, love and truth of Jesus with them. We will want to do this in a warm, practical and personal way. Let us seek to help and serve others in every way we can — in the Name of the Lord.

Trust the Holy Spirit to daily flow through your life and bring His blessing to those around you. As you minister the love of God in little ways, larger openings will come. We will see what needs to be done, and how with others we can do it.

As we seek to bring God's life through our words and deeds, we will learn to trust the Holy Spirit for His help and power.

The Fruit and Gifts of the Spirit will work together in a beautiful and balanced way. We may not even be aware how powerful they are in our lives — but others will!

C. FIVE BASIC MINISTRY-GIFTS

Indeed, the five ministry-gifts of apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher are the foundation upon which the Church rests (see Ephesians 2:20; 1 Corinthians 3:10-11). They are listed by Paul in his letter to the Ephesians:

"Christ has given each one of us a special gift from his great store-house of grace. That is why the psalmist says: 'When he was taken up to heaven, he gave gifts to men...'

"The gifts he gave were men with different ministries: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers.

"He did this that God's people might be trained and equipped to serve him. These gifts are needed for the Body of Christ to grow up and become strong and sound" (Eph 4:7,8,11,12 smf).

We will now briefly review these five leadership ministries.

1. The Apostle

He is a man who lays the foundation for (or plants) new churches. He appoints local leaders and gives them advice after he moves on. He will keep in touch with them and inform them of what God is doing in the Church at large. Christ's apostles have a special calling to fulfill in every generation. This ministry-gift is just as important today as any time in the history of the Church (see Luke 11:49; 1 Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 2:20).

2. The Prophet

He is a man with a timely message from the heart and mind of God. He foretells events. He speaks to leaders and others, and tells them what the future holds if they move outside God's perfect will. His lesser function is also to "edify" (build up), "exhort" (stir up) and "console" (cheer up) the Body of Christ (see Acts 11:28; 13:1; 21:10,11).

3. The Evangelist

He is a man who preaches the gospel of Christ to sinners. His message is simple,

direct and in the power of God's Word. Men are moved to make a decision about Christ (see Acts 8:5-40; 21:8).

4. The Pastor

He is a man with a shepherd's heart. He cares for each sheep personally, yet watches over the flock as a whole. He seeks to direct, protect, correct, feed and comfort God's people in a local church setting (see John 10:11-18).

5. The Teacher

He is a man who has a love for God's Word and God's people. He seeks to teach divine truth in both a practical and a personal way. He ministers to the minds of men that they might know how to wisely walk in God's will (see Nehemiah 8:4-8).

D. LEADERSHIP GIFTS GIVEN TO TRAIN & EQUIP BELIEVERS

The Apostle Paul tells us that Christ gave these five leadership gifts to train and equip the born-again believers to become ministering members. The saints are to be equipped and made ready to serve.

1. Church Members Must Learn To...

Those who have been called into one of the five leadership ministries have an important three-part duty to perform. They are to teach their church members how to:

- a. minister to the Lord;**
- b. minister to one another; and**
- c. minister to the world.**

2. Teach Them How

Equipping the members to fulfill these three ministry areas involves teaching them how to do the following:

- a. Worship in Spirit and in truth**
- b. Watch, pray and intercede**
- c. Fight spiritual warfare**
- d. Study the Scriptures**
- e. Grow in Christ's character**
- f. Exercise the Gifts of the Spirit**
- g. Hear the voice of the Lord**
- h. Serve the saints — God's people**
- i. Witness to the unbeliever.**

In this way, members will mature and develop in the Lord Jesus and strengthen His Body —the Church.

3. Every Member A Minister

God's people are not to be like little children, always looking to others for help; they are to grow in Christ that they might serve in the Kingdom of God. They had this problem in New Testament times with the Jewish believers:

"You have been Christians a long time now, and you ought to be teaching others, but instead you have dropped back to the place where you need someone to teach you all over again the very first principles in God's Word. You are like babies who can drink only milk, not old enough for solid food.

"And when a person is still living on milk, it shows he isn't very far along in the Christian life, and doesn't know much about the difference between right and wrong. He is still a baby Christian!"

"You will never be able to eat solid spiritual food and understand the deeper things of God's Word until you become better Christians and learn right from wrong by practicing doing right" (Heb 5:12-14 tlb).

Every member is to become a ministering member — who ministers to the Lord, to other believers and to unbelievers!

E. OTHER MINISTRIES LISTED BY PAUL

Besides the five basic ministry-gifts of leadership listed above, Paul includes other ministries for the members that fall within training members to:

- **Minister to the Lord;**
- **Minister to one another; and**
- **Minister to the world (unbelievers).**

They are as follows (see Romans 12:6-8 and 1 Corinthians 12:28-29):

1. Serving And Helps

This refers to practical service in the local fellowship. It would include the office of deacon, but takes in many other activities as well.

2. Exhortation

To "exhort" means to encourage, inspire, warn and inform the people of God. The purpose of this ministry is to stir up believers to worship, work, war and witness for the Lord. The "exhorter" puts fire in our faith.

3. Giving

This ministry involves the giving of one's earthly goods (usually money) for the support of God's work. The giver must be honest, sincere and humble. He must be sensitive to the Spirit and gifted with wisdom. Only then can the right amount be given to the right people, at the right time, for the right reasons.

4. Administration (Government)

This ministry refers to wise, strong, loving leaders who know how to plan, organize, train, and establish budgets and accountability in the church. It involves the structure and organization needed to oversee the affairs of the church (see Acts 6:3).

5. Mercy

This ministry requires sympathy — a caring feeling for others — and wisdom to know what to do. Wisdom is linked with practical action.

It is a calling which not only meets practical needs, but brings faith, hope and love to those who need help. There is a great need in the Body of Christ for such "glad angels of mercy" (see James 2:13-16).

6. Miracles And Healing

Miracles show God's power and prove His presence. Their purpose is to point unbelievers to God and build up the faith of the saints. They are signs of divine love in action for those in need. These ministries prepare the way for God's gospel of grace.

Gifts of healings (plural in the original Greek manuscripts) are to provide Christ's healing power to those who are sick.

What a blessed thing to have these gifts working in the lives of the members of the church and the leaders!

F. MORE MINISTRIES IN THE BODY OF CHRIST

There are many other ministries which are supported by Scripture. With a little

thought, we might add other functions to our list.

1. Intercession

Prayer and fasting on behalf of others has always been a powerful — though often hidden — ministry in the Church.

2. Hospitality

A kind welcome in a Christian home has brought much blessing into many lives. Many examples can be found in Scripture.

3. Visitation

We can take God's love to others when they can't come to us. We think of the sick, the aged, the lonely, and even those in prison. Jesus wants to reach them all.

4. Social Concern

How very much God wants to reach out to the poor and needy — to those who have been put out and put down. He can touch them only through us.

5. Literature

The power of the written word is very great. God has given the gift of writing to many. It ranges from personal letters to published articles and books. It requires much effort, but the rewards are great.

6. Modern Media

Many advances have been made in radio, films, television and other fields of communication. These are modern methods by which to witness. God has given ability and training to those whom He would use in creative ways. If we don't move into these areas for God, the devil will be pleased to take our place.

7. Fine Arts

The favor God has given to Christian music has been a great blessing over the years. It is time the other art forms were fully brought back into God's holy purpose. They can be touched by God's Spirit to aid us in teaching, enrich our worship, and better our witness to the world. No longer will it be art for art's sake, but art for the glory of God.

8. Reconciliation

To "reconcile" means to bring together in peace those who have been enemies. First of all, of course, is a person's peace with God.

Then there is a need to be at peace with one another. This is true in a very special way in the Church. Hostility and strife among believers is like a painful wound in the Body of Christ. No wonder the Scriptures declare, "*Blessed are the peacemakers...*"

G. FINAL THOUGHTS ABOUT PERSONAL MINISTRY

It is easy to see that many of the above ministries overlap or work together. A single person may have more than one function in his service for the Lord.

Moreover, one ministry may become the foundation upon which another builds. Philip the faithful "servant" later became Philip the flaming "evangelist" (compare Acts 6 and 8).

All of us have a calling in the Body of Christ. We begin where we are — with what we have — NOW! The Holy Spirit, our divine Helper, will provide the Fruit and Gifts which we need for our calling.

It is our duty to "cultivate" or develop the fruit by turning to God's Spirit during difficult times.

And we must learn to "excel" or do well in the use of the Spiritual Gifts. Our desire is to become good and faithful servants of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Personal ministry is best discovered and developed within the fellowship of a local Spirit-filled church. Under wise and loving leadership, we will find our place and function in the family of God. In this way the Church of Jesus Christ will become strong and sound.

Then we will be ready to minister to the Lord, to one another, and to the whole wide world!

PART 3; MINISTRIES OF CHURCH MEMBERS

Chapter 9

Ministry To The Lord: Worship

A. EVERY BELIEVER A PRIEST

Every believer is a priest under the New Testament scheme of things.

"You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation. You are a special people who belong to God. You have been chosen to declare his praises—for he has called you out of darkness into his wonderful light" (I Pet 2:9 smf).

This is a beautiful word-picture of the Church of Jesus Christ. We are a chosen people—called to be royal priests in the Church. *"He has gathered us into his kingdom and made us priests of God his Father..." (Rev 1:6 tlb).*

As a "royal priesthood," every member has a priestly ministry which is wide and wonderful in its work. The functions of that ministry are three-fold in nature:

- 1. Ministry to the Lord;**
- 2. Ministry to one another; and**
- 3. Ministry to the world.**

There is only one way such a large task as ministering to the world can be accomplished. And that is by every member in the Church becoming a ministering member. Every member should fulfill a place of service in the Church. "Christ has made us to be a kingdom of priests to serve his God and Father... and we shall rule and reign on the earth" (Rev 5:10 smf).

B. OUR MINISTRY IN WORSHIP

All Christian ministry should begin with ministry unto the Lord. "Worship of God" should be the well from which our "work for God" springs forth.

Our priestly ministry to God involves four main functions:

- 1. Prayer**
- 2. Praise**
- 3. Thanksgiving**
- 4. Worship**

Each of these functions has a specific purpose. However, in this teaching we will put them together under the general heading of "worship."

God is our dear heavenly Father. Above all else. He wants our love and our

worship. Worship speaks of "worthship." God is "worthy" of our love because He first loved us — and great was that love! (I Jn 4:19).

The Pharisees once tried to trick and trap Jesus with a hard and difficult question. They asked Him, "*What is God's greatest law or commandment?*" Jesus very quickly put them to shame with a very simple but powerful response:

"Love the Lord your God with all of your heart, soul and mind. This is the first and greatest commandment" (Matt 22:37-38 smf).

We love what we worship and we worship what we love. Our worship of God springs from our fellowship with God.

As a Father, God desires to fellowship with His family. He wants and waits for us to respond to His holy love with our prayer, praise and worship. When we draw near to Him, He draws near to us (see James 4:8).

David the psalmist found out how to have God near you. David said, "*God lives and lingers in the praises of his people*" (Ps 22:3 smf).

Worship of God and fellowship with God are divinely linked together. You cannot have one without the other!

C. WORSHIPPERS THEN WORKERS

Many feel that God's greatest desire is for "workers." This is not true. Jesus plainly told His disciples that the Father was seeking "worshippers" — those who would worship Him in Spirit and in truth (see John 4:23).

Our greatest and highest calling is to worship God — before all else. If we do, God won't suffer from a lack of workers. True worshippers always become true workers. True love always seeks to please and do the will of the one being loved!

This truth is clearly seen in the familiar story of Mary and Martha (see Luke 10:38-42). Martha was in the kitchen working and worrying. Mary was at the feet of Jesus worshipping and learning to listen. Jesus said Mary's part was the most important, and it would not be taken from her.

Christians are not primarily "saved to serve," but "called to worship." The Lord wants that first of all — before anything else. If we do not enter into a ministry to the Lord, we will never have an effective ministry to one another or the world.

1. The Church At Antioch

The church at Antioch demonstrates that worship must be first in importance — even before service. It was a "working" church, but **before its work was its worship**.

What was the church doing before Paul and Barnabas were chosen of the Spirit and sent out as "workers" on the mission field? They were worshipping God!

"As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them'" (Acts 13:2).

It is interesting to note that Acts 13:1 tells us there were prophets and teachers in the church. Plainly, their priority of ministry was not prophesying or teaching, but worship. Everybody was worshipping (ministering to the Lord). From the ministry of worship flowed God's prophetic word concerning the work.

The steps or stages were clearly in this order:

a. Worship. First, there was "worship" to the Lord.

b. Word. Second, there was a "word" from the Lord.

c. Work. Third, there was the "work" for the Lord.

Ministry to the world follows ministry to the Lord!

2. No Worship —No Rain!

The divine priority for worship is seen in this prophetic word from the lips of Zechariah:

"And it shall come to pass that whoever ... will not come up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, even they will receive no rain" (Zech 14:17).

The principle is plain: no worship, no rain! Activity without worship will produce very little harvest — no matter how hard we work. Why? It takes the rain of God's Spirit to produce the harvest. Without our worship, we will have no rain. If we don't have time to worship, our work-time will produce very little fruit.

God's divine order is **worship, then work**. Ministry to the Lord brings the blessing of His Spirit upon our efforts. The Lord is far more interested in our relationship with Him than in our work for Him!

D. WORSHIP IN SPIRIT AND TRUTH

For seven centuries the Jews and Samaritans had been arguing about the proper place of worship.

While going through Samaria, Jesus met a woman at a well. To her great surprise, He began to talk to her about the deep desire and longing in her heart for God.

In their discussion, she raised the age-old question about the right place to worship. Let us listen as they talk to one another: *"Sir, I can see that you are a prophet. Our fathers worshipped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem. Who is right?"*

*"Believe me, woman.' Jesus replied, 'a time is coming when you will not worship the Father on this mountain or in Jerusalem... A time is coming —and has now come — when true worshippers will worship the Father in **spirit** and in **truth**. These are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks" (John 4:19-23).*

1. Two Necessary Parts

From these words of Jesus, worship can plainly be divided into two portions:

- a. SPIRIT....which is God's part;**
- b. TRUTH.... which is man's part.**

In other words, both God and man have a part to play for worship to be complete.

2. God's Part In Worship

God's part in worship involves both His Son and His Spirit. The author of Hebrews speaks of the role which Jesus has in our worship. He quotes a Psalm of David in which the psalmist is speaking on behalf (in the person) of Christ:

"Father, I will introduce your name to my brothers. In the midst of the church I will sing praise unto you" (Heb 2:12 smf).

This verse poses an interesting question for us to consider. How will Jesus sing praise to the Father in the midst of the Church?

a. Jesus' Song Of Praise. I believe He does it through our lips, using our voices. As we yield to the Holy Spirit's action upon us — Jesus' own adoration of the Father flows from our innermost being.

The "person" of Jesus Christ is now at the right hand of the Father. The "presence" of the Lord, however, is in us by His Spirit.

Thus, as the Spirit anoints us to worship, Jesus' song of praise will fill our mouths

and hearts. As we yield our lips and voice to the action of His Spirit upon us—we are worshipping the Father **in Spirit**.

This is the true "song of the Lord" — because as the Spirit is filling our spirit with the worship of Jesus, we in turn express it to the Father with our voices.

This happened in the Old Testament. In the reign of Hezekiah, a great revival broke out as a result of cleansing and restoring the temple. Here is the story: *"Hezekiah organized Levites at the Temple into an orchestral group, wing cymbals, psalteries, and harps. This was in accordance with the directions of David and the prophets Gad and Nathan, who had received their instructions from the Lord.*

"The priests formed a trumpet corps.

*"Then Hezekiah ordered the burnt offering to be placed upon the altar, and as the sacrifice began, the instruments of music began to play **the songs of the Lord** [i.e., those songs given by the Lord], accompanied by the trumpets.*

"Throughout the entire ceremony, everyone worshipped the Lord as the singers sang and the trumpets blew.

"Afterwards the king and his aides bowed low before the Lord in worship.

*"Then King Hezekiah ordered the Levites to sing **before the Lord** some of the psalms of David and of the prophet Asaph, which they gladly did, and bowed their heads and worshipped" (2 Chr 29:25-30 tlb).*

b. Filled By The Spirit. Sadly, it is possible to have a "form" of worship without the involvement of Jesus or the Holy Spirit.

Only Christ's Spirit can produce true worship acceptable to the Father. Without His Spirit's involvement, our worship is at best only an empty ritual. This is what Jesus meant when He talked about the religious leaders of His day:

"These people say they honor and respect me, but in their hearts they have no place for me at all. Their worship of me is worthless" (Matt 15:8,9 smf).

On the other hand, when our hearts are yielded to the living Spirit of Christ, worship will not be an empty form. It will be a fresh overflow of love and praise. Paul puts this truth in these beautiful words:

*"Always be filled and flowing with the Holy Spirit. Sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs to one another and offer praise **to the Lord**. Sing and make music **to him** within your hearts. Ever be thankful to God your Father in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph 5:18-20 smf).*

As we are continuously being filled with the Holy Spirit — we can offer praise to the Lord and sing and make music **to Him**.

The modern-day Church often has music that is sung to the people or for the people. In the Bible, the music was directed toward and sung for (and to) the Lord.

We need to yield to the action of the Holy Spirit upon us to be true worshippers. God has given us His Spirit that we might sing the songs of Jesus, inspired by the Spirit, to the Father — from our hearts!

3. Man's Part In Worship

"Who may go up to the hill of the Lord? Who may stand in his holy place [to worship]? He who has clean hands and a pure heart. He who is honest in all of his ways. He shall receive the blessing of the Lord" (Ps 24:3-5 smf).

Man's part in worship is to come to God in "truth." This means that man's heart (motives) must be clean, pure, honest and sincere — or his worship is unacceptable.

a. Rules Of The Tabernacle. This is confirmed by the rules given the priests in the tabernacle of Moses. In the structure and priesthood of the tabernacle are many things which illustrated what Jesus and His followers must do.

All of the sacrifices, washings, anointings and garments were important illustrations of future spiritual principles that would be observed by Jesus and the Church. Before the priests could serve and worship the Lord in the Holy Place, they had to be:

- 1) **cleansed** of sin by blood sacrifice (Lev 4:3),
- 2) **washed** with water,
- 3) **anointed** for worship and
- 4) **clothed** in clean priestly garments (Exo 30:17-33).

They were in danger of death if they had not dealt with sin, cleansed themselves of defilement, received the anointing and put on clean priestly garments. Only then could they come into God's holy presence. They had to be prepared for worship!

b. Our Preparation Is In Christ Jesus. We too must:

- 1) **accept the blood sacrifice** of Jesus on the cross (Rev 1:5);
- 2) **be properly "washed"** by water baptism (Acts 22,16: Heb 10:22);
- 3) **"be anointed" for service** by being baptized in the Spirit (Luke 4:18); and
- 4) **"be clothed" with power** (Luke 24:49) before we can properly minister to the

Lord.

c. The Scriptures Declare. Praise God, all of these needs have been fully met in Christ Jesus. The Scriptures declare that we have been:

1) **Cleansed By His Blood.** *"If we confess our sins, God will be faithful and just to forgive us our sins and **cleanse** us from all sin and unrighteousness" (I Jn 1:9 smf).*

2) **Washed By Water Baptism And His Word.** *"Christ gave himself up for the Church. He did this to make her holy and clean, **washed** by water and the Word" (Eph 5:25,26 smf).*

3) **Anointed By His Spirit.** *"It is God who has fixed our faith with you in Christ. He has **anointed us** and set his seal upon us. He did this by putting his Spirit in our hearts. This is our promise of things to come " (2 Cor 1:21,22 smf).*

4) **Clothed In His Righteousness.** *"Let your priests, O Lord, be **clothed** with salvation... He has clothed me with the garments of salvation; He has covered me with the robe of righteousness..." (2 Chr 6:41; Isa 61:10 smf).*

d. Christ Jesus: Our Great High Priest. The writer of Hebrews sums up the priestly privileges of those who are blood-washed in these wonderful words:

"Dear brothers, now we are free to walk right into the most holy place — where God is. We can do this without fear because of the blood that Jesus shed for our sins. We can come through the new and living way that Jesus opened for us by his body on the cross. He is our great High Priest, and he rules over all of God's house. So let us come near to God with a true heart full of faith.

"Our hearts have been cleansed, and we have been set free from guilty feelings. Our bodies have been washed with the pure waters of baptism. Therefore, let us hold firmly to the hope which we have confessed. We can trust God to do what he has promised" (Heb 10:19-23 smf).

Yes, Christ has provided all we need to worship God in Spirit and **in truth**.

Jesus still seeks to worship the Father *"in the midst of the church"* (Heb 2:12). He desires to do this through us who are members of His body. It is through us and by His

Spirit that the Son wishes to adore the Father.

E. SUMMARY

We have seen:

1. God's Part

God's part in worship involves both His Son and His Spirit.

2. Our Part

We have a part to play as well. We are to come before the Lord with *clean hands and a pure heart*. This means confessing our sin, faults and failures quickly to the Lord. It means being cleansed and clothed by His grace. It means being anointed by His Spirit. It means keeping our thoughts, words and deeds right and holy in God's eyes — that we might live "... to the praise of his glory" (Eph 1:12).

Then, indeed, we will be "...a chosen people, a royal priesthood and a holy nation" (I Pet 2:9). Joyfully we shall share His love and grace to all the world — with all our hearts. And it all begins with worship.

This is what we mean when we say every believer must learn to "minister to the Lord."

Why don't you yield your lips and your voice to the Lord right now and begin to worship Him? Tell Him:

*"I love You, Lord,
and I lift my voice
To worship You —
Oh! my soul rejoice;
Take joy, my King,
in what You hear;
Let it be a sweet,
sweet sound in Your ear."*

Chapter 10

Ministry To One Another: Service

Introduction

Ministry to one another means "serving and supporting" one another. We are to help, love and take care of each other. We are to build up each other emotionally and spiritually.

This means we are involved in supplying practical help and support to our brothers and sisters in Christ who are in need.

Doing this means we put in place (establish) "biblical support-systems." Three basic systems cover our most important personal needs. As leaders, we must train our members how to minister to one another through:

- **Emotional support-systems;**
- **Financial support-systems; and**
- **Spiritual support-systems.**

This is Christ's way of reaching out in love to minister to His people. Just as Jesus worships the Father in Heaven through us — He serves the members of His Body through us.

Jesus comforts hurting people by using our arms to embrace them. He lovingly touches them with our hands. He wants to speak to them through the lips of the members

of His Body—the Church!

Let us again turn to the Book of Acts and see how these principles were put into practice — how this works.

In the following verses we see reaffirmed the outline we have chosen to explain what you (as a church leader) must train your people to do. This is what the members of the church at Jerusalem did.

Members ministered to the Lord. *"And those who believed... were baptized — about three thousand in all! They worshipped together regularly at the temple each day, met in small groups in homes for communion... with great joy and thankfulness, praising God" (Acts 2:41,46,47 tlb).*

This was their first priority — worship, thankfulness and praising God.

Members ministered to one another. *"And all the believers met together constantly and shared everything with each other, selling their possessions and dividing with those in need. They ...met in small groups in homes for communion, and shared their meals with great joy and thankfulness" (Acts 2:44-46).*

They shared meals together in their homes, and nobody went hungry or was left homeless. Each one gave what he could to those who were in need. This was all done with "great joy."

Then their ministry to the world developed from the other two. *"A deep sense of awe was on them all, and the apostles did many miracles.*

"The whole city was favorable to them, and each day God added to them all who were being saved" (Acts 2:43,47).

From their ministry to God and each other came their witness to the world. Every day, many new believers were added to their fellowship. This is a perfect picture of God's plan and purpose in action. Now let us study the different support-systems that are a part of our ministry to one another.

A. THE EMOTIONAL SUPPORT-SYSTEM

The first support-system in our ministry to one another relates to our emotional needs. Our emotional needs are met through "relationships." We have not been created to "go it alone." *"And God said, 'Let us make man in our image... **It is not good for man to live alone**'" (Gen 1:26; 2:18).*

As we are conformed to the image of God, we find relationship (Rom 3:29; 2 Cor 3:18). We were made for fellowship with God and each other — to love one another.

Without that relationship, we are incomplete. And that is not good. We need each other very much. God planned it so!

1. Koinonia

The Greek word for "fellowship" is koinonia. It means

a. sharing life together

b. around a common interest. The life that we share is His life in us. The common interest is Jesus!

2. Koinonia Meets Emotional Needs

This is very practical in the results produced. Christian fellowship (koinonia) meets the deepest needs and desires of our hearts. It is interesting to note that "koinonia" was a term used in the marriage contracts (legal papers) of the Greek-speaking people in New Testament times. Marriage was to be "koinonia."

The Greek word for "community" is also "koinonia." A "community" is a group of people who are **united** around a **common** interest.

Jesus' love for us is without conditions. Such love has the power to forgive, heal and restore. Jesus wants us to have this same love for one another.

If we have this kind of love, believers will be able to confess their faults — and be honest and open about their problems. In a true "koinonia" (community) of Christians, we should find people coming and finding refuge, loving acceptance and understanding. We need "koinonia" for the following reasons.

<u>WHEN WE HAVE:</u>	<u>WE NEED TO BE:</u>
1. Failed	Forgiven
2. Stumbled	Supported
3. Been hurt	Healed
4. Been bound	Released
5. Been wrong	Corrected
6. Lost our way	Directed
7. Been afraid	Protected
8. Been rejected	Accepted
9. Been hated	Loved

These are some of the emotional needs which should be found in every Christian community. Only through an active support-system in our church can these personal needs be met.

Such support-systems are very important in societies which strongly oppose the Christian gospel.

This was true of the early Church in Jerusalem shortly after it began. The Jewish leaders of that day did not warmly welcome the newly-formed Christian fellowships. As we have seen in our earlier study, the early Church soon felt the fires of religious persecution and hatred. They were treated in cruel and unfair ways.

New believers, therefore, came together not only to worship and learn more about Jesus, but also to support and shield each other from a hostile and unfriendly society.

Such fellowships for Christian growth and support have formed all throughout the history of the Church. We need not be surprised. The god of this world (Satan) has always opposed the purposes of God and persecuted the people of God.

3. Basic Role Of Home -Church Groups

a. Practical Support. The practical way in which the early Church supported its members was through fellowship in their homes.

The church in Jerusalem began on Pentecost Sunday with 3,000 members. They grew rapidly as large numbers of men and women were added daily. Some believe they may have grown to 30,000 or 40,000 over the next couple of years. How do you house a group that size?

Jesus had warned them that the city and temple were going to be destroyed. There is no record that they tried to find or build a large meeting place. Instead they encouraged the people to meet in homes. They then ordained elders to be in charge of the newly-formed fellowships.

The apostles could then keep in touch with all the people through the elders which

had been set over each home-group.

It was to one of these house-groups that Peter and John reported their meeting with the Jewish council after healing the lame man at the gate (see Acts 4:23).

The homes were natural and simple settings for fellowship and practical ministry.

Large cathedrals and robed clergy were not known until the time of Constantine (Roman emperor who, it is claimed, was converted in the 4th century).

Cathedrals and clergy came as the Church backslid — and began to substitute these for the presence and power of the Spirit. These replaced the members' ministry to the Lord, to one another and to the world.

Substitution of grandiose buildings and pompous clergy are always related to a decline in spiritual life.

The ministry of members is repressed as professional clergy depart from the true faith. The personal touch is gone, and the emotional needs for love and acceptance are not fulfilled. Religious ritual replaces true koinonia.

b. Personal Contact. Small children need more than just food and warm clothing. They also need to be caressed, talked to, held and hugged. There have been situations when institutions who care for newborn babies have been short of personnel. Little newborn babies had all of their physical needs met, but died from a lack of a loving touch or being held and hugged.

Adults can die from a lack of love too, although it is a slower process. For some it's a living death — unloved, unwanted, unneeded and uncared for.

In Western nations, loneliness is one of the great ills of our age. It is possible to feel lonely in a crowd if we feel that no one knows or cares about us.

The Church must reach out in a special and personal way to those who have become separated from the life of the Christian community. This is true of the aged and sick and all who are shut away from loving contact with others.

As we have said, one of the reasons for the home-fellowship meetings in the early Church was to provide the emotional support which each member needed. Each person knew he belonged to a praying, caring group who accepted and loved him in the Lord.

The fellowship was a place where God's love could be shared in practical and personal ways. The basic human needs for both affection (love) and authority (truth) could be met and satisfied.

It was the heavenly Father's way of giving divine direction, correction, protection and provision — all within the warm, personal setting of His family.

It is a secure feeling to know we are supported by mothers and fathers and brothers and sisters in the family of God. It is a fellowship in which our own abilities and divine gifts are needed and wanted.

The church should always be a place where we can worship, serve and witness together.

B. THE FINANCIAL SUPPORT-SYSTEM

The second way the Bible teaches us to minister to one another is in the area of finances.

For our purposes, this will include not only money, but other material things and practical services as well.

1. In The Early Church

Let us see how the early Church acted to develop a financial support-system for its members. We will be looking for biblical principles which will apply in our time and setting. We will begin with the newly founded church in Jerusalem.

"And all the believers met together constantly and shared everything with each other, selling their possessions and dividing with those in need.

"...and there was warm fellowship among all the believers, and no poverty — for all who owned land or houses sold them, and brought the money to the apostles to give to others in need" (Acts 2:44,45; 4:34,35 tlb).

The attitude we have about our possessions often reveals what is in our hearts — whether good or evil.

God delivered the Jerusalem church from the evil of covetousness and deception (lying) in a most convincing way. This is what happened:

"Joseph, whom the apostles called Barnabas [son of comfort], was a Levite from the country of Cyprus. He sold some land and brought the money to the apostles to be given to the needy.

"There was a man and his wife by the name of Ananias and Sapphira who also sold some land. However, they kept back a part of the price, but acted as if they were bringing it all to the apostles.

"Peter, seeing into their hearts, straightly said, 'Ananias... why have you lied to the Holy Spirit? ...The land and the money were yours to do with as you wished. You have not lied to us, but to God.' When Ananias heard this, he fell to the floor and died!" (Acts 4:36-5:11 smf).

After Ananias died, the same judgment fell on his wife Sapphira, and she fell dead.

a. Principles Discovered. There is never enough money to help everyone, so priorities of where and when we give support are needed. Several important and practical points or principles can clearly be seen from the financial support-system of the New Testament Church.

1) Requests For Help Were Screened. Those members who had lived lives of service to others, and were in need, were helped.

Paul established practical principles for financial support to members of the Church. For example, he taught that we have responsibility for widows: *"Put great value upon [literal] those widows who are really in need" (ITim 5:3 niv).*

a) Aged Or Infirm. The person helped must be aged or infirm and unable to work and support themselves. *"No widow may be put on the list of widows unless she is over sixty years of age..." (I Tim 5:9 niv).*

b) Work If You Can. Those who are physically and mentally capable of working must do so. They are not to be supported by the church. *"... when we were with you, we gave you this rule: If a man will not work, he shall not eat."*

"We hear that some among you are idle... Such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and earn the bread they eat" (2 Ths 3:10-12).

c) Relatives Take Responsibility. Relatives (or the extended family) must take responsibility for relatives who are too old or infirm to work.

"But if a widow has children or grandchildren, these should learn first of all to put their religion into practice by caring for their own family and so repaying their parents and grandparents, for this is pleasing to God.

"If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate

family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever" (I Tim 5:4,8 niv).

The church leaders should teach this, and require families to joyfully assume responsibility for their own relatives. If this fails or there are no relatives, then...

d) Must Be Worthy. Those given financial support must be worthy. *"No widow may be put on the list of widows unless she... has been faithful to her husband, and is well known for her good deeds, such as bringing up children, showing hospitality, washing the feet of the saints, helping those in trouble and devoting herself to all kinds of good deeds" (I Tim 5:9,10 niv).*

e)The Jerusalem Church Example. Many of the believers were from out of town and had come to Jerusalem for the Feast of Pentecost (Acts 2:5-12). After confessing Christ as their Savior-Messiah, they were baptized in water and filled with the Holy Spirit; some probably joined the Christian community in Jerusalem.

In time, some may have run out of money and found it hard to find employment. Some of the believers were also poor and widows.

The bond of love within the family of God was so strong that many were moved to sell what they owned. The money received was then given to the apostles and leaders to be fairly shared with those in need.

2) Nobody Was Forced To Give. There was no pressure put on the people to sell what they possessed. They responded to needs by freely and joyfully giving what they had to those who had nothing. This they did under the oversight of their leaders. Therefore everything was done in a fair and orderly way.

The sin of Ananias and Sapphira was not that they held back part of the money they received from the sale of their land. They had the right to keep all of the money from the sale if they wanted to.

The apostles never asked the people to sell their land and give away the money. Even God would not have been concerned if they had kept the money from the sale of land.

No, the sin of Ananias and his wife was that they lied about the money that they gave. They pretended and acted as if they were giving everything to God when they weren't. Perhaps they thought their gift would bring them great prestige in the eyes of the apostles and the people.

The point is they didn't have to give and they didn't have to lie.

They would still have been loved and accepted by the community if they kept the money from the sale of their property — instead of pretending to give it all.

3) Honest Leadership Was A Must! The early Church was gifted with righteous leaders — honest men of good character.

The apostles had been trained by the Lord Jesus Himself. There had been one man among their group, however, who had been taken over by the devil because he was dishonest and greedy.

In the end, he lost his life in tragedy. He not only sold himself to Satan, but sold his Lord to those who crucified Him. His name was Judas. What a warning this should be to all of God's people in every age!

Perhaps this is the reason God dealt so severely with Ananias and Sapphira. Perhaps they had the same spirit which had moved and motivated Judas. If this spirit was not dealt with, it could defile and stain the Christian community in Jerusalem.

The Holy Spirit Himself swiftly moved to root out this evil before it could spread

throughout the whole fellowship.

Everybody took notice, for "*a great and holy fear came upon the whole church*" (Acts 5:11).

b. Financial Policy. Now we can understand why the apostles were so careful to see that finances were handled in a fair and honest way. It was a very serious duty which they had before the Lord. From the record in Acts, we find that they laid out a financial plan or policy with great care and wisdom. It will be worthy of our study.

1) Leaders Were Honest And Spirit-filled. Those who were responsible for the business matters of the church were competent and honest Spirit-filled men of good report. They were wise, honest men whose character and conduct were known by the community. They were not unknown outsiders, but faithful servants in the fellowship. Their daily lives and personal family affairs proved they could be trusted.

2) Helping People Came First. "People" needs came before "program" needs. When personal needs arose, the fellowship was informed or told about it. There was no pressure or dishonesty in the appeals that were made by the leaders.

The people knew the needs and how the money would be used. Therefore, they gave freely and joyfully. They were not threatened with God's punishment or bribed with God's blessings.

In other words, they didn't give out of fear of what God would do if they didn't. Nor did they give with the idea that God would always reward them with great financial gains.

They gave simply because God's love moved them to help out their brothers and sisters in Christ. Different ones then gave as the Holy Spirit moved them to do so.

3) According To Each One's Needs. The leaders distributed or gave out the funds "according to each one's need." The support-system in the Jerusalem church was set up to meet the actual needs of the people — no more and no less. Everybody received his fair share. This would be possible because the people in need would truly be known by those in their home-fellowship group.

Anyone who was lazy and didn't have a job or didn't want to serve in the community would receive no financial help. Selfish and foolish people who ran up large debts could not expect the church to pay them off. The church should never be guilty of supporting irresponsible behavior.

Those who act irresponsibly should be taught discipline and the divine order that God wants us to follow in our financial affairs. Whenever we go into debt, we come under a bondage which will hinder our freedom in serving the Lord.

For those in financial problems, a very simple rule to follow for the future is this: "If you don't need it, don't get it. If you don't have the money, don't buy it!"

Excessive debt not only limits our service for God, but destroys our witness in the world. One mark of spiritual maturity is the wise use of money.

The financial policy of the early Church also avoided another problem:

4) Beware The Self-Appointed Minister. The self-appointed minister feels the saints owe him a living. Some people go forth without ever being sent by a responsible group. They arrive on the scene and inform the local fellowship that they were sent of God and need their financial support. They are under no one's authority, but want everyone's respect — and money.

Paul refers to such ministers in his epistles and warns against them. The problem

still exists. We need to be aware of this so that we will not be deceived. Truly, there is safety and wisdom in the biblical pattern for church finance.

c. Relationship: The Key To Support-System Success. We have seen that the early Church had an emotional support-system which brought the leadership in contact with the people. From this relationship there developed a financial support-system.

Not only were the emotional needs of the people to be met within the Christian fellowship, but also the physical and financial needs.

Because godly leaders and their people knew each other in the Lord, a wise, fair financial policy was formed. The Lord gave His blessing, "*and not one among them suffered need.*"

C.THE SPIRITUAL SUPPORT-SYSTEM

The Jerusalem church ministered to one another not only in their areas of emotional and financial need, but to their spiritual needs as well. They did this through a system of spiritual support which can be seen in their home-fellowships.

1. The House Church: Best Place To Grow

The best place for a fruit tree to grow is in an orchard. An orchard is a place where the trees are protected from outside dangers by a fence. Their roots grow deep into ground that is watered and enriched by fertilizer. Their branches are trimmed and pruned for growing the finest fruit. Tree diseases and pests are treated at once. It is a setting which was carefully planned that each tree might become as fruitful as possible.

The small group-fellowship is like an orchard. It is a place of protection.

2. The House Church: Best Place To Learn

We learn by trying and making mistakes. Mistakes require correction. Correction administered in God's love is never accompanied by rejection.

If God's love [Greek=*agape*] fills the hearts of the leaders and members, we need not fear being wrongly corrected. We all need correction — but we would want it to be from those who love us. If we are teachable and not rebellious, we can make mistakes without being afraid we will be rejected.

When we feel God wants us to do something, we must take action. If we are afraid of making a mistake, this prevents us from taking the risk of "faith-actions."

Peter's walk on the water with Jesus is a good example. Peter's leap and walk of faith took him out of the boat and onto the stormy sea. When he began to sink in fear, Jesus took Peter by the hand and lifted him up again. Then Jesus taught him about the dangers of doubting God's Word.

Having learned his lesson, Peter walked back to the boat through the storm with Jesus — two men of faith, side by side.

Peter's faith action — even with its ups and downs — was highly blessed by God. Only Peter took Jesus at His word. Only Peter risked faith-actions and walked upon the water! (See Matthew 14:22-34.)

The home-fellowship is also a place where we can safely and wisely learn to walk in the Spirit. Hopefully there will be those in your house church (home-fellowship) who can wisely correct you and save you when you doubt and make mistakes.

a. Learn To Use Spiritual Gifts. Paul says, "*You may all prophesy... that all may learn*" (I Cor 14:31 smf). This verse has two meanings:

- We "learn" how to prophesy by doing it.

- We "learn" from what we hear when someone prophesies. Prophecy often contains instruction.

From the first point we learn that not only are the Gifts of the Spirit given by God, but we must learn to use them.

It is not enough to be called and gifted by God. We must learn how to "excel" — to do wisely and well — in our ministry. This takes time, training and practical experience.

The spiritual support-systems of the Church should provide sessions for those desiring to learn to use the Gifts of the Spirit — or a ministry-gift of preaching or teaching.

3. Training In Large Meetings

In meetings where hundreds of people may be gathered, it is also possible to teach members to minister to one another. Here is a way to do that:

a. Form Prayer Circles. Have the people form "prayer circles" of four to six persons. They do this by standing in a circle facing each other and joining hands.

Then they do the following:

1) Introductions. Each person in the prayer circle introduces himself by giving his name.

2) Share Prayer Requests. Then each person shares ONE prayer request. A prayer request is something they would like the rest to pray with them about. They may want prayer for personal physical healing or for God's help in finding a job — or other things too numerous to mention.

3) Each One Prays. Then person number one prays for person number two (with the rest silently praying) for one or two minutes — asking God to grant them their request. Then number two prays for number three in the same manner. Continue this until everyone in the prayer circle has been prayed for.

4) Share Insights. While this is happening, the Holy Spirit will sometimes give us a picture in our head (a vision) that relates to the need of the person being prayed for. Sometimes a 'prophetic prayer' is given. A scripture verse may come to mind that is to be shared. All these things (given by the Spirit) should be shared with the one who is being prayed for.

5) Ask For Confirmation. We should then ask the person with whom we shared the vision, prophetic prayer or scripture verse, "Did what was shared speak to your need? Did it address your concern? Was it accurate?"

If they say NO! then the person who mis-spoke should respond, "I'm learning and sometimes make mistakes. I'm sorry. I'll pray more this next week and ask the Lord to help me do better next time."

If they say YES! then give thanks to the Lord for helping you to help them.

b. Principles Of Prayer Circles. If the principles outlined above are followed, the prayer circles become valuable learning times. Keep in mind that these principles require three things:

1) Liberty for people to try — and in trying, to occasionally make mistakes.

2) Boundary. This means someone must verify that what is being shared is accurate and true. If it is not — then honest acknowledgement of...

3) Fallibility. This means we are capable of making a mistake.

Our character and giftings are to develop together — hand in hand. One does not

become a great "prophet" overnight.

There is a time of training and testing, of learning the ways of God's Holy Spirit. Then as we make mistakes and receive correction — we grow in our gifting and ministry. The home church is an ideal setting for this biblical model.

Most Bible schools and seminaries give very little time or attention to the Gifts of the Spirit. When they do, they almost never teach the students how to respond to the Holy Spirit's actions.

We can never learn how to move in the power of the Holy Spirit from a lecture outline. There has to be actual experience where we watch and work with others who have gifts.

c. The Early Church. In the early Church (the one in the New Testament), new believers were shown how to move in the power of the Holy Spirit in the small group-fellowships.

They could learn how to speak and act in faith, yet in divine order. They would be encouraged and corrected by wise and loving leaders.

The Fruit and Gifts of the Holy Spirit would be kept in balance. New believers could grow, therefore, both in character and in their calling. God cares as much about the "worker" as He does about the "work."

We need the counsel of godly leaders and the fellowship of our brothers and sisters to grow in the Lord. We learn by ministering His life to and with one another. We were not made to "go it alone!"

In the setting of the small group-fellowship, we must face the fruit of our actions with others. This will keep our lives in balance. Our character and calling — our motives and ministry — will develop in a sure, steady way.

Then, when we are ready to go forth to minister to the world, we will go with the blessing, approval and support of the local fellowship.

D. PUTTING PRINCIPLES INTO PRACTICE

We have set before you a number of principles concerning emotional, financial and spiritual support-systems. Three things should be kept in mind, however, when it comes to putting these ideas into practice.

1. It Must Be Done Carefully And Slowly

"The plans of those who are careful and steady in their efforts will be largely fulfilled, but a hasty, impatient spirit will lead to loss and shame" (Prov 21:5 smf).

God is not in a hurry. He wants to do things wisely and well. This means laying a careful foundation. You lay this foundation for the members in the following ways:

a. New Believers Training Manual. Begin by gently teaching the people **The New Believers Training Manual**. This will help them understand the divine purpose behind any changes that are before them.

b. Prayer Warrior. Teach them how to become prayer warriors, using Sections A4 and A5 of **The Leaders Training Guide**.

c. Baptism And Gifts Of The Spirit. Teach them about the Baptism in the Holy Spirit and the Gifts of the Spirit in Sections D1.1 – D1.3 of **The Leaders Training Guide**.

This will help them find what role they will play, and the blessing God has in store for them. This will lay to rest the fear many have of being trained for ministry to

others.

2. It Must Be Done From A Willing Heart

"You shall receive my offering from those who give with a willing heart" (Exo 25:2 smf).

Worship, work and service which is pleasing to the Lord should not be forced (coerced). This is against the law of love. Teach the people; then allow the Holy Spirit to motivate them to volunteer for service and training.

People who are informed and inspired — taught and touched by God's Spirit — will gladly and freely respond. A wise shepherd will lovingly but patiently **lead** his flock into growth and responsibility. They must not be pushed or rushed.

3. It Must Be Done With Everybody Altogether

"When the whole church comes together in one place... let everybody be ready to give a psalm, a teaching, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. Let all things be done in a way which will build up the church... For you all may prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be encouraged'" (I Cor 14:23, 26,31).

The key thought in these scriptures is that gifts and ministries will be learned only as they are put into practice in the church fellowship. We learn by doing things with and for each other.

Paul's use of the little word "all" over and over again clearly shows us that everyone is to be a part of the ministry.

It is not just for those few who by nature are more out-going and gifted. Everyone has a place and a function in the Body of Christ. In God's divine plan, we are all to learn from and with each other by His Spirit.

E. CONCLUSION

God has wisely given us divine principles and patterns. By them, His will for our day can be done through His people.

As we have gone to God's Word, we found that:

1. Every Member A Priest

He has set leaders in the Church to equip and prepare every person to be a royal priest in his own right.

2. Every Member Has A Ministry

That ministry can be discovered and developed within the personal setting of small group-fellowships.

3. Small Group-Fellowships Are Important

It is here that we can safely learn to:

- a. Worship God together;**
- b. Minister in the Gifts of the Spirit together; and**
- c. Go forth to witness to the world.**

This is how we become mature members of Christ's Body. This is God's will and God's way!

4. Leaders Must Provide

As leaders in the Church, let us then establish the support-systems to insure the spiritual development of our members. Let us provide for them:

- a. Emotional Support-Systems:** Fellowship (Koinonia).
- b. Financial Support-Systems:** Money for the needy.

c. Spiritual Support-Systems; Training in Spiritual Gifts and ministry.

If you do these things carefully and prayerfully — the Lord will add to your church those He saves.

Chapter 11

Ministry To The World: Witness

Introduction

Everyone will need to understand:

- **The plan...**WHAT will be done
- **The purpose...**WHY it will be done
- **The procedure...**HOW it will be done
- **The people...**WHO will do it
- **The place...**WHERE it will be done
- **The program...**WHEN it will be done

Jesus told His disciples that at the end of the age, the world would face a time of great distress and difficulty. Fear, hatred and greed would cause the nations of the world to war against one another. The "last days" will be dark days indeed (see Matthew 24; Luke 21).

"Darkness as black as night shall cover all the peoples of the earth, but the glory of the Lord will shine from you" (Isa 60:2 tlb).

There is a bright hope, however, for the Christian Church. When the darkness increases, the glory of God upon His people increases also. The Scriptures state that in the last days God will *"pour out his Spirit upon all people everywhere ...And whoever calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved"* (Acts 2:17,18,21 smf).

This teaches us that more people are going to hear the gospel and be saved in these last dark (but glory-filled) hours than at any other time in history. There is going to be a great end-time revival. The light of the gospel will shine into the darkness of a dying world.

God always brings a "warning" and a "witness" before times of great judgment. Grace spurned brings judgment. *"Repent; or else I will come... quickly, and will fight... with the sword of my mouth"* (Rev 2:16).

For this reason. God desires to unify the Church in her worship, work, warfare and witness. Revival will come only as Christ's power and glory are revealed through His Church throughout the world.

"Father, I pray that they all may be one... that the world might believe that you sent me... For this gospel of the kingdom must be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations. Then the end shall come" (John 17:20-21; Matt 24:14 smf).

A. RECONCILIATION: GOD'S PLAN/OUR MISSION

"Reconciliation" is a beautiful and wonderful word. It means to bring together in peace those who have broken fellowship with each other.

When man sinned, he opposed God and came under the control of His enemy — Satan. To disobey God is sin. And sin separates us from God and makes us His enemies.

God, in His grace, wants to forgive us our sins and bring us back into His family. In short, He wants us to be "reconciled" unto Himself and be at peace with Him. That is why He sent His Son into the world: to die for our sins. God wants to be our Father; He wants to be our friend!



Yes, reconciliation is a word filled with holy wonder. It is spoken from the very heart of God Himself. It tells us of His love and grace for all mankind. It speaks of His desire to bring all of the nations of the world unto Himself.

Nations are made up of people. And God loves people — even people who have sinned and sought their own will and way. Through sin, man lost his way with God and became His enemy. Through Christ, God seeks to bring the whole world back into a right relationship with Himself.

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his one and only Son. Whoever believes in him will not die, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16 smf).

God revealed to the Apostle Paul His great love for the nations of the world. Moreover, He set that same love in Paul's own heart. Listen carefully to these words written to the church at Corinth:

"God has reconciled us to himself through Christ. And he has given us this mission of bringing everyone into peace with him. Yes, God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself..."

"We are, therefore, 'ambassadors' of peace. We are royal ministers sent with this divine message: 'Be reconciled to God'" (2Cor 5:18-20 smf).

Truly, this is God's plan for the nations — that they be reconciled to Himself. God's purpose has always been to have a worldwide family. He wants a people who know, love, worship and serve Him with all of their being. He has never changed His mind; it is still the deep desire of His heart.

1. Men With A Mission

The Book of Acts is the story of men with a mission to reach the world for Christ. In the early chapters of the Book, we find men being chosen, called and prepared for their task.

The Lord gave them the time and training needed to "grow" in the Fruit of the Spirit — and "excel" in the Spiritual Gifts. This growing time involved ministry to the Lord and ministry to one another. The time finally came when they were equipped to minister to the world.

Their story is one of ordinary men (laymen, not clergymen) being used in most unusual ways. Little men with a great God on a glorious mission — to reach the world for Christ!

Acts 7 and 8 record how the first missionary movement in the Christian Church began.

a. Stephen — A Martyr. Chapter Seven is a story about a layman named Stephen. You recall that he was one of the seven chosen to serve tables. He became a great man of faith and performed many signs and wonders among the people. He was also a strong defender of the faith, and became the first Christian to give his life for Jesus. Stephen crowded a lot of God into his short life for God!

Chapter Seven marks a turning point in the Book of Acts. No longer is the action going to center mainly around the apostles in Jerusalem.

God's plan for "every member to be a minister" in Christ's Church will get underway. It will result in an "evangelistic explosion" — a gospel bombshell — which will be seen and heard far and wide. How it happens and who is involved makes very interesting reading.

b. Saul — A Persecutor. After Stephen's martyrdom, a man by the name of Saul

enters the story, and the church at Jerusalem would never again be the same. Let the record speak for itself:

"Saul rejoiced over Stephen's death, for he believed he deserved to die... Saul then began to destroy the church in a very cruel and terrible way. He went from house to house, dragging out the men and women and putting them into prison..."

*"As a result, all of the Christians — **except for the apostles** — were forced to flee Jerusalem. They spread out into the nearby regions of Judea and Samaria. Wherever they went, they preached the Word — the good news of the gospel" (Acts 8:1,3,4 smf).*

The church at Jerusalem is scattered through persecution. It is very clear that everyone is now on his own. No longer could they look to the apostles for direction or help.

Had they been properly trained and prepared for the hard and difficult days ahead? Could they function apart from the leadership in Jerusalem? Had Saul destroyed the only New Testament church that then existed?

Cruel treatment which is set to destroy a special group of people is called "persecution."

Did Saul succeed in such efforts against his helpless victims? Had the fires of persecution filled the hearts of the believers with fear? Would they dare speak out for their Lord?

The Scripture gives us the answer in a most certain way: *"Everywhere they went, they preached the Word!"* Saul had made the greatest mistake of his life. He had come against not only the Church of the living Christ, but the Christ of the living Church.

In his effort to stamp out the fire of the Spirit in Jerusalem, he succeeded — only in spreading and starting fires all throughout the region.

Yes, the apostles had done their job well: *"to equip the saints for service."* They had taught them how to pray and preach on their own — to hear and obey the voice of God. Therefore, when the time came, the Jerusalem church was ready to carry her witness on out to *"Judea, Samaria and the ends of the earth"* (Acts 1:8).

God actually used Satan's weapon of "persecution" as a means of moving His Church into action.

2. A Mission To The World

God knew that when His people were finally ready to go, everybody would have a part to play in His divine plan. They would be indeed a *"special people, a kingdom of priests, a holy nation"* (I Pet 2:9).

Their work and witness would not be easy. But they would be *"... strong and of good courage, because they knew God was with them, and that they would have good success wherever they went"* (see Joshua 1:6-9).

And go they did! And successful they were! The painful move from Jerusalem became a glorious mission to the world. Wherever they went in weakness, the gospel went in power!

a. All Must Hear. The mission of the early Church is the mission of the Church today. God still wants to reconcile the nations. He wants the good news of Jesus Christ to spread throughout the entire earth.

The word "nation" in Scripture refers to a people who have a common language, culture and/or geographic ties. It is a social grouping in which the people find an identity. These "nations" are called "people groups."

No tribe, tongue or "people group" is to be overlooked. All are to have the right or privilege of hearing about God's love for them. The task is great. Many throughout the world have never heard the Name of Jesus — not even once!

There are more than five billion (5,000,000,000) people in the world today, according to The U.S. Center For World Missions. These can be divided into some 24,000 different "people groups."

About 7,000 people groups have been reached with the gospel of Christ. They include some three billion people. Some 17,000 people groups, or 2.4 billion people, however, have never heard about the Lord Jesus Christ. That is close to 40 percent of the world's population!

Who are these people who are yet to be reached with the gospel? The main groups can be listed as follows:

PEOPLE GROUPS		POPULATION
Tribal	5,000	135 million
Chinese	4,000	774 million
Muslim	2,000	418 million
Hindu	3,000	561 million
Buddhist	1,000	264 million
Others	2,000	281 million

b. A Missionary Goal. Yes, the task is great, but not impossible. In fact, many missionary leaders believe the Great Commission of Christ to take the gospel to all "nations" could be achieved within ten years.

In 1983 there were some 1.4 billion Christians in the world. That means 1 out of every 3 persons calls himself a Christian. Furthermore, the Christian population is now growing at the rate of over 28 million per year.

Every year, over 50,000 new churches are formed in Asia and Africa alone. One hundred years ago there were no churches in Korea. In 1970 only 10 percent of the South Koreans were Christians. By 1980 they had grown to 20 percent. By 1984 the figure reached nearly 30 percent.

In 1949-1950 there were about 1 million Christians in China. All the Western missionaries were asked to leave. Some thought this might severely damage the Church. In recent years, as the door to China has again been opened, the strength of the Church was found to be most surprising. Instead of being damaged, it had grown to some 40 to 60 million!

The Church is growing rapidly in many places. In other places, however, the work of evangelism is much more difficult or even impossible.

There are few known Christians in the Mongolian People's Republic, in Albania, in Libya or in Afghanistan. France, Israel and Bangladesh are also very hard places in which to spread the gospel.

Nevertheless, 90 percent of the world is still open to the gospel. In some places, closed doors have even reopened. Sadly, we have not made the most of these open doors.

There are over 2.8 billion non-Christians in the world today. And, as was stated earlier, some 2.4 billion have never once heard the good news of God's love.

To reach them, cultural barriers will have to be crossed. The witness can come

only from without, for there is no church whatsoever within. It will take both a love for the lost and a well-directed effort to reach these "hidden people" for whom Christ died. This is why we need to be informed. Information is necessary to channel the power of God's love into those parts of the world which need it most.

Only in this way can the Great Commission of the Lord Jesus Christ be obeyed, and the task completed in this century. It can be done — if we will look, listen, pray and obey.

c. Invest In Missions. In view of this, God's people can never be satisfied until every "nation" has been reached with the gospel. This should be our highest aim and greatest goal.

Sadly, many are more interested in "getting" than in "giving." We pray for the day when most of God's people will be as willing to invest in missions as they are in material things.

Homes and material goods are important in our modern world, but they are not all-important. Bricks, boards and shiny metal will someday pass away, but the souls of men are eternal.

Jesus said that our hearts and treasure will always walk hand-in-hand. Where you find one, you will find the other (Matt 6:21).

Our desires and interests (heart) will always point in the direction of our values (treasure). We will give of our life, time, talent and energy to that which we feel is precious to us and of great worth.

The words of Jim Elliot, the missionary martyr to the Auca Indians in South America, speaks straight to our hearts: "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep, to gain what he cannot lose!"

d. Go Into All The World. It has been said that a man's last words will often be the most important words of his life. Words of great men have been recorded from their deathbeds for the benefit of those who remain — or are yet to be born.

We do know this: Jesus' last words were recorded, and they are very important. His parting words to His disciples were clear and direct.

"Go into all the world and preach the gospel to everyone, everywhere" (Mark 16:15 smf).

Jesus said to "go." In simple obedience, the Scripture tells us, they "**went.**" *"And the Lord went with them by his Spirit and backed up their words with signs and wonders"* (Mark 16:20 smf).

What He said to them and did for them He is saying and will do for us today. If we go and obey, Christ will honor His Word in our lives — and in our world — as He did in theirs.

e. What Should We Do. Every believer should be trained and equipped to fulfill this commandment. Then the believer should go out and preach the gospel, pray for those who go, and give their money — whether it is little or much — to support those who are chosen to use all their time to preach the gospel. Remember, this job can be done only during the harvest season; when the harvest season is past and the winter comes, it will be too late. It is the same with the Harvest of souls. We must preach the gospel today.

In eternity, the poor sinners we failed to tell about Christ will lament, *"The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved"* (Jer 8:20). When we get to Heaven, this failure may also cause us to weep and lament for a time. *"The Lord... shall*

wipe away all tears from their eyes..." (Rev 21:4).

No wonder the Apostle Paul warns us: "*Awake! ...sin not, for some have not the knowledge of God*" (I Cor 15:34). Paul is warning us that we can sin by failing to obey the Great Commission.

Take Jesus' words to heart: "*Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? Behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest*" (John 4:35).

Wait in worshipful prayer until you are baptized in the Holy Spirit. Start telling your relatives and friends what Jesus has done for you.

If they need healing, lay hands on the sick and pray for them to be healed. Cast out any devils you encounter. Be a soul-winner. Spread the blessings and victory of Christ. Triumph over Satan everywhere you go.

Let us therefore listen, learn, trust and obey — that we may truly become "*a treasured people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, and a powerful witness*" of God's truth and love... to the ends of the earth.

"And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a witness to all nations — and then will come the end... Even so, come Lord Jesus!" (Matt 24:14; Rev 22:20 smf).

SECTION E2

PRAISE AND WORSHIP

By Gerald Rowlands

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AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

The subject of Praise and Worship is one of the most important of all Bible themes. It is also one of the most neglected. To fail to practice pure spiritual praise and worship is to forego a vital aspect of our ultimate calling in Christ.

In recent years, God has been restoring this ministry to His people. An integral feature of the great spiritual renewal which is sweeping the world is the restoration of praise and worship to the Church, as prophesied by Joel (Joel 2:21,23,26).

It is to church leaders in the nations of Asia, Africa and Latin America that this study is dedicated. The prayer of my heart is that these truths will help inspire and

motivate many of my readers to become praisers and worshippers of God. This is what the Father is seeking: *"Worshippers, who worship in spirit and truth"* (John 4:23).

Chapter 1

The New Priesthood

Introduction

Under the Old Testament, God ordained a priesthood to represent His people (act as a go-between) before Him.

Their ministry involved a complicated system of ritual and ceremony. These ceremonies were symbolic of spiritual realities to come. They were the shadow of those things, but not the substance (Heb 8:5; 10:1).

The priestly ministry of Christ fulfilled every type implicit in the Old Testament priesthood. He has fulfilled all its symbolism. He is the fulfillment of all its types. The Levitical priesthood has now been replaced by a new priesthood (Heb 7:11-14). Under the terms of the New Covenant, every believer is a priest unto God.

We do not offer animal sacrifices, as did the Old Covenant priests. We are called to be a *"holy priesthood, to offer up **spiritual** sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ"* (I Pet 2:5).

One of the spiritual sacrifices we offer is praise. *'By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name'* (Heb 13:15).

The Greek word for "offer" is **anaphero**, which means to bring, raise up, offer up. It is the word used in Exodus 24:5 (in the Greek Septuagint version) where they "offered up" *"...burnt offerings, and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen unto the Lord."*

A. ASPECTS OF OLD TESTAMENT PRIESTHOOD

The word priest is associated with those who "draw near" to God. You will notice this privilege of the priesthood mentioned in Exodus 19:22, Deuteronomy 21:5 and Ezekiel 44:15. The word **priest** often refers to the sons of Aaron, but it has also a much wider application.

It is applied to Melchizedek (Gen 14:18), Jethro (Exo 3:1), and to the priests mentioned in Exodus 19:22-24 who exercised priestly ministries prior to the Levites being chosen as the priestly tribe.

1. Three Attributes Of Old Testament Priests

In Numbers 16:5 we see the three things which pertain to the Old Testament priesthood: *"... the Lord will show who are his, and who is holy; and will cause him to-come near unto him: whom he hath chosen..."*

a. Set Apart For Jehovah *"...those who are his. "*

b. Holy *"... and who is holy..."* **c. Ordained To Approach God** *"... will cause him to come near him."*

2. Three Attributes Described

a. Position. The first of these describes the **position** of the priest: he is sanctified;

set apart from the world and unto God.

b. Condition. The second describes his **condition**: he is holy — consecrated unto the Lord. Every vessel offered to God became holy unto the Lord (Lev 27:28).

c. Ministry And Function Of Priests And Community. The third describes his **ministry and function**: to draw near to God. This refers to every function the priest performed. Since the priesthood stood in the place of the people before God, their function also represents the essential elements on which the whole covenant community was based. They were to be:

- 1) **A called out, separated company;**
- 2) **A holy nation, a special (treasured) people;**
- 3) **A kingdom of priests unto God (Exo 19:4-6).**

3. Role Of New Covenant People

The New Testament also describes the role God has desired for His New Covenant people.

a. We Are The Ecclesia — the called-out company: called out of the "*Egypt of sin*" and the kingdom of Satan; and separated unto the Kingdom of God and His dear Son (Col 1:13).

b. We Are To Be A Holy People. Holiness is essential to fellowship and communion with God. '*Without holiness, no man shall see God*' (Heb 12:14).

c. To Draw Near To God and offer up spiritual sacrifices: "*...a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ*" (1 Pet2:5); "*...let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips...*" (Heb 13:15).

B. FURTHER ASPECTS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT PRIESTHOOD

1. Sonship

God selected the sons of Aaron to be priests (Exo 6:16-20; Num 3:6-10). Aaron was the first high priest.

2. Ordination

The sons of Aaron were ordained to the priesthood by Moses. We are also ordained to be priests unto God, by Jesus Christ (Rev 5:10).

3. Wholeness

"No man that hath a blemish... shall come nigh to offer the offerings of the Lord..." (Lev 21:17-21).

4. Cleansing

Priests were required to wash their hands and feet before entering the Holy Place (Exo 30:17-21; 40:30-32).

5. Clothing

See Exodus 28:40-43. When the priests ministered in the sanctuary, they were required to wear priestly garments.

"He shall put on the holy linen coat, and he shall have the linen breeches upon his flesh [loins], and shall be girded with a linen girdle, and with the linen mitre [headdress]

shall he be attired: these are holy garments..." (Lev 16:4). The clothing consisted of four pieces:

a. Coat: The coat, woven in one piece, without a seam.

b. Breeches: Linen breeches.

c. Girdle: A multicolored girdle, the same four colors as in the veil, which hung before the holy place.

d. Cap: A linen headdress (cap). We have spiritual garments for our priestly ministry. *"I will also clothe her priests with salvation..."* (Ps 132:16). Jesus says to us; *"I counsel you to buy of me... white raiment, that you may be clothed, and that the shame of your nakedness do not appear..."* (Rev 3:18).

6. Anointing

The candidate for priesthood was conducted to the door of the Tabernacle.

a. Washed: His body was washed with water. *"Let us draw near... having our... bodies washed with pure water"* (Heb 10:22).

b. Clothed: He was clothed with the priestly vestments. *"... but wait... until ye be clothed [Greek = enduo] with power from on high"* (Luke 24:49).

c. Anointed: He was anointed with holy oil (symbol of the Holy Spirit) (Exo 30:30).

"...He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit..." (2Cor 1:21,22 niv).

7. Priestly Ministry (I Pet 2:9)

(In the Tabernacle — unto the Lord)

a. In The Court: To keep the fire constantly burning on the altar of sacrifice (Lev 6:9,13).

To clear away the ashes from the altar (Lev 6:10,11).

To offer the morning and evening sacrifice (Exo 29:38-44).

To bless the people, after the daily sacrifice (Lev 9:22; Num 6:23-27).

To offer the sacrifices on the altar.

To blow the silver trumpets, or the jubilee horn.

b. In The Holy Place:

To burn incense on the golden altar morning and evening.

To clean and light the lamps every evening.

To place the shewbread on the table of shewbread every Sabbath.

This is but a brief outline of the priestly functions, but it serves to guide us as to our functions as a "Kingdom of Priests" unto our God.

C. NEW COVENANT PEOPLE ARE ALSO TO BE...

1. Sons Of God

We are the family of God (Eph3:15), and descendants of our High Priest — Jesus Christ (Heb 2:11, 13). Only the truly regenerated sons of God have access to the royal priesthood. It is through the new birth that the human spirit is *"made alive unto God"*.

Until this happens, we are totally incapable of offering the spiritual worship "*which the Father seeks*" (John 4:23,24). Spiritual worship is the Spirit of God worshipping through our redeemed, renewed spirit.

2. Ordained Priests Unto Our God

"...I have chosen you, and ordained you..." (John 15:16). As children of God, we are a "...royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people" (I Pet 2:9). Christ has made us "*a Kingdom of Priests to serve our God*" (Rev 5:10 niv).

3. Whole

We are complete [Greek = **pleeroo** meaning perfect or whole] *in Christ* (Col 2:10) — thus qualified to worship.

The physical imperfections and blemishes outlined in Leviticus 21:17-21 are symbolic to us. In the symbolic sense, there is an application to worshippers today.

It is those spiritual imperfections, of which the physical ones are a type, that can hinder our worship. God desires the praises of a WHOLE(SOME) people.

Our Christian life is to be consistent with that which we profess by our worship of God. We cannot praise God and, with the same mouth, curse man. These things ought not to be (Jas 3:9-11).

4. Cleansed

a. Old Testament Example: Before they went up to Bethel, to build an altar unto the Lord that they might worship Him, Jacob demanded of his household: "*Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean [wash yourselves] and change your garments*" (Gen 35:2).

Moses also insisted that Israel sanctify themselves and wash their clothes (Exo 19:10) in preparation for the manifestation of the Lord on the third day.

God insisted that the priests wash their hands and feet at the laver before entering to minister in the Tabernacle (Exo 30:18-21; 40:12-16).

We too "*are washed*" (I Cor 6:11) "*...by the water of the word*" (Eph 5:26), "*...by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost*" (Titus 3:5).

Nadab and Abihu died before the Lord for failure to comply with the requirements God had laid down for the priests who would minister to Him (Lev 20:1-3). God said, "*I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people, I will be glorified.*"

We need to take warning from this. It is not a light thing to come before the Lord. To perform the function of a priest under the Old Covenant was an immense privilege.

It is no less so today. In fact, it is more of a privilege now. The terms of our Covenant are far superior to that of the Old. It is important that we are not lax in our preparation for worship.

The priestly ministry of many congregations has ceased because, like Nadab and Abihu, they were not careful to fulfill the requirements God made of worshippers.

b. Results: Note these five results of being cleansed by the Blood, the Word and the Spirit:

1) A Pure Conscience (Heb 10:22). Our approach to God is no longer associated with sprinkling ourselves with the blood of animals. The sacrifice of Christ has

fulfilled all which that typified. Now it is the blood of Christ with which we are sprinkled. As we receive its power by faith, our hearts are "...sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water" (Heb 10:22). Only in this way can we draw near to God, in full assurance of faith.

2) Clean Hands (Ps 24:3,4). *"Who ...shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands..."* (Ps 24:3,4). *"Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands..."* (Jas4:8).

Here we have the New Covenant equivalent of the Old Covenant requirement, the washing of hands prior to ministering to the Lord. This means we must be clean in order to minister to others. We must dedicate our hands to working and avoid using our hands to steal and do other evil works.

3) A Pure Heart (Ps 24:3,4). *"Who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath... a pure heart..."* A pure heart indicates right motives. Why are we praising God? Are our motives right, or do we have secret, ulterior motives?

"Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you... and purify your hearts, you double minded" (Jas 4:8). In this verse, double-mindedness is associated with an impure heart.

A double-minded person whose mind (heart, affections) is on two things at the same time cannot be a true worshipper.

We should never attempt to offer worship unless our mind is set wholly upon the Lord. To offer praise while our thoughts are dwelling on other things is a dreadful insult to the Person and Character of God.

4) A Humble Heart And Spirit (Ps 51:17). *"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."*

The "broken spirit" David refers to is not a sad and heavy heart. The broken spirit refers to a spirit which has been "broken" by the dealings of God.

You cannot ride a horse until it is "broken." When broken, the horse submits to the will of the rider. The horse can then be guided and ridden; the rider will not be thrown off a horse who is broken.

A broken spirit refers to a spirit which has learned discipline and yields to the Lordship of Christ.

A contrite heart is a repentant and humble heart. This describes the condition of David's heart after the severe judgments of the Lord because of his sin of adultery with Bathsheba.

5) Reverence And Godly Fear (Ps 89:7). *"God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him."*

5. Clothed Upon

We are not called to wear special robes, as were the Old Covenant priests; but spiritually there is a very real sense in which we must be "clothed upon."

a. Clothed With Salvation. In Psalm 132:16, God says He will "...clothe his priests with salvation..." The clothing of the priests with linen garments was symbolic of two things:

1) The Hiding Of The Flesh. *"That no flesh should glory in his*

presence."

2) Free From The Curse And Self- Effort. God stipulated linen rather than wool, because linen does not cause one to perspire, as wool does — perspiration being symbolic of the curse and self-effort (Gen 3:19). Also, linen can be thoroughly cleansed. Wool can never be.

b. Clothed With Humility. In 1 Peter 5:5 we are exhorted to be "...clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud..." Carnal pride has no place in the presence of God.

c. Clothed With Righteousness. "...a great multitude... stood before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands" (Rev 7:9).

We are told in Revelation 19:8 that the fine linen (white robes) is the righteousness of the saints.

d. Clothed With Power. In Luke 24:49, Jesus commanded the disciples to wait in Jerusalem until they were endued (clothed) with power from on high. As the priests of old were anointed with oil prior to commencing their ministries, so must we be clothed with the Spirit's power in order to properly function in our role as priest.

Jesus Himself did not commence His ministry until He was clothed upon by the Spirit at Jordan (Matt 3:16).

6. Ministers As New Covenant Priests Offering Unto God

a. Ourselves (Rom 12:1 gnb). "*So then, my brothers, because of God's many mercies to us, I appeal to you: Offer yourselves as a living sacrifice to God, dedicated to his service, and pleasing to him. This is the true worship that you should offer.*"

Presenting our whole being to God means to be wholly and eternally His. Then we may bless the Lord with all that is within us (Ps 103:1).

We are three-part beings — spirit, soul and body. "*May your [1] spirit, [2] soul and [3] body be preserved sound and complete...*" (I Ths 5:23).

David instructs us to "*Bless the Lord... with all that is within me...*" (Ps 103:1).

1) Spirit. "*My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior*" (Luke 1:47).

2) Soul. "*Bless the Lord, O my soul...*" (Ps 103:1).

3) Body. "*...let all flesh [bodies] bless his holy name...*" (Ps 145:21).

b. The Sacrifice Of Praise (Heb 3:15,16). The term "*sacrifice of praise*" suggests that it is not always easy or convenient to do this. We are to praise the Lord at all times and not only when it is easy to do so. Our sacrifice of praise is the "fruit of our lips" — praise which is verbalized, spoken forth audibly.

c. Demonstrations Of Praise. "*...that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light*" (I Pet 2:9).

d. Our Singing Of Psalms, Hymns And Spiritual Songs. One way we maintain the Spirit-filled life is to sing. Three kinds of songs minister to the Lord: Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Spiritual songs are spontaneous songs given by the Spirit which speak to our need and minister to God's need to be loved, worshipped and adored (Eph 5:19; Col 3:16).

e. Our Wealth. "*Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the first fruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine*" (Prov 3:9,10 niv).

Under the Old Covenant, God required that when the priests came before Him, they should never come "empty-handed."

They should always bring an offering (I Chr 16:29; Exo 23:15; 34:20; Deut 16:16,17).

We should never come before Him empty-handed. We ought to come with praise, worship, adoration and thanksgiving, expressing our praise in songs, rejoicing, and with our substance.

Chapter 2

Vital Elements Of Praise

A. WHAT IS PRAISE?

If we could dissect and analyze praise, what would we discover at its core? What is the essence, the substance and nature of praise? Of what does true praise consist? What are the vital elements involved? Let's take a look first at some of the words in the Old Testament which are translated "praise," in order to discover something of the meaning and significance which they are intended to convey.

1. Old Testament Words Translated "Praise"

a. Hallal. This is the most frequently used word in the Old Testament for praise. It occurs some 88 times. Its primary meaning is "to produce a clear sound." Its further meaning is "to boast, to celebrate, to rave about, to glory in..."

True praise, therefore, should have a clear and distinct sound. There should be no confusion as to what is intended. It must be clearly recognizable for what it is. It is a note of celebration, a boasting in the Lord.

b. Hilluwi. Hilluwi (derived from Hallal) is a "celebration of thanksgiving for the completion of harvest." Such praise is to be expressed in merriment.

A post-harvest scene in any agricultural country would illustrate the essence of this word. The long months of anxious waiting are over. The harvest is safely gathered in. The hard work is finished, the tools are laid down, the crops are safely stored away. It is the time to celebrate the successful completion of the harvest. It is a time of merriment and celebration.

Singing and dancing are the order of the day. The rejoicing is an expression of thanksgiving and praise.

c. Tehillah. Tehillah is another word derived from hallal. This time the emphasis is on singing. Thus, we sing our hallal, our celebration! We sing forth a clear song of praise to God. We celebrate Him in song.

Songs and hymns should be clearly and unmistakably songs of praise to God. We are to boast about Him, in both the words and the music.

d. Shabach. This means to "shout with a loud voice, a shout of triumph, glorying in the victory!" Praise does not always have to be noisy. We do not always have to shout. But there are occasions when a triumphant shout is the only fitting manner in which to

praise our God. Psalm 47:1: "...shout unto God with the voice of triumph." When such occasions arise, do not be half-hearted; let your shout of praise be a resounding one.

e. Zamar. The meaning is "to touch or play the strings." Here is an obvious reference to praising God on musical instruments. It also has the sense of "singing praise to the, accompaniment of musical instruments." How wonderful to play unto the Lord on all kinds of instruments, making a glorious anthem of praise unto God.

f. Yadah. The primary meaning is "to give forth a confession of thanks." However, it also conveys the thought of "extending forth the hands," giving thanks with the hands extended towards God.

g. Towdah. This word comes from the same root as Yadah, and thus has a very similar meaning; but it is even more specific: It means "the extension of the hands in adoration and thanksgiving."

h. Barak. "To kneel in adoration." Here, the posture of the whole body speaks volumes of praise. To kneel before someone is to manifest humility, and to demonstrate their superior worth and position.

2. Ingredients Of Praise

Let us think for a moment of some of the ingredients we notice in these forms of praise.

a. Physical Expression. They are the physical enactment and demonstration of spiritual perceptions. Praise and worship is initially an inner response of the heart to a revelation of God and His greatness. In order for it to become true praise, it must be manifested.

b. Audible Sound. The possible exception is BARAK, to kneel in adoration; such a posture of worship could be demonstrated silently. However, we may also kneel AND sing or shout unto God.

c. Physical Action. Praise demands active physical participation. It cannot always be silent and inactive. Praise is something we DO!

d. Emotional Release. Praising God is NOT an emotional exercise; it is a spiritual activity. However, it does necessitate emotional release.

Far too many Christians are frightened of emotional expression. They are always seeking to suppress it, believing it to be carnal and fleshly. Biblical expressions of praise require a positive, controlled emotional release.

God gave us our emotions, and they are meant to glorify Him. David says we are to "*Bless the Lord with all that is within us*" (Ps 103:1). That includes our emotions. Human emotion must have expression.

If we do not provide a positive, healthy release, then there will be a negative, unhealthy release. Praising God is the healthiest way to release your emotions. It is the God-ordained way!

e. Reverence. Every true expression of praise should be reverent. Reverence is to honor and esteem someone properly.

Activities of praise should never be allowed to degenerate into irreverent excesses. Praising God is NOT merely a means of enjoying ourselves.

Praise is not primarily for the enjoyment of man, although we do enjoy expressing

it. It is, and always should be, an expression of reverence to God.

In releasing our emotions in praise, which is both biblical and legitimate, we should carefully avoid going to excess and merely making a show in the flesh. True reverence is always an essential ingredient of praise.

B. WHY SHOULD WE PRAISE THE LORD?

Psalm 47:7 says to "...sing praises with understanding." We should know why we are offering praises to God. Here are some of the scriptural reasons why we should do so:

1. Because Of Who He Is

"Praise ye the LORD..." (Ps 149:1). In other words, praise Him because He is the LORD. He is the ultimate authority. The highest power. The King of all kings and Lord above all lords.

He was before all things and is the Maker of all things. Therefore, He is greater than all things.

"Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised..." (Ps 48:1; 96:4).

2. Praise Glorifies God

"Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me..." (Ps 50:23). Surely this should be the great desire of all God's people: to glorify Him.

3. Because God Commands Us To

"Praise ye the Lord" is not a suggestion or a request. It is a commandment.

4. For All His Benefits

"Bless the Lord for all his benefits" (Ps 103:2).

5. For His Goodness

"Praise him for his goodness" (Ps 107:21).

6. For His Mighty Acts

"Praise him for his mighty acts" (Ps 150:2).

7. It Is Good

"It is a good thing to give thanks" (Ps 92:1,2; 147:1).

8. He Is Worthy

"The Lord is worthy of praise" (2Sam 22:4; Ps 18:3).

9. Praise Magnifies God (Ps 69:30)

10. Praise Is Proper

"Praise is comely! —for the upright" (Ps 33:1). The old English word "comely" means proper, right, fitting, appropriate, becoming and suitable. Unfortunately, some Christians seem to feel that praising God is unseemly and improper. They are concerned lest they should appear to be undignified. For some reason, they feel that this so-called dignity is the proper attitude for Christians.

However, the Bible projects the opposite view. God says the garment of praise is most becoming upon them. Rejoicing in God and praising the Lord is suitable and proper for the child of God. I would much prefer to have the approval of God than that of men!

11. God Inhabits Praise

"God dwells in the praises of his people" (Ps 22:3). The Holy One of Israel inhabits our praises! If our heart is filled with praise, it is also filled with God, for He inhabits our praises.

This is also true of our home or church. Fill them with praises, and they are filled with God's presence.

We can surround ourselves with God's presence by cultivating the attitude of praise. We shall then be more conscious of His presence than we are of problems, difficulties and adverse circumstances.

12. Praise Generates Power

In Psalm 84:4-7 David says, "*Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will still be praising thee... blessed is the man whose strength is in thee... they go from strength to strength...*"

The man who praises God has the Lord for his strength. He also knows the joy of the Lord through praise, and the joy of the Lord is his strength (Neh 8:10).

13. To Receive Right Desires

"The praising soul delights himself in the Lord, and God gives him the desires of his heart" (Ps 37:4).

So many people say, "If only God would grant me the desires of my heart, how I would praise Him for it!" The divine order is the reverse of that.

We praise Him, and delight in Him, and THEN He gives us the desires of our heart. God puts holy desires in the praising heart so we have the right desires. The "praisers" priorities are in order, and God then delights to grant those desires.

14. Praise Precedes Victory

King Jehoshaphat led God's people into battle against their enemies. God instructed him that he should appoint singers unto the Lord (2Chr 20).

They went before the army praising God and saying:

"Praise the Lord; for his mercy endureth forever." And when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushments against the children of Amman, Moab, and mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten" (2Chr 20:21,22).

Imagine an army being led by a choir! How strange to the natural mind to go into battle this way.

But *"... the weapons of our warfare are not carnal. They are strong to the pulling down of strongholds"* (2Cor 10:4).

As we face our enemy, we need to realize afresh the power of praise and go into battle with the high praises of God in our mouth. We can then expect to see the salvation of God.

The people who truly learn to praise the Lord are the people who will know His presence and power.

C. WHO SHOULD PRAISE THE LORD?

1. All Men Everywhere (Ps 145:21; 148:11-13)

2. All Flesh (Ps 145:21)

3. **Everything That Hath Breath (Ps 150:6)**
4. **The People Of God (Ps 79:13)**
5. **The Righteous (Ps 140:13)**
6. **The Saints (Ps 145:10)**
7. **The Redeemed (Ps 107:1,2)**
8. **Those Who Fear The Lord (Ps 22:23)**
9. **Those Who Know And Believe The Truth (ITim 4:3)**
10. **The Servants Of God (Ps 113:1; 134:1; 135:1)**
11. **All His Angels (Ps 148:2)**
12. **All Nature (Ps 148:3-10)**

D. WHEN ARE WE TO PRAISE THE LORD?

1. From Morning Till Night

"From the rising of the sun to the going down of the same the Lord's name is to be praised" (Ps 113:3).

2. All Day Long

"My mouth shall be filled with your honor and your praise all day" (Ps 71:8).

3. As Long As We Live (Ps 146:2)

"While I live I will praise the Lord..."

4. At All Times

"...his praise shall continually be in my mouth" (Ps 34:1).

5. In Times Of Depression

"Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, "For I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance and my God" (Ps 42:11).

6. In Everything

"Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph 5:20).

E. WHERE ARE WE TO PRAISE THE LORD?

1. In The Great Congregation

"...IN THE MIDST OF THE GREAT CONGREGATION will I praise thee" (Ps 22:22).

2. Among The People

"I will praise thee. O Lord, AMONG THE PEOPLE" (Ps 57:9).

3. In His Courts

"Enter INTO ...HIS COURTS with praise" (PS 100:4).

4. In The Assembly Of The Elders

"Let them exalt him also... and praise him IN THE ASSEMBLY OF THE

ELDERS" (Ps 107:32).

5. Among The Nations

"I will praise thee. O Lord, AMONG THE PEOPLE; and I will sing praises unto thee AMONG THE NATIONS" (Ps 108:3).

6. Among The Multitude

"...I will praise him AMONG THE MULTITUDE" (Ps 109:30).

7. *"...IN THE CONGREGATION..." (Ps 149:1).*

8. *"...IN THE SANCTUARY..." (Ps 150:1).*

Chapter3

Praise: Blessings And Hindrances

A. HOW PRAISE BRINGS GOD'S BLESSING

1. The Hydrological Cycle

In nature there is a cycle which brings great blessing to the earth. It is known as the HYDROLOGICAL CYCLE.

The Bible has a great deal to say about this. It is a two-step process:

a. Evaporation. Water evaporates from the oceans or lakes, then rises in the air mass and forms clouds.

b. Rainfall. Then the moisture condenses and comes down as rain to water the earth. This makes the land fruitful and productive.

It is used to illustrate this spiritual principle: As our praises rise up to Heaven, they form *"showers of blessing"* (Eze 34:26). These showers rain down on us as blessings from God.

"For he maketh small the drops of water: they pour down rain according to the vapor thereof..."

"Do you understand the process by which God produces clouds? ...He spreads light upon the ocean" (Job 36:27-30 pph).

God causes the sun to shine upon the ocean. The heat causes the water to evaporate (vaporize). As warm vapor, it rises up into Heaven where the vapors form clouds.

When the vapors cool, they distill and form drops of water. This forms the rain which *"...distills and drops upon man abundantly"* (vs 28).

2. Spiritual Truths

This natural process illustrates spiritual truth.

a. God Causes His Blessings To Shine On Mankind just as the sun shines upon the ocean.

b. Man's Heart Should Be Warmed toward God, in response to the blessings He has shone upon him.

c. Man's Praises Are To Arise to God like the vapors that are created by the sun on the ocean.

d. Those Praises Form Clouds Of Blessing.

e. God Causes Them To Distill into rain which pours forth on the earth.

f. The Blessing Of Rain makes the earth fruitful and prosperous, providing seed for the sower and bread for the eater.

g. The Excess Rain Forms Rivers, which run to the sea, from whence it originally came, and the whole process begins again.

3. Illustrations From Scripture

Consider the following scriptures which illustrate this process:

a. Amos 5:8; 9:6 — God *"...calleth for the waters of the sea and poureth them out upon the face of the earth..."*

Amos was a fanner, and understood very well the process by which rain is formed. Here he describes the process of evaporation. God *"calleth for the waters of the sea"* — He causes the ocean to evaporate and vaporize, and from those, vapors, pours down rain upon the face of the earth.

b. Psalm 147:7,8 — *"Sing unto the Lord with thanksgiving; sing praise upon the harp unto our God: who covereth the heaven with clouds, who prepareth rain for the earth, who maketh grass to grow upon the mountains."*

c. Proverbs 11:25 — *"The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself."*

As we sing praise to God, He forms clouds of blessing from our praises, from which He sends forth showers of blessing upon the earth. The amount of blessing is governed by the amount of praise we have sent up to God. Our liberality prompts God's liberal response.

During the future millennial (1,000-year) reign of Christ over the earth, all the peoples of earth will be required to **worship** Jehovah. If they fail to do so, God will withhold rain from their nation. *"And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain"* (Zech 14:17). No worship—no rain!

d. Ecclesiastes 1:7 — *"All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again."*

e. Ecclesiastes 11:3 — *"If the clouds befall of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth..."*

f. Hosea 6:3 — *"...He [the Lord] shall come to us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth."*

g. Isaiah 45:8 — *"Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation..."*

h. Zechariah 10:1 — *"Ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain; so the Lord shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain, to everyone grass in the field."*

i. Isaiah 55:10 — *"...the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and... waters the earth, and makes it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower,*

and bread to the eater."

j. James 5:7 — *"Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain."*

4. End-Time Outpouring

These scriptures clearly show that there will be an "end-time" outpouring of God's Spirit before the coming of the Lord. That period will be known as the ' *time of the latter rain*' (Zeeh 10:1).

The Spirit will fall from Heaven like a deluge of rain. Joel predicts an unprecedented outpouring: the "*...former rain and the latter rain [together] in the first month*" (Joel 2:23).

Normally, Israel experienced two rainy seasons. The first came early in the agricultural year, softened the ground and facilitated the planting of the seed. The second came after the dry summer months, at the end of the agricultural year.

(This was the time when the Feast of Trumpets was observed; see Section C 10.6). This latter rain matured the grain for harvest.

These were termed the former and latter rains. But the glorious outpouring of God's Spirit in the end times will be as though both these rains came together!

The Heavenly Husbandman is patiently waiting for this copious rain so that He can finally gather in the great Harvest. What will cause this great rain? The abundant worship of God's praising people — rising up to Heaven like great clouds of vapor!

He is going to raise up such a praising people in these last days; they will arise as a mighty army, marching through the earth. *"The high praises of God will be in their mouths, and two-edged swords in their hands"* (Ps 149:6).

Their praises will form abundant clouds of blessing. God will distill them, and send down showers of blessing greater than ever witnessed before. This outpouring will ripen the great final Harvest of precious souls.

B. HINDRANCES TO PRAISE

Even when people are persuaded that praise is scriptural, right and proper, it is still not always easy for them to begin to praise God. Many excuses have been offered in this regard.

People endeavor to explain why they cannot praise God. Some seek to excuse themselves because of their disposition or temperament. They plead shyness, or the fact that they are not "outgoing" or demonstrative.

The fact is that the Bible does not excuse anyone on any of these grounds. David says, *"Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord!"* (Ps 150:6). If you have breath, you are alive and you should praise God! Only *"...the dead praise not the Lord..."* (Ps 115:17).

There are some definite hindrances to praise, all of which God wants us to deal with and overcome. He will not accept any of them as a valid reason to not praise Him.

I. Sin

Sin is the first hindrance to praise. This is the basic reason why the unconverted

do not praise God. It is also one reason why some Christians do not.

Unconfessed sin inhibits us in the presence of God. If we are conscious of unforgiven sin in our life, we do not feel free or at ease in God's presence.

David said, "*If I regard iniquity in my heart, [if I am aware of sin in my life] the Lord will not hear me*" (Ps 66:18). Sin and iniquity separate us from God (Isa 59:2), and we lose whatever communion we may have previously enjoyed.

The realization of sin in our life ties our tongue before the Lord. The only thing we really feel free to speak to Him about under these circumstances is our sin.

There is a very obvious answer to this hindrance: Confess the sin to God and sincerely accept His forgiveness and cleansing, so that a right relationship can be restored and the flow of praise released (I Jn 1:9).

2. Condemnation

Even when we have been forgiven by the Lord, it is not always easy to forgive ourselves. Many Christians remain in condemnation. Though God has freely forgiven them, they cannot forgive themselves.

This often results in a sense of unworthiness. Freedom to worship is inhibited. They tend to "hang their heads" in God's presence. The sense of God's presence tends to make them more aware of their unworthiness. They do not feel affirmed in the mercy and grace of God which He has exercised towards them.

This kind of altitude often comes from being overly self-conscious instead of God-conscious. If we are constantly searching our hearts with a negative attitude, always looking for faults and weaknesses, naturally we will find them. Nobody is perfect.

This ultra-critical inspection of self is unhealthy. It focuses attention on self, instead of On Jesus.

The Bible entreats us to "*Look unto Jesus [Who is] the author and finisher of our faith*" (Heb 12:2). This accomplishes at least two things:

First, it gets our thoughts and attention off ourselves and onto Jesus.

Second, the more we look to Jesus, think about Him, meditate on Him, occupy our thoughts with Him, the more we desire to praise Him.

This is how praise begins — by looking to Jesus. Our admiration and appreciation for Him will grow continually as we do this. Our awareness of His worthiness will increase, and this will promote thoughts of praise and worship to Him.

3. Worldliness

Oliver Cromwell once defined "worldliness" as "everything which eooleth my affection for Jesus Christ." Worldliness is the opposite of spirituality. It is the condition prevailing when our minds and thoughts are centered on the things of this world, rather than the things of God and His Kingdom.

Worldly-minded people find praising God extremely embarrassing. It offends their carnal sense of dignity. The cure for this problem is to become more and more Christ-centered. As our awareness and appreciation of Him increases, Worldliness will decrease accordingly.

One of the symptoms of worldliness is an obsession about maintaining dignity and decorum — an over-consciousness of "What will people think?" — too much

concern about what people's reactions will be.

Our first concern as Christians is to please the Lord. This does not always please carnal man. If we become too concerned with pleasing men and winning their approval, we shall be in danger of displeasing God.

4. A Wrong Concept Of God

This is frequently a strong hindrance to praise. Many have a completely negative view of God. They see Him as Someone Who is constantly trying to catch them in some failing so that He can condemn them; they feel He is opposed to everything they do. They feel there is little hope of pleasing Him and enjoying His approval.

They view God as a creature who is determined to stop people from enjoying themselves in any way.

How could one ever think to praise such a God as this?

Praise begins to rise in our hearts only when we gain a right concept of God. The Holy Spirit must show Him to us as He really is.

Reading the Word of God is a wonderful cure for wrong concepts of God, but only if we are open and will allow the Spirit to reveal the truth to us.

Many who read the Bible have their minds closed to the truth. A true awareness of God, of who and what He is, will surely lead us to praise and worship.

5. Religious Traditions

In Christ's day, many allowed vain traditions of men to make void the Word of God (Matt 15:6). Unfortunately, there are many today who do the same thing.

A lot of Christians have been brought up in so-called Christian traditions, which frown upon praise and worship. Such traditions condemn praise as mere emotionalism.

Remember that "**Religion represses, but Redemption releases.**" Persons imprisoned in traditions of men frequently have wrong concepts of God too. God is an extremely negative being in their view. He is completely unemotional, stern and forbidding.

Those who believe in such a God become like this themselves. The cure for this condition is to have the courage to boldly expose our traditions to the Word of God, with an open heart and mind. Whenever the Holy Spirit reveals the error of your tradition, be willing to abandon it and embrace the Word of God instead.

6. Pride

Pride is a further hindrance to the release of praise. This is a difficult problem to deal with because of our unwillingness to acknowledge pride of heart. Our very egotism will not allow us to do so!

We are told: "*Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up*" (Jas4:10).

If we will not humble ourselves. God will resist us and break our pride, "*...be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and gives grace to the humble*" (I Pet 5:5).

Pride is so concerned with the self- image: always wanting to be well thought of; always wanting to be seen doing what is considered to be the right and proper thing.

7. Fear Of Man

Proverbs 29:25 tells us, "*The fear of man bringeth a snare.*" Fear of man, his thoughts and opinions, creates a real snare in which many have been caught.

*"The fear of **the Lord** is the beginning of wisdom..."* (Prov 9:10). If we truly reverence the Lord, we need never be afraid of man.

We should always seek to please the Lord in all things. Certainly we must praise Him in order to do this.

If men do not like it, that is their problem. Never allow their opinions to inhibit you or hinder your desire and intention to give to God the praise which is due Him.

8. Satanic Suppression

Finally we come to the most serious of all hindrances, a satanically inspired suppression of praise.

It is difficult for us to understand the deep hatred which Satan has for God, and how greatly he loathes hearing people praise God.

Satan wants the worship that belongs to God. You remember that in the temptation of Jesus, Satan asked Jesus to bow down and worship him (Matt 4:9).

It was Satan's deep-rooted jealousy of God which brought about his downfall. In his pride, he thinks himself greater than God (Isa 14:13, 14). He is filled with unreasonable jealousy whenever he hears God being praised and magnified. He therefore seeks to discourage and suppress all such praise.

When a person is under the influence of Satan, or one of his demons, this person may not be able to even say the Name of Jesus. When encouraged to do so, the throat freezes. The word just will not come out. It has also been noted that when the Name of Jesus is spoken in the presence of such people, the demons within them begin to rage.

Satan reacts strongly to even the very mention of that Name. His victim will sometimes froth at the mouth, fall into a fit, curse and blaspheme — so violent is the reaction against the praise of God or Jesus.

C. CONCLUSION

Whenever a Christian is aware of an aversion to praise, a sincere and honest searching of the heart should take place. He should prayerfully ask God to reveal to him the nature of his problem, and what it is that is restricting or blocking the flow of praise.

When this has been discovered, there must come a repentance and turning away from the hindrance. The person must set his heart to be obedient to God and give praise to Him.

If it still seems impossible to flow into praise, help should be sought from some mature and spiritually sensitive person. It may be that there is satanic oppression on the life which needs to be broken. Until this has been done, the person can never worship God in joy and freedom.

An inability to praise and worship God indicates a blockage somewhere. There is a basic problem which needs to be dealt with. Keep seeking God until victory comes, and rivers of praise are released from the innermost being!

Chapter 4

Scriptural Ways To Worship & Praise God

A. PRAISE AND WORSHIP: THERE IS A DIFFERENCE

1. Thanksgiving

Praise is primarily the expression of admiration and approval. In its fullest sense, it also includes the expression of gratitude and thanksgiving for favors received. Thus, praise and thanksgiving are frequently linked together.

However, the purest forms of praise do not include thanks and gratitude. They are essentially expressions of admiration and adoration to the object of one's praise, irrespective of whether or not favors have been received. Some feel this higher form of praise should be called "WORSHIP."

2. Adoration

Worship of God, therefore, is primarily the extolling of His person, character, attributes and perfection. It is the adoration of God for who and what He is, rather than for anything He has done from which we have benefited. *"Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness"* (Ps 29:2).

Worship is first an inner awareness of worth. It is subsequently an outward expression of that inner appreciation. It does not become worship until it finds outward expression.

While it remains within the heart and mind, it is admiration. When it finds expression and becomes vocal or visible, it is then worship.

B. VOCAL EXPRESSIONS OF PRAISE AND WORSHIP

There are many scriptural ways in which we may express our praise to God. We are now going to look at some of these.

Our list may not be exhaustive. You may be able to find other ways which are equally scriptural. I believe that God wants every Christian to be free enough in their spirit to be able to praise Him in any and all of the ways found in the Bible.

If you are conscious of praise within your heart which has never been given adequate expression, let me suggest that you study these various expressions. Look up the scripture references cited and prayerfully consider the context and significance, then PRACTICE whatever expression you are considering.

For example, if you are studying the references to shouting, then go ahead and shout unto the Lord.

You will discover a tremendous release in doing it. Something will be set free within you; a new dimension of joy will be released within. This is because you are being obedient to God, and you are beginning to praise Him in new ways which He has ordained for you in His Word.

Should you be teaching others these principles of praise, get them to DO each one as you teach. Don't be content to only talk about these methods of praise; have the people participate and actually do what you are teaching.

1. Praising God With The Voice

"That I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all thy wondrous works" (Ps 26:7). "...I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise..." (Ps 42:4). "My lips shall greatly rejoice... My tongue also shall talk of thy righteousness all the day long..." (Ps 71:23,24).

David was constantly speaking forth the praises of God. He would say things like, *"The Lord is my strength, and my shield; My heart trusted in him and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth..." (Ps 28:7).*

We should also cultivate the habit of talking about the Lord and His wonderful works. Begin each day by speaking forth praise to God. Tell Him how great and wonderful He is, how you love Him and appreciate Him. Thank Him for a new day, and begin to praise Him for His presence with you throughout that day.

Employ your voice, your lips, your mouth. Make them instruments of praise. You will be surprised how quickly you will cultivate the habit of praise.

"I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth" (Ps 34:1).

"Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee: let such as love thy salvation say continually, the Lord be magnified" (Ps 40:16).

"O bless our God, ye people, and make the voice of his praise to be heard" (Ps 66:8).

2. Shouting Unto God

The verbal praise we have spoken about in the previous segment requires only conversational volume. We are speaking to God in a conversational manner, telling Him our opinion of Him and expressing our appreciation. However, there are also times when it is fitting and scriptural to raise our voices and really shout unto God. *"SHOUT UNTO GOD with the voice of triumph" (Ps 47:1).*

Many conservative people are very averse to shouting or making any kind of loud noise. They feel it is undignified.

Some have even said, "There is no need to shout; God is not deaf!" To which we would reply, "God is not nervous either!"

There is a time and place for the joyful noise and the shout of praise, and we should not be afraid to do it when that time comes.

"But let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice: let them ever shout for joy.." (Ps5:11).

"Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, ye righteous; and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart" (Ps 32:11).

"Let them shout for joy, and be glad, that favor my righteous cause ..." (Ps 35:27).

"Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness, and let thy saints shout for joy...and her saints shall shout aloud for joy" (Ps 132:9,16).

"Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee" (Isa 12:6).

"Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem" (Zeph3:14).

"And the glory of the Lord appeared unto all the people... which when all the people saw, they shouted, and fell on their faces" (Lev 9:23,24).

"And when the ark of the covenant of the Lord came into the camp, all Israel shouted with a great shout, so that the earth rang again" (I Sam 4:5).

3. Singing

"... Come before his presence with singing" (Ps 100:2). Singing is one of the simplest and most natural reactions to the wonder of God. It is a spontaneous expression of joyful emotion. It has always been a valid expression of praise amongst God's people.

Immediately after the exodus from Egypt, when God had brought them safely through the Red Sea, Miriam led the children of Israel in singing the praises of God. They had been miraculously and wonderfully delivered from the hand of their enemies. *"And Miriam answered them, Sing ye to the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea" (Exo 15:21).*

There are many references to singing throughout the Scriptures. Here are but a few:

"...I will sing unto the Lord, I will sing praise to the Lord God of Israel" (Judg 5:3).

"Therefore I will give thanks unto thee, O Lord, among the heathen, and I will sing praises unto thy name" (2Sam 22:50).

"Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him, talk ye of all his wondrous works" (I Chr 16:9).

"Moreover Hezekiah the king and the princes commanded the Levites to sing praise unto the Lord with the words of David, and of Asaph the seer. And they sang praises with gladness, and they bowed their heads and worshipped" (2Chr 29:30).

"I will praise the Lord according to his righteousness: and will sing praise to the name of the Lord most high" (Ps 7:17).

"I will be glad and rejoice in thee: I will sing praise to thy name, O thou Most High" (Ps 9:2).

"Sing praises to the Lord, which dwelleth in Zion..." (Ps 9:11).

"I will sing unto the Lord, because he hath dealt bountifully with me" (Ps 13:6).

"Be thou exalted, Lord, in thine own strength: so will we sing and praise thy power" (Ps 21:13).

"...I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the Lord" (Ps 27:6).

"Sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness" (Ps 30:4).

"Sing unto him a new song; play skillfully with a loud noise" (Ps 33:3).

"Sing praises to God, sing praises: sing praises unto our King, sing praises. For God is the King of all the earth; sing ye praises with understanding" (Ps 47:6,7).

"My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise" (Ps 57:7).

"But I will sing of thy power; yea, I will sing aloud of thy mercy in the morning: for thou hast been my defense and refuge in the day of my trouble. Unto thee, O my strength, will I sing: for God is my defense, and the God of my mercy" (Ps 59:16,17)

"So will I sing praise unto thy name forever, so that I may daily perform my vows" (Ps 61:5).

There are many other references to singing praise to God, but these few will suffice to give some idea of the importance of singing.

Singing is a sign of gladness and contentment. It is a sign of joy, indicating a satisfaction with one's lot in life.

It is a healthy expression of positive emotion which ministers strength to the total being.

God delights to hear us singing His praises.

a. A Variety Of Songs. In Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16, we are exhorted to sing *"...psalms and hymns and spiritual songs... to the Lord."*

The Psalms have provided a tremendous amount of material for worship in song — from old traditional hymns to modern choruses taken directly from them.

Hymns have also provided great themes to inspire the Church and furnish her with anthems of praise.

Spiritual songs are somewhat different from either of these previous categories. They are songs given directly by the Spirit and sung spontaneously as the Spirit supplies both words and melody.

These songs may be in the language of the person singing, in which case they are sung *"...with the understanding..."* (I Cor 14:15). At other times, the lyrics may be in "other tongues," in which case the mind of the person is *".. .unfruitful"* (I Cor 14:14).

The mind has no natural understanding of what is being sung, yet at the same time knows intuitively that the Spirit is praising and magnifying God, frequently with the "tongues of angels."

In both cases the songs are completely spontaneous and unplanned. The songs are rendered by faith. The singer, listening to the Spirit of God within his own spirit, faithfully follows the melody and words which the Spirit supplies.

C. PHYSICAL EXPRESSIONS OF PRAISE AND WORSHIP

In addition to verbal, audible expressions of praise, the Bible cites many ways in which we can use physical expressions in order to worship God.

1. Standing

To stand erect is always a sign of respect. If a person of importance enters a room, those already present will rise to their feet to honor and show respect to that person.

Frequently the Holy Spirit will inspire us to stand before the Lord as an act of worship and reverence. *"Let all the earth fear the Lord: let all the inhabitants of the world STAND in awe of him"* (Ps 33:8).

"Bless ye the Lord, all ye servants of the Lord, which by night stand in the house of the Lord.... Praise ye the Lord. Praise him, O ye servants of the Lord. Ye that stand in the house of the Lord, in the courts of the house of our God" (Ps 134:1; 135:1,2).

2. Raising The Hands

Raised hands are a universal sign of surrender. By raising our hands high before

the Lord, we acknowledge that we are completely surrendered to Him.

We tell Him again that we are unconditionally His.

We have no desire to rebel against Him; we have no weapons in our hands to fight against Him.

People who are NOT wholly surrendered to God have great problems in doing this, though it appears to be such a simple thing. They strongly resist this mode of worship. However, once they have done it, great release comes and they are frequently able to express praise in many other ways also.

"Lift up your hands in the sanctuary, and bless the Lord" (Ps 134:2). It is also a sign of deep longing after God. "Hear the voice of my supplications, when I cry unto thee, when I lift up my hands towards thy holy oracle" (Ps 28:2).

It is also symbolic of spiritual thirst after God. *"I stretch forth my hands unto thee; my soul thirsteth after thee, as a thirsty land"* (Ps 143:6).

3. Clapping Our Hands

When someone does something which wins our admiration and approval, and we want to let them know they have done so, we frequently put our hands together and clap.

Perhaps a concert pianist plays a truly beautiful piece which the audience thoroughly enjoys; they will usually break forth into spontaneous clapping. If they wish to express their approval even more obviously, they will often stand to their feet and clap their hands. We call this a standing ovation. When God is so wonderful, and has done so many glorious things which win our admiration and approval, is it so strange that we would want to applaud Him?

We are commanded to clap our hands unto God. *"O clap your hands, all ye people..."* (Ps 47:1). It is a sign of gladness, rejoicing and approval.

4. Bowing Low Or Kneeling

Often when people are overcome with the sense of God's presence and glory, they will spontaneously fall on their knees or bow before God. It is a gesture of reverence and respect.

"O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker" (Ps 95:6).

One day every knee shall bow before Him (Phil 2:10).

5. Falling Prostrate Before God

Here is another extreme form of obeisance and worship. To fall before and lie in front of someone is a sign of deepest reverence. We are humbling ourselves to increase the sense of elevation of the One before Whom we prostrate ourselves.

6. Dancing

Because dancing is a highly demonstrative and perhaps somewhat emotional form of praise, it has met with a good deal of criticism and opposition, mostly from conservative people. Because of this controversy, I have given more space to the consideration of this subject.

Dancing involves the use of the whole body in order to express joy, praise and worship before the Lord. The Hebrew and Greek words translated "dance" in the Scriptures have a variety of meanings — including "leaping, skipping, lifting up the feet

and jumping."

These indicate something of the spontaneous, unstructured nature of such dancing. This dancing is not usually done according to prescribed and programmed (choreographed) movements, but rather simple, spontaneous responses of joy before the Lord.

Such incidents as that recorded in Acts 3:8 in which the previously lame man went off "...walking and leaping, and praising God" can now be seen in a different light.

This is particularly so when we remember the integral part that dancing has always played in the worship of the children of Israel.

"Let them praise his name in the dance..." (Ps 149:3).

"Praise him with the timbrel and dance..." (Ps 150:4).

a. Instances Of Dancing In The Bible

1) To Celebrate Salvation And Deliverance. *"And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels [tambourines] and with dances"* (Exo 15:20).

"And Jephthah came to Mizpeh unto his house, and behold, his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and with dances.." (Judg 11:34). He was returning from a great victory.

2) To Rejoice Because Of Restoration. When the Ark of the Covenant was being restored to Jerusalem, *"David danced before the Lord with all his might..."* (2 Sam 6:14).

"Michal. ...saw King David leaping and dancing before the Lord" (2Sam 6:16).

"...Michal saw King David dancing and playing..." (I Chr 15:29).

Jeremiah prophesied concerning the glorious restoration to come: *"...Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance, both young men and old men together: for I will turn their mourning into joy, and wilt comfort them, and make them rejoice from their sorrow"* (Jer 31:13).

According to Lamentations 5:15, their dances had been turned to mourning when they were taken into captivity. In Jeremiah 31:13, we see that the dance was restored when they were brought out of captivity again.

In Joel 1:12, we see that drought and barrenness come upon God's people when *"...joy is withered away from the sons of men."*

The joy and laughter which accompanies a return from captivity is a testimony to the heathen that *"The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad* (Ps 126:3).

3) Dancing In The New Testament. It has been argued, by those who would oppose dancing in the Church today, that it was purely an Old Testament phenomenon and has no place in the New Testament church.

However, when reading the New Testament, this expression is there also.

When the lame man was healed, he responded with enthusiasm: *"And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God"* (Acts 3:8).

When Paul saw the lame man at Lystra, he *"said with a loud voice, 'Stand upright on thy feet.' And he leaped and walked"* (Acts 14:10). His leaping was obviously a joyful

response to his miracle of healing.

One of the Greek words for joy which appear frequently in the New Testament is **agalliao**, which means literally "to leap for joy."

This is not a deep, inner type of joy; rather, it is a dynamic, emotive expression of tremendous joy, which makes one literally "jump for joy." Here are a few places where it occurs in the New Testament:

Jesus said, "*Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy [agalliao]: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven...*" (Luke 6:23).

Mary said, "*My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced [agalliao] in God my savior*" (Luke 1:46,47).

The jailer "*...rejoiced [agalliao], believing in God with all his house*" (Acts 16:34).

"*But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy [agalliao]*" (I Pet 4:13).

Right at the end of the New Testament, we encounter an exhortation to "*Be glad and rejoice [agalliao —jump for joy], and give honor to him [Christ]; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready*" (Rev 19:7).

When the prodigal son was restored to his father, there was '*music and dancing*'" (Luke 15:25).

When the restoration of all things spoken by the prophets takes place (Acts 3:21-24), there must also be dancing, for this is one of those things spoken by the prophets (Jer 31:13).

b. Some Aspects Of Scriptural Dancing:

1) It Is Spontaneous And Unsophisticated In Style. Not a highly structured, practiced and precision mode.

It may be expressed in leaping, jumping, skipping and gyrating. It was some times accompanied by music from instruments (1 Chr 15:29; Ps 149:3). It was often accompanied by singing (Exo 15:20,21).

2) It May Be Practiced By An Individual Or As A Group. David danced before the Lord. Miriam and ALL the women danced.

3) It Is Not Dancing With A Member Of The Opposite Sex. Miriam and all the women danced (Exo 15:20). Young men and old men together (Jer 31:13).

4) There Is No Age Limit On It. Young men and old together.

5) Singing And Dancing Often Went Together. "*Is not this David, of whom they sang one to another in dances, saying Saul slew his thousands, David his ten thousands?*" (I Sam 29:5).

6) There Is A Right Time To Dance. '*A time to mourn... and a time to dance*'" (Eccl 3:4).

7) God Has Prophesied A Restoration Of Dancing. "*...and shall go forth in the dances of them that make merry*" (Jer 31:4).

"*Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance...*" (Jer 31:13).

c. WARNING !!! Dancing of a carnal nature is also associated with backsliding, idolatry, immorality and worldliness. (For example, see Exodus 32:19 — dancing around

the golden calf.) Satan has a counterfeit for everything. Counterfeits prove only the reality of the genuine and original.

The fact that Satan may counterfeit something does not mean that we should not practice the genuine.

7. Playing A Musical Instrument

Musical instruments were frequently used in Scripture to express praise and worship. They can also play a vital part in worship today.

We are commanded to "*Praise him with the sound of the trumpet; praise him with the psaltery and harp. Praise him with the timbrel and dance: praise him with stringed instruments and organs. Praise him upon the loud cymbals*" (Ps 150:35).

a. Playing "In The Spirit". Those musicians, who would offer praises on their instruments, must seek to excel in doing so. They must apply themselves to "play skillfully" on their instruments (Ps 33:3). This does not necessarily imply the skill of precision. It is not the offering of skillful human ability.

It is a spiritual skill, rather than natural talent. The skill is not only in the playing of the instrument, but in interpreting the mood of the Spirit. We call this "playing in the Spirit."

1) David's Skillful Playing On The Harp drove the evil spirits from Saul (I Sam 16:23).

2) Musicians Can Produce An Atmosphere conducive to the exercise of spiritual gifts.

3) 4,000 Musicians Praised The Lord on their instruments at the dedication of Solomon's temple (I Chr 23:5).

"And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: and they sung as it were a new song before the throne..." (Rev 14:2,3). This would indicate there are instruments and musicians in Heaven.

8. Silence

In complete contrast to the sounds of singing, musical instruments, dancing, etc., is the expression of praise through silence: "*...a time to keep silence, and a time to speak*" (Eccl 3:7).

Do not be afraid of silence. Some times the Holy Spirit will bring a holy hush upon a congregation. In these times, the silence becomes profound and eloquent. There is often a great sense of awe and reverence during such periods. One can stand (or sit) silently before God, contemplating, adoring and worshipping Him. "*Be still, and know that I am God...*" (Ps 46:10).

9. Weeping

Weeping can also be a legitimate response of praise to God. It is not the weeping of sorrow or heartache, but of gratitude and thanksgiving. Sometimes, as we meditate on the greatness and goodness of God, the only appropriate response to His goodness is to weep tears of gratitude.

Do not be afraid to do this. It is not a sign of weakness. Let the tears flow. Our human reaction is often to refrain from tears.

However, weeping can sometimes express the deepest longings of our being in a manner which nothing else can. It often brings a deep release and liberation.

One should not be given to too much weeping as this can be a sign that something is wrong in the inner being, and in such cases there may be a need for inner healing.

When Nehemiah began to read and explain the Word of God, the people wept when they heard it. Nehemiah allowed them to weep for a time, but then he interrupted their weeping and instructed them to "...Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, ...neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the Lord is your strength" (Neh8:10).

Too much weeping weakens one, whereas the joy of the Lord is a source of strength.

10. Laughter

There is such a thing as "holy laughter," when a desire to laugh unto the Lord comes upon one.

This is not a response to something humorous which someone has said. It is an expression of such heightened joy in the Lord that the only way to express it is through laughter.

"...Blessed are you that weep now: for you shall laugh" (Luke 6:21).

The children of Israel experienced this upon their return from captivity. *"Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing..." (Ps 126:2).*

"Behold, God will not cast away a perfect man ...till he fill thy mouth with laughing, and thy lips with rejoicing" (Job 8:20,21).

11. Marching

God frequently commanded His people to march. Probably the best known instance of this was the march around Jericho (Josh 6:2-5). Israel marched in response to God's command, and Jehovah brought down the walls of Jericho.

Many walls still fall when God's people march in response to His direction — walls of pride, unbelief, spiritual bondage, etc.

Jehoshaphat and his army marched and sang praises to God, and God delivered their enemies into their hand even though they were badly outnumbered (2Chr 20:20-22).

Many congregations have marched around in response to a prompting of the Spirit. Marching around a church building may have seemed, to the natural mind, to be as ridiculous as marching around Jericho. But often the results have been almost as dramatic.

Walls of bondage, pride and bitterness have been brought tumbling down. This type of march has sometimes been called a "Jericho March." Others call it a "glory march."

The Bride of Christ is pictured as an army marching forward together (Song 6:4,10).

12. Rejoicing

Rejoicing in the Lord is yet another way of praising God. When Nehemiah came into the king's presence with a sad face, the king knew immediately that something was drastically wrong. Nehemiah says, *"He had never seen me look sad before, so he asked, 'Why are you looking so sad? You aren't ill, so it must be that you are unhappy'"* (Neh 2:2 gnb).

Nehemiah was sore afraid. To come before the king with a sad face seemed to be an indication that he was unhappy in the king's service. This would be an insult to the king and would not be tolerated by him. This was why Nehemiah was afraid. He quickly began to explain the reason for his sad countenance, and that it had nothing to do with the conditions under which he was serving the king.

No one would dare come before the king with a sad countenance and manner, yet many Christians come before the King of kings with sad and mournful dispositions. To do so is an insult to God. It is an indication that we are far from satisfied with our lot under His rule.

The proper manner in which to appear before the King is with rejoicing. This indicates that we are delighted with our position.

We are thankful for the honor bestowed on us, to be servants of the King! The people of God were frequently told, "*And ye shall rejoice before the Lord your God*" (Deut 12:12).

God was instituting a place where He could meet with them. "*Then there shall be a place which the Lord your God shall choose to cause his name to dwell there: to that place shall you bring all that I command you... And ye shall rejoice before the Lord your God, ye, and your sons, and your daughters, and your men servants...*" (Deut 12:11-12).

Thus God decreed that when we come into the place which He has ordained for us to meet with Him, we should come there with rejoicing. David understood this when he said he would "*Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise...*" (Ps 100:4).

When the children of Israel kept the Feasts of the Lord, they were to rejoice before the Lord. "*...and ye shall rejoice before the Lord your God...*" (Lev 23:40).

Rejoicing is a way of expressing thanksgiving and praise. When we give a gift to someone, their rejoicing indicates their pleasure and appreciation.

So, too, when we rejoice before the Lord, we express our pleasure in Him and our appreciation of Him. It is a great pity that so many churches have instilled the idea that reverence is solemnity, quietness and soberness.

They seem to feel that to express joy and gladness is the height of irreverence. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Christians should be the most joyful people in the community, and their rejoicing should be obvious to all. The church meeting should be a celebration. It would then attract many more people, for it would more faithfully reflect the true nature of God.

Instead, many modern churches often repel people by their coldness and dreariness. They are so solemn and heavy. The atmosphere is so stiff and formal. The people conduct themselves in such a false, religious and unnatural manner. It should not be so. Let us return to the spirit of rejoicing before the Lord.

There are many ways in which our rejoicing can be expressed. Singing joyful songs instead of mournful dirges is one way. Raising our hands, clapping and dancing are some of the other means.

Rejoicing in the Lord will cause us to be much more relaxed in God's presence. We need less formality and more reality! This world is a sad enough place without our adding to its sadness. Let us aim to brighten it up, for we are the light of the world.

In the New Testament, the Greek word "**agallia**" (discussed previously — see "dancing") is translated "rejoice!" This literally means 'to jump for joy,' to rejoice exceedingly, to be exceeding glad, with exceeding joy.

Here is an expression of joy which is free and uninhibited, spontaneous and expressive — so free that it might cause us to even skip and leap for joy, with childlike delight.

D. SUMMARY

Remember that these expressions of praise are worthwhile only if they are truly giving expression to praise which is in our hearts.

Merely going through the motions, like a mechanical robot, does not constitute praise. They are merely a means of giving expression to the admiration, thanksgiving and respect which is within us.

Chapter 5

Offering The Sacrifice Of Praise

"By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name" (Heb 13:15).

A. WHAT IS THE SACRIFICE OF PRAISE?

There is a distinct difference between praising God and offering the "sacrifice of praise."

For a child of God in right relationship to the Father, praise is usually something which flows easily. We have so much to praise God for, that whenever we think about Him, there should be a spontaneous flow of praise from our hearts.

Our praise usually involves thanksgiving too, and we minister to God in praise for all the blessings and benefits He has brought into our lives.

The "sacrifice of praise" is somewhat different. It does not usually flow easily and spontaneously. It is not the praise we offer because everything is going nicely and we are happy and blessed. The sacrifice of praise is something we offer to God when we do not feel like praising Him.

Everything seems to be going wrong. Our world seems to be falling apart. In these circumstances, we are praising God not because of our circumstances but despite them.

Our praise is not ascending because we feel great and want to give expression to our good feeling. In this situation, we are praising God by faith. We are praising Him in obedience. We are praising Him for who He is and not particularly for what He has done.

This kind of praise does not come easily. It is not a cheap thing. It is costly. But it brings special delight to the heart of the Father, and He loves to receive the sacrifice of praise.

1. It Is Continual Praise

David learned the secret of this. He said, *"I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth"* (Ps34:1).

This praise is not spasmodic and erratic. It is not "fair weather" praise. It is not cheap, easy praise which costs nothing.

It is not sentimental praise. It is not superficial and empty. It is consistent. It is offered to God continually; in the good times, and in the bad times, when everything is fine, and when nothing seems to be going right.

We praise in those times when "the Lord giveth," and those times when "the Lord taketh away." In such times we are enabled to say, *"...blessed be the name of the Lord"* (Job 1:21).

It is praising God when the baby dies, and we do not understand why.

It is praising God when sickness has struck and doctors say there is no hope.

It is praising God when you lose your job, when you are miles from anywhere, without a jack, and your car has a flat tire.

It is especially in those times when the heavens seem to be brass. God seems to be a million miles away. Your prayers do not seem to be heard, much less answered.

When you cannot immediately think of anything for which you want to praise God, but you praise Him just the same — that is the sacrifice of praise.

It is the praise you offer to God when it really costs you something to do it. Your natural feelings argue against it. Your friends discourage you. Your heart is heavy; there is no spring in your stride.

The devil says, "What have you got to praise God for?" He says, "No one can be expected to praise God in this kind of situation. Even God would not expect you to do it. It would be fanatical." Nevertheless, you know deep inside that God is worthy to be praised. You know that He is still on the throne. He is still the Almighty, the God of the whole universe. He has not changed in any way. He is the same, yesterday, today and forever. Praise His wonderful Name!

2. It Is Audible Praise

It is the fruit of our lips. Our lips produce words. They help to verbalize our thoughts.

So the sacrifice of praise is something we say.

Something we speak out.

Satan can hear it.

People can hear it.

We can hear it ourselves.

And, most important. God can hear it.

It was the sacrifice of praise which Paul and Silas offered to God at midnight, when they were held fast in the deepest dungeon (Acts 16:25).

They had been thrown into prison for speaking about Jesus. They were not criminals. They had not committed some grievous crime. They were spreading the good news of the Kingdom, and were thrown into prison for their efforts.

They had been beaten with many stripes. Their backs were open and bleeding. They were sore. Their wounds were raw. Every nerve in their bodies was screaming out. Every inch of their backs was painful. Their hands and feet were chained to the wall. They could not make themselves comfortable, no matter how they tried.

Now it was midnight — the time when the human spirit is at its lowest ebb; when their spirits would normally be at the depths of depression and despair. They had probably never felt less like praising God than at that very time.

But at midnight, they began to sing praises to God. They opened their mouths and began to sing forth the praises of the Lord. How this must have gladdened the heart of God. Here were two of His servants, suffering shame, pain and despair for His Name. They were languishing in prison because they had done what God told them to do.

Would they curse God? Would they deny Him? Would they say, "What were we thinking about, to let ourselves get into this mess?" Would they blame Him, saying, "We would not be in this trouble, were it not for God." No! A thousand times no!

They began to sing His praises — at midnight, in the darkest hour, when everything seemed dark and discouraging.

Suddenly the walls of the prison began to shake. Their chains became loose.

I like to think that when the Lord heard their midnight praise session. He was so thrilled that He joined in with them and shouted "Hallelujah!" so loudly that the walls of the prison began to reverberate!

Those men were offering the sacrifice of praise. They were praising God despite every adversity. They were climbing right up on top of their circumstances and shouting "Glory to God anyway!"

Saints of God around the world are still offering these same kinds of sacrifices. From prison cells in many parts of this earth, where saints of God suffer for the testimony of Jesus, they are offering their sacrifices of praise to God.

3. It Can Be Done Only Through Jesus

"By him, therefore, let us offer..." Only Jesus can make this kind of offering possible. This is why Christ is so wonderfully glorified in this exercise.

The Father knows full well that no person could offer praise and thanksgiving from out of that kind of situation unless the Lord was helping him. So God sees the wonder of His Son in this offering. It is the grace of His Son which has accomplished this miracle.

Here is a person who previously might have cursed God in this situation; but now, because of the triumph of God's grace in his life, he is actually thanking and praising God. He is saying, "I don't understand why this is happening. God, but I am praising You just the same. I cannot understand why this should happen to my family and me; I cannot discern the reason or fathom the purpose, but I praise You just the same."

Every time a sacrifice of praise is offered, Jesus Christ is glorified!

4. It Is The Giving Of Thanks To His Name

God wants to bring us into the place where we can sincerely *"give thanks always for all things unto God and the Father"* (Eph 5:20).

Notice it is giving thanks to the Father FOR all things. That is difficult. We can do

this only when we really believe in the sovereignty of God, when we truly "... *know that ALL things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose*" (Rom 8:28).

B. HOW TO OFFER THE SACRIFICE OF PRAISE

1. Determine Beforehand That You Are Going To Praise God

Do this at all times and in every situation.

2. Begin To Do It Right Now

Praise God every day and all day. No matter what may arise in your day, praise God in it, for it and through it. Get into the good habit of praising God continually.

3. If Trouble Should come Your Way, Or You Find Yourself In Difficulties, Order Yourself To Praise the Lord.

David said, "*Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me, and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I show the salvation of God*" (Ps 50:23). Order yourself to praise God in that difficult situation, and God will prepare a way of deliverance for you.

4. Begin To Do It By Faith

Speak out words of praise. Give vocal thanks to God by faith, even though you may not understand what you are thanking Him for. Begin to praise Him for making a way of deliverance for you. You cannot yet see the way. You do not know how God will deliver you, but you are thanking Him and praising Him just the same. You are already in victory.

5. Having Once Begun, Continue To Praise Him

Let your praises ascend higher and higher. Let the Spirit of praise really overtake you. Shout out praise to God. Sing unto Him. Dance before Him. Glorify Him and magnify His Name. He will make a way of salvation for you.

Chapter 6

The Meaning Of Praise And Worship

A. WHAT IS WORSHIP?

To praise is to speak well of, to express admiration for, to compliment, to commend, to congratulate, to applaud, to eulogize and to extol.

To worship is to express reverence, to have a sense of awe, to bow low before the object of worship and to make obeisance.

Worship is the highest form of praise.

We generally commence with praise and then move on into worship.

The word 'worship' derives from the old English word "WORTHSHIP" —to esteem the worth of, and to make a suitable response to, that worthiness.

1. An Attitude

Worship is first an attitude of heart. It is the reverent occupation of the human heart with its Creator.

It begins with an inner musing of the heart, a depth of meditation upon the greatness and worthiness of God. It is the savoring of admiration about God. It is an inner **sense of awe and respect for the Almighty.**

2. An Overflow

Second, it is an OVERFLOW of those thoughts and emotions. They flow forth spontaneously. They should not have to be pumped up or forced out. Our cup, like David's, should "*run over joyfully*" (Ps23:5).

3. An Outpouring

Third, it is the OUTPOURING of the soul in deep expressions of reverence, awe, wonder and adoration.

B. THE FIRST BIBLICAL REFERENCES TO WORSHIP

One of the principles of Bible interpretation is the "law of first mention." The first biblical mention of any subject gives a clear indication of its meaning and significance wherever it may occur in the Bible. It is the key to understanding the import of that word or subject throughout the Scriptures.

The first occurrence of the word worship is in Genesis 22:5. Abraham is speaking to the young men who accompanied him and Isaac to Moriah: "*...I and the lad will go yonder and worship.*" The word used here is SHACHAH (pronounced Shawkaw), meaning "to prostrate in homage to royalty or God"; to bow down, crouch or fall down in worship.

Let us look at what Abraham did when he worshipped. This first mention of worship teaches us many lessons.

1. God Commanded Abraham To Go And Worship

Praise and worship is not an option which we may decide to do or not to do according to our whim. It is a commandment of God.

When the Bible says, "*PRAISE YE THE LORD,*" that is not a suggestion or a request; it is a commandment. There are no exceptions made. Every child of God is to be a praiser and worshipper of God.

2. Abraham's Response Was One Of Obedience

This obedience was essential to his covenant relationship to God. God and he had entered into a covenant, which demanded Abraham's absolute obedience and total commitment to God.

God was about to test the sincerity and integrity of Abraham's commitment. He was demanding the sacrifice of the very thing that Abraham held to be most precious: Isaac, the son of promise.

3. The Act Of Worship Is A Costly One

This act of worship would cost Abraham his very best and highest offering.

It was to truly be a "*sacrifice of praise*" (Heb 13:15). A life of worship demands everything we are and have (Rom 12:1,2). There has to be a complete surrender of our whole self to God, in order to become a true worshipper. David also understood this

principle when he said, "*Shall I offer to God that which cost me nothing?*" (2Sam 24:24 pph).

4. The Act Of Worship Is An Act Of Faith

Every step that Abraham took that day was a step of faith. As he marched up Mount Moriah, knowing that God had demanded the offering of his well-beloved son, he knew, by faith, that somehow he and Isaac would return together (Gen 22:5).

5. The Surrender Of Self

Not only was Abraham prepared to offer Isaac, he was also to offer to God his own plans, desires, ambitions and wishes for the future. His future was tied, inevitably, to this boy.

This was the son that God had promised him — through whom all the promises of the covenant would be fulfilled. To surrender him in obedience was to surrender the prospect of all he longed to see fulfilled. He surrendered himself.

We can never enter into true worship until there has been a complete surrender of our self to God. The self or ego will always get in the way of worship. So we must give it to God in surrender.

6. Praise Glorifies God

Abraham's costly act of worship glorified God. How great and glorious must be the One for Whom Abraham would be willing to sacrifice his well-beloved son, in order to render the worship of obedience and faith.

God says, "*Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me...*" (Ps 50:23). Every true act of worship glorifies God.

7. The Worshipper Is Also Blessed

God's response to Abraham's act of worship indicates His great pleasure and also His desire to bless every worshipper: "*...because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son; that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; ...because thou hast obeyed my voice*" (Gen 22:16-18).

The story of Mary anointing the feet of Jesus with precious ointment (John 12:3) is a beautiful type of worship. John tells us that afterwards she "*... wiped his feet with her hair...*"

Imagine the sweet fragrance she would have carried away in her hair. Everywhere she went, people would be aware of the sweet aroma.

So it is with worshippers. Their lives carry a sweet fragrance wherever they go. It is the fragrance of the presence of the Lord!

C. WORSHIP PORTRAYED IN THE TABERNACLE

A further principle of Bible interpretation is the "law of much mention." This principle says that the amount of treatment and space given to a particular subject indicates its importance. Consider how much space is devoted to the description of the Tabernacle. There are fifty chapters throughout the whole Bible devoted to this subject:

Exodus 15 Chapters

Leviticus 18 Chapters

Numbers 13 Chapters

Deuteronomy 2 Chapters

Hebrews 2 Chapters

This makes us realize how important this subject is.

1. Vital Nature Of Worship

Since the primary purpose of the Tabernacle was the worship of God, we see that God is conveying to us the vital nature of worship, and the tremendous importance He attaches to it.

The first piece of Tabernacle furniture which God describes (Exo 25:22) is the Ark of the Covenant. The lid of this box was called the **mercy seat**. God said, "*...there will I meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat...*" The room (Holy of Holies) in which the ark was located was the place where God would meet and commune with man face to face. It was the place of worship.

In the Old Covenant economy, this awesome privilege was afforded to the High Priest only, and that on only one day of the year —the Day of Atonement. How blessed we are, under the terms of the New Covenant, to have the privilege of continual access through the blood of Christ.

The basic teaching implicit in the Tabernacle for us Christians is that of worship. God had brought forth His people out of Egypt with a strong and mighty hand (Exo 32:11).

Once their deliverance from Egypt was complete, the first thing He did was to commission Moses to build the Tabernacle. God's first desire, after our deliverance from Egypt (sin and its bondage), is to initiate us into the ministry of worship.

2. Order And Progression Of Worship

The Tabernacle teaches us the order and progression of worship. When entering the outer court of the Tabernacle, the first item one sees is the brazen altar of sacrifice. This is where our sins and iniquities are dealt with and we receive the pardon of God.

Next came the brass laver, typical of cleansing through the water of the Word. The would-be worshipper had to come through these two experiences before reaching the curtains of the holy place.

Within the holy place stood the table of shewbread, the seven-branch candlestick and the golden altar of incense — all of which have deep significance in the teaching of worship.

Ultimately, there was the Holy of Holies, that sacred and solemn meeting place which typifies the highest and purest forms of praise and worship. It is to this spot that the Spirit wants to bring us.

There is a definite progression in learning the skills of worship. God wants to bring us through all the various phases until, at last, we can enter the ultimate place of sacred worship, that place within the veil with Him.

Chapter 7

Music In Praise And Worship

A. MUSIC IS IMPORTANT IN WORSHIP

Music has always played an important role in the worship of God. Way back, in the dawn of Creation:

"...the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy"
(Job 38:7).

Hebrew music was predominantly vocal. There were very few instruments in the earliest days of their history. The human voice was the most accessible and popular instrument with which to make music.

The first biblical mention of music and song is in Genesis 31:27, and is associated with the expression of mirth. Worship in song is first mentioned in Exodus 15: In verse 1, Moses and the children of Israel sang unto the Lord. In verses 20,21 Miriam and all the women, with tambourines and dances, responded to the song of Moses.

The digging of the well at Beer was celebrated with singing (Num 21:17,18).

Deborah and Barak celebrated their victory in song (Judg 5:1-31).

The women of Israel celebrated David's victory over Goliath in song (I Sam 18:6,7).

Four thousand Levites praised the Lord with instruments (I Chr 23:5) when Solomon was made king over Israel.

"The children of Israel... kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with great gladness: and the Levites and priests praised the Lord day by day, singing with loud instruments unto the Lord" (2 Chr 30:21).

"And David spake to the chief of the Levites to appoint their brethren to be the singers with instruments of music, psalteries and harps and cymbals, sounding, by lifting up the voice with joy" (I Chr 15:16).

It is clear that music and singing are vitally integral to the praise and worship of God. This is portrayed all through the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation. And so it is today. It is a vital, glorious, positive expression of praise to God.

B. SATAN USES MUSIC

It is also true that Satan uses music most effectively to achieve his purposes. Before his fall, Lucifer was a chief musician. Ezekiel 28:13 tells us that the *"...workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created."* Lucifer was a master musician. He was meant to use this gift for the glory of God. But when he rebelled against Jehovah and had to be cast out of Heaven, he prostituted his gift and began to use it for evil instead of good. He has done so very effectively to this day.

It was the descendants of Cain who invented both instruments of music and instruments of war (Gen 4:21,22).

When Moses returned from meeting God in the mountain, he discovered that the

children of Israel had backslidden and returned to the worship of idols. They were dancing and singing around the golden calf. The sound of their music was so confusing to the ear of Moses that he could not immediately discern the significance of the sound.

This confusion-filled type of music has the hallmark of Satan — he is a confuser. So much modern music is filled with confusion. It disturbs and deranges people.

Godly music has just the opposite effect. It is calming rather than confusing. David's anointed music restored Saul's sanity. '*And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him*' (I Sam 16:23).

Godly music may stir us, but it will never cause us to lose control of our emotions. It will strengthen us, not deplete us.

Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, used musical instruments of various kinds to induce the worship of the golden image he had erected (Dan 3:5-7). Herod succumbed to the seductive music and dancing of Salome and foolishly ordered the death of John the Baptist (Matt 14:6-10).

The satanically inspired music of Babylon will finally be destroyed when the city of Babylon is cast down.

The sound of her music will be heard no more (Rev 18:22).

C. MUSIC CAN INSPIRE WORSHIP OF GOD

The Holy Spirit can also use music for the glory of God and edification of people.

We noted above the powerful therapeutic effect that anointed music had on Saul (I Sam 16:23).

David had been anointed by God. He was a skillful musician, a gifted composer and a sweet singer. When he played and sang under the anointing of the Spirit, the evil spirit departed from Saul. He was refreshed. He was well.

When Jehoshaphat needed a prophet in a time of national crisis, he called for Elisha. The prophet Elisha called for a musician.

"...and it came to pass, when the minstrel played, that the hand of the Lord came upon him. And he said, 'thus saith the Lord...'" (2 Ki 3:11,15,16). The music helped create an atmosphere and mood for the prophetic gift to operate.

King David appointed 4,000 men to prophesy with harps, six psalteries and cymbals (I Chr 25:1).

It was only when Israel was in captivity in Babylon that they ceased to sing and play. Their anointed music ceased and they hung their harps on the willow trees (Ps 137).

When their Babylonian captors goaded them to sing, they replied, *"How can we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?"* When their captivity ceased, after 70 years, they returned home with joyful singing and laughter. There was praise on their lips (Ps 126:1,2).

It is only when the Church is in spiritual captivity that her anointed music ceases. When that captivity is broken and the people come into liberty once more, music, singing, praise, dancing and laughter are all restored to her.

D. MUSIC AND SONG IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

- 1. The Disciples Sang Hymns Together (Matt 26:30; Mark 14:26).**
- 2. Paul And Silas Sang Praises To God In Prison (Acts 16:25).**
- 3. The Apostle Paul Instructs The Church In Anointed Singing.**

They should sing:

- a. PSALMS:** The Psalms set to music.
- b. HYMNS:** Songs of praise to God.
- c. SPIRITUAL SONGS:**

Spontaneous songs given by the Spirit.

The songs of the primitive Church were praises to the Lord. Their primary objective in singing was to praise and magnify God. They did not sing for effect, or to entertain. Their singing was not man-centered. It was directed to God for His pleasure alone.

E. HOW TO HAVE A MINISTRY OF ANOINTED MUSIC

This type of anointed singing and music, directed to God in praise and worship, is very rare in the Church today. But God is restoring this ministry to His people.

Here are some suggestions to help you bring your fellowship of believers into a ministry of anointed music in praise to God:

1. Commence Each Service With Thanksgiving And Praise In Song

"Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise, give thanks to him, praise his name" (Ps 100:4).

2. Prayerfully Ask The Holy Spirit For The Right Song Or Hymn

God has a theme and a message for every service. Often the right song will set the tone for that theme.

3. Do Not Be Afraid To Sing The Song More Than Once —

or even a particular portion of it which seems especially anointed and blessed.

4. Exhort The People To Really "Sing Unto The Lord"

Hymns are often sung because it is our tradition and custom to sing. We have a much worthier purpose than this. It is to sing unto the Lord — to direct our focus heavenward in song.

5. Commence With Songs Of Praise And Thanksgiving

Allow the people to genuinely express their praises through them. Songs are not praises in themselves. They are merely vehicles through which we may express our praise. It is highly possible to sing many hymns and songs without expressing any true praise.

6. Songs Of Praise Will Inspire The People To Worship

We often begin with praise, and then the people move progressively through various levels of praise until they move right into worship, which is the highest level of praise.

7. Do Not "Rush Through" The Song Service

Many ministers look on this part of the service as the "preliminaries" — an

irksome, but traditional, necessity. Take time to sing, praise and worship. This is a most important function of our gathering.

8. Allow Opportunity For Congregational Participation

Encourage spontaneous expression. Someone may lead in prayer, which may set the tone for the meeting.

Another may prophesy, and the exhortation may supply the theme for the rest of the service.

9. The Manifestations Of The Spirit

(I Cor 12:8-11) This should find expression in believers' worship services. Do not quench the Spirit (I Ths 5:19). Encourage participation and expression through these spiritual endowments.

However, the appointed and anointed leader should retain spiritual authority over the service at all times.

10. All Things Should Be Done To Mutual Edification

Every scriptural manifestation is legitimate and proper; but let everything that is done, and the manner in which it is done, be to the edifying of the whole gathering (I Cor 14:26).

11. Discourage Those Who Engender Confusion

"God is not the author of confusion..." (I Cor 14:33). If the service begins to move into confusion, take charge and lead it back out of confusion.

If necessary, pause and explain to the people what is happening, thus clarifying the situation. Use such times to teach the right and wrong way to do things.

12. Let Everything Be Done As Unto The Lord —

and to the glory of God. Remember that the aim of every gathering is to glorify God and edify the believers.

13. Use A Song Book Or Overhead Projector —

so that the people can participate. Do not be afraid, at a certain point, to put down the song book or words and just worship from the heart.

14. There Are Certain "Mechanics" To The Leading Of A Song Service Or A Worship Service —

but you must carefully avoid becoming mechanical or too formal. Let there be an underlying freedom.

Be flexible. Don't insist on keeping to the program. Be constantly sensitive to the promptings of the Spirit and be willing to follow them.

Good song-leading entails much more than waving the arms, even if this is done correctly. The liberty of the Spirit and spontaneity are more important than technical correctness.

15. Seek To Be Hidden —

that the people may "... see no man, but Jesus only" (Matt 17:8).

I remember a church I pastored for many years. The first time I stepped up to the pulpit, I saw some words carved in the pulpit. They confronted every person who stepped up to that pulpit to speak or minister. The words said, "...Sir, we would see Jesus"

(John 12:21).

We ought always to bear this in mind. The people have not come to see or hear you. They have come to see and hear Jesus.

Our task, with the help of the Spirit, is to draw aside the veil, that every eye may see the Lord and worship before Him. This should be the ultimate aim of every servant of Christ who leads a worship service.

Chapter 8

Leading A Worship Service

A. MOST IMPORTANT FUNCTIONS OF A CHURCH

Congregational worship is an extremely important element of the New Testament Church. The primary calling of New Testament Christians is the worship of God. The most important functions of a church, in order of priority, are;

- 1. Worshipping God.**
- 2. Ministry To The Body** — edifying the saints.
- 3. Ministry To The World** — Evangelism.

Every church should be a worshipping community. In the development of corporate worship, much depends on the leader of the service.

B. QUALITIES IN WORSHIP LEADERS

1. Leading Worship Is A Special Ministry

Not everyone has this ministry. Often the pastor does not have this particular ability. In that case, he should find someone in the congregation who does possess such a gift, and be willing for that person to take the lead in this particular area.

2. The Leader Must Be A Worshipper

It is essential that one who is called to lead others into worship should be skilled and adept in the worship of God.

It is impossible to lead others into something unless the leader has already learned the requirements and skills of worship. This person should be free in his own spirit and able to freely praise and worship God in his personal life.

3. Spiritual Maturity

The worship leader should be a person with experience and maturity in the things of the Spirit. His spiritual development should be equal to (and preferably superior to) the congregation that he is seeking to lead.

Such maturity gives the leader confidence, and results in a sense of security in the congregation. He should be able to control his own spirit so that his personal thoughts, feelings and emotions do not intrude into the meeting.

He must also be a man of faith, not only able to discern the leading of the Holy Spirit, but with faith to implement what the Spirit may be saying to the assembled saints.

He should be an exhorter who can motivate and encourage the believers.

4. Spiritual Sensitivity

The ideal leader has developed a sensitive ear for the voice of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit Himself will lead the service if the leader will actively move into those promptings which the Spirit will give.

Worship services should be led by the Holy Spirit. However, He will always use human channels. So there must be a deep spiritual awareness in the leader.

This will be conveyed to the congregation too. They will begin to develop the ability to hear the promptings of the Spirit and quietly and confidently move into them.

5. Genuine Humility

A good leader will always seek to "hide behind the cross."

Nothing ruins the spiritual atmosphere of a service more quickly than an egotistical leader who constantly projects himself into the meeting.

The Holy Spirit loves to glorify Christ, and is totally unwilling to turn His spotlight on any human being.

No flesh should glory in the sight of God. Rather than drawing the congregation's attention to himself, the leader must always seek to focus the attention of the people on Christ.

6. Prayerful Preparation

Prior to the service, the leader should always spend some time privately in prayer. The theme of a meeting can be discerned beforehand in this way.

The spirit of the leader can be tuned to the Spirit of God and, in this way, the meeting can move right into God's purposes from the very first song or prayer.

There should be no such thing as "preliminaries" in a worship service. The whole service, from the very first moment, is dedicated to the praise and glory of God.

Too many preachers regard everything prior to their sermon as a preliminary — necessary, but unimportant.

The truth is that what precedes the sermon is usually much more important — for the sermon is addressed to the people, but our worship is addressed to God Himself!

7. Allow Sufficient Time For Worship

The manner in which many "worship services" are hurried through is an insult to the majesty of God. We need to recognize the importance of corporate worship and give ample time to it.

Worship time should not be wasted by needless chatter on the part of the leader. His real task is to get the congregation in tune with the Spirit of God just as quickly and sweetly as he can. Unnecessary talk and comment can detract from this purpose. People have come to worship God, and want to give themselves to Him in praise, worship and adoration. It is a sad thing when they are delayed and hindered by the very one who is ordained to lead them into such worship.

8. Be Open To The Holy Spirit

It takes real faith to lead a service into true worship because such worship cannot be prescribed or programmed beforehand.

Many leaders feel they must have a prescribed program. They want to know exactly what is going to happen in a given service, and just when it is going to take place. Spiritual worship demands more flexibility than this.

Once the service has commenced, seek to keep quietly aware of the way the Spirit is leading. Be prepared to follow His leading step by step. He will instruct you as to just when the worship should take place.

Not every service will be the same. God is a God of variety. He does not have to do the same thing every time. He has a special purpose for every gathering.

The leader must learn to discern what that purpose is and to flow along with it, as the Spirit unfolds it step by step. God can even change the order and direction of the service while it is proceeding. A good leader will be able to discern the very songs that should be sung; how many times they should be sung; and with what kind of emphasis!

Sometimes a service will be bright and full of rejoicing. Other times the Spirit may lead in a much quieter way, and even into periods of silence which may be extremely profound and meaningful.

9. Be Aware Of All That Is Transpiring

The leader should avoid closing his eyes and being "lost in worship." It is wonderfully possible to be fully involved in worship and still be aware of and sensitive to the people.

The leader should have a sensitivity to the Spirit and, at the same time, be exercising a gentle but definite control over the service.

C. SOME SIMPLE GUIDELINES FOR LEADING WORSHIP

1. Begin Right Where The People Are

Seek to make immediate contact with the congregation, right where they are. Quietly establish your leadership with them. Help them to recognize that God has ordained you to lead this service and that, if they will cooperate and follow along with you, they will be led right into the Holy of Holies and have a glorious experience of worship.

2. Song Leading Is Not Necessarily Worship Leading

There are many good song leaders who have not the ability to lead people into worship. However, the worship leader must be able to lead singing, and then to lead on further into worship.

Most often a worship service will commence with singing. The singing of appropriate songs which eulogize God and speak of His greatness, might and splendor, will help to get the people's minds off themselves and their problems, and onto the Lord. Songs of praise and thanksgiving are often appropriate and suitable.

Community singing is also a good way to bring the people into unity. As their voices blend, so will their minds and spirits. Once that unity has been achieved, the people may be led on into realms of worship. We begin with praise and then move on into worship.

3. Allow The Holy Spirit To Give Direction

This may come in any one of a number of ways. It may spring out of the first song

that is sung. This may set the theme for the entire service. Often the Spirit will lead from one song to another, all on the same or relevant themes.

If there are those present with Gifts of the Spirit, the Spirit may use these to indicate the course the service should take. This may be communicated through a prophecy or some revelation.

Sometimes the mind of the Spirit is imposed on the service in a very quiet and undramatic fashion. It is only after the gathering, when looking back, that one sees so clearly how beautifully the Spirit led, and what unity and harmony was woven into the fabric of the service.

4. Avoid Intrusions And Cross-Currents

This is where the spiritual maturity of the leader is so necessary. He must be able to discern a new emphasis which might be introduced, which is not of the Spirit. He must be spiritually alert to recognize such a trend.

A meeting can be very subtly redirected if one is not careful and watchful. Once the Spirit has set the course and direction, be sensitive to any intrusion which may change that emphasis.

The intrusion may seem quite harmless. It may come in the form of a lovely chorus which is quite scriptural in content, and yet it changes completely the direction in which God is seeking to lead the people. The leader must be loving and yet firm in keeping the worship on target.

There are many ways in which he can bring the meeting back on course again. He may say, "Now, friends, let us keep pursuing this direction which the Spirit is indicating, and let us not turn aside." He may start singing another chorus which reinforces the original theme of the Spirit. There may come a further word of prophecy, directing the attention once more to the original theme.

It requires faith and boldness on the part of the leader. He must exercise discretion and tact, but he must not compromise the purpose of God for that occasion. This often demands great wisdom and grace. The Holy Spirit will supply these if we trust Him implicitly.

5. Recognize Transition And Change

The Spirit may direct a service along any line He wishes. This frequently means that there may be a change of emphasis during the course of the service. In fact, this may happen several times.

These transition periods are very important. The leader must be ahead of the people, anticipating what the Spirit is wanting to do. He must give clear and firm leadership during these transitional periods, so the meeting does not begin to wander aimlessly.

If a time of indecision is allowed to develop, someone may be tempted to try to give direction, and a wrong note may be introduced. The leader must always remember that God has anointed and appointed him to lead the people, and he is therefore responsible for doing just that.

Do not rule the meeting with a heavy hand. Do not try to impose your will on the people. Keep a firm but gentle grip on the direction and progress of the worship.

6. Keep The Purpose In Mind

Never lose sight of the objective and purpose of the gathering: It is first to praise and glorify the Lord; second, to edify and bless the people. Never allow the gathering to degenerate to anything less than these basic objectives.

7. "Make Us A Symphony"

One of the many fine choruses which the Spirit is introducing today says, "Lord, make us a symphony, a symphony of worship." The Greek word **symphoneo** from which we derive "symphony", means to "agree together."

Jesus said, *"If any two of you shall agree [symphoneo] on earth... ye shall ask... and it shall be done."*

This word symphoneo means to "produce a symphony of sound." A worship service should be like a symphony. Everything should blend harmoniously together. The voices should all blend, the instruments should blend, the various parts of the service should all blend together.

This is one of the basic purposes God seeks to achieve through our corporate worship: to blend us all together in a glorious harmony. In so doing, He introduces and encourages unity at the deepest levels of our being.

A famous priest said, "The family that prays together, stays together." And we might say, "The congregation which truly learns to worship together, will stay together."

8. Encourage Participation

Too often today, the congregation becomes mere spectators instead of participators. Frequently we find the minister doing everything and the congregation merely watching and listening.

The New Testament encourages the participation of every member. However, good solid teaching on this subject needs to be given first. God's people should be taught that He wants to hear their voices raised in worship.

They must be taught how to participate and, having been taught, given opportunity to do so. Verbally encourage the people to enter in. Exhort them to lift their voices in praise. Make opportunities for them to express their praise.

9. Let Everything Be Done Decently And In Order

Many churches use this scripture (1 Cor 14:40) as an excuse for not allowing any congregational participation. They are so intent on maintaining "decency and order" that they allow nothing to be done.

This is not what the Bible says.

It does NOT say, "let nothing be done, decently and in order." It says, *"Let EVERYTHING be done..."* Let there be participation. Let there be prophecies, revelations, psalms, hymns and spiritual songs.

But let them be done in such a manner that there is no confusion, for God is not the author of confusion (I Cor 14:33).

10. Seek To Excel

Our goal, as we learn to praise and worship God, should be to ultimately excel in these things. We should aim for progress and development in these vital areas.

Such excellence will not be human excellence. It will not be the development of human talent and ability. It will not be the employment of professionals, with correctness

and precision.

It will be the deepening of spiritual life. It will be the sharpening of spiritual sensitivity, the growth of spiritual awareness, and of the ability to make a spiritual response to the promptings of the Spirit of God. The ultimate objective of our worship is to uplift and glorify God. The more effectively we can do this, the more acceptable our praise.

Chapter 9

The Prophetic Significance Of Praise

A. PREPARING FOR CHRIST'S REIGN ON EARTH

The importance of praise is emphasized throughout the entire Bible. Praise has always been important. However, in the final days of this age, praise and worship are especially important. They play a special role in the fulfillment of God's purposes.

This is why God is restoring praise to His people today. We are moving rapidly towards the manifest reign of Christ on the earth. One of the great characteristics of that age will be praise and worship.

So God is preparing His people for that tune. We are already entering into the Kingdom, and part of our preparation is excelling in praise and worship.

1. Psalm 149:6: The High Praises Of God

The first portion of Psalm 149 is filled with exhortations and commandments to praise the Lord. There are at least ten clear commands to praise God in a variety of ways.

We are told to sing unto Him; rejoice in Him; be joyful in our King; dance before Him; praise Him with musical instruments, etc.

In Psalm 149:6, we reach the highest expression of that praise — the highest level of pure praise. David calls it "*the high praises of God.*" The ultimate weaponry of God's last-day army are the "*high praises of God in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand.*"

With such weapons, we can wage victorious warfare against the enemy and gain the great final victory, in the Name of our God.

a. God Is Seeking To... God is seeking to teach us many things about praise. He is leading us on from one truth to another— always seeking to further purify our praises, until at last we are able to enter into the high praises of Jehovah. He is seeking to:

- 1) **Enlarge our understanding of praise;**
- 2) **Purify our motives in praise;**
- 3) **Refine our expressions of praise;**
- 4) **Establish His throne upon them (Ps 22:3);**
- 5) **Manifest His authority through them.**

In Psalm 149:8, God tells us what He will accomplish when we begin to worship God with those high praises. He will "... *bind king with chains, and their nobles with*

fetters of iron."

These are not earthly human kings and nobles. They are the principalities and powers who exercise spiritual rule over the heathen nations.

In response to the high praises of His people, God is going to bind these Satanic principalities. God is going to release the peoples they have held in bondage to receive the blessing of the gospel of the Kingdom.

This is going to pave the way for the greatest spiritual awakening that the world has ever witnessed. The great pagan nations of earth are going to open up to the Kingdom of God.

Those multitudes which Joel saw prophetically, in the "valley of decision," are going to be released from the spiritual bondage of centuries, and be free to receive the blessings of God's glorious reign.

2. Psalm 67: God's Saving Health To All Nations

This prophetic Psalm opens with a cry for God's mercy and blessing to be revealed to all nations. It closes with the prediction that God SHALL bless us, the earth will yield her increase, and "*... all the ends of the earth shall fear him.*"

The key which releases such universal blessing is the praises of God's people (note vs 3,5).

a. Notice The Progression Of Praise:

1) Let The People Of God Praise Thee, O God. This refers to the people of God — His redeemed people. They are to be the leaders of an army of praising people. Until God's people move into these areas of praise, this plan of world redemption will remain dormant. The trigger which precipitates the great blessing of Jehovah for the whole earth is the praises of His redeemed community.

2) Let All The People Praise Thee. This signifies a time when praise will no longer be limited to God's redeemed people, but it will spread far beyond them. Even the unregenerate will begin to praise Jehovah. They will begin to recognize Him as the one true God, and the only one worthy of praise, worship and adoration.

3) Let The Nations Be Glad And Sing For Joy. At this point, entire nations will begin to speak favorably and in praise of Jehovah. They will begin to realize that the only solution to their humanly insoluble dilemma is in the intervention of the government of God.

When this chain-reaction of praise has been triggered off by God's people, it will bring the government and justice of God to the earth (vs 4).

Only this can cause the "*... way of God to be known upon earth, and his saving health among all nations*" (vs 2).

The word used here for "saving health" is "YESHUAH." Meaning salvation, deliverance, victory, prosperity, well-being, etc.

All these blessings are inherent in one Person: His Name is JESUS. He is the only answer to the world's multiple dilemmas. It is for Him alone that we look. His coming will be accelerated as we enter into the high praises of God.

3. Psalm 72: The Kingdom Reign

Psalm 72 is a glorious, prophetic Messianic Psalm which outlines many

wonderful aspects of the coming Kingdom of our Messiah, Jesus.

The whole Psalm is filled with marvelous facts about that Kingdom. However, we will mention only two of them, which are in keeping with our present theme.

Psalm 72:15b: "...*daily shall he [Messiah] be praised.*"

Psalm 72:17; "His name shall endure forever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed.

One of the integral features of God's eternal, universal reign upon earth will be the worship of Jehovah. God's throne will be established in Jerusalem. Christ will be seated upon it. King David will be His Vice-Regent (Jer 30:9; Eze 37:24,25).

All nations will go up to Jerusalem from year to year to worship the King and keep the Feast of Tabernacles (Zech 14:16).

The house of the Lord will be established on the top of the mountain, and people of every nation will come to be taught of the Lord (Isa 2:2,3).

They will say, one to another, "...*come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord and to the house of our God, and he will teach us his ways, and we will walk in his paths...*" (Mic 4:2). Any who refuse or neglect to come and worship will forfeit the rain on their land (Zech 14:17).

In that day the watchword will be "...*HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD*" (Zech 14:20).

OH! COME, LET US ADORE HIM! AMEN!

SECTION E3

BREAKING THE BABYLONIAN BARRIER

By Ralph Mahoney

Chapter 1

The Babylonian Barrier

Introduction

There are THREE GREAT HINDRANCES to spreading the gospel. These obstruct the evangelization of those who have never heard the good news about what Jesus Christ has done to save and bless all nations. These are:

- CLERICALISM
- PNEUMATOLOGY DEFICIENCIES
- CATHEDRAL BUILDING

In this section, *Breaking the Babylonian Barrier*, you will learn how to overcome CATHEDRAL BUILDING.

The other two are dealt with in other sections.

A. BABYLONIAN BARRIER

Most modern-day Christian leaders do not know that events of five thousand years ago are influencing their values and actions. The influence of Babel is still very much with us, substituting its humanistic, centristic, narcissistic agenda in place of that which God has commanded. It is robbing us of God's true purpose in the Church.

1. Background Of Babel

When Noah and his sons came out of the ark. God's instructions were clear. *"God... said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth"* (Gen 9:1). God had a worldwide purpose for the whole earth. *"And you, be ye fruitful, and multiply; bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply therein"* (Gen 9:7).

God's purpose for all the survivors of the flood was that they *"be fruitful, multiply and fill the earth"* (Gen 9:1,7 niv).

a. Sin And Disobedience. In Genesis 10, the descendants of Noah are listed as Shem, Ham and Japheth. Shem and Japheth's descendants were blessed. Ham and his descendants (Canaanites) were cursed.

"And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father... And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him. And he said. Cursed be Canaan..." (Gen 9; 22,24,25).

Many scholars believe these verses describe a homosexual act committed by Ham against his father Noah. Thus judgment came upon Ham and his descendants, the Canaanites.

Ham's first son was Cush. *"Cush begot Nimrod and he became a mighty one in the earth"* (Gen 10:8). The Hebrew word GIBBOWR (translated *mighty one*) means "a powerful tyrant warrior." He hunted down men to enslave and subjugate them. He was filled with lust for power over others.

Verse 10 tells us *"the beginning of his kingdom was Babel."*

b. A Counterfeit Religious System Babel was the result of the Hamitic people, under the leadership of Nimrod, bringing a counterfeit religious system into the world. Nimrod moved under satanic and demonic inspiration to produce this substitute for the real thing.

I want to identify what Babel religion is, how you can recognize it and how you can deal with it so that you can break the Babylonian barrier in your church and in your life. This ancient influence is still with us today.

2. Babel —Hinders God's Purpose

What was it that became the great hindrance to God's purpose? God willed for His people to *"multiply and fill the whole earth and make it fruitful."* What stood in the way of the whole world being made fruitful and covered with the knowledge of God?

It was the 'Babel factor'. The Nimrod influence interjected itself into the divine purpose to neutralize what God had purposed.

"The whole earth was of one language, one speech. And it came to pass. as they journeyed from the east, they found a plain in the land of Shinar and they dwelt there.

"They said one to another, 'Come, let us make bricks and burn them thoroughly. "

And they had brick for stone and slime had they for mortar.

"Come, let us build us a city and a tower -whose top may reach into heaven, and let us make us a name." Let's do all this, "lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth " (Gen 11:1-4).

God wanted His people to be scattered abroad, to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. Babel existed to prevent this. They built their tower 'lest it happen,' i.e., to prevent it happening.

The Nimrod religion is still very prominent in the world, and its influence casts a heavy shadow across the Christian Church.

B. WHAT WERE THE MARKS OF BABEL?

1. Let Us Make

Firstly: *"Let us make bricks and mortar. "* Human initiative, apart from and in contradistinction to the will of God, elevated itself and said, *"Let Us!"*

Contrast that with Matthew 16:17,18 where Jesus says, *"I Will!" "On this rock I will build. "* That's divine initiative. Human initiative lifts itself up against the purpose of God. Divine initiative complements the purpose of God. The Babel statement is, *"Let us. "* The divine statement is, *"I will."*

As a church leader, which do you want to give allegiance to today? The 'I will' of Jesus, or the 'Let us' of your own initiative? You have to make that choice. The 'Let us' leads to modern-day towers of Babel. The 'I will' leads to involvement in evangelizing the world.

2. Let Us Build

Secondly: *"Let us build us a city."* Again, contrast that with the words of Jesus, *"On this rock I will build my Church."* Who is going to do the building? Is it going to be 'Let Us' do the building or is it going to be *"I Will Build!"*

Don't you know, Jesus is a great builder. His purpose is worldwide, and what He does will never, never, never be localized. The Babylonian thing will be *totally localized*. It will be totally focused in one place, on themselves. The emphasis will be on THE "LOCAL" CHURCH. (The word "local" is not in the Bible.) That is the major distinction, and you need to observe and be warned thereby.

Does this sound like the ambitions of many pastors in Western nations? Yes it does. Many are modern-day "Nimrods," arrogating their "local" ambitions, egos, building plans and will against God's purpose of worldwide evangelization.

So, in contrast to 'Let us build us a city —let us build us a tower; let us build up,' the Great Commission is to go out into all the world, taking the gospel to every creature. The purpose of God is still to go *"...out and fill the earth."* The Babylonian spirit is 'to build up' instead of 'out'. Which are you doing today, pastor?

a. Cathedral Builders. It is no accident that Nimrod and Babel still influence church architecture.

Nimrod's tower was called a Ziggurat, which means 'amemorial'. It was 600 feet (sixty stories) high.

Looking straight down on it from Heaven, it would appear to be shaped like a

Columbus cross. From the North, South, East and West, 900 stair-steps ascended up each side in a straight line from the bottom to the top.

Its side-view profile looked very much like that of a pyramid.

"And they said... let us build us... a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven..."
(Gen 11-4).

Why do church leaders in Western nations build cathedrals with very high steeples? Is there a single verse in all the Bible telling us to erect cathedrals or church buildings of any kind — much less those with *"... tops in the heavens"* ?

If you know any verses, please let me know. In over forty years I haven't found a verse yet.

This statement is the summation of Babel. *'Let us make us a city, a tower whose top is in the heavens. Let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered'* (niv).

I've frequently said, "The way church leaders in Western nations profligately spend all the money on mortar (buildings) would lead one to believe the Great Commission was 'Go into all the world and build cathedrals for every creature.'"

Jesus and the early apostles put their emphasis on the MESSAGE! NOT THE MORTAR!

There were no cathedrals until the time of Constantine (about four centuries after Christ). This "converted" Roman Emperor radically altered and politicized the Church. He converted pagan temples into cathedrals — and thus introduced the vanities of Nimrod into Church tradition. His influence ultimately produced the 1,000-year apostasy called "The Dark Ages."

The church in Western nations is still not free from Nimrod-Constantine influence.

3. Let Us Receive Worship

Nimrod took the place of God. Every year Nimrod required worship offerings to himself of hundreds of pounds of spike nard incense on top of Babel's Ziggurat. It was worth millions of dollars.

This was the spikenard put on Jesus' feet (see Matthew 26:7 and John 12:3: *"There came unto him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious... ointment of spikenard, very costly... "*).

Nimrod proclaimed himself ruler and god of Babel. He became the first political deity. He started the system of **deific rulers** such as we have in the emperor of Japan, where the ruler is worshipped and venerated as God.

Why was Daniel in later centuries thrown into the Den of Lions? It was because King Darius decreed that no one ask a petition of any god or man save himself. Daniel's refusal meant the death penalty. Daniel was countering the Nimrod religion, which went round the world in ancient times.

Where did the Roman Caesars get the idea that they were gods? In New Testament times it was against Roman law to use the Greek word **Kurios** (translated Lord) for any other than Caesar. This too, came from Nimrod's influence. The early disciples risked imprisonment and death by calling Jesus "**Kurios**" (Lord — see Romans 10:9,10).

It is of great interest to me that the Greek word translated **antichrist** is defined in

Strong's Concordance thus: "anti, meaning instead of; in the room of, therefore often used to denote substitution."

It is not just a word of opposition to Christ, but means to take the place of Christ. Have you ever heard it said of the chief prelate of the Roman Church that he is "the vicar of Christ on earth" — he takes me "place of Christ?"

Our dear Anglican bishops are "Lords spiritual" and "Lords temporal." As "Lord's spiritual" they rule in the Church. As "Lords temporal" they enjoy a reserved seat in THE HOUSE OF LORDS in the Parliament of England.

I would be the first to acknowledge that many good and godly persons have (and do) occupy these offices in the Roman and Anglican (and Protestant) churches. However, the concepts and theology associated with these practices is a blatant contradiction of Jesus' clear teaching to His Apostles on the matter.

*"But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion **over them**, and they that are great exercise authority **upon them**. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your servant; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your slave: Even as the Son of man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matt 20:25-28 nkjv).*

Pastor? Church leader? Do you believe Jesus' words and practice this?

4. Let Us Make A Name For Ourselves

"Let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered." This is pride-filled sectarian denominationalism at its worst.

The word denominate means "to name." This influence has troubled the Church since the first century. Sectarian denominationalism was found in the disciples of Jesus:

"And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name; and we forbid him, because he followeth not with us" (Luke 9:49).

Paul had to deal with it in the carnal Corinthians — *"...every one of you saith, I am of Paul: and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?" (I Cor 1:12).*

Identification or belonging to a specific church family (denomination) is not wrong. Prideful elitism, exclusivism and sectarianism is wrong — and should have NO place in the heart or mind of any true follower of Christ.

Note Jesus' response to His own disciple. *"And Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us" (Luke 9:50).* Lord! Deliver us from these Babylonian sectarian barriers; whether they emanate from our denominational pride or our arrogance from being an "independent" church.

C. BABEL LIVES ON!

When God's judgment came on Babel and they were scattered, they took their false religion with them.

1. It Has Circled The Globe

Nimrod's religious system is seen in Egypt's pyramids — which were modified Ziggurats. You'll find Nimrod's influence in the new world, among the Aztec and the

Incas who built their Ziggurats much on the same model.

You'll find Nimrod's religion in India today, in the Hindu temples. You'll find it in Tibet, Laos and Cambodia, among the Buddhists. That ancient religious influence circled the globe and brought down its satanic grip on the human race with all the curses that have accompanied it.

Co-existing with Babel (the descendants of Ham) were the descendants of Shem and of Japheth who held to the true knowledge of God. Secular history of the times tells us the Shemites eventually rose up against Nimrod and slew him for the blasphemy — of making himself God.

2. It Frustrates God's Purpose Of Evangelism

Babel religion focused on localized, self-serving, self-dealing expressions of religion, as opposed to the worldwide view and cause which God had in His mind. It has been the obstacle down through the centuries to antagonize and frustrate the purpose of God. It has been the enemy of the spread of the true knowledge of God and of the gospel from Nimrod's time until now.

D. GOD PROMISES TO BLESS ALL NATIONS

1. Abraham -God's First Missionary

It was about a millennium after the Ziggurats of Babel, that God called Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees as His first missionary.

Jehovah made a covenant with Abraham. The covenant required a difficult thing of Abraham: *"The LORD had said to Abram, Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you"* (Gen 12:1 niv). Thus God's vision for a people who would cause the whole world to know Him was renewed. It would require leaving one's family and going to peoples of other nations, languages and cultures. Abraham became God's first missionary.

The Abrahamic covenant included seven promises. The seventh was the most important.

*"In you shall **all** the families (Heb = mishpachah, meaning tribes or people groups) of the earth be blessed"* (vs 3).

Lest any doubt be left as to what God meant by this, Paul makes it abundantly clear that God was talking about the evangelization of the world.

"The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: 'All nations will be blessed through you'" (Gal 3:8 niv).

Two thousand years before Christ, God declared to Abraham His desire that the pagan world be justified and evangelized. It was a promise that would be frustrated by the Babel influence. *"Let us... make us... build us... lest we be scattered."*

a. A Failure Of Responsibility. God had made His people Israel, *"a light to enlighten the Gentiles"* (Isa 42:6,7). Did they fulfill that role? No! They failed miserably.

Jehovah told Abraham what would happen to his offspring. *"Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own, and they will be enslaved and mistreated **four hundred years**. In the fourth generation your descendants*

will come back here..." (Gen 15:13,16). This happened! Jacob moved his family of seventy souls to Egypt in Joseph's time (Gen 46:26, Exo 1:5).

Moses brought them out four centuries later as God told Abraham. *"And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years... that all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt"* (Exo 12:41).

2. Israel To Be A Kingdom Of Priests

When Israel came out of Egypt, the first covenant God offered them encompassed their worldwide responsibility and privilege. He said, *"If you will obey my voice and keep my covenant, I will make you a **kingdom of priests**, a holy nation"* (Exo 19:5,6).

Why would God need a **holy nation** of 2.5 million (Exo 12:37) priests? The only rational reason would be to fulfill the promise made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

*"Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and **all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?**"* (Gen 18:18).

*"And in thy seed shall **all the nations of the earth be blessed**; because thou hast obeyed my voice"* (Gen 22:18).

*"And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall **all the nations of the earth be blessed**"* (Gen 26:4).

*"And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shall spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall **all the families of the earth be blessed**"* (Gen 28:14).

God wanted to bless **all nations (tribes, ethnic groups)**, and He needed a large number of missionary-priests to mediate His truth to these nations. God's hope was that Israel would have faith to accept His offer and fulfill their destiny. But it did not happen! *"Wherefore I was grieved with that generation... [because] ... the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith"* (Heb 3:10; 4:2 niv).

a. Two Conditions. The covenant (contract) offered had two conditions for the Israelite:

1) *"obey my voice "* and

2) *"keep my covenant."*

One only need read Exodus 20 to see that Israel rejected the **first** condition, *"obey my voice."*

*' And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but **let not God speak with us...**"* (Exo 20:19).

"...which voice they that heard in-treated that the word should not be spoken to them any more" (Heb 12:19).

Having rejected the voice of God, it was impossible for these Israelites to fulfill God's will and purpose for them to be a *"kingdom of priests. "*

A few chapters later we see the Israelites also violated the **second** condition, *"keep my covenant."*

"And Moses turned, and went down from the mount, and the two tables of the testimony [covenant] were in his hand..."

"And it came to pass, as soon as he came nigh unto the camp, that he saw the calf, and the dancing: and Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount" (Exo 32:15,19).

Moses only did what the Israelites had already done by their sin and disobedience — they had broken the covenant; not kept the covenant. So Moses threw down the tablets on which were written the covenant and broke them. *"...the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which covenant they brake..." (Jer 31:32).*

3. The Levitical Priesthood

The promise made to Israel at Sinai to be made *"a kingdom of priests"* did not refer to the Levitical priesthood. The Levites became priests as a result of the failure and disobedience outlined above.

The first condition — *"obey my voice"* — was broken. How could God keep His covenant and promise to make them *"a kingdom of priests"* when they would not hear His voice?

God's purpose was again frustrated when the Israelis broke the covenant. On that day. God decreed a judgment: *"Moses stood at the entrance to the camp and said, Whoever is for the LORD, come to me. And all the Levites rallied to him. Then he said to them. This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'Each man strap a sword to his side. Go back and forth through the camp from one end to the other, each killing his brother and friend and neighbor'" (Exo 32:27).*

As it turned out, there was only one tribe that had weapons readily available. That was the tribe of Levi. What had happened to all the other tribes? The record says, *"Aaron had made them naked in the presence of their enemies.*

Reading this, one would think they were running around with no clothes on! That is not what the Hebrew word means. They were militarily exposed (naked) in the presence of their enemies. They had laid their weapons aside even though surrounded by enemies.

The children of Israel had brought all the gold and silver out of Egypt. They had multiplied millions of dollars worth by today's standards.

Here they were, the heirs of the treasure-house of the ancient world, and they had laid their weapons down. They were not protecting the inheritance. Militarily naked! What folly!

The Levites were the only faithful tribe. Being armed, they went in among the unarmed and slew three thousand that day. God appointed the Levites priests because they had kept their weapons by their side. They were the defenders of the nation and its inheritance. All the rest had compromised the security and welfare of the nation.

"The Levites did as Moses commanded, and that day about three thousand of the people died. Then Moses said, You [Levites] have been set apart to the LORD today... and he has blessed you this day" (Exo 32:26-29 niv). Thus the tribe of Levi became the priestly tribe.

But the purpose of God, for a **priestly nation**, was delayed for another fifteen (15) centuries. Most of the world would now have to wait many generations before knowing about the one true God.

Throughout history the Ziggurats would continue to be built around the world. The Nimrod influence would increase and overshadow the knowledge of the One True God.

The world would wait for more than a millennium for a people who would *"obey God's voice "* and *"keep his covenant."*

4. The Promise Fulfilled

"But when the fullness of the time was come. God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Gal 4:4,5).

E. WHY DID JESUS COME?

1. Jesus Came To Give Israel A Last Chance

From Abraham to Christ was 2,000 years — twenty centuries in which Israel failed to lay hold of the promises made to Abraham. **All** nations were not being blessed, as God had purposed. Israel was not enlightening the Gentiles as God desired. "I the LORD have called thee in righteousness... for a light of the Gentiles; "

"And he said.. I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth" (Isa 42:6; 49:6).

Instead of being God's light to the Gentiles, it was said of Israel, *"For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you..." (Rom 2:24). "And I will sanctify my great name... which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen [Gentiles] shall know that I am the LORD..." (Eze 36:23).*

When Jesus came. He wept over Israel and her capital city. *"As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it and said, If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace..."*

"The days will come upon you when your enemies will... dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God's coming to you" (Luke 19:41-44).

When finally rejected by the Jews, Jesus said, "Therefore say I unto you. The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof" (Matt 21:43). Who was that nation to whom the Kingdom was given? We will find out next.

Israel sinned away her day of opportunity. She missed her last chance to be God's missionary nation — a kingdom of priests. Now others would receive the blessing, and be given the chance to succeed at what Israel failed in.

2. Jesus Came To End Temples And Temple Building

He came to break the power of the Nimrod religious system which took great pride in religious construction.

And as some spake of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts, he said, 'As for these things which ye behold, the days will come, in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down'" (Luke 21:5, 6).

"And Jesus answering said unto him, 'Seest thou these great buildings? There shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down'" (Mark 13:2).

There was a good reason why Jesus would put an end to temples. *"Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me?"* (Isa 66:1).

"...the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands..." (Acts 7:48). *"God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands "* (Acts 17:24).

God wanted to live in the hearts of His people. That was His plan.

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (I Cor 3:16).

"...God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us?" (1 Jn 4:12).

".. for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said. I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people" (2Cor 6:16).

Pastor, are you like the foolish rich man in Jesus' parable? *"And he said. This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater..."* (Luke 12:18).

Be like Jesus and the early apostles who put their emphasis on THE MESSAGE — NOT THE MORTAR (buildings). The MESSAGE produces hearts ready to provide God a place to dwell. The mortar (Cathedrals - Ziggurats) strokes the egos of those who build them.

3. Jesus Came To Bless ALL Nations

Jesus came to revive the ancient promise and purpose of God, that all the world be blessed by knowing God.

When He rose from the dead He said, *"All power in heaven and in earth is given to me and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age... Therefore GO!"* (Matt 28:18-20).

What was the meaning of this? Jesus was renewing the ancient commission to Noah and his sons. He was reviving the missionary call to Abraham and his seed. *"Therefore... Go!"*

Well, the Church went... but only as far as Jerusalem. From Noah's time until now, it seems the Lord's primary problem has been to find people with a world-view. Absorption with me, my family, my desires and ambitions seems to personify most of us. Many of us Pentecostal believers have the attitude, "Me, my wife, my two children — us four, no more. Acts 2:4."

Before the early Church would implement the clear commission of Jesus to *"... Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature"* (Mark 16:15), the Lord had to allow persecution. It took this to get them out of their comfortable nests and obeying what He commanded. Even then, it wasn't the preachers (apostles) who obeyed.

"And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles" (Acts 8:1).

It was a "laymen-led" movement that broke the exclusive franchise of the Jewish Apostles on the gospel. *"Therefore they that were scattered abroad [no apostles — just laymen] went everywhere preaching the word"* (Acts 8:4).

4. Jesus Came To Make Us A Nation of Priests

The Jewish apostles were no more attentive to Jesus' Commission than we are today. They sat there, enjoying the revival and the blessing in Jerusalem.

Until the 8th Chapter of Acts, when the persecution came, they were doing nothing about God's worldwide purpose of spreading the gospel. The laymen finally responded when persecution scattered them.

Peter says, *"But you are a chosen people, a royal **priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God...***" (1 Pet 2:9). The very thing that God promised the children of Israel, in Exodus 19, we have now become.

God does not lay down conditions. He just says *"YOU ARE royal priests [king-priests], a holy nation!"* Not conditionally, as it was under the old covenant, but unconditionally.

*"Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that **I will make a new covenant** with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:*

"Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake...

*"...After those days, saith the LORD, **I will** put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts..." (Jer 31:31-33).*

Now, God in effect is saying, **"I will"** — "I tried to elicit the voluntary cooperation of my nation Israel and they refused. Now I'm going to do it, regardless."

There are no "clergy" or "laymen" anywhere in the Bible. Jesus declares us "kings and priests." *"And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen"* (Rev 1:6). *"And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth"* (Rev 5:10).

F. WHAT WILL BREAK THE BABYLONIAN BARRIER?

The thing that broke the Babylonian barrier was God coming down and causing them all to speak in other tongues.

"Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the LORD did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the LORD scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth" (Gen 11:6-9).

That's what the Day of Pentecost was intended to accomplish... to scatter those who spoke new languages into all the earth — preaching the gospel of Christ. It was to break the Babylonian barrier.

It was not to form little 'bless-me' clubs that build up, instead of reaching out. It was to empower us to go into all the world and become martyrs for Jesus Christ (Acts 1:8). It was the confounding of languages that broke the Babylonian barrier.

1. Focus On World- Wide Evangelization

God intended Pentecost (Acts 2:4) to be that for His Church. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit should cause us to be international and global in our thinking and mentality. Pentecost should make us realize that there are people of other nations and tongues that are waiting for the gospel.

Every time you speak in tongues you should be reminded of God's global program

for **all** people from *"...every tribe and language and people and nation."*

The Book of Revelation takes us to Heaven and shows the outcome of the Church age. Gathered before the throne is a countless multitude.

"And they sang a new song: You are worthy... because... with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be kings and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth" (Rev 5:9,10).

If it is God's will that those people *"from every tribe and language and people and nation "* are in Heaven, you better pray that God Almighty will help you do your part in seeing that they get the gospel.'

A huge segment of the world still waits for the gospel. Two out of five (two billion) still wait for the Church to obey Christ's command to GO and tell — to cooperate with God's desire to justify the heathen through faith in Jesus Christ.

Until about 200 years ago, the Church was totally trapped in this Babylonian bondage. The Dark Ages had brought the total immersion of the divine purpose under the Nimrod religious system. It was called 'Christianity' but in fact was all 'Nimrodic'. It was a political system with religious leaders running the show.

2. Stop Building "Temples"

What did the Church do in those Dark Ages? It discarded the mandate to evangelize the world and started building cathedrals with nice tall spires *"...whose top may reach to heaven."*

What spirit do you think that came out of? Did it come out of the Great Commission? Did it come out of the loving heart of Jesus ' *'who came to seek and save that which was lost'* (Luke 19:10)?

No! It came out of the Nimrod religion that spread its tentacles of darkness over the Church and cursed it. It produced the wanton selling of indulgences to finance the construction of cathedral spires to Heaven, not (as claimed) for the glory of God — but rather for the carnal vanity of man.

I am not against the Church having facilities to carry on its work, but nonsensical building of Babel towers to satisfy the ego of man is a sinful curse on the Church. God never ordained it. God never commanded it.

There's not one word of authority for it from Genesis to Revelation.

Yet, what do we Western church leaders focus most of our resource, time and efforts on? It seems to me the preponderance of leaders are Nimrods saying, "Let us make us! Let us build us! Lest we be scattered — and end up going into all the world with the gospel." (Take that as sarcasm.)

We shoot our spires heavenward and compete with one another for the most ostentatious buildings that can be erected. It is the old Nimrod system raising its ugly head, "Lest we be scattered abroad throughout all the earth and fulfill the divine purpose." Wouldn't that be a tragedy if that happened? (That question is divine sarcasm.)

It is an ancient problem. It will not go away with Ralph Mahoney preaching about it one time.

But if you are a leader with courage and faith, you can rise up and break the

Babylonian barrier. You can start praying against it and binding those ancient, demonic principalities and powers that have a death-grip on the finance of the Church and refuse to release it for the great harvest of the world.

3. Re-Prioritize Finances

In America, we give 3 cents of every \$100 given in our churches (not 3c of every dollar; but 3c of every **one hundred dollars**) to missionary evangelism. This is a sad commentary on a church gripped by the bondage of Babel.

Forty percent of the world is still without the gospel. They have never heard it and are not within reach of the gospel today. What a crime!

It has been almost two thousand years since Jesus told His followers what He specifically wanted them to do; 4,000 years have passed since God told Abraham about His desire for a people who would bless all nations; 5,000 years have lapsed since God spoke of His worldwide plan to Noah and his sons — and the unevangelized world still waits.

"Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame" (1 Cor 15:34). If it was a shame thirty years after Pentecost, when Paul wrote this, it is a double-shame today — that some still have no knowledge of God.

We church leaders in Western nations have decisions to make of **when, where** and **how** we'll rise up to break the Babylonian barrier. We must make it our number-one priority —to preach the gospel, to spread the message and quit spreading so much "mortar" (building bigger barns to house the sheep). Sheep were meant for the field, not barns. *"The field is the world"* (Matt 13:38).

I say it a third time, the emphasis of the Bible is **the message**. The emphasis of western Christianity is **the mortar**. You think about it!

G. CONCLUSION

One of the primary obstacles to world-evangelism is the Cathedral concept. Cathedrals capture most of the financial resource that should be used for spreading the gospel. "Lord! Cause us to repent of this terrible sin against the unevangelized. AMEN!"

SECTION E4

LEARNING HOW TO WIN SOULS

By Ralph Mahoney and Dr. T.L. Osborn

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Chapter 1

Methods of Evangelism

Introduction

Christians in Western nations have the idea that soul-winning is done inside then church auditoriums. While many find Christ in church buildings, in Bible times soul-winning was done out where the people lived.

Therefore, let the cross be raised again at the center of the marketplace, as well as on the wall of the church building. Jesus was not crucified in a cathedral between two candles, but on a cross between two thieves — on the town garbage heap, at a crossroads traveled by people of so many nations they had to write His title in Hebrew, Latin and Greek.

The Son of God was crucified at the kind of place where cynics talk smut, where thieves curse, and where soldiers gamble. Because that is where Christ died and since that is what He died about, that is where Christians can best share His message of love because **that is what real Christianity is all about.**

A. TWO METHODS OF EVANGELISM

In the Book of Acts there were only two methods of evangelism: mass evangelism and **personal** evangelism.

1. Mass Evangelism

*"Then Philip went down to the **city of Samaria**, and preached Christ unto them. And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. And there was great joy in that city" (Acts 8:5,6,8). Philips' city-wide crusade is an example of **mass** evangelism.*

In Acts 8:26-38 we see this same evangelist, Philip, doing personal evangelism. *"And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? Of himself, or of some other man? Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him [one man] **Jesus**" (Acts 8:35,36).*

"...I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly [mass evangelism], and from house to house [personal evangelism], testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:20,21).

Within a century of the Day of Pentecost, theological discussion took the place of soul-winning in the Church. Spiritual "lukewarmness" and apostasy resulted. By the 4th century, the Dark Ages had already begun.

It was not until the 18th century that **mass** evangelism began to reappear under John Wesley (founder of the Methodist church). **Personal** evangelism as practiced by the Church in the Book of Acts has only begun to be rediscovered in this last century.

2. Personal Soul-Winning

For generations, Christians evangelized the Church, the classrooms of their schools, the pews — but not the world of unbelievers. People were enlisted for the class and the club, and invited to church buildings where, it was hoped, they would receive Christ as their Savior and Lord.

This worked for those who would go to a church. But 90 percent or more of the people will never attend a church, so they can never be won there.

Our greatest opportunity is **outside** the church. Christians must win souls at the workplace, in the parks, on the streets and in the homes. We must go out into the world — where the people are.

The Church was born in a blaze of personal soul-winning. Souls were won in homes in face-to-face ministry.

*"...And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, **except the apostles**.*

"Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word" (Acts 8:1,4).

Note: it was the "laymen" that went everywhere preaching the Word and leading people to Christ. The "apostles" stayed at Jerusalem. That is the way God intended it.

Leaders were put in the church to *"...equip the members for the work of the ministry"* (Eph 4:12 rsv).

Every member should be instructed by the church leader in how to bring others to Christ.

A fresh breeze of New Testament-style evangelism is blowing across the world.

The Christian's life motto is very simple: **One Way! One Job!** The **One Way** is Jesus! The **One Job** is soul-winning!

There is no joy like giving the good news to everybody everywhere — **winning souls — out where the people are!**

"For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). "...and he that winneth souls is wise" (Prov 11:30).

"And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness [soul-winners] as the stars for ever and ever" (Dan 12:3).

Becoming a partner with Jesus in His great work of saving lost souls is the greatest thing in the world.

a. A Visit With Aquila. Come with me on a visit to the city of Ephesus. We're going to visit with Aquila and Priscilla, business persons and lay leaders in the church.

"Good evening, Aquila. We understand you're a member of the church here. Could we come in and visit for a while?"

"*Certainly!* Come on in."

"If you don't mind, we would like for you to tell us about the way the churches here in Asia Minor carry on their soul-winning program. We read that you have been a member of a church in Corinth and Rome, as well as this one here in Ephesus. You should be very well qualified to tell us about evangelism in the New Testament Church. If you don't mind, we'd like to visit your church while we're here."

'Sit down. You 're already in the meeting place. The church meets here in my home."

"You don't have a church building?"

"What's a church building? No, I guess we don't."

"Tell me, Aquila, what is your church doing to evangelize Ephesus? What are you doing to reach the city with the gospel?"

"Oh, we've already evangelized Ephesus. Every person in the city clearly understands the gospel."

"What?"

"Is that unusual? "

"How did the church do it? You don't have radio, television, electronic communications or printing presses. Did you have a lot of evangelistic campaigns?"

"No. As you have probably heard, we tried mass meetings in this area, but most of the time we would end up in jail."

"Then how did you do it?"

"We just went to every home in the city. That's the way the church in Jerusalem first evangelized that city (Acts 5:42). The disciples there evangelized the entire city of Jerusalem in a very short time. All the other churches in Asia Minor have followed their example."

"Is it effective everywhere?"

"Yes, it is. There are so many converts that some of the pagan leaders fear their own religions will die. When Paul left Ephesus for the last time, he reminded us to keep on following this same procedure" (Acts 20:20).

"Aquila, this is amazing! At this rate, there is no telling how many people are going to hear the gospel and respond."

"Oh, haven 'tyou heard? We 've already shared the gospel with every person in Asia Minor, both Jews and Greeks" (Acts 19:10).

"That's not possible. You can't mean everyone!"

"Yes, everyone."

"But that would include Damascus, Ephesus, dozens of large cities, as well as towns and villages. What about the nomadic tribes on the desert? How long did it take the churches to reach all of these people?"

"Not long; 24 months to be exact" (Acts 19:10). "The same thing is happening in North Africa and Southern Europe. The gospel has reached Spain, too. We 've heard of a land called Britain, and several Christians may be there by now."

"Aquila, what you're telling us is incredible. You have done more in one generation than we have done in a thousand years!"

"That's strange. It's been rather simple for us to do. It's hard to realize things have moved so slowly for you. Maybe there is a better way to spread the good news — than preaching in church buildings. Maybe you need to try our methods."

Commission To Win Souls

Give us a watchword for the hour, A thrilling word, a word of power;

A battle cry, a flaming breath, A call to conquest or to death;

A word to rouse the church from rest, To heed the Master's high behest.

The call is given, ye hosts arise, The watchword is EVANGELIZE!

To fallen men, a dying race, Make known the gift of gospel grace.

The world that now in darkness lies, O' Church of Christ, EVANGELIZE!

Chapter 2

Why We Should Evangelize

A. SEVEN REASONS FOR WINNING SOULS

1. Because Jesus Was A Soul-Winner

"This statement is completely reliable and worthy of universal acceptance, Christ Jesus came into the world to rescue sinners..." (I Tim 1:15 rsv).

"For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10).

a. Jesus Came To Save People. Jesus came to save people. That is His mission. The first group Jesus chose to follow Him received this challenge:

"Follow me, and I will make you fishers of people" (Matt 4:19).

The last group who followed Him out to His ascension received this command: *"Go therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:*

"Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you..." (Matt 28:19,20 rsv).

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

The word **Christian** means Christ-like. Christ came to save people, to seek out the lost; so if we are to be like Christ, we are also to be soul-winners.

b. He Went Where The People Were. Jesus took His message to the people. He went wherever the people were — in the marketplaces, on street corners, on the mountainsides, by the seashores, in the homes.

He was criticized by the religious leaders for identifying with people where they were. *"This man receives sinners, and eats with them" (Luke 15:2 rsv).*

He encourages us to *"...go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to*

come in, that my house may be filled" (Luke 14:23).

He never said, "Go to a church building and pray for God to send people in." He said, "...go out and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled."

After His ascension, Jesus' followers acted just like Him. They were busy witnessing in the markets, on the streets, in houses, around the public wells; talking, reasoning, witnessing, persuading, preaching, winning souls, compelling people to believe the gospel — just like Jesus did.

The Bible says, "**Daily** in the temple, and in every house, they never stopped teaching and preaching Jesus Christ" (Acts 5:42).

Take a moment to circle the word **daily** in your New Testament. While churches seldom have more than two or three meetings a week, the gambling casinos, the cinema theaters, the bars that serve liquor, amusement parks and dance halls are doing business **daily**.

New Testament Christians were **daily** in the temple and in every house, teaching and preaching Jesus Christ.

c. He Said "Go Out And Get Them". We pray for people to be saved. Jesus said, "Go out and get them." They will be lost if all we do is pray.

"God... hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to **us** the **ministry of reconciliation**.

"To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto **us** the **word of reconciliation**" (2 Cor 5:18,19).

God has given to **us** both the **ministry** and **word** of reconciliation to reconcile men to God. God has done all He can do. "He gave his only Son... that whoever makes a covenantal commitment to him, shall not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16 lit).

Christ has done all He can do. "And, having made peace through the blood of his cross... to reconcile all things unto himself..." (Col 1:20).

Now He commissions us to tell this good news to all people everywhere. 'For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?' (Rom 10:13,14).

Our part is to tell people, to let them know the good news of what our heavenly Father and His Son have done to save us.

We should all be soul-winners because Jesus was.

2. Because The Harvest Is Great

"Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few" (Matt 9:37).

"...when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd" (Matt 9:36).

a. Jesus Sent Laborers Into The Harvest Fields. When Jesus pondered these needy multitudes, what did He do? He called twelve disciples, gave them power to cast out devils and heal the sick, and sent them out to help reap this Harvest.

Because of the great Harvest, He chose seventy others also (see Luke 10:1-3). To

them He said, "*Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you*" (Luke 10:19).

Jesus did something about this ripened Harvest. He did not just sit and ponder it and pray about it. He set about getting laborers out into these Harvest fields.

We also can be moved with compassion toward those who are untouched by the gospel. If we are "Christ-like" — we will become involved doing something about sharing the gospel with them.

b. We Must Go Out. Soul-winning is done **out where the people live, work and play**. It is vital we re-emphasize this basic principle in soul-winning.

We do not go fishing in our bathtubs. If we expect to catch fish, we cast our net out in the ocean or lake. We put our fish bait and hook into the river or stream — **out where the fish are**.

We reap our harvest in the fields, **out where the grain stands ripe and ready to be harvested**. We seldom win souls by staying inside our church building. To reap the unconverted, we carry our witness away from our sanctuaries, out into the markets, onto the streets, in jails, hospitals, in the homes of people, **out among them. This is evangelism**.

Hindus do not go to church. Moslems do not enter a Christian temple. Shintoists and Buddhists do not attend Christian worship. The UNchurched do not come to church.

We must go out "*...into the highways and byways and compel them to come in*" (Luke 14:23).

There is an element of urgency when harvest comes. If the fields are not quickly reaped, the harvest may perish in the field.

Storms may come and damage the wheat or corn. If not harvested quickly, fruit can over-ripen and spoil.

Paul urged his own sense of urgency on others: "*But this I say, brethren, the time is short...*" (I Cor 7:29).

If we really want to reap the harvest of our generation, the secret is to rediscover the urgency, passion and zeal of the early Church. Those Christians went out across cities and villages in constant pursuit of lost souls — even at the risk of their lives. This is being Christ-like. This is true Christianity.

c. Mobilize To Evangelize. As a church leader, it is your place to start the process of praying, mobilizing and planning soul-winning. The order in the ministry of Jesus was this:

1) See. Jesus **saw** the Harvest and was moved with compassion.

2) Pray. He then went to **prayer**, as the means to solve the problem of laborers for the Harvest. "*And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God*" (Luke 6:12).

3) Choose. After prayer. He **selected** laborers — the twelve and the seventy — and trained and equipped them to go out and reap the Harvest.

He **saw** — Now He wants us to see. "*...behold, I say unto you. Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest*" (John 4:35).

He **prayed** — Now He wants us to pray. You "*Pray the Lord of harvest that he*

would 'cast out' (lit) laborers into his harvest" (Luke 10:2).

He **chose** — Now He wants us to choose. "*Brothers, choose... men who are known to be full of the Spirit... turn this responsibility over to them*" (Acts 6:3 niv).

This simple plan of action — **See, Pray, Choose** — will start the process of ingathering.

Our Motto: Every Christian, A Witness!

Our Mission: Out Where the People Are!

This is the second reason we are soul-winners: **The Harvest truly is great!**

3. Because The Laborers Are Few

"Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying. Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send we" (Isa6:8).

a. Billions Need To Hear. The number of living persons in the world is increasing at the rate of over 70,000,000 (seventy million) each year. Less than 3,000,000 (4%) of these are being touched by the gospel.

About 40 of the people (2,000,000,000 — two billion) in the world are outside the reach of the gospel. These are people outside the reach of a self-reproducing church group who will share the gospel with them.

b. They Will Be Lost Without Christ. These unevangelized will never hear the gospel unless you take action to break this "*famine for the word of God*" (Amos 8:11). Mobilizing and training soul-winners to go **out where the sinners are** is the only solution to this dilemma.

Thousands of towns and villages across China and India still have no one to tell them about Christ. Those people live and die without Christ — not because they have rejected Him, but because during the last 2,000 years, not one Christian has gone to share with them the gospel of His love.

Less than one out of five hundred church leaders dedicate their lives to reaching un-cached peoples. We need a recommitment to the principles embraced by the Apostle Paul: "*Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation*" (Rom 15:20).

Paul always set out "*To preach the gospel in the regions beyond...*" (2Cor 10:16) — out where people had not yet heard about Christ. Peter also understood "*The Lord is not slack concerning his promise... not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance*" (2 Pet 3:9). It is NOT GOD'S WILL that men perish. They perish because we have not given them the gospel.

No wonder Paul was so passionate about this issue. "*Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame*" (I Cor 15:34).

Three important points are made:

1) The Church Sleeps. People are lost because the Church is sleeping. The call is "*Awake to righteousness...*"; "*...he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame*" (Prov 10:5).

2) It Is A Sin. It is SIN that people do not know about God. We are admonished, "*...sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God...*"

This is a sin of **omission**. *"Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin "* (Jas 4:17).

3) It Is A Shame. This fact is a cause for shame (loss of face). *"...I speak this to your shame..."; "...he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame"* (Prov 10:5).

The woeful lament of the lost rises up to Heaven, *"The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved"* (Jer 8:20). This dreadful condition exists because **the laborers are so few**. *"Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest"* (Matt 9:38). We are soul-winners because the laborers are so few.

4. Because Of The Great Commission

"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15).

Every believer is **commissioned** and **called**. *"Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling... according to his own purpose and grace..."* (2 Tim 1:9).

a. Every Believer Has A Responsibility. The "Great Commission" to go and the "Holy Calling" to witness and serve is every believer's God-given authority to minister. Every believer has three priestly ministries:

1) To Minister To The Lord in prayer, praise and worship;

2) To Minister To One Another in loving relational, financial and spiritual support; and

3) To Minister To The World (unbelievers) by healing the physically and emotionally sick, casting out demons and telling them the good news, *"... that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures"* (I Cor 15:3,4).

When believers are taught how to fulfill these three ministries, many will assume their God-given privileges and responsibilities and say, *"...here am I Lord, send we"* (Isa 6:8).

b. A Great Privilege. Christ left us no privilege greater than to announce the gospel to every creature.

This is what the early Christians did day and night They healed the sick; cast out demons; and shared the gospel from house to house, at markets, village wells, on the busy roadways, streets, in meeting places, from jail cells, in dungeons, everywhere.

They had no cathedrals or elaborate church buildings to inhibit their unbridled joy of ministry and sharing with those who were anxiously waiting to receive Christ. They went **out where the sinners are** and spread the gospel.

We should live and breathe for one purpose: to share the gospel with the maximum number of people, by every means possible.

You do not have to be an "ordained minister" to share the gospel. This is the privilege of every believer. Christians do not need a special call to do things Christ authorized to be done throughout the world. They only need to accept the honor conferred upon them of becoming an ambassador for Christ.

c. Every Believer Is Commissioned. Because every believer is commissioned

and called, no "special call" is needed to be a soul-winner. Jesus' instruction is clear: "*Let your light... shine before men... Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled...*" (Matt 5:16; Luke 14:23).

Jesus said, "*...preach the gospel to every creature.*"

If one nation is 95 percent Christian while another nation is 95 percent non-Christian, our choice should be to reach the non-Christian nation.

If a small field of ripened grain had a hundred reapers at work in it, while a large field had only one reaper, which field would you toil in to save the grain? You should choose the field where the need is greatest and where there are the fewest laborers to meet the need.

If ten people were lifting a log, nine on the small end and one on the large end — it should not be difficult to choose where you would lift.

d. God Will Guide. As you motivate your members to pray for and go to the places that need the gospel. God's Spirit will begin to give guidance **as they go**. You cannot guide a ship that is stopped in the water. Movement is needed for the rudder to steer the ship.

So it is with God's guidance.

Paul was en route to Asia on a certain occasion, but was "*...forbidden of the Holy Ghost. Then he tried going into Bithynia; but the Spirit suffered them not... then a vision appeared to Paul in the night.*" In this vision, "*a man of Macedonia prayed him saying, come over into Macedonia, and help us*" (Acts 16:6-9).

This is the kind of guidance you may receive, if you stay sensitive and alert in your spirit. Paul was already an apostle, an evangelist, going throughout his world, preaching the gospel. As he was going to yet other "*regions beyond,*" he received this guidance to Macedonia.

When considering where to harvest, pray this prayer: "Lord, if there is any certain field or area or nation where You want us, show us and we will go. But if You do not, we will choose the best opportunity to reap the most fruitful harvest and we will be there reaping until You guide us elsewhere."

He has promised, "*Lo, I am with you always*" (Matt 28:20). His orders to us are clear: "*GO into ALL the world. Preach to EVERY creature.*" Christ's words are to be acted upon — not analyzed, argued or theorized.

We are soul-winners because of the Great Commission of Jesus Christ.

5. Because Of The Unfulfilled Prophecies Concerning Jesus' Return

The return of Christ to earth is the blessed hope of millions in the persecuted Church. We joyfully embrace that hope. "*If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable*" (I Cor 15:19). We long for His return.

a. Gospel Preached In All The World. But, most who teach this are not doing anything to make it possible for Him to return. Many even teach there are no unfulfilled prophecies preventing His return.

Jesus made it clear. There would be certain pre-conditions before He could come back to earth. The most important of these is in Matthew 24:14: "*And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in **all the world** for a witness unto **all nations**; and then shall*

the end come.

*"Verily I say unto you... this gospel shall be preached in the whole world..." (Matt 26:13). "...repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations..." (Luke 24:47). "...ye shall be martyrs [literal] unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, **and unto the uttermost part of the earth**" (Acts 1:8).*

In the Greek language, the word **nations** is *ethnos*. It refers to "ethnic" groups. Specifically, a group of non-Jewish people who have a unique linguistic and cultural identity that make them distinct from any other group of people in the world.

India has over 2,000 such people-groups. These range from primitive people, living in trees in the jungles of the northeastern mountains, to sophisticated high-caste "Brahmins" who live in the mid-lands.

Many of these people-groups have never heard the gospel. Most do not have one verse of the Bible in their language.

b. Saints From All Nations. The Apostle John was given prophetic insight into the future.

He saw a heavenly scene. "After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations [ethnos], and tribes, and people, and languages, who stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands. These are they who... have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the lamb" (Rev 7:9,14 niv).

This is the final outcome of the Church age. The redeemed uncountable millions who make up the Church (Greek = **ecclesia**, meaning "called out ones") are involved in serving God before His throne for all eternity.

Note that they are there from all ethnic groups (nations). They are from all tribes and language groups.

If Jesus should come today, the Church age would end and we who serve Him would *"... be caught up. ..to meet the Lord in the air... and so we shall ever be with the Lord"* (1 Ths 4:17). But since there are thousands of unreached people-groups who've not yet heard the gospel, Jesus cannot come back today.

If Jesus came before all 'ethnos' hear the gospel, the vision seen by John could not be a true vision. People will not be in Heaven who have not heard the gospel.

"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent?" (Rom 10:13-15).

These sobering questions should sink deep into our hearts. We must realize there is something we must do to bring back King Jesus.

Is Jesus asking church leaders... *"Ye are my brethren, ye are my bones and my flesh: wherefore then are ye the last to bring back the king"* (2 Sam 19:12)?

c. Preach The Gospel To Every Creature. The Church is involved in doing many good things. But we have neglected the most important instruction Jesus gave us. His last commandment: *"...preach the gospel to EVERY creature."* This we have left **UNDONE**.

"... these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone" (Matt 23:23). He will hold us to account for doing ALL He told us to do.

Untold millions still die UNTOLD. They still wait for church leaders to prioritize time, people and money to see that they get their first chance to be told about Jesus.

The Church argues about Christ's Second Coming, when thousands of tribes and language groups have not heard about His first coming.

We insist on second blessings, while these forgotten ones have never experienced a first blessing. We argue about a refilling, while multitudes have never experienced a first filling.

Is this fair? Should those on the front row receive a second serving before the hungry ones on the back rows have received a first serving?

1) Early Christians Were Motivated. We must repent of this disobedience and commit our time, our people and our money to the task of taking the gospel into ALL the world to EVERY creature.

This concept of soul-winning to bring back the King so motivated the early Christians that they spread the gospel testimony across most of their known world.

Down across the Mediterranean Sea the message went until North Africa was dotted with Christian places of worship. Braving storms, dangers at sea, perils of ancient travel and every conceivable hardship, they spread the message with unequalled gallantry.

2) Spiritual Darkness Fell. But something happened after the first hundred years. Instead of charting camel caravans south of the Sahara into the African highlands and jungles, or pressing eastward beyond the continental mountain barriers, or northward to the pagan European tribes, they became more interested in conserving what they had. They failed to press on out to the uttermost parts of the earth.

Doctrinal disputes superseded personal witnessing. Conventions began to replace evangelism. Denominational disputes and political power became more important than following the Lamb.

They created religious organizations and called them "the church." Spiritual darkness began to fall. The long dreary thousand-year-long night of the Dark Ages descended on the world.

Jesus loved the world so much. He died for it. The lukewarm church abandoned this world to the conquest of Mohammed, to the ravages of the mighty Mongol, Ghenghis Khan, to the blood-stained sword of a Napoleon.

3) Moravians Pray And Act. It would take a prayer meeting that went on twenty-four hours a day for over one hundred years — to break this death-grip of indifference from the Church. That hellassaulting prayer ministry was started about 250 years ago through the influence of a little known, nor highly regarded Bavarian Prince named Count Van Zinzendorf.

The Moravian Church, which he is credited with founding, deployed the first (and for many years the only) evangelical missionaries of modern times.

The Moravians prayed with passion for the lost souls of men. But they not only prayed, they took action to take the gospel to them. They gave the finest of their young men to become soldiers in the army of the Lord.

Two such young men heard of an island in the Caribbean sea where 40,000 Africans were held in abject slavery. No one was permitted on the island unless they came as a slave.

Two young Moravian men were moved with compassion for these slaves. They realized these slaves would perish in their sins if they did not take the gospel to them.

So, these young Moravians sold themselves into slavery to reach these Africans. As they sailed from the docks in Hamburg, Germany, their last words echoed across the ocean tides: "**We go to gain for the Lamb, the reward of His sacrifice.**"

They believed they could help bring back the King. They believed Jesus could not come back until "*...this gospel of the kingdom, was preached in all the world, for a witness to all nations.*"

4) Learn From Political Revolutionaries. Did you ever study how political revolutionaries gain control of nations?

They infiltrate leaders into the hills, the jungles, the swamps, and from there bring their influence on the local tribes. They promise them schools, jobs, help and prosperity (though they seldom keep their promise).

Once entrenched among these forgotten people where disease and poverty are rampant, they organize guerrilla bands and begin their harassment. First villages, then towns and cities; their aim is to take over the country.

These political and mercenary leaders go to the very people which the Church has often neglected. They pay any price and make any sacrifice to live in the most difficult areas.

The gospel messenger is usually not equipped or encouraged to reach these people. In general, they would scarcely survive in such areas, so these tribes have been left without Christ.

By contrast, the political insurgents send in their teachers to live completely indigenous and make the utmost sacrifice — often life itself — to organize these tribes into militia for their purposes.

What the Church has not done, revolutionaries have done. The very people who have been neglected by the Church have become fertile soil for the seeds of revolution and bloodshed. And by these means, they take over nations.

Yet, many Christian leaders teach, "...all the signs of Jesus coming have been fulfilled. Come quickly, Lord Jesus!" But Jesus' clear words refute this. "*And the gospel must first be published among all nations [ethnos]*" (Mark 13:10).

The Scriptures teach us what we must do, and what must happen before Jesus can come again.

"Now change your mind and attitude to God and turn to him so he can cleanse away your sins and send you wonderful times of refreshment from the presence of the Lord and send Jesus your Messiah back to you again.

"For he must REMAIN IN HEAVEN until the final recovery of all things from sin..." (Acts 3:19-22 tib).

When we complete the job He gave us, Jesus will return for His Church. That is why we are soul-winners — to bring back our King.

6. Because God Will Hold Us Accountable

God specifically warns His servants that they must deliver the message He gives them, to the peoples to whom He sends them. Otherwise they will be held accountable for their failure to do so.

"Son of Man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me.

"When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand" (Eze 3:17,18).

"But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned... his blood will I require at the watchman's hand.

"So thou, O Son of Man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me.

"When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand" (Eze 33:6-8).

Some Bible teachers will say this warning does not apply to Christians. They insist there is no jeopardy for believers. Even if we fail to obey Christ's commands concerning preaching the gospel to EVERY creature in ALL the world, these teachers see no chastisement or negative consequences resulting therefrom.

a. Paul Recognized His Obligation. The Apostle Paul did NOT believe that. He said, *"Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men "* (Acts 20:26).

Why was Paul secure that his hands were not "blood-stained?" His innocence was based on his obedience to the Great Commission.

He says, *"...Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia. ..howl served the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears... And how I kept back nothing that was profitable to you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ"* (Acts 20:18-21).

Paul had exonerated himself. He affirms, *"...I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision"* (Acts 26; 19).

Paul was not present at Christ's ascension. It would be several years later before he encountered the resurrected Christ. When converted, Paul received the instructions the other apostles received at Christ's ascension, several years previously.

"And Paul, trembling and astonished said. Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do."

The Lord tells Ananias to tell Paul, "...he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel.

"And straightway Paul preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God" (Acts 9:6,15, 20).

Paul had no doubt about what he was to do. He recognized his debt, his obligation to preach the gospel — lest his hands be blood-stained for disobedience.

"I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also" (Rom 1:14,15).

Paul well knew the scripture, *"...their blood will I require at your hand."* He made sure he fulfilled his debt, his obligation to preach the gospel to the unreached.

He could write, *"...I have written the more boldly unto you... because of the grace that is given to me of God... to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed, through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God:*

*"So that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum [a vast area], I have fully preached the gospel of Christ. Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, **not where Christ was named**, lest I should build upon another man's foundation"* (Rom 15:15,18-20).

Paul went to the lost, the least, the last. He did not want the blood of the unconverted on his hands.

b. Catch The Vision. One great soul-winner wrote, "We do not pretend that we alone can win the world to Christ; but **we are involved in evangelism as though God's plan depended on us alone.**

"If we cannot win everyone, we shall certainly win some — and **we shall minister as though the reaping depended entirely upon us.**

"We do not want the blood of the unconverted to ever be required at our hands. It is as simple as that!"

Many are catching the vision of world evangelism. Filipinos are going to China. South Americans are winning souls in Alaska. Indonesians are winning the lost in Europe. Asians are going to the islands of the Caribbean. We are World Christians.

Do not let fear, unbelief, misunderstanding or criticism hold you back.

Remember, "...it is not the critic who counts; not the one who points out how the strong person stumbled, or where the doer of deeds could have done better.

"The credit belongs to the one who is actually in the arena — in action — whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood, who errs and comes short again and again; who is spent in a worthy cause, who knows the triumph of high achievement — but who fails while daring greatly."

When you have dedicated yourself, your time, your financial resources, your young people to this top priority of spreading the gospel, then *"...if the unconverted turn not from their sinfulness, or from their sinful ways, they shall die in their iniquities; but you have delivered your soul"* (Eze 3:19).

We are soul-winners because we do not want the blood of sinners required at our hands.

7. Because Of What We Have Experienced

"What makes us think that we can escape if we are indifferent to this great salvation announced by the Lord Jesus himself, and passed on to us by those who heard him speak?"

"God has always shown us that these messages are true by signs and wonders and various miracles and by giving certain special abilities from the Holy Spirit to those who believe; yes God has assigned such gifts to each of us" (Heb 2:3,4 tib).

a. The Gospel Of The Kingdom. Jesus called His gospel **the gospel of the Kingdom**. *"And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the **gospel of the kingdom**, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people" (Matt 4:23).*

*"And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the **gospel of the kingdom**, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people" (Matt 9:35).*

The gospel of the King-dom is the gospel of the **KINGS-DOMinion**. King Jesus always demonstrated dominion by healing the sick and diseased and casting out demons.

To understand this gospel, let us take a look backward for a moment. This dominion was first given to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.

*"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and **let them have dominion**... male and female created he them. And... said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, an replenish the earth, and subdue it: and **have dominion**... over... the earth" (Gen 1:26,28).*

Satan soon spoiled God's plan. Satan wanted the dominion given Adam and Eve. To obtain it, he knew he had to cause them to fall into sin. If this happened, the crown of dominion would fall from their head and the scepter would fall from their hand. Satan would be there to pick it up and thus usurp the dominion that rightfully belonged to mankind.

One proof that Satan obtained this dominion is found in the temptation of Christ.

"Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me" (Matt 4:8,9).

For this to be a valid temptation, the devil had to make a valid offer. If Satan did not have the dominion (the kingdoms of the world) to offer Jesus, there would have been no temptation. It is obvious Satan did have the dominion — and he offered it to Jesus.

Jesus had come to restore the dominion to its rightful heir, mankind. He was to do this by dying on the cross. This would give Him an entree into the realm of death and Hades. While there. He would conquer both, and set the prisoners free.

David described this epic struggle of Christ in Psalms 116:3. *"The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me..."*

Isaiah foretold how Christ would set us sinners free from death and Hell in Isaiah 28:18. *"And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand..."*

Jesus came *"...that through death he might destroy [render powerless] him that had the power of death, that is, the devil"* (Heb 2:14). Jesus rendered Satan powerless. He took the dominion from him.

Jesus' 'victory cheer' is recorded in Revelation 1:18: *"I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."* Because He has the keys, Jesus now controls the gates to both Hell and death.

When Jesus rose from the dead, He cried out, "*ALL DOMINION [Arabic version] in heaven and in earth is given unto me... and I am with you always, even unto the end of the age*" (Matt 28:18,20).

John described the results of that triumph in these words: "*And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen*" (Rev 1:6).

The good news of the KINGS-DOMINION is this. Jesus now has the DOMINION! He is with us, to restore it back to us. We are now king-priests, "*But ye are... a royal priesthood [that means kingpriests]*" (I Pet 2:9).

Therefore, we can proclaim the good news that Satan no longer has dominion. "*And this gospel of the Kingdom [King's Dominion] shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations...*" (Matt24:14).

b. In Word And Power. This gospel of the Kingdom was the gospel the early disciples and apostles proclaimed and demonstrated. "*And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all*" (Acts 4:33).

"*But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God...*" (Acts 8:12).

"*And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people... And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.*

"*Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them.*

"*There came also a multitude out of the cities roundabout unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one*" (Acts 5:12-16).

"*And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him... to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus...*" (Acts 28:23).

"*And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power*" (1 Cor2:4).

This gospel of the KINGS-DOMINION is the secret to successful witness, church growth, adequate financial support and most of the other problems that plague the Church worldwide.

Those who have a **word only** gospel are in big trouble. "*For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance...*" (I Ths 1:5). Because of apostasy (backsliding), much of the Church rejected the supernatural enablements of the Holy Spirit. (See Section C4, **Signs And Wonders Today**, in the **Leaders Training Guide** for a more complete explanation.)

They preach another gospel. "*I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ*" (Gal 1:6,7).

If we will take ALL OF THE GREAT COMMISSION and practice it, we can win

the world for Christ. If we deny the power of the Holy Spirit and fail to give Him His rightful place of Lordship in our ministry, we will have little fruit.

"And he said unto them. Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be condemned" (Mark 16:15,16). The Great Commission does not stop here. It continues on:

"And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;

"If they shall take up serpents; or if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

"So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God [in the place of dominion].

"And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen" (Mark 16:15-20).

Chapter 3

Signs Following Evangelism

A. SIGNS AND WONDERS GIVEN TO CONFIRM THE WORD

As you preach the gospel, it is important to remember that one of the main reasons God's Spirit has been given is to confirm His Word through the Gifts of the Spirit.

1. In The Old Testament

Elijah miraculously raises a widow's son from the dead and she says, *"...now by this I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in your mouth is the truth"* (I Ki 17:24).

2. In the New Testament

"And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs" (Mark 16:20).

Jesus said: *"And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come"* (Matt 24:14).

The Greek word for witness in the above verse is "maturion," which means "something evidential, with proof, with evidence." In other words, something to verify its authenticity.

Jesus was saying that the **gospel will be preached with something to verify its authenticity**, and that is why we have the Gifts of the Holy Spirit.

3. Showed God's Approval Of Christ's Ministry

"...Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved by God... by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through him..." (Acts 2:22).

"But I have a greater witness than John's; for the works which the Father has given me to finish — the very works that I do — bear witness of me, that the Father has

sent me" (John 5:36).

*"So when he came to Galilee, the Galileans received him, **having seen all the** [miraculous] **things he did in Jerusalem at the feast; for they also had gone to the feast**" (John 4:45).*

4. Verify God's Support Of Your Ministry

"God also bearing them witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to his own will." (Heb 2:4).

B. THE MIRACULOUS RESULTS IN UNBELIEVERS BEING SAVED

1. Peter Heals A Lame Man—Acts 3:1-11

As Peter and John went to the temple to pray, Peter was led by the Spirit to heal a lame man. This event brought people to hear the apostles preach (vss 12-26) and ultimately many received the Lord.

"...many of those who heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand" (Acts 4:4).

2. Apostles Pray For Power—Acts 4:29-31

Having tasted of the supernatural, the apostles prayed to preach the word boldly and to do more signs and wonders.

*"Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to your servants that with all boldness they may speak your word, by stretching out your hand to heal, **and that signs and wonders may be done** through the name of your holy Servant Jesus.*

"And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness."

3. The Apostles Do Signs And Wonders — Acts 5:12-16

"...signs and wonders were done among the people" (vs 12).

"And believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women" (vs 14).

4. Philip Does Miracles —Acts 8:5-8

Verse 6 - *"And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and **seeing the miracles** which he did."*

5. Peter Heals Aeneas — Acts 9:32-35

Aeneas had been paralyzed for eight years and, after Peter healed him, many believed.

*"So all who dwelt at Lydda and Sharon saw him, and **turned to the Lord**" (vs 35).*

6. Peter Raises Dorcas From The Dead —Acts 9:36-42

A Christian woman named Dorcas was raised from the dead in the city of Joppa and many believed in Jesus.

*"... and it was known throughout all of Joppa; and **many believed in the Lord**" (vs 42).*

7. Elymas The Sorcerer Blinded—Acts 13:6-12

The Spirit gave Paul Gifts of the Spirit (a Word of Wisdom and a Word of Knowledge) which helped a proconsul get saved.

"Then the proconsul believed when he saw what had been done, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord" (vs 12).

C. SIGNS AND WONDERS DO NOT GUARANTEE LASTING FRUIT

There are no guarantees that someone will follow Jesus, even after having personally experienced His miraculous power.

Jesus moved mightily in signs and wonders but confessed His great disappointment **that most of the people who followed Him did it for the wrong reasons.**

They were more concerned about eating the loaves and the fishes than making Jesus Lord of their lives (John 6:26).

Remember, out of the tens of thousands of people who saw Jesus move in the miraculous, practically no one stood by Him during His crucifixion. Even at Pentecost, only a remnant of 120 disciples (Acts 1:15) were praying, though 500 had personally seen the resurrected Christ (I Cor 15:6).

1. Only One Believed—Luke 17:12-19

Jesus went into a village and healed ten lepers but only one of them returned to express his gratitude and glorify God. Though their lives had been miraculously touched by God, 90 percent of them went on their way unwilling to submit their hearts to follow Jesus.

2. Some Believed, Some Didn't—Acts 14:1-7

Paul and the other disciples continued to preach boldly, and God confirmed their words with signs and wonders.

*"Therefore they stayed there a long time, speaking boldly in the Lord, who was bearing witness to the word of his grace, **granting signs and wonders** to be done by their hands."*

Even with the signs and wonders, some believed and some did not.

"But the multitude of the city was divided: part sided with the Jews, and part with the apostles."

The people wanted to stone them to death: *"...a violent attempt was made by both the Gentiles and Jews, with their rulers, to abuse and stone them..."*

"They became aware of it and fled to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and to the surrounding region. And they were preaching the gospel there,"

The disciples were "led by the Spirit" (after nearly being stoned) to leave that particular town and preach elsewhere.

"Now it happened in Iconium that they went together to the synagogue of the Jews, and so spoke that a great multitude both of the Jews and of the Greeks believed."

Paul and others went to preach the gospel and many people believed their words.

"But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brethren."

The unbelievers provoked people to turn against them.

D. SIGNS AND WONDERS PROVE GOD'S WORD

1. A True Life Story

The story that follows illustrates what happened in the life of one young missionary-evangelist in his search for effectiveness in "signs-following-evangelism."

a. Failure In India. Many years ago, a young Christian missionary and his wife went to India. They did not understand the Scriptures outlined above. They did not understand miracle faith. They led a few souls to Christ, but for the most part they failed.

When they preached Jesus Christ, Hindus politely accepted Him in theory as another nice god to add to their several million other gods — but no change resulted in their lives.

Moslems reasoned: "How do you know Jesus Christ is God's Son or that God raised Him from the dead?" They declared, "He was a good man, but was not God's Son — and certainly not risen from the dead."

They contended that the Koran was God's word and that Mohammed was God's prophet.

This young couple declared that the Bible was God's Word and that Jesus Christ was His Son.

"Prove it, then," the Moslems taunted.

"We will. Look at these verses. Listen to what they say!" They began to read the Bible to the Moslems.

"Oh no!" they replied, "that is not God's word. That is no proof. This Koran is God's word."

The BIBLE? or the KORAN? Which was the word of God? How could they prove to them that the Bible was God's Word? Without miracles they could not.

They longed for an experience like those we read about in the Bible. *"And with great power gave the apostles witness [maturion = something evidential, with proof] of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus..."* (Acts 4:33).

They returned to their home country, sick, discouraged and broken in spirit. They didn't give up though. They fasted and prayed for the salvation of the underprivileged masses without the gospel. What was the answer?

b. A Vision of Jesus. The discouraged missionary tells his own story.

One morning at six o'clock, I was awakened as Jesus Christ stood in our bedroom. Looking upon Him, I lay there as one dead. I could not move a finger or a toe. Water ran from my eyes, though I was not conscious of weeping.

I do not know how long I gazed into His penetrating eyes before He disappeared, nor how long it was before I could move from the bed. I pulled myself onto the floor, face down, and lay prostrated before Him until the afternoon.

When I walked out of the room that day, I was a new man. I had met Jesus! He was not just a religion. He was alive and real. I saw Him! He became Lord of my life.

Since that day, what people say or think does not matter. I discovered the living

Christ and He became **Lord** of my life.

Following that experience, a man of God came to our city, preaching and ministering to the sick. We witnessed hundreds of conversions and undeniable instant miracles of healing. I was overwhelmed by what I saw.

It seemed like ten thousand voices whirled over my head, saying, "You can do that. That's what Jesus did. That's what Peter and Paul did. That proves that Bible methods are for today. You can do that."

I knew I could. That is, **I knew Christ could do it in and through me**. I knew He had never changed.

c. Mass Evangelism Crusades:

1) The Caribbean. So, we went after the unconverted. We flew to Jamaica. In thirteen weeks over 9,000 souls accepted Christ; 90 totally blind people were healed; over 100 deaf-mutes were restored. Hundreds of other miracles took place as "*... the Lord worked with us, confirming his word with signs following*" (Mark 16:20).

Next, we went to Puerto Rico. The crusades were even greater. They were massive! Our message was simple. The people wanted reality. They believed when "*they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased*" (John 6:2).

Then we went to Haiti. It was the same again. Throngs too large for any building filled the yard, and even the roadway.

Next, it was Cuba. By that time, it began to look like more than just a spontaneous spiritual visitation in a couple of countries. It began to appear as a pattern.

These meetings had been heralded across the world.

But tradition is strong in the church. Well-meaning ministers began to console us and to prepare us for inevitable failure. For surely, we were told, we must not expect such things to happen everywhere.

Some counseled us that from time to time. God foreordains these great events, but that it could not be a pattern.

We were told to be prepared for defeats as well as successes, that they would come because God just works that way, lest we become proud.

All of this sounded traditional to us, and we did not accept their words. We were convinced that the Great Commission which Jesus gave was for "*every nation, to every creature.*" He promised these signs shall follow "*those that believe*" and never mentioned an exception "*unto the end of the world.*"

We believed that any people in any nation in the whole world would believe when they saw the miracles. It seemed logical to us that **if we preached the gospel, Christ would confirm it with miracles**. We stood firm on this fact.

We were not prepared for failures then, and we still are not. We believe in success. Christ never fails. His Word never fails. The gospel never fails.

When we arrived in Cuba, spiritual leaders counseled us about the wisdom of balance and patience, that we should not necessarily expect a great meeting in Cuba just because of the successes we had experienced in Jamaica and Puerto Rico.

Their logic asserted that "Jamaica was traditionally Christian already. Puerto Rico, of course, was so influenced by the United States that religious opposition was not a

factor there."

"But here in Cuba," they said, "the people are radical in their 'Christian' religious tradition. It may not be the same here."

Despite these warnings, it turned out that people are exactly the same, when the gospel of the Kingdom of God is preached.

An organized procession of a hundred 'Christian' leaders of the traditional church marched in the streets to warn the public against attending our massive crusade; but scores of thousands turned to the Lord and every Cuban city-wide crusade was successful.

2) Venezuela. Next, it was Venezuela. I still remember the counsel we received there:

"Oh, it's different here. In Cuba and Puerto Rico, religious opposition doesn't amount to much because the people are influenced by the United States; but here you are on the South American continent.

You could be stoned to death by people of the traditional church."

Venezuela was exactly like Cuba. Multitudes believed. Thousands were saved. It was no different.

3) Japan. Then we traveled to Japan. When word was received that we were coming, many letters were rushed to us: "Don't come here. Japan is difficult. Miracles are not for this land. Japan seeks only academic enlightenment. They look to their ancestors as their spiritual source."

"Too many of her religions have healing cults. We Christians do not want our religion to be identified with these healers. Besides, miracles will never convince the Japanese about Jesus Christ."

Others said, "Japan is Buddhist and Shintoist. You are not accustomed to preaching to them. People in the western-hemisphere are easy to reach. They already believe the Bible. They believe that Jesus is God's Son, that His blood was shed for our sins, but the Japanese would never believe this. You won't find it the same here. These people are not emotional. They will not respond."

The pattern of success in our crusades seemed to pose a threat to the very foundation of the church traditions in Japan, which had proven so ineffective.

At that time, it was unheard of to go to a nation, to preach in open public places, and to reap thousands of souls, again and again. The traditionalists said it had to be 'emotionalism'. The converts of this new mass evangelism would not last.

The missionaries and church leaders in the last century (1800s) never did it that way. They labored patiently for years to get a few converts — but their converts were thought to be solid, hand-picked, genuine. So, many thought mass evangelism was superficial. It would never endure the test of time.

A pastor in India told me, "I've ministered here for five years and have never won a soul to Christ. That's the way it is in India. You must learn patience."

A revolutionary pattern seemed to be taking form. Instinctively, traditional minds reject anything new that threatens to replace instituted and accepted church policies and positions.

It seemed that God wanted to show His people everywhere that there are no

exceptions in gospel evangelism. Jesus wanted all to know that His Great Commission would prove effective **wherever the gospel is proclaimed with living faith and obedient actions.**

Not all church leaders in Japan were pessimistic and negative. Some wrote, "Come over and help us too. **Modern theological concepts about Christ can never save the Japanese. They must see miracles!**"

I still recall the logic of a Baptist pastor who wrote: "Japan is full of phony healing cults. The Japanese must see the real thing, Our modern churches lack the miracle power. Come and help us. You have what we need to win this vast nation of people."

We accepted the challenge and Japan proved to be just like Jamaica, Cuba and Venezuela. When they saw the miracles, the Japanese screamed, wept and repented with more emotion than we had ever seen anywhere yet.

We went to the historic and religious heart of Japan — Kyoto. There on a large field near the downtown area, thousands heard the gospel. Forty-four deaf-mutes claimed healing in that one crusade. Many great miracles were wrought.

Those Shintoists and Buddhists acted just like Jamaicans or Cubans. Thousands believed on Christ. The Japanese responded like any other people.

4) Thailand. We went to Thailand—the strong Buddhist monarchy of Southeast Asia. Some said: "This won't be like Japan. The Japanese Buddhists have been influenced by the post-war occupation. The Japanese are responsive to Americans, but here in Thailand we have the old-fashioned Buddhist. They have never been ruled by a foreign power. They will not listen to foreigners."

When we first ministered in Thailand, there were less than a dozen people in the entire country who had received an apostolic Baptism in the Holy Spirit. Even these Spirit-baptized leaders were not enthusiastic about proclaiming the gospel out in public places. This would violate Thai culture.

Such an approach would seem too aggressive for any Thai community. They are a very serene and sensitive people. Any approach to them must be in keeping with their traditional poise.

Needless to say, when the Thai people saw the miracles — the blind seeing, the cripples walking, the lepers cleansed and the deaf hearing —their response was no different than the Japanese, the Venezuelans, the Cubans, the Puerto Ricans or the Jamaicans. They received the living Christ and enthusiastically began to follow Him.

Today, there are thousands of Spirit-filled Christians all over Thailand. Great soul-winning ministries have flourished there, building strong, big churches.

5) Indonesia. When we first ministered in Java, Indonesia, the population was 95 percent Moslem. Around the world we had heard how difficult the Moslems were to reach. They do not believe that Jesus is God's Son or that God raised Him from the dead.

We remembered how helpless we were to convince them in India. However, by the time we reached the capital city on the island of Java, things were different. We knew how to believe for miracles.

The first night that I preached to the multitude, I did something unusual at the end of the message. I told them I would not expect them to accept Jesus Christ unless He

proved Himself alive by undeniable miracles. I expressed my feelings that a dead Christ could do them no good.

I emphasized the fact that Jesus Christ was confirmed to be the Son of God by miracles 2,000 years ago; and that if He is alive today, then God would confirm this fact by doing undeniable miracles in their presence.

They knew about the historical Jesus. They had heard that He was a good man, even a prophet with healing powers to do miracles. They knew that He had been crucified, and they were convinced that the Christian teaching of His resurrection was false.

There is only one message for a Moslem: If Jesus Christ is alive, let Him do the miracles which He did before He was killed. If He is dead. He **cannot**. If He is risen. He **will**.

I called for deaf people. I told them I would pray in Jesus' Name. If Christ is dead. His Name would have no power. If He is alive. He would do the same as He did before He died on the cross.

The first man to be prayed for was a Moslem priest about 55 years old. He wore his black fez, indicating he had been a pilgrim to the revered Moslem city of Mecca in Arabia. He was born totally deaf in one of his ears and had never heard a sound from that ear.

I witnessed to him of Jesus Christ, then told him how I would pray. I explained that God was looking down on us. I witnessed to him that God had raised His Son from the dead. I explained that God wanted people to know that Christ is alive and would therefore give proof of His resurrection from the dead by doing this miracle.

Then I told the audience: "If this man does not hear when I have finished praying, you can say I am a false preacher and Jesus is dead. But if he does hear, you will know that Christ is risen, because a dead Christ cannot do such a miracle."

I looked at him and said, "That it may be known that Jesus Christ is God's Son, that God raised Him from the dead, that only through Him and His shed blood can we come to God and receive eternal life; let this be known according to the Scripture by causing this deaf ear to hear; in Jesus Christ's Name. Amen!"

The entire audience gasped when the Moslem priest could hear the faintest whisper and even the ticking of a watch.

Thousands raised their hands that night indicating their desire to accept Jesus Christ as their Savior. How different this was from the embarrassment we had suffered in trying to convince Moslems in India seven years earlier.

The Moslems were just like the Japanese. When they saw the proof of the good news, that Jesus Christ is alive, they believed.

Christianity without miracles cannot prove that Jesus is alive. Take miracles out of Christianity and all you have left is another lifeless religion.

Moslems know their prophet Mohammed is dead, but we know our Savior Jesus is alive. When that is proven by miracles, people forsake the dead prophet and follow One Who is alive. Without miracles, there is no proof.

This is why Jesus commissioned every believer to preach to all the world, promising that supernatural signs would follow—"in all nations, ..unto the end of the age." He knew it would always require miracles to really show the world that Jesus is alive.

When we were in India as young missionaries, Moslems challenged us: "Prove that your Christ lives!"

We were helpless and embarrassed. We had to leave India — or accept the status quo of those who believed that "faithfulness and patience without results" was a virtue. We could not bring ourselves to do that.

But in Indonesia, it was different.

One evening in that great campaign, a young Moslem priest — a real fanatic — started up the platform steps in anger, to interrupt me while I was preaching. My wife, Daisy, spotted him coming and intercepted him at the steps.

He said, "That man is false. Jesus is dead. He is not God's Son. Let me speak to the people about Mohammed, God's true prophet."

My wife tried to reason with him, but he was too emotional.

Finally, she told him, "Listen, I'm a Christian and here's what I will do. I will interrupt my husband on one condition: you and I will go together to the microphone. We will not argue. We will show which prophet is true and alive by calling for someone totally blind to come forward.

"You pray for him, in the presence of the people, and in the name of Mohammed. If he sees, we will believe on your prophet.

"If no miracle results, then I'll pray for him in the Name of Jesus. If he sees, then you and your people will know that what the Bible says about Christ is true — that He is God's Son and that God has raised Him from the dead to be the Savior of the world."

The young Moslem priest refused the challenge by my wife. He turned away and left in a rage.

This was what **we could not do in India** as young missionaries.

6) North India. We finally experienced the joy of returning to North India, fourteen years later — to the same city where we had so miserably failed. We went back to the university city of Lucknow, where we had been unable to prove to the Hindus and Moslems that Jesus Christ is the living, resurrected Son of God, the Savior of the world.

This time we were different! 20,000 to 40,000 people massed in front of the big stadium grounds.

We preached that "*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever*" (Heb 13:8). Then we prayed. The deaf heard. Cripples walked. Blind people received sight. Lepers were cleansed. Thousands accepted Christ.

Jesus was showing Himself to India through us. Our search for Truth had paid off. This is the way world evangelism was meant to be carried out.

"Christ showed himself alive by many infallible proofs" (Acts 1:3).

A young Hindu, a university student, stood out in the multitude, ridiculing everything. When we prayed, Jesus Christ suddenly appeared to him, dressed in a purple robe. He opened His nail-pierced hands and extended them to the young man, and as He did. He spoke these words:

"Behold my hands, I am Jesus."

The youth fell to the ground — weeping, repenting, sobbing. Then he rushed to the microphone and with tears bathing his face he told what he had seen and urged his

people to believe on Jesus.

How different than it had been in our meetings fourteen years earlier! With miracles, India was the same as other nations.

7) Africa. Next, it was Africa, where again we proved that people are the same everywhere.

A Moslem beggar in Africa, paralyzed by polio, had crawled on the ground for thirty years. He dragged himself in the dirt until he reached the crusade. He listened to the gospel and as he believed on Jesus Christ, he was instantly healed.

He pushed through the crowd and walked up before the multitude to show himself and the miracle he had received to the people.

As he stood on the platform in tears, he cried out: "Jesus Christ must be alive. Otherwise, how could He have healed me? Mohammed is dead, but Jesus lives. Look at me. You know me. I have begged in your streets. Now I can walk. Look! This Jesus lives!"

What greater sermon could be preached than that? It sounded like the Book of Acts being re-enacted in our day.

Around the world we have seen that people want Christ. They seek reality and they believe, when they have proof that Jesus is alive and real.

God made all human beings alike. People are made to walk with God. They instinctively seek for Him. This is why every unevangelized tribe practices some kind of religious ritual in search of God.

The gospel, straightforward and in simple terms—not explained, but proclaimed — "*... is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth*" (Rom 1:16).

People want the gospel. And our task is to preach it, witness of it, tell it, confess it everywhere—to crowds or to individuals, in public places or in private homes. People want what we have. We have proven this worldwide. This is why we are soul-winners — because of what we have seen.

Chapter 4

The Real Christian — How To Be Saved

Introduction

You see, there are only two kinds of preachers or Christian workers: negative and positive — doubters and believers.

Some think that if they preach on the streets, no one will listen and passers-by will scoff at them; that any literature they distribute will only be thrown on the ground and trod upon; that doors will be shut in their faces. That is a negative attitude about a very positive opportunity.

We believe that when we preach on the streets, crowds will gather around us, straining to hear our message; that passers-by will be delighted to see a Christian out witnessing.

We believe that when we distribute gospel literature, it will be eagerly received, treasured and read.

We believe that when we knock on doors, we will find families who welcome our help, sick people who need healing, problems which need solutions, hearts and ears open to the counsel and prayers of a real, dedicated Christian who has living faith. This is the positive approach, and it works,

We are soul-winners and we have proven around the world, in every conceivable circumstance, that **people want Christ**, but are little interested in another religion. They **long for God**, for His salvation, for eternal life, but disdain more lifeless religious rules.

They are made in God's image to be like Him, to walk and talk with Him. They are never content until they find Jesus Christ, Who is the Way, the Truth and the Life (see John 14:6).

With sixty million unreached people being added to our generation every year—people seeking for light and life—our priority is to witness, preach the gospel, to produce soul-winning tools for Christians. This is our priority — until Christ returns. **This is the seventh reason we are soul-winners.**

Feel free to reprint the following and use it in soul-winning. This section is especially prepared for the following groups of people:

- If you are not sure about your own salvation, or not certain that you have really been born again; or
- If you do not know if you are a real Christian; or
- If you have simply accepted a religion, joined a church and mentally assented to the Bible, without experiencing the new birth.
- Most of all, I present this chapter to you who have never been saved or converted and know it.

The Bible says that we can "*...know that we have passed from death unto life*" (1Jn3:14).

The following will help you to know, beyond a doubt, that you have experienced this inner miracle of new life in Christ. It will take place in you while you read this with reverence and simple faith.

If you are already a Christian, committed to winning souls, this section can serve as a guide to help you show others how to experience the miracle of the new birth.

A. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE SAVED?

I want to tell you how you can be saved from Hell, saved from your sins, saved from death, saved from disease, saved from evil. The Bible says, '*This is a faithful saying... that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners*' (1 Tim 1:15).

The Bible says, "*God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved*" (John 3:17).

Peter said, '*Whoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved*' (Acts 2:21).

You can be saved today. This is what you need: to be saved, to know Jesus Christ as your personal Savior,

But what does it mean to be saved?

1. Born From Above

To be **saved** means to be born from above (born again), to become a child of God.

Jesus said, *"You must be born from above"* (John 3:7). This means you must experience a **heavenly** or **spiritual** birth — the counterpart to your natural or earthly birth. This is a miracle birth.

When invited, Christ actually comes in and lives in you, and you are made new because He begins to live in you. This is not accepting a religion. This is accepting Christ. He is a person, not a philosophy. He is reality, not theory.

When you marry, you accept a husband or wife into your life. You do not get the "marriage religion." You receive another person — your spouse.

When you are **saved** by receiving Christ, you do not get the Christian religion. You receive a Person, the Lord Jesus. My conversion was as definite an experience as was my marriage. On both occasions, another person was received into my life.

the Bible says of Jesus Christ, *"...as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the children of God"* (John 1:12).

What a marvel that one can receive a new birth and be bom into God's royal family. You have been bom once — born in sin, a child of sin, a servant of the devil. Now Christ says, *"You must be born again"* (i.e. ,from above—John 3:7). You must be converted — saved, changed, made new.

2. Sins Are Forgiven

To be saved means to have your sins forgiven.

The Bible says, *"He forgives all your iniquities"* (Ps 103:3).

The angel said, *"You shall calt his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins"* (Matt 1:21).

God says, *"I am he that blots out your transgressions"* (Isa 43:25). *"And their sins and iniquities will I remember no wore"* (Heb 10:17).

"As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us" (Ps 103:12).

3. Receive New Life

To be **saved** means to receive a new spiritual family and genealogy.

Paul says, *"If any one be in Christ, that person is a new creation: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new"* (2Cor 5:17).

That is exactly what happens when Christ saves you. A conversion takes place. Old desires, habits and diseases pass away. All things become new. You receive a new life, a new nature, new health, new desires, new ambitions. You receive Christ's life.

He said, *"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly"* (John 10:10).

4. Receive Peace

To be saved means to receive peace.

Jesus said, *"Peace Heave with you. My peace I give unto you"* (John 14:27). He said, *"I have spoken unto you, that in me you might have peace"* (John 16:33).

Real peace comes only with Christ's pardon and salvation. In sin you can never have peace in your soul. The Bible says, *"There is no peace, says my God, to the wicked"* (Isa 57:21).

a. Two Kinds Of Peace

1) Peace Of God. The Peace **OF** God is that quiet, secure feeling that everything is alright. You know God is in control and you are unafraid. That is wonderful peace!

*"And the **peace of God**, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus"* (Phil 4:7). *"For the kingdom of God is...righteousness, **and peace**, and joy in the Holy Ghost"* (Rom 14:17).

2) Peace With God. Peace WITH God is quite different. *"Being justified by faith, we have **peace with God** through our Lord Jesus Christ"* (Rom 5:1).

As sinners, we were God's enemy, living in rebellion against His will and purposes. We are at war with Him.

"...when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son..." (Rom 5:10). *"And you, that were... enemies... by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled"* (Col 1:21).

Christ made peace for us with God. He did what was necessary to reconcile us to God and make us friends. When we are saved, we receive the peace **OF** God as a result of having peace **WITH** God. *"For he is our peace, who hath made both one..."* (Eph 2:14).

5. Fellowship With God

To be **saved** means to have fellowship with God.

You were created in God's likeness, so you could walk and talk with Him. But your sins separated you from God. Now, instead of fellowship with the Father, you fear God. The thought of facing Him frightens you. Your sin condemns you and creates in you a sense of guilt before God.

Only Christ can save you from your sins. He will blot out every stain and bring you back to God with a clean record — as if you had never sinned.

Then you can say with the Apostle John: *"Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ"* (1Jn 1:3).

He will be *"... a friend that sticks closer than a brother or sister"* (Prov 18:24).

No person was made for a life of sin and disease. You were created to walk with God.

But sin separated you from God.

"Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear" (Isa 59:2).

But, *"His blood was shed for many, for the remission of sins"* (Matt 26:28).

"If we confess our sin [to Him], he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1Jn 1:9).

B. YOU CAN KNOW THAT YOU ARE SAVED

John said, *"We **know** that we have passed from death unto life"* (1Jn 3:14). There

are many things in this world which you may never know, but you can know you have Christ's life in you. You can know that you have been saved—that you are born again.

To say, "I don't know for sure if I'm saved," is like a husband or a wife saying, "I don't know for sure if I'm married."

To say, "I think I'm saved. I try to be, but I'm not sure about it," is like saying, "I think I'm married. I try to be, but I'm not sure about it."

Jesus said, *"One who believes [the gospel] and is baptized shall be saved"* (Mark 16: 16).

Paul said, *"If you shall confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in your heart that God has raised him from the dead, you shall be saved "* (Rom 10:9).

These Scriptures promise: You *"shall be saved."*

Follow them, do what they say, and you can know that you have received Christ that you have passed from death unto life, that you are saved! This is not accepting a religion. This is Christianity —the Christ life!

1. What Is A Real Christian?

According to the Bible, a real Christian is a person who:

- a. Has Acknowledged Sin.** Has come to God as a lost sinner;
- b. Has Accepted Jesus.** Has accepted by faith the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior by embracing Him as Lord and Master;
- c. Has Confessed Jesus.** Has confessed Christ as Lord before the world;
- d. Wants To Please Jesus.** Is striving to please Him in everything, every day.

C. SEVEN STEPS TO SALVATION

If you are not sure that you have personally accepted Jesus Christ into your heart as your Lord and Master, then follow these seven steps prayerfully:

1. Realize You Are A Sinner

"All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom 3:23).

"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves" (1Jn 1:8).

2. Truly Be Sorry For And Repent Of Your Sins

"And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner" (Luke 18:13).
"For godly sorrow works repentance to salvation" (2Cor 7:10).

3. Confess Your Sins To God

"One who covers sin shall not prosper: but whoever confesses and forsakes them shall have mercy" (Prov 28:13).

"If we confess our sins [to Him], he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (Jn 1:9).

4. Forsake Your Sins

"Let the wicked forsake their way, and the unrighteous their thoughts; and let them return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon them for he will abundantly pardon" (Isa 55:7).

"Whoever confesses and forsakes sin shall have mercy" (Prov 28; 13).

5. Ask Forgiveness For Your Sins

"Who forgives all your iniquities" (Ps 103:3).

"Come now, and let us reason together says the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isa 1:18).

6. Believe That God Saves You By His Grace

Grace means unmerited favor, undeserved favor, receiving the opposite of what you deserve.

"For by grace [undeserved favor] are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any one should boast" (Eph 2:8,9).

7. Consecrate Your Entire Life To Christ

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Rom 12:1).

Then tell others about Christ. *"Whoever shall confess me before others, I will confess also before my Father which is in heaven" (Matt 10:32).*

"But you are a chosen generation... that you should tell others of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (I Pet 2:9 smf).

D. ACCEPT CHRIST NOW

"Now is the day of salvation" (2Cor 6:2). Not some other day — but now, this very day!

"Behold, now is the accepted time" (2Cor 6:2). Not some other time — but right now!

"Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake their ways, and the unrighteous their thoughts: and let them return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon them... for he will abundantly pardon" (Isa 55:6,7).

If you have not yet accepted Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, the Lord is listening for your prayer. So before you do anything else, find a place alone with God where you will not be disturbed. Get on your knees and read-pray this prayer to the Lord right out loud:

1. Prayer To Be Saved

Dear Father in Heaven, I come before You to receive the gift You promise in the Bible, even eternal life. I acknowledge that I have sinned against You. I deserve to die for my sins because You said, *"the penalty for sin is death."*

I believe that, in Your great mercy and love for me. You sent Your Son, Jesus the Christ, to die on the cross, to suffer the penalty of death for my sins.

I'm the one who should have to pay the penalty for my own sins, but Jesus loved me enough to pay the penalty, and suffer and die for me, in my place.

After dying on the cross for sins, I believe He rose from the dead to live forever as my Savior.

I am sorry for my sins which have separated me from Your blessing. I truly turn from my sinful lifestyle and turn toward You and ask Your forgiveness of all my sins.

I do, here and now, welcome Jesus Christ into my heart as my Savior from sin, from Hell, and from all the power of the devil. I accept Christ as Lord of my life. Here and now, I dedicate my life to pleasing You. I accept the covenant (promises) offered by Your Son, Jesus Christ.

Now Lord Jesus, I want to talk to You. You have said that; *"...if I will come to you, you will receive me and not cast me out."* I now come to You, wanting You with all my heart, seeking salvation and trusting only in the blood You shed for my sins. I am sure that You do not reject me, You receive me now.

You have said, *"If I will confess with my mouth that you are Lord, and will believe in my heart that God has raised you from the dead, I will be saved"* (Rom 10:9).

I believe with all my heart that You are my Lord, and You rose from the dead. I do, here and now, confess You as my Master, my Savior, my Lord. I receive You now into my heart by faith.

Because You died for me, suffering the penalty which I ought to have suffered, I know my sins can never condemn me again. You paid the full price for my redemption.

Because the Bible says, *"As many as received Jesus Christ, to them gave he power to become the children of God"* (John 1:12) — I believe that You do at this very moment give me power to become Your child.

I believe that You forgive me now. Your precious blood washes all my sins away. You were wounded for my transgressions. You were bruised for my iniquities. The punishment I ought to have endured was laid upon You.

I know I am forgiven. Thank You, Lord!

From this hour, I will read Your Word and do my best to follow You and to please You in all that I think and do and say. I am now a real Christian, a **representative of Jesus Christ** on earth. Now I know I am saved.

As an act of faith, register your covenant with Jesus by signing your name at the bottom of the covenant that follows.

2. Decision And Covenant

Today I have read **The Real Christian**. I have learned what it means to be saved. I have sincerely taken the seven steps outlined here and have reverently prayed the prayer.

I have received Jesus Christ in my own life. I am now a new creature. I commit my life to do my best to please God in all that I think and say and do. With His grace and help, I shall share Jesus Christ with others.

Relying on Him to keep me by His grace, I have made this decision today, in Jesus' Name.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

There is a time, we know not when, A place, we know not where; Which marks the destiny of men To glory or despair.

There is a line, by us unseen, Which crosses every path, Which marks the boundary between God's mercy and His wrath.

To pass that limit is to die, To die as if by stealth; It does not dim the beaming eye, Nor pale the glow of health.

The conscience may be still at ease, The spirit light and gay; And that which pleases still may please And care be thrust away.

But on that forehead God hath set Indelibly a mark; Unseen by man, for man as yet, Is blind and in the dark.

He feels perchance that all is well And every fear is calmed; He lives, he dies, he walks in Hell, Not only doomed, but damned!

O, where is that mysterious line That may by men be crossed, Beyond which God Himself hath sworn That he who goes is lost?

An answer from the skies repeats, "Ye who from God depart. " TODAY, O hear is voice, TODAY repent and harden not your heart.

Chapter 5

Practical Tips For Soul-Winning

A. PRAY FOR THOSE YOU WANT TO WIN

Intercession is the way that leads to the winning of souls. No church can prosper without it. No Christian can grow without it. The law of life demands reproduction — *"...for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children" (Isa 66:8).*

Jesus interceded and travailed for me. *"He hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors: and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors" (Isa 53:12).*

You begin to care for a man spiritually when you begin to pray for him. *"Always in every prayer of mine for you" (Phil 1:4). "Praying always for you" (Col 1:3).*

B. MAKE CONTACT WITH THOSE YOU WANT TO WIN

"He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ" (John 1:41).

With Christ came the emphasis of seeking the lost. *"For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10).*

The movement of Christianity in this world is scripturally based on personal contact. Anyone who really knows Jesus will want others to know Him.

The secret is in the words of Andrew, *"...we have found. "* The search for satisfaction in a man's soul is completed in a living knowledge of Jesus Christ. Personal evangelism is sharing this discovery. *"And he brought him to Jesus" (John 1:42).*

How is this accomplished? Christ gives the answer. *"Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men"* (Matt 4:19). A love for Christ produces a love for mankind.

C. REMOVE THE OBJECTIONS; ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. Some Questions/Excuses And Their Answers

a. Question: What Is Sin?

Answer: Sin is breaking God's law (1 Jn3:10).

Everything that is not morally right is sin (1 Jn 5:17).

Unbelief is sin (John 16:8,9).

Questionable indulgences are sin (Rom 14:23).

Missing the mark is sin. That is what the Greek word for sin means - "to miss the mark" (Rom 3:23).

Undone duty is sin (Jas 4:17).

b. Question: Why Does God Allow Evil In The World?

Answer: Freedom of choice is the Creator's great gift to the human race. *"I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live "* (Deut 30:19). This Bible verse teaches us that God gives man a choice — life or death, blessing and cursing — and urges man to choose life.

Sin originated in man, not in God. God prevents sin's dominion (Rom 6:14).

God has, at His own cost, provided a remedy for sin. *"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us "* (Rom 5:8). *"He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"* (Rom 8:32).

c. Excuse: My Sins Are Small, So Why Worry?

Answer: Because any sin torments. *"There is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked"* (Isa 48:22).

Because any sin separates you from God (Isa 59:2).

Because any sin enslaves you (John 8:34).

Because any sin ends in death (Rom 6:23).

Because any sin excludes from Heaven (1 Cor6:9).

d. Excuse: I Am Not A Sinner; I Am As Good As You Are.

Answer: You are correct. You are as good as I am, and maybe better. But think of this. It only takes one lie to make a liar, only one murder to make a murderer. Likewise, it only takes one sin to make a sinner. *"For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all"* (Jas 2:10).

"There is none righteous, no not one... All have sinned..." (Rom 3:10, 23). *And God says, "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord"* (Rom 6:23).

I am not saved because I am better than you. I am saved because I asked for and received pardon and forgiveness for my sins and transgressions. Wouldn't you like to do the same?

e. Excuse: I Cannot Break With My Sins.

Answer: Salvation is a life-and-death choice. "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3).

You cannot live one way and die another way. **"For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting"** (Gal 6:8; Rev 21:8).

You cannot break sin in your own strength. *"If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed"* (John 8:36). *"I can do all things through Christ which strengthened me"* (Phil 4:13).

Christ can reach you where you are (Heb 7:25).

f. Excuse: I Am Too Big A Sinner.

Answer: Jesus came to save all sinners. The Apostle Paul had killed innocent Christians, yet he wrote, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief" (1 Tim 1:15).

Are your sins scarlet? *"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool"* (Isa 1:18).

Are you lost? *"For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost"* (Luke 19:10).

Are you without strength? *"For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ **died for the ungodly**. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us"* (Rom 5:6-8).

Jesus will not cast out anyone who will come to Him (John 6:37).

God makes no exceptions in His offer of salvation. *"And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses"* (Acts 13:39).

Murder is not unpardonable. David confessed his sin and was forgiven (Ps 32:5).

Theft is not unpardonable. The penitent thief- on the cross was pardoned (Luke 23:43).

Blasphemy is not unpardonable. Paul was a blasphemer and he was pardoned (1 Tim 1:13).

Adultery is not unpardonable. The woman of Samaria was saved (John 4:18).

One of the amazing records of forgiveness is found in 1 Corinthians 6:9-11. Paul lists all the sins for which the Corinthians had been forgiven.

"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,

"Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunk' ards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

*"And **such were some** of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. "*

The person who sincerely asks for pardon will never be refused ' *Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon* " (Isa 55:7).

"Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isa 1:18). See also Acts 10:43.

Paul was a great sinner but he obtained salvation (I Tim 1:12-16). Further scriptures which may be used: Matthew 9:13, Hebrews 7:25, Luke 23:39-43.

g. Excuse: Jesus Christ Is Only One Of The Great Men Of History.

Answer: He claimed to be God. ' *Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God*" (Phil 2:6). He was put to death for this claim (Matt 26:63-65). The resurrection substantiated this claim. *"Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death; because it was not possible that he should be holden of it"* (Acts 2:24).

The moral grandeur of His life surpasses anything on record. *"Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?"* (John 8:46).

No one has influenced history so much as Christ (Luke 2:34). There is the repeated testimony of personal experience. *"Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world"* (John 4:42).

There is the open challenge to prove His divinity for yourself. *"If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself"* (John 7:17).

h. Excuse: There Are Too Many Hypocrites.

Answer: Hypocrites are lost. If you let hypocrites keep you from being saved, you will spend eternity in Hell with them.

Besides, you have to be smaller than what you hide behind. If you hide behind a hypocrite, you must be smaller than a hypocrite.

Further scriptures which may be used: Zechariah 13:6, Acts 1:16, Hebrews 12:2, Acts 17:30,31, Romans 14:12, Matthew 7:1-5, Romans 2:16,1 Samuel 16:7.

i. Excuse: God Is Unjust.

Answer: Who is God? Who are you? Injustice is sin. Do you mean to accuse God of sin? God is so just that He never demands two payments for one debt. Jesus paid your sin-debt on the Cross — all of it. Therefore, when you accept Christ you do not have that sin-debt to pay.

j. Excuse: Folks Would Laugh.

Answer: Better let them laugh than to have God laugh. *"I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh"* (Prov 1:26).

Shun evil companions. *"Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble"* (Prov 4:14,19).

Do not be ashamed of Christ. *"Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me*

before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven" (Matt 10:32,33).

k. Excuse: I Am Afraid Of Persecution.

Answer: It is a cowardly thing to deny Jesus Christ. *"But the fearful . . . shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death" (Rev 21-8).*

"Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels" (Mark 8:38).

So little is asked for so much in return. *"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Rom 8:18).*

It is all or nothing. *"If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us" (2Tim 2:12).*

You join a select company. It is a chance of a lifetime to do something worthwhile.

"Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of Man's sake.

"Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets" (Luke 6:22,23).

He does not ask you to do anything for Him that He did not do for you (Heb 12:2).

l. Excuse: Not Now.

Answer: Every time you say no, it is more difficult to say yes. The time and day is now. *'Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2Cor 6:2).*

Seek the Lord while He may be found. Delay is decision for the wrong way. *'Today — if you will hear his voice, harden not your heart" (Heb 4:7).* Tomorrow is the day when the idle man works, the thief becomes honest, the drunkard sober. Tomorrow is a period nowhere to be found except, perhaps, in the fool's calendar. God's call is not a call for tomorrow, but for today.

m. Excuse: I Believe God Is Too Good To Damn Anyone.

Answer: That is not what the Bible says. *"Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish" (Ps 1:5,6).*

God places your salvation or damnation on your acceptance or rejection of Jesus Christ (John 12:48).

It is not God that is hard. It is the human heart that is hard! *"But after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasures! up into thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God" (Rom 2:5).*

Every agency of God seeks to lead you to repentance (2Pet 3:9).

n. Excuse: How Can I Reconcile The Doctrine Of Hell With The Christian's God of Salvation?

Answer: *'Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye*

cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt 25:41). God prepared Hell for the devil and his followers. If you follow the devil, you will live with him eternally.

"Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place " (Acts 1:25). The place for the transgressor is Hell.

"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long suffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2Pet 3:9). God does not want to send anyone to Hell. He wants them to repent and be saved.

"Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord God; and not that he should return from his ways, and live? " (Eze 18:23). Those who turn from sin to Christ will enjoy life now and life eternal.

' And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal" (Matt 25:46).

"Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented" (Luke 16:25).

"Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers. how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" (Matt 23:33).

"But rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matt 10:28).

o. Question: Doesn't The Bible Have Inconsistencies And Contradictions In It?

Answer: Where are they? The Bible is revelation. *"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isa 55:8,9).*

The Bible is a locked book to a **locked heart**. *"Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand" (Dan 12:10). "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them. because they are spiritually discerned" (1Cor 2:14).*

Certainly there are mysteries presented in God's Word! Peter says of Paul's writings, *"As... in all his epistles, speaking in them of... things; ...things hard to be understood..." (2 Pet 3:16-18).*

Know Him and you will know His Book.

p. Question: How Can I Know There Is A God?

Answer: There are **three** sources we can draw from to answer this question.

First, there is the Bible. *"Search the scriptures; for... they... testify of me" (John 5:39).*

Second, there is the Creation. There could be no Creation without a Creator.

Paul says those who never had the Bible could still know about God from Creation. *"Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them... from the creation of the world... even his eternal power and*

Godhead..." (Rom 1:19,20).

Third, there is man. *"When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained, what is man that you are mindful of him?"* (Ps 8:3,4). Just as God is mindful of man, mankind has a 'God-shaped-cavity' that only God can fill.

Some primitive tribal groups left anthropologists in a quandary as to whether to classify them as human. They created a test: Do they have objects of worship? If yes, they were human. Animals do not worship. Only man was created in God's image and likeness. Only man has 'God-awareness.'

These three make it self-evident there is a Creator. None are possible by happenstance. None could have been produced by accident.

q. Question: Why Do I Need The Blood?

Answer: This is the eternal law of redemption believed in by all civilizations and found among all peoples. *"For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul"* (Lev 17:11).

Jesus died for you and me! (Matt 26:28).

Someone had to take my place and bear my guilt because... *"...without shedding of blood there is no remission"* (Heb 9:22).

He tasted death for me. Thus He bore the supreme penalty of my sins (Rom 5:9,10).

It took the greatest price in the universe. *"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain manner of living received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood as of a lamb without blemish and without spot"* (1 Pet 1:18,19).

r. Excuse: I See No Harm In Worldly Amusements.

Answer: The believer's approach to this question should always be positive, not negative. Instead of asking, "What harm is there in it?" I should ask, "What good is there in it?"

"And whatsoever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by few" (Col 3:17).

"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor 10:31).

"All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any" (1 Cor 6:12).

As a Christian, I am responsible to use my body and my mind for God's glory (1 Cor 6:19,20).

Strong warnings appear in the New Testament: *"If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are"* (1 Cor 3:17).

"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you" (2Cor 6:17).

"They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable,

and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate" (Titus 1:16).

My aim should always be to give my utmost for His Highest (2Tim 2:4).

D. LIVING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

After taking all the steps outlined above in Chapter 4, "*The Real Christian - How To Be Saved*," you need to teach the new convert to do the following to continue his new life as a disciple of Jesus.

1. Rejoice Publicly

Give your testimony for Christ. Tell others what He has done for you. "*That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shall be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation"* (Rom 10:9,10). See also Matthew 10:32,33.

2. Request Water Baptism

This is an outward testimony to an inward transformation. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be condemned" (Mark 16:16). Baptism without believing is useless.

"Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so, we also should walk in newness of life.

"For, if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection" (Rom 6:4,5). In water baptism, we 'bury' our old life of sin — and come up out of the 'burial' to walk a new life with Christ.

3. Read The Bible

The Bible, God's written Word, is the source of your faith. "*These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God"* (1 Jn 5:13). See also Romans 10:17, Psalms 119:105.

4. Talk With God In Prayer

Prayer is conversation with God. Life is sustained by union and communion (Eph 6:18, Jas 4:2).

"And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: and if we know that he hears us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him" (1 Jn 5:14,15).

5. Resist Temptation

Temptation is not sin. It is yielding to temptation that is sin. "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

"Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man; But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

"Do not err, my beloved brethren" (Jas 1:12-16).

"For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need [temptation]" (Heb 4:15,16).

6. Make Restitution

Your guilt is gone, you are forgiven. Now you can prove your new-found faith to others by making restitution to those you may have wronged when you were an unbeliever. *"... if I have taken any thing from any man [wrongly]... I restore him fourfold"* (Luke 19:8). *"And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offense toward God, and toward men"* (Acts 24:16).

7. Render To God The Things That Are God's

Start tithing (giving 10 percent) of your income to support the Church immediately. *"Will a man rob God?... Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there maybe meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it"* (Mal 3:8,10). See also 1 Corinthians 16:2.

8. Regularly Attend A Church Fellowship

Associate yourself immediately with God's people (Heb 10:25). *"And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day..."* (Luke 4:16). *"And upon the first day of the week... the disciples came together to break bread and Paul preached unto them..."* (Acts 20:7).

9. Study The New Believers Training Manual Elsewhere In This Book

"Search the scriptures; for... they are they which testify of me " (John 5:39).

SECTION 5

GIVING INSTRUCTIONS TO NEW CONVERTS

INDEX TO THIS SECTION

E5.1 - The New Life

E5.2 - Water Baptism - Part I

E5.3 - Water Baptism - Part II

E5.4 - Standards Of Sexual Morality

INSTRUCTION TO LEADERS: You (or someone you appoint) should review this information with every new believer within a day or two of his or her decision to receive Christ. If you have a class or study course for New Believers — enroll them in it. If not — assign someone (or do it yourself) to teach them week by week the material in the **New Believers Training Manual** at the beginning of this book.

NOTE: The Scripture quotations in this material are from The Living Bible and

used by permission.

Chapter 1

The New Life

By Paul Collins

A. A NEW LIFE BEGINS

You started a brand new dimension of living when you received Jesus into your life. One man said, “When you find Jesus Christ, life finds you!”

The Living Bible puts it this way: *“When someone becomes a Christian he becomes a brand new person inside. He is not the same anymore. A new life has begun!”* (2Cor 5:17-20).

1. What Does It Mean To Be “Saved”?

Salvation is not something you do, but something Jesus does when you receive Him. No way can you save yourself, any more than a drowning man can. He needs the help of someone else. He's saved when he puts his total trust in the lifesaver.

That's what Jesus has done for you. He has rescued you from a life that was overwhelmed by sin, under the control of Satan, and heading for the well deserved judgment of God... and He's planted your feet on the firm ground of God's domain, taking you out of your old ways and giving you eternal life.

The Bible says that God has *“rescued us out of the darkness and gloom of Satan's kingdom and brought us into the kingdom of his dear Son, who bought our freedom with his blood and forgave us all our sins”* (Col 1:13,14 tlb).

An eternal transaction was taking place as Jesus was dying on the Cross. He was representing you and me before His Father. God's righteous judgment had pronounced us guilty because we had sinned... but His great love had sent His Son to take the punishment we deserved instead.

When you received Jesus into your life, this is the wonderful exchange that took place... *“God took the sinless Christ and poured into him our sins. Then, in exchange he poured God's goodness into us”* (2Cor 5:21 tlb).

Now a whole new way of living spreads before you... and it all revolves around a special person... Jesus Christ. When you opened your life to Him, you started living under His control.

2. What Does It Mean To Be “Born Again”?

The Bible has another way of describing what has happened to you. It calls it being *“born of the Spirit.”*

A man came to Jesus one night. He was a very religious man, but Jesus took one look at him and knew that he was lacking the most important thing of all.

“Nicodemus,” He said, *“you must be born again!”* Poor Nicodemus. He'd never heard of such a thing. He found this difficult to understand. How could he possibly enter his mother's womb and be born a second time? Then Jesus explained it to him: *“What I am*

telling you so earnestly is this: *Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.*

“Men can only reproduce human life, but the Holy Spirit gives new life from heaven; so don't be surprised at my statement that you must be born again” (John 3:57 tlb).

Jesus was using birth as an illustration. He was picturing the experience of coming alive to God in the realm of the Spirit.

A baby has no knowledge or contact with the outside world before it is born; in the same way every individual who has not been born of the Spirit of God has no knowledge or contact with God, and with the things of Heaven and eternity.

For nine months before it is born a baby is alive. It has all the potential of life, without the ability to use it.

a. It Has Eyes But It Can't See. There is another eyesight lying dormant in each one of us, waiting to be “turned on” by the Spirit of God. It is the ability to understand the things of God.

Imagine if two unborn babies could communicate with one another, and one said to the other, “I don't believe in what I've heard about this life after birth!”

To us that seems ridiculous when we realize all the tremendous possibilities that lie before a young life as it's born into the world. But the same thing is true of spiritual life.

The Bible puts it this way:

“The unspiritual person doesn't accept the things of the Spirit of God; to him they are foolish and he can't understand them, because they are spiritually understood” (1Cor 2:14).

b. It Has Ears But It Can't Hear. Many times before He spoke to the crowds Jesus would cry out: *“He that has ears... let him hear!”*

There is an ability to hear God through spiritual ears. God has always desired to communicate with you. He's made you alive in the Spirit so that you can hear Him!

c. It Has A Mouth But It Can't Speak. A baby also has a mouth and the potential of speech before it is born... but has no ability to communicate.

God wants to have fellowship with us. That is, He wants to have mutual communication... to talk to us, and for us to talk with Him. It's only possible as we are spiritually alive.

d. It Has Lungs But It Can't Breathe. The first thing a baby does when it is born — is cry. It breaths air for the first time.

The Bible calls the Spirit of God the *“breath of life,”* and when you received Jesus — God *“breathed”* His Spirit into you and you were *“born again.”*

e. Washed At Birth. Next, the nurse will take the baby and wash it. When we are born spiritually, a cleansing takes place in our souls. All the grime and dirt we have picked up throughout our lives from the things we have thought, and said, and done, is washed away by the Spirit of God.

f. Clothed In New Garments. Think of the hours a mother spends preparing those little garments for the new member of the family. The Bible says God clothes His spiritual children with the garments of His righteousness (Isa 61:10).

g. Nursed And Nourished. The Apostle Peter writes to the new Christians and tells

them:

“Like newborn babes, long for the pure milk of the Word, that by it you may grow in respect to salvation” (1Pet 2:2).

You will grow in your faith by reading God's Word, the Bible... it's your spiritual food.

h. Given The Family Name. When you were born of the Spirit, you became part of the family of God. God is your Father Who loves and cares for you. Now you bear His Name, and everywhere you go you represent Him.

3. A New Perspective

Here you are then... you've stepped out onto the threshold of a new dimension of living. Suddenly you're seeing life around you in a new perspective.

You feel so clean inside, and so full of the joy God has given you, even the trees and the flowers look brighter. You see your friends... and even your enemies... in a different light. You understand why they sometimes act the way they do... they need Jesus just like you did.

God has been so good to you. Now, instead of being full of your own selfish thoughts, you want to help others and bring them into the same blessing you have received. Life is wonderful. And that is just what Jesus said He had come to do... *“I have come that they might have life... and have it more abundantly!”* (John 10:10).

4. A New Awareness

But not only that! You're also finding that you have a new awareness of eternal realities. God is no longer some great influence way up in the sky somewhere... He's a real person to you. He's a loving Father!

Jesus is so real, you can talk to Him every day, and hear Him speak to you in that quiet voice deep inside. You'll never be alone again. Jesus said, *“I am with you always... I will never leave you nor forsake you”* (Matt 28:20, Heb 13:5).

Every day, for the rest of your natural life, you are going to be discovering more and more about your wonderful Lord. In fact, stretching before you is a lifetime of exciting discoveries.

5. A Map And Manual

You'll need a map and a guide to help you... and God has provided both. The Bible is His written Word to you. It maps out for you all that Jesus has done, is doing, and is going to do.

It contains all the wonderful promises of God that now belong to you because you belong to Him. It is a complete manual for life, which covers instructions and promises for every aspect of your life and future.

You will be wanting to read it more than doing anything else. As you read, you will learn the wonders of God's love for you; His plan for your life both now and throughout eternity. You will start to have unfolded to you the fullness of what Jesus has given you, and the kind of person you are now because you are His.

6. A Companion And Guide

Just as God has given us the Bible to be our map for life, so He has given us the Holy Spirit to be our constant companion and guide.

As you begin to walk along your road of discovery, the Holy Spirit is leading you every step of the way.

His work is to lead us into all truth, and to reveal the many qualities of God's character to us... not only showing us what God is like, but changing us to be like Him.

God's plan is for us to live with Him forever. Thus, the years we live on earth are given to us to develop the capacity to live comfortably in His atmosphere of purity, holiness, peace, joy and truthfulness.

The work of the Holy Spirit in us performs the initial miracle of new birth, and thereafter causes us to continue growing in our new life. One day, all Christians will be fully matured and made perfect before the Lord.

This is how the Bible describes the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives:

“But we Christians have no veil over our faces; we can be mirrors that brightly reflect the glory of the Lord. And as the Spirit of the Lord works within us, we become more and more like him” (2Cor 3:18 tlb).

7. A New Relationship

This is a real time of rejoicing. You are now part of God's family... the Royal Family of the Universe! Sons of the King! The Apostle Paul describes it like this:

“Now you are no longer strangers to God and foreigners to heaven, but you are members of God's very own family, citizens of God's country, and you belong in God's household with every other Christian.

“What a foundation you stand on now: the apostles and the prophets; and the cornerstone of the building is Jesus Christ himself! We who believe are carefully joined together with Christ as parts of a beautiful, constantly growing temple for God. And you also are joined with him and with each other by the Spirit, and are part of this dwelling place of God” (Eph 2:19-22 tlb).

The Bible uses many illustrations to describe the new relationship we have with God and our new spiritual family. We are called *“living bricks being built into a spiritual house that God dwells in”* (1Pet 2:5), or *“soldiers in the army of the Lord”* (2Tim 2:3,4), but perhaps the main illustration God uses is that of a body.

“And God has put all things under his [Jesus] feet and made him the supreme head of the church — which is his body, filled with himself...” (Eph 1:22,23 tlb).

“Our bodies have many parts, but the many parts make up only one body when they are all put together. So it is with the `Body' of Christ... All of you together are the one Body of Christ and each one of you is a separate and necessary part of it” (1Cor 12:12,27 tlb).

You have now become part of a spiritual Body, and just as every part of your physical body is important to the rest of it, so are you important to the rest of the Body of Christ, and every other individual Christian is important to you.

8. A New Kind Of Joy

The joy you have experienced isn't the end in itself. It is a product of your new relationship with God through your faith in Jesus.

You realize that your salvation didn't come by anything you did, but it was a gift. God planned and initiated your experience of coming to know Him.

Just as you have learned that it is impossible to obtain salvation yourself, it is true

also that it is impossible to live the Christian life without God's help.

As you are dependent on Him for the forgiveness of your sins, so you are dependent on Him to live in victory and joy day by day. Joy comes continually as a result of this relationship of trust in the Holy Spirit's power within.

Christians in the past have lived under very difficult circumstances at times, but history and the Bible confirm that the believer experiences joy under all circumstances.

The Apostle Paul wrote in the New Testament of the Bible concerning this experience:

*“Since then it is by faith that we are justified, let us grasp the fact that we **have** peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

“Through him we have confidently entered into this new relationship of grace, and here we take our stand, in happy certainty of the glorious things he has for us in the future.

“This doesn't mean, of course, that we have only a hope of future joys — we can be full of joy here and now even in our trials and troubles.

“Taken in the right spirit, these very things will give us patient endurance; this, in turn, will develop a mature character, and a character of this sort produces a steady hope, a hope that will never disappoint us” (Rom 5:1-5).

9. There Will Be Temptations

Everyone is tempted, so you can expect it. You will be more aware than you were previously concerning the temptation of sin around you.

Even Jesus was tempted when He walked the earth 2000 years ago. He must have experienced the battle in the mind which temptation occasions.

But the Bible makes it clear that, while He was tempted, He never sinned. He blazed the trail ahead for us, so that we, who follow, can live in daily victory too.

Temptation is the devil's business. He wants always to discredit a person's experience with Jesus, if he can. The Apostle James made a startling statement when he said:

“Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust or desire and enticed” (Jas 1:14).

There is an important difference between temptation and sin itself. We are all tempted, and the enemy usually picks our weakest area of life as the target.

However, temptation does not become sin unless we begin entertaining and receiving the wrong thoughts into our life. When an evil thought comes to mind, it is important to know that the initial thought is not your own, but is the enemy presenting a temptation hoping that you will receive it.

It is at this point that you make a choice — by rejecting the temptation in Jesus' Name. If you will do this, you will find the Holy Spirit will be there to help you and give you strength to resist evil.

There is a promise in James 4:7: *“So give yourselves humbly to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”*

An important thing to keep in mind is to stay away from the obvious areas, places and people, which would cause the greatest temptation. You are courting danger to flirt with temptation.

God gives you a wonderful promise, and victory will always be yours, if you just live simply by His guidance:

“But remember this — the wrong desires that come into your life aren't anything new and different. Many others have faced exactly the same problems before you.

“And no temptation is irresistible. You can trust God to keep the temptation from becoming so strong that you can't stand up against it, for he has promised this and will do what he says.

“He will show you how to escape temptation's power so that you can bear up patiently against it” (1Cor 10:13 tlb).

B. NOW — WALK WITH GOD

When you were converted you turned your life around. Now you must not stand still at that point, but begin to walk with God.

This means living day by day with Him and being led by Him. This is simple and exciting. The Lord Jesus Christ dwells in your heart by His Spirit, but He will control only that portion of your life which you yield to Him.

1. Surrender All To Him

The Apostle Paul wrote to Christians about this:

“And so, dear brothers, I plead with you to give your bodies to God. Let them be a living sacrifice, holy — the kind he can accept. When you think of what he has done for you, is this too much to ask?”

“Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but be a new and different person with a fresh newness in all you do and think. Then you will learn from your own experience how his ways will really satisfy you” (Rom 12:1, 2 tlb).

Because His Spirit now dwells in your body, the only way He can express His life and love is through a person totally committed to Him.

Don't expect the Holy Spirit to transform your “heart-house”, if you refuse to let Him into all its rooms. I know you will want to be sure you have surrendered everything to Him, so here's a suggestion: Take a number of slips of paper and write down on each piece the money you possess, your car or any possessions, your loved ones and lastly yourself.

Have a short time of prayer in which you make a commitment to God. Give each of these over to Him — “Here, Lord, is my bank account, my T.V., my home. I surrender them to you.”

When you surrender to God, you surrender to life and joy and peace. This is what it really means to be a disciple of Jesus.

2. Communicate With Jesus

Your life will grow and develop as you communicate with Jesus. The Apostle Paul gives good advice in Philippians 4:6-8: *“Don't worry about anything; instead pray about everything; tell God your needs and don't forget to thank him for his answers.*

“If you do this, you will experience God's peace, which is far more wonderful than the human mind can understand.

“His peace will keep your thoughts and your hearts quiet and at rest as you trust in Christ Jesus.”

a. Anytime, Anywhere. Prayer is simply talking to God. You can talk with God at any time... in the bus, train, car or anywhere. However, it's a great idea to have a special place and a special time of the day when you draw aside into a secret place with Him.

Just be quiet and listen. Bring your problems and requests into His presence. Here is an important promise God has given to encourage you:

“But when you pray, go away by yourself, all alone, and shut the door behind you and pray to your Father secretly, and your Father who knows your secrets, will reward you” (Matt 6:6 tlb).

b. Find A Prayer Partner. *“Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done of them of my Father which is in heaven”* (Matt 18:19).

This is a special promise to any two people who will agree to pray in unity and faith together. In this way, you can encourage one another to believe and be positive in your faith. It adds extra power to your life.

There is unlimited scope in this kind of prayer. In the promise God says if you shall ask ANYTHING! What possibilities! God will do it from Heaven. What a great experience to join the forces of Heaven in seeing miracles in people's lives and circumstances.

In the Old Testament of the Bible there is a question asked:

“Is anything too hard for God?” (Jer 32:27).

The answer to that is, NO!

c. Join With Others. Also make sure you attend a prayer meeting and join with others in the family of God for prayer. Great things are being accomplished in the earth through the prayers of the Church. Be a part of it.

3. Obey The Holy Spirit

“Fix your thoughts on what is true and good and right. Think about these things that are pure and lovely, and dwell on the fine good things in others. Think about all you can praise God for and be glad about it” (Phil 4:8 tlb).

This is good advice. As you are daily looking to the Lord for guidance in your new life style, these things will happen. You will be conscious of God speaking through His Word as you read it.

An inner conviction will grow in your heart that a particular thing is right. Obey this conviction, for this is how you are learning to be led by His directions.

There are many voices in the world, but the Holy Spirit's voice will never ask you to do anything that is sinful or that would hurt anyone, and never anything that is contrary to what is written in the Bible.

You must expect that sometimes people will fail you, but don't be discouraged. God is always the same, and His character is absolutely reliable.

When faced with a decision or a choice between two ways of conduct, always choose the high road — the way which is better, purer, more generous and honest. If there is any doubt about something, it is probably wrong for you.

4. Read The Bible Every Day

The Bible is your most exciting book. It is the world's best-seller. Here in this one book (made up of 66 books) is the thinking of God about everything that matters. As you

read God's Word, you will find you will be challenged to change. When you discover an area of your life that is contrary to God's way — then you will want to change.

This will add to the joy in your life. Reading the Bible will be like having a bath... it will bring with it a sense of cleansing and refreshing.

The Psalmist put it this way:

“I have thought much about your words, and stored them in my heart so that they would hold me back from sin” (Ps 119:11 tlb).

We share God's life through His words and we find strength and authority to challenge and defeat the temptations of Satan. In Ephesians 6:7 we are told that the sword of the Spirit is the Word of God.

Make up your mind you are going to read the Word of God every day. Start by reading the New Testament. Pray and ask God to speak to you as you read it.

It's good to have a notebook or diary to write down the important lessons and points you get as you read.

Also take note of those things God is asking you to do. There is great joy in obeying His instructions, for they are producing the very life and character of God within us.

5. Find A Spiritual Home

It is very important to find a spiritual home where you can receive instruction and fellowship to help your growth and understanding.

You need to find a shepherd (who is sometimes called a pastor, an elder, or minister)... someone you can look up to and entrust your life, who will be your spiritual father.

Be loyal and faithful to that person and allow him to help guide you. If you find there are areas of your life that you have not been able to gain victory over alone, share with your shepherd.

His counsel and prayer will help you. Remember God wants you to be completely free.

Jesus said: *“If therefore the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed”* (John 8:36).

6. Support God's Work

God wants to prosper your life and meet all your needs.

One thing you will want to do now is to honor God by giving money and time to support the work of God. This is part of our worship and helps extend His Kingdom. In this way, others will have an opportunity, as you have had, to hear the good news (the gospel).

A good habit which is encouraged by God is this: Take a tenth of your income each payday and put it aside for God's work.

Take this to your spiritual home and offer it in worship to the Lord with all the other believers.

This is your way of expressing your love and thanks to God for all He has done for you.

7. Ministry-Gifts To Help You

God has given special ministry-gifts to the Church such as instructors and teachers. They are called by five different names: Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers.

You will learn to recognize these as you participate in the life of the Christian Community. They are God's provision for your help. You can read about them in Ephesians 4: 11-13.

8. Tell Others About Jesus

Be sure to share your new life with others. This may bring misunderstanding or even persecution. But God will give you wisdom in how to share the gospel with people.

Remember, they need Jesus badly. Pray for them and realize that God's Spirit is using your words to work in their hearts — even when the evidence seems to indicate the opposite.

You are part of a mighty witnessing army of believers around the world. There are literally millions turning to Christ and He wants you to have the joy of winning someone to Him also.

What a fantastic life you now have! Enjoy it, and enjoy God.

God bless you, and welcome to the Family of God.

C. CONCLUSION

Remember:

- God loves you.
- He is living within you.
- He is there to help.
- Obey, when you feel the Holy Spirit is telling you to do something.
- Speak with God often in prayer.
- Read and study His Word.
- Tell others about Jesus.
- Fellowship often with others in the Family (Church) of God.

Chapter 2

Water Baptism — Part I

By Graham Truscott

Introduction

“He who believes and is baptized will be saved” (Mark 16:16).

After repentance and receiving Christ as our Savior, the next step in our Christian life is water baptism. We should note carefully that water baptism is God's command: *“Be baptized”* (Acts 2:38).

Water baptism is not something about which we can please ourselves. It is essential for **every** believer in Christ to obey this command in the Word of God. And it is also essential to obey it **in the biblical way**. Jesus said: *“He who has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me”* (John 14:21).

The Bible tells us in 1 Samuel that King Saul wanted to please God with his animal sacrifices, but he had already disobeyed the command of God. The Lord spoke to him through His servant Samuel: *“And Samuel said, ‘Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord?’*

“Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams” (1 Sam 15:22).

These words come as a warning to us today. You may be willing to do much service for the Lord. You may be ready to do many other good works. You may be trying to serve God in so many ways, like Saul.

But if you are not ready to obey God's command to “Be baptized” in the Bible way, then the Lord will not accept your services and sacrifices.

We see the absolute necessity to obey the Lord's command to “Be baptized” in the biblical way when we see that Jesus *“became the source of eternal salvation to **all who obey him**”* (Heb 5:9).

In the light of this solemn warning, let us examine God's Word, and see what He has to say about water baptism.

There are five questions usually asked about water baptism:

- **WHO** should be baptized?
- **HOW** should we be baptized?
- **WHERE** should we be baptized?
- **WHY** should we be baptized?
- **WHEN** should we be baptized?

God's commands about water baptism are very different from the traditions of men. So we must bear in mind the warning of the Lord Jesus against those who *“for the sake of your tradition [the rules handed down by your forefathers] ...have set aside the Word of God”* (Matt 15:6 amp).

A. WHO SHOULD BE WATER BAPTIZED?

Before He ascended to Heaven, the Lord Jesus Christ commanded His disciples:

“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned” (Mark 16:15,16).

Here we see that the command of the Lord Jesus is very simple and clear. Only those who have become genuine believers by putting their faith in Christ should be baptized. Obviously, then, those being baptized should be old enough to make their own personal decision for Christ.

Some children receive Christ at a very early age. If they have a valid faith in Christ, they are ready for baptism.

The Bible seems to refer to an “age of accountability.” This age comes when a child knows right from wrong. “*By the time this child is weaned and knows right from wrong...*” (Isa 7:16 niv). Until that age, children of believers are safe and secure by the faith of their parents.

“...*Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy*” (1Cor 7:14b niv).

Again, in Matthew 28:19,20, Jesus commissioned His disciples: “*Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age.*”

Here also the wording is clear. Only those who have become disciples by choosing to follow the Lord Jesus Christ, and His teachings, are to be baptized.

Now Jesus said the conditions for becoming a disciple are as follows: “*If any one comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters [that is, in comparison with their love for Me], yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple*” (Luke 14:26,27 amp).

Thus we see that one who is to be baptized is to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. A disciple is one who has chosen to make Christ the supreme love of his life. Anyone who has not done this “*cannot be my disciple,*” Jesus said.

And if they cannot be His disciple, they cannot be baptized. It is as simple as that.

“Be baptized”: **Who?** Those who have placed their personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Those who have made their own choice to be His disciples and follow Him.

There is no authority in the Bible to baptize anyone except those who have repented from their sins, and made their personal decision to accept Christ as their Lord and Savior and follow Him.

We cannot obey the second commandment — “*Be baptized*” — until we have obeyed the first commandment — “*Repent.*” Even those born in a Christian home must truly repent, and hold their own living faith in Christ.

1. Biblical Examples

During the ministry of Christ's followers, only those who truly repented and believed and accepted Christ in their hearts, were baptized.

a. The Day Of Pentecost. “*Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, ‘Brethren, what shall we do?’*”

“*And Peter said to them, ‘Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sin...’*”

“*So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls*” (Acts 2:37, 38, 41).

Notice that those who received the word and obeyed the command to repent were baptized.

b. The New Christians At Samaria. “*When they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women [no mention of children]*” (Acts 8:12).

When Philip preached Christ in Samaria, and demonstrated the miraculous power

of God by healing signs and wonders, there was a multitude of men and women present. We read: *“when they believed... they were baptized, both men and women.”*

c. The Ethiopian Eunuch. *“Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture (Isa 53:7,8), he told him the good news of Jesus.*

“And as they went along the road, they came to some water, and the eunuch said, ‘See, here is water! What is to prevent my being baptized?’ And Philip said, ‘If you believe with all your heart, you may.’ And he replied, ‘I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.’

“And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him” (Acts 8:35-38).

Water baptism for believers is an essential part of the “good news of Jesus.” Otherwise, the eunuch would not have asked for baptism.

The evangelist Philip's words to the eunuch are so very clear: *“If you believe with all your heart, you may [be baptized].”* This condition has never changed.

d. Saul Of Tarsus (The Apostle Paul). *“So Ananias departed and entered the house. And laying his hands on him he said, ‘Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came, has sent me that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.’*

“And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptized” (Acts 9:17,18).

We have already noticed how, on the Damascus Road, Saul repented of his sins, and called Jesus “Lord.” Ananias was described as “a disciple” (Acts 9:10). Ananias addressed Saul as “Brother Saul,” because through personal faith in Christ, Saul had become his brother in the Lord. So the one who was to become the great Apostle Paul was baptized in water as a believer.

e. Cornelius And His Company. *“‘Can any one forbid water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?’ And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ” (Acts 10:47,48).*

As we saw in our study on repentance, Cornelius and his company first believed and repented (Acts 11:17, 18). Then they received the Gift of the Holy Spirit. Notice that those who received the Holy Spirit, just as the 120 disciples had in Acts 2, were baptized in water.

f. The Corinthians. *“Many of the Corinthians hearing Paul believed and were baptized” (Acts 18:8).*

There is no room for debate: **first**, they believed; **after that**, they were baptized.

g. The Disciples At Ephesus. *“Paul passed through the upper country and came to Ephesus. There he found some disciples... they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus” (Acts 19:1,5).*

We saw that these disciples at Ephesus were true followers of the Lord Jesus. And their example, like all the others, shows that biblical baptism in water comes **after** repentance and personal faith in Christ. There is no authority in the Bible for baptism of those who have neither repented of their sins nor received Jesus Christ into their lives.

“The Scripture cannot be broken” (John 10:35). In all of the above instances of water baptism, those being baptized first repented of sin and believed in Jesus Christ.

There are four more examples of water baptism in the Bible. We shall now show how these also teach that the Lord's command to "*Be baptized*" is to be obeyed by those who first repent and believe in Him.

2. Household Baptisms

There are four references in the Bible to household baptisms. We now deal with the subject of household baptism in the light of what the Bible says:

a. The Household Of Stephanas. "*I did baptize the household of Stephanas*" (1Cor 1:16). "*Now, brethren, you know that the household of Stephanas were the first converts in Achaia, and they have devoted themselves to the service of the saints*" (1Cor 16:15).

Reading these two verses together, we get the whole picture of the baptism of the household of Stephanas.

The first reference tells us only that Stephanas and his household were baptized by the Apostle Paul.

But from the second verse, we learn that all in the household were "**converts**" — meaning they had repented and turned to Christ. The words "*they have devoted themselves to the service of the saints*" reveal two things about this family:

- Stephenas and his household members experienced personal salvation through believing in Christ.
- They also dedicated their lives to the service of God's people.

Because they had all become devoted believers in Christ, Paul baptized them in water.

Scholars agree that the word "household" in the New Testament would in Bible days mean dependents and servants. Indeed, every example of those responding to the apostolic instructions — "*Repent,*" "*Be baptized,*" "*Receive the Holy Spirit*" — establishes this: All three of these experiences are for persons who receive instruction, understand the gospel, repent and have faith.

b. The Jailer And His Household. "*And they said, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.'*"

"And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all that were in his house.

"And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their wounds, and he was baptized at once, with all his family.

"Then he brought them up into his house, and set food before them; and he rejoiced with all his household that he had believed in God" (Acts 16:31-34).

It is very clear that the whole family of the jailer rushed to the prison cell when they felt the earthquake which had set the prisoners free.

Paul and his companion, Silas, preached the gospel to them all — there in the prison cell. They all heard the Word of the Lord.

And because they all believed, they were all baptized. So all the members of the jailer's household heard and believed the Word of God.

Therefore, they were all baptized as believers, and all rejoiced in the joy of their newfound salvation.

Once again, then, we see that it was baptism for believers.

c. The Household Of Crispus. *“Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord, together with all his household; and many of the Corinthians hearing Paul believed and were baptized”* (Acts 18:8).

This prominent man believed on the Lord together with all his family members. Therefore, all of them were entitled to experience believer's baptism. The other Corinthians who believed were similarly baptized in water.

d. The Household Of Lydia. *“One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshipper of God.*

“The Lord opened her heart to give heed to what was said by Paul. And when she was baptized, with her household, she besought us, saying, ‘If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay.’ And she prevailed upon us” (Acts 16:14,15).

Lydia's heart was opened to the gospel and to the Lord Jesus. She became a faithful believer and was baptized.

On the strength and authority of the previous examples, plus Lydia herself, we conclude: Whether it is the household of Lydia or any other household, **every** member of the household must truly repent from sin, and believe and receive the Lord Jesus Christ and His gospel as a personal experience, before all the members of the household can be baptized.

We have now considered every instance of water baptism in the New Testament. The truth stands out from all eleven examples. The command to *“Be baptized”* is for those who have personal, living faith in the Good News of salvation through Christ, and have received Him as their Lord and Savior.

“Buried with him in baptism” (Col 2:12).

B. HOW SHOULD WE BE BAPTIZED?

We have now established from the Bible the answer to the question “WHO should be baptized?” God answers us loud and clear from His Word. The candidate for water baptism must have repented, and have experienced personal salvation through Christ.

The next question is “HOW should we be baptized?” If we sincerely desire to build a good, firm foundation for our Christian lives, it is essential we find the correct answer.

In the Greek language in which the New Testament was written, the word for baptism is *baptizo*, which comes from *bapto*, meaning “to dip,” “to plunge under,” “to immerse.”

For example, the word *bapto* was used among the Greeks to signify the dyeing of a garment. When a piece of cloth was to be dyed, it was plunged under the colored liquid until changed into the color of the dye.

Another example of the use of this word was the drawing of water by dipping one vessel into another. The vessel being used to draw water was immersed beneath the water in the larger vessel.

It is of great significance that the Greek Orthodox Church has retained the word “Baptizo” in its liturgical language from the beginning, and has always understood it to

mean nothing else but immersion in the water.

To this day, the Greek Church baptizes in water by immersion. We may be sure that the Greeks understand the meaning of their own language!

1. The Biblical Method Of Baptism

Because the Bible word means “to dip,” “to plunge under,” “to immerse,” we should expect to find this to be the baptism practiced in the Bible. This is exactly what we do find.

a. John The Baptist. *“Then went out to him [John the Baptist] Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region about the Jordan, and they were baptized by him **in the River Jordan**, confessing their sins”* (Matt 3:5,6).

The Bible could not make it any clearer. They were baptized — in the waters of the River Jordan.

Indeed, the Bible teaches that both John the Baptist **and** our Lord Jesus Himself chose a place where there was much water, to do their baptizing: *“After this, Jesus and his disciples went into the land of Judea; there he remained with them and baptized. John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim, **because there was much water there**; and people came and were baptized”* (John 3:22, 23).

Aenon means “fountains” or “springs.” You can go there today and still see the abundant springs of water. Another rendering of John 3:23 is *“because there were many pools and streams there”* (Weymouth's translation). “Much water” was essential, because they were baptizing by immersion of the candidate in the water.

b. Christ's Baptism. *“In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John **in the Jordan**. And when **he came up out of the water**, immediately he saw the heavens opened...”* (Mark 1:9,10).

Our Lord Jesus was baptized in the water, and came up out of the water. He came *“leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps”* (1Pet 2:21). Have you followed His example? Have you been baptized **in** the water, and come **up out of the water**?

c. The Ethiopian Eunuch. *“And he commanded the chariot to stop, and **they both went down into the water**, Philip and the eunuch, **and he baptized him**. And when **they came up out of the water**, the Spirit of the Lord caught up Philip; and the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing”* (Acts 8:38,39).

Why does the Bible say *“they came up out of the water”*? Because the word “baptize” means to dip under, and the New Testament speaks of no other way of baptism.

2. A Burial And Resurrection

The Bible teaches that baptism is a burial. The candidate is completely buried in water:

“Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death” (Rom 6:3,4).

“You were buried with him in baptism” (Col 2:12).

We shall discuss the spiritual significance of this soon. Here we note that all who have been baptized were buried in water, just as Christ was buried in the earth. The Bible

also teaches that baptism is a resurrection to a new life:

“We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life” (Rom 6:4).

“...baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead” (Col 2:12).

“You have been raised with Christ” (Col 3:1).

In water baptism, after the candidate is buried, he is raised up from under the water. Water baptism is a **burial** and a **resurrection**.

“HOW should we be baptized?” There is only one way: in water. The Bible teaches us no other way.

C. WHERE SHOULD WE BE BAPTIZED?

From our study of “HOW should we be baptized?” the answer to our third question is obvious. “WHERE should we be baptized?”

The Bible says they baptized **in** water where there is **much water**. Baptize in the sea, in rivers, in streams, pools, fountains and tanks. Where possible, baptize outdoors as in the Bible, as a public testimony.

However, some churches have a deep tank, or “baptistery,” inside the building. To follow the Bible pattern, it is recommended that it take place where you can be buried and raised up — a place where there is much water.

Chapter 3

Water Baptism — Part II

“It is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness” (Matt 3:15).

A. WHY SHOULD WE BE BAPTIZED?

WHY should we be baptized? Because the Lord Jesus commanded it. Because it is the second step in the apostles' instructions upon which we are to build our lives as believers.

Furthermore, there is a deep spiritual meaning in water baptism. Whole books could be written about the spiritual meaning of baptism. We have space only to briefly consider the most important aspects.

1. A Clear Conscience

“God's patience waited in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water.

“Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal [answer] to God for a clear conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ” (1Pet 3:20,21 smf).

It is an historical and biblical fact that because of the sinfulness of mankind, God covered the whole earth with a flood of water, saving only Noah and his family in the ark. The earth was completely covered with water. Here the Bible says baptism “corresponds to this.”

How does baptism in water “answer to God for a clear conscience”? It means that God is asking us if our conscience is clear. The Bible says, “*How much more shall the blood of Christ... purify your conscience*” (Heb 9:14).

If your sinful conscience has been washed in the blood of Christ and purified, you no longer feel guilty and ashamed to come into the presence of God. Your conscience is clear. Therefore, in baptism you are affirming to God that your conscience has been purified by the blood of Christ and is now clear. Praise the Lord!

2. A Public Testimony

“Baptized into his death” (Rom 6:3).

Each time someone is baptized in the biblical way, they are testifying to the world that God's Son (Jesus Christ) was crucified on the cross, and shed His blood and died for their sins.

His dead body was placed in the grave. But He did not stay there. After three days He rose from the tomb, victorious over sin and death.

Each time a believer is baptized, confessing faith in Him, public testimony is given to this glorious fact:

“We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life” (Rom 6:4).

3. Burying The “Old Man”

It has often been said that “Baptism is an outward testimony of an inward experience.” It is. But it is much more than this!

Baptism is an experience too! From a study of Romans 6 and Colossians 2, we see that there is a deep and precious identification of the believer with the Lord Jesus in His death, burial and resurrection, when water baptism takes place:

“We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the sinful body might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. For he who has died is freed from sin. For sin shall have no dominion over you” (Rom 6:6,7,14).

“Buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead” (Col 2:12).

What tongue can tell the blessed deliverance we have in the Cross of Christ! Freed from struggling! Freed from sin! Freed from condemnation, guilt and fear. Sin nailed to the Cross. Old man buried. We ourselves risen in newness of life. This is the inward experience of those who follow their Lord through the waters of baptism.

4. Declaration Of Victory

“Buried with him in baptism . . .

“He disarmed the principalities and powers and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in him” (Col 2:12,15).

In biblical water baptism, the believer is certainly laying a good and firm

foundation! Baptism testifies before Satan together with all his devils, that the Lord Jesus has triumphed over them all in His cross. Baptism declares that Jesus has delivered the believer from their kingdom and powers. Hallelujah!

5. Acknowledgement Of Faith

“Every one who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven; but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven” (Matt 10:32,33).

The New Testament teaches that the first way a new believer is to acknowledge his newfound faith in Christ is by being publicly baptized in water.

We have already seen, in the New Testament, examples that baptism was no secret thing, but an open, bold testimony before others. This public acknowledgement and testimony strengthens our faith and determination to follow Christ!

The Lord does not want secret, weak, fearful disciples. This is one reason why He has commanded believers to *“Be baptized”* — to acknowledge Him before men.

6. Affirm Our Oneness In Christ

“For as many of you as were baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal 3:27,28).

The believer being baptized testifies that he or she is equal and one with all other believers in Christ.

By the shedding of His blood on the Cross, the Lord Jesus has made all believers in Him *“...one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us” (Eph 2:14 kjv).*

In Jesus Christ there is no Jewish Christian, English Christian, African Christian, Indian Christian, no rich or poor Christians, no educated or uneducated Christians, no servants or masters, no black or white, no male or female, no denomination or mission — *“...for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”*

So the believer, by being baptized, is acknowledging this equality. The new believer is affirming oneness in Christ with all other Christians in the world. He is joining the family of all who have trusted in Christ and been baptized in the Bible way.

Any baptized believer still holding in his or her mind any kind of class consciousness, racial prejudice, denominational feeling, or attitude of superiority over other Christians, is living contrary to the truth and testimony of baptism. Such a person needs to repent and be cleansed afresh in the blood of Christ.

7. Accepting God's Purpose

“But the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected the purpose of God for themselves, not having been baptized by him” (Luke 7:30).

Although this verse is speaking of baptism by John the Baptist, the spiritual lesson here and in believer's baptism in the Name of Jesus Christ are the same.

We acknowledge in water baptism our willingness to accept God's purpose for our lives. God has a purpose — a plan — for each one of us. But, if we will not obey His command to *“Be baptized,”* we reject His purpose for us. I am sure that God's purposes are best, aren't you?

8. Separation From The Old Life

“I want you to know, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea” (1Cor 10:1,2).

The only other Old Testament incident given to us as a picture of water baptism is the baptism of the Israelites in the Red Sea.

Even though the level of the water was well above their heads, and the water was *“...a wall to them on their right hand and on their left, the people of Israel walked on dry ground through the sea” (Exo 14:29).*

They had been saved from the judgment of God through the blood of the lamb on their doors. They were set free from bondage and slavery to the Egyptians.

But their *“baptism into Moses”* meant full and final separation from Egypt, Pharaoh King of Egypt, and the Egyptians. Pharaoh and the Egyptian chariots and horsemen were thrown into the sea, and destroyed under the waters which God brought upon them (Exo 15:19,21).

In the same way, believers who have followed their Lord through the waters of baptism (and those intending to be baptized) should live lives of complete separation from bad habits and the sinful ways of the world (Egypt).

9. Fulfills All Righteousness

“Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him, saying, ‘I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?’

“But Jesus answered him, ‘Let it be so now; for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.’ Then he consented. And... Jesus was baptized” (Matt 3:13-16).

If the sinless, spotless Son of God, the Lord Jesus, had to be baptized to fulfill all righteousness, then who are we to say we do not need to be baptized in water as He was? Believers, in their baptism, show that like their Lord, they are willing to fulfill all righteousness.

10. Brings Rejoicing

“And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him.

*“And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught up Philip; and the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way **rejoicing**” (Acts 8:38,39).*

*“He was baptized at once, with all his family... and he **rejoiced** with all his household that he had believed in God” (Acts 16:33,34).*

The eunuch returned to Ethiopia rejoicing, and planted the seeds of the Church of Jesus Christ there. The results are still evident today, nearly 2,000 years later.

The jailer, naturally speaking, had nothing to be happy about. His prisoners were free. The prison was damaged. But the joy of salvation and baptism so filled his heart, he rejoiced with all his household.

Today, many seek for joy in ways that are not pleasing to God. There is no lasting joy apart from God. *“Thou dost show me the path of life; in thy presence there is fullness of joy” (Ps 16:11).*

As you follow His path, which leads to baptism, you too will be rejoicing. For there

is a direct connection in the Bible between water baptism and joy — a deep, spiritual, lasting joy as a result of obeying God.

Many more reasons why we should be baptized could be listed. But these show the emphasis God has placed on baptism. Notice again that all the experiences of water baptism are for those who accept and experience for themselves the grace and blessing of God.

11. Circumcision Of Heart

“Nor is true circumcision something external and physical... real circumcision is a matter of the heart, spiritual and not literal” (Rom 2:28,29).

Paul teaches that those *“are the true circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God, and glory in Christ Jesus, and put no confidence in the flesh” (Phil 3:3).*

The outward rite of circumcision has been replaced by the inward experience of the cutting off of the power of sin and fleshly desires, by the burying and raising again of true believers in baptism: *“You have come to fullness of life in him [Christ], who is the head of all rule and authority.*

“In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of flesh in the circumcision of Christ: And you were buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead” (Col 2:10-13).

The matter is settled. Baptism is for those who have accepted Christ, and the fullness of His life. These put off the body of fleshly sins and desires, by their spiritual experience of being buried with Him in water baptism.

According to the Bible, baptism is for those who have repented, and have personal saving faith in Jesus Christ. If you have not been baptized since you repented from your sins and accepted Christ as your Savior, then your next step should be to obey God's command to fulfill all righteousness by receiving water baptism.

12. God's Command

“WHY should we be baptized?”

Because of the glorious testimony and blessed experience of water baptism. Because it is an essential step in God's plan for our lives.

Above all, God has commanded us to be baptized. Even if we do not understand all the reasons and spiritual meanings of water baptism, this one fact should compel us to obey the Lord: it is His command.

He said: *“He who has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me; and he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him” (John 14:21).*

The real proof of our love for Christ is not our words, not all the many things we do for Him, not our prayers, not our Bible reading, not our going to church, although all these things have their place. The real proof is this: do we **keep** His commandments? *“I hasten and do not delay to keep thy commandments” (Ps 119:60).* Are you hastening to keep His - commandment to *“Be baptized every one of you”*? God's Word says: *“He commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ” (Acts 10:48).*

B. WHEN SHOULD WE BE WATER BAPTIZED?

“And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized” (Acts 22:16).

From the answers found in the Bible to our previous questions, the answer to our last question is obvious.

“WHEN should we be water baptized?” Just as soon as we repent from our sins, and believe the gospel, receiving the Lord Jesus Christ into our hearts.

The word to act on in repentance and salvation is “now!” *“God... now commands all men everywhere to repent”* (Acts 17:30). *“Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold now is the day of salvation”* (2Cor 6:2).

In exactly the same way, the word to act on in water baptism is “now.” *“And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized”* (Acts 22:16).

The Bible knows nothing of “instruction classes,” “three-month trial periods,” “seeing if it will last,” “getting ready,” “waiting for the next baptismal service,” or any other such waiting or delay. God’s command is “now.” On the Day of Pentecost, the three thousand who repented from their sins *“were baptized... that day”* (Acts 2:41). There was no delay.

The Samaritans were baptized in water *“...when they believed”* (Acts 8:12). The Ethiopian eunuch was baptized immediately after he believed in Christ, even though this was the very first gospel sermon he had ever heard (Acts 8:35-38).

The Apostle Paul was immediately baptized by the first Christian disciple who came to him (Acts 9:17,18).

Cornelius and his company were baptized immediately after they believed (Acts 10:48).

The jailer and his household were baptized the same night they believed in Christ (Acts 16:30-34).

As soon as they heard of the baptism of Jesus, the Ephesian believers were baptized by Paul (Acts 19:4,5).

We find no delay in any example given in the Bible.

How many are being robbed of the great blessings of baptism by saying, “I’m preparing my heart. As soon as I am ready, I will obey the command to be water baptized.” The only conditions laid down in the Bible for water baptism are repentance from sin, personal faith in Jesus Christ, and total commitment to be His disciple.

Right now, the Lord is speaking to your heart from His Own Word about baptism. You feel you should follow your Lord’s command to *“Be baptized.”*

Act at once! Arise. Go to a church, a pastor or a disciple who is living according to the Bible. Do not delay; for God commands you: *“And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on his name”* (Acts 22:16).

If you have repented, and believed on the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior, and know in your heart you are His child, then obey the commandment of God. Act upon His Word. *“Rise and be baptized,”* right now!

Chapter 4

Standards Of Sexual Morality

By Zac Poonen

Hebrews 13:4 says, “*Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: but - whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.*”

A. GOD CALLS US TO PURITY

Believers, first and foremost, must be morally and sexually pure (cf. 2Cor 11:2; Titus 2:5; 1Pet 3:2).

The word “pure” or “chaste” (*Gk hagnos*) means to be free from all taint of that which is lewd. It suggests refraining from all acts and thoughts that incite desire not in accordance with one's virginity or one's marriage vows.

It stresses restraint and avoidance of all sexual actions and excitements that would defile, debase or cheapen one's purity before God.

It includes controlling one's own body “*in sanctification and honor*” (1Ths 4:4), and not in “lust” (4:5). This instruction of Scripture is for both those who are single and those married.

With regard to the biblical teaching concerning sexual morality, note the following:

1. Sexual Intimacy Reserved For Marriage

Sexual intimacy is reserved for the marriage relationship and is approved and blessed by God only in that state. Through marriage, the husband and wife become one flesh according to God's will. The physical and emotional pleasures resulting from a faithful marriage relationship are ordained by God and held in honor by Him (Heb 13:4).

2. Sexual Sins Are Severely Condemned

Adultery, fornication, homosexuality, sensuality, impure desire and degrading passions are considered grave sins in the sight of God. They are a transgression of the law of love and a defiling of the marriage relationship. Such sins are severely condemned in Scripture. Making a practice of these sins places one outside the Kingdom of God (Rom 1:24-32; 1Cor 6:9,10; Gal 5:19-21).

3. Sexual Sins Occur Outside Marriage

Sexual immorality and impurity are defined as sexual intercourse or consummated acts outside marriage. Any act of sexual gratification with another person other than one's marriage partner is immoral. Uncovering or exploring the nakedness of anyone other than your spouse invites God's judgment.

Some contemporary teachers say any sexual intimacy among “committed” unmarried youth and adults is acceptable, if it stops short of full sexual union. This idea is contrary to the holiness of God and the biblical standard of purity. God explicitly prohibits the “uncovering of the nakedness” or “seeing the nakedness” of anyone who is not a lawful wife or husband (Lev 18:6-30; 20:11,17,19-21).

4. Believers Must Exercise Self-Control

The believer must exercise self-control and steadfast restraint with reference to all sexual matters before marriage. To justify premarital intimacy on the grounds of a real or a felt “commitment” to another — flagrantly compromises God's holy standards. The world's impure ways justify immorality. As believers, we dare not.

After marriage, sexual intimacy must be confined to one's marriage partner. The Bible names self-control as an aspect of the Spirit's fruit. This evidences itself in our life by the positive and pure behavior that is in contrast to immoral sexual acts. Gratification, fornication, adultery and impurity must never be acceptable among believers. One's commitment to God's will opens the way to receive this gift of self-control (Gal 5:22-24).

5. Biblical Terms For Sexual Immorality

Biblical terms used for sexual immorality, describing the breadth of its evil, are as follows:

a. Fornication (Gk *porneia*) describes a wide variety of sexual activities before or outside of marriage. Any intimate sexual activity or play outside the marriage relationship, including the touching of the intimate parts of the body or viewing the nakedness of another person, is included in this term and is clearly a transgression of God's moral standards for His people (see Leviticus 18:6-30; 20:11,12,17,19- 21; 1 Corinthians 6:18; 1 Thessalonians 4:3).

b. Lasciviousness (Gk *aselgeia*) denotes the absence of clear moral principles; specifically, disregard of sexual reserve and restraint that maintains pure and chaste behavior (1Tim 2:9). It includes the inclination toward indulging in or arousing sinful lust, and thus may lead one to participate in unbiblical conduct (Gal 5:1; Eph 4:19; 1Pet 4:3; 2Pet 2:2,18).

c. Defraud (Gk *pleonekteo*) means to deprive another of the moral purity and chastity that God desires for that person in order to satisfy one's own self-centered desires. To arouse sexual desires in someone which cannot be righteously fulfilled is defrauding that person (1Ths 4:6; cf. Eph 4:19).

d. Lust (Gk *epithumia*) is having an immoral desire, which one would fulfill if the opportunity arose (see Matthew 5:28; note: Ephesians 4:19,22; 1 Peter 4:3; 2 Peter 2:18).

True morality is maintaining righteous standards when no one but God will know what we are doing.

SECTION E6

PLANNING FOR CHURCH GROWTH

By Ralph Mahoney

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PREFACE

Back in my teenage years, I was attending the North Hollywood Assembly of God Church. Our leader, Arne Vick, often taught that the two key principles to successful ministry were prayer and study, study and prayer, then more prayer and study. We young people believed him and tried it but it didn't work for us.

What we didn't realize was that behind Brother Vick's understated explanation of his highly successful ministry lay talents and gifts of which he, himself, remained largely unaware.

After several years of stumbling along, I began to understand that prayer and study, no matter how fervent, faithful and well-intentioned, were not enough.

It was only after I finally began to gather together and sort out some **Principles For Achievement** of my own, that I became fruitful and productive in the Lord's work. I want to share these principles with you.

These principles are intended as a supplement to, and not a replacement for, the spiritual foundations of ministry. I am assuming you've already laid the foundation stones of dedication, holiness, commitment, intercession and a basic understanding of the Scriptures. Your motivations are cleaned up and purified. Your life is sold out to the Lord.

If these are not in your life, the principles I'm going to share with you won't make you successful. Spiritual life must come first. But, when all of that is in order and operative, there is still a need for practical principles to work by, practical elements of understanding.

I dedicate this section to all those church leaders who are willing to pay the price and invest the effort, to make their lives count for the Lord — for all eternity.

Chapter 1

Taking Inventory

Introduction

We have an imbalance in some Pentecostal circles toward the subjective side of Christianity. In evangelical circles, the imbalance tips toward the objective side.

To be subjective means you live your life "from the subject" or "from what comes from within yourself." Your intuition guides you. What you "feel inside" is your primary source of direction for your life and ministry,

To be objective means "from the object" or "from what comes outside yourself."

Your reason, intellect and logic carefully evaluate every detail and you make a decision based on this "objective" base of information.

In living for Christ, being too subjective causes you to "blow up"; being too objective causes you to "dry up"; and the right balance of each causes you to "grow up." It is this balance I aim at for myself, and that I work toward developing among those to whom I minister.

Let me illustrate what I mean by subjective imbalance.

Some years ago a friend of mine and his church elders received what they thought was a "word from the Lord" to go to a certain island in the Caribbean and evangelize its people.

After asking for and receiving backing from the church membership, they geared up to go, bought tickets from a travel agency and took off with plans for a great evangelistic crusade.

They made these expansive plans without any research into the previous history, present need or opportunity for evangelization on that island.

Their plane landed on an airport approximately thirty miles from their destination. From there, they loaded themselves and their supplies and gear into a small sailboat owned by a native guide who claimed to know where the island was. They sailed happily across the placid Caribbean Sea toward their final destination.

As they approached the midpoint in the ocean between the two islands, the native guide asked, "What do you intend to do when you land?"

They enthusiastically replied, "We have been sent by the Lord to evangelize this island!"

"Well, sirs," he said, "there are no people on that island. It has always been uninhabited. It is only a few miles long, and all you will find there are a lot of coconut trees."

"Are you sure?" they asked in astonishment.

"You can soon see for yourselves," he said.

When they arrived, it required only a few minutes to explore the island sufficiently to see that their guide had spoken the truth. They were the only people on the island.

That is what I mean by being too "subjective" in our Christian experience. Being overly subjective can lead us astray. A little objective research would have confirmed there were no people on this island.

They would have discovered their "leading" was wrong. Objective confirmation of their subjective "guidance" would have spared these men from their spiritual fiasco.

They had spent a lot of money and wasted a lot of time following what they thought was "the leading of the Lord." Had they sought objective confirmation of their subjective "leading" — they could have spared themselves and their church this waste.

They had to come back to their church and report their failure to the brothers and sisters. They had to explain why the great crusade never took place.

The people forgave them — but never forgot their foolish escapade. Even with all the embarrassment and apologies, it took some years to restore confidence in their

leadership.

So it is balance that I always try to work for, both in my own ministry and in that of others. Good management principles, the "*spirit of a sound mind*" (2Tim 1:7), must balance "the leading of the Spirit." This section is to show you how to bring objective management to your church and ministry.

A. BEGIN FROM WHERE YOU ARE

We all need a starting point where we can assess the personal resources available to each of us in our work for the Lord. You always **begin from where you are, with what you have, now.**

Ask yourself this question. "What do I have?"

You have what you are by BIRTH, by TRAINING, by GOD'S GRACE, and by EXPERIENCE. These are your resources. Surveying these will help you discover what you have to work with.

Faith always seizes the future, always works to claim the future and make it yield what God wants. But we need to begin with the past. Your past reveals and yields the resources you need, to get things done in the Kingdom of God.

Paul tells us, "*For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you...*"

"We have different gifts, according to the grace given us..." (Rom 12:3-6).

Paul's appeal is for you to make a sober evaluation of what you **are** and what you **have**. Then make use of that evaluation in making your future fruitful for the Lord. He encourages you to take a balanced view of yourself. Do not think more highly nor less highly of yourself than you ought to think.

1. Your Inherited Resources

The first item on our inventory sheet is "Gifts From Our Parents." What did your dad and mother endow you with? Your dad and mom endowed you with APTITUDES, TEMPERAMENT and INTELLIGENCE.

We need to be aware of whatever we are by birth because it is going to have an impact on the eventual outcome of what we do to extend the Kingdom of Christ.

In 2 Timothy 1:5 Paul pointed out to Timothy an important quality he received through his birth. He says:

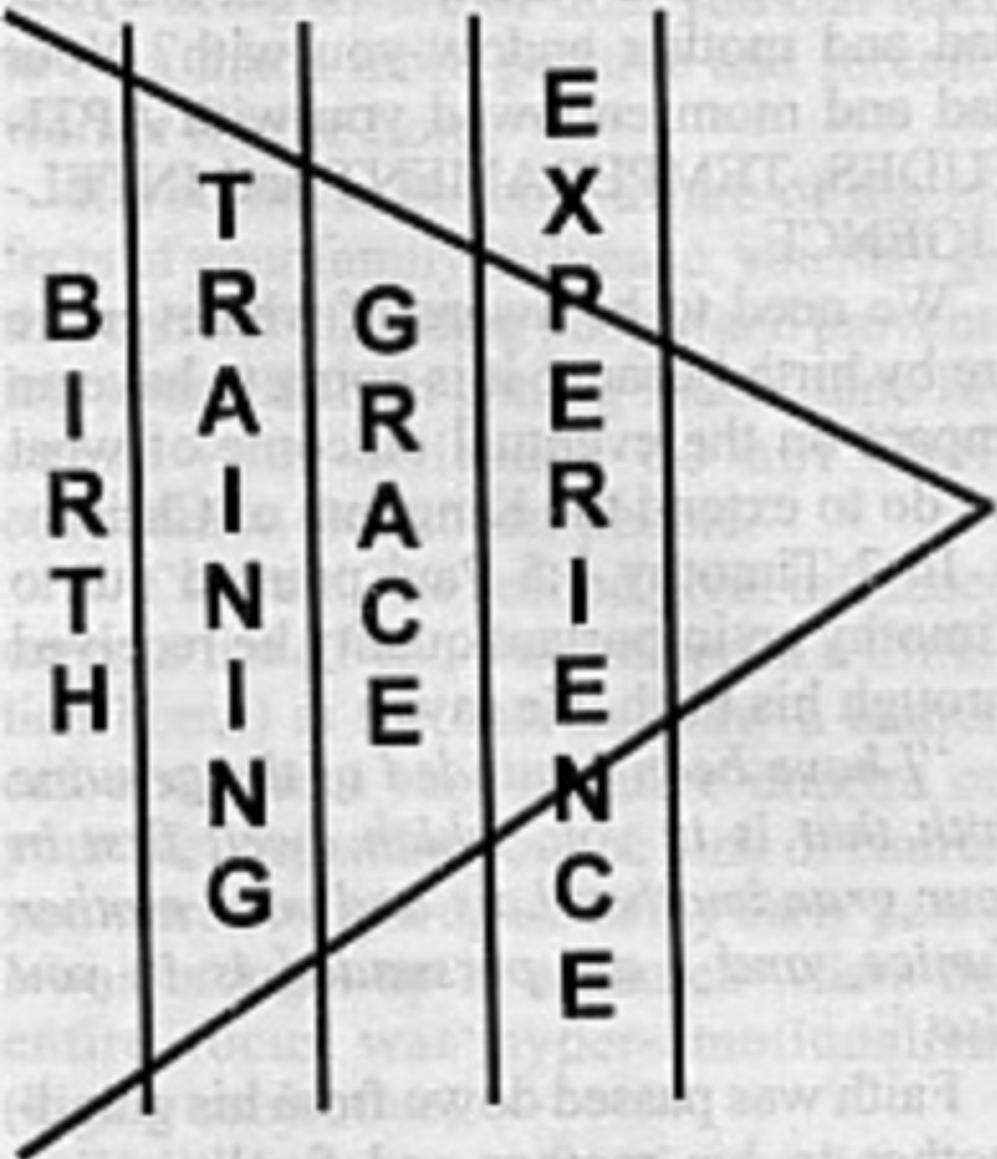
"I have been reminded of the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also."

Faith was passed down from his grandmother to his mother and finally on to Timothy through the birth process — the genealogical process. Paul describes it as "*genuine [sincere] faith*" that was in Timothy. Faith came to Timothy through birth.

Musical ability, artistic talents and leadership gifts are usually gifts from our parents — who passed them on to us when we were born.

a. Your Aptitudes. When you look at aptitudes, ask this question: "What am I good at?" The answer or answers you come up with are your aptitudes, the things for which you have a natural gift.

SUCCESS RESOURCES



For example, a gifted pianist can make his instrument sound beautiful. This is the result of a certain inborn aptitude. Even with a great deal of training and practice, those of us who have no natural musical aptitude are unable to perform at the level of those who do.

While God will sometimes bypass our natural gifts. He generally doesn't. Normally He works through and with these. So, stop and take ten to fifteen minutes to list your aptitudes on a piece of paper. This list will be invaluable to you later on. Stop and do it now!

b. Your Temperament. The second thing you want to take a look at is your temperament. The question here is, "What do I enjoy doing?" Some Christians have the idea it is a sin to do what they enjoy doing. There are things you might enjoy doing that would be sin. But the fact you enjoy doing it doesn't make it a sin.

What you enjoy can often be an indication of what you should be doing. This is because our likes and dislikes most often indicate whether we are temperamentally suited to a certain job or not. List the things you enjoy doing on your work paper.

c. Your Intelligence. The third thing we have by birth is intelligence. "How good am I at figuring out **how** to do it?"

Everyone is good at figuring out some thing. But figuring out what we're good for is one of our greatest difficulties.

Intelligence is the ability to make a useful contribution to others and the ability to take care of yourself.

Your ability to think clearly and logically is essential for leadership. Your conclusions from your reasoning process should always agree with the teaching of the Bible. This would be the ultimate test of intelligence.

When we receive Christ as our Savior and Lord, our intelligence is enhanced. "*For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind*" (2Tim 1:7). Christ gives us a spirit of a sound mind.

Darkness covers the mind of the unbeliever. When we turn to the Lord, He removes this "veil" that covers the mind. "*But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains...* It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away...

"But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away" (2 Cor 3:14,16).

2. The Influence Of Training

The second area we need to evaluate is the influence of training upon what we are by birth. There are three main areas of influence that impact upon our lives as Christians.

a. Family. First, the major influence upon any person's life is family. The parental situation essentially "patterns" the child for a certain lifestyle, certain habits.

If you were born into a loving family where your mother and father were getting along well, that will help you.

If they gave a lot of positive reinforcement to you from the time you were born, you will have more self-confidence and may be willing to risk things that would frighten others.

If your parents showed you a lot of love, a lot of hugging, you, of course, will have a much better chance to grow up to be a friendly person who relates well to others

and makes a success in life.

Those who study the behavior of animals and humans discovered this "patterning" phenomenon is very strong in ducks.

When a duck is hatched from an egg, it will psychologically bond to the first object it sees. It will then try to act like that object.

For example, if the duck sees a gentle dog — it will follow that dog around and try to be like a dog. The dog's habits and way of living will be imitated by the duck.

To a lesser degree, we are all like that. We are "patterned" (molded, formed) by our family and environment.

Perhaps you came out of a less than ideal family. That's where about ninety percent of us came from. We have some negative things in our background. Well, let's be aware of them.

Negative "patterning" is no excuse to violate the will of God. But, being aware of the family "training pattern" might help you (with God's help) to rise above some of the negative aspects of that negative "patterning."

By being aware of this, you can learn to be a much more positive and forceful worker for the Lord.

If you never become aware of the effects of your family influence, you may go through life offending people and preventing yourself from getting much done because your attitudes do not elicit cooperation from other people.

b. Church. The second great influence on your life (if you were raised in a Christian home) is the church. Now a church can also put a very negative imprint on your life, depending on the kind of church you were brought up in. In my early years, I was brought up in a church where the entire focus was hyper-emotionalism (highly subjective).

Well, if you are raised in that kind of church environment you would think "emotionalism is spirituality, that is what church is all about."

Our church background can lead us to assume that all Christianity is whirling to certain tunes, jumping to certain beats, responding to certain punch lines the preacher puts into his message. Key words and punch lines trigger certain emotional responses. All that is a part of our church culture.

If you come from a church where they are very conservative, and everything is liturgical and ordered, then obviously that is going to impact upon your understanding of God, Christianity and the Bible.

Note on your inventory sheet what negative and positive influences your church brought to your life.

c. Schools. Formal education is an extremely critical factor during this whole process. The training by family, church and school impact upon our lives and, together with the qualities we are born with, make us what we are.

Training is very important. Luke 12:47 says, "*That servant who knew his Lord's will and **prepared not himself**, shall be beaten with many stripes.*" Preparation and training are necessary to fulfill the Lord's will.

You that sit on personnel committees and evaluate candidates should be taking

special note of what I am saying. You should inventory every one of your ministerial or preacher candidates to see what they are by birth and training.

3. God's Grace

The third area we need to consider in our personal inventory is God's grace. For some of us, grace is the only compensating factor we've got. I mean that sincerely.

If anyone had inventoried my life on the basis of my birth and training, they would have estimated zero possibilities. I'm very thankful for the abundant supply of the GRACE of God in my life. This is, for the believer, the great compensator!

What do I mean by God's grace? First of all, in the context of this study, I do not mean "unmerited favor," although that is one of the meanings of grace. I do not mean grace as "the opposite of what we deserve," although that too is a meaning of grace.

But I am referring to "grace" as Paul uses it in several places in the New Testament. The word means "divine enablement."

a. Divine Enablement. Paul, in 2 Corinthians 12:9 reports that the Lord said to him, "*My GRACE is sufficient for thee. For my strength is made perfect in weakness.*"

What was the Lord saying to Paul? He was **not** saying: My "unmerited favor" is sufficient for you. He was **not** saying to Paul: My "giving you the opposite of what you deserve" is sufficient for you. He **was** saying: "My divine enablement" is sufficient for you to live victorious despite the buffeting of Satan's messenger.

Now if we survey our birth and training, we may be unqualified. We must count on God's grace, the divine enablement God can bring to our life.

That, for the believer, is the compensating dimension the unbeliever does not have available to him. God's grace (divine enablement) can be the great compensator.

You see it in the life of David, when as a young lad he went out to fight Goliath. What was it that made him successful against the giant Goliath? It was divine enablement, God's grace in his life. He had been anointed by the prophet Samuel just a short time before.

What was it that made Joseph successful in Egypt? He had a pretty good family background in his birth. He was only seventeen when he was sold into slavery, so he didn't have much formal education.

He was raised in a nomadic family out in the hills of Judea. He had a divine impartation. He could interpret dreams — that was his gift. This was a divine enablement in his life, that caused him to become prime minister of Egypt.

These men knew the sufficiency of God's grace. Be encouraged! Jesus says to you, "*My grace is sufficient for thee.*"

Again, it was this grace Paul refers to in 1 Corinthians 15:10, "*By the grace [divine enablement] of God, I am what I am: and his grace [divine enablement] which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace [divine enablement] of God which was with me.*"

Paul says the grace that was bestowed upon him was not in vain: "*But I labored more abundantly than they all: yet not I but the grace of God which was with me.*" Paul recognized God's grace was the great compensator for human weakness and deficiencies.

From a Jewish perspective, Paul came from a good home. He was a Benjamite. In

terms of training, you couldn't fault him. He sat at the feet of Gamaliel and trained to be a member of the Sanhedrin. To qualify, he had to be able to quote the first five books of the Bible from memory. He was accomplished in his knowledge of the Old Testament.

He said, *"I am what I am by the grace of God"* —the great compensator! What he was by birth, and what he was by training, made a murderer out of him, stoning Christians, hauling them into prison, standing by while Stephen was martyred, holding the clothes of those who Stoned him.

He had been made a murderer by birth and by training. But by the grace of God he led thousands to salvation and life, and founded many churches. He became a man who saved the lives of others and pointed them to the grace of God.

4. Experience

Finally, we need to evaluate our "EXPERIENCE." There is no one in the world more dangerous than the graduate who is just out of Bible school. No one in the world is more dangerous than the minister who has just graduated from the school of theology.

Why is he so dangerous? Well, he may have strong natural abilities and training. He possibly has received divine enablements (grace). What does he lack? Experience!

To presumptuously assume leadership for a church, project or ministry for which you have no experience, will usually produce disaster.

You may have aptitude, training and even confirming grace; but without experience, you can foment tragedy for yourself and perhaps thousands of others.

a. Test Your Ideas. When men come along with new doctrine, new concepts, new ideas that they claim are going to revolutionize the church or the world, I say to them, "Brethren, go test your ideas for two years with thirty people and come back and tell me if it works."

I don't want to be part of any mass sociological or religious "experiment" — because that's exactly what it will be for the first two to five years.

The Bible warns us in 1 Kings 20:11, *"Let not him that girdeth on his armor boast himself as he that putteth it off."* What's the difference? The one that's girding on his armor, has no experience. The other that's putting it off is returning from battle with a valuable advantage.

"Let not him that girdeth on his armor boast as he that putteth it off." This teaches us that until an idea has been tested in the school of experience, you can shipwreck yourself and a lot of other people in the process.

There is nothing so important that it cannot be tested in some kind of experimental situation to prove the validity of the point. And let me tell you, if you have principles that work, the whole world will queue up to learn them because everybody wants to be successful.

But as leaders we must avoid untested, unproven concepts, even if they are popular and accompanied by all kinds of fanfare — and being preached by many proponents.

Don't boast when you're putting on that armor. Wait until you've tried it. If you go out and try it in several battles and you're still alive, then come back and tell me about it. Your technique probably works. But, if you lose the battle, then I will need to be cautious about your principles.

b. David Had Experience. Consider the story of David and Goliath. This story has often been interpreted by Sunday school teachers as an example of how an innocent, inexperienced youth was able to bring a giant, seasoned warrior to his downfall, with only his bravery and skills to help him.

There is something very interesting that I want to point out about this story. David comes forward to volunteer to fight Goliath. Now he was the only one in all of Israel who was willing to volunteer for that job.

David was born in the right family. He had the right kind of training. Anointing oil had already been poured upon him by the prophet (1 Sam 16:12). He had an impartation of God's grace and yet, with all those things going for him, David would not venture out into anything beyond his experience.

Read 1 Samuel 17:34-40 carefully. You find that David used his experience to convince Saul he should let him fight Goliath. What was his experience?

He said to Saul, *"Your servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion and a bear and took a lamb out of the flock; and I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth; and when he arose up against me, I caught him by his beard and smote him and slew him.*

"Your servant slew both the lion and the bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God."

And he goes on to say:

'The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine.'

What did he base his commitment on? Experience!

c. Not A Novice. There is this incredible mentality in the church that says a man can become equipped for preaching by walking a hundred steps to an altar and "surrendering his life to the call."

This is beyond the scope of all reason. I don't understand that kind of thinking. And yet that's the only qualification many preacher applicants have.

When did they take inventory of their resources? When did they (or someone else) evaluate what they had by birth, training, the grace of God, or experience? We must realize that experience is a very important part of the package.

Notice one down a little further in 1 Samuel 17:38-39, *"Saul armed David with his armor, and he put a helmet of brass upon his head; also he armed him with a coat of mail. And David girded his sword upon his armor, and he delayed to go; for he had not proved it."*

Why did David falter at this point? *"And David said unto Saul, I can not go with these; for I have not proved them. And David put them off him."* David would not fight with armor and weapons in whose use he had no experience.

Paul outlines qualifications for leadership. He says, *"Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. And let these also first be PROVED!"* (1 Tim 3:6,10). In other words, there needs to be some kind of screening by which background and experience are validated before a person is moved into leadership.

d. A History Of Credibility. When you take a faith challenge, it should be

predicated upon a history of successful faith achievements. To go back to the example of David once again: his encounter with Goliath wasn't simply a case of a young unseasoned shepherd boy, with faith as his only weapon, going against a battle-hardened giant.

David had a background of prior faith conquests. As he told Saul, *"The lion and the bear came out against my sheep and I tore them up, I smote them, I was victorious — and I'm going to do the same thing with that big-mouth Philistine"* (free translation). The point is, your present actions have to be in line with your history of faith achievements.

Occasionally I see church leaders with congregations of 300 people jumping into programs to build auditoriums for 3,000. They boast, "Brother, God's given me a vision!"

If you are planning on making the leap from a building for 300 to one for 3,000, you may have a vision, but you certainly don't have much wisdom. The Bible says we move, *"from faith to faith; from glory to glory."* That means we should go in smaller steps we are able to work with and handle.

You may eventually have 3,000 attending your church group. But you will more likely succeed at that goal if you move in stages of orderly planning, *"line upon line, precept upon precept."*

If you have thirty, first build for sixty. At the point where you reach 80 percent of your projected goal, start implementing the next planned step. For example, when you have 48 out of your goal of 60, start building for 120. When you have about 100, start building for 300, and so on up to 3,000. If you allow enough time, you may have your 3,000 in a series of progressive steps of faith.

We don't go from zero accomplishment to total conquest in one battle. We take it in a series of faith steps.

If you start taking a series of faith steps, there may not always be all the money for the next step when you start. But, if you have a history of faith achievement and have trusted God in the past and have seen Him work to fulfill His promises, you then have "genuine faith" and the resources will come.

If God has given you leadership and a proven history of credibility in your planning, the brothers and sisters will give finances to support your vision. New faith conquests grow out of past faith performances. When you have experience, you know God will intervene and you will see more miracles than you've ever seen in your life.

5. Summary

It is these four areas: **birth, training, grace and experience** that form the foundations on which to build your future. When you have taken that inventory, you are then ready to face the future and seize its challenges and opportunities. (See the diagram on page 167 of this section of the book.)

Now I challenge you, if you've never taken an inventory of your life, as I've outlined here, kneel down right now to pray. Take some time to look to the Lord, and try to write out the inventory of your life.

Don't become introspective; don't become cast down by what you see in the area of your aptitudes, temperament or intelligence. Your training may be weak, but look at God's grace. That's the great compensation for your weaknesses and deficiencies.

If God's grace hasn't been developed in your life, or if there isn't a basis of experience, then delay your course of action. Delay your goals and implementation of

your plan until you've sought the Lord earnestly in prayer.

From a time of waiting on God, you can receive an impartation of God's grace. Be faithful in your present opportunity to gain experience to validate your call and vision. Be a faithful servant to a successful leader (who has a calling like your own) for two or three years. Gain some experience.

You will find that by taking time to soberly take inventory of your measure of faith, you will be led right up to the point where you're ready to launch out in a whole new and fresh challenge for the Lord.

And you'll be able to get some things done that you never thought you had the capacity to accomplish.

Join me as we bow our hearts together in prayer.

Lord Jesus, I trust that after each one has soberly evaluated and inventoried his life, he'll be able to say with the Apostle Paul, *"I am what I am by the grace of God."*

Lord, I pray that we will be inspired to go out and work more diligently and fully pour out our lives to cause Your Kingdom to come, Your will to be done on earth as it is in Heaven.

Lord, deliver us from high-mindedness and human ambition and initiative not in line with Your Lordship. May understanding of Your purpose for our lives be revealed to us by Your Spirit.

Father, help us, we pray, to more fully and effectively serve You in these days of glorious opportunity. We give You praise and thanksgiving as we ask this in the matchless Name of Jesus. AMEN!

Chapter 2

Vision—Key To Achievement

Introduction

Now we have come face-to-face with a critical junction in our study of principles of achievement. We have described and examined the important factors of our past and we are ready to begin to seize the future and make it yield the harvest God desires.

A. BEGIN WITH VISION

Examine (review) the diagram on the next page. It is a forward-pointing arrow. It points toward the future.

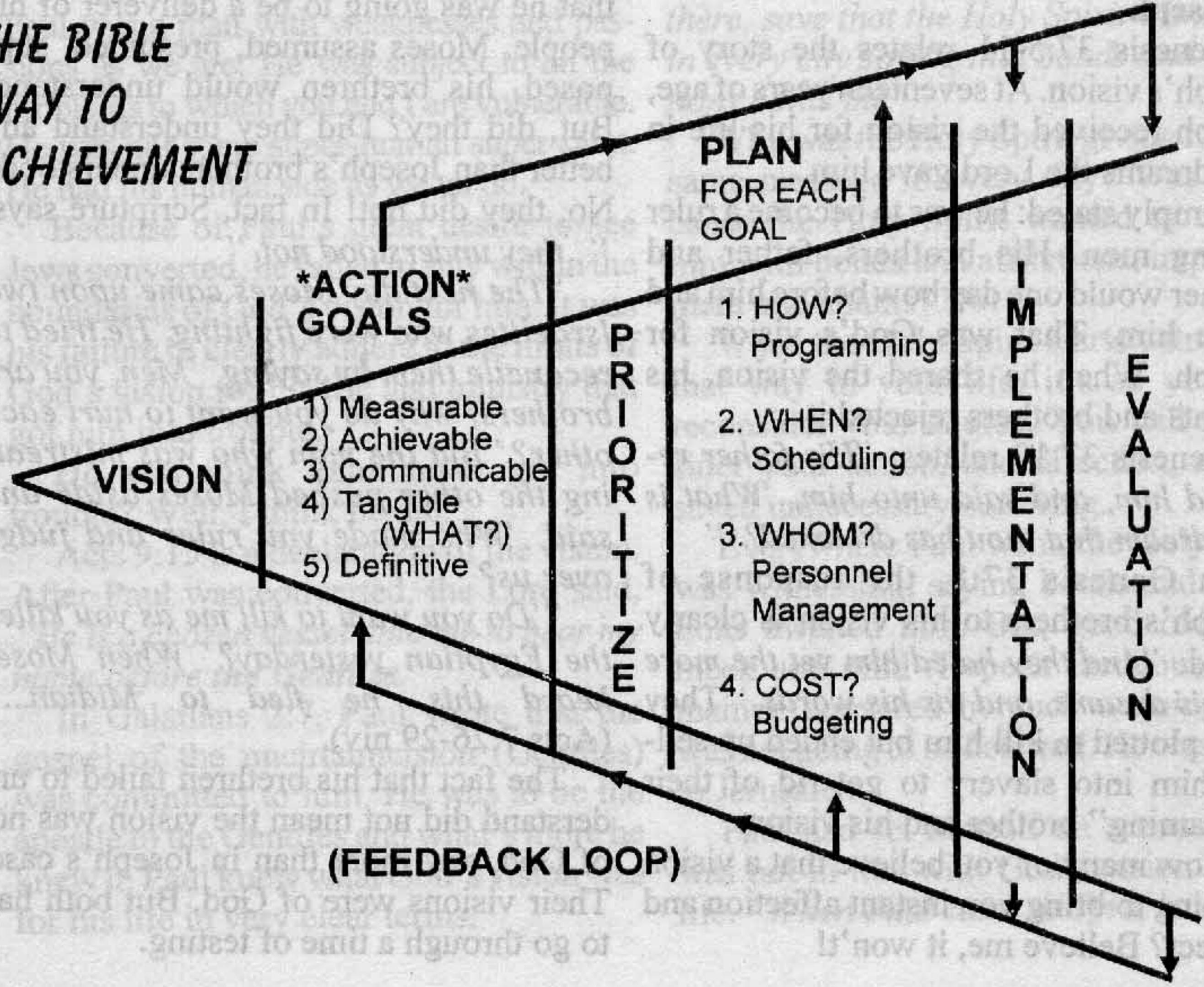
I call this the "arrow of achievement" because these are the steps by which a Christian leader achieves the will and desire of God.

All achievement, all goals, all programs — everything God wants you to do — must begin with the arrow point you see on that diagram. It must begin with VISION.

1. Without Vision

To really understand what I mean when I talk about vision, it is useful to discuss

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what happens without vision. Proverbs 29:18 is very well known in evangelism circles: "*Where there is no vision, the people perish.*"

One thing is not generally understood about that verse. The **vision** the writer of Proverbs is talking about is not just a vision to win the world for Jesus. I have no quarrel with that application.

But, the writer of Proverbs is talking about **prophetic vision**. [Hebrew = *chazown* meaning a revelation, or oracle — vision.] Where there is no **prophetic vision**, the people perish.

a. People Dwell Carelessly. One translation I like says, "*Where there is no vision the people dwell carelessly,*" that is, unlawfully, unrestrained. They live a life-style which lacks purpose. That is what happens "when there is no prophetic vision."

For example: for many years my own country has lacked vision and purpose. This nation has been like a ship without a rudder. And, as a result, we dwell carelessly. We drift aimlessly through shoals near very dangerous shores.

When I was a child, there was a sense of vision imparted to us in our school, a sense of individual and national destiny, a sense of purpose. Today, when we talk about imparting that sort of vision to young people, many in educational circles accuse us of being religious fanatics.

But when I was young we taught a sense of purpose and destiny to our children. We saluted the flag proudly every day, we honored and respected the founders of our nation, and we realized we were a nation born to be a light to other nations.

An inscription on our Statue of Liberty reads, "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free...."

It has not been too many years since we acted like we believed this country was a haven of liberty. Now, we dwell carelessly.

2. The Need For Clear Vision

We who are preachers frequently have a lot of illogically structured concepts. We come from a background where we think in abstract theological values. We express ourselves in ambiguous terms that have broad definitions, meanings and interpretations.

When someone asks what our goal in life is, we say, "My goal is to glorify God." Doesn't that sound spiritual? Doesn't that sound wonderful? How many of you realize that is a totally ambiguous (fuzzy, imprecise) statement, especially to the average man on the street?

The response of the average guy walking down the street would be, "What's that religious clown talking about?"

If I were to ask you readers to define what it means "to glorify God," I would most likely get as many answers as there are readers. There is no precision to a statement like that.

a. Can It Be Communicated? Let me ask at this point: Do you suppose that a vision that can't be communicated to others is ever going to amount to anything?

My work with computers taught me that I needed to clean out the intellectual storeroom of my own mind. Through neglect it had become filled with dust and cobwebs.

I would speak in clichés (trite platitudes) and offhand "spiritual" expressions.

These are commonly accepted statements by religious people without really being understood.

To fulfill your calling, you must first of all define the vision in clear, understandable words, rather than in religious jargon and cliches. **You must begin with a clearly defined vision.**

b. Know God's Purpose. The same holds for your life and ministry. The forward point of my diagram below is vision. If you do not have a clearly defined vision, you will experience life as the famous proverbial saying, "Blessed is he that runneth about in circles all day, for he shall be called a Big-Wheel."

You will be blown by every wind because you will have no compass, no map to go by. You will be like the fatalistic Hindu who sees himself as an autumn leaf, cast upon the river of life, floating aimlessly wherever the current takes it. Too many Christians go through life that way.

But God didn't plan it that way. He desires we know His purpose. He wills we go through life with direction, with vision, knowing where we are going. He wants us to run the race, determined to gain the prize — to have a mark, an aim, a vision, toward which we are constantly moving.

But it is not God's way to force the vision on anyone. Jesus said, "*Ask and it shall be given you.*"

B. BIBLICAL MEN OF VISION

Let's examine some biblical examples of men of vision.

1. Joseph

Genesis 37:5-11 relates the story of Joseph's vision. At seventeen years of age, Joseph received the vision for his life in two dreams the Lord gave him.

Simply stated: he was to become a ruler among men. His brothers, father and mother would one day bow before him and serve him. That was God's vision for Joseph. When he shared the vision, his parents and brothers rejected it.

Genesis 37:10 relates, "*His father rebuked him, and said unto him, 'What is this dream that thou has dreamed?'*"

In Genesis 37:8, the response of Joseph's brothers to his vision is clearly stated: "*And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words.*" They later plotted to kill him but ended up selling him into slavery to get rid of their "dreaming" brother and his vision.

How many of you believe that a vision is going to bring you instant affection and respect? Believe me, it won't!

As Joseph's story shows, a vision can get you into deep trouble. Of course, his story had a happy ending, but there is something here worth learning, a pattern that we need to notice. A vision from the Lord is always tested by trials and tribulations.

2. Moses

Moses, like Joseph, had a vision. There is an interesting passage in Acts 7:22-25 (niv) that describes what happened.

"Moses was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was powerful in

speech and action.

"When Moses was forty years old, he decided to visit his fellow Israelites. He saw one of them being mistreated by an Egyptian, so he went to his defense and avenged him by killing the Egyptian.

"Moses thought that his own people would realize that God was using him to rescue them, but they did not."

God had given Moses a vision, a vision that he was going to be a deliverer of his people. Moses assumed, presumed, supposed, his brethren would understand. But, did they? Did they understand any better than Joseph's brothers understood? No, they did not! In fact. Scripture says, "...they understood not."

"The next day Moses came upon two Israelites who were fighting. He tried to reconcile them by saying, 'Men, you are brothers; why do you want to hurt each other?' But the man who was mistreating the other pushed Moses aside and said, 'Who made you ruler and judge over us?

"Do you want to kill me as you killed the Egyptian yesterday?' When Moses heard this, he fled to Midian..." (Acts 7:26-29 niv).

The fact that his brethren failed to understand did not mean the vision was not of God, any more than in Joseph's case. Their visions were of God. But both had to go through a time of testing.

3. Abraham

The toughest instance of testing in the : Old Testament is that of Abraham's vision. God ordered him to sacrifice his only son Isaac, an order which seemed to contradict the vision God had given him.

In that moment of hopelessness, with Isaac on the altar. God stepped in and resurrected Abraham's vision. He brought Isaac back, and God fulfilled His promise to Abraham.

4. Paul

Paul had a vision. He told King Agrippa, "*I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision*" (Acts 26:19). Paul's vision was communicated to him when he was converted, and his life was largely directed by it. I say "largely" directed by that vision, because there are exceptions, the most important of which carries an important lesson.

Now, we are getting into a controversial subject. We tend to deify (think they are beyond mistakes) great men of the Bible; 'Paul was a man with weaknesses and passions as we are. He was subject to all the problems to which you and I are vulnerable. He was not some super-human super-saint. He had his human side as we all do.

Because of Paul's great desire to see Jews converted, he failed to stay within the boundaries of God's vision for him. It was his failure to clearly adhere to the limits of God's vision for his life and ministry that got him into trouble.

Do you think Paul never got into trouble? Well, I think he did.

Acts 9:15 is a declaration of the vision. After Paul was converted, the Lord said, "*He is a chosen vessel unto me to bear my name before **the Gentiles.***"

In Galatians 2:7, Paul wrote that the gospel of the uncircumcision (Gentiles) was committed to him. He was to be the apostle to the Gentiles and what's more he knew it.

Paul knew what God's vision was for his life in very clear terms.

Paul was called to the Gentiles, but he had a preoccupation. How many of you know what his obsession was? Paul's obsession was his kinsmen the Jews.

In Romans 9:3,4 he writes, *"I could wish myself accursed from Christ if I could only get my Jewish kinsmen saved"* (free translation).

a. Deviating From The Vision. Evidently, Paul was not entirely content to go along with the vision God had given him to win Gentiles for Jesus. So we find some unusual behavior in Paul's life.

Paul speaks, *"Now, behold I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem"* (Acts 20:22). In this instance he is in Miletus, talking to the Ephesian elders, sharing with them his last words before he leaves.

Why is Paul going to Jerusalem? He is going because he wants to win Jews for Jesus. He wants to testify to the Jews, and so he says:

"Behold, I go bound in the spirit... not knowing the things that shall befall me there, save that the Holy Spirit witnesseth in every city saying that bonds and afflictions abide me."

Why was the Holy Spirit giving him the same message in every city? Was it because the Holy Spirit wanted to torture him with bonds and afflictions, imprisonment and chains? No!

When the Holy Spirit starts witnessing that way in your life, it's so you will reconsider your course. You will reconsider your action, and direction, and be saved unnecessary suffering.

Everywhere Paul went, the Holy Spirit was witnessing, saying bonds and afflictions awaited him. But, good old Paul, meek and mild (I speak facetiously) remained unmoved by such warnings. He was not going to be deterred. He was going to Jerusalem.

Paul had set himself on a course that was not in line with God's vision for his life. *"When Paul came to Tyre, he tarried there seven days and found disciples who said to him through the Holy Spirit that he should NOT go up to Jerusalem"* (Acts 21:4). The Holy Spirit spoke to Paul through these brethren, *"Do NOT go up to Jerusalem."* And, what did he do? Paul continued toward Jerusalem!

Paul went on to Caesarea, and a certain prophet named Agabus came to him. Now, the Lord sent Agabus to get Paul to stay among the Gentiles and fulfill God's vision for his life.

Agabus took Paul's belt and bound his hands and feet, illustrating his prophesy as he said, *"Thus sayeth the Holy Spirit: So shall the Jews in Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this belt and shall deliver him into the hands of **the Gentiles**"* (Acts 21:11). Who? The Gentiles!

Paul wanted to win Jews for Jesus, but the vision God had established for Paul's life was going to be fulfilled, whether he liked it or not. If he went on to Jerusalem, they would bind his hands and feet and deliver him to the Gentiles. (The first priority of his calling and vision.)

b. Paul's Choice. Paul could make his choice. He could go to the Gentiles as a free man. Or, he could ignore the warning of the prophet. If he ignored the warning of the

brothers in Tyre and in Caesarea and all the Gentile churches, he would go to the Gentiles bound in chains. Do you know what he chose?

Paul went to Jerusalem!

He was praying in the temple and fell into a trance. He saw Jesus speaking to him, *"Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem, for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me"* (Acts 22:18).

So what did Paul do? He started arguing with the Lord. He said in effect, *"Lord, you don't know all the facts of the case. They know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee."*

"When the blood of thy martyr, Stephen, was shed, I also was standing by and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him. And he [Jesus] said to me, 'Depart for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.'"

Did the Lord tell Paul, "I will send thee unto the Jews?"

Was it somehow Paul's mission to organize Jews for Jesus despite all the warnings, despite what the Lord Himself told Paul?

You almost feel like yelling in Paul's ear! "Gentiles for Jesus, Paul! Gentiles for Jesus!"

Do you know how Paul left Jerusalem?

In chains.

Whom was he delivered unto?

The Gentiles!

I believe Paul could have lived much more of his life in freedom, if he had stayed within the limits of God's vision, if he had concentrated on his work among the Gentiles.

He loved his Jewish people dearly and longed to see them saved. I could be wrong, but I think Paul settled for God's permissive will in going to Jerusalem — rather than His perfect will.

5. Maintain The Vision

Vision is extremely important, and you must hold fast to the vision God gives to you.

We need to learn from the biblical examples of men of vision like Abraham, Joseph, Moses and Paul.

If an organization, institution or individual deviates from the vision God gives them, they are going to experience the same kinds of problems Paul did.

When God establishes a vision. He does not change His mind even though men do. The Lord is not a man that He should have cause to repent. Nor is He the Son of Man that He could tell a lie. When He says it. He expects it to be followed down to the last period and comma! Can you say "Amen" to that?

The vision may be fulfilled, as it was in Paul's case, regardless of straying from it. The choice may well be whether we follow in obedience and remain free, or take second best and end up in chains and bondage. The choice is ours. Will you choose the consequences of God's permissive will? Or the joy of His perfect will?

Maintain the vision and avoid trouble. Be true and faithful to God's vision for

your life, and you will have less chastening to endure.

C. TRUE VISION

We are going to pause here to explore a few points about a true vision. Again, I want to emphasize that vision is extremely important. Without vision, leadership accomplishes nothing. Without vision, the people perish, the people wander aimlessly, the people dwell carelessly.

1. Vision Is Divinely Initiated

FIRST, a true vision is a divinely initiated purpose that comes from God to your heart, to your spirit. It might not come in dreams, as it did with Joseph. It might not come in a blinding light on the road to Damascus, knocking you off your donkey, as it did with Paul.

It might not come as it did with Moses. (The Bible doesn't tell us how Moses came to know initially that he was to be a deliverer, but somehow he understood it!) His vision was renewed at the burning bush. Forty years before that he tried to fulfill the vision in his own power and failed.

It might come as it did in my life and in the lives of many others. Over the years God gradually implanted the vision deep into my spirit, giving me an inescapable conviction that there were certain things that had to be accomplished through my life. I knew my life must be dedicated to certain ministries and these ministries had to be birthed from it.

However your vision comes, it must come from God.

2. Vision Will Be Tested

SECOND, vision will be tested by many problems, many adversities. It will generally bring you into conflict with others who will try to talk you out of it and say it is not of God. All sorts of action may be taken against you as you move out into the vision God has given you.

That is part of God's testing process for the vision. The Word of the Lord is always tried. It is always tested, and part of the testing process is the Lord allowing opposition to rise against you when you move out to implement His vision.

3. Vision Has Limits

THIRD, we can stay within the limits or go beyond the limits of vision. God can give us the vision, but then we can walk contrary to it. That's what "free will" is all about. When we see that a man as committed to Christ as was Paul, walking beyond the limits of God's vision, the rest of us need to watch out. Loving the Lord does not protect us from errors of our own zeal.

4. Vision Must Be Incubated

FOURTH, when a person has received a vision from the Lord — and knows it — there seems to be an almost irresistible impulse to start running with it, to rush things. Now, there is sometimes a very thin line between the zeal of the Lord and impatience, and I believe we need to walk that line carefully.

Paul Yongi Cho (from Korea) says that the impartation of a vision is like the fertilizing of an egg. The hen must sit on it and brood over it until it breaks forth into an

expression of life.

In practical terms, says Yongi Cho, the way we incubate a vision is through times of fasting, prayer and meditation. We call up into our minds the vision God has given [us and reflect upon its fulfillment and expression until God begins to clarify the details.

*"The earth was without form and void: and darkness was upon the face of the deep and the Spirit of God **moved** on the face of the waters"* (Gen 1:2). That word "moved" in the Hebrew [*rachaph* = to brood] literally means "brooded." God brooded upon the face of the waters.

God had a vision for His world, and it was brought forth by the Spirit of God brooding over the darkness that was on the face of the deep. Out of the deep burst forth the recreative word that restored the earth so it would be a fit habitation for man.

Do you have a clear vision? If you don't, wait on the Lord until He gives you one. Let Him communicate it. It becomes the arrow, the point of God's purpose for your life. Then, when it comes, "brood" upon it, let it come to life through incubation.

5. Vision Must Be Communicated

' And the Lord answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it" (Hab 2:2).

The Lord says, *"Write the vision."*

Write the vision. Share it with others. Men will want to know what your vision is. As it is communicated to others, some will be called to work with you. You will form a team, and with a team you can, of course, get much more done than you ever could alone.

If you work alone, you will-not get much done in this world. But, a man who can organize others to work for a common vision, a man who can build a team, can do a significant work for the Lord's Kingdom.

The Bible speaks of one putting a thousand to flight and two putting ten thousand to flight. That's quite a jump! What about three or four or fifty all working together in common vision? Perhaps they could put millions to flight and win mighty victories in the Name of the Lord.

A vision that can be clearly communicated is the critical thing in mobilizing men and money for achieving the work the Lord wants done.

When you are able to communicate clearly where you are going, many will be ready and willing to help you get there. The resources will come in.

The problem is not money; the problem is leadership who do not communicate vision and goals.

Solving the problem of adequate financial support is probably one of the easier problems of leadership. There's more money in this world than people know what to do with. When you start communicating vision and goals, people will line up to help you financially and otherwise.

The financial problem most church leaders and other Christian leaders face arises because they don't know where they are going.

Isn't it interesting how many different kinds of problems are caused by a lack of vision? When a leader lacks vision, the people dwell carelessly.

If you don't have a vision, people don't care to contribute to your church or

organization. You have to communicate your goals and direction, and a clear plan of how you're going to get where you're going. Then you will get support.

I hear an all-too-frequent complaint from leaders who are not communicating vision. They say their people are sending money off to people and organizations that have radio and television ministries, the "electric church" as it's called. Can you guess why? Of course you can.

The "media ministries" are communicating their vision, goals and plans through me "electric church." They have a vision, and the people respond.

I tell church leaders, "The people of your church wouldn't be sending their money elsewhere if you were communicating vision. They'd be supporting you. If you don't know where you're going and your church members do not know where you're going, they are going to send their money to somebody who does know."

There is, however, a qualifying clause to the release of God's abundance in support of ministry. We might say it's near the end of the contract. If you miss it, you may be communicating vision and still lose your financial support.

What is this qualifying clause in the fine print? God requires that we use the money He provides with wisdom and integrity. He will not honor deception. He will not continue to commit Himself to a church leader who is spending foolishly or living lavishly off the sacrificial offerings of God's people.

If you are a man or woman of integrity, if you use funds for what you say they are being used for, not wasting them. God will take care of your finances. God takes care of a man who is ethical, honest and upright in his dealings. He'll pour in more than sufficient resources to do what He's called you to do. But you must communicate vision, and live selflessly.

Let's pray

Lord, Jesus, clarify to us today the vision You have for us and let none of us depart from that divinely appointed vision. May we embrace it with joyful, willing hearts. Give us grace to fulfill it, and we'll give You thanksgiving in Christ's Name. AMEN.

Chapter 3

Setting Goals And Priorities

A. PURPOSE OF GOALS

I think most of us in Christian work could use enlarged vision. We have been working closely with some of the people at Campus Crusade for Christ. Some of the staff said to me, "Brother Ralph, one of our problems is that Bill Bright (the founder) is always coming up with these large visions from the Lord. Then we have to implement them!"

1. Goals Help Fulfill The Vision

God grant that we all may have larger visions and express them in practical and tangible ways. We do this by establishing clear-cut goals and objectives that will cause the vision to be fulfilled. This gives our team something we can work for, and commit

ourselves to, and mobilize others to help us accomplish.

What are the goals of your church or organization for the next five years? What are you believing God to make your work accomplish in the next sixty months?

2. Goals Are Faith Forecasters

That is what goals are — faith forecasts. Don't limit your planning to what men can do, but rather to what God wants done. *"If thou canst believe, all things are possible"* (Mark 9:23).

3. Goals Define Action

The purpose of goals is to define action which will result in specific achievements. A vision becomes effective only when it is translated into action. To translate vision into action, effective action, requires divinely directed action goals.

B. QUALITIES OF A GOAL

To understand what a "goal" is, we must first of all leave the realm of religious words and enter the realm of business language.

Many of us use a certain type of religious terminology that a friend of mine calls VRG — **V**erbalized **R**eligious **G**arbage. We preachers use high-sounding words to cover up our lack of concrete, crystallized, clear thinking.

"What is your goal?"

"Oh, my goal is to glorify God."

"That's wonderful! How will you know when you've glorified God? What action or results will validate that you have glorified Him?"

"Well, He'll just put a special peace in my heart."

Sound familiar? Of course, it is a wonderful thing to glorify God. But, when I talk about goals, I'm not speaking of those ambiguous, subjective, undefinable, immeasurable values that leave us in a sort of verbal wilderness of foggy, imprecise concepts. I am talking about practical action that is measurable.

Your goal may be to plant three churches in the next three years in communities near your home church. That meets the criteria for a goal. It's not abstract, it's clear. You know when you've accomplished it.

Let's get it straight.

Goals are:

- 1. Tangible** (not abstract);
- 2. Communicable** (not imprecise, fuzzy ideas);
- 3. Achievable** (not presumptuous, dream-world thinking);
- 4. Measurable** (quantitative, not immeasurable ideals);
- 5. Definitive** (of action you will take).

One useful goal for you would be to memorize these five qualities right now.

C. GOALS MUST BE DEFINED

Definition of goals with these five qualities is necessary for the fulfillment of vision. You have to come to grips with this.

I cannot tell you what action goals to define to fulfill the vision God has given you. Once He has given you vision, you must go to the Lord. and say, "Lord, what practical steps must I take to make this vision find fulfillment?"

I remember some years ago, a group of us sat around a table to do some planning. We wanted to set out what we felt God wanted us to do for the next five years. We sat down together to do some "faith forecasting," to come before God in prayer and fasting to plan things we thought were impossible.

In the five years that followed. God caused things to happen that exceeded all our plans. He always exceeds whatever we set out to do under His direction. *"Now to him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think.."* (Eph3:20).

Five years later, we were staggered when we looked back at our five-year plan, because God accomplished *"exceedingly, abundantly above all we were able to ask or think"* (Eph 3:20).

For God to do this, we had to do some hard thinking and asking over many days of prayer and planning. If you are too lazy to think or ask — you will accomplish little.

I know God honors "faith forecasting," because we have seen it work. We have seen what happens when men sit down together in faith, in prayer, in fasting, and seize the future without fear, knowing that God is preparing the way for them.

We are going to control that future by forecasting in faith what God wants us to be and what God wants us to do.

As you get into the exercise of faith forecasting. God always brings about results greater than you ever project in your planning, if your plan is according to God's will and vision.

D. PRIORITIES MUST BE SET

At this point you are. going to have to stop and do some prioritizing.

In one of our first planning, prioritizing meetings, we found we were involved in no less than twenty-seven different ministries. It would take a company of geniuses to manage twenty-seven different time and energy consuming goals. That's too many. No one can adequately minister in that many areas.

The problem with many organizations is that they are trying to do far too many things with mediocrity, rather than a few things with excellence. Organizations will do better specializing and applying themselves to a few well-defined, well-planned goals.

1. Three Categories

In our case, we sorted out our twenty-seven projects into three categories:

a. High Priority

b. Maintenance Status

c. Deferred Goals

Here is how we did it. We asked this question, "If we had to abandon everything except one, what one thing would we keep?" When we answered that question, we made this number one on our high priority list.

We repeated the question and asked, "If we had to abandon everything left on this list except one — what would we keep?" That answer became number two in our high priorities.

We kept that process going until all twenty-seven ministries were stratified into high, maintenance or deferred goals.

I will tell you a little secret: Deferred goals generally die of neglect, so don't worry about them. They might be someone's sacred cow, so you don't want to kill them. You just let them die of neglect.

2. The Sorting Process

a. Sharpening The Arrow. Many organizations have a lot of sacred cows around that should be herded into the "deferred goals corral." That gives them a "sanctified status," and no one worries about them. But if you shoot the cow, everyone gets upset.

Of the twenty-seven items, we ended up with six on our high priority list. We committed to achieving the top six priorities. We considered these top six goals as the ones which would best fulfill our vision.

We put about six other items on our "maintenance status" list. We didn't let them die, but we didn't put the effort needed for expansion into them either. We just let them coast along, barely surviving; but we didn't push growth or give impetus to them.

The rest we put into deferred status, and most of them died of neglect.

When we are able to focus on a few high priorities and really concentrate on those, we can give them all we've got. I call this "sharpening the arrow." Then, watch what happens when you shoot that arrow. It will fly straight to the target and penetrate deeply.

Paul said, "*This **one thing** I do*" (Phil 3:13). We might say, "*These three things...*" or, "These six things we do." If there are any more than that, we are not going to be able to do them with excellence. Trying to achieve too many priorities simultaneously, will simply result in the proliferation of mediocrity, accomplishing little or nothing.

Prioritizing is a very important discipline. We have to get down to the only thing we would do if we had to abandon everything else. What is the one thing we would hold onto? What is the central thrust of the vision God has given? Determine what that first priority is and make that number one on your list.

Then determine numbers two, three and so forth in the same way. If you prioritize your time, people and money into achieving a limited number of goals, you will look back in a few years and see very significant accomplishments in your church or organization.

3. Faith Forecasting

Right at this time, we are in the process of faith forecasting for the next five years. God has opened some magnificent doors of opportunity to us.

In one nation alone, we have an invitation to go in and minister to thousands of church leaders. The implications of that are simply staggering! Thousands of church leaders will come to know about the power and work of the Holy Spirit. When they do, they will achieve much more. As soon as they have attended one of our World MAP Spiritual Renewal Seminars, many of them will be changed for life.

The opportunity in that one nation would require over a million dollars and several years of a strong team's time and effort.

We are looking to the Lord and asking Him to give us faith to fulfill opportunities now coming to us around the world from many, many nations. God is on the move, looking for people who will respond to the harvest opportunities with which this generation is faced.

Believe me, the next twenty years will be the most significant in all the history of the Church. God is looking for men to whom He can communicate vision and purpose. He is looking for men who can translate that vision and purpose into action goals —men who can prioritize those actions into a reasonable, logical sequence and get to work implementing them.

Those who commit themselves to faith forecasting today will be able to look back in a few years and see results greater than they could imagine.

I challenge you to rise to a whole new level of involvement in the Lord's work. Perhaps you have been discouraged, or maybe you haven't known how to get started. Take these biblical principles for achievement, and step forth in faith. Expect great things and, according to your faith, it will be done.

E. IMPLEMENT GOALS

There are some things we need to understand about divinely directed action goals. A passage in the Book of Revelation will illustrate the point. *"And I went unto the angel and said unto him, 'Give me the little book' [scroll]. And he said unto me, 'Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey.'*

"And I took the little book [scroll] out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey; and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter" (Rev 10:9,10).

I heard a friend say years ago, "This is the way it is with vision. When God speaks to you about what He wants you to do you love it, and oh! it's so great and marvelous and sweet!

"But, when you start giving birth to the vision, when you get into the hard work of implementing what God is talking about, it can turn bitter in your belly."

1. Hard Work Is Essential

The famous business consultant Peter Drucker has pointed out that the problem with vision and goals is they eventually degenerate to WORK. That's when the "fat meets the fire," or "the rubber meets the road," as the Americans say.

I remember a church leader some years ago who had a membership of about five hundred people. He was on the golf course about three days a week, enjoying a leisurely lifestyle. His church paid him a nice salary. He was comfortably fixed. He drifted along with the same five hundred people for several years.

On the golf course one day, the Lord spoke to him. "Do you want to go on the rest of your life as a mediocre church leader with a mediocre following of people, with mediocre responsibilities and a mediocre schedule? Or, do you want to go to work?"

That church leader had to decide between his easy lifestyle and real hard work. And that is the decision that is generally involved in committing yourself to vision and goals. Rather than drifting through life he said, "Lord, I want to work."

Within three years of the time he made his commitment to work the long hours, do the hard labor and assume the responsibility — his church was running about 2,000 members. But, it had been up to him to translate the vision into action.

There are church leaders who have never learned to work. I know because I've met many of them. All over the world I've encountered church leaders who live in semi-retirement. Some in full retirement.

They wonder why nothing ever happens in their ministries. They aren't willing to work; they are lazy; they can't get up in the morning because they've been up half the night watching television. You can't get them to apply themselves to responsibility, planning, vision and growth.

Nations that are in bad condition are often poor because most of the people don't want to work. It's like a disease, an epidemic. We might call it the "procrastination syndrome."

You know how it works: "The sun is shining. Why fix the leaky roof today? It's not raining now." Then when it is raining the same person will say, "I can't fix the leaking roof now, it's raining. I will have to wait until it stops raining."

That syndrome covers the world like a curse; no initiative, no responsibility, no willingness to work.

2. Time: Ours Or The Lord's?

When the vision is translated into goals, somebody has to go to work. Who do you think that "somebody" is? That's right, it's you! You are going to have to lead the pack.

And, it isn't going to be an eight-to-five job. Men who have a vision do not work eight-to-five. They are not looking for four weeks' vacation every year with retirement benefits. They are looking for opportunities to serve the King of kings and Lord of lords.

Men who have a vision are going to give it everything they've got. You don't get the job done with union wages, union regulations and a forty-hour work week. The Bible says, "*Six days shall thou work.*" That ought to be a minimum.

Those were eleven-hour days they were talking about in Bible times, sunrise to sundown. So, that was sixty-six hours for a start. That is probably a biblical work week.

Although we live in the age of leisure, every vision, every goal — if it will be achieved — boils down to hard work at some point. Who is going to do the work of the Lord? That's where we get the separation between hirelings and laborers.

Of course, you can talk all day about vision — talk is cheap — but when it gets down to the work necessary to implement a vision, that's where God separates the men from the boys.

When I started the work of World MAP in California in 1963, I didn't have enough money to bother counting it.

The Lord provided us a chicken shed to start with. We cleaned it out, put a small printing press in it and began to work. We were in that chicken "coop" doing our work. That was our "publishing headquarters," a cleaned-out chicken shed!

Do you know how they build chicken sheds? They are constructed seven feet (two meters) high along the front and four feet (one meter) high along the back, with a sloping roof.

It kept us in a continual "attitude of prayer" because the roof wasn't high enough. We couldn't stand up straight.

Many were the times I worked all night, happily bent over the printing presses in that little shed. The work had to get out and we didn't have the money to hire someone to do it. So I pitched in and did it. I often kept two presses running full speed.

The Lord eventually blessed us with a beautiful facility, valued at over three million dollars. But the Lord gave it to us for much less than that.

Our beautiful World MAP headquarters in Burbank, California was given to us through one of the Lord's wonderful miracles. The work that we started in that chicken "coop" has grown through hard work and God's blessings into a three-million-dollar facility!

Recently we sold that property so we could provide this training material to hundreds of thousands of church leaders in the nations of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

That is the way visions are birthed. If you aren't willing to work, forget it. Join the local union and get into the eight-to-five routine. Go into semi-retirement and live your life of leisure.

If, on the other hand, you want to go to work. God has a tremendous job opportunity for you. He will transform those long hours into phenomenal consequences, results you would never think possible.

He will multiply the fruit of those sixty- or seventy-hour work weeks into great achievements for the gospel. God rewards commitment and dedication.

3. Paul Was Committed

When you read about the ministry of Paul, you see the commitment he brought to his work. He preached the gospel at the risk of his life.

Speaking of the hardships he endured, Paul says:

"Of the Jews, five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the sea...."

"In weariness and painfulness..." (2Cor 11:24-27). Why was he weary? Why was he in pain?

When you look at Paul's work, he was a tentmaker by day, earning a living for himself and seven other men.

He was a teacher, preacher and apostle by night. He carried on both ministries simultaneously. In relation to other leaders, he says he *"labored more exceedingly than all of them."*

The grace of God, Paul said, was not frustrated, nor wasted on him, because he worked harder and brought a greater commitment to his job than any of the rest of the apostles. The historical record proves that he did.

In this regard an interesting thing happened at Ephesus: *"And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul,*

"So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them" (Acts 19:11,12).

These "handkerchiefs" were "sweat rags" wrapped around Paul's head and waist, to catch the sweat pouring down his body from the hard work.

There was more power in Paul's sweat than most preachers' sermons. The anointing went with those sweat rags to the many Paul could not personally go to — because he had to work such long hours.

It would be a valuable exercise for many lazy preachers to try Paul's methods for awhile. They might get better results.

When Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, concerned about their "no work" mentality, he used strong language to rebuke their laziness. *"If any would not work, neither should he eat"* (vs 10). He spoke to them of the need to be occupied in fruitful employment, to avoid idleness and to commit themselves daily to the discipline of hard work (2 Ths 3:6-12).

All through the epistles, he constantly alludes to his commitment to labor, to sweat, to tears, to toil, to advance the cause of Christ. He didn't look for short hours nor did he allow monetary rewards to determine how and where he worked for the Lord. He gave his life fully, completely, without reservation. He wanted to see God's will and purpose fulfilled in his life.

4. People Will Back Worthwhile Goals

You will find that people will work with you. They will give sacrificially to assist, giving their resources and strength to help you achieve your goals — if you know where you are going. If you don't, the money, the people and the success will follow leaders and organizations that know where they are going.

If you will come up with God's vision and goals and begin to communicate them, express them, let other people know where you are going, they will fall in behind you and back you. They will work with you to accomplish your goals. If you will lead the way, pay the price and work the hours it takes to do it, others will follow you.

The moment you know where God wants you to go and how you plan to get there, you will find people will rally around and work with you.

Once you have clarified the vision, once you have clearly defined goals, once you have translated your goals into statements that clearly communicate what God wants you to achieve, you will find that the results will begin to surpass your ability to cope.

Let's pray

Lord, help us to make a new commitment to do Your work Help us to take bold action as we go forth to express the vision You have for us. Cause our lives, our ministries and the organizations we work with to advance Your Kingdom.

Teach us to rely, not on these principles, but on the Author of them, in Whose behalf we use them. Teach us to prioritize our goals in accordance with Your will that we may effectively express the vision You gave to us. We give all the glory to You as we ask this in the Name of Jesus. AMEN!

Chapter 4

The Gift Of Administration

Introduction

In the previous chapter, we discussed the need to make that crucial step from vision to action. We talked about the need for goals and for prioritizing goals so as to direct and focus the work and action appropriately. We defined goals as tangible, communicable, achievable, measurable and definitive action we will take toward the translation of our vision into working programs.

Now, we need to ask ourselves, "Who is going to put all this together? Who is going to provide a practical assessment of the best ways to use our personnel, money and time to get the job done?"

You may be the leader of a church flock, a fellowship or an organization. But do you have the time, skill, training, experience and aptitudes to plan, coordinate and implement all these necessary things we've been discussing?

A. ADMINISTRATION IS IMPORTANT

There is a need among Christian leaders to seek wise counsel in those areas in which they themselves are lacking in aptitudes, training and experience. This brings us to the role of administrators and administration.

1. A Project That Failed

Spiritual leaders all too frequently insulate themselves from practical counsel, knowledge and understanding available from their followers. Perhaps unintentionally, they erect an invisible wall around themselves. How do they do this? By making deific pronouncements.

"The Lord told me this" or "The Lord showed me that," they say.

And, of course, nobody wants to question "the Lord." If someone dares to voice a concern about the "Big Chiefs" plan, this type of leader usually turns a deaf ear to it.

In the fall of 1935, a leader in a Pentecostal denomination received what he said was a revelation from the Lord. In the beautiful mountains of Southern California, he was to build a large tabernacle in which to conduct the conferences and the summer camp meetings of his denomination.

After purchasing a piece of land near Big Bear Lake, he hired a construction crew to begin building the tabernacle.

The tabernacle was to be quite large, hexagon shaped, with a broad, flat roof.

Some members of his fellowship who had construction experience in that mountain area approached him and said, "Sir, we believe you're making a fatal mistake in the way you're constructing this building."

"Gentlemen," he responded. "Don't question my plan. The Lord gave it to me!"

Later, a county engineer happened to be driving by and saw this man directing the construction workers. He stopped, approached the superintendent and tried to tell him there were errors in the design of the building. The only response he received for his trouble was a cold rebuff.

Now, this was in the days before building codes, and you could build just about anything you wanted to. But it was also during the Great Depression years, when money was hard to come by and every dollar counted.

Well, people who have lived in snow country may guess what was wrong with the design of that tabernacle. It snows a lot at higher elevations in the mountains, even in "sunny California!"

Here was this great tabernacle, about two hundred feet across, with a flat roof atop very long, unsupported full-span beams. At the 6,000-foot elevation level where it was, it is not unusual to have three or four feet of heavy snow in a winter. What do you think happened?

Winter arrived before a single meeting had been held in that tabernacle. The storm winds blew, snow fell, the building collapsed — great was the fall of it. The weight of the snow on the broad flat roof caused the whole thing to crash to a worthless heap on the ground.

Now, I warn leaders against preoccupation with a "deific" attitude in Christian work. Any time men insulate themselves from counsel, advice and correction, they are setting themselves up (and usually others) for tragedy and difficulty.

2. Financial Catastrophes

As a board member of several Christian organizations in the western United States, I have attended meetings at which businessmen raised concerns about the lack of financial planning for certain church leaders' projects and proposals.

Frequently I hear church leaders stop these men from speaking, with such words as, "Brother, you don't understand. We don't run this organization like a business, we operate by faith."

In the semantics (way of speaking) of religious circles, "operating by faith" sometimes translates into borrowing more money than you can repay at exorbitant interest rates and unrealistic repayment terms. Many church leaders call that "faith." It is often "presumption" of the worst sort.

So the businessman, finding his advice unwelcome, bows out of the situation to let church leaders pursue their folly. A few years later and a few miles down the road, many such "faith" projects end up as financial catastrophes. They are forced into receivership or bankruptcy.

Many a good Christian ministry has failed because a church leader rejected the gift of administration in an experienced brother.

If you are not an administrator, for the sake of the gospel admit it, and allow those who have gifts in this area to bring order and effectiveness to that area of your work for the Lord.

Without the gift of administration, any church or ministry will end up in serious difficulty, either with the community or within itself.

B. ADMINISTRATION IN THE EARLY CHURCH

In the early Church, as described in Acts, we find an interesting sequence of events. This has proved useful to help me understand organizational development and progress.

- In Acts Chapter 1 God chose certain **men**.
- In Acts Chapter 2 He gave to those men a **ministry**.
- In Acts Chapter 3 we see great **multiplication**.
- In Acts Chapter 4 we see the birth of a great **movement**.
- In Acts Chapter 5 there arises a **murmuring**.
- In Acts Chapter 6 the apostles appoint **administrators**.

The murmuring stage is the critical stage in a movement. The leadership can take two or three options at that point.

FIRST, they can silence the dissenters by saying, "If you were really spiritual, you wouldn't be complaining."

SECONDLY, they could say, "Don't challenge the leadership God has appointed. Submit! or Split!" Most of us have heard responses like these.

THIRDLY, they may say, "Brethren, we hear you have a problem. Let's explore it and see if we can solve it."

1. Solving The Problem

The third approach is the one the early Church took. They followed a reasoned approach in responding to the murmuring that arose from within the ranks of the movement.

They didn't try to silence the complaints, they solved the problem. They solved it with the gift of administration.

The apostles directed the people to choose seven men of good report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, to take charge of the matter of serving tables.

People frequently have the impression that these seven men were appointed to take charge of tables where food was being served. But these were not necessarily eating tables. They were more likely money tables. The Greek word used here is *trapeza*, indicating a table used for food or money dealings.

The Grecian widows were being neglected in the daily ministrations. They were, most likely, not being given their proper allotment of money. There were racial overtones to the problem, a dangerous situation which could have turned Greek against Jew.

The apostles addressed that difficult, racial, financial, social problem by telling the people to choose from among themselves men with gifts of administration to oversee

the money, so the apostles could give themselves continually to prayer and ministry of the Word.

2. A Continuous Cycle

The gift of administration or ministration, as it is used here, comes out of the six stages that revival goes through.

- a. Men** moved upon by God were given a
- b. ministry**, out of which came
- c. multiplication**, out of which came a
- d. movement**, out of which arose
- e. murmuring**, out of which had to come
- f. administration.**

And it works on a continuous cycle. From proper administration are brought forth more men for more ministry to generate more multiplication, which builds into a greater movement from which arises, once again, more murmuring. As long as the murmuring stage is dealt with, the movement continues to develop and grow.

But if you reach the stage where administration is needed and you neglect to address it, you are in trouble. You can't block or side-step the murmuring stage. If you ignore it and try to grow on past it, I assure you, within a matter of months your work will collapse in chaos. Either fiscal chaos or organizational chaos.

C. ADMINISTRATION IS NEEDED FOR GROWTH

If you want to grow, you are going to have to address organizational and fiscal responsibility. And that means you need administration.

Eighty-five percent of all church congregations in the United States are less than two hundred people in size. Why can't congregations get above a plateau of two hundred? Because the men in leadership do not recognize the need for administration.

One man cannot effectively handle more than one hundred seventy five people, so few churches get much beyond that stage. I am not saying there is anything wrong with that, and I am not being critical of small congregations.

I pioneered every church I ever pastored, and pioneer churches start with small congregations. Those eleven years of pioneer pastoral work were a great blessing from the Lord to me. It was during that time that I was able to gain experience that would later help me work in larger spheres of responsibility.

In my view, a new church leader must gain some skills in administration, or he will be very limited in what he can accomplish.

When you have your own church and you are just starting out, you can't just take someone among the brothers and sisters and say, "I need to focus on preaching and counseling, so I want you to trouble-shoot any problems that come up and to develop plans for church growth." You can't do that, not at the start anyway.

Unless a new church leader is able to recognize and deal with "murmuring," he's going to reach a point of maximum attendance very early in his ministry. Numerical growth will stop very soon.

If he tries to do his job without attending to administration, he will create either fiscal or organizational chaos. His work will collapse in shambles. Events and problems tend to grow beyond a church leader's capacity to handle them.

My advice to a new church leader would be to learn the basic administrative principles in this section of this book and begin putting them into practice right away.

Chapter 5

How To Plan

Introduction

We have talked about goals and their need to be measurable, achievable, communicable, tangible and definable. Goals provide the specific objectives for the action we are going to take to express the vision the Lord has given us. We have previously mentioned the need to prioritize those goals.

Next, we come to a step which is crucial to your work as an administrator and church leader or organizational leader. **You must come up with a plan for each goal.**

A. YOU MUST HAVE A PLAN

For every one of the goals on your high priority list, you must have a plan. Again, I want to emphasize that you should never be working with more than three to six prioritized goals at any one time.

1. God Had A Plan

God has "a plan of salvation." And, when did God make this plan? He made it **before** the foundation of the world!

If we stop and think about it, we might easily come to the conclusion that God was setting an example for us to emulate. He had a plan which He formulated before the foundation of the world.

The Bible doesn't say He planned as He went along, does it? Then, we too need to lay out our plan before we lay our foundation, and start to build.

However, in my experience, that is not the way many Christian Organizations function. Many of them try to start a project before giving thought to the planning.

God didn't ordain it that way. God didn't begin until He had a plan. He drew up His plan before He laid the foundation, much as an architect would do. Every wise builder has a plan before he begins construction.

Too frequently, it seems to me, Christians are not wise builders. Paul made a point of this. Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 2:5 that we are not going to obtain the prize unless we strive lawfully — unless we strive according to certain rules, principles and plans.

In 1 Corinthians 3:10, he tells us to take heed how we lay our foundation. This involves doctrine, but it also involves planning. If you have no plan, you shouldn't be trying to build.

In my lifetime, I have witnessed the ability of many church leaders to mobilize people, inspire them and get some wonderful projects off to a flying start. But, because they had no plan, five or six years down the road, the vision would crash, falling into economic and organizational chaos.

I believe that unless men are willing to work like God works, they are going to encounter ruin down the line somewhere, with very little accomplished. We must remember. God had a plan **before** He started.

2. Plan With The Lord's Help

It is essential that planning be done through being in touch with the Lord in times of prayer and meditation. You cannot shut God out of your planning and expect it to work.

You should pray, "Lord, show me the plan. You know where You are going. You know what You want to accomplish and how You are going to do it. Now, help me do it Your way."

When we come into partnership with God, we follow His example and develop a plan to implement each one of our goals. So, we are working with God's vision, with God's goals, with God's plan.

These components generally come out of the corporate wisdom of a group of brothers praying, seeking God and working together. The vision will usually come out of one man's heart and mind, but the details of implementation will usually come out of a group of brothers.

B. FIVE STEPS TO A PLAN

Five questions must be carefully and completely answered before you have a plan. They are:

- **What** are we going to do? (Goals defined)
- **How** are we going to do it? (Action steps defined)
- **When** are we going to do it? (Scheduling action steps)
- **With** whom are we going to do it? (Personnel requirements)
- **What** is it going to cost? (Budgeting)

1. Define Goals

If you have clearly defined and prioritized goals, you have already completed Step Number One. Goals are a statement of what actions you hope to take in order to implement and fulfill God's vision for your life and ministry.

2. Define Action Steps

How are we going to do it? Defining the "how" is one of the most challenging aspects of achievement. Defining how you are going to implement and achieve goals is work — hard work — time-consuming work.

A friend of mine was retained by the U.S. Marine Corps. His job was to define how to call to active duty the Marine Corps Reserve. Thousands of Marine Reserves had to be ready to fight within thirty days in case of a national emergency.

Frank retained ten other top planners to help. It took these eleven men three years to define "how" the goal could be implemented. Thirty-three man-years were required to define "how" to achieve the goal.

Your goal may not be this complex. To define "how" your goal will be implemented will not take thirty-three man years. But don't defraud yourself. Your potential for success is in direct relationship to the time you take to define how you are going to achieve your goals.

3. Schedule Action Steps

WHEN are we going to do it? Once the action steps defining "HOW" are completed, you must take a calendar and figure out WHEN each action step is going to be taken.

To do this, estimate how much time step one will take. Then, determine how much time step two will take. Make a time estimate for every step in your plan and write this adjacent to the action step defined in Step Number 2.

Now set deadlines (the calendar date) by which each step must be accomplished. When you have done this, you have your time schedule for implementation. This will be very useful to you later. You will be able to determine if the project (goal) is progressing as planned.

If it is behind schedule, action may have to be taken to catch up or some critical time junction may be passed which will make it impossible to achieve the goal.

For example, if you are planning a youth conference to reach teenagers for Christ, you must announce the date when it will be convened. If the action steps are defined and time estimates established, you might see it will take at least six months to do the work to be ready for the conference.

If the announcements are not created, printed and distributed on schedule, you might not have anyone show up at the conference.

I know of one conference when the announcements came back from the printers after the conference was over. What was the result?

Hardly anyone came because the announcements never went out. Waste of time, money and a good plan resulted because a critical time junction was missed on an important action step.

4. Delegate The Work

With WHOM are we going to do it? Most plans involve mobilizing others to help. If you try to do it all yourself, you are not a leader. A leader is one who gets things done through others.

Having clearly defined implementation action steps (Number 2 above) — with time estimates for completion — simplifies the task of delegating work to others.

To delegate the work, write the name of a person (or persons) who might be able to implement each action step.

Contact your prospective helpers. If they are willing, provide them the training needed to do the work, then explain the deadlines they must meet, and then monitor their progress to make sure they keep on schedule.

(NOTE: It is EXTREMELY important to remember that people do not do what you EXPECT; they do what you INSPECT. Follow-up after delegating is essential, or the job will usually not get done.)

5. Determine The Financial Cost

What is it going to cost? Jesus said, "*No man constructs a tower without first counting the cost to see if he has enough to complete it*" (Luke 14:28).

To determine the financial cost, you must look at each action step (Number 2 above) and estimate the cost of implementing that step.

When you've done this — add up the cost of each step and you have the "total cost" of achieving the goal.

If this cost is more than your resources of finance and faith, you must revise your goal or the plan to achieve it.

The revision must continue until step five (budgeting) is within your resource of finance and/or faith.

I would warn you not to take leaps of presumption. The Bible teaches us to take steps of faith. There is a great difference between leaps of presumption and steps of faith.

Steps of faith involve gradual progress related to spiritual growth and development.

A little child takes short and frequent steps to walk a mile. A well-trained and strong adult athlete takes long strides.

If the little child tries to leap over a deep chasm which is fifteen feet (five meters) across, he will fall and be killed. The adult athlete might easily vault over it with safety.

So, if your goal is beyond your faith and finances, scale it down. Slay your lion and bear before you take on Goliath (see "*Experience*" on page 171 of this section).

When you have taken all of the above steps carefully, using the sound mind God gives (2Tim 1:7), your chance of success is increased tenfold.

C. CONCLUSION

Nearly ninety-eight out of one hundred new ventures fail. Why? Because leaders try to shortcut these biblical principles. The result is usually failure.

Don't let your time, energy and money get sidetracked into activities that do not relate to God's vision for your life and ministry. The enemy will come in with all kinds of temptations and pressures to divert your resources with irrelevant and useless side issues.

Some fantastically appealing idea may suddenly pop up in front of you. It may appear to be more worthwhile than what you are doing.

Just stand firm, keep the faith and make sure your goals continue to relate to God's vision. When your priorities are established, stick to them.

Chapter 6

Strategy - Implementation – Evaluation

A. DEVELOPING STRATEGIES

We are at war with the spiritual powers and principalities who have held dominion over nations for centuries. We are challenging those powers of darkness. God will help us bring forth strategies and plans to go into these nations and topple principalities and powers, to release unevangelized countries for the entrance of the gospel.

1. Must Be Inspired By The Holy Spirit

But the devil is a crafty fellow, and he's had several thousand years of experience countering the plans of Christians. So, we need strategy and planning inspired by the Holy Spirit to unseat the enemy and outmaneuver his counter attacks.

We have only enough space here to illustrate the wonderful genius of the Holy Spirit in several of the many strategies He has given to evangelism endeavors.

a. A Strategy In Mexico. I want to relate to you one story about a brother in Mexico. Now, you need to understand from the start that it is very difficult to evangelize in Mexico and other Latin American countries. There are laws and restrictions of various kinds, and certain customs and cultural barriers.

But God, through the genius of the Holy Spirit, dropped a plan right into my friend's heart, and it is being successfully implemented all over Mexico today.

He is mobilizing hundreds of Mexican laymen in the churches of Mexico, teaching them simple ways of appropriate witnessing within the Latin-American cultural setting. It is just fantastic!

In Mexico, if you present a gift to someone, it becomes a small public ceremony. Their courtesy demands that when the ceremony begins, no one leaves until the ceremony is over. To leave is simply unthinkable, according to their custom.

So, my evangelist friend and his co-workers arrange to have a meeting of about thirty people in a home, to make a presentation of a Spanish Bible to the head of the house.

When the presentation is made, they begin by asking, "Why do we present Bibles to the heads of families?" Then they explain that when Christ comes into the heart and life of the head of the family, it makes him a better parent, a more loving parent. That encourages the growth of stable, God-loving children who will make better citizens of Mexico.

Then they explain the simple plan of salvation. They go through a simple presentation (that any layman in Mexico can learn to make to a captive audience). Nobody will leave for an hour.

At the end of the simple presentation of the gospel, they invite everyone to "honor the family" by receiving the Christ told about in the Bible that has just been "presented." They all kneel down and pray a prayer of repentance and acceptance of Jesus as their resurrected Lord and Savior. Many are thus born again.

Then a Bible study program is explained. Afterward they ask, "How many of you would like to have such a presentation in your home?" Of course most say, "Yes! I would!"

In the nation of Mexico, where it is difficult to evangelize, the genius of the Holy Spirit provided this simple strategy. The gospel is being spread by ordinary lay people through a simple, wonderful plan.

God is willing to give strategies to you if you can tune into Him, and let Him communicate His mind, will and understanding to you.

B. IMPLEMENTATION — KEEP FLEXIBLE

Now we are ready to move into the stage of implementation. Implementation may be defined as "action steps planned and carried out toward achievement of a goal."

If you have a plan, you can solve unexpected problems and work around them by taking a different approach. You can isolate and correct trouble spots before the situation becomes hopeless. If you don't have a plan you will be left floundering in limbo. You may not know what went wrong, or why, or what to do next.

Your plan is your blueprint for implementation. Wise builders compare a building under construction with the specifications on the blueprint. If they find that some things do not match, it is evident that the builders are not following the plan. There may be good reasons. The plan may need modification.

1. Feedback Is Important

(See Feedback Loops on the diagram on page 175 of this section.)

As we have pointed out before, one thing you can plan on — nothing will go exactly according to plan. So in implementation we have to have feedback. We have to learn from our mistakes and learn how to move past unanticipated obstacles.

What we learn in implementation frequently causes us to modify our plan, either to shore up a weakness or to take advantage of a strength. That is the wisdom of using feedback.

For a simple example, if you were building a church, and planned to have gold-plated door knobs when gold was still \$35 an ounce, and the government dropped price restrictions so that gold shot up to \$600 an ounce, you might decide to modify your plan.

The news of the price shift on gold is feedback. The feedback causes a modification of the plan because the increase in gold values has run up the costs in excess of your budget. So, you settle for brass door knobs.

During the process of implementation, you encounter something unexpected; this information is fed back to the plan, which is modified; implementation continues on the basis of the modified plan.

In Christian circles it is not unusual to encounter people who are allergic to feedback or evaluation.

Leaders who claim to be guided "by revelation" may adamantly refuse to modify their plans. "When God says it, that's it. Brother. I will not be moved." The problem is, they are often not going by God's plan but by some impression of their own, perhaps because planning is too much work.

For some people it's much easier to claim revelations and visions than to do the work to develop a plan. It is easier to say, "The Lord showed me," or "The Lord said...."

Feedback, advice and evaluation in such a case are viewed as a criticism of the way God wants it done. And, who dares criticize God?

I'm not suggesting that the Lord can't show you a plan, because He can; nor that He cannot speak, because He does. But men who substitute their impressions of God's plan for the hard work of actual planning are setting themselves up for deception.

They are kidding themselves and their people because they can cover it with, "The Lord said." The people will believe it, and, before long, the leader will be believing it even when it is obvious that it is nothing but a deception.

2. Feedback Counteracts Deception

We need to use feedback to counteract the possibility of deception or lack of wisdom in what we are doing, or the deficiencies with which we are implementing our plan.

I speak from a certain amount of knowledge and experience in this area, having been in the Lord's work since 1947.

For example, I know of a church leader who claimed he received a revelation directing him to go to a certain distant city and build a Bible school. There was no plan involved.

He and a colleague traveled thousands of miles to another country, where the Lord purportedly led them to the very property they were to buy. They were directed by angels and visions, moving according to entirely subjective directions.

The church leader heading the project was preparing to leave a large and growing group of brothers and sisters to commit himself completely to his new vision. Someone asked, "Where is your plan?"

"The Lord directed me to do this," he said.

"Maybe He did, but He still wants you to have a plan. He had one before the foundation of this world and He expects you to have one, too. You have not defined how, when or with whom you are going to implement this project. That isn't the way God works."

Those who expressed concern were not appreciated, and the leaders turned deaf ears to counsel. They were not open to feedback.

I haven't been close to that situation for years now, but I know they have poured thousands of dollars into it, and there is still no Bible school. There is confusion in that particular organization's work. There is a credibility gap which might take years to bridge. People have been hurt and wonder if they were deceived.

3. Feedback Keeps A Balance

Why do such things happen? Because no objective confirmation was sought for what they experienced subjectively. No goals. No prioritizing. No plan.

Believe me, I don't reject the subjective communications of the Lord. God uses the intuitive gifts we have, but they need to be validated by facts. Feedback shows when the plan is — or is not — in step with objective facts.

When the subjective and objective are in balance, you are on safe ground. You are on a railroad track that will take you somewhere.

But you can't run a train on a one-rail track; you have to have both rails. Subjective leading and objective facts need to be parallel, and they need to be mutually confirming. When they are, you can almost be certain that the outcome will be good.

Successful endeavors require a careful plan. It takes work —thoughtful and practical planning. If you don't have the gift of administration to handle it, get someone who does to help you.

No matter what the Lord gives you in the way of vision and goals, someone has to plan for their implementation in an orderly, logically-sequenced manner that will cause it to happen.

If you don't follow these principles, I can almost assure you of failure and disappointment in anything you try to do.

At the implementation stage, don't set your plan in concrete. After you draw up your plan, let the facts and knowledge you discover during the implementation stage modify it.

Don't practice concrete theology (all mixed up and set). Make your plan flexible, so that it can be modified as the implementation process indicates that it needs to be.

C. EVALUATION — VERY IMPORTANT

1. Shows Us If The Goal Was Reached

When you have implemented and completed your plan, you should always take time for evaluation. Was the goal reached? Did we accomplish our aims? Did we finish what we started? Has the vision finally been realized? Or, did we get sidetracked by some trick of the enemy, or our own pride or stubbornness?

One of the stickiest areas I've gone into in the last twenty years is the evaluation of evangelism ministry. Missionaries, in general, don't want to be evaluated. "Just let me go to Africa and glorify God, Brother, and don't ask me any questions." That, often, seems to be the attitude.

When you start evaluating missionaries with objective criteria, it can be very rough. "What have you accomplished in Africa in twenty years of glorifying God? What has happened during all those years? Where is the fruit? Can you describe some measurable results?"

Now, I don't want to give the impression that an evaluation team is made up of stone-hearted hypercritical armchair generals. Our evaluation teams do not go into the mission field unfamiliar with local problems and conditions to tear a longsuffering missionary's life and career to shreds. It isn't that way.

The evaluation teams are generally sensitive about conditions in various parts of the world. When they find a missionary brother leading a few souls to the Lord under extremely difficult circumstances, they give him commendation for his accomplishment. We love to find successful, thriving, productive missions and we praise the Lord for them and for the people who run them.

2. Shows Us If The Effort Is Justified

But many mission efforts simply cannot be-justified on the basis of what is being accomplished, considering the outlay of people, resources, time, energy and funding.

That is why evaluation is needed. Where it is lacking, abuse and incompetence tend to develop.

a. Wasted Years And Money. In one part of the world, a missionary had spent five years and \$250,000 before an evaluation team was sent out to check up on him. His place was a day's journey up a remote river by speed boat. To save time, the evaluation team flew over the jungle and finally came to a large concrete block building.

Out in the middle of the jungle, this missionary was planning a "Bible school to train people to evangelize the natives." The problem was, the nearest village was hours away by motorboat.

Even this nearest village consisted mainly of 2,700 poor, illiterate Indians. But even at that, it would have been a much more sensible location for a Bible school. It was in the middle of nowhere, many miles from the nearest point of communication with the outside world.

The whole area was so sparsely populated that you would have to fly over it in an airplane to locate people who could be evangelized. And, there weren't many.

To build one concrete building this missionary spent \$250,000 over five years. The high costs of expensive transport of the materials up the river, and imported laborers from the United States, ran the costs up much higher than they should have been.

What did the missionary have to show for \$250,000 and five years? He hadn't yet conducted his first class. He hadn't yet enrolled his first student, and there he was with one small building.

There were full-time fund-raisers running around the United States showing films of this glorious missionary venture in the jungles. They were saying, "Praise the Lord, we're going to evangelize the lost and win them for Jesus! We're building a Bible school! Isn't that beautiful? Boy, those jungle scenes are terrific! Look at those monkeys, parrots, parakeets — WOW!"

You have to consider the whole picture. Those local Indians couldn't read, so, assuming you could get them into a Bible school, where would you start their training? By first spending five to ten years teaching them to read? When do you start teaching them the Bible? Those people can't add two and two.

Wouldn't it make more sense to find people who already know how to read, and train them to go out and witness to those villagers? These are the kinds of issues you have to consider in missionary work — and in evaluating missionary efforts.

There are special problems with living in primitive areas. In this jungle region, there was no plumbing, no electricity and no safe drinking water.

This missionary couple had to boil their drinking water. They had to go to the river to bathe. They were constantly treating themselves for jungle parasites of various kinds. And, they were trying to raise and educate their children in the midst of all this.

When did they even have time to run a Bible School? When you get down to bedrock truth, they didn't have the time. It was taking eight or nine hours of each day just for them to survive. Unfortunately, this case is typical of what often happens on the mission field.

By the way, this missionary was a nice guy, and the chances are, if he had been a member of your church, you would have liked him. But during the process of the

evaluation interview, when he was faced with the illogical realities of the situation, he finally admitted, "Brother, this land is going to be valuable some day. I have two hundred acres and I'm building this up for my children's estate."

The evaluation team could hardly believe their ears, his children's estate? He was bamboozling people all over North America to build a Bible school out in the middle of the jungle on junk land that will probably not be worth two dollars an acre when the Lord comes.

Because his motives were wrong, he was deluded into believing that junk land was going to be worth thousands of dollars an acre. All this so he could leave his children an estate.

He has wasted years now and he seems to be determined to go on wasting more. People in North America are gullible enough to continue giving money to him, to the tune of about \$50,000 a year.

There is a great need for planning that has sanity to it. The feasibility of the vision somebody subjectively feels God has given him, needs to be evaluated by an objective evaluation team.

Otherwise, what do we have? We have 2,000-seat tabernacles with flat roofs built in snow country and collapsing the first winter. We have people traveling thousands of miles to evangelize an unpopulated Caribbean island. We have a quarter-million dollar Bible school in the middle of a jungle, with no students.

D. HOW TO VALIDATE THE WORTH OF PROJECTS

Guarding against worthless or deceptive projects can be very difficult.

In 1 Thessalonians 5:12, Paul says, "*We beseech you, brethren, to know them which labor among you.*" That is the only real protection you have. It helps to work within a known sphere of fellowship, where each person is regularly evaluated by others, and where everyone knows what is going on.

A good example of this is in Exodus 25, when God gave Moses the vision of the tabernacle. This project required the commitment of what probably amounted to several million dollars in gold, silver, precious stones and other materials.

Now, the people of Israel had no problem in committing themselves to come up with that kind of love offering, because there was clear evidence that Moses was hearing from the Lord, based on his past faith conquests and achievements.

But if Moses had tried to do that when he first got together with his people in Egypt, he would not have succeeded. Or, if he had come to join them as a stranger in the wilderness, they would not have listened to such a proposal. He had been with them many years and he had a history of credibility.

Secondly, what Moses came up with was a complete plan. It was measurable, achievable, communicable, tangible and definable in terms of goals or action steps. When someone asks you to participate in a project or donate money to it, don't be afraid to ask questions. If they can't or won't give clear answers about their goals and plans, you have good reason to hold back your support.

E. CONCLUSION

These are the biblical principles for achievement. Someone has said, "What God will bless as a supplement. He will curse as a substitute." If you try to substitute these principles for dedication, prayer, separation, integrity and other spiritual principles, they will become a curse to you. But if they are a supplement, tools you work with to advance the Kingdom of God, I am quite positive they will be a blessing.

May you have many more sheaves to lay at the feet of Jesus when He comes again.

SECTION E7

CONSERVING THE HARVEST

By Leo Harris

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Preface

You need to understand the word "church" as used in the New Testament. This will enable you to apply the following teaching to your situation. The word translated "church" comes from the Greek word "*Ekklesia*."

It is translated (in the King James English Bible) "assembly" three times (Acts 19:32,39,41). In these passages, it means a public gathering of people (in this case, to hear charges laid against Paul).

It is translated as "church" in 76 verses and as "churches" in 35 verses. In this usage it refers to:

The Church Universal: (Worldwide or in many places.) For example: *"And I say also unto thee...upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it"* (Matt 16:18).

"Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, and were... multiplied" (Acts 9:31).

The Church In A City: (Usually made up of many "house churches.") *"...And the Lord added to the [City of Jerusalem] church daily such as should be saved"* (Acts 2:47).

"...And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem..." (Acts 8:1,11:2).

"Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus [the city church] write..." (Rev 2:1).

You will find the church of a city referred to in contrast to a "house" church. *"Gaius mine host, and of the **whole church** [all the house churches in a city] saluteth you..."* (Rom 16:23).

The House Church: Contrast the last reference above to the "whole church" and a "house church." *"Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus; Likewise greet the church that is in their house"* (Rom 16:3,5).

"Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea [city church], and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house [house church]" (Col 4:15).

You will note that when Peter and John were set free after their detention, the Scripture says, *"And being let go, they went to their **own company** [house church], and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them"* (Acts 4:23).

When the angel let Peter out of prison, he went to his house church, *"...he came to the house [church] of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together praying"* (Acts 12:12).

The House Churches Within A City Church: *"If therefore the whole church [city church] be come together into one place..."* (I Cor 14:23).

'The whole church' refers to the many "house churches" in Corinth which made up the "city church." Occasionally, all the house churches came together for fellowship and ministry in a large public gathering. In this context, Paul gave special instructions as to how this special meeting should be conducted.

Chapter 1

The Power Of A Deep Desire

Introduction

We are about to consider a truth which may well revolutionize your life. We shall discover the spring of living water. From this spring flows true faith, effective praying and all the blessings of spiritual victory. These blessings are for you individually and for the Church collectively.

I do not believe we have ever conceived the tremendous power there is in DESIRE.

We hear much about our praying. We have heard many sermons on faith. But when we deal with our **desires**, we are putting first things first. **Desire** is the foundation on which we may build mountain-moving faith and a powerful prayer life. Here is the secret of all true spiritual revival.

A. WHAT IS DESIRE?

We often use this word improperly. We use it to mean a passing wish, our hopes or our "wants."

There is, however, a capacity to **deeply desire** something which few have ever fathomed. **Deep, strong desire** is to use the word in its truest and deepest sense.

1. A Strong Passion

This **desire** is a strong passion for something, an unsatisfied holy appetite that springs from a "vision," a "concept" that motivates our lives and shapes our destiny.

Few have ever known true and notable success unless they had the fires of this passionate desire within their souls.

2. Knowledge And Vision Combined

There are two interesting scriptures which I would like to compare.

The first is Hosea 4:6 — *"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge."* Knowledge itself does not bring power; but our use (application) of knowledge can.

The second scripture is Proverbs 29:18 *"Where there is no vision, the people perish."* Vision is the light (revelation) we have received about God's purpose for our life and ministry.

These two verses teach us two things:

- People without knowledge are in danger of destruction;
- But people without vision are perishing. They are slowly but surely losing their usefulness.

Deep desire is the result of combining knowledge and vision. **It is knowledge set aflame within us.**

Knowledge is like machinery; but vision produces the strong desire, which drives (moves) the machinery.

3. Produces Real Faith

It is true that faith comes through our knowledge of the Word, but knowledge itself is not enough. Our knowledge of God's Word must create within us an intense desire for the fulfillment of His Word.

Many people know God's promises, but they never act upon those promises because they lack that deep and intense desire.

Such a desire will cause us not only to know God's promises, but to constantly THINK them, SPEAK them, REJOICE in them and ACT them. That is real faith. That is the kind of faith that produces VISION. **It is faith born out of a strong desire.**

Many of us love the words of Jesus found in Mark 11:24:

*"What things soever ye **DESIRE**, when ye **PRAY**, **BELIEVE** that ye **RECEIVE** them and ye shall have them."* Here we see that our **praying**, our **believing** and our **receiving** all spring from our desiring.

It is wonderful to know the gospel, the good news of salvation, the truth of divine healing, the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, and all the glorious provisions of this gospel message.

Knowledge of these, however, is not enough to bring the victory and the revival we need. Seeing people saved, healed and baptized in the Spirit must become our intense desire, our constant vision; only then can we see and prove the power of the gospel.

B. WHAT IS MY DEEPEST DESIRE?

It is well for each of us to ask this question from time to time. It is good for us that we have a top-priority desire in our lives.

This will be determined according to:

- our needs
- the call of God in our lives
- our circumstances
- our spiritual experience.

Stop right now and ask yourself:

"What is my deepest and strongest desire?"

Then ask the same question **collectively** — as an assembly, as a house church, as a company of believers in the Lord.

C. THERE IS POWER IN UNITY OF DESIRE

One of the great secrets of the supernatural success of the early Church was their unity. It was said of them, "they were all of one accord." They had unity in their purpose, in their praying and in their ministry.

The New Testament teaches us that there is a vast unlimited power in a united vision; being of one accord in our desires and believing.

D. AREAS WHERE UNITY OF DESIRE IS NEEDED

Here are some things in which we should find a unity of desire:

1. Salvation Of Men And Women

This should be high in our priorities.

The Book of Acts records the constant conversion of souls. This includes both mass conversions and the day-by-day winning of men and women to the Lord.

There is a great danger that people become carried away with the idea of mass results, of great numbers turning to the Lord at one time. That is very wonderful and surely has its place in the program of the Church today, even as it did in Bible days. **Nevertheless, nothing can replace the importance and value of a systematic, day-by-day, week-by-week in-gathering of souls.**

In Acts 2:41, we are told of 3,000 souls being saved on the Day of Pentecost. In Acts 4:4, we read of 5,000 men being won for Christ at one time. These are great highlights of mass evangelism.

However, in Acts 2:47 (tlb), we find the normal pattern of city church evangelism: *"...and each day God added to them all who were being saved."*

Too often the churches rely upon the ministry of a special evangelist, a great campaign with much publicity, to bring souls into their midst. This is good, and certainly there should be times for such events (if circumstances allow it).

Nothing, however, can replace the wonderful effectiveness of constant, systematic soul-saving. This can be brought about only as each house church is imbued with a vital vision **born out of intense desire to win the lost.**

If God had not included soul-saving in His plan for the Church, it would have perished in its infancy. Thank God it has not perished, and it will not perish while believers and city churches desire, believe for, pray for and work for the winning of souls that they might be added to the Church day by day.

2. Healing Of The Sick

There are two reasons we should also desire this with all our heart:

- Because we are moved with compassion for the suffering, and
- Because we desire the signs to confirm the gospel that we preach.

3. Outpouring Of The Holy Spirit

May we never compromise our message and experience of the Holy Spirit. This is still the Holy Spirit dispensation. We need the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. We need the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. We need to show forth the Fruit of the Holy Spirit. We need His power in our lives and in our ministry.

Surely here is something for us to hunger and thirst for, to deeply desire. May a true Holy Spirit revival ever hold a prominent place in our vision!

4. A New Testament Church In Action

A vision of New Testament revival includes every blessing and every provision that God has made for us. May we not only believe the New Testament; may we also desire with all our hearts to work, to worship and to witness in accordance with the pattern of the New Testament.

Friends, I am persuaded of this: if these things fill our vision, if this concept for every believer and every church would fill our hearts and minds, and if we would dedicate ourselves to these things which we most surely believe — then we shall see a revival of unlimited proportions before this age ends and Christ returns.

Remember, knowledge is not enough. We must have knowledge — but above all, we must have a vision and a heart aflame with godly desire.

Chapter 2

The Unlimited Power Of A Dedicated Unity

Introduction

In our last chapter, we wrote about the power of deep desire in our hearts and a united desire in the house church. We wish to develop this theme further, and consider the tremendous power that is released when Christian men and women enter into **dedicated unity**.

The five-point program for revival in the Church is:

- * A deep desire
- * A definite program
- * A dedicated unity
- * Disciplined minds
- * A deliverance ministry

The first point was covered in Chapter

1. The second point must be worked out by each house church or city church, according to their own circumstances (see Chapter 11).

This chapter covers the third and fourth points, and they are: **a dedicated unity and disciplined minds**. Surely here we have two very important keys that will unlock the power of God in a genuine New Testament revival for any house church of believers.

A. DEDICATED TEAMWORK

When we speak of unity, many people think of unity in a passive sense. They feel that unity is achieved merely by removing friction or disagreements amongst people.

The kind of unity that the New Testament portrays is more than a passive unity, **it is aggressive teamwork**. It is UNITY IN ACTION,

Such a dedicated unity may be put into action on any level — among home church leaders, among traveling ministries, among the members of an assembly, or with any group of believers who are dedicated to a common purpose in the service of the Lord.

1. Three-Fold Dedication Needed

Such teamwork calls for a threefold dedication:

- a. To The Lord;**
- b. To The Vision** or desire of the team and to its definite program;
- c. To Each Team Member.**

This is an essential secret of revival and of the blessing of God in any church or other group of believers. And yet, amazingly enough, it is one that is most neglected.

Unity may be prayed for or hoped for; but unity will never be successfully achieved unless it is wholeheartedly worked for. **The results it produces will be an abundant reward for all the effort and labor involved.**

2. Two Benefits Of Teamwork

The Bible presents two wonderful benefits of such a dedicated teamwork. Let us observe:

a. The Protection It Affords. Here we see the defensive value of a dedicated man. Consider the wisdom of Solomon (Prov 11:14): *"Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counselors there is safety."* And again (Prov 15:22): *"Without counsel, purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of counselors they are established."*

The subtle tactics of "divide and conquer" are as old as Satan himself. However, where brethren counsel together in dedicated teamwork, the devil's efforts are frustrated and there is safety or protection for the people of God.

How many worthy purposes are "disappointed," or fail to be fulfilled, because of the lack of a dedicated unity? When believers share a common desire and have united and dedicated teamwork, such purposes can be accomplished. Yes, friends, our surest defense against every onslaught of the devil is to be found in a dedicated unity in our midst.

Next let us observe:

b. The Power It Releases. We can never cease to wonder at the depth and the scope of miracle-working power indicated in the words of Jesus found in Matthew 18:19,20: *"Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth; touching anything that they shall ask it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven."*

"For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

Some Bibles have a heading over verse 20: "THE SIMPLEST FORM OF A HOUSE CHURCH." In fact, the comments of our Lord from verse 15 to the end of verse 20 are specifically applied to the house church. Here He shows the unlimited power of a dedicated agreement among believers.

The Book of Acts (which is the historical record of the early Church) draws our attention to this vital and fundamental feature of their unity:

"These all continued WITH ONE ACCORD in prayer" (Acts 1:14).

"And when the Day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all WITH ONE ACCORD in one place" (Acts 2:1) .

"And they, continuing daily WITH ONE ACCORD in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their food with gladness and singleness of heart" (Acts 2:46).

"They lifted up their voices to God WITH ONE ACCORD..." (Acts 4:24).

"And the multitude of them that believed were of ONE HEART AND OF ONE SOUL" (Acts 4:32).

3. Key Leaders Are Needed

The early Church fathers had a saying: "Where three are, there is a church." We may add: "Where three are in a dedicated unity, there is a powerful church."

There is a need for principal shepherds or key leaders (see Jeremiah 25:34; 25:35; 25:36).

In a New Testament Church, we must always recognize and follow the key leader (or principal shepherd) whom Christ has given.

However, this key leader cannot minimize in any way the imperative need for a dedicated team of leaders working together.

Every team needs a key leader; but it is equally true that every key leader needs a team.

Every house church needs a principal shepherd-leader; but again any shepherd-leader becomes many times more effective when surrounded and supported by a dedicated team of other leaders.

B. MAINTAIN UNITY

The need to establish a dedicated unity is equaled only by the need to maintain such a unity. With this in mind, let us direct our thoughts to:

1. The Price To Be Paid

It does not require a detailed study of the New Testament to discover the following:

Each believer and each assembly is held responsible to maintain the unity that God has created in the Holy Spirit.

"Endeavoring to KEEP [or maintain] the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph 4:3).

A paraphrasing of this verse would be as follows: ***"Striving by all means at your disposal to maintain the unity of the Spirit by making yourself a prisoner of peace."***

We are not here told to "create" a unity or to "organize" a unity; we are told to **keep or maintain** a unity that has already been made for us in the Holy Spirit.

There is a price to be paid. It is that we become willing *"prisoners of peace."*

In other words, true liberty has its limitations. We have freedom to drive our bicycles or cars only so long as we observe the traffic laws. We can exercise all the privileges of citizenship so long as we abide by the law and keep the peace.

So it is in the Christian Church. We can maintain the unity of the Spirit only so long as we accept the responsibility of maintaining peace with our brother and sister.

This is the responsibility we must all accept if we would enjoy the wonderful potential for power to be found in a dedicated unity.

Next let us consider:

2. The Pattern To Be Followed

One day, while reading my Bible and meditating on the needs of several churches I had been ministering in, the words of Paul were strongly impressed upon me:

*"But whatever happens to me, remember always to live as Christians should, so that whether ever see you again or not, I will keep on hearing good reports that you are **standing side by side with one strong purpose — to tell the Good News fearlessly, no matter what your enemies may do**" (Phill:27,28tlb).*

*"Only let your conduct be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye **standfast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel; and in nothing terrified by your adversaries**" (Phill:27,28kjb).*

Here we see the great burden on the Apostle Paul's heart concerning the churches in his care.

What would be the best news he could receive concerning the city church and house churches for which he had such concern?

This is what brought joy to his heart more than anything else: that they should stand fast in one spirit, and with one mind strive together for the faith of the gospel.

Paul knew that if this condition prevailed in any church, the rest would follow — the salvation of souls, the healing of the sick and revival blessing.

Notice the two things that concerned Paul:

- that believers should stand fast in ONE SPIRIT, and
- that with ONE MIND they should strive together for the gospel.

Here is the pattern for true spiritual unity.

a. Stand Fast In One Spirit. Every born-again believer has received a new spirit (Eze 11:19; 18:31). This is some thing God does for us when we believe.

It is in the spirit (or heart of man) that we experience regeneration, justification and the indwelling power of Christ. This is the miracle of the new birth. Each house church is a company of reborn, Christindwelt men and women.

Here then is the basis for our unity: We are all partakers of the Spirit of Christ.

We must accept this fact. We must stand in this revelation. This is our starting point.

Let us accept what God has wrought in our individual lives, and know that we are a company of new creatures in Christ.

Let us stand fast in one spirit!

b. With One Mind Striving Together. This is our responsibility!

The New Testament has much to say about the renewing of our minds (Rom 12:2; Eph 4:23).

While meditating on these thoughts, I read on through Philipians Chapter 2, and noted the emphasis that Paul laid on our responsibility to take care of our minds and thoughts:

"That ye be like minded... of one accord, of one mind... in lowliness of mind... let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus..." (Phil 2:2,3, 5).

Our mind includes our will, reasoning powers, thoughts and emotions. It is our responsibility to take care of these through the guidance of God's Word and the help of the Holy Spirit.

God has done what we cannot do. He has created a new spirit within us and made us the children of God. Now we must live and walk worthily of our calling. **The controlling factor in our conduct is the attitude of our mind.**

God has given us the starting point for our unity, and in the revelation of our position in Christ we must take our stand. Let us rejoice in what God has wrought in us; then let us work out our victory day by day through our minds, our thoughts and our actions.

1) Renew Your Mind. The mind is the ground on which the devil works. First, he seeks to sow seeds of disunity, thoughts of prejudice, resentment, jealousy and

distrust. Seeds of suspicion are sown in our minds before they are ever expressed in our words and actions.

If we will maintain unity and enjoy the tremendous benefits that may be derived from it, then we must be willing to pay the price for it and follow the pattern.

We must stand fast in one spirit, rejoicing in what God has done for us; then we must strive together with one mind, working out what God has already worked in us. If we give thought to this truth, we will discover that it is in the realm of our minds that we find **our greatest hindrances**.

In our hearts we have faith; yet so often that faith is obstructed by the negative attitude of our minds and emotions. Our entire spiritual life can be restricted because we fail to be renewed in our minds.

Adjust your attitude (mind) to the revelation that Christ's mighty energy or power is working in you. This is what Paul said in Colossians 1:29 (tlb): *"This is my work, and I can do it only because Christ's mighty energy is at work within me."*

C. CONCLUSION

The early Church understood this secret of **standing fast in one spirit and striving together with one mind**. We read in Acts 4:32:

"And the multitude of them that believed were of ONE HEART [or spirit] and of ONE SOUL." There is surely an unlimited power to be discovered and demonstrated by means of a dedicated unity expressed in teamwork!

What transformation could be expected if house churches everywhere could realize the powerful potential of a dedicated unity according to the New Testament pattern!

What revival could be experienced if house assemblies could receive and demonstrate this glorious New Testament concept of unity in action.

Here is a sure defense against the divisive onslaught of the devil. This is the divinely appointed way into the power and blessing of a New Testament revival.

Chapter3

Fully Preaching The Gospel Of Christ

Introduction

"For I will not dare -to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed, through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem and round about unto Illyricum, I have FULLY PREACHED the gospel of Christ..."

"And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ" (Rom 15:18,19,29).

In our previous chapters, we have presented several secrets of revival in the city church or house church. These are certainly fundamentals for success in any church. However, we must have a message, the right message. God's message, according to His Word.

Here, then, is an indispensable secret of revival: The Power of the Full Gospel.

A. WHAT IS THE FULL GOSPEL?

When we use the term "full gospel," some people think we are inferring that there are two gospels in the Bible. This, of course, is not so.

I believe Paul has expressed the thought very clearly when he wrote: "*I have FULLY preached the GOSPEL of Christ*"; and, again, "*the FULLNESS of the blessing of the GOSPEL of Christ.*"

It is the same gospel in your Bible as in mine; but the question for us to face is whether the gospel is being "fully preached" or not. Are WE presenting the "fullness of the blessing of the gospel" or not?

We cannot have a New Testament revival unless we preach the New Testament gospel. We cannot have the results that Paul had unless we preach the gospel as Paul preached it.

This, then, is a challenge to us — individually and as a Church. Are we preaching as Paul preached? Is our church preaching as Paul preached? Are we fully preaching the gospel of Christ?

B. HOW DID PAUL PREACH THE GOSPEL?

We notice that Paul said, "*SO THAT... I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.*" We see, therefore, that there were certain things that were essential, in Paul's mind, in order to fully preach the gospel.

To understand every detail of Paul's message, we would need to make a thorough study both of the Book of Acts and of Paul's epistles; and this we obviously cannot do here. Nevertheless, there are certain outstanding fundamentals of Paul's ministry which we shall study.

1. He Preached With Demonstration

Paul said: "*...to make the Gentiles obey the gospel, by word and deed*" (Rom 15:18). "Word and deed" were necessary in fully preaching the gospel. There were not only words, but supernatural works in the ministry of Paul.

The good news (gospel) of the resurrection of Christ was no mere theory in Paul's ministry. He had seen the resurrected Lord. He proved the message and confirmed it by a demonstration of the power of God. This was in keeping with the entire ministry of the early apostles and evangelists in the Book of Acts.

Luke, in the first verse of the Book of Acts, refers to the Gospel he wrote: "*The former treatise [Gospel of Luke] have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to **do and teach***" (Acts 1:1). Here Luke claimed that the record of the ministry of Jesus as contained in his Gospel was "*of all that Jesus began both to **DO and TEACH.***"

As Luke writes the Book of Acts, he is writing the record of the ministry of the early Church — showing how, by the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus **continued** both to **do** and to **teach**. The New Testament ministry must include DOING as well as TEACHING. There must be works of power as well as words of instruction.

In keeping with this pattern, the Apostle Paul fully preached the gospel by **word** and **deed** (doing).

2. He Preached The Blessing Of Salvation

"And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ" (Rom 15:29). When Paul said this, he included the blessing of personal salvation.

Earlier in his epistle he had written: *"I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are in Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth"* (Rom 1:15,16).

In fully preaching the gospel of Christ and presenting the fullness of the blessing of the gospel, Paul taught that **salvation** was a very real and definite experience wrought by the power of God.

Even so today, the power of the full gospel which we preach includes a vital, heart-changing experience of salvation. We must preach to save souls! We dare not be satisfied unless our preaching, or the preaching of our house church, brings men and women into salvation by the power of God.

How can anyone claim to be enjoying the fullness of the blessing of the gospel if this blessing is not bringing salvation to men and women? How can anyone be content to enjoy the power of the full gospel if this power is not touching the lives of those who are unsaved?

3. He Preached The Blessing Of Obedience

He said the gospel he preached was *'to make the Gentiles obedient...'* (Rom 15:18). To truly believe the gospel means to obey it. The first step of obedience for those who say they believe the gospel is, of course, to be baptized in water.

We have only to read the Book of Acts and the many passages in Paul's epistles to discover how firmly he believed in baptism in water in obedience to the command of Christ.

One practical result of our fully preaching the gospel will be seen in those who follow Christ through the waters of baptism in obedience to His command.

4. He Preached With Signs And Wonders

The words used by Paul — *"through mighty signs and wonders"* (Rom 15:19 kjv) — are rendered *"by the power of signs and miracles"* (niv). It was by the power of supernatural signs and wonders that Paul fully preached the gospel in his day. The gospel that we preach today must include the same supernatural manifestations.

As we read the record of Paul's ministry as found in the Book of Acts, we cannot fail to observe the very prominent place given to miraculous healings.

In Acts 14, there is the man at Lystra who was crippled from birth and was miraculously made whole through Paul's ministry.

In Acts 19, we read of special miracles wrought through the ministry of Paul. Handkerchiefs and aprons were taken from his body and placed on the sick and demonpossessed, who were then healed and delivered.

In Acts 28, we are told of the miraculous healing of Publius and the other islanders, following the shipwreck Paul experienced on his way to Rome.

Then in 1 Corinthians 12, Paul writes about the Gift of Faith, Gifts of Healing and the working of miracles being set in the Church as an essential part of its ministry.

Friends, the Apostle Paul could fully preach the gospel of Christ only by the power of signs and wonders!

Anything less could not be called *"the fullness of the blessing of the gospel."* Anything less could not be termed *"fully preaching the gospel."*

If we would fully preach the gospel, if we would offer men and women the fullness of its blessing — then as with Paul, so with us, there must be the power of signs and wonders, particularly in the miraculous healing of the sick. There can be no New Testament revival where these supernatural manifestations are lacking.

The New Testament Church is a healing Church. The New Testament gospel is confirmed with signs and wonders.

5. He Included The Blessing Of Spiritual Power

Paul said he fully preached the gospel *"by the power of the Holy Spirit"* (Rom 15:19).

The Lord had said in Acts 1:8, *"Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you."*

Paul received the Holy Spirit (Acts 9:17). Paul led believers to similarly receive the Holy Spirit and be endued with power.

In Acts 19, the apostle greeted the Ephesian disciples with the question, *"Have you received the Holy Ghost since you believed?"*

He then laid his hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit, with the result that they spoke in tongues and prophesied.

So it is today. We who claim to preach a full gospel — we who offer the full blessing of the gospel — believe and teach that all believers should be baptized in the Holy Spirit.

Let it not be a ministry *in word only, but in word and deed*, that we may constantly witness this glorious experience — men and women baptized in the Holy Ghost and endued with power from on high.

This is the vital, throbbing life of every believer and of every house church. We cannot be full gospel, nor can we fully preach the gospel, without the blessing of the power of the Spirit of God.

6. He Preached The Second Coming Of Christ

How clearly Paul taught this great truth. He strongly maintained that when Christ came again at the end of this age, the believing dead would be resurrected. He said the living believers would be changed into immortality, and together they would be caught up to meet the Lord at His coming (I Ths 4:17).

I think Paul summarized his teaching on the Second Coming in Titus 2:13:
"Looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior, Jesus Christ."

Paul said that this is the Christian's blessed, or happy, hope. If we are truly saved and looking for the Lord, we too shall find this to be our happy hope — that soon the Lord Jesus Christ will return.

The thought of our Lord's return surely lends a note of urgency to our ministry of service for Him. If ever we are to fully preach the gospel, we must do it now. If ever we are to see supernatural signs and wonders, now is the time.

Too many have developed the habit of expecting these blessings in the future. It is NOW that we must enjoy and present to others *"...the fullness of the blessing of Christ"* (Rom 15:29).

C. SUMMARY

The fundamentals we have considered were essential to the Apostle Paul. He fully preached the gospel. How can we preach less? How can we believe less? Let us dedicate ourselves to the power of the full gospel — not only in word, but in deed also.

This gospel is God's provision for spirit, mind and body. It is God's way of deliverance for those that are bound. It is the way into New Testament revival.

In the day when we stand before our Lord, may we be able to boldly repeat the words of Paul: "I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God" (Acts 20:27).

Chapter 4

Preachers And People In A New Testament Revival

Introduction

Here is a passage from the "Pattern Book" for the Church:

"Now many signs and wonders were done among the people through the apostles. And they were all together in Solomon's Portico.

"None of the rest dared to join them, but the people held them in high esteem.

"Yet more than ever believers were added to the Lord, great numbers of both men and women,

"So that they even carried out the sick into the streets, and laid them on cots and mats, in order that Peter's shadow might fall on some of them as he came by"
(Acts 5:12-15 nrsv).

When we go to the end of the Book of Acts, there is no "amen" ("ending"). That is because this Book is still being written.

Acts provides the inspired record of the activities of the early Christian Church. God intended that these activities should continue as long as the Church is upon earth — that is, until Christ returns again.

Thank God this record is being continued in all parts of the world today. Reports of supernatural ministries and revival, according to the New Testament pattern, continue to be written.

Let us look more closely at the account we have quoted above, and see if our modern-day ministries and our modern-day churches comply with this inspired pattern.

A. PREACHERS IN A NEW TESTAMENT REVIVAL

One thing is obvious: if we have New Testament preachers and a New Testament ministry, we shall surely have New Testament results. Notice the following points in regard to the preachers in this particular revival:

1. The Hands Of The Apostles

We read: *"And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people."*

This is a thrilling thought. The Bible has much to say about human hands as a means of contact with our fellow men.

The hands of the servants of the Lord in a New Testament revival play an important part in ministering to the needs of the people.

In the Old Testament we often read of *"the arm of the Lord,"* and this is believed to be a reference to the Lord Jesus Christ. For example, in Isaiah we read: *"...to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?"* (Isa 53:1). The prophet went on to describe the events associated with the coming of Messiah.

Jesus Christ in His earthly ministry was *"the arm of the Lord"* reaching out toward mankind with salvation, healing and deliverance.

Now Christ is glorified at His Father's right hand. But still, He is *"the arm of the Lord,"* reaching out in love and mercy to save and heal through persons whom He has called.

Thus, as the apostles stretched forth their hands to bring deliverance to the people, they were operating as *"the arm of the Lord."* They were an extension of His ministry. It was in the Name of Jesus that they continued Jesus' own supernatural ministry upon earth.

Preachers in a New Testament revival have arms and hands dedicated to the deliverance of the people.

2. Many Miracles Of Mercy

Our Scripture tells us that by the apostles' hands *"...many signs and wonders were done among the people."* This is wonderful to contemplate. Supernatural judgment had just fallen upon Ananias and Sapphira, who had lied to the Holy Ghost. Here was the first drastic display of discipline in the early Church. The result was *'great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.'*

And now, immediately following this miracle of judgment, we read of many signs and wonders bringing deliverance to the people. What a striking revelation of the nature

and purpose of God in this dispensation: one miracle of judgment followed by many miracles of mercy.

3. Signs And Wonders

Our report of this New Testament revival tells us that many signs and wonders were wrought among the people.

What is the difference between "signs" and "wonders"?

A **sign** is a supernatural act of God's power designed to convey a meaning or a message to the people. It has significance. It achieves a purpose.

On the other hand, a **wonder** is (as the word itself denotes) designed to cause people to marvel or to arrest their attention.

New Testament preachers should have signs and wonders displayed in their ministry in the Name of Jesus Christ.

The Great Commission, as found in Mark 16:15-18, declares that *"These signs shall follow them that believe..."* These signs include casting out devils, speaking with new tongues (languages) and laying hands on the sick for their healing.

4. Peter's Shadow

So numerous were these signs and wonders in the ministry of the apostles that the people of Jerusalem laid their sick folk on beds and couches in the streets. They hoped that the shadow of Peter might pass over them as he walked along the road.

They believed that, if Peter's hands could not touch them, his very shadow could be the means of their healing. This shows how much the signs and wonders had incited their faith.

This is the principle seen elsewhere in the New Testament: the hands (or the shadow) became a means of contact by which people's faith was released so they were touched by the Lord.

You remember there was the woman who touched the hem of our Lord's garment (Matt 9:20).

There were the *"handkerchiefs or aprons"* taken from Paul and laid upon those who were sick or possessed with demon spirits (Acts 19:12) and they were healed.

In this manner, the people of Jerusalem made the passing of Peter's shadow the means of contact with his ministry that they might be healed.

5. A Deliverance Ministry

Our story describes how *"There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one"* (Acts 5:16).

A deliverance ministry patterned after that of the New Testament has magnetic power. It draws people from distant places whose hearts are open and ready to receive Jesus as their Lord.

This world is filled with people afflicted in mind and body. Despite all the opposition and persecution the early Church leaders endured, the common people sought out their ministry that they might be delivered and healed.

We observe that they recognized the difference between physical sickness and the affliction of demon power.

The ministry of the early Church brought healing to the sick and deliverance to those who were bound and tormented. May God raise up in these days an even mightier manifestation of a ministry patterned after that found in the New Testament records.

B. PEOPLE IN A NEW TESTAMENT REVIVAL

In every great revival there are conditions to be met by both preachers and people. Let us pay attention to the condition of the people in the revival described for us in this scripture.

1. With One Accord

We are told *"they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch"* (Acts 5:12 kjv). This is a term we read frequently in the Book of Acts. In the Upper Room before Pentecost they all continued *"with one accord in prayer and supplication"* (Acts 1:14). On the Day of Pentecost the disciples were *"all with one accord in one place"* (Acts 2:1). Immediately after Pentecost, we read of the people *"continuing daily with one accord in the temple"* (Acts 2:46). In a later outpouring of the Holy Spirit, we are told that *"the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul"* (Acts 4:32).

And now, in the midst of this revival, we find the people once again gathering *"with one accord in Solomon's porch."* Surely here we have found infallible secrets for revival in a city church: a supernatural ministry and a united church.

2. Fear And Favor

We read these unusual words: *"None of the rest dared to join them, but the people held them in high esteem."* Thus we find that, in the midst of a New Testament revival, there is found (a) fear and reverence and (b) great favor bestowed upon the people of God.

We read of this two-fold reaction in Acts 2:43,47: *"And fear came upon every soul..."* while, at the same time, they had *".. favor with all the people."*

There is no need for compromise when the power of God is in action. Public reactions will find their own level when the Spirit of the Lord is manifested in the midst of the people of God.

3. Added To The Lord

Here is the thrilling result of this New Testament revival: *"And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women."*

This is the outcome of a supernatural ministry supported by a united people. This should be the constant experience of every church enjoying a New Testament revival.

Notice the significant expression, *"Added to the Lord."* This is real salvation.

It is not enough to be added to the church. It is not enough to have one's name added to a membership roll. These things are good in themselves, but the vital experience needed by all men and women is that they be *"added to the Lord"* — **joined to Christ by faith in Him.**

My friend, let me assure you that in these momentous days God is raising up preachers and people who are conforming to the New Testament pattern. Their witness is being confirmed with signs and wonders.

To all who believe, they are offering the glorious privilege, the vital necessity of being added to the Lord through faith in His saving power.

Chapter 5

The Church Universal & House Churches In The New Testament

Introduction

Let us now embark upon a study of the New Testament pattern for the Christian Church.

Because of the limited space, it will be impossible to make this a complete and thorough study. But we hope to provide our readers with an understanding of the scriptural blueprint for the Church today.

A. WHAT DOES "CHURCH" MEAN?

The words "church" and "churches" are derived from the Greek "*ekklesia*," which simply means A CALLED-OUT ASSEMBLY.

1. "Church" (appears 80 times in the New Testament)

"Church" (singular) refers to either **the Church Universal, a city church or a house church**. It never refers to a denomination or a church building.

In the first two usages of the word "church" in the New Testament, it applies firstly to the Church Universal and secondly to the house church.

a. Church Universal. First Use: "*I will build my church*" (Matt 16:18). Christ is referring to the **Church Universal** and not to any one section or division of it.

b. House Church. Second Use: "... *tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church...*" (Matt 18:15-17). This passage deals with the disciplinary measures to be followed when reconciliation is refused by the offending believer.

It is quite clear, therefore, that the word "church" as used in the second instance applies to the **house church** and not the Church Universal.

In like manner, in every one of the 80 times the word "church" appears in the New Testament, the context will show whether the reference is to the Church Universal or to a house church.

c. Exception: Israel As A Type Of The Church. In Acts 7:38, there is an exception to the general usage of the word "church." In that verse we read about "*the church in the wilderness.*" This is a reference to Israel in her wilderness journeyings after being delivered from Egypt via the Red Sea.

While Israel was not a church in the New Testament sense, the word "*ekklesia*" is applicable to Israel in her wilderness wanderings. In that role, Israel was a type of the Christian Church in this dispensation.

- Israel had been redeemed through the blood of a lamb,

- called out of Egypt (the world), separated from Egypt by the Red Sea (water baptism),
- supernaturally provided for in the wilderness (manna from Heaven and water from the rock — types of Christ),
- led across the River Jordan (Baptism in the Holy Spirit) and settled in Canaan (a type of the heavenly places).

Thus Israel, a called-out assembly, was a type of the Christian Church. Acts 7:38 is the only time in the New Testament that the word "church" is applied to anything other than the Church Universal or a house church.

2. "Churches" (appearing 35 times in the New Testament)

The word "churches" always refers to **house churches** and never to denominations, organized groups of churches or church buildings. Typical usages of the word "churches" in the New Testament are as follows:

"...the churches of the Gentiles" (Rom 16:4);

"...the churches of God" (1 Cor 11:16);

"...the churches of the saints" (I Cor 14:33);

"... the churches of Asia" (1 Cor J 6:19), etc.

All these are references to **companies of believers** meeting regularly (usually in someone's house) for worship and service.

3. "Assembly" (appearing five times in the New Testament)

Let us consider the word "assembly" as it appears in the New Testament. It is a word usually used in reference to our house churches today.

Three of the five times the word "assembly" appears, the application is not to a church but to an ordinary assemblage of people (see Acts 19:32, 39, 41).

The other two appearances of the word "assembly" are found in Hebrews 12:23. Here the word means literally "**a mass meeting**" — a reference to the Church Universal. In James 2:2 the Greek word is literally "**synagogue.**"

It is quite fitting that James should use this word, which simply means "to come together." The Jewish synagogue was probably the model for the house church gathering.

B. THE CHURCH AS GOD SEES IT

The use of the words "church" and "churches" is extremely simple. Our understanding of these words provides us with a firm foundation on which to base our study of the New Testament Church.

Although the word "church" is generally used **today** in reference to a denomination, like The Baptist Church, The Presbyterian Church or The Little Flock, the Bible does not use the word in this way.

From God's point of view there is one Church Universal, comprising born-again believers of all lands and of all languages.

God sees this great Church of Jesus Christ divided only into house churches — local companies of believers meeting regularly in His Name.

Strictly speaking, the only church organization the Bible recognizes is that which functions within the house church. All other organization is formed for the convenience of these churches and as a means of coordination.

The New Testament presents the house church as being sovereign (that means under control of those attending), supporting and governing itself, and propagating the gospel.

House churches of similar spiritual experience and doctrine may prefer to group together for the furtherance of their particular vision. But we should never lose sight of this New Testament concept: the Church Universal is divided only into house gatherings of believers — the "Church" and the "churches" of the New Testament.

C. A SYMBOL OF NEW TESTAMENT CHURCHES

In Revelation 1, we find a symbolic representation of the New Testament Church organized into its many city churches. The Apostle John, banished to the Isle of Patmos, was in the Spirit on the Lord's day when he was shown a vision.

He beheld "*one like unto the Son of man*" standing among "*seven golden lamp stands*." In His hand He held seven stars.

In verse 20, we are given the interpretation of these symbols. The seven golden lamp stands were **seven city churches** situated in Asia Minor; the seven stars were the angels (or leaders) of those churches.

The Lord Jesus Christ appears like a High Priest attending to the lamp stands. Here is the fulfillment (anti-types) of types found in the Tabernacle of Moses and the Temple of Solomon of the Old Testament.

As we read through Revelation 2 and 3, we find that the Lord gave a special message to each of the seven churches.

Most students of the Book of Revelation agree that these city churches existed in Asia Minor.

But they also portrayed seven different periods of Church history that would unfold in future centuries in this Church age (dispensation). This age would extend from John's day until the coming of the Lord. (See Section G1 of **The Leaders Training Guide** for more details on this.)

"Seven" in Scripture is the number representing perfection. Therefore the seven golden candlesticks of John's vision may be taken to represent the entire Church of this dispensation, **each candlestick symbolizing a city church**.

What an inspiring picture we have here: The risen Christ standing in the midst of the churches of every land and every generation throughout this present age. With each He deals directly. For each He has a special message: rebuking, warning, counseling, encouraging, commending.

This is in perfect harmony with the New Testament concept of the Church of Jesus Christ.

He is not only Head over the Church Universal. **His headship is expressed also in each city or house church.** For each. He has a purpose and a plan. The living Christ

seeks to manifest Himself in each city or house church in correction and in gracious encouragement and commendation.

Moreover, the ministry is held in His hand! The angels (or ministers) receive their message directly from the living Christ, that they may convey it to their respective house churches which make up the city church.

Surely such a vision as this must help us to widen our horizons, and to better understand the purpose of the Lord for both the universal Church and the city and house churches of the New Testament pattern.

Chapter 6

New Testament Analogies Of The Christian Church

Introduction

Analogies of the Church are ways of explaining the Christian Church by comparing it to things we already know. For example: the Church is like a building in some ways; like a body in some ways; and like a bride in some ways.

Let us now consider some New Testament analogies of the Christian Church. In so doing, we have in mind the Church Universal, yet there is an aspect in which each house church is a miniature representation of the Church Universal.

A. FOUR MAJOR ANALOGIES

The four major analogies of the Church as found in the New Testament are as follows:

1. A Building

We may observe that the Christian Church is not described as buildings, but always in the singular. **There is but one Church.** In 1 Corinthians 3, we find the Apostle Paul describing the Church as a building.

In verse 9 he says, "*Ye are God's building.*" In verse 10, Paul claims that he, "*as a wise master-builder,*" had laid the foundations as far as the church in Corinth was concerned. He said that other ministries would in due course build upon that foundation. In verse 11, this foundation is identified as Jesus Christ.

This is in harmony with the words of Jesus Himself in Matthew 16:13-18. Referring to the divinely-given revelation that Jesus was "*the Christ, the Son of the living God,*" He added: "***Upon this rock*** [foundation] *I will build my church.*"

Thus we accept the basic fact that the Church of Jesus Christ, in its universal aspect, is as a building. It is being erected upon this one great foundational truth that Jesus is me Christ, the Son of the living God.

Returning to 1 Corinthians 3, we find in verses 16 and 17 that Paul continues his theme. He refers to the Church as the Temple of God, in which dwells the Spirit of God.

This analogy of the Church as a building is repeated in Ephesians 2:20-22. Here Paul refers to *"the foundation of the apostles and prophets,"* but adds: *"Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone."* Then he further adds: *"in whom all the **building**, fitly framed together, groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord: in whom you also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."* Peter, too, similarly describes the Church in 1 Peter 2:5: "Ye also, as living stones, are built up as a spiritual house."

The purpose of God throughout this age has been to complete the magnificent edifice of the Church, so that in the ages to come, it may show forth the praise and glory of God.

2. A Household

The Church is pictured as a household in the following scriptures:

"If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household" (Matt 10:25).

"The household of faith..." (Gal 6:10).

"Now there fore you [believers] are no more strangers and foreigners but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God" (Eph2:19).

"...for this man [Christ Jesus] was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who has builded the house has more honor than the house... Christ as the Son over his own house; whose house are we..." (Heb 3:3,6).

Thus the Church is presented as a household over which Jesus Christ is the Master.

3. A Body

There are a number of references in the New Testament to the Church as the Body of Christ.

"So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another" (Rom 12:5).

"For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body" (ICor 12:12,13).

"Now ye are the body of Christ and members in particular" (I Cor 12:27). (See also Ephesians 1:22,23; 4:4,12,16.)

The human body, with the interrelationship and coordination of all its members, is taken by Paul as an analogy of the Church of Jesus Christ.

This analogy shows the importance and the inter-dependence of every member of the Church. The apostle uses this analogy particularly to demonstrate the utter necessity for unity among the members of the Church.

4. A Bride

In Ephesians 5:23-33, the Apostle Paul draws a parallel between the relationship of Christ and His Church and the relationship of husband and wife.

In these verses the relationship of Christ and His Church is used as an illustration of husband and wife. Let us consider the following extracts from this passage:

"For the husband is head of the wife, EVEN AS Christ is the head of the church..."

"Therefore, AS the church is subject unto Christ, SO let the wives be to their own husband in everything..."

"Husbands, love your wives, EVEN AS Christ also loved the church..."

"So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies... for no man ever yet hated his flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, EVEN AS the Lord the church."

Some have found difficulty in seeing the Church as both the Bride and the Body of Christ, but in these verses the Apostle Paul has boldly maintained that the Church is both.

Observe how both the analogies of body and bride are presented in verses 30 to 32 of this chapter: "For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: *BUT I SPEAK CONCERNING CHRIST AND THE CHURCH.*"

In the light of the above scriptures, it may be seen that the great universal Church of Jesus Christ is presented in the New Testament as: A BUILDING being erected upon the foundation of Christ Himself; A HOUSEHOLD over which Christ is the Master; A BODY of which Christ is the Head; and A BRIDE of whom Christ is the Bridegroom.

We may also observe that there is but one Church — one building, one household, one body, one bride — even though men have, for various reasons, divided this New Testament Church by denominational and doctrinal barriers.

As we considered in our previous chapters, the only scriptural division of the New Testament Church is to be found in the organization of house churches.

B. INDIVIDUALS IN THE CHURCH

Having considered the above analogies of the Christian Church, it is easy to understand the true nature of **our individual membership in the Church** — that is, in the Church Universal. So many today have assumed that the placing of their name on a house church roll secures their membership in the Church of Jesus Christ. Let us, however, briefly recall the four New Testament analogies presented above, and consider our individual relationship to each.

1. Living Stones In A Building

We are told that we, as believers, "*are built upon the foundation*" and "*builded together for a dwelling place of God through the Spirit*" (Eph 2:20-22). Again the Apostle Peter says:

"To whom coming, as unto a living stone... ye also, as LIVING STONES, are builded up a spiritual house" (I Pet 2:4,5).

It is therefore clear that we can hold membership in the Church as a building only as we ourselves become living stones through our personal contact with Jesus Christ, the chief Cornerstone.

2. Born Into A Household

In Galatians 4:6,7 Paul wrote: "*And because ye are sons. God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.*"

A household may have servants, or even boarders, who may come or leave as they choose; but we enter the household of God **through the new birth**. We belong in our Father's household; and as sons and daughters, we share in the family inheritance.

3. Members Of The Body Of Christ

We take our place in the Body of Christ through all that is symbolized by our baptism. That is our identification with Jesus Christ (1 Cor 12:13).

We become "members of Christ" by means of His life which is in us. It is a living, vital union with Jesus as the Head of the Body.

4. Part Of The Bride Of Christ

Our individual relationship to the Lord in this sense is set forth in 1 Corinthians 6:17: *"He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit."*

The same thought is presented in 2 Corinthians 11:2: *"For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ."*

Thus, as part of the Bride of Christ, we are espoused to Him, being united in one spirit.

C. CONCLUSION

From these scriptural illustrations, it becomes obvious that our individual membership in the Church of Jesus Christ doesn't result from our formally joining a house church, or from placing our name on a church roll; it results from **a vital personal experience between ourselves and the Lord**. This experience is called salvation, or the new birth.

It is possible that someone may be put on a list of official membership of a house church, and yet never have become a member of the Church of Jesus Christ universal.

On the other hand, it is possible for someone to be a member of the Church of Christ through the new birth, and yet not have attached himself to a house church or church organization.

As the Apostle Paul declared (2Tim 2:19):

*"Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal. **The Lord knoweth them that are his.**"*

Membership in a house church should only follow one's membership in the Church of Christ universal. Moreover, when someone has been born again, **he should by all means seek membership in a house church fellowship**.

We are exhorted in Hebrews 10:25: *"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."*

Each of us needs the fellowship, the edification, the encouragement and the discipline of a house church.

Having found our place in the great New Testament Church of our Lord through faith in Christ, may we all be willing to commit ourselves to the membership of a house church, that we might unite wholeheartedly in worship, witness and service together.

Chapter 7

The Priesthood Of The New Testament Church

A. DIFFERENCES BETWEEN OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT PRIESTHOOD

We cannot fully understand the New Testament pattern for the Christian Church without an appreciation of the fundamental difference between the priesthood of the Old Testament and that of the New.

1. Aaronic Priesthood

God gave Israel, in olden days, the opportunity of becoming a *"kingdom of priests"* (Exo 19:6). Israel, however, failed to rise to this great privilege, with the result that the Lord appointed the Aaronic priesthood (Exo 28:1). The Old Testament itself records the failure of this ministry to faithfully serve the Lord and to minister on behalf of the people of Israel (Eze 22:26).

2. Priesthood Of The Believer

Turning to the New Testament, we discover that the priesthood is the privilege of every true believer (I Pet 2:5,9). As such, we have the glorious privilege of enjoying access to God through our High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The believer's access unto God is clearly presented in Hebrews 10:19-22:

"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having an high priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water."

In our day, some Christian denominations refer only to their leaders as priests. This is not supported in the New Testament. This is entirely contrary to the fundamental principle of the New Testament revelation for the Church.

Consider the words of 1 Peter 2:5,9: *"Ye also... are...an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.*

"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood...that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."

This is the highest privilege of our Christian experience. We have access into the Holy of Holies, into the very presence of God, through Jesus Christ.

When the Savior died on Calvary, the veil of the temple was rent from the top to the bottom. Figuratively speaking, many have tried to stitch it up again, but all to no avail. The type has been forever fulfilled in the anti-type. The shadow has been replaced by the substance. Christ is forever alive — the only Mediator between God and men.

In the Christian Church, God has provided us with various ministries, with pastors and others who may advise and counsel us. None, however, can give us access to God. Christ has done this once and for all. *"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace [mercy seat], that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need"* (Heb 4:16).

B. THE SACRIFICES OF THE BELIEVER-PRIEST

As the Old Testament priesthood offered sacrifices to God, we too, as New Testament priests, have offerings to present to the Lord. The New Testament shows us that our sacrifice is threefold:

1. Our Bodies, Our Lives

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your spiritual worship" (Rom 12:1 nrsv).

We see this priestly sacrifice in its ultimate degree in 1 John 3:16:

"Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."

The basic truth which we accept when we come to the Lord is that our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit;

"For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (I Cor 6:20).

2. Our Praise

"By him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name" (Heb 13:15).

The priests of the Old Testament ministered to the Lord in the room of the temple known as the Holy Place.

The fragrant smoke ascended from the Altar of Incense in the Holy Place. It permeated the veil into The Holy of Holies where God lived above the mercy seat (throne).

This was a type (prophetic picture) of us New Testament priests offering our praise and thanksgiving as a sacrifice well pleasing to the Lord.

The New Testament does not invite us to praise the Lord as an expression of feelings only, but to do so as a sacrificial ministry to the Lord.

The sacrifice of praise should not be offered **because** of our circumstances but often **in spite of our circumstances**. If we do this, we shall soon find that in the sacrifice of praise there is victory over circumstances. It is our priestly duty and privilege to praise the Lord!

3. Our Money

Hebrews 13:16 is beautifully explained in the English Amplified New Testament as follows: *"Do not forget or neglect to do kindness and good, to be generous and distribute and contribute to the needy, for such sacrifices are well pleasing to God."*

This and other scriptures teach us that a faithful priest (believer) will dedicate some of his money to be used in caring for those less fortunate than himself, and for the work of God.

C. NO DISTINCTION BETWEEN CLERGY AND LAITY

The words "clergy" and "laity" are not in the Bible. These words came into use as a result of church leaders teaching they had privileged status above the other members of the Church.

This distinction made between "clergy" and "laity" is not in the New Testament Church. Certainly there are various ministries and offices ordained by God. These are given to build up the Church and provide the leadership of God's people.

The New Testament priesthood creates a brotherhood of born-again men and women. We all enjoy the same privilege of access to God through Jesus Christ, our High Priest.

In the same manner, we are all members of the Body of Christ, directly governed by Jesus Christ the Head of the Body (Eph 1:22; 5:23; Col 1:18).

It is vitally important that this truth of the priesthood of all believers be clearly understood and thoroughly appreciated. Otherwise we will not value our privileges in the Christian Church. Thus, we may fall prey to a man-made priesthood or a hierarchy of religious leaders who act as lords over others (I Pet 5:3).

Chapter 8

Ministries In The New Testament Church

Introduction

The Christian Church, being a divinely-ordained organism rather than a man-made organization, must have **a divinely-given and divinely-gifted leadership**. Unfortunately, today most Christian leadership ministry is based upon academic achievement, human calling and appointment.

The New Testament pattern, however, provides for a supernaturally-chosen and divinely-equipped ministry for the Church.

There are certain offices that function within each house church. Elders and deacons serve within the house church, and must possess certain personal qualifications according to the Scriptures. These we shall consider later in our study. But the gifted leadership, which Christ has provided for His Church, is based upon five ministry-gifts.

These ministry-gifts are supernaturally imparted by Christ Himself to certain persons. Such leaders continue and carry on the ministry of the Lord Jesus in His Church on earth. They do what He did.

A. FIVE MINISTRY-GIFTS GIVEN TO THE CHURCH

"However, Christ has given each of us special abilities—whatever he wants us to have out of his rich storehouse of gifts.

"The psalmist tells about this, for he says that when Christ returned triumphantly to heaven after his resurrection and victory over Satan, he gave generous gifts to men.

"Notice that it says he returned to heaven. This means that he had first come down from the heights of heaven, far down to the lowest parts of the earth.

"The same one who came down is the one who went back up, that he might fill all things everywhere with himself, from the very lowest to the very highest" (Eph4:7-10tlb).

"It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers" (Eph 4:11 niv).

These scriptures make it clear that, after His ascension into Heaven to return to the Father's right hand, Christ gave five gifts of ministry to men within His Church.

These ministry-gifts are partial expressions of His own complete ministry. No one church leader could contain the entire ministry of Jesus; a variety of "leader-servants" in the Church are given these gifts. This is so the complete ministry of Christ might appear again among His people.

1. Given By Christ Alone

These five ministries are the gifts of Christ, and are bestowed by Him alone. They do not depend upon human appointment. Christ raised up and equipped these men (and women) for their particular ministry in the Church.

2. Function Under Guidance And Power Of The Holy Spirit

It is well that we give due recognition to these ministries as they appear among us. But, whether we recognize them or not, they function under the guidance and by the power of the living Christ.

3. Associated With Men And Women

It is interesting to note that the ministry-gifts of Christ are always associated with men and women.

By contrast, the Gifts of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12) are associated more with the giver than the recipient. We call them Gifts of THE SPIRIT (the giver). But we cannot dissociate the five ministry-gifts from the persons to whom they are given and who exercise them.

We do not read of men receiving "a gift of apostleship" or "the gift of a pastor"; but we do read, *"He gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, "* etc. The gifting (or enablement) is their identity, who they are and what they are in the Church.

The men themselves are Christ's gift to His Church. They are Spirit-filled, supernaturally-equipped; all bearing a part of the glorious, complete ministry of the Head of the Church — Christ.

B. FIVE MINISTRY- GIFTS DESCRIBED

Let us now give consideration to each of these five ministry-gifts.

1. Apostles

The word "apostle" comes from the Greek "apostolos," meaning "**one sent forth**" or "**he that is sent (as an ambassador).**" The Lord Jesus Christ is THE Apostle (Heb 3:1)—the One "sent forth by God. " He laid the foundation for the Church. He is now building the Church.

a. The Twelve Apostles. During His earthly ministry Christ appointed twelve apostles, whom He fully equipped for their ministry and "sent them forth" (Matt 10:16).

These apostles were not humanly appointed, but were solely dependent upon the commission and the enablements (power and authority) of Christ.

They are referred to as the "Apostles of the Lamb." *"And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve **apostles of the Lamb**"* (Rev 21:14).

They had a unique ministry and relationship to Israel and the Jewish people. *"These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, nor into any city of the Samaritans enter not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel"* (Matt 10:5,6).

Their reward will be to sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Luke 22:28-30).

b. Other Apostles. A study of the New Testament shows that there were other : apostles besides the twelve that Jesus chose to work with Him while He was here.

One of the first twelve, Judas the traitor, was replaced by Matthias just before the Day of Pentecost (Acts 1:26; 2:14), thus restoring the required number of twelve *"apostles of the Lamb."*

However, apart from Matthias, many other apostles were chosen by Christ, and sent forth by Him after the Day of Pentecost. It might be appropriate to refer to these as **"ascension apostles,"** since they were given after Christ ascended back to Heaven.

The "ascension apostles" usually have a special relationship to the Gentile church. Those mentioned in the New Testament are Paul and Barnabas (Acts 14:14), Andronicus and Junia (Rom 16:7), James (Gal 1:19), Silas and Timothy (1Ths 1:1, 2:6), and others (1Cor 9:5; 2Cor 8:23).

Paul and Barnabas (Acts 14:14) are outstanding examples of apostles given by Christ to the Church after Pentecost.

Moreover, the fact that the early Church had to be repeatedly warned against accepting "false apostles" (2Cor 11:13; Rev 2:2) indicates that there were other apostles.

The clearest scripture that affirms continued apostolic ministry is found in our scripture quoted above, which states that Christ "gave some apostles" AFTER HIS ASCENSION. (NOTE: For more on the five ministry-gifts, see Section C5.)

c. Apostolic Ministry. An apostle, being "one sent forth" by Christ, is a pioneer, laying foundations, establishing churches in scriptural order, overseeing and caring for such churches and confirming them in the Word.

He exercises a part or fragment of the ministry of our great Apostle, Jesus Christ. He is called and raised up by Christ, and given a vision of the work he is to do (Acts 26:15-18).

The proof of his ministry is the fruit of his labor — the work he leaves behind him. As Paul wrote to the Corinthians— *"Am I not an apostle... for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord"* (1 Cor 9:1,2).

Paul pointed to the establishment of the Corinthian church as evidence of his apostolic ministry. He also claimed that his ministry came directly from the Lord, not from men.

"Paul an apostle — sent neither by human commission nor from human authorities, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead" (Gal 1:1 nrsv).

The apostolic ministry of founding new churches is seen in the words of Paul: "*According to the grace of God which is given unto me as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation*" (I Cor 3:10).

This pioneering ministry still functions today. The Church is a living organism, not a lifeless organization. New house churches are still being established, new fields are still being penetrated, as the Church continues to grow upward and outward.

There is evidence that indicates the apostolic ministry-gift may include elements of the other four ministry-gifts. In its pioneering, foundation-laying, overseeing function, this ministry-gift requires some element of the prophetic, evangelistic, pastoral and teaching ministries. Yet the apostolic ministry-gift remains distinct and apart from the others.

2. Prophets

The Greek word is "prophetes." It comes from two Greek words: *Pro*, meaning "fore" — that is, in front of; *Phemi*, meaning "to show or make known one's thoughts," that is, speak or say: affirm, say. Combining the two words, it means one who can tell (or foretell) God's thoughts (mind) or on occasion the thoughts of other persons.

For example, Peter was operating under a prophetic anointing when he said to Ananias, "*...why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost...?*" (Acts 5:3). Peter knew Ananias' thoughts and revealed the deception and hypocrisy.

The word can also mean "an inspired speaker." But the New Testament record shows that the ministry of a prophet is more than mere preaching.

This is also indicated by the fact of other gifts being bestowed — such as evangelist, pastor and teacher — all of which involve speaking.

A prophet is one who speaks forth under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit without any premeditation or preparation. His ministry may often involve the exercise of the Gift of Prophecy (I Cor 12:10), but will certainly include Revelation Gifts, such as the Word of Knowledge and the Word of Wisdom (I Cor 12:8).

The Gift of Prophecy functions within the city church or house church (I Cor 14), but the ministry-gift of a prophet is for the benefit of the entire Body of Christ.

A prophet conveys revelation of spiritual things and of present and future events or circumstances of which he has no human knowledge. He does not exercise control (governance) over leaders, followers or churches. Nor does he mandate direction. Rather he confirms what God has already spoken to an individual.

As we have seen in our earlier studies, there is a fundamental difference between the **priesthood** of the Old Testament and that of the New.

Today every believer is a priest unto God, with direct access into the "*Holy of Holies.*"

Every believer has a right to the mind of Christ and to know the will of God, and should not be bound by the direction of a prophet.

The New Testament prophet does, however, give enlightenment concerning present or future events, and every believer is free to act in the light of that revelation. We see this prophetic ministry of the New Testament functioning in the following scriptures:

Acts 11:27-30: Here the prophet Agabus gave revelation concerning the approaching famine. The disciples took practical action in the light of this prophecy, and sent relief to brothers in Jerusalem.

Acts 20:22-24: In this passage we read of Paul's decision to go to Jerusalem in spite of warnings by the Holy Spirit (probably through a prophetic ministry) that bonds and afflictions awaited him there.

Acts 21:10-14: The prophet Agabus gave illustrated prophecies and foretold the sufferings that awaited Paul in Jerusalem. Yet the apostle was determined to continue his journey, saying: "*The will of the Lord be done.*"

Other New Testament prophets were Judas and Silas (Acts 15:32).

Thus we are given some insight into the function of the prophetic ministry-gift according to the pattern of the New Testament. May God raise up such ministry in a greater way in the days to come, and give us wisdom to recognize its operation.

(NOTE: For more on the prophetic ministry, see Section C5.)

3. Evangelists

The word means "**a preacher of good tidings.**" Perhaps the ministry-gift of an evangelist is the best understood of all. Its place and function in the Church has seldom been the subject of controversy. The evangelist does not do the work of an apostle — founding and establishing churches — nor the work of a pastor.

We see an outstanding example of the ministry of the evangelist in Philip (Acts 8:5-40). Philip went down to Samaria and preached Christ. Many believed, as signs and wonders confirmed his ministry. Philip baptized them in water, but then handed the converts (results) of his evangelism to the care of the apostles, Peter and John. Philip went into the desert to give the good tidings to the Ethiopian eunuch,

Disaster often befalls the work of some evangelists today. This is often because they fail to recognize the true nature of this ministry-gift.

Because God has blessed the evangelist in his ministry, he then decides to stay permanently in a certain place. This denies other unreached, unsaved people the benefit of his evangelistic ministry. This also prevents his converts from receiving the benefit of other gifts such as the apostolic, pastoral and teaching ministries.

Remember, the Church is NOT built on the foundation of the evangelist — but rather "*...built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets...*" (Eph 2:20). Unless the apostolic and prophetic ministry come in to consolidate and confirm the evangelist's converts — the church that could have resulted rarely comes into existence. If it does, in time it fails (or falls) for lack of a foundation.

The evangelist is the "arm" of Christ reaching out into the world. The results of his ministry should be gathered into house churches and supplied with the other ministries which Christ has set in His Church.

In every case in the Book of Acts, unless converts were the result of apostolic ministry, the apostles and prophets came in soon after to lay the foundations. This would transform these new believers into a strong church.

Read Acts 11:19-27. Many believed. Then the Apostle Barnabas comes. He leaves to get Saul (Paul) to join him at Antioch. Soon after, the prophets come to assist (vs 27). We ignore this pattern at our peril and those of the new believers.

4. Pastors

Here the Greek word is "*poimen*," meaning "a shepherd." The pastor is a shepherd who cares for and feeds the flock of God. His ministry is very similar to that of an elder. He has a loving, caring, nurturing personality and ministry.

The basic difference of the elder is that he is usually an older (fatherly) person appointed because of **certain personal qualifications** (I Tim 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; etc.). The work of the elder is also to "*feed the church of God*" (Acts 20:28).

The eldership, however, is a local office, whereas the ministry-gift of "pastor" is given to the entire Body of Christ. The pastor may travel from church to church, whereas the elder is usually associated with one house church.

It is suggested that Timothy and Titus held the pastoral gift. These young men served under the general oversight of Paul. They also were commissioned by Paul to ordain elders (Titus 1:5).

Pastors are usually qualified as elders also, even as the Apostle Peter claimed to be an elder (I Pet 5:1).

The office of elder is confined to the house church, whereas the ministry-gift of pastor, while functioning in and through house churches, is given for the benefit of the entire Body of Christ.

5. Teachers

The Greek is "*didaskalos*," meaning "**an instructor**," and translated in the English Bible as doctor and master. There is a very close relationship between the ministry-gifts of pastor and teacher. This is suggested in the very construction of the text (Eph 4:11): "*And he gave some, **pastors and teachers**...*" Moffatt translates the verse as follows: "*He granted some to be evangelists, some to **shepherd and teach**.*"

It would not be correct to consider "pastor" and "teacher" as synonymous terms. Do not regard these ministries as being identical.

There is, however, a very close connection between the two. The teacher works with the pastor and elder for **the shepherding and teaching of the house church**, caring for their spiritual welfare and instructing them in the Word of God.

In the teaching ministry, there is often a certain amount of overlapping. The teaching ministry is often part of another ministry.

For example, the Apostle Barnabas (Acts 14:14) is referred to as a teacher also: "*Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain... teachers; as Barnabas...*" (Acts 13:1).

Paul likewise illustrates how one individual bears a multi-faceted ministry-gift. Paul writes:

*"Whereunto I am appointed a **preacher**, and an apostle, and a **teacher** of the Gentiles"* (I Tim 2:7; 2 Tim 1:11).

C. PURPOSE OF THE MINISTRY-GIFTS

We know that all members of the Body of Christ have their part to play in edifying the Church and glorifying Christ.

However, the ascended Christ has given the five ministry-gifts for a specific purpose described for us in Ephesians 4:12: "*For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.*"

The word "perfecting" in this verse is translated from the Greek word *katartismos*, which means "to make complete." It comes from a root word *katartizo*, meaning "to repair or adjust; to make fit, mend; to perfect, prepare, restore."

This describes what the five ministry-gifts have been given for. Another translation makes the meaning clear:

"To prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up" (Eph 4:12niv).

This opens up a challenging new thought concerning the purpose of the ministry-gifts in the Church. The five ministry-gifts are NOT to do the work of the ministry. They are to repair broken lives and prepare the believers so the members do the work of the ministry.

This thought is confirmed by the Amplified New Testament which renders Ephesians 4:12 as follows:

"His intention was the perfecting and the full equipping of the saints [His consecrated people], that they should do the work of ministering toward building up Christ's Body [the Church]."

What wonderful light this throws on the purpose of the ministry in the Body of Christ.

In the formation of an army, officers are first trained that they in turn might train the troops. In this same manner, Christ has gifted certain ones in His Church that, through their ministry-gift, they might equip the saints to minister for the benefit of the entire Church.

Thus the Body of Christ and each house church should be self-ministering and self-edifying.

Though all believers do not have ministry-gifts, all do have a ministry to perform in building up the Church and edifying the people of God. May each of us, as a member of the Body of Christ, discover our ministry and fulfill it.

"We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith.

"If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach;

"If it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully" (Rom 12:6-8 niv).

Chapter 9

Officers In The City Church And House Church

Introduction

Having considered the five ministry-gifts which function in the Church Universal, in the entire Body of Christ, let us now briefly examine the ministries pertaining to the city church and house church. We have seen earlier that New Testament government is based upon the city and house church.

The original pattern presents a picture of many self-governing house churches in which elders guard and feed the flock. These house churches within a city (church) are coordinated by the bishops (overseers) and cooperate for the extension of God's Kingdom.

When dealing with the ministry-gift of pastor, we noted that there is a striking similarity between the ministry of pastor and the office of an elder.

The fundamental difference between them is that the pastoral gift, while functioning in the house church, need not be confined to one house church. It is a gift which may serve any house church which invites the pastor. The pastor serves the whole Body of Christ.

Basically there are two offices in the City church. These are elders (who serve in a house church) and deacons (who serve all the house churches within a citychurch).

For example, there were many house churches within the city of Jerusalem. This city church had 3,000 new converts on the Day of Pentecost and 5,000 men (beside women and children) a short time later (cf. Acts 2:41; 4:4).

They met in small groups or companies in houses. Those who had money shared and gave directly to the poor, as they had need (Acts 2:44,45).

But some gave the proceeds from the sale of lands and property to the apostles, who distributed the money to those in need. The money does not appear to have been kept by the elders in the house churches. Rather, it was given to the apostles, who chose deacons to give it to the widows and others in need (cf. Acts 4:34-37; 5:3; 6:1-7).

In Philippians 1:1, Paul writes *"to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi [a city church], with the BISHOPS and DEACONS."* The bishop was a superintending or overseeing elder or presbyter. See also Titus 1: 5,7. Let us examine this office a little more closely.

A. ELDERS

1. Their Work

In Acts 20, we read Paul's address to the elders of Ephesus: *"...and from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the church"* (Acts 20:17).

Paul said to them: *"For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God."*

"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20: 27,28).

Here Paul spoke to the ELDERS (presbyters) and told them the Holy Spirit had made them OVERSEERS (Greek =presbuteros, translated **bishops** everywhere else in the English Authorized Version).

The apostle commanded them to FEED the flock over whom they took the oversight. This shows the close relationship between pastoral ministry and eldership, and yet there is no reference here to a ministry-gift being required.

This and other scriptures provide us with the following summary of the work of elders in the house church:

a. Take Heed To The Flock. They must *"take heed...to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made [them] overseers "* (Acts 20:28).

b. Feed The Church. They are to *"feed the church of God"* (Acts 10:1). (See also 1 Peter 5:14.)

c. Take Care Of The Church. They are to *"take care of the church of God"* (1 Tim 3:5).

d. Rule Well. Elders are to *"rule,"* and those who *"rule well"* are to be *"...paid well and should be highly appreciated, especially those who work hard at both preaching and teaching"* (1 Tim 5:17 lib).

e. Hold To The Message. Another responsibility of an elder is to *"...hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it"* (Titus 1:9).

f. Able To Teach. An elder must be *"apt [or able] to teach"* (I Tim 3:2).

g. Visit And Pray For The Sick. Elders must be available when called to visit the sick and to pray *"the prayer of faith"* (Jas 5:14,15).

Summarizing then: It appears there were elders who were also apostles (as Peter); those who had citywide responsibility as bishops (overseeing, superintending others); those who were especially gifted in preaching and teaching; and those who, by reason of their old age and character, acted as spiritual fathers in a house church.

2. Their Qualifications

The necessary qualifications for eldership are found in two passages: 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. Combining these two passages, we have the following list of personal qualifications required by the Scriptures:

"A bishop must be blameless...the husband of one wife...vigilant... sober...of good behavior... given to hospitality...apt to teach...not given to wine...no striker...not greedy of money... patient...not a brawler...not covetous...not self-willed...not soon angry...not newly come to the faith [a novice] lest, being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil...

"one that ruleth well his own house, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly, having his children in subjection with all gravity...

"to be a lover of good men... just... holy...temperate... moreover, he must have a good report of them which are without, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil."

Thus it may be seen that the outstanding characteristic of a scripturally qualified elder is to be found in his personal life.

As regards his ministry, he is to teach that which he himself has been taught and to care for the flock.

3. Don't Overemphasize Structure

While the structures we put in place to conserve the Harvest can be important, church leaders should not place too much emphasis on this.

Which is most important? The wine (Harvest) or the wineskin (that which conserves the Harvest)?

The Bible answers this question. "... *the builder of a house has greater honor than the house itself*" (Heb 3:3). Jesus is building His House (the Church). But we must always give Him much more honor than the House itself.

Church leadership and ministry-gifts are needed to help build the Church. The leadership structures we adopt to contain and preserve the Harvest are less important than the Lord of the Harvest (Jesus) or the Harvest itself (the believers).

So, do NOT put over-emphasis on the wineskin, the structure, the governance and how things are organized. Adopt what works in your nation and culture. Ask the Lord to give you wisdom and to help you set up the minimum structure possible.

Remember, the Jerusalem church had more than 5,000 families (approximately 30,000 or more persons) and only seven deacons and twelve apostles.

4. Local Eldership Includes Ministry-Gifts

The ministry-gifts of pastor and teacher are set in the Church to serve many congregations. But the elder carries on a similar ministry, in his office as an elder, in the local house church. Pastors may come and go, teachers may come and go; but the eldership office remains in the house church.

The five ministry-gifts are (in most cases) traveling elders. It would appear that a house church eldership may include any or all of the five ministry-gifts. At least we have evidence that Peter, who was an apostle, was also an elder: "... *The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also am a fellow-elder*" (I Pet 5:1).

The eldership of a city church or a house church may include one who has an apostolic ministry-gift such as Peter. As in the church at Antioch (Acts 13:1-3), there may be others possessing the ministry-gift of a prophet, evangelist, pastor or teacher, who called this their home church.

In this case, such men may serve in the eldership of their house church, and yet their ministry functions in a much wider scope for the benefit of the entire Body of Christ.

By the same token, it may be possible that one could possess a ministry-gift, and yet for some reason not qualify as an elder in the house church.

If this should be so, such traveling ministry-gifts would, we believe, be subject to (under) the elders whom God has ordained in the house church.

We may summarize these thoughts by saying that the eldership constitutes the local oversight, and is appointed according to certain personal qualifications. Ministry-gifts are bestowed by the Lord Jesus Christ to serve His Church in many localities upon earth according to His own will.

B. DEACONS

1. Their Work

The word "deacon" means "servant." The work of a deacon is to serve the practical needs of the leaders and members of the city church and the house church.

There are many ways in which deacons may serve the interests of a city church, but these can best be determined by each church and its particular circumstances.

Generally it should be understood that the deacons bear responsibility in taking care of the material (financial) aspects of the work of the city church. Thus the ministry and the oversight are left free to devote themselves to the spiritual needs and well-being of the church.

2. Their Qualifications

The personal qualifications of a deacon are listed for us in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. They include all aspects of personal integrity, spirituality and having a well-ordered home life.

Verse 13 (lib) presents a wonderful promise to faithful deacons: *"Those who do well as deacons will be well rewarded both by respect from others and also by developing their own confidence and bold trust in the Lord."*

Every active city church knows the value of faithful and efficient deacons.

C. OTHER OFFICERS

In Acts 6:1-6, we read of the choice of seven Spirit-filled men to relieve the apostles of their menial responsibilities so that they may be free to give themselves to prayer and the ministry of the Word.

These men may have been, as some believe, the first deacons. But we are not told this in the scriptural record.

However, we do see here the principle of separation of spiritual and time-consuming menial duties in connection with the city church and house church.

Turning to 1 Corinthians 12:28, we find a list of some of the ministries and offices which the Lord has set in the Church; these include helps" and "government (administration)." The English Amplified New Testament and the Moffatt Translation render these words as "helpers" and "administrators."

Church leaders of larger fellowships, or over many house churches in one city, may appoint helpers in the organization and administration of the affairs of the city church.

Many churches have appointed councils (a group of deacons) to supervise the business matters involved in the affairs of the assembly. This has been proven to be very effective, particularly in handling the financial and legal demands of the church.

As a general rule, we may find that there are many who are qualified to serve the assembly as deacons, but not necessarily equipped to handle the more involved aspects of business administration.

Thus we see the advantage of councils being appointed to meet this need and to serve the assembly under the oversight of the elders.

D. SUMMARY

Summarizing our thoughts on the offices functioning within the house church, we would say that the Lord has ordained that:

- Elders should constitute the governance and oversee the spiritual needs of the assembly, although this eldership may also include brethren possessing ministry-gifts.
- Deacons should be appointed to take care of the material (financial) aspect of the house church activities. The New Testament allows for the appointment of those specifically qualified to advise, counsel and otherwise assist in the administration of the city church and house church's affairs.

All activities, however, should function under the spiritual oversight of the local eldership.

Chapter 10

Supernatural Equipment For The House Church

NOTE: For additional information on this theme study Section D.

A. THE BELIEVER AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

"Now concerning spiritual gifts, my brethren, I would not have you to be uninformed" (I Cor 12:1 rsv).

With these words, the Apostle Paul begins to teach us about the nature and operation of the nine Gifts of the Holy Spirit.

These three chapters (1 Corinthians 12, 13 and 14) are not understood by the great majority of Bible teachers and students. This is because they have denied the full blessing of the Holy Spirit in the Christian's life and the full manifestation of the Spirit in the modern-day Church.

However, when the Spirit is given free expression (not quenched or extinguished), it is soon discovered that it is not the New Testament that is outdated, but the experience of modern Christianity.

The Holy Spirit's power and manifestation are the same as in Bible days. If we allow Him liberty to do as He desires, these three chapters of Paul's letter to the Corinthians are understood and experienced.

1. "Another Comforter"

When Jesus was on earth in the flesh, His disciples depended upon Him day by day for training, power, guidance and correction. They relied on HIS faith, on HIS wisdom, on HIS power.

When He told them that He must leave them, they were extremely sorrowful. Now what should they do? On whom could they rely?

It was then that the Master told them that, if He went away, ANOTHER COMFORTER (Helper) would be sent to them. This COMFORTER was called *"the promise of the Father"* and *"the Spirit of truth,"* Who was already dwelling WITH them, but would later dwell IN them (John 14:17).

When the COMFORTER (The Holy Spirit) was dwelling IN them, Jesus said, the disciples would continue doing the works of power they had seen Him do.

Jesus taught His followers that they would do even greater works than He did because, although He would return to Heaven, the Holy Spirit would empower **many disciples in many parts of the world** throughout this gospel age (see John 14:12-17; 16:7-15).

As the first disciples relied completely upon Christ, should not we rely completely and constantly upon this OTHER COMFORTER, the Holy Spirit? He was sent to enable us to continue the miraculous ministry of Jesus until His glorious Second Coming.

Jesus told the disciples: *"All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you."* The Holy Spirit was to be the agent (representative) of Christ IN every believer — taking CHRIST'S wisdom, HIS power, HIS authority, HIS character and revealing it in and through the believer, and in every assembly of believers.

2. The Holy Spirit Within The Believer

The Holy Spirit came down from Heaven on the Day of Pentecost and filled the 120 disciples who were prayerfully waiting in the Upper Room in Jerusalem.

Thereafter the Spirit was to fill **every** (spiritually) hungry, thirsty believer and empower (enable) each of them to be an effective witness for Christ (Acts 1:8; Acts 2:38,39).

The Spirit was WITH all believers, but believers were to RECEIVE the Spirit, to have the Spirit within them.

This was a separate experience from salvation and water baptism (Acts 8:12-17; 19:1 -6). The New Testament pattern is REPENT, then BELIEVE ON CHRIST, be BAPTIZED in water, and RECEIVE THE FULLNESS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (Acts 2:38,39; 19:1-7, etc.).

B. NINE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

It was to an assembly of people thus filled with the Holy Spirit that Paul wrote these three chapters: 1 Corinthians 12, 13 and 14.

He was explaining how the Holy Spirit had come to bring various GIFTS (supernatural enablements), that the ministry of the exalted Christ might be continued through the members of His Body (the Church) here on earth. Here was God's supernatural equipment for ministry and for worship.

For sake of convenience, we usually divide these nine spiritual Gifts into three categories, with three Gifts in each category, as follows:

GIFTS OF REVELATION — Word of Knowledge, Word of Wisdom and Discerning of Spirits.

GIFTS OF POWER — Gift of Faith, Gifts of Healings and the Working of Miracles.

GIFTS OF INSPIRED SPEAKING — Gift of Tongues (languages). Gift of Interpretation of Tongues and Gift of Prophecy.

1. Gifts Of Revelation

a. Word Of Knowledge. This is not amplified naturally-acquired knowledge, but a supernatural impartation of a fragment of God's omniscience, or all-knowingness. It is a Gift of the Holy Spirit.

It is a miraculous impartation of a fragment of God's knowledge to a Spirit-filled believer. Just as a WORD can express but it a fragment of your own knowledge, so the "WORD of Knowledge" is but a fragmentary expression of the infinite knowledge of God —just sufficient to meet the need of the time.

It functions when we are under the anointing and power of the Spirit. It is a divinely imparted word of knowing some thing. It might be knowledge concerning an event, or an insight as to what is causing sickness (particularly in the ministry of healing).

It could relate to knowledge about certain circumstances. It is a spiritually imparted knowledge which could not otherwise have been gained.

It is a fragment of the infinite knowledge of God implanted in the human heart to meet a specific need in the functioning of the ministry of the Body of Christ on earth.

The Word of Knowledge is not given to satisfy one's curiosity! It is given for the same purpose as all other Gifts of the Spirit: *"for the common good of all"* (1 Cor 12:7 niv). It is to enable Spirit-filled believers to continue the miraculous ministry of Jesus.

b. Word Of Wisdom This is not natural wisdom, nor the wisdom of the philosopher or "thinker." This is the supernatural Gift of the Holy Spirit. It is a miraculous impartation of a fragment of God's wisdom to a Spirit-filled believer.

Just as a WORD can express but a fragment of your own wisdom, so the "WORD of Wisdom" is but a fragmentary expression of the infinite wisdom of God —just sufficient to meet the need of the time.

Those who have been blessed with the exercise of this Gift know that it comes supernaturally, to meet a specific need. It operates only when we are anointed of the Holy Spirit.

This Gift usually works in conjunction with and following a Word of Knowledge. Through the Word of Wisdom, we know (by the Spirit) what to do with (how to apply in a practical way) the knowledge (information) we received when the Word of Knowledge came to us.

Surely this "Word of Wisdom" is needed for the leadership and ministry of every house church.

c. Discerning Of Spirits. This is NOT, as so often misquoted, the Gift of DISCERNMENT. The discerning of **spirits** is strictly limited to the world (realm) of **spirits**. Through this, we can know whether a miracle or manifestation is from the Holy Spirit, our human spirit or a demonic spirit.

It is particularly helpful in the ministry of casting out demons (Mark 16:17, etc.).

The word translated "discerning" is the Greek diakrisis, meaning **"a thorough judging, or summing up, or assessing."**

This Gift of the Holy Spirit enables one to completely sum up the position in the case of demon-possession, knowing the name, nature and strength of the demon and having power to cast it out in the Name of Jesus.

As the powers of darkness are often behind mental and physical afflictions, the importance of this Gift of Discerning of spirits cannot be overemphasized in any ministry of deliverance today.

2. Gifts Of Power

a. Gift Of Faith. All Christians have faith as a faculty of their human spirit. Faith is born in the heart of every man and woman. Some have "little faith," others "wavering faith," and yet others "great faith." This Gift of Faith, however, is a supernatural impartation of the **irresistible faith of God** into the heart of a Spirit-filled believer. **It is a special faith for a special purpose.**

It is supernatural equipment for carrying on the miraculous ministry of Jesus, and is a Gift of the Holy Spirit. This Gift operates under the Spirit's anointing. Individual believers and house assemblies could surely achieve great things for God were this Gift more generally manifested.

b. Gifts Of Healings. These Gifts are for the healing, or curing, of physical sickness.

There are many ways in which people are healed. There is healing by medical means; by natural methods of diet, etc.; by developing right, positive, healthy thinking; by one's own prayer and faith; or by prayer and faith of others. None of these methods, however, includes the GIFTS OF HEALINGS.

The Gifts of Healings are supernaturally imparted to the Spirit-filled believer by the power of the Holy Spirit. They are to enable one to carry on the healing ministry of Jesus.

They do NOT overcome the need for faith on the part of the sick person. Jesus could not heal where there was no faith (Mark 6:5,6).

Nevertheless, where the Gifts of Healings are in operation in ministry, the healing power **is available** to those who can receive it by faith.

Many have wondered why Paul used the plural "Gifts." It would seem that various Gifts are needed for various kinds of sickness. It is like the medical world, where there are "specialists" in different diseases.

It is worthy of note that the Gifts of Healings were to be an integral part of the Church's ministry — "SET" in the Church (I Cor 12:28).

c. Working Of Miracles. The Greek is *energemo dunamis*, meaning literally the "energy of power." This Gift of the Spirit is for the demonstration of the power of God. It may be seen in certain miraculous healings such as the instant knitting of broken bones, dematerialization of cancer, etc.

But it goes far beyond the physical realm. It would include acts of divine power over nature, like the cursing of the fig tree (Mark 11); and over the elements, such as turning water into wine (John 2), stilling the storm (Luke 8), etc.

There is no doubt that, as we approach the end of this age and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit increases, we shall see much more achieved by means of this spiritual Gift of "Working of Miracles" than we have as yet seen in modern times.

3. Gifts Of Inspired Speaking

a. Gift Of Tongues. This is not the ability to learn and speak in other languages as some have supposed. Neither is the purpose of this Gift for preaching the gospel in foreign lands.

On the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2) there were 120 disciples filled with the Spirit and speaking in other tongues, so that visitors to Jerusalem from other nations were able to catch a little here and there in their native tongue.

But when it was necessary to answer their questions and preach the gospel to them, Peter stood up and spoke to them all in the Aramaic language spoken in that part of the world. This resulted in 3,000 souls repenting and being saved.

They certainly understood Peter preaching. So the "other tongues" were evidence of the in-filling and empowering of the Spirit, but not for the purpose of preaching to foreigners.

In 1 Corinthians 14:2, Paul says, "*He that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh NOT unto men, but unto God.*" And in verse 4: "*He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself.*"

In verse 5 he says: "I would like every one of you to speak in tongues"; and in verse 18: "*I thank God I speak in tongues more than all of you*"; in verse 39: "*Forbid not to speak with tongues*" (niv).

In the Book of Acts, Chapters 2,10 and 19, people received the Holy Spirit with the result that they spoke in other tongues. That is the most common initial sign of the infilling with the Spirit.

In 1 Corinthians Chapters 12-14, Paul is writing about the **Gift of Tongues**, which is the ability to speak in a meeting, followed by the "twin Gift" of Interpretation of Tongues.

In 1 Corinthians 14:27 he says that, if an interpreter is present, two or three may speak in tongues in a meeting. If there is no one with the Gift of Interpretation present, they should remain silent, speaking only to themselves and to God (1 Cor 14:27,28).

Some teach that the New Testament distinguishes between:

- "tongues" as the initial evidence of the infilling of the Spirit,
- "tongues" of worship or intercession, exercised in one's private devotions, and
- the GIFT OF TONGUES to be exercised in a meeting followed by the GIFT OF INTERPRETATION, so that all may be edified thereby.

Your editor has found that when believers are properly instructed, and gain experience with the Gift, they can use the Gift in all the above dimensions.

Paul also explains that when one speaks in tongues, his understanding (mind) is unfruitful (unproductive) and his spirit (not his mind) is speaking unto God (1 Cor 14:14,15). "*For this reason, anyone who speaks in a tongue should pray that he may interpret what he says*" (1 Cor 14:13 niv).

The Holy Spirit, the Master of all languages, moves upon and inspires one's own spirit to speak forth in a tongue unknown to the speaker.

This is a Gift of the Holy Spirit, as supernatural as any of the Gifts previously dealt with.

b. Gift Of Interpretation Of Tongues. This is a "twin" to the previous Gift. In 1 Corinthians 14:5, Paul says: "*Greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying.*"

"Tongues" alone are of benefit only to the speaker (vs 4), unless followed by the Gift of Interpretation of Tongues. This makes the inspired message understandable to the congregation.

For this reason, Paul says in verse 13: "*Wherefore let him that speaketh in an tongue pray that he may interpret.*" This would enable the speaker to bring edification to the congregation by exercising these twin Gifts of Tongues and Interpretation of Tongues.

Interpretation of Tongues is as supernatural as the Gift of Tongues or any other of the nine spiritual Gifts. One does not LEARN the language, but the same Holy Spirit that inspires the speaking in tongues inspires the interpretation thereof.

Nor is this TRANSLATION. Translation is usually word for word or an attempt at verbatim interpretation. But this Gift of Interpretation gives the MEANING of the message in tongues. The Spirit interprets the meaning of what was said in tongues. This means there may be more elaboration and explanation than was contained in the words spoken in the tongue.

When the tongue is a prayer, the interpretation may be a reciting of the prayer in the known language.

Or the interpretation could include God's response to the prayer, letting the listeners know what God is going to do because of the prayer — and any conditions that must be met for the prayer to be answered.

The link between the speaker in tongues and the interpreter is the Holy Spirit inspiring both.

c. Gift Of Prophecy. Finally, we consider this third Gift of speaking — Prophecy.

This is not preaching, although preaching may at times rise into this dimension. If such is the case, then the speaker is preaching by prophecy (I Cor 14:6). There are several Greek words used in the New Testament for "preaching."

But prophecy means "**speaking forth as inspired by another,**" "**to speak under inspiration,**" "**unprepared and unpremeditated utterance.**"

The Gift of Prophecy is as supernatural as any of the other eight spiritual Gifts.

It is not a message prepared and given from the natural mind, but one that flows forth from the spirit within.

Its purpose is threefold: "*edification*, [building up], *exhortation* [stirring up], and *comfort* [cheering up]" (I Cor 14:3).

Although prophecy is inspired utterance, the gift is always under the control of the speaker. Thus we read in 1 Corinthians 14:32 (niv): "*The spirits of the prophets are subject to the control of the prophets.*"

This means that one's own will and faculties regulate the exercise of this spiritual gift. The Living Bible translates the above verse this way: "*Remember that a person who has a message from God has the power to stop himself or wait his turn.*"

Thus we have briefly considered the three Gifts of inspired utterance — Tongues, Interpretation of Tongues and Prophecy.

These Gifts should be in operation in every church. They are characteristic of a New Testament Church. They are part of the New Testament pattern for the Church today.

(NOTE: Section D1 contains more teaching on The Gifts of The Spirit.)

C. THE MORE EXCELLENT WAY

When presented with the challenge of spiritual gifts today, many resort to a misapplied text, saying: "*I prefer the MORE EXCELLENT WAY*" (see 1 Corinthians 12:31, and Chapter 13).

It is wrongly claimed that the "*more excellent way*" is the way of love instead of Gifts.

Are we to believe that the Apostle Paul teaches us we should have LOVE **instead of** the GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT? Not at all!

Chapter 13 is wisely placed between 12 and 14 so as to provide a beautiful balance between the FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT (represented by love) and the GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT. The Fruit of the Spirit enables us to show others the character of Christ. The Gifts of the Spirit enable us to show others the power of Christ. We desperately need both.

The ninefold FRUIT of the Spirit is enlarged upon in Galatians 5:22,23, but LOVE sums up all of this spiritual fruit.

FRUIT is the result of growth. Fruit takes time to grow and mature. Even so, FRUIT of the Spirit is the result of spiritual growth and maturity. It is the evidence of Christian character formed in our lives by the Holy Spirit.

GIFTS are not so; they are provided as supernatural equipment for service and ministry. GIFTS are distributed (freely given) by the Spirit. FRUIT is produced within us, as part of us, by the Spirit.

Thus Paul could write in 1 Corinthians 13 that even if he had "*tongues of men and of angels... prophecy... knowledge.. faith*" etc. (all of which are good and commendable), and yet lacked love in his life, HE would be nothing.

In other words, it is possible to have all the GIFTS of the Spirit for service, and yet not produce the FRUIT for personal Christian character.

1. Gifts With Love

Then what is the "*more excellent way*"? Is it love at the expense of Gifts? Or Gifts at the expense of love?

No! The "*more excellent way*" is GIFTS WITH LOVE. We want neither gifts without love, nor love without gifts. We want the beautiful balance of gifts (equipment) and fruit (character).

Remembering that there were no chapter divisions in the original writings (these being arranged by the translators), we see that Chapter 13 is summed up in the first verse of Chapter 14: "*Follow after love and desire spiritual gifts.*"

This, then, is the "more excellent way" for believers and churches today: 'FOLLOW AFTER LOVE, AND DESIRE SPIRITUAL GIFTS.' This "way" includes the fruit of Christian character, plus the gifts of supernatural equipment.

Chapter 11

Every House Church A Base For Evangelism

A. THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

According to the New Testament pattern, house churches should be:

- supported by money given by the members,
- governed by local elders, and
- served by locally appointed deacons.

They should also be busy evangelizing and propagating the gospel. If the gospel is to be effectively shared with other people all around, then each house church must become a base for evangelism activities. This was the pattern in the early New Testament church.

1. The Church At Jerusalem

The first seven chapters of the Book of Acts describe the activities of the first church at Jerusalem.

It seems there were several years of getting the new members trained and equipped for ministry following the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. Then the church settled down in spiritual comfort and forgot the instructions given by Jesus.

Jesus had said: *"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in **Jerusalem**, and in all **Judea and Samaria**, and to the ends of the earth"* (Acts 1:8 niv).

The witness must begin in Jerusalem (your home town), and then be carried to the nearby areas (Judea), and then to further distant points and finally to the ends of the earth.

2. Persecution Produces Evangelism

When the church at Jerusalem failed to obey this mandate, the Lord allowed persecution that caused the people to be scattered. Only then was the gospel carried by large numbers of the members to other places.

Acts 8 tells the story. Among those **scattered by persecution was Philip. He went down to Samaria** and preached Christ to the people. A wonderful revival followed.

In Chapter 9 we discover that there were believers in **Damascus**, and in verse 31 we read about *"the churches... throughout all **Judea and Galilee and Samaria**."*

Turning to Acts 11:19, we read: *"Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen traveled as far as **Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch**, preaching the Word..."*

3. The Church At Antioch

All these new centers of Christianity were the outcome of the evangelistic activities of the church at Jerusalem. However, in Acts 13—we find that one of these new churches developed into another "operational base." **It was the church at Antioch.**

During a time of prayer and fasting at Antioch, the Holy Spirit confirmed the call of Paul and Barnabas to conduct a missionary tour to distant places. It was in Antioch that they laid their hands on these two apostles and sent them away.

Chapters 13 and 14 describe the itinerary of Paul and Barnabas. After they had been gone for about two years, we read:

"From Attalia they sailed back to Antioch, where they had been committed to the grace of God for the work they had now completed.

"On arriving there, they gathered the church together and reported all that God had done through them, and how he had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles.

"And they stayed there a long time with the disciples" (Acts 14:26-28 niv).

The church at Jerusalem was always held in high esteem as the original center from which the gospel came. But here was Antioch sponsoring its own evangelism activities and becoming a base for missionary operations.

It was not to Jerusalem that Paul and Barnabas returned to report on their activities, but to Antioch — the city church which had sponsored their pioneering tour.

It is true that Paul, Barnabas and other brethren went to Jerusalem where a conference of apostles and elders was held (Acts 15). This was to settle a fundamental issue of doctrine. Nevertheless, the picture presented to us in the Book of Acts is one of locally governed city and house churches becoming involved in evangelism.

A variety of the five ministry-gifts functioned under the headship of Jesus Christ in Antioch. They moved in the power of the Holy Spirit. They sponsored missionary evangelistic outreach.

4. Recognition Of Ministry-Gifts

Every house church functioned under the oversight of its elders, but all fully recognized the ministry-gifts which God had ordained for their leadership, instruction and exhortation.

The apostolic ministries in the Book of Acts often operated for several years from one center. We find that Paul was in Antioch for "a whole year" prior to his missionary itinerary described in Acts 13 and 14.

On returning from the missionary tour, he "*abode long time with the disciples*" at Antioch.

At Corinth, Paul stayed for eighteen months (Acts 18:11). At Ephesus he continued for three years (Acts 20:17,31).

Thus we see how Paul's apostolic ministry used these churches, located in key cities, as centers for his ministry for long periods of time.

Nevertheless, these city churches and house churches were self-governing evangelism bases for the spread of the gospel.

5. Pattern For Today

Surely this is the pattern the Lord intended us to follow. We were to continue this throughout the centuries of the Church age, for the entire history of the Church upon earth.

May God raise up more and more house churches soundly established and energetically pursuing a program of evangelism and soul-winning. It is God's will **that house churches give birth to other house churches.**

In this way, by the law of compound multiplication, not only can the gospel be spread, but house assemblies can be formed as spiritual homes for those that are brought to Christ.

B. SUGGESTED METHODS OF OUTREACH FOR OUR DAY

The five-point program for revival outlined at the beginning of this section is:

* Deep Desire

*Definite Program

*Dedicated Team

*Disciplined Minds*Deliverance Ministry

All these have been covered, with the exception of the second point.

The definite program, or methods of outreach of each assembly or group of churches, must be worked out according to local conditions and circumstances. However, here are a few suggested means of evangelism. These are proving effective in many places, and may be adapted as the Holy Spirit leads.

1. Preaching The Gospel

Nothing can take the place of the anointed preaching of the Word of God. This is God's ordained method of saving souls. Under this heading we would include: preaching indoors, in churches, in halls, or in tents, as well as in the open air (see 1 Corinthians 1:21).

2. Campaigns With Visiting Evangelists

The anointed ministry of an evangelist can make a great impact. Evangelism is a scriptural method for the saving of souls. There are God-called evangelists whose integrity and qualifications are proved, and these may be used to great advantage in the outreach of city churches or house churches.

3. Christian Films

The success of films will depend very much upon different conditions in each locality. The right film at the right time in the right place can be greatly used by the Lord. This method of outreach, used wisely, can bring many new people into the house church, and thus reach them with the gospel.

4. The Printed Page

Publishing the Word of God is a very important form of outreach. Many organizations have demonstrated the tremendous power of the printed page.

We should aim to put a piece of Christian literature in the hands of as many people as we can. There is great opportunity for local assemblies in using this method of outreach.

5. Personal Witnessing

It seems that the great majority of souls that are saved are won through personal witnessing. One of the most effective witnesses of the house church is the personal

witness of those who have proved the grace and power of God in their lives. Believers can do this ministry at work, in social contacts, and even going from one house to another talking to people.

6. Youth Activities

It is reported that one thing lacking in every juvenile criminal is a vital Christian experience. Here is a vast field of opportunity, reaching young people — from the youngest child to the oldest teenager. House churches have a wonderful opportunity in this method of outreach.

7. Advertising

While it is true that one miracle can do more than anything else to advertise the gospel, we can also effectively use the various advertising media available to us.

Newspaper advertising has often been proved to be effective. Handbills and pieces of literature can also be used to great advantage. Radio and television are also two means by which we can reach thousands of people with the Good News.

In this modern world, the city church should seek to use all modern means to reach this modern generation. The gospel never fails to satisfy the hearts of all.

Let us seek to conform to the New Testament pattern. Let us accept the challenge of our times. Let us engage in an "operation outreach." Let us win the lost at any cost before Christ returns. We shall be well rewarded with the joy of serving the Lord here and now, and by receiving the crown from His hands when He comes.

(NOTE: For further help on *How To Win Souls*, see Section E4.)

Chapter 12

The Call Of The Harvest

"In the meantime his disciples urged him, saying, 'Rabbi, eat.'

"But he said to them, 'I have food to eat of which you do not know.'

"Therefore the disciples said to one another, 'Has anyone brought him anything to eat?'

"Jesus said to them, 'My food is to do the will of him who sent me, and to finish his work.'

"Do you not say, 'There are still four months and then comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!"

"And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit unto life eternal: that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together'" (John 4:31-36 nkjv).

A. FOLLOW THE PATTERN OF THE MASTER REAPER

Jesus was always conscious of harvest time, always ready to seize the opportunity. Frequently during His earthly ministry, He referred to the ripened harvest and the need for reapers to work in the fields.

He was the Master Reaper, and He calls for other reapers to join Him in the harvest fields.

Let us consider the example of the Master Reaper, that we might follow His pattern. In this we can share His joy on the day when we come rejoicing, bringing in the sheaves (Ps 126:6).

1. The Master's Food Must Be Our Food

John 4 gives us the background to this chapter. In verse 4 we read: "*He must needs go through Samaria.*"

Not only was this necessary because the road went that way, but we believe the Master knew there was a soul to be saved. As a result of this one soul, a great Harvest was to be reaped.

Verse 6 tells us that He was weary, and that He sat by the well. Then came the woman of Samaria to draw water, and Jesus asked her to give Him a drink. Here was His point of contact, and an opening to a conversation which would lead to a Harvest of souls in Samaria.

Consider the Master, ministering to a congregation of one.

Then the disciples returned with the food they had purchased in the city. They offered Him nourishment — they knew He was weary and hungry. To their amazement He replied, "*I have food to eat that you know not of.*"

The weariness of body and the pangs of hunger had been forgotten, as His deeper hunger was satisfied in ministering to and saving one soul from pain, hurt, misery and eternal torment.

a. Doing The Father's Will. No wonder He could say: "*My food is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.*" Here was food more nourishing, more satisfying than any delicacy the disciples could buy.

With what eager enthusiasm the Master had witnessed to one soul. How engrossed He had been in this personal evangelism. This was His food — doing His Father's will.

Friends, the Master has taught us that the food of evangelism, of soul-winning, is more to be desired than natural food, rest and the comforts of life. He was completely dedicated to the will of His Father. He had been sent to seek and save that which was lost.

And there was no "nibbling" at this meal. Some of us may be inclined to "nibble" at the will of God. The Master had an immense appetite for the Father's will: "*My food is to do the will of him that sent me, AND TO FINISH HIS WORK.*" May we too be so dedicated to the call of God in our lives that we shall never be turned aside until the work is finished and the will of God fulfilled.

Yes, friend, the Master's food must be our food!

2. The Master's Moment Must Be Our Moment

Jesus was always conscious of the pressing challenge of the hour: *"Say not ye there are yet four months and then the harvest will come? Behold, I say unto you, lift up your eyes and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest."*

It was four months from seed-sowing to reaping the corn harvest, but not so with the Harvest of souls. It seems there is sowing and reaping simultaneously.

No sooner has the seed been sown in the heart of this woman of Samaria, than the Harvest is ready for reaping. Lift up your eyes and see the Samaritans streaming out of their city: *"And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman"* (vs 39).

One sinner saved — one saved soul witnessing — and multitudes seeking after the Lord. That is the pattern which follows total obedience to the will of the Father.

In Acts 8, Philip the evangelist continues to reap the Samaritan Harvest. Even after Christ had returned to Heaven, the effects of the woman's witness was evident.

Where the Master had sown the seed and reaped a Harvest, Philip now reaps an even greater Harvest:

"And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did."

"For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed. And there was great joy in that city" (Acts 8:6-8).

a. A Limited Time. The Harvest is an appointed time. It is a time of limited opportunity; it is a time that must be recognized, a moment that must not be missed.

Throughout this age there have been many Harvest times, many periods of reaping with the gospel sickle.

However, Jesus told us that there is a great climactic Harvest at the end of this age: *"The harvest is the end of the world [or age]"* (Matt 13:39).

We are living in the time of the "Harvest of all Harvests." We are living at the end of the age. It is a set time — it is a limited time — it is the opportunity of all opportunities.

"And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle."

"And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap: for the harvest of the earth is ripe."

"And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth: and the earth was reaped" (Rev 14:14-16).

Christ is the Master Reaper. The Master's moment must be our moment!

3. The Master's Method Must Be Our Method

In Matthew 9:36-38, Jesus referred to the Harvest of His day. He exhorted: *"Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field"* (niv).

Verse 35, however, shows us the **methods** the Master used to reap the Harvest of His day: *"preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people."*

These words would seem to sum up the ministry of Jesus. He preached or proclaimed the gospel to the people. He taught and instructed the people in the Word of God. And everywhere He brought healing to the sick and deliverance to the bound.

In reaping the Harvest of our day, the **same methods** prevail: Preaching the good news, teaching the Word of God, and bringing healing and deliverance to the people.

a. Signs And Wonders Confirm The Gospel. It is not enough that we teach healing; it is not enough to have a doctrinal faith in this ministry. It is **actual** healing and deliverance by the power of God that will enable us to reap the Harvest of our time.

The gospel must be confirmed with signs and wonders. The people need not only to hear the good news, but they need the power of the Lord to deliver them.

These are the methods the Master used, and these must be our methods. God has not changed; Christ has not changed; human nature has not changed; and the power of God is still available to set the people free.

These methods are adaptable to all generations, to all civilizations, to all people. As we go forth to reap the Harvest of our generation, let us make the Master's methods our methods!

4. The Master's Motive Must Be Our Motive

Many are the motives which lead people into Christian service, but it is not for us to judge this. Nevertheless, it is imperative that we have the same motive as the Master had.

What was it that drove Him on, compelling Him to seek and save the lost and to bring healing to the sick? We find the answer in Matthew 9:36 (niv):

*"When he saw the crowds, **he had compassion on them**, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd."*

Compassion was the motive in the ministry of Jesus. As He lifted His eyes and saw the multitudes. He saw them as a vast ripened Harvest field. He was stirred in His inmost being; He was moved with compassion for them.

a. Compassion Moves Us To Action. *Compassion is not sympathy.* We may sympathize with people but do nothing to help them.

Compassion is not sentimentality. Many people are moved sentimentally by the needs of others, yet do nothing to meet their needs.

Compassion **always** moves one to take action.

When Jesus was moved with compassion on the multitude. He immediately called for laborers to go forth into the Harvest and minister to the needs of the multitude.

Consider these instances of the Lord being moved with compassion and immediately acting to meet the needs of the people:

"And Jesus...was moved with compassion towards them, and he healed their sick" (Matt 14:14).

"And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth his hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean" (Mark 1:41).

"And Jesus...was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things" (Mark 6:34).

"And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, weep not." Then He raised her son to life (Luke 7:13-15).

These and other scriptures demonstrate that compassion is much more than sympathy. Compassion moves us to action. Compassion will move us to pray. Compassion will move us to witness. Compassion will move us to study and prepare ourselves for active service.

When compassion motivates our ministry, we are not content unless souls are brought to Christ, the sick are healed and the people blessed with the fullness of the gospel. If we would follow the example of the Master Reaper, then the Master's motive must be our motive too!

5. The Master's Reward Must Be Our Reward

A reward is a recompense. Jesus said: *"He that reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit unto life eternal"* (John 4:36).

There is a reward for faithful service — there is a **crown for the worthy** laborer.

The Apostle Paul wrote: *"For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? **Are not even you** in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For you are our glory and joy"* (I Ths 2:19,20).

What joy there will be in the presence of the Lord when the sheaves are gathered in, when the final Harvest is completed!

a. "Fruit Unto Life Eternal". Not only is there the future reward, however; there is also the present reward. Those who reap the Harvest gather *"fruit unto life eternal."*

When a soul is saved, it means more than "another decision," or "another contact," or "a new member." When a soul is saved, someone has been born into life eternal.

As we go forth into the whitened Harvest fields preaching the gospel of Christ, we are gathering *"fruit unto life eternal."*

Then, when the Lord of the Harvest appears, sowers and reapers will together receive their wages.

The last gospel message will have been preached, the last personal witness will have been undertaken, the last contact will have been made, the last sheaf will have been gathered in.

Let us share the vision of the Master Reaper. Let us follow in His footsteps. Let us engage in this "Operation Outreach," and gather in the Harvest before Christ returns and this age closes. AMEN!

Section F

Rewards/Judgments

F1: God's Certificate of Approval

F1.1 – Called, Chosen, And Faithful

F1.2 – God Tests Men

F2: Crowns/Rewards

F2.1 – The Judgment Throne Of Christ

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SECTION F1

GOD'S CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

By Zac Poonen

INDEX TO THIS SECTION

F1.1 - Called, Chosen And Faithful

F1.2 - God Tests Men

Chapter 1

Called, Chosen And Faithful

Introduction

It is one thing to be accepted by God; it is quite another thing to be APPROVED by God.

The Book of Revelation speaks of the triumph of the Lamb of God. But we are told that the Lamb has an army of disciples through whom He fights His battles and overcomes. These disciples are (1) called, (2) chosen and (3) faithful.

"The Lamb is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those who are with him are called and chosen and faithful" (Rev 17:14).

Many are called, few are chosen, and fewer still are faithful. The faithful are the overcomers spoken of ten times in the Book of Revelation. They are disciples of Jesus who have not only been accepted by God, but who have been tested by Him through many circumstances and who have been approved by Him.

There were many who believed in Jesus when He was on earth, but He did not commit Himself to all of them.

The first group was **the multitudes**. *"And great multitudes followed him..."* (Matt 19:2). It was later said of this group, *"From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him"* (John 6:66).

The second group was smaller. There were **seventy** in that group with a special ministry to the seventy Gentile nations (see Genesis 10).

"After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also" (Luke 10:1).

The third group consisted of twelve men. *"And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.*

"And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles..." (Luke 6:12,13).

Out of this He chose the fourth group who consisted of only three. *"And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart,*

"And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light" (Matt 17:1,2).

This group of three were to be *"...eyewitnesses of his majesty"* (2Pet 1:16).

These represent those who *"...press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus"* (Phil 3:14).

These three are like the overcomers, the ones rewarded with God's **certificate of approval**.

A. How To Gain God's Approval

Not many who follow Jesus qualify for inclusion in this inner circle. *"When Jesus was in Jerusalem... many believed in his name, beholding his signs which he was doing. But Jesus, on his part, was not entrusting himself to them, for he knew all men"* (John 2:23,24).

1. Seek The Good Of Others

Jesus knew that the vast majority of those who believed in Him did so for selfish reasons. They came to Him only for personal blessings. Their sins had been forgiven but they did not desire to be overcomers.

To be an overcomer, one must long to be free from seeking one's own good at the expense of others.

2. Pass God's Tests

When Gideon gathered an army to fight the enemies of Israel, he had 32,000 men with him. But God knew that they were not all wholehearted. And so God whittled them down. The fearful were sent home first.

But 10,000 still remained. These were then taken down to the river and tested. Only 300 passed the test and were approved by God (Judg 7:1-8).

The way those ten thousand people drank water from the river to alleviate their thirst was the means God used to determine who qualified to be in Gideon's army. Little did they realize that they were being tested.

Ninety-seven hundred (9700) of them forgot all about the enemy while kneeling down to satisfy their thirst. Only 300 of them remained on their feet, alert, drinking the water with cupped hands.

It is in the ordinary things of life that God tests us — in our attitude toward money, pleasure, earthly honor and comfort, etc. Like Gideon's army, when God-arranged circumstances come to us, we do not realize that God is testing us, to see how we will respond.

3. Don't Be Distracted By The World

Jesus warned us not to be weighed down with the cares of this world. He said, *"Be on guard, that your hearts may not be weighted down with gluttony and drunkenness and the worries of life, and that day come on you suddenly like a trap"* (Luke 21:34).

Paul exhorted the Corinthian Christians, saying: *"From now on both those who have wives should be as though they had none; and those who weep, as though they did not weep; and those who rejoice, as though they did not*

rejoice; "And those who buy, as though they did not possess, and those who use the world, as though they did not make full use of it; for the form of this world is passing away..."

"I say this to secure your undistracted devotion to the Lord"(1Cor 7:29-35).

We must not allow anything of this world to distract us from total devotion to the Lord. The legitimate things of the world are a greater snare than the sinful things — because the legitimate things look so innocent and harmless!

We can alleviate our thirst — but we must cup our hands and drink just the bare minimum necessary and keep alert to any surprise attack from the enemy. Our mind is to be occupied with the battle the Lord has given us to fight, not on our own thirst, hunger or

wants. We have to forsake all and be willing to endure difficulties, if we are to be disciples of Jesus (2Tim 2:3).

4. Set Your Mind On Eternal Things

Like a rubber-band that is stretched, our mind can attend to the things of earth that are necessary. But once those things have been attended to, like the rubber-band springing back to its normal position when released from its tension, our minds too should spring back to the things of the Lord and of eternity.

This is what it means to have our mind *"set on things above and not on the things that are on earth"* (Col 3:2).

With many believers, however, the rubber-band works the other way. Their minds are stretched now and then to think about eternal things and, when released, come back to their normal mode of being occupied with the things of this world!

5. We Must Be Diligent

Paul exhorted Timothy, saying, *"No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier"* (2Tim 2:4). Paul was not telling Timothy how to be saved, but how he could please Christ as an effective soldier in God's army.

"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God," Paul told him (2Tim 2:15).

Timothy had already been accepted by God. He now needed to be diligent to gain God's **approval**.

Paul himself had been placed in the Christian ministry by Christ because he had gained God's approval.

He says, *"I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because he considered me faithful, putting me into service "* (1 Tim 1:12).

Paul was among the called, chosen AND FAITHFUL — and he longed that Timothy should be in that number too.

But Paul had been tested before he was approved. We are being tested too.

God never commits Himself to anyone before testing him.

The accounts given us in the Scriptures of the testings of various men — some of whom were approved and some of whom were rejected — can therefore be of great value to us for they have been written for our instruction.

B. Well-Pleasing Or Not Well-Pleasing To God

In the New Testament, we read of One with Whom the Father **was well-pleased**, and also of a group of people with whom God **was not well-pleased**. A study of this contrast is most interesting.

1. God Was Not Well-Pleased

Of the 600,000 Israelite soldiers (Num 1:46) who perished in the wilderness in their unbelief, it is written that "*God was **not well-pleased** with them*" (ICor 10:5).

Those Israelites had been redeemed out of Egypt by the blood of the lamb (symbolic of our redemption through Christ); they had been baptized in the Red Sea and in the cloud (symbolic of baptism in water and Baptism in the Holy Spirit) (ICor 10:2). Yet God was not happy with them.

a. He Took Care Of Them Anyway. God was nevertheless very good to them, in that He provided all their physical and material needs supernaturally. "*Your clothing did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years,*" Moses told them at the end of their forty years of wanderings (Deut 8:4).

God healed all their sicknesses, too. The Bible says, "*there were no sick and feeble folk among them*" (Ps 105:37 tlb).

God did many miracles for them. In fact, no single group of people in the world's history has ever seen as many miracles as those unbelieving Israelites did, with whom "*God was angry for forty years*" (Heb 3:17).

This teaches us that God answers the prayers of carnal believers too — and that He provides them with their earthly needs, even supernaturally if necessary.

The fact that God does a miracle for us proves nothing about our spirituality. It only proves that God is a good God Who makes His sun shine on the righteous and the unrighteous alike!

b. Miracles Are No Guarantee. Jesus also warned us that in the final day of Judgment, many who had done miracles in His Name would be rejected and disqualified because they had lived in sin.

He said, "*Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name cast out demons, and in your name perform many miracles?'*"

"And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you who practice lawlessness'" (Matt 7:22,23).

He was obviously referring to Christian preachers and healers who did genuine miracles in His Name. From the words of Jesus, it becomes clear that MANY of these men (not just a few and not all, but many) who have these miraculous ministries are not free from sin in their private lives and in their thoughts and attitudes. This will be exposed at the Judgment Seat of Christ, if not beforehand.

The working of miracles, by itself, is no indication that a man is approved by God. Have we understood this thoroughly? If not, we will be deceived.

2. God Was Well-Pleased

In contrast to the Israelites in the Old Testament with whom God was **not well-**

pleased, we read of Jesus in the New Testament that the Father **was** well-pleased with Him.

When Jesus was thirty, the Father spoke these words about Him publicly from Heaven: "*This is my beloved Son in whom I am well-pleased*" (Matt 3:17). And this was said before Jesus had done a single miracle or preached a single sermon!

What then was the secret of His being approved by God? It was obviously not because of His ministry, for He had not even commenced His public ministry. It was because of the type of life that He had lived for thirty years.

a. Faithful During Temptations. We are approved by God not on the basis of the success of our ministry, but rather on the basis of our faithfulness in the temptations that we face in daily life.

The only two things that we are told about the thirty "silent" years of Jesus' life (apart from the incident in the temple) are that "*He was tempted in all points as we are and yet did not sin*" (Heb 4:15) and that "*He never pleased himself*" (Rom 15:3).

He had faithfully resisted temptation at every point and He had never sought His Own wishes, desires or will in any matter. This was what delighted the Father.

b. Godly Character. Our external accomplishments may impress worldly people and carnal believers. But God is more impressed by our character. It is our character alone that can bring us God's approval.

And so if we want to know what God's opinion of us is, we must deliberately erase from our minds what we have accomplished in our ministry. We must evaluate ourselves purely by our attitude toward sin in our thought-life and self-centeredness in our actions. That and that alone is the infallible gauge of our spiritual condition.

Thus, the world-traveling healer / preacher and the busy mother who is never able to leave the confines of her home, have exactly the same opportunities to acquire God's approval.

We shall find at the Judgment Seat of Christ that many who are first here in the Christian world will be last there. Many who were considered last here on earth (because they did not have a well-recognized ministry) will be first there!

C. Jesus Is Our Example

Jesus is our Example in all things. The Father had arranged for Jesus to spend the first thirty years of His earthly life in two places basically — His home and His place of work (the carpenter shop).

It was Jesus' faithfulness in these two places that gained Him the approval of the Father.

This is a matter of great encouragement for us, for we all find ourselves in these two places constantly — our home and our place of work. And it is in these two places that God most often tests us.

1. Faithfulness At Home

Jesus' home was a poor home. Joseph and Mary were so poor that they could not even afford to offer a lamb as a burnt offering. They didn't have American "prosperity-preachers" to teach them how to be rich.

The Law had commanded that "*if she cannot afford a lamb, then she shall take two turtledoves or two young pigeons...*" (Lev 12:8). And Joseph and Mary took "*according to what was said in the Law of the Lord, 'a pair of turtledoves, or two young*

pigeons" (Luke 2:24).

Of Jesus it was said, *"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor..."* (2Cor 8:9).

Jesus had at least four younger brothers and two younger sisters, living with Him in the same house. Mark 6:3 tells us that the people of His home town remarked concerning Jesus:

"Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James and Joses, and Judas, and Simon? Are not his sisters here with us?"

One can imagine the pressures and struggles that Jesus faced as He grew up in that poor home.

To top it all, His younger brothers were unbelievers. It is written: *"For neither did his brothers believe in him"* (John 7:5).

They must have taunted Him in many ways. He had no private room in His house to retreat to, when facing the pressure of temptation from others in the house.

There must have been the fighting and the squabbling and the scolding and the selfishness (common to all homes) in that home too.

And amid such circumstances, Jesus was tempted in all points as we are; and He never sinned even once in a deed, word, thought, attitude or motive, or in any other way.

If Jesus had come in some different form than us, in some flesh that was incapable of being tempted, then there would have been no virtue in His living in purity in such circumstances. But He was made like us in all things.

The Word of God says, *"He HAD TO BE MADE like his brethren in all things, that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God"*(Heb2:17).

He has undergone the pressure of every temptation that we can ever face. This is what gives us great encouragement in the moments when we are tempted, that we too can overcome. This is the hope that Satan seeks to rob us of, by trying to hide from us this glorious truth that Christ came in our flesh and was tempted exactly as we are.

2. Faithfulness At Work

As a carpenter in Nazareth, Jesus must have faced the temptations that all who engage in any form of business face. But He would never deceive anyone to whom He sold anything. He would never demand too much for any article and He would never compromise on any point of righteousness, whatever the cost (or loss) to Him may have been.

He was not in competition with the other carpenters in Nazareth. He only worked to earn His living. Thus, through buying and selling and the handling of money (as a carpenter), Jesus faced all the temptations that we face in the area of money. And He overcame.

Jesus lived in submission to imperfect foster parents for so many years. This must have exposed Him to various forms of inward temptations (in the realm of attitudes); and yet He never sinned.

Mary was among those waiting for that empowering, sanctifying Baptism in the Holy Spirit and Fire in the Upper Room (Acts 1:14).

Lacking that power, it is probable that Joseph and Mary raised their voices and argued with each other, just as most married couples do.

Jesus, on the other hand, was living in perfect victory. Yet He never despised

them. If He had, He would have sinned. He respected them, even though He was far purer than they. There we see the beauty of His humility.

Thus we see that Jesus was not living an uneventful life during those thirty years in Nazareth. Jesus was in the midst of a conflict against temptation all the time — a conflict that increased in intensity as each year went by.

Before He could become our Savior and our High Priest, the Father had to take the Captain of our salvation through the entire range of temptations possible to human beings.

God's Word says, *"It was fitting for him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings"* (Heb 2:10).

There were still a few temptations (such as the ones that come through nationwide fame, etc.) that Jesus would face in the last three and half years of His earthly life. But the common temptations that we all face at home and in our place of work, He had encountered and overcome in His first thirty years. And the Father gave Jesus His "**certificate of approval**" at His baptism.

D. Seek A Transformed Character

If only our eyes were opened to see the basis on which God gives us His approval. It would revolutionize our lives totally. No longer would any of us covet a worldwide ministry. Rather, we would long for faithfulness in the moments of temptation in daily life.

We would pray for a baptism of fire that would produce a transformed character as well as praying for power that would produce miracles. Thus our minds would be renewed to have our priorities right.

Take encouragement in this. God's greatest rewards and His highest commendations are reserved for those who face temptation with the same attitude that Jesus faced it. Jesus' attitude was this: **'I would rather die than commit a sin or disobey My Father at even one point.'**

This is the meaning of the exhortation in Philippians 2:5-8, which says, *"Have this attitude in you which was in Christ Jesus... who became obedient even to the point of death."*

Irrespective of our gift, ministry, station in life, sex or age, all of us have the same opportunity to be overcomers and to be among the called, chosen and faithful.

Chapter 2

God Tests Men

Introduction

The biographies of men of God and of those who failed God have been written in the Bible for our instruction and our warning. There is much that we can learn, if we meditate on them, with an ear attuned to the voice of the Spirit.

When reading of people in the Old Testament, one fact that we must bear in mind is that they all lived in a period prior to the coming of '**grace**' through Jesus Christ.

"For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth were given through Jesus

Christ" (John 1:17). In this verse, the word "grace" means "enablement." The law contained truth but did not empower those who embraced the law to keep its holy commandments.

"Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." That means the law was no longer on stone, but written in our hearts.

"... I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people" (Jer 31:33).

We are given the Holy Spirit to empower us to keep the law of God. *"For the Spirit... has made me free from sin... For what the law could not do in that if was weak... God sent his own Son... That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us..."* (Rom 8:2-4).

Therefore, we have a power available to us that enables us to be judged by a higher standard. The Old Testament saints were not expected to rise to New Testament standards.

Matthew 19:8,9 illustrates this. There Jesus explained to the Pharisees why Moses permitted divorce under the Old Covenant. He said, *"Because of your hardness of heart, Moses permitted you to divorce your wives."*

But under the New Covenant, God takes away our hard heart and gives us a soft heart instead.

"A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart... and I will give you an heart of flesh" (Eze 36:26). And so divorce is not permitted now.

God is called *"the God who tests the righteous"* (Jer 20:12). He does not tempt any man to do evil. *"God cannot be tempted by evil, and he himself does not tempt anyone"* (Jas 1:13).

But He does TEST the righteous.

A. God Tested Job
Job was one of God's choice servants. God could point him out to Satan, as one man on earth who feared God in all his ways.

"The Lord said to Satan, 'Have you considered my servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, fearing God and turning away from evil'" (Job 1:8).

God says nothing about Job's intelligence or his talents or his wealth — for these have no value to God. He only points out his purity and his uprightness. As in the case of Jesus, it was Job's character and not his accomplishments or his ministry that delighted the heart of God.

Even Satan has supernatural gifts and intelligence. He has Bible-knowledge too! What God looks for, however, is character. When God tests us, He tests our character — not our knowledge of the Bible.

When God looks for a man whom He can boast in, whom He can point out to Satan, He looks for a man of character — a blameless and an upright man, one who fears God and hates evil.

We may have a reputation among other believers for our spirituality. But can God, Who knows us through and through, point us out to Satan? Such a certificate as God gave Job is greater than any earthly honor that we can ever get. All the empty honor of

Christendom too is as useless rubbish compared to that.

So the most important question is not "What opinion do others have of my spirituality?" but rather "Can God point me out to Satan as one whom He can boast in?"

1. Four Tests Used By God

When God told Satan about Job, Satan said that Job was serving God because he had benefited and profited thereby.

a. Loss Of Possessions. *"Satan answered the Lord, 'Does Job fear God for nothing? Hast thou not made a hedge about him and his house and all that he has, on every side?"*

"Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. But put forth thy hand now and touch all that he has; he will surely curse thee to thy face" (Job 1:9-11).

God refuted that charge and allowed Satan to test Job to find out for himself that his charge was not true. God did that because He knew Job's integrity.

How about us? Do we serve God for material profit? Would God have to acknowledge that Satan was right, if Satan pointed to any of us as one who served God for personal gain?

Alas! The world is filled with Christian workers and pastors who are in Christian work for personal gain — some for a salary, some for honor and position, and some in order to get free trips to Western countries. Anyone who does Christian work for personal gain is serving mammon and not God.

Service for the Lord performed from right motive will always cost us something.

Consider the words of David, when he was about to offer a sacrifice to the Lord. He said: *"I will not offer to the Lord my God that which cost me nothing"* (2Sam 24:24).

How few there are who display David's attitude. True service for the Lord will usually bring us material loss, not gain. The profit will be spiritual. That which seeks material gain, on the other hand, belongs to Babylon and not to the heavenly Jerusalem.

The Bible says concerning spiritual Babylon, *"The merchants of these things became rich from her"* (Rev 18:15).

In the midst of self-seeking Christian workers, Paul could point to a Timothy as a rare exception.

He said concerning him, *"I have no one else of kindred spirit who will genuinely be concerned for your welfare. For they all seek after their own interests, not those of Christ Jesus"* (Phil 2:19-21).

Paul was not deceived. He knew the spiritual condition of his co-workers. God isn't deceived concerning us either.

God had such confidence in Job that he could permit Satan to test him.

Even though Job lost all his children and his vast wealth in one day, yet he continued to worship and serve God. He said: *"Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I shall return there. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord"* (Job 1:20-22).

He knew that all he had — children, property and even health itself — were God's free gifts to him. God had every right to take these away when He so desired. One cannot truly worship God until one has forsaken all — that is, given up the right to possess anything as one's own.

b. Loss Of Health. God then allowed Satan to go one step further and to afflict

Job with boils from head to foot.
Sickness is from Satan. But even that can be used by God to sanctify and perfect His servants.

Paul was afflicted by a thorn in the flesh, which he specifically says came from Satan. It was not a messenger of God but a messenger of Satan. Yet God allowed it to remain and would not remove it (despite Paul's repeated prayers). It served the purpose of keeping Paul humble.

Paul says, *"Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations I received from God, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me — to keep me from exalting myself. Concerning this I entreated the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is perfected in your weakness'"* (2Cor 12:7-9).

c. Accusing Wife. Satan's third step was to afflict Job through his wife. *"Then Job's wife said to him, 'Do you still holdfast your integrity? Curse God and die!'"* (Job 2:9). It can be a terrible test of your sanctification, when your own wife turns against you and accuses you.

The Word of God commands: *"Husbands, love your wives, and do not be embittered against them... Love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave himself up for her"* (Col 3:19; Eph 5:25).

A husband must never be bitter against his wife under any circumstances; he must love her at all times, even if she is an instrument of Satan against him.

If you have a difficult wife, instead of complaining of your lot in life and envying others who have godly wives, you could look at your circumstances as a means to your own sanctification.

God tests you under those very circumstances to see if you qualify to get His **certificate of approval**. He tests you, when your wife shouts at you and taunts you, to see whether you qualify to be a true representative of Jesus Who was even called insane by His Own relatives.

The gospel record says, *"Jesus' own people... went out to take custody of him; for they were saying, 'He has lost his senses'"* (Mark 3:21). Jesus bore that insult with patience. We are called to follow Him and to represent Him.

d. Accusing Friends. Satan's fourth step was to accuse Job through his preacher friends (see Job 4 to 25).

This was the hardest blow for Job to bear — because those preachers came to him and acted like prophets of God telling him that all his sicknesses were due to his secret sins. Little did those preachers realize that they were unconsciously acting as agents for the 'Accuser of the brethren' (Rev 12:10).

But God permitted them to do that in order to purify Job.

B. Overcomers Through Grace

Today God promises *"sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law, but under grace"* (Rom 6:14). But Job lived in an age when some of the resources of grace were not available to him.

And so he finally yielded to self-pity, self-justification, depression and gloom. Occasionally his faith shone through the darkness. But his was an up-and-down

experience.

Now that grace has come through Jesus Christ, if we are tested similarly there is no need for even a moment of depression or gloom. The commands in the New Testament are, *"Be anxious for nothing... rejoice in the Lord always... give thanks for everything..."*, etc. (Phil 4:6,4).

Such commands were not given in the Old Testament, because grace had not yet come. We should acknowledge God's hand in everything. Grace is available at every moment to keep us victorious constantly.

1. We Can Be Overcomers

Paul's triumphant cry was, *"Thanks be to God, who always leads us in his triumph in Christ"* (2Cor2:14).

We can be overcomers now, even if we lose our property and our children, or even if our wives accuse us. If fellow-believers misunderstand us and criticize us, or if anything else happens that God sees fit to allow in our lives, let us *"...rejoice in the Lord always"* (Phil 4:4).

2. A Testimony To Satan

Thus God demonstrates to Satan that He has a remnant on earth, who will not only submit to all His dealings with them, but who will also accept every trial joyfully, convinced that these light afflictions are designed by God to produce for them an eternal weight of glory.

The Bible says, *"For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen"* (2Cor 4:17,18).

The New Testament tells us that God desires to show His wisdom to the rulers and authorities in the heavenlies through the Church. Ephesians 3:10 says, *"In order that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places."*

Ephesians 6:12 tells us that those rulers are the evil spirits in the heavenly places.

The things that befall us are not accidental, but specifically planned for us and weighed out (so that they will never be beyond our capacity to bear) *"according to the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God"* (Acts 2:23).

Trials have the dual aim of transforming us unto the likeness of Christ, and of manifesting to satanic spirit-rulers in the heavenlies that God still has a people on earth who will love, obey and praise Him, in faith, in all circumstances.

3. A Trial Of Our Faith

Every trial that we could go through is a trial of our faith. Even in Job's time, he could say, *"God knows every detail of what is happening to me"* (Job 23:10 tlb).

Today we can go one step further and say (on the basis of Romans 8:28) that *"God PLANS and works for good every detail concerning me."*

Do we really believe, concerning everything that comes across our path, that God has planned it all in perfect wisdom and love, and that His power is almighty enough to deliver us from the testing, when the right time comes?

Will God find in you and me those whom He can boldly point out to Satan as men who will never complain or grumble under any circumstance, but who will only give thanks for all things at all times?

C. The Testing Of Peter And Judas

Among the twelve apostles that Jesus chose, perhaps the greatest contrast in personality was between Peter and Judas Iscariot. Peter was simple, unlearned and warm-hearted. Judas Iscariot was intelligent, shrewd and ambitious.

God had a great calling for Simon Peter. But it could not be fulfilled until he had been tested and approved.

Peter, however, had no idea about God's wonderful plan, at the time that Jesus called him. God unfolds His plan to us only one step at a time.

1. Peter's Attitude Toward Money

One day Jesus came into Peter's boat and told him to put the boat out into deep water and to let down his nets for a catch. Peter did so and caught the greatest catch of his lifetime (Luke 5:1-11).

If Peter had been like some Christian businessmen today, he would have said something like this to Jesus: "Lord, this is fantastic. Let us — You and I — be partners. You do the preaching and I will support You financially.

"If my fishing business is going to be like this, I will soon be the richest businessman in all Israel; and my tithes will support not only You but a host of other Christian workers in many parts of this land and abroad as well!"

Peter could then have gone around the world giving his testimony at various conferences for businessmen and taught businessmen about a Christ Who could make their businesses prosper. Such is the reasoning of the carnal mind.

a. Gave Up His Business. But Peter didn't do that. When Jesus called him to leave his nets, he left his fishing business immediately and followed Jesus. He passed the test.

Little do Christians realize, when God prospers their ways so that they earn more money, that they are being tested. Most Christians fail the test here. They settle for being empty millionaires when they might have become apostles.

Years later, Peter — far from being a wealthy businessman — could only say, "*I do not possess silver and gold*" (Acts 3:6). But he had something far better than silver and gold. He had given up the rubbish of earthly wealth for the eternal wealth of Christ's Kingdom.

b. "Rich Toward God". Christian bookstores are flooded these days with books that claim to teach Christians how to become materially prosperous and to make money, with Jesus as a partner in one's life! Christians are encouraged in these books to claim expensive cars, houses and lands — all by faith in Christ.

A child can see the earthly-mindedness of these writers, yet many believers are being deceived. The testimonies given therein of people receiving material things may all be true — but how many of them realized that God was testing them when He gave them wealth?

They were being tested when they became rich to see whether they would learn to give away their wealth and become 'rich toward God' (Luke 12:21). But I suspect that most failed the test — unlike Peter.

Self is the center of every child of Adam. When we are converted, Self does not die, but seeks in subtle ways to constrain God to serve its own interests.

Self is the source of carnal Christianity that majors on getting material and physical blessings from God. It comes to us nowadays in books, clothed in the garb of

'faith.'

Yet these books serve a purpose, too, in that they reveal what the hearts of their readers truly desire — the earthly or the heavenly. Thus the wheat is sifted from the chaff in Christendom!

"For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you" (I Cor 11:19).

Heresies reveal the heart and motives of men. They separate the approved from the disapproved.

2. Peter's Attitude Toward Correction

We see how Jesus tested Peter in yet another way when He rebuked Peter publicly with the sharpest rebuke that He ever gave any human being.

When Jesus told His disciples that He was going to be rejected and crucified, Peter — with intense human love for the Lord — *"...took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, 'God forbid it, Lord! This shall never happen to you'"* (Matt 16:22).

Jesus turned around and publicly said to Peter (in the hearing of the other apostles):

"Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling-block to me" (Matt 16:23).

a. Not Offended. It is quite insulting to our ego to be rebuked publicly. It is far worse to be called 'Satan.'

Yet Peter never got offended.

When many of Jesus' disciples got offended with the message of 'death to self that Jesus preached, and left Him, Jesus asked the twelve apostles whether they would like to go away, too. It was Peter who replied, saying, *"Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life"* (John 6:68).

These words were uttered by Peter soon after he had received a strong rebuke from Jesus' lips. That is what makes Peter's words even more wonderful. He felt that any words of rebuke from Jesus' lips were only words of eternal life!

Our ability to accept rebuke from an older brother is a test of our humility. Peter passed the test with flying colors.

3. Judas' Attitude Toward Money

Judas Iscariot, being one of the twelve apostles whom Jesus selected, had just as good a chance as the others to qualify for the certificate "Approved by God."

But like the others he, too, had to be tested.

The gospel record says that *"Judas Iscariot became a traitor"* (Luke 6:16). This implies that he was just as sincere as the other eleven disciples when Jesus chose him. But he backslid terribly through selfish ambition.

The Bible warns us, *"Where selfish ambition exists, there is disorder and every evil thing"* (Jas 3:16).

Judas' life is a warning to all of us, for it is possible for any one of us to become like him, if we are not careful.

He was the treasurer of Jesus' team and he had ample opportunity to prove his faithfulness in the area of money. He could have become one of the authors of the New Testament epistles, if he had been faithful. His name would certainly have been on one of the foundation stones of the wall of the New Jerusalem.

The Bible says that *"the wall of the city [New Jerusalem] had twelve foundation stones, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb"* (Rev

21:14).

But Judas Iscariot failed when tested.

a. He Was A Thief. One of the uses of the money-bag was to have funds to give to the poor and the needy (as we can see from John 13:29): *"For some were supposing, because Judas had the money bag, that Jesus was saying to him, that he should give something to the poor."*

Judas professed to have an interest in this activity, but he stole all the money that was donated for the poor.

It is written that *"Judas Iscariot... was not concerned about the poor, but he was a thief, and as he had the money box, he used to steal what was put into it"* (John 12:4-6).

We could ask the question, "Why didn't Jesus expose Judas straightaway?"

To answer that question, we could ask another question, "Why doesn't Jesus expose all those who are making money for themselves in the name of Christianity today?" There are thousands who serve God for money even today, and who are not 100 percent honest with the money that is given to them for God's work.

If only Judas could have known what he was going to miss by choosing money, how differently he might have acted! And if only today's Christian workers knew what they are missing by choosing money, how differently they would act in relation to money!

b. He Wanted It All. Judas' problem was that he loved to receive but hated to give. Jesus had taught His disciples the blessedness of giving. *"The Lord Jesus himself said, 'If is more blessed to give than to receive'"* (Acts 20:35).

Peter understood that. But not Judas. Judas thought that happiness came through receiving more and more.

Every Christian falls into one of these two categories: Those like Peter, who forsake all and who love to give to God and to others in need; and those, like Judas, who love to receive and to hoard up for themselves.

If ever these 'Judases' give, it will be in a miserly way, just to ease their conscience — and that, too, with great reluctance! They have no reluctance, however, when it comes to receiving!

God tests us in the matter of receiving and giving to see whether we desire to live by the principles of the world or of His Kingdom.

If we are to be approved by God, we will have to radically crucify 'the love to receive gifts' that is found in our flesh. We will have to unlearn old habits and learn new ones instead. As much as we have been experts at receiving gifts in the past, we can now become experts at giving.

But we can't hope to become experts at anything overnight. It is only constant practice that can make us experts at anything. We have to begin to give, and then continue at it until our character has been truly transformed, so that finally God Himself can testify concerning us that we would rather give than receive.

The true disciple of Jesus is one who has learned how to be rich toward God and how to give to others who are in need. In his own time of need, he will find that God gives back to him in the same measure that he gave out.

Jesus told His disciples:

"Give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together running over, they will pour into your lap. For whatever measure you deal out to others, it will be dealt to you in return" (Luke 6:38).

Jesus taught that if we were unfaithful with money we could never hope to receive spiritual riches from God.

He said, "If you have not been faithful in the use of unrighteous mammon, [money] who will entrust the true riches to you?" (Luke 16:11).

The Lord put Judas Iscariot on probation with the money-bag and he failed. His loss was eternal. Today you and I are on probation with our money-bag.

4. Judas' Attitude Toward Correction

We saw that Peter was tested by Jesus in his reaction to being corrected publicly. Judas was tested in this area too. But unlike Peter, he failed.

When a woman poured an alabaster vial of perfume at Jesus' feet, out of gratitude for what the Lord had done for her, Judas expressed his opinion that it was a waste of money.

Jesus, however, took the side of the woman and said: "Let her alone, in order that she may keep it for the day of my burial. For the poor you have always with you; but you do not always have me" (John 12:7,8).

a. He Was Offended. One can hardly say that Jesus rebuked Judas Iscariot at all here. In fact, compared to the way Jesus rebuked Peter, this was nothing! Yet Judas Iscariot was offended.

In the parallel passage in Matthew's Gospel, we read what Judas did immediately after this event:

"*THEN Judas Iscariot went to the chief priests and said, 'What are you willing to give me to deliver him up to you?'*" (Matt 26:14,15).

The word 'Then' is significant here. The immediate provocation that prompted Judas to go to the priests and offer to betray Jesus to them, was his being corrected by the Lord.

Peter passed the test triumphantly. But Judas failed miserably.

Today you and I are tested whenever we are corrected by those whom God has placed in authority over us.

Children are tested when they are corrected by their parents. Wives are tested when they are corrected by their husbands. Employees are tested when they are corrected by their employers. And in the church, we are all tested when we are corrected by our elders.

Our reaction to correction is one of the clearest tests of our humility. If we get offended, we are in company with Judas Iscariot.

If we find that we do get offended when corrected, we need to cry out to God for help that we might die to our ego, so that we don't miss out on our eternal reward.

Eternal issues hung on Peter's and Judas' reactions to correction. Little did they realize that they were under probation.

Little do many of us realize that God is watching our reaction to correction as well.

You cannot be approved by God if you are unwilling to be corrected or if you get offended when corrected.

D. The Company Of God's Approved Ones

In Revelation 14:1-5, we read of a small company of disciples who followed the Lord wholeheartedly in their earthly lives. They stand with Jesus in the final day, as

overcomers — for God was able to accomplish His full purpose in their lives.

As we see in the Book of Revelation, those whose sins are forgiven are a vast multitude whom no man can number.

"After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude, which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands; and they cry out with a loud voice, saying, 'Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb'" (Rev 7:9,10).

But the company of disciples mentioned in Revelation 14 is a much smaller one, that can be numbered — 144,000. Whether the number is literal or symbolic (as much of the Book of Revelation is) is immaterial. The point is that it is a very small number when compared with the great multitude.

1. True And Faithful

This is the remnant that was true and faithful to God on earth. They were tested and obtained God's **certificate of approval**. God Himself certifies concerning them that *"they have kept themselves pure... they follow the Lamb wherever he goes... no lie [guile] was found in their mouth... they are blameless "* (vss 4,5).

These are God's first-fruits. They comprise the Bride of Christ. On the day of the marriage of the Lamb, it will become clear to everyone that it was worth it all to be utterly true and faithful to God in all things — both big and small.

In that day, the cry in Heaven will be, *"Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and his bride has made herself ready"*(Rev 19:7).

2. Obeyed His Commands

Those who sought their own gain and honor on earth will realize fully only in that day how great their loss really is. Those who loved father or mother, wife or children, brothers and sisters, their own life or material things above the Lord, will discover their eternal loss in that day.

Then it will become evident that the wisest people on earth were those who obeyed the commands of Jesus totally and who sought with all their hearts to walk even as He walked.

The empty honor of Christendom will then be seen clearly for the rubbish that it is. Money and material things, we will then see, were only the means by which God tested us to see whether we qualified to be in the Bride of Christ.

Oh, that our eyes might be opened even now to see something of the realities that we shall see clearly in that day! The greatest honor that any human being can have is to find a place among the overcomers in that day — as one who has been tested and approved by God Himself!

"Yea doubtless, and I count all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,

"And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

"That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection from among the dead.

"Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.

"Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,

"I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

"Let us therefore, as many as be mature, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded. God shall reveal even this unto you" (Phil 3:8-15).

"He who has ears to hear, let him hear" (Luke 14:35).

SECTION F2

Crowns / Rewards

Researched and adapted by Ralph Mahoney

Chapter 1

The Judgment Throne Of Christ

Introduction

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2Cor 5:10).

The Greek word for "Judgment Seat" is **bema**, which means "raised platform." It is NOT a "Judge's Bench," where a stern jurist sits and decides what kind of punishment to give to each defendant.

The "Bema" was more like a raised platform, or "reviewing stand," where the judges of a contest or race decide which REWARDS to give to each contestant or runner.

Christ will sit at that **bema** or "reviewing stand." If, after being born again (John 3:3), we live a life of faithful service to the Lord, a life rich in good works, Christ will reward us at His Judgment Throne!

At the Judgment Seat of Christ, we will be rewarded — or our works will burn as hay and we may have little or no reward.

"Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

"If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire" (1 Cor 3:10-15).

"If any man's work abide," Paul said, "he shall receive a reward."

Let us look at such rewards or "crowns."

A. Salvation Versus Rewards For Christians

There is a vast difference between the **doctrine of salvation** for the lost, and the **doctrine of rewards** for the saved.

1. Salvation Is Free

Salvation is *"the gift of God, not of works"* (Eph 2:8,9). Salvation is received by faith in what Jesus did on the cross. *"This is my blood..., which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins"* (Matt 26:28 niv). *"...Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures "* (1Cor 15:3). When I believe that the blood Jesus shed on the cross was the full payment for my sin, I have everlasting life (John 3:36).

2. Rewards Are Earned

Rewards are according to the **works** of the believer (Matt 16:27). The scripture verses from 1 Corinthians 3:8-15 give a most revealing insight into rewards.

a. Rewarded For Labor. Every believer will be **rewarded** according to his own **labor** (vs 8). We do not labor for salvation.

b. God's Fellow Workers. *"We are God's fellow workers"* (vs 9) — not for salvation, but for rewards.

c. Build On Christ. The believer is to build on the Lord Jesus Christ — the only foundation (vs 11).

d. Choice Of Materials. The believer has a choice of two main types of building materials: *"gold, silver, precious stones"* — eternal materials; or *"wood, hay, straw"* — temporal materials (vs 12; cf. 2Cor 4:18).

e. Receive A Reward. The believer who builds on Christ with eternal materials, *"gold, silver, precious stones,"* will receive a reward.

f. Receive No Reward. Those who build on Christ with temporal materials, *"wood, hay, straw,"* will receive no reward. The *"wood, hay, straw"* works will be destroyed at the *"judgment seat of Christ"* (2Cor 5:10), and the believer will suffer loss —not the loss of salvation, but the loss of his crown or his reward.

3. Ashamed At His Coming

The Lord Jesus Christ has given every Christian a **job to do**. If we ignore His commands, we will be very sad and frightened when we stand before Him at the Judgment! Note John's warning:

*"Little children, abide in him so that when he shall appear, you will **not be ashamed** at his coming"* (1 Jn 2:28).

The word "abide" means to be like a tree whose roots go deep so it can bear much fruit. We must be deeply rooted in Christ (see John 15:5, 8).

The word "ashamed" means "to **shrink back** in fear and lose face."

Some believers will shrink back from Christ in shame at His coming because of their fruitless lives. They were fruitless because they were not "deeply rooted" in Christ (see Colossians 2:7; Matthew 13:3-10;18-23).

In the first year of his ministry, a pastor sat at the bedside of a dying friend. As they talked of the home-going of the dying man, tears filled his eyes. The pastor thought his friend was afraid to die, and attempted to speak words of encouragement to him.

But the man said, "I am not **afraid** to die; I am **ashamed** to die." He went on to say that Christ was his Savior, but that he had lived for himself, and now had to meet the Lord Jesus Christ empty-handed. His life loomed up before him as *"wood, hay, straw."* He was saved but he had few works of apparent eternal value to offer the Lord (1 Cor 3:15).

B. Seven Crowns Christians Can Receive
1. The Crown Of Life

"Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him" (Jas 1:12).

This reward could be called the crown of those who love God. Do those who love God use His blessings only for themselves, or pray only for their own prosperity and comfort, or demand that He solve all their problems? No — they show it by enduring trials for His sake.

Through his love for God, the believer finds strength to overcome temptation and persevere when trials come. Paul said, *"We also glory in tribulations."*

Do we glory in tribulations? We can do so only if the *"love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit"*(Rom 5:3-5). Without love for God in the heart of the believer, trials can cause him to become bitter and critical; he may lose the *"crown of life"* (vs 12).

a. Faithful Unto Death. All believers have eternal life (John 3:15,16), but not all believers will be rewarded with the *"crown of life."* This crown will be given to those who are *"faithful until death"* (Rev 2:10).

To receive the *"crown of life,"* the believer must love the Lord more than his own life.

"For whoever desires to save his life [live for self] will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's [live for Christ at all cost] will save it" (Mark 8:35).

This reward will be given to those who live for Christ, and endure temptations, in the power of the love of God (1Cor 10:13).

2. The Imperishable Crown

"Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize.

"Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last. But we do it to get a crown that will last forever.

"Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly, I do not fight like a man beating the air.

"No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize " (I Cor 9:24-27 niv).

Paul uses the Greek games to illustrate the spiritual race of the believer. They ran to win a *"perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown"* (vs 25). No young man could compete in the games unless he was a Greek citizen, born of Greek parents. No unsaved person can participate in the service of the Lord for rewards; only those born of God are eligible (John 3:3).

a. Run To Win. The **Runner's Crown** is given to the Christian who disciplines himself and keeps his body and bodily desires under strict control. Just as an athlete disciplines himself so that he can win the race, so we run the race that is set before us (Heb 12:1).

The athlete must deny himself many gratifications of the body, so the believer must *"discipline his body and bring it into subjection"* or he will be *"disqualified"* (vs 27). He will not lose his salvation, but he can lose his rewards. Christ has a special reward for the believer who struggles and battles to resist temptation. Here is how to win the

"imperishable

crown":

1) **Deny Yourself.** The believer must deny himself anything that would weigh him down and hold him back (Heb 12:1).

2) **Eyes On Christ.** The believer must keep his eyes fixed on Christ, not looking to the right or left (Heb 12:2).

3) **Strength In The Lord.** The believer must find his strength in the Lord (Eph 6:10-18).

4) **A Living Sacrifice.** The believer must give his body as a living sacrifice to the Lord (Rom 12:1,2).

5) **Unencumbered.** The believer must, by faith, refuse anything that would impede spiritual progress (Heb 11:24-29).

Do not be a spiritual spectator. Enter the race; run to win the *"imperishable crown."*

3. The Crown Of Rejoicing

"What is our hope, our joy, our crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you [the Thessalonians, whom Paul's missionary work had won for Christ]?"

"Indeed, you are our glory and joy" (I Ths 2:19,20). This crown is awarded to believers who persuade others to believe on Christ as their Lord and Savior.

a. Given To Soul-Winners. The "crown of rejoicing" (vs 19) is the soulwinner's crown.

The greatest work you are privileged to do for the Lord is to bring others to a knowledge of Christ as Savior.

Much of your joy in Heaven will be determined by the souls you have had a part in bringing to Christ. Paul tells the Thessalonian believers that they are his *"glory and joy,"* now and when Jesus comes.

b. Reasons For Winning Souls. The Bible also gives these reasons for winning souls:

1) **It Is Wise.** It is wise to win souls to Christ (Prov 11:30).

2) **An Attack On Sin.** It is an attack on sin to win souls to Christ (Jas 5:20).

3) **A Cause For Joy.** It is a cause for joy in Heaven to win souls to Christ (Luke 15:10).

4) **Shine Forever.** Soul-winners will shine as the stars forever (Dan 12:3).

c. How You Can Win Souls:

1) **Witness With Your Life.** Live so that others may see Christ in you (2Cor 3:2;cf.Gal2:20).

2) **Witness With Your Mouth,** trusting the Holy Spirit to give power to the spoken word (Acts 1:8).

3) **Witness By Your Giving** tithes and offerings, so that others may preach Christ, and you will have *"fruit [reward] that abounds to your account"* (Phil 4:15-17;cf.2Cor9:6).

God has promised that your labor will not be in vain in the Lord (1Cor15:58).The soul-winner will not rejoice alone; all of Heaven will rejoice with him when he receives the *"crown of rejoicing"* (vs 19).

4. The Crown Of Righteousness

"But you... endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties

of your ministry... Now there is in store the **crown of righteousness**, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day — and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing" (2Tim 4:5-8).

The "crown of righteousness" (vs 8) is a reward. It is not to be confused with the "righteousness of God" which the believer receives when he becomes a Christian. We put our faith and trust in Christ because, "...he [God] hath made him [Christ] to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2Cor 5:21).

This righteousness is imputed to **all** those saved by grace through faith. The "crown of righteousness" is a reward to be earned by the saved.

a. They Loved His Appearing. The apostle looked ahead to the "judgment seat of Christ" (2Cor 5:10) where the "crown of righteousness" will be given to those who "have loved his appearing" (2Tim 4:8).

If the believer looks for, and loves, the Second Coming of Christ, it will affect his whole life. Look at the dynamic impact this truth had on the life of the Apostle Paul. He could say:

1) Fought The Good Fight. "I have fought the good fight" (vs 7; cf. I Cor 15:32). He fought a spiritual battle throughout his Christian life, and won. He never surrendered to the enemies of righteousness (Eph 6:12).

2) Finished The Race. "I have finished the race!" (vs 7). He had a course to travel, and he did not detour the hard places; neither did he look back (Luke 9:61,62). He finished his course with his eyes fixed on Christ (Phil 1:6).

3) Kept The Faith. "I have kept the faith" (vs 7). He preached the "whole counsel of God," never betraying any of the great biblical doctrines (Acts 20:24-31).

Do you long for His appearing? Do you fulfill all the duties of your ministry and evangelize? If so, this crown is for you.

How important it is for the believer to look with a heart of love for the Second Coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, that he may receive the "crown of righteousness" (vs 8).

5. The Crown Of Glory
"Feed the flock of God which is among you... not for filthy lucre...Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock.
"And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a **crown of glory** that fadeth not away" (1 Pet 5:2-4).

a. Faithful Shepherd's Crown. The "crown of glory" (vs 4) is a special reward for faithful, obedient, God-called pastors. They will receive this reward when the "Chief Shepherd appears." It is eternal; it "does not fade away" (vs 4).

Every believer may share in the pastor's "crown of glory." "He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward" (Matt 10:41). Support the faithful, God-called pastor by praying for him and encouraging him in the work of the Lord.

Undergird his ministry with your tithes and offerings (Mal 3:10), giving freely of your time to the Lord's service. God will reward you for supporting His chosen servant by allowing you to share in your pastor's reward. The pastor will earn this "crown of glory" by:

1) Proclaiming The Word. He is to proclaim the Word of God without fear or favor, and when necessary, to "convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and

teaching" (2 Tim 4:1-5).

2) Taking Spiritual Oversight Of The Church. A pastor is responsible to God for the message preached to his people. No pastor should preach to please the people; he is to please his Lord (Gal 1:10).

3) Being An Example To The Church. He is not to serve for the reward of money. However, the church is responsible to care for his material needs (I Tim 5:18). He is to be a spiritual leader, and not a dictator. He is to walk with God by faith.

"And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away" (I Pet 5:4).

Some who are called "Pastor" and have been elected and paid to be the chief administrators of organized institutional churches will miss this crown because of failure and sin.

6. The Overcomer's Crown

"...hold that fast which you have, that no man receive thy crown. Him that overcometh will I make..." (Rev 3:11).

The overcomer is promised a crown if he holds steadfast to that which has been given him by God.

It is possible to lose your overcomer's crown. That which should have been given to you is received by another.

Jacob received that which belonged to Esau (Gen 25:33, 27:35,36). Matthias received that which belonged to Judas (Acts 1:20,26).

7. The Martyr's Crown

"Fear none of those things which thou shall suffer. Behold, the devil will cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried, and ye shall have tribulation...; be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown..." (Rev 2:10).

Those who have the high honor of giving their life as a martyr receive this crown. A martyr is one who is *"... slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held"* (Rev 6:9).

Stephen was the first to receive this crown (Acts 7:54-60).

SECTION F3

JUDGMENT OF LAWLESS WORKERS

By Ralph Mahoney

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F3.2 - Faithful Leaders

Chapter 1

Unfaithful Leaders

Introduction

It is with sorrow and shame that we must recognize that there is much self-serving leadership in Christianity. It has always been true. It is still one of the most serious problems in the Church worldwide.

The Apostle Paul recognized this problem in his time.

"I have no one else like Timothy, who takes a genuine interest in your welfare. For everyone looks out for his own interests, not those of Jesus Christ" (Phil 2:20,21 niv).

Of hundreds of church leaders Paul was acquainted with, he only had one he could trust with the sheep. That was Timothy. Timothy would serve the sheep, not himself. The other leaders would serve their own self-interests.

There are men and women who have power ministries given by the Holy Spirit. Sadly, instead of seeking God's face in humility, they begin to seek that which will serve, save and promote "their ministry." They use and abuse their spiritual gifts for their own gain and glory.

They become self-sufficient and proud. There is deception in pride. The soulish and selfish drift is so gradual, leaders may not even realize how far from God they have gone.

A. THREE ENEMIES OF THE SHEEP

In John 10, Jesus and church leaders are likened to shepherds. Sheep symbolize the true followers (believers) of Jesus. Jesus warns His disciples to guard against three major enemies of the sheep. These enemies are:

- the thief,
- the robber, and
- the hireling.

1. The Thief (John 10:1,8,10)

The thief is one who steals subtly and deceitfully. The thief usually comes in the night, when all is dark and he cannot be seen. He is sly, clever and deceitful in his ways. The thief is the devil and those church leaders who are like him (vs 10).

2. The Robber/Wolf (John 10:1,8)

The robber steals by force, violently attacking others and taking away their goods. He will overpower anyone, anytime, anywhere, to take what he wants. False prophets, pastors, etc. are wolves (Matt 7:15; Acts 20:29).

3. The Hireling (John 10:12,13)

The hireling is one whose only motive for working with sheep is the money or wages. *"... an hireling looketh for the payment for his work"* (Job 7:2). It is just a job for him.

He is unfaithful in the discharge of his duty.

The hireling will run as soon as he sees the wolf coming. His attitude is one of self-preservation, so he flees when the enemy comes (John 10:12).

The hireling has no real care for the sheep of God's fold (John 10:13).

Paul refers to this problem in his second letter to the church at Corinth: *"Unlike so many, we do not peddle the Word of God for profit. On the contrary, in Christ we speak before God with sincerity, like men sent from God "* (2Cor 2:17 niv).

Paul did not want to be like those who make a trade or profession out of their

ministry of God's Word. He wanted to be a man of sincerity.

Paul would get a job and work with his hands to support himself before giving even the appearance of being a hireling (Acts 18:3; I Cor 4:12).

Sadly, in Western society there has been a trend towards making a profession out of one's God-given ministry. There are those who will minister only if large crowds and finances are promised beforehand.

Those who set such self-serving conditions are often drawn into deception and error, and lead others astray in the process.

A real man or woman of God will not be partner to such selfish standards, but will be led only by the straight, true, righteous sense of God's will.

They will have the courage of Peter. When tempted by Simon to sell his gift, *"Peter answered: 'May your money perish with you, because you thought you could buy the gift of God with money'"* (Acts 8:20).

The gift of God should never be available "for hire." Ministry should not be "for sale." Preachers should never allow themselves to be bought or sold!

The direction of a true prophet must come from a sure sense of God's will. Such a revelation can only be birthed out of a commitment to integrity, prayer, intercession and seeking the face of the Lord.

a. Examples Of Hirelings

1) A Levite. *"Dwell with me, and be unto me a priest, and I will give thee ten shekels of silver... and a suit of apparel...So the Levite went in "* (Judg 17:10).

"And he said... thus dealeth Micah with me, and hath hired me, and I am his priest" (Judg 18:4).

Judges 17 and 18 relates the story of the pitiful Levite who sold his ministry for ten shekels and a suit. He violated an important principle of true ministry. *"Ye are bought with a price [the blood of Jesus]; be not ye the servants of men "* (I Cor 7:23).

This priest sold himself to serve a man for money. He surrendered to the low spiritual standards of the time. By doing so he squandered the opportunity to lift the entire tribe of Dan into a place of purity in worship.

The young Levite (priest) burned incense before idols and eventually corrupted a whole tribe.

He could have turned the tide against idolatry and brought a return of God's glory. But he chose material reward over spiritual usefulness. How differently the record could have read. But he failed — what might have been never was!

Idolatry triumphed. Judgment came, and the nation was eventually carried away into captivity. By selling his calling and ministry, the Levite opened the door for judgment and destruction. Don't make this fatal mistake!

God does not call and anoint leaders for their own selfish gain, but for the good of others and His glory.

Any other attitude or motive will only lead to our spiritual loss — and perhaps that of others — as in our story of the Levite above.

2) Gehazi. The story of Elisha healing the Syrian general Naaman, contains a shocking sequel. After dipping seven times in the Jordan River, as Elisha had instructed, the general was cleansed of his leprosy.

"Then Naaman and all his attendants went back to the man of God. He stood before him and said, 'Now I know that there is no God in all the world except in Israel.

Please accept now a gift from your servant.'

"The prophet answered, 'As surely as the LORD lives, whom I serve, I will not accept a thing.' And even though Naaman urged him, he refused " (2Ki 5:15,16).

Elisha understood it was wrong to use God's gift for selfish gain. If Elisha had accepted money, Naaman would have known nothing of the selfless character of God.

God freely gives to us and expects us to freely give to others. Jesus' commandment was: *"...cleanse those who have leprosy... Freely you have received, freely give"* (Matt 10:8). Elijah had obeyed this injunction.

It should be noted that the reputation and respect for modern-day healing evangelists would be greatly enhanced if they emulated Elijah's attitude. Unfortunately, many appear to merchandise their gift for the maximum financial return. How sad! In some cases, they appear to have Gehazi's spirit rather than Elisha's.

But Gehazi, Elijah's servant, saw what Elisha had done and decided to go after Naaman's gold and garments for his own personal gain.

"So Gehazi hurried after Naaman. When Naaman saw him running toward him, he got down from the chariot to meet him...

"Gehazi answered... 'Please give... me a talent of silver and two sets of clothing.'

"By all means, take two talents,' said Naaman. He urged Gehazi to accept them...

When Gehazi returned... he took the things... and put them away in the house...

"Then he went in and stood before his master Elisha. 'Where have you been, Gehazi?' Elisha asked. 'Your servant didn't go anywhere,' Gehazi answered.

"But Elisha said to him, 'Was not my spirit with you when the man got down from his chariot to meet you? "

*"... Naaman's leprosy will cling to you and to your descendants forever.' Then Gehazi went from Elisha's presence and **he was leprous, as white as snow** " (2 Ki 5:20-27 niv).*

Gehazi got Naaman's gold, garments **and — leprosy!** Such are the ways of those who want to take money for God's gifts and are greedy of gain.

3) Balaam. *"...Balaam ...loved the wages..."* (2Pet 2:15). The prophet Balaam sold his ministry for position (Num 22:17) and money.

Balaam was perhaps the most eloquent prophet in the whole Bible. His lofty words revealed most astounding truth about God.

Why then was he judged a false prophet? Why then was he stoned to death in judgment?

It was not because his prophecies were false — it was because his motives were mixed. Balaam went after the glory and the gold. When King Balak's representatives came to Balaam, the Lord's instructions were clear:

"And God said unto Balaam, 'Thou shalt not go with them...' And the princes came back to Balaam, and said to him, 'Thus saith King Balak, Let nothing, I pray thee, hinder thee from coming unto me:

"For I will promote thee unto very great honor, and I will do whatsoever thou sayest unto me; come therefore, I pray thee..." (Num 22:12,16,17).

God had given the prophet Balaam clear instruction NOT to go to King Balak to be his hired prophet. But Balaam kept insisting that God allow him to go.

Balaam desperately wanted the money, prestige and honor that King Balak offered. He kept pressing the Lord to permit him to go.

“... Balaam... they slew with the sword” (Num 31:8). The love of position and money cost Balaam his life. His prophecies were true — his motives were false. He died under judgment.

When what we want is contrary to His word and will, the worst judgment God can send on us is to let us have what we insist on. Balaam was to learn this tragic lesson about God. *"He gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul"* (Ps 106:15).

If we set up idols in our heart, the Lord will even send prophets who *"...by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple"* (Rom 16:18). God will deceive those whose motives in ministry are wrong.

"And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Ths 2:11,12).

The prophet Ezekiel explained this. *"Therefore speak to them and tell them, "This is what the Sovereign LORD says: When any Israelite sets up idols in his heart and puts a wicked stumbling block before his face and then goes to a prophet, I the LORD will answer him myself in keeping with his great idolatry"* (Eze 14:4 niv).

Going to a prophet with idols in your heart causes God to only further confirm you in your sin and disobedience, and you end up like Balaam.

I have said to the Lord, "Lord! I would rather you slay me than deceive me. Please do not let me have my own way when it is contrary to Your will. Cause me to ever know Your will and fulfill it." I hope that is your attitude and prayer as well.

4) Judas. The Apostle Judas sold Christ for 30 pieces of silver and never lived to spend it. He committed suicide (Matt 27:3-10). How dangerous it is to let covetousness and the love of money get a grip on one's life!

b. Examples Of Others Motivated By Greed;

1) Ananias And Sapphira. Sapphira and Ananias lied to the Holy Spirit over money and suffered the death penalty (Acts 5:1-11).

2) Simon The Sorcerer. Simon the sorcerer sought to buy the power of God for imparting the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands, and was judged accordingly (Acts 8:12-24).

3) Those Who Make A Business Of Ministry. Those who buy and sell in the temple (trade on their gift or ministry) will face severe judgment (Matt 21:12; Mark 11:15; Luke 19:45; John 2:15). They will end up with the mark, name and number of the Anti-Christ (Rev 13:17).

B. SNARES TO AVOID

The devil has three simple traps to bring disapproval and destruction to church leaders:

- The love of position (pride-power-control).
- The (immoral) love of women (in adultery/fornication).
- The love of money. This last trap is set for the hireling.

"For the love of money is the root of all evil: which some coveted after, and have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (1 Tim 6:10).

"No servant can serve two masters... You cannot serve God and mammon" (Luke 16:13). Mammon means money, wealth, material prosperity. Sadly, many church leaders serve mammon. Those who follow Jesus (especially church leaders) must renounce

covetousness and love of money (Luke 14:33; I Tim 3:3).

"If you have not been faithful in... money, who will commit to your trust the true riches?" (Luke 16:11). True riches represent spiritual gifts and virtues: the anointing to preach, teach, heal, etc. Jesus taught that right use or wrong use of money was a way of identifying a true or false ministry.

Thousands of church leaders have a hireling spirit and exploit the flock of God. They fleece the sheep instead of feeding the sheep.

1. The Snare Of Commanding And Claiming By Faith

We need to be very careful about "commanding and claiming by faith" anything we might wish to name. There is a danger in any teaching that implies we can possess anything we confess if we have enough faith.

Some will take one verse and isolate it as the basis for their teaching or doctrine. For example: Some say Jesus taught us we can have anything we want. "*If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it*" (John 14:14).

Do you believe that if you ask God for a harlot on which to satisfy your lust, God would give that to you? Can you ask God to kill someone you dislike and He will do it? Obviously, we have to take Jesus' words in the context of "... *the whole counsel of God*" (Acts 20:27). We must "*do our best to present ourself to God as one approved, a workman who correctly handles the word of truth*" (2 Tim 2:15).

In the illustration used above, we show how the words of Jesus can be twisted to justify carnal praying. The very next verse says, "*If ye love me, keep my commandments*" (John 14:15).

If we love Him, we will never ask anything contrary to His will and commandments. This is what we call a "MODIFIER". We take the verse we want to interpret and look for other verses in the Bible on the same subject.

a. We Need The Whole Counsel Of God.

When we put all the verses together, we have "... *the whole counsel of God*" on the subject. For example, James talks about two problems in prayer:

- "*You do not have, because you do not ask God.*" Some fail to pray and ask God for their needs, and go without.
- "*When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures*" (Jas 4:2,3). Others pray with wrong motives, out of covetousness and lust — and do not receive.

Further, John teaches us: "...*this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he hears us:*

"And if we know that he hears us... we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him" (1 Jn 5:14,15).

Our understanding of John 14:14 is thus **modified** by James' and John's epistles. We understand that we must ask with right motives and ask things that are according to God's will. With these "MODIFIERS" in mind, "*If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it*" (John 14:14). That is "...*the whole counsel of God.*"

I have seen many church leaders pray wrongfully — because they wanted to please people instead of the Lord.

How much wiser it is to wait for God's word and will to be revealed by God's Spirit before praying wrongfully or speaking forth a prophetic word.

One of the greatest dangers for individuals who have been gifted by the Holy Spirit with prophetic words and miracles, is the people to whom they minister.

b. Avoid Prostituting Spiritual Gifts.

There is a large number of individuals in this world who want a "command performance" of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. They are not happy unless there is a dramatic display of miracle power.

We are reminded of King Herod who wanted Jesus to appear before him and perform such a miracle (Luke 23:5-16). It was a "command performance" to satisfy his curiosity.

This same Herod had also once commanded Salome to perform an obscene dance before him and his guests to satisfy their lustful desires (Mark 6:19-29). Salome "prostituted" or sold her beauty for a price —the head of John the Baptist. She was willing to perform as commanded.

Jesus was not!

Forty years ago, the United States was in the midst of a great healing-revival movement. Scores of evangelists crossed the nation in great tent revivals and healing crusades. Many of them were true and valid ministries.

However, as a young man I was greatly distressed. Some, it seemed, were willing to "prostitute" their spiritual gifts for pride and profit — fame and fortune. They were willing to perform for a price.

Some even claimed that God's healing power would come to the people if they gave their money to support the evangelist. Tragically, as I write, the same thing is happening again. Television evangelists are using their gifts to get money for themselves and their own glory.

I cried out to God for an answer. Why was there such a lack of purity and sincerity on the part of both the people and the ministers? The Lord gave me the following passage from Scripture:

"Some of the Pharisees and teachers of the law said to him, 'Teacher, we want to see a miracle as a sign from you.'

"Jesus answered, 'Only wicked and adulterous [unfaithful] people seek after a miracle-sign. But it shall not be given them'" (Matt 12:38,39).

In other words, there were unfaithful leaders who were willing to "prostitute" or sell their ministry in order to satisfy the carnal desires of the people who followed after them. There were also people who wanted to either see or receive a miracle, and were willing to pay for the privilege.

Jesus rejected both the buyers and sellers. The same evil lust that caused Herod to pay for Salome's obscene dance was the same root of carnality from which came the desire to see a miracle.

Herod (like many today) only wanted to satisfy carnal curiosity. Jesus would have no part of it. May God guard leaders from catering to this clamoring carnality today!

Once again God is wanting to move in power through the Gifts of His Spirit. **He wants a witness in which both the work and the worker will bring honor to His holy Name.**

2. The Snare Of Religious Pride And Position

God desires to raise up in these last days holy prophets of prayer. With the prophetic ministry, however, is the great danger of religious pride and position. I would

like to share with you some spiritual insights God has given me over the years regarding this problem.

Some time ago I was invited to speak in a church. I was introduced as a "great prophet of God."

I fully believe in the five-fold ministry of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers in the Body of Christ (Eph 4:11).

However, when people ask me what I am, I tell them that I don't really know. I simply see my self as "*a voice crying in the wilderness*" (John 1:23). It is not necessary for me to carry a title to do the will of God. As He shows me His will day by day, week by week and month by month, I just try to do it.

I admit concern over the self-anointed and appointed honors and titles church leaders arrogate to themselves. I'm likewise afraid for the people who sometimes give flowery accolades to those called of God to the ministry.

I am concerned because of the danger of pride that can go with a high calling of God and the resulting prominent posture in society.

I am not saying that we should show disrespect to church leaders. I certainly am not saying we should never honor those who are in responsible positions of leadership. **I am saying we should be careful not to exalt or lift someone up to a place where they are destroyed by pride because of unnecessary accolades and praise.**

a. Seek A Job Description, Not A Title. It is interesting to note in the New Testament that the terms apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher (Eph 4:11) were never used as titles. They were merely used to describe a function in the Body of Christ.

In the work world we call this a "job description." Mechanics, carpenters and plumbers all have different functions which they perform, and jobs which they can do. We don't introduce someone as "the great and honorable plumber Jones," but simply by his name.

The same should be true of the people with ministries in the Body of Christ. Their function should not be used as a title. If some do, I am not condemning them. I just believe this can be a dangerous snare related to pride of position.

The most famous evangelist in the Church worldwide is Billy Graham. Perhaps you have noted that whenever anyone in Billy Graham's evangelistic team introduces him, it simply is as "Mr. Graham."

Others may call him "Dr. Graham," and add many words of honor and esteem. Billy Graham overlooks such words of praise because he doesn't need them. He prefers to serve the Lord in humility.

His desire is just to be what God wants him to be, and do what God wants him to do. He is secure in God's call on his life. Nothing else is necessary. These are the marks of a true, humble servant of the Lord. I pray they may be ours as well.

We don't need an official and formal "position and title" in the Body of Christ in order to serve the Lord. John the Baptist didn't have one. He didn't even know how to answer some of the questions of those who asked him about his identity. The Apostle John records this interesting conversation: "*Now this is what John the Baptist said when the Jews of Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him who he was. He freely told them that he was not the Christ [Messiah].*

"They asked him, 'Then who are you? Are you Elijah?' He said, 'I am not. "Are you the prophet?' He answered, 'No.'

"Finally they said 'Who are you? Give us an answer to take back to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?'"(John 1:19-22).

"John replied in the words of Isaiah the Prophet: 'I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, make straight the way for the Lord'" (Isa 40:3).

Moses had prophesied and foretold 1500 years earlier that the Lord God would someday raise up another "**prophet like himself**" (Deut 18:18). The prophet Malachi had said that "**Elijah would come before the great and terrible day of the Lord**" (Mal 4:5). So the people of Israel were waiting for the coming of this great prophet like Moses and Elijah.

When they asked John if he was that prophet (like Moses or Elijah), he said he was just *"the voice of one crying in the wilderness."*

After John's death, Jesus tells us that John the Baptist bore the mantle (anointing) of Elijah (Matt 17:11-13). It seems that Jesus knew who John was, but John didn't know these facts about himself!

To his credit, John did what God told him. And God did talk to John. He could boldly say, "God told me...!"

John didn't need a title or recognition of who he was to do the will of God. He only needed to hear and obey God's voice.

John didn't worry about his title or position among men. He simply did the will of God. He laid down his life as a young man, probably 30 or 31 years of age.

No wonder the Scriptures say that he would be called *"the prophet of the Most High... and prepare the way before the Lord... in the Spirit and power of Elijah"* (Luke 1:17,76).

Let us BEWARE OF THE SNARE!

Chapter 2

Faithful Leaders

A. SIGNS OF TRUE APOSTLES

1. Not Self-Serving

THE FIRST sign of a true apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor or teacher is this: He will not use the Gifts of the Spirit or his God-given ministry in a self-serving or self-saving way. He will use these gifts only when the Holy Spirit guides and directs they be used.

When Jesus was hanging on the cross, one of the derisions hurled at Him was this: *"He saved others, but he cannot save himself!"* (Matt 27:42).

And that was very true. Jesus would not use His ministry for self-serving or self-saving reasons. He could not save Himself.

2. Endures Suffering

SECONDLY, the true apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor or teacher will be willing to endure suffering and hardship to fulfill the ministry Christ has given. That is the attitude the Apostle Paul had.

"Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake... for when I am weak, then am I strong" (I Cor 12:10).

Every Christ-honoring ministry will have the same attitude. *"Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus"* (Phil 2:5 niv).

B. EXAMPLES OF FAITHFUL LEADERS

1. Elijah — A Faithful Prophet

"Now Elijah... said to Ahab, 'As the LORD, the God of Israel, lives, whom I serve, there will be neither dew nor rain... except at my word'" (I Ki 17:1 niv).

As this prophetically declared judgment continued for several years, the land of Israel faced terrible drought and famine.

All went well with Elijah for a while. God had directed him to a brook where he could drink. God also sent ravens to faithfully feed Elijah bread and meat every morning and evening. It was a fairly peaceful picture. In view of the problems that others were facing during this time of drought and famine, Elijah wasn't doing too badly.

However, in time the brook finally dried up, and Elijah became a victim of his own prophecy! Dry bread with no water is not a very pleasant picnic. He might have been tempted to command it to rain.

If he had acted on that desire, he clearly would have been outside of God's will. God had not yet told Elijah to give the command for rain. If Elijah had spoken when he should have been silent, one of two things could have happened:

- God would not have honored the word, because he had *"asked amiss"* —that is, apart from the divine will (Jas 4:3). Had he done so, Elijah would have become a worthless and selfish prophet.
- God would have honored the word, but that might have ended the whole story. Elijah might have missed the *"fire-from-heaven miracle,"* and found himself with *"leanness of soul"* (IKi 18:30-39; Ps 106:13-15).

Like the Lord Jesus during His temptation in the wilderness (Matt 4:1-4), Elijah refused to use his gift to quench his own thirst and take away his hunger. He waited for God to come and tell him when to use his prophetic gift. Only then would he speak the word of the Lord that would end the drought.

But God is faithful. The record simply reads: *"Then the word of the Lord came to Elijah: 'Go at once to Zarepheth of Sidon and stay there. I have commanded a widow in that place to supply you with food'"* (I Ki 17:8-9 niv).

Because both Elijah and the widow obeyed the word of the Lord, both were rewarded by the blessing and provision of a wise and loving God.

Their need became the opportunity for the Lord to perform the "oil and meal" miracle which saved their lives.

They both could have missed it by unbelief, or speaking when they should have been silent; or by being silent when they should have spoken.

Elijah showed us a good example. He would not use his power-gift to solve his own problems or meet his own need. He would keep the gift under the discipline of God's will and control.

2. Three Faithful Church Leaders

"The elders... I exhort... Feed the flock of God which is among you... not for filthy lucre [money] ...And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory..." (1 Pet 5:1-4).

a. Paul.

The Apostle Paul was a leader with a true shepherd's heart. He could have legitimately received financial support from the churches (I Cor 9:17,18; I Tim 5:17,18).

To set an example, he supported himself. *"Even unto this present hour we... labor, working with our own hands..."* (I Cor 4:11,12).

He was not a hireling. *"I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel ...you know that my own hands have ministered unto my needs..."* (Acts 20:33-35).

b. Peter.

When Peter was offered money he replied, *"...Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money"* (Acts 8:20). Are you committed to being a leader like Peter? You should be.

All true leaders of God's people will continually guard against the hireling spirit and hate "the love of money."

c. Timothy.

Paul said, *"But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy... to you, For I have no man like minded, who will naturally care for your state. For all [the rest] seek their own..."* (Phil 2:19-21).

These must be the saddest words in the New Testament— *"All seek their own..."* Paul could find only one leader whose motives were clean and clear, to send to help the church at Philippi.

C. REWARDS OR JUDGMENT

The Lord told us, *"...take no thought, saying, What shall we eat or, What shall we drink? or, How shall we be clothed? ...Your heavenly Father knows that you have need of all these things. But seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you "* (Matt. 6:31-33).

1. Rewarded For Faithful Service

God will bless those who lay down their lives for Jesus to serve others. He will graciously provide and take care of His servants.

But God has not called us to go where there is the most gold. He has called us to go wherever the Holy Spirit might lead us.

It may be to a hard people, as was Jeremiah's call (Jer 6:19); or to a people who will readily respond, as was true of Jonah (Jonah 3:5-10). What truly matters is that we joyfully do God's holy will from a loving heart. That must be the supreme commitment of our lives!

2. Judged For Unfaithfulness

"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the Kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

"Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?'

"Then I will tell them plainly, I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!" (Matt 7:21-23 niv).

Your reward in Heaven is based on what you have done for Christ on earth, and HOW (with what motive) you did it. To use Christ's power to heal, cast out devils and prophesy — while living in the fleshly defilements of loving money, loving the praise of men and living in immorality — will bring divine judgment.

What is that judgment?

The judgment on this group of Christian ministers was this: "DEPART FROM ME!"

The issue is proximity; how close you are allowed to Jesus in Heaven. If you do not stay close to Jesus in your walk and work on earth, you won't be close to Him in Heaven.

a. Depart From Me.

During a time of apostasy (backsliding) in Israel, most of the priests became idolaters and sacrificed to idols. The SONS OF ZADOK remained true and stayed close to the Lord.

When reckoning time came, the judgment on the backsliding priests was this: "... *the Levites that are gone away far **from me**... which went astray **away from me** after their idols; they shall even bear their iniquity, ...they shall **not come near unto me**..."*

But those who were faithful and remained true had this reward: "*But the priests... the sons of Zadok, that kept the charge of my sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from me, they shall **come near to me** to minister unto me, and they shall **stand before me** ...saith the Lord GOD*" (Eze 44:10-15).

The judgment for disobedience and failure was denial to HIS presence. That's a privilege I do not want to lose.

The reward for obedience and faithfulness was not Heaven in this case. It was the privilege of His presence. "*They shall come near to me... saith the Lord!*" That's what we should desire more than anything else in this life and eternity —to be close to Jesus.

How close will you be to Jesus in Heaven? As close as you stay here on earth. If you walk in sinful lusts, covet money, desire the praises of men more than God's (John 12:43), Jesus will say, "DEPART FROM ME!" You will suffer the loss of all rewards, and the fire will burn up all your works (see 1 Corinthians 3:10-15; 1 John 2:28).

If you walk in faithfulness to your call and ministry, if you maintain integrity and righteous motives, Jesus will reward you with a place with Him in His throne (Rev 3:21). You will enjoy His close presence throughout all eternity.

D. THE JUDGMENT OF THE BELIEVER

"Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly " (Jas 3:1).

"For we must all appear before the judgment throne of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Cor 5:10).

The Bible teaches that leaders and believers will someday have to give an account at "*the judgment throne of Christ*" for all deeds done in the Body, whether good or bad. Concerning the judgment of the believer, the following facts should be kept in mind:

1. All Christians

All Christians will be subject to judgment; there will be no exceptions (Rom 14:12; 1Cor 3:12-15; 2Cor 5:10).

2. When Christ Returns

This judgment will occur when Christ returns for His Church (see John 14:3, cf I Ths 4:14-17).

3. The Judge Is Christ

(John 5:22; 2Tim 4:8)

4. Solemn And Serious

The Bible speaks of the believer's judgment as something solemn and serious, especially since it includes the possibility of damage or "loss" (I Cor 3:15; cf. 2 Jn 8), of "being ashamed before him at his coming" (I Jn 2:28), and of "burning" one's whole life's work (I Cor 3:13-15). The believer's judgment, however, will not involve a declaration of condemnation by God.

5. Everything Made Public

Everything will be made manifest. The word "appear" (Gk phaneroo, 2Cor 5:10) means "to be manifest openly or publicly,"

Hence, God will examine and openly reveal, in their true reality:

- a. **Our Secret Acts** (Mark 4:22; Rom 2:16),
- b. **Our Character** (Rom 2:5-11),
- c. **Our Words** (Matt 12:36,37),
- d. **Our Good Works** (Eph 6:8),
- e. **Our Attitudes** (Matt 5:22),
- f. **Our Motives** (I Cor 4:5),
- g. **Our Lack Of Love** (Col 3:18-4:1), and
- h. **Our Work And Ministry** (I Cor 3:13).

6. Give An Account

In sum, the believer will have to give an account of the degree of his faithfulness or unfaithfulness to God (Matt 25:21,23; I Cor 4:2,5) and of his deeds and actions in light of the grace, opportunity and understanding made available to him (Luke 12:48; John 5:24).

7. The Believer's Deeds

The believer's bad deeds, when repented of, are forgiven in relation to eternal punishment (Rom 8:1), but they are still taken into account when being judged for recompense: "He that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done" (Col 3:25; cf. Eccl 12:14; I Cor 3:15; 2Cor 5:10). The believer's good deeds and love are remembered by God and rewarded (Heb 6:10): "Whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord" (Eph 6:8).

8. Gain Or Lose

The specific results of the believer's judgment will be varied. There will be either the gain or loss of:

- a. **Joy** (I Jn 2:28),
- b. **Divine Approval** (Matt 25:21),
- c. **Tasks And Authority** (Matt 25:14-30),
- d. **Position** (Matt 5:19; 19:30),
- e. **Rewards** (I Cor 3:12-14; Phil 3:14; 2Tim 4:8), and
- f. **Honor** (Rom 2:10; cf. 1 Pet 1:7).

9. Fear The Lord

The anticipation of the Christian's judgment to come should perfect in him the fear of the Lord (2Cor 5:11; Phil 2:12; 1 Pet 1:17) and cause him to be sober, to watch and pray (1 Pet 4:5,7), to live in holy conduct and godliness (2Pet 3:11), and to show mercy and kindness to all (Matt 5:7; cf. 2Tim 1:16-18).

Section G
Eschatology

G1: Last Things

G1.1 – The Last Days

G2: Adoption

G2.1 – Adoption And Sonship

SECTION G1

LAST THINGS

By Ralph Mahoney

Chapter 1

The Last Days

Introduction

NOTE: For more extensive teaching on the Last Days and the Coming of the Lord, see Chapter 6, *The Feast of Trumpets*, in Section C 10.

There are numerous conflicting views among Christians concerning how to interpret biblical statements about the end of the Church age and events which follow.

The study of this is called "eschatology", from the Greek word "**eschatos**" — translated "lastday(s)", "latter (time)" in the English Bible.

Five times in John's Gospel, Jesus uses this word in relation to the resurrection of the righteous dead: "...I will raise him up at the **last day** " (6:39,40,44,54; 11:24). In this context, "eschatos" would refer to the time of His Second Coming to earth, "...at the **last trump... the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed**" (I Cor 15:52). "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven... and the dead in Christ shall rise first" (I Ths 4:16).

A most helpful text is Acts 2:16,17 in the Amplified Bible: "*This is **the beginning of that spoken by the prophet Joel...And it shall come to pass in **the last days**, saith God, that I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh...***"

Peter said that the prophecies of Joel concerning eschatos were beginning to be fulfilled when the Spirit was poured out in the Upper Room fifty days after Jesus' crucifixion.

In the larger context, then, the "last days" began at Pentecost in the year 33 A.D. Most believe the "last days" end when Jesus comes back to earth again.

A. NINE EVENTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE LAST DAYS

The following verses capture most (nine) of the events associated with the last days.

The prominence of "the trumpet" sound should be noted. The last festival celebrated by Israel each year at the end of their harvest season (The Festival of

Tabernacles) began with the blowing of trumpets (Lev 23:24; Num 29:1).

This festival was a prophetic pageant portraying the last days of the Church age. Here are some of the things that will happen:

1. Return Of Christ

"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first".(1 Ths 4:15,16).

"Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all die, but we shall all be changed,

"In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound and

2. Dead Raised

"the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and

3. Living Are Changed

"we shall be changed" (ICor 15:51,52).

"And the seventh angel sounded [his trumpet] ; and there were great voices in heaven, saying,

4. Christ Rules

"The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever" (Rev 11:15).

5. Angry Nations

"And the nations were angry, and

6. God's Wrath

"your wrath is come, and

7. Dead Judged

"the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and

8. Rewards Given

"that you should give reward unto your servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and

9. Sinners Destroyed

"should destroy them which destroy the earth" (Rev 11:18).

The above nine things are the primary events accompanying the consummation of the Church age and the coming of the millennial or Kingdom age.

B. A LOOK AT ESCHATOLOGY

1. Don't Be Too Absorbed

There are several English Bibles that dedicate a large part of their notes to eschatological interpretation (Scofield and Dakes, to name just two).

When studying the New Testament, you notice the curiosity of Jesus' disciples about the end times. *"And as he sat upon the Mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?"* (Matt 24:3).

The most important part of Jesus' response to this enquiry is found in Matthew 24:14: *"And this gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto **all nations**; and then shall the end come."*

The Greek word translated "nations" is **ethnos** — meaning non-Jewish ethnic groups (Gentiles). The English translators used all the following words to translate **ethnos**: Gentiles, heathen, nation, nations, people. In Western nations, missiologists now refer to ethnos as "people-groups."

Few commentators emphasize that the end of the age is contingent on the gospel being preached to **all people-groups**.

Jesus was consistent in trying to turn His disciples' interest from the "sweet by and by" to the "needy now and now." In Acts 1, we read of Jesus' attempt to prepare the apostles for the job that lay ahead (the evangelization of the world).

He was giving them instructions on receiving the power of the Spirit. What was their response? Just like most church leaders, they had an eschatological question. They had little interest in the responsibilities of the present.

Note in Acts 1:6: *"When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the Kingdom to Israel?"*

*"And he said unto them, **It is not for you to know the times or the seasons**, which the Father hath put in his own power.*

*"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye **shall be witnesses** unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth "* (vss 7,8).

His response was a mild rebuke to their carnal curiosity about the future and their apathy concerning God's present program for the Church age. *"...It is not for you to know the times or the seasons..."*

Serious business lay before them. They were to be *"...witnesses [Greek="martyrs"] unto him to the uttermost part of the earth."* It is obvious Jesus had much more concern for the present salvation of the lost than encouraging a carnal curiosity concerning the future (eschatology).

Jesus does not want the church leader to develop an undue emphasis and interest in trying to delineate the details of the last days. Far better that you be *"... about your Father's business"* (Luke 2:49), striving *"...to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named"* (Rom 15:20).

2. Eschatological Views Differ

a. "In That History". There are numerous conflicting views. The **forth-telling, or "in that history" view**, regards the prophecies of the Book of Revelation, for example, as wholly concerned with John the Revelator's own day.

Those who hold this viewpoint believe that what John saw and recorded in the Revelation (Apocalypse) is fulfilled already and thus not something for contemporary

concern. "Liberal" scholars (most of whom do not believe in the miracles recorded in the Bible) largely endorse this view.

b. "All Of History". The historical, or "all of history" view, sees the visions of the Book of Revelation as a preview of history from John's time until the end of the Church age. Most Protestant reformers supported this view.

Of these, some believed each one of the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3 represented a progressive forecast of seven periods that would unfold from John's time until the end of the Church age.

For example, what we read about the first of the seven churches (Ephesus) would reveal what the Church would be like in the latter years of John's life at the end of the first century.

What was written about the last of the seven (Laodicea) would reveal what the Church would be like in the last part of the Church age, just before Jesus returns to earth. The others would represent the time periods between Ephesus (the first) and Laodicea (the last).

What follows is an example of one writer's explanation of this view:

"The seven letters were written to actual historical assemblies of believers that existed at the close of the first century in the province of Asia — today's western Turkey.

"The letters were delivered to the seven churches. They were real cities and real churches.

"There were, of course, at that time many other Christian churches at such cities as Rome, Corinth, Colosse, and so on.

"These seven, in the providence of God, provide for us a microcosm (miniature model) of all churches of every age, and thus they are representative. Likewise, the problems that these seven churches faced are today faced by churches in varying degrees. From the letters we can learn what qualities displease God, and what Christ advocates for their remedy.

"Some have also seen in these churches a prophetic quality, i.e., that in this book of prophecy they foreshadow the seven dominant characteristics of the entire church on earth through the various eras until the Lord comes. The suggested eras, looking back from the present, are as follows:

- Ephesus — apostolic church (A.D. 30 —100)
- Smyrna—persecuted church (A.D. 100—313)
- Pergamos — state church (A.D. 313—590)
- Thyatira—papal church (A.D. 590—1517)
- Sardis — reformation church (A.D. 1517—1730)
- Philadelphia—evangelistic church (A.D. 1730 — until the Rapture)
- Laodicea — apostate church (A.D. 1900 — until Second Coming).

"Christ wrote to the seven local churches because each congregation was a self-governing body. A local church may be affiliated with a fellowship, a denomination, or a larger, corporate society, but God holds the leadership responsible for the teaching of his congregation."

The secret to the study of each letter is to recognize the chief problem of each church, as identified by the Lord, and then to see how everything in the letter — Christ's

appearance, warnings, and promises of reward —relates to this problem.

c. "Above History". The **poetic, or "above history"** view, sees the prophet describing in a dramatic way the sure triumph of God over all evil powers. It has little or nothing to do with the future or with history. It represents a "drama" of the ultimate triumph of good over evil.

3. Millennial Views Differ

The word millennium means "a thousand-year span." The 1000-year period is spoken of six times in Revelation 20.

It is the *millennial* views **that usually cause most conflict when one speaks of last things** or the *last days*. They center around the interpretation of the 1000-year reign of Christ, the millennium (Rev 20).

Does Christ come before the millennium (premillennial view)? After the millennium (postmillennial view)? Or is the millennium basically figurative — not literal (amillennial view)?

Conservative interpreters are divided into four divisions:

- postmillennial;
- amillennial;
- dispensational premillennial; and
- historical premillennial.

All four of these groups are literalists if one is allowed to define the word "literal" as meaning "to interpret words in their normal and proper designation." There is even a division among conservative interpreters between strict and moderate literalists.

a. Post Millennialism A view popular in the early part of the twentieth century is called **postmillennialism**. This group is convinced of the growth of the Christian Church by the power of the Spirit until it brings the millennial condition upon the earth.

b. Amillennialism Another view held by many devout Bible scholars is called **amillennialism**. This group believes that the prophecies made to Israel are fulfilled in the Church. If these prophecies are so fulfilled, no millennium on earth is necessary.

c. Premillennialism There are different **premillennial** views.

1) Dispensational Premillennialism specifies an exact literal interpretation, particularly as it has to do with Israel, the Church and the future.

In this view, Israel and the Church are two separate peoples, not to be mingled nor confused, since God has two programs: one for Israel, one for the Church.

God's theocratic program with Israel was interrupted when Israel rejected Christ. Therefore God turned to the Church to accomplish His redemptive purpose. This will be fulfilled (completed) at the millennium.

Then God will resume His theocratic program with Israel through her ruling over the nations of earth from a restored Davidic monarchy in Palestine.

There will be a literal throne, a literal restoration of the temple, a literal restoration of the priestly order of Old Testament times and a literal resumption of the sacrificial system. All the promises of the Old Testament will be literally fulfilled.

This view divides the Scriptures according to classes of people (Israel or the

Church). It insists that no single passage can have primary application to two dispensations at the same time.

The pre-tribulation Rapture grows out of their concept of the Church — it cannot be on the earth when God's earthly purposes commence again to restore the literal earthly reign of Christ according to their view of the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants.

2) The Pre-Tribulation Rapture view is dispensational, rooted in the principle of interpretation which separates the Church from the total redemptive plan of God. The Church must be "Raptured" (taken) out of the world before the "great tribulation" because it is not part of the Kingdom.

The Kingdom will be in its initial stage of restoration through the remnant of Israel that survives the tribulation.

The Church is removed from the earth in the Rapture (catching away). The seven-year tribulation period which follows is divided into two periods, each lasting three-and-one-half-years.

During the first period, Israel enters into a covenant with the antichrist, who breaks it at the end.

The second period begins when Satan empowers the antichrist, and the "time of Jacob's trouble" is poured out on the world.

During these seven years of tribulation, the gospel of the Kingdom (which proponents of this theory distinguish from the gospel of grace) is preached. An elect remnant of Israel, numbering 144,000, survives the tribulation to become the Kingdom, to which Christ returns after the seven years.

The millennial reign is decidedly Jewish; the consummation of God's plan for Israel; the literal fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. Christ will be on a physical throne, and all nations will be subservient to Israel.

Some say the Church will return to earth at the beginning of the thousand years and live on earth during this period. But others say the Church will stay in the holy city, which will be hovering (like a satellite) above the earth. The Temple is to be rebuilt, and the sacrifices are to be re-instituted. The relation of this sacrificial system to the death of Christ is "commemorative," not "anticipatory."

The "blessed hope" for the dispensationalists, seemingly, is that Christ will rapture the "parenthetical Church" so that He may reign through Israel, not the Church.

(The Church is referred to as "parenthetical" because in this view the Church is a temporary phenomena which only exists between the Day of Pentecost and the millennium.)

In this view, the organized church on earth is apostate. Dispensationalists early distinguished between the "true Church" and "Christendom — the organized church". The "true Church" was composed only of the born-again, saved peoples. Only a few out of many professing Christians are included. Thus the "true Church" could be described only in terms of the relation of the believer to Christ, not in terms of the organized structure.

3) Historic Premillennialism is a view mediating between amillennialism and dispensationalism.

This view seeks to combine the forthtelling and foretelling views of the Book of Revelation. The beast of Revelation 13 is reflected first in the Roman emperor, but finally presented as a personal antichrist in the time of the end.

Revelation 19 describes, in apocalyptic symbolic terms, the Second Coming of Christ to destroy the satanic evil embodied in Rome and antichrist.

This is pictured as a bloody battle, but the only weapon is the word proceeding from the mouth of the conquering Messiah (Rev 19:15). The millennium is one interval of time in the accomplishing of God's redemptive rule (the Kingdom of God).

4. Key Concepts To Study

Some key concepts to consider in studying last things are: The Second Coming of Christ, The Millennium, The Rapture, The Tribulation and The Great White Throne Judgment.

This is not a complete depiction of all the varying views, nor is the purpose to decide for the Bible student. The latter is best left up to study, prayer and the Holy Spirit.

Because such a variety of synthesis (combining of viewpoints) exists, almost every scholar holds some distinctive eschatological view. One thing history has proven: seldom has anyone been correct who has made predictions concerning events of the "end time" or what the Bible means when it describes the "last days."

5. Three Sure Things

The three things we can be sure of are these:

a. Faithfulness Brings Reward. If we occupy ourselves with what He has told us to do during the Church age, we will receive the ultimate accolade: *"... Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord"* (Matt 25:23).

b. Those Looking Will See. If we keep "looking" for Him, we will see Him. *"...to those that look for him he will appear a second time, not this time to deal with sin, but to bring to full salvation those who eagerly await him"* (Heb 9:28 pme). Do NOT look for antichrist, look for Jesus!

c. God's Time, Not Ours. God is going to work it all out according to His Own will and purpose in His Own time. He is not going to consult our "prophecy charts" when He is ready to do what the Bible speaks of in Revelation about the last days.

6. The Consummation

The consummation begins when the angel announces, *"There will be no more delay."* (Rev 10:6 niv).

"And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ: and he shall reign for ever and ever.

"And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldst give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldst destroy them which destroy the earth" (Rev 11:15,18).

"Let us be glad and rejoice... For the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready... Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb..." (Rev 19:7,9).

C. DISPENSATIONAL PREMILLENNIAL VIEW REFUTED

The "Dispensational Premillennial" view — which replaces the Church with Israel and restores a Jewish temple, Levitical priesthood and animal sacrifice — is particularly troubling.

1. Jesus Changed The Priesthood

God took an oath that Jesus would change the priesthood from Levitical to Melchisedec —FOREVER.

"For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law "(Heb 7:12).

*"For the Lord has sworn [of Christ], you are a priest **forever** after the order of Melchisedec"*(Heb 7:17; Ps 110:4).

*"But this man [Jesus], because **he continueth forever, hath an unchangeable priesthood**"* (Heb 7:24).

*"Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing **he lives forever** to make intercession for them "* (Heb 7:25).

2. Jesus' Sacrifice Was For All Time

It was not something to be replaced by "commemorative" animal sacrifice.

*"For he never needs the daily blood of animal sacrifices, as those [Old Testament] high priests, to cover over first their own sins and then the sins of the people; for **he finished all sacrifices, once and for all time, when he offered up himself**"* (Heb 7:27 tb).

3. New Covenant Replaced Old

The New Covenant replaced the Old Covenant with better promises, a better priesthood and a better sacrifice.

*"Because God speaks of 'a **new** covenant,' he has made the first one **old**. For the old one is out of date now and **has been put aside forever**"* (Heb 8:13 tb).

"...He takes away the first, that he may establish the second" (Heb 10:9).

These verses seem to clearly refute some of the ideas held by some "Dispensational Premillennialists."

It seems highly unlikely that we will ever see a Jewish temple with animal sacrifices again. Jesus foretold the end of the temple and its destruction (Luke 21:6). What purpose would a restored temple have? *"...The Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands..."* (Acts 7:48; 17:24).

4. King-Priests Reign With Christ

"If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him..."(2Tim 2:12).

*"...With your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be kings and priests to serve our God, and **they will reign on the earth**"* (Rev5:9,10 niv).

Those ruling with Christ are called king-priests. These king-priests are those who are willing to suffer for Christ from every tribe, language and **nation** (Greek = **ethnos**, meaning **gentile ethnic group**).

The twelve apostles of the Lamb have a special relationship to the twelve tribes of

Israel. *"...When the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of his glory, you also will sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel"* (Matt 19:28).

However, when it comes to the Gentile nations, the privilege of ruling and priesthood is shared by those of every nation who qualify.

"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne" (Rev 3:21).

The above was written to those in Laodicea. *"...Send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia... unto Laodicea "* (Rev 1:11).

This church was largely Asian Gen tiles. Yet, if they overcame, they were promised a place with Christ in His throne.

This would put in doubt the idea that a geo-political group called Israel will rule the world. Jews and Gentiles who are in right union with Christ will share His throne. They will be **king-priests** (just as Melchizedek).

SECTION G2

ADOPTION

By Ralph Mahoney

Chapter 1

Adoption And Sonship

Introduction

What is this business of "adoption" and "sonship" all about anyway? What did Paul, the apostle, mean when he wrote: *"...ye have received the Spirit of ADOPTION... ": "even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting/or the ADOPTION"* (Rom 8:15,23); *"... God sent forth his Son that we might receive the ADOPTION ..."* (Gal 4:4,5)? Did the Apostle Paul have a revelation of something that we know nothing or little about today?

Ministering in the Bible-lands with a brother born in Israel helped me to understand some of the imagery and customs taken for granted by the Apostle Paul when he wrote about adoption.

The eastern-born peoples have no problem with things that have long baffled Westerners, because they understand the metaphor and language.

It is because Westerners have not known the traditions and customs of the Bible-lands that we have missed the powerful truths expressed in this one word — ADOPTION.

The word translated "adoption" is a Greek word, *huiiothesia*, meaning "to place as a son." It has no reference to an orphan or benevolent adults who might want to "adopt" an orphan.

This word *huiiothesia* is applied to those young men who have reached adulthood, *"them that are of full age... who... by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil"* (Heb 5:14).

A. PLACED AS A SON

When a young man grows up to full age in Bible-lands and has demonstrated his ability to bear responsibility, there comes the day when his father, in a public ceremony, "**places him as a son.**"

The neighbors, friends and village elders are called to witness this event, as it has great import in the life of a young man. Everything changes for him after his ADOPTION ceremony.

The boy has always been the natural descendant of his father from the day he was conceived in the womb. But at full age, at full stature, at a time the father deems him ready, the mature young man is "**placed as a son!**"

In the Western world, when a baby boy is born, the father walks into the nursery and says proudly, "There's my son!"

1. Three Words Used For Son

The problem is *semantical* — that is, a problem of language. In English we have only one word for "son." In Greek, there are three words used.

a. Teknion refers to a baby son.

b. Teknon. refers to a son who is maturing but not yet ready for responsibility. In English, we would call him a "child."

c. Huios refers to one ready for responsibility — who has gone through the "adoption" ceremony.

Thus we could summarize the concept this way: The first—*teknion*—means an infant or a little child. The second — *teknon* — means an adolescent child. The third — *huios* — means a son (one placed as a son by adoption).

In Bible-lands a baby boy would not be called a son (*huios*). The term "son" usually is used after the ADOPTION.

Paul refers (alludes) to this when writing to the Galatians:

"The heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he [is destined to] be Lord of all; but [the child] is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father [this refers to the adoption]" (Gal 4:1,2).

This is the picture of the Christian, who must likewise go through the growth process before he is placed in his position as a son of God.

B. THE RIGHT TO BECOME

Justification is just the beginning of our great salvation. *"But to as many as received him, to them gave he power [authority, the right or privilege] to become the sons of God..."* (John 1:12).

The word "power" is an important word in this verse. It should be translated "authority," since it is the Greek word *exousia*.

This is a word of privilege or right or permission. When the traffic signal turns green, you have the *exousia* (right, permission or privilege) to proceed forward.

If your motorbike runs out of gas and stalls at that instant, you do not have the POWER to go even though you have the authority (right, permission) to go.

So, when we receive Christ, we are given the right, permission or authority to become the sons of God.

We are warned, however: *"Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us... any of you should seem to come short of it"* (Heb 4:1).

The Hebrew Christians of Paul's day were reprimanded for not becoming what they had the right to become.

"For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again... and are become such as have need of milk and not of strong food. For everyone that uses milk... is a babe. But strong food belongs to them that are of full age..." (Heb 5:12-14).

Similarly, the children of Israel had the authority (right, permission, privilege) to enter Canaan and possess the land of promise, but they perished in the wilderness in unbelief.

Unbelief killed them (as it is killing many spiritually today). They had the authority and right of those *"...who through faith and patience inherit the promises"* (Heb 6:12). They did not become what they had the authority to become.

The same could be said of the Corinthian Christians to whom Paul said, *"And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto... babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk and not with food: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able"* (I Cor 3:1,2).

This is a rather sobering thought when you realize that the Corinthian church had all the Gifts of the Spirit (I Cor 1:7) and many other commendable qualities. But they had not become what they had the right to become — mature Christians prepared for the responsibilities of sonship.

Thank God, we are promised the power (*exousia* right) to become the sons of God (John 1:12).

C. THREE STAGES OF GROWTH

We mentioned the three Greek-words used to denote the growth of a baby into a son. The first is "teknion," meaning an infant or a little child. The second is "teknon," meaning an adolescent child. The third is "huios," meaning a son (one placed as a son by adoption).

The Apostle John confirms this concept when he says:

*"I write unto you **little** children... I write unto you **young** men... I write unto you **fathers**..."* (I Jn 2:12,13). Three stages of growth are implied here.

We see these three stages of growth beautifully illustrated in the life of Jesus.

The first glimpse the Bible gives of Christ is as a BABE in the manger (Luke 2:7).

Little is said about Jesus after infancy until His adolescent years, when as a boy of twelve He is seen in the temple *"...sitting in the midst of the doctors"* (Luke 2:46).

Again, the period called the "silent years" pass, and we have little record of Jesus' life until suddenly, at thirty years of age (Luke 3:23), He appears at the River Jordan to be baptized of John.

The three stages of growth are clearly recorded in Jesus' life: the babe (teknion) in the manger; the adolescent (teknon) in the temple; and the events at the age of thirty, when His adoption took place.

His adoption was confirmed at His water baptism by John the Baptist. Afterwards the Holy Spirit descended on Him in the form of a dove. Then a voice from Heaven spoke, *"This is MY BELOVED SON, hear him!"* (Matt 3:17; Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22). He

was thus placed as a son (huios).

The events that transpired after Jesus' adoption are a marvelous revelation of what we have been predestined to become. Jesus' growth and development was the pattern for our own maturing process and ultimate sonship. "...having predestinated us unto the adoption..." (Eph 1:5).

D. JESUS' ADOPTION: OUR EXAMPLE

When "*Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age... when he was baptized, went up straight way out of the water; and lo, the heavens were opened unto him...*

"And the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo, a voice from heaven saying, 'This is my beloved Son...' "(Luke 3:23; Matt 3:16,17).

Ah! Here the transcending mystery of SONSHIP suddenly comes into sharp focus. Here, "*the eyes of our understanding being enlightened*" (Eph 1:18), we suddenly see Jesus the SON of God, "*... the firstborn among many brethren...*" (Rom 8:29).

The River Jordan experience was clearly His adoption. Following the Bible-lands tradition, the heavenly Father brings His Son before the friends, neighbors and elders of Israel (at John's baptism) and speaks clearly from Heaven for all to know: "*This is my beloved SON.*"

1. His Life Changes

As Jesus comes out of Jordan's waters, He comes out altogether different in relationship and privilege.

He has now been "placed as a Son" by the Father. From this time, everything is different in the life of Jesus.

We see no miracles before this time in Jesus' ministry. In fact, He was known simply as "*...the carpenter, the son of Mary... without honor... in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house*" (Mark 6:3,4).

There was no halo around His head, for "*... in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren [you and me]...*" (Heb 2:17).

The prophet said of Him, "*... he hath no form nor comeliness... there is no beauty that we should desire him... we esteemed him not...*" (Isa 53:2,3).

Paul said He "*...was made in the likeness of men... found in fashion as man...*" (Phil 2:7,8). Before His adoption, there was little to distinguish Him from any other carpenter or laborer of Nazareth.

But the ADOPTION changed all this for Jesus. Adoption brought privileges. Adoption wrought changes almost too grand to conceive.

2. Heavens Were Opened

He emerged from the waters under **open heavens!** Glory to God!

Heavens that for centuries had been closed by the rationale, religiosity, legalistic hardness and apostasy of mankind.

Heavens that had seemed as brass — as generations lived and died awaiting this grand moment.

Heavens that had blistered with heat, scorched with sun, and pelted with hail, sandstorm and rain.

Now in Jesus' adoption, "*the heavens were opened unto him*" (Matt 3:16). They were opened to release healing for the lame, sight for the blind, restoration for the fallen, forgiveness for the sinner, hope for the hopeless, life for death, beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning.

The Sun of Righteousness would now rise with healing in His wings and the open heavens would rain down righteousness and blessing instead of curse and destruction.
HALLELUJAH!

3. Privileges Of Sonship

Before elaborating further on the significance of the '**open heavens**,' let us pause to consider briefly the three primary privileges that come to the young man in the Bible-lands who has been 'placed as a Son' (adopted).

After the adoption, the son has these three benefits:

- The power of attorney (use of his father's name).
- He receives his inheritance (use of his father's wealth).
- Equality with the father as he remains in union with the father (use of his father's authority and power).

Did Jesus demonstrate that He had all these after His adoption?

In the Gospel of John, we find most of the answers to the above question.

John presents Christ as **THE SON OF GOD**; thus most of the important facts concerning **sonship** are found in John.

a. Using The Name. When you have the power of attorney, you have the right to make contracts, sign checks, buy or sell — all in the name of the one who gives you this power.

When you sign the person's **name who** has so empowered you, it is as valid as his own signature. Your command is as his edict.

Jesus said, "*I come in my Father's name...* " (John 5:43). "*For as the Father hath... so hath he given to the Son to have... authority to execute judgment...*" (John 5:26,27). Such authority is not possible without relationship to the Father.

The seven sons of Sceva tried to emulate Paul and cast out devils in the Name of "*Jesus whom Paul preaches*" (see Acts 19:13). The devils were so resentful against this pseudo-authority that the man in whom the devil was, "*...leaped on the seven sons of Sceva and overcame them...so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.*"

It is not saying the words "In the Name of Jesus, I command you..." that makes demons flee. But if there is union with the Father, if there is right relationship with the Father, the authority is present.

The adoption makes the difference. And the adoption is given only to those of full spiritual stature, those of full age.

No wonder Paul exhorted the Ephesians that they "...no longer be babes... but... grow up in all things into him, who is the head, Christ..." (Eph 4:14,15).

b. Using The Wealth. We have previously stated: The second privilege of sonship was receiving your inheritance (use of the father's wealth). This is illustrated in the story of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32).

Both the prodigal and the older brother had been placed as sons in the father's house. The prodigal squandered his inheritance with riotous living.

After repentance and restoration, the father made a joyful celebration because the prodigal had returned. The elder brother complained, "*you never gave me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends.*"

The father gently replied, "*Son, thou art ever with me, and ALL that I have is THINE.*" his is the glorious privilege of adoption, of sonship: all the Father has is at the son's disposal. "*All that I have is thine*" (Luke 15:31).

I have often said, "After Jesus' adoption at the River Jordan, He just went around handing out Heaven."

Why do I make such a statement? The Bible says, "... *the heavens were opened to him.* " As a Son, Jesus entered into His inheritance (use of the Father's wealth). The Father's store-house of bounty, blessing and glory were thrown open to Jesus at His adoption. "*The heavens were opened unto him.* "

1) Heaven On Earth. I was startled some years ago to read this verse: "*And no man has ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man who is in heaven*" (John 3:13 nkjv).

Jesus was standing on earth when he said this. How could He be "*in heaven*" — standing there on the earth?

I have often pictured Heaven like an invisible cloud coming down and encircling Jesus about on all sides so that He was "*in heaven.*"

Not only was He in Heaven, but Heaven was in Him. He was speaking out of Heaven, ministering to the needy out of Heaven, healing the sick out of Heaven, for He was in Heaven —though on earth.

He had become, in all its resplendent glory, "*the tabernacle [dwelling place] of God with man*" (Rev 21:3).

This prefigures, adumbrates, typifies and foreshadows our "...*great salvation, reserved in heaven for us, ready to be revealed in the last days*" (I Pet 1:4,5) when we, too, shall be "...*conformed to the image of his Son* " (Rom 8:29).

And in that day shall come to pass the larger fulfillment, in the Body of Christ, of what we see in Jesus, when we hear the "...*voice out of heaven saying, behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell IN them...* " (Rev 21:3).

Glory to God! Do you see it? "...*God sent forth his Son... that WE might receive the ADOPTION... we... groan within ourselves waiting for OUR ADOPTION...* " (Gal 4:4,5; Rom 8:23).

In our adoption, we too shall have the blessing of bringing Heaven to earth, of sharing Heaven with earth.

2) Jacob's Ladder. Jacob "*dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it... And he said, '...this is none other but the house of God... the gate of heaven'*" (Gen 28:12,17).

Have you ever wondered at Jacob's interpretation of the dream, "*this is the house of God, the gate of heaven*"!

That is exactly what Jacob saw. But you must understand the metaphor, the spiritual symbol expressed by the dream.

What has this to do with "*open heavens*"! Look at John 1:51. "*And Jesus saith unto him, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you. Hereafter ye shall see **heaven open** and the angels of God ascending and descending UPON THE Son of Man.'*"

Jesus takes Jacob's dream and adds dimension and understanding by showing us that the ladder Jacob saw was a symbol of Himself as the Son of God operating and moving on earth — yet in Heaven (John 3:13).

The ladder reached through **open heavens** and joined Heaven and earth; the two were joined and made one. This, Jesus experienced during His three and one-half years' ministry as a Son of God. He brought Heaven to earth and earth to Heaven —just like Jacob's ladder —with angels coming down from Heaven and going up to Heaven.

3) House Of God. But there is another great truth here which was not totally fulfilled in Jesus. Jacob said, *"this is none other but the HOUSE OF GOD."* What or who is the "House of God"?

Is the "House of God" the buildings made of stone, cement and steel called by the misnomer 'church'? No! A thousand times no! *"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"* (1 Cor 3:16). God's people are *"the house of God."*

The word "ye" (or you) in English is both singular and plural. "You" can mean one of you (singular) or all of you (plural).

But in the Greek, it is not so. There is one word used for the singular form and another for the plural. Here the plural form is used. So, in effect, Paul was saying, *"Know ye not that ALL OF YOU at Corinth corporately constitute the temple of God?"*

Alone, I am not the temple (house) of God. As lively stones, we (corporately) are built up into a spiritual house. *"In whom you [corporately] are builded together for a habitation [house] of God through the Spirit"* (1 Pet 2:5; Eph 2:22).

So the Church, which is His Body (the believers), constitutes the house of God, the place where God lives.

Remember, Jesus said, *"Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I [where?] in the midst of you"* [i.e.. He dwells in the corporate body of believers].

The house of God, the Church, is a corporate, many-membered body. This vision of Jacob was a vision of the house of God. What, then does this mean to us?

Simply this: Just as the vision had prophetic aspects fulfilled in Christ when He was on earth — so it has prophetic aspects to be fulfilled in the Church while she is still on the earth.

4) End-Time Ministry. Just as Jesus' three and one-half years ministry was the fulfillment of what Jacob saw; just as Jesus became the gate where Heaven could pass through and come to men; just as, through Jesus, men could see Heaven manifested on earth —

IN THIS SAME WAY will the saints who come to full stature, who come to full maturity, who come to adoption glory — have a great end-time ministry (also, likely, three and one-half years).

The saints become the fulfillment of the ladder which Jacob saw with its feet on earth and its top reaching to Heaven, bringing Heaven down to men and men to Heaven through the ministry of reconciliation and the word of reconciliation committed to the Church (2Cor 5:18,19).

This ladder of Jacob under *"open heavens with angels ascending and descending"* is a picture of the house of God — *"whose house are we, if we holdfast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end"* (Heb 3:6).

Adoption brings this blessed benefit: The Father's wealth becomes ours to dispense, the open heavens become our portion, and all of glory is put at the Son's disposal to bless and lift sin-cursed man up to Heaven.

This is part of the glory of His inheritance in the saints that Paul speaks of in Ephesians 1:18.

c. Equality With The Father. *"And lo a voice from heaven saying, This is my beloved Son"* (Matt 3:17). The people heard the proclamation in shocked amazement! "The SON OF GOD?" they mused.

Wonderment, surprise and hostility must have erupted simultaneously as the crescendo of conversation rose.

These words undoubtedly found their way to the Pharisees and leaders of the Jews, who waited for an occasion to stone Him. *"The Jews answered him saying, For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy; ...because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.*

"Jesus answered them... Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest!; because I said, I am the Son of God?" (John 10:33,34,36). *"Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his [own] Father, making himself equal with God"* (John 5:18).

1) The Son Of God. While the liberal theologians of today still equivocate His claims and dispute His Deity, Jesus knew Who He was: the Son of God — equal with the Father.

No wonder Paul could joyfully exclaim: *"For in him all the fullness of the Godhead was pleased to dwell"* (Col 1:19). *"For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily "* (Col 2:9).

"But unto the SON he saith, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever" (Heb 1:8). Here the Son is plainly addressed as GOD. Yes, Jesus was God robed in flesh. He became what we are that we might become what He is — a son of God.

2) Sons Of God. *"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God... and because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.*

"Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an HEIR OF GOD through Christ" (1 Jn 3:1; Gal 4:6,7).

*"For you have received **the Spirit of adoption**, ...you received **the Spirit of sonship**. And by him we cry, Abba, Father.*

"The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.

*"Now if we are children, **then we are heirs** — heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.*

*"I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with **the glory that will be revealed in us.***

*"The creation waits in eager expectation for the **sons of God** to be revealed.*

*"...we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for **our adoption as sons**, the redemption of our bodies.*

"For in this hope we were saved" (Rom 8:15-24 niv).

We cannot place ourselves as sons. This is the Father's doing and business.

We can *"press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ*

Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect [mature], be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you" (Phil 3:14,15).

No wonder the time of Jesus' return to earth is called the "blessed hope" (Titus 2:13).

*"...and he will come again, but not to deal again with our sins. This time he will come to **bring to full salvation** all those who we eagerly and patiently waiting for him " (Heb 9:28 amp).*

I believe that this full salvation He will bring will be our adoption. Oh, how I want to see Him! Don't you?

"The Spirit and the bride say, 'Come.' Let each one who hears them say the same, 'Come.' Let the thirsty one come — anyone who wants to; let him come and drink the Water of Life without charge

*"He who has said all these things declares: Yes, **I am coming soon! Amen! Come, Lord Jesus!**" (Rev 22:17,20 niv).*