

THE WAY, THE TRUTH and THE LIFE

The Way, The Truth and The Life

Awakening to Discover Christianity

A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO BIBLICAL UNDERSTANDING

By

Charles Pinkney

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The Way, The Truth, and The Life Biblical Foundations

Are We All God's Children?.....	3
The Mystery of Faith and Grace.....	9
Faith VS Reason and Evidence.....	14
Grace is Accessed Through Faith.....	14
The Gospel – A Supernatural Power From God.....	39
Mysteries revealed by God.....	42
The Mystery of the Holy Spirit's Power.....	43
A God of Power Today? Speaking in other Tongues - -.....	51
Two Kinds of Tongues.....	51
Uses of Tongues and Praying in the Spirit.....	52
The Tradition of The Priesthood and The Laity.....	53
A Primer On Prophecy- part 1.....	68

Prophecy foretells the End From The Beginning: Isaiah 46:9-10	
Birth of the Messiah.....	74
Last Days – End Times and Rapture of Believers.....	78
Prophecy foretells the End From The Beginning: Isaiah 46:9-10.....	84
Death of Messiah prophecy fulfilled:	
Second coming and Kingdom age (the millennium) are future prophecies.....	84
Prophecy Session 3 – Six End-Time Signs.....	85
End Times Revealed by Paul the Apostle.....	87
Mile Markers On The Road to Apostasy.....	93
Prophetic End Times Foretold In The Bible.....	96
The Nature Of The Anti Christ Religion.....	102
The Day of The Lord, A Day of Judgment is Coming.....	105
Scriptural Teaching On The Power Of Words.....	109
Spoken Words: Establish Covenant, Faith Filled Words, Heavenly Results	110
A DISCIPLE'S HANDBOOK:	
Chapter 1- An Introduction to Discipleship.....	119
Partaking in The Life of God: Extending The Ministry Of Jesus “Koinonia”	125
Chapter 3 – Foundation Of The Apostles.....	131
Chapter 4 – The Spiritual Life; How Much Do We Have to Learn to Become Spiritual?	144
Giving Giving for the Sake of the Gospel.....	152
Chapter 5 - Maturing to Minister.....	153
Chapter 7 – Learning Christ, The Spiritual Life.....	157
Chapter 8 - Spiritually Empowered To Minister.....	163
Chapter 9 – Discern and Pitfalls; Issues of Discipleship.....	166
The Gift Of God -(Power From Heaven).....	167
Chapter 10 – The Matter of Ministry.....	172
Criterion and Other Matters Concerning Giving.....	174
Chapter 11 - Becoming A “True Worshiper.....	180
Chapter 12 – Praise and Thanksgiving.....	185
A Brief Forward; World, Flesh, the Devil.....	190
THE WORLD.....	193
THE FLESH Jesus Confronts the God of This World.....	198
THE FLESH Sin, Sinners, and The Fallen Nature.....	199
The Way of Salvation, Saved Once and Forever?.....	201

WHO ARE GOD'S children ?

ARE WE ALL GOD'S CHILDREN?

In this present world there is great confusion about any and all spiritual matters. Millions of people are connected to a *religion* or a Christian *denomination* that holds a world view values tolerance and inclusion. The the *spirit of the age* embraces the idea that God made all of us just the way we are, quirks and all. People walk in the way that seems right to themselves. This prevailing world view is mostly unaware of the Biblical truth concerning who are or may become the “Children of God.”

The first verses in John's Gospel point to the reality of *becoming* a child of God. We discover that there is a time of transformation in which is we become a true child of God. Further study reveals that it is those "*who believe on Jesus' name.*"

What the Bible Says: **John 1:11** *He came unto his own, and his own received him not. 12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*” (In this passage the "right" is *Gk. exousia*, meaning permission or authority.)

The question may be asked, “Who are his own?” Are they the Jews who were first *elected* under God's covenant or does it refer to all of the human race? I think the answer can be yes, both. The message of of God's selection (election) of a called people for himself came to the Jew first and then only after the cross, to the world (nations) gentiles.

In John, the first chapter, we find that those who receive him (Yeshua, Jesus the Messiah) will receive right which is *Gk. exousia* which means authority or permission. At this point we are to we come to understand **that not all will receive Jesus**. These *unbelievers* are not be among those who may call themselves "sons of God, or *children of God.*" It is a true saying that “*God has no grandchildren.*” (<https://youtu.be/9FUIkeQkjcl>) Each who comes to him must come on the strength of their own faith and calling.

1 John 3:1 - *Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knows us not, because it knew him not. 1John 3:2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*

John 6:37 *All (they) that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.* The notion that all humanity are the "Children of God" although a popular "ecumenical" belief viewpoint is a *Universalist* theology. Universalism is a view that all humanity will go to heaven and none are punished in hell. The universalist doctrine is one that has been offered by the now pope, Pope Francis 1.

I find this belief to be the current doctrinal understanding in many of the mainline Christian churches. *Universalists* uphold the comforting belief that man is essentially good and that a wise, all-compassionate God will certainly acknowledge that one's best human efforts will grant them an eternal heavenly reward based on their best intentions motivation and actions. It is a belief that seems most fair to the natural mind. The view that all are children of God is also allows a tenant of Buddhism where "all paths eventually lead to God."

We must turn to Jesus' words to be reconciled to the reality. There is "a broad path that leads to destruction, by which many go. "Matthew:7:13 *Enter ye in by the narrow gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and many are they that enter in thereby. And also: Pro 16:25 There is a way that seems right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.*

Jesus speaks of a narrow path. This narrow path leads through Jesus of Nazareth himself. He is the one access point, *the door*. He said, "*No one comes to the 'Father' but through me.*" This narrow way has always been the pathway that brings offense and causes many to stumble. Also see: John 6:44: (Jesus speaking of those who come to believe in him) *No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.*

Why is the path that leads to salvation such a limited one?

This chapter rightly belongs among the topics of *The Mysteries of God*. Is the WAY so restricted that it limits access to but a few? The belief of a hidden or limited path is rejected by the mass of humanity. Proofs are found in the New Testament but veiled and hinted in the Old Testament. The Holy Bible teaches that only those who are "born of God are the children of God." 1 John C.3, (The Jewish traditions honors the title of God by rendering the divine name God, ha shem or JHVH, Yahweh.)

"Our Father Who Art in Heaven.. "

This familiar prayer memorized by most Christians begins addressing the recipient. Does this "our" validate the universalist view point or does it suggest another reality? We give little thought to the first phrase of the "Lord's Prayer" because it has lost any kind of meaning since we have learned to pray it religiously countless times.' We never contemplate the profound implications that it had among those who originally heard it recited by the Messiah himself. A change was to come in the status of humanity from "children of wrath" to children of God. See [Ephesians2:3](#) *Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.*

Remember in the days that Yeshua (Jesus of Nazareth) ministered on earth. The Jewish authorities held that God had no son. The same doctrine is held by Islam today. It is emblazoned upon the Al Aqsa mosque on the dome of the Rock in Jerusalem.

Why did Jesus so thoroughly offend the Jewish authorities of his day? Because they said he made himself equal with God declaring that God was his father. This was blasphemy according to their understanding of Mosaic law. It continues to be a critical point of contention held by any orthodox Jew today. Since in Jewish tradition, God is "Echad" "one," the rabbis concluded that Yeshua can not be the Messiah because he made himself equal with JHVH. The Sanhedrin, of Jesus' day, crucified Jesus for this "blasphemy."

Jesus instructed his disciples to pray to the *heavenly Father* even as he himself did. This new relationship foretold a new relationship that would soon come, not to affirm to them that "we are all God's children." This point of view of course is questioned by credentialed church leaders today. Only a closer study of the Bible texts will bring light to settle the matter.

Were There Christians Before the Resurrection?

I have heard many Christian leaders actually call Yeshua's disciples "Christians" during his earthly ministry. They were not Christians since the church had not come into being yet. They were disciples and followers of Yeshua of Nazareth. His disciples believed him to be the Messiah, the promised King of Israel and it was hoped that he would soon begin ruling as such. After Pentecost **the disciples of Jesus identified themselves as being followers of "the way"** of their Messiah. It was at the birth of the church age. At Pentecost the supernatural "Power of God" (The Holy Spirit) transformed the spiritual nature of the disciples into "sons and daughters of God. It was a few years later that followers of the way were called Christians in Antioch Syria.

The identity of Jesus as the "Son of the Living God" was given to Peter by revelation of the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 16:16) **The question that Jesus asked his disciples that day is one of the most important questions that the entire human race will need to answer, both then**

and now! Thereafter the disciples believed that Jesus was truly the **Messiah** and the **Son** of the Living God. They carried this belief for the duration of their days with him. Nevertheless they stumbled at what it meant when Jesus spoke of his destiny to die in Jerusalem to fulfill his Father's will.

Finally, the original disciples did not attain the status of sonship until after Jesus breathed upon them bringing spiritual regeneration (**salvation to them**) and empowered life to them. (John 20:22) (Luke 24:45) They were then prepared to receive the "promise of the Father" (Acts C.1 vs 4) the full immersion into the Spirit Acts C,2) was an outpouring of the Holy Spirit to bring Spirit empowered life. *The Spirit of Truth would take that which Jesus would supply in word or action to minister through his disciples* with the various anointings that Jesus' ministry required. Therefore, the sonship that was promised in the above prayer was spoken in advance of any of the disciples actually becoming "children of the Father."

Proverbs 30:4 - An Old Testament Statement Testifying of God's Son

"Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? who hath gathered the wind in his fists? who hath bound the waters in a garment? who hath established all the ends of the earth? what is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou canst tell?"

Jesus' Parable of the Wheat and the Tares;

A Proof Text That We Are Not All God's Children.

Matthew 13: 36 Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field. 37 He answered and said unto them, He that sows the good seed is the Son of man; 38 The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; **but the tares are the children of the wicked one**; 39 The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. 40 As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world.

The above passage indicates that those sitting next to us in a pew, who we presume to be Christians, may be among the tares. Others from another denomination or religion may likewise be among the tares, unregenerate humanity. The appearance of goodness or moral standing is no guarantee that they are among the called and redeemed. Only God has this knowledge. **Sorry! The Bible does not teach the equality of all religions.**

Who is it that determines whether or not we qualify for the title of God's children? The Father knows those who are His own. This will become abundantly clear when the in-gathering, final harvest occurs at the end of the age. We who have been "born from above" have this witness that we are the children of God. From the viewpoint of any casual observer, believers are

indistinguishable from unbelievers. Churches and cults imagine themselves display confidence in their righteous standing; that they are the elect and beloved of God. But have they had their names written in the "Book of Life?" Have they been "born again?"

The Gospel of Grace declares that our status of adopted sons and daughters may be received as a free gift. It is not awarded because of meritorious religious works or righteous deeds. God Himself initiates this transaction supernaturally. He answers those who cry out with a sincere heart.

Anyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved!

(Joel 2:32) 32 "And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered: (saved) for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call."

Why Jesus Taught in Parables

Matthew 13: 10 *"And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speak unto them in parables? 11 He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. 12 For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. 13 Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing, see not; and hearing, they hear not, neither do they understand."* You may ask how can God be fair? According to the knowledge and wisdom of God some are called and Equipped but are unchosen. This is clearly a mystery among mysteries. God prepares the heart of those he calls at the time of His choosing.

Proof Texts from the Gospel of John

John 1:11 *He came unto his own, and his own received him not. 12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.* (In this passage the "right" is *Gk. exousia*, which means permission or authority.) In John, the first chapter, we find that those who receive him (Yeshua, Jesus the Messiah) those who will receive, he gives the **Power** (*Gk. exousia*) which means authority or permission. Again we are to **understand that not all will receive Jesus**. They can not be among those who may call themselves "sons of God, or children of God."

John 6:37 *All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.*

John 14.6 - - *Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.* It is the Father in heaven who makes the decision about those who

will be drawn forth or "chosen" for the title of Son of God. But the qualifying fact is that they are to come to the Father through only one channel, that of the Son, who is also called *the door of the sheep fold*. Believing in God you do well, so do the demons and they tremble; But to go into the sheep fold by any other means is not permitted. (John 10: 7-10)

John the apostle writes in his first Epistle 1 John:3 : *Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, **that we should be called the sons of God:** therefore the world knows us not, because it knew him not. 2 Beloved, **now are we the sons of God,** and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*

John continues to clarify the identifying traits of those who are God's children and the children of the devil later in the same chapter:

(1 John 3:9) Anyone born of God refuses to practice sin, because God's seed abides in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God. (10) By this the children of God and the children of the devil can be distinguished: Anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is anyone who does not love his brother.

Worldly Christians it seems, are far more engaged in pursuit of worldly rewards, name, fame, power, recognition, and acquisition of things. They have set their hearts (the seat of affections) upon things of this world that perish, and not things which are eternal / heavenly. John has exhorted against this pitfall,

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." (1 John 2:15)

Some have debated the reality of Good vs. Evil.

The Bible makes it clear; there are some human beings who are Evil and some who are Good. The good news is that we can change that status once we realize the truth about our fallen nature. **Ephesians 2:v3** explains:

*We were in times past counted among the **children of the evil one**. But in God's time we were delivered from that state and translated into the Kingdom of God's dear son. AMPC translation of Ephesians 2:3 - - Among these we as well as you once lived and conducted ourselves in the passions of our flesh [our behavior governed by our corrupt and sensual nature], obeying the impulses of the flesh and the thoughts of the mind [our cravings dictated by our senses and our dark imaginings]. We were then by nature children of [God's] wrath and heirs of [His] indignation, like the rest of mankind.*

This is the Phillips translation of the same verse:

To you, who were spiritually dead all the time that you drifted along on the stream of this world's ideas of living, and obeyed its unseen ruler (who is still operating in those who do not respond to the truth of God), to you Christ has given life! We all lived like that in the past, and followed the impulses and imaginations of our evil nature, being in fact under the wrath of God by nature, like everyone else. The final thought is this; we can be changed. We can be rescued from destruction.

Rescued From the Wrath to Come

Paul in his letter to the Thessalonians states: For God appointed us not unto wrath, but unto the obtaining of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, (1 Thes. 5:9). We know that the wrath of God will come upon all who have not chosen to follow the promised redemption of the Messiah. *Like a snare it will come upon all who dwell upon the face of the earth. (Luke 21:35)* This warning was from the Lord himself speaking of the wrath at the end of the age.

We can escape the wrath to come both temporal and spiritual. We can change our parentage from a fallen child of the evil one; (a son of Adam or daughter of Eve) into becoming a child of the living God.

Christ has redeemed us. We are redeemed from the curse of the law, Christ having been made a curse on our behalf. (Galatians 3:13)

The consequences of not receiving our Savior Redeemer: John 3:16 to 3:18 The offer of redemption is made clear in these verses:

16) For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. 17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. 18 "He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. 19 And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. And finally Chapter 3 of John concludes with this verse for further emphasis: 3:36) He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

GRACE through FAITH

THE MYSTERY OF FAITH AND GRACE

*It is the Glory of God to Conceal a Matter,
It is the Glory of Kings to Search out a Matter. Proverbs 25:2*

"But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: 1 Corinthians 2:7 Which none of the princes of this world knew: (2:7) for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. 1Co 2:9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. 1Co 2:10 But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. Tools specific to 1Co 2:11 For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." 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.

1 Corinthians; 2:14

Revelation and inspiration result from searching, knocking and asking. As simple as it may sound, these pathways that lead a seeker into the knowledge of the mysteries of God **is not easy to discover**. "God is a Spirit," says the scripture. His divine existence is one that can only be perceived, believed on a non-sensing level. If I say that I know God, whom you neither know nor see, you can only judge my assertions on the basis of my personal credibility. Some spokes persons for God or more credible than others. The early apostles did not so much argue the existence of God as a theory or concept but to prove His existence by supernatural attestations that demonstrated the **Power of God**. (1Corinthians 2). So we have the task of proving to a materialistic, non-believing world that God is real and that He still has a part in the day-to-day affairs of this world and its people.

It is a very great mystery that it is God who calls us to have fellowship with Him. It is God who equips us to grow and minister through Him. It is God who preserves and keeps us until he gathers his called out people unto himself. So you see, it is very little about our performance or goodness. It is the gift of God that prevails throughout the life of a believer.

Progressive Revelation

First let me preface this topic by stating the principle that persons without the Spirit, the "natural man (persons)" do not, can not know God! They are wearing the spiritual blinders common to all humanity. The first step to progressive revelation is to be born of God. This allows them to be partakers of heavenly things and Christ's divine nature. Thereafter they can read the work of God or scripture and derive understanding from it. Prior to this time it is sealed to them. Their eyes have the veil of *spiritual* blindness that is removed through Christ.

God is a god of mysteries and hidden things. The parables taught by Yeshua (Jesus) had within them truth at varying levels, plain story-level truth and higher spiritual level revelation. There is and always was that matter of hidden truth. To Christ's disciples it was given to know the secrets of the Kingdom of God while others received no more than a moral homily. God reveals himself to some and not to others. Heaven and its mysteries are not laid bare for any to intrude upon as there are defining limits between darkness and heavenly light. The Bible truths and hidden mysteries are not delineated as point by point, topic by topic facts and realities. Thus the key to unpacking and deciphering the Word of God can not be achieved strictly by academic skills and study alone. Without the Holy Spirit which is the teacher and discipler of truth we are limited pretty much to the moral homily level of the listener.

We are given understanding in through Yeshua (Jesus) in a line by line, precept upon precept, understanding. As it is stated *that Jesus is the Word of God*. This is itself a mystery. For when the Scripture is made known in its completeness we shall See Him as He IS.

The following writings deal with the subject of Mysteries. They do little more than introduce the topics of God's mysteries, some of the mysteries. There remains, more, much more to be gleaned within these domains of study. Moreover, there are likely more and more mysteries and mysteries within mysteries which will come into our field of view in due time. Revelation is progressive and always deepening as **His** truth is being revealed by God's Holy Spirit **in God's divine time**. God is withholding certain things from us because it is not yet His time. Contrary to some ecclesiastical authorities we do not have all the answers (facts) as to Who God is and what His complete plan is for His Body, The Church (another mystery).

Matthew 16:16 "But who do you say ye that I am?"

Jesus asks his disciples, "*Who do you say that I am?*" Peter, answers and says, "*You are the Messiah, the son of the Living God.*" Jesus then tells Peter, "*- - Flesh and blood have not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.*" This is an example of how we (3) receive knowledge of hidden things, Mysteries revealed by God *1Corinthians 2:0 - -"Eye has not seen nor ear heard, neither has entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for those that love him. 10: But God has revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the*

Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. 11. For man knows the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God, know man knows, but the Spirit of God."

No scripture is of private interpretation. The word of God means only what God has intended it to mean. The apostles of the first church established the precise understandings and parameters of doctrine that stand for all generations.

There is today an apostate movement that would tell us that certain, elected prophets and apostles have equal or greater knowledge to the early apostles. This is a dangerous deception. Any and all current revelations must square with the word of faith first presented by the fathers. (Jude 3)

Various Uses of the Religious term "Faith"

"FAITH" A GENERIC RELIGIOUS TERM REFERRING TO BELIEF IN A RELIGION; A PERSON WITHOUT "FAITH" MIGHT CONSIDER HIMSELF/or herself AN ATHEIST. One can argue that they still have faith in something e.g. SCIENCE, or COMMON SENSE

THE FAITH OF ABRAHAM: "HE BELIEVED GOD AND IT WAS CONSIDERED HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS" *"For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness."*

THE "FORMULA FOR FAITH" AS GIVEN IN HEBREWS 1:16

All active actions of faith are exemplified by this principle: *"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."* My faith definition is knowing that God is working continuously with you; even in the, here and now, in our present moment or crisis.

EXAMPLES OF WHEN THE GIFT OF FAITH IS NEEDED

To Be "BORN AGAIN"

To Be ENABLED To Walk On Water,

To HAVE FAITH TO CALM A STORM,

To Have FAITH FOR ANSWERED PRAYER, In fervent and effectual prayer, etc.

Faith is provided to enable the believer supernaturally in matters that are not possible without the enablement of Almighty God.

We can not come to believe in Jesus nor seek redemption without the Spirit drawing us. *"For to each of us is given the measure of faith." No one can believe unless God provides each*

individual with "**a measure of faith**; the measure needed for us; therefore it (4) is a gift from God. (Rom_12:3 For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.)

THE "WORD OF FAITH MOVEMENT" BEGAN TO LOSE ITS WAY

I and many others started out in the Kenneth Hagin, Norvell Hayes, Kenneth Copeland school of faith. This has come to be known by some as the *The Hyper-faith teaching*. After a time its practitioners began to demean and misjudge those who lacked the faith needed for health and prosperity. If anyone failed to speak with anything other than faith-filled words and positive confessions, they might be judged harshly. In time many grew to have more "*faith in faith*" than faith in God.

There are Biblical instances when not all of the apostles experienced healing or deliverance from hardship. 1 Peter 4:12 "*Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you.*" } Yes, Christians can and have always suffered affliction, hardships and trials and yes some of died while serving God faithfully.

YET IT IS CLEAR THAT WE LIVE A LIFE OF FAITH

And We Pray for GOD To Meet Our Needs by His Provision and Strength.

There are many great and precious promises that can guide our prayers. 2Pe_1:4 whereby he hath granted unto us his precious and exceeding great promises; that through these ye may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world by lust."

CHRISTIAN PRACTICES THAT HAVE FAITH AS THE FOUNDATION:

Such As:

We live by *Faith and not by sight*, the Spiritual world becomes known and manifest to us. "The Prayer Of Faith" mentioned in Jame's epistle includes provision for healing the sick; There are various **gifts of healing** available as the Lord directs.

Baptisms: We are baptized into the New Creation (baptized into Christ's Body; We are baptized into the fullness of the Spirit, (Holy Spirit Baptism;

Faith and renewal in the Lord's Supper;

We acknowledge the provisions of Christ's sacrifice. We acknowledge that there has been an exchange at the cross for us; a wonderful study in itself.

Faith to receive the things Jesus prayed for:

Jesus prayed for the provision that the Father would ensure for his own in his prayer of consecration in John. {Chapter 17.}

MARK 16 FAITH; See Mark 16:15-18 " *Mar 16:17} And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; Mar 16:18 They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.*"

(5) Faith That We Are Given Authority in the Spirit Realm; Believers have authority over demons

BELIEFS currently prevalent that have replaced Biblical Faith.

Rationalism. Belief that human reason should be our supreme authority (a belief which, ironically, we cannot prove by human reason).

Egalitarianism. Belief that all people should be given equality of opportunity and outcome regardless of (enter classes of your choice).

Naturalism. Belief that the natural world is all there is — there is no divine being.

Libertarianism. Belief that people should have unfettered freedom in every area of life (except where they do harm to others as defined by the elite.)

Relativism. Belief that there is no such thing as ultimate truth (which is, famously, a claim to ultimate truth). Salvation by works. Belief that God accepts us on the basis of what we do.

BELIEFS AND PRACTICES COMMON TO THE “NATURAL PERSON”

Hedonism. Belief that pleasure is the aim of life and will satisfy me.

(Witchcraft and Luciferianism) Which seeks Control and Manipulation to gain advantage to ourselves.

Materialism. Belief that money and possessions will satisfy me and natural things guide my world view. Decisions like these about what beliefs to hold are being made daily by everyone we encounter. The person who sits opposite you at work; the person you talk to occasionally on the train; the teacher who advances a particular idea in your local school.

FAITH – VS. REASON AND EVIDENCE

Does science supersede religious faith? Atheists tend to point to hard science to disprove “faith”. Surely they think the vast universe somehow disproves and displaces God. Most evolutionists, and scientists like Carl Sagon, Christopher Hitchens, Stephen Hawking would exemplify this.

God Choses those will believe and follow:

Who God has chosen? 1Corinthians 1:26

“For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. 27 But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; 28 and the [m]base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, 29 that no flesh should glory in His presence.”

(6)

GRACE ACCESSED THROUGH FAITH

Faith and the Grace of God

Grace is everything that God has provided Is providing, And will provide, On our behalf. Grace is what God does, Yielding and Obeying Is what we do.

[A Bible Example of Faith in Action](#)

[Faith and Grace](#)

[Faith Grows as a Fruit as we study the Word of God](#)

[Jesus Lived by Faith](#)

[Jesus Taught and Demonstrated Faith in Action](#)

A Bible Example of Faith in Action

To continue the idea of response to God or his Word:

We can find it portrayed in the Gospel story in **Matthew 14:28**. In this account, Peter sees Jesus walking upon the surface of the water, an act quite impossible in the natural world unless of course the water be frozen. Peter, always adventurous, tells Jesus that he would like to join him in walking on the water, (but only if it truly is Jesus). The faith sequence is portrayed by Jesus telling Peter to "come." Peter himself, then proceeds to approach Jesus, walking on the water. When he removes his eyes from the master and begins to sink, Peter began to notice the waves and the storm, when his faith was replaced by reason and doubt, Peter began to sink.

An indispensable element of the equation is the fact that Jesus spoke directly to Peter and said, "Come."

Jesus spoke A *Rhema* word directly to Peter. Peter acted upon that word from the Lord. It was not Peter's ability to transcend the laws of nature but the power of the Word of God, which formed all of the natural world in the beginning. It was this Word that held Peter up miraculously. This was faith in action.

In the present day we do not often get "*rhemas*" to walk on water but if His voice tells you, "Walk." you should respond. If it tells you, "Sing." you should resound. If it tells you "Go." you should respond. If it tells you, "Stop." you should respond. This is acting in response with faith.

Faith and Grace

The natural human mind, emotions and will (the human soul) would not seek God, could not believe, and it has no inherent goodness in itself. Though not all of our souls are that of (7) arch villains or wholly reprobate, everyone in the human race "*-falls short of the glory of God.*" Therefore our faith is first given to us by God. His provision or spiritual endowment is GRACE.

Grace is everything which God has provided and will provide, working (spiritually) on our behalf. Grace is what God does! Yielding and obeying is what we do!

In the beginning all of Paul's letters, Paul begins with a certain phrase. I believe these words were written by the Spirit of God to provide a living rhema capable of empowering our faith as we read. This greeting by the apostle is charged with Spiritual Power, that phrase is, "**Grace be unto you** -," sometimes it is accompanied by "**and Peace** - " This "invocation" has come to be ritualized in church ceremonies but in its initial form, I believe it was Paul's intent that it be, a blessing of faith. A prayer of faith is a spoken proclamation which is intended to achieve a Spiritual result. [The sinner's prayer is a prayer in faith that brings salvation. See my 5 minute video.](#)

Grace is the working of a Holy, Spiritual God on our behalf. Grace is linked to the term "**anointing**", which is the manifestation of power and presence of God working upon one of his servants at a certain time.

It is the Father in heaven who sends His Spirit to help us in every way including to believe. This is an act of GRACE. **Grace is that which God does or supplies freely on our behalf.** Grace too is spiritual. It is a "Spiritual Fuel" which allows faith to work.

Salvation through grace and faith is described in Ephesians 2:8, "*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:*"

Faith Grows as a Fruit as we study the Word of God

Faith grows as a consequence of studying the Scriptures which are the repository of God's mind and wisdom. The entrance of God's word brings "life" and "light" as the psalmist declares. God's Word begins to redirect our thought processes and renews our minds to conform to God's thought. If we have little understanding of the Word, it follows that we can not be persons of faith. But again I promise you, God provides Grace and anointing to follow Him and know His word.

Faith is cumulative, like a living entity it grows and develops as a fruit. Hearing the Word of God spoken builds faith. (***Faith comes by hearing.***) Reading the Scriptures aloud is a powerful faith building exercise. Speaking the Word of God with our own mouths builds and activates faith. For example when it says in Scripture, "Fear not, for I the Lord am with you." We may activate faith by saying aloud, "I will not fear for you Lord, are with me."

"If we believe we shall see the glory of God."

(8) **John 11:40:** "*Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou believe, thou will see the glory of God?*"

If we do not believe, we can not see God's manifested glory. Unbelief does not activate faith. God does not violate our unyielding will and unbelief. As we move toward God in faith, he moves toward us.

Jesus Lived by Faith

Isaiah 11 is a prophetic scripture describes Yeshua, Jesus the Messiah. In it he is described as the one who does not judge by seeing of his eyes nor the hearing of his ears; this is the essential formula for any faith-filled child of God. Truth and the life of God are born in the heart of the children of God. (Jesus was the first born of many brethren.) In the days of the created son of God, Adam and Eve, the knowledge of God was part of their life. Godly wisdom were resident in their hearts; The fall was initiated by seeing with the natural eyes and hearing with the

natural ears world and knowledge of good and evil was predicated on the natural world and not faith.

Some may wish to argue that Jesus was too much like God and thus exempted from the life of faith that is required of us. I do not believe that this was the case. I believe that Jesus of Nazareth acted as the "son of man," Jesus Christ was faithful in word and deed. continuously from His youth onwards. It is said of Jesus, that he was full of Grace and Truth.

Php 2:5 *"Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Php 2:6 who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, Php 2:7 but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; Php 2:8 and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross. Php 2:9 Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name;"*

Two things are evident here: First that Jesus had knowledge of and lived by the Word (Scriptures) The Scriptures are the source of Faith. The son of God did not did not operate as God in this world but as the son of man, thus he operated under faith which pleases God and so demonstrated this principle to all of us! "This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased." (Matthew 3:17, Luke 3:22)

Another point in support of this thesis is that Jesus walked in faith is the Scripture which we quote from *Habakkuk 2:4, " - -the just shall live by his faith."* Whose faith we may ask? The answer I believe, is Christ (the Lord.) Therefore if it is his faith which empowers us, he must therefore be preeminent in the exercise and use of faith.

Jesus obeyed the word of the Father with whom he was in **Spiritual union**. It was the Father's voice and Jesus' response to his Father's voice, the Rhema, which characterizes Christ's life of faith for all of us, his disciples.

(9) Jesus Taught and Demonstrated Faith in Action

Jesus likewise, demonstrated faith by action. Thus both Jesus' words and actions initiated a life under God's control. His spoken words were with the tone of authority, they brought a result which was often miraculous. Miracles are spiritual intervention in the natural order, thus they are considered supernatural.

To receive any manifestation from God we must act upon faith. We must say or do something. (Romans 10:9,10, we see the principle of Faith described that results in the new birth "for with the heart we believe and with the mouth we confess.") Only true and sincere belief causes God to honor faith. God looks upon the heart of man. We can not partake in faith through someone else's revelation. We can not walk on water because Jesus told Peter to come forth. Our faith must be personal and it must be sincere knowing with assurance that His Word was given to us.

Finally, friend of God, to summarize: All spiritual promises are reached through the door of faith. To see the promises of God **actualized** requires faith. With faith all things are possible. "

NEW TESTAMENT BELIEVERS

solidly rooted

TO THE OLD TESTAMENT

WHAT EVERY CHRISTIAN SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE OLD TESTAMENT

(The OT was the only Bible at the time of the first Christian disciples and apostles. If you are a new Christian you may not fully understand the importance of the Old Testament Bible. At least that was my case. I was terribly ignorant about how the Christian faith came forth out of the Jewish election and covenant with God. As Paul describes our dept to Judaism, we were a wild olive branch that was grafted in to the root of the Natural root of Israel. (*Romans 11:17*))

The typical Bible we see today contains 66 books of which 39 are found in the Old Testament. We understand that the Old Testament (OT, or Hebrew Tanakh) is comprised of 4 categories of writing:

1. The Law (Pentateuch or the 5 books of Moses*;))

The first book of Genesis has a special place of importance in the word of God as it is the fountain head of first principles and beginnings. It is the book of “first mentions.” Genesis establishes important “typologies” that carry through the entire Bible.*

2. The historical books;
3. The poetic and wisdom books, including the Psalms*, Proverbs, Song of Solomon, Ecclesiastes;
4. The prophets. The books of the prophets include both the major and the minor prophets. Every prophet spoke with 100% accuracy in that which they spoke as the mind and purposes of God. To fail to do so would be punishable by death. The major prophets wrote greater numbers of chapters
but the minor prophets covered events that included the scope of time from
contemporary events to the end of the age.

3.* *It is clear that Psalms were also prophetic as Jesus stated that he must fulfill all things written in the law, the prophets and the psalms.*

It is a giant step to go from a Bible illiterate to a believer. You may call it a leap of faith because only through God's grace is this possible. This transition is a journey from blindness to sight and from having only *natural understanding* to possessing what can be called a *renewed or God-focused mind*. "*The heart of man is deceitful and desperately wicked, who can know it?*" says the prophet in *Jeremiah 17:9*. That is a profound question to be answered. Only those who have been graced by the power of God can say they know it.

When I first became a Christian I began slowly to grow in the knowledge of the Bible. Before this I had no interest, no knowledge, nor any trust in the veracity and importance of the Bible. Owing to the church experiences I was exposed to prior to being born again, I had only an inkling of the importance of the Bible's Old Testament. These churches held "Reformed Theology" doctrine.

I was familiar with the Bible "stories" told in Sunday school but these, I thought were tales for kids and not to be taken seriously. We had the Garden of Eden story; The Noah and the ark story; The David and Goliath story; The Moses and the Israelites and Egypt story. The Hebrew children in the fiery furnace story, and the familiar Daniel and the lion's den story. These were great stories but how should any grownup regard these?

I thought that the New Testament is for Christians. There was not much to be drawn from the Old Testament books. I questioned if they had relevance at all to the Christian religion today. I even wrote to a well known ministry to address the question, "What is the importance of the Old Testament?" I received no answer to my question.

I had no idea then, that the Old Testament was such a deep well of knowledge pertaining to the plan of God and the place and destiny of humanity on this planet. God saw in the beginning the need for a plan of

redemption on behalf of fallible and fallen humanity. The Almighty foresaw an angelic rebellion and the fall of His human creation. He before creation “in the beginning” had foreseen the need and the solution of how to redeem the world and regain perfection, again. The plan was to have a "new Adam" who would be a "redeemer" whose purpose was to restore a fallen humanity. This plan was to be enabled by a particular "set-apart" people who would be the vehicle of bringing forth the redeemer and through an "elect people and nation” His glory would be restored and the adversary would be judged and removed from his stronghold upon humanity. (*Daniel 9:24-27*)

The Almighty Creator God saw from the beginning in countless ages past what would transpire to his creation on earth. God exists outside of time and space and supernaturally sees the end from the beginning. This includes the destinies of you and me and our time and place in this world! Now that is a marvelous thing and something to think about!

See this proof text; A God outside of time!

“Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure”: (*Isaiah 46:9-10*)

The Bible Which Jesus and the Disciples Knew

We should be aware that in the days of Jesus and his disciples and apostles the only bible available was the Old Testament. This was the source used to validate the covenants and promises of God concerning the prophesied Messiah. The Old Covenant scripture contains the Mosaic writings, the Pentateuch; the history of God’s elect people; the Psalms and the prophetic writings. The “New Testament” addition was made a part of the “Canon of Scriptures” only after the fourth century ad. (325 ad)

The purposes and claims of Jesus could be fully validated in the books of Moses, the prophets and the Psalms. The Old Testament contained numerous pre-incarnational appearances of Yeshua, Jesus. These were times

when Jehovah (JHVH) physically manifested to Abraham, Moses Joshua, Jacob and others. Such appearances are known as Theophanies. In such appearances he is often referred to as “*the Angel of the Lord.*” In Joshua he is identified as the Captain of the Lord’s Armies or the Lord of Hosts.

Certainly the Old Testament (The **Hebrew Tenakh**) is not an easy subject but it effectively foresees the timeline of the world from the beginning to the end of the age through the declarations of the prophets. The prophets had to be 100% perfect to make God's purposes and plans known. The depth of cohesiveness or consistency throughout the OT is amazing, yes, miraculous. It bears witness to the divine authorship and its symbolic depiction of the person of Messiah in every book of the Bible.

The Book of Genesis

The book of Genesis is an exceptional and deeply challenging document. It is called the book of beginnings. It begins with the creation story but maybe it would be better stated as the recreation story. The universe is formed, the earth is formed and all life is formed by God upon the earth. But in the second verse of Genesis Chapter 1 we find the mysterious mention of a world in disruption and disorder, ***formless and void*** is taken from the Hebrew as a chaotic formlessness as though the world is being restored from a prior act of disruption. First man is told to *replenish the earth*. This is also hinting at civilizations lost in antiquity past.

Science has long clashed with theologians over the concept of creationism and whether the creation was an old long term time line or whether it was a literal 6 day creation. Christian science authorities differ as well but such matters do not impact faith and fundamentals of salvation in the Lord Jesus.

The Garden and The Fall of Adam and Eve

It is a certainty that God created the first humans in this earth age. He created them perfect. He set them in a pristine garden paradise and made them to have dominion over all manner of life on earth. In this garden there was a tree whose fruit if eaten would result in calamity. It would test the obedience of the man and woman. Meanwhile, another supernatural being has found access to the garden. He is a rebel and an enemy of God, *the tempter*. This being is described as being reptilian. How did this once, anointed, perfection of beauty become a reptilian? This remains is an untold story. How did he came into the picture to disrupt God's purposes and what is the backstory of his previous existence is never fully explained and open to conjecture. Through the ages we have come to know him by many names including *Satan* and *the Adversary*.

The Edenic World Is Entirely Devastated by The Fall

The aftermath of the fall was devastating and world changing. It destroyed the humanity's dominion and Satan became the default "god of this world." Adam's sin brought the sentence of death upon the human race. The fall destroyed the entire biosphere and ecosystems of the planet. We are living with that aftermath even to the present day. Entropy ensued, lives were shortened, disease and distress entered the lives of humans. The animal kingdom became dangerous.

All Born Under the Race of Adam Inherit Adam's Sin Nature

This is a foundation Biblical Understanding! All born from the Adamic lineage were born with a *fallen nature* or "*born in sin*" according to the image and frailty of fallen Adam. Being born *having a sin nature* is the fate of every person born since the fall in Genesis 3. The entire world fell under the domination of Satan as Adam surrendered his dominion to *the (now) "god of this world."* Satan became Earth's default sovereign.

God Addresses Satan and Outlines His Plan

For Redeeming the World in the "Proto-Evangelium."

(Genesis 3:14) *And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast*

done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: (Genesis 3:15) And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

The above text is the statement that describes the adversarial conflict between good and evil and the ultimate outcome of a Messiah who would arrive in the fullness of time who would redeem fallen humanity. The passage is called the *proto evangellium*. It is the first mention of the gospel and God's plan of redemption in the bible. It speaks of a "seed war" between Satan's seed and the woman's seed, which is predicated on a person, supernaturally born by the virtue of a virgin birth. This required a genealogical line of the human seed to be pure and undefiled. This virgin's "seed" would need to be free from any human mixture from Adam's defiled "sin nature." Any genetic impurity would destroy God's pure line to produce the Messiah. (See John 10:1-2) *The "Sheepfold is a metaphor for being born a human."*

This explains why the flood came to destroy a population upon the earth. (Genesis 6-7) *All flesh on earth had become corrupted* before the time of the flood. The DNA, genetic code had become corrupted not only among the human population but even the animals through the genetic games engaged in by the *fallen ones*. action described in the following.

Genesis Chapter 6: The Incursion of Fallen Angels

In Genesis chapter 6 we are told of Sons of God being introduced to the human population. Watchers were angels who had the ability to manifest in human likeness. (*See the Account of Angels in Genesis 19*) They possessed supernatural, heavenly knowledge and power. These watchers "left their first estate" as Jude describes them. The details of the action and the names of these entities are found in the Book of Enoch. The actions of these 200 watchers upon the earth were wrong and unlawful. They took wives (forcefully) and procreated with them. Their offspring were demigods, great men of myth and legend. These no doubt produced the images and

mythologies of Greek, Roman and other national mythologies. Many of these creatures were incredibly gigantic in stature and it can be argued that they left traces of their powers and technology to be seen in various places on earth.

The information described in Genesis 6 is brief and lacks detail.

(Genesis 6:1) And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, (Genesis 6:2) That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose. (Genesis 6:3) And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be a hundred and twenty years. (Genesis 6:4) There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown.

In pre-Christian times extra canonical Hebrew writings were familiar and extant up to the time of Christ. Among these documents were; The Book of Enoch; The Book of Jasher; The Book of Giants. Fragments of these were found in a number of the caves of Qumran, the location of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Dr. Ken Johnson, of Bible Facts Ministries is an authority on many of the ancient books that have been found. Dr. Johnson has translated and transcribed studies on Enoch and Jasher and others from the Qumran Essene collections. (www.biblefacts.org)

Most information on the angelic incursion is detailed in The Book of Enoch which was in wide circulation during the second temple age in Israel. Passages from the Book of Enoch were quoted in Jude's short epistle: Speaking of the sins of the watchers: *(Jude 1:13) Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever. (Jude 1:14) And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, (Jude 1:15) To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which*

they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him. (Jude 1:16) These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaking great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage.

We see that Angels can be manifested in human form as they were described again in Genesis Chapter 19 when they visited Abraham and later visited Lot to rescue him from Sodom.

The Book of Genesis Points Us to the Time of the Patriarchs

The days of Noah and the Days of Lot are mentioned by Jesus as an example of the depravity and rebellion in the days *in which we now live*. We are witnessing the coming end of the age that Jesus spoke about in detail. (See Matthew 24; Luke 21; and Mark 13) We could say so much about the details that are encompassed by this statement. 2nd Peter reminds us that the world that was in Noah's day was destroyed by water and the present world is reserved for destruction by fire. Now that is serious global warming!

Genesis Abraham's Two Sons and The Typology of Joseph, Son of Jacob

There were two sons born to Abraham, Ishmael and Isaac. After Abraham received the promise that he would be the father of many nations. It appeared from all the natural evidence that he could never father a child through his bride Sarah for reason of her advanced age. So Sarah persuaded Abraham to fulfill the promise through her Egyptian servant Hagar. The child of the bond servant was named Ishmael. It was God's plan that Sarah should bare a child miraculously, against all odds in her advanced years. When it finally came to pass a child born and he was called Isaac. It was Isaac who was the child of the promise.

We will quickly skip past many details of the lineage of the "father of faith" Abraham. The sons of Abraham were Isaac and Isaac's son Jacob. As a test of faith Abraham was told to sacrifice his only son on Mount Mariah. At the last moment God provided a lamb to fulfill the sacrifice. In later centuries, Jesus was crucified as God's substitutionary lamb on that very mountain.

Jacob persevered in a wrestling match with God and was awarded with a new name, Israel. (**Genesis 32**) The sons of Israel are referred to as the twelve tribes. Each tribe was named after a son of Jacob. Among the last two sons of Jacob were the favored two Joseph and Benjamin. They were the sons of the most loved wife, Rachel.

Jacob's 11th Son, Joseph Stands As An Amazing “ante-type” Of The Messiah Jesus

Joseph is a very special story in the history of Israel and its traditions. Theologian Arthur Pink (1886-1952) noted a hundred or more similarities of Joseph to the Messiah, Jesus.

The son of Jacob's more beloved Rachel, Joseph was favored by Jacob and given a token robe that made his brothers envious. Moreover Joseph was inclined to have revelatory dreams that portrayed himself as being exalted above his brethren. The brothers decided to rid themselves of the annoyance and took him into the desert to be killed. The plan evolved when a caravan traveling to Egypt came by and rather than merely killing their brother, they sold Joseph to become a slave. The brothers had stripped off the beautiful coat and covered it with blood from a lamb and used that as evidence that a wild beast had killed him.

Through many dangers and trials and snares, Joseph survived prison and false allegations and terrible hardship to be recommended to the Pharaoh of Egypt as a diviner of dreams. Joseph interpreted Pharaoh's dream in which he foresaw the future seven- year rise of abundance and seven- years of famine. Joseph was promoted to become chief administer next only to the king in authority. He steered Egypt through that great famine. When the famine was at the worst Jacob's sons came to request food in Egypt which had abundance due to Joseph's wise counsel. The story of Joseph's reunion and reconciliation to his brothers and his father is among the most dramatic and touching in the Bible. There are dozens of parallels of the life of Joseph and the Life of Yeshua Jesus. The typology is rich. What the brothers meant for evil God used for good.

Moses The Lawgiver, The promised Deliverer From Egyptian Bondage

The book of Exodus introduces us to the typology of the World. Pharaoh exemplifies *the god of this world*. He is an unrelenting taskmaster. He holds all of the people in bondage until they are delivered from his powers. He blinds the eyes of all who are not redeemed from his dominion.

The ten plagues of Egypt were used to demonstrate God's power over the natural world. The last plague finally brought the release of the Israelites from captivity but those even after being freed from bondage were still stiff-neck and obstinate, a stiff-necked people who grumble and complain and who quickly lose faith in the God who miraculously delivered them with great signs and provision.

Numbers to Deuteronomy; The Delayed Journey to the Promise Land

The journey in the wilderness was destined for Canaan across the Jordan River. Moses sent some leaders, one from each of the 12 tribes, to spy out the land. They returned with an example of the great richness and abundance of Canaan but ten of the leaders brought forth *an evil report*. (*Numbers Chapter 13*) The inhabitants were giants and impossible to overcome. (*Recall Genesis 6.*) Only two of the spies gave a report that was full of faith. They saw with God's eyes. The faith-filled two declared that no matter how impossible the challenge might appear, they were well able to take the land. These two *heroes of faith* were Joshua and Caleb.

God was wroth with the lack of faith by those who denied his ability to do to the giants what he did to the Egyptians. As punishment God would send them on a march around and around the desert but never able to reach their destination.

Moses leadership was met with grumbling and defiance throughout this part of the wilderness journey. The Israelites found themselves in skirmishes with some of the inhabitants of the land but with God's help were victorious

over the armies of two famous kings who were giants in stature. Sihon king of the Amorites and Og, king of Bashan.

Jewish Law and Upholding Traditions

The Jewish ordinances of The Law and memorial festivals (*Moedim* – *Levitus 23*) that were instigated in the ancient historic past by the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and Moses, portray future events to be fulfilled by the Son of the Highest who will in the fullness of time finally redeem the people of Israel.

Meanwhile throughout the passage of centuries "*the adversary*" who had usurped rulership over the planet after Adam's fall, has never stopped resisting the divine plan of redemption through stealth and cunning. The adversary as stated is a spirit being, called by many names; Satan, Lucifer, The evil one, The god of this world, the Prince of the power of the air among others. He tempted the Messiah Jesus in the wilderness later as he sought to disrupt God's plan to restore the planet.

The things which I include in this brief OT study are but a sketch. These are compiled for beginners. I will not go into particular historical epochs (*dispensations*) or the stories of the many heroes and heroines of the faith spoken whose names appear later in Hebrews chapter 11. The historical periods from creation and the garden to the times of the Messianic deliverer, are populated by individuals who were empowered (anointed) by JHVH and whose calling was to keep God's covenant people, Israel, from turning aside to idolatry, genetic defilement and judgment. The prophets foretold that the people of God would rise and fall into disobedience then go into captivity.

In the fullness of time, God's chosen seed would be born according to dozens of prophetic promises. He would be announced as the "Lamb of God" as proclaimed by the last prophet of the Old Testament, John the Baptist. Jeshua, Jesus was born to be the ransom for sin. He would extend his arms to gather in the nations (the gentiles). Jesus was that *Kinsman redeemer* (Book of Ruth) (*Ruth 2 v20*) who would call forth a special people for himself and eventually rule over a people called out for his pleasure. (The church or *ekklesia* are His called out ones.) All the while the adversary is continually

at work to hinder and destroy God's plan. Satan is still making preparation for his own kingdom to arise and rule.

As it turns out the Old Testament Bible or **First Covenant** is rich in revelation and prophecy that provides insight into history “*His-Story*” which includes:

1. How God created the world, finally man and woman; and what caused their "fall" from glory.
2. How Lucifer (the shining one) usurped man's dominion and became “*the god of this world*”;
3. How God revealed his eternal plan to provide a redeemer from the seed of a woman; (*Gen. 3:15, the proto evangelium*) and fulfill the promise of a kingdom on the earth; “*I will put **enmity** Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel.*”
4. [How Satan has an allotted time](#) and will eventually be defeated along with his minions;
5. How Satan's character is vanity (pride). He is a liar, a thief, a killer and a destroyer.
6. How Satan's kingdom and its influence produced a depraved world that brought forth judgment in the time of Noah and later Lot in Abraham's day.
7. How Satan is constantly engaged in an effort to thwart God's plan of producing a redeemer, (*the woman's seed, the messiah*) who is promised to reign;
8. How God established a righteous line (*through Abraham*) from which the promised messiah would come;
9. How the descendants of Abraham (*the patriarchs*) were thwarted by Satan's forces continuously through the centuries;
10. How Abraham was given a **land of promise**. It was to be an eternal possession;
11. How the land of promise (**Canaan**) was occupied by giants and beings who practiced idolatry and demonic worship; These also had a bloodline that was corrupted by inter-mixture with fallen angels. (Gen. 6)
12. How these lands once conquered by the Israelites were meant to be sustained in righteousness;

13. How God raised up holy prophets who spoke words of correction and spoke of things to come as God directed their speech by the Holy Spirit (*Ruach Ha Kodesh*);
14. How Moses led the Jews out of captivity in Egypt with signs and wonders and was later given the commandments and sacrifices needed to continue under the blessings of JHVH;
15. How all the books of the O.T. (*the Tenakh*) point to Jesus the Messiah; the books of Moses, all of the prophets and the Psalms. (**Luke 24:27 & Luke 24:44**);
16. How Israel became a kingdom about 1000 BC and anointed King David who prefigures the righteous king who will rule in the Messianic Kingdom;
17. How Israel was taken into captivity by other empires when they failed to continue JHVH's laws;
18. How prophets spoke of a time of future judgment when all the unrighteous will answer for their idolatry, blasphemy, and sorceries. This time of judgment is called the "Day of the Lord" a time when Satan's head will be crushed and evil will be vanquished. Jesus is the one who will destroy the enemy wielding his own "*terrible swift sword*;"
19. How John the Baptist was the last O.T. prophet. John came in the Spirit and Power of Eliajah the prophet. He was the forerunner who declared the coming of Messiah and to "*make straight the way*."
20. How Jesus' earthly ministry was only to the Jews. (*the lost sheep of the house of Israel*) (Matthew 10:5) *These twelve Jesus sent out, instructing them, "Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans,*
21. (Matthew 10:6) *but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.*
22. He presented proofs of his divinity and messiah- ship but was not received by the religious authorities.
23. How at the *birth of the church age*, God's covenant was extended beyond the Israel and the Jews. The "good news" of the gospel was to go to all the nations (gentiles.) Non Jews were allowed to be grafted into the vine of Israel, becoming fellow heirs along with the Jews.

From Judges to The Kings of Israel

Before Israel was ruled by a king. Israel was ruled by a succession of Judges. Following the leadership of Joshua Israel advanced into the regions of Canaan to possess the land promised to Abraham. There was ongoing confrontation by the pagan tribes living there. There were Midianites, Hivites, Malechites, Zidonians, and multiple tribes of Philistines and others. All of these were nations practiced all matters of abominable demonic worship and who were in some way intermingled with the admixture of non human DNA. God was intently focused on maintaining the purity of the hereditary line of his people Israel. It was to provide for a pure messianic line.

At a time following the period of the Judges the people thought it wise to have a king to rule over them like the other nations. Saul, son of Kish, was the tallest and most manly candidate. Samuel, with some reservation, anointed him king.

Saul, Israel's First King

Saul's reign was spent defending Israel from the Phillistines. Here is where the tale of Goliath of Gath comes in. Goliath is a Phillistine giant having 6 fingers on each hand and 6 toes on each foot. He is the champion who challenges the Israelites and taunts them for 40 days to send out their best warrior to contend man to man. Goliath is confident and mocks the armies of Saul. Israel has no man who is willing to take on the challenge. David the shepherd, tending the flock of Jessie of Bethlehem hears that Israel is being taunted by a heathen giant, and says to himself. I am willing to confront this enemy of God. He was good using the tools of a shepherd. It is a good story and brings the youthful shepherd into notoriety. He valiantly slays the giant and beheads him with Goliath's own sword.

During Saul's life following David's triumph, Saul's ego can not tolerate the attention that David is getting from the people. Saul is dealing with a mental disorder in which he requires David's soothing songs on a harp to bring him peace. David is anointed and full of faith and the presence of God is with him. Though Saul threatens his life in jealousy and madness David

never lifts a hand against him because Saul is God's anointed. Samuel the prophet anoints David as the next King of Israel and he rules Israel for 40 years. David's life is full of challenges and some moral failures. David was a man of war and is called "a man after God's own heart." There was rivalry between his sons and strife among members of David's family and wives. David is surrounded by a faithful cohort of valiant warriors, his mighty men of valor.

During the Kingdom age of Israel we see the people of Israel constantly facing threats from foreign nations that seek to bring God's people to ruin. The psalmist David was a King, a warrior and a worshiper. He was the prophet Samuel's God-selected choice of leader over the young kingdom in the era of about 1000 BC.

Solomon one of David's sons by his wife Bathsheba, succeeded David as King. David had at least 19 named sons by his 8 named wives. He also had children with his concubines that are not named. It was Solomon who would build the first temple as the place where God would manifest and where worship ordinances were followed. God manifested to Solomon in a dream in which Solomon was asked what he should like to receive from the Lord. (1 Kings 3:5) The thing Solomon requested was wisdom to rule this vast people of whom he was given charge. This answer was so pleasing to Jehovah that he granted much more, wisdom, wealth and glory beyond measure.

The Richness of the Psalms

The Psalms written and sung by David are a testament of his heart of faith, and his love for the presence of God. His writings express in a powerful way, the anointing of the Holy Spirit. It is written that he "*beheld the Lord ever before him.*"

David's psalms are filled with a vast array of praise. Among the Psalms are many foretelling the Messianic times to come. According to Christ Jesus, he was called into this world to fulfill everything written in the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms. David was a true worshiper. His heart overflowed passionately in thanksgiving and extolling the greatness of God. There is no doubt that David possessed the Holy Spirit in a measure that present religion

can not imagine. When the church was born at Pentecost the Holy Spirit fell upon the 120 in the upper room were filled to ecstasy and overflowing they began to prophesy. The Holy Spirit baptism brings us close to the level of intimacy with God that David the psalmist and warrior-king knew.

The Psalms are so rich in portraying God's love and Power and His faithfulness it is absolutely essential to make note and understand this treasure of Old Testament writing.

Poetry of the Psalms and the Wisdom Writing

In the intimacy of God's presence we transcend the manner of normal thought and expression. We can call this "inspired expression." It enhances the manner of communication or performance giving us thought patterns that are flavored by Godly inspiration. If God is powering the mind then subject matter flows from the breath of God. It is God-Breathed as the Holy Bible is described.

Solomon was gifted with Wisdom. He's called the wisest man who ever lived. He recorded his wise sayings which resonate with truth and a practical application of living in this world with Godly perspective and purpose. God is the author of wisdom.

Solomon also authored additional writing. The Song of Songs, or the Song of Solomon and Ecclesiastes. Solomon's fame and wealth bought him renown but it also brought him a departure from faith and regret. Solomon's many wife from ungodly nations provided a foothold for the ungodly pagan world to intrude on God's plan to continue on a righteous course. "A little leaven, leavens the lump." as the saying goes. Now dark spiritual forces entered to corrupt and divide God's kingdom. The sons of Solomon had the wealth and power but they had no wisdom and turned aside from the godly path.

The Prophetic Voice Throughout the Old Covenant

The prophet speaks for God. He must be anointed to speak for God. This anointing allows God to address the people directly with regard to matters confronting them at any given time such as, “Shall we go out to battle against the Philistines?” The prophetic voice guided the judges and the kings. There were some notable prophets and some less notable ones. There were also false prophets following the division of Israel into the Northern Tribes and the Southern tribes. During the reign of the so called evil kings they employed their own favored prophets who prophesy good things and never God’s true message of warning or correction. The false prophets were possessed by “a lying spirit.” True prophets were required by the law to be 100 per cent without fail. To prophesy a false message was a matter punishable by death. When the people were taken in idolatry and disobedience the manner of correction was to send them plagues or being overtaken by other nations.

Prophets Foretold the Destruction of Israel, Judah and Their Captivity

The kingdoms were divided after the reign of Solomon’s son Rehoboam. For more than 200 years the kings that followed Solomon degenerated further and further into evil and idolatry. The northern ten tribes went into captivity to the Assyrians in 722 BC. During and prior to the reign of many kings of the north, the voices of God’s righteous prophets continued to be heard. Among the God’s prophets were Jehu, Micaiah, Elijah, Elisha, Amos, Jonah, Hosea and Micah. The kings of Assyria who vanquished the kingdoms of the north included Shalmaneser, Tiglath-Pileser III and Shalmaneser V, and later Sargon II and Sennacherib. These accounts are recorded in the OT books of the Kings and the Chronicles which historically account for the rising and falling of the tribes of Israel and their failing to follow the God of Israel.

Moses, Micah, Habakkuk, Jeremiah and Isaiah all prophesied that Judah, the southern kingdom would bear the consequences of failing to keep the sabbaths. Jeremiah was abused and imprisoned by the king of Judah. The Babylonian empire at that time was under King Nebuchadnezzar. Jerusalem was plundered and the temple destroyed in the Babylonian invasion. Judah would be taken captive for 70. Many prisoners were taken to Babylon in 586

BC including Daniel and other Hebrew youth to be named later in the book of Daniel the prophet. These were all used as servants in Babylon. Jehoiakim was the king who refused to listen to and heed the voice of Jeremiah. Jeremiah was abused and treated shamefully and then thrown into a dungeon.

For the remainder of the Old Testament we encounter a thorough accounting of all manners that pertained to then and future declarations of God. All of which have or will soon come to pass.

Messianic Prophecies and the Future Church Age and Final Restored Kingdom

I found 178 specific messianic prophecies which were fulfilled in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. You can read this detail list at:

<https://www.messianic.org/prophecy/a-comprehensive-list-of-messianic-prophecies>

Some of these are found in the writings of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Micah, Hosea, Zechariah, Habakkuk, Psalms and Proverbs. They were foretold by Moses as well.

The Book of Daniel the prophet has among its prophetic visions and visitations very specific foretelling of the end of days, also called end of the age. Beginning in Chapter 2 the King of Babylon has a dream that portrays all the major kingdoms and times in the then present and later future of the world. A statue portrays the various kingdom ages from Babylon to Persia to Greek to Roman and to the end of times depicted as ten toes made up of iron intermixed with potter's clay. In those days a stone made without hands strikes the feet of the statue causing it to turn to dust and form into a great mountain. This depicts a final imperishable kingdom which is yet to come. It points to the Messianic kingdom where Christ rules from Jerusalem and the restoration of the world that was lost to Adam. Amillennialists and reformed theologians do not accept this prophesied final world kingdom since they hold to the notion that prophecy has been fulfilled already and the church is presently the agency of Christ's rule on earth. They also teach that the present state of Israel is no more favored than any other nation and has no

particular prophetic role since the church has assumed the place of Israel in prophecy.

The Prophecy of the 70 Weeks in Daniel 24

Probably the most astonishing of Old Testament prophecies is the prophecy of the 70 weeks of Daniel. In Daniel chapter 9 version 24 to 27. An angel explains in detail the exact number of days and years there will be before the Messiah of Israel appears and what his role will be. The matters addressed deal with the Jewish people (Daniel 9:24). He will be introduced to the people of Jerusalem on a specific day. That day is calculated from the going forth by the decree of Artaxerxes in 445 BC. (as meticulously calculated by Sir Robert Anderson in his work “The Coming Prince.”)

With all the calculations and the day counting Jesus was to enter Jerusalem on one specific day. Jesus was “cut off” at the end of the 69th week. Daniel (9-26). This leaves one week a “seven” unfulfilled. The correct interpretation of Scripture is that final 7 years will be fulfilled by the Jews and Israel. The church age has been an undefined period of times awaiting the gathering of the Gentiles and the end or fullness of the gentiles when all who are written in the book of life have been gathered in. The final 7th week returns to focus again to the people of Israel to whom Jesus made his final descriptions of the end of the age to his disciples in the 24th Chapter of Matthew, the 13th chapter Mark and the 21st chapter of Luke. All of this is addressed to the Jews who Jesus infers will be back in their land, will have a new temple and will be offering temple worship and sacrifices once again.

The epistles of the New Testament bring a new prophetic focus into view. These are written to the people who have been redeemed in the new covenant of grace and who are now living during *the church age*. Peter, Paul and John the apostles establish the nature of the Gospel of Salvation and Grace. They speak about the fullness of a redeemed life and living as *new creations in Christ*. Among their epistles we are led to the end of the church age and the coming time of Jacob’s trouble when Israel is back in the land and God refocuses entirely on restoring his chosen people through a time of great trouble. *A time of Tribulation such as the world has never seen.*
(Matthew 24:21)

I had not intended to go so deeply into the nature and depth of the Old Testament, although cursory. But to eliminate any part of it would leave so many questions unanswered. To draw this treatise to an end I will state again that the Old and New Testament are inextricably linked. The Old Testament is the New Testament concealed and the New Testament is the Old Testament revealed.

FOUNDATION OF the POWER OF GOD

THE GOSPEL - POWER FROM ON HIGH

"But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: 1 Corinthians 2:7 Which none of the princes of this world knew: (2:7) for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. 1Co 2:9 ¶ But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. 1Co 2:10 But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searches all things, yea, the deep things of God. Tools specific to 1Co 2:11 For what man knows the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knows no man, but the Spirit of God." But the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. 1 Cor. 2:14

Revelation, inspiration, searching, knocking, asking; are pathways that lead a seeker into the knowledge of the mysteries of God. "God is a Spirit," says the scripture. His divine existence is one that can only be perceived, believed on a non-sensing level. If I say that I know God, whom you neither know nor see, you can only judge my assertions on the basis of my personal credibility. Some spokes persons for God or more credible than others. The early apostles did not so much argue the existence of God as a theory or concept but to prove His existence by supernatural attestations, demonstrating the Power of God. (1Corinthians 2). So we have the matter of proving to a materialistic non believing world that God is real and that He still has a part in the day to day affairs of this world and its occupants.

It is a very great mystery that it is God who calls us to have fellowship with Him. It is God who equips us to grow and minister through Him. It is God who preserves and keeps us until his coming to gather his called out people unto himself. So you see, that it is very little about our performance or goodness. The gift of God prevails throughout the life of a believer.

Dunamis Power of the Gospel

The Gospel of the Kingdom is Manifested Power "For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."(Romans 1:16) "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." (Romans 15:19)" Paul said in essence that he preached the Gospel in full measure, or the "full Gospel message."

Revelation, inspiration, searching, knocking, asking; these are all pathways that lead a seeker into the knowledge of the mysteries of God. "God is a Spirit," says the scripture. His divine existence is one that can only be perceived, and believed on a non-sensing level. If I say that I know God, whom you neither know nor see, you can only judge my assertions on the basis of my personal credibility. Some spokes persons for God are more credible than others. The early apostles did not so much argue the existence of God as a theory or concept, as to **prove** His existence by supernatural attestations; demonstrating the Power of God. (1Corinthians 2). So we have the matter of proving to a materialistic non-believing world that God is real and that He still has a part in the day-to-day affairs of this world and its occupants.

Progressive Revelation

God is a god of mysteries and hidden things. The parables taught by Jeshua (Jesus) had within them truth at multiple levels, plain story-level truth and higher levels of spiritual revelation. There is and always has been that matter of hidden truth. For Christ's disciples it was given to know the secrets of the Kingdom of God while others received no more than a moral homily. According to the Mystery of Godliness, God reveals himself to some and not to others. Heaven and its mysteries are not laid bare for all to intrude upon. There are defining limits between darkness and heavenly light. God did not choose that Bible truths and hidden mysteries be delineated as point by point, topic by topic facts and realities. Thus the key to unpacking and deciphering the Word of God can not be achieved strictly by academic skills and study alone. Without the Holy Spirit, the teacher and discipler of

truth, we are limited pretty much to merely the moral homily level of the listener.

We are given understanding in the light of Jeshua (Jesus). In the scripture that has been preserved for humanity we find the Truth revealed in a line by line, precept upon precept, understanding. Jesus himself is the manifested Word of God. When the Scripture is made known in its completeness we shall See Him as He is.

I have attempted in this series of writings to shed some light of understanding that have been proven to me in the course of several decades of studies. We know or have heard that God is for all intents and purposes, seems to be hidden from most human beings. For this reason many come to the conclusion that he is a myth made up by fools who can not be persuaded by science. God is revealed to the extent that He makes himself known to individuals as He wills. It is as though a curtain is drawn aside and light begins to shine through. This light is a glimpse into an unseen world which has a beauty and purpose beyond our imagination.

Revelation is progressive and always deepening as **His** truth is being revealed by God's Holy Spirit *in God's time*. God is withholding certain things from us because it is not yet His time. We do not have all the answers as to Who God is and what His complete plan is for The Church, which is his Body (another mystery).

Matthew 16:16 But who say ye that I am?

Jesus asks his disciples, "Who do you say that I am?" Peter, answers and says, "You are the Messiah, (the Christ) the son of the Living God." Jesus then tells Peter, "- - - Flesh and blood have not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. This is an example of how we receive knowledge of hidden things,

Mysteries revealed by God

1Corinthians 2:0 - -"Eye has not seen nor ear heard, neither has entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for those that love him. 10: But God has revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. 11. For what man knows the things of a man, except by the sprit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God, know man knows, except by the Spirit of God.

MANY OF THESE BIBLICAL TOPICS REMAIN UNREALIZED BY MANY NOMINAL CHRISTIANS. HOWEVER, BIBLE TRUTHS ARE NOT HIDDEN OR "ESOTERIC" AS SO-CALLED OCCULT AND NEW AGE TEACHINGS CLAIM TO BE.

THESE TRUTHS ARE ALL REVEALED IN THE SCRIPTURES. THIS IS MADE POSSIBLE BY BELIEVERS BEING ENABLED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT. THE SPIRIT OF WISDOM AND TRUTH LEADS US INTO ALL THAT IS TRUE. THE HOLY SPIRIT OPENS OUR UNDERSTANDING (See John 20:22)

(Many do not garner understanding when reading scripture since they have not yet received the Spirit of Truth that is promised to disciples.

THE MYSTERY OF HOLY SPIRIT POWER

Power From On High

A God of Power Today? Power From on High

The Two Words for Power

God Baptized Jesus Supernatural Ability, Power and Might to Minister

A Matter of Moments To Become a New Creation

That was Then, What About Now?

How You May Receive the Promise of the Father

Speaking in other Tongues [Spiritual Languages]

Prayer language and Holy Spirit Ministry

Intercession, a Spiritual Ministry

A God of Power Today?

TOPICS

**Suggested Reading: Mark 16; 1Corinthians 12; 1Corinthians 14; Luke 4:
Matt. 28 end, Acts 1 & Acts 2, and Others listed in the paragraphs
following:**

TOPICS:

Two Words for Power

**God Baptized Jesus With Supernatural Ability, Power and Might
Becoming a New Creation**

Power of God Then, What About Now?
Receiving "the Promise of the Father "
Speaking in other Tongues [Spiritual Languages)
Tongues and Holy Spirit Ministry Intercession, a Spiritual Ministry

Many persons who have attended church for most of their lives have not actually experienced God's manifested power. This is real evidence of dramatic proof of God's presence in a real way. The believing Christian, once born of the spirit is set apart for the Glory of God. No believer should be relegated to being a casual listener, whose spiritual life consists of coming to a place only to hear messages about God. Too often those making the presentation may not even know God. It is a shame to relinquish our own spiritual potential of being "a child of the Most High" with messages framed in unbelief.

A God of Power Today?

God almighty created the Heavens and the Earth. We are told of miraculous deeds done in time past by the power of God; stopping of the sun's movement to allow time to give Joshua a military victory; miracles and signs done by Moses and Aaron in Egypt; opening of the Red Sea; or the power of God which came down as fire to consume Elijah's sacrifice. We know that Jesus performed miracles outside of realm of natural law; healing(s), raising the dead, walking on the water, changing water into wine; as well as miracles to know the thoughts of men, and foretelling events of the future.

We also know that the disciples of Christ duplicated Jesus' miracles when they ministered with the power of God, as recorded in the book of The Acts of the Apostles. How do we look upon these accounts? Shall we say they are only myths that did not occur? Or, shall we say that God has changed? The Bible states that God does not change and that He continues in the same way in the present as He did in times past.

This writer grew up attending churches which had no manifestation of God's presence. Neither was there teaching that God was to be an intimate part of church fellowship. Sadly, there was no reality of God being a *good God* who brought benefits from day to day. Hymns were sung without conviction or zeal. How can anyone give heart felt praise when they do not know the God they praise? (John 4) "- You worship what you do not know -" It is amazing to me that people continue to support traditions in which there are no manifestations which attest the truth in the words which are preached. For all practical purposes one could easily preach that "God is dead." One might say that faith was equated to believing in the God of Glory without any way to test that assertion. No person, no disciple or believer in Jesus the Messiah can understand or experience the fullness of this truth nor act as a manifested child of the Most High without supernatural enablement. "- *No man knows the things of God except for the Spirit of God - -* (1Corinthians 1:11,12)

Thank God for His excellent Grace, He has provided that which is necessary to walk as a child of God, walking in Jesus' footsteps. It is ***dunamis*** power which Jesus promised to all his true disciples. This power is God-Power from the Holy Spirit. When this power is manifest it is God working in and through us. This is provided to fulfill His word and provide us with a first hand witness of the promises and provisions stated in the Bible. This power continues to be scripturally promised for Disciples of Jesus Christ to partake in his heavenly abilities.

Dunamis power is used to perform the outreaches of the Gospel of the Kingdom, also called the work of ministry.

If we are not taught about this provision in the Word enunciated to us, we can not believe it nor appropriate it. If we have only heard only an incomplete Gospel, then we are encumbered to have to unlearn that wrong doctrine. There is a spirit of unbelief, a spirit of slumber, this is the leaven of Pharisees which masquerades as scripturally correct doctrine. Religious tradition is not unlike the spirit which the Pharisees manifested to withstand Jesus in the time of his earthly ministry. Bible training centers train practitioners only in a *form of godliness* without power, presenting many

arguments which contradict the promises of God, namely that the Power of the Spirit and His ministry gifts are no longer being manifested today. Jesus said, If you believe you will see the glory of God. (*2nd Timothy Chapter 3:*)

Paul stated that he did not bring words of spell-binding oratory or philosophy (intellectual reasoning) in his presentation of the gospel. Rather he brought the demonstration of the Holy Spirit and Power. Today institutional Christianity abounds as a religion without power. If by chance power it is taught as a doctrine many look upon it as something questionable. On the other hand, folks have the tendency to exalt the man by whose hand these miracles occurred, placing him on a pedestal. Note in the Book of Acts disciples Paul and Barnabus had to constrain people from deifying them when powers from God were displayed.

The Two Words for Power

The Bible mentions two kinds of power, power (dunamis) and power (exousia). Both words have a place in understanding the power which is granted to every believer. Exousia power is the authority to act granted by God. Jesus declares after his resurrection, All power (exousia authority) in heaven and on earth have been given to me; you go therefore ...” The commission to his disciples is given for taking the Gospel into every nation.

Jesus states in his prayer to the Father in John Chapter 17, "*the glory you have given me, I have given to them.*" The glory of God is, I believe, a physical manifestation of God's presence, therefore it must be equated with Power. I believe the phrase is values that says, "The glory of God is the manifested presence of God."

Jesus speaks of "*the promise of the Father*" power from God when he tells the disciples, "*to wait in Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.*" God Baptized Jesus with the Same Dunamis Power of the Spirit. The anointing of Holy Spirit power came upon Jesus when John baptized him in the Jordan river, it was only after this that Jesus began to perform mighty works and began His ministry. "- *how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power who went about doing good and healing all those oppressed by the devil.*" (Acts10:38)

Supernatural Ability

The ministry of Jesus was a four-fold ministry; teaching, preaching the kingdom, healing, and deliverance. All demonstrated the Kingdom of God. The divine power he commanded was directed against the forces of Satan. As described in Luke Chapter 4:18, there is an emphasis on power in order to fulfill the commission of the Gospel of the Kingdom. It was Jesus' declaration when he spoke the prophecy of Isaiah Chapter 61 in the synagogue in Nazareth. (Isaiah 61) *V1. The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; Isa 61:2 to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor- .."*

Power ministry is heart of the Gospel of the Kingdom. It can be summarized as freeing people and restoring them from conditions-body, soul and spirit. (Isaiah 61:1-2) (Luke: Chapter 4:18) Satan's bondage has been placed upon mankind in general and upon ourselves and our families individually. Lack of wholeness through the bondage of Satan in sickness; Lack of wholeness through the bondage of Satan through mental oppression; Lack of wholeness through the bondage of Satan which are demonic in nature; Lack of: wholeness through the bondage of Satan through various kinds of curses; Lack of wholeness through the bondage of Satan in lacks and limitation, and in fears; Lack of wholeness through the bondage of Satan in connections to unclean, destructive and dehumanizing forces. Where the ministry of the Gospel is taught the adversary, (the enemy of God) must never be omitted for he remains the enemy and has oppressed the race of man since the beginning. Satan has not retired in Florida since the victory of Christ Jesus was proclaimed in the heavens and in the earth!

A Gospel without power is a false Gospel.

Likewise any Gospel which does not introduce us to the spiritual powers of the enemy which are against us is a false Gospel. The faith life is to a large degree spent in enforcing God's authority in the earth with respect to our own lives, our families and other who we care for. Satan's team is

positioned to take advantage of our ignorance. They will take an offensive action against us unless we are poised to stand our ground. Satan comes to steal, kill, destroy & deceive, and to perpetuate false Gospels. The Promise of the Father Help from the Spirit of God for Every Disciple The book of acts introduces the promise of the Father, What is this promise of the Father? It is Power from on high!. The Holy Spirit came to ordinary men and gave them supernatural knowledge, ability and might. They were clothed with the Glory of God's fire. Under the power of the Spirit, they manifested total loss of normal mental self control, they began to utter language which was not their own. They became witnesses. After being touched by Power (dunamis) we also bear witnesses that our lives are being remade, renewed, blessed in wholeness, through an agency which is totally beyond man's natural enablements. but that is something heavenly.

A Matter of Moments to Become a New Creation

The disciples of Jesus, men and women, waited in an upper room of the temple that day of Pentecost. They were all believers in Jesus. They all knew him. They all walked with him and knew his voice and his sayings but they were not yet able to minister as God desired them to minister. It was not enough to have known Jesus personally, face to face. They and ourselves can not minister from knowledge and experience and natural ability alone! The kind of ministry that Jesus and the Father had prepared for his disciples was to replicate Christ within each of disciple! Suddenly at the appointed moment each man and woman experienced what the prophets had written: The prophet Joel writing states: "It shall come to pass in the latter days that I will pour out of my spirit upon all flesh --' The prophet Ezekiel writes: "-- a new heart will I give you, and put a new spirit in you; I will remove the heart of stone and put in a heart of flesh-"(Ezekiel Chapter 36:26) I will write my laws upon your heart " and David the psalmist prophet writes: "- Let this be written for a future generation, a people not yet created shall Praise the Lord" --(Psalm 102,18)

That was Then, What About Now?

Religious tradition has relegated the book of Acts to "stories" or fables about unique and favored saints and apostles. Some imagine God no longer wishes to make disciples and to use them, as he once did; nor any longer empower them with power from on high as at the time of Peter, James and

John. Remember God does not lie, if he made any promise he will certainly fulfill that promise. The "promise of the Father" was specifically that of receiving divine, enabling power. It is the prophetic bottom line enabling the ministry of Jesus Christ to continue in the church age. The Gospel of the Kingdom has not changed in its objectives or methods. However, hundreds of years of religious myths and baggage has to be examined and if it is necessary, trashed. Unbelief keeps us from entering the upper room and emerging a vibrant 'New Testament church' ALIVE with the first-hand witness of God's power and blessing.

How You May Receive the Promise of the Father
Only believers can receive the Holy Spirit.
This may require some personal self-evaluation.

Do you believe? What do you believe?

Do you believe that you are a sinner alienated from the life and promises of God? Do you believe that you have until this time either knowingly or unknowingly followed a life which was ruled by Satan's nature, pride, rebellion, self-serving and uncleanness? Do you believe you need a Savior? Do you believe that Jesus was the lamb of God whose blood cleansed us from all of our sins and offenses? Do you believe that his blood has the power to restore you in perfect accord with God the Father? Do you believe that God loves you and wants to forgive you? Do you believe that He has the power to make your life entire over again and to make you a new creation?

If so, Hallelujah! An ordinary person like you and me, who are called outcasts, or sinners in the Bible, may begin a spiritual life by talking to God and asking Him to do something in our life. I can assure you of the truth in this. You need to do two things, the first is to believe. Kindly note and consider the things discussed above, for these are the essential elements of believing in the Gospel of Christ. The second is a spoken confession or petition to God. The psalmist states, "I spoke unto the Lord with my voice and He heard me out of His holy hill." (Psalm 3:4 and Psalm 77:1) You confess (say with your own words) what you know of the provisions

provided through the cross by Jesus. Speak these things in a way that is personal and honest to you.

It is not a ritual but simply your getting honest with God and telling Him that you need Him and that you accept the sacrifice of his Son for your sins. The words which provide a change in our lives begins with a confession of our need. It follows with a statement of believing that Jesus has met that need. God honors this confession. He will change you in an instant and take you into His family. However, you must act in sincerity and faith. Believe that you will most assuredly receive this new birth and this new status, forgiven which is righteousness in Christ Jesus.

This is the first step of receiving the Promise of the Father, the gift of the Holy Spirit. If you are already a believer and have a sure witness of the fact that God has restored your spirit, you are eligible to become a disciple filled with power. The experience of being born of the Spirit and made new is a good example of how God (Through Christ Jesus) works on our behalf. All transactions of faith operate through a similar sequence of action to that demonstrated above (Romans Chapter 10, verses 9 and 10.) Belief is followed by action. We believe in our hearts and express the belief vocally, that the Father is anxious to give you out of His Kingdom. (Luke 12,32). We know and confess that Jesus died for this cause, to make you a completed disciple. We know and confess that God has not changed nor will He ever change. We know and confess BELIEVING that God empowered all of his first disciples and that you believe He wishes to give you a good gift and empower you. Expect Jesus to do that greater work. Receiving the "Baptism of the Holy Spirit" is God's desire for you. As he commanded the first disciples he likewise commands us so that we can function as a child of God. In the process of being filled with the Spirit the disciples in the second chapter of Acts came together to seek the promise of the Father. They sought it prayerfully. After the Holy Spirit was poured out there were manifestations for each disciples. They did not proceed to go out and minister without this experience. Then when the moment of fulfillment came they began to praise God and to prophesy and to speak in other languages that the Holy Spirit gave to them.

Speaking in other Tongues - -

The New Testament describes two kinds of tongues. Both are Spiritually derived, one is an actual language unknown to the speaker. The other is a heavenly, spiritual language sometimes called the language of angels. Understanding and receiving these spiritual languages are a problem for many believers. Not thinking too much, is a weird kind of thing for people to do. Releasing the language utterance is a little confusing. Do you try or try not to try? It is hard to release words you do not know by not thinking. But the wisdom of God has made it possible to bypass the normal function of natural mental processes. Your thought processes are mostly bypassed in the tongues of God. These are not words you "learn" such as learning vocabulary words. The language of tongues are real languages a form of speech. They are not usually identified as any human dialect.

Two Kinds of Tongues

Paul refers to 2 kinds of tongues; of men; and of angels (1Cor 13). Nevertheless, tongues are messages from God, to allow us to give God perfect praise back to him. At times tongues along with a spiritual interpretation occurs as a message to edify others. Tongues edify and instruct ourselves on a spiritual level. Tongues bring revelatory wisdom. Tongues open the door to Spiritual experiences of all kinds. Tongues build our faith and open understanding of the Scripture. Prayer language and Holy Spirit Ministry The gift of Tongues as listed in 1 Corinthians, Chapter 12 is the ability to speak a language having never learned it. An example is described in Acts Chapter two. Where Galileans spoke the languages known to many nations who were present. Experience has taught me that languages can be a part of messages given publicly in meetings although this is not seen too often. As we pray in the Spirit our minds are rendered quiescent. the language of the Spirit has no predictability or conscious control. We find in it many kinds of expressions both in word and in tones of expression.

Uses of Tongues and Praying in the Spirit

Praying in the Spirit, expresses in a Spiritual language God's perfect will on matters. When we do not know how to pray in particular the Holy Spirit provides the necessary words. Romans, 8: 26, describes groanings or expressions beyond words. This is also called praying in the Spirit.

Intercessors will lapse into prayers beyond words where sounds come forth that are very strange to listen to and may not sound at all like language. We can also at times, receive the understanding of prayers that we pray or that are prayed in the Spirit by others.

Sometimes understanding come into our minds spontaneously after we have spoken in tongues or after someone else has been heard to utter something in a spiritual language. You may seek and ask the Lord to reveal these that you pray about so that you mind may also be fruitful. (1Cor 14) Interpreted tongues equal prophecy. Intercession, a Spiritual Ministry The ministry of divine intercession is empowered through the language of the Spirit

Intercession a Spiritual Ministry

God calls forth true intercession into manifestation. Some are given this ministry gift in a unique and powerful way. The Holy Spirit causes such individuals to yield to the Spirit and bring out the words necessary to enforce the perfect will of God for many things. It has been testified how people awaken in the night to bring forth prayers for people they know or for those in ministry undergoing trials and crisis.

The power of praying God's will for people, circumstances or nations, need not depend upon the leading of the rational mind. Sometimes visions and revelations can accompany intercession where God allows his servant to see the nature of the circumstances for which he or she is praying. Praying in the Spirit and the ministry of intercession is not learned through natural means, although it may be seen demonstrated by men or women with the gift. God is willing and happy to train any person who wishes to explore and

learn Spiritual things.

Continuing to practice Spirit led prayer brings fluency and fruitfulness and the ability to learn and apply of Spiritual understandings. Practice ministering through prayer, according to the leading of the Holy Spirit. Ask the Lord to train you and lead you in the Spirit. Listen to what the Spirit is prompting you to say or do. Surely it His will and pleasure to develop his children to become mature "sons or daughters of God."

"Knowledge makes arrogant, love edifies."

E-Book
C. Pinkney's
The Gospel Without Religion

Clergy Vs Laity

How Scriptural is This Doctrine?

THE PRIESTHOOD AND THE CLERGY-LAITY DOCTRINE

The function of the clergy or priest in Christianity is a tradition that for the most part has been a mainstay of Christian Religion for centuries. The priest, overseer tradition has continued unquestioned since the time of Constantine. For centuries every congregation had an overseer -cleric, "a man of the cloth" presiding over it. In the beginning the "church" (*ek-kles'sia=called out ones*) functioned much differently than it does now.

The disciples of Jesus the Messiah were spiritually empowered to minister to the nations through the divine enablement of the Holy Spirit. It was clear from the time of the apostles that discipleship was the expectation of each and every believer. The Holy Spirit places each disciple in the Body where he/she is allowed to grow in his or her particular gift. The endowment of dunamis (Holy Spirit) power enables each disciple the credentials required to grow and function in their office. Thereafter, every new believer whether man, woman, or child came to be similarly empowered.

New believers were gradually *discipled* into maturity through the manifold gifts functioning in the body. (*1 Peter 4:9-10*) Early church ministry is in sharp contrast to what the *ekklesia* (church) would eventually become. The familiar clergy-focused ministry consists of a top down bishop (overseer) or pastor who was principal source of Spiritual leadership.

It is important to have a sense of what a meeting or gathering of the body fellowship was like in the time of the apostles. Every member disciple had their Spiritual gift added to enhance the body (*believers who shared in common fellowship*). Men and women after being saved, grew through their involvement with *the body*. New believers grew from novice (baby Christians) making transition from their previous lifestyles and

understandings to spiritual maturity. Every new believer then and today must experience having their minds renewed through scriptural understanding. A renewed mind equates to having knowledge of *Spiritual things* and is a manifestation of the *mind of Christ*.

Those having The Holy Spirit know that he is continuously at work providing insights into living, ministering to others and participating in the body. *Those without the Holy Spirit are actually outside of the Body and must rely on natural understanding.* (Rom_8:9 *But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.*)

There can be no Spiritual understanding without the action of the Holy Spirit at work jointly and severally. Paul and Peter give substantial amount of instruction to direct our understanding in regard to the function of our place in the body and gifts of the body. The body of Christ is operable when all its members are recognized. (See Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, 14, 1 Peter Chapter 4.)

Before the Church Age

In Old Covenant Judaism a priest class set apart for ministry. The priest acted as a go-between between God and others in the community. The *Levites* were thoroughly schooled in temple priest craft and thus qualified to go to God on behalf of others. Priests met with God and receive from God on behalf of others. Priestly rites in the days of the tabernacle and the temple were detailed and had to be followed to the letter.

Throughout the world, other religions required a priest or a shaman whose task was to communicate with their gods or goddesses according to their prescribed rites. That the priest was the one person who had the proper spiritual credentials to offer incense, sacrifices, offerings, prayers and petitions to their God (gods.) The Canaanite religions had their own priests or priestesses. They led in the worship of their own demon gods or goddesses. Among these Canaanite demon gods were Baal, Molech, Chemosh, Dagon, Ashtoreth, Milcom and others. Other religions have their priests to accommodate a host of other dieties.

Christianity was intended was to be a different kind of worship and priesthood. Jesus' followers, the first disciples and apostles, were given a

distinctly different charge. Jesus did not come to create a religion that required a priest.

The *new creation* was the fulfillment of the original Pentecost described in Exodus 19. It was JHVH's plan that there would be *a kingdom of priests*. The people of Israel, out of the terror of God's presence, declined that plan and insisted that Moses and Aaron should meet with God and receive any instructions to be given. After Jesus rose from the dead he met with his disciples and gave them a brand new commission, it is called the "*great commission*." It was to go into the world, including all nations outside of Israel and make disciples. Disciples were to be not merely believers; they were men, women and children who were spiritually transformed. Spiritually renewed believers carry with them an incorruptible seed that made (and continues to make) them a different kind of creature than their natural selves. The prophet Jeremiah gives us a description of a new kind of creation: (Jeremiah 31:31) *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: 32 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, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord: 33 But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord,*

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.

Jewish people who have not received Yeshua, the Messiah remain devoted to traditions in Judaism but have not yet received this transforming gift described In Jeremiah 31, a new covenant and a new spirituality. A remnant from the Jews have been called to believe but at a time future, many more will be part of this new creation. In the meantime the *Gospel of grace* is drawing many from all nations to the Messiah Jesus every day. They are called to believe and experience the transformation of being Born Again.

The Church Reformed, but Not Much

Since Constantine, we have inherited the tradition of a priesthood and church hierarchy that governs churches. Without questioning the fact,

Christians after the 16th century reformation continued to follow the tradition of the clergy model of priesthood practiced by the Roman Catholic church.

Roman Catholic priests who perform the ceremonies and ordinances of the "church" are dressed in priestly regalia. Such religious costume elevates and separates the official priest from the congregation as well as elevating the authority of his office before God. The priest continues to act as intermediary to God as if the common folk, the laity, could not access God in any way. Priests follow a litany of readings of Scripture planned in times past that focus on the present situation.

Catholic versus Protestant Priesthood

You may ask, "How can you say that protestants still have a priest?" It is by virtue of this fact: Protestants still have ministers and clergy who continue, in varying degrees, to administrate, to lead, and manage programs of church. The clergy select lesson topics, biblical discussions or "*sermons*." The men and women are expected to have been trained for "the ministry" in Bible training or seminaries. They are ordained and certified to know and uphold the ordinances and mission of their denomination. Ministry is a profession and a career for church leaders. Leadership is not a matter to be shared among the congregation except for selected deacons or elders elected to serve as a counsel of advisors.

In some cases an enlightened pastor may be thrown out by ungodly deacons. The laity is consigned to the pews to perform as audience and giving units. In most cases protestant clergy are more or less unapproachable when it comes to direction or correction from anyone in the "laity." There is a huge gulf separating those who are the clergy and those of the laity. The structure of a worship service becomes codified, routine and predictable. Worship services are governed by time allotments and number of meetings in a given day. The pastor is likely to be a true disciple maker. Body ministry and gifts of the body is generally absent from modern fellowships.

Some Biblical Passages Point to How a Church "The Body of Christ" Functions

Ephesians: 4: 11 *"And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers to equip the saints for the work of ministry for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ - "*

Notice the comma in some translations (like KJV) after “perfecting the saints” would suggest that not all work in the ministry. This is an error in translation since the original text is without punctuation. It should actually read “ to equip the saints for the work of ministry, (Ephesians 4:12)

The point to be made is that each disciple is called to minister. We are (at least we were meant to be) trained by the practical experience of witnessing the function of the body as members each of whom possessed a functioning gift needed to edify and mature the others. The Holy Spirit is the teacher and the person who through grace works to mature every disciple. If you read **Corinthians chapter 12** and **Romans chapter 12**, you will discover the idea of a body possessing various gifts, all of which are necessary for the growth of all. The church functioned this way in the days of the apostles and it was expected and urged to continue so thereafter.

See Jude vs. 3: *Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.*

It is also a great insight to see what Peter had to say about utilizing the individual gifts of 'the body.'

1 Peter 4: 10 *As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: 11 whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies.”*

This points to an entirely different function of the church and her execution of The Gospel as is commonly seen and experienced today.

In the early church, that is the church of the apostles, there were no top-down priests. There were however, overseers that managed the purity of doctrine and directed the body from apostasy. There was the activation and participation of the *gifts of God*. The Spiritual gifts were allocated to every believer at God's discretion. These Spiritual gifts were the provision needed to bring glory to the Father and to validate the gospel supernaturally.

Kingdoms of This World vs. The Heavenly Kingdom

We have seen individuals eagerly pursue what they believe to be God's calling. Clergy that I know often refer to their “*call to minister.*” I find this a bit strange as I believe that those who are born of God are *all* called to minister using the gift that is particular to them. *Today's called* tend to find themselves trained to partake in traditional *institutional* religion. The brand of Christianity that I refer to as *churchianity* takes its form and practice from that which has been practiced throughout most of the history of Christendom. Religion tends to reflect mere human wisdom and natural human efforts with little knowledge of God or the Holy Spirit's leading. How easy it is to lose the knowledge of God's best plan. Religion can produce a form of godliness and yet lack evidence of the power of God.

(2 Timothy 3:5 *having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!*)

Those who have been touched by God's authentic power through the Holy Spirit will seek to grow in the knowledge of Spiritual things. They may express a desire to be used in ministry. The familiar path to ministry has been to enter into a school of ministerial training, a Bible school or seminary. Once credentialed they may proceed to a paying career in some area of Christian ministry. To summarize that paradigm: One who is *called to the ministry* becomes formally trained and graduates with ministry credentials. Now, officially qualified to minister, he or she takes charge over a body or a congregation. Thereafter, the success of a ministry *professional* depends upon that person's ability to please a congregation, attract members and present programs and messages in a professional way. The laity provides the audience that supports the church program and is presumably edified and sustained by their professional leadership.

Where Did the Clergy and the Laity Doctrine Come From?

Historical information allows us an insight into how the church of the apostles transitioned *into religion*. In the beginning individuals who made up the body of believers were called by God. Those who actually knew the early disciples wrote about the doctrines and practices of the first and second century church. There is ample free access to these writings from a

search of the topic 'church fathers'. Retracing the church from its earliest days will introduce us to some who followed the original apostles most of whom were martyred. Polycarp of Smyrna, Irenaeus, Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, Eusebius of Pamphilia, Origen of Alexandria are among the fathers that hearkened to the apostolic foundation of Christianity.

From the beginning those called were transformed from worldly-minded souls to individuals who discarded the values and vain philosophies of this world. They became known as disciples and saints. (This has always represented the true church.) The apostles warned their disciples that men would eventually come in who would not follow the way of truth, the faith presented by the apostolic founders. See references above in [Jude v.3](#) and [Peter and elsewhere](#). In my own experience of studying the word and watching religious scenarios play out, I have observed how worldly values and methodology gradually take the place of and altering Spiritual life and practice. True Spiritual discernment alone determines the right spirit from the deceptive spirits of this world.

The Function of Priests (Sacerdotalism)

In light of the gospel, with the birth of the "church" and the New Covenant, we see a discontinuation of any kind of priesthood. Jesus is the one high priest of the New Covenant. Remember that the role of priests are people believed to have the authority to minister to God or receive knowledge from God on behalf of others. Are there any who can not freely access God by faith? No, not so long as they are aware of this possibility. Thereafter, there is no need for a priest, so long as the Bible is available to them. Following the protestant reformation, 1517 and following, the priesthood was still seen as the proper function to serve a body of believers. In a time when few had access to the written word we can justify the role of a literate leader of a congregation but the concept of the functional priest should have been viewed as a vestige of the past. We are reminded of the mentality of priesthood and laity in any church where there are pulpits and pews.

Addressing The Need For Real Discipleship

Leaders with knowledge and experience in the Word of truth, (not

necessarily credentialed) are used to mature those who have just come **out of the world** into entering the God-centered life. Those who carry experience and knowledge of the word are called 'elders.' These elders should understand the apostolic ways of God in order to protect the new believer from error. Believers are edified and grow through mutual sharing and testimony. Thus all participate take part in the edification of **the body**. Both those new to the faith and those with depth of knowledge are co-participants through **koinonia** (freely sharing in a common assembly.) God the Holy Spirit ought to be an active participant in the fellowship everything is for edification that is if the congregation has not been taught that the Holy Spirit power is not for today.

The Way Church Was Done in the Days of the Apostles

A new testament fellowship meeting (koinonia) is described in 1 Corinthian Chapter 14.) An important aspect of a fellowship meeting may be the communion remembrance, scripture discoveries and sharing testimonies. Testimonies build faith and encourage the new and seasoned believer alike. Sadly, testimonies are rare. Where God has not been a participant in lives their will few if any testimonies. Fellowship is to be without confusion and in good order with allowance for the Holy Spirit to guide and direct as Paul informs us in the above passage in 1Cor.14. There need not be any time constraint on an open meeting gathering. All things are done decently and in order using a host or moderator.

Priesthood by definition is any system in which a person (a leader or person of authority) intervenes with God on behalf of others. The revelation of the **New Covenant Gospel** points to a new dispensation: **a priesthood of all believers**. Further, in the book of Revelation, John receives a vision of the churches and among these we find reference to *the doctrine of the Nicolaitians*, (Rev.2:6) a doctrine that God despises. Nicolaitiaism is a system in which a leader assumes control over a body of common believers and essentially take them captive, ruling over them and dispensing whatever teaching he deems necessary, making merchandise of the sheep. In my opinion, the priesthood fulfills the definition of *Nicolaitan*. Many cults such as Jim Jones of Jonestown fame, begin to function in accordance with this

model. Pastors who exert a stifling control over a congregation also fit this application.

We find it hard to compare the forms of worship and discipleship described in the epistles to that which we find in most formal church experiences known today. In the early days of the church there was no formalized ministry. There was apostolic leadership that brought the gospel, disciplined believers and released them to lead and minister in their own communities. There were no theology schools, nor accrediting agencies to credential ministers but there was the active reliance upon the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the *Spirit of Jesus* which was promised to guide and equip believers in all matters of spiritual witness. The churches (ekklesia) consist only of believers who after being told the good news, received the free gift of salvation. Unbelievers are converted when exposed to the action of the Holy Spirit working through the body. Believers are the disciples to whom it is given to ***experience the powers of the world to come*** (The Kingdom of Heaven.)

These first century believers were not taught in schools of theology, even as Christ was not schooled formally as were the Jewish Pharisees and doctors of the law. Yet, the saints of the first century experienced the mighty works of God on a day to day basis. All learned that Jesus (Yeshua) the Christ (Messiah) made it possible for any and all who believed to become adopted children of God; new creations through acknowledgment that Jesus' died for the sin of all humankind. With the empowerment of the Holy Spirit each were led to understand that they could partake in the exploits that replicated Jesus' ministry. The Holy Spirit and Power (dunamis) was given at Pentecost.

The Power of God Heralds a New Status of Humanity

In the time of *the fall* in Eden, mankind lost their status as *children of God*. Thereafter, human beings were born according to fallen Adam's form and likeness. In the centuries following *the Patriarchs*, only an occasional prophet was raised up to be anointed and to speak for God. But for the most part individuals could not know God, nor meet with him personally. When Adam lost his dominion over the earth, Satan became the default 'god of this world.' He was acting in this capacity when he tempted the Lord in the wilderness. The tempter said, "*All of these kingdoms are mine and I give them to whom I wish.*" Lucifer was willing to make a deal with Jesus, offering

these kingdoms with the stipulation that Jesus would worship and give homage to him. This would have the effect of defeating the plan of redemption through the promised seed of the woman. (Genesis 3:15)

Jesus Christ came to fulfill his mission as the "son of man" and the lamb of God. In this role, He prepared the way for us. Crucified and raised from the dead Jesus became more than Messiah King of the Jews. He became the **savior and redeemer** of all humankind. We who were outside of the fellowship of God could at last, know Him, have fellowship with Him, and even call Him Abba, Daddy. This is ***the Good News!***

Throughout the earliest days of the Christian faith the question has been asked and must continue to be asked, "*Should we obey God or man?*" In order to distinguish between these two voices something is required of us: To begin, each of us must acknowledge that the Bible IS the Word of Truth and trust it to be the single valid source of truth and doctrine. Too few in the modern world have actually discovered this and believe it. Secondly it is required of us to listen to the voice of inner witness which God has given to all his children. Those seeking truth will usually seek some expert, theologian, or cleric explain to explain to us what is written.

About New Believers

We all go through a spiritual infancy. At such times you are open and eager to grow in the knowledge of God. During these times we find that God is always close at hand. He is quick to reveal himself and to answer prayers and to support you as you grow. But this is also a precarious time because in our eagerness to learn the ways of God we can be taken captive easily by wrong doctrine and fall into the trap of religion which we accept willingly enough. (1Corinthians 12v1-2)

New believers require time to renew their minds and their habits of lifestyle and even beliefs they formerly held to be reasonable and true. The renewing of the mind is achieved only as we absorb the words of the Bible. The epistles written by the first apostles describe the nature of the spiritual life and the parameters of community and discipleship. The Holy Spirit baptism is the power and the prerequisite for any such discipleship and

growth. Many will argue the theology of this statement. I will argue however, that this baptism of power is a second **act of Grace** proven by the study of the Book of acts. This baptism opens our eyes to heavenly things. It bears witness to the Spirit of Truth that the world can not receive nor comprehend.

If any expert tells you, with assumed authority, that the gifts of the first century apostolic church have disappeared (*doctrine of cessationism*), do not believe them. Flea quickly any association from any such group or authority. As Jesus said addressed leaven of the Pharisees (religious traditionalists without spiritual understanding); who resisted the Holy Spirit. Matt 23: 15 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves." (also see Revelation Chapter 8, Stephen's testimony of how the religious always withstand the Holy Spirit.)

We begin our spiritual path as spiritual infants who crave "the milk of the Word." Too many who God has called to be established as a new born child of God become polluted with religious doctrine. Our understandings can be poisoned and corrupted by evil doctrine. As a result, many receive the wrong Jesus, the wrong spirit, or the wrong gospel. (1 Corinthians,11;3) Discerning truth is a constant challenge.

Religion presents teachings or stipulations that become binding or obligatory upon the followers. Are we to question the teachings of traditional authorities? Yes, prove all teachings with scripture. Are we to question the doctrine of our church or church leadership? Yes, there are many in the pulpit, who are nothing more than "blind guides." Many who question will be shunned, or dismissed as heretical. Though we suffer condemnation it becomes the path to liberty.

WHAT IS MINISTRY?

What is a Minister?

In the New Testament texts, the word translated "ministry" is translated from **service**. The term ministry comes from *Greek Diakonia*. Thus **ministry means to serve**. Through the process of generations of religious practice,

ministry has come to mean something else, something formal and liturgical. Gifts denoted experience and leadership become designated as a religious **office**. e.g. Pastor, Deacon, Bishop, or Cardinal. Within the context of "church house" practices, ministry has been defined and restricted to that which is done behind a pulpit and then only by the few with "credentials."

All Believers are called Disciples and Saints

According to the Scripture, discipleship is the keystone of the gospel. Yet, it is rarely taught to church congregations with the emphasis that Jesus gave to his own first disciples or apostles. All **believers are trainees or disciples** in the Kingdom of God. And all disciples are expected to minister what he has been given by the Holy Spirit (A particular gift of God). ***"As every person has received the (free) gift, so minister the same to one another."*** (1Peter 4:11)

To grow in the Spiritual life of God we are instructed that we can be transformed into the pattern of Jesus the Son of God. and through him becoming partakers of the Lord's ministry as well as his spiritual attributes. These attributes include the gifts of the Spirit, (Galatians 5:22) love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. All demonstrate the character of compassion and the ability to serve in kindness, (charity) through the Spirit of Love. Through such ministry (service) the path is open to see human lives restored and perfected.

The Tradition of the Professional Clergy

There are some elements in the institutional church that are positive. These include social relationships and a place to receive teachings and moral precepts that are Biblical. But even in this light such deeper and more intimate relationships are limited and lack deeper levels of discipleship and growth in the knowledge of heavenly things. Institutional religion has remained a long standing stronghold and is resistant to change and resolute. Institutional religion in some ways is in descendency as numbers who participate gradually decline. But old habits and traditions die hard. The inertia of centuries of social tradition is hard to alter.

We have learned to accept without question, the role of a professional clergy person. Many of these men and women have wonderful natural gifting. Many are brilliant communicators, possessing compassion and

dedication. These will I believe, received their heavenly rewards according to the fruitfulness in their calling. Such who carry the love and zeal of God are beloved by those who they touch or disciple. The gift and calling of a Spiritual shepherd is a **gift** to disciple the body. A pastoral gift enables mentor-ship and , encouragement. The pastoral call may just as easily minister that gift outside of the parameters of religious formalism. But this may be a call without a salary or a congregation. The shepherding gift forms caring relationships. It brings with it a necessary compassion and wisdom to minister hope, encouragement, wisdom to strengthen the 'flock.' Leadership is based upon experience and depth of understanding of the Word of God and the True Gospel. It should not be imagined as a mere career calling. I know very few who fit these criteria.

Conversely, there are others among the certified clergy who may not even know God. Some do not apprise themselves of all his promises and power. Unlike the apostle Paul who said I determine to know nothing among you but Jesus Christ crucified and to demonstrate the reality of his ruler-ship by the power of God. There are innumerable trained clergy professionals who presume to substitute sermonettes rather than in demonstrating and discipling believers in the Spiritual life, understanding and demonstrating the power of the Spirit. Among those in the ministry, many exalt 'preaching.' Eloquence and persuasive speech and the ability to hold an audience in awe is a prerequisite for clerical success.

I believe that most in professional clergy presume their own pre-eminence owing to their credentials. It would be a great if people approved with seminary credentials would use as a doorway to service, to bless and to edify. Sadly these spiritual credentials are often turned into a tool of personal gain and control over others.

The Body Divides With Clergy and the Laity

The Clergy-Laity doctrine *divides the flock into two disparate parts*. The good shepherd story described in John's gospel, chapter 10, describes the characteristics of a good shepherd. It lists among the virtues, intimacy and closeness of the shepherd to the flock. The shepherd knows each of his charges and calls them by name; he will sacrifice his personal comfort and life for the flock. Finally we are told that Jesus is this shepherd. The psalmist

has written almost a thousand years before, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want." Jesus Christ remains the true shepherd, the **true bishop (overseer) and shepherd (pastor) of our souls.**"

Jesus modeled correct shepherding. His ministry modeled preaching, teaching and leading with care and compassion. The Messiah demonstrated his Spiritual credentials with miracles, signs and wonders, and with deliverance from the demonic. Jesus knew the Father's plan to extend the Kingdom of God and eventually to establish the Millennial Kingdom. He gave more intimate insight to his closest disciples. Jesus engaged in dialogue with these closest disciples and to them he expounded deeper truths and unraveled parables.

Jesus came and ministered with authority and yet with the meekness of a servant. He was a friend to sinners. He came to seek, and to save, and to serve. Modern church members tend to exalt leadership and place them on unrealistic pedestals and grant them unusual authority. **Jesus taught us about those who lead:** (Matthew 23) *"Who is the greatest among you, Jesus said, shall be a servant to all."* Moreover, Jesus instructed his own disciples not to place one man over others. He required that they were not to give titles to these 'masters' saying call no man master, No man teacher, No man father. This ought to qualify as a template by which to measure the character and role of those in the role of pastoral leadership.

THE BODY: The Body is Edified By ALL (A Multiplicity of Gifts)

One individual with a pastoral gifting will not carry **all** of the ministry gifts. A multiplicity of ministry gifts are needed to fully edify the body. (Ephesians 4) *God in fact has more than one finger on his hands. There is something called the 5-fold ministry, which includes apostles, prophets, teachers, pastors, and evangelists. We might also consider the other hand as a body has two hands; consider additional gifts or, 5 other ministries which serve the body in a less formal or visible way. So called apostolic movements tend to reintroduce the hierarchical structure and a network or association of high profile and highly paid Christian 'celebrities' all eager to provide seminars or conferences to garner large offerings and expand their ministries.*

Guidance To The Body From Spiritually Mature Mentors

Throughout the apostolic letters we are told that mature men of God were to guide and direct to maintain purity of doctrine and practices. These were designated overseers (Gr. *presbuteros*) of the local flocks (fellowships) of God. These bodies met in a form and place having no resemblance to church houses today.

Overseers need spiritual experience more than theological credentials! The apostolic intention was to keep our faith and traditions accurate and steadfast. This model must continue to stand. What was written by the apostles was delivered with the intention of providing guidance and knowledge of the kingdom for believers for all times. Maturity in faith and spiritual understanding prepared elders or overseers. These men and woman having depth of experience in *the Spiritual life* are necessary to provide balance and correction so that true doctrine be maintained and enforced among the fellowship.

After the early days of Christianity, elders, pastors, or overseers evolved into an office that assumed the whole responsibility of "ministry." Thus the evolution into the clergy roles of today. There is some interest in returning to the form of early church fellowship and worship today. In most cases it takes the form of *small group* meetings that are sponsored by larger church ministries. It is at least a first step to a return to New Testament forms of *Koinonia*, the Ekklesia the unity and harmony Christians assembling together.

A PROPHECY PRIMER

A PRIMER ON PROPHECY - part 1

In Revelation 19:10 the Bible summarizes the prophetic message. It is the line that proceeds from Genesis to Revelation: “*The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.*” This can also be stated “the testimony of the Messiah.” We find revelations of the Messiah or a typology that points to him. The Bible becomes “his story.”

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6 day war, returns Jerusalem to Jewish hands, 50 years, a jubilee, after 6 day war, 70 Years after 6 day war, Trump declares Jerusalem capital of Israel against great opposition

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Isaiah 2:10-2:12; Isaiah 13:13 and many other passages describe the final cleansing of the ungodly from the earth. NT Romans 1:18; 1 Thess:1:10 " - you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, 10 and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

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to deal with matters pertaining to the true gospel. (*Jude 3*) (*1 John 2*) (*2 Peter 2*) etc. (*Rev. 2,3*)

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SIGNS OF THE TIMES EXPRESSED IN SIX AREAS

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Distress of nature is noted by Jesus in his description of end times in Matt 24, Luke 21, Mark 13. Famines, Floods, Earth Quakes, Plagues, These gradually increase becoming

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SPIRITUAL

As we approach the end of the church age we see departure from the Biblical faith. People will seek a religious mode that appeals to their own interests. Secularism and worldliness will invade churches. Jesus will not be the one way to be saved.

The Antichrist will be revealed with powers of lying wonders. In certain ways he will replicate the authentic Christ. He will be seen as a man of peace, a man of brilliant wisdom and compassion. He will validate his authority with supernatural miracles, (lying) signs and wonders, be raised from the dead (Rev. 13:3) He will bring peace through deception, expression of inclusion and tolerance of all faith.

POLITICAL

We are seeing the reforming of individual nations into a coalition of nations. (Daniel 2) The UN is exerting authority to set aside our constitution and control our laws. There is be a push to make the world a world without borders. Nations are in a struggles to retain their national identity and their sovereignty. The first order in the NEW WORLD ORDER is to outlaw borders and boundaries between nations. The revived Roman Empire will re-form into United Europe and a center that will be the ruling seat of the Antichrist.

TECHNOLOGY

The twentieth century has seen the transition from horse and buggy to rockets to the moon. Daniel the prophet said Daniel 12:4 -“But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.”

New technology: Artificial intelligence, is now able to recreate images that are entirely artificial; A I it has just been announced can write and edit without the aid of human oversight. Genetic engineering, designer dna splicing, organ growth in non humans

CERN Atom accelerator has as its goal to replicate material in the atom when the universe was formed. It will provide a portal between the spiritual dimension and the physical.

ISRAEL - - Rebirth of Israel, prophesied Ezekiel 37 (See over)

Isaiah 43:5-7 _ Jeremiah 23:7-8 “- 7 “Therefore, behold, the days are coming,” says the Lord, “that they shall no longer say, ‘As the Lord lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of Egypt, 8 but, ‘As the Lord lives who brought up and led the descendants of the house of Israel from the north country and from all the countries where I had driven them.’ And they shall dwell in their own land.” The Ezekiel 38 War with alliance of neighboring Islamic countries and Russia.

Armageddon: The final war in Israel where nations face the Returning

Messiah Rev. 16:16 The tribulation temple: Is ready to be assembled, All priestly garb and instruments are read



LAST DAYS PROPHECY OF THE RAPTURE

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interests. Secularism and worldliness will invade churches. Jesus will not be the one way to be saved.

The Antichrist will be revealed with powers of lying wonders. In certain ways he will replicate the authentic Christ. He will be seen as a man of peace, a man of brilliant wisdom and compassion. He will validate his authority with supernatural miracles, (lying) signs and wonders, be raised from the dead (Rev. 13:3) He will bring peace through deception, expression of inclusion and tolerance of all faith.

POLITICAL

We are seeing the reforming of individual nations into a coalition of nations. (Daniel 2) The UN is exerting authority to set aside our constitution and control our laws. There is be a push to make the world a world without borders. Nations are in a struggles to retain their national identity and their sovereignty. The first order in the NEW WORLD ORDER is to outlaw borders and boundaries between nations. The revived Roman Empire will re-form into United Europe and a center that will be the ruling seat of the Antichrist.

TECHNOLOGY

The twentieth century has seen the transition from horse and buggy to rockets to the moon. Daniel the prophet said Daniel 12:4 -“But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.”

New technology: Artificial intelligence, is now able to recreate images that are entirely artificial; A I it has just been announced can write and edit without the aid of human oversight. Genetic engineering, designer dna splicing, organ growth in non humans CERN Atom accelerator has as its goal to replicate material in the atom when the universe was formed. It will provide a portal between the spiritual dimension and the physical.

ISRAEL

Rebirth of Israel, prophesied Ezekiel 37 (See over)

Isaiah 43:5-7 _ Jeremiah 23:7-8 “- 7 “Therefore, behold, the days are coming,” says the Lord, “that they shall no longer say, ‘As the Lord lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of Egypt, 8 but, ‘As the Lord lives who brought up and led the descendants of the house of Israel from the north country and from all the countries where I had driven them.’ And they

shall dwell in their own land.”

The Ezekiel 38 War with alliance of neighboring Islamic countries and Russia.

Armageddon: The final war in Israel where nations face the Returning Messiah Rev. 16:16 The tribulation temple: Is ready to be assembled, All priestly garb and instruments are ready to use.

PROPHETIC END TIMES

God Has Seen the End

FROM THE BEGINNING

END TIMES SPOKEN OF BY PAUL

PROPHETIC END TIMES ARE FORETOLD IN THE BIBLE

Spiritual conditions at the end of the Age and its implications for believers
(See 2 Timothy Chapter 3)

Matters to consider:

1. What Jesus told us regarding the latter days;
2. Deception, deceivers and demonic practices are in evidence;
3. Condition of the church;
4. Are believing Christians exercising diligence?
5. Apostasy in Christian churches; "Seeker-friendly" churches and "easy-believism".
6. Growing evidence of the politics of the NWO (New World Order) the One-World government, and economic system;
7. The false gospel of the Anti Christ, A one-world religion, A left leaning Jesuit pope.

Matthew 24:4,5: 4 And Jesus answered and said to them: "Take heed that no one deceives you. 5 For many will come in My name, saying, "I am the Christ," and will deceive many.

Matthew 24:37,8: 37 But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. 38 For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, (*The "thief in the night" parable indicates that a sense*

of routine and normality will continue to dominate the minds of most people. Then, the sudden return of Christ for his bride will catch many unaware.)

Luke 17: 28 Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; 29 but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. 30 Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed. Judgment and destruction followed a society given to depravity and rebellion.

(2) What the apostles had to say about steering clear of deception:

2 Timothy 3:2-5: ** But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: 2) For men (people) will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3) unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, 4) traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5) having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!

2 Timothy 4:3: For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; (*weak on admonition*)

2 Thess 2: 9 The coming of the *lawless one* is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, **10** and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. **11** And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, *that they should believe the lie*, "iç½ (Few teach on this passage, this is the reason the Lord"iç½s prayer has the phrase, "lead us not into temptation but deliver us from (the) evil (evil one).

(3) The departure from sound Biblical doctrine; A wayward church, misdirection from the pulpit:

The church from the very beginning had to deal with error of doctrine and

false teachers. This is every bit as true today. Any and all of these misguided doctrines hinge on the principal issue of "i½the right Jesus, the right gospel (doctrine) and the right spirit. (2Cor 11:2). Here is the admonition of the apostles on the matter:

PAUL, Galatians: 1:7-9: but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. **8** But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. Mainline churches are rapidly departing from the strictures of the gospel. The trend is Grace alone without attending to future judgment. This lends itself to another issue, that of tossing away the principle of scriptural inerrancy. (*Did God really say?*)

PAUL, 1 Thess: 5: 19 Do not quench the Spirit. **20** Do not despise prophecies. **21** Test all things; hold fast what is good. **22** Abstain from every form of evil.

PAUL, 1 Timothy 4:1 [The Great Apostasy] Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, ...

JUDE: Jude 3: 3 Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. **4** For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.

(4) Are believers acting with due diligence or taking every word from our preachers and teachers as valid?

LUKE, Acts:17:11 "Now **the Bereans** were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true."

JOHN, 1 John 4:1: Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

PAUL, 1 Corinthians 12:1 12 Now I want to give you some further

information in some spiritual matters. 2-3 You have not forgotten that you were Gentiles, following dumb idols just as you had been taught. (J.D. Phillips translation) Here the Greek word translated *Spiritual Gifts* is *pneumaticos*. It means Spiritual Matters or all matters relating to the Spirit-led life.

(5) 5. Apostasy in Christian churches; We have already progressed into the apostasy of the Tribulation religion.

There is still a remnant of congregations where preaching biblically faithful, and not submitted to false teachers who are making merchandise of their congregations and promising spirituality outside of the guidelines of the original apostolic fundamentals. *There are several end time scenarios that main line denominations are teaching. The differences pertain to the future of God's kingdom on earth. Is there a future Kingdom? What does or will it look like? What has become or will become of Israel and the Jews? Will the church go through the tribulation to survive or thrive? Is there "one way to God the Father or numerous ways? Will all the religions unite having hope of fulfilling their understanding that "we are all God's children?* Each question above is dealt with by leading Christian leaders and theologians.

Important questions that must be resolved to prove if we are on the right page biblically:

- Is the Bible fable and fallacy or a reliable guide to understand humanities fall and redemption?
- What is the Gospel of Salvation?
- What must we do to be saved?
- Can church ordinances and sacraments save us?
- What is God's purpose and plan for Israel?
- What is the consequence of ignoring the Biblical mandate?
- What is the gift of God?
- What happened at the Cross when Jesus was crucified?
- What is the church?
- Where do we fit in to the structure and function of the church?

6. The politics of the One World government and economic system

Prophecy is being fulfilled as we see the policies and agendas of the United Nations try to erode the sovereignty of individual nations. The UN has had a plan in place for decades (Agenda 21) to make America part of a world

without borders. The hidden ruling powers of the One World Government are in place. The Globalists are doing their best to destroy national sovereignty, remove borders, drastically reduce world population, and have the central ruling global elite make decisions that will make every individual answerable to them.

This explains the actions of the NWO, globalist-leaning congress of the United States. They have done all that is possible to block the nationalistic pro constitutional agenda to keep America sovereign. One-worlders have tried to unseat an elected president. This president is hanging onto the constitution of an America "of and by the people" and the dream of a strong and secure America. To block this effort the president has been besieged and maligned 24 hours a day by an open border one-world aiming congress and a complicit, bought-off main-stream media. News has become disinformation and propaganda. Multitudes fall in line with the mainline news narrative that is repeated around the clock. A greater part of the population does not question what the media presents as "news."

Christians should be alert and question everything, but most do not question. Spiritual delusion has turned good into evil and presents evil as good.

(Anyone may check out Agenda 21, formulated in 1992 by the UN. Its purpose is to guide the planet in a sustainable future. This proposal among others is proposed to remove national sovereignty, personal rights and freedoms and the ownership of property or land.) Please take time to look into "agenda 21."

7. The false gospel of the Anti Christ, One World religion.:

N A R (New Apostolic Reformation):

Chris-Lam; Amillennialism; Emergent Christianity; 7 Mountain teachings; Dominion Theology;

Pope Francis, is a proponent of leftist policies; man-made global warming; Pro LGBTQ (politicized gender issues.) The pope also is also promoting a large tent world religion, encompassing all religions into one.

SIGN POSTS TO APOSTASY

MILE MARKERS ON THE ROAD TO APOSTASY

Departure From Biblical Faith

CHRISTIANITY IS PROGRESSING TOWARD THE FINAL
ONE – WORLD, ANTICHRIST RELIGION

Christian churches are dramatically departing from biblical authority. The traditional church denominations in the interest of accommodating cultural changes are progressing toward the final GREAT apostasy of the Christian religion as they. Paul even in first days of his ministry instructed the young churches as he foresaw the days we are living in today. In his letters to Timothy we are told in 1 Timothy 4:1 and 2 Timothy 3:1; Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; 4 And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. (Christian Leaders , pastors and teachers will be responsible for this.) 2 Timothy 3,1; But know this, that in the last days grievous times shall come. 2Ti 3:2 For men shall be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, haughty, railers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 2Ti 3:3 without natural affection, implacable, slanderers, without self-control, fierce, no lovers of good, 2Ti 3:4 traitors, headstrong, puffed up, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God; 2Ti 3:5 holding a form of godliness, but having denied the power thereof: from these also turn away.

With this in view there remains a remnant of congregations where

preaching remains biblically faithful, who have not submitted to false teachers who make merchandise of their congregations, and promise spirituality outside of the guidelines of the original apostolic doctrines. There are several end time scenarios that main line denominations are teaching. The differences pertain to the future of God's kingdom on earth.

Is there a future Kingdom?

What does or will it look like?

What will become of Israel and the Jews?

Will the church go through the tribulation?

Is there "one way" to God the Father or many?

Will all the religions unite with their understanding that "we are all God's children"?

Each question above is dealt with by leading Christian leaders and theologians.

WHAT DID THE APOSTLES SAY WAS THE DUTY OF EVERY DISCIPLE?

Prove all things.

1 Thess. 5:21 Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. (The Bereans examined the message against the Scriptures.)

Test every spirit.

1 John 4:1 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

Flee from unbiblical, apostate leadership.

1 Timothy 6:11.. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.

Contend for the Faith that was presented by Christ's first apostles.

Jude vs.3: Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

SIGN POSTS THAT POINT TO A DEPARTURE FROM THE FAITH

1. Departure from the idea of Scriptural Inerrancy
2. The belief in tolerance and de-emphasis on the doctrine of "Judgment"
3. Universalism; we of every religion are all are God's children and all will be saved

4. A broad road rather than a narrow road to salvation, *we are all worthy of a heavenly reward.*
5. Emergent Christianity, New Age, Leaders include, Henry Nouwen, Eckhart Tolle, Brian McClaren, Tony Jones, Oprah Winfrey, Pope Francis (Big tent Christianity, the pope states that we all worship the same God and can fellowship with one another, Muslim, Catholic, Protestant) Chrislam, Rick Warren. To some degree or another they all depart from scripture seeking spirituality from various sources.
6. Dominion Theology and Kingdom Now theology; 7 Mountains to regain by "the church." The seven mountains include the mountains of global society; Media, Government, Education, Economy, Religion, Entertainment and Family. The church should conquer these areas of influence, this the key to taking the world for the kingdom of God.
7. The N. A. R. Super apostles and prophetic leadership. This is the super-spiritual arm of the Charismatic, Pentecostal church. It is characterized by its teachings on signs and wonders, "greater works", glorious manifested powers of the spirit. It is a growing movement in which there is an emphasis on signs of God's presence and manifested glory. Dreams and visions involve visits to heaven, visits with Jesus and the Father, Interviews and directives from angels. And .. extra biblical revelations that go beyond the teachings of the first apostles. Note that worship tends to point to "me messages."
8. The Antichrist church will be super spiritual with lying signs and wonders to fool if it were, even the elect.!!
 2 Thess.2: 9 Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, 10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: C.P. 2-15-2024

Perilous Times

PROPHETIC END TIMES FORETOLD IN THE BIBLE

Spiritual conditions at the end of the Age and its implications for believers (See 2 Timothy Chapter 3)

Matters to consider:

1. What Jesus told us regarding the latter days;
2. Deception, deceivers and demonic practices are in evidence;
3. Condition of the church;
4. Are believing Christians exercising diligence?
5. Apostasy in Christian churches; "Seeker-friendly" churches and "*easy-believism*" and denying judgment and hell.
6. **Growing evidence of the politics of the NWO (New World Order) the One-World government, and economic system;**
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(1) What Jesus told us regarding the latter days:

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Luke 17: 28 Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; **29** but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. **30** Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed.

Gen. 19:22 reveals the pattern that the righteous must be taken to *a place of refuge before judgment* ensues. Judgment and destruction followed a society given to depravity and rebellion.

(2) What the apostles had to say about steering clear of deception:

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This explains the actions of the NWO, globalist-leaning congress of the United States. They have done all that is possible to block the nationalistic pro constitutional agenda to keep America sovereign. One worlders have tried to unseat an elected president. This president is hanging onto the constitution of an America "of and by the people" and the dream of a strong and secure America. To block this effort the presidentt has been besieged and maligned 24 hours a day by an open border one-world aiming congress and a complicit, bought-off main-stream media. News has become disinformation and propaganda. Multitudes fall in line with the mainline news narrative that is repeated around the clock. A greater part of the population does not question what the media presents as "news."

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THE ANTI - CHRIST RELIGION

Current Doctrines Departing From The Faith

One World Agendas For New World Order

CONSIDERING THE NATURE OF THE ANTI CHRIST RELIGION:

2Th 2:8 And then shall that Wicked (person) be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: 2Th 2:9 Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, 2 Th 2:10 And with all deception of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 2Th 2:11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:”

- *The Antichrist religion will be a supernatural religion with supernatural wonders; but these are lying signs and wonders wrought by Satan.*
- *The Antichrist religion will be a universal religion. It will be inclusive to all the religions of the world. It will be a truly ecumenical religion.*
- *The Antichrist religion will be an inclusive religion, open to all life styles.*
- *People will be flattered into believing that they are among those who are advanced spiritually and about to evolve into God-likeness.*
- *Extra-Terrestrials will at last openly manifest. They will announce the news of earth's inclusion into the community of advanced universal civilizations. It will be stated that these "**star people**" have been secretly visiting the planet for many years and at will finally make their existence and mission known openly. The mystery of so-called space beings will be revealed as the progenitors of humanity. One of the greatest lies*

will be revealed by these "star people." It will be said those who resisted the next advance of evolution have been taken away. The backward non spiritual people (born again Christians) have been taken to a place where they can grow and evolve in the proper understanding.

"END TIME" THEOLOGY OFFERS DIFFERING EXPECTATIONS OF THE FUTURE (Eschatological doctrines)

AMILLENIAL THEOLOGY holds that the "Kingdom Of God" on earth began with the ascension of Christ and will go on, more or less, in its present form until Christ returns. Those holding to this doctrine do not expect a literal reign of Christ on earth. Furthermore, most Amillennialists hold the view that the Jews have no future prophetic role or unique status.

Amillennial doctrine; many mainline denominations include: Eastern Orthodox, Oriental Orthodox, Roman Catholic Church, Lutheran, Reformed, Anglican, Methodist, Amish, Old Order Mennonite, Conservative Mennonites, Churches of Christ, Christian Church/Disciples of Christ, Christian churches and churches of Christ, Association of Grace Baptist Churches in England.

DOMINIONISTS (KINGDOM NOW THEOLOGY) This theology holds to the idea that the 'church' has been given the mandate of bringing the Gospel to the nations and entirely restore the DOMINION that Adam forfeited. The 5 fold ministry and inspired Apostolic leadership will restore the nations in righteousness. Societal institutions will be brought back to the righteous rule of Christ. The following are in the Kingdom and Dominion camp.

- **N A R, New Apostolic Reformation** and its associated ministries (Bill Johnson), Bethel Church, Redding CA; also the following:
- **Hillsong mega church** (Brian Huston) of Sidney, NSW Australia;
- **IHOP Kansas City, International House of Prayer and the Kansas City Prophets** (Kingdom "Forerunners")
- **7 Mountains movement** (Lance Walnau Dr. Bill Hamon, Dr. Bill Bright and Loren Cunningham and others)The notion is to restore and bring under submission to Christ *7 domains of social institutions*: 1) Education; 2) Religion; 3) Family; 4) Business; 5) Government/Military, 6) Arts/Entertainment; 7) Media
- **Morning Star Ministries**, Rick Joyner of Fort Mills, SC
- **Vineyard Ministries International**: The Vineyard is growing around the world, with over 2,500 churches in six continents.
- **Calvinist Reconstructionists** also have a view to bring in God's Kingdom through the church.

Dominion Theology is a top down authoritarian expression of Christianity. On the topmost level of the order is the anointed Apostle, Then the prophets and descending down to the local leadership. The base of the pyramid is the supporting Laity who serve to support those who are in the higher order. This has always been the structure of the Roman church which is a top down authoritarian institution commanding great power over its subjects. This is the very expression of the doctrine of the Nicolaitins spoken of in [Revelation 2:6](#). and described by Jesus in [Matthew 23:10-12](#), also *see 3John1:9*

THE PRESENT STATUS OF THE ASSEMBLIES OF GOD DENOMINATIONS IS UNCERTAIN
It is my belief, however, that many of the Assembly of God congregations, depending on the training and associations of the leadership, are moving toward the camp of Kingdom Now or Dominionist theology. Evidence that might point to this would be a lack of teaching on the prophetic future of the church (Preaching eschatology). Or preaching that does not clearly reflect unfolding signs of the times or clearly prophetic happenings in the middle east, Israel being God's time clock.

Another possible evidence of the focus on Kingdom restoration in a congregation might be the inclusion of worship forms and music which derive from either The Vineyard, or *Jesus Culture* music of Redding CA, Bill Johnson's mega church whose music reflects their non-sensationalist theology.

This will be the last of the studies I will offer whose purpose has been to give some insights into the state of *the church at large* which approaches a time of trials and transition. I think there should be a healthy curiosity about where we are as Christians that should go beyond the familiar boundaries of church life. It is right to question and challenge what you see and hear using the Bible as our guide that we may rely upon with confidence.



THE DAY OF THE LORD

A Day of Judgment is Coming

Scores of prophetic passages provide descriptions of a time of divine judgment when God will purge the earth of evil and rid the world of sin. Nearly every prophetic book touches upon this event to some degree. Here is just a sampling from among many that explain this period called “The Day of The Lord.”

As we have discussed previously, there is an ongoing spiritual battle going on around us. It is a battle of spiritual darkness against the light. The population of the earth is under the influence of the *Prince of darkness*. The children of God have been set free being called out of darkness into the light of God’s Son, the Messiah, Jesus. Those who are “Redeemed” have access to the power of God (grace) on their behalf. By this they may know the truth and walk in newness of life.

Our spiritual battle is one that occurs in the invisible realm. Among the human ranks there are powerful and influential people who are *consciously* or *unconsciously* serving Satan. Their aims in life focus on the pursuit of pleasure, treasure and power.

It has been this way since Adam's fall and Nimrod's rebellion. We don't have to look very far to find evil. Shockingly, there are many in this world who are willing to literally sell their souls to attain fame and power.

God is not ignoring the acts of evil doers who flaunt their lawlessness. Human decadence expresses itself in degradation, violence, murders and the like. God has ordained a time that he will deal with all the proud and depraved. This time of judgment has been described by the prophets of God for thousands of years. This period is called by various names; "that day" the "day of wrath," the "day of judgment," the great and the great and terrible day of the Lord.

Selected O. T. Descriptions of The Day of the Lord

There are dozens of passages that use the term or a similar description:

Isaiah 2:11-*The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day.*

Isaiah 13:6 *Howl ye; for the day of the LORD is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty. 7 Therefore shall all hands be faint, and every man's heart shall melt: 8 And they shall be afraid: pangs and sorrows shall take hold of them; they shall be in pain as a woman that travaileth: they shall be amazed one at another; their faces shall be as flames. 9 Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. 10 For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine. 11 And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogance of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible.*

Joel 3: 14 *Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision. 15 The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining. 16 The LORD also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the LORD will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel.*

New Testament References To The Day of The Lord

1Thessalonians 5:2 *"For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. 1Th 5:4 But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief."*

2 Peter 3:7: *The world that now is awaits destruction by fire.*

Despite all the clamor about climate change and its political ramifications, despite the good intentions of the Sierra Club, it appears that man can not alter God's destined course of nature, nor the things foreseen through the eyes of prophecy. Forget the *endangered species* list, the sad fact is that most all species will face extinction including the human race.

When will the day of the Lord Occur?

Many believe in a prophesied *future* millennial kingdom following the return of Jesus to earth. This group holds that divine judgment will finalize the "Great Tribulation." This is the second advent. Jesus will return with hosts of his angels. The saints will join this host. The powers of the Antichrist and his followers will be destroyed. His appearing will be as the lightning. *"For as the lightning comes out of the east and shines even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the son of man be." (Matt. 24:27)*

Will Jesus literally wield a sword and destroy multiple thousands?

Yes! The familiar, gentle Jesus holding a lamb will become the *Lord of Sabaoth*, the general of the armies of heaven. He will be wearing a garment dripping with blood. (Isaiah 63:2,3) The world's population has chosen darkness and the lie. (Revelation 19:13-15) The returning Messiah wields a great sword which is the word from his mouth.

The Second Coming is Not the Same as the 'Appearing' of Christ

Jesus' *appearing* (gk.*apocolupsis*) is the event known as the "Rapture". It is an event that comes without warning as a *"thief in the night."*(1 Thess. 5:2) The "**second coming**" will follow a time that is thoroughly delineated by

time and events. In the second coming when Jesus sets his feet upon the Mount of Olives and the region splits in two. (*Zechariah 14:4*) Jesus intervenes to fight for Israel. At His coming he will judge and destroy the evil and establish the kingdom. In the second coming the church of blood bought believers follow Jesus on horses clothed in white.

Surviving The Final Days of The Tribulation.

The tribulation is broken into two 3 ½ year sections. The last 3 ½ is the period of “great tribulation.” In the first half the Antichrist will present himself with wisdom and charisma. He will be seen as the savior of a planet in chaos that results from a world-wide crisis of destruction. This destruction may be man-made or a natural calamity or a combination of both. Believers will have escaped (removed by God) just before this calamity. (See Genesis 19:20) Those left behind will witness amazing “*lying signs and wonders*.” It will be explained to those *left behind* why the “Christians” were removed. There will be a disclosure of beings who will present themselves as space brothers from another world. They will claim they were the seed source of the human race and that the earth is now ready to go forward toward its glorious evolution to universal wisdom and harmony. Most people who are left behind who have not previously heard of God’s plan will likely be deceived and believe a lie. They will be promised a Utopian paradise and pay the price by losing their souls.

There will be a new universal religion. Some of its manifestation is already beginning to manifest. There will be a one-world economic system, A universal I D (implant) will be required for all to buy and sell and to have necessities to survive. (*Revelation 13:17*)

The mid point of the 7 year will see the *abomination of desolation* (Matt. 24:15) in the rebuilt temple In Jerusalem. The Antichrist will declare that he is God and must be worshiped. The final 3 ½ years describe God’s wrath upon the Antichrist and his followers, those who have taken the mark. The day of the Lord concludes with the earth and its population nearly destroyed by a growing onslaught of natural cataclysms followed by the second coming of the Messiah in power and in great glory.

Mystery Of The SPOKEN WORD There Is Life And Death In The Power Of The Tongue

SCRIPTURAL TEACHING ON THE POWER OF WORDS

In the day of judgment we must give account of every word; careless words, unguarded and foolish words.

“And I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.” Matthew 12:36

The mature and righteous person should aspire to speak words that reflect faith and the pure oracle of scripture.

The Word of Faith and hyper-faith movement teaches that we can have whatever we say. This has led to the notion that we can create and control the outcomes of every need and situation. It also allows that wellness and prosperity are a certainty that is produced by the creativity of speaking things that are not as though they were. This has often brought frustration and condemnation in its wake when our confessions are not manifested. The "name it and claim it" belief as it is called, is a distortion that tends *to focus our faith upon our faith* and not to the will of the Lord, who is the "Author and Finisher" of our faith.

The principle of speaking the word as promises of Scriptures remains

and guides life and godliness. The promises of God are to be trusted and stood upon in the face of every occasion in life. *We believe and therefore we speak.* The things that transpire are in the plan of the Savior for his purposes and for his glory. We can not circumvent the greater plan of God.

We are given understanding of the deep and hidden things of God in the light of Jeshua (Jesus.) We grow in understanding line by line and precept upon precept. Jesus, as revealed by the apostle John, is the **Word of God** who manifested in human flesh. This is itself a great mystery. When the Scripture at last is fully known, it will reveal Jesus as He truly is. Revelation of the mysteries of God's kingdom is progressive and deepening as His truth is being revealed by God's Holy Spirit.

SPOKEN WORDS:

WORDS ARE SPOKEN TO ESTABLISH COVENANT

FAITH FILLED WORDS BEAR HEAVENLY RESULTS

(click on the links below go to a particular topic:)

[A COVENANT IS FORGED IN WORDS](#)

[THE MOUTH EXPRESSES WHAT WE HAVE FED OUR SPIRIT](#)

[JESUS SPOKE AS HE YIELDED TO THE SPIRIT](#)

[BOOK OF PROVERBS FILLED WITH REFERENCES TO SPOKEN WORDS](#)

[THE TONGUE, IS A SECRET POWER FOR GOOD AND EVIL](#)

[THE TONGUE HAS THE POWER TO GUIDE OUR LIVES](#)

[A PRAYER TO CONTROL THINKING AND SPEAKING](#)

[MISAPPLICATIONS of SPEAKING IN FAITH](#)

The doctrine of the spoken word is revealed as a key concept of Biblical wisdom. It is expressed from Job to David, to Solomon's Proverbs, and is

restated by the Lord Jesus and his apostles. The impact of the words we speak, not only reflect an individual's character but engage deeper spiritual things. While we who believe are being transformed into the image and characteristics of the Lord Jesus we should take on his attributes. We know that the spoken word has an impact of authority in this world. This world is the domain of spiritual forces both for good or evil, who react to our words of faith. The unholy spiritual powers in heavenly places are equally mindful of our words. Our spoken words must be consistent to establish our identity as a redeemed soul. The "**double minded person**" (James 1:8 and 4:8) has not yet gained mastery over negative words that can affect their daily lives and relationships. The words of the double minded vary as the wind. Their speech may range from positive expressions that are faith-filled to ungodly utterances and negative or profane words that are contrary to what God says about our identity in Him. We know that our spiritual enemy, Lucifer, is the father of lies and deceit. He desires that anyone speak words of UNBELIEF not affirming the knowledge of truth. There is no deceit or variability of any kind in the almighty.

Words of faith should echo the promises of God. God's promises overshadow and supersede the apparent realities of this world, though reason and observation may argue contrariwise. The spiritual impact of words which come from our own mouths is a sadly neglected area of knowledge. Words affirm and regulate our spiritual well being and grow our faith. The unredeemed person has "misused his tongue" all of his life. They regularly speak words that are lies or that brutalize others, even members of their own family. The new birth brings the power of the Holy Spirit by whom we begin to get the tongue back under control and working for our soul's betterment. It may be necessary to undo the accumulated seeds of negativity that we planted with words of unbelief or profanity. This usually occurs as we come to God for repentance from years of profanity uttered in ignorance. The "new man" has a heavenly priest who can be petitioned to help to remove the seeds of evil words that they no longer bear fruit thereafter.

I am convinced that there are many Christians who are unaware of any kind of spiritual consequences to that words that come out of their mouths.

Of course there are social and emotional consequences as people react to the words of others. Scripture is filled with reference to words, the tongue and speaking. Speaking is the source of both blessing and cursing. There can be neither a blessing nor a curse if it were not for the fact that words have power of a spiritual kind. The patriarchs of the Old Covenant spoke blessings to their children, these blessings carried power and were tied inextricably to the future and destiny of those receiving it. In the book of Proverbs alone there are more than forty verses that describe the power of words or the tongue. I will share several of the more important ones in just a moment. Why are words powerful? Why are words Spiritual? Why do our words guide our lives and our potentiality to walk in Faith? I will share some of my thoughts and insights which I believe to be supported by Scripture.

God has spoken things into being. Jesus is the "Word of God" that was spoken and that *abides forever*. Those things spoken by the Lord will all come to pass. While we are created after His image and likeness, we are not with our words able to create realities separate from God's purpose and creation. We can by words affirm our belief and faith in His divine promises as a faithful adopted son or daughter. Those who teach that we are co-equal to God the creator are expressing a doctrine which moves close to occult, demonic practices.

Jesus said, "the words that I speak are Spirit and they are life." Jesus taught many things about words, including the fact that we will hear the words we have spoken preserved eternally and give account for them in the judgment. We're taught to let our yes's be "yes" and our no's simply "no" as anything else touches on sin. Jesus also taught that words mark our spiritual treasure house: When we speak we give evidence to the stuff which we have within us (our hearts.) **Luke 6:45 an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.** In other words, our words reflect our thought and values held in life.

James, the half-brother of Christ and an apostle, gives a lengthy dissertation on the power of the tongue to do good and evil, he says that though the tongue is small it has the power to rule and guide our lives even

as a ship is guided by a rudder. James also advises that one well should not bring out two kinds of water, poisoned and sweet.

Solomon, who is called the wisest man, included more than 35 proverbs dealing with the power of words. It is clear that words have a large part to control not only our faith but our life of prayer. Have you wondered about silent prayer versus spoken prayer. This is a very important understanding that is not taught enough in the church. *The words we speak have the power to change life and circumstances; the words we think are merely meditations.* Yes, God speaks to us in the meditations of our heart; and yes, God hears the meditations of our thoughts. Scripture tells us that God knows our hearts and our thoughts. It also teaches that thoughts are not sin, but when our thoughts become words and actions based upon evil thoughts, this constitutes sin. (Jesus was tempted in every way as we are, yet without sin.) This means that he had thoughts which were like ours, temptations which are like ours, but he did not give place to these but cast them down. In his worst temptations Jesus actually addressed Satan, "Get thee behind me Satan!" or, "It is written, you shall not put the Lord thy God to the test!" Spoken word brought the power of God into action against these circumstances.

We see in the gospels how Jesus ministered by speaking words. Now we do not see many people in churches speaking words like Jesus did.

I wonder why? Paul said, "Imitate me as I imitate Christ." This means we should pray and speak like Jesus. How did Jesus minister? Jesus spoke to diseases. He spoke to demons afflicting many people. He spoke to the fig tree and it responded; he spoke to the wind and it responded. Jesus by speaking took direct authority over the condition or situation. Jesus did not ask God to fix things for him he himself took action with the Words and the authority which the Father had given him. Jesus obviously prayed in a different way that you and I have learned to pray. Jesus heard and saw in prayer, he ministered with words and with authority. Words spoken in the world have power to minister good. Salvation comes to a believer by speaking aloud from the belief of the his heart. John 12:50 - - And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak

therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak. John 5:19: So Jesus answered them, "I tell you the solemn truth, the Son can do nothing on his own initiative, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, the Son does likewise.

MISAPPLICATIONS OF WORDS SPOKEN IN FAITH DOMINION THEOLOGY, LITTLE GOD THEOLOGY,

While the notion of speaking the Word and agreement with the Word is clearly an application of a life of faith, it is clear that some in the Word of Faith movement have followed a path that is not biblical. We can not create something out of nothing as God, the creator, originally formed all things that are in existence. We can not force God to fetch and perform any way we want. God remains in control and his will will control the ultimate outcome. The heart of man is desperately wicked and to give us full authority to fulfil the lusts of the flesh and to have things our way would be to give a believer "over to witchcraft." The realm of the occult can produce some manifested outcomes by the use of creative visualization and declarations but this kind of action gives the activity over to the realm of the adversary.

A COVENANT IS FORGED IN WORDS: WORDS ESTABLISH A COVENANT AND WORDS INDICATE ASSENT TO THE COVENANT.

"And he said, Now also let it be according unto your words: he with whom it is found shall be my servant; and ye shall be blameless." -- Gen 44:10

GOD SETS FORTH THE COVENANT; WE ACCEPT AND AGREE TO THE TERMS OF HIS COVENANT

"And she said, According unto your words, so be it. And she sent them away, and they departed: and she bound the scarlet line in the window." -- Josh 2:21

THE MOUTH EXPRESSES WHAT WE HAVE FED OUR SPIRIT IN OUR
MEDITATIONS

"O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks." "A good man out of the good treasure of the heart brings forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things." "But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment." (Matthew 12:34-36)

JESUS EXPLAINS HOW WORDS ARE SPIRIT: BUT THE SPIRIT MUST BE THE LIFE OF GOD'S SPIRIT NOT SATAN'S SPIRIT (A SPIRIT OF DESTRUCTION)

"It is the spirit that quickened; the flesh profits nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." -- John 6:63

JESUS SPOKE AS HE SUBMITTED TO GOD'S VOICE WITHIN

Below you will find some of the dozens of Scriptures which address words, lips

or the tongue of speech. This is ancient and foundational wisdom.

"Believe thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwells in me, he dos the works." (-- John 14:10)

The Book of Proverbs Is Filled with references to "WORDS", "LIPS", and "TONGUE"

"A man shall eat good by the fruit of his mouth: but the soul of the transgressors shall eat violence." (-- Proverbs 13:2)

"He that keeps his mouth keeps his life: but he that opens wide his lips shall have destruction." (-- Proverbs 13:3)

"Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof." (-- Proverbs 18:21)

"The tongue of the just is as choice silver: the heart of the wicked is little worth." (-- Proverbs 10:20)

"The tongue of the wise uses knowledge aright: but the mouth of fools pours out foolishness." (-- Proverbs 15:2)

"He that hides hatred with lying lips, and he that utters a slander, is a fool." (-- Proverbs 10:18)

"For my mouth shall speak truth; and wickedness is an abomination to my lips." (-- Proverbs 8:7")

"All the words of my mouth are in righteousness; there is nothing forward or perverse in them." (-- Proverbs 8:8)

"In the multitude of words there wanted not sin: but he that refrained his lips is wise." (-- Proverbs 10:19)

THE TONGUE IS POWER FOR GOOD AND EVIL

"For thy mouth speaks thine iniquity, and you choose the tongue of the crafty." (-- Job 15:5)

"Thine own mouth condemns thee, and not I: yea, thine own lips testify against thee." (-- Job 15:6)

JUDGMENT (PUNISHMENT)

INCLUDES CONSEQUENCES OF THE USE OF WORDS

"The LORD shall cut off all flattering lips, and the tongue that speaks proud things:" (-- Psalms 12:3)

UNDERSTANDING IS A GIFT OF THE LORD

"The Lord GOD hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: he wakens

morning by morning, he wakens mine ear to hear as the learned." (-- Isaiah 50:4)

THE TONGUE HAS THE POWER TO GUIDE OUR LIVES:

THE SPIRITUAL LIFE OF FAITH DIRECTLY CONNECTS TO FAITH WORDS, OR NEGATIVELY BY OTHER NON FAITH WORDS, UNBELIEF, FOOLISH JESTING, HURTFUL WORDS, A TONGUE YIELDED TO SATAN, CURSING - ETC.

"Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasts great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindles!" (-- James 3:5) "And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defiles the whole body, and setts on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell." (-- James 3:6)

"But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison." (-- James 3:8)

"Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God." (-- James 3:9)"Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter?" (-- James 3:11)

WORDS SPOKEN IN THE WORLD (EARTH) ARE SEEDS PLANTED IN THE EARTH:THEY SPRING FORTH TO BEAR THEIR FRUITEACH ACCORDING TO ITS KIND. (Genesis 1) IN THE EARTH

"Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth." (-- Deuteronomy 32:1)

The sower, sows the word. (-- Mark 4:14)

And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after itself, and the tree yielding fruit after itself, whose seed was in itself, after his kind (-- Genesis 1:12)

A PRAYER TO CONTROL THINKING AND SPEAKING

"Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer." (-- Psalms 19:14) "Hear my prayer, O God; give ear to the words of my mouth." (-- Psalms 54:2)

THE SPOKEN WORD IS THE ACTION OF FAITH THAT BRINGS GOD INTO OUR HEART

*"For with the heart man believes unto righteousness; and **with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.**" (--Romans 10:10)*

DAVID'S PRAYER TO GOD TO GUARD HIS MOUTH

"Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips." (-- Psalms 141:3)

A final thought. Among Christians I am always disturbed when I hear a brother or sister talking like “the world.” The world has its own manner of expression. It is always changing according to the fashion of what is modern slang or tolerance for the profane. Profanity in the present age is rampant by both men and women. Profanity expresses the course-mindedness of the times. Trashy talking, and *expressions that are cool* are emulated by those who want to express the latest trendy in-talk.

Many have no self control when it comes to words coming out of their mouth. Some have what can be called *verboreah* (diarrhea of the mouth). Other indulge in foolish jesting. Satan is the god of this world and he loves to see speech degenerate into coarseness and profane expression.

It was not long ago that certain words were inappropriate, even taboo. Sadly, the days when *darn* and *heck* were the norm have past.



A DISCIPLE'S HANDBOOK:

Charles Pinkney <https://Friendlyarts.net>

CHAPTER 1 - AN INTRODUCTION TO DISCIPLESHIP

Charles Pinkney - 2024

Believers need to be nurtured in order to grow as disciples. When I use the term "church" I always imagine it in quotations because not everyone regards this word the same way. The familiar church-house model where most denominational Christians meet routinely is most commonly thought to be a church. This reference is not the original New Testament model. The term *ekklesia* (ek-kles-si'a) in the original Greek text is translated "Church" throughout the Bible. The proper connotation of *ekklesia* is *the called out, or the gathered out ones*. We tend to assume that church life in early Christian times is equal to its present day form. However, the form of the 'church' in the days of the apostles was quite unlike modern

understanding of familiar religious forms built around a church house. (*you will find various spellings on ekklesia*)

In ancient times ekklesia was a form of gathering in which members came together to transact a specific kind of business on behalf of a community. In the case of the Christian *ekklesia* it was and is the business of the heavenly shepherd, Christ Jesus. In this kind of fellowship all members are called to participate actively. In this church body we are called out of the world by the Spirit to be a part of Christ's body, (He, Christ the Messiah, is the head over the church.) All members bring with them unique abilities, gifts or enablements. God's *grace* provides the activation or enablement of those many gifts that are needed for Spiritual fellowship and growth in understanding. (1 Peter 4:11)

The Holy Spirit is the divine personage who brings the gifts or enablements of Grace. We who are **called out** into the Kingdom of God grow and mature, gain experience and develop testimonies in the Kingdom of God. These are our personal 'God Stories.'

These testimonies when shared, build faith among those with whom we share. Testimonies are God stories that describe the dynamics of heaven touching us individually. Spiritual gifts are enablements that bear witness of God's presence in day to day experience. Church house religion, all too often deficient in such experience of God in the present.

Among the assertions I will present in the discussion of discipleship is that we as believers, after being born of the Spirit, may not only know God, but that we all (men, women, boys, or girls) can have a spiritually *empowered* life. The "church" as Jesus Christ established it, was given this provision. But in spite of this provision, both knowing God and developing a spiritual life, is often unrealized in the institutional church. Time, circumstance and unrelenting forces of spiritual resistance by our spiritual adversary disrupts believers, to derail or to side track us from following the Spiritual life. Instead human traditions are instigated. Jesus warned his disciples in Mark 15 to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and also the leaven of Herod,

superficial religiosity, and worldliness. Jude, half brother and an apostle of Jesus, writes that we must, "- *earnestly contend for the faith given to us by the apostles.*"

Disciples, Learning the "Way"

The foundation of the life of Christ begins as we become a disciple of Jesus. Just as he made disciples in the time of his earthly ministry so he continues today. (John 8:21 ; 17:20) Religion has made the life of the Bible remote and impersonal. It has made Peter, James and John or John the Baptist into icons or religious folk heroes. The sense of their being our brothers, sharing our same life of trials and faith has been all but lost. In our minds Bible days were another time, another faith, another kind of application. This is not the case. Religious tradition places apostles on pedestals and this should not be the case because it is contrary to every apostolic and Christ-uttered teaching. God does not show favoritism nor does he show respect of persons.

A short time after the apostolic age, lust for human rule and power and other motives undermined the apostolic foundations. Liberty and spiritual forms of worship began to erode. We are entitled to the same promises and gospel practices that New Testament believers knew.

The Christian life, being Holy Spirit inspired, is not of human authorship nor human tradition. It is the way that leading to a God inspired, life-changing, fulfilling, and in perfect accord with the Bible.

Discipleship described here was/is modeled by the saints and apostles in the beginning of this *church age*. Many denominations and religious teachers, attempt to mentor and advise others about the spiritual life. The historic trend is to promote religious traditions instead of knowing God, it is important that we look to grow in wisdom through the guidance of the *Spirit of Truth*, the *Holy Spirit*.

God tells us through the Word (James) that we may ask for wisdom or truth to be revealed to us. He further instructs us to be confident knowing that God is willing to give *good gifts* which bring fulfillment and blessings and not sorrows. When seeking the revelations which are **of** God and not false we must be fully aware of the risk of error and counterfeit. Deception

and false teaching is on the increase and is everywhere. In order to discern the true from the false, test every spirit. Is it the right spirit, is it the right Jesus, the right Gospel?

It is very important to invoke the name of Jesus Christ. His is the *name above every name!* And also know that His Spirit will not lead us into bondage, fear, submission to abusive men, or lawlessness. Meekness, gentleness, compassion and service to others is the right spirit.

The Bible teaches that Jesus' name commands all powers of heaven and earth. It is above the authority of any other god or angel or worldly authority. The word states that at the name of Yeshua, Jesus, every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess his lordship. It is in His name that we can consecrate any prayer or any request. It is a safeguard and assurance that anything which will be revealed or imparted spiritually will be without deceptive influence. If you ask in Jesus, name *the deceiver* is unlikely to make his intrusion.

Reconciling The Spirit in the Seeker, the Spirit of Him being Sought; The true Spirit of Christ Jesus is the spirit of love, forgiveness, gentleness, meekness, selflessness, and patience.

It is not tinged with fear, with condemnation, with urgency or panic, It is not contaminated by a lust for personal gain, ownership of another or any desire to control or manipulate another person. Check yourself if you are seeking with motives containing any of the negatives stated above for they are contrary to the nature of the God who will insure your being lead into truth.

Receiving True Gifts and not Counterfeit

Jesus instructs us about receiving gifts from God, especially the gift of the Holy Spirit. He teaches us that the God of heaven gives *good gifts* and not devilish or perverted ones. Christ also characterizes the fact that there are two sources who might affect spiritual results. God's gifts are good and true. Let us look at the scripture found in Matthew 7:8-11 and in Luke 11:11-13: These shed light on Spiritual gifts.

"For every one that asks receives; and he that seeks finds; and to him that knocks it shall be opened."Matt 6:8;"Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?":9; "Or if he ask a fish, will he

give him a serpent?":10; "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?" -- :11. The two gifts requested are bread and a fish, God gives things which are life-giving (bread) and safe (meat-fish). Luke chapter eleven restates the same teaching about asking from God the Father with a slightly different emphasis, and includes the gift of the *Holy Spirit* which is the living gift of God's power and presence: "If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent?"; "Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?" "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" -- Luke 11:11-13

The references to the counterfeit gifts are not just coincidental or random examples they represent the fact that there is a source of the *bad gift*. The enemy is Satan. He does not give good gifts, nor give valid revelations. His gifts are not life giving, they give neither joy, nor health nor liberty. Yet it is possible that he will try to come in unless you exclude him from having any part of the asking and seeking transaction (namely the spiritual search for a spiritual life.) Satan's gift is characterized as a stone instead of bread, as a serpent instead of pure food, a poisonous scorpion instead of an egg.

Jesus teaches that Satan is the deadly counterfeiter who will insinuate himself into the seekers life subtly and at any opportunity. Forewarned is forearmed; for this reason we will need to initiate safe guards and precautions as I suggested above in order to keep the deceiver out of your life.

There was a time when our lives were entirely under his (Satan's) control. We may not think that this was the case but the apostle is very clear about it. A couple of apostolic letters bring understanding of the nature of the unredeemed life. These apply to all, whether saint or not so saintly, before that life is renewed *In Christ*.

Paul states in his letter to Ephesus, Chapter 2, verses 2 and 3."- - *in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, (Satan) the spirit that now worketh in the*

children of disobedience; Among whom also we all had our conversation (lifestyle) in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others."

Paul's letter to Colossae, Chapter 1 verse 21. "*And you, that were sometime before now) alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled*" Paul's letter to Corinth, Chapter 1 verses 10 and 11, "*Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, 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."*

Resources and Understanding Home Church Fellowships

Frank Viola interview with a typical church-goer

(Discusses the subject of "Open Church")

CHAPTER 2 - FELLOWSHIP, WE ARE GOD'S FAMILY

Koinonia and Sharing

(with those of like precious faith)

Every Believer Becomes a Disciple Matthew 28:19

**DISCIPLESHIP IS ABOUT PARTAKING OF THE LIFE OF GOD
(AND EXTENDING THE MINISTRY OF YESHUA – JESUS)**

KOINONIA:

Sharing, Communicating, Partaking In The Kingdom Of God

*Jesus is the living "head of the church" for all believers. He has designed a way for us to both know him and follow him, even as the original twelve disciples followed him. During the Lord's earthly ministry, they walked at his side, conversed with him, and were both witnesses and **partakers** of his ministry. They knew his voice; saw his power; and marveled at his wisdom. On a strictly physical level they *knew* him! Yet, this was not considered adequate. These original disciples were instructed to receive a further supernatural empowerment. In order to demonstrate and build the Kingdom of God there were told to. "Wait in Jerusalem until you receive power from above- -."*

Today I suspect that far too few nominal Christians are able to say they truly know Jesus on a Spiritual level. Yes they know about him have been taught

doctrines but how much do they know him in the transformative power of his love and the power of his resurrection?

Perhaps the greatest thing to be revealed in the "gospel" is that we not only **may know him**, but have fellowship with him **and partake** in his divine nature and *in his ministry*. When we gather as believers at any particular place of meeting can we say as we leave that meeting knowing him better? Can we say that we have heard his voice, felt his presence, or have been empowered by his touch?" *1 Peter 4:10,11* defines God's idea of the importance of sharing the gift that is unique to each believer for indeed each has received a gift or many gifts to be shared from his or her life. Tradition has had the negative effect of barring or at least, discouraging the ordinary believer from ministry even though apostolic scripture consistently prohibits this.

All believers are exhorted to grow and mature in the knowledge of him who came to give more abundant life through the power of his resurrection. We are not to remain a novice and a baby in the faith, but that we attain "unto the stature of a 'mature man' even the stature of Christ." (Ephesians 4). The exaltation of a single voice in the role of authority **to disciple** us is limited and limiting. Pulpit ministry is an unfortunate self- perpetuating legacy of 17 centuries of the "Church" age. Those who in fact have experience in Christ's life and ministry, through the power of the Holy Spirit have a title in the Word of God; these individuals are called "**elders**." Certainly church denominations use the same term within some context of their doctrines. But those who Jesus calls elders may differ from what religious traditions might label as elders.

The apostle John, the disciple who Jesus loved, begins his letter by talking about Spiritual **experience** as the qualification (credentials) that we must look to and lean upon. He noted what he had seen, touched, looked upon, and handled in the Word of life. *(1John1:1)That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life, these things we declare unto you - -"*

True fellowship is elusive and hard to achieve since religious traditions tends to separate rather than unite in belonging and a feeling of one accord. Wrong

motives and wrong understandings create disharmony. Correction and exhortation is necessary but must be given in the right Spirit. For we are to have the same Spirit that is Christ's and "- say the same thing - ", seeking that there be no schisms, walls, or disharmony among us. (1Cor. 1:10,11)

Ministry Transforms, Edifies, Strengthens, and Blesses

After a believer's initial conversion, disciplining follows. Through edification we mature as part of the body Christ. Discipling advances at a slow pace in a formal sort of ministry experience in the normal Saturday or Sunday fare in a church congregation. Indeed denominational religion makes little out of disciplining its members.

Intimate and loving fellowship was modeled by the first apostles. The Holy Spirit was fully in evidence to empower. Individuals gave testimony of the continuous transformation of their lives in Christ. Revelations and teachings in the Word of Truth were shared with fellow believers.

We pass through various stages as we grow *in the Lord*. Just as in the natural, we begin as babies, then children, the strong young 'men', then mature sages expressing the character and spiritual nature of Jesus Christ. So is it in the matter of Spiritual growth. The Bible shows how we each are called to ***minister our individual Spiritual gifts to one another.*** (Rom.12; 1Cor.12. 1 Cor. 14, and 1Pet 4:11)

The proper time to edify and grow is in gathering with the body, and fellow believers come together in koinonia (fellowship). When two or more true believers get together the natural result is to share their common salvation and to have "fellowship" to minister "edification" to each other. When these two or more gather, Jesus 'joins' them and becomes a co-participant through the Holy Spirit! This fellowship process is not complicated, nor formal, it is not one person, a leader, dominating another. It is not adversarial. Discipleship happens as we share the gifts that have been given to us as individuals.

Koinonia is characterized by participation, communication and sharing. As referenced in 1John 1:1-3, It begins with actual experiences given as a witness of Jesus' life and resurrection. **Koinonia is about sharing what Christ has given to each believer and ministering that gift to others.**

According to the measure of God's grace, individuals have various testimonies and experiences, some have more, some fewer. There are some with musical gifts which enhance worship others have less of that ability. Some may have verbal skills, some less. Some possess practical kinds of skills, some not so much. Some may be working through personal tragedies or rejection, while others have already had healing in these areas. All need to be encouraged to participate at some level so that **leadership skills** may be fostered in each.

The dynamics of fellowship will change from week to week. Few or more people may be present at a house or meeting place and the Spirit of God will act in accordance to the time and persons present. Fellowship should never turn into something regimented or formalistic. However it often becomes that especially when everything is controlled by one leader. If you are unfamiliar with the kind of fellowship I have described it would be inspiring to experience for yourself what can happen in a place of meeting where the Spirit of God is given liberty! God can make his glorious presence known; lift people out of their fears and oppression; bring joy and even healing; Hearts and broken relationships can be restored and souls saved. The Holy Spirit administers all such actions. (See link to [Why We Gather](#))

The Encroachment of Formalism

A **religious spirit** encroaches in the form of supremacy, control or formalism. Formalism and structure stalks the believer with the aim of transforming God-life into **dead religion**. I suppose church liturgy was put together in times past, following the kind of glorious Spirit-led fellowship described above. Liturgical forms may have started with good intentions with the hope of bottling up something very good and worthwhile, perhaps to preserve some of the glory of an earlier day. If only God's manifest presence could be captured and preserved, but alas it can not. He is moving on as the pillar of cloud moved ahead directed the sojourners in the wilderness in the book of Exodus.

The Bible demonstrates that God's presence can not be captured and preserved. The Israelites of old tried to do so, but when God's Glory departed they were left with a lifeless object (a religious artifact or idol.) The temple remained, the glory was gone. The

brazen serpent remained, but the manifestation of its power was gone. A cistern remained, the fount of living water was gone. God's continued glory and fellowship with us is determined by the hearts of those who gather to worship him. Years and centuries past and only rituals and catechism remained supplanting the glory that had been lost. The ritual enactments remained and the liturgical trappings but the presence of God vanished. Ritual happens, I believe, when men try to duplicate a behavior which once brought forth God's 'glory' through waiting upon Him in faith.

As God's presence leaves it is replaced by man-led religion. "Ministry" follows a similar transition. Leadership becomes the domain of a very small body of liturgical experts. It has come to pass that the priesthood or the clergy only is trained and authorized to govern and rule over the flock of God. But in the new covenant as it was presented to the saints, discipleship is the domain of every believer.

A concept to re-think: "Abolish the Laity!"

God wishes each believer to be a ministering priest, just as he wishes each of us to become **a true worshiper**. What is this true worshiper and what is worshiping the Father in Spirit and in Truth? (John 4:23) God is always looking for True Worshipers. Any one other than "true worshipers" fall short in worship. The natural mind is not accustomed to partaking in heavenly things. The natural man (without the Spirit) is an intruder *in the inner court of the temple*. Our Heavenly Father looks at the heart. He does not regard the man who is adorned with the outward regalia of religious uniform over any common believer whose heart is open.

The physical temple, cathedral or church is not where God dwells .

Our Heavenly Father does not require a building or cathedral but has chosen a holy dwelling site *inside of us*. As Jesus told the woman at the well of Samaria, (It is not about where you worship,) not on 'this mountain or another mountain,' **we worship what we KNOW!** Many *do not know what they are worshiping*. The truth is that worship is inseparable from salvation. Salvation is through the root and foundation of the Jews. The time was coming, Jesus explained, when men and women would worship the Almighty God in Spirit. Those without this Spirit receive nothing of the revelation and fellowship of God of which Jesus spoke. A divine meeting place for the first

priest hood was a place behind the veil into the presence of God where no human could stand without having been made pure by scrupulous preparation. In the presence of God man does not utter a word nor risk the defilement of his own sweat.

Disciples, Learning the "Way"

The foundation of the life of Christ is laid by becoming a disciple of Jesus. Just as Jesus set about making disciples in the time of his earthly ministry so he continues today. (John 8:21 ; 17:20) The Great Commission is about discipleship. Too often, the Christian world has made the life of the Bible remote and impersonal through religion . It has made Peter, James and John or John the Baptist into icons or religious super heroes. It is too easy to lose the sense that Peter, James, Paul and Barnabus and the host of others are our brothers and our teachers. Though now having run their race, they shared the same life of trials and faith as we ourselves. In our minds Bible days were entirely another time, another kind of faith life , another dispensation. This is not the case. Religious tradition places men on pedestals. This should not be the case because it is contrary to every apostolic and Christ-uttered teaching. God does not show favoritism nor does he show respect of persons. s many that have received the gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the Grace

You may be interested in checking out the writing of Frank Viola and George Barna [See www.ptmin.org](http://www.ptmin.org) and listen to some interviews as sound files describing the return to open, house church. For any that have received the gift, (God Life, Grace and Power) minister it to one another, as good stewards of the Grace of God. 1Peter 4:11

CHAPTER 3 - FOUNDATION OF THE APOSTLES

Learning Christ-Issues of Discipleship

God has provided that each believer who is born of the Spirit may grow in the Spiritual life. Learning Christ, in a general sense is becoming familiar with God not only through His word but also through His presence, thus

gaining familiarity with His character and personality. We, in the process of time, should become partakers of His glory and His character. As it is written, we go from *glory to glory* (2Corinthians 3:18,) and *from faith to faith* (Romans 1:17.) We learn to hearken to the voice of His Spirit and respond accord to the way we are directed. I call this learning Christ. God's model for learning Christ is **imitation** of the first born Son of God, Jesus Christ. We are to model his manner of thinking, and his manner of acting. We are to duplicate his interacting with the Heavenly Father and his Spirit-directed ministry. The first disciples were given a living model but they were only able duplicate his Spiritual behavior after they had received the enabling Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

With Christ's life within us, we submit our egos and wills to him. We aim to become as he was in this world. (John 16:16; 1John 4:17) The total spiritual inability and helplessness of the natural man or woman, places huge limits upon him. We can not be the light of the world if God's light does not burn within us.

Too many nominal Christians experience a religion which could function just as it is without a resurrection!

We can not be *witnesses* of his resurrection if we have not been touched by the fiery hand of God that raised Jesus from the dead who also quickened our own body and spirit. We can not reflect the goodness of God if he has not made us good who were once reprobates. We come in to this world to know God. This is our first calling and some come and go from this world not having achieved that first calling. If we are fortunate to have God reveal himself to us then we press on to the next stage; that of being a functional witness. It is also unfortunate how many are thwarted in this second stage, by the incomplete or ineffectual teachings and tradition.

As we have noted, the institutional church has either lost sight of, or failed to actualize the provisions of the New Covenant which comprises the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Time has eroded true understanding, and spiritual subterfuge authored by an unrelenting adversary has come in to subtly sidetrack our spiritual lives and foster human understanding instead of biblical, Godly truths.

Again, what I am sharing in this writing is not a unique revelation but a simple restatement of **the way** that was revealed by Jesus to his servants the apostles following Pentecost at the beginning of the church age. Any church or teacher (including denominational groups) who are attempting to mentor or direct others into a spiritual life are under divine obligation to be accurate. Private interpretation risks wrong doctrine. Since there is always a danger of deception, it is important that we proceed cautiously, both as teachers and learners. We are obligated to discern all things with the wisdom, the help, and guidance of the *Spirit of Truth* who is the *Holy Spirit*. God has told us through the Word that we may ask for wisdom and for truth to be revealed to us. He further instructs us to have confidence in this asking, knowing that God is willing. God is willing! God is willing to give *good gifts* which bring fulfillment and blessings and not sorrows. When seeking the revelations which are *from God*, it is up to the seeker to be on guard against deceptions and to discern the true from the false. If you are asking anything from God it is very important to invoke the name of Jesus Christ. This name is the name above every name and above every spiritual entity or authority. This name will consecrate or make pure anything which may transpire. It will guarantee that anything which will be revealed or imparted spiritually will be free of any corrupt or deceptive influence. If you ask in the name of Jesus, *the deceiver* can not work his way so readily into the workings.

Receiving True Gifts and not Counterfeit Ones

Jesus instructs us about receiving gifts from God, especially the gift of the Holy Spirit. He teaches us that the God of heaven gives *good gifts* and not evil, hurtful or perverted ones. Christ also characterizes the fact that there are two kinds of gifts which might be tendered, the true and the false, but God's gifts are good and true. The scripture is found in Matthew 7:8-11 and in Luke 11:11-13: "*For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.*" :8; "*Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?*" :9; "*Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?*" :10; "*If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?*" :11. KJV The two objects which are sought are bread and fish. God gives things which are life-giving

and safe (bread, and meat.) Luke chapter eleven restates the same teaching about asking from God the Father but expands the emphasis, toward the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the living gift of God's power and presence: *"If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent?"; "Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?" "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" -- Luke 11:11-13kfv.* I have emphasized the word son to emphasize that relationship is the key to receiving from God. There are a whole lot of different kinds of seekers; some sincere and some less sincere. If a dabbler negotiates to receive a spiritual manifestation from God, it is uncertain what may transpire. But God wishes to emphasize that he is for blessing His family. He is the giver of Good gifts.

Counterfeit gifts are a peripheral issue. The above quote presents the possibility of receiving a *bad gift*. These kinds of exceptions bear upon the setting and environment where and with whom the "ministry" occurs and the sincerity of the hearts who seek the gift.

We have a common enemy, Satan, who is always ready to move in to block the gift of God or to substitute a counterfeit. Satan does not give good gifts, nor does he give valid revelations. His gifts do not enhance abundant life, they always diminish joy, health and liberty. There was a time when our lives were entirely under his (Satan's) control. We may not think that this was the case but the apostle Paul is very clear about it. A couple of apostolic letters bring attention to the nature of the unredeemed life, which includes each and every life before the renewal *In Christ*. Paul's letter to Ephesus, Chapter 2, verses 2 and 3. *"Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience; Among whom also we all had our conversation (lifestyle) in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others."* KJV Paul's letter to Collosae, Chapter 1 verse 21. *"And you, that were sometimes (before now) alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled"*The apostle contrasts the previous unredeemed nature our previous lifestyle with the redeemed nature. In the letter to Corinth, Chapter 1 verses 10 and 11, he lists

a number of these life styles; *"Neither - thieves, - - covetous, - - drunkards, - - revilers, - - extortionist, 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 Foundation of the Apostles

Every Believer Becomes a Disciple " Apostles were first **disciples**. Disciples walked with the Lord in an intimate way. They learned his ways by first hand observation, through hearing his word and knowing his voice. The disciples while they were growing in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus were also *participants* in the work of Jesus' ministry. It was they who announced, *'the Kingdom of God is at hand.'* They showed that the Kingdom could be demonstrated by both **the spiritual power and the authority** to impact the afflicted, the oppressed, the poor and the broken- hearted. Disciples were and are called to be partakers of Jesus Christ's ministry. Each of us continues to share the same access to Jesus Christ. We share the same Spirit, we share in the same commission. *"For this reason the son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the Devil."* (1John 3:8) We aspire to attain to the **same unity and inclusiveness** as the original fellowship of disciples. There was no member of the original circle of disciples who was just like another. Yet, there was a unique niche for each of those Jesus called. Each of the first disciples had a divine destiny and an unlimited opportunity for growing up in the fullness of the Lord. Jesus chose the original disciples. He singled them out and called them aside to walk with him and to have a face-to-face relationship with him. Descriptions indicate that each had attributes which could label them as plain **folks** or ordinary people. Some associated with Jesus more intimately than others. Each disciple had unique traits and attributes of character; Matthew a worldly businessman, a publican, a tax collector; Peter a robust, headstrong man who generally spoke without thinking and was always competing to be someone; John a warm, compassionate and trusting youth; Nathaniel innocent and open; Thomas a scientific minded pragmatist who had to have things proven before he could be persuaded and so on. The twelve included men who we might not have chosen, including Judas the deceiver and betrayer who Jesus also called a robber. Outside of the twelve were a multitude of other disciples **including women** who traveled extensively with Jesus though were not part of the

inner group of the twelve.

It is possible that those who were reasonably close and connected to Jesus may have higher, certainly seventy or several hundreds of individuals. The apostles were men with whom Jesus visited, taught and broke bread. He also imparted his life and Spirit into them. After he had risen from the dead, he breathed upon the disciples saying to them, "receive Holy Breath (Gr. *pneuma*)." The word breath and spirit are the same word in the original text. This is the same as to say, "Receive the Holy Spirit." I believe It was this action which imparted regenerated Holy life within each disciple. I believe this act before the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost was the equivalent of the new heaven-born experience that we believers today call being **born again** or spiritual renewal. The eleven apostles and Judas Iscariot's replacement Matthias thus were 'born from above' i.e. conceived as a new spirit being at this time.

The apostle Paul (originally Saul) came on board some time later being called by Jesus for a particular revelation and ministry. Saul of Tarsus was a Jewish theologian, a Pharisee of the strictest sect of Judaic fundamentalism of the day. Saul was an intellectual of supreme discipline and credentials. The zealous Saul, set out to destroy the disciples of Jesus, persecuting and imprisoning all who preached Jesus as Messiah and the doctrine of the resurrection from the dead. Saul was added to the order of discipleship but in a special way **after** Christ's resurrection.

How did Saul become a disciple and an apostle? Paul recounted his account of the encounter several times, but the original encounter is described in Acts, Chapter 9. God supernaturally intervened in Saul's life, on a journey to Damascus. His travels were interrupted by Jesus appearing to him in a brilliant light. Saul was blinded and knocked onto the ground. The voice spoke to him saying, "*Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?*" Paul answered this voice saying, "*Who are you, Lord?*" and Jesus replied, "*I am Jesus who you are persecuting.*" Jesus then gave Saul brief instructions about who he was to visit to received further ministry and instruction. Jesus began to tutor a new disciple after this. Jesus did not give Saul any information that he did not need to know at that time, but he told him the first thing to do. Paul was told where to go in Damascus to get further help. God likewise does not give us more information than we need to get started. He does list

all of the stages of our journey, including both the trials and the victories. The journey of faith is an hour by hour, day by day program. The journey of discipleship begins with a first step forward into a new life. In the first chapter of his letter to Galatia, Saul who has been given a new name, Paul, to go along with his new nature, accounts how he was taken aside and how he began to be instructed face-to-face, personally by Jesus. For three years in the deserts of Arabia, Paul **learned Christ**. being discipled as one "*out of due time*" a description of his apostolic commissioning found in 1Corinthians 15:5-10.

The Apostles Doctrine

Why should we place an emphasis on the apostles and the disciples?

Because we wish to be connected to the same authentic and pure doctrine and the same spirit and the **same manifested spiritual life** that was brought forth in the beginning of the "church". It must breath the same purity, power and the same divine order. The apostolic teachings have been described as the foundation upon which the house of God is constructed. We who continue to build the Kingdom of God must continue building upon the same foundation which is true and sound. The foundation is the apostle's doctrine. It is based upon the essentials of the true faith. The "promise of the Father" a nation of kings and priests through Jesus Christ, designated as "the firstborn of many brethren."

Understanding the Apostle's Doctrine

The writings of the apostles constitute practical, uncomplicated, hands-on teaching of how to live a Spiritual life. The Apostles who wrote in the Bible include Peter, James, John, Paul and Luke is generally credited with authoring the Book of acts as well as the Gospel of Luke, Paul is generally credited with writing most of the other epistles. Theologians fine tune and over-process questions of authorship and have vain debates over endless issues of scholarship, but such debates bear little relevance to living the Spiritual life if we merely accept the epistles as true.

The apostle Paul brings a unique revelation. There are a number of commonalities that all the apostles share. The original disciples (apostles) received the power to become sons and daughters of God through the Spirit of adoption and the release of the Spirit of God to bear witness that we are the sons of God. The Jews of Jerusalem who believed were prejudiced to the Jewish religious traditions and the establishment of the Kingdom as a Jewish prophetic event.

Paul is given a revelation from Jesus that is directed to **the gentile** audience. The emphasis in Paul's teaching is directed to the entire world, a Gentile world. With the other apostles he enunciates the **power of the crucified and resurrected Jesus**. The Messiah's resurrection is a legacy for all mankind, not just the Jews in Jerusalem, the promise of sonship and new life as a Spiritual Creation *in Christ*. Paul's revelation speaks to a different audience, the gentile world and the concept of the "Church." (Ek-kle-si'-a) Paul goes so far as to call this revelation '**His Gospel**.' The original apostles, while they began outreach beyond Jerusalem, maintained a focus on the Jews and Israel. Messiah's resurrection denoted the identity of Jesus as the Son of God and the King of Israel who would eventually restore the Kingdom to Israel. Jesus as the risen son on God was the corner stone of both group's gospel message consistent with the revelation of Christ's grace shared by Peter, James, John or Luke. It is clear however, that Paul was not taught the Gospel by the apostles in Jerusalem but given unique revelation and instruction by Jesus personally, for 3 years after his conversion on the Damascus road.

FOLLOWING ARE SOME OF THE FOUNDATIONAL APOSTOLIC DOCTRINES:

Jesus Christ, the True Son of God Almighty, Jesus Christ, Virgin born, fulfilling the Messianic Scriptures of the Old Testament, Christ Jesus, crucified, resurrected and alive;
Jesus Christ, the <i>only</i> mediator between God and man;
Jesus Christ, the lamb of God, He becomes our Passover;
Jesus Christ, offers Redemption through the blood God's of Lamb (Jesus Christ) the perfect sacrifice;
We are offered the promise of "The New Creation" in Christ Jesus;
The Holy Spirit provides enablement and reveals truth in Christ Jesus;
The believer is given authority against spiritual powers; Deliverance and discerning of the spiritual world
The potentiality of the children of God. Widely unknown or untaught who we are

as children of God.
The law of the Spirit, has bought us liberty and freedom apart from the “Law of sin and death;”
The Church calls for Unity of all believers; All blood bought believers are one in Him, Unity produces synergistic power, peace and potentiality.
All believers must learn to discern matters of the Spiritual life and maintain unceasing vigilance over matters of the common faith;
Believers have been forgiven therefore we must continuing to walk in Love and Forgiveness;
Rebellion and unbelief will be dealt with at the hand of the returning Jesus in divine judgment before & at His second advent;
There is a culmination of the church age; Thereafter, this evil age will also conclude after the false prophet and deceiver are revealed and the deeds of the wicked are met with judgment.
Constant vigilance must be maintained against False doctrines, false messiahs and anti-Christ; Rampaging ferocity of ascendancy of the final anti Christ.
Believers need to be alert to false teachers; and Aware of doctrines of Demons that take believers into bondage
The redemption of Israel becomes a praise in all of the earth; With the second advent Israel will become the head of all nations and Christ will rule in the Holy City.

Paul's Insights into the Gospel

Paul an intellectual's intellectual and a theologian's theologian, set aside his natural credentials when he began to minister the Gospel. Paul

presents some of the most powerful insights into the conflict of intellectualism and theology. Paul experienced a total turn around in his life. The features of his traditional achievements were discarded as were the merits of his classical education. Paul declared that the things which he once esteemed and considered meritorious were now no better than "dung".

The Holy Spirit drew a line of division in Paul's life. He clarified the difference between the fashion of this world and the world of God. He revealed the matters which pertained to mind and soul and matters of spirit; *the thoughts of the mind* versus *the intents of the heart*. Vanity no longer had a place in his life. Personal pride and striving for status was cast down he was given another job description. A "slave" of Christ.

Paul in all his letters addresses two points of doctrine which are at times in tension or contrast. First the purely Spiritual nature of the Gospel and the God-connected source of life; and secondly teachings on leadership, headship and government impacting the long-term course of this entity called "the church," the body of believers. Contradictions have occurred in this respect, that individuals are placed in positions of leadership and authority who do not have spiritual credentials but merely human approval. Spiritual enablements allows the kingdom of God to be manifest according to the apostolic model. Even in the first years of the church age we hear accounts of men like the apostles Paul and John struggling with individuals who have assumed leadership though their motivation were entirely wrong or their doctrine was corrupt. We hear Paul describe associates who tried to undermine or destroy his ministry, or who departed because their hearts turned again to the world; or of the associates who preach for personal gain; or the associates who wanted to be pre eminent and gloried in having control over people. (See 1Timothy 1:19,20 1Timothy 4:14) regarding Alexander the Coppersmith; 2Timothy 4:10 regarding Demas; 3John 1:9 regarding the person of Diotrophes.)

Paul Defines the Apostolic Emphasis

In his first letter to Corinth Paul presses a very important foundation point in the first two chapters. This particular emphasis stressed the difference between a Spiritual message contrasted to a conceptual one. In

chapter 1 verse 17 he states that his gospel emphasis is not based upon words of human wisdom but in power generated from the cross of Jesus. The cross and crucifixion is where the exchange of righteousness was made. The cross of crucifixion is where the sacrifice was made. The cross and crucifixion is where God paid the price in blood for every sinner. This doctrine of the cross does not end with a man's death but with a divinely-powered resurrection. Thus the doctrine that Paul speaks of includes the death and the resurrection of Jesus. It was Jesus who was crucified, dead, buried and resurrected. The holiday we call Easter concludes three Jewish Festivals; Passover, Unleavened bread and First Fruits speaks of the resurrection. As Jesus became the first fruits of those who have died. (1Cor.15-2) It is truly unfortunate that so few Christians understand **the Jewish roots of Christianity**, including the fact that Yeshua and most all of the first disciples and apostles were Jews. Jesus (Yeshua) rose from the dead, *ascended on high, took captivity captive, and gave gifts to the human race.* Paul's statement of the cross does not address sorrow or loss, it addresses rather, victory, effulgence and power. The resurrection speaks of *the power of an endless life.* It speaks about the Father's plan to extend grace and peace to every man, woman and child. It speaks about the ability to *become a new creation in Christ.*

Godly Wisdom Versus Human Wisdom

Paul going on in his first letter to Corinth, introduces the theme of "wisdom." Paul contrasts human wisdom to divine wisdom. He explains that man who deems himself wise through reasoning, can't accept the wisdom of God. God's wisdom is framed in paradoxes and conundrums. For example the paradox of the least being the greatest; the weak being the strong; the first being last; the wise being foolish; the living being dead; the dead being awakened to live. If these concepts make any sense to you, perhaps God has already opened your eyes in a very significant way. God framed truth in such a way that when they are articulated sound preposterous, unbelievable and irrational. The world says, "Be someone, do your own thing, express your individuality." God says, "Decrease to yourself, take your cross and let the outward "you" be crucified so that the Divine (Christ) can have effective

sanctuary and expression in you. The scientific mind requires proof. The eye measures and discerns the things which we call real or reality. Yet Christians are entreated to disregard outward manifestations, the outward world. Neither is the mind the highest organ to lead and direct, **children of God are led by the Spirit**, not by acting purely out of natural reason.

The truth is not determined according to science and rationality. God requires **faith** on our part. Paul, again in the same letter speaks to the matter of making Spiritual realities manifest, "*I did not come teaching and preaching with enticing words of man's wisdom but with demonstration of the Spirit and of power that your faith should not stand upon man's wisdom but upon the power of God.* (1Corinthians 2:4,5) The Spiritual life first begins to manifest, because of the grace of God and secondarily by acting in faith. The gospel states with respect to the Kingdom of God that we are all *pressing into it.* (Luke 16:16) The Lord stands at the door knocking, the action of faith opens that door to him. Again, grace is the initiatory cause, it is God's hand in matters concerning our life, stirring, directing and empowering. Grace is the hand of God outstretched to us. Beckoning, he bids us to come forth. We respond to him and we press in to the world of Spiritual life that awaits. The hand of grace is outstretched in love. Grace speaks of loving kindness, compassion and giving. This love is caring and constructive in nature. Love builds the bonds of faith and defines the character and the parameters of the spiritual life. It is not knowledge that defines the spiritual life although there is a knowledge component. Scripture reminds us that knowledge ultimately has the affect of "puffing up" our egos. There is an adverse relationship to our character when knowledge becomes pre eminent in our orientation to God. We will always find "knowledge" being closely linked to "religious systems". It is a realm defined by expertise and expertise is usually defined by knowledge.

How Much do We Have to *know* Before We Become Spiritual?

I began to describe the Apostle's doctrine by mentioning doctrinal content, followed by emphasizing the power (*Gk. dunamis*) that God provides, through his Spirit, to empower our lives and relationships. The attribute of spiritual relationships may lie closer to the center of Spirituality

than any other factor. The apostle's doctrine has fellowship and relationship within the very heart of it. Here is a glimpse into the New Testament church of the Book of Acts, "*They continued steadfastly in the apostles doctrine and fellowship and breaking of bread, and with prayer.*" (Acts, Chapter 2:42) The apostles who knew the way of God fully through first hand experience were to guide the novices into the same area of common experience; the community expands, the Kingdom of God is entered by more and more converts. A community is being built and stands in the midst of a world of unbelief, carnality, and unrighteousness. God calls us into a family-like community in which *God is not only glorified but in which God continuously interacts with the community.* True fellowship is what the community of believers is about. There is a sense of family, it is characterized by the joy of redemption (salvation, the first step in pressing into this community.) This intimate fellowship of believers is the closest thing to heaven God has for us on earth. We share a common mind, a common testimony, a common hope. We are baptized into one Spirit and into a common destiny. This community is redemptive owing to the fact that the smoke and tarnish of this world can not endure in the presence of the Living God, neither can the things which defile the flesh stand in his presence. We come together in this community of faith where we find restoration, strength and edification. We come together in fellowship to repair the bumps, bruises, and blemishes that life in this world inflicts upon those who are "*not of this world.*"

Edification and Ministry as it Pertains to Community

We have been conditioned by a religious world ***to go to church*** to receive ministry. After all, the church is where the minister is. I believe this is a viewpoint which needs to be reexamined in light of true fellowship and ***the question of what true ministry ought to be.*** Those to whom *church is a place* to be ministered to, are still conditioned to think in terms of priest (clergy) and laity. In this model which has been the tradition for the past 17 hundred years, we are taught that we need someone else to do our spiritual work for us. We come to the priest; we have him pray for us, teach us, bless us, absolve us. We presume that ministry is what happens in a church (fellowship,) and this kind of ministry is some kind of a "Band-Aid" to help

us salve the current bruise. I believe there is an alternative, apostolic way of viewing the community of believers in fellowship. It is the notion of coming to a place of restoration and strengthening; some have called this a "spiritual filling station." In this setting of fellowship there is rest, repose, and encouragement. There is a continuous need for teaching but the manner of teaching need not be formalistic. Those who know and who have experience victory in one kind of challenge or another, are able to share and encourage others with less knowledge or experience. Edification can occur without formalized, programmatic services. There is sharing of food and the life of God. Spiritual fellowship provides a redemptive community in which the bond of fellowship is not the bond of obligation but of the heart. Love is true and not an affectation. This kind of fellowship is far less structured, yet there is common motivation which guides everyone to seek first the things which are from God. God is the focus and reason for being of all of the people who gather. God is not necessarily first in the lives of many, but in the right community this **will** change. I do not see this kind of fellowship either taught, practiced or encouraged within the institutional church. Those who come to church for a formalistic program come in unsatisfied and they leave unsatisfied. They come feeling estranged or alienated from God and they leave feeling just as far from him. They can however, pretend to be listening while they sleep; or they can pretend to be praying while they dream of their next adventure with the girl at the office or the guy at the club. The actions of formal ministry can not touch the heart of those who need to have a spiritual heart transplant.

To summarize:

Learning Christ according to the Apostles Doctrine requires that we:

Be spiritually renewed by faith in Jesus Christ

Receive the empowerment of the Holy Spirit

Renew our mind by studying scripture

Seek personal fellowship of God

Seek the fellowship of God's family - - where your loved and valued

Imitate those who have mature spirituality

Walk in faith, (the knowledge that God cares for us in our present moment)

Minister to others, the same gifts and wholeness that we have received from

God

CHAPTER 4 - THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

QUESTION?

How Much Do We Have to Learn Before We Become Spiritual?

Mentors and Ministries

Part of the spiritual life is to make a connection with those who can supply valuable connections. The joints are connections to individuals in the body of Christ. Fellowship supplies input to areas of knowledge which will be encouraging, and edifying. When we are born into the kingdom, we must move forward or we will retrograde back to the old life in the world. Here according to most voices of ministry is where one would be encouraged to get connected to a "good" church. This should be a simple fact but it is not. There are few church bodies of believers who hold more than a traditional evangelical viewpoint. Most are adhering to forms and traditions as well as doctrines which do not advance the Spiritual life to a significant level of maturity. Once in a church you are expected to "play by their rules." My best advice is to search for the church and set your sights on particular features which will allow you to be discipled and grow not in tradition but in spirituality. If one does provide "life" move on until you sense that it is where God would have you. In the mean time find a home fellowship where you can grow with others in an informal setting. God does not discriminate against home meetings. They are apostolic! It is how the "Church" began. It is obvious that formalized Christian ministry is everywhere in one form or another. As I have already described a vast majority of these churches or ministries are a manifestation of institutional and traditional religion in which the expectation is at best conformity to the norms of a Saturday or a Sunday ritual. Most offer no more than comfortable routine or ritual and little hope of gaining spiritual knowledge and understanding. Neither can they prepare us to fulfill Christ's gospel in the world. Most churches, which are struggling to maintain membership, interest, or involvement, are extremely jealous of their members going astray or getting involved with meetings or activities which are not sponsored by their own fellowship.

There was a time when such unfaithfulness could be met by excommunication, but today the usual rebukes from the pulpit are just admonitions or doctrines created out of hand which indicate an obligation to support the local body. Yet it would seem to be close to a cardinal sin to consider "church hopping" or being active in any outreaches from other congregations. This is, in effect the fruit of division which institutional religion enforces.

The Electronic Media Church

There are many other kinds of ministries that are currently accessible to us. Among these are media ministries. Men or women who have some special gift of teaching or evangelism or certain personal *charismas* have been able to share their spiritual understandings and insights with any who will watch or listen. If we appreciate the content of a given message we write to them or request their tape series or perhaps, we think that they have enough clout with God to pray for our special needs. These ministries, sometimes called the "broadcast **media churches**" are not always highly regarded by pulpit ministries.

One hears all kinds of castigation directed toward the names of such ministries, whether Billy Graham, Oral Roberts, Robert Schuler, Benny Hinn or countless others who fill(ed) the airwaves of radio and television and short wave broadcast channels. In view of practical matters of church survival and management, local preachers and church leaders need to maintain membership and viability. 'Grandma Smith' might write a check to a radio or television evangelist and forego giving her five dollar donation to the church collection plate. A pastor might make the following remark to parishioners, "Grandma Smith, if you want to support Reverend So and So on TV maybe you should call them when you need a trip to the doctor; or need someone to pray for you when you are sick; or have them officiate your funeral."

What has the Electronic Church ministry to offer? In some cases they be offer better teaching or preaching than some tradition-bound churches where so many to languish in their pews around the world? Televangelists usually have some unique strengths and certainly the ability to preach and

persuade. There are important matters to consider in choosing any ministry to support whether remote or local. However, they do subsist on donations from listeners which at times becomes problematic. How may media ministries provide value and features that provide edification?

Let's Look at Some Attributes of Ministry:

- First and most importantly is the message; Do we hear the correct gospel being taught?
- How much of the appeal of this ministry is performance and dazzling rhetoric which attracts us and how much is a sense of devotion to the truth of the Gospel?
- Does the minister seem to model Jesus Christ? The best mode of discerning a minister or a ministry is to imagine Jesus behaving and saying the things as the evangelist or teacher.
- Is devotion and reverence modeled and portrayed?
- Does the person try to draw attention to themselves through colorful mannerisms?
- Does he seem preoccupied with authority and followings?
- Does the leader indicate as we listen to his messages that he wants influence, control, or worship?
- Does there seem to be more of emphasis on one aspect of the Gospel than another?
- Is it a Gospel of power and wholeness or just continually underscoring sin?
- Is it a Gospel in which we can become partakers of God's life or are we blessed because of our supporting the "Super Ministry of Brother X?" There are some media evangelists who I listen to and support because they have helped to mentor me in understanding the Word of God. I support them because they teach the full Gospel message, (more or less) and believe in the potentialities of becoming children of God, partaking in His Divinity. They teach what we should be taught in the local fellowship or church but are not.
- We need to practice discernment and note any inconsistencies in doctrine which place the teaching outside of norms of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The *Apostles Creed* is recited by many denominations in

the context of a worship service, but in spite of this, the content of the Apostle's Creed may hardly be addressed in teaching and preaching in sermons. Based upon denominations which I have belonged to or visited before and after I became a believer, *unbelief and spiritual deadness till characterize most of the churches today even those who recite the Credo!*

Mega-Churches

When a brilliant preacher, teacher or evangelist proves his (her) ability to move and edify people they begin to develop a following. People are attracted to spiritual gifts or 'anointings.' People are searching for a greater revelation of God. Seekers follow men or women who have demonstrated their abilities to impact the lives of others. The largest churches today grow around the giftings of a single person. Nearly every Christian I know has a natural desire to be in the presence of "anointed" preaching. Mega-churches are built around mega-men. I believe there are in America today well over a hundred such mega-churches. I have attended a few and have seen others via telecasts and cable networks.

Positives Associated with Mega-Ministries

There are both negatives and positives in following this kind of ministry. A few positives: God shows favor to his servant by anointing him (her) just as God anointed Jesus and the Apostles for ministry. God's favor indicates his approval to bring forth a minister's particular gift or understanding to the body. God's approval indicates that he foreknows that many will be touched and blessed by this individual. God allows a such a man or woman with special abilities to reach more people with a Gospel focus than they would ordinarily hear or be exposed to. Many are born again through the mass media ministers.

Negatives Associated with Mega-Ministries

The gifted minister may be persuasive or charismatic in purely human terms, without necessarily walking in a divine anointing. The media evangelist may be preaching a partial or flawed gospel, a non Christian

gospel or simply traditionalism. There is no way for the novice seeker to know whether this person teaches true doctrine or not except by natural reasoning or mental judgment. There is a temptation for the minister to become puffed up in mind and think himself to be great. There is a tendency to focus on money and self promotion. Though there may be a great gift of preaching or imparting information there are serious limitations for body ministry or fellowship. To deal with this home fellowships or satellite congregations are set up to allow blessings of human interaction and loving community. Those who study under any ministry need intimacy and a human touch. *It is not good for man to be alone.* Ultimately the spiritual life is more than the acquisition of information about God.

Those who attend services in a mega church are content to be a mere audience onlooker. This is a terrible loss and limitation. *But the most serious limitation is that individual believers are never really trusted or free to lead when they have received personal testimonies or revelation. Typically, they are told that they must be submitted to a greater ministerial authority who must oversee any sharing by the 'laity'.*

Impressions of Mega-churches

I have attended worship services in several 'average size' mega-churches with bodies in attendance numbering 2 or 3 thousand. Some mega churches have numbers approaching 10 thousand and those with 10 thousand that aspire to 50 thousand. While there may be brilliant teaching and preaching and outstanding musical worship, performance; one could not help but feel that those in attendance came mainly to view the show or to hear the inspired address of the mega-minister. What I saw was an enterprise in which each person was committed to make the mega-church even more of a mega-church. Something was missing. There was little or no contact between the "pastor" and the individual members. Individuals may have known and recognized a handful of people in the auditorium but they did not seek each other out for closeness, sharing, breaking of bread or lingering in the afterglow of God's presence. It seemed that the super Christians who were attending the super church quickly rushed home to resume life in whatever form life that awaited outside of church. If the

members who number thousands each give their tithe religiously, one can only imagine the amount of revenue that affords luxury and resources of a personal and ministerial nature.

What is the Glorious Church?

The Roman Catholic Church claims to be the authentic representation of the Kingdom of God in the world. It numbers approximately a billion persons around the globe. Is this the glorious church? Does the number associated with a church denomination make it glorious? The issue of a glorious church may well be addressed in the context of the mega-church. There is evidence that many ministries of mega-churches teach an emphasis of the gospel that introduces the concept of a "glorious church." Will the church function as a dynamic economic and political force in the earth as well as a moral power to renovate society as well? For those who judge on externals this may appear to be the case but God does not regard externals. How can the size of a building or the number of people attending a mass or a service have any bearing on Godly glory? Glorious surely must bear more on the quality of the heart and the sincerity and earnestness that allows the love of God to be shared.

[See Description of the Kingdom Theology](#) doctrine. In secular societies, Christians have been regarded as the bane of society because of their conservative and fundamental viewpoints but quite the opposite is true. The true Spirit of Christianity is compassion, forgiveness, and understanding. Moral precepts include personal honor and righteousness, integrity and responsibility; kindness, mutual support and family stability. Though the world does not like to recognize sin and unrighteous behavior as anything other than a "choice," Christians see that we humans **all share** alike, having a need for a redeemer along with the essential need of being hopelessly lost until God extends mercy upon our lives. In recent decades, Christians were too long absent and silenced from the counsel of social values and political ideas. In the present hour it is surely appropriate for those who have so much cause to rejoice and give voice to the life-changing testimony in the arena of public opinion. Men and women of integrity need to stand up publicly and politically and exercise their rights on behalf of issues of righteousness.

The Bible makes it clear that the prophetic day is coming when God's righteous kingdom will be established upon the earth. We are in this current dispensation called the church age. The church age will come to its culmination. I believe that Jesus' statement to Pilate stands; “- - Now my kingdom is NOT of this world.” The church is not now chartered to extend itself as an empire of political power. Why? The spiritual life is essentially a non secular and a non materialistic life. We are strangers and sojourners in a strange land. Social or political activism may be a Godly calling in some. Those who follow a leading to become apologists for social and political issues it should be presumed have their own foundations in correct doctrine and not equate activism with the gospel. The emphasis of the Christian life can not be focused too strongly upon the things which are social, political, or economic at the expense of Spiritual relationships. These are not lines that I draw, but lines that the Holy Spirit has drawn. These parameters have been in place since Jesus spoke these words, "My kingdom is not of this world," and "You are not of the world." (*John 18:36; John 15:19*) The nature and operation of the present world is contrary to God's ways and I do not look for this situation to change until Jesus returns to set up an unending righteous Kingdom. Just how far into the future this event will occur is open to debate, there have been hundreds of book titles addressing it but the Bible itself has "sealed up" many of the answers and insights into the "second coming" of Jesus Christ. This is another area of scholarship.

So then, this "glory" can not refer to the size, influence and authority of mega-church to rule upon the earth. Is it possible that the glorious church refers to the whole body of living believers? This glorious church is this faithful remnant who somehow remains separate, pure and faithful in the midst of a reprobate generation of spiritual pretenders and flaccid, luke-warm church goers?

Church as empire is not a new idea. It was in fact the goal of the early church since Constantine's day. The Christian empire was born on the two legs of Daniel Chapter 2, Rome and in Constantinople, where power, influence, authority and might married the political world and the religious world. For centuries church membership and doctrine was forced upon the

whole world. A person was then a Christian by political decree and not by the grace of God. Such ordinances do nothing to produce the life and promises of the Gospel. In the church empire men were exalted. These held the power of life and death over others; these acted as spiritual judges over others; were mediators between God and man and who rewarded themselves with worldly luxuries while being exalted to the point of worship in their offices.

It is the nature of most men men to lust for power and control. The unredeemed clamor for recognition and power. They are driven to achieve self exaltation. They lift and promote their own names as someone great, "as the great power of God." Acts 8:10)

No, I do not think this can possibly be the Glorious church. The true glory remains hidden to this world, shrouded with humility. This cloud of glory can only be penetrated by the meek, through self-effacement and kindly service. Exaltation of such is the provence of God alone. These are principles of the Gospel worthy to be followed.

Professional Ministry

The concept of the clergy, professional ministry is a well establish and unquestioned paradigm. ([See the power of paradigms.](#)) The concept of **Ministry** has been traditionally connected to career or occupation. The concept of clergy as a professional career extends into the dim past of Christendom. The traditional church operates in accord with, and is enabled because of **the professional clergy concept**. The question of institutionally accredited, "professional ministry" appointed to churches and church giving is something that I believe each of us has to examine in light of Scripture and draw our best personal conclusion in the light of the Word. It is not my desire to subvert a system that you may believe in for your own best reasons, but rather to encourage each person to strive to know God as fully as possible and to experience the potential of Christ's Gospel, even if it means setting aside certain long held traditions. Every person should support the **Kingdom of God** as we judge it to be **best expressed**. We need to see the life

of God as a Divine promise and a human potentiality. We need to see ministers bringing others into this potentiality. Once that criterion is met, we can go on to other matters concerning Giving. It is not my desire to subvert a system that you may believe in for your own best reasons, but rather *to encourage each person to strive to know God as fully as possible* and to experience the potential written of in the Gospel, even if it means setting aside certain long-held traditions. Every person should support the Kingdom of God as we see it best expressed. We need to see the life of God as a potentiality and the people who minister bringing others into it. Once that criterion is met, we can go on to other matters concerning Giving.

Giving

Giving for the Sake of the Gospel

If you want to experience anger, dissonance, or heated theological debate this is the topic to broach. Giving is the bread and butter of ministry. It is support for a man and his message. It is the financing of the Gospel to world. It is the support of both the local church missionary outreaches. Because men and women go forth with good intentions and have devoted a large part of their lives to preparing for "ministry" they proceed believing that they are now prepared to live by the Gospel. *"The Lord hath ordained that those preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel."* (1Corinthians 9:14)

Giving: Giving is Blessed by God

There are no laws (rules) for giving in the Kingdom of God. God has set us free from rules including rules about giving. Giving is good, it is God's nature, and it is encouraged. Giving supports the callings of men of God but also supports people who are not necessarily "ministers" of churches but who God wishes to bless through us. Various kinds of enterprise which touch upon the Kingdom of God need support, whether it be buildings, outreach

expenses, travel or any of a wide variety of needs. These best met by many sharing the cost. God wants his will to be done through selfless sharing and contributions of money resources. But it is important that we be able to hear God leading us in our sharing of these gifts so that it is truly a work of God for the Gospel sake and not just another good sound cause or charity.

Basic principles identified in the Bible shed light on the subject of giving.

It is more blessed to Give than to receive
Give and it shall be given unto you
Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven
Those who give to the poor lend to God
The Tithe is the Lord's - (Old covenant principle)
In the measure you give it shall be given to you
Sow sparingly, reap sparing
Give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven
Give as you purpose in your heart, Let no one give out of obligation
God loves a cheerful giver.

Chapter 5 - Maturing to Minister

It is God's plan that every disciple partake in Jesus' ministry!

Jesus is the living "head of the church" for all believers. He has designed a way for us to follow him, even as the original twelve disciples followed him. They walked at his side; broke bread; discoursed with him; and were both witnesses and partakers of his spiritual ministry. They new his voice; saw his power; and marveled at his wisdom. They new him as anyone knows someone in a natural way! By contrast I fear that few nominal Christians are able to say they know him. Yes they have heard about him, but do they know him? Perhaps the greatest thing to be revealed in the "Gospel of Grace" is that we not only may know him, but have fellowship with him and partake in his nature and his mission and calling. To reveal the rule and authority of God to the principalities and powers arrayed in the heavens. (The domain of Lucifer and his Angels) "For this reason the Son of God was

manifested, that he should destroy the works of the Devil." - - John 3:8 - - We worship what we know. We know him. He called us to have fellowship with Him. We hear His voice; we see what He shows us in the Word and what he reveals in the place of his dominion. As we gather as believers in a place of meeting can we say that we leave that meeting, knowing him better? Can we say that we have heard his voice, felt his presence, or were empowered by his touch?

Ministry Edifies, Strengthens, and Blesses

It would be good for unbelieving eyes to see what things can and do happen in a place of meeting. For in such times of fellowship God can make his glorious presence known; lift people out of their fears and oppression; bring joy and healing; restore broken hearts and broken relationships and save peoples souls. Church liturgy, put together in a time far past, perhaps following shortly after the kind of glorious kind of fellowship described above may have had good intentions.

Liturgical forms no doubt hoped to preserve some of the truth or glory of those earlier days. Maybe they wished to insure the manifestation of God's presence and to provide a platform to disciple those who needed to understand the truth of Christ's eternal ministry. But God can not be bottled and preserved! For He is alive and powerful, acting always in the NOW, never in the THEN.

The Bible shows that God's presence can not be captured and preserved. The Israelites of Old tried to do so, but when God's Glory departed it was gone they were left with a lifeless idol. The temple remained the glory was gone. The brazen serpent remained but the manifestation of its power was gone. God's continued glory and fellowship with us is determined by the hearts of those who gather to worship him. With passing years catechism remained but the glory had been lost. The ritual remained and the liturgical trappings remained but the presence of God vanished. Ritual happens, I believe, when men try to duplicate a behavior which once brought forth the glory of God through faith. Elements that remained were vainly held and became a substitution for God's presence.

In the minds of most of the world, "Ministry" is the domain of a very small body of liturgical experts, called the priesthood or the clergy. Despite this

belief, it was always to be the domain of every believer. Just as God wishes each believer to be a ministering priest, he wishes us to become a true worshiper.

Chapter 6 - GATHERING AS CHRIST'S BODY

Expectations and Guidelines

for Christian Fellowship & Worship

The form of Christian fellowship and worship described here may be very different from the religious experience you are familiar with. The manner of assembling as it was known in the apostolic first century *ekklesia* (gatherings of believers) is virtually unknown in contemporary denomination churches. It is nonetheless entirely Scriptural, modeled after the Teachings of Paul in all his epistles.

What is this true worshiper and what is worshiping the Father in Spirit and in Truth? (John 4:23) God is always looking for True Worshipers. He looks at the hearts he does not regard the man with the religious uniform over a common person whose heart is open. He does not favor a cathedral over a location which has been made ready on the inside of us. As Jesus told the woman at the well of Samaria, it is not where you worship, not this mountain or another mountain, but what and how we worship. He said to her that some do not know what they are even worshiping but the truth is that salvation is connected to worship, it is through the foundation of the Jews. The time was coming, Jesus explained, when men and women would worship the Most High God in Spirit. Those who do not have this Spirit can not have the revelation of God of which Jesus spoke.

Koinonia (fellowship) is the hallmark of the Christian gathering.

Traditional church gatherings are unlike Biblical koinonia that were usually home meetings. This familiar form of denominational Christianity is guided and controlled by selected leaders or overseers who are generally called the priests or pastors.

The Ec-cles-si'-a (Greek word translated church) might be translated "called out assembly" consists of a relatively small group of professing and Holy Spirit empowered believers. These believers meet to regularly to share and participate in the active life of and interaction with God. Such sharing is exercised with openness and liberty.

The the essential aim of the gathering consists of sharing and transacting matters of the Kingdom of God; Koinonia would typically involve sharing food, perhaps in celebration of the cup and bread of the Lord; As the spirit would lead it could also include making prayer, offering praise, bringing forth teachings, testimonies, psalms, spiritual songs, prophetic revelations Such gatherings are mostly democratic with a good deal of freedom to express whatever the Holy Spirit is pleased to do in that time. We can conclude based on the truth of Scripture, that each believer has a place, a gift and a essential role to play in the Kingdom of God.

The Lord Jesus is the rule and the authority of any ekklesia. Where the body gathers Christ Jesus is the invited and welcomed participant. The Holy Spirit functions to point to and exalt Jesus.

WHY GATHER AS A BODY? SOME GUIDELINES AND EXPECTATIONS

1. To be: United in Spirit and purpose - knowing the reality of Jesus as Savior; and having fellowship with God our Father through Him and giving glory to God. After any person is reborn spiritually, they become part of one heavenly family who share the "gift of God." To continue to be United in Spirit - The same Spirit that is in Christ Jesus.
2. For the body in fellowship to continue to grow (be edified) in knowledge of truth
(Holy Bible must be the surety of doctrine and a guide to revelations and practices.)
3. To be bound in mutual love and acceptance. The spirit of Love denotes we are Christians.
4. To seek God's manifested presence corporately. (Seeking and activating His kingdom to be manifested on earth)

5. To recognize and invite the Holy Spirit to empower, lead and guide; to reveal Jesus.
6. To value and build from the unique gifts and abilities that the Holy Spirit of God has given to each believing disciple. (our brothers and sisters)
7. To follow the "Gatekeeper", shepherd, or the head of the home, who is practiced in following the Holy Spirit in an orderly way.
8. For all to discern and guard against spiritual pitfalls, against against disunity; To guard against the expression of any wrong spirit -- anger, prejudice, suspicion, jealousy that will "grieve" the Holy Spirit.
9. To see to it: That all things serve to edify and build each believer kindly with liberty in the Holy Spirit.
10. Doctrinal purity must employ the whole counsel of God, The Word of God (Scripture) used for instruction in Godliness, correction and reproof thus contending for correct doctrine. *The Scriptural model of intimate corporate fellowship (Koinonia) is found in 1 Corinthians, Chapters 12, 14; 1 Peter 4:10*

Chapter 7 - LEARNING CHRIST, THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

Daily Life in the Kingdom of God

"Be Ye Imitators of Christ as dear Children."

Through the power of the Holy Spirit our egos and wills become conformed and yielded to him. Christ in us is our only hope of glory. We are told that we may be **as he was in this world**. (John 16:16; 1John 4:17)

The inheritance of this world (cosmos) is Spiritual Poverty:

Our natural human state, despite what some with talent and gifts of intellect will proclaim, must eventually come to understand that we are actually helpless and without the power necessary to live a truly spiritual life. We are dead in our trespasses and sins and thus unable to ascend to the

necessary status of righteous children of God!

We can not be “the light of the world” if God's light does not burn within us. We can not be witnesses of his resurrection if we have not been touched by the fiery hand of God that raised Jesus from the dead who also quickened our own body and spirit. We can not reflect the goodness of God if he has not made us good who were once reprobates. We come in to this world to know God. This is humankind's highest calling. Some come and go from this world not having realized that calling. If we are fortunate to have God reveal himself to us then we press on to the next stage, that of being a functional witness. It is unfortunate how many are thwarted at this second stage predominately by the incomplete or ineffectual teachings of religious tradition.

As we have noted, the institutional church has either lost sight of, or failed to actualize the provisions of the New Covenant which is the Gospel of Salvation through Jesus Christ. Time has eroded true understanding, and spiritual subterfuge authored by an unrelenting adversary has come in to subtly sidetrack our spiritual lives and foster human understanding instead. I do not present any private methodology that is contrary to Biblical teaching. Nor is what I share here a unique revelation but simply a restatement of ***the way*** that was presented by Jesus to his servants the apostles, in the beginning of this church age. (The gospel of salvation equates to the church age. Here is where the ingathering of the gentiles is provided.)

Any church or teacher who are attempting to mentor or direct others into a spiritual life are under divine obligation to be accurate, and of course all are certain that they are orthodox and correct. Private or incomplete biblical interpretation risks wrong doctrine. Since there is always a danger of deception, it is important that we proceed cautiously, both as teachers and learners. We are obligated to discern all things with the wisdom, the help, and guidance of the *Spirit of Truth*, the *Holy Spirit*. God has told us through the Word that we may ask for wisdom and for truth to be revealed to us. He further instructs us to have confidence in this asking, knowing that God is willing. God is truly willing!

God is willing to give *good gifts* which bring fulfillment and blessings and not sorrows. When seeking the revelations which are of God, or *from God*, it is up to the seeker to be on guard against deceptions and to discern the true from the false. In asking for anything from God it is very important to invoke the name of Jesus Christ. This name is the name above every name and above every spiritual entity or authority. This name will consecrate or ensure the authentic in anything which may transpire. It will guarantee that anything which will be revealed or imparted spiritually will be free of any corrupt or deceptive influence. When we ask in the name of Jesus, *the deceiver* can not work his way so readily into the workings.

JESUS MODELS SPIRITUAL LIFE & MINISTRY

JESUS' SPIRITUAL PATH

The Typology of Jesus Life and Ministry

The Bible reveals that certain key events ushered in the power of God into the world through the Lord Jesus. I believe that the Bible reveals that we who are born of His Spirit as new creations of the Lord will replicate these same patterns in a very real way. Our replication of these surely may not be as profound or dramatic as Jesus himself experienced. Because we are still largely limited flesh bound human beings. We still manifest too much our common Adamic inheritance and having lived most of our lives under the domination of the God of this world and the reasoning system of the world.

The Traditional religious world, however, tends to discount any such parallels to God within us just as the religious world of Jesus' time accounted it blasphemy for a man (Jesus, The Son of Man) to be made to be made equal to God. For centuries of religious life church authorities had no interest in promoting the divine potential of the individual believer who is crucified in the likeness of his death and has already risen with him in Glory and has already been placed above all things in this world in Christ Jesus.

The apostle urges believers to pray to have their eyes enlightened with respect to this amazing potentiality of the inheritance of the children of light. Reading the letter to Ephesus we find in Chapter 1 verses 18 to 22, Paul tells us to pray to have enlightenment on three specific large questions, "*the*

hope of his calling;" "the riches of his glorious inheritance to us;" and "what is the exceeding greatness of his power given to us." The chapter concludes with the nature of the church placed, over all things as as rulership and power. As yet Christians simply don't know how much has been promised and much can be accessed of the divinity of Christ within each of us individual believers.

Yeshua, Divinely Conceived By the Holy Spirit Our lives Given a "New Birth"

We know that Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit. The *virgin* birth was a supernatural birth. It was not a natural process of the flesh but a supernatural work of the Spirit. The manifestation of the Christ in human flesh begins with a divinely planted "seed" which gives rise to a "miraculous conception." After this "conception," Mary brings forth her first born and in the fullness of time, the life of Jesus is revealed in the world.

When a sinner comes to the knowledge of Christ as a *savior*; repents and asks God to make a new life available to them, a parallel miracle occurs. The Holy Spirit conceives and implants a whole new *Holy and Spiritual life* within a mortal human being. Regardless of the measure of our sins and shortcomings in previous times, even though our sins were as red as scarlet they become purged and made pure as that of a newborn. We are all part of a fallen world, typified by the "barn stall" and so the divine is again revealed in the presence of beasts and uncleanness.

We who were born in a corrupted form and are being raised incorruptible. We ascend from Glory to Glory as Christ is fully being revealed in us.

Becoming a Christian, therefore is not just about believing a concept and judging it to be true! This would be merely intellectual assent. But in reality becoming a believer, or "coming to Christ" is a miraculous new life which has been birthed in the Spirit. It is inspired by understanding, knowing our need for a redeemer. This new birth proceeds from an incorruptible seed and produces a new spiritual creation. The old ceases to be and the new commences.

Angels Rejoice and Give Praise at the Birth of Christ (Within the Holy Child)

The angels surround the place of the birth of the infant Jesus Christ. They rejoiced and gave praises to God. The Glory of the Lord shown forth in the heavens. The family of God is portrayed as universal in nature, it spans heaven and earth. Its kingdom includes heavenly beings and human earthly beings. Heavenly events touch happenings upon the earth, earthly events impact things which happen in heaven. The "cloud of witnesses" described in the epistles of Paul, may probably refer to angels who continue to applaud the victories and glories of salvation as they impact humans who find their place in the family of God.

Jesus Grows in Wisdom and Stature and in the Fear of the Lord

The life of the young Jesus is described with little detail. In the briefest description we read that he grew up in the fear and admonition of the lord and grew in wisdom and stature and favor with God and man. Jesus is aware of his divine calling though his ministry is not yet fully activated. He works and learns the Torah, the laws of Moses as any other Jewish youth.

Each believer has a Spiritual infancy, and grows in subsequent levels of maturity. In the spiritual sense there is no set number of years which allow the foundations of wisdom and understanding. Many never leave the stage of novice. It is the availability of *Spirit and Truth* which (by the Active Force of [The Spirit of Grace](#)) allows growth in wisdom and authority to occur. (*If you continue in my word then are you a true disciple, and you shall know the truth; and the truth will make you free.* John 8:31) The word of God is the guide to wisdom and understanding; the Spirit upon the Word is life and power as it is spoken into our inner Spirit.

Yeshua, Jesus, Baptized by the Holy Spirit

The gospel account begins with Christ having reached *maturity* at approximately 30 years of age. Now we read of the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan river by John the Baptist. What was Jesus doing the day before, the week before, the year before? Probably finishing jobs in the carpenter's shop in Nazareth; attending the synagogue; studying the word; and praying to the Heavenly Father. The time came, however, when he was revealed to Israel.

This time was precisely in keeping with God's prophetic timetable. With Jesus' baptism in the Jordan, the Spirit came to rest and remained upon Jesus. This is when his ministry and teaching began. The Spirit of God descends from above, the voice of the Father proclaims, "This is my beloved, in whom I am well pleased." **In God's time** we ourselves, may partake in the same experience which Jesus modeled. We are instructed to receive the Holy Spirit. Our growth in the knowledge of truth depends entirely upon this "good gift."

The Holy Spirit Baptism causes the Holy Spirit to infill and fully empower the believer. This experience is called "*the promise of the Father*", after receiving the Holy Spirit's baptism we become "*Witnesses of Christ*." The Holy Spirit begins to take those things which are from Jesus and reveal them to each of us as we seek him in fellowship. The father is well pleased to call us into his family. We are the latter borne of many brethren. The Father in heaven has many great plans and many precious promises which he is anxious to deliver to his sons and daughters. (Read John ch.17.)

Jesus Tempted & Tested (in the wilderness)

Until the Holy Spirit Baptism we have not been fully aware of the two Spiritual Kingdoms which stand in opposition to one another, but now after this initiation into the Spirit of Truth, we begin to experience the "Mind of Christ." We now sense that the world is a spiritual place, and that thoughts and actions of others are inspired by spiritual influences and are not just "our thoughts." Satan who has possessed human flesh and human institutions and nations since the fall, is not willing to let go of his influence on the life and thoughts of human beings easily. *Jesus experiences the temptation of Satan.*

In his temptation Jesus, received temptation on three levels, of the flesh (physical), the soul (personal) and the spiritual (Described in the apostle 1 John's the epistle, as the Lust of the Flesh, Lust of the eyes, and the Pride of Life.)

Jesus response to each temptation was declaring the Word of Scripture to answer the voice of the tempter: He was tempted through appetites and responded, "*Man shall not live by bread only, but by every word that proceeds*

from the mouth of God." He was tempted in the soul or ego when offered fame, fortune and power, and responded, *"You shall worship the Lord only and him only shall you serve."* He was tempted in the Spirit when told that he could exercise his God-given inheritance for vain reasons, and responded, *"You shall not put the Lord thy God to the test."*

Believers are no threat to the kingdom of darkness until we have been born of the Spirit and Baptized in the Spirit. Being religious offers no threat to the kingdom of darkness. Satan is religious too and in fact promotes [religion](#) and religiosity. Satan's kingdom is terribly at risk when a human knows his inherited rights in Christ. Jesus said, as I am so are you in this world! (1 John 4:17) For this reason there are very dramatic attacks which are leveled against believers who begin to understand our power and authority through God. Jesus through the Spirit remained victorious in great trials, Likewise, refined, and fully empowered, the man or woman of God is prepared for ministry.

Jesus returned from the wilderness experience - not weakened and discouraged but *"full of the Spirit and power."* **Victorious in great trials, refined, the man of God is prepared for ministry;** he is *thoroughly prepared for every good work.*(2 Timothy 2:21)

CHAPTER 8 - SPIRITUALLY EMPOWERED TO MINISTER

Spiritual Activation Through the Anointing Of The Holy Spirit

In Luke's gospel Chapter 4, we are shown Jesus announcing the whole purpose of his ministry to the lost, the bruised and the needy of this world. *"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, for He has anointed me -to preach the gospel to the poor, he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are bruised, and to preach the acceptable year of the Lord (the Lord's favor.)"*

This proclamation defines **spiritual ministry**. It reveals completely the purposes for which Jesus Christ was called. The same declaration may be claimed by every believer. This is a stark contrast to human religious tradition. Every redeemed soul is called to the same potentiality, the same anointing, the same

ministry which is to be performed by the same unction or anointing of the same Holy Spirit. This kind of ministry is practically impossible except for the empowerment which comes from God through the His Spirit. In our own natural abilities and strength all we are able to do is to discuss concepts of ministry and the nature of God, as a theological concept. In the anointing we are enabled to be as He was in this world! This is where true ministry lies, not in services and rituals conducted in church buildings but in the power of God to impact lives whether in or out of a house of worship or any kind of building.

Jesus Seeks Continuous Communion and Intimacy With Father God.

Jesus is described as continually seeking the Father in the most intimate kind of fellowship. This is where the power came from; This is where the revelation came from; This is where the directives came from; This is where the authority came from; This is where the strength came from. This is where we who are seeking need to seek more. This is where we who are without power need to find our source of power and authority.

Without relationship in the secret place of the most high we can have no hope at all to do the works of God. The most basic of understanding requires with this 'head upon the breast of Jesus intimacy.' Only Christ can empower and direct us in being like him in the world.

Before anything like revival can happen in the Christian world, we as individuals have got to come alive in Christ. The "*waste places*" of human life and thought have got to be restored and rebuilt to make them a habitation for the life of God to make them flourish and bear fruit. The soul thirsts or longs for various things. Most of these things have no bearing on the Kingdom of God or His righteousness. These things are the pleasures and longings of the heart of man. We long for human treasures and human pleasures we do not seek for the life of God. It is the grace of God which can turn our hearts again to Him. Until we esteem the life and reproach of the "life of Christ" more highly than the pleasures of this world and its lusts and pleasures we have not crossed that river of promise, into the land of fulfillment.

To have "friendship with Christ" *is to be at enmity to the world and friendship with the world is enmity with Christ*. The meditations and treasures of our hearts can be focused on transient treasures or eternal treasures. The abiding in Christ

which brings the Spiritual life is a task unmet in but few in the Christian world today.

Meditating on The Word equates to Intimacy

"In thy law do I meditate, day and night." (psalm 1:2)

The thoughts and intents of our hearts bring into focus that which we focus on in our meditations. Our *heart* has its own kind of treasure, either good or wicked, God-focus or evil intentions. We can not meditate on the word of God if we do not know what that word may be. Part of discipleship is to learn the word and the Way of God. This requires that at some time we have to delve into that source of understanding and revelation that is written in the Word, from Genesis to Revelation.

The Scriptures are an empowering force and also allow the voice of God to speak to our hearts. The Word of God speaking to our hearts which defines meditation and brings his *'light.'* Yes, we can also have meditations on any number of things, but when we see and hear things which are worldly, vain, sensuous or profane, we can be sure that God is not speaking to us but the spirit of the world, and the *god of this world*. The Holy Spirit brings help and direction in the unique issues we face in our lives from day to day. The word of God speaks to us and becomes a light to lighten our pathway. We personally must walk out the challenges, struggles and the hopes that we face daily. These individual paths are unique to each person and we were never meant to face them alone.

Responding to the Father's voice *"My sheep hear my voice, and another they will not follow."* (John 10:4)

To have an active spiritual life as Jesus did. The meditations of our hearts must be dealt with. We need to address the issue of double mindedness which is discussed in the epistle of James. Double minded Christians do not receive things from God (of God.) The Christian who is not different from the world in thoughts, beliefs or attitudes is certainly not the kind of Christian that Jesus encouraged us to become.

We have a benchmark or image to conform to. It is the fullness of the stature of one man, Jesus Christ. **God grant us grace to understand and know what is the greatness of your power to us who believe; empower us to become sons of God, having the same mind which was in Christ,**

having hearts which are ever turned toward the kingdom of heaven.
Amen.

CHAPTER 9 - DISCERNMENT AND PITFALLS ISSUES OF DISCIPLESHIP

GROWING AS A DISCIPLE Good Gifts vs. Counterfeit Ones

God has purposed that each believer *born of the Spirit* may grow in the Spiritual life. Learning Christ, in a general sense is becoming familiar with God through the Word and through his Spiritual presence. It is through the Holy Spirit that we gain familiarity with his divine nature and our place in Him. We begin to partake of his love and and his understandings. As it is written, we go from *glory to glory* (2Corinthians 3:18,)and *from faith to faith* (Romans 1:17.) We learn to hearken to the voice of the Spirit and respond as we are directed. I call this *learning Christ*.

God's model for learning Christ is **imitation**. We immitate the first born Son of God, Jesus Christ. We are to model his manner of thinking, and his manner of acting. We are to duplicate his interacting with the Heavenly Father and his Spirit-directed ministry. The first disciples were given a living model but they were only able duplicate his Spiritual behavior after they had received the enabling Baptism of the Holy Spirit. The apostle Paul exhorts us to follow (*imitate*) me as I imitate Christ.

RECEIVING THE GIFT OF GOD -(POWER FROM HEAVEN)

Authentic Gifts not Counterfeit Ones

Jesus instructs us about receiving gifts from God. There are nine gifts of the **Holy Spirit** to be accessed. The Lord teaches us that the God of heaven gives *good gifts* and not evil, hurtful or perverted ones. Jesus reveals fact that there are two sources of gifts; true gifts and false, spurious and dangerous gifts.

God's gifts are life-giving, good, pure and true.

The scripture is found in Matthew 7:8-11 and in Luke 11:11-13: "*For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.*" :8; "*Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?*" :9; "*Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?*" :10; "*If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?*" :11. KJV The two objects which are sought are bread and fish. God gives things which are life-giving and safe (bread, and meat.) Luke chapter eleven restates the same teaching about asking from God the Father but expands the emphasis, toward the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the living gift of God's power and presence: "*If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent?*"; "*Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?*" "*If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?*" -- Luke 11:11-13kfv.

I have emphasized the word son to emphasize that relationship is the key to receiving from God. There are a whole lot of different kinds of seekers; some sincere and some less sincere. Some who seek do not acknowledge Christ as the source of heavenly things. If a *spiritual dabbler* negotiates to receive a spiritual manifestation from God, it is uncertain what may transpire. But God wishes to emphasize that he is for blessing His family. He is the giver of Good gifts.

Demonically inspired gifts must be recognized as *counterfeits to heavenly gifts*. The devil has power to assume a pleasant face. His normal operation is through deception. The angel of light is one of Satan's identifying names. His gifts do not accrue to God's glory. So given the possibility of receiving a

counterfeit gift, how can these be recognized and avoided? Spurious gifts bear upon the setting and environment from which and from whom this "ministry" occurs. Some minister with the wrong spirit.

The first line of defense against counterfeit gifts is the sincerity of the hearts that seek the promised gift from God through Christ. Bad trees produce bad fruit. Be cautious of those who teach the Gospel of God with the wrong motives or the wrong spirit. Such sources to mentor us can take us further from righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. Such mentors may eventually take our liberty from us and enslave us in some way to this world's system.

Our common enemy, Satan, is a crafty adversary, an opportunist who is always ready to move in to insinuate his influence. His gifts are not good gifts. His revelations are not valid revelations. His gifts are not life affirming. They bring no joy, health or liberty. Satan's gift is characterized as a stone instead of bread, as a serpent instead of pure food, something infused with poison instead of food. We must make an effort to block and avoid him. Jesus has portrayed Satan as the enemy seeking the opportunity to make a prey of the seeker's life. Jesus told Peter, "the enemy has desired to sift you like wheat, but do not fear, I have prayed for you."

Forewarned is to be forearmed; it is wise to initiate safeguards and precautions as I suggested above in order to keep the deceiver out of your life and out of every spiritual transaction. There was a time when our lives were entirely under his (Satan's) control. Many of us may doubt this was the case, but the apostle Paul is very clear about this.

A couple of apostolic letters bring attention to the nature of the unredeemed life, which includes each and every life before the renewal *In Christ*. Paul's letter to Ephesus, Chapter 2, verses 2 and 3. *"Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience; Among whom also we all had our conversation (lifestyle) in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others."* KJV Paul's letter to Colossae, Chapter 1 verse 21. *"And you, that were sometimes (before now) alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled"*

The apostle Paul contrasts the previous unredeemed nature our previous lifestyle with the redeemed nature. In the letter to Corinth, Chapter 1 verses 10 and 11, he lists a number of these life styles; "*Neither - thieves, - covetous, - drunkards, - revilers, - 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.*"

**BIBLICAL ISSUES AND DOCTRINES OF FAITH WHERE
UNDERSTANDINGS PRODUCE WRONG TEACHINGS
(This is a small sampling of matters pertaining to
the Kingdom of God and our place in it.)**

Whos is Jesus Christ, True son of God almighty, Virgin born, fulfilling the Messianic Scriptures of the Old Testament, Christ Jesus, crucified, resurrected and alive; Jesus Christ, the *one and only* mediator between God and man; Christ Jesus reigns from heaven as the High Priest and intercessor and true Mediator. All dominion, judgment, and all authority are given to Jesus Christ.

Redemption through the blood of the Cross, God's Lamb (Jesus Christ) the perfect acceptable sacrifice; The blood of Jesus Christ the lamb of God has the power to take away sin; The power of the Cross and resurrection from the dead enables becoming a new creation in Christ Jesus;
The Power of God at work, Manifest enablement – **Grace empowers** through the **Holy Spirit**; The Spirit of Truth (the Holy Spirit) reveals all truth in Jesus and our place in Him;

The essential doctrines of Faith and Grace are verified in scripture. The Word through the Spirit provides wisdom and power. The law of the Spirit, has bought us liberty and *freedom from the Law* of sin and death;

The Church is The Body of Christ on Earth.

One in Unity of all believers; All blood bought believers are one in Him; Unity produces peace and potentiality while it unites believers in love.

Believers desire to build fellowship bonds, continuing to walk in Love and Forgiveness;

All believers must discern matters and maintaining unceasing vigilance over matters of the common faith; Believers must be diligent to Safeguard against false teachers; Worldly rebellion and unbelief will be dealt with at the hand of the returning Jesus in divine judgment before; deceivers and false apostles and teachers.

The Kingdom to Come

What is the timeline pertaining to the rule of Christ in this world? Is the kingdom in manifestation at this time? What form does it take? Is the Kingdom of heaven a political kingdom? At Jesus' second advent he returns in power to judge peoples and nations. The bible speaks of a literal physical return of the Messiah. At this time he will deal in vengeance, with all individuals and nations who are still under satan's dominion. Spiritual rebellion will be destroyed and the Messiah, Jeshua will rule and reign the nations.

The culmination of the church age; Is not the end of the world; Judgment will be visited upon the unbelieving and the lawless, End times will be a time of increasing evil, leading to the ferocious rule of an anti christ and false prophet.

The redemption of Israel as a praise in all of the earth; The second advent. Israel will be the head of all nations; The authority of the believer against spiritual powers; Deliverance and discerning of the spiritual world

Who Are God's Children? The potentiality of the children of God. Widely unknown or untaught who we are as children of God. **The Spiritual World: The demonic spiritual world.** Awareness that doctrines of Demons that take believers into bondage; The Cross of Jesus Christ paid the price for our sin:

The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead made it possible for us to

become the children of God most high.

Paul's Insights into the Gospel

Paul an intellectual's intellectual and a theologian's theologian, set aside his worldly credentials when he began to minister the Gospel. Paul presents some of the most powerful insights into the conflict of intellectualism and theology. Paul experienced a total turn around in his life. The features of his traditional achievements were discarded as were the merits of his classical education. Paul declared that the things which he once esteemed and considered meritorious were now no better than "dung". The Holy Spirit drew a line of division in Paul's life. He clarified the difference between the fashion of this world and the world of God. He revealed the matters which pertained to mind and soul and matters of spirit; *the thoughts of the mind versus the intents of the heart*. Vanity no longer had a place in his life. Personal pride and striving for status was cast down he was given another job description. A "slave" of Christ.

It is Paul who addresses two points of doctrine which are at times in tension or contrast. First the purely Spiritual nature of the Gospel and the God-connected source of life; and secondly teachings on leadership, headship and government impacting the long-term course of this entity called "the church," the body of believers. Contradictions have occurred in this respect, that individuals are placed in positions of leadership and authority who do not have spiritual credentials but merely human approval.

Spiritual (Holy Spirit) enablements allows the kingdom of God to be manifest according to the apostolic model. Even in the first years of the church we hear accounts of men like the apostles Paul and John struggling with individuals who have assumed leadership although their motivation was entirely wrong or their doctrine was corrupt. We hear Paul describe associates who tried to undermine or destroy his ministry, or who departed because their hearts turned again to the world; and others of their associates who preach for personal fame or gain. In John's epistle we are told of Diotrophes who wanted to be pre eminent, glorying in having control over people. (See 1Timothy 1:19,20 1Timothy 4:14) regarding Alexander the

Coppersmith; 2Timothy 4:10 regarding Demas; 3John 1:9 regarding the person of Diotrophes.)

CHAPTER 10 - THE MATTER OF MINISTRY

THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

You Are Being Prepared for Ministry

How Much Do We Have to Learn Before We Become Spiritual?

Mentors and Ministries

Part of the spiritual life is to make a connection with those who can supply valuable spiritual understanding and companionship. These are the *joints* that support and nurture the parts of the body. Fellowship supplies input to areas of knowledge which will exhort, encouraging, and edifying. When we are born into the kingdom, if we do not move forward we will retrograde back to the old life in the world. Traditionally after being born of the Spirit through ministry we are encouraged to get connected to a "good" church. Here are where we have some issues.

There are few church bodies who hold more than a traditional evangelical viewpoint. Most are adhering to their own well established traditions, or doctrines. Most often these do not advance the Spiritual life to a significant level of maturity. Once in a church fellowship, you are expected to "play by their rules."

My best advice is to search carefully for a church and set your sights on

particular features which will allow you to be disciplined and grow not in tradition but in spirituality. If one does not nurture spiritual "life" move on until you sense that it is where God would have you. In the mean time if it at all possible, find a fellowship of believers who share a passion for God. In a home fellowship you can grow with others in an informal setting.

God does not discriminate against home meetings. They are apostolic! It is how the "Church" began. It is obvious that formalized Christian ministry is to be found everywhere in one form or another. As I have already described most of these churches or ministries are a manifestation of institutional religious traditions. These so called normal forms of a Saturday or a Sunday ritual mostly go unquestioned. People support the familiar and comfortable routines even though they add little to spiritual knowledge and understanding. As a result the Kingdom of God is not advanced as it was originally intended.

Churches, struggle to maintain membership so are eager to enhance interest, or involvement. A church may be jealous of their members going astray or getting involved with any meetings or activities not sponsored by their own fellowship. There was a time when such unfaithfulness could be met by excommunication, but today the usual rebukes from the pulpit are just admonitions or doctrines created out of hand which indicate an obligation to support the local body. Membership encompasses a clause to support that congregation. This result becomes, in effect, the fruit of division which institutional religion enforces.

Professional Ministry

The concept of the clergy, professional ministry is a well establish and unquestioned paradigm. ([See the power of paradigms.](#)) The concept of Ministry has been traditionally connected to career or occupation. The concept of clergy as a professional career extends into the dim past of Christendom. The traditional church operates in accord with, and is enabled because of the professional clergy concept. The question of institutionally accredited, "professional ministry" appointed to churches and church giving is something that I believe each of us has to examine in light of Scripture and draw our best personal conclusion in the light of the Word.

It is not my desire to subvert a system that you may believe in for your own best reasons, but rather to encourage each person to strive to know God as fully as possible and to experience the potential of Christ's Gospel, even if it means setting aside long held traditions. Every person should support the Kingdom of God as we judge it to be best expressed. We need to see the life of God as a divine promise and a human potentiality. We need to see ministers bringing others into this potentiality.

Giving for the Gospel's Sake

My desire is not to subvert a system that you may believe in for your own best reasons, but rather *to encourage each person to strive to know God as fully as possible* and to experience the potential written of in the Gospel, even if it means setting aside certain long- held traditions. Every person should support the Kingdom of God as we see it best expressed. We need to see the life of God as a potentiality and the people who minister bringing others into it. Once that criterion is met, we can go on to other matters concerning Giving.

Giving: Giving & Sharing is Blessed by God

Under the New Covenant there should be no laws (rules) for giving in the Kingdom of God. God has set us free from religious rules including rules about giving. Giving is good. Giving supports the man of God but it also supports people who are not necessarily "ministers" of churches but who God wishes to bless through us.

Various kinds of worldly commitments which touch upon the Kingdom of God need support, whether it be church buildings, outreach expenses, travel or any of a wide variety of needs which can only be met by others sharing the cost. God wants his will to be done through selfless sharing and contributions of various kinds. We need to be able to sense God leading us in these gifts so that it is truly a work of God for the Gospel sake and not just another good cause or charity.

Basic Principles Identified on the Pages of the Bible Shed Light on Giving.

*It is more blessed to Give than to receive
Give and it shall be given unto you
Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven
Those who give to the poor lend to God
The Tithe is the Lord's - (Old covenant principle)
In the measure you give it shall be given to you
Sow sparingly, reap sparingly
Give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven
Give as you purpose in your heart, Let no one give out of obligation
God loves a cheerful giver*

The above scriptures are a few of many references to money and giving as introduced in the Bible. When we grow spiritually, we can better discern what God would have us do to support special ministries or servants of God. But we would miss God will if we only gave to ministry professionals and not to individuals and especially the poor. God love is about giving. Ministry is about sharing. Koinonia is also about mutual support. This whole world thrives in the light of a generous heart. **"God so loved the world that he gave -"**

Reborn Christians do not resist giving and sharing. The unredeemed do not want to let go of anything. The world thinks that their own well-being is threatened by releasing necessary assets and resources. Believers know that when they give they are really investing in returns that are certain to come back to them, either now or later.

The Tithe

The doctrine of the tithe (a tenth of one's increase) is taught in churches often not just as a principle but as an obligation. Very few congregations actually enforce the giving of tithes by recording all receipts and maintaining scrupulous records of the income although some come very close to this. Mostly what we hear is teaching which explains that tithing is a practice pre-dating the Christian era and the era of law. We find Abraham tithing before the era of law in the Book of Genesis. Thus with Abraham

giving to Melchisedek we have a type of giving which all Christians should wish to embrace. The Book of Malachi supplies the greatest picture of God's displeasure at those who withhold the tithe. God calls it robbing Him. "*The Tithe is mine,*" says the Lord, therefore to withhold it is to rob him. Malachi describes the "storehouse" where we are supposed to bring our tithe to God. Pastors love to teach that the storehouse is the local church, where all of the sheep are fed. This model has some problems associated with it, as follows:
Is God there?

Is his presence manifested?

Is His Word being taught?

Is the Spiritual life a reality and accessible?

Are the needs of the poor and needy being met?

Are important voices for the Kingdom of God being supported who also edify us individually?

The Storehouse

The Storehouse is associated with a view of the Levitical priesthood which existed in temple worship in early Israel. The Levites were the tribe chosen to minister to the house of Israel. It was only the Tribe of Levi (Levites) who were the designated priesthood, This tribe, had no other source of livelihood and were sustained by the rest of the tribes of Israel. *With the ascension of Jesus Christ into the heavenly temple of God it is my belief that the nature of the storehouse has changed as radically as the priesthood.*

At this time in the age of grace, the church age dispensation, the people of God are supported and not fed by natural bread or by sacrifices of lambs and oxen. Now we are under a different priesthood before God; we give spiritual sacrifices unto Christ who is now King and High Priest over all. (*Read Hebrews which explains the transition from the old covenant to the new.*)

From where do these blessings flow? From a heavenly place. Unto whom are our sacrifices given? To God in heaven. What is the sacrifice? It is the sacrifice of our lips; both praise and thanks giving. Who is the overseer who watches over our gifts and measures a blessing today and in the time to come? It is Jesus The Great High Priest who takes account of those things

given in his name, whether money in a church collection plate or food to a hungry child, or a visit to an invalid or a drink to a thirsty man, or a visit to a person sick and alone in a hospital.

God sees every act done and the motive of every heart in which that gift is bestowed. God loves a cheerful giver. The motive of the heart touches faith. We know that Jesus sees our love and kindness to another in need. Giving to God in faith, we also know that he will also meet any of our needs in a time of lack because we did not withhold to others. We do not give out of obligation. We are not debtors to the law. We are free to give because God is a giver. Giving is like sowing seeds. We sow bounteously in order to reap bounteously. We expect something to come from our planting. Those who sow also believe that a crop which will come at harvest time. This is surely a part of giving to the Kingdom of God. God will meet our needs at a future time because we have planted. God stores up treasure for another day in a heavenly place, because we have given.

Tithing in Faith Becomes an Act of Worship

The giving of tithes is not just a simple token gift placed in an offering plate or bag. Tithing in the scriptural sense relates to act of worship in presenting the "tithe" to God. **We find the act described in Deuteronomy Chapter 26.** **"Therefore it shall be, when the LORD thy God hath given thee rest from all thine enemies round about, in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance to possess it, that thou shalt blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven; thou shalt not forget it."** *"And it shall be, when thou art come in unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance, and possesses it, and dwellest therein;"* (- 26:1-) *"That thou shalt take of the first of all the fruit of the earth, which thou shalt bring of thy land that the LORD thy God giveth thee, and shalt put it in a basket, and shalt go unto the place which the LORD thy God shall choose to place his name there."* (- Deuteronomy 26:2-15) **Note this is during the dispensation of The LEVITICAL PRIESTHOOD.**

Abraham gave a tithe to Melchisedek the King Of Salem two thousand

years before the Church age and prior to the Age of the Law. This tithe prefigures the law of commandments, giving, as it were, to the King of Heaven who exists outside of genealogy forever. We give as unto him. *Jesus abides forever, in the order of that high priest, Melchisedek.*

Now regarding tithing as worship, don't try to memorize a ritual to recite, but it is good to have an understanding of the rite noted in the Leviticus 26 text. The giving of such a gift or tithe should be something which reflects our own understanding of our previous "captivity" and God's hand at work to take us out of that place of bondage and oppression, want and sorrow. The spiritual life acknowledges that ***we were also taken out of bondage***. It is a faithful saying which needs to be voiced. Notice that all of this tithing worship is spoken to God in the place which has His name written upon it. Today we are redeemed and the house of God is not a special place it is the human house where the spirit resides. The tithing worship reminds us of God's covenant with us and how he is taking further towards strength, blessing and victorious living. Speaking these things tells God that we know what he has done for us and that we are truly thankful that he knows and remembers us each and that he will continue to be with us supplying good things.

The Prosperity Message (Giving to get)

The past several years has seen a great emphasis on the Prosperity message. Poverty and lack are seen as a curse throughout scripture. God does want us without provision. The redemption from the curse of the law also freed us want and lack. We believe that "God shall supply all of our needs according to his riches in Glory by Christ Jesus." In gaging any matter of doctrine we have to hold it up not only to common sense and scripture but to discerning what the spiritual life needs to be. Though we should not lack nor want, God wants more of us and not less of us. Therefore anything which takes our focus away from God and places it upon unfruitful things, those things which only decay, is really a stumbling block for a believer. Those who preach riches and wealth are laying a stumbling block that can lead people away from intimacy unless they are able to handle wealth and prosperity more graciously than I. Many are able to assume possessions of wealth and money and property without being seduced away from God's presence. But

sometimes the aware of the futility and the emptiness of wealth comes too late when are already victimized by excesses, this was the case of the writer of Ecclesiastes, Solomon who realized late in life that with wealth comes other griefs and spareness of the soul.

Gain is not Godliness, the apostle writes in 1Timothy 6:5, withdraw yourselves from such doctrines. *but Godliness with contentment is great gain,* (1Timothy 6:6) God wishes to supply our needs, to bless us in our going out and our coming in to make us fruitful in body and in all of the pursuits of our life. (Deuteronomy 28:3-6)

The doctrine of **prosperity has blessing** connected to it to be sure; but the negative side of it is its link to selfish motives both in the giver and the receiver. Many who preach the prosperity message are in a position to directly benefit by the unrestrained giving that is encouraged in sermons and in seminars. Some of those who preach the doctrine exceed the Word of God by suggesting that gifts given to their own ministries have the greatest return connected to them. Of course faith is infused into the process to insure a greater degree of return, thirty, sixty or one hundred fold according to scripture as is described and taught as a consequence of giving. (There is greater insight in the 30, 60 and hundred fold metaphor than mere cash and assets. The prospering of the soul is accounted above all, in Spiritual richness.)

Giving, according to Jesus, should not be in the manner of the Pharisees who "sound a trumpet" to give notice that they are doing an alms deed. Jesus teaches to give in secret and for the left hand not to see what the right hand does. All of these teachings address anonymous giving rather than a public display in which people are applauding the giver for his excellent generosity. The Lord says of such people, they receive their reward by the act of receiving public acclaim and applause. It is far better to give when only the Father who sees in secret knows. He will be the one who insures a return in the best possible time. Any man or woman can give or contribute in any 'kind' or commodity. One can give a gift of service another a gift of a song. Another a gift of kindness. The same principle applies when the motive is right, God who is the author and overseer of every good and perfect gift knows when our giving is free from self exaltation. He will insure the return.

CHAPTER 11 - BECOMING A TRUE WORSHIPER

Thanksgiving, Praise and Worship

John 4:23 "-But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. 24, God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

A form of worship is part of all religion.

Certain sects believe in worshipping their ancestors; others worship or hold in reverence for creatures or objects; others worship gods, hundreds even thousands of gods with different names. Worship often consists of intricate and specific rituals and rites practiced by its believers. All of these rituals and rites come from serious and sincere beliefs and are fervently practiced by its practitioners.

Religious worship may be in the form of the burning of incense, or the spilling of blood, sacrifices are offered in the most solemn manner. Priests or 'holy men' wear sacred garments. In order to follow the rigor of perfected worship, worshipers follow rites of purification. Supplicants bow and posture, fold their hands and make mystical gestures heavenward. It is easy to follow a ritual and think that you are a true worshiper. Why? Because anyone when learn a ritual and follow that ritual with some degree of solemnity. All such worship is mostly a human endeavor but is it true worship? Is God the Almighty in it? Does such worship please the King of the Universe?

Praise and worship are practiced in all Christian Churches but in very different ways

What Jesus said about True Worshipers

A foundation of understanding of the subject of worship is found in the gospel account of Jesus' encounter with the woman at a well in Samaria:

John 4:19 - John 4:24 19 - - The woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. 20, Our fathers worshiped on this mountain,

and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship.” 21, Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. 22, You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. 23, But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. 24, God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”

We who believe call ourselves True Worshipers. We claim to know who we worship. We also have our own notions about whether or not we are worshiping 'in Spirit' or 'in Truth.' Certainly not all of the world's religions worship our God who we call "The Father" in Spirit and in truth. I am also confident that not all those who embrace the title Christian know the one they claim to worship. Moreover, I seriously doubt whether all Christians have a sense of Spiritual union with the Father.

What is required to become True Worshipers?

Following is a description of a worship service that we would see in a typical Christian church house.

Musical preludes may be performed by an organist or musicians;
The congregation sing hymns from a hymn book at intervals throughout the 'service';
An individual, usually the priest or pastor, offers a Bible lesson or homily that engages the congregation in order to enhance the spiritual life and understanding of the parishioners;
The congregation or choir sings musical responses following particular parts of the service;
Scripture readings, prayers and petitions, or collection of offerings;
A group of specially appointed singers may perform well rehearsed anthems
Individuals may perform special music (as a featured soloist.)

This sort of programmed worship service is standard fare in most Christian denominations. Such programs are performed with greater or lesser degrees of sophistication or excellence depending upon the size of the congregation and its pool of talent and resources. Churches that have access to greater pools of talent and imagination are more successful in creating performance based presentations and eventually attract larger congregations. Thus the church or ministry is considered more successful and viable.

An important point to note is that the things listed above are designed to be executed by relatively few individuals and the majority are onlookers acting in their role of an audience. How much of this seems to accrue to being true worshipers? Or, are individuals allowed to be passive and disengaged?

Praise and worship are the Cornerstone of the Christian Life

In the scripture quoted just above, Jesus makes a number of points about worship that reveal a new paradigm, the mystery of relationship of believers to the (spiritual) Father. First, worship is not about a place. While Jesus speaks of the mountains where people go to be in Holy communion with their God (God) any such seeking of a *holy place* in the present time is wrong. God meets with His children in an entirely different way.

I believe the next point that Jesus makes is that a large segment of world in their effort to worship a particular god, may affect a form of worship but have no connection to the object of their worship. Their god is unknown to the worshiper. Absent any spiritual bond no worshiper can come into union with their deity.

For Christians who would be worshipers, I think it can also be inferred that without certain qualifications *any effort to be a true worshiper is in vain!* A mere form or mechanism of worship will not bridge the gap to make you a true worshiper. I am talking about worshipping our God, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The Father of the Messiah Jesus.

True worshipers must be true believers.

True believers must be called into the Kingdom of God. This is not a wholesale process. Each individual must approach the throne of grace seeking mercy and pardon for sins. If this seeking is sincere and *heartfelt* an individual is born of the Spirit. Now they become partakers in Jesus Christ's divine nature. They have become sons and daughters of God and come into fellowship with Him. This point will be neither understood nor agreed upon by some religious experts because of the fact that their theology precludes their ability to know who they worship.

Any who say "There is no God, or we can not know God" are simply reasoning these things and have not been blessed to become **born of God** and become that brand new creation. *2 Corinthians 5:16 - 2 Corinthians 5:18 17, Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. 18, Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ- - "*

The Spiritual side of worship

First understand that **the mind is NOT the spirit** although some may teach this. Understand also that **the soul or personality of a person is not the spirit**. Human beings are *soulish* beings. We were entirely so before coming to Christ and tend to remain so after coming to Christ. But the soul which equates to -mind, intellect and emotion, is not the part that is born from above (or reborn) in Christ Jesus. The soul can find exaltation in various things. It can react in many ways to someone else's emotional presentation. Such is not Spiritual worship. Soul music is aptly named. Soul music comes from the soulish, personality side of human beings. Uniqueness of presentation that exalts the performer characterizes soulish worship.

Soul (soulish) music says, look at me. A soulish performance is made for the approval of an audience. It says, "Aren't I a snappy performer!" Spiritual worship requires no audience but God. Spiritual worship does not have to have special gifts, ornamentation or sophistication. It is just from ourselves, from our spiritual selves. We who were in times past, entirely

unworthy. The ability to sing or play an instrument is a good thing to start with it alone does not make a true worshiper.

The Spiritual side of worship is about our interaction with heaven. It is free and unrestrained. It exalts in the joy of salvation and the wonder of being called forth to be called, with Christ, into heavenly places. *Colossians 3:1 - Colossians 3:3 1,"- -So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2,Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth, 3 for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. "*

Spiritual life is about engaging the very presence of God. In the times of the Old Covenant priesthood, the high priest went annually into the presence of God through a heavy veil but only after exhaustive preparation and purification. In such a place the priest hardly dared to make a move in the presence of a Holy God. Any falling short resulted in the death of the officiate. The veil of God's temple was rent in half at the death of Jesus on the cross.

Worship within the Holy Place is now a part of the legacy of the child of God born of the Spirit. We can now boldly go into God's presence through the blood of the Messiah Jesus who has purchased this right for us. *Hebrews 10:19 - Hebrews 10:22 20, - -by the new and living way that he opened for us through the veil (that is, through his flesh), 21, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22, let us approach with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. - -"*

Lest this topic might become overly heavy, let me try to make it plain and simple: We worship the Heavenly Father with our hearts. The heart is the very center of our passion and desires, for what the heart desires becomes its worship. Those born from heaven esteem and value the Spiritual life which is given from heaven and orchestrated from heaven. Heaven interacts with our hearts to make us true worshipers. Zeal is not the emotion of the soul it is the passion of the heart for Him who called us out of darkness into the Holy presence of heavenly things. (Mount Zion and the heavenly company of angelic beings and righteous souls.)

Our souls can be inspired and stimulated by stirring music but takes

the Holy Spirit to lift our hearts to heaven. The Holy Spirit (Holy Ghost) animates and empowers the worshipers with inspiration and revelation in times of worship. When some particular saint is in worship he may be at the very feet of Jesus or receiving a revelation of a truth that has been hidden from us until this very minute.

Free Worship Versus Programmatic Worship

We do not all feel comfortable about participating in thanksgiving, praise and worship. Most feel inadequate or unqualified. As we gather together we should feel freedom to give praise or thanksgiving with the liberty that God allows. This means it does not have to be scripted or perfect to be heartfelt. *“Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty.”*

CHAPTER 12 - PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING

A heart of thanksgiving is called for by all who claim to be the children of God through Christ Jesus. If we are callous and have no true thanksgiving in our souls it would appear that we have not been impacted by God's loving kindness, mercy and grace:

If we were impoverished and received a legacy valued beyond all the riches of this world, would we not be happy and wish to give thanks? If we were spared an eternity of judgment and hell by God's gift of righteousness which says we do not have to pay the penalty for being unrighteous or unworthy because Jesus himself bore our sins, would we not be happy and full of thanksgiving?

If we are spared from the horrors of oppression by tyrants or sorrows of natural calamities ought we not offer up thanksgiving to God? If we are blessed to find food to eat; are comfortable while thousands go without food and shelter, ought we not give thanks? The people who do not know God are called "unthankful, unholy, etc. - - " *2 Timothy 3:2 - 2 Timothy 3:2 - - -, for men shall be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, evil-speakers, to parents disobedient, unthankful, unkind-*".

The Psalms: Examples That Teach Us Thanksgiving, Praise

Psalms are not entirely made up of songs of praise as they include prayers and prophetic utterances.

The 150 Psalms of the Bible are the best examples of a man possessed of God's Holy Spirit (The Ruach Ha Kadesh) whose life and thoughts are turned continually God-ward. God refers to David as “a man after His own heart.” While addressing the matters of trouble which surround him, David looks to the Lord as his strength, his hope, and his deliverer. He never forgets God's mercy and faithfulness. David, while praising the Lord actively (with his mouth) God at various times intervenes in the midst of his utterances and begins to speak His words through the psalmist's mouth. (Psalm 91, a good example) Here are typical utterances of Praise and Thanksgiving.

Psalms 9:1-2 - Psalms 9:1; I will praise You, O Lord, with my whole heart; I will tell of all Your marvelous works. ;2 I will be glad and rejoice in You; I will sing praise to Your name, O Most High. **

Psalms 111:1 - Psalms 111:1 Praise the Lord! I will praise the Lord with my whole heart, In the assembly of the upright and in the congregation.**

Psalms 34:2 - Psalms 34:3 1) I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth. 2) My soul shall make its boast in the Lord; The humble shall hear of it and be glad. 3) Oh, magnify the Lord with me, And let us exalt His name together. **

Psalms 30:12 12) To the end that my glory may sing praise to You and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give thanks to You forever. **

Psalms 106:1 - Psalms 106:1 1) Praise ye the LORD. O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever. **

Psalms 5:11 - Psalms 5:12 11 But let all those rejoice who put their trust in You; Let them ever shout for joy, because You defend them; Let those also who love Your name Be joyful in You. 12 For You, O Lord, will bless the righteous; With favor You will surround him as with a shield. **

Psalms 13:5 - Psalms 13:6 5 But I have trusted in Your mercy; My heart shall rejoice in Your salvation. 6 I will sing to the Lord,

Because He has dealt bountifully with me.**

Psalms 31:7 - Psalms 31:8 I will be glad and rejoice in Your mercy, For You have considered my trouble; You have known my soul in adversities, 8 And have not shut me up into the hand of the enemy; **

Psalms 71:23 - Psalms 71:24 23 My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing to You, And my soul, which You have redeemed. 24 My tongue also shall talk of Your righteousness all the day long; **
24 This is the day the Lord has made; We will rejoice and be glad in it. **

Psalms 148:2 - Psalms 148:5 1 Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord from the heavens; Praise Him in the heights! 2 Praise Him, all His angels; Praise Him, all His hosts! 3 Praise Him, sun and moon; Praise Him, all you stars of light! 4 Praise Him, you heavens of heavens, And you waters above the heavens! 5 Let them praise the name of the Lord, For He commanded and they were created. **

Psalms 148:13 - Psalms 148:14 13 Let them praise the name of the Lord, For His name alone is exalted; His glory is above the earth and heaven. 14 And He has exalted the horn of His people, The praise of all His saints— Of the children of Israel, A people near to Him. **

Psalms 149:2 - Psalms 149:6 1 Praise the Lord! Sing to the Lord a new song, And His praise in the assembly of saints. 2 Let Israel rejoice in their Maker; Let the children of Zion be joyful in their King. 3 Let them praise His name with the dance; Let them sing praises to Him with the timbrel and harp. 4 For the Lord takes pleasure in His people; He will beautify the humble with salvation. 5 Let the saints be joyful in glory;

Let them sing aloud on their beds. 6 Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, **

Psalms 150: - Psalms 150:6 1 Praise the Lord! Praise God in His sanctuary; Praise Him in His mighty firmament! 2 Praise Him for His mighty acts; Praise Him according to His excellent greatness! 3 Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet; Praise Him with the lute and harp! 4 Praise Him with the timbrel and dance; Praise Him with stringed instruments and flutes!

5 Praise Him with loud cymbals; Praise Him with clashing cymbals!

6 Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise the Lord!

Final Thoughts Regarding Praise and Worship

We see that there is a wealth of Praise and Thanksgiving found in the Psalms. There is much more throughout other Old Testament books as well. "Praise is an ornament of beauty" for the upright. There is strength in praise. Praise is active and not passive. When we praise The Lord we are interacting with the hosts of heaven who continually offer praise unto Him who sits on the throne. There is deliverance in praise, it brings confusion to the ranks of the enemy (demonic spiritual orders.) Praise takes all kinds of forms. It includes music and dance. Praise includes shouting loudly to extol the virtues of God. Praise includes making joyful noises to God. Praise brings us into the very presence of the Holy presence of God. 'Enter his gates with thanksgiving' speaks of making the way into God's place, as one would enter the Tabernacle from the world of care into the gate beyond the fence. Enter into His courts with praise, addressing progressing into a place of greater intimacy. This part of the tabernacle is the Holy Place. Here we may still praise and speak to God and extol his goodness and mercies. But the ultimate place is entered with a higher level of worship where we can nothing but *worship* in the Holiness of His presence.

Those who say there should no be loudness and clammer in zealous worship are not biblically accurate. Those who say there should be no musical instruments, are not biblically accurate. Those who say there should be no dancing, are again, not in harmony with what we see in the Psalms.

Words translated Praise in the psalms and other books and include at least 7 words. Each word addresses a different kind of praise or thanksgiving which may include, singing, playing, shouting and others. This is an interesting subject to investigate using the Strong concordance. Look at words translated as "Praise" in the KJV Bible.

Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is Liberty. Liberty in Spiritual worship allows freedom to praise. It should not be curtailed. It should allow each person to engage in his or her own forms of praise. We all are called to Praise. Let everything that has breath, Praise the Lord! Freedom in praising the Lord creates a beautiful tapestry of sound and glory into which God's

presence is pleased to dwell.

THE WORLD, THE FLESH, AND THE DEVIL

A BRIEF FORWARD

This is the last addition to my Biblical collection that focuses on biblical precepts. In it I will offer what I believe the Holy Bible reveals about the age-old questions of; “Who are we? Where did we come from and Where are we going? I am fully aware that philosophers, theologians and psychologists have written volumes to answer these questions in a studied, intellectual way.

“How, some may say, can a person without earned formal degrees, without religious credentials, robes of vestiture, or any emblems of authority, understand God’s secret things?” The answer is the same as that given by the first disciples, “- they took notice that they had been with Jesus.” God, in His wisdom decides who He will choose to reveal himself and to speak on His behalf. He then proceeds to prepare them according to their calling.

(1 Corinthians 1:23) But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; (1 Corinthians 1:24) But unto them which are called, both Jews and

Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. (1 Corinthians 1:25) Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. (1 Corinthians 1:26) For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: (1 Corinthians 1:27) But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; (1 Corinthians 1:28) And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nothing things that are: (1 Corinthians 1:29) That no flesh should glory in his presence.

Psalm 91 reveals there is a secret place where God hides himself from the scrutiny of the ungodly. *"We who dwell in the secret place of the most high, abide under the shadow of the Almighty."* The chosen have discovered this secret place. In another place Paul writes: *"We see through a glass darkly. 1Corinthians 13:12 For now we see in a mirror, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know fully even as also I was fully known."* Again, the apostle Paul reminds us that God's ways and abode are hidden and secret.

Those who He calls he justifies or redeems. This action provides that we who are *of His Body* may participate in His Divine Nature. We are granted this provision by the *power* of a supernatural benefactor. It is not gained by human intention or effort.

The Called Out People of God (*The Ekklesia*)

Who does God call? The noble, strong, crafty, wise and rich or important persons in the eyes of the world are mostly passed over. Why? Because there is a strong tendency that such are equipped enough to be self satisfied and seek nothing more to find fulfillment.

The *eyes of our understanding* must be opened before the ways of God can be discerned. The veil of blindness must be removed. The provision of *the new birth* was given first to the disciples who followed *The Way* of Yeshua, Jesus the Messiah. The outpouring of supernatural grace happened at Pentecost fifty days following Christ's resurrection. From that day and immediately following, God's rich, provision of power and grace was lavished upon each believer.

(Acts 4:32) "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. (Acts 4:33) And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all."

There are a few key concepts that unlock the present nature of humanity and the state of the planet upon which we dwell. I believe that most legacy church denominations have failed to understand and teach these concepts right.

The Prince of This Fallen World

This world has for six thousand years been under the control of a spiritual ruler. He is not a human entity but is in fact the powerful head of a fallen host of angelic beings. Humankind and the earth itself exists in a *fallen state* under the control of these spiritual powers. (Here is where we lose the hard scientists and atheists.) While the lost millennia of our primordial past is largely hidden to religious scholars who argue that the creation of the world and the universe itself was done in *six literal days*. There is a sufficient evidence I believe, to address an older creation followed by a re-creation of a disturbed, chaotic world. The present cosmos now approaches the end of six thousand years of prophetic millennia since "The Fall." Yes, we are speaking of the Book of Genesis and the story of Eden. Six millennia accords to the prophetic measure of one day equaling 1000 years. Jesus gives this reference to ministering to the Samaritans in John Chapter 4. It holds a prophetic clue that twice foreshadows the church age outreach to the gentile nations.

(See John 4:40-43.. Jesus in Samaria) and (2 Peter 3:8 But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.)

Following is an online graphic that I have drawn to illustrate **the fallen world** and the world after its redemption and renewal. Here is a link to that page from a previous discussions on that matter.

https://friendlyarts.net/Book_Titles/3-mystery_Captives_of_the-World.htm#graphic-the%2Ofallen%20world

Since the fall, the world's *earth-dwelling* humanity have lived under the spiritual control and disillusionment of the *God of this world* and the *rulers of spiritual wickedness in heavenly places*. (Ephesians 6) These are the authors of humanity's troubles and self delusion.

We were *born blind* to our own spiritual deficiencies. We are living in a bubble of sorts, where the things that we regard as real are only a shadow of reality. I believe that few, very few ever come to realize that fact. The "Spirit of Truth" must reveal it.

We are blind to the truth! Every human is trapped in a *matrix*-like delusion! Only a touch of Christ Jesus Holy Spirit power can remove our spiritual blinders and shackles.

The power and influence of the World, the flesh and the Devil are incessantly at work to force their nefarious influence upon every human life. The many contrived religious systems may intend to offer peace, understanding and righteousness but in an attempt to penetrate the veil of darkness, unwittingly only serve to enhance it.

THE WORLD

*" The world is so full of a number of things,
I'm sure we should all be as happy as kings,"*

The above lighthearted quotation by the writer Robert Louis Stevenson expresses the innocent idea that the natural world is filled with an abundance of wonders and curiosities that anyone, adult or child, may discover and ponder. I can not disagree.

Children are filled with curiosity as they discover the world for the first time, after all that is what growing up is about. As we become educated or “taught” we exchange wonder and curiosity for the assurance of a mature intellect where facts are cemented and curiosity takes a back seat. Science and established paradigms are what guide our lives. At a certain point our minds are made up concerning worldly matters and resistant to change.

Influencers

Today nothing in the world is more obvious in shaping our thoughts and opinions than the mass media. It is, for most, an incessant blaring barrage of news, advertising, noise, entertainment, or simply distraction. Radio, TV, Internet and social media has a power to inform and forge our opinions. It tells us how to talk, how to think, what to think and what not to think. The modern electronic media influence teaches us how to talk and think! It fuels what we put in our heads; who to exalt as idols; what’s “in,” current, and fashionable, or not. It shapes social norms and popular opinion. It parades before us those who are the current super stars, the whose, who of notable celebrities and how they should occupy our world of thought and purposes.

Vanity and pride are the life-beat of the world today. Is the world different today than in ancient times? You will probably answer, “*Well, dah!* Of course it is different!” But what if we examine the question in the context of what Jesus told his followers. This is what John the apostle recorded:

“John 15:19 If ye were of the world, the world would love its own: but because ye are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.”

“1Jn 2:15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 1Jn 2:16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the vainglory of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

Why does Jesus use such powerful admonitions that point to a **world** that contends against his Spirit and against our calling and our purpose in God?

The Bible among many other revelations, gives us an insight into the world. The times, the players, and places may be different but the world’s the spiritual realities remain the same.

Jesus had much to say about the world and the lusts thereof.

(1 John 2:15) Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. (1 John 2:16) For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world.

The greatest insights into Christ's desire for his disciples and their place in the world can be found in John chapter 17. This is an amazing prayer of consecration by Jesus immediately before he went to the cross. The phrase "the world" is found seventeen times in it and bears study.

(John 17:12) While I was with them, I kept them in thy name which thou hast given me: and I guarded them, and not one of them perished, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled. (John 17:13) But now I come to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy made full in themselves. (John 17:14) I have given them thy word; and the world hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. (John 17:15) I pray not that thou should take them from the world, but that thou should keep them from the evil one. (John 17:16) They are not of the world even as I am not of the world. (John 17:17) Sanctify them in the truth: thy word is truth. (John 17:18) As thou didst send me into the world, even so sent I them into the world."

Jesus' entire ministry was focused on undoing a millennia-long condition that was wrought upon the whole world. It was planetary and pervasive. It took an eternal plan to be enacted by God to deal with the crisis. The mission of Christ Jesus, the Messiah, was and remains to "reverse the curse."

(1 John 3:8) he that doeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. To this end was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. (ASV)

From the time of his baptism by John, there was not a moment in his teaching and preaching that he was not completely aware of this mission that was planned by the Godhead in a time *before the world* was to restore a fallen and blighted world that had fallen into degradation from an angelic rebellion. You see, everything is spiritual and for many, this is where some toss aside anything that hearkens to the supernatural. This darkened dissonance is witness to the heart and mind of fallen humanity. It is descriptive of those who have eyes but see not and have ears but hear not.

(Jeremiah 5:21) Hear now this, O foolish people, and without understanding; that have eyes, and see not; that have ears, and hear not:

(Ezekiel 12:2) Son of man, you dwell in the midst of the rebellious house, that have eyes to see, and see not, that have ears to hear, and hear not; for they are a rebellious house."

There is a wonderful account of healing a man born blind. The story goes beyond a mere recounting of a messianic miracle.

John 9:32 Since the world began it was never heard that any one opened the eyes of a man born blind. John 9:39 And Jesus said, For judgment came I into this world, that they that see not may see; and that they that see may become blind.

When our eyes are opened to Spiritual realities we are filled with the desire to help others to regain sight and deliver them from the veil of deception which grips the world and has held it in darkness. This reality lies at the heart of the Gospel of Grace which was made known to the apostles two thousand years ago but has been obscured by religion and religious enterprises.

The world we live in is a mysterious place. The reality of a world peopled by invisible spiritual entities around us is not obvious though it is a Biblical fact. Our understanding is limited. The machinations of spiritual forces in this world are veiled just as the proverbial workings of that unseen "man behind the curtain." Paul makes this statement:

Ephesians 6:11 "Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. Ephesians 6:12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

The people of this world are under a spiritual veil of deception. We are in spiritual bondage to the prince of this world. This bondage was typified by the children of Israel and their bondage under the King of Egypt. The pharaoh typified "The god of this world." It was Moses who brought them out of the house of bondage. In similar fashion it is Jesus of Nazareth who has come to destroy our bondage under the power of the prince of this world. Jesus the Messiah proclaimed his mission in Nazareth as he quoted from the

prophet Isaiah.

Christ's Prophetic Mission

Isaiah 61:1 The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; Isaiah 61:2 to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor - -"

Here is where Christ's mission statement concludes. Jesus omits the portion dealing with wrath and judgment because his calling addresses the year of God's favor, the acceptable year of the Lord. The day of judgment and coming wrath upon the ungodly is reserved for a time deferred to a future time after the church age concludes. This *Age of Grace* is a time in which there is an in-gathering of souls including the gentiles from outside of God's covenant people. A supernatural Redemption is offered to any who accept the offer of righteousness without any other obligation other than to believe in the "gift of God." The church age and in-gathering is foreshadowed in the gospel of John where he ministers to those outside of Israel for two days in Samaria.

I should add this detail which serves as a model and typology of the world. Jesus tells his disciples in Luke Chapter 8 to beware of two things which mitigate against the kingdom of God:

Mar 8:15 And he cautioned them, saying, "Watch out; beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod."

Herod Antipas was the tetrarch, a regional ruler of Judea when Jesus ministered in Israel. It was he who had John the Baptist killed and later had a brief audience with Jesus before the crucifixion. Herod exemplified everything worldly. He was ruled by his passions, loved luxury and excess and was blind to anything that was truly spiritual except as a mere novelty. When Herod asked Jesus the kind of questions the spiritually dead ask, Jesus answered not a word. "- for what communion has light with darkness or the temple of God with Belial." See 2 Corinthians text below.

(2 Corinthians 6:14) Be ye not unequally yoked together with

unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? (2 Corinthians 6:15) And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believes with an infidel?

(2 Corinthians 6:16) And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? 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.”

THE FLESH

Jesus Confronts the God of This World

Before Jeshua, Jesus began his ministry at or around the age of thirty he had a divine appointment with John the Baptist, the last Old Testament prophet. John was called to herald the coming Messiah and his ministry. When John baptizes Jesus in the Jordan, The Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus as a dove. From that time forward Jesus is given (anointed and possessed with) the Holy Spirit in full measure. It is the Holy Spirit who drives Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted by the Devil.

The Devil is most often imagined and portrayed by artists in caricature as ugly, deformed, and frightfully wicked creature, an image of pure evil. People forget that the Devil can appear as an angel of light. The Devil has many names including the Tempter. Jesus is tempted in 3 modes, The flesh, his divine nature and his divine calling pertaining to the rulership of this world. (*Matthew Chapter 4.*)

Jesus' Temptation in the Wilderness

Jesus with his human frailty, had fasted for forty days and became weak and hungry. He is first tempted to use his divine authority to satisfy fleshly needs. Jesus is weak and hungry. Satan tempts Jesus saying that as the Son of God he has the power *to turn stones into bread*. This was certainly a real possibility. Jesus answers the tempter with scripture. “*Man shall not eat from bread alone but by every word the proceeds from the mouth of God.*” (*Deuteronomy 8:3*)

In the next temptation Jesus he is tempted to display his abilities to interact with heavenly beings whenever he may desire their aid. Satan tempts Jesus to throw himself down from the temple to demonstrate that angels will come to his rescue, Jesus quotes scripture again, “*You shall not tempt the Lord the God.*” (*Deuteronomy 6:16*)

Satan’s final test is an attempt to destroy the entirety of God’s plan to redeem the earth through the seed of the woman. (Genesis 3:15) This would have the effect to leave Satan to have dominion over the planet and continue his role as “the god of this world.” He tempts Jesus to a great temptation that he Jesus, can have the rule of this world and its kingdoms without going to the cross and paying the sin debt and the redemption of the world by shedding his own blood. He would in effect, be a vice regent under Lucifer.

(Matthew 4:10) Then Jesus said to him, “Be gone, Satan! For it is written, “You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.”

(Matthew 4:11) Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him.

After being tempted, the Devil left him until a more appropriate season. These came at various times and through words spoken by various mouths including Simon Peter and later in other taunting mouths at the crucifixion.

The World and The Flesh That Affects Each of Us

Here is where we can identify the blindness into which each person is born. Here I speak of Spiritual blindness. It is a condition which most religious people called being *born in sin*. I prefer the expression “**a sin nature**” because that is inextricable from every soul born regardless of degree.

We are caught in a trap that we did not choose. It is and was a condition of our inheritance as an heir to the first man and woman. Yes, the story of the “Garden of Eden” is part of the curse that we are born into. If that seems stupid or zany so be it. It is a foundation pillar of God’s cosmology and mystery of redemption. We are under Adam’s curse from which came death, misery and strife and separation from God.

THE FLESH

Sin, Sinners, and The Fallen Nature

The Bible is clear we are ALL sinners. Sin is something that can be measured and quantified by OUR thoughts and our deeds. Sin is defined as “*missing the mark.*” The gift of salvation is often described as being rescued from sin. I am going to stress the point that our propensity to sin results of our *fallen nature*. It is an inescapable reality regardless of our degree of degradation. Regardless of whether we are small sinners or great sinners we are destined to pay the sin dept which is death! That is unless there is someone who could rescue us. This is the need for a Redeemer!

(Romans 2:12) For all who have sinned without the law will also perish without the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law.

(Romans 3:22) the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: (Romans 3:23) for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

(Isaiah 53:5) But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. (Isaiah 53:6 - OT) All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Most protestant churches and evangelistic outreaches speak of the human race being comprised of sinners. That is true. They also teach and conclude that we all need to “saved”. That too is true. But, **how do we actually deal with this sin matter?**

This is where we may hear a message that suggest that we must try not to sin in order to please God. Human will would then need to be the answer or the remedy of our living “sin free.”

Now we must ask, **“Do we ourselves earn the right to have our names written in the Book of Life?”** Christ died for our sins. What does that mean?

Do we follow the teachings of one religion or another that says “*yes, or yes, but?*”

Among the entire spectrum of humanity and through history there appear to be *greater sinners and lesser sinners*. Some imagine their list of offenses to be less severe than others. Thus one may think of differences in terms of degrees of punishment, or *levels in hell*. Roman Catholic priests give “last rights” to absolve those who are at death’s door. They believe they have the authority to absolve sins by virtue of their priestly office.

I spoke with one elderly fellow to share the gospel many years back. When I said we need a Savior to save us from our sins he replied, “I never had much interest in sinning.”

If we look at sin as a measured commodity then we miss the greater truth of the “Sin Nature” that saddles, shackles and blinds every soul that comes to breath air on this planet.

Blindness of our Sin Nature and its Ramifications

As the blind man in John Chapter 9 was blind from birth so are each of us born with a fatal spiritual condition. We are all spiritually blind to the fact that we are fallen and bear the mark of “sinner” and the sentence of death. No church or religious authority has the power to open our eyes. But he who formed us in the womb is able to make us altogether new again. It is the act of a supernatural, Almighty God who is above any human institution or office. Study and knowledge give insights but does not have the power to open our spiritual eyes. The natural man or woman can not receive from God even when gifted with intellectual brilliance.

(1 Corinthians 2:13) Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Spirit teaches; combining spiritual things with spiritual words. (1 Corinthians 2:14) Now the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually judged.”

When men or women, and here we speak of natural-minded people, whether priests, imams or shaman, purpose to approach the realm of heavenly things through a route other than the Gospel of Christ, they indeed come into the domain of spiritual powers. These however, are the elemental

forces of this world and are under the dominion of the Prince of the Power of the Air, another name for the deceiver, Satan. Paul speaks of there being gods many. Indeed in Hinduism it is said there are millions.

The Way of Salvation, Saved Once and Forever?

There is a great debate over the question of “once saved always saved.”

Can those whose sins God has pardoned and given the free gift of eternal life have that gift removed? It has been my experience that the majority of Bible training schools and seminaries who graduate religious professionals hold the belief that salvation is very fluid. One day we are in good standing with our Redeemer and the next day, through some infraction, are on the outside looking in.

We were blind and now see. We were dead in trespasses and sins but are now “made alive.”

(Ephesians 2:5) even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—

(1 Corinthians 15:22) For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.

(Colossians 2:13) And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses,

Theology directs us in studying and gaining knowledge of God. Theological training however may actually enable becoming a tool of **religious enterprise**. By this I mean that they produce a product along with a plan to market that product. These denominational, religious entities contrive outcomes like any corporate entity to enrich and to prosper in their outreach.

This is the way of world. A friend once said, “Roman Catholics have one Pope, protestants have a pope in each church.” This comes across as cynical but contains a large measure of truth. I believe we have lost sight of **The Way** that was first presented to the apostles of Jesus.

(Jude 1:3) Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.

The apostle Jude says a lot in his brief letter. Jude provides a measuring tool for all churches that followed the apostles through the centuries up to the present day. How much have we altered the perfect message of the *good news* and the *power of the gospel*? In this modern day church are we under law or under grace? Have we become new creations, seated with the Lord in heavenly places or are we still living in unbelief, half blind and following blind guides who possess a form of godliness but deny the power of God? Are we sharing in the ministry of the Body of Christ or are we merely the sheep that can only hear stories of a God of the past and fables of saints and sages long ago? Are we each ministering with our gift that was provided to inspire and mature our brethren in the faith and others who are yet to have their eyes opened?

Those who are born of the Spirit can not be unborn. We are called out of darkness into *the marvelous light* by the Grace of God, which is the gift of Christ Jesus. We who *have tasted of the good things of the world to come* can not be dissuaded regarding God's great and precious promises.

Today he still stands at the door and knocks and beckons us to draw near to him in assurance that we shall not face the wrath which is yet to come.

The flesh is weak but our heavenly Shepherd comes to rescue us and lead us into paths of righteousness. The man Christ Jesus gave us the Spirit of Truth and eyes to see while the world remains in blindness partaking of the false and fatal promises of its ruler who remains in control for just a little while longer.

Attributes of Those Who Have Been Redeemed

Those who God calls and rescues from this present world begin to bear the resemblance of our Heavenly Father who called us. It happens little by little, to some more quickly than others depending upon our Spiritual nurture.

I would state that certain things should be in evidence. First an interest and an eagerness to study, to hear about and investigate the Word of Truth which is The Bible. The wonders of the Word and Excellence of Christ Jesus are subjects from which we earnestly seek and desire to share.

Next I think we will have a desire to gather with others who have experience the gift of God. We gather with them and hold them in esteem and we recognize their importance to ourselves. These make up God's family. The family of God is worthy of true, *unfeigned* affection. We are spiritually in touch with their joys and their sorrows. We *rejoice with those who rejoice* and weep with those in sorrow.

The old life filled with coarseness, depravity, self-centeredness, sensual excesses and addictions begin to fall away as the Holy Spirit does his work of renewal. The "fruits of the Spirit" are a byproduct of redemption as we read in Galatians:

*(Galatians 5:21) envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. (Galatians 5:22) **But the fruit of the Spirit** is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, (Galatians 5:23) gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. (Galatians 5:24) And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires."*

The fullness of redemption awaits those whose names are written in the Book of Life. What we enjoy now is described as an *earnest* or down-payment of our heavenly future. This we know, that those who are "In Christ" are brand new creations and heavenly things are quickly manifesting. We know we have passed from death into life and from spiritual blindness

into light. We are alive because He is Alive! The things of this world are coming to an end.

If you have found value in this writing, I would ask you to share with others who might also gain knowledge from it. Thank you.

C. Pinkney, 12/14/2025

