



# **BRIDGING TWO WORLDS**

**Communicating God's Heart  
To Today's World**

**Dave Woodrum**

**Preparing The Way Publishers**  
411 Zandecki Road, Chehalis WA 98532

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**PREPARING THE WAY PUBLISHERS**

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**Cover layout by Steven Woodrum**

# FOREWARD

“The apostle Peter declared an introduction to the Church Age, recorded in Acts 2:14-40. In it he states that prophesying will be a part of this Age – “Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy...” - verse 17.

If prophecy and prophesying are to be part of the Church Age then we better learn everything we can about it.

In Matthew 24, Jesus warns that many will be deceived and misled in the Last Days.

I am grateful to GOD that Dave Woodrum of Chehalis, Washington, has written a treatise that will teach us about prophecy and prophesying and keep us from being misled in these Last Days. I have known Dave since 1988 and have seen him develop into a man of GOD who, with his wife Janice, has a world-wide ministry.

This book is the most extensive work I know of on this subject. I highly recommend it to the Body of Christ, especially those in leadership.

May GOD use this book around the world to bring restoration and balance to His Church.”

Nate Krupp - Salem, Oregon

## ENDORSEMENTS

“I have known Dave as a co-laborer in Christ since 1988 when a team of us worked on developing a prayer calendar for the 39 counties in the state of Washington. He has developed into a superb writer over the years. This work on the prophetic in the church is clear, articulate and comprehensive. He helps to put the whole topic into clear perspective with his piercing insights. The book is blessed with vital truths about how it is the Holy Spirit’s Pentecostal plan to have every member in the church be able to prophecy and speak out truth in its many forms of expression.

Dave has blessed the Body of Christ with a greater understanding of the prophetic voice of the Lord. It reminds me of Priscilla and Aquila in the book of Acts pulling aside Apollos to explain to him the truth of the Holy Spirit more “accurately.” This book is a valuable resource. Dave gives a solid footing in the Word of God as to how to interpret revelational experiences. I would use this substantial book for a manual in teaching others in the development of their discernment and knowledge on how to participate in groups who allow the prophetic to flow. It is an honor to recommend this book to the wider Body of Christ. It will surely entice one to live to the max for the glory of our Lord.”

Carol Taylor – Tacoma, Washington

“Dave Woodrum has written a challenge to the church and individuals to seek the Holy Spirit to guide us into prophesy and living in the Kingdom of God (Heaven) in the earth today. In this book he lays out the scriptures to teach us. Dave continues to be a leading expounder of "EMI" (Every Member Involvement) in the small bodies of Christ and larger bodies. This is a book for study and to learn from.”

Keith Couch – Mound City, Kansas

# INDEX

<b>CHAPTER</b>	<b>TITLE</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
	Forward	3
	Endorsements	4
	Index	5
	Prolog	8
	Introduction	11

## **SECTION ONE**

### **TRANSITIONING TO A PROPHETIC ~ REFORMATIONAL CHURCH**

Chapter 1	.....	14
	<b>The Community of Gathering Together</b>	
Chapter 2	.....	18
	<b>The Principle of Multiple Witnesses</b>	
Chapter 3	.....	23
	<b>Defining and Balancing the Gift of Prophecy</b>	
Chapter 4	.....	27
	<b>Which is the Best Gift?</b>	
Chapter 5	.....	32
	<b>The Primary Focus &amp; Direction of New Testament Prophecy</b>	
Chapter 6	.....	40
	<b>Cultivation and Developmental Seasons</b>	
Chapter 7	.....	47
	<b>The Promise of the Day of Pentecost</b>	
Chapter 8	.....	50
	<b>Women, and the Manifestation of the Holy Spirit</b>	
Chapter 9	.....	55
	<b>Prophecy as it Relates to Calling Forth Emerging Ministries</b>	
Chapter 10	.....	59
	<b>Prophecy May Be Used to Warn Us of Danger</b>	
Chapter 11	.....	62
	<b>Balanced Times of Gathering Together</b>	

## **SECTION TWO**

### **CRITERIA FOR JUDGING PROPHECY**

Chapter 12	.....	XXX
	<b>Lawlessness Shall Abound</b>	
Chapter 13	.....	XXX
	<b>We Must Judge Prophecy</b>	
Chapter 14	.....	XXX
	<b>Discerning the Source of a Prophetic Word or Action</b>	
Chapter 15	.....	XXX

	<b>Basic Principles When Judging Prophecy</b>	
Chapter 16 .....		XXX
	<b>The Plumbline and Honoring of God's Written Word</b>	
Chapter 17 .....		XXX
	<b>The Intentional False Prophet</b>	
Chapter 18 .....		XXX
	<b>Basic Guidelines to Consider When Prophesying</b>	

### **SECTION THREE**

#### **FELLOWSHIPING THE MYSTERY OF THE AGES**

Chapter 19 .....		XXX
	<b>A Life Changing, Empowering Encounter With the Holy Spirit</b>	
Chapter 20 .....		XXX
	<b>Pentecost Was a Day of New Beginnings, a Day of Creation</b>	

### **SECTION FOUR**

#### **HEARING & UNDERSTANDING ~**

##### **KEYS TO THE KINGDOM OF GOD**

Chapter 21 .....		XXX
	<b>Restoration of Reciprocating Revelational Relationship</b>	
Chapter 22 .....		XXX
	<b>Cultivating and Nurturing An Expectation of Communicative Fellowship with God</b>	
Chapter 23 .....		XXX
	<b>Aggressive Pursuit of the Kingdom of God</b>	
Chapter 24 .....		XXX
	<b>Hearing and Understanding ~ Two Keys to the Kingdom</b>	
Chapter 25 .....		XXX
	<b>God Wants to Teach Us All His Ways in All Our Ways</b>	
Chapter 26 .....		XXX
	<b>Aflame With the Knowledge of the Kingdom of God</b>	
Chapter 27 .....		XXX
	<b>The Parable of the Clanging Triangle</b>	

**SECTION FIVE**

**SAMUEL AND THE CONFLICT BETWEEN  
THE OLD ORDER AND THE NEW ORDER**

Chapter 28 ..... XXX  
**God’s Choice and Anointing of a New King  
and a New Order**

Chapter 29 ..... XXX  
**How Long Shall We Mourn?**

Chapter 30 ..... XXX  
**Overcoming the Fears and Obstacles of Change**

Chapter 31 ..... XXX  
**Hindering the New Order**

Chapter 32 ..... XXX  
**Why a King Anyway?**

Chapter 33 ..... XXX  
**The Desire of the Lord Is Upon Us**

**SECTION SIX**

**ADMINISTRATING THE GRACE OF GOD**

Chapter 34 ..... XXX  
**The Significance and Need for a New Wineskin**

Chapter 35 ..... XXX  
**Evaluate How to Implement E. M. I.**

Chapter 36 ..... XXX  
**Manifestations of the Holy Spirit**

**SECTION SEVEN**

**PREPARING THE WAY FOR THE COMING OF THE  
KING**

Chapter 37 ..... XXX  
**Parenting a Prophetic Generation**

Chapter 38 ..... XXX  
**A Highway Through the Wilderness ~  
Reaching the Nations with God’s Heart**

Chapter 39 ..... XXX  
**Being Received in the Name of a Prophet**

**Appendix**

One Potential Danger of “Personal Prophecy” ..... XXX

The Prevalence of Supernatural Encounters ..... XXX

Philip’s Preaching ..... XXX

10 Point Prayer Focus for Revival and  
Spiritual Awakening ..... XXX

One Another ..... XXX

Unraveling Déjà vu ..... XXX

Final Thought ..... XXX

Note Pages ..... XXX

Other Books by Preparing the Way Publishers ..... XXX

## PROLOGUE



Hebrews 11:8-16 <sup>(8)</sup>“By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. **And he went out, not knowing where he was going.** <sup>(9)</sup>By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; <sup>(10)</sup>for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. <sup>(11)</sup>By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised. <sup>(12)</sup>Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born as many as the stars of the sky in multitude – innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore.

<sup>(13)</sup>“These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. <sup>(14)</sup>For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. <sup>(15)</sup>And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. <sup>(16)</sup>But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for **He has prepared a city for them.**”

**I**n the fall of 1985, I moved my family from eastern Montana to western Washington. It was a difficult adventure, primarily due to the emotional ties that my children had with friends in the small rural community of Red Lodge, Montana. They made friends quickly upon arrival in Lake Stevens, Washington, demonstrating the wonderful resiliency of pre-teens. As a family we made it to through the wet winter and into the beautiful spring of 1986, when Little League Baseball started up for the season. This, of course, brought the whole world into alignment for my sons and they were able to finish their move with some measure of satisfaction and hope for the future.

When I reflect upon the various moves that I have undertaken through the years I come to realize that the actual act of packing, moving and then unpacking personal belongings is only a small part of “the move.” And while the transporting of goods may take only a few days or weeks, the emotional, spiritual and physical realities of “the move” may extend far beyond the transport time. The consideration and planning prior to moving and the discovery and settling in after the fact should also be considered a part of “the move.” The whole process may actually take months and perhaps even years to be fully accomplished, depending upon the extent of the move. It will differ for example, if “the move” is within the community, across the city, to a different state, a different country, across the ocean(s), among a people who speak a different



language, have different social customs, etc. All these factors and many more, contribute to the duration and complexity of “the move.” The numbers of people involved, pets, livestock, vehicles, family, friends; on and on the list of variable factors of relocating can be inventoried. Moving from one location to another can be very challenging, tumultuous, frightening, exciting, wonderful and fulfilling all at the same time.

If “the move” involves a family the different members may experience varying degrees of similar emotional turbulence throughout the season of “the move.” For some members of a family “the move” may begin earlier in the consideration and planning options; while for other members of the family “the move” may take longer, as they try to erect fresh friendships within a new community or at a new school, etc. It is potentially wounding and destructive for one member of the family to impose upon another the same qualifications for concluding “the move.” In general, family members need to be sensitive to the varying dynamics of each individual family member; this is never more necessary than when the family is engaged in the ordeal of moving.

Deuteronomy 6:23 “Then He brought us out from there, (Egypt, the land of bondage), that He might bring us in, to give us the land of which He swore to our fathers.”

Centuries after God had called Abraham out of the land of his father and brought him to Canaan the children of Israel were brought out of Egypt and restored to the same land. Even after their return to the “promised land” it required years to forcefully “take the land” from those who had come to occupy the land during their absence, while they were in Egypt. It was a very long time before the land “came to rest from war,” and even longer before the Ark of God, the symbol of the presence of God, came to be moved from a tent, and then a threshing floor and finally to a specific temple designed by King David and built by King Solomon. “The Move” that began with God revealing Himself to Abram (Abraham) while he dwelt in the land of Ur had taken several centuries to conclude. In countless ways that “move” is still taking place today and there is still a looking forward to an abiding peace of the presence of God among men upon the face of the earth.

We have not arrived at our final destination and rest, but we look forward, with hope, to the abiding presence of God among men, both within our individual lives and then within the communities of men throughout the planet. It is this cosmic march and processional of humanity that has engaged God’s heart through the chaotic history of mankind. God is incredibly in love with mankind. He desires above all things to dwell among men once again, as He was able to do in the Garden of Eden. The story of the Bible is first and foremost the story of God’s quest to be reunited in intimate fellowship with man. God so loved the world and committed Himself to this quest, that He gave His only begotten Son to die and suffer the penalty and consequence of sin for all creation, that man might be reconciled back to Him in fellowship void of the pain and stain of sin.

That “move” is still underway. There have been huge leaps of progress throughout the millenniums, and there have been significant setbacks and disastrous hindrances. But still, “The Move” of God proceeds towards His ultimate goal, which He offered to Abraham. There have been many recognizable seasons and times of restoration across the tapestry of mankind’s history. The narration of “the Move” of God among men beckons irresistibly to be examined, that we might learn from the past and gain a greater hope for the future. While there are many lessons that can be gleaned from such an examination, perhaps one of the foremost observations is encapsulated in the statement, **“We are in transit from the wilderness of sin, from which God has redeemed us, in route to the city of our God, which He has prepared for us from before the beginning of time.”** We have not arrived at our final destination. We are each engaged in the enterprise of walking with God in faithful obedience to His revealed ways.

In the Hebrews scripture offered above the patriarchs were identified as strangers and pilgrims in this world. The apostle Peter used similar titles in 1 Peter 2:11 when he wrote, “Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lust which war against the soul.” Both Peter and the disciples to whom he was writing understood that they were on a journey together. Another observation from the study of history is the tragic consequence that occurs when any people come to the conclusion that “they have arrived.” Complacency is the best of the woes that follows such an attitude of the heart; pride and prejudice are second cousins that take up residence quickly. Intolerance and violence are the ultimate examples of those who adopt such a presumptuous posture throughout history, even to our present day.

In the summer of 2007, I moved once again; this time from eastern Kansas to western Washington. Two of my sons, their wives and families joined my wife and I on this expedition. Our goal was to move back to where my two other sons and daughter lived with their spouses and children. My wife’s heart and mine were crying out to be reunited with our children and grandchildren, (10 at that time). The spring of 2008 has arrived and I find myself out on Little League Baseball fields once again. This time it is my grandsons who are bringing their world into alignment and completing their move, making friends and becoming secure in their new community. Beside me, behind the fence, are my sons and their wives watching their children learn the game, encouraging them with some of the same exhortations they had heard when they were children learning the game, more than two decades before.

For me, I know “the move” is far from being over, because I realize that it is about far more than simply moving personal belongings from one location to another. I am in transit from the wilderness of sin from which God has delivered me to the City of the Living God that He has prepared from before the beginning of time. And I am making this voyage with the most amazing family in the history of mankind, the Family of God.

## INTRODUCTION



There are many believers today who feel that the Holy Spirit is presently preparing His Church for the most glorious and triumphant season of its history. Many believe that we are very near to the return of our Lord Jesus Christ to Jerusalem. This is a time when we must look seriously upon the stage of world affairs and earnestly search the scriptures that speak to us of such a time as this. We are living in awe-some and dreadful times. There is an increasing number who believe that the Lord has been progressively restoring various aspects of truth and practice to the Church through the last 700 years. For the most part, the Church of today does not look or operate in the same manner as the Church of the 1400’s or the even the 1800’s. The changes four to five centuries ago took place rather slowly. But today the rate of restoration and reformation has escalated to a breathtaking pace. The Lord is preparing a people for Himself who will be able to rule the nations.

Ephesians 5:15-17 <sup>(15)</sup>“See then that you walk circumspectly, (carefully with wisdom), not as fools but as wise, <sup>(16)</sup>redeem-ing the time, because the days are evil, (becoming increase-ingly wicked). <sup>(17)</sup>Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.”  
(Parenthesis added for clarification.)

The current global reformation being implemented by the Holy Spirit is impacting every arena of Church life. It is preparing a people for what the prophet calls “the day of the Lord” in Joel 2:11. This present restoration of Biblical understanding and practice of God’s Word is resulting in the thrusting of many into the most resistant and hostile mission fields the Church has ever witnessed to. The Holy Spirit is drawing literally tens of thousands of young people into a realm of a martyr’s lifestyle in preparation for awesome revival and severe judgment upon the earth. The opportunities to take the gospel of the Kingdom of God into all the earth have never been greater; nor have they ever been more difficult and dangerous. The gospel of the Kingdom of God is being progressively restored to the Body of Christ today. More people than ever are repenting and forsaking their rights of self-determination, preferring to seek and understand the will of the Lord for their lives. At the same time there has never been a generation more determined to destroy themselves with self-indulgence than those living on the earth today, (Ephesians 4:17-24, 2 Timothy 3:1-9). God is preparing to pour out His Spirit upon those who choose to be His servants, to empower them to be effective witnesses of the Lord Jesus. Over the last fifty years the Lord has restored the functional graces of the apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher to equip the saints to do the work of the ministry God intended them to do (Ephesians 2:10). This is resulting in a multiplication of the number of those disciples ready and able to carry out the mandates of our Sovereign Bridegroom and King. This is especially true among young people aged 12 to 35.

In the last few hours prior to His crucifixion it is recorded in Matthew 24 that Jesus severely warned His disciples, <sup>(11)</sup>“Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. <sup>(12)</sup>And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. <sup>(13)</sup>But he who endures to the end shall be saved.” A few verses later in Matthew 24:24 Jesus said, “For false christs (anointings) and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.” Many believe that there is no value in producing a counterfeit of something that does not exist. As the prophetic Church of Jesus Christ increases in its effectiveness and wreaks havoc against the kingdom of darkness in these last days, the enemy of men’s souls shall rise up and release more false prophets to counteract the impact against his dominion.

Today, God is presently restoring to His Church the capacity to speak to the world as a relevant, timely prophetic voice; conveying His heart to a lost and dying, dysfunctional humanity. The Church is becoming an authentic ambassador and voice of God once again. The Holy Spirit will confirm His Word with signs and wonders, which is why the enemy of God’s Kingdom will need to respond with lying signs and wonders. Our families, local congregations and communities are the training grounds the Holy Spirit is utilizing to develop this prophetic voice. The primary goal of this study is to consider what we must do as a congregation and a global community to position ourselves in such a way as to take maximum advantage of what the Holy Spirit will be able to accomplish within us and through us, not for our sake or even for the sake of the world around us, but for His great name’s sake and for the pleasure of His heart.

We will discuss various aspects of the gift and ministry of prophecy. We will speak to the apparent increase in prophetic activity throughout the globe, both in and out of the Body of Christ. We will examine the who, what, when, where and why’s of prophecy. We will develop Biblical guidelines that will release more of God’s people into the functional, practical, daily operation of the gift of prophecy within and through their lives. We will look at the practical aspects of conflicts that occur in the development and implementation of the prophetic ministry among and through God’s people.

The hour in which we live is both terrifying and terrific. There is an increasing hostility against the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. Before the beginning of the foundations of the world our cause has been established by God. Our destiny is to triumph over all the forces of darkness that have opposed the purposes of God through the ages, culminating with the glorious return of our Majesty, King Jesus.

## **SECTION ONE**



# **TRANSITIONING TO A PROPHETIC - REFORMATIONAL CHURCH**

## CHAPTER ONE

# THE COMMUNITY OF GATHERING TOGETHER



The message of the Kingdom of God and personal salvation through faith in the person, life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is the single most important aspect of human existence. It affects individuals, communities, regions and nations. The message of Christianity cannot be lived out in a vacuum; it must be lived out in organic, authentic community life. While it is a message of personal salvation and restoration of individual relationship with our God and Creator, it is also a message and hope of a life lived in community with other disciples who are also seeking the Kingdom of God. Jesus commanded His disciples in John 13:34-35, <sup>(34)</sup>“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. <sup>(35)</sup>By this all (the world) will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” In John 15:13-15 our Lord and King spoke in the plainest of terms when He said, <sup>(13)</sup>“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. <sup>(14)</sup>Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends. <sup>(15)</sup>You are my friends if you do whatever I command you.” Paul instructed Timothy, “...pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart” (2 Timothy 2:22).

More than fifty scriptures can be provided from the New Testament that convey the significance of “one another” as it relates to the gospel of the Kingdom of God and the impact of the message of Christianity in and to the world. It may also be a contributing factor to the general lack of mature disciples in the fellowship of the saints. It may be that the typical *believers meeting* presently promoted and practiced among Christians throughout the world may actually serve to hinder Biblical Christian character and community rather than cultivate and nurture it. Through a careful examination of the Word of God we may determine that the typical *Sunday-go-to-meeting* practice of most Christians has actually been detrimental to true Biblical spiritual growth, and may be a primary reason for the woeful condition of carnal immaturity so prevalent in the Church today. The Holy Spirit is opening our eyes to scriptural truth and practice in order to correct this malady within the Body of Christ.

I would like to suggest the following amplification of 1 Corinthians 14:26-33 in order to better describe what many have come to believe was a typical *believers/disciples’* meeting of the original (*Genesis*) Christian Church. I believe that the amplification will provide a more accurate

**It is possible that the general lack of authentic, Biblical community lifestyle being lived out on public display among those who claim to be Christians has been a detriment to faith among those who are uninformed of the Life of Christ.**

rendering and understanding of what may have been the original intent of this particular passage of scripture and the experiential practice of the early Church. The words that are in bold type are text from New King James Version, while the words that are in *italics* have been inserted for the purpose of amplification and clarification.

### 1 Corinthians 14:24-33

- <sup>(24)</sup>”**But if all of you when you are gathered together prophesy conveying the heart of God into the heart of the circumstances, and an unbeliever or an uninformed person comes in to your meeting, he or she is sure to be convicted by all, he or she is sure to be convicted by all through what is said and done,**
- <sup>(25)</sup>**And thus the secrets of his or her heart are revealed; and so, falling down on his or her face, he or she will worship God in reverential awe and with an awareness of His presence and report that the real, living God is truly dwelling and active among you.**
- <sup>(26)</sup>“**How is it then brethren? Whenever, each and every time you come together, each one of you may have a psalm, each one of you may have a teaching, each one of you may have a tongue, each one of you may have a revelation, and each one of you may have an interpretation. Let each one of you do all things that are to be done for the edification of each one of you who are gathered together.**
- <sup>(27)</sup>**If anyone of you speaks in an unknown tongue, let there be no more than two or at the most three for each situation, or topic, or concern, each in turn and let one or two of the others who are present interpret that those present will be edified.**
- <sup>(28)</sup>**If there is no one present who is practiced or recognized as someone who is an interpreter, let him who desires to speak in an unknown tongue keep silent in the public assembly of the Church, and let him or her speak to himself and to God. Or, let them speak in an unknown tongue and then according to what I instructed earlier (1 Corinthians 14:5 & 13) let him pray that there will be an interpretation given by the Holy Spirit through either himself or one of the others present; for, as I explained, each one of you has the capacity to interpret (verse 26).**
- <sup>(29)</sup>Now, whenever you are gathered together and you are considering and praying for a person or a particular situation and there are those who have a sense that the Holy Spirit would speak to that person or situation **let two or three of you prophesy, and let the others who are present, who are mature, familiar and practiced with speaking and ministering prophetically in this manner judge what has been said or done.**
- <sup>(30)</sup>**But, if while one person is speaking or ministering prophetically anything is revealed to another who sits by regarding or because of the things being shared by the one who is speaking prophetically, let the first one who is speaking prophetically consider if he or she should keep silent and allow the one with the most recent revelation declare what has been revealed to him or her, remembering that we are each to consider others more highly than ourselves and no one has the right to monopolize the whole time your are gathered together.**
- <sup>(31)</sup>**For you can all speak and have the potential to minister prophetically one by one, in order that all may learn and all may be encouraged, edified and comforted.**
- <sup>(32)</sup>**And always remember that the spirits of the ones who speak prophetically are subject or mutually accountable to the prophets and the judgment of the others who speak prophetically.**
- <sup>(33)</sup>**For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.”**  
(Amplification added by the author for clarification.)

Although there are no other scriptures which so clearly describe a *believers/ disciples' meeting* as those in 1 Corinthians 14, verse 33 seems to indicate that what had been written in these verses may have constituted the general practice of all the fellowship gatherings of the early followers of Jesus Christ.

I prefer to use the term *Genesis Church* when referring to the original fellowship, only because it conveys the idea of “a beginning” rather than “a goal.” It is the hope of many that the Church revealed in the pages of the New Testament is a “starting point” of the testimony of Christ and His Kingdom, even as their witness began in Jerusalem and was then to spread throughout the whole earth and that “the glory of the latter house shall be greater than the glory of the former house” (Haggai 2:9). Of course it is obvious that before we can exceed the glory of the original Church, we must first attain to the glory of that Church. It is possible that if we allow the Holy Spirit to restore a similar fellowship and community experience that was lived out on a daily basis by early disciples of Christ, we may produce the same fruitfulness as is recorded of their lives.



**Chapter One Study Notes:**

What is the single most important aspect of human existence? \_\_\_\_\_

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2) We live out our Christian lives in \_\_\_\_\_ with other disciples who are seeking the Kingdom of God. \_\_\_\_\_

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3) 1 Corinthians 14:24-33 is an excellent example of things that should be expected to take place in a typical \_\_\_\_\_ meeting.

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NOTES: \_\_\_\_\_

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## CHAPTER TWO

# THE PRINCIPLE OF MULTIPLE WITNESSES



Let everything be confirmed out of the mouth of two or three witnesses” is a principle that is brought forward into the New Testament by Jesus from Deuteronomy 19:15 in Matthew 18:15-20. In his writings the apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 13:1 and again in 1 Timothy 5:19 repeats it. The author of Hebrews mentions it in chapter 10:28; while the apostle John refers to it in 1 John 5:6-8. It also seems to be the practical application of the principle that is related in 1 Corinthians 14:26-33. It appears that it would not be inappropriate or unreasonable to expect that each thing that the Holy Spirit would say and do in and through our lives, and the life of our congregations, would most likely be “*confirmed out of the mouth of two or three witnesses.*”

Those *witnesses* may be a wide array of testimonies that result in conveying the heart of God into the heart of a particular situation. Look again at 1 Corinthians 14:26. **“How is it then brethren? Each and every time you come together, each one of you may have a psalm, each one of you may have a teaching, each one of you may have a tongue, each one of you may have a revelation, and each one of you may have an interpretation. Let each one of you do all things that are to be done for the edification of each one of you who are gathered together.”** While this verse provides several examples of testimonies that may be expected in a congregation gathering, it should not be considered an exhaustive list, but only a *sampler* of examples, which would allow for many others as well. God may choose to speak through a vision as He did in Acts 10:9-16 and 16:9. God may speak through a dream as He did with Joseph in Matthew 2:13, or Pilate’s wife in Matthew 27:19 and promised on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2:17. God may send an angel in the night as He did in Acts 12:5-11 and Acts 27:23. Or the Holy Spirit may desire to speak to us through a poem or a dramatic presentation or perhaps a spontaneous new song in tongues followed by an interpretation in the understanding of those in the meeting. We should allow the list to be as great as the Lord of Glory chooses. These witnesses may be called the *fingerprints of God*. These *signs* are an indication of God’s concern and involvement in the circumstances of the situation.

Sometimes an item such as a prayer request involves seeking for direction in a ministry opportunity or a counseling situation. When the direction of the Holy Spirit has been confirmed by the mouth or testimony of two or three witnesses and is judged as being from the Holy Spirit, then there appears to be no real need for any additional confirmation or discussion for that particular situation. At that point the brethren gathered together should move on to the concerns and needs of others who are present in order that everyone gathered will have an opportunity to be ministered to and to minister to others as well, in order that all may learn, be encouraged and edified in the Spirit of the Lord.

All disciples should make a sincere and diligent effort to cultivate and nurture a sensitivity and discernment of the witness of the Holy Spirit. The witness may be the testimony of another person, a scripture verse, a dream or vision, a new song, a photograph in a magazine, a financial provision or lack of financial provision, circumstances, a word in tongues and interpretation... and on and on and on. We must learn to identify and discern the testimonies of the witnesses that the Holy Spirit has provided to direct us and confirm His Word. We need to learn how to *tune in* to the frequency of Holy Spirit speaking to us. This may be considered a more accurate and appropriate application of 1Corinthians 14:26.

In considering this then we should expect and anticipate that two or three prophecies or tongues with interpretation, or some manner of prophetic testimony such as those mentioned should speak in context towards one particular issue or individual situation. This will confirm God's heart and His will in a particular situation, and then the meeting should move on to someone or something else. It is our understanding that the original intent of this scripture does not mean to imply that during the time of an entire church meeting of several hours, there should be only two or three prophecies or prophetic testimonies. Such an interpretation and application of these scriptures is contrary to the context of the text and especially 1Corinthians 14:31 which reads, "**For you can all speak and have the potential to minister prophetically one by one, in order that all may learn and all may be encouraged, edified and comforted.**" In a New Testament gathering of believers there might be many such tandem or triplet witnesses concerning the various needs and concerns of the congregation. This process may be repeated numerous times throughout the meeting until all the needs are met and all have had an opportunity to minister and learn.

Tim and Mary are a young couple, fairly new in their Christian faith walk. While they were attending a fellowship meeting they expressed a desire for prayer for their financial needs. It seemed that no matter how hard they tried, they simply couldn't seem to make their paycheck last from one pay period to the next. As they tried to save some money back for an offering at the meeting the next week, it seemed to dwindle away until there was nothing left to give when the meeting time came, or when they had opportunity to share with some one during the week.

After they shared their request another disciple who was more mature in his faith walk with the Lord and more knowledgeable of the scriptures felt prompted by the Holy Spirit to share a brief teaching or exhortation from Matthew 6:33 regarding "seeking first the Kingdom of God" and then also Malachi 3:8-11 concerning the need to give as unto the Lord from the "first fruits" of God's provision to them, and not from the leftovers when all their other needs were met. The young man who was speaking challenged them to set apart their offering to the Lord immediately after receiving their paycheck, seeking the Holy Spirit for direction to steward their remaining resources for the rest of the pay-period and watch to see how the Lord could un-expectedly supply for their needs as the week went on.

The wife of another couple in the group was noticeably anxious to share a testimony of how God had seemed to miraculously provide for a particular need at the end of the week when they had followed this Biblical principle and given their gift to the Lord immediately after they had received their paycheck.

Tim and Mary admitted that they were both unfamiliar with the Scriptural teaching about giving practices, but were encouraged by the other young couples testimony, and would try it themselves when they received their next paycheck.

Another disciples picked up the original prayer request and prayed for the young couple's immediate needs, and for the grace for this couple and all those present to accept and obey the Biblical principles for giving, and to seek to hear and obey the voice of the Holy Spirit in matters

of spending and stewardship through the week. At the close of the prayer one person began to sing “Jehovah-Jireh, my Provider, His grace is sufficient for me...” The others in the group joined in. Following the song there was a moment of stillness, listening to the Holy Spirit and then the group moved on to something else.

The practice of only one specific person bringing the “word of the Lord” or instructing the normal congregational meeting in an exclusive manner is unprecedented in the New Testament and actually appears to be contrary to the Word and the heart of God. There are appropriate times of training and instruction in righteousness and those things that pertain to the Kingdom of God. But the manner of instruction and the venue for training has often been counter productive in the lives of many believers. It may have significantly hindered their advancement as disciples.

**The idea that one person would repeatedly monopolize and manipulate an entire meeting week after week is unfounded by New Testament example and an affront to the Holy Spirit.**

The larger the number of people involved in a meeting, the more difficult and restrictive this process becomes in order to guard the well-being of the fellowship. When a group’s size becomes too large to engage in this manner, then it may be time to divide and plant another church or at the very least disengage into smaller groups during the meeting time to allow all members a meaningful opportunity to minister to all those desiring to receive ministry. If a larger group does break up into smaller groups, perhaps to pray for those who have expressed a need we might expect all such ministry to take place among the small groups simultaneously. There are no *sole source providers* in the Body of Christ, which is why Jesus gave apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers to equip the saints so that they, the saints, might do the work of the ministry toward or with one another until we all come to the fullness of the stature of Christ (Ephesians 4:11-16).

There are a few examples of traveling ministries speaking in a dialog or didactic format primarily for the purpose of teaching or prophetic evangelism. But the scriptures in 1 Corinthians chapters 11-14 are the most clear description of a *believers’ community gathering* or meeting presented in the scriptures. There is absolutely no scriptural evidence to support the perpetuation of the historic church gathering model in which one person dominates the entire gathering time with his or her thoughts, opinions or ministry as the predominant type of meeting in our faith life and experience. This is especially true when no opportunity is provided for open public judgment and conversational discussion of what has been said. Such a practice appears to be foreign to the New Testament record and should be regarded in the same way as other “extra-biblical” traditions, passed down by previous generations. Our Lord says that similar traditions made the Word of God of null effect among the Jewish people of His day (Mark 7:13, Matthew 15:6, Isaiah 29:13, Jonah 2:8, Psalms 31:6). Such practices seem to perpetuate the eternal childhood and immaturity of the believer, and may actually produce results in the believer’s life that are contrary to the intent of God in sending the Holy Spirit. One day it may become clearer that such meetings and gatherings may actually be in opposition to the anointing of the Holy Spirit being nurtured within and through the individual believers as they exercise the privilege of the priesthood of the believer.

There appears to be a number of different types of meetings in the New Testament, and it seems that it would be good to recognize the various differences we might expect in each of the various gatherings. Our primary focus in this study is “the believer’s meeting,” because that is the gathering most prevalent in the believer’s life and the one that should produce the greatest degree of growth in the character of Christ and the operation of the ministry and gifts of the Holy Spirit.

A distinction should be made as to the flow or the type of the meeting that may be taking place. The Holy Spirit does not rule all meetings in the same manner. There is a diversity of operations and administrations of the grace of God that can and should be expected even within the same meeting. What may be appropriate at one time during a meeting or one type of meeting under the direction of the Holy Spirit may not be appropriate at another time or in another type of meeting. There is a unique, God-ordained purpose, intent and order for our meetings that must be discerned in the Holy Spirit. For example, if nine people were to enter a small fellowship group of 35-50 people as guests and four of the people were uninformed, or are unbelievers and unsaved, the Holy Spirit may use that opportunity to confirm His Word with signs and wonders to convict their hearts of their unbelief and sinful nature. He may chose to speak the secrets or the hidden concerns of their hearts through a number of disciples exercising the gift of prophecy in order to persuade them that He cares and is ready to be involved in a more active way in their lives as Lord and Savior.

**1 Corinthians 14:24-25** <sup>(24)</sup>“**But if all of you when you are gathered together prophesy conveying the heart of God into the heart of the circumstances, and an unbeliever or an uninformed person comes in to your meeting, he or she is sure to be convinced by all, he or she is sure to be convicted by all through what is said and done,** <sup>(25)</sup>**and thus the secrets of his or her heart are revealed; and so, falling down on his or her face, he or she will worship God in reverential awe and with an awareness of His presence and report that the real, living God is truly dwelling and active among you.**”

(Amplification added by the author for clarification.)

**The ideal of a “sole source provider” is unfounded in the New Testament. God desires to reveal His heart through a number of different testimonies.**

God greatly desires to reveal Himself in the midst of His people, and that His glory might be manifest through His people among a lost and dying humanity. The Holy Spirit will produce what might be called a “streaming prophetic download” that would be an overload for one but will be able to be received and processed through several.

**Chapter Two Study Notes:**

1) What principle did Jesus bring forward from Deuteronomy 19:15 to apply to New Testament thinking and action? \_\_\_\_\_

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2) Quote the verse in Matthew chapter 18 that states this Biblical principle.

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3) List several types of testimonies that could convey the heart of God into the heart of a particular situation. \_\_\_\_\_

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4) Is it God's best plan or New Testament example that one person should monopolize the entire believers' meeting of disciples of Jesus Christ? \_\_\_\_\_ Why or why not?

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5) God's heart and plan for the New Testament Church is that believers would minister to \_\_\_\_\_ by the direction of the Holy Spirit.

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## CHAPTER THREE

# DEFINING AND BALANCING THE GIFT OF PROPHECY



1 Peter 4:10 “As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.” (NKJV)

“Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms.” (NIV)

God gives grace (un-earned, divine enabling) gifts to disciples for useful, practical and profitable purposes. 1 Corinthians 12:11 says, “But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.” It is our understanding that it is not God’s will for any believer to be without a clear, open manifestation of the Holy Spirit being present in his life. As we cultivate and nurture our awareness of His abiding, indwelling presence we should expect to experience, to a greater degree, the manifestation of the gifts and ministry of the Holy Spirit in and through our lives. As we learn to walk and gather together with other disciples in mutual, reciprocating submission and equality we will readily embrace the necessary restraints and disciplines that will facilitate an enhanced disclosure of the operations of the Holy Spirit and the Kingdom of God. Conversely, we should not expect the Holy Spirit to manifest Himself to and through us for the sake of others when our lives are governed by self-ruled interest. We must become servants of Christ, and this attitude is manifested in practical concern for and service to others.

1 Corinthians 12:7-10 <sup>(7)</sup>“But the manifestation of the Spirit **is given to each one for the profit of all:** <sup>(8)</sup> for to one is given the **word(s) of wisdom** through the Spirit, to another the **word(s) of knowledge** through the same Spirit, <sup>(9)</sup> to another **faith** by the same Spirit, to another **gifts of healings** by the same Spirit, <sup>(10)</sup> to another the **working(s) of miracles**, to another **prophecy**, to another **discerning(s) of spirits**, to another **different kinds of tongues**, to another the **interpretation of tongues.**”

Of the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit listed in 1 Corinthians Chapter 12, there are three revelation gifts, three power gifts, and three vocal gifts. The three vocal gifts or manifestations of the Holy Spirit are: tongues, interpretations of tongues, and prophecy.

**Tongues:** the ability given to a believer by the Holy Spirit to speak in a language not understood by the speaker.

**Interpretation of tongues:** the ability given by the Holy Spirit to speak in a language understood by the speaker, the meaning of words previously spoken in an unknown language.

**Prophecy:** the ability to speak in a language understood by the speaker words given by the Holy Spirit. Additionally, prophecy might be simply understood as the conveying of the mind, counsel and heart of God into the heart of the circumstances by whatever means the Holy Spirit directs.

Prophecy is not limited to *inspired preaching*, as many have defined prophecy over the years. Prophecy, as it is intended in this context, is a supernatural action of God through a selected vessel at a specific moment. It does not come as a result of seminary training, human reasoning, learning or education. Although the Holy Spirit will utilize these human efforts, the manifestation of the Holy Spirit through a gift of prophecy is on a supernatural level, as are all the manifestations of the Holy Spirit. While there is a maturing of the prophetic ministry that we should strive for, that does not mean that only the mature should prophesy, especially when the scriptures expressly describe our sons and daughters prophesying upon receiving the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:17-18).

While there may be a tendency for some persons to allow prophesy to be manifested through them more readily than others this should not result in a conclusion that only some believers may (have permission from God) prophesy in the gathering of the saints, especially when the scriptural evidence clearly states that all can (have ability from God) prophesy, (1 Corinthians 14:31).

## **ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS TO BALANCE THE PROPHETIC**

Jeremiah 3:15 “And I will give you [spiritual] shepherds [leaders] after My own heart, who will feed you with [My] knowledge and understanding *and* judgment.”  
(Amplified Version)

*Prophecy* should be understood as simply the conveyance of the heart of God into the heart of the circumstance or condition. The primary vehicle to convey the heart of God is *speech* (vocal verbalization). But while speech may be the primary manner, it is not the exclusive manner of communication employed by the Holy Spirit, or modeled as examples throughout the Bible. Non-verbal forms of communication are also used and equally valuable in the expression of the gift of prophecy. Often, non-verbal actions are explained by words such as in Acts 21:10-11. “And as we stayed there many days, a certain prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. When he had come to us, he took Paul’s belt, bound his own hands and feet, and said, ‘Thus says the Holy Spirit, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man who owns this belt, and deliver him into the hands of the gentiles.’”

God is creative. He manifests His will creatively, primarily through the element of speech. In John 16:13 Jesus boldly declares that the Holy Spirit will speak. God moves creatively primarily, but not exclusively, through the vehicle of speech. We might want to consider the testimony of Genesis 1:2 where we witness that the Holy Spirit brooded over the deep, but everything was without form... without order. The creative work of God required something more than the presence of the Holy Spirit. **The creative work of God required the spoken Word of God to produce order, life and the capacity to reproduce.**

The following three items are considered essential for a fuller understanding and greater agreement among members of the fellowship relating to the manifestation of prophecy. They are helpful for the continued study and appropriate procedure for the practice of the manifestation of the Holy Spirit within the congregation of the saints. The mature, balanced prophetic word is both **redemptive** and **restorative** in nature and results in **reconciliation** being produced in the hearts of men.



1. **The heart of God the Father is primarily redemptive in nature, in that He sent His son into this world to redeem man unto Himself from sin, sickness and death.**
2. **The heart of God the Son is primarily restorative in nature in that all the work of the Son was to restore God's fellowship with man, and to restore man's condition to wholeness.**
3. **The heart of God the Holy Spirit is primarily reconciliatory in nature in that He takes the redemptive heart of the Father and the restorative heart of the Son and reconciles these in the heart of man.**

Without the balance of the **redemptive** and **restorative** heart of God, the Holy Spirit is limited or simply unable to work *the word* into the heart of man to produce a greater degree of **reconciliation** with God. The prophetic word of God is primarily intended to produce fellowship between God and man.

The balance may require more than one person delivering different portions or aspects of the same *word* of prophecy. This might be called *team prophecy*. Occasionally, one person may be prompted to speak a "contrary word" to the predominant "flow" of a meeting, but it may be this "contrary word" that brings balance to the word and releases the Holy Spirit to use the "whole word" to accomplish His purposes.

Example: a prophetic word given to point out a specific area (of sin) in an individual or within the fellowship of believers; such as in Acts 5:1-11. Another word might come forth expressing the merciful heart of God, and His desire to forgive and bring changes to restore holiness. Both words may work together to bring restoration of a disciple into appropriate fellowship with God, or a similar word may cause unbelievers to recognize their need of God and enable them to humble themselves and repent.

Psalm 85:10 "Mercy and truth have met together; righteousness and peace have kissed."

As a fellowship of believers and disciples we should strive to cultivate, nurture, provide and protect an environment and suitable model of gathering together which promotes and accommodates a healthy, scriptural expectation and vision of the manifestation and operation of the Holy Spirit in, through and towards each and every person participating in the congregation, i.e. *Every Member Involvement*.

**Chapter Three Study Notes:**

1) What experience should we expect and foster in our lives as we cultivate and nurture a greater awareness of God's presence? \_\_\_\_\_

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2) List the three revelational manifestations or gifts of the Holy Spirit.

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3) Prophecy could be described as conveying the \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ of God into the heart of the circumstance by whatever means the Holy Spirit directs.

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4) Write a simple definition of prophecy. \_\_\_\_\_

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5) God's heart towards His people is \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ in nature and experience. \_\_\_\_\_

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6) What might we call a healthy environment in the believer's meeting that would nurture the manifestation and the flow of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

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## CHAPTER FOUR

# WHICH IS THE BEST GIFT?



Disciples in the New Testament are encouraged to seek to have spiritual gifts.

1 Corinthians 12:7 “But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to **each one** for the profit of all...

1 Corinthians 12:11 “But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to **each one** individually as He wills.”

1 Corinthians 12:31 “But earnestly desire the best gifts...”

**W**hich is the best gift or manifestation of the Holy Spirit? The best gift might be considered the one(s) that fulfills and accomplishes God’s purpose in and through the situation at a specific time. It is the *one* you need to get the job done! The manifestation that the Holy Spirit may choose to operate through in one instance may be different than another circumstance a few moments later. Each operation of the Holy Spirit is unique and specifically intended to accomplish and meet a particular need.

1 Corinthians 14:1-5 <sup>(1)</sup>“Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy. <sup>(2)</sup>For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands him; however in the spirit he speaks mysteries. <sup>(3)</sup>But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men. <sup>(4)</sup>He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the Church. <sup>(5)</sup>I wish you all spoke with tongues, but even more that you prophesied; for he who prophesies is greater than he who speaks in tongues, unless indeed he interprets, that the Church may be receive edification.”

If we were pressed to make a choice about the best gift, it appears that the New Testament often encourages believers and disciples to prophesy, in order that the Church may be edified. It is the heart of God to build up, encourage, strengthen and comfort people. God desires the restoration of revelational relationship with humanity.

When Peter stood up with the other eleven, on the Day of Pentecost, to respond to the questions and criticisms from the citizens about the noise that they had heard he quoted the prophet Joel and said,

Acts 2:16-18 <sup>(16)</sup>“But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: <sup>(17)</sup>“And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams, <sup>(18)</sup>and on My menservants and on my maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days.”

And then, by the direction of the Holy Spirit, Peter adds to the prophetic word, “and they shall prophesy.” I believe he says this to emphasize that the *new creation*, *Genesis Church of Jesus Christ* would be a prophetic voice intended by God’s design to convey His heart to the world, in the same fashion and manner that Jesus of Nazareth did during His earthly ministry. (See Section Three)

## **PRIMARY SCRIPTURAL PURPOSES OF PROPHESYING**

1 Corinthians 14:3 “But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men.”

**Edification** is to build up, to strengthen, to make more effective as a Christian and as a member of the body of Christ and in whatever ministry function that person has. The Greek word that is translated “edification”, “oikodome”, is a construction term which combines the word “oikos” (dwelling, family, house or household, family shield), and “doma”, (housetop, edifice or parapet wall), which holds people back from walking off the top or the roof of their house.

**Exhortation** is to stimulate, to admonish, encourage and stir up. The Greek word that is interpreted “exhortation”, “paraklesis”, means a calling to one’s side. “Come here.” It is primarily an encouragement, such as a coach might give to a member of his team at a crucial time. To admonish may include severe warning, but does not include condemnation.

Condemnation and confusion are not from the Holy Spirit. The ministry of the Holy Spirit does not discourage believers. (See also 2 Corinthians 5:19 and Romans 8:1.) It should be recognized that an immature or backslidden believer may choose to be offended or discouraged by a particular expression of the Spirit, especially when the Holy Spirit is revealing an area in that believer’s heart that needs to be changed or simply removed from his life

**Comfort:** In reviewing the gospel of John Chapters 14, 15 and 16 we see that at least once in each of these chapters Jesus calls the Holy Spirit a Comforter. It is the same root word as the Greek for “exhort” in 1 Corinthians 14:3, “paramuthia”. The term that Jesus used in describing the ministries of the Holy Spirit was “parakletos”, advocate - one called in to help you and plead your cause. “Paramuthia” is used only once in the New Testament in 1 Corinthians 14:3. The word is an address spoken closely or intimately to someone; hence denoting consolation and comfort with a great deal of tenderness.

**Over-emphasis of any truth to the practical exclusion of other truth will produce error in the life of the Church.**

Exhortation is more of a forward-looking view while comfort is more of a backward view. Exhortation says, “You can do it! Go out there and do a great job! This is your destiny; seize the moment!” “Be careful not to go beyond this point.” Comfort usually consoles for things of the past such as, “It wasn’t your fault. It will be better tomorrow. This kind of thing happens to all of us at one time or another. That doesn’t mean you’re a failure, you will get another chance.” We need a balanced approach and we need to guard against the tendency to error on one side or the other with unbalanced extremes depending upon our human nature. Over-emphasis of any truth to the practical exclusion of other truth will

produce error in the life of the Church.

In general the Church today is far too casual, indifferent, naive or even flippant and uncaring regarding the manifestation of the Holy Spirit through prophecy. We need to cultivate and nurture a heightened esteem for this “gift” of God. The “gift” of God is not prophecy... it is the

indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. The “gift” is a person. What many have traditionally termed the gifts of the Holy Spirit are more accurately the manifestations of the Holy Spirit, who is the “gift.” It may seem to some to be only a matter of semantics but it is truly a posturing and attitude of our heart towards God that is revealed in this apparently small distinction.

## **THE MOST VALUABLE UTENSIL IN THE KITCHEN**

Several years ago, during a leadership-training workshop in the Philippines, I used the following illustration to demonstrate this principle, which is also the heart of the mystery of God hidden throughout the ages, which is “Christ in you the hope of Glory,” (Colossians 1:27). This simple illustration seems to clearly demonstrate several important principles that could be applicable and beneficial in our practical, daily Christian life.

While in the midst of a serious discussion relating to the merits of engaging in the cultivation and nurturing of an increased, present tense awareness of the abiding presence of Christ in our daily lives I asked the following question, which seemed to take everyone a little off guard. “Which is the most valuable utensil in the kitchen?” Some of those who were nodding off during the afternoon session were jolted to alertness by the irrelevance and apparent humor of the question.

The question persisted and was repeated. “Which is the most valuable utensil in the kitchen?” At first it seemed that no one really understood the intent or purpose of the question being asked. Some thought that the question related to the cost or expense of purchasing the particular item. It took a few moments and a number of “guided” inquiries before the correct line of thought began to emerge. Some considered the frequency that an item was used as the determining factor in the value of a utensil, while others consider how easily a particular task was accomplished by using a specific tool or device.

“Which is the most valuable utensil in the kitchen?” The query was thrown down like a challenging gauntlet for any in the group to respond to. Many of the answers were good and might have sufficed quite well, but I had a particular purpose in mind and so needed a very specific response.

“The range or the oven!” One quickly responded believing the answer was in the purchase price of the utensil. While another countered, “No, it’s the refrigerator!?” Knowing that it was the most frequently used, at least in his house.

Without much thought about the question one of the younger people in the group revealed the generational differences in the group when he confidently asserted, “It must be the microwave!” And yet one more declared that for him it was the intercom that his wife used to call the family together for meals and played music throughout the house.

Each of those who responded waited for that reassuring nod they would affirm that their answer was true and had unlocked the passageway of understanding, but instead only more guided questions seemed to result.

“What if I needed to open a can of tomato soup for lunch? Which is the most valuable utensil in the kitchen to me at that moment?”

Of course the response was swift and confidently to the point. “The can opener!”

“And what if I wanted to brown the bread for toast, which utensil would I use?”

“The toaster!” One spoke up immediately.

By this time the group was growing restless, thinking they were possibly being insulted by these simple questions with such blatantly obvious answers. With unhidden frustration one of the participants demanded to hear what I thought was the appropriate answer; each one of them being stumped and yet knowing that the answer would become extremely obvious when they finally arrive at their desired destination.

“Which is the most valuable utensil in the kitchen?” A dramatic pause only served to aggravate the situation further. “The one necessary to accomplish the task at hand.” The blank look on the face of several of the students prompted an additional, “What ever it takes to get the job done.”

Immediately the responses varied from, “How do you expect us to get that?” to, “I still don’t understand.” But within a few moments it became unmistakable clear that everyone had grasped the idea.

After a few minutes of laughing at the simplicity of the answer to the riddle another question was again thrown out for their consideration. “Where are the utensils?”

More carefully now one of the students offered, “In the kitchen?”

“Yes!” was their immediate reward, followed by, “And where do I go if I need a particular utensil to accomplish a particular task?”

“The kitchen!” asserted one quickly. Everyone was feeling a bit giddy with the whole dialog,

“Yes! Yes!” came the second responsive reward. “And where is the kitchen?”

The excited crowd simmered in careful consideration of what they perceived was another of their teacher’s infamous trick questions. A timid response came from the back of the room. “The kitchen is in the house.” In some rural regions where we travel the cooking area is actually outside the living quarters.

“Yes!” My excitement was not fully appreciated by the a group of people who had no idea how a discussion of utensils in a kitchen could be applicable to spiritual matters and especially some thing so serious as, “Christ in you, the hope of glory.”

The point is that all the gifts of the Holy Spirit are resident in the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit is resident in you. Therefore all the gifts of the Holy Spirit are resident in and available to you as the Holy Spirit determines. The same is true of the “Christ” anointing of God being in you. All that is in Christ is in you and resident and available for you to avail of. So that we might be able to say, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me!”

This simple paradigm shift in thinking can have a profound affect upon our faith and walking out the things of the Kingdom of God in this present life. God is not “out there” some place. God is dwelling within each of us, if we have been born a new of the Spirit of God. Our struggle is not trying to find something outside of ourselves as though we were on a treasure hunt, but to find and release the treasure of God within us, in these earthen vessels of flesh and blood.

**Chapter Four Study Notes:**

1) The best gift is the one that fulfills God's \_\_\_\_\_ in and through a particular situation at a specific time. \_\_\_\_\_

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2) If one were pressed to identify the most valuable gift, it seems that the New Testament often encourages believers to \_\_\_\_\_ in order that the Church might be built up or edified.

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3) The New Testament Church should be a prophetic voice to convey God's \_\_\_\_\_ to the world, just as Jesus did during His earthly ministry.

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4) Edification is to \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and make more \_\_\_\_\_ each person as a Christian in the Body of Christ. \_\_\_\_\_

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5) Exhortation means to \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and stir up.

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6) In John chapters 15, 15 and 16 Jesus calls the Holy Spirit a \_\_\_\_\_.

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## CHAPTER FIVE

# THE PRIMARY FOCUS AND DIRECTION OF NEW TESTAMENT PROPHECY



Through the years it has been thought that New Testament prophecy was to be primarily directed and focused towards the needs and maturity of the Church such as revealed in 1 Corinthians 14:3, "... he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men." This conception is predicated upon the generally accepted perception that the normally accepted believers' meeting is an accurate representation of what took place in the New Testament. When we realize that much of what is presently practiced in the typical Christian Church meeting throughout the earth is actually unsubstantiated by any scriptural precedence, we are able to recognize that our present methodologies are actually formatted in such a way as to severely limit the operation of the manifestation of the Holy Spirit through the gift of prophecy. The current religious system under which the vast majority of Christianity strives to exist is foreign to the New Testament and is actually a perversion of God's design and His heart's intent. It may be argued that the current system is actually designed to purposely hinder and limit the expression of the anointing of God in and through the individual believers as they gather together corporately. From this perspective it might be further argued that such a system is actually against the anointing of God being freely or appropriately manifested through the Church, as such it is "anti-Christ." (See Section Three.)

There is yet an additional dimension to New Testament prophecy that we rarely, if ever, witness in today's politically correct, seeker sensitive, westernized perversion of Christianity. It is possible that this additional element is part of the equation that turned the world upside-down in the beginning of the Church's historical march across the planet to take the nations out of the grasp of Satan's control, for God's glory and the honor of His name. It seems likely that this particular element shall be restored to the Church in the last days in order that the Church may finish the task begun so many centuries ago.

### WHERE IS YOUR GOD?

Psalms 35:19-26 <sup>(19)</sup>Let them not rejoice over me who are wrongfully my enemies; nor let them wink with the eye who hate me without a cause. <sup>(20)</sup>For they do not speak peace, but they devise deceitful matters against the quiet ones in the land. <sup>(21)</sup>They also opened their mouth wide against me, and said, 'Aha, aha! Our eyes have seen it.' <sup>(22)</sup>This You have seen, O LORD; do not keep silence. O Lord, do not be far from me. <sup>(23)</sup>Stir up Yourself, and awake to my vindication, to my cause, my God and my Lord. <sup>(24)</sup>Vindicate me, O LORD my God, according to Your righteousness; and let



them not rejoice over me. <sup>(25)</sup>Let them not say in their hearts, ‘Ah, so we would have it!’ Let them not say, ‘We have swallowed them up.’ <sup>(26)</sup>Let them be ashamed and brought to mutual confusion who rejoice at my hurt; let them be clothed with shame and dishonor who exalt themselves against me.”

This could easily be the prayer of many saints today who lament the scorn of the world against our faith and trust in God. The world is trying to “swallow up” the “quiet ones in the land.” In verse 22 the psalmist cries aloud to God, “Do not keep silence. O Lord, do not be far from me.” It is this desire of the psalmist that we may want to consider more carefully. He is praying that the Lord would be near and He would make Himself known in a way that would not be silent. It might be appropriate that God would speak in some fashion and add His testimony against those who wrongfully opposed the psalmist. This would vindicate the writer’s faith and trust in his God and Lord.

Psalm 42:1-3 <sup>(1)</sup>“As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for You, O God. <sup>(2)</sup>My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God? <sup>(3)</sup>My tears have been my food day and night, while they continually say to me, ‘Where is your God?’”

This is the essence of the heart cry of those who oppose the knowledge of God. “Where is your God?” This is the cry of many throughout the whole earth. For some it is said in mocking sarcasm, while for others it is spoken in reverent hope. Regardless of the manner in which the question is asked, it is a legitimate inquiry that deserves to be answered. Such an inquiry should press us to our faces to cry aloud for God’s mercy to be revealed to the scoffer and unbeliever that God would reveal Himself in some manner.

Psalm 42:6-10: <sup>(6)</sup>“O my God, my soul is cast down within me; therefore I will remember You from the land of the Jordan, and from the heights of Hermon, from the Hill Mizar. <sup>(7)</sup>Deep calls out to deep at the noise of Your waterfalls; all Your waves and billows have gone over me. <sup>(8)</sup>The LORD will command His loving kindness in the daytime, and in the night His song shall be with me - a prayer to the God of my life. <sup>(9)</sup>I will say to God my Rock, ‘Why have You forgotten me? Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?’ <sup>(10)</sup>As with a breaking of my bones, my enemies reproach me, while they say to me all day long, ‘Where is your God?’”

Where is our God? How should we answer those who ask such a question, whether they are asking in sarcastic contempt or with serious consideration? Even within our own lives, occasionally the oppressive demands of this world cause us to challenge the character of God by asking, “Where are You God? Why have You forsaken me?”

In many lands across the globe today the advancement of the Kingdom of God is encountering some of the most well equipped and hostile antagonist of its history. There is a violent adversarial mindset and spirit against the claims of exclusivity of Jesus of Nazareth as the only sufficient, God ordained and accepted payment for mankind’s sin. The fear of man, pluralism and complacency have dulled the prophetic edge of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, but the Holy Spirit is sharpening His sword in the mouth of Jesus in this generation. The prophetic voice of God is once again being heard.

In the same way that there was a long period of silence between Nehemiah and the final prophets of the Old Testament and the prophetic anointing of John the Baptist and of the Son of God who both fulfilled the prophecies of old, but in a unfamiliar fashion; so likewise the draught of a prophet-less church has come to an end.

## **THE FALSE BRIDAL PARADIGM**

Micah 7:8-10: <sup>(8)</sup>“Do not rejoice over me, my enemy; when I fall, I will arise; when I sit in darkness, the LORD will be a light to me. <sup>(9)</sup>I will bear the indignation of the LORD, because I have sinned against Him, until He pleads my case and executes justice for me. He will bring me forth to the light; I will see His righteousness. <sup>(10)</sup>Then she who is my enemy will see, and shame will cover her who said to me, ‘Where is the LORD your God?’ My eyes will see her; now she will be trampled down like mud in the streets.”

Two items should be noted in these verses. The first is the reference to a female who is an enemy. There is no reference with a feminine pronoun prior to verse ten and there is no use of a feminine pronoun after this verse. It seems to stand alone in the middle of this section of scripture. The other thing to note is the additional phrase, ‘the LORD’ in the question, “Where is your God?” In Micah the reference to “the LORD” is mocking the relational submission and obedience of the true Bride of Christ who shall be vindicated by the presence of her radiant Bridegroom King. In the 17<sup>th</sup> chapter of Revelation we are introduced to an image of a Scarlet Woman, Mystery Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots. This imagery is historically accepted as an example of a false church, a counterfeit bride of Christ. There is a false church/bride today, which denies the Word of God and ridicules and attacks those who practice a Biblical faith in Christ; especially that a person might be able to experience a supernatural spiritual awareness of the presence of God dwelling within them. The added phrase, “the LORD” makes reference to a relationship, which the enemy mockingly challenges, because she has never experienced a restoration of revelational relationship with God in her own life.

## **JOEL’S CORNERSTONE**

Joel 2:17-19 <sup>(17)</sup>“Let the priests, who minister to the LORD, weep between the porch and the altar; let them say, ‘Spare Your people, O LORD, and do not give Your heritage to reproach, that the nations should rule over them. Why should they say among the peoples, ‘Where is their God?’ <sup>(18)</sup>Then the LORD will be zealous for His land, and pity His people. <sup>(19)</sup>The LORD will answer and say to His people, ‘Behold I will send you grain and new wine and oil, and you will be satisfied by them; I will no longer make you a reproach among the nations.’”

Our God is compassionate towards those who will seek His face with this extent of fervent desperation, crying out for mercy. God repeatedly promises that He will respond to our heart’s cry and answer.

Notice that the nations rule over the people of God. This should be taken literally relating to Israel, but it may also be applied figuratively to the Church. In the case of so many believers today, the things of this world rule over their lives. Circumstances and situations control them more than the Word and Heart of their God. In this context there is a severe mocking by the world against the faith of those who believe in God because there seems to be no benefit for them or relief from the torment, tribulation and difficulties that come upon the whole earth. The devil attacks the character of our God. He asks, “Where is your God when you need Him?” “There is no God.” “If your God were real He would never allow you to suffer in this way.” The accusations against God’s character can be relentless until the believer learns how to shut up the mouth of the serpent and accuser of the brethren.

In verse 19 we read, “The LORD will answer and say to His people...” God wants to speak to His people! God’s nature is communicative! God wants to restore revelational relationship between Himself and humanity! That is the reason that God sent His Son into the world. Jesus

did not come only to save us from our sinful nature and the consequences of judgment against sin, but to save us to a full restoration of reciprocating revelational relationship with God, that we might have fellowship with the Father. This is God's heart towards His inheritance in the saints (Ephesians 1:18), that we might know Him and enjoy Him and bring glory, honor, praise and pleasure to Him.

Joel 2:27 "Then you shall know that I am in the midst of Israel: I am the LORD your God and there is no other. My people shall never be put to shame."

Here again, God affirms the restoration of His relational posture with Israel, "I am the LORD your God." As a result of the relationship He will never allow them to be put to shame. These promises are directly related to Israel, but because we are engrafted into the Jewish community through abiding faith in Jesus of Nazareth, God has given Himself to our well being also. The most significant statement in this verse, as it relates to our topic, is that God promises, "I am in the midst..." in answer to the question, "Where is the LORD your God?" God Himself provides the answer here.

This promise is followed by another, which Peter quoted in explanation of the phenomena experienced on the Day of Pentecost recorded in Acts 2.

Joel 2:28-29 <sup>(28)</sup>"And it shall come to pass afterward that I shall pour out My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. <sup>(29)</sup>And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days."

There is a conditional clause in this promise. "And it shall come to pass afterward..." It might be important to consider; "After what?" Some might argue that the "afterward" relates to all that had been previously stated in the chapter, at least back to verses 12 through 17. Or, it may refer to the "then" of verse 18, which is also a time word. But, I believe that it relates most directly to the "then" of verse 27, relating to the restoration of revelational relationship and an awareness of God's presence being in the midst of the people.

Jesus boldly echoes a similar promise as Joel 2:27 in Matthew 18:20, "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them." God promises, "I am in the midst..." in answer to the question, "Where is the LORD your God?" Jesus of Nazareth provides a similar answer here, "I am in the midst of them."

There is an interesting phrase in 1 Corinthians 5:4 relating to this. "In the name of Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together... with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ..." The word used for "power" here is the Greek word "dunamis" and is translated; miraculous power, (77x), mighty work (11x), strength (7x), miracle (7x), might (4x), virtue (3x), mighty (2x). When we are gathered together in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, then He promises to be in the midst of us. I have written in the margin of my Bible, "Where is the power in our gatherings?" 2 Timothy 3:1 says, "But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come:" Verse 5 declares that there will be those who practice their Christian faith, "...having a form of godliness but denying it's power." The "power" that will be denied is the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ manifested in the midst of His people to change and heal lives.

In the *end days* "perilous times" are defined by the gathering together of people who are, "lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents (self-ruled), unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal (speaking of violence), despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such turn away!" This list of character traits describes many of the people occupying our prison systems today; sadly this list just as aptly describes many of those who occupy the pews and pulpits of

our churches today. “Where is our Lord God?” Is He in the midst of such fellowships that complacently tolerate and even condone such attitudes as those described in 2 Timothy 3:2-4? When Paul writes, “From such people turn away!” I believe he is indicating that the Lord will not be in their midst, due to their unwillingness to repent and turn away from their habitual practice of sinful attitudes and actions... even though they have been made aware of the standard of righteousness and holiness required by the Lord.

## THE ADDED PHRASE

When we examine Acts 2:16-18, where on the Day of Pentecost, after receiving the indwelling presence of the anointing of God, we see that Peter stood before the crowd and said, <sup>(16)</sup>“But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: <sup>(17)</sup>“And it shall come to pass in the **last days**, say God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams, <sup>(18)</sup>and on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; **and they shall prophesy.**” The “last days” of Joel 2:28 and Acts 2:17 are the same as 2 Timothy 3:1. We are in the “last days” and we can rightfully expect God to pour out His Spirit as He did on the day of Pentecost.

In investigation of Peter’s quote of the prophet Joel we see that he added, at the very end, the phrase, “and they shall prophesy.” This phrase is in line with the heart and theme of Joel’s prophecy, but was not a part of it. Peter was speaking under the unction and anointing of the indwelling presence of God and spoke by revelation of the Holy Spirit. The promised manifestation of receiving the Holy Spirit was that those who received the Spirit would prophesy. This is the prophetic promise of Joel and historic evidence of Acts that those who received the Holy Spirit would prophesy. The evidence of speaking in tongues was never promised in the Old Testament prophecies relating to receiving the Holy Spirit. Tongues are appropriate and to be expected, but the prophetic promised evidence of receiving the Holy Spirit was that the recipient would prophesy.

**This is the prophetic promise of Joel and historic evidence of Acts, that those who received the Holy Spirit would prophesy.**

1 Corinthians 14:22-25 <sup>(22)</sup>“Therefore tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers: but prophesying is not for unbelievers but for those who believe. <sup>(23)</sup>Therefore if the whole Church comes together in one place and all speak with tongues and there come in those who are uninformed or unbelievers, will they not say that you are out of your mind? <sup>(24)</sup>But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an uninformed person comes in, he is convinced by all; he is convicted by all. <sup>(25)</sup>And thus the secrets of his heart are revealed; and so falling down on his face, he will worship God and report that **God is truly among you.**”

Jesus promised that when the Holy Spirit returned to the world He would produce conviction for sin, righteousness, and judgment.

John 16:8-11: <sup>(8)</sup>“And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: <sup>(9)</sup>of sin, because they do not believe in Me; <sup>(10)</sup>of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; <sup>(11)</sup>of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.”

The evidence of scripture is that this conviction is primarily the result of prophecy through believers as the Holy Spirit anointed and directed them. Paul wrote in Romans 10:14, “How then

shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?" The word "preacher" might be defined as one who proclaims the Word of God: a herald, a prophet; or one who prophesies. In verse 17 Paul adds, "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." We have historically relegated "the Word" to the written word on the pages of the Bible, but God is not limited to the use of only those who are able to read or own a copy of the Bible. If that were true then many millions of illiterate believers would have been swept into dark judgment through the centuries, and even today. The word here, in this context, refers to the prophetic word spoken by the Holy Spirit through a believer. Prophetic evangelism exposes the very secrets and intents of the heart of man, things that can be known by no other means than supernaturally. This proves to the hearer that God is and that He is engaged in their lives in a meaningful manner.

Listen to the testimony of a woman who received prophetic ministry from Jesus in John 4:29. "Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?" The Word of Knowledge that Jesus received from the Holy Spirit in verse 17-18 revealed the sin in the woman's life; it also persuaded her that Jesus was a prophet, (verse 19). As she continued to listen to His words she became convinced that this man might be more than a prophet, and was perhaps the Christ, or long awaited Messiah of the Jewish people (John 4:39). As a result of her testimony of the prophetic word of knowledge that Jesus declared to her, many from her city came out to listen to Him. Many believed in Him as they listened to His words. Then they said to the woman, "Now we believe, not because of what you have said, for we ourselves have heard Him and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world" (John 4:41-42). Today the same thing will take place when we minister prophetically to a lost and dying, hopelessly dysfunctional world. The people who live and work around us will say, "**Surely God is among you.**"

Hebrews 4:12-13 <sup>(12)</sup>"For the Word of God is living and powerful (active), and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. <sup>(13)</sup>And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account."

Historically many believers have limited the "Word of God" in verse 12 to only the written word, or perhaps the prepared preached word of a professional clergyman or respected teacher. But, God's intent is that we should all prophesy, that we all may learn and be encouraged and built up in our holy faith. If we would train and equip the whole body of Christ in how to minister in prophecy as God intended, it would greatly multiply the fruitfulness of the Church, reaping a great harvest for the glory of the Father (John 15). This is one of the conditions of the "last days" end time harvest of the age: the equipping and releasing of God's people to do God's work God's way through the manifestation of the Holy Spirit as it pleases Him.

Revelation 19:6-10 <sup>(6)</sup>"And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, 'Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! <sup>(7)</sup>Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.' <sup>(8)</sup>And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. <sup>(9)</sup>Then he said to me, 'Write: Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!' And he said to me, 'These are the true sayings of God.' <sup>(10)</sup>And I fell at his to worship him. But he said to me, 'See that you do not do that! I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! **For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.**'"

Many might say that John fell at the feet of the “fellow servant” because of some attribute such as physical size or appearance, but John had been witness to many spectacular sights in heaven by this time and would not have been so susceptible to the appearance of the creatures he encountered. I propose that John fell to his knees in response to the prophetic revelation that he seemed to receive in verse 8 and the prophetic word relating to the “wife of Christ” and “the marriage supper of the Lamb” in verse 9. A God given, heaven inspired prophetic revelation and word will inspire worship-like awe in the recipients. The natural response is to be humbled and to bow down. We should follow the example of this servant in guarding against the wrongful placement of appreciation and adoration towards or on the one who ministers the prophetic word. There is an appropriate expression of appreciation. All such adulation should be directed towards the person of God the Father, Jesus or the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 14:25).

“For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” 1 Corinthians 14:31 says that as disciples of and believers in Jesus Christ we can all prophesy that we may all learn and be encouraged in our most holy faith. As we cultivate and nurture the gift of prophecy within and through our lives, we enlarge our capacity to witness to the testimony of Jesus of Nazareth in the power and authority of the Holy Spirit with signs and wonders. This is God’s desire and intent for all members of the Body of Christ.

Revelation 12:17 “And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and **have the testimony of Jesus Christ.**”

The dragon directs its attack specifically against those believers in Christ who are disciples that obey His commandments, making them the friend of Jesus (John 15:14), and those who have the testimony of Jesus Christ, the anointed one of God. **The dragon’s enraged attack is not against religion but against those who have the testimony of Jesus within them by the spirit of prophecy.** This is not to say that there isn’t conflict with Christians in general, surely there must be, for even the name of Jesus provokes the enemy’s wrath. But, in the last days the dragon’s severest attacks shall come against those who prophesy the testimony of Christ. I propose that this attack was marshaled against the offspring of the woman with the change of the manner of meetings that the fellowship of saints engaged in. The typical believers’ meeting of today hinders practically all expression of the gift of prophecy among the general members of the congregation, resulting in believers who lack the ability to reproduce the life of Christ in others and the manifestation of the Spirit of prophecy which is the testimony of Jesus Christ.

**Chapter Five Study Notes:**

1) The traditional method of expression of Church life handed down through the centuries often \_\_\_\_\_ the operation of the manifestation of prophecy and other gifts of the Holt Spirit in the believer's meeting. \_\_\_\_\_

2) What is the essence of the heart's cry of those who oppose the knowledge of God. \_\_\_\_\_

3) God wants to save us to restore \_\_\_\_\_ between Himself and humanity.

4) Define "reciprocating revelational relationship." \_\_\_\_\_

5) List twelve character attributes of people in the "last days". \_\_\_\_\_

6) According to Acts 2:16-18, what should we expect when God pours out His Spirit on His people? \_\_\_\_\_

7) What might people say when we minister prophetically to a lost and dying, hopelessly dysfunctional world? \_\_\_\_\_

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## CHAPTER SIX

# CULTIVATION AND DEVELOPMENTAL SEASONS



Isaiah 50:4-5 <sup>(4)</sup>“The Lord God has given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him who is weary. He awakens me morning by morning. He awakens my ear to hear as the learned. <sup>(5)</sup>The Lord God has opened my ear; and I was not rebellious, nor did I turn away.”

**T**his verse from Isaiah is recognized by many as being prophetic regarding the fellowship, which Jesus shared with the Father during His earthly life among men. But, it also speaks to us today that we should meet with God with a sense of anticipation that He will instruct us how to speak a word to those who are weary and in need of one. Jesus met early in the morning with God, (Mark 1:35) or would spend the whole night with God (Luke 6:12) to get the words He was to speak. Old Testament prophets were to eat the word He gave them and then to speak it out. For example in Ezekiel 3:1, God instructed His servant: “Son of man, eat what you find; eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel.”

The scripture mentioned above from Isaiah 50:4-5 reveals that the Holy Spirit instructed Jesus in the following ways.

1. What to say
2. To whom to speak
3. How to speak (manner, attitude, tone)
4. When to speak (season) at the right time

In the life of our Lord and King there were established patterns of fellowship with God. His was not a nonchalant, take it or leave it attitude. Our Lord’s example is one of absolute abandonment to the purposes and destiny of God for His life. As a result He sought His Father’s will diligently in a determined and regimental fashion.

The importance and practice of personal prayer in the life of our Lord Jesus is clearly emphasized in the following scriptures. Many more examples could be provided but these should be enough to establish His pattern principle for those seeking first the Kingdom of God.

Matthew 14:23 “And when He had sent the multitude away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. Now when evening came, He was alone there.”

Mark 1:35 “Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out to a solitary (deserted) place; and there He prayed.”

Luke 5:16 “So He Himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed.”



Luke 11:1 “Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, that one of the disciples said to Him, ‘Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.’”

“Teach us to pray” is more than a request for words to speak. It is a request for the desire and ability to share the heart of the Father in the same manner that Jesus did through His life.

We must cultivate and nurture a similar experience in our prayer times of fellowship with our heavenly Father. Our powerlessness as a Church is directly proportional to our prayerlessness as a Church. Where there is no prayer there will be no power. The Holy Spirit knows who has been faithful to meet with Him to receive His word for those who are weary. The Lord knows those who are His and becoming increasingly submitted to His direction in their lives, who are obedient to His voice. He will direct the steps of a righteous man in the way he should go and to whom he should minister the heart of God. The Holy Spirit watches over His Word to perform it. He knows who has met with Him in the morning in this manner and with this heart. Then He will be able to cause the spirit of a man to be alert to the needs of those around him and to the promptings of His direction in their life throughout the day. God shall not be mocked... what so ever a man sows that he shall also reap. Prayer is not essentially or primarily an act of asking “of Him” but is an occasion of being “with Him,” and in our being with Him the Holy Spirit may instruct us what to ask of Him, or He may simply delight in our fellowship.

## **PROPHETIC EVANGELISM**

This verse in Isaiah and the application mentioned above is also a foundation stone for “Prophetic Evangelism.” It is not unreasonable for a disciple to expect the Holy Spirit to reveal the hidden needs of even unbelievers or strangers during their daily lives, in the marketplace of life. This gift is not limited to a few but is readily available to all who will avail themselves of it with a pure heart and earnest desire to reach others with the gospel of the Kingdom of God and the heart of God. This manner of evangelism will often be accompanied with supernatural signs and wonders, in addition to words of wisdom and knowledge, (1 Corinthians 12:8).

Prophetic evangelism cannot be printed on a piece of paper and handed out on the street, or left on the table at a restaurant; it must be lived out in direct interaction with others. It will be uniquely crafted by the Holy Spirit for each individual and speak to them on a heart to heart basis. We often say that God knows us intimately; that He knows what we are thinking and feeling. Prophetic evangelism is a manifestation of that attribute of God’s love and concern in a tangible way.

**“But there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets...”**

While there are many examples of this manifestation of the Holy Spirit throughout the Bible, and especially the New Testament, my favorite is the encounter of Daniel and King Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel chapter 2. The king had a dream and his spirit was so troubled that his sleep left him. He commanded that his magicians, astrologers, sorcerers and soothsayers tell him what his dream was and to interpret it’s meaning without him telling them what the dream was. The king was looking for a supernatural encounter and explanation and proof of the authenticity of these counselors and wise men. Because the dream was on a spirit level I believe the Holy Spirit hid the knowledge of it from the practitioners of darkness and deception. The king began killing the wise men of his realm in his frustration, (vs. 13).

Together with his friends Daniel sought the Lord for mercy concerning the secret of the dream. In verse 27 we read, “Daniel answered in the presence of the king and said, ‘The secret which the king has demanded, the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, and the soothsayers

cannot declare to the king.” Today the world is demanding answers to the secrets and mysteries of life. They are looking for authentic ambassadors of Christ to step forward and provide the evidence that there is a living God, which is exactly what Daniel did in verse 28. “But there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days. The dream, and the visions of your head upon your bed, were these...” Verse 30 is very interesting when considering the idea of Holy Spirit directed prophetic evangelism. “But as for me, this secret has not been revealed to me because I have more wisdom than anyone living, but for our sakes who make known the interpretation to the king, **and that you may know the thoughts of your heart.**”

The king had said nothing about visions to his wise men in verse 3, only that he had had a dream. The Holy Spirit had not only revealed what and the why but also the how, in order to fully authenticate Daniel’s claim to be representing the true and living God. The Holy Spirit is looking for disciples today who will boldly declare God’s heart to this generation; to reveal the secrets of their hearts so that they might know there is a God in heaven who cares for and loves them. Then as 1 Corinthians 14:25 explains, “And thus the secrets of his heart are revealed; and so falling down on his face (humbling himself), he will worship God and report that God is truly among you.”

## **DEVELOPMENTAL PROCESS OF A PROPHETIC WORD**

Ecclesiastes 3:1 “To everything there is a season. A time for every purpose under heaven.”

Ecclesiastes 3:11 “He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also He has put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end.”

Ecclesiastes 8:6<sup>(a)</sup> “Because for every matter there is a time and judgment...”

In the process of developing an expression of the prophetic heart of God there is often a separate place and time for the following items, depending upon whether the expression is spontaneous or crafted.

**Receiving → Refining → Realizing → Releasing → Reviewing →**

- **Receiving the Burden and Word of the Lord;**
- **Refining the Word and the Worker;**
- **Realizing the Word made Flesh in the Worker;**
- **Releasing the Burden of the Word and the Wonder of God in due season;**
- **Reviewing the Witness of the Word made flesh in others.**

**Receiving** ~ We must be willing to receive the Word of God and maintain a posture and position in Christ to carry the burden of the Lord. The burden of the Lord might be described as the responsibility to carry the Word of God to full term until the Holy Spirit births it. We will often receive a burden for someone or something before receiving the Word of God for that situation. It may be in groanings and heart travail before the burden first becomes apparent. The burden and the Word of the Lord are often received in private... in the closet of our fellowship with God.

**Refining** ~ There is a process in the Holy Spirit where both the burden and the Word of God are refined in the worker. There is a greater clarity and articulation brought to the Word of God both in understanding and application. The Holy Spirit also seeks to refine the worker under the

burden of the Lord and to the full measure of the word. This often involves the attitude and posture of the heart, but may also include increased sensitivity to the Holy Spirit or the circumstances of others. Ideally, during this time the worker rises up to the level of the Word of the Lord that he has received.

**Realizing** ~ The worker who has allowed the Word of God to become flesh within himself will have a greater authority in the Holy Spirit at the time of releasing the word to others. Realizing requires allowing the word to become a part of the character and life of the worker, being lived out in daily lifestyle practice. The worker must become the first recipient and disciplined one of “the Word” he has received (2 Timothy 2:6). This level of prophetic utterance exceeds simply providing others with another wonderful teaching. This provides others with a living example that can be witnessed and imitated. John 1:13 says, “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” The same thing happens today when believers allow the Word of God to become flesh within their lives, causing them to be full of grace and truth in balance. They become partakers of His divine nature with the image of Christ Jesus.

**Releasing** ~ Many times the Holy Spirit will hide both the worker and His Word until both have been refined and the reality of the Word of God is realized in the life of the worker. Then, in a particular time and season the Holy Spirit will provide direction on how, when, where, why and to whom the Word of God is to be released. The entire process may take only moments or hours, or it may take weeks (even months and years) of agonizing travail of soul. Then it may be released all at once, or it may be released in pieces over a period of time and in different places. It may be written, or it may be spoken; it may be both, or it may be neither. It may be a song, a poem, a dance, a dramatic portrayal; or it may be a sermon or a book, a booklet, a magazine article or a magazine. It may manifest in an act, such as going to a courthouse and reading particular scriptures at the flagpole. It may simply be released through the changed life of the worker. There should also be a release of the burden of the Lord, after the word has been released

In every situation and regardless of the venue of the release, there shall be a Wonder of God produced to one degree or another. The Wonder may not appear to be a miracle as we think of miracles...it may simply be the wide-eyed astonishment of God’s awesome mercy at being involved and engaged in our day-to-day lives and circumstances. But, there should be an expectation of God accompanying and confirming His Word with signs and wonders in some fashion: change, conviction, confirmation, challenge, chastisement, creativity, etc. God watches over His Word to perform it (Jeremiah 1:12). His testimony of confirmation should be manifest in some manner through or by the release of His Word.

**Reviewing** ~ Ultimately the Word of God is like a seed that, when it is sown, brings forth a harvest of fruit. Being received by others it produces life within them. It is important to adequately and appropriately appraise the effectiveness of the sowing of the seed (gift) that has been given by God through the worker. The review should be both subjective and objective in nature. It should also be confirmed out of the mouth of two or three witnesses. It is very dangerous to proceed through the review process alone. This can result in a skewed, distorted or even perverted appraisal of the situation.

Matthew 10:40-41 <sup>(40)</sup>“He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives me receives Him who sent Me. <sup>(41)</sup>He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet’s reward.”

There is a reward contained within the prophetic word that will be released into and through the lives of those who receive that word and the one whom the Holy Spirit uses. It is appropriate to inspect the fruitfulness of the ministry of the prophetic word to determine if it is actually being

received into the heart and soul of the recipient, or is it like the seed that lands on rocky soil. Many will receive after the appearance of the flesh, but not receive the Word of the Lord into their soul and spirit. Jesus said, "Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46) The people received Jesus after the courtesy and appearance of the flesh but not after the spirit. The word was not mixed with faith, that it might be activated in their lives. (See Chapter 39.)

Along this same line no one should be the *end user* of the prophetic word. People should receive the prophetic word and then proceed through the prophetic process in that person; then being released into the lives of others in one form or another should reproduce the word. The Word of the Lord never fails or dies or ends; it returns to Him... it reverberates and echoes back to heaven.

Luke 1:20 explains that the prophetic words which are spoken will be fulfilled in their own time. There is a time and season to the prophetic word.

**Example:** Several years ago, a lovely young woman in fellowship with my wife and I shared how she had been raised in a denomination which did not allow women to participate in any fashion with the teaching or preaching of God's Word. As a result she had never had an opportunity to cultivate and nurture her prophetic and evangelistic giftings within the assembly of the Body of Christ. This restriction was not present in the current group setting that we enjoyed with her and she began to enjoy a freedom in the Lord that she had never experienced in her life before.

But, as she began to share her heart in a prophetic word or short teaching, her manner of speech became more apparent in the use of sarcasm as a "cute and funny" way of getting her point across.

One day while praying for her, according to Hebrews 10:24, "And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works," the Holy Spirit pointed out to me how this practice would severely limit her usability by Him for releasing a more mature and effective word of instruction or prophecy. I received a burden to share this insight with her in order to aid in her growth as a useful disciple and her ministry to others.

Over a short time the Lord helped me refine the message I needed to share with her. He reminded me of Isaiah 53:9, "Nor was any deceit found in His mouth." In other words, Jesus always said what He meant and meant what He said. Holy Spirit explained that expressions of sarcasm usually express the opposite of what one really means. For example one might say about another, "He sure is a quiet soul," when in reality the person being spoken of was rather loud, rude and at times obnoxious. The Holy Spirit reminded me that the devil is "the father of lies," (John 8:44) and the spoken lie became the property of the devil to twist and distort, creating havoc, misunderstanding wounding and disruption of relationships between people. He showed me how this practice of "cute and funny" sarcasm came out of her areas of woundedness and as a means of carnal self defense.

In the process of allowing the Holy Spirit refine the word He had given me for this dear sister, He pointed out to me occasional times when I had used a sarcastic phrase in my own speech. I had to confess this as sin, repent of the use any and all sarcasm in my speech, and seek His forgiveness and grace for more holy and acceptable speech patterns in every area of my life. Only then was I prepared to address this issue in my sister's life. This followed the Kingdom principle found in 2 Corinthians 10:6, "and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled."

My wife and I continued to pray for the method and timing for me to share this sensitive word with our precious sister in Christ. We agreed that it would be most appropriate to share it

together with her. Finally an opportunity arose when we alone with her in an unhurried atmosphere. She was sharing how pleased she was to finally be in a group where she, as a woman, was able to share a message she felt God had laid on her heart. I discerned it was a safe time and place to release the word I had been given. First, my wife and I both commented positively on several things she had shared in recent meetings of believers and the way it seemed to edify and encourage the group. Then I was able to gently and carefully share our concerns that the habit of using sarcasm in her everyday speech could limit her usability by God to deliver a prophetic word or teaching that the Holy Spirit could empower for growth and change in the lives of others. I shared the various scriptures and insights I had seen over the several weeks I had been praying about this concern.

At first she was somewhat defensive, explaining that the sarcasm was harmless and simply a part of her unique personality and her way of expressing herself. We did not argue, but encouraged her to prayerfully consider the word we had given her, expressing again our appreciation for the gifts God had placed within her, our confidence in her heart's desire to follow after God with all her strength and our desire that she would be used by the Holy Spirit to the fullest for His kingdom.

As we reviewed this incident we recognized that over a short time we began to see a change in this young lady's speech patterns, and the habit of using sarcasm was being replaced with more appropriate truthful and useful manners of communication for God's glory and the advance of His kingdom. We looked for opportunities to praise the positive changes in her speech patterns, and we continued to pray for the Father's full work in her life.

**Spontaneous vs. Crafted:** There is a distinct and significant difference between the inspirational, *spontaneous* prophetic word that may be given by the Holy Spirit at any particular moment and a *crafted*, seasoned, prepared and refined word. Both are important aspects of an ongoing, healthy, sustainable move of manifestations of the gift of prophecy among and through God's people. As we honor the spontaneous prophetic word by providing an adequate opportunity, venue and judgments, we may expect that the quality and quantity of the prophetic release and anointing will be enlarged in our personal lives and in the expression of the Holy Spirit in our fellowships. A balanced prophetic voice should include both the spontaneous and the prepared or crafted Word of the Lord.

It is interesting that the apostle Paul gave both these instructions to His young son in the faith, Timothy. First he said, "Be diligent to present yourself approved of God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15). This indicated or implied that Timothy needed to study and apply himself to the Word of God in order that he would not be ashamed. Only a few verses later in 2 Timothy 4:2 Paul says, "Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching." Timothy's readiness to minister spontaneously was the result of cultivation and nurturing of the gift of the Holy Spirit within him.

### **Chapter Six Study Notes:**

1) From Isaiah 50:4-5, list four things the Holy Spirit may instruct you on, as you meet with God in His Word and prayer fellowship in the morning.

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2) When the disciples asked Jesus, “Teach us to pray...” what may they have wanted in addition to merely knowing words to speak?

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3) If we meet with God in the morning to receive from Him a word to sustain the weary, what may the Holy Spirit do for us later that same day?

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4) Has the Holy Spirit ever shown you the secret thoughts of another person while you were share a testimony about Jesus? \_\_\_\_\_

Please explain. \_\_\_\_\_

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5) In regard to receiving and developing a prophetic word, briefly define each of the steps outlined in this chapter. Use the lines below if necessary.

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6) What is the difference between an inspirational, spontaneous prophetic word, and a crafted, seasoned, prepared and refined word of prophecy?

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## CHAPTER SEVEN

# THE PROMISE OF THE DAY OF PENTECOST



Acts 2:17-18: <sup>(17)</sup>“And it shall come to pass **in the last days**, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy; your young men shall see visions; your old men shall dream dreams. <sup>(18)</sup>And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; and **they shall prophesy.**”

**T**he Day of Pentecost was the birthing of a reformational and revolutionary, prophetic community of new creatures in Christ upon the earth.

Peter quoted the Old Testament prophecies of Joel 2:28-29, declaring boldly that sons, daughters, young men, old men and even slaves were to all experience ongoing sovereign visitations from God through visions, dreams, revelations, etc.; and that they would prophesy. According to this scripture the promised evidence of receiving the Holy Spirit was not speaking in tongues but “they shall prophesy.” These three words, “they shall prophesy,” were not found in the original text of the prophecy of Joel. Peter added them as the Holy Spirit illuminated his spirit with the revelation of the Kingdom of God, which He was prophetically declaring for the very first time under the anointing and unction of the empowerment of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

When the scripture says, “**I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh,**” we must understand that the original prophecy in Joel 2:28-29 was not speaking about all the peoples, or even *people groups* or nations of the world, but *upon all classes of people*, (ages, gender, classes). The prophecy of Joel was absolutely reformational for the day in which he lived and declared it. The idea of slaves prophesying was absolutely unprecedented in the history of Israel. There had been no record of such a thing happening until this particular day of Pentecost. But later we see in Titus 2:9-10 an admonition to slaves to behave in such a way that their very lives would prophesy regarding the nature of Christ in them. It was absolutely crucial for the development and advancement of this new reformational dispensation of the grace of God to include all classes of people in experiencing His love and mercy. As the Kingdom of God was intended to move out through the entire Gentile world to usher in “the Age of the Gentiles”, this was an essential element necessary to implement God’s manifest destiny for and through His people.

As we travel we meet many people who are partially or wholly in bondage to a slave mentality within their souls, while there are others who maintain a prideful master’s colonizer mentality. There are definite class distinction in the hearts and attitudes of so many people and societies. Pride, discrimination and segregation of peoples by virtue of their race, gender, age,

education or financial well-being seems to be contrary to the expressed heart of God as revealed in the life and death of Jesus of Nazareth. Mutual reciprocating submission and equality seem to be the hallmark of those who are “seeking first the Kingdom of God.” The Holy Spirit lifts up and uses those who are downcast and lowly of spirit, which results in humbling and bringing low those who think more highly of themselves than they should, fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah 40:3-5.

Isaiah 40:3-5 <sup>(3)</sup>“The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. <sup>(4)</sup>Every valley shall be exalted and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; the crooked places shall be made straight and the rough places smooth; <sup>(5)</sup>the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.’”

A New Testament companion to this verse in Isaiah 40 might be:

1 Corinthians 1:18-19 <sup>(18)</sup>“For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. <sup>(19)</sup>For it is written: ‘I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.’”

1 Corinthians 1:26-29 <sup>(26)</sup>“For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. <sup>(27)</sup>But God has chosen the foolish things of this world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things that are mighty; <sup>(28)</sup>and the 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, <sup>(29)</sup>that no flesh should glory in His presence.”

In the prophecy of Joel that Peter referred to on the Day of Pentecost, the Lord declares, “...upon My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit...” There is an element of exclusivity in this promise. The conditional aspect of this promise is that those receiving the Holy Spirit would be God’s servants... those willing to serve the King of Glory.

God is promising to empower those who have made a heartfelt commitment to serving Him. Many people have sought the Baptism of the Holy Spirit without having settled the issue of the Lordship of Christ and servanthood in their lives. The Holy Spirit is the Administrator of the Kingdom of God. His primary purpose in coming to planet earth is to express, extend, expand and establish the Kingdom of God in every sphere of human existence and social order with supernatural means, signs and wonders. God is searching to and fro throughout the whole earth for those whose hearts are set upon Him, seeking first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness (2 Chronicles 16:9, Matthew 6:33).

A direct personal encounter with and experience of the power and presence of God will convince a person that his faith did not come from some other place or country, but from God. It confirms the validity and value of the Word of God for his life. On the day of Pentecost God was bearing testimony to the Word of His grace by taking up a supernatural habitation within human beings. A new species of humanity emerged upon the earth; a new creation in Christ Jesus came forth. Peter later wrote in his first epistle that the Church was to be a “special, chosen people” (1 Peter 2:9), and that they were to provide such a witness to the character of Christ in their own lives as to cause even those who opposed them to “glorify God in the day of visitation” (1 Peter 2:12). **God is not looking for a time of visitation with His people but a place of habitation among His people.** God is searching for a people among whom He might become flesh as He did in the incarnation of Christ, that we might be partakers of His divine nature and conformed to the image of Christ in every way.



**Chapter Seven Study Notes:**

1) What different types of people were included in those who may prophesy according to Acts 2:17-18? \_\_\_\_\_

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2) What is a hallmark characteristic attitude of those who are “seeking first the Kingdom of God?” \_\_\_\_\_

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3) What is the primary purpose of the Holy Spirit as the administrator of the Kingdom of God?

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4) Describe in a sentence or two the “new creation” that came into being on the Day of Pentecost. \_\_\_\_\_

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5) God is seeking a people who are partakers of His \_\_\_\_\_, and conformed to the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.

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## CHAPTER EIGHT

# WOMEN AND THE MANIFESTATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT



It is critically important to affirm the significance and essential role of women in the Church and Kingdom of God. We must strive in our endeavor to reverse the hell-spawned curse that has been perpetuated throughout the centuries against women in the Church, religious and secular societies, and cultures throughout the earth. The savage dishonoring and horrendous disrespect of women throughout the history of the world is nothing less than Lucifer's relentless, hateful attack against the image of the Bride of Christ, the very purpose of the creation of this age and the distinct inheritance of God. The satanic rage of the dragon against the woman and her offspring in Revelation 12:13-17 is the direct result of its being cast out of heaven. God's divine plan for this age is to produce a Bride of like nature and character to reign with the risen, ascended Son of God, Jesus of Nazareth, upon the throne of heaven and earth into the ages to come. This Bride is composed of those elect saints throughout this age who have given themselves wholeheartedly to the Lordship, reign and sacrificial love of Jesus Christ. Lucifer's insane jealousy and prideful rebellion were aroused against this redeemed Bride who would occupy such a place of intimacy, honor and authority with the Lion of the tribe of Judah on the throne. Lucifer, (the Dragon), Satan's rebellion against this plan seems to be the ultimate cause for his being thrust from the presence of God and his honored position in heaven. This also explains his ongoing attack against the Bride of Christ, and women in general. Please consider Romans 5:17; 2 Timothy 2:12; Revelation 5:10; 11:15; 20:6; 22:5. This is the fellowship of the mystery, which has been hidden from the beginning of the age in God, but now is being manifest to the powers and principalities through the Church (Ephesians 3:8-12).

Acts 2:17-18 <sup>(17)</sup>“And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your *daughters* shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams. <sup>(18)</sup>And on My menservants and on My *maidservants* I will pour out My Spirit in those days; and they shall prophesy.”

In the above verse we see that no class of people was omitted from the use of this gift of the Holy Spirit manifested through prophecy. Peter boldly declared that according to the prophet Joel no one would be hindered from participation because of social standing, education, age or gender during his very first declaration of the Kingdom of God after receiving the Holy Spirit, whom the Lord said would lead His disciples into all truth (John 16:23). Peter made it absolutely clear that all women, young and old, free and slave were to be allowed to participate equally in the dispensation of God's grace in this manner. To hinder or refuse anyone the privilege or an opportunity to receive and express the grace of God in this manner is to despise and reject the

grace of God altogether; or to add to the Word of God, making the Word of God of null effect through the traditions which are handed down, such as the Lord condemned in Mark 7:13.

Acts 1:14 "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers."

Women were among those that were gathered in "waiting upon the promise of the Father." There is ample reason to believe that the women would have been just as present as the men on the Day of Pentecost when the scripture says:

Acts 2:1 "When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place."

Acts 2:4 "And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."

Women were present and actively involved with the gifts and ministry of the Holy Spirit throughout the book of Acts. There is absolutely no scriptural evidence to prohibit women from ministering in the gift of prophecy or fulfilling the function of a prophetess. Prophecy appears to be open to women as much as men in the example and practice of the New Testament testimony and historical record of the early Church. The criteria for judging of prophecy are the same regardless of the gender of the one releasing the prophecy.

Acts 21:9 "Now this man had four virgin daughters who prophesied."

Apparently, the evangelist Philip's daughters all prophesied regularly enough to be specifically mentioned by Luke in his narration of the reformation. It should not be assumed that Luke mentioned this fact about Phillip's daughters because it was a rare or unusual circumstance, or else he would have had to provide some explanation and defense. Instead, Luke mentions the information only in passing, almost as a badge of honor that this man had raised four daughters who were sensitive to the voice of the Holy Spirit, even as Phillip had been years earlier when he demonstrated a sensitivity and obedience to the direction of the Holy Spirit when he went to Samaria to conduct city-wide crusades and then to the desert to meet with an Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:4-40). As an example of the ministry of an evangelist in the New Testament, Philip epitomizes the significance of prophetically exposing the secrets of the hearts of those he ministered to through the gift of prophecy. It is indeed interesting that his evangelistic gifting did not produce four daughters who evangelized but four daughters who prophesied.

## **JUDICIAL FIRST WITNESS**

In Matthew 28:1-10 it is women to whom an angel of the Lord appeared and spoke concerning the resurrection of Jesus. It is also to women that the Lord Jesus first appeared and gave the command to go and tell others of His resurrection from the dead. In Luke's writing he also mentioned the same event following the resurrection of Jesus and the commission of the women to proclaim the good news. In the gospel account recorded in Mark 16:1-11 the story is relatively the same except verses 9-11.

Mark 16:9-11 <sup>(9)</sup>"Now when He (Jesus) rose early on the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven demons. <sup>(10)</sup>She went and told those who had been with Him, as they mourned and wept. <sup>(11)</sup>And when they heard that He was alive and had been seen by her, they did not believe."

Even in the gospel of the beloved disciple John, the account of the morning of the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth is relatively the same. In John 20:1 it was Mary Magdalene who "went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away." She told the

good news to Peter and John, and then while they were examining the tomb she stood outside the tomb. After John and Peter left the tomb, two angels appeared within the tomb and spoke to her and then the Lord Jesus Himself appeared outside the tomb and spoke to her. Jesus said, "...go to my brethren and say to them..."

It should be understood that Mary Magdalene, (and the other women when they are mentioned), was the first one sent (Greek "apostolis") at the direct command of the risen Lord and King of creation with the message of the resurrection. One might conclude that she was an *apostle to the apostles* in the strictest sense and definition of the word. It is undeniable by the Biblical testimony that women were the first to proclaim the message of the resurrection of Jesus from the grave. **If God intended that the role of women in the New Testament Church community was to remain the same as that of women in the Jewish custom of the day, (simply possessions of either their father or husband), it is unlikely that every gospel account would have utilized the same testimony, thereby elevating women to such a lofty position as *judicial first witnesses*.**

Lydia in Acts 16:14, was Paul's first European convert to Christianity. Luke wrote that the Lord opened her heart. In this case the Lord chose a woman as *judicial first witness* for the continent of Europe. It is unreasonable to believe that the Holy Spirit later diminished women to a second-class role of subservient unimportance.

Psalms 68:11 "The Lord gives the word [of power]; the women who bear (carry, birth) and publish (the news) are a great host (company)." (Amplified Version)

We have often heard people say statements such as: "If God can't find a man to do the job He will use a woman." In many arenas of Christianity there seems to be a prevailing, hell-spawned, prejudicial attitude towards women that they are primarily suitable for the *small jobs*, but when God wants to do something *important* or significant then He will bring in the *big guns*, so to speak, and use a man. This is such an arrogant, devilish attitude and is in complete contrast to the character and attitude displayed by Jesus of Nazareth and revealed throughout the entire New Testament. We must confront such prideful and arrogant attitudes and actions in the humility and example of Christ with the heart of our Father.

**In many arenas of Christianity there seems to be a prevailing, hell-spawned, prejudicial attitude towards women...**

We should consider very carefully:

- God does not operate at a lack in any way.
- He *makes/creates* what He *needs* to accomplish His purposes.
- His purposes were determined and established before the foundation of the earth.
- Women are never "substitutional" or a "secondary choice" for disobedient or weak men any more that another man is.
- When the Holy Spirit uses any person for anything it is because that is God's primary intent and appointment for that particular person and specific situation.

It is an extremely tragic fact of history that the Christian Church community often reflects the prevailing customs and attitudes and practices of the community and society that surrounds them. Rather, the Church should provide a dynamic and effective testimony and example of the gospel of the Kingdom of God. This testimony of the eternal Kingdom of God should penetrate and confront the fallen, depraved nature of our temporary, worldly cultures.

There is a great deal of current scholarship which asserts that the early Roman Catholic church leaders purposefully omitted references of women being significantly positioned in leadership roles throughout the first 150 years of the Church's existence. It is speculated that this

was done in order to justify and perpetuate their unscriptural, pride-swollen, hell-spawned, *pyramidal* male dominated hierarchy and structure that had emerged by the mid 200's and early 300's. This is in line with the history of destruction that flows out of the Roman hierarchy that has set itself up against the clear and revealed Word and will of God throughout the centuries.

## **OLD TESTAMENT EXAMPLES OF PROPHETESSES**

In the Old Testament there are at least six examples of women who are considered to be "prophetesses." In Exodus 15:20 Miriam is referred to as a prophetess. In Judges 4:4, Deborah; in Nehemiah 6:14, Noahdiah; and in Isaiah 8:3 Isaiah's wife was considered a prophetess (which implies a shared anointing between a husband and a wife). In Luke 2:36 Anna was called a prophetess and would have ministered prior to the advent of Christ.

Interestingly, one woman, Huldah was mentioned twice in the Old Testament (2 Kings 22:14 and 2 Chronicles 34:22). In both accounts she was clearly sought out and chosen to deliver the Word of God, even though there were male contemporaries available in Jerusalem at the same time. The prophets Jeremiah (Jeremiah 1:2) and Zephaniah (Zephaniah 1:1) and perhaps Nahum and Habakkuk were ministering in and around Jerusalem at the same time. In Huldah's case, she is preferred over those men who were her contemporaries. Her example refutes the statement that is occasionally heard in some circles of Christian community that "God uses a woman because He can't find a man who is willing or able to do the job." This statement is often arrogantly used to imply that women are not God's first choice, or that God only uses women as a *last resort*. Nothing can be further from the scriptural and historical testimony of God. One might only consider the testimony of Abigail in 1 Samuel 25, and of so many other women in both the Old Testament and the New.

**Chapter Eight Study Notes:**

1) The \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ of women throughout history is actually Lucifer's (Satan's) attack against the image of the \_\_\_\_\_.

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2) What is God's ultimate plan for this age? \_\_\_\_\_

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3) In Acts 2, Peter declared that no one would be hindered from opportunity to speak or act prophetically by the power of the Holy Spirit, including what groups?

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4) Who were the first apostles sent by Jesus Christ to tell the news of His resurrection from the dead to the other apostles. \_\_\_\_\_

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5) The Church should provide a dynamic and effective \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ of the gospel of the Kingdom of God. \_\_\_\_\_

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6) List 3 Old Testament prophetesses and describe their roles in history.

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## CHAPTER NINE

# PROPHECY AS IT RELATES TO CALLING FORTH EMERGING MINISTRIES



Speaking of the “end days” Jesus said in Matthew 24:36-37, “<sup>(36)</sup>But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only. <sup>(37)</sup>But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.” Many people have expounded upon this prophecy of our Lord over the years. Usually the focus is upon the negative aspects of the “days of Noah,” and rightfully so. But there are also a number of positive aspects of the days of Noah that we should look forward to being present at the time of the coming of the Son of Man. While a careful, Spirit directed study of Genesis chapters 6-8 will provide a wealth of positive aspects to aspire to there is one aspect of the days of Noah that directly pertains to our topic here.

In Genesis 5 we are introduced to the genealogy of Adam. It is very interesting in a number of ways. It speaks of the birth of Lamech, the father of Noah. It also tells us that Noah was the grandson of Methuselah, and the great-grandson of Enoch, a man who walked with God. Each of these personalities have an impact on the preparations of the days of Noah, but nothing so affects our study as verse 29, speaking of Lamech. “And he called his name Noah, saying, ‘This one will comfort us concerning our work and the toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord has cursed.’” Noah’s father prophesied his destiny and purpose, releasing Noah to accomplish God’s purposes through his life. Noah continued the heritage of his great-grandfather Enoch and in Genesis 6:9 the record reads that “...Noah walked with God.”

But the issue here is that Lamech is the first father recorded to have spoken a prophetic blessing into the life of his child. This is an aspect of the “days of Noah” that we have not considered... that before the return of the Son of Man their will be a generation of parents and grand-parents who will be able to speak prophetically into the lives of their children and release the destiny of their generation fulfilling the prophecy of Malachi 4:5-6; “<sup>(5)</sup>Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. <sup>(6)</sup>And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers...” There will be a prophetic spirit of testimony as strong as that of Elijah that shall concern itself with the loosening and equipping of the young, (young being in their 30’s and 40’ and even 50’s [depending upon your prospective and age at the time]), to prepare the way of the Lord’s Kingdom reign upon the earth. (See Chapter 37, Parenting a Prophetic Generation, page 333, for additional comments.)

One aspect of the restoration of the manifestation of the gift and ministry of prophecy is that the Holy Spirit uses personal prophecy, i.e. prophecy directed towards a single person’s needs or circumstances as opposed to a prophecy to a group, community or nation, as an important part of finding and fulfilling our destiny in Christ. At this time in the history of the Church the Holy

Spirit is calling forth and anointing many disciples into their ministry and placement within Christ. This particular manifestation of the Holy Spirit is especially useful in providing an objective testimony of confirmation to an internal witness of selection. God desires to confirm His Word to us with signs and wonders. As the Church breaks free from the strangling shackles of non-Biblical pyramidal religious structures and moves into the liberty of a relational community, reflecting the Kingdom of God in their daily lives, this aspect of the gift of prophecy will become more predominant than in the recent past. Discerning and fulfilling our personal placement in the Body of Christ is essential to the well being of Christian community. Knowing who we are in Christ functionally is rather unfamiliar in most of the Church throughout the earth due to the historically crippling affect of the atrocious clergy-laity distinction that has permeated our cultures. As this shackling aspect of the destructive traditions of men are increasingly broken and cast off the people of God they shall move out into greater liberty in their individual placement in Christ, enabling them to accomplish more for the purposes of the Kingdom of God.

Acts 13:1-3 <sup>(1)</sup>“Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers... <sup>(2)</sup>As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’ <sup>(3)</sup>Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away.”

This prophecy through someone, or perhaps several, regarding Barnabas and Saul is a word of directional wisdom. It resulted in increasing their appointments in the Lord and establishing their destiny unlike any other activity previously recorded. It might be good to note that both these men had proven themselves in various actions through the years prior to this event. They had been “set apart” from their mother’s womb for their calling and functional gifting in Christ’s Body, but they had also been seasoned and matured through the process of living in community which qualified them to enter into this new functional position for the advancement of the Gospel of the Kingdom. There is a “setting into place” or “setting apart” that is appropriate to articulate in a public or semi-public situation, but it does not require the pomp and circumstance that accompanies many of the “ordination services” of today.

1 Timothy 1:18 “This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies made concerning you, that *by them* you may wage the good warfare.”

As an individual, congregation or as a ministry, personal prophecy may strengthen and encourage us when we become engaged with the work God has for us and the work becomes difficult, demanding or dangerous. It does not seem unreasonable to retain some means of remembrance of the prophecies that we have received individually and as a community of believers, to review them occasionally and to evaluate and be encouraged by them. We must guard against the temptations of being controlled or limited by prophecy that the Holy Spirit may have intended for a particular time or season in our lives.

1 Timothy 4:14-15 <sup>(14)</sup>“Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership. <sup>(15)</sup>Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress will be evident to all.”

2 Timothy 1:6 “Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.”

These two references may be an example of *prophetic presbytery* and may have occurred at the beginning of Timothy’s apostolic ministry related in Acts 16:1-3, when it appears that elders from several communities may have gathered together to pray for this young man, Timothy, to send him along with Paul as a part of Paul’s missionary team. Another example of what may be called “prophetic presbytery” is Acts 6:5-6.

Acts 6:5-6 <sup>(5)</sup>“And the saying pleased the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man



full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nichlas, a proselyte from Antioch, <sup>(6)</sup>whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them.”

In each of the scriptures mentioned above there is an aspect of the gift of prophecy and the laying on of hands for identification and impartation of Holy Spirit grace for particular functions, calling and gifting in the Body of Christ. It appears that this procedure of practice occurred primarily as mature, established, five-fold ministers recognized emerging elders in their particular giftings and callings. They would have an opportunity to publicly acknowledge and identify the giftings and callings before witnesses. During these times of gathering there may have been particular, specific words of prophetic instruction, direction or impartation given by the Holy Spirit

The “laying on of hands” is relatively unpracticed among a majority of Christians today as is “prophetic presbytery”, even among established leadership. But, both of these expressions of identification and impartation are being restored to a broader, more powerful place as the Gospel of the Kingdom of God is being restored to the Church.

**Chapter Nine Study Notes:**

1) In this day the Holy Spirit is using prophecy to call forth and anoint many disciples into their \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ into their \_\_\_\_\_ in Christ.

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2) What did the prophets and teachers in Antioch do to facilitate hearing a word from the Lord for \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_?

3) Who was another disciple whose life/ministry was directed, confirmed and anointed by the prophetic words spoken to him, along with the laying on of hands?

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4) As an individual, a congregation or a ministry, when is it especially strengthening and encouraging remembering and recounting the prophetic word that may have been spoken earlier?

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5) I 1 Timothy 4; 2 Timothy 1 and Acts chapter 6, what was the purpose and function of “laying on of hands?” \_\_\_\_\_

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## CHAPTER TEN

# PROPHECY MAY BE USED TO WARN US OF DANGER



Acts 20:22-23 <sup>(22)</sup>“And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there, <sup>(23)</sup>except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me.”

Acts 21:4 “And finding disciples, we stayed there seven days. They told Paul through the Spirit not to go up to Jerusalem.”

**B**elievers in several cities warned Paul that prisons and hardships were facing him. This was most likely accomplished by a word of prophecy, perhaps accompanied with a vision or a dream that one or more may have had. Through the Spirit of prophecy they told Paul not to go up to Jerusalem. They actually pleaded with Paul not to go to Jerusalem.

Acts 21:10-11 <sup>(10)</sup>“And as we stayed many day, a certain prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. <sup>(11)</sup>When he had come to us, he took Paul’s belt, bound his own hands and feet, and said, ‘Thus says the Holy Spirit, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man who owns this belt, and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.’”

Here we see that Agabus also warned Paul, but His prophetic word provided an element of choice for Paul. Paul recognized these prophecies as a confirmation of the subjective dealings and promptings of the Holy Spirit that he had received within his own spirit over the years. As a result, his interpretation of the prophetic word was significantly different than those who had given the words from city to city and perceived only the danger aspect of the prophecy. As we examine the aspect of “judging prophecy” in the next section, we will consider this paradigm more carefully.

Earlier in the book of Acts there is the record of the Holy Spirit warning of an impending famine. This was an event that was going to impact the whole world and God warned His people about it.

Acts 11:27-30 <sup>(27)</sup>“And in those days prophets came from Jerusalem to Antioch. <sup>(28)</sup>Then one of them, named Agabus, stood up and showed by the Spirit that there was going to be a great famine throughout all the world, which also happened in the days of Claudius Caesar. <sup>(29)</sup>Then the disciples, each according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brethren dwelling in Judea. <sup>(30)</sup>This they also did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.”

Because of the prophetic ministry, the Church was enabled to engage in effective efforts by rising up together to answer this challenging opportunity. In the last days times will become

more perilous than humanity has ever known, and it is essential that we allow the Holy Spirit to instruct us in this arena of shielding and guardianship of His people. He will direct us in similar ways today and it will be a testimony to our neighbors and community. It is also tremendously encouraging to the younger and weaker brethren that God is looking after His people in this fashion.

Throughout the Book of Acts there are accounts of receiving visions, encountering angels, being directed through dreams or receiving a prophetic message in one form or another. As we rush towards the conclusion of the age and the return of our Lord and King we may anticipate that there will be an increase in such supernatural activity. As the attacks of the forces of darkness escalate in their intensity we should be alert to the manifestation of the Holy Spirit in all areas as He protects and guides His people. Although the focus of this book is primarily upon the spoken prophetic word it should be recognized that dreams, visions and angelic visitations are equally heralded as legitimate means of prophetic, supernatural communication.

We need to cultivate and nurture an *expectation* that the Holy Spirit will communicate in a supernatural manner through visions, angels, dreams or prophecy, etc. We must develop an attitude of *acceptance/ appreciation* of the various forms of communication that the Holy Spirit may chose to utilize; we should record them and interpret them. Then we must be prepared to *take action* to obey and use them, following the word of warning, i.e., prepare, inform others, go to a particular destination, follow a specific path, pray in a certain manner, etc. These three items form an acronym *EAT*. The prophet Ezekiel was instructed by God to EAT the scroll that was delivered to him in a vision and to go and speak to the people of Israel, (Ezekiel 2:8-3:1).

**Chapter Ten Study Notes:**

1) In Acts 21, Agabus expresses his warning to Paul both in prophetic message and also drama. What was the purpose of his word? \_\_\_\_\_ Why do you think the drama may have made the prophecy more effective? \_\_\_\_\_

2) In what time period will the Church especially need to be instructed by the Holy Spirit in shielding and guarding God's people? \_\_\_\_\_

3) As the return of the Lord Jesus draws closer, there will be an \_\_\_\_\_ in supernatural, spiritual activity. Do you have any thoughts about this?

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4) Several forms of supernatural prophetic communication by the Holy Spirit to man can be through \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

5) What does the acronym E.A.T. stand for in regard to receiving and responding to a prophetic word given by God? \_\_\_\_\_

6) In John chapters 14, 15 and 16 Jesus calls the Holy Spirit a \_\_\_\_\_.

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## CHAPTER ELEVEN

# BALANCED TIMES OF GATHERING TOGETHER



1 Corinthians 14:40 “Let all things be done decently and in order.”

**A**t the conclusion of this portion of instruction in 1 Corinthians, Paul finishes with the statement, “Let all things be done decently and in order.” The “all things” refers back to verse 26 where Paul had presented a partial list of possible expected manifestations of the gifts and ministry of the Holy Spirit in the gathering of the saints.

1 Corinthians 14:26 **“How is it then brethren? Each and every time you come together, each one of you may have a psalm, each one of you may have a teaching, each one of you may have a tongue, each one of you may have a revelation, each one of you may have an interpretation. Let each one of you do all things that are to be done for the edification of each one of you who are gathered together.”**  
(Amplification added by the author for clarification.)

The “decently and in order” is in reference to the accurate, appropriate, acceptable, adequate, anointed, and accountable use of the gifts of the Holy Spirit to accomplish God’s purposes among and through His saints. It was not necessarily the idea that what took place was required to fit into some type of pre-arranged, pre-designated “order of service.” God is neither the author of confusion and anarchy of self-willed display of personal talent; or of overbearing, authoritative control and manipulation which limits, hinders, impedes or stops the manifestation of the gifts and ministry of the Holy Spirit among and through His purchased people.

Neither is it right to give over an entire meeting or gathering of disciples to just one manifestation of His Spirit. We need to be open to different types of workings of the Holy Spirit. If there is a gracious, safe environment in which to practice and refine each person’s gifting, it will be more conducive to growth than a restrictive, overbearing or fearful environment, or an environment without appropriate guidelines and adequate instruction, direction and balance.

1 Corinthians 14:29-33 <sup>(29)</sup>Now, whenever you are gathered together and you are considering and praying for a person or a particular situation and there are those who have a sense that the Holy Spirit would speak to that person or situation **let two or three of you speak prophetically, and let the others who are present, who are mature, familiar and practiced with speaking and ministering prophetically in this manner judge what has been said or done.** <sup>(30)</sup>**But, if while one person is speaking or ministering prophetically anything is revealed to another who sits by regarding or because of the things being shared by the one who is speaking prophetically, let the first one who is speaking prophetically consider if he or she**

*should keep silent and allow the one with the most recent revelation declare what has been revealed to him or her, remembering that we are each to consider others more highly than ourselves.* <sup>(31)</sup> **For you can all speak and have the potential to minister prophetically one by one, in order that all may learn and all may be encouraged, edified and comforted.** <sup>(32)</sup> **And always remember that the spirits of the ones who speak prophetically are subject or mutually accountable to the prophets and the judgment of the others who speak prophetically.** <sup>(33)</sup> **For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.”**

(Amplification added by the author for clarification.)

The instruction above is rarely articulated and practically never seen in today’s Christendom... the grace of *preference*. Considering the interest of others of higher value than our own, preferring one another. This is not an attribute based upon fear of man or of a poor self-image or wounded spirit, but is instead a proper sensitivity and obedience to the promptings and direction of the Holy Spirit. There is no doubt that its implementation is potentially difficult and will need to be uniquely crafted for each circumstance. But the Holy Spirit has provided such a guard within the meeting of the brethren to guard against the hateful practice of domineering of a gathering by one person or a few. When you start a new fellowship containing a number of new believers or converts to the Christian faith, there may be legitimate times of intentional training and instruction by one person or perhaps a few more mature disciples. But in order to promote healthy, sustainable, reproducible growth among the brethren, the practice of sharing with each other and ministering to one another as the Holy Spirit directs should be cultivated, nurtured and protected. The admonition of these scriptures is that learning and practicing the ways of the Kingdom of God comes as the people are allowed to actively and meaningfully participate in the prophetic process, not in the sitting and listening to didactic teaching, regardless of how masterful such teaching may be. That should not be the primary diet of the believer.

**The admonition of these scriptures is that learning and practicing the ways of the Kingdom of God comes as the people are allowed to actively and meaningfully participate in the prophetic process, not in the sitting and listening to didactic teaching, regardless of how masterful such teaching may be.**

It is interesting to note that the church planting teams of Barnabas and Paul, and Paul and Silas usually spent no more than four to six months in the community of new believers, often less and only rarely more, before they would move on, leaving the congregation of new converts entirely on their own with the Holy Spirit to direct them and mature them. They were provided no church management manuals or even New Testament to review and search out. The involvement of the apostles in these fledgling fellowships was interrupted by long segments of time when they neither visited nor wrote. Letters followed later, but for many of the brethren their newly received faith was left primarily to the Lord to instruct them. The prophetic word of the Holy Spirit was essentially the primary resource they possessed, or that they required in order to mature in their faith. Even the idea that these new communities were to be led by a plurality of elders came about on return visits of the church planting teams often two years or more after the initial visit.

May the Lord give us all wisdom in pursuing His Kingdom in this fashion.

**Chapter Eleven Study Notes:**

1) What six words beginning with “a” describe the way the Holy Spirit works decently and in order? \_\_\_\_\_

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2) What manner of Church-life setting will facilitate growth of a person’s prophetic gifting?

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3) What type of environment will tend to hinder the development of a person’s prophetic giftings? \_\_\_\_\_

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4) In the New Testament Churches established by Paul, Barnabus, Silas, Timothy and the other apostles, who was the primary teacher of the new disciples as the apostles traveled on to other cities? \_\_\_\_\_

5) Upon returning to the city or community, the apostles (Church planters) would appoint several \_\_\_\_\_ to provide oversight and servant-leadership for the new Churches. What would happen if we planted Churches the same way today?

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## **SECTION TWO**



## **CRITERIA FOR JUDGING PROPHECY**

## CHAPTER TWELVE

# LAWLESSNESS SHALL ABOUND



In anticipation of an *end times, latter rain* outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon all classes of society throughout the earth, it is appropriate that we might allow the Holy Spirit to prepare our fellowships, as much as possible, for the harvest that may be supernaturally and yet reasonably expected to accompany such a lavish display of God's love. We must engage in an earnest effort to train and equip every member of the Body of Christ to their fullest potential in Christ, to reach their destiny in God. Over the past two centuries many authors have expressed a lament that much of the fruitfulness of revival movements of the past was lost due to the inadequate maturity of Christians to provide oversight ministry and instruction for new converts. We must recognize that as we proceed towards the coming of our Lord and King to Jerusalem, that according to Revelation 12:17 there will be an escalation and intensification of hostility and open aggression against the Church that obeys God's commandments and claims to hear His voice. There is a desperate need to train believers how to discern and judge between the holy and profane, between good and evil. We need to know how to distinguish the work and Word of the Holy Spirit of God from the lying spirits of darkness and the depraved gods of this age who seeks to defy, defile, disfigure and destroy the Church of God, and the Bride of Jesus Christ.

If, as many believe the scriptures imply, we may expect an increase in the manifestation of true Holy Spirit inspired and directed prophetic anointing and ministry in the end times, we might also expect an increase in the counterfeit by false prophets accompanied with lying signs and wonders. The damnable heresies of false christs and lying signs and wonders are even now seducing and drawing multitudes into the abyss of a dismal Christ-less life and a certainty of judgment and eternal separation from God. We are in an increasingly desperate place. Desperate times call for desperate measures! We must become more aggressive in our pursuit of the Kingdom of God and the expression of the heart of our King throughout the earth. At the same time, we should not be so foolish and presumptuous as to believe that the enemy of men's souls will not raise up it's forces against God's authentic Church. In the last days there will be a great falling away and the love of many will grow cold as the result of an infiltration of false teachers and prophets into the ranks of the Church. These people will draw many away after themselves to follow damnable heresies and fables (Matthew 24).

We must provide a safe environment for the functioning of the Body of Christ that adheres to and even exceeds that which is displayed and taught in the New Testament. We must learn how to set up a guard for the prophetic gifts to function within the Church in a way that will not hinder the expression of the Holy Spirit through an ever-increasing number of disciples. We must learn how to judge prophecy in a scripturally prescribed manner. We must not react to the possible abuses of the prophetic ministry by limiting it to only a few or removing it altogether.

Instead, we must instruct and train all our people how to recognize and practice the authentic gift of prophecy, from the youngest to the oldest.

### **1 Corinthians 14:24-33**

<sup>(24)</sup>”**But if all of you when you are gathered together prophesy conveying the heart of God into the heart of the circumstances, and an unbeliever or an uninformed person comes in to your meeting, he or she is sure to be convinced by all, he or she is sure to be convicted by all through what is said and done,**

<sup>(25)</sup>**And thus the secrets of his or her heart are revealed; and so, falling down on his or her face, he or she will worship God in reverential awe and with an awareness of His presence and report that the real, living God is truly dwelling and active among you.**

<sup>(26)</sup>**How is it then brethren? Whenever, each and every time you come together, each one of you may have a psalm, each one of you may have a teaching, each one of you may have a tongue, each one of you may have a revelation, and each one of you may have an interpretation. Let each one of you do all things that are to be done for the edification of each one of you who are gathered together.**

<sup>(27)</sup>**If anyone of you speaks in an unknown tongue, let there be no more than two or at the most three for each situation, or topic, or concern, each in turn and let one or two of the others who are present interpret that those present will be edified.**

<sup>(28)</sup>**If there is no one present who is practiced or recognized as someone who is an interpreter, let him who desires to speak in an unknown tongue keep silent in the public assembly of the Church, and let him or her speak to himself and to God. Or, let them speak in an unknown tongue and then according to what I instructed earlier (1 Corinthians 14:5 & 13) let him pray that there will be an interpretation given by the Holy Spirit through either himself or one of the others present; for, as I explained, each one of you has the capacity to interpret, (verse 26).**

<sup>(29)</sup>Now, whenever you are gathered together and you are considering and praying for a person or a particular situation and there are those who have a sense that the Holy Spirit would speak to that person or situation **let two or three of you speak prophetically, and let the others who are present, who are mature, familiar and practiced with speaking and ministering prophetically in this manner judge what has been said or done.**

<sup>(30)</sup>**But, if while one person is speaking or ministering prophetically anything is revealed to another who sits by regarding or because of the things being shared by the one who is speaking prophetically, let the first one who is speaking prophetically consider if he or she should keep silent and allow the one with the most recent revelation declare what has been revealed to him or her, remembering that we are each to consider others more highly than ourselves and no one has the right to monopolize the whole time your are gathered together.**

<sup>(31)</sup>**For you can all speak and have the potential to minister prophetically one by one, in order that all may learn and all may be encouraged, edified and comforted.**

<sup>(32)</sup>**And always remember that the spirits of the ones who speak prophetically are subject or mutually accountable to the prophets and the judgment of the others who speak prophetically.**

<sup>(33)</sup>**For our God is not the author of confusion, as are the idols you once revered, but our God is the author of peace, as is taught and practiced in all the churches of the saints.”** (Amplification added by the author for clarification.)

A New Testament believer who is ministering or speaking prophetically does not regularly lose control of himself or herself during the course of ministering prophetically. A person must at all times be held accountable for what is said and done while they are ministering in the name of Jesus Christ. Inappropriate behavior and speech is unacceptable and may grieve the Holy Spirit. Frenzied or frantic actions or reactionary, inflammatory statements cannot be tolerated. Those who prophesy must be held to a high standard, for their own sake, for the sake of the congregation and for the sake of God's name in which we are prophesying. *We must find a balance between grieving the Holy Spirit by despising prophecy through our prohibiting the manifestation of the gift of prophecy, on the one hand, and the anarchy of allowing everyone to speak or act in an unrestrained, undisciplined, unguided, unjudged manner on the other.*

It is inappropriate and unscriptural to admit prophesying in any of its many forms in an authentic New Testament congregation if it is not submitted to judgment and careful consideration. It is better not to have prophesying at all, than to have prophesying that is not checked or judged by scriptural standards. Because prophecy has such a great potential for positively impacting disciples, it has been targeted and fallen victim to the possibility of distortion by the human heart and the enemy of our souls. There are many examples of the *inappropriate speaking of the truth* and even *perverted speech* being promoted as prophecy originating from God throughout the history of the Church. And yet, with even the smallest degree of discernment of spirits and judgment, based upon knowledge of the whole council of God's Word, such pronouncements are discredited and lose their power of deception.

In the 7<sup>th</sup> chapter of Matthew, in the middle of some of His most significant teaching about finding the narrow way that leads to eternal life (verses 13-14), and the fact that not everyone who calls Him Lord shall enter into the Kingdom of God (verses 21-23), Jesus warns His disciples about false prophets (verses 15-20). Jesus speaks about judging the inner attitudes and motives in verse 15 and the fruit of their personal life in verse 16. Our King warns that those who do not bear *good fruit* will be cut down and cast into the fire. That is judgment. In Matthew 7:22 Jesus says; "Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?'" In response to this Jesus said boldly in verse 23, "Then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you (approved of what you said or did) depart from Me, you who (repeatedly) practice lawlessness (self-willed determination).'" (Amplification added by author for clarity.) Undisciplined, unjudged prophecy may result in the loss of fellowship with Jesus.

At the conclusion of His ministry in Matthew 24 Jesus responds to questions about the end of the age. He speaks of deception, false prophets, wars and tribulation. In verses 11-13 Jesus says, "Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. But he who endures to the end shall be saved." Again the word "lawlessness" appears. The result of practicing unrestrained lawlessness is that the love of many towards God will grow cold. In Matthew 24:24 Jesus explains, "For false christs (false anointings) and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders (with the intent) to deceive, if possible, even the elect." ***Jesus never speaks of a lack of signs and wonders at the end of the age, but of the increase of lying and deceiving signs and wonders. He never says that prophecy will decrease or cease, but that there will actually be an increase of false prophets and false prophecy. If there were not authentic prophecy then there would be no counterfeit prophecy. In the end both will increase and those who are disciples of Christ need to learn to discern and judge between the two.***

**Chapter Twelve Study Notes:**

1) State at least one reason why at the end times we can expect an increase in false prophets and lying signs and wonders. \_\_\_\_\_

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2) According to Revelation 12:17, there will be an \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ against the Church that obeys God's \_\_\_\_\_ and claims to \_\_\_\_\_ His voice.

3) Undisciplined, unjudged prophecy may result in the loss of \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus.

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4) Name the primary reason that even the elect of God may be deceived during the last days.

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Who are the "elect of God?" \_\_\_\_\_

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## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

# WE MUST JUDGE PROPHECY



1 Corinthians 14:22 “Therefore tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers; but prophesying is not for unbelievers but for those who believe.”

**T**he primary purpose revealed in the New Testament for the gift of prophecy is for speaking to believers. In the Old Testament God used prophecy many times to speak to Israel as a nation and to the peoples and nations surrounding Israel who were unbelievers; Elijah, Isaiah and Jeremiah are a few examples of those whom God used in this manner. But in the New Testament Church prophecy became much more personal due, in part, to the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. As a result the tone and language of New Testament prophecy will be appropriate to God’s people.

1 Corinthians 14:29 “Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge.”

*“Now, whenever you are gathered together and you are considering and praying for a person or a particular situation and there are those who have a sense that the Holy Spirit would speak to that person or situation **let two or three of you speak prophetically, and let the others who are present, who are mature, familiar and practiced with speaking and ministering prophetically in this manner judge what has been said or done.**”*

(Amplification added by the author for clarification.)

Prophecy often operates with or through a plurality of persons whether they are prophets, elders or simply disciples who are ministering prophetically. While one ministers prophetically, the other prophets, or those who have experience and training in ministering prophetically will judge or discern the manner and content of what has been conveyed to the fellowship. Elders or merely other disciples may provide the judgment. While the judgment of prophecy must be based upon mature understanding of the whole counsel of God and the revealed heart of God, according to the Word of God, we must be careful to allow even the youngest members of the congregation to express their discernment and judgment. In this way we honor the anointing in each of us and cultivate and nurture the development of hearing and obeying the Holy Spirit in each member of the congregation.

If we do not define who Jesus is by the Word of God then we allow others to define whom Jesus is by their personal opinions, experiences, cultural biases, traditions, etc. The same thing is true when we do not appropriately judge prophecy openly at the time it is provided. If we do not judge prophecy as outlined in the scripture, then we allow people to judge prophecy by any means that they chose or to not judge or accept it at all. This may prove to be extremely

dangerous, as it grieves the Holy Spirit and it opens the door for deception and erroneous interpretation either from the soul and intellect of man or from the influence of demonic spirits. We must teach and train the Body of Christ in the application of scriptural, Holy Spirit directed guidelines and criteria for judging prophecy.

Discerning involves prayerfully answering the questions; “Is it of God?” “Is it true?” “Is it something we have to give heed to or not?” “Is it for now?” “Is it directional... correctional... etc.?”

1 Thessalonians 5:19-21 “<sup>(19)</sup>Do not quench the Spirit. <sup>(20)</sup>Do not despise prophecies. <sup>(21)</sup>Test all things; hold fast what is good.”

We *despise* prophecy when we do not honor it enough to recognize it as being something from the Holy Spirit, or consider it to be of insufficient value to weigh or judge. Despising and dishonoring prophecy may also take the form of hindering or prohibiting the exercise/practice of the gift of prophecy in our fellowship. The answer is not to despise prophecy, but to learn *how* and *when* to test it and then to discern and retain that part which is good. We often lack the spiritual knowledge and moral character to confront and even stop wrong activity while it is happening, before it has an opportunity to cause severe damage among God’s people.

### **THE ‘A’ LIST**

An authentic Holy Spirit inspired prophetic word; act or function should fulfill each of the following criteria:

- Accurate - according to the Word of God and the circumstances/conditions.
- Appropriate – being sensitive to the situation or circumstances, (age, gender, etc.).
- Acceptable – culturally sensitive, not rude or unnecessarily inflammatory.
- Adequate – concise and complete, not vague, able to convey the thought.
- Anointed – by the Holy Spirit, able to reproduce *life* in the Spirit, (John 6:63).
- Accountable – properly submitted to other mature disciples, (James 3:17).

### **Accurate**

Daniel 2:27-28 <sup>(27)</sup>“Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, ‘The secrets which the king has demanded, the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, and the soothsayers cannot declare to the king. <sup>(28)</sup>But there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets... Your dream, and the visions of your head upon your bed, were these...’”

We should maintain a standard of accuracy regarding details of a prophetic word or vision. If someone speaks to the past of another person, it should be accurate and not simply vague references open for interpretation as people see fit. Visions of physical conditions such as health issues or relationships must be accurate. Be careful of “guided responses” and “correctional inference” that become aides of the false prophetic. Detailed accuracy usually is the result of experience and personal confidence and faith in what may be seen or heard subjectively by the ones who are prophesying.

### **Appropriate**

Acts 16:16-18 “Now it happened as we went to prayer, that a certain slave girl possessed with a spirit of divination met us, who brought her masters much profit by fortune telling. <sup>(17)</sup>This girl followed Paul and us, and cried out, saying, ‘These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation.’ <sup>(18)</sup>And

this she did for many days. But Paul, greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, 'I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.' And he came out that very hour."

The inappropriate speaking of the truth is one of the most dangerous weapons in our enemy's arsenal. A prophetic word may be accurate in regards to detail but not be appropriate because of the manner in which it is presented, or the place it is released. The timing of an utterance can also disqualify it; if the speaker is interruptive, rude or demonstrates an attitude that demands to be heard *right now*. These are not attributes of the character of the Holy Spirit. Certain intimate details shared between male and female may not be appropriate, or the sharing of certain indiscretions or sin in an open venue or format.

### **Acceptable**

The idea that the Holy Spirit is culturally sensitive in the manner of speech that He chooses demonstrates that He is the Lord of all creation and the Savior of all. He is not the God of western culture and civilization; He is the God above all gods; as such He knows how to behave Himself in a culturally acceptable manner. God is not rude, demeaning or unnecessarily inflammatory. The Holy Spirit will utilize the individual personalities of each believer, but not behave Himself unseemly. It is often the mixture of our own souls that taints a Word in an unacceptable manner or demands that a Word be presented in a manner or fashion that may be foreign or even repugnant. When Jesus instructed His disciples to "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth, go therefore and make disciples of all the nations..." in Matthew 28:18-19, he was stating two distinct Kingdom realities. The first was that He was now capable of relating with every single ethnic people group on the globe as a King, in an authoritative manner. Not in a way that would be offensive, but in a manner that would bring comfort and produce hope in the hearts of the people. The second is that there is a grace in God to impact and disciple whole ethnic people groups with the gospel of the Kingdom of God in a culturally acceptable fashion. Jesus did not say, "Make disciples **among** the nations," but "Make disciple **of** the nations."

### **Anointed**

Genesis 2:7 "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being."

John 6:63 "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life."

God's desire is to convey His heart and passionate and compassionate love to all of humanity on an individual, one-on-one basis. The Holy Spirit is the *giver* of Life; as such the manifestations, gifts, ministries and administrations of the Holy Spirit should result in producing or reproducing God's Life in others. But, the *Word of God* without the *heart of God* will miss and misrepresent the *will of God*, usually producing a religious façade or mask. The anointing will release people into greater degrees of liberty in God and breathe new life into them through revelation. Healing and wholeness, release and revelation are each produced by the presence of the Holy Spirit. An anointed word can produce life in an individual and in a congregation, and is a sure signature of the Holy Spirit's presence. A gathering of believers will experience a wonderful surge of life when the anointing is present, but only dry religious formalism when it is not. We must cultivate a sensitivity to distinguish between fleshly exuberance, soulish performance, mental prowess and spiritual anointing. While there may be similarities in



appearance among these four items there is radical difference in the results that they will produce in the life of an individual, a congregation or a community.

### **Accountable**

1Corinthians 14:31-32 <sup>(31)</sup>“**For you can all speak and have the potential to minister prophetically one by one, in order that all may learn and all may be encouraged, edified and comforted.** <sup>(32)</sup>**And always remember that the spirits of the ones who speak prophetically are subject or mutually accountable to the prophets and the judgment of the others who speak prophetically.**”

(Amplification added by the author for clarification.)

James 3:17 “But the wisdom that is from above is pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.”

Pride, self-sufficiency and self-rule will disqualify both a prophetic word and those who desire to minister prophetically. There are no *sole source providers* in the body of Christ. We are members of one another and should therefore humble ourselves before one another in mutually reciprocating submission and equality. Perhaps there is nothing more sad and disturbing as a good, solid *word of the Lord* being soiled and spoiled by arrogance and pride of a self-sufficient, fleshly/soulful brother or sister. The right and privilege to minister to the Body of Christ carries with it the corresponding responsibility to submit to the Body of Christ, especially to those to whom one is ministering.

**Chapter Thirteen Study Notes:**

1) The primary purpose of prophecy revealed in the New Testament is to speak to believers.  
Circle one: TRUE FALSE

2) Why is it essential to accurately and clearly define who Jesus is according to the Word of God? \_\_\_\_\_

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3) We show that we despise prophecy when we do not recognize it as coming from the \_\_\_\_\_, or we do not take the opportunity to \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ it?

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4) List the six "A's" of judging prophecy. \_\_\_\_\_

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5) The \_\_\_\_\_ of God without the heart of God will often misrepresent the \_\_\_\_\_ of God.

6) List three things that may disqualify the \_\_\_\_\_ or the prophetic word:

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## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

# DISCERNING THE SOURCE OF A PROPHETIC WORD



To discern is to distinguish, or separate out so as to investigate by examination or looking through objects or particulars. It is hence to examine, scrutinize, question or to hold a preliminary judicial examination preceding a trial proper, implying that more examination may follow. Another definition explains that to discern signifies to separate, discriminate; then to learn by discriminating, to determine, decide. The word also implies the ability or qualification to judge something based upon the ability to distinguish the evidence available. It is often a legal term used to indicate the process of sorting through various pieces of evidence prior to a trial in order to determine which pieces of evidence shall be submitted as evidence for the trial. It conveys the sense of discrimination, passing judgment on thoughts and motives. As such it tends to be rather an uncomfortable attribute in our western society’s climate of tolerance and forbearance. In the *seeker sensitive* atmosphere of many Christian fellowships today the “gift of discerning of spirits” is frowned upon and considered counter productive to the growth of the numbers of those in attendance.

In the text of 1 Corinthians 12:1-11 listing the various manifestations or gifts of the Holy Spirit the “discerning(s) of spirit(s)” is clearly listed. It is essential that disciples cultivate and nurture their capacity to operate in Holy Spirit discernment by maintaining a pure heart before God, a clean conscience towards men, studying the scriptures, and edifying ones self through the practice of speaking in tongues. It is important to recognize that the gift is listed in a plural designation of discernment of spirits and is recognized as a Holy Spirit given ability to detect the spirit world, or spiritual entities and to distinguish the true source of circumstances or motives of the actions or words of people.

In the antagonistic environment in which the Church is established to flourish for the glory of God, it is not sufficient to simply test the *word* that has been spoken. But we are also admonished to test the spirit(s) of the person ministering. This would include considering their attitude and spiritual anointing. The word for *test* or *try* is derived from the same Greek as the word for “prove” in 1 Thessalonians 5:21, when it says, “test all things; hold fast what is good.” This includes discerning and testing the spirit speaking or acting through the believer who is prophesying. There is a *spirit of error*, which, if not discerned and judged, may lead Gods people into grievous difficulties and even open error and sin. There are agents of distortion and lying spirits that are completely devoted to the destruction of the effectiveness of the Word of God, using any means possible. The peddling of “half-truths” is the same as a lie and will produce the same poisonous fruit in the lives of those who consume them.

1 John 4:1 “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.”

1 John 4:6 “We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.”

To discern is to recognize and distinguish between one thing and another, even though they may appear similar in many ways. Or in the case of lying spirits, they may be actually attempting to hide themselves behind acceptable behaviors, traditions or customs. Discernings of spirits is a form of direct perception given by the Holy Spirit, whereas a word of knowledge is an impartation of a fact. A word of wisdom is a deposit of God’s wisdom on a course of action or what to do with the knowledge or perception received by the Holy Spirit.

Hebrews 5:14 “But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.”

It is necessary to exercise the senses, both natural and supernatural, to discern some things. To be unable to spiritually discern between the sincere person and the hypocrite, the genuine and counterfeit is not to the glory of God. The dangers that face the Church in the last days are compounded by its abhorrent lack of knowledge of the Word of God, experience and fellowship with the person of the Holy Spirit, and its poor and often non-existent ability to discern between the holy and profane in relation to spirits. It is not the obviously evil spirit that is the greatest threat, but the vague deceptive spirit that takes on an appearance of being good and proper. It’s not what *they* are going to do to *us*; it’s what we lack in ourselves that is the greatest threat to our survival and growth as we express and establish the Kingdom of God in a hostile and resistive environment.

Discerning of spirits can come in various ways.

John 1:32 “And John bore witness, saying, “I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him.”

John alone saw the Holy Spirit as a dove. He had the ability to *see* what was taking place in the spirit through the discernment of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 2:3 “Then there appeared to them divided tongues as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”

Peter discerned that the Holy Spirit had been manifest like tongues of fire; in Acts 2:16 he said, “But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh...” The gift of discernment aided in his interpreting the events that were taking place.

We must be able to discern the Holy Spirit in different manifestations in the meeting, so we don’t hinder the work of the Holy Spirit among us, and also in our day-to-day activities so that we do not hinder His operation through each of us in the marketplace.

This *discerning(s) of spirits* may include four or five different arenas: the Holy Spirit, good angels, fallen angels/demons or evil spirits and the human spirit. It is essential to distinguish between the various potential sources of evidence that we consider in each case and situation.

## **LIVING IN PURSUIT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

Righteous discernment will emanate from the disciple who cultivates, nurtures and guards a life in fellowship and communion with the Holy Spirit.

Romans 8:5-7 <sup>(5)</sup>“For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, *set their minds on* the things of the Spirit. <sup>(6)</sup>For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. <sup>(7)</sup>Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.”

Romans 8:12-14 <sup>(12)</sup>“Therefore, brethren, we are debtors - not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. <sup>(13)</sup>For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. <sup>(14)</sup>For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.”

1 Corinthians 2:10-16 <sup>(10)</sup>“But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. <sup>(11)</sup>For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. <sup>(12)</sup>Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. <sup>(13)</sup>These things we also speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. <sup>(14)</sup>But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them for they are spiritually discerned. <sup>(15)</sup>But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one. <sup>(16)</sup>For ‘*who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct Him?*’ But we have the mind of Christ.”

There is a conscience choice that must be made and maintained to follow after the things of the Spirit and the Kingdom of God in order to foster the gift of discernment.

## **DISCERNING OF ANGELS**

Luke 22:42-43 <sup>(42)</sup>“‘Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done.’ <sup>(43)</sup>Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him.”

Throughout the life of Jesus of Nazareth He was repeatedly ministered to in one fashion or another by angels. From the beginning to the very end of His life angels were a significant influence in the activities that surrounded Him. If the Holy Spirit did not want us to recognize the existence and involvement of angels, He would not have allowed it to be such a significant part of the testimony on the life of Jesus and of the early Church history and writings.

John 20:11 “But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping, and as she wept she stooped down and looked into the tomb. And she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.”

In John 20:4-13, we see that Peter and the other disciple ran to the tomb, and neither of them saw any creatures at the site, but the record says that Mary saw two angels. Not only is Mary provided as a judicial first witness, her testimony is based, in part, upon the sighting of supernatural creatures. In today’s court of law, her testimony might be considered suspicious or simply rejected as unacceptable altogether. But the Holy Spirit chose to include it in the historical record. In three of the four gospel accounts, angels are a part of the testimonial record. It is unlikely that the Holy Spirit would have included them in such a significant way if they were not considered important. This is even more significant in consideration of the fact that many of the Jewish leaders of the first century did not believe in angels. The inclusion of angels in the testimony would serve only to discredit the testimony in the minds of many in those early years.

In Acts 5:17-23 the apostles are imprisoned for preaching in the name of Jesus. An angel came in the night and opened the doors of their cell and brought them out of the prison. The angel furtherer directed them to endanger their lives by continuing to preach, not in the streets or countryside but in the temple. The apostles seemed to consider the direction of the angel adequate for them to risk their lives, yet again. In Acts 12, Peter is placed in prison to await his execution. Another angel comes in the night, awakens him, facilitates his freedom from his chains, and gives him specific direction about how to get free from the prison.

Yet one other example of angelic intervention in the affairs of the Church is the visitation of an angel with Paul during a storm at sea.

Acts 27:22-24 <sup>(22)</sup>“And now I urge you to take heart, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship. <sup>(23)</sup>For there stood by me this night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve, <sup>(24)</sup>saying ‘Do not be afraid, Paul; you must be brought before Caesar, and indeed God has granted you all those who sail with you.’”

### **DISCERNING OF THE (A) HUMAN SPIRIT:**

In John 1:47, Jesus discerned the spirit of Nathaniel: “Jesus saw Nathaniel coming toward Him, and said of him, ‘Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!’” Jesus discerned a truthful soul in him. Jesus testified that He discerned the heart/soul of men. Throughout the gospel accounts it is evident that Jesus is cognizant of information and conditions by means that are supernatural; being instructed by the Holy Spirit.

John 2:23-25 <sup>(24)</sup>“Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name when they saw the signs which He did. But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all men, and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man.”

Acts 8:18-21 <sup>(18)</sup>“And when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles’ hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, <sup>(19)</sup>saying, ‘Give me this power also, that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit.’ <sup>(20)</sup>But Peter said to him, ‘Your money perish with you, because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money! <sup>(21)</sup>You have neither part nor portion in this matter, for your heart is not right in the sight of God. <sup>(22)</sup>Repent therefore of your wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you. <sup>(23)</sup>For I see (perceive, discern) that you are poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity, (lawlessness).’”

The discernment of the motives and intents of a person’s heart is a safeguard against the infiltration of compromise and unbelief among a group of believers. Throughout the centuries, in places where persecution has risen against God’s Church, the manifestation of the gift of discernment has seemed to increase, in part as a safety measure for the saints. While we should guard against the attitude of suspicion or a judgmental attitude, it would serve the body of Christ well to be a little more cautious and less naive in many areas of our inter-relationships. Accurately discerning the character and true spiritual maturity and condition of other people, who are believers, would save a tremendous amount of heartache and wasted time and effort.

Acts 14:8-10 <sup>(8)</sup>“And in Lystra a certain man without strength in his feet was sitting, a cripple from his mother’s womb, who had never walked. <sup>(9)</sup>This man heard Paul speaking. Paul, observing him intently and seeing (*perceive, discern*) that he had

faith to be healed, <sup>(10)</sup>said with a loud voice, ‘Stand up straight on your feet!’ And he leaped and walked.” (Amplification added by author for clarification.)

In this demonstration of discernment we also witness an example of “command prayer.” Paul is not speaking to God, or to demons casting them out, nor even to the condition, but directly to the man’s spirit. This demonstration of the powers of the age to come caused many to turn to faith in the message of Paul and Barnabas regarding Jesus of Nazareth and the Kingdom of God. When involved in this type of ministry, evangelistic prayer for the sick, it is good to wait upon the Lord to reveal whose “spirit” is ready and poised by grace to receive the manifestation of the Holy Spirit.

It appears that Paul instructs disciples in Corinth to be careful to guard against knowing one another only after the flesh, or outer man; those attributes that can be known by the natural senses. He is calling them to a greater depth of spiritual sensitivity and discernment, even suggesting that they should cease from reliance upon their “sense knowledge” alone when it relates to their fellowshiping with one another. One of the greatest wounding presently taking place in the Body of Christ is the lack of discerning the operations and placement of the members of the Body of Christ after the Spirit instead of the flesh and attributes and acclaim of men.

2 Corinthians 5:16 “Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer.”

### **DISCERNING OF EVIL SPIRITS:**

Matthew 9:32-34 “As they went out, behold they brought to Him a man, mute and demon-possessed. And when the demon was cast out, the mute spoke...”

Jesus discerned that an evil spirit was causing the dumbness (inability to speak) of the man. Jesus dealt publicly and audibly with the demon resulting in the man being able to speak. This is an example of what I have termed “prophetic command prayer.”

Matthew 12:22, 24 “Then one was brought to Him who was demon-possessed, blind and mute; and he healed him, so that the blind and mute man both spoke and saw.”  
<sup>(24)</sup>“Now when the Pharisees heard it they said, ‘This fellow does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons.’”

Jesus had discerned and cast out the demons that were causing the man to be blind and mute. This is the manner of “extreme prophetic evangelism” that we should expect to be restored throughout the earth in the last days before our Lord’s return, as the conflict between the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of darkness accelerates and intensifies.

In verse 25 we read “Jesus knew their thoughts, and said to them...” Here we witness that Jesus discerned their thoughts and perhaps the intents of their hearts, (Hebrews 4:12).

In Mark 9:17-27 Jesus discerned the deaf and dumb spirit in the boy. Before casting it out He spoke with the boy’s father about his childhood experiences. Childhood experiences can be important in tracing the origin and entrance of demonic activity into the life of an individual. There is such a need for the mature “mothers and fathers” in the Lord to raise a clarion call for guardianship of the “Generation of Jacob” as they are coming forth in this hour. The enemy of our souls will try every possible means to distract this generation from its pursuit of the face of God. In verse 23 Jesus said to the boy’s father, “If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes. Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, ‘Lord I believe; help my unbelief!’” This illustrates the truth that we as parents are responsible to have faith on

behalf of our children. It also illustrates how a parent can release the destiny of their children for the glory of God and His Kingdom.

Luke 13:11-12 <sup>(11)</sup>“And behold there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bent over and could in no way raise herself up. <sup>(12)</sup>But when Jesus saw her, He called her to her and said to her, ‘Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity.’”

In this instance Jesus discerned that the infirmity that had inflicted this woman for so long was actually caused by a *spirit of infirmity*. As the woman heard His voice the anointing and virtue of Jesus caused the demon to flee and the woman was set free from her tormentor. She was then able to receive her healing which she had been seeking for so many years. Many times we must discern demonic activity and deal with that situation first before we will witness a manifestation of healing in the person. In this case Jesus did not so much as address the demonic influence, He simply prophetically pronounced her loosed from her afflictions.

Acts 16:16 “Now it happened, as we went to prayer, that a certain slave girl possessed with a spirit of divination met us, who brought her masters much profit by fortune-telling.”

Paul and Silas discerned that she was possessed with a *spirit of divination*, which allowed her to do fortune telling. Again the approved solution was to speak publicly and audibly to the spirit. In that moment there is no record of either of the disciples praying to God on her behalf; instead they spoke in a command to the spirit.

Each discerning is an operation of the gift of discernment. It operates under God’s will; we cannot do it on our own, or whenever we want to do it. But we must be open to it especially as it pertains to the judging of the prophetic words and works among God’s people. There is also the cultivation of the knowledge of the Word of God and the ways of His kingdom that will assist in this effort.



**Chapter Fourteen Study Notes:**

1) List four ways we can cultivate and nurture our ability to operate in Holy Spirit discernment of prophecy. \_\_\_\_\_

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2) A “half-truth” is a “whole \_\_\_\_\_.” Explain: \_\_\_\_\_

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3) In the last days, the Church is in great danger because of her abhorrent lack of \_\_\_\_\_. What can be done to change this situation?

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4) List four different arenas of discernings of spirits.

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5) What factor can be very important in tracing the origin of demonic activity?

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## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

# BASIC PRINCIPLES WHEN JUDGING PROPHECY



The incredible privilege of receiving and releasing prophecy from the Holy Spirit carries a corresponding responsibility to submit the prophecy to the judgment of others. If we refuse to properly judge prophecy as outlined in the New Testament, then we should not be surprised when the Holy Spirit ceases giving prophecy, or it is replaced with prophecy by another spirit. The unwillingness to submit to the judgments of others may disqualify the prophecy and possibly even the one ministering prophetically, if for no other reason than the principle that God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble. Submitting a prophetic declaration or action to others is not to say that one must ask for permission to release or give a prophecy, although that is not without merit, but is simply the humility to allow others to appraise the prophecy before accepting and obeying it; it is a guardianship issue to protect all the members of the fellowship.

Disobedience to God's written Word dishonors and grieves the Holy Spirit. If we desire to see a higher level of prophetic ministry manifested in our lives and congregations, then a part of our cultivation and nurturing of these gifts will include putting into place the process by which prophecy might be properly and sufficiently judged. If we object to or disagree with the prophecy, we need to vocalize or somehow appropriately communicate our objection to it. If we permit the operation of prophecy in the congregation, we have a scriptural obligation to judge and discern that prophecy. If we fail to judge prophecy or refuse to judge it, then the result is that we are actually guilty of "despising prophecy" according to 1 Thessalonians 5:19-21. Unbelief and pride are the two edges of the same sword of the enemy of our souls that has successfully excised the manifestation of the prophetic heart and voice of God from the vast majority of Christian congregations throughout the earth over the centuries.

As we consider some basic principles when judging prophecy we may want to consider the example of the medical community. When a physician makes a medical diagnosis, he may need to do a "battery of tests" to insure the accuracy of his diagnosis, unless of course, the diagnosis is blatantly obvious. The following items are a similar "battery of tests" that may prove to be beneficial when considering how to judge prophecy. They are in no way to be considered an exhaustive list of criteria but should provide a basic, balanced approach to the arena of judging prophecy.

### **1. NEW TESTAMENT PROPHECY IS PRIMARILY DIRECTED TOWARDS BELIEVERS, AND SPEAKS EDIFICATION, EXHORTATION OR COMFORT. THE PROPHECY SHOULD NOT BE CONDEMNATORY OR CONFUSING.**

I Corinthians 14:3 “But he who prophesies speaks edification, and exhortation and comfort (encouragement) to men.”

**E**dification is to build up, to strengthen, to make more effective as a Christian and as a member of the body of Christ, and in whatever ministry function that person has. The Greek word that is translated “edification”; “oikodome”, is a construction term which combines the word “oikos” (dwelling, family, house or household, family shield), and “doma”, (housetop, edifice or parapet wall), which holds people back from walking off the top or the roof of their house.

**E**xhortation is to stimulate, to admonish, encourage and stir up. The Greek word that is interpreted “exhortation”, “paraklesis”, means a calling to one’s side. “Come here.” It is primarily an encouragement, such as a coach might give to a member of his team at a crucial time. To admonish may include severe warning, but does not include condemnation.

Condemnation and confusion are not from the Holy Spirit. The ministry of the Holy Spirit does not discourage believers. See also 2 Corinthians 5:19 and Romans 8:1. It should be recognized that an immature or backslidden believer may choose to be offended or discouraged by a particular expression of the Spirit, especially when the Holy Spirit is revealing an area in that believer's heart that needs to be changed or simply removed from their life

**C**omfort: In reviewing the gospel of John Chapters 14, 15 and 16 we see that at least once in each of these chapters Jesus calls the Holy Spirit a Comforter. It is the same root word as the Greek for “exhort” in 1Corinthians 14:3, “paramuthia.” The term that Jesus used in describing the ministries of the Holy Spirit was “parakletos,” advocate - one called in to help you and plead your cause. “Paramuthia” is used only once in the New Testament in 1 Corinthians 14:3. The word is an address spoken closely or intimately to someone; hence denoting consolation and comfort with a great deal of tenderness.

This should not be construed to say that the Holy Spirit will always say nice comforting things that will not offend our fleshly nature; to the contrary. The Holy Spirit will often speak to those issues of the flesh, our sinful nature and appetites that offend the Holy Spirit and hinder the cultivation and maturing of the nature of Jesus Christ within and through our lives. Consider the instructions of God to the prophet Jeremiah, who although an Old Testament example, serves as a balanced approach to the prophetic.

Jeremiah 1:9-10 <sup>(9)</sup>“Then the Lord put forth His hand and touched my mouth, and the Lord said to me ‘behold, I have put My words in your mouth. <sup>(10)</sup>See, I have this day set you over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out and to pull down, to destroy and to throw down, to build and to plant.”

### **Root Out, Pull Down, Destroy, Throw Down, To Build, To Plant**

There is a place for *rooting out* what doesn’t belong, like a gardener weeding plants that are growing out of place or are noxious. We are commanded to *pull down* every errant thought that exalts itself against the knowledge of Jesus Christ or those things that have been improperly built and are hazardous. Jesus was manifested to *destroy* all the works of the enemy and as His body we are called to accomplish the same, the destruction of the works of the devil. *Throw down* is a wrestling term and as such relates to our spiritual warfare, not with the flesh but against powers and principalities in high places. The prophetic word may accomplish each or all of the items mentioned, but the ultimate purpose of prophecy is to build others up in their faith and to build the kingdom of God. God gives true spiritual authority primarily for the edification of His people and not for their wounding or destruction. Such authority can only be exercised correctively in the jurisdictional realm of relationship. There may be an occasional place for rebuke and chastening, but it must not be in done a condemnatory manner. Mercy triumphs over

judgment. We are to proceed in a attitude of meekness and humility, not considering ourselves beyond the possibility of falling ourselves.

2 Corinthians 10:8 “For even if I should boast somewhat more about our authority, which the Lord gave us for edification and not for your destruction, I shall not be ashamed.”

2 Corinthians 13:10 “Therefore I write these things being absent, lest being present I should use sharpness, according to the authority which the Lord has given me for edification and not for destruction.”

The Holy Spirit convicts of present sin, turning our attention and focus upon the Lord Jesus Christ and the Word of God, while the devil condemns us for the past, usually comparing us against others or ourselves. As the Holy Spirit convicts of sin, He does so with the promise of forgiveness and cleansing from that sin (1 John 1:9), cleansing from a guilty conscience while providing a hope for change and restoration. The enemy of our soul condemns us without the hope of Gods redemptive, restoration, reconciling love and concern for our lives.

## **2. THE HOLY SPIRIT DOES NOT *DRIVE HIS PEOPLE, BUT LEADS AND GUIDES HIS PEOPLE.***

If you feel or hear someone say; “I must do this or that right now,” then stop moving in that direction or activity until you can find a place of rest with God to see what He has to say. While there are times of urgency when the Holy Spirit will urge us to move quickly in a particular manner, God does not typically drive His people in that fashion. For example, perhaps you receive a telephone call from an elder to pray for a woman who is sick. The elder intends that you pray for the woman from where ever you may be, at home, at work, etc. But, as you are praying you feel an urging that you should go to the woman’s house to pray for her and that you should go immediately, but your wife has not yet come home to accompany you. The pressure to go *now* is likely not of God, because 1 Thessalonians 5:20-22 describes testing prophecy and avoiding even the appearance of evil. In this example the knowledge of the Word of God may prevent a slanderous testimony against the name of the Lord within the community.

John 10:4: “and when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.”

The more we know of the written Word of God, the Bible, the more easily we will discern the promptings and direction of the Holy Spirit. It is not God’s greatest desire to simply give us guidance and then send us along our way, but He desires to travel with us in life’s journey, accompanying us as our Guide.

John 16: 13 “However, when He, the Spirit of Truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth...”

Zephaniah 3:17 “The Lord your God in your midst, the Mighty One, will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing.”

## **3. PROPHECY GIVEN BY THE HOLY SPIRIT NEVER PRODUCES A CONDITION OF BONDAGE IN THE LIVES OF THOSE WHO HEAR THE PROPHECY.**

1 Corinthians 10:29-31 <sup>(29)</sup>“‘Conscience,’ I say, not your own, but that of the other. For why is my liberty judged by another man’s conscience? <sup>(30)</sup>But if I partake with thanks, why am I evil spoken of for the food over which I give thanks? <sup>(31)</sup>Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”

2 Corinthians 3:17 “Now the Lord is the spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.”

Galatians 2:4-5 <sup>(4)</sup>“And this occurred because of false brethren secretly brought in (who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage), <sup>(5)</sup>to whom we did not yield submission even for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.”

The English word ‘liberty’ comes from the Greek word ‘eleutheria’ and means: freedom from slavery, independence, and absence of external restraint, a negation of control or domination, freedom of access. Paul exalted in the liberty that there is in Christ Jesus. Legalistic believers were critical of his new lifestyle, but Paul may have responded to them: ‘I am free from religious bondage. Why does anyone want me to go back to it?’ We are free to serve the Lord in all the ways that are consistent with His Word, will, nature, and holiness. (Note from the New Spirit Filled Life Bible.)”

Our freedom in Christ is not the same as anarchy and self-rule that the world demands as a standard of liberty. The liberty we experience in the Spirit of Christ is the freedom from the hazardous insanity of sin that we may be able to choose to obey God’s commandments as we humbly serve one another with love and forbearance.

John 6:63 “It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are Spirit and they are life.”

Romans 8:15 “For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, ‘Abba, Father,’”

The spirit of bondage and the Spirit of adoption both refer to a mechanism of identification and motivation of conduct. The gift of discernings of spirit will aid in clarifying the operational heart of a particular prophecy. Bondage, confusion and fear are not the fruit of the operation and presence of the Holy Spirit, but they can occasionally occur as a result of a carnal or spiritual immaturity that misunderstands or misapplies the prophetic Word of the Lord.

1 Corinthians 14:33 “For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.”

2 Timothy 1:7 “For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.”

1 Peter 1:17-19 <sup>(17)</sup>“And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one’s work, conduct your stay here in fear, <sup>(18)</sup>knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, (‘...empty ways of life handed down to you by your forefathers...’ NIV) <sup>(19)</sup>but with the precious blood of Christ, as a lamb without blemish or spot.”

Holy Spirit liberty and freedom will produce a progressive transformation of our character to that of Christ Jesus. The Holy Spirit will not normally direct us into unscriptural, pyramidal religious structures, systems and practices unless it is to deliver others out of them. We must carefully consider any word or humanistic desire to walk and fellowship in some guise of artificial, carnal unity with other people who call themselves Christians but who are not progressively pursuing increasing dimensions of liberty and holiness in the life of the Spirit of

Christ. To become united with those who condone, practice or encourage lawlessness and disobedience to God's Word for the sake of humanistic unity is not encouraged in any fashion by the Word of God. Any prophecy that instructs us to join together with others who are themselves in bondage is suspect and probably soulish.

Romans 6:18 "And having been set free from sin, you became slaves to righteousness."

Romans 6:22 "But now having been set free from sin and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life."

Romans 8:2 "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death."

We are *set free* from sin, sickness and death in a moment by placing our life in God through faith in Jesus Christ, but we are *made free* progressively through our obedience to the Word of God and the Holy Spirit. This is progressive sanctification and holiness. We must maintain a pursuit of God in our spirit, soul and body, with our whole heart, mind and all our strength in order to progress and mature in our faith experience.

#### **4. A PROPHECY BROUGHT FORTH BY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL OFTEN *BREATHE* FRESH LIFE INTO A MEETING AND HARMONIZE WITH GOD'S OVERALL PURPOSES FOR THAT MEETING AND GROUP OF BELIEVERS.**

Genesis 2:7 "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life."

John 6:63 "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life."

1 Corinthians 15:45 "And so it is written, 'The first man Adam became a living being.' The last Adam (Jesus) became a life giving spirit."

2 Corinthians 3:6 "...who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life."

**T**he Spirit of Christ produces spiritual life, but a religious spirit produces paralysis and spiritual death. Many times a prophetic word will be given during a meeting and the result is that an increased level of faith will arise among those gathered together. It may provide revelation, direction or confirmation all at the same time. People's hearts and spirits will often be stirred and even burn within them when the Holy Spirit has spoken. A prophetic word that produces confusion in the hearts of those listening may result in hindering the nurturing of faith in the people's hearts. If there is confusion the word may require additional explanation, or there may be more of the word to be given that will provide clarification. That clarification and balance may come from another person. This is one of the main reasons that we need to adhere to the principle that all things should be confirmed through the mouth of two or three witnesses.

We should take the appropriate time to examine and evaluate the prophetic word at the time that it is provided. If we do not judge a prophetic word according to the scripture and determine how it should be applied, then we allow others to judge the prophecy by their own thoughts, opinions and experience or not at all. If the Holy Spirit speaks a Word to the congregation, then the congregation should be provided an opportunity to consider how that Word should be obeyed.

Visions will usually breath new life into a congregational gathering, as will dreams, if they are adequately considered and appreciated. A fresh Word of God may provide a steering for the meeting to follow a fresh or new, unplanned direction. There is often a thrill and excitement in receiving a prophetic word. We should not allow complacency and a “ho-hum” attitude to squelch a move of the Holy Spirit. When we do not recognize or honor a prophetic act or Word of God we dishonor and grieve the Holy Spirit.

**Chapter Fifteen Study Notes:**

1) What responsibility comes along with the privilege of receiving and releasing prophecy?

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2) Disobedience to God’s written word \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ the Holy Spirit.

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3) New Testament prophecy is primarily directed towards \_\_\_\_\_.

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4) The Holy Spirit \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ His people. He does not \_\_\_\_\_ them.

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5) Describe the difference between being “set free” and being “made free.”

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6) What is one of the main reasons to adhere to the principle that “all things” should be confirmed out of the mouth of two or three witnesses?

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## Chapter Sixteen

# THE PLUMBLINE AND HONORING OF GOD'S WRITTEN WORD



### 5. PROPHECY GIVEN BY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL NEVER BE CONTRARY TO NOR IN OPPOSITION TO THE LETTER OR THE SPIRIT OF GOD'S WRITTEN WORD REVEALED IN THE BIBLE.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 <sup>(16)</sup>“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, <sup>(17)</sup>that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

Prophecy will often be an indicator of where a group is in their knowledge of the scriptures and their experiential level in God. The Holy Spirit will meet us at the point of our need and our current position or place of understanding of truth. The plumb line for judging all prophecy is the testimony and law of the Word of God. We should not seek or receive or accept a word that does not line up with this plumb line.

Isaiah 8:19-20 <sup>(19)</sup>“And when they say to you, ‘seek those who are mediums and wizards, who whisper and mutter,’ should not a people seek their God? Should they seek the dead on behalf of the living? <sup>(20)</sup>To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.”

2 Corinthians 1:17, 20 <sup>(17)</sup>“Therefore, when I was planning this, did I do it lightly? Or the things I planned, do I plan according to the flesh, that with me there should be Yes, Yes, No, No? <sup>(20)</sup>For all the promises of God in Him (Jesus) are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us.”

God does not have moods or change His mind depending on the circumstances or the culture or the times, but He will *mercifully* accommodate our level of maturity (1 Corinthians 3:1-3, Hebrews 5:11-14). We must always remember that even the most mature spiritual person is still far from a full revelation of God. Even on our best day we fall far short of the glory of God.

At times the prophetic word will reveal the following:

1. **Perceived level of maturity:** where one thinks he or she is in the Lord.
2. **Actual level of maturity:** where one is actually in their experience and true spiritual authority.
3. **Expected level of maturity:** where one should be according to the measure of grace and revelation they have received since committing their life to Christ.



## **6. ALL PROPHECY GIVEN BY THE HOLY SPIRIT THAT SPEAKS ABOUT JESUS CHRIST WILL ALWAYS GLORIFY HIS PERSON AND EXHALT HIS POSITION.**

John 16:13-14 <sup>(13)</sup>“However, when He, the Spirit of truth has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. <sup>(14)</sup>He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.”

**T**he Holy Spirit always glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ, exalting the name, person, word and work of Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit will never diminish the reign or the rule or the authority or exclusivity of Jesus Christ. It is essential to consider the prophecy in regard to the attitude of the prophecy towards Jesus Christ.

Revelations 19:10 “And I fell at his feet to worship him (the angel). But he said to me, ‘see that you do not do that! I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.’”

One may also say that the spirit or heart of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus. Not only is prophecy a testimony about Jesus, **it is Jesus’ testimony about something**. The Holy Spirit does not give anything that departs from testifying to and exalting Jesus Christ, or from conveying His heart regarding a circumstance or situation. But because the Holy Spirit uses men it is possible for the prophetic heart of the testimony to be tainted, colored or even perverted by the heart of the one speaking. The New Testament clearly and repeatedly conveys that there is an exclusivity of Jesus Christ and the gospel of the Kingdom of God. In opposition to this fact, false prophecy might exalt a human personality, denomination, method; or it could promote pluralism, false unity, syncretism or blending with false religions or doctrines under the guise of some noble, even godly cause.

Colossians 1:18 “And He is the head of the body, the Church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.”

Vs.

3 John 9 “I wrote to the Church, but Diotrephes, who loves to have the preeminence among the people, does not receive us.”

## **7. TRUE PROPHECY WILL PROMOTE, NOT DIMINISH, THE CHARACTER AND ATTRIBUTES OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD.**

Romans 5:17 “For if by the one man’s offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One Jesus Christ.”

Romans 14:16-19 <sup>(16)</sup>“Therefore do not let your good be spoken of as evil; <sup>(17)</sup>for the Kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. <sup>(18)</sup>For he who serves Christ in these things is acceptable to God and approved by men. <sup>(19)</sup>Therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another.”

**A**ny presentation of the joy of the Lord and/or peace with God that bypasses righteousness from God is a deception. There is no true peace and joy from God unless it is based upon righteousness that results from faith in Jesus Christ. As we approach the end of the age we may

expect an increased revelation of the gospel of the Kingdom of God and a functional awareness and understanding of how to live and move and have our being in Christ on a day-to-day basis. We should expect an ever-increasing manifestation of the Kingdom of God upon the earth in anticipation of the approaching King of Glory. The Holy Spirit will encourage and promote Kingdom thinking and activities in the lives of those who are looking forward to the coming of the King. In the last days the Holy Spirit shall release “Kingdom technologies” that will accomplish greater works for the glory of God than at any time in the history of the Church.

1 Corinthians 1:30 “But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God – and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption.”

2 Corinthians 5:17 “For He (*the Father*) made Him (*Jesus Christ*) who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God (*the Father*) in Him (*Christ Jesus*). (Amplification added by author for clarification.)

At the same time we may also expect an increase in the manifestation of rebellion, idolatry, all manner of wickedness and especially violence as the earth is prepared for the emerging anti-Christ and his religious system. The rate of polarization of community’s, countries and cultures will escalate, as the days grow increasingly evil.

1 Timothy 4:1-3 <sup>(1)</sup>“Now the Spirit expressly says that in the latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, <sup>(2)</sup>speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, <sup>(3)</sup>forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.”

2 Timothy 3:1-5 <sup>(1)</sup>“But knowing this, that in the last days perilous times will come: <sup>(2)</sup>For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, <sup>(3)</sup>unloving, unforgiving, slanders, without self control, brutal, despisers of good, <sup>(4)</sup>traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, <sup>(5)</sup>having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such turn away.”

It is significant that both of the warnings mentioned above are written by Paul to Timothy, his beloved son in the faith. Paul was expressing a true fatherly concern, which is an earmark of true apostolic anointing and function. The warning in 1 Timothy credits a prophetic word of the Holy Spirit as a warning worthy of being repeated and taught, showing how the prophetic word was providing instruction and doctrine to the early church.

## **8. HOLY SPIRIT PROPHECY WILL NOT ENCOURAGE BEHAVIOR CONTRARY TO THE “FRUIT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.”**

Galatians 5:22-25 <sup>(22)</sup>“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>(23)</sup>gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. <sup>(24)</sup>And those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. <sup>(25)</sup>If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.”

Galatians 5:20 “But if you are led of the Spirit, you are not under the law.”

The context of these verses in Galatians implies that Paul is speaking of the Law of Moses and the Bible, not of Rome. Today, we may apply this principle to our individual countries and civil authorities in addition to the religious authorities in our life, throughout the world. Many nations and religious organizations are enacting laws today that are contrary to God’s Word and the manifestation of the fruit and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Even organizations that make some

claim to being Christian are in open defiance of the expressed open heart of God's Word. When this occurs the disciples must prayerfully seek the Holy Spirit's direction in how they should then live, considering the recorded history and examples of the early Church. Any prophetic word that encourages behavior or character contrary to the fruit of the Holy Spirit should be considered invalid.

Acts 4:18-20 "So they (*rulers, elders and scribes*) called them (*Peter and John*) and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. <sup>(19)</sup>But Peter and John answered and said to them, 'Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. <sup>(20)</sup>For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.'" (Amplification added by the author for clarification.)

Romans 8:14 "For as many as are led by, (*directed by, receive instruction from*) the Spirit of God, these are sons (*the offspring, born*) of God." (Amplification added by the author for clarification.)

**Chapter Sixteen Study Notes:**

1) What is the ultimate “plumb line” for judging prophecy? \_\_\_\_\_

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2) Any prophecy that speaks in a negative fashion about Jesus Christ or His work is not given by \_\_\_\_\_.

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3) As the return of Christ approaches, will we see an increase or a decrease in the manifestation of the Kingdom of God? \_\_\_\_\_

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4) Holy Spirit given prophecy will always encourage or produce what kind of fruit in the lives of those who receive it? \_\_\_\_\_

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## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

# THE INTENTIONAL FALSE PROPHET



### 9. CARE MUST BE EXERCISED TO DISCERN THOSE WHO ARE “FALSE PROPHETS” INTENTIONALLY.

Matthew 7:15-17 <sup>(15)</sup>“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. <sup>(16)</sup>You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thorn bushes or figs from thistles? <sup>(17)</sup>Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit.”

We must beware of false prophets who come, appearing to be right, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves, motivated by self-interest rather than the true purpose of prophecy. We must discern their spirit and the fruit of their character in order to recognize them. False prophets purposefully put on an appearance, and so they are especially dangerous because we must recognize that they may not even be true sheep of our Lord’s fold. The sheepdog discerns by the smell those wolves that appear to be sheep. Those elders who are responsible for caring for God’s people must cultivate a greater level of discernment in their own lives for the sake of others in order to survive the deceptions and falling away that will assail the Church in the last days.

Hebrews 5:14 “But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use (*experiential practice*) have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.” (Amplification added by the author for clarification.)

The objective test is to see the fruit of their lives. These are not the fruit of the Holy Spirit: pride, arrogance, haughtiness, boastfulness, exaggeration (stretching the truth), dishonesty, covetousness, financial irresponsibility, (where finances are a problem it is never the only problem), licentiousness, immorality, addictive appetites, broken marriage vows and unfaithfulness. One should also be on guard to recognize inappropriate speaking of the truth, sarcasm, course jesting, inordinate affection and flattery. In Matthew 12:34 Jesus said, “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.” Sweet water and sour water cannot flow from the same fountain. Many believers disqualify themselves from the manifestation of the prophetic simply because they will make no effort to restrain and control their tongue.

Matthew 7:21-23 <sup>(21)</sup>“Not everyone who says to Me, Lord, Lord’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father in heaven. <sup>(22)</sup>Many will say to me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in your name, cast out demons in your name, and done many wonders in your name?’ <sup>(23)</sup>And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you who practice lawlessness!’ (*workers of iniquity*)” (Amplification added by the author for clarification.)

The one sure evidence that a person is living right is that he is living right. If a person is not willing to allow you to investigate his manner of life, then he disqualifies himself to speak into or minister to your life, or to the congregation of God's people. The whole of 2 Peter Chapter 2 is about false prophets. Mutual reciprocating submission and equality is a safeguard for the household of faith, and the sooner a fellowship can restore this single aspect of guardianship to the hearts of the disciples, the greater will be the peace and unity of the brethren and clarity of expression of the Holy Spirit among and through the congregation.

It is sad to observe that the people in a congregation who won't listen to and submit to the truth are often willing to accept a lie presented by false prophets. They are drawn away by the undisciplined lust and unhealed wounds of their soul. There are "gatekeepers" within the Body of Christ that are gifted by the Holy Spirit to detect and discern the spirit of error and the attitudes that are contrary to the health and well being of the fellowship. These voices of warning and guidance must be cultivated and empowered over time. At the same time, care must be taken not to elevate people to a place of authority and control beyond that which the Holy Spirit has provided for.

## **10. IF THE PROPHECY THAT CONTAINS FUTURE PREDICTIONS DOES NOT COME TO PASS, THEN THE PROPHET MAY NOT BE FROM GOD.**

Deuteronomy 18:20-22 <sup>(20)</sup>“But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die. <sup>(21)</sup>And if you say in your heart, ‘how shall we know the word which the Lord has not spoken?’ <sup>(22)</sup>when a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not happen or come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.”

Luke 1:20 “But behold, you will be mute and not able to speak until the day these things take place, because you did not believe my words which will be fulfilled in their own time.”

Many prophecies of the Bible stand *alert* for God's command to be accomplished. Many prophecies relating to the return of our Lord await His fulfillment to this day. The same thing may occur with present day prophecies. We must be careful in evaluating the *times of fulfillments* as there may be a number of qualifying aspects or factors to a prophetic word. We must also be careful to discern the “conditional clause” or aspects of prophecies when provided, such as “If you do this then I will do that,” or “When you see this then it is time for that.” Care and concern must be exercised to consider the whole text of the message and even the context of the environment and circumstances in which the message was released to consider the syntax of the word of prophecy.

Another aspect of fulfilling prophecy is that the Holy Spirit will often need to redefine our understanding of certain items before we are able to understand or see the fulfillment of certain prophecies. The fulfillment of the prophecy may be taking place before our eyes but we are unable or unwilling to see what the Lord is doing because of the hardness of our heart or the “experiential filters” of our own traditional perspectives that require certain conditions to be met before we will accept something as being from God. The people of Israel all but missed the coming of their Messiah because He did not come to them in the manner that they had anticipated. A congregation that limits its youth or the manifestation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit through women may be looking to the Lord for the answer to some situation but miss it

because of the pride of their heart that will not receive the Word of the Lord through a particular member of the Body of Christ due to their age or gender. The Holy Spirit may be breaking off the shackles of bondage that have hindered Him among those people because of their empty ways of life handed down to them through their forefathers or the traditions of men. It is God's mercy that sometimes withholds the fulfillment of prophecy.

Another aspect of unfulfilled prophecy is that men are able to change the heart of God through intercession. We see this in the ministry of Moses as he turned the wrath of God away from consuming the children of Israel when they had sinned against God.

## **11. IF A PROPHECY IS GIVEN THAT PROMOTES OR ENCOURAGES DISOBEDIENCE TO GOD OR THE SCRIPTURES IT MUST BE CONSIDERED FALSE PROPHECY.**

Deuteronomy 13:1-5<sup>(1)</sup>“If there arises among you a prophet or a dreamer of dreams, and he gives you a sign or a wonder, <sup>(2)</sup>and the sign or the wonder comes to pass, of which he spoke to you saying, ‘let us go after other gods,’ which you have not known, ‘and let us serve them,’ <sup>(3)</sup>you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams, for the Lord your God is testing you to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. <sup>(4)</sup>You shall walk after the Lord your God and fear Him, and keep His commandments and obey His voice; you shall serve Him and hold fast to Him. <sup>(5)</sup>But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death, because he has spoken in order to turn you away from the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of bondage, to entice you from the way in which the Lord your God commanded you to walk. So you shall put away the evil from your midst.”

There are many historical examples of people being led into error due to the false or lying signs and wonders that accompany the message of a false teacher or prophet. Our Lord did not say that there would be a lack of signs and wonders in the last days but that there would be lying signs and wonders. The intent of these signs and wonders is to draw people away from a pure fellowship with God through faith in the exclusivity and sufficiency of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. Such motivation is hell-spawned and devilish leading many to the destruction of their soul. A believer who has only a vague knowledge of the scriptures and an occasional fellowship with the Holy Spirit is a fertile field for the planting of deception. Throughout the whole earth superstition runs rampant in such an environment, producing devastation in the lives of many wonderful and sincere people. Genuine, heartfelt sincerity is not a guardian against deception.

Matthew 24:24 “For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.”

2 Thessalonians 2:9-10 <sup>(9)</sup>“The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs and lying wonders, <sup>(10)</sup>and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.”

2 Peter 2:1 “But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them and bring on themselves swift destruction.”

1 John 2:18-19 <sup>(18)</sup>“Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrist have come, by which we know it is the last hour. <sup>(19)</sup>They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had

been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be manifest, that none of them were of us.”

1 John 4:1 “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.”

3 John 9-11 <sup>(9)</sup>“I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to have the preeminence among them, does not receive us. <sup>(19)</sup>Therefore, if I come, I will call to mind his deeds which he does, prating (talking nonsense) against us with malicious words. And not content with that, he himself does not receive the brethren, and forbids those who wish to, putting them out of the church. <sup>(19)</sup>Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. He who does is of God, but he who does evil has not seen God.”

Many times false prophets will go out from a reputable fellowship, even using the credentials or names of others if it serves their purpose and the advancement of their agenda. Past relationship is no replacement for current fellowship. In a world of media hype and Madison Avenue glitz and showmanship it can be a daunting task to discern the real from the false. In this hour, it must be acknowledged that a false prophet may arise from among a group of false prophets who have premeditated to work together for the destruction of the Lord’s people.



**Chapter Seventeen Study Notes:**

1) Elders in the Body of Christ must learn to exercise an increasing level of spiritual \_\_\_\_\_ to avoid being deceived, or leading others into deception.

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2) What failure can disqualify a person from being able to minister in your life, or the life of the congregation? \_\_\_\_\_

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3) Holy Spirit today is endeavoring to release His people from limitations placed upon them by the \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_.

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4) Holy Spirit given prophecy will never encourage \_\_\_\_\_ to God or the revealed teachings in the scriptures. \_\_\_\_\_

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5) The Word of God does not tell us there will be a lack of signs and wonders in the end times, but that there will be an increase of \_\_\_\_\_ signs and wonders.

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## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

# BASIC GUIDELINES TO CONSIDER WHEN PROPHECYING



### 12. WHEN PROPHECYING, DO SO ACCORDING TO THE MEASURE OF FAITH, CAREFUL NOT TO MOVE FROM THE SPIRIT TO THE FLESH, FROM FAITH TO PRESUMPTION.

Romans 12:6 “Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them; if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith...”

Romans 12:3 “For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.”

When prophesying we must be careful not to exceed our Spirit given measure of faith. It is easier than one might think to move from Spirit into presumption or pretentiousness. When a person is prophesying there is a possibility that the flesh or the soul may continue to express itself after the Holy Spirit has stopped expressing Himself. There is a *thrill* that excites the soul when one is partnering with the Holy Spirit in prophecy. This may result in producing a *mixture* of Spirit and soul in the prophetic word and can dilute the effectiveness or even disqualify the word of prophecy altogether. There is a great need to discern, that which is of the Holy Spirit and that which is not. We need to remember that the Lord does not disengage a person’s personality, mind or soul when they prophesy. The Holy Spirit will delight in His choice to utilize our personalities in partnership with Him, but we must be careful not to allow our personalities, mind or soul to control or rule over the prophetic word.

Occasionally a person may prophecy out of the heart and woundedness of their own soul or out of the enthusiasm of their own thoughts and feelings. This must be taken into consideration when judging the prophecy because we are an integrated being: body, soul and spirit. The heart and attitude may be proper and right but the word may be more of an opinion or feeling than a revelation or prophetic word from the Holy Spirit. There is nothing inappropriate with a believer expressing his or her opinion or feelings; they simply should not be cloaked in the guise of being prophetic or the *Word of the Lord*. Phrases such as, “God said...” “God told me...” “Thus says the Lord...” must be guarded against as being used as tools of soulish manipulation. This is not to say that such phrases should not be used, only that extreme care and prudence should be exercised in doing so.

We should prophesy in the manner that is consistent with our own personalities and should refrain from trying to copy the mannerisms or styles of others. We should prophesy within the confines of our personal faith and not attempt to exceed our faith into realms and levels that we

have not been called, gifted and instructed by God. And yet this can be very awkward at times when the Holy Spirit is calling and urging a disciple to extend his faith beyond anywhere he has experienced in God before, which of course is a part of spiritual growth. This is one arena where “spiritual parenting” is very beneficial, as is small group fellowship and mentoring. There is a delicate balance that must be maintained for the developmental growth of the individual and the concerns of the fellowship. It is not unlike the carefulness that must be exercised in raising a number of children in a family, rather than just one.

### **13. THE SOURCE OF OUR TRUTH IS AS IMPORTANT AS THE TRUTH.**

Acts 16:16-18 <sup>(16)</sup>“Now it happened, as we went to prayer, that a certain slave girl possessed with a spirit of divination met us, who brought her masters much profit by fortune telling. <sup>(17)</sup>This girl followed Paul and us, and cried out, saying, ‘These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation.’ <sup>(18)</sup>And this she did for many days. But Paul, greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, ‘I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.’ And he came out that very hour.”

The slave girl made money through her fortune telling for her owners. An evil spirit caused her to prophesy and it was accurate. Paul, Silas, Timothy and Luke were in Philippi at the beginning of their ministry in Greece. Modern day archeology reveals that for more than 900 years there had been a large numbers of fortune-tellers in that culture. It is as though Satan recognized the servants of the Most High God and was trying to infiltrate the new work of God and get the fortune-telling girl in at the ground level. The devil will often tell enough truth to get a person to believe, and then he will begin to introduce a lie. He did this in the Garden of Eden and he does it today. The enemy seduces and lures the innocent, immature and unlearned into traps of deception and destruction through their ignorance of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God. The older are taken captive by pride and presumption or neglect of the Word of God and the Holy Spirit. Adam may have been older in his fellowship with God and his knowledge of God’s Word but he fell nonetheless and his judgment was greater, as a result.

1 John 4:1 “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.”

A half-truth is a whole lie. When we speak any form of a lie our words become the property of the father of lies, the devil. He has legal grounds to steal our words and distort them. In addition Jesus taught us in Matthew 12:34 that, “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.” When a person speaks *half-truths* such as inappropriate jesting or sarcasm, that person may be revealing a *divided heart*. When such a condition is mixed with prophetic it will result in dishonoring the Word of God and disqualifying the prophetic ministry and the one presenting. The standard of the Kingdom of God is our King, not our culture, not society, not our thoughts or what feels good or right to us personally. Our standard-bearer is Jesus Christ of Nazareth. He is the plumb line. There was never, at any time, any deceit found in His mouth... because there was no deceit in His heart. Jesus esteemed the liability of speaking on behalf of the Father to humanity above every other privilege warranted to Him by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. We should be even more concerned about the quality of the words that we speak.

Isaiah 53:9 “And they made His grave with the wicked-- but with the rich at His death, because He had done no violence, nor was any deceit in His mouth.”

John 6:63 “It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life

#### **14. WE NEED TO LEARN TO TRUST THE DISCERNMENT OF OUR OWN SUBJECTIVE TESTIMONY, WHICH WE RECEIVE FROM THE ANOINTING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.**

1 Corinthians 2:12 “Now we have received, not the spirit of this world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.”

1 John 2:20 “But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things.”

1 John 2:27 “But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him.”

1 John 4:1 “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.”

This anointing, which John is speaking of, does not eliminate our need for teachers or even teaching, but speaks instead to the fact that the Holy Spirit teaches us those things pertaining to our personal position, calling and gifting in the Body of Christ. If someone prophesies to us something contrary to that which the Holy Spirit has already instructed us, we should be alerted to the possibility that such prophecy is not from the Holy Spirit. New Testament prophecy is primarily “confirmational” in nature rather than “directional” in nature. New Testament prophecy is for the most part an objective testimony by the Holy Spirit to confirm a subjective direction that the Holy Spirit has already imparted to our spirit.

If our personal subjective, *internal* testimony is uncomfortable with a prophecy, we should be careful to put the other tests in this list into operation in order to continue to test and *try* the prophecy. It is good to judge prophecy in team with others. “Out of the mouth of two or three witnesses let everything be confirmed” (Deuteronomy 19:15, Matthew 18:15-20). This will provide a balanced guardianship for God’s people and will aid in protecting against the abuses of false or distorted prophecy, while gleaning the word from the mixture of human soul.

If we are sensing a change of direction is coming to our life, or perhaps we are seeking the Lord for direction as a congregation we may expect a *directional Word* of the Lord to come forth. But such a word must bear witness to our spirit and be in line with the general calling and capacity of the individual or congregation. This is not to say that the Holy Spirit will not stretch us beyond our previous experience and understanding of His grace. One of the surest signs or signatures of the direction of the Holy Spirit is that He will most frequently call us into places of our inability and inadequacy; so that in our weakness His strength might be displayed and His ability and adequacy manifested in and through our lives.

There are many testimonies of one member of a family or person in a group feeling uncomfortable with a prophetic “Word from the Lord,” even in opposition to the other members of a family, team or congregation. As those people hold their ground, so to speak, and the entire group continue to seek the Lord’s heart in the matter, something might change that would bring additional clarity and confirmation into the circumstances, vindicating the one or two who had felt uncomfortable. This should not be used to justify selfishness or stubbornness, self-sufficiency or pride. Nor, should this be considered the standard mode of operation, but it has happened frequently enough to be considered valid.

## 15. WE MUST DISCERN THE “SEASON” OF A WORD AND A PEOPLE, ALSO THE “TIMES OF A SEASON.”

1 Chronicles 12:32 “...of the sons of Issachar who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do...”

Ecclesiastes 3:1 “To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven:”

Ecclesiastes 3:11 “He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also He has put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end.”

Ecclesiastes 8:6(a) “Because for every matter there is a time and judgment...”

Isaiah 28:23-29 <sup>(23)</sup>“Give ear and hear my voice, listen and hear my speech. <sup>(24)</sup>Does the plowman keep plowing all day to sow? Does he keep turning his soil and breaking the clods? <sup>(25)</sup>When he has leveled its surface, does he not sow the black cumin and scatter the cumin, plant the wheat in rows, the barley in the appointed place, and the spelt (rye) in its place? <sup>(26)</sup>For He instructs him in right judgment, his God teaches him. <sup>(27)</sup>For the black cumin is not threshed with a threshing sledge, nor is a cartwheel rolled over the cumin; but the black cumin is beaten out with a stick, and the cumin with a rod. <sup>(28)</sup>Bread flour must be ground; therefore he does not thresh it forever, break it with his cartwheel, or crush it with his horsemen. <sup>(29)</sup>This also comes from the Lord of hosts, who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in guidance (sound wisdom).”

Luke 1:20 “But behold, you will be mute and not able to speak until the day these things take place, because you did not believe my words **which will be fulfilled in their own time.**”

Luke 19:41-44 <sup>(41)</sup>“Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, <sup>(42)</sup>saying, ‘If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. <sup>(43)</sup>For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, <sup>(44)</sup>and level you, and your children with in you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, **because you did not know the time of your visitation.**”

Acts 3:19-21 <sup>(19)</sup>“Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins might be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, <sup>(20)</sup>and that He may send Jesus Christ who was preached to you before, <sup>(21)</sup>whom heaven must receive until **the times of restoration of all things**, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.”

Ephesians 1:10 “that in the dispensation **of the fullness of the times...**”

**I**t is important to discern the *seasons* and the *times of the seasons* for the release and application of a particular word of prophecy. It is good to cultivate sensitivity to the times and seasons of the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of individuals, congregations, communities and even regions where we are trying to make an impact for the sake of the Kingdom of God. The *inappropriate speaking of the truth* is a ploy of the enemy of the purposes of God, and has caused a great deal of turmoil in the lives of untold numbers of believers. This weapon of the enemy often uses truth through well meaning believers, but results in the unintentional and often

untimely wounding and hurting of others. To everything there is a season and we must acknowledge the Lord in all our ways.

Proverbs 20:21 “An inheritance gained hastily at the beginning will not be blessed at the end.”

At times it may be necessary to help enthusiastic believers to temper their speech with wisdom. Help them to recognize that what they say is as important as how they say it. Equally important is where they might share and when, keeping in mind that there is appropriateness in the operations of the gifts of the Holy Spirit and especially the gift of prophecy. “Speaking the truth in love,” can occasionally be a means of unintentionally wounding others. We must maintain a guardianship and concern for one another, examining the attitude and motive of the heart.

In the prophetic process there is often a separate place and time for:

**Receiving → Refining → Realizing → Releasing → Reviewing →**

- **Receiving the Burden and Word of the Lord;**
- **Refining the Word and the Worker;**
- **Realizing the Word made Flesh in the Worker;**
- **Releasing the Burden of the Word and the Wonder of God in due season;**
- **Reviewing the Witness of the Word made flesh in others.**

A person may receive an accurate word from the Lord. And that person may allow it to be refined within them for some time. There may even be a refinement of their heart and attitude. But, if the word is given out of season it will lose a measure of its potential impact and power. There is a timeliness that is essential. Please refer to Chapter Six “Cultivation and Developmental Seasons” in Section One.

**Chapter Eighteen Study Notes:**

1) What can result if the word of the Spirit in prophecy is mixed with our own opinion, woundedness, or thoughts? \_\_\_\_\_

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2) When we tell a lie, whose property do the words we speak become?

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3) What is the result when coarse jesting or sarcasm are mixed in with the prophetic word or spiritual teaching? \_\_\_\_\_

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4) Which scripture tells us that Jesus never said anything He did not mean, and always meant what He said? \_\_\_\_\_

5) What does it mean that a prophetic word is often “confirmational?”

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6) Describe the danger of “inappropriate speaking of the truth.”?

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## **SUMMARY OF CRITERIA FOR JUDGING PROPHECY.**

Judging prophecy is a guardianship, “parenting” issue. It is a matter of honoring the gift of God. Every effort should be employed to guard the people of God without moving into a place of lording it over the people or replacing their personal responsibility to seek God on their own. We must honor the grace of God expressed through each and every one of His purchased people. It is a challenge to find the balance of the whole council of God. There may be a tension and or even conflict which occur as we practice obedience to the scripture to judge the prophetic word, but the reward of increased awareness of God’s presence and the assurance of God’s direction in our individual and corporate lives is worth the effort and risk. The potential of a greater release of prophecy in and through the Body of Christ will prove to be very challenging to the old paradigm of clergy-laity distinction and Church structures, but as we honor God and His Word, He shall honor us.

### **PRINCIPLES WHEN JUDGING PROPHECY**

- 1. NEW TESTAMENT PROPHECY IS PRIMARILY DIRECTED TOWARDS BELIEVERS, AND SPEAKS EDIFICATION, EXHORTATION OR COMFORT. THE PROPHECY SHOULD NOT BE CONDEMNATORY OR CONFUSING.**
- 2. THE HOLY SPIRIT DOES NOT *DRIVE* HIS PEOPLE, BUT *LEADS* AND *GUIDES* HIS PEOPLE.**
- 3. PROPHECY GIVEN BY THE HOLY SPIRIT NEVER PRODUCES A CONDITION OF BONDAGE IN THE LIVES OF THOSE WHO HEAR THE PROPHECY.**
- 4. A PROPHECY BROUGHT FORTH BY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL OFTEN *BREATHE* FRESH LIFE INTO A MEETING AND HARMONIZE WITH GOD’S OVERALL PURPOSES FOR THAT MEETING AND GROUP OF BELIEVERS.**
- 5. PROPHECY GIVEN BY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL NEVER BE CONTRARY TO NOR IN OPPOSITION TO THE LETTER OR THE SPIRIT OF GOD’S WRITTEN WORD REVEALED IN THE BIBLE.**
- 6. ALL PROPHECY GIVEN BY THE HOLY SPIRIT THAT SPEAKS ABOUT JESUS CHRIST WILL ALWAYS GLORIFY HIS PERSON AND EXHALT HIS POSITION.**
- 7. TRUE PROPHECY WILL PROMOTE, NOT DIMINISH, THE CHARACTER AND ATTRIBUTES OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD.**
- 8. HOLY SPIRIT PROPHECY WILL NOT ENCOURAGE BEHAVIOR CONTRARY TO THE “FRUIT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.”**
- 8. HOLY SPIRIT PROPHECY WILL NOT ENCOURAGE BEHAVIOR CONTRARY TO THE “FRUIT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.”**
- 10. IF THE PROPHECY THAT CONTAINS FUTURE PREDICTIONS DOES NOT COME TO PASS, THEN THE PROPHET MAY NOT BE FROM GOD.**





## SECTION THREE



## FELLOWSHIPING THE MYSTERY OF THE AGES

Matthew 13:11 “He answered and said to them, ‘Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven (God), but to them it has not been given.’”

Matthew 16:17 “Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.’”

Matthew 25:34 “Then the King will say to those on His right hand, ‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.’”

John 15:15 “No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made to you.”

## CHAPTER NINETEEN

# A LIFE CHANGING, EMPOWERING ENCOUNTER WITH HOLY SPIRIT



In the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> chapters of the Gospel of Luke there are five explicit references to the work of the Holy Spirit in and through the life of Jesus. Each reference is used with increasing force, revealing a progressive involvement of the Holy Spirit in our Lord’s life.

The first reference is in Luke 3:22 where John the Baptist sees the Holy Spirit come upon Jesus in bodily form like a dove. This speaks of the gentle and fragile nature of the Holy Spirit and His initial work as a comforter in our lives.

But the Holy Spirit is not only our comforter. He is also our guide as we see in Luke 4:11, where the Holy Spirit is recorded as leading Jesus into the wilderness, apparently, to be tempted and tested; perhaps to validate His claim of Sonship. We must always keep in mind that God is more interested in our character than in our comfort, and although He may begin a work in us through comfort, it will frequently result in conforming our character to the holiness and nature of God through confrontation.

Following His victory over temptation, Jesus returns to Galilee in the power of the Holy Spirit and with the authentic authority and ability of the Father (Luke 4:14). The Holy Spirit is the administrator of the power and authority of the Kingdom of God, while Satan is the administrator of the curse of sin and dominion of darkness. Our growth in the knowledge and experience of the authentic power and authority of the Kingdom of God will bring us into open confrontation and conflict with the Prince of Darkness and the rulers of this age even as it did Jesus and the early disciples.

The baptism, temptations and earthly ministry of Jesus Christ describe clearly the process whereby Jesus received and understood His mandate from the Father, underwent the temptations to solidify and certificate His right to rule as King, and His entry into the world at large as monarch of the new Kingdom of God on earth. The events were ordained to test, display, demonstrate and declare the authenticity, authority, and ability of Jesus Christ of Nazareth as the Son of God and King of Kings.

In the fourth testimony Luke writes that in the Nazareth synagogue Jesus reads the Messianic passage, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me...” (Luke 4:18) quoting Isaiah 61:1-2. Jesus claimed the fulfillment of this prophecy in Himself at that moment. The Spirit of the Lord was upon Jesus to anoint Him to:

1. Preach the Gospel of the Kingdom of God to the poor

2. Heal the broken hearted
3. Proclaim liberty to the captives
4. Recovery of sight to the blind
5. Set at liberty (release) those who are oppressed
6. Proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, (the Year of Jubilee)

Finally, the evidence of His charismatic ministry is resoundingly listed in Luke 4:31-44 and continued throughout His entire earthly ministry.

1. Teaching with authority
2. Casting out demons
3. Healing those with fevers and disease

Luke chapter 4 concludes with verses 43-44. “But He said to them, ‘I must preach the Kingdom of God to the other cities also, for because of this purpose I have been sent.’ And He was preaching in the synagogues of Galilee.” The good news that Jesus was teaching and preaching to the poor had little to do with salvation through faith in His life, death, resurrection and ascension to heaven; although He spoke of these things at various times, those events had not yet occurred. Jesus preached the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. Jesus appeared with the express purpose to display, declare and demonstrate the Kingdom of God among men, destroying all the works of the enemy, (1 John 3:8). Every activity of His public life was a declaration of the Kingdom of God; the feeding of the crowds, the healings, the confrontation with religious false comfort and casting out demons. Everything had to do with the Kingdom of God; the rule of God as King over all things material or spiritual; all people, demons and angels; all forces of nature and spiritual realms.

In the gospel of John, during His last supper, we have this prophetic promise recorded for us.

John 14:15-18 <sup>(15)</sup>“If you love Me, keep My commandments. <sup>(16)</sup>And I will pray the Father, and He will send you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever- <sup>(17)</sup>the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells **with you** and **will be in you**. <sup>(18)</sup>I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.”

The disciples were celebrating the Passover with Jesus. In the middle of so many confusing statements about His departure is this strange promise relating to the Spirit of truth. “He dwells with you and will be in you... orphans... come to you.” It was all very confusing. It is unlikely that any of His disciples actually understood what Jesus was talking about at the time.

Forty days later, Jesus was walking outside the city of Jerusalem with His disciples. He had been crucified upon a cross. He had been raised from the dead. He had returned to heaven to present Himself to the Father. Then Jesus returned, in bodily form, to earth to instruct His disciples about the Kingdom of God. Eight days before the celebration of the Jewish feast of Pentecost, Jesus ascended once again to the presence of His Father.

Acts 1:3-8 <sup>(3)</sup>“To whom He presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs [guarantees], being seen by them during forty days and **speaking of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God**. <sup>(4)</sup>And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, ‘which’, He said, ‘you have heard from Me; <sup>(5)</sup>for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.’ <sup>(6)</sup>Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, ‘Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?’ <sup>(7)</sup>And He said to them, ‘It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. <sup>(8)</sup>But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you;

and you shall be witnesses to me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

Verse 9 says that after He had spoken these things He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.

In Luke 24:49 this same event and commandment is recorded, “Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued [or clothed] with power from on high.”

For the next eight days after Jesus had disappeared into the sky, the disciples gathered together in their houses and in the temple. They were worshiping, praying, fasting and wondering what all this might mean for them and their futures. The disciples eagerly anticipated the return of Jesus at any moment. Over the previous 40 days, since His resurrection from the dead, His disciples had witnessed Jesus coming to and from their presence many times. Through locked doors and solid walls he had appeared repeatedly with His glorified body. It is possible that on the day of Pentecost the 12 were gathered together so as not to miss His appearing as Thomas had a few weeks before (John 20:24).

Acts 2:1-4 <sup>(1)</sup>“When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. <sup>(2)</sup>And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. <sup>(3)</sup>Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. <sup>(4)</sup>And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”

A few moments later Peter stood up with the other eleven, who had also received the Holy Spirit, and preached a sermon that drew 3,000 souls into the Kingdom of God. This disciple who had denied the Lord three times was transformed by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. Only fifty-one days before, a young girl stood in a courtyard where Peter warmed himself by a fire, the night Jesus was on trial before His crucifixion. As she questioned Peter about Jesus, Peter lacked the courage to admit that he even knew Jesus. But now Peter was fearlessly confronting thousands of people with the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, and winning! Peter was a changed man! He had always been bold but now he was courageous. He had expressed a willingness to lay down his life for his Lord, but now he was enabled to lay down his life.

The public ministry of Jesus, as recorded in the gospels, and the public ministry of the Church, recorded in the book of Acts, were both initiated with a life changing, empowering encounter with the Holy Spirit.

The presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of Jesus **authorized** Him to declare the gospel of the Kingdom of God. As the authentic King of glory and Sovereign Lord He demonstrated God’s Kingdom with power and authority to those He ministered to. By healing the sick, casting out demons and setting free those who were captive to hell’s bondage and oppression of sin, sickness and death, Jesus authenticated or validated His claim of being the Messiah of Israel and the Son of God, establishing His Kingdom in the earthly realm.

## **EXPRESSING, EXTENDING, EXPANDING, ESTABLISHING THE KINGDOM OF GOD**

The same Holy Spirit power and authority came upon the Church on the day of Pentecost. The Holy Spirit gave the disciples the same power, passion and purpose that Jesus possessed during His earthly ministry. The book of Acts is a very small portion of a great historical tapestry of disciples of Christ who received what Jesus received; in order to do what Jesus did...

in order to obey what Jesus commanded... that we should be His witnesses in the midst of a world perishing under the grip and torment of the false claims of Satan, the dictator of a dark domain. Christ's Church is to provide an **expression** of the Kingdom of God **extending** it into new territories and peoples while ever **expanding** it's effectual working into increasingly more arenas of society, thereby **establishing** the Kingdom of God under the reign and rule of the administration of the Holy Spirit.

God wants to use ordinary people to do extra-ordinary things for His Kingdom. Today, our Father and God shall glorify His name in all the earth through ordinary people in everyday situations. To accomplish this, our Sovereign Lord and King Jesus commands that we receive the same Holy Spirit power and authority from Him that He poured out upon the apostles on the Day of Pentecost. God desires that all disciples today would be possessed with the same power, passion, purpose and authority that the early disciples in the book of Acts received. It is the same power and authority that countless others throughout history have received from God with gladness and joy.

**God wants  
to use  
ordinary  
people to do  
extra-  
ordinary  
things for  
His  
Kingdom.**

The Kingdom of God which is paraded so wonderfully on triumphant display throughout the pages of the New Testament is **supernatural**... **supernatural**...; **supernatural** in its origin, nature and operation. It cannot be demonstrated by human compassion alone. It cannot be declared through human intellect alone. God shall use our body, soul, heart, mind and spirit, as we become increasingly surrendered, sanctified and submitted to the rule and reign of Jesus of Nazareth, as our sovereign King. In order to accomplish this, our lives, our soul and spirit must be administered (ruled) by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit must enhance our hearts and minds in order to be used by God to their greatest potential. *Our God desires wholeness for His people.* He desires to heal our broken hearts. He wants to gather our scattered thoughts. God has set Himself to restoring humanity to our first and fullest purpose in fellowship with Himself.

**Love is God's motivation.** God is passionately affectionate toward His purchased people. God is *lovesick* towards His Church.

God loves you and me, individually as His child and collectively as His family. Because of His great love God sent His only begotten Son to die for us. Jesus died for us while we were yet sinners and far from Him. God does not wait for us to come to Him. God comes to us, even while we are lost and broken in the darkness of our desperation and despair.

According to 2 Corinthians 5:21, "He who knew no sin became our sin." Jesus became your sin! The Lord of Glory became my sin! And then, He suffered the entire righteous judgment, penalty and wrath of a holy God against sin in our place, in order that we might receive mercy instead of justice. Jesus did this so that we might not have to suffer the penalty that we rightfully deserve. This was accomplished as a result of God's overwhelming love towards us. Then, God offered His love to us as an exchange gift. Our Father's provision for us is stunning and staggering, overwhelming the senses of the natural man. In the natural, we lack the capacity within ourselves to comprehend the width, the depth, the breadth and the height of God's love towards us.

After Jesus fulfilled every righteous requirement of the judgment and just punishment for our sin, God raised Him from the dead. God was not willing to leave Jesus under the dominion of sin and the dark hopelessness and torment of hell. Upon satisfying all the righteous requirements of God, paying the entire penalty for the sin and sickness of all humanity for all time, Jesus was received by God back to Himself. After pouring out His own blood upon the heavenly altar, not made with human hands, His sacrifice was fully accepted by God our Father; and then the glory, which Jesus had known from the very beginning, was fully restored to Him. He was given a

name above every other name! He was seated in the highest place! He was honored above all others! Our human soul and spirit are incapable of understanding the fullness and extent of the depth of this mystery. But this is the very core of our faith and salvation.

As a result of what Jesus of Nazareth accomplished, God is committed to restoring wholeness and fullness to those who cry out to Him for mercy. God is able to do exceedingly abundantly beyond all that we can think or ask (Ephesians 3:20). As His purchased possession we must give Him the glory that is due to His holy name!

God has given Himself to passionately loving you and me. It is only reasonable that we give ourselves to loving Him with our whole heart, mind and strength in response.

**Chapter Nineteen Study Notes:**

1) Describe the manifestation of the presence of the Holy Spirit at the time that Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist? \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

2) The Holy Spirit is also our \_\_\_\_\_ and our \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_

3) What scripture verse best describes the ministry anointing upon Jesus' life. \_\_\_\_\_ Do you believe that this anointing is available for you today? \_\_\_\_\_ Explain. \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

4) Where did the disciples get the power, passion and purpose that Jesus of Nazareth possessed during His earthly ministry? \_\_\_\_\_

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5) God's motivation for redeeming mankind through the passion and resurrection of Jesus Christ was \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_

NOTES: \_\_\_\_\_

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## CHAPTER TWENTY

# PENTECOST WAS A DAY OF NEW BEGINNINGS, A DAY OF CREATION



Once the separation between God and mankind, caused by sin, was forever remedied through the sinless life... the atoning death... substitutional suffering and restorational resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth; then, the next great mystery and promise of God that had been in the heart of God since before creation... since before time began... was able to be unfurled and commence... **the fellowship of God by man and the indwelling of man by God.**

Matthew 13:11 “He answered and said to them, ‘Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven (God), but to them it has not been given.’”

1 Corinthians 2:7-8 <sup>(7)</sup>“But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained **before the ages** for our glory, <sup>(8)</sup>which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory.”

Ephesians 1:3-4 <sup>(3)</sup>“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, <sup>(4)</sup>just as He chose us in Him (Jesus) **before the foundation of the world**, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.”

Ephesians 3:8-9 <sup>(8)</sup>“To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, <sup>(9)</sup>and ***to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ;***”

Colossians 1:24- 28 “I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the Church, <sup>(25)</sup>of which I became a minister according to the stewardship of God which was given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God, <sup>(26)</sup>**the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints.** <sup>(27)</sup>To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the gentiles: which is **Christ in you, the hope of glory.** <sup>(28)</sup>Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.”

2 Timothy 1:9-10 “Who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus **before time began,** <sup>(10)</sup>but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Titus 1:2-3 <sup>(2)</sup>“... in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began, <sup>(3)</sup>but has in due time manifested His word through preaching.”

This mystery had been hidden since before the foundation of the earth - the mystery that the Christ, the anointing of God would dwell within our earthly vessels; and that indwelling presence would be our hope of glory, our hope of wholeness, and our hope of eternal life.

Not one of the rulers of this present age understood this mystery that had been hidden in God since before their creation by God. If they had glimpsed the truth or understood the reality of the circumstance, they would not have crucified the Prince of Peace and Glory. For in His dying He brought forth a multiplication, even as a seed buried in the ground. When it dies it brings forth many more of it's own kind.

Genesis 1:12 “And the earth brought forth grass, the herb that yields seed, and the fruit tree that yields fruit according to its kind, whose seed is in itself, on the earth.”

Genesis 3:15 “And 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.”

John 12:24 “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.”

The ability of the powers and principalities in spiritual realms to comprehend the intent of God is extremely limited. But God always knows what He is doing. And God predetermined every single aspect of the historical fabric of the life of Jesus... the Christ... the Anointed One. God's love was in command of Jesus' life and His death. The enemy of men's souls thought it was destroying the anointing of God that was in Jesus of Nazareth by destroying the body or *shell* of the anointing; when in truth, as a result of His being crucified, the anointing would be spread to multiplied tens of millions throughout this age through the resurrected body members of Christ, His Church..

The designation of “Christ” is a Greek word meaning, “anointed of God,” or “the anointing of God.” It may also refer to “the anointed one,” (Acts 4:26) or “the anointed ones.” In 2 Corinthians 1:21-22 the word is also used of believers.

2 Corinthians 1:21-22 <sup>(21)</sup>“Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, <sup>(22)</sup>who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.”

The apostle Paul writes “Christ in you the hope of glory,” in Colossians 1:27. He expresses his profound hope for the people in Ephesus 3:19 when he declares, “to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge, that you might be filled with all the fullness of God.” Here Paul is signifying the One who by His Holy Spirit and power indwells His disciples and molds their character in conformity to His likeness. He is referring to the anointing (Christ of God) dwelling within mankind. This is the mystery that has been hidden through the ages, but now has, is and shall be made known to principalities and rulers in heavenly realms through the life and manifest presence of the anointing within and through the Church.

Ephesians 3:10-12 <sup>(10)</sup>“to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the Church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places (realms), <sup>(11)</sup>according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord, , <sup>(12)</sup>in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him.”

Acts 2:32-33 <sup>(32)</sup>“This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. <sup>(33)</sup>Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He (Jesus) poured out this which you now see and hear.”

Acts 1:4-5 <sup>(4)</sup>“And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, ‘Which’, He said, ‘you have heard from Me; <sup>(5)</sup>for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

The Book of Acts records the manifestation of the Holy Spirit being **restored** to the earth on the day of Pentecost. It was **the restoration of the anointing of God** that had been manifested in the life of Jesus during the commencement of His reign upon the earth. It was the restoration of reciprocating revelational relationship between God and man. **THE HOLY SPIRIT... THE ANOINTING OF GOD... HAD RETURNED TO EARTH!** Now, He would be able to dwell **within** redeemed men and women who were separated, sanctified unto God through faith in the life, the words and the work of Jesus of Nazareth.

In the past the Holy Spirit was only able to come upon men or to come to men in a limited promise of grace. But now, because sin had been adequately atoned for and restitution had been fully made, the Holy Spirit, the anointing of God could dwell **within** man. This provides us with an understanding of our Lord’s statement in Matthew 11:11. “Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of woman there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the Kingdom of Heaven (Kingdom of God) is greater than he.” Why does Jesus say that the person who is least in the Kingdom of God is greater than John the Baptist? The reason is because he has the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, the Anointing of God within him; he is born of the Spirit.

### **The Day of Pentecost was a day of new beginnings...**

#### **It was a day of creation.**

A new kind of creature appeared on the planet for the very first time on the day of Pentecost recorded in Acts Chapter 2. Jesus of Nazareth was a proto-type of God’s desire. This new creature was a human, who was also a temple of the Holy Spirit, and a dwelling place for the very **anointing...** for the very presence of God. This new creature emerged out from the sound of rushing wind and glow like or as if of tongues of fire. Humans who had cowered in fear and trepidation only a few days before now stood to their feet, made alive in Christ, **the anointing.**

**A new kind of creature appeared on the planet for the very first time on the day of Pentecost recorded in Acts Chapter 2.**

The forces of darkness and the rulers of this age that threatened to take their lives no longer intimidated them. A “**new creature in Christ**” (2 Corinthians 5:17) stepped forward out of the ashes of the old creation. Old things had passed away; behold all things had become new. A new hope, beyond measure, had emerged from the blood soaked soil surrounding the foot of the cross. A hope that all of creation had longed for, since the fall of man in the Genesis garden, erupted onto the human scene there in that upper room on the Day of Pentecost. Love had been perfected and fear had been cast out (1 John 4:18).

The creative, redemptive, restorative anointing of God had **returned** to earth to dwell within man. The **anointing** that the waters had thankfully carried across the lake when Jesus walked on the waters only a year before had returned. It was the **anointing** that the winds had obeyed when Jesus spoke. It was the **anointing** to whom the graves had given up their dead when Jesus called them forth. And now this same **anointing** had returned, appearing on the earth again. But now that **anointing** was being distributed in many, not just one or in a few. Pentecost is the celebration of “first fruits” and these were the first fruits of the Kingdom of God, “new creatures in Christ Jesus.”

Creation was witness to the manifestation of the children of God. There for all to see was a new creature, a new creation in Christ Jesus. This was an awesome, earthshaking event. It was totally unprecedented, it was completely un-equalled by anything else that had ever occurred throughout the history of the ages. Never before had such a thing even been imagined or considered possible by even the greatest of angelic minds. But there she was, in all her matchless splendor, resplendent light and flourishing beauty... the Bride of Christ. This was His Church, His temple... those who would rule with God. This is the one with whom Jesus would share His glory (John 17:10,22)! This is the one for whom He was willing to suffer and die and suffer again.

Perhaps, for a fleeting moment, creation may have recalled that incredible event in the Genesis garden, so very long before, when they witnessed God causing Adam to enter a deep sleep. Is it possible that Creation remembered how God had reached into the side of man to retrieve what was necessary to create a suitable helpmate of like nature and character for Him. Out of that death-like state God brought forth that which would be needed to reproduce the life of man for new generations to come. In the natural realm she was God's concluding act of creation, born out of season.

Now, once again, was it possible that they were witnessing how God Himself was bringing forth another helpmate of like nature and character. This helpmate would be able to reproduce for generations to come, throughout the end of the age. There were so many similarities in the circumstances. Everything seemed to have been clearly foreshadowed and prophesied. **But this helpmate wasn't for a man. This helpmate was for the King of Glory, the Lord of the hosts, the God-man Jesus.** This was the one who would reign and rule with the Son of God into the ages to come. This was His Bride. This was the ultimate "new creation." And all the rest of creation gathered around and bowed silently, listening to her prophesying and glorifying God. It wasn't only the citizens of Jerusalem who gathered to hear the strange noise from the upper room, who wondered what the sound might mean. All of creation, both seen and unseen were left breathlessly spellbound as they beheld the matchless splendor radiating from this incredible Bride. The crowning achievement of God's wisdom was piercing the darkness of hopeless humanity. This was the hope of the ages for those who were destined for redemption, and the terror of judgment for those who were destined for destruction. The diadem of the glory of God was on parade in Jerusalem. The whole of creation would never be the same, ever again.

Ephesians 3:8-12 <sup>(8)</sup>“To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, <sup>(9)</sup>which from the **beginning of the ages** has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ; <sup>(10)</sup>to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the Church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, <sup>(11)</sup>according to *the eternal purpose* which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord, <sup>(12)</sup>in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him.”

There is a fellowshiping, a knowing, and an experiencing of **the mystery** that had been hidden in God since before time began. On the Day of Pentecost this mystery of the ages was openly displayed as the trophy of our Lord's triumph over hell. **The mystery** was being openly revealed and made known to the principalities and powers in the heavenlies. This was God's eternal purpose, before He engaged in His first act of creation. Before He created time, His love embraced your destiny and purpose. This one purpose was at the forefront of God's heart when He created this cosmos. This moment had been long anticipated and was now fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost. It was ultimately why Jesus had come to earth and removed the sin barrier between God and man... so that God could dwell in and fellowship with man. No wonder the

forces of hell opposed it so greatly, and continue to oppose it to this very hour. It is the anointing that breaks the yoke of hell's bondage to sin, sickness, disease and death.

Romans 8:9 "But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His (God's)."

In the first Adam, mankind received the breath of God and he became a living soul. In the second Adam, Jesus, we receive not only the breath of God, but some small portion of God Himself to dwell within us - the flame of God's essence, His Spirit. Being born again by the Spirit we become spiritual creatures. 1 Corinthians 15:45 reveals that Jesus became a life-giving Spirit. It is this indwelling presence of God Himself, within an earthen vessel, that produces such an uncharacteristic confidence and boldness to approach our new found access to God our Father in humility. Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 4:7, "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us." This fact of our faith separates us from every other religion on the planet. This fact sets us apart unto God as His anointed ones. We are sanctified and set apart to God for His special service when we receive the Holy Spirit, being called His menservants and maidservants (Acts 2:17-18).

The Christ of God is in you as you sincerely commit yourself to Him as Savior and Lord, and is the very "matrix" of our hope of glory and eternal life. **The anointing** is God's DNA being implanted into our human being. It is **the anointing** that the devil can never have which the host of hell hates, despises and fears. It is **the anointing** of God, the life of God, the Spirit of God in and through ordinary people that most threatens the kingdom of slavery and darkness.

Our human compassion doesn't frighten the forces of hell. Our human intellect doesn't impress the father of lies. Our human strength is woefully inadequate to take hold of the gates of hell! But, **the anointing** of God will open those repulsive gates and loose the captives held within. **The anointing**, the indwelling Christ of God in you will shake the very foundations of slavery that Lucifer's domain is founded upon. In **the anointing** is the Truth that exposes the lies of mankind's archenemy. The father of lies is undone in the glory of Christ, **the anointing** of God within you.

And it is out of **the anointing** that the prophetic word and heart of God flows to glorify our God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ of Nazareth, the Firstborn from the dead. God has extended His merciful invitation for all humanity to be partakers of this mystery of the ages, Christ in you the hope of glory.

**Chapter Twenty Study Notes:**

1) What is the “hope of glory” spoken about by Paul in his letters?

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2) What can mold you into the character and likeness of Christ Jesus?

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3) What was restored to the earth on the Day of Pentecost recorded in Acts?

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4) What barrier was torn down by God, in order to make it possible for the Holy Spirit to dwell within men and women? \_\_\_\_\_

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5) How can you obtain the wonder and anointing of Christ for yourself?

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6) What might be the most significant new thought for you in this chapter?

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## SECTION FOUR



### HEARING AND UNDERSTANDING

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### TWO KEYS TO THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Matthew 16:17-19 “<sup>(17)</sup>Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. <sup>(18)</sup>And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. <sup>(19)</sup>And I will give you the KEYS TO THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN (KINGDOM OF GOD), and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.’”

## CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

# RESTORATION OF RECIPROCATING, REVELATIONAL RELATIONSHIP



It is God's desire to restore fellowship and communication with mankind on an individual and corporate basis. The *rock* upon which Jesus is building His Church is not simply the confession of faith, which Peter boldly declared. The *rock* that Jesus is referring to here in Matthew 16 is the **restoration of reciprocating, revelational relationship** between God and man. When the Holy Spirit speaks to our spirit we are undeniably affected and absolutely changed. God, the Father had revealed to Peter through the Holy Spirit that Jesus was the Son of God, the Messiah and the Christ. It is the restoration of *revelational relationship* and *reciprocating communication* that is the *rock* upon which the Church has and is being built. Throughout history, where and when this supernatural element of the Christian faith has been present, the Church has been able to withstand the most devastating assaults by the kingdom of darkness triumphantly. Without this element the Church becomes nothing more than a religious business institution. The idea that "the Word of God" spoken of in the New Testament is primarily the written, canonized scriptures is a bias of an institutional religious system that, in most instances, exists in opposition to the heart of the Kingdom of God revealed in the pages of the New Testament. "The Word of God" most influential in the New Testament appears to be the "prophetic Word of God," speaking of the immediate, fresh, revelational expression of God's heart for particular circumstances.

In Genesis, chapters 2 and 3, there was a very "open" fellowship between God and man. They were able to communicate with one another, face to face. One of the tragic results of sin was the loss of the privilege of open reciprocating fellowship. The open and clear revelation of God to man's senses became a cloaked, hidden mystery. It was unobtainable by many, undesired by most and practically unknown by the majority.

The restoration of "open, reciprocating, revelational relationship" and "fellowship Spirit to spirit" with God, our Father is the primary purpose of what Jesus came to "seek and to save." In both Matthew 18:11 and Luke 19:10 Jesus says the same thing, "The Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost." The "that" of these scriptures is not a "those" as though He were speaking about people, although that is an awesome aspect of His work. What Jesus came to "seek (apprehend)" and to "save (restore)" was the privilege and capacity of man to have a revelational relationship with God and for God to be able to have open, indwelling fellowship with man. This has been and continues to be the great desire of God's heart, to walk with and fellowship with mankind on an individual and corporate basis. It may be questioned if the idea of redeeming man to take him to heaven is of primary concern to God. It may be argued that



God's foremost desire is to bring heaven to men and to the earth, that His will might be done on earth as it is in heaven. Jesus was manifest to destroy all the works of the devil (1 John 3:8). The primary purpose or goal of all the works of the devil is to produce a separation between man and God.

Our Lord Jesus Christ has paid a sufficient cost to remove the hindrance to open fellowship with God caused by sin. Jesus Christ of Nazareth alone has made an appropriate, adequate and acceptable provision for such a reversal of the curse of the fall and the rampant plague of death that results from sin. Throughout the tapestry of human history, only Jesus is uniquely qualified to offer to humanity the possibility of knowing experientially the fellowship of the mystery of the anointing of God, which has been hidden through the ages, but now revealed through Him. The ultimate result of the work of Jesus of Nazareth shall be the full restoration of unhindered, open fellowship between God and man upon the earth, without shame.

Romans 8:14-17 <sup>(14)</sup>“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God. <sup>(15)</sup>For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, ‘Abba, Father.’ <sup>(16)</sup>The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, <sup>(17)</sup>and if children, then heirs – heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.”

The indwelling presence and anointing of the Holy Spirit produces the restoration of reciprocating, revelational relationship and spiritual fellowship with God our Father. The Spirit of adoption produces a Sonship within the spirit of man. There is a connection between hearing and understanding the instruction of the Father, with exercising the authority and power that is available in the KEYS OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD as an adopted son or daughter. It is this aspect of the process of hearing and the ability to understand what the Holy Spirit is saying and doing that I would like to consider in this section.

**Chapter Twenty-One Study Notes:**

1) Define the following words in your own words.

- a) restoration: \_\_\_\_\_
- b) reciprocating: \_\_\_\_\_
- c) revelational: \_\_\_\_\_
- d) relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

2) Can you state in your own words what the phrase “restoration of reciprocating, revelational relationship means to you?

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3) Consider your own personal relationship with God in prayer and your experience of fellowship and communication with God. Does it have each of the items mentioned above? If not, which is missing? How do you intend to remedy any lack?

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4) How would you respond if someone were to ask you, “What did God say to you this morning during your time with Him in prayer and in His Word?”

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5) Would you be able to identify what and how God revealed His truth, instruction or direction to you? \_\_\_\_\_ Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_

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## CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

# CULTIVATING AND NURTURING AN EXPECTATION OF COMMUNICATIVE FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD



John 10:27 “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.”

John 15:26 “But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me.”

John 16:13 “However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.”

**M**any believers today have no expectation within their hearts to hear God speak to them. They have not been instructed that they should expect such an experience, nor have they been taught how to cultivate or nurture such an experience. Neither have most believers been challenged by the question, “What is God saying to you... TODAY?!” Nor do the majority of those who consider themselves to be “Christian” live among a group of other disciples who say or experience such things. But, as disciples of Jesus of Nazareth, we should make every possible effort to both cultivate and nurture a listening ear to the prophetic, Word of truth whether it is actually spoken to us through our spirit, audibly via our senses, or simply through the understanding that we glean as we study the scriptures. There is great value in hearing others share what God is saying to them. There is also value in being instructed in didactic fashion. A guard must be developed against elevating one manner of instruction over another. While this entire book is intended to promote the restoration of reciprocating, revelational fellowship between God and man, primarily through the gift of prophecy, it should not be construed, in any fashion, that there is no place for the preaching or expounding of the scriptures.

My spirit and soul are fixed upon an expectation that is growing deep within me. That expectation is focused on the hope of an increased knowledge, understanding and experience of the Kingdom of God in and through my personal life. I have an urgency in my heart to learn and put into action the promises and fruitful provision of the Kingdom of God in and through every area of my life. I so greatly desire to hear the voice of my Shepherd, and to obey His direction; in whatever manner He chooses to express His heart to mine. I find myself so envious of Solomon’s encounter with God at Gibeon.

1 Kings 3:5-10 <sup>(5)</sup>“At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, ‘Ask! What shall I give you?’ <sup>(6)</sup>And Solomon said: ‘You have shown great mercy to Your servant David my father, because he walked before You in truth, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with You; You have continued this great kindness for him, and You have given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day. <sup>(7)</sup>Now, O LORD my God, You have made Your servant king instead of my father David, but I am a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. <sup>(8)</sup>And Your servant is in the midst of Your people whom You have chosen, a great people, to numerous to be numbered or counted. <sup>(9)</sup>Therefore **give to Your servant an understanding (literally: hearing) heart** to judge Your people, that I may discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?’ <sup>(10)</sup>The speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing.”

I sincerely believe that the Holy Spirit is listening for a similar cry of the heart among His people today; and that He is anxious to respond and give to all those who acknowledge their lack. How precious it must be to the heart of our beloved Bridegroom to hear this sort of heart’s cry coming from His betrothed, purchased Bride.

### **COMPLACENCY IS AN OPPONENT TO EXPECTATION**

Zephaniah 1:12 “And it shall come to pass at that time that I will search Jerusalem with lamps, and punish the men who are settled in complacency, who say in their heart, ‘The Lord will not do good, nor will He do evil.’”

I am not satisfied with my present understanding and experience of God. I am persuaded that there is more available to me as a disciple of Jesus Christ. There is more knowing and experiencing the presence of His Person, His Passion, His Purpose and His Power. Je

sus promised that “...when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth...” When I evaluate my life I can clearly see that I have not come into *all truth*. I can see that love has not been perfected within me. These are the longings of my soul... to know Him and to make Him known. It is my chief aim to experience a greater awareness of His presence in and through my life, bearing fruit for His kingdom.

For a number of years I have prayed specifically for: “**A jealous concern for the truth of God’s Word and the display, declaration and demonstration of the *Gospel of the Kingdom of God* in an accurate, adequate and appropriate manner” in and through my life and the Church community that is known by His name. Additionally, I couple that prayer with another prayer that I continually pray for: “**An increased zeal to express, extend, expand and establish the Kingdom of God through the evangelization and discipling of a lost and dying, Christ rejecting world.” These two items have taken on a renewed significance in my heart and mind over the last few years. Areas of my life that were once championed by complacency have been commandeered by concern and zeal for the name of Jesus Christ, for His Kingdom and for the glory of the Father. (See Appendix for complete “10 Point Prayer for Revival.”)****

As I grow in my personal understanding and application of the principal patterns of the life of renewed reciprocating fellowship with God, I find myself on a quest to seek the Kingdom of God according to the command of Mathew 6:33. But what, or where, is the Kingdom of God and how will I recognize it? What will the “signs of the Kingdom” be? How will it be displayed? How will it be declared? What will my life or this community look like if the Kingdom of God is expressed, in part or in full? Are we really able to establish the Kingdom of God on earth? Now? Here? Does Jesus expect His disciples and Church to actually carry on His Kingdom upon the earth... before His return? Though I have been praying for these things for more than twenty years, in so many ways I am not always sure that I really know or understand what I may

be asking God for. The Kingdom of God is so spectacular and overwhelming to the human senses, thoughts and capacity to perceive it. But still the words of Matthew 6:33 reverberate through my soul, “But seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.” Are there any options remaining for us but to obey to the extent of the grace of God given to us?

**Chapter Twenty-Two Study Notes:**

- 1) Who is the Helper spoken of in John 15:26? \_\_\_\_\_
  
- 2) Have you had an experience of “being filled with the Holy Spirit” in such a way as to reveal new methods of communication with Him? \_\_\_\_\_
  
- 3) If not, do you know at least one person you can speak with about who can help you to learn how to experience this aspect of fellowship with God? \_\_\_\_\_
  
- 4) If you do not know of such a person, list some things you might do to find someone to help you. If no one can be found, what can you do?  
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- 5) Have you prayed for a “hearing heart” as Solomon did in 1Kings 3:5-10?  
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- 6) Define “complacency” in your own words. \_\_\_\_\_  
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- 7) Ask to Holy Spirit to reveal any areas of complacency, and to replace them with appreciation, praise and thanksgiving, passion, concern and zeal for the expression and establishment of the Kingdom of God in your own life and in the world.  
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## CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

# AGGRESSIVE PURSUIT OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD



Matthew 11:12 “And from the days of John the Baptist until now the Kingdom of God suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.”

I have committed myself to aggressively pursue an increased understanding and manifestation of the Kingdom of God in a more intense and determined fashion than ever before in my life. I believe that there is so much more of the Kingdom of God to apprehend and take hold of at this present time than we can imagine, and more than I have yet beheld. I am persuaded that there is so much more that our God desires to manifest and display through our individual lives, and also in and through us corporately as a community of faith as His Church. Even after 35 years of walking with God I know that my vision of our God is still so small. My hearing is so dull. My knowledge of His Word is so limited and my obedience seems to me to be so tenuous. I am crying out to the Lord for a change in me! I am praying and fasting that my faith will be increased to believe God for His will in the world about me, for a greater fruitfulness of His character and life. I am praying for the manifestation of the Kingdom of God on earth as it is in heaven, in and through my life.

In 1 John 3:8 the apostle writes, “...For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.” But, today I see so many lives being broken, ravaged and destroyed by the works and workers of the devil. The damnable heresies of false christs and lying signs and wonders are drawing multitudes into the abyss of a dismal Christ-less life and a certainty of judgment and eternal separation from God. There seems to be nothing to hinder this foul rampage of the kingdom of darkness against reason and life. The gospel of the Kingdom of God and the Spirit of Prophecy, which is the testimony of Jesus Christ, is the only God-given hope for humanity. But, so often the Church seems incapable of producing any meaningful change in an individual life or in the communities where they reside. Often the disciples of Jesus Christ are considered no different, in the eyes of the world, than those who are adherents of other religions such as Buddhist, Judaism, Sikh, Hindu, Islam, New Age or witchcraft and sorcery; or even those of no religious pursuit at all. There should be something more that separates us from other religions than our theological posturing, verbal rhetoric and where we spend a few hours once a week.

The world is rightfully waiting to see more of the Kingdom of God in us before it will believe the message of the Kingdom of God from us. I need more of the Kingdom of God in my life. I need to see the “signs of the Kingdom” manifest in my life. But, what are the “*signs* of the Kingdom of God?” Below is an abbreviated list of those items that I am cultivating and

nurturing within my own life at this time believing they represent a balanced active operation of the Kingdom of God currently available upon the earth.

1. That an awareness of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, my King, would be functionally present in my life, reproducing righteousness, peace and a sense of joyful celebration within and through me at all times. He must rule more while I must rule less. All areas and aspects of self-determination must become progressively less intrusive in my life.
2. Speaking, teaching and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God with a growing realization that the Kingdom of God is the *real* world being made progressively *real* in my life and the lives of others with whom I fellowship.
3. Open and victorious confrontation with the powers of darkness and demons that oppress and possess people, holding them captive to the dominion of sin, sickness and the devil. It is the anointing of God that breaks the yokes of bondage.
4. The name of Jesus needs to be experientially victorious over sickness and disease. Divine healing will become the “bread of the children” rather than the possession of a few *super-saints* with special anointings and giftings.
5. The restoration of the authority and power of Christ over nature, the fish, the waves, the storms, etc.; and creatively over the crippling effects of birth defects and even death.
6. Dramatic and complete miraculous deliverance from the clutches of the kingdom of darkness to the embrace of the Kingdom of God in conversion and new birth, and *open* manifestation of the presence of the Holy Spirit.
7. The fruit of the Holy Spirit being manifested in Christ-like character and holiness, producing social transformation through the good works of the redeemed.
8. A willingness to suffer and die for the Kingdom of God ~ martyrdom.



**Chapter Twenty-three Study Notes:**

1) Consider prayerfully the eight items listed as aspects of the gospel of the Kingdom of God on the previous two pages. Identify at least two areas that you agree with and would like to pray for to be manifested in your life.

- That an awareness of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, my King, would be functionally present in my life, reproducing righteousness, peace and a sense of joyful celebration within and through me at all times. He must rule more while I must rule less. All areas and aspects of self-determination must become progressively less intrusive in my life.
- Speaking, teaching and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God with a growing realization that the Kingdom of God is the *real* world being made progressively *real* in my life and the lives of others with whom I fellowship.
- Open and victorious confrontation with the powers of darkness and demons that oppress and possess people, holding them captive to the dominion of sin, sickness and the devil. It is the anointing of God that breaks the yokes of bondage.
- The name of Jesus needs to be experientially victorious over sickness and disease. Divine healing will become the “bread of the children” rather than the possession of a few *super-saints* with special anointings and giftings.
- The restoration of the authority and power of Christ over nature, the fish, the waves, the storms, etc.; and creatively over the crippling effects of birth defects and even death.
- Dramatic and complete miraculous deliverance from the clutches of the kingdom of darkness to the embrace of the Kingdom of God in conversion and new birth, and *open* manifestation of the presence of the Holy Spirit.
- The fruit of the Holy Spirit being manifested in Christ-like character and holiness, producing social transformation through the good works of the redeemed.
- A willingness to suffer and die for the Kingdom of God ~ martyrdom.

Please take a few moments to record your thoughts and perspective on the previous statements.

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## CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

# HEARING & UNDERSTANDING – TWO KEYS OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD



In Matthew 13:18-23 our Lord unlocks and opens the parable of the sower for His disciples. It is a worthwhile time spent in Bible study to compare the explanations of Matthew with those recorded in Mark 4:13-20 and Luke 8:11-15.

Matthew 13:18-23 “Therefore hear the parable of the sower: <sup>(19)</sup>when anyone hears the WORD OF THE KINGDOM and does not understand it, then the wicked *one* comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who receives **seed** (the Word of the Kingdom of God) by the wayside. <sup>(20)</sup>But he, who received the seed (the Word of the Kingdom of God) on stony places, this is he who hears the word (of the Kingdom of God) and immediately receives it with joy: <sup>(21)</sup>yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word (of the Kingdom of God), immediately he stumbles. <sup>(22)</sup>Now he who received **seed** among the thorns is he who hears the word (of the Kingdom of God), and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word (of the Kingdom of God), and he becomes unfruitful. <sup>(23)</sup>But he who received the **seed** on the good ground is he who hears the word (of the kingdom of God) and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundred fold, some sixty, some thirty.” (Author’s amplification for clarity.)

The “**seed**” referred to here is very specific. It is the spoken, anointed, prophetic Word or message or Gospel of the Kingdom of God. Our Lord is not making a reference to the gospel that we so often think of today. The message of salvation through faith in the immaculate conception, sinless life, sacrificial and substitutional atoning death, restitutional, suffering penalty of hell, resurrection from the dead, ascension to heaven, the Father’s acceptance of the blood of Jesus Christ upon the heavenly altar, and ultimate glorification of Jesus Christ at the right hand of God our Father and finally His return at the close of the age - was not the gospel which Jesus proclaimed. He may have shared glimpses of these future events with His close disciples. But without the anointing of the Holy Spirit’s indwelling presence, and the post resurrection grace of God to open their understanding to comprehend the scriptures (Luke 24:45), they were unable to understand what He was speaking about. None of these things had occurred at the time that Jesus was preaching. Jesus was speaking specifically about the *Gospel of the Kingdom of God*.

The message of salvation through faith in:

- The immaculate conception,
- Sinless life,
- Sacrificial and substitutional atoning death,
- Restitutional, suffering penalty of hell,
- Resurrection from the dead,
- Ascension to heaven,
- The Father's acceptance of the blood of Jesus Christ upon the heavenly altar,
- Glorification of Jesus Christ at the right hand of God our Father,
- and finally His return at the close of the age –

was not the gospel which Jesus proclaimed. The items with bullets above were added to the Gospel of the Kingdom of God after our Lord was raised from the dead by the power of God as the Holy Spirit led the apostles and prophets and teachers into all truth.

Luke 4:42-43 <sup>(42)</sup> “Now when it was day, He departed and went into a deserted place. And the crowd sought Him and came to Him, and tried to keep Him from leaving them; <sup>(43)</sup>but He said to them, ‘I must preach the Kingdom of God to the other cities also, because for this purpose I have been sent.’”

Jesus explained to his disciples that the purpose for His being sent had to do with His preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God.

In Acts 1:3 Luke tells us that Jesus “...presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.” Additional mysteries of the Kingdom of God were also revealed to the Church through the revelational instruction of the Holy Spirit following the Day of Pentecost.

The fruitfulness that Jesus was speaking of has little to do with mentally acknowledging all the scriptural facts relating to the theology of the items listed above, but has everything to do with comprehending the message or “seed” or gospel of the Kingdom of God imbedded in our soul, spirit and understanding. The lack or collapse of understanding greatly hinders the reproductive capacity inherent in the seed. But the key that releases the fruitfulness of the gospel is not the understanding that results from cerebral/mental study, although that is of great value and should be encouraged. The hearing and understanding spoken of here is intuitive and spiritual in nature, absolutely requiring Holy Spirit revelation to produce comprehension, and making the promises of God active and alive within the disciple.

We must acknowledge our reliance upon the Holy Spirit and humbly recognize that the revelational knowledge of the Kingdom of God is both a mystery and a gift.

**Today, we have a message that is primarily focused upon believers going to heaven after they die, while the gospel that Jesus proclaimed was a message that focused primarily upon disciples being empowered to bring heaven to earth where they live.**

Matthew 11:25 “At that time Jesus answered and said, ‘I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes. Even so, Father, it seemed good in Your sight.’”

Luke 24:45 “And He (Jesus) opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.”

We need to acknowledge that according to the parable of the Sower, *understanding* is the *key* to fruitfulness - some a hundred-fold, some sixty and others thirty. But *understanding* must be recognized as a revelational grace gift from the Father through the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives, and not necessarily the result of our own personal capacity and ability. It is more like an intuitive perception than a cognitive deduction of human reason. We can't figure God out. His ways are above our ways and beyond our finding out through the strength of our own endeavors. Unless the Holy Spirit reveals His ways we will not find them. If it were not so then only the intelligent and educated could enter the Kingdom of God. The scriptural testimony is that the opposite is usually true. The sooner we realize this, the sooner we will begin to grow in our knowledge and experience of the Kingdom of God.

1 Corinthians 2:7-12 <sup>(7)</sup>“But we speak **the wisdom of God in a mystery**, the hidden wisdom which **God ordained before the ages for our glory**, <sup>(8)</sup>which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. <sup>(9)</sup>But as it is written: ‘Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things, which God has prepared for those who love Him.’ <sup>(10)</sup>But **God has revealed them to us through the Spirit**. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. <sup>(11)</sup>For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so **no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God**. <sup>(12)</sup>Now **we have received**, not the spirit of the world, but **the Spirit who is from God**, (in order) **that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.**”

The *criteria* for the different yields are clarified in comparing Matthew with Mark and Luke. But, for our purposes here it is enough to see that *understanding* is one of the *Keys of the Kingdom* that our Lord has provided us. It should be understood that there is no restriction on the part of the Lord that some people should reproduce a hundredfold while others are only permitted to reproduce thirty-fold. That would be cruel. What the Lord is speaking to is the potential for the same individual to produce an ever increasing yield in his life as his *understanding* increases. We have taken the phrase “some” to represent “some people” when it could just as well mean “some times.” Jesus could just as well be saying that the same person could at various times in his life produce one hundred-fold, sixty or thirty. The yield is dependent upon the believer's *understanding* of the gospel of the Kingdom of God as it relates to a particular situation or circumstance and his appropriate obedience and application of the promises and principles of God's Word.

Look at the scriptures between the “seed” of the Kingdom being stolen by the enemy at the beginning of the parable due to the lack of understanding, and the seed of the Kingdom of God being reproductive at the end when understanding is present. Lets examine the parable with the intent of learning how we might be more productive in our own lives and through our efforts for the Kingdom of God.

Matthew 13:20-22 <sup>(20)</sup>“But he, who received the seed (the Word of the Kingdom of God) on stony places, this is he who hears the word (of the Kingdom of God) and immediately receives it with joy: <sup>(21)</sup>yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word (of the Kingdom of God), immediately he stumbles. <sup>(22)</sup>Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word (of the Kingdom of God), and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word (of the Kingdom of God), and he becomes unfruitful.”

Mark 4:16-19 <sup>(16)</sup>“These likewise are the ones sown on stony ground who, when they hear the word (of the Kingdom of God), immediately receive it with gladness; <sup>(17)</sup>and

they have no root in themselves, and so endure only for a time. After-ward, when tribulation or persecution arises for the word's sake, immediately they stumble. <sup>(18)</sup>Now these are the ones sown among thorns; they are the ones who hear the word (of the Kingdom of God), <sup>(19)</sup>and the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word (of the Kingdom of God), and it becomes unfruitful.”

Luke 8:13-14 <sup>(13)</sup>“But the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear, receive the word (of the Kingdom of God) with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away. <sup>(14)</sup>Now the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity.”

In the Living Bible this last verse in Luke reads, “Never able to help anyone else to believe the Good News.” The idea of not bringing any fruit to maturity includes the thought that no fruit was ever brought to a place of reproducing capability. One defining element for maturity might be the ability or capacity to reproduce one's self. When the image is that of planting and harvesting of *seed*, then this appraisal is appropriate. When the life of Christ Jesus has been cultivated and nurtured within us, it will naturally multiply through us with the aid of the Holy Spirit into the lives of others.

The word for “cares” used in these verses is “merimna.” It is derived from the word “meiro” which means “to divide” and “noos” which means “the mind.” The word denotes distractions, anxieties, burden and worries. The Greek word “merimna” means to be anxious beforehand about daily life, to draw the mind in different directions.

In Matthew 13, the person hears the Word of the Kingdom but the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches “choke the Word” and he becomes unfruitful.

In Mark 4, the person hears the Word of the Kingdom, but 1) the cares of this world, 2) the deceitfulness of riches and 3) the desires of things other than the Kingdom of God enter into the person's life. These other things work in opposition to the words of our Lord in Matthew 6:33 commanding us to seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. As a result these things enter into the person's life and “choke the Word” of the Kingdom and it (the Word of the Kingdom of God) becomes unfruitful.

In Luke 8, the person hears the Word of the Kingdom, goes out; which perhaps speaks about moving away from the source of hearing the Word, or not fellowshipping with the Holy Spirit or other disciples; and as a result they are choked with cares, riches and pleasures of life. The result is that they never bring any fruit in their life to a place of maturity.

The word used in these scriptures for “choking” is interesting because it conveys the idea of “choking together by crowding.” The same word is used in Luke 8:42 where we are told that the crowd “thronged” Jesus, implying that He was almost to the point of suffocation due to the people pressing in to Him. The implication of this parable is that the enemy, who was unable to steal the “seed of the kingdom” because the person understood it; proceeds to amplify the person's shallowness of character and faithlessness by crowding out the life of the Word of the Kingdom of God. This is accomplished with a disproportionate attention to the concerns and pleasures of this world. If the person does not fall away from the faith, but continues as a believer in the Kingdom of God he never enters the realm of sacrificial discipleship, reproducing Christ's character within himself; nor does he reproduce Christ in others, who then reproduce themselves in yet others. It is as though the life stops with them. The generation that follows in the footsteps of such undisciplined, unproductive people do not even know that they are to expect

a multiplying, reproduction of the life of the Kingdom of God within or through their life, having never seen it in the life of their forefathers.

This is the tragedy. Although Satan may have lost the one, he succeeded in stopping that one from cultivating and nurturing the life of Christ in 30, 60 or 100 others in their lifetime. Although they may think they understand the words of the Kingdom of God intellectually, they have never really come to know the heart of the Kingdom of God or of their King experientially.

**Chapter Twenty-Four Study Notes:**

1) How does the Gospel of Salvation through faith in Jesus Christ differ from the Gospel of the Kingdom that Jesus preached during His earthly ministry ?

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2) What did Jesus predominately speak about with His disciples during the forty days following His resurrection from the grave? \_\_\_\_\_

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3) Why do you think it was so important to Jesus and the Father to teach these things at that time? \_\_\_\_\_

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4) Understanding the mysteries of the Kingdom of God requires the assistance of whom?

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5) What is one vital key to the Kingdom of God which causes one to increase their yield 30, 60 or 100 fold? \_\_\_\_\_

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6) What are the greater implications (results) when one's fruitfulness is choked out by the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches?

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## CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

# GOD WANTS TO TEACH US ALL HIS WAYS IN ALL OUR WAYS



John 14:26 He said, “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.”

Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would not only reveal the “what” of the Words He spoke but also the “heart,” the “purpose” and even the “how” or manner He said it. There is so much more of the Father’s heart that the Holy Spirit yearns to reveal to His people through Jesus Christ. There is more of the purpose, passion and pain of Jesus of Nazareth that has been buried beneath the simplistic, humanistic approach of studying God’s Word and hearing His voice.

Jeremiah 3:15 “And I will give you shepherds according to My heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding.”

We must require of those who would be our leaders that they possess a desperate longing and passion to know the heart of God, our Father. This should be a greater pre-requisite for leadership in the Body of Christ than any other attribute because it will release knowledge and understanding into the lives of the disciples, thereby making them fruitful in their daily lives. We need to bring the whole council of God to bear on every area of our lives. We must cease from simply preparing people to go to heaven when they die, and begin preparing people for heaven to come to earth while and where they live.

God desires that we should walk in **all** knowledge of Him – He is truth.

John 16:13 “However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but what ever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.”

It is clear that what Paul was sharing with the brethren in 1 Corinthians 2 was similar to what Jesus was teaching to His disciples during the course of the evening of the Last Supper. I am fully persuaded that there is far more available to me in my experience with the Holy Spirit than I have ever even imagined. I want to do everything I can to enhance my fellowship with the Holy Spirit, building myself up in my most holy faith. As Jude writes in

**“But you,  
beloved,  
building  
yourselves up  
on your most  
holy faith,  
praying in the  
Holy Spirit.”**



his letter, verse 20 instructs me to pray in the Holy Spirit, which means to pray in tongues, to build up myself in my most holy faith. According to 1 Corinthians 14:2 and verse 4, when I pray in tongues I speak to God, and although no one may understand my speech, in my own spirit I am speaking mysteries and building myself up. The mysteries that my spirit are praying are mysteries of the Kingdom of God given to it by instructional revelation from the Holy Spirit, in order that I may be able to better know God, serve others and bear fruit for the King and Kingdom of God.

## **IT BRINGS GOD PLEASURE TO BRING US INTO A FULLER EXPERIENCE OF HIS KINGDOM**

Luke 12:31-32 <sup>(31)</sup>“But seek the Kingdom of God first, and all these things shall be added to you. <sup>(32)</sup>Do not fear little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the Kingdom of God.”

In regards to this issue of the Kingdom of God, I am encouraged by the fact that the Kingdom of God is not only in heaven in the future but, “righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” right now, in this life, as clarified in Romans 14:17. God’s desire is that we might both “see” and “enter” the Kingdom of God experientially on the earth now in this lifetime, (see John 3:3,5). It pleases the Father to give us His Kingdom. One-way for us to please the heart of our Father God is to enter into His Kingdom and to reveal His Kingdom through the attitudes and actions of our daily life. This increases the significance of scriptures such as Romans 5:17, if we do not ascribe such scriptures to an experience in God reserved for after our death, but apply them to our lives now upon the earth.

Romans 5:17 “For if by one man’s offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.”

There is a Kingdom of God in the heavens above where the Father reigns and there will be a Kingdom of God upon the earth when Jesus returns to Jerusalem to reign over the nations, but there is also a Kingdom of God *now* where the Holy Spirit administers the authority of the Father in the name of the Son in the lives of individuals and Christian communities. There are also aspects and principles of the Kingdom of God that can be implemented in the marketplace of our daily experience. We must believe God for each aspect of the Kingdom of God and seek and pursue the Kingdom of God with all our soul and strength. But we must cease making heaven our goal as though we were escaping from some prison cell here on earth. Instead we must endeavor to so follow the Lord that we experience the reign of God in our lives here on the earth, today.

The knowledge and experience of the Kingdom of God is hidden, or cloaked from those outside the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. The experiential knowledge and present tense awareness of the Kingdom of God is withheld from those who claim to be Christian, but who live in such a manner as to repeatedly grieve the Holy Spirit through their arrogant self-reliance and self-determination, ignoring or denying the scriptures and testimony of God and effectively betraying the Spirit of Christ.

It may be interesting to compare three scriptures that contain a reference to an Old Testament prophecy. Here Jesus expresses a similar idea as Paul regarding the hidden wisdom and mystery of the Kingdom of God, which our Father intends for His children to know intimately and understand practically. These scriptures become increasingly significant if we do not reserve the Kingdom of God to heaven, but acknowledge that it may be experienced in this present life upon the earth.

Matthew 13:11 “He answered and said to them, ‘Because it has been given (as a grace gift) to you to know **the (secrets) mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven (God)**, but to them it has not been given.’”

Mark 4:11 “And He answered them, ‘To you it has been given (entrusted) to know **the mystery of the Kingdom of God**; but to those who are outside (of our circle), all things come in parables.’”

Luke 8:10 “And He said, ‘To you it has been given (*to come progressively*) **to know (that is, to recognize and under-stand more strongly and clearly) the mysteries (and secrets) of the Kingdom of God**, (the *secret counsels of God that are hidden from the ungodly*) but to the rest it is given in parable that ‘*Seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.*’”

(Amplification added by the author for clarification.)

The word used here for “mystery” refers to a secret that is known only to the initiated or those invited. It is something hidden or closed and requires special revelation, a key or password. In the New Testament the word always denotes something that people could never know by their own understanding, and that demands or requires a revelation from God. The secrets, thoughts, plans and dispensations of God remain hidden and locked away from unregenerated humanity and those who approach God in the arrogance of their own intellectual strength and ability. But these secrets are available and stand alert and ready to be revealed to all disciples by the instruction of Holy Spirit, regardless of their age or intellectual ability. That is one of the primary reasons that the Holy Spirit was restored on the day of Pentecost.

The Christian faith is the most mystical faith known to man. No other faith on the planet declares so boldly that God dwells within them, speaks to them and guides them with loving council. But that is exactly what our faith proclaims and the early Church practiced.

In non-biblical Greek the word *musterion* refers to knowledge withheld, concealed or silenced, but in Biblical Greek it is always “truth revealed.” This is the same word that Paul uses in his letter to the Colossians when he wrote “the *mystery* which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.” Unregenerate man cloaks and hides the keys to the Kingdom of God behind rituals, incantations, secret societies, cults and special hidden knowledge. Jesus addressed such arrogant, elitist attitudes when He responded to the leaders in Luke 11:52. “Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge. You did not enter yourselves, and those who were entering in you hindered.” In verse 46 Jesus had said to the same people, “Woe to you also, lawyers! For you load men with burdens hard to bear, and you do not touch the burdens with one of your fingers.” From the very beginning of the Church there have been those who have tried to make the knowledge of the Kingdom of God difficult to attain by adding to the Word of God their own restrictions and traditions, which have resulted in making the Word of God of null effect in the lives of millions of people throughout generations of humanity.

Each of these scriptures in Matthew, Mark and Luke makes reference to Isaiah 6:9-10. The lengthiest reference is in Matthew’s gospel, which was originally intended for the Jewish people of his day. Jesus might just as easily have quoted Jeremiah 5:21 “Hear this now, O foolish people, without understanding, who have eyes and see not, and who have ears and hear not...” or Ezekiel 12:2 “Son of Man, you dwell in the midst of a rebellious house, which has eyes to see but does not see, and ears to hear but does not hear; for they are a rebellious house.” The reference to Isaiah is found in Matthew 13:14-15. But in verse 13 our King Jesus, Himself provides insight into His intent when He says:

Matthew 13:13-15 <sup>(13)</sup>“Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see and hearing they do not hear, nor do they **understand**.” Then quoting Isaiah Jesus continued, <sup>(14)</sup>“And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says: ‘*Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, and seeing you will see and not perceive; <sup>(15)</sup>for the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, lest they should **understand with their hearts** and turn so that I should heal them.*”

## **HEARTS GROW DULL; THEY ARE NOT BORN DULL**

The people of whom Isaiah had prophesied and to whom Jesus was referring were some of the most religious people on the planet at that time: Sadducees, Pharisees, scribes and even lawyers of the Law of Moses. Others were the congregants who were deceived and blindly led away by their blind leaders, who claimed to be able to see. There was a great deal of religious activity in the days of the life of Jesus, but it had scarcely little to do with the Kingdom of God and His righteousness.

Hebrews 5:9-11 <sup>(9)</sup>“And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all those who obey Him, <sup>(10)</sup>called of God as High Priest “according to the order of Melchizedek,” <sup>(11)</sup>of whom we have much to say, and hard to explain, since you have become (grown) dull of hearing.”

Tragically, the same is glaringly true today. The abhorrent blind religious practices wax along eloquently in a quest for self-realization and fulfillment. The current global situation is symptomatic of the Jerusalem that Jesus wept over, only on a much grander scale. The cry in the heart of their Messiah was that He must declare judgment against the lifeless merchandizing system of religion. It had displaced the beauty of encountering God with emblematic projection and false hope. This was the same condition of the Israelites centuries before who had been brought out of Egypt with an outstretched hand of their God. They fabricated a golden calf with the very gold and provision that God had caused the Egyptians to give to them. The pain of God’s heart was that the people He had redeemed from bondage preferred the false security of a god of their own making.

The peoples’ hearts had grown cold, and this affected the way they heard the Word of God and saw the world around them. This condition reduced their capacity to understand from the heart and fulfill the conditions necessary to receive their healing, or to enter into the provision of God’s promises.

“The hearts of this people have grown dull,” reveals the blunting effect of rote religious activity without personal interaction with and encounter of God. The complacency and boredom of ritualistic incantations and ceremonies is rampant throughout religious communities of the world today. True encounters with the one true living God will sharpen the heart, even as iron sharpens iron. Encountering God will humble and change the heart of man.

**The abhorrent blind religious practices wax along eloquently in a quest for self-realization and fulfillment. The current global situation is symptomatic of the Jerusalem that Jesus wept over, only on a much grander scale.**

Typically, the heart of a child is born alert, poised and anxious to learn and discover the world about him. If that young heart is nurtured and encouraged, it will become even sharper and more alert and sensitive to his environment. But if the young heart is discouraged and battered by

unrealistic expectations and inappropriate harsh criticism, it will grow dull or become blunted, disfigured or even crippled. The same thing can occur in the spiritual life of an individual or a community of believers.

“Their ears are hard of hearing,” is often the result of unguarded and indiscriminant listening that fills our ears with information contrary and in hostile opposition to the will and purposes of God for our lives. There is an act of plugging the ears that occurs when someone places their hands over their ears or stuffs their ears with cloth or something to muffle the sound. This same type of act can take place with our spiritual ears when we refuse to be still and hear what the Holy Spirit is saying. One way we do this is through excessive activity or not being careful of the things we listen to and look at. Disease and birth defects can also impair our ability to hear. If a child is made to listen to loud noises during its developmental years, or adults are subjected to excessive sounds in the work place, their hearing may also be drastically impaired. In much the same way our ability to hear God’s heart and voice can be considerably hindered by the circumstances and environment in which we live that have victimized us unknowingly.

“Their eyes they have closed,” is a choice they have made in order not to see what the Holy Spirit or the devil is revealing or doing in their lives or the lives of others. Neither God nor the devil closed their eyes. They closed their eyes. Perhaps they had become so introspective and self-absorbed that they could not or would not look outward to the needs and concerns of others. Or possibly they had become so self-satisfied and self-sufficient that they were not looking for or seeking help from God. This is often the result of affluence. Whatever the heart cause may have been, it was an act of their will that they had closed their eyes. Their refusal to “look” resulted in their loss of the ability or grace to understand with their heart that they might be healed.

Between the promise of God’s Word and the provision of God’s Heart is the principle of God’s Kingdom or conditional phrase: “If you will do this, than I will do that!” I can grasp for the promises of God, but if I will not submit to the conditional principles and discipline associated with the promise, I will never experience the provision of the promise in my life. Even though I know and even confess my belief in the promises of God’s Word, my unbelief or disobedience may hinder the intended fulfillment of the promise in my life. I may possess the ability to teach a Bible class at a university level, but not possess the ability to understand and experience the truth of what I am teaching in the practical, day-to-day activities of my life. I may win the praise of men but fail to obtain the provision of God’s promise. As a result of continuing such religious folly, my heart will grow dull and hardened to the gentle touch and voice of the Holy Spirit.

The “therefore” of verse 13 is a conditional reference to the previous verse.

Matthew 13:12 “For whoever has (spiritual knowledge), to him more will be given (furnished richly or lavishly), and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him.”  
(Amplification added by the author for clarification.)

This phrase might be considered a conditional clause in God’s covenant or contract.

I need to confess that in the early years of my faith walk in the Holy Spirit these scriptures confused me and even bothered me just a little. Every time I would read them I would add my humanistic “Why?” But Jesus didn’t use this conditional phrase just once; He used it repeatedly. In the “parable of the talents” in Matthew 25:29 Jesus uses the same exact phrase as he did here in Matthew 13:12. He uses the same phrase again in Mark 4:25, and again in Luke 19:26 in the “parable of the minas.” *Recognizing and acknowledging what God has already accomplished or given to us, and being an honorable steward of those graces will prompt and facilitate the receipt of additional graces into our life.*

**Chapter Twenty-Five Study Notes:**

1) We might expect the Holy Spirit to bring to our remembrance the words that Jesus spoke, but also the \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ of what He said.

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2) What is one very practical way the Bible instructs us to build ourselves up in our most holy faith? \_\_\_\_\_

3) What passion would be appropriate and desirable to see in someone who is a leader in the Body of Christ ? \_\_\_\_\_

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4) According to the scriptures, is the Kingdom of God something that we experience only when we get to heaven? \_\_\_\_\_ Why or why not?

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5) How can we begin to experience the Kingdom of God now on the earth? What does it mean when Jesus says in Luke 12:31 that we should seek first the Kingdom of God?

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6) Empty \_\_\_\_\_ having little or nothing to do with the Kingdom of God and His righteousness can cause people's heart to grow

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7) Unrealistic expectations and harsh criticism can cause what effect of a tender, pure young heart? \_\_\_\_\_

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## CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

# AFLAME WITH THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD



**I**t is God’s intent that our lives should be aflame with the knowledge of His kingdom, and those who are disciples of Jesus Christ should be able and willing to lead or assist others in the ways of the Kingdom.

In Mark 4:25, Jesus is concluding a thought that He began in verse 21, which began with the question, “Is a lamp brought to be put under a basket or under a bed? Is it not to be set on a lamp stand?” Jesus is speaking here of the mysteries of the Kingdom of God, in the context of the “parable of the sower,” related in Mark 4:1-20. Those mysteries that we receive from the Holy Spirit are not to be hid under a bed or reserved for our personal enjoyment and comfort only, but they are intended by God to be brought out at an appropriate time and openly displayed or declared in a public forum for the benefit of others as well.

Mark 4:21-25 <sup>(21)</sup>“Also He said to them, ‘Is a lamp brought to be put under a basket or under a bed? Is it not set on a lampstand? <sup>(22)</sup>For there is nothing hidden which will not be revealed, nor has anything been kept secret but that it should come to light. <sup>(23)</sup>If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear.’ <sup>(24)</sup>Then He said to them, ‘Take heed what you hear. With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you and to you who here, more will be given. <sup>(25)</sup>For whoever has, to him more will be given; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him.’”

At least eight times Jesus uses the phrase, “If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear” in Matthew, Mark and Luke.

The items that were once “hidden” that Jesus is referring to are the mysteries of the Kingdom of God. The Greek word is “*kruptos*” meaning secret or private. It comes from the word “*krupto*” meaning to hide. We derive the English word crypt and cryptic from this word. Many have used this scripture to speak of hidden sin, thoughts or motives; but its intended application is to the secrets of the Kingdom of God. Jesus says that nothing regarding the Kingdom of God will be withheld. In Luke 12:32, Jesus said. “...it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the Kingdom of God.” God’s desire is to give, not withhold. He desires to reveal His Kingdom to us by the Holy Spirit, and to the world through us by the anointing of the Holy Spirit. The word “brought” refers to the presentation or provision of a lamp being conveyed or carried into a place where it was needed or appropriately placed... for the sake of the people in the room.

The Greek word used in this instance for “reveal” is “*Phoneroo*” and means: to lay bare, reveal, uncover, make visible, make known what has been unknown, make clear. “*Phoneroo*” tells us of Christ’s appearing in Colossians 3:4 when all of humanity through the ages shall see

Him in the full expression of His glorious character, power and splendor. One day the Alpha and Omega shall be openly known by all of creation simultaneously.

Mark 4:24 “Take heed what you hear. With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you; and to you who hear, more will be given.”

In Mark 4:24 Jesus continues His teaching as He warns all those who are listening to Him. As God’s purchased possession we should cultivate a greater discrimination towards the materials we listen to and look upon because we are no longer our own. We have been purchased at a price to the praise of God’s glory. We should glorify God in and with our bodies at all times. In the same way that we would not consciously consume poison through what we eat or breathe, neither should we consume poison through what we hear or what we look upon.

And then in verse 25 He adds the phrase He has used so often to emphasize the importance of what He is saying. “For whoever has, to him more will be given; but whoever does not have even what he has will be taken away from him.” The effectiveness of the Word of God can be eroded in a believer’s life to the point of being practically useless. Romans 10:17 says, “So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.” In the same manner that faith can be increased by what we hear and read, so can unbelief and doubt. It is frightening to consider that if we refuse to guard what we listen to, what we possess in our knowledge of God’s kingdom may actually be taken away from us.

In Matthew 10:27 our King says: “Whatever I tell you in the dark, speak in the light; and whatever you hear in the ear, preach on the housetops.” This verse clearly implies that we should possess, cultivate and nurture an expectation to hear our Lord speak when we separate ourselves to Him in secret. What we hear in private seclusion with Him we should be prepared to share openly and publicly for Him as the Holy Spirit directs. We should be ready to give an answer to those who ask regarding the hope that resides within us. We should be prepared to be a prophetic voice in every circumstance and situation; not only by the manner of our life, but also by the living prophetic Word that the Holy Spirit chooses to speak. (Consider Ephesians 4:29-30.)

## **RESPONSIBILITY TO GUARD WHAT WE ALLOW TO ENTER OUR SOUL**

It has helped me to clarify Mark 4:25 in my own understanding by amplifying and paraphrasing it in the following manner. I submit it to you for your consideration. “For whoever has the desire and interest to listen to and hear the Word of the Kingdom of God, to him more will be given. But, whoever does not have any desire or interest in listening to the Word of the Kingdom of God, even what he seems to have will be taken away and snatched from him becoming eroded and polluted because of what he is desiring and interested in listening to.” I pray often for; “An eagerness to hear and read the Word of God (the Bible) and to hear and speak about the things of the Spirit.”

In its context this is an extremely severe warning to be diligently on guard to what we allow ourselves to listen to and to hear. In Luke 8:18 Jesus says, “Even what he seems to have (or ‘thinks he has’ NIV) will be taken from him.” That is a staggering thought to me. ‘Even what I seem to have?!’ In my thinking that implies that I may have an appearance, or an attitude, or even an action that conveys that I have some truth of the Kingdom of God in my life, but in the final analysis, it is not really a settled heart issue, and actually can be removed from my life. It is frightening to consider that I might exchange what I possess or have received from the Holy Spirit for some frivolous morsel of information or entertainment. This is one reason that some believers are so easily tossed to and fro by every wind and doctrine, being unstable in their walk

with God (Ephesians 4:14). Backsliding usually occurs in areas of our lives where we have been indiscriminate in what we were allowing ourselves to listen to, think about or look upon.

Over the years it seems to me that the Holy Spirit has revealed many Kingdom truths to my spirit. But 4-6 months later I can barely recall what the Lord was saying or doing. Whatever the “truth” was, it was not functional or operational in a practical way in my daily life. I had it, or thought I did, but I lost it. I believe Luke 8:18 explains this experience. Someone may say, “Oh, I’ve heard that before.” But, the fruit of their life reveals they have not received the provision of the promise into their life. They heard with the ears of their mind, but not with the inner ear of the heart or of the spirit.

John 6:62-63 <sup>(62)</sup>“It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life. <sup>(63)</sup>But there are some of you who do not believe.”

**The sooner I allow a particular truth to be interwoven into my character and soul, the greater the impact that truth will have on my life and ultimately through my life for the glory of God.**

If I desire to obtain and retain the secrets and mysteries of the Kingdom of God, then I need to submit to them in obedience, applying them to my life and allowing them to rule and impact my life.

The sooner I allow a particular truth to be interwoven into my character and soul, the greater the impact that truth will have on my life and ultimately through my life for the glory of God. Interestingly, I might resist or oppose a Kingdom principle or truth of God’s word saying, “I don’t need that,” or “I don’t believe it’s real,” or something like that. But at some later time in my life I acknowledge the validity of the truth or agree that it may truly be important. The result may often be an isolating of that truth into some mental “pocket” of uselessness in my life. I think I have accepted the truth of God’s Word, but I have never allowed it to have its intended

effect in my life. I have received the grace of God in vain. The mercy of God provides grace to those who truly repent of their attitude against God’s Word, embrace it’s correction, and earnestly pursue the Kingdom of God.

Proverbs 1:5 “A wise man will hear and increase learning...”

Jonah 2:8 “Those who regard (*hold on to*) worthless idols forsake (*give up*) their own Mercy, (*the grace that could have been theirs*).”

(Amplification added by author for clarification.)

2 Timothy 3:7 “... always learning but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.”

There is a long list of scriptures that could be provided to validate the dangerous position of those who hear the Word of God but refuse to heed the content with obedience. Perhaps the most fearful condition is the forsaking of ones salvation **without** realizing it, due to the deceptive doctrine of demons that has stolen the pure Word of truth and testimony.

Mark 4:24 “Take heed what you hear. With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you; and to you who hear, more will be given.”

The Greek for the verb “to hear” in Mark 4:24 is “*akouo*.” There are two primary meanings or thoughts of this word. The first is that of “the sensational perception” or activity of the nerves in the inner ear in response to sound waves. The second aspect of this word is “the thing perceived” in regards to the cause of the sound or the motive or meaning of the sound.



We can hear someone speak but not understand what is being said by that person. There are a number of reasons or causes for this.

- What is spoken is in a language that is not understood by the listener.
- What is spoken is said so quickly that it cannot be adequately heard or understood.
- What is spoken is vague or unclear, or in code.
- What is spoken is said so quietly it cannot be heard or understood.
- What is spoken is gibberish, or “baby talk.”

Of course there are many other reasons for being unable to hear. Some have more to do with the condition of the hearer than the speaker.

- We were yawning. Yawning affects our hearing in the same way that sneezing affects our sight.
- We are distracted by other voices, noises or distractions.
- We are not paying attention to what is being said.
- Our capacity to hear is defective in some manner.

John 15:7-8 <sup>(7)</sup>“If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. <sup>(8)</sup>By this My Father is glorified, that you bear (produce) much fruit; so you will be My disciples.”

If hearing and understanding are keys to fruitfulness in the Kingdom of God and bringing glory to God our Father, then it is imperative that we guard and nurture our ability in both arenas. Hearing the words that someone is speaking or the sounds they are making is a natural physical and cognitive experience. Being able to hear and accurately discern the heart’s motive of the words being spoken is a separate item altogether and requires cultivating, nurturing and guarding,

**Chapter Twenty-Six Study Notes:**

1) What should we be willing to do if we are aflame with the knowledge of the Kingdom of God? \_\_\_\_\_

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2) Why should we cultivate a greater carefulness and discrimination about the things we listen to and look upon? \_\_\_\_\_

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3) What is a major cause of backsliding in the lives of? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4) How can we increase our appetite and ability to hear, read and understand the Bible? \_\_\_\_\_

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5) Why is it important to allow a spiritual truth to be interwoven into our soul and character as soon as possible after hearing that truth?

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## CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

# THE PARABLE OF THE CLANGING TRIANGLE



I would like to illustrate this issue of hearing and discerning the heart’s motive in the following story of a 10-year-old girl named Lilly who was visiting her cousin Ruth, who was 12, for the first time on Ruth’s parent’s ranch near Livingston, Montana.

On the first day of Lilly’s visit Ruth wanted to show her cousin around the ranch. As they were leaving the house Ruth’s mother said to the girls, “Don’t go too far away. Be sure to listen so you can hear me when I call you for lunch.”

Ruth called back over her shoulder, “Okay Mom.” The two girls ran off in the direction of the horses and the barn for the beginning of a wonderful adventure.

About two hours later the girls heard the loud clanging of a bell. Ruth said to Lilly, “Oh! Dinner is ready. We need to go back to the house.”

Lilly said, “How do you know that lunch is ready?”

“I heard Momma call,” Ruth explained as she put the lid on the feed bucket next to the horse’s stall.

“I didn’t hear anything but that noisy bell ringing.” Lilly was petting one of the kittens that had been born in the barn, not really paying attention to Ruth.

Ruth answered, “The sound of the bell was mom calling us to come and eat. Dinner is ready. We better get up to the house right away.”

As the two girls approached the back porch of the house a few moments later, Ruth showed Lilly the large metal bell that her mother had been clanging. “See that’s the bell that Mom was calling us with.”

After lunch the girls went out to the tree house by the creek to play. Ruth loved this place because she could see so far in every direction. On the way to the tree house Ruth told Lilly how her father had built it last spring when her brother Frank was home from college on Spring break.

The afternoon seemed to pass by quickly as the two girls enjoyed the treasures Ruth had stored in her hideaway. Then Lilly heard the clanging of the triangle again. She asked Ruth, “Is your mother calling us to eat, again?”

Ruth hadn’t seemed to even notice the clanging sound this time. “Oh no, that’s not for us. When Momma rings the bell that way she’s only calling my dad. Someone must be at the house to meet him and he’s probably working in the shop of the barn fixing the horse trailer.” Lilly

was glad that she hadn't run all the way back to the house for nothing, having heard the clanging of the triangle but not understanding what the meaning of the sound was.

Shortly after that the girls decided to go down to the creek and throw stones in the water. They also decided to look at a bird's nest that Ruth had found a few days earlier to see how the eggs inside were doing. As they approached the nest Ruth warned Lilly, "Now don't touch the eggs. The momma bird will abandon her eggs if she smells our scent on them." Lilly had never heard of such a silly thing, but she had never seen real bird's eggs in their nest before either.

As they approached the creek it happened again. The triangle began to ring out again. This time though the sound was different. The clanging seemed louder and was very rapid or quicker than before. Ruth jumped down from the small tree that she and her cousin had just begun to climb to see the bird's nest, and began to run in the direction of the house. Turning, as she continued running, Ruth yelled back to Lilly, "Hurry up! There's an emergency and Momma's calling us to come home quickly. Something's wrong! We need to get home right now!" Lilly jumped out of the tree and chased Ruth back to the house.

As they approached the house the girls saw the Game Warden's truck at the back yard. When they got near to the house both Ruth's mother and father ran out to greet the girls, scooping them up in their arms. "What's wrong Mommy? What's wrong?" Ruth gasped as she tried to catch her breath in her mother's arms.

"Look honey." Her Father pointed beyond the area where the girls had been playing. What Ruth saw filled her heart with fear.

"What is it?" Lilly asked, not understanding what she was looking at.

"It's a wild fire, Lilly," Momma said.

The Warden added, "It is heading directly towards where you girls were playing. It might be about a half mile away."

After a moment, they all stood looking at the fire raging quite near to their home Lilly said to Ruth, "I am sure glad that you heard the bell this time and knew what to do."

As she lay down to sleep that night Lilly thought about all the wonderful things that she had learned on her first day in the country. Looking out the window of her bedroom she could still see the faint red glow of the distant fire as it reflected against the clouds of the night sky. The fire had come so close to the ranch, but the wind changed directions at the last minute and the consuming blaze seemed to change directions just as quickly. As she was nodding off to sleep she thought, "I have so much to learn about living on the farm."

**Chapter Twenty-Seven Study Notes:**

1) Name several way the bells was sounded from Ruth’s parent home.

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2) How did Ruth learn the meanings of the variations in the clanging of the bell?

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3) Why was it important to listen for, understand and obey the meaning of the different types of noises the triangle made? \_\_\_\_\_

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4) What helped Ruth’s friend Lilly, learn the meaning of the various sounds?

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5) Can you remember any circumstances in your life were a similar situation or lesson may have been learned? \_\_\_\_\_

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## **SECTION FIVE**



### **SAMUEL AND THE CONFLICT BETWEEN THE OLD ORDER AND THE NEW ORDER**

Acts 13:16-23 <sup>(16)</sup>“Then Paul stood up, and motioning with his hand said, ‘Men of Israel, and you who fear God, listen: <sup>(17)</sup>the God of this people Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an uplifted arm He brought them out of it. <sup>(18)</sup>Now for a time of about forty years He put up with their ways in the wilderness. <sup>(19)</sup>And when He had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, He distributed their land to them by allotment. <sup>(20)</sup>After that He gave them judges for about four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet. <sup>(21)</sup>And afterward they asked for a king; so God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years. <sup>(22)</sup>And when He had removed him, He raised up for them David as king, to whom also He gave testimony and said, ‘I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all my will.’ <sup>(23)</sup>From this man’s seed, according to the promise, God raised up for Israel a Savior – Jesus.”

## CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

# GOD’S CHOICE AND ANOINTING OF A NEW KING AND A NEW ORDER



Several years ago, on Friday, October 31, 2003, my wife and I began the first session of a conference on the “**Current Global Reformation and It’s Impact of The World Mission’s Movement**” in Prenslau, Germany. Early in the day we had been informed that it was “*Reformation Day*,” a national holiday in Germany celebrating the liberty Martin Luther had brought to the German people in 1517. Martin Luther was a monk in the Roman Catholic faith and taught theology at the University of Wittenberg.

Luther took a stand against the incomprehensible and abominable practice of selling indulgences and forgiveness of sins for a sum of money. The practice of selling salvation was done in direct opposition to the sacrificial work of Jesus Christ. Additionally, the Roman church had concocted a fabrication of a place or state of existence following death they called “purgatory,” and then proceeded to sell the means of escape from this hell-like existence; all the while manipulating and extorting money from the uneducated people through fear, intimidation and superstition. Luther’s frustration had reached a climax. The atrocities of the Roman church’s seeking dishonest gain, the taking of bribes, and the perverting of God’s justice could no longer be ignored.

On October 31<sup>st</sup>, 1517, Martin Luther called for an open, public debate of these horrendous practices by posting his “*95 Theses*” or points of debate, upon the door of the castle church at Wittenberg, Germany. The corruption and complacency of the Roman church’s priesthood could no longer be tolerated. Luther demanded change, even if it cost him his career or his life, as it had for so many before him. His actions changed the course of his nation. This one man’s life affected the direction of European history. He was not willing to simply turn his back and ignore the arrogant errors and atrocities of the church of his day; he contended for his faith, willing to forsake everything for the truth of God’s Word. Today, many historians consider Martin Luther among the top five “*Most Influential People of the Millennium*.”

On the third evening of our conference it had become obvious that the Holy Spirit intended to confirm His Word to the people who were gathered together by calling forth the ministries and functions necessary to set a functional New Testament Church into place in that particular city and region of the former East Germany state. The Holy Spirit anointed the evening meeting in a wonderful way. Repeatedly the Lord would reveal things that He had previously spoken to the hearts of people, following the pattern that Paul wrote about in his first letter to the Corinthians.

1Corinthians 14:24-25 <sup>(24)</sup>“But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an unformed person comes in, he is convinced by all, he is convicted by all. <sup>(25)</sup>And thus the secrets of



his heart are revealed; and so, falling down on his face, he will worship God and report that God is truly among you.”

That evening the Holy Spirit revealed dreams, desires, hopes, visions, conflicts and disappointments that many of them had never shared openly. As prophetic words of knowledge took place, the faith of the people rose to greater heights. It seemed as though a door had been opened into heaven and there was this awesome rush to enter in and receive all that God had to offer. Restraining traditions and thoughts were consciously released and cast aside. Almost everyone at that Sunday meeting was involved in some manner in the ministry of calling forth and praying for the ascension ministries, functions and foundational giftings necessary to move forward in God. There was no tolerance in the hearts of the people for any complacency that might hold them back. They were persuaded that choice, not chance would determine their destiny and the future of their fellowship with one another in God.

**Restraining traditions and thoughts were consciously released and cast aside.**

As we were preparing for the ministry on Sunday, the Holy Spirit directed us to consider 1 Samuel 16:1-13 for the evening meeting.

1 Samuel 16:1-13 <sup>(1)</sup>“Now the Lord said to Samuel, ‘How long will you mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? Fill your horn with oil, and go; I am sending you to Jesse the Bethlehemite. For I have provided Myself a king among his sons.’ <sup>(2)</sup>And Samuel said, ‘How can I go? If Saul hears it, he will kill me.’ But the Lord said, ‘Take a heifer with you, and say, ‘I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.’ <sup>(3)</sup>Then invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do; you shall anoint for Me the one I name to you.’ <sup>(4)</sup>So Samuel did what the LORD said and went to Bethlehem. And the elders of the town trembled at his coming and said, ‘Do you come peaceably?’ <sup>(5)</sup>And he said, ‘Peaceably; I have come to sacrifice to the LORD. Sanctify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice.’ Then he consecrated Jesse and his sons, and invited them to the sacrifice. <sup>(6)</sup>So it was, when they came, that he looked at Eliab and said, ‘Surely the LORD’s anointed is before me.’ <sup>(7)</sup>But the LORD said to Samuel, ‘Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.’ <sup>(8)</sup>So Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, ‘Neither has the LORD chosen this one.’ <sup>(9)</sup>Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, ‘Neither has the LORD chosen this one.’ <sup>(10)</sup>Thus Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. And Samuel said to Jesse, ‘The Lord has not chosen these.’ <sup>(11)</sup>And Samuel said to Jesse, ‘Are all the young men here?’ And he said, ‘There remains yet the youngest, and there he is, keeping the sheep.’ And Samuel said to Jesse, ‘Send and bring him. For we will not sit down until he comes here.’ <sup>(12)</sup>So he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, with bright eyes, and good looking. And the LORD said, ‘Arise, anoint him, for this is the one!’ <sup>(13)</sup>Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel arose and went to Ramah.”

One focus of our ministry time in Germany was verse 13. “Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day.” Verses 4-5 explained that the elders of the town of Bethlehem were also present during the event. We felt that it was necessary to identify and call forth the giftings and callings to establish a reformational Church model while we were there in Prenslau. We recognized the

significance and importance of acknowledging them publicly, setting them in place and anointing them 'in the midst of their brothers' in the same manner as Samuel had anointed David as King over Israel, setting into place a "new order" or regime of government to replace the old order/regime of Saul. Identification – Impartation – Affirmation: are evidence of spiritual parenting.

The activity of Samuel anointing David in the midst of his brothers ushered a greater awareness of God's presence into David's life. This action by Samuel activated, released and set into motion God's destiny for and through David. The obedience of all those who had been involved that day would result in impacting the remainder of David's life, the nation of Israel, his generation and the way that the God of creation would ultimately relate to the entire human race. The prophetic destiny of humanity was intertwined in all that was being done in Bethlehem that day by an elderly prophet obeying the directional, instructional voice of God. Choice, not chance, determines our destiny. We desperately need our Lord to open our understanding that we might comprehend the scriptures.

Luke 24:31-32 <sup>(31)</sup>“Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight. <sup>(32)</sup>And they said to one another, ‘Did our heart not burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the scriptures to us.’”

Luke 24:45 “And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.”

The phenomenal, panoramic processional of the eternal purpose of the Lord God Almighty was being unfurled in a small village, whose name came to mean "*house of royalty*" but, it had meant "*house of bread*," representing the "*bread of the presence*." There was none of the pomp and circumstance of the world's system or envy and imitation of the other nations involved in the ceremony of David's anointing as there had been in 1 Samuel 8:5 and 20 for King Saul. There were no prophetic signs as there had been with Saul, nor any public warnings such as those that had preceded King Saul's inaugural anointing in 1 Samuel 10:25 and 1 Samuel 8:11-18. This was an endeavor initiated by the Lord and the choice was fully His. There isn't even a word recorded coming from David as he received his anointing to be king over Israel. There is nothing but the simplicity of a young boy obeying the voice of his father.

It was through the lineage of David that the everlasting King of Glory would be ushered into the realm of human suffering and hopelessness. Centuries later in this same village the Alpha and Omega of human history would emerge in a stable in the City of David. The governmental sovereign of the whole of creation, His Majesty King Jesus, would come in the form of a baby boy, a son born to a virgin. And He would engage the forces of darkness and death. The miraculous mystery of the ages would be revealed in this same small village. And then, once again, God's choice in selection of a King would be seen as being radically different than the choice of the people and the ways of this world.

**This one action of Samuel, in obedience to the voice or Word of the Lord, produced a framework for the coming of the Messiah and Savior of all humanity.** What God had spoken was acted upon by this elderly servant of God; as a result of his obedience thousands of others were affected in Israel, and multiplied millions were also impacted throughout the earth over the centuries. Our choosing to hear the voice of God and obey the Lord is essential to releasing the destiny of God in and through our lives and perhaps in the lives of others, especially those with whom we fellowship on a regular basis. We desperately need each other to hear and obey the "*prophetic*" voice and Word of the Lord our God. Throughout the whole earth our villages and communities need it; our cities need it and our nations need it. Like Samuel we must arise from our places of mourning and go forth with the unction of the Holy Spirit to fulfill our destiny in God, while releasing the eternal purposes of God in the earth today.

Over the years that followed, the young boy David may have considered the words spoken by the prophet Samuel many times. He may have questioned, “Why me Lord?” He may have wondered to himself, “When will this thing happen?” Imagine the impact of such words in the life of such a young boy. His own brothers and even his father had rejected him from the possibility of being included in this special prophetic meeting and opportunity. Imagine the prophetic symbolism of being rejected by his brethren.

It is likely that David left the meeting that day and simply returned to tending his father’s sheep after this prophetic encounter. We don’t know for sure, but that is the most likely scenario. He went on with his ordinary duties and responsibilities, but now he had the hope of a prophetic word to sustain and motivate him from day to day.

After leaving Germany, I went on to N.E. India and then to Pakistan. In both countries the Holy Spirit provided additional opportunities to identify; call forth and publicly anoint various individuals into their prophetic purposes and destinies in God’s kingdom advance. Each time, I revisited these same scriptures in 1Samuel 16:1-13.

By examining the life of Samuel we discover that there is much to learn in understanding the purpose, motives and methods of God in our personal lives. I believe that there are insights that would aid each of us in overcoming the difficulties, obstructions and hindrances associated with fulfilling God’s prophetic purposes and mandate in our lives. There are “*keys to the Kingdom*” that will release within us a greater dimension of the expression of the Kingdom of God. Then, through our lives the Holy Spirit is able to impact our families, our communities, our nation and ultimately our generation for the advancement of His Kingdom will, “on earth as it is in heaven.”

**Chapter Twenty-Eight Study Notes:**

1) Describe some of the practices of the Roman Catholic Church that Martin Luther could no longer tolerate? \_\_\_\_\_

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2) Given the opportunity, do you believe that you would be willing to risk your life to oppose the types of wickedness that Martin Luther opposed?

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3) What is one sure evidence in a believers' meeting that the Holy Spirit is truly among the group? \_\_\_\_\_

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4) From 1 Samuel 16:1-13, how does God see a person differently than man sees?

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5) What can we release into our lives and the lives of others as we choose to hear and obey the prophetic voice of the Holy Spirit? \_\_\_\_\_

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## CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

### HOW LONG SHALL WE MOURN?



1Samuel 16:1 “Now the Lord said to Samuel, ‘How long will you mourn for Saul seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and go; I am sending you to Jesse the Bethemite. For I have provided Myself a king among his sons.’”

**I**t is often easier to mourn over our inadequacies and apparent lack in some area, and even our failures, than it is to move into a new paradigm, posture and position to receive from God His choice for us today. It is usually simpler to lament our failures from the past and our apparent lack in the present than it is to “trust God and to do the next thing.” We must learn to discern and reject the operations of the accuser of the brethren in our life. We need to move into a posture and position that facilitates our hearing from God today, reminding ourselves that God says, “I am ready.” “I am watching over My Word to perform it” (Jeremiah 1:12). We must choose to live in the current “day of the Lord,” cultivating a present tense awareness of His presence, believing that choice, not chance, shall determine our destiny. We must repent of our everlasting mourning over our failures and the failures of others and arise and move out in God’s current word to our soul and spirit. It is unhealthy for us to stay too long in a place of mourning; we must move past those times.

There may be several reasons that Samuel continued to mourn for Saul until God had to finally speak to him to stop. God wanted Samuel to move on with His prophetic purposes for the nation of Israel and humanity. Proverbs 13:12 reads, “Hope deferred makes the heart sick.” Misplaced hope leads to despair. The people had placed their hopes in having a king like the surrounding nations (1Samuel 8:20), but their hope had been misplaced as Saul repeatedly revealed his lack of character and inability to fully obey the word of the Lord. Occasionally we may place our hopes for strength and success in some charismatic leader, or special teaching or a new experience. But our hope needs to be in the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth, in His Word being “made alive” in our fellowship with the Holy Spirit.

We sometimes make the mistake of saying to ourselves, “If we can only get enough people to pray... enough people to agree... if we could just...” Fill in the blank. This might be called “**Critical Mass Assessment.**” But, sadly, too often our focus is on our lack instead of our Father’s great and gracious abundance. He is our source of supply for everything necessary to accomplish His purposes and destiny in and through our lives. God’s grace is released into our lives to accomplish a particular task as we set ourselves to doing the task the Holy Spirit has instructed us to do.

Even our desire and many of our efforts to network pastors and churches together, although wonderfully motivated by sincere conviction and desire for “unity,” often results in only glorifying the same spirit of the “old order.” We need to communicate, cooperate and work together for community transformation and establishing the Kingdom of God, but we need to walk and function in a new anointing to do so. The old order has not sufficiently impacted the lives of God’s people to equip them to impact our communities and cultures. We need a new wineskin of fellowship. We must not become a patch of new cloth on a tear in an old garment, or allow ourselves to be new wine placed into an old wineskin or both the new and the old will be lost (Luke 5:36-39). David was not called and anointed to fix the old monarchy of Saul; he was called and anointed to replace it. God had removed His anointing off of Saul and given it to another. The old was gone; God had brought a new order forth. It was not revival or restoration or even reformation that God was interested in. God directed Samuel to anoint David to replace Saul. The same thing is true today.

When David tried to serve the old order and walk in submission alongside of Saul, to sooth Saul’s troubled spirit with his harp, playing it only resulted in animosity and jealousy. Eventually, Saul’s fear of David’s anointing caused him to pick up a spear and try to kill David while David was ministering to him (1Samuel 18:10-12). Usually, when we minister to the old-order paradigm in the freedom and liberty of the Holy Spirit new-order anointing it will result in producing anger, resentment and hostility in those unable or unwilling to come out of the old order. Amos 3:3 ask, “Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?” **We are not always called to comfort the troubled heart. Sometimes we are called to challenge and change it.**

We must consider if we are trying to revive what God is trying to replace. Martin Luther did everything that he possibly could to change the old order of the Roman Catholic church from within the old order, but one day it became necessary to come out from among them and depart from the Roman indignities and intolerable abuses. Occasionally, it may become necessary to come out from among those who refuse to hear and obey what we believe the Holy Spirit is saying today.

Part of the reason for Samuel’s mourning over Saul is that Samuel is having difficulty making the paradigm shift, transitioning to the thought that God may have another option in mind rejecting the old order of Saul. Even though he was the “prophetic voice” whom God intended to use to bring forth His change of regimes, Samuel was challenged to trust God for such a radical transformation. God wants to use each of us to confront and change the regimes that rule over

**We can be used of God to bring His Kingdom purposes to bear upon the earth even as it is in heaven.**

the circumstances that impact our lives and culture. We must bring into captivity every thought that exalts itself against the sovereignty of God’s rule in our lives. We must believe and declare that by God’s grace we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us. We can be used by God to impact our communities, our schools, our economies, our culture, and our generation. We can make a difference. We can be used of God to bring His Kingdom purposes to bear upon the earth even as it is in heaven.

**Chapter Twenty-Nine Study Notes:**

1) We need to learn to cultivate a \_\_\_\_\_ awareness of God’s presence in our live? \_\_\_\_\_

2) What are the dangers of “Critical Mass Assessment?” \_\_\_\_\_  
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3) Considering your own life situation, are you and/or those of you fellowship with trying to revive what God may intend to replace? Could there be something that God may want to change in your experience as a congregation?  
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4) Do you have a sense of “destiny” for your life or for your fellowship?  
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## CHAPTER THIRTY

# OVERCOMING THE FEARS AND OBSTACLES OF CHANGE



**G**od will provide a strategy to overcome our fears and the apparent obstacles that seem to oppose God’s purposes in our life. In 1 Samuel 16:2 the prophet explains his reluctance to obey God’s command to “Fill your horn with oil and go.” “And Samuel said, ‘How can I go? If Saul hears it, he will kill me.’”

Many of us have been crippled from fulfilling our destiny in God by the fear of others and what they may think or what they might do to us if we obey what we believe is the Word of the Lord to our hearts. Old order authority will try to put to death the cause and mechanism that is spawning, encouraging and nurturing the new order. Thankfully, Samuel appropriately confessed his fear before God, which then precipitated the release of God’s strategy and boldness. Choice, not chance, determined his destiny. Such obedience often requires confronting and overcoming our fears and the obstacles that appear to hinder our obedience to God’s prophetic Word in our lives. Every excuse and defense of self-justification and complacency must be dismantled in our lives. Every arena of self-determination must be subdued and removed (extracted) from our lives.

In Matthew 11:12 Jesus said, “And from the days of John the Baptist until now the Kingdom of God suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.” The N.I.V. renders this verse, “the Kingdom of God is forcefully advancing.” There is an intentional determination required to enter into and under the reign of the King of Glory. A forceful, confrontational pursuit of the Kingdom of God within ourselves and against the vain philosophies of this present age is required to enter into the provisions of the Kingdom. We cannot enter into the provisions of the Kingdom of God by accident. We must press into the Kingdom, advancing forcefully. There must be a purposeful intent and determination established in our soul before we will witness the extent that God may choose to move through us. We must cast away the chords and chains of complacency and lethargy that hinder our walking out in obedience those things that we know please God.

In this situation in 1 Samuel 16, God is directing Samuel to move in direct opposition to the existing order of governmental rule that had been established in Israel earlier at God’s instruction. Establishing Saul as king over Israel was not the “work of the devil;” it was a part of God’s reformatinal process among the people. Samuel’s actions now in anointing David as king would have been considered “high treason” against King Saul. His motivation was not vindictive rebellion against the king of Israel but obedience to the King of Glory. When Martin Luther spoke out against the dominion of the Roman Catholic church it was considered treasonous and his offenses were punishable by death. We must become more concerned about



hearing and obeying the voice of the Lord, than in revering the title and authority that men ascribe to each other. We need to learn to consider the direction of the Holy Spirit in higher esteem than the titles and positions of honor that men cherish and consider so important.

Hebrews 4: 12-13 <sup>(12)</sup> “For the Word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. <sup>(13)</sup>And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.”

What a man sees, feels and thinks often governs him in his estimation and appraisal of spiritual matters. Man is by nature a “sense knowledge” creature; since Adam partook of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil. As we grow in the ways of the Kingdom of God we must strive to dethrone the “old-order” reign of “sense knowledge” in our lives. In 1 Samuel 16:6 it says that Samuel looked at Jesse’s eldest son, Eliab and then said “Surely the LORD’s anointed is before me.” This is a natural, but potentially dangerous approach to appraising spiritual choices through the senses of the soul of the old nature or natural man. We must continually strive against our natural tendency to judge our self, each other, or the circumstances of our life, after the flesh. One would think that Samuel would have been more mature in his walk in the Spirit of the Lord by this time in his life. In some ways Samuel seems to reflect the condition of so many believers today who are entangled in a preposterous propensity towards the Peter Pan principle and pattern of perpetual childhood. They never seem to grow-up to maturity in their understanding of the knowledge of the Kingdom of God and the ways of the Holy Spirit and His Word. For the sake of our King and Lord, and for our own safety and survival, we must grow in our discernment, judgment and sensitivity to the things of God and the leading of the Holy Spirit.

## **PROGRESSIVE REVELATION AND INSTRUCTION**

The Holy Spirit usually releases or provides direction in incremental steps, each step being dependent upon our obedience to what He has revealed previously.

The Lord gave Samuel “the Big Picture” in 1 Samuel 16:1, but in verses 2 and 3 the Holy Spirit provided only a portion of the instruction on how to accomplish what God was requiring of him. The “*progressive revelation*” of the procedure would be released to Samuel on a “*need to know*” basis. We need to “trust God and do the next thing.” Do the thing that is before you to do. When we have been faithful to do the little that we know to do, then the Holy Spirit will give us more. One of the primary reasons that so many believers do not possess a present tense awareness of God’s presence in their lives is because they haven’t yet dealt with or obeyed the last thing that the Lord spoke to them. Our disobedience, self-justification or complacency to obey the Holy Spirit’s direction today will hinder our ability to fellowship openly with God and to hear His voice to our spirit tomorrow. This will result in our spirit growing dull and losing its sensitivity. Our spirit is not born dull; it *grows* dull, (Matthew 13:14, Isaiah 6:10).

**The significant difference between providing guidance and being a guide is primarily one of fellowship and communion, sharing our lives together.**

God does not desire to give us guidance apart from fellowship. God’s promise to us is to be our guide. The significant difference between providing guidance and being a guide is primarily one of fellowship and communion, sharing our lives together. This is God’s heart towards us.

God desires to be our guide in the journey of life, not simply give us directions and send us on our way alone. Fellowship sustained out of a steadfast relationship is essential.

The Lord did not find it necessary to disclose to Samuel the details of what He was doing in the lives of the other people involved in this scenario. Sometimes there is an unhealthy inquisitiveness that can infiltrate our thought life. One hindrance to a freer flow of the prophetic word among congregations is the general inability of so many to mind their own business in areas that don't concern them. Discretion is such a beautiful adornment of the Gospel of the Kingdom. We can disqualify ourselves and defile our prophetic gifting which God entrusts to us by grieving the Holy Spirit when we engage in unwholesome speech, such as gossip, sarcasm or slander. We also grieve the Holy Spirit when we speak the truth of God's Word without the heart of God, or in His timing and season. We are often reckless in the manner of our speech.

Ephesians 4:29-30 <sup>(29)</sup>“Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearer (according to their needs). <sup>(30)</sup>And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you have been sealed for the day of your redemption.”

**Chapter Thirty Study Notes:**

1) What is a major obstacle that hinders our ability to obey the voice of God?

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2) In one or two sentences, define in your own words Matthew 11:12.

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3) Man is naturally governed by what he sees, feels and thinks. This is called \_\_\_\_\_. We must allow the Holy Spirit to help us learn how to perceive and operate in the realm of the \_\_\_\_\_.

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4) We need to learn to trust God and \_\_\_\_\_. (

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5) What is the primary reason we sometimes don't possess a present tense awareness of God's presence? \_\_\_\_\_

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6) Name three areas of unwholesome or putrid speech in addition to lying?

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## CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE

# HINDERING THE NEW ORDER



There is a tendency to hinder or even cripple an emerging “new order” of the Holy Spirit by imposing the qualifications and external qualities of the existing “old order” of the flesh, even when those qualities have proven unsatisfactory or even detrimental to our spiritual life and the security of our fellowship with God.

We each have “*experiential filters*” through which we see the world around us and by which we relate to others. These *filters* are the way we look at circumstances in our life and are based upon past life experiences, or those patterns that have been passed down to us from our forefathers. It requires a true work and living, current word of the Holy Spirit to change or remove those *experiential filters* that have dominated and controlled the way we have always looked at things or performed certain activities. In 1 Samuel 16:6 Samuel began to inspect the sons of Jesse after the same criteria by which King Saul had been selected, which were primarily his physical attributes. 1 Samuel 9:2 says, “And he had a choice and handsome son whose name was Saul. There was not a more handsome person than he among the children of Israel. From his shoulders upward he was taller than any of the people.” (See also 10:24). This was Samuel’s *experiential filter* when selecting and anointing kings in Israel. But, God was not going to apply the same standards for a new order.

**The whole arena of “paradigm shifts” is intimidating to most humans and cultures.**

The same human tendency is seen in the debate that took place in the early Church over the issue of circumcision and the necessity of new believers in Christ Jesus to first convert to Judaism. The whole arena of “paradigm shifts” is intimidating to most humans and cultures.

In 1 Samuel 16:7 God reveals the standard that He is using to determine His choice for the king over His inheritance, Israel. “Do not look at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.” God explained to Samuel that man’s tendency is to look at the outward attributes of the impressive things: the appearances, the successes, the popularity, the positions and degrees that have been obtained. But God looks where man cannot see... into the heart of man... the deep of man. Several hundred years later the young man Daniel would stand before the most powerful man in the Middle East, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, and declare the same truth.

Daniel 2:27-28 <sup>(27)</sup>”Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, ‘The secret which the king has demanded, the wise men, the astrologers, the magician, and the soothsayers cannot declare to the king. <sup>(28)</sup>But there is a God in heaven who reveals

secrets, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days. Your dream, and the vision of your head upon your bed were these:”

With every privilege in life there is a corresponding responsibility. If we fail to fulfill our responsibility for a particular privilege, we risk the loss of that privilege. King Saul lost his privilege to rule under the anointing of God due in part to his lack of obedience and in part because he would not deal with the inner condition of his heart; the two being somewhat related. He was complacent about his own personal fellowship with God. Saul was satisfied with occasionally sensing the presence of the Spirit and experiencing a “new heart” while under the anointing of the Spirit. He was willing to prophesy, but he wasn’t willing to change. As a result he ceased to prophesy. Saul never progressed in the area of holiness and sensitivity to the voice of God throughout his life. He was satisfied with where he was in his relationship and fellowship with God. He was self-satisfied with others hearing the voice of God for him instead of hungering for a greater depth of fellowship himself. Saul’s successes were in the natural “sense” realm, not in the spiritual. As a result the kingdom was taken from him. Jesus spoke of this principle in Matthew 21:43 when He said, “Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it.” The privilege of inheriting the Kingdom of God carries with it the responsibility of producing the fruit of the Kingdom. If we fail in our responsibility we jeopardize our possession of the privilege.

There is a transformation of our mindset that must be accomplished to facilitate a transition from an “old wineskin” to a “new wineskin.” We see in Samuel’s example that his association with the old order of Saul apparently hindered him from recognizing the new paradigm or pattern that God wanted to do through his selection of David. Samuel had even set out on a course of obedience to the prophetic mandate and direction of the Holy Spirit, only to falter at this crucial moment by judging after the appearances of the flesh and outward accomplishments, rather than by the Spirit. Although Saul had failed due primarily to his lack in personal character, Samuel failed to examine the character attributes of the one who would replace him in ruling Israel.

1 Corinthians 1:26-30 <sup>(26)</sup>“For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. <sup>(27)</sup>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; <sup>(28)</sup>and the 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, <sup>(29)</sup>that no flesh should glory in His presence.”

We often comfort ourselves by considering 1 Corinthians 1:26-30, but in truth we do not really want or allow such a standard for those who we desire to minister to us. We need to repent from all our empty, traditional standards of *professional clergyism* that infiltrate our thinking or hinder our obedience to the Holy Spirit. We must reject those *traditional* standards that are not found in the Word of God. There are true standards that we should apply such as character, holiness, anointing and a heart after God and the cultivated fruit of authentic authority and faithful fellowship with God.

It is unlikely that anyone even knew that God had rejected Saul at this point, or that he had even done anything wrong. Israel’s request had been for a king like the other nations that surrounded them, and that is what they received. The same is true today. The vast majority of Christendom has no sense that the current practice of clergyism is even offensive to God.

In 1 Corinthians 14:31 the Word of God says, “For you can all prophesy one by one, that all may learn and all may be encouraged.” Today, the greatest objective, external hindrance to the Biblical operation of the priesthood of the individual believer is the priest, or in the case of the Protestant church, the pastor, or the *professional clergy*. Martin Luther replaced the Roman

priesthood with a pastor who could marry and have children, but little else has ever changed. There is still in place through out most of Christendom, five hundred years later, the same empty unscriptural, pyramidic religious structures that are contrary to the heart and purpose of God for His people and clearly revealed in the writing and practice of the New Testament *Genesis Church*.

In making the transition from the old to the new, Samuel needed a change in his pattern and approach to ministry. It was possible for him to pronounce judgment upon the old order of Saul and even anoint the new order of David while remaining governed and even fearful of the old. We can do the same thing in much of the *progressive* Church today, preferring human programs over God's presence; choosing activities over adoration of God and practicing our well thought out traditionally correct government structures in lieu of a sovereign move of God's Spirit and establishing of His Kingdom.

**Chapter Thirty-One Study Notes:**

1) In your own words, define the term “experiential filters.” \_\_\_\_\_

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2) How does the Lord see differently than men see each other? \_\_\_\_\_

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3) Every privilege in life carries a corresponding \_\_\_\_\_. If we fail to fulfill the \_\_\_\_\_ we risk the loss or the \_\_\_\_\_.

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4) List two reasons King Saul lost his privilege to rule Israel under the anointing and approval of God? \_\_\_\_\_

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5) List four Biblically authentic qualifications or standards that we should apply to those who minister in leadership. \_\_\_\_\_

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## CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO

### WHY A KING ANYWAY?



1 Samuel 8:1-5 <sup>(1)</sup>“Now it came to pass when Samuel was old (55-65) that he made his sons judges over Israel. <sup>(2)</sup>The name of his firstborn was Joel, and the name of his second, Abijah; they were judges in Beersheba. <sup>(3)</sup>But his sons did not walk in his ways; they turned aside after dishonest gain, took bribes, and perverted justice. <sup>(4)</sup>Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah, <sup>(5)</sup>and said to him, ‘Look, you are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now make us a king to judge us like all the other nations.’”

**A** review of 1 Samuel 8:1-5 reveals the human motive that prompted the practice of establishing of kings over Israel. The elders of Israel gathered together to confront the prophet Samuel and express their concern about his passing on the leadership of Israel over to his two sons who were corrupt in dishonest gain, taking of bribes and the perversion of justice. In a number of ways these elders represented the heart of Martin Luther in their day. They had a list of complaints and were willing to risk confronting the established leadership in order to make their demands known and hopefully provoke a change.

“I’ve had enough!” is an attitude of the heart that is necessary to provoke change in our lives. “I have had enough of a complacent, lifeless, religious Christianity! I must have God! I must experience an awareness of His presence and the power of His resurrection in my life. What must I do God? Change me Lord! Do anything You must to make my faith real and alive.” Desperation makes a man willing to depart from his dignity far enough to acquire his deliverance. Desperation allows a man to fall at the feet of Jesus in humility and cry out for mercy. The cry for mercy releases God’s mercy into our lives. Desperation of soul will lead to inspiration and illumination by the Holy Spirit. Choice not chance determines our destiny.

The situation in Israel was very much like the condition of the Roman church of Martin Luther’s day and the same in many communities of faith today. In the same way that God stirred Luther to stand against the injustice of his day, it appears that the Holy Spirit may have actually stirred the concern and action of the elders in 1 Samuel 8:1-5 within them. It had always been God’s intent to establish the throne of David over Israel. But something needed to happen in Israel to precipitate a change in the empty ways of life and traditions that had been handed down to them through the chaotic heritage of the country since Joshua and the long line of government by judges. Something needed to break the stranglehold of complacency that had gripped them for so long. God was in control of the circumstances that produced the environment that provoked a heart condition that was willing to change.

For about 330 years the people of Israel had experienced a ‘yo-yo,’ up and down fellowship with their God, being obedient and blessed in one generation only to fall away in disobedience in



the next. Judges 21:25 says, “there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in their own eyes.” At this time, these elders of Israel were not willing to simply sit back and complacently watch as their beloved nation slipped back under the influence of ungodly, unsanctioned leadership. They had enjoyed the influence and prospered under the godly prophetic anointing of Samuel through the years. They did not want to return to the way Israel had lived before Samuel.

There are two main strategies that the enemy of our soul employs in opposing a move of the Holy Spirit in our lives. The first is complacency, or self-satisfaction. The second is the right of self-determination. They are the two edges of the same sword in the enemy’s hand. This weapon of our enemy is used more frequently than practically any other weapon of his arsenal.

In scripture after scripture the Lord condemns and judges complacency and the complacent heart and lifestyle.

Proverbs 1:32 “For the turning away of the simple will slay them and the complacency of fools will destroy them...”

Isaiah 32:9-11 <sup>(9)</sup>“Rise up, you woman who are at ease, hear my voice; you complacent daughters, give ear to my speech. <sup>(10)</sup>In a year and some days you will be troubled, you complacent women; for the vintage will fail, the gathering will not come. <sup>(11)</sup>Tremble, you women who are at ease; be troubled, you complacent ones; strip yourselves, make yourselves bare, and gird sackcloth on your waists.”

Amos 6:1 “Woe to you who are at ease in Zion...”

Zephaniah 1:12 “And it shall come to pass at that time that I will search Jerusalem with lamps, and punish the men who are settled in complacency, who say in their heart, ‘The LORD will not do good, nor will He do evil.’”

In response to the actions of Samuel establishing ungodly leadership over Israel by appointing his sons as judges, the elders of Israel were not willing to simply sit back without making a genuine effort to provoke a change. They gathered together in 1 Samuel 8:4 unwilling to accept another unrighteous, pyramidal, family hierarchy being set up by a strong charismatic leader. Samuel was following the pattern he had seen in Eli when he was but a child. It is sad to realize that Samuel did no better in raising his children than Eli did. During his youth, Samuel had witnessed Eli’s sons grow up so evil and disobedient that the Lord brought judgment upon the house of Eli and allowed them to be killed. (See 1 Samuel 2:12-17; 22-36; 4:1-22)

As we prepare the way for the coming of the Lord, we must cultivate and nurture a generation that will surpass ours in their obedience to the word and knowledge of the heart of God. We must grow in grace and raise up a generation that is filled with the Holy Spirit at the youngest possible age, even from their mother’s womb, as John the Baptist was. We must provide and guard opportunities for their equipping in the ministry and gifts of the Holy Spirit. We must not despise their youthful expressions of a genuine faith in God. We must have the genuine... we must have the real, for and in our children.

There is no evidence that the Lord had instructed Samuel to set his sons in place as judges over Israel. There is no evidence of Samuel praying or the Holy Spirit speaking. Samuel was simply following the pattern of the “old order” of the rejected house of Eli, which had influenced his formative years of following and serving the Lord. Today, many Christians are guilty of the same presumptuous sin as Samuel when he moved his sons into ministry without the appropriate direction and confirmation of the Holy Spirit. The prophet had a tendency of following the “old order” patterns of his life, although they had proven to be unsatisfactory in the past. This was his *experiential filter*.

From Genesis 49:10 it is clearly stated that there would be one whose right it was to reign, who would come forth from the tribe of Judah. Saul was from the tribe of Benjamin (1 Samuel 9:1). In Deuteronomy 17:14-20 there are specific guidelines about establishing a king over Israel after they came into the land to possess it.

Deuteronomy 17:14-15 <sup>(14)</sup>“When you come to the land which the LORD your God is giving you, and possess it and dwell in, and say, ‘I will set a king over me like all the nations that are around me,’ <sup>(15)</sup>you shall surely set a king over you whom the LORD your God chooses;”

It was not displeasing to the Lord that the elders had sought a king to reign over Israel. However, it was displeasing that they did not inquire of God for His choice, His heart, His destiny and purpose for Israel. God clearly outlined the criteria of a king of his choosing in verses 15 through 20, approximately 470 years prior to their actually requesting a king. But, they wanted a king after the same standard and criteria as the world. This was the rejection that God was speaking of in 1 Samuel 8:7-8. It was not that the people of Israel did not want God or religious activities in their life; they simply wanted these things in the same manner as the world. We often select our leadership in the Church in the same manner, as leadership is determined in a worldly, success-motivated corporation. It is not uncommon to encounter those who claim to be Christians but are not seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness with their whole heart and with all their strength, which is the standard and criteria that Jesus of Nazareth established for those who would enjoy the benefits and privileges of the Kingdom of God.

In 1 Samuel 13:14 Samuel explained to Saul, “The LORD has sought for a man after His own heart,” and that the kingdom would be taken from Saul and given to another. This is yet one more clear distinction between the old order and the new. One of the things the Holy Spirit is saying here is, “I am looking for those who seek my heart, with all of their heart.” In 2 Chronicles 16:9 it is recorded that “the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him.” Another version reads, “those whose hearts are fully, perfectly committed.”

Jeremiah 3:15 “And I will give you shepherds (leaders) according to My heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding.”

We must have leaders who are possessed with a desperate longing and hunger in their souls to know the heart of God. We must require this passion of those whom the Holy Spirit would raise up into any type of leadership. Not that they have arrived but that they are actively pursuing the heart of God. Actually, a people who require it of themselves will have no difficulty requiring it of their leaders. We must not allow ourselves to become complacent and lethargic in our seeking the rule and reign of the Holy Spirit in our lives. There needs to be a persistent, active pursuit of God within our souls.

**Chapter Thirty-Two Study Notes:**

1) \_\_\_\_\_ not \_\_\_\_\_ determines our destiny. \_\_\_\_\_

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2) Name at least two primary strategies the enemy of our soul uses to oppose a move of the Holy Spirit in and through our lives. \_\_\_\_\_

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3) List several things we must cultivate and nurture in the next generation of believers as we prepare the way for the coming of the King to planet earth.

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4) In 1 Samuel 13:14, what is God looking for in a person who would lead and govern His people? \_\_\_\_\_

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## CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

# THE DESIRE OF THE LORD IS UPON US



Deuteronomy 6:23 “Then He brought us out from there, that He might bring us in, to give us the land of which He swore to our fathers.”

**W**e are in transit, being transformed from glory to glory. We have transitioned through many venues to the place where we now find ourselves. The “change” isn’t coming; it is arriving. It is taking place at this moment across the entire earth. The reformation has been set in place and anointed by the Holy Spirit. The *old order* is being replaced with a *new order* of God’s choosing. Many of the people of God who are seeking the Kingdom of God have become extremely frustrated with the characteristics of the religious, pyramidal structures that have reigned over God’s people for centuries. They are anxiously anticipating that the prophetic anointing presently operating in the world would cause a new “Davidic” order to come forth. This is especially true of those who are more mature in the realm of the gifts and ministry of the Holy Spirit, those who might be considered elders. In Acts 15:16, during the Jerusalem Council regarding the issue of requiring gentiles to fulfill the requirements of the *old order* of Judaism before being admitted into the *new order* of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, James quoted the prophet Amos saying, “After this I will return and will rebuild the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down; I will rebuild its ruins, and I will set it up; so that the rest of mankind may seek the LORD, even all the gentiles who are called by My name, says the LORD who does all these things.”

We must remember that Saul did not acknowledge the anointing upon David, even when David came into Saul’s house and ministered the peace of God to Saul’s spirit. Even after years of relationship between them and the dear friendship between David and Jonathan, Saul’s son, still King Saul resisted conveying his right to rule over the people to David. Not only did he reject David’s anointing he actually attempted to destroy David in order to protect himself. We must not wait for recognition, acceptance, or approval from the *old order*. We must begin to live and function as the *new order*. Not in rebellion against the *old order*, or even in an attitude of “self justification”, but in submission, humility and obedience to the King of glory, Jesus of Nazareth, the Anointed One.

Acts 3:19-21 <sup>(19)</sup>“Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, <sup>(20)</sup>and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, <sup>(21)</sup>whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.”

According to this scripture, one of the conditions or pre-requisites of our Lords' return is the "restoration of all things." This same conflict between the *old order* and a *new order* is written of in great detail in the book of Hebrews, chapters 7-10. In Hebrews 9:10 there is a reference to "the time of reformation."

At this point in our history as children of God, both individuals and collectively, we need to choose to move on with God into the *new order* of the Kingdom of God, in the following areas.

We should quit focusing or mourning over the past, our own inadequacies, failings or woundings. We need to forgive ourselves, others and maybe even God and move into a new paradigm, position and posture to receive from God His choice for us today. It is of little value to continually evaluate our future opportunities on the basis of past failures or successes. We must strive to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit and endeavor to obey what He says to us today. We must arise from our place of mourning and move forward.

We need to seek God for His strategies to overcome our fears, or other obstacles that seem to oppose the fulfillment of God's purposes in our lives through the indwelling fullness of the Holy Spirit in our lives. We must determine within our souls to aggressively confront and overcome fears such as:

- Fear of failure or our own inadequacies.
- Fear of what others will think or say about you, fear of man.
- Fear of losing control or releasing control to the Holy Spirit.
- Fear of getting hurt... again.

We may also need to confront obstacles in our life such as:

- Unconfessed or unforgiven sin.
- Unforgiveness in our hearts towards ourselves, others or God.
- Bitterness over past events or emotional wounds to our soul.
- Pre-conceived ideas or personal notions or thoughts about 'how' God should move now.
- Complacency, self-satisfaction and retaining of our right of self-determination.
- Our own failure to take the necessary time to wait on and seek God's direction and purpose for our lives.

We need to allow the Holy Spirit to search our hearts to reveal to us if He is withholding grace for direction in His current move, due to any failure on our part to obey previous steps of direction or correction He has already given to us. One primary obstacle hindering a present tense awareness of God's presence in the daily lives of God's people is the general reluctance to adequately resolve past failures to obey what the Holy Spirit had clearly directed. If it is entirely impossible to return to the "fork in the road" where we chose to follow our own self-determined path over God's direction, then we should find Godly repentance, wherever we are, and move on in the mercy and grace of God.

And we need to ask the Holy Spirit to search our hearts to discern if we are hindering or crippling His new move in and through our lives by criticizing, or judging what He intends to accomplish according to the standards and expectations of the *old order*, previous methods of ministry or of our own experiences.

- Are we trying to revive what God desires to replace?
- Are we trying to mix the *old order* and the *new order*?
- Are we still trying to put new wine into old wineskins?
- Do we have a critical or judgmental attitude towards what God is doing?
- Do we cling to the old because it is familiar, comfortable or safe?

This story of the prophet Samuel contains many lessons for each of us. The internal conflict that he experienced in obeying God's voice is only one. But, it is encouraging that such a "prophetic" man of God had challenges in following after the "heart of God" in this matter. His example provides hope to each of us who are faced with opportunities for change of this magnitude in the face of opposition. There is a genuine conflict that is encountered in this process of transition, restoration, reformation or replacement. May we each honor our Lord Jesus while we are "in transit from the wilderness to the city of the Living God."

**Chapter Thirty-Three Study Notes:**

As we chose to move on with the Holy Spirit in the “new order” of what He is accomplishing today, we must consider four major arenas of conflict.

1) We must quit focusing our attention or mourning over the \_\_\_\_\_ our own \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_.

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2) We must seek God for His strategies to overcome our \_\_\_\_\_.

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3) We must identify any ways we have failed to \_\_\_\_\_ previous direction or correction given by the Holy Spirit.

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4) We must ask the Holy Spirit to help us discern how we might be hindering the Holy Spirit’s work by judging God’s purposes after the \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ of previous methods of ministry or our own experience.

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## **SECTION SIX**



## **ADMINISTRATING THE GRACE OF GOD**

2 Corinthians 6:1 “We then as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain.”



## CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR

# THE SIGNIFICANCE AND NEED FOR A NEW WINESKIN



**A**s someone might consider “the how” of transitioning to a prophetic, reformational church fellowship and faith community lifestyle, it may be appropriate to consider the theology of making such a move. It can be very expensive; spiritually, emotionally, financially and in so many other ways for all those who are concerned and involved, warranting careful consideration and deliberation. The consequence may be as devastating to some as it is rewarding to others. A paradigm shift with any degree of reformation to our life can be as excruciatingly painful as it is wonderfully exhilarating, whether that reformation is a new diet, a change in our budget, an exercise program or the manner of our meeting together with others to fellowship and encounter God.

The significance of the Holy Spirit producing and providing a new wineskin for and through the current reformation becomes especially important to us when we recognize that the primary focus of the Holy Spirit throughout the globe today is on “how God speaks to and ministers to and through men and women to His people and to the world.”

While it is thrilling and even captivating to speak about every member in a congregation becoming involved in the meeting of the saints and the ministry of the Holy Spirit, there are serious practical considerations necessary to put such theories into practice.

**While it is thrilling and even captivating to speak about every member in a congregation becoming involved in the meeting of the saints and the ministry of the Holy Spirit, there are serious practical considerations necessary to put such theories into practice.**

### EMPOWERING GOD’S PEOPLE:

If we are going to empower people with the tools and training necessary to enhance their gifts and talents, but do not provide a tangible target of opportunity for the appropriate application of the tools, training, gifts and talents in a meaningful manner, we fail to empower those people. To empower the Church today, we must provide an environment where we may accomplish an appropriate, adequate and accurate acknowledging of anointings and authority; with an attitude of acceptance and anticipation of actual activation and acceleration of activity.

Matthew 10:40-42 <sup>(40)</sup>“He who receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives Him who sent me. <sup>(41)</sup>He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet’s reward. And he who receives a righteous man in the name of a

righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. <sup>(42)</sup>And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward."

This scripture conveys a kingdom principle that requires a social/political paradigm shift from the kingdoms of this world to the kingdom of God in order to grasp even the slightest hope of attaining the provision of the promise. We must cultivate and nurture through the Holy Spirit our ability to recognize and receive one another in our giftings as the Holy Spirit is refining us and preparing to release us into His purposes. Then we shall receive the reward. The reward is an enhancement of revelational relationship with the Father, and the manifestation of various spiritual fruit in our lives.

### **THE CORPORATE CLIMB:**

The greatest obstacle to climbing the proverbial "corporate ladder" to success is the pyramidal vertical direction of the climb, with those above you stepping on you and kicking you down, and those below you pulling at you to use you in one way or another. The "corporate" mindset that permeates the vast majority of the Church today must be abandoned, and we must return to the Biblical model, which may be described more clearly as a "family" style of government. The government of the Kingdom of God is Hebraic not Greek; it is relational family... tribal, not salaried corporation... career.

The conflict of corporate control and manipulative pyramidal monarchy is resolved in the Kingdom of God as we come into the functional family form of government which is reflected in responsible, reciprocating relationships working together in mutual respect and submission for the edification and strengthening of one another (Ephesians 4:16).

- **Together Everyone Achieves Maturity**
- **Together Everyone Accomplishes More**

To accomplish the ministry of God's purposes, which have been hidden from generations and ages, there is a need to evaluate in the Holy Spirit what is necessary to move forward and avoid the hindrances and pitfalls of the past. Many small fellowships are extremely relational and even familial, but lack an expectation of every member involvement, due primarily to a lack of training and perhaps adequately releasing of the laity by those in positions of clergy. The colonization mindset of thousands of missionaries over the last several centuries has reinforced non-kingdom structures throughout the world, even when a relational community would have been more conducive to the acceptance of the gospel of the Kingdom of God among certain peoples and cultures.

### **REFORMATIONAL GARMENT AND WINESKIN:**

Luke 5:33-39 <sup>(33)</sup>"Then they said to Him, 'Why do the disciples of John fast often and make prayers, and likewise those of the Pharisees, but Yours eat and drink?' <sup>(34)</sup>And He said to them, 'Can you make the friends of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them? <sup>(35)</sup>But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them; then they will fast in those days.' <sup>(36)</sup>Then He spoke a parable to them: 'No one puts a piece from a new garment on an old one; otherwise the new makes a tear, and also the piece that was taken out of the new does not match the old. <sup>(37)</sup>And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; or else the new wine will burst the wineskins and be spilled, and the wineskins will be ruined.

<sup>(38)</sup>But new wine must be put into new wineskins, and both are preserved. <sup>(39)</sup>And no one, having drunk old wine, immediately desires new; for he says, ‘the old is better.’” (See also Matthew 9:17 and Mark 2:22)

The questioning in verse 33 was in an attitude of offense and grumbling, resulting from our Lord’s acceptance of a tax collector as a disciple earlier in verse 30. The question of verse 33 is likely an effort of self-justification and an attitude of superiority. These men had been following Jesus looking for a reason to accuse him and to reject him. They represented a council of opponents “who had come out of every town of Galilee, Judea and Jerusalem” (Luke 5:17). Our Lord’s forgiving the sins of a paralytic (5:20) sparked the controversy, compounded by the paralytic man being healed (5:24).

The purpose of parables is explained to his disciples by Jesus in Matthew 13:11 in response to their question, “Why do you speak in parables?” Jesus said, “It has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God.” And so we understand that the parable of the wineskin speaks directly of a mystery of the kingdom of God. (See also Luke 8:10)

The Pharisees recognized three separate groups of disciples: their own disciples, those of John the Baptist, and those of Jesus. Regarding fasting, Jesus and his disciples represented a different pattern and stood in stark contrast to the old. These three groups might be seen as representing, in a symbolic sense, three various forms of Christian governmental types:

1. Pharisees      Traditional/denominational      Fixed form/pyramidal
2. The Baptist   Charismatic/evangelical      Free form/pyramidal
3. Jesus Christ   Prophetic/reformational      Free form/relational

The Pharisees were steeped in the form and traditions of the Jewish faith. They were at the top of the “faith pyramid,” as church leaders of the day, with no flexibility of expression of church life.

John the Baptist was a transitional minister, positioned between the Pharisees and the ministry of Jesus to pave the way for a drastic reformation of human faith and community life. The modern Charismatic and Evangelical church movements may be seen in this position in history. The expression of faith life takes a much more free form in the regular gatherings of the saints, but in most cases the ministry is still led and monopolized by a singular figure often characterized as the “pastor,” though his Holy Spirit anointing may not even be that of a pastor. It may be that of one of the other 5-fold ascension gifts, or there may be no particular ministry anointing at all. In the vast majority of these congregations there is a distinct clergy/laity distinction and segregation which is hated by Jesus of Nazareth (Revelation 2:15).

**Jesus is the greatest reformer of human life in the history of mankind.**

Jesus is the greatest reformer of human life in the history of mankind. God’s covenant with man was made new by the sacrifice of His blood, and the form of “church/community life” was entirely transformed from the traditionally established Jewish gathering, to the free-flowing ministry through the spiritual gifts recorded throughout the gospels, in the pages of the book of Acts and via the letters to the early churches. This “free form/relational” community of faith and fellowship model is the one God is re-forming and re-establishing in His Church and Bride, in these last days.

## THE ISSUE OF GARMENTS

Luke 5:36 <sup>(36)</sup> “Then He spoke a parable to them: ‘No one puts a piece from a new garment on an old one; otherwise the new makes a tear, and also the piece that was taken out of the new does not match the old.

The term that Jesus used for the word “garment” was used especially of an outer garment, mantle, or tunic. The garment that Jesus would have been referring to was woven from wool gathered from sheep and goats on a local, village loom. The patterns and colors of the fabric that was produced were handed down from one generation to another and speaks of both tribal/family identify (like a Scottish family plaid), and pattern (or form). The garment also refers to a “paradigm,” or manner of conduct. The garments were woven, which speaks of inter-relatedness.

The whole process of harvesting the wool of sheep, cleaning “carding” and the use of a spinning wheel or some other form of “twirling” the strands of wool together, bleaching of natural colors, producing a uniform texture and appearance, and dying with a specific color chosen by the craftsman, all speak to us of the development process of making disciples for Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of God.

A used garment has been stretched and worn. The weave of the fabric and color are affected by age, soil and cleaning. If a piece of new woven garment is applied to an old garment it will shrink when washed and tear the seam holding the two pieces of fabric together, fraying the edges. This speaks to the strain placed upon the relationships of those with varied experiences in the Holy Spirit, even though they may try to coexist with one another. The color will not match nor will the pattern, producing an unsightly appearance. This whole issue speaks to “the conflict between the old order and the new order” of what the Holy Spirit is doing at any particular time.

**Identity:** Throughout the world today certain woven garment patterns are unique to a certain people or region and provide a manner of identification and recognition. In using this example Jesus is speaking to the need for a new identification with the Kingdom of God through faith in Him more than adherence to the Law of Moses and the traditions of the “fathers”. When we first come into the Kingdom of God we become identified with Christ in a number of ways, separating ourselves from the world’s systems that we may have been involved with. As we mature in our faith we will ultimately develop our identity in Christ and His body (2 Corinthians 5:17). At various times in our life we may identify with a denomination, a movement, a method or even an experience; which is only natural and in some ways is necessary for healthy growth, security and strength. In this parable our Lord is indicating that it is not appropriate to place a new identity upon an old identity. Although His followers continued attending the Temple worship in Jerusalem for decades following His resurrection from the dead, eventually they developed their own identity separate from those who worshipped at the Temple. Their identity became based upon their practice and pattern of worship and experience in God.

**Pattern:** Speaks of the form of organization, practice, purpose or place of worship.

Hebrews 9:9-10 “It was symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience... concerned only with foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation” (“time of new order” [NIV]).

Their departure from centuries of identification with Moses and the Law was the result of their embracing and practicing a new, revolutionary theology which placed the Holy Spirit within man, now that Jesus of Nazareth had provided a sufficient sacrifice to remove the barrier of sin between God and man. This matter of experiencing the indwelling presence of God set the

disciples apart from the rest of Judaism, to say nothing of their belief that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah spoken of by the prophets.

The “pattern” of the woven fabric speaks to the “methodologies” of expression of faith in God. All were introduced by Christ.

<b>New priesthood</b>	(of the believer)
<b>New sanctuary</b>	(believer is the temple)
<b>New sacrifice</b>	(Jesus Christ Himself)

The Greek word used in Hebrews 9:10 for reformation or new order is “diorthosis,” meaning “to straighten thoroughly, rectification, the Messianic restoration, reformation.” This particular word is used only once in the New Testament. The root word is “orthos”, which means “to make straight, level, stand up.” Note the similarity with the word “orthopedic”, which means “setting the bones into right alignment.” Diorthosis means properly <sup>(1)</sup>“a making straight” and denotes a “reformation” or reforming. <sup>(2)</sup>The word has the meaning of a right arrangement, or right ordering; and what is indicated here is a time when the imperfect, the inadequate, would be superseded and replaced by a better order of things. It speaks of a “new order” of human existence that would accommodate the indwelling presence of God, within and among men in community with one another.

Hebrews 10:9 “He takes away the first that He may establish the second.”  
(See also Mark 7:8, 13, 15-16.)

## **OLD ORDER ~ NEW ORDER REFORMATIONS**

As we study previous reformations we see that they primarily reformed the way men reached out to God. John Hus, John Wycliffe, Martin Luther and so many others from 1374 through 1546, endeavored to put the Bible into the language of the common people, so that it could be read and understood by them. Until this time the scriptures had been read only in Latin which was not understood by the common people, but only by the priests. (Imagine a worship service in a foreign language with absolutely no effort to interpret or aid the participant to understand what was being said.)

This produced the recognition of personal responsibility in seeking God, and that there was an access to God whereby man could approach Him directly. Martin Luther and others championed the cause of salvation by faith in the work of Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ of God, not by works prescribed by man. As a result of the reformational teachings of those who boldly departed from the traditions of their forefathers, multiplied millions have been ushered into the Kingdom of God over the centuries, able to confess their sins and sinful nature directly to God, without a priest mediator being required or needed.

The leaders of these early reformations fought and lived valiantly for their trust in the spiritual authority of the scriptures, above man’s traditions or ecclesiastical organizations dictating what they must believe to be saved. It was also during this time that worship was begun with the contemporary music and in the language of the people.

Today, we are involved in a reformation of the process of how God speaks and ministers to and through ordinary men and women, (not only the Bible school trained, ordained, or titled people), to each other and to the world.

Acts 4:13 “Now, when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained (ordinary) men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.”

The proponents of this present day reformation recognize the reprehensible practice of the clergy and laity distinction and that there is no priest or pastor mediator required between God and man. The Holy Spirit may speak through or use whomever He selects. All believers are priests and able to hear from God directly and minister to each other by the direction and power of the Holy Spirit.

## **REPRESENTATIONS OF FAITH MODELS:**

### **Judaistic Model:**

- Two separate classes of people, (the “Priesthood” and the common people)
- Human mediators between man and God, (the Priests)
- Sacred building, (Temple)
- Outward form of ritual observance, (prescribed rituals and sacrifices)

### **Old Order Christian Wineskin Model:**

1. Components
  - Clergy/laity distinction, (Pastors or hired ministers/ ordinary believers)
  - Program driven gathering times and events, (bulletin driven, rather than Holy Spirit led worship services and events)
  - Passive priesthood of believers, (Professional clergy do the ministry/ believers sit back and watch passively, or participate only minimally in the meeting)
  - “Edifice complex” Over-emphasis on the need to have a church building (edifice), which often saps tremendous amounts of money from church resources which might have been used for missions to reach the lost

**SPECIAL people doing SPECIAL things in  
SPECIAL places at SPECIAL times.**

2. Effects of the Old Order Christian Wineskin Model on the Body of Christ:
  - **Expectation:** “Pastor Joe will feed me and the others.”
  - **Activation:** “I am spiritually lukewarm or maybe dead.”
  - **Motivation:** “I don’t need to get ready for the fellowship meeting.”
  - **Maturation:** “Why study the Bible for myself? Pastor Joe will feed me.”
  - **Sanctification:** “Why be a holy vessel? I won’t be allowed to minister anyway.”
  - **Evangelization:** “WHY should I share ‘this’ spiritual life with my neighbor?” “Their religion is as good as this.”
  - **SPIRITUAL STAGNATION:** “I am bored and dying.”

### **New Order Christian Wineskin Model:**

1. Components:
  - Organic in construction
  - Relational in function
  - Scriptural in form
  - Christ centered in operation
  - Holy Spirit empowered dynamic
  - Body oriented in unification
  - Able to gather anywhere at anytime

2. Effects of the New Order Christian Wineskin on the Body of Christ:
- **Expectation:** “I can be used by God.”
  - **Activation:** “I am waking up!”
  - **Participation:** “God is leading me to speak to, pray for, minister to someone.”
  - **Motivation:** “I want to prepare. I want to hear from God. I want to know the scriptures better.”
  - **Maturation:** “I am growing up spiritually.”
  - **Sanctification:** “I want to be more like Jesus. I want to be holy and prepared for Him to use me.”
  - **Evangelization:** “I want to share my new life.”
  - **REVIVAL:** “I AM ALIVE!”

**“We” are “the Church”**

**We are “the church” gathered:**  
Luke 24:12-14, I Corinthians 12-14

**We are “the church” scattered:**  
Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:15-20, Acts 8:1, 4

As we consider the “new wineskin” model, we need to recognize that there are a variety of reasons for gathering, in a variety of places and various methods represented in the New Testament. We witness “prayer meetings” in homes behind locked home doors. Evangelistic meetings were held in open places. There were meetings when elders and prophets and teachers would gather to minister to one another and unto the Lord. There were opportunities for traveling apostles, Barnabas and Paul to meet with resident apostles in Jerusalem. We see church council meetings where serious concerns are addressed determining discipline, doctrine and directional issues. There were also church fellowship meetings where believers ministered to one another.

We should not try to “fit” all our meetings into one mode or style. There are times for seminars, conferences with single special speakers; but there are also times when everyone is expected to minister to one another, and all those who are present are permitted to prophesy. We should guard against the tendency to evaluate the validity of something based upon our personal benefit or enjoyment or comfort rather than upon the purposes of God being served through a particular vehicle of ministry opportunity at a specific time in a unique place.

The logic of Luke 5:36-39, as a parable, demonstrates the need for a new pattern or form of garment (identification/practice) rather than endeavoring to patch up the old garments used to identify previous moves of the Holy Spirit. **You can not contain new wine in old wineskins without the potential of causing loss or harm to both.** Therefore, if you want to contain new wine, you will need a “NEW” wineskin.

**WHAT IS THE “NEW WINE?”**

Jesus told this parable because the religious leaders were confronting him, since His disciples were not following the Pharisees traditional religious procedures. The new wine that He is speaking about could represent several aspects of the “newness of life” that Jesus was bringing to the faith community by His life, death, resurrection and subsequent outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. In Old Testament theology, the “life is in the blood”, and the blood

sacrifices were given to God. A new way of life in God was in process of being revealed to the world in that hour. This newness could be interpreted in several ways in that day and in our day:

- The new covenant with God through His shed blood on the cross (1 Corinthians 11:25). Jesus said the new wine represented his blood shed for them in the new covenant with the Father
- The Holy Spirit that would be poured out after Jesus' return to the Father
- A new move or outpouring of the Holy Spirit among the people of God bringing renewal and revival
- A new freshness and dynamic to the faith and community life of God's people when the truth of God's Word is recovered, renewed and obeyed in the practice of the Church, as opposed to carrying out our religious practices of form according to man's traditions.

Jesus knew that the new covenant with its new faith life through the gifts and power of the Holy Spirit being poured on young and old, men and women, etc. (Acts 2:17-18 in quoting from Joel 2:28) would not fit within the "old wineskin" of the Old Covenant, the traditions of men which the Pharisees had added to the law of Moses, or the confines of expected religious and cultural practices which were empty of life in God.

Jesus lived out His life before men in a confrontational manner:

- refusing to conform to the empty ways of life handed down by the forefathers through the empty traditions added on to the Law by the Jewish leaders after the return of the Jewish people from Babylon (the Mishnah)
- refusing to conform to accepted cultural norms and practices of the day (by associating with women, commoners, sinners, tax collectors; etc.
- openly demonstrating God's Kingdom power and authority in His life through the manifestation of divine healings, deliverances and miracles.

In this day we have all but lost the dynamic of the early Church because the traditions and shackles of men have been placed back onto the life and community of God's Church. We are in the same position of needing a "new wineskin" to hold the tremendous move of the Holy Spirit in the last days of the Church before the Lord's return, and to be a receptacle for the end time harvest which will astonish us all. The reformation of the Christian faith and community life experience in this hour is thought of as a modern "new wineskin", but is actually a return to the new wineskin of Church life which we see represented primarily in the book of Acts and the letters to the Churches in the New Testament.



**Chapter Thirty-Four Study Notes:**

1) What is a primary focus of the Holy Spirit throughout the globe today?

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2) We fail to empower God’s people if we fail to provide a target of \_\_\_\_\_ to apply the training they have received in the operation of their gifts and talents.

3) We must abandon the \_\_\_\_\_ mindset that permeates the experience of Church life today and return to a \_\_\_\_\_ mindset and model.

4) List three scriptural passages which help us learn from Jesus’ description of the old and new wineskins, (providing book and verse).

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5) Write two possible sentences from the acronym T.E.A.M..

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6) Who is the greatest reformer of human life in the history of mankind?

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7) The parable of the old and new garments speak to us of our need for an \_\_\_\_\_ and also various \_\_\_\_\_, and also practice, purpose and place of worship.

8) Jesus of Nazareth introduced a new pattern of Church life which involved a new \_\_\_\_\_, a new \_\_\_\_\_ and a new \_\_\_\_\_.

9) Name at least three Church “reformers” who helped put the Scriptures into the common language of the people:

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10) How did the early Church reformers change and enhance the worship experience for their constituency? (List at least 2 changes.)

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## CHAPTER THIRTY-FIVE

# EVALUATE HOW TO IMPLEMENT EVERY MEMBER INVOLVEMENT



**A**s wonderful as it might be to consider a sweeping return to every member involvement in the fellowships of our Lord’s Church, the reality is that the vast majority of those who call themselves Christian may never witness such an opportunity in their lifetime. The current reformation is global in its scale: this move of the Holy Spirit is impacting many fellowships throughout the earth, but in truth there is such a wide diversity among Christian communities that this aspect of restoration and reformation may never even be heard about or considered by most believers. There are a number of obstacles that stand in the way of such a move of the Holy Spirit. It may be of some benefit to consider a few of them while evaluating how to implement Every Member Involvement (EMI) and the transition to a prophetic reformational Church.

Some fellowships are simply far too large to put into practice the items mentioned throughout this book, and it is an unrealistic expectation to hope that they ever would or could do so in a successful manner. When the number of people in a congregation exceeds 150 many aspects of EMI become difficult to execute effectively. It may be that with larger fellowships the full prophetic expression of the Holy Spirit might be best articulated and actuated through smaller groups and home church types of opportunities.

Much of Christendom is so deeply entrenched and invested in the experiential filters and historical practices of their predecessors that a departure from historical practices is unimaginable. In some instances the very culture of a community is intertwined with the local church. In such circumstances it is very difficult to bring reformation to bear on the condition of the Church, but it is not unprecedented. There are historical examples of a reformational move of the Holy Spirit impacting and altering the very culture of whole communities and people groups. The book of Acts seems to speak to this very issue, although it must be recognized that such change is accompanied by significant resistance and perhaps even persecution before it is realized.

In some instances the leadership is too privileged or prideful to relinquish the reins of their church over to the Holy Spirit in mutually reciprocating submission and equality with others. Leadership may be insecure in their position in the body of Christ and uncomfortable with allowing others an opportunity to express themselves in the liberty that the Holy Spirit produces to facilitate a release of the prophetic among and through the people of God. Rather than extending the effort to learn how to appropriately practice the prophetic in a manner that edifies and encourages the fellowship and reaches out to the community and the nations, leadership severely limits or simply prohibits the manifestation of the Holy Spirit among and through the

general membership of the congregation. This is nothing new or unique to any particular culture and may have been the very thing that John, the beloved disciple and apostle of our Lord was speaking about in his third letter.

3 John 9-11 <sup>(9)</sup>”I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to have the preeminence among them, does not receive us. <sup>(10)</sup>Therefore, if I come, I will call to mind his deeds which he does, prating against us with malicious words. And not content with that, he himself does not receive the brethren, and forbids those who wish to, putting them out of the church. <sup>(11)</sup>Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. He who does good is of God, but he who does evil has not seen God.”

For those of us who look to the Genesis Church of the New Testament as a model of sorts to emulate, these types of scriptures are good evidence of the early infiltration of unholy attitudes into the Church and even manipulating it's way into leadership positions, even while the apostles of our Lord were still alive.

Where the prophetic may be allowed to function in a limited fashion, there is often imposed unscriptural control standards that imply or actually state that everything and everyone needs to be in submission to the pastoral leadership. Although there may be some manifestation of the prophetic in such an environment it will tend to be very limited and tainted by the conflict of paradigms. There is an appropriate submission and process of judging prophecy that is carefully and clearly outlined in the New Testament but, ***bringing everything into submission to any one person is not exemplified by any scripture.***

The other extreme is when the prophetic people rise to the top of a hierarchy and over emphasis occurs. ***The over-emphasis of any one truth to the practical exclusion of another truth causes or results in error and distortion, possibly producing deception.*** The Lord Jesus provided five fold ascension functions to provide balance and stability to the body of Christ and edification of itself in love. As mentioned previously, these giftings or functions are to relate to one another in mutual, reciprocating submission and equality, which is a hallmark of humility. A functional plurality of matured five fold ascension giftings will greatly enhance the chance of the restoration of an authentic prophetic voice to the Church of our risen Lord and King that will actually impact the nations.

This is not to imply that each and every fellowship, regardless of size, should have resident within the congregants each of the five-fold ministries functioning equally; that is an unrealistic expectation, unfounded by scriptural example. What is realistic is that there may be multiple pastoral anointings resident within a particular fellowship, and perhaps teaching and evangelistic giftings; there may be a few who have strong prophetic functions, although not necessarily walking in the role of a prophet to the general Body of Christ. Interestingly it appears that elders and deacons are the only actual “offices” that are acknowledged in the New Testament and that the functional ministerial anointings of the five-fold giftings of Jesus to His Church flow out of these two. While it is necessary for the pastoral and teaching giftings to be resident within the congregation the other giftings may actually be transient or traveling or trans-local in nature. And while they may be known to one degree or another by the general membership of a congregation, they are primarily “relationally” joined together with the elders and deacons who are resident in the local congregation(s). There are whole books on this subject alone and it is not the purpose of this volume to reiterate or argue the case, but only to briefly recognize the manner in which this seems to operate.

It may well be that fellowships exceeding 100-150 people may find it difficult to implement E.M.I. in full measure. But, regardless of the size of the fellowship, there may need to be adaptations directed by the Holy Spirit that accommodate the circumstance and personnel of each particular congregation. Transitioning to a functioning prophetic fellowship may require a series

of incremental instruction and procedural changes to aid in the implementation over a period of several months or even years, (although the latter is not advisable in most cases). Some mixture of open and guided meetings may work best to facilitate maturing and equipping of the saints to do the work of the ministry. If a move is made too quickly people can feel uncomfortable and unstable. Change takes time to get used to, no matter how well meaning or appropriate.

## **THE HYBRID MODEL**

The vast majority of Christian fellowships on the planet are 85 to 150 people in size. Of course there are many which are only 30-85 or the other side of 150-350. It is impractical to consider implementing E.M.I. in congregations larger than 350, at least during their main gathering times. And while some consider the “home church” model and size to be the answer that is neither my position nor experience. I have and still continue to participate in models of 30-150 people in size, and find them to be capable of producing and sustaining the level of discipleship and eldership required to successfully cultivate, nurture and guard the fellowship from abuses and over-emphasis.

From an administrative point of view, this has required congregational planning and organizational meetings about every six weeks to provide an opportunity for the various members to volunteer for different ministry opportunities that are available. Included among those opportunities would be “ministry of the Word,” which would provide various members of the Body a valued, viable prospect to share, “What’s God saying to you?” with the other members of the fellowship. If this is accomplished with a preferential attitude towards others and common etiquette it should provide a foundation for a healthy prophetic flow in the Holy Spirit. It is appropriate to facilitate “training sessions” where the practical aspects of prophetic ministry can be identified and practiced in a safe and instructive environment. In cases where one of the members has a genuine and appropriate teaching to share with the group but lacks the training and skill in preparation and presentation of such a teaching, it may be necessary for an elder to come alongside this disciple to provide counsel and tutoring prior to their releasing the message to the congregation.

Divesting of centralized “clergy” stipulation and embracing plurality of leadership will usually require more individual members to take additional personal responsibility to prepare to bring something to a gathering to give to others; it will require maturing, healthy disciples. Not everyone is a gifted orator and teacher; nor should such an expectation be placed upon those who choose to obey the Holy Spirit’s prompting. Because our God is always multi-tasking, He may use someone with a speech impediment to expose the pride in another who feels that they are more qualified in some fashion. The Holy Spirit may not use only the words someone speaks but also the person themselves, their manner of speech, their appearance, etc. to address various issues not otherwise dealt with in a professional clergy presentation.

The extremely practical consideration that each one be heard may require the use of a sound system with one or more handheld or mobile microphones being passed through the congregation. Accommodating the soft spoken and the hearing impaired is essential. There are wonderful times of group prayer that may be led by an individual whose voice is difficult to hear only a few feet away; providing a microphone for these people will allow others to join in agreement more readily. As the transition is being made it is helpful to remember that the brethren have been told to be quiet for centuries. Since many were growing up in church they heard, “Sit down, sit back (be still) and soak up the blessings of God (listen to the preacher).” Now these same people are being encouraged to, “Stand up, speak out and share what God is saying to you.” This extent of change will require patience and diligence in many arenas that were never issues with the clergy dominated and directed fellowship. The facilitation of E.M.I.

will require the participation of more people, or it will digress back to a non-edifying experience in frustration. Not only will people need to be released to speak, but also to help others so that they may be able to speak, which sometimes means learning to be appropriately still and allowing the Holy Spirit to stir someone else to speak. In an activity prone, purpose driven environment the art of waiting upon the Lord in quietness sometimes seems to be extremely rare. The idea of being still, even for a few moments, in a group gathering is awkward, nerve racking and very uncomfortable to some people. The Church has become an “entertainment center” of sorts in order to be “seeker friendly.” Thankfully, this is changing.

Esteeming the manifestation of the prophetic as worthy of being heard by everyone and even being recorded, evaluated and judged will elevate it in the hearts and thoughts of the congregation. I have been in many meetings over the years where there has been a wonderful flow of several prophetic, Holy Spirit prompted unctuations such as a dream, an interpretation, testimony, a vision, prophecy, prayer for the sick, discernment of spirits and so forth. I have been extremely grieved in my spirit when someone would announce, “And now so-and-so will come and bring us the word of the Lord.” I believe that this also grieves the Holy Spirit. Such a statement or attitude devalues all that had taken place before as being of less value to the congregation than the prepared, crafted presentation of the word. This is a subtle, or not so subtle continuation of the elevation of the professional clergy over the ordinary laity, disciple. The clergy/laity distinction is so engrained into the soul of man that it requires a sovereign work of the Holy Spirit to remove or even lessen its chords of deception upon the hearts of God’s people.

The spontaneous prophetic word does not need to be short; nor does there need to be only one crafted, prepared message. Time will determine the amount of content. If allowed the Holy Spirit would continue in wave after wave of sweet and precious communion with His people, with different emphasis and varying manners, until everyone had been ministered to or had an opportunity to minister to one another the grace of God. The Holy Spirit is not “meeting time bound.” He will flow out into the streets and marketplace if we will learn to release the expression of His heart in an appropriate and adequate manner.

## WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

It is very dangerous to begin describing an E.M.I. meeting for fear that an example might then become a pattern that some might try to copy, rather than simply applying the principles provided in a simple, unique, organic process. When the “main person” clergy mind-set is replaced by the New Testament example of E.M.I. (Every Member Involvement) the number of interactions and potential for expressing God’s grace and love seem to be unlimited. The expression is as varied as the people involved, their level of maturity in Christ and His Word, their sensitivity to the Holy Spirit, their freedom of expression towards and familiarity with one another, the way the seating is arranged and even the location and environment of the place and time of gathering together.

...it is not as important **where** we gather as what takes place **when** we gather

The smaller groups, 20-45, tend to be more intimate in their dialog and interactions with one another. The Holy Spirit tends to guard each disciple’s dignity. As a result, the level of intimacy experienced among the group is determined by the expressed level of covenant commitment the fellowship shares together. Quite obviously the greater the number of people, the more difficult this process is. This is one of the reasons for the rapid increase in the “home church” model over the last few decades. But it is not as important where we

gather as what takes place when we gather.

If believers gather together in small groups through the week and simply review and speak about the Pastor's sermon from the previous week, or work through a prepared Bible study, it may not be as edifying as the scriptures convey our fellowship with one another may be. I am not saying that these venues and activities are without value, to the contrary, they may be wonderful opportunities of strengthening ourselves together in Christ. They simply are not a full expression of what is described in 1 Corinthians 12-14.

## **A QUICK LOOK AT ONE SAMPLING**

Imagine for a moment that you are a part of a gathering of 35-40 people, in the fellowship hall of a small community church, or 20 to 25 in a neighbor's home. The people gathered represent a broad cross-section of age and experience in the Holy Spirit. After some time of fellowship and a few spontaneous worship songs a young couple attending the local community college ask for prayer for direction in their lives and the decisions that they need to make. The whole group begins to focus on this one couple, praying in the languages given by the Holy Spirit and in their mother's tongue. After a few moments one of the elders clears her throat and begins to sing a new song in tongues. Without hesitation she interprets the song into a language the whole group is familiar with and understands. The main idea of the song is that the islands would hear of the good news and that this young couple was being clothed in humility to bring reconciliation to an innocent people of war. This is followed with praise of a familiar chorus that seems to spontaneously rise up among the group.

As the chorus quiets, an elderly brother shares that during his Bible study that morning he had read Job 22:27-30, and thought that perhaps these verses may be important for this young couple. Everyone opens their Bibles and begins to read the reference together, excited by how it seems to fit with the song. One of the men suggests that the group take a moment to pray out these scriptures prophetically over this couple. Before the group begins praying one of the high school girl points out that she feels the Lord would have them pray out verses 21 through 26 as well explaining that she felt that the Lord wants this young couple to know that He was able to provide for their financial resources. The whole group initiates prayer. The elderly man and the high school girl raise their voices to be heard by the others as they lead out with the burden that they each sense. The intensity of the groups prayers increase and then quiet, until there is a moment of silence as the group waits to hear if there is anything else from the Holy Spirit for this couple.

One of the ladies, whom God uses frequently to prophecy, says that she has just had a vision while the group was praying. As she rises from her knees were she had been praying she begins to describe the scene that she had seen in her vision. With practiced clarity she conveys the images she has seen. While she is sharing her vision the young lady for whom the group was praying begins to weep uncontrollably. Her husband reached into his back-back and pulls out an envelop with a photograph inside. Handing the photo to the woman with the vision he asked if the photo was like the vision she has just described. The woman says that the photo is exactly like what she had seen in the vision. People began to pass the photo around the room so that everyone has an opportunity to see it. Everyone is excited by the similarity between the vision and the photo.

The young couple begins to explain that they had received the photo from a college friend who is serving as a missionary among some war refugees, on the island of Cypress. Their friend had invited them to join her. They had been praying and fasting for God's direction for the last four days, since they had received the letter. And although they had a sense that they were to

join their friend, they were looking to the Lord to objectively confirm His word through the mouth of two or three witnesses, explaining that they had been concerned about the financial needs for such a venture. A number of those sitting near the couple reaches over and lay hands upon them and pray a prayer of thanksgiving and commissioning on behalf of the whole group. They also pray for the Lord's continued revelation of His purposes for the couple in this missions venture.

This whole episode took less than fifteen minutes.

As you might guess, everyone in the meeting would have been very encouraged by such a dramatic experience of the Holy Spirit, and their faith in God's ability and willingness to use them would have been greatly increased. There had been four separate people used by God to confirm the direction of the young couple. Following such a scene everyone would be very encouraged and ready to go on with the meeting and to allow the Holy Spirit to use them to minister to one another. In an atmosphere such as this there may be lying on of hands for prayer of healing, or other needs. While two or three might share from their quiet time with the Lord something from the scriptures that would edify and encourage the whole group; perhaps the sharing would be in response to the questions of younger believers in the group. This is not a description of an extraordinary meeting, but a regular meeting of ordinary believers and disciples who have cultivated and nurtured their individual giftings in Christ and sensitivity to the Holy Spirit, who are willing to become lovingly invested in the lives of others. Such meetings as this are intoxicating and addictive to the heart of man and an adornment to the gospel of the Kingdom of God that can be touched.

## **NEITHER DICTATORSHIP NOR ANARCHY**

While the Spirit of Prophecy is often grieved and hampered by a controlling, manipulative or domineering form of leadership, the opposite is equally destructive and wounding. Anarchy, everyone doing what is right in their own eyes without restraint of thought for others nor accountability to authority, is contrary to the very principle of the Kingdom of God in which there is both a King and an Administrator. We need to strive towards a clearly defined balance of a mutually, reciprocating team approach to ministry and leadership. There are guidelines and there are parameters that are appropriate when we gather together in the name of the Lord of Glory, King Jesus of Nazareth. There are consequences for disobedience to the Word of God. There need to be parental teams to provide safety and security for all those of the "family" or community and to take "lead responsibility" for things that need to be planned and accomplished.

Making the transition from the old order to the new will require practice. Along the way, those involved may experience some awkwardness as they learn to hear from the Holy Spirit in this fashion, but they will also know the joyful bliss of our Father's pleasure when they share His love in this fashion. Determination and even more practice will help. Did I mention the need to practice and put into action the principles shared in this book. A real effort will need to be exerted to break free from the chains of lifeless traditions that have been handed down to us from our forefathers. It may take months to move beyond stagnation or manipulation... to healthy interactive growth and prosperity, but it is worth the effort.

**Chapter Thirty-Five Study Notes:**

1) Sometimes church leaders are too \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ to release the reigns of the meeting over to the direction and control of the Holy Spirit.

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2) Over emphasis of any truth to the practical exclusion of other truth may result in \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_.

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3) Describe three attribute of a “hybrid” model of Church fellowship life that may be reasonably anticipated in the experience a transformation of a small congregation.

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4) What do the initials E.M.I. represent? \_\_\_\_\_

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5) The Spirit of Prophecy may be grieved or hampered by a \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ form of leadership.

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6) On the other hand \_\_\_\_\_, or everyone doing what is right in their own eyes, without considering the rights and needs of others will also grieve the Holy Spirit.

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## CHAPTER THIRTY-SIX

# MANIFESTATIONS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT



1 Corinthians 12:1-11 <sup>(1)</sup>“Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant: <sup>(2)</sup>You know that you were Gentiles, carried away to these dumb (*speechless*) idols, however you were led. <sup>(3)</sup>Therefore I made known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed, and no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit. <sup>(4)</sup>There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. <sup>(5)</sup>There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. <sup>(6)</sup>And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. <sup>(7)</sup>**But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all:** <sup>(8)</sup>for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the Spirit, <sup>(9)</sup>to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, <sup>(10)</sup>To another the workings of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. <sup>(11)</sup>**But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one as He wills.”**

**T**he Holy Spirit will empower His people, not over-power His people. We abide in the Holy Spirit and astoundingly He dwells in us. Our fellowship within Him is reciprocating and amazingly mutual. He is unbelievably gracious while being incomprehensibly holy. The paradoxes of the Holy Spirit are exceedingly abundantly beyond anything we can think or even have the capacity to imagine. There is absolutely no limit to His comforting mercy towards sinners, nor His righteous judgments and even wrath against sin.

**One of the great acts of God’s mercies is when He extends to us even the slightest awareness of His presence to our physical senses.**

If I took page upon page to describe the attributes of the Holy Spirit, even volume upon volume, still I would lack the adequate resources to fully clarify Him to our understanding. The height, the depth, the width and the breadth of His love is beyond our finding out and yet we are repeatedly encouraged, even commanded, to search out the profundity of God with all our heart, with all our strength and with all our soul; with all that is within us and with all that we possess. One of the great acts of God’s mercies is when He extends to us even the slightest awareness of His presence to our senses. Offering us some miniscule piece of revelation into His Word or His Kingdom only slightly enlarges our grasp of His benevolence. If we are brutally

honest with ourselves and each other the very smallest sense of God’s presence is enough to

undo the heights of our mental achievements to a heap of insignificant rubble. We are overwhelmed by His power and overcome by His mercy, being undone in every respect by His nearness and quickness to reveal His heart to us and through us to others within the Body of Christ and to a lost and dying, Christ rejecting world. No quantity of words can capture or convey the sensation and awesome wonder of the extravagance of God towards us.

Prophecy, in all its many hues and shapes, is a manifestation of the Holy Spirit, as are of course each of the other gifts of the Holy Spirit. Ultimately, it is good to see that it is the Holy Spirit that is “the Gift” of God to us who believe. Those items which Paul list as “gifts” would perhaps be better perceived as facets or attributes of “the Gift” of the Holy Spirit. As such, then each of the “gifts” or manifestations of the Holy Spirit are resident within each believer. (See “The Most Valuable Utensil in the Kitchen”, page 23.) We possess this glorious heavenly treasure in these earthen vessels of our bodies with all its many inadequacies and weaknesses. Although a perplexing mystery to us and an enigma to the unbelieving throngs of humanity looking upon us, it is the pleasure of our heavenly Father and God to invest Himself into us in such a manner as to produce the Kingdom of God through us. Such divine mystery and hope of glory is offered to each of us by our loving Father without respect of gender, culture, language, race, economics, age, location; and on and on and on...!

Luke 24: 32 “And they said to one another, ‘Did not our heart burn with in us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?’”

Luke 24:45 “And He opened their understanding that they might comprehend the Scriptures.”

Bringing the manifestations of the Holy Spirit to the forefront of our awareness and cognitive faculties has been the clarion quest and magnificent obsession of humanity throughout the centuries. In the early hours of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and cascading in an ever increasing crescendo of marvelous revelation through the tapestry of the past century the Holy Spirit has continued to open our understanding that we might comprehend the Scriptures and Himself. As the Church exited the 20<sup>th</sup> century it was considerably different than when it had entered the century. But most of us, who claim to be believers, still live our lives like those who stand on the shore of the ocean or float upon its surface; we have yet to search out its depths and indescribable beauty and riches.

“The more I know, the more I know I don’t know anything.” The nearer that I draw to God the more I realize how far away I really am from God.

By God’s mercy and grace this current move of the Holy Spirit shall usher many souls into the everlasting Kingdom of our God and Father, not only at the level of salvation but also as the manifestation and revealing of the sons and daughters of the Living God, (Romans 8:19). Purity, holiness, power, strength, humility and so much more shall be resident in the lives of those who will greet the King of undying glory during His triumphant march upon Jerusalem. The prayer of Paul for the church of Ephesus in 3:19 that they might know the unsurpassed love of Christ and that they may be filled with all the fullness of God resoundingly echoes across the corridors of time, being embraced by multiplied scores of disciples in this very hour as their anthem of service and devotion to Christ.

2 Corinthians 13:5 “Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? - unless indeed you are disqualified.”

And yet there are still multitudes of people who claim to be Christians whose life and heart are absolutely, diametrically opposed to the operation and manifestation of the Holy Spirit for one reason or another. The admonition or 2 Corinthians 13:5 bears careful consideration and

assessment, even as it did during the first years of the Genesis Church; this is especially true in light of the centuries of abuse and neglect that the “life in the Spirit” has suffered under the regime of human administrations.

It is not that people do not attend church services or that they live openly sinful lives or flatly reject Jesus Christ; but instead the tragedy is that they live their lives in such a manner as to deny the presence of Christ, the Anointing within them, and consequently fail to express the anointing of God’s life through them to others. There is a functional denial and purposeful failure to implement the gifts, ministry and manifestations of the Holy Spirit in their day-to-day life. Their faith is genuine, in as far as it goes, but is primarily cultural or cerebral, lacking an experiential encountering of God in a supernatural, life altering fashion. The Holy Spirit manifestation of prophecy in the midst of the congregation significantly increases the potential of the “encounter factor” in people’s lives.

Those who have experienced E.M.I. and authentic Holy Spirit prophecy are not very satisfied with the pastoral spoon feeding of the vast majority of Christendom. Once the chords of wickedness and bondage are severed off the mind and heart of the child of God and they enter into the “new order” liberty spoken of throughout the New Testament, there is no returning to the “old-order” boxes of man’s design.

To move forward in the Holy Spirit may require radical repentance and paradigm transformation, not only in the life of an individual but whole groups, congregations or communities. Our experience has been that there is a greater release of the Holy Spirit among those who are first generation converts; such as the Hindu in N.E. India or Muslims in southern Philippines or northern Pakistan. If a people have no traditional “experiential filters” they are more readily brought into the supernatural, spiritual faith move in keeping with what appears to be portrayed in the New Testament.

If the manifestations of the Holy Spirit are part of their conversion experience, then their expectation for their daily walk of faith is also supernatural. If the “original” pattern package of the Genesis Church in Acts is presented at the outset, then it is more likely that it shall also be preserved. If the Gospel of the Kingdom of God can be shared without the colonization of entrenched patterns of performance and misconceptions, then new converts are left to being led by the Holy Spirit in their incorporation of their faith into their daily lives. As a result, their experiential growth as a living knowledge of God far exceeds those new believers faced with the dilemma of overcoming the obstacles and hurdles of predetermined patterns and procedures. This is often the case in Christianized cultures where presumed familiarization has anesthetized people to the complete capacity and inconceivable potential of the manifest presence of the Holy Spirit in the expression, extension, expansion and establishment of the Kingdom of God in their midst.

**Chapter Thirty-Six Study Notes:**

1) The Holy Spirit will \_\_\_\_\_ His people, not \_\_\_\_\_ His people.

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2) \_\_\_\_\_ is a manifestation of the Holy Spirit, as are each of the other gifts of the Holy Spirit. \_\_\_\_\_

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3) What century in the life of the Church ushered in a new awareness and manifestation of the Holy Spirit? \_\_\_\_\_

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4) Often new converts who have not been exposed to the traditional “western” pastoral dominated expression of Church life, will more easily move forward in the manifestations of the Holy Spirit in their gatherings together. \_\_\_ TRUE \_\_\_ FALSE

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## SECTION SEVEN



## PREPARING THE WAY FOR THE COMING OF THE KING

Isaiah 57:14 “And one shall say, ‘Heap it up! Heap it up! Prepare the way, take the stumbling block out of the way of My people.’”

Isaiah 62:16 “Go through, go through the gates! Prepare the way for the people; build up, build up the highway! Take out the stones, lift up a banner for the peoples (nations).”

## CHAPTER THIRTY-SEVEN

# PARENTING A PROPHETIC GENERATION



Psalms 24:3-6 <sup>(3)</sup>“Who may ascend the hill of the Lord? Or who may stand in His holy place? <sup>(4)</sup>He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, nor sworn deceitfully. <sup>(5)</sup>He shall receive blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation. <sup>(6)</sup>This is Jacob, the generation of those who seek Him, who seek Your face.”

Matthew 5:8 “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.”

**T**oday in many parts of the Christianized cultures of the earth there is a move of the Holy Spirit that is being experienced primarily among younger disciples between the age of 15 to 35, resulting in their desperately seeking the face of God in radical abandonment and pursuit of the Kingdom of God. This phenomenon is also happening among non-Christian youth as well, but is not being manifested in the same fashion. Many of these young people are rising out of an environment of a “fatherless generation.” This is not to say that there have not been fathers for this generation, but that for many there has been a “disconnect” between the parents and children resulting in a lack of affirmation. For the most part, this has been replaced by our becoming an “informational generation.” But the great cry of the heart of this generation is for affirmation, not just information. Affirmation requires reciprocating, relational fellowship, while information does not. The strongest and most important affirmation is between parents and children and especially between a father and his child. Although parents may have more than one child, the life-giving affirmation that is necessary is provided primarily on a one to one basis and not as a cluster. When parents relate to their children primarily on a cluster or group basis something significant is lost. While siblings are intensely important to one another, they are simply not able to affirm one another with the same level of life as parents can.

**But the great cry of the heart of this generation is for affirmation, not just information.**

Much has been lost through the centuries by the lack of relational “spiritual” parenting within the Body of Christ. We have tried to do through the disbursement of information what can only be done through reciprocating relational fellowship and affirmation, the making of sons and daughters of God. There is a tremendous, even desperate cry of the Spirit for parenting and re-parenting this generation in the paradigms of the Kingdom of God, and especially in the manifestations of the Holy Spirit in the day to day expression of our supernatural faith. Such parenting or re-parenting is not limited to the youth, but is also taking place among older believers who are only now coming into the practical application of the gospel of the Kingdom of

God in their lives. As such, “spiritual parenting” is not restricted to age specific direction, i.e.: older teaching younger, but is instead the more mature teaching the less mature in a particular arena of life.

“Parenting” is a Holy Spirit produced connection, or “re-connect” between believers that tends to go beyond informational discipleship or even mentoring, affirming who a person is more than applauding what a person does. Parenting is most appropriately accomplished in an environment of fewer people, not in the context of a large group. Spiritual parenting usually requires covenantal relationship and some level of transparent, reciprocating fellowship that is capable of sustaining the relationship over an extended period of time and perhaps extending across great distances.

Possibly the most significant attribute of prophetic, spiritual parenting is the Holy Spirit endowment and capacity of identification and impartation that results in a recognition and affirmation of spiritual destiny and gifts in others within, what I like to call, our “realm of relational responsibility.” Many, if not the vast majority of believers today are like the children of an orphanage; their physical needs may be being met in the area of food, clothing, bedding, toiletry, etc., but they lack a sense of being nurtured and guarded through the identification of family or even community. Most believers today lack a sense of identification of their destiny and role in the Body of Christ. They may fill a position or a function in a local fellowship, even as a child in an orphanage is assigned chores to teach him a sense of responsibility, but they lack a deeper sense of vision and purpose. True spiritual parenting will result in identifying and releasing the calling of God in and through others.

Discerning of the Body of Christ is far more than simply taking communion from time to time in remembrance of the Lord’s death and resurrection. It has far more to do with the recognition and acknowledge-ment of the purpose and function of others within the Body of Christ as it relates to the Kingdom of God; not after the natural, fleshly talents and ambitions that are so prevalent in the world, but after the Spirit.

2 Corinthians 3:5-6 <sup>(5)</sup>“Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God, <sup>(6)</sup>who has made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not by the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.”

2 Corinthians 5:16-17 <sup>(16)</sup> “Therefore, from now on, we regard no man according to the flesh. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer. <sup>(17)</sup>Therefore, if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”

2 Timothy 1:9 “...who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works (abilities or achievements), but according to His own purpose and grace (divine enablement) which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began...”

This lack of mutual, reciprocating identification, impartation and affirmation within the Body of Christ, after the purposes of the Kingdom of God, is a primary cause of the rampant dysfunctional condition of Christendom. One of the primary purposes of the gift of prophecy is to accomplish this very thing within the fellowship of the saints. As this manifestation of the presence of the Holy Spirit is increasingly restored to the Body of Christ, the Body will heal itself through the life-giving presence of Christ Jesus. Being strengthened through the inner man it will grow up in all things, able to do all things through Christ which strengthens it; striking fear into the heart of hell as it proceeds to cease destroying itself like a cancerous cell, and turns its attention and efforts against the domain of darkness and death.

## **BUT AS THE DAYS OF NOAH WERE...**

Matthew 24:3 “Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, ‘Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?’”

Matthew 24:36-39 <sup>(36)</sup>“But of that day, and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, but My Father only. <sup>(37)</sup>But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. <sup>(38)</sup>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, <sup>(39)</sup>and did not know until the flood came and took them away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.”

Matthew 24:42 “Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.”

Many people have commented upon these scriptures through the centuries. Most commentaries and preaching concern themselves with the negative aspects of “the days of Noah,” which is the most obvious aspect of application of this teaching of our Lord’s, but there are encouraging aspects of the “the days of Noah” that we might do well to consider. A careful study of the story of the life and times of Noah in Genesis chapters 5-8 will produce a wealth of reproducible aspects of “the days of Noah.”

Genesis 5:28-29 <sup>(28)</sup>“Lamech lived one hundred and eighty-two years, and had a son. <sup>(29)</sup>And he called his name Noah, saying, ‘This one will comfort us concerning our work and the toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord has cursed.’”

This appears to be the first recorded parental, prophetic word describing the purpose and destiny of a child. It is a form of a blessing. It is very affirming. So one might say, “As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be at the coming of the Son of Man; parents shall be prophesying over their children, identifying and releasing or speaking forth their destiny in God.”

The record reveals that Lamech was the grandson of Enoch, who “walked with God” to such a degree that God actually took him from the earth. It is very possible that Enoch may have spoke to his grandson, Lamech, of those things he became aware of regarding the future and walking with God. It says of Noah that he was a just man, perfect (blameless) in his generations, and that he “walked with God,” providing us with another aspect of “the days of Noah.” As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be at the coming of the Son of Man; there shall be those who walk and commune with God... who hear His voice... who obey His instruction... who build their lives on the foundation of previous generations... who are just and blameless before God... living their lives in open display before their own family, community and generation.

Hebrews 4:9-11 <sup>(9)</sup>“There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. <sup>(10)</sup>For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his own works as God did from his. <sup>(11)</sup>Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience.” (See Hebrews 3:7-4:11)

Noah’s name means or describes an ability to “rest” and “to lie down or to recline.” The New Testament speaks of entering into God’s rest through experiential faith in Christ. So it might be said, “As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be at the coming of the Son of Man; there shall be those who functionally enter into the rest of God through their faith in Christ Jesus.”

These are only three of many positive aspects of the “days of Noah.” Each of them applies to the parenting of a prophetic generation.

Psalms 24:6 “This is Jacob, the generation of those who seek Him, who seek Your face.



The Holy Spirit is producing a generation of love-sick disciples upon the earth whose primary identification will be their desire for their God and a passion for seeking His fellowship. Not only will there be a few such as Enoch or Noah, but there will be an entire generation or era of untold numbers pursuing the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, preparing the way and ushering in the coming of the King of everlasting glory, Jesus of Nazareth.

## **APOSTOLIC FATHERING OF A PROPHETIC GENERATION**

1 Corinthians 4:14-17 <sup>(14)</sup> “I do not write these things to shame you, but as my beloved children I warn you. <sup>(15)</sup>For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. <sup>(16)</sup>Therefore I urge you to imitate me. <sup>(17)</sup>For this reason I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful son in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church.”

1 Corinthians 11:1 “Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.”

Paul spoke of being a father to the disciples in Corinth because he and the team he was a part of (Acts 18:1-17) had been instrumental in preaching the gospel of the Kingdom of God to them and bringing the regenerating power of the abiding Holy Spirit to them. But in the same lines of his letter to the Corinthians he speaks of Timothy, his beloved and faithful son in the faith. Timothy had been a part of the team which had initiated the church in Corinth and would have been very familiar to the brethren there. But Timothy was a disciple who was well respected in several cities before Paul even met him. (See Acts 16:1-3)

Philippians 2:19-23 <sup>(19)</sup> “But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, that I also may be encouraged when I know your state. <sup>(20)</sup>For I have no one like-minded, who will sincerely care for your state. <sup>(21)</sup>For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus. <sup>(22)</sup>But you know his proven character, that as a son with his father he served with me in the gospel. <sup>(23)</sup>Therefore I hope to send him at once, as soon as I see how it goes with me.”

Here again Paul refers to Timothy as his son in the faith, listing as evidence his character attributes and history in ministering in the gospel of the Kingdom of God. In 1 Timothy 1:2 we see that it is not only a phrase which Paul uses about Timothy while writing to others, but is also a phrase or salutation he uses with Timothy while communicating directly with him. Between these two there was a precious spiritual relationship and fellowship which the Holy Spirit is utilizing today as one of the models of mutually reciprocating submission and equality in Christ that is being reproduced among many today all over the earth.

Throughout the history of the Church there have been many examples of “spiritual parenting.” The significant difference is that at this time of preparing for the Bridegroom’s returning to planet earth and the emerging “last days” scenario preceding His return, the Holy Spirit is “birthing” a prophetic generation that will be capable of speaking for the heart of God and walking out His purposes for the world to witness. For God’s judgments to be righteous and true, there must be an exhibited example of a fully matured, redeemed human community, functionally operational upon the planet to justify the full work of redemption upon the cross and through the grave to the whole of creation, both seen and unseen, whether in the heavens above or the earth here below.

This emerging prophetic generation will surpass the theoretical hopes of the past and proceed on to a functional reality of judicial evidence of the practical reality and superiority of the Kingdom of God. This will result in demonstrating the superiority of Jesus of Nazareth, the

Lamb and Christ of God over all philosophies, faiths and hopes of mankind. He alone will have preeminence over all other authorities and powers. This generation will understand and operate within true, Godly spiritual sacrificial parenting and servant authority. They will be whole and complete, mature and stable, - - able to withstand the assault of the enemy of the souls of mankind through the last hours at the close of this age of preparation of the Lamb's Bride and Wife.

## **PROGRESSIVE REVELATION ~ GROWING IN THE GRACES OF GOD**

The role of parenting a prophetic generation will result in enlarging the revelational perception of God and His kingdom, as those being parented are also being equipped and released into their destiny, trained to overcome their fears and misunderstandings that have crippled previous generations. The Holy Spirit shall open their understanding that they may comprehend the Scriptures (Luke 24:45) and heart of God to a greater degree than ever before in human history.

Exodus 6:2-3 <sup>(2)</sup>“And God spoke to Moses and said to him: ‘I am the Lord. <sup>(3)</sup>I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty, but by My name ‘LORD’ I was not known to them.”

Micah 8:15-16 <sup>(15)</sup>“As in the days when you came out of the land of Egypt I will show them (My) wonders.’ <sup>(16)</sup>The nations shall see and be ashamed of all their might; they shall put their hand over their mouth.”

In the same manner that God multiplied the signs and wonders that He performed in Egypt through Moses to confirm who He was to His people and to the people of Egypt so shall the Holy Spirit multiple His signs and wonders in the last days to confirm the lordship of Jesus of Nazareth and His right to rule, while validating the Father's acceptance of the blood of His selected Lamb.

John 14:12-14 <sup>(12)</sup>“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father. <sup>(13)</sup>And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. <sup>(14)</sup>If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.”

The multiplication of signs shall be the result of the multiplication of those ministering in this fashion, not necessarily the increase within an individual or a few special, super spiritual saints. The truth of the exclusivity of Jesus of Nazareth shall be conveyed to the world with signs following by those who are abiding in the fellowship of their relationship with the Father. It is this fellowship which the Father identifies with, imparts life through and affirms by watching over His word to perform it, (Jeremiah 1:12).

After thousands of years, we have yet to exhaust the width, depth, height and breadth of God's love. In truth we may have barely scratched the surface of His heart toward humanity. While there may be scores of reasons for this, none the least being the unsearchableness of our Fathers heart; one of the big reasons is the propensity of one generation after another needing to tear down the scaffolding of religious paraphernalia that had been erected during the previous generation, before being able to build again. The Holy Spirit is looking for spiritual parents that will lift their children up, not hold them down. The Father of glory is searching to and fro throughout the whole world for those “spiritual fathers” who will raise and release spiritual children after the same fashion as He did with His only begotten Son.

In the natural, normal, healthy human parents want their children to excel and even do better

in their lives than they did as parents. Healthy, whole parents will make every effort to promote their children in some fashion or another, and find great satisfaction and even pleasure in the well being and advancement of their child. Healthy parents are not insecure in themselves as it relates to their children, and are willing to sacrificially nourish their children even when it produces a lack, in some manner, for them. The same type of sacrificial attitude shall be an “earmark” of Holy Spirit provided spiritual parents.

There is so much more that needs to be said regarding this topic, and yet this volume is not the appropriate venue for an in depth study. While I am usually reluctant to do so, in this case I would like to suggest that, if you are interested in a further study of this topic that you examine my book; *Imitate Me As I Also Imitate Christ - Lifestyle Discipleship and Parental Mentoring Which Forms the Character of Christ in Others*.

**Chapter Thirty-Seven Study Notes:**

- 1) This generation needs not only information but also \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2) Most believers today lack a sense of \_\_\_\_\_ of their destiny and role in the Body of Christ.
- 3) Discerning the Body of Christ includes recognition and acknowledge-ment of the purpose and function of others within the Body of Christ after the \_\_\_\_\_, and not after natural talents.
- 4) What is the primary cause of the rampant dysfunctional condition of many in the Body of Christ? It is a lack of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ within the Body of Christ.
- 5) Where can we find the first recorded examples of a parental, prophetic word describing the purpose and destiny of a child? \_\_\_\_\_
- 6) Who did it? \_\_\_\_\_ Who was the recipient? \_\_\_\_\_
- 7) Do you believe he fulfilled the meaning of his name and his prophetic destiny?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 8) Today there is a great need to see spiritual \_\_\_\_\_ of the emerging prophetic generation.
- 9) The Holy Spirit will \_\_\_\_\_ His signs and wonders in these last days to confirm the lordship and rule of Jesus Christ.

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## CHAPTER THIRTY-EIGHT

# A HIGHWAY THROUGH THE WILDERNESS – REACHING THE NATIONS WITH GOD'S HEART



Isaiah 62:16 “Go through, go through the gates! Prepare the way for the people; build up, build up the highway! Take out the stones, lift up a banner for the peoples (nations).”

**A**s we consider the theme of “a highway through the wilderness; reaching the nations,” I invariably turn to the eighth chapter of the Book of Acts. Here we see the first post resurrection effort to take the gospel of the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ to non-Jewish people. The effort was spearheaded by Philip, a man who was not among the original twelve apostles. He is introduced to us as one of the seven selected to be a deacon in the Jerusalem “Genesis” Church (Acts 6:5), chosen to help meet the practical needs of the growing community of disciples. Later he is reintroduced to us as one of our examples of a New Testament “evangelist” (Acts 21:8). Philip was among those who had been scattered by persecution and the havoc caused by Saul of Tarsus (Acts 6:3). These were very challenging times for the early Church, which had experienced wonderful growth in the city of Jerusalem.

Acts 2:46-47 <sup>(46)</sup>“So continuing daily with in accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, <sup>(47)</sup>praising God and having favor with the people. And the Lord added to the Church daily those who were being saved.”

Acts 6:7 “The Word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the Priests were obedient to the faith.”

The reformational move of the Holy Spirit following the Day of Pentecost appears to have significantly impacted the city of Jerusalem on many different levels of society. The record indicates that even those who had once been adversaries of the faith had become adherents and perhaps even advocates of the fledgling populations’ cause. In Acts 2:47 it says that the Lord **added** to the church, while by Acts 6:1 we read that the number of the disciples were **multiplying**. It seems that this would indicate that a significant number of believers had matured in their faith adequately to disciples others, who would then train others, producing a threatening multiplying effect against the existing religious order of the Jewish leaders. It is very likely that many years later, the man who had been responsible for causing such havoc among the Church of Jerusalem would encourage his son in the faith to employ a similar strategy in extending the

Kingdom of God elsewhere.

2 Timothy 2:2 “And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men (disciples) who will be able to teach others also.”

### **GOD WANTS TO USE ORDINARY PEOPLE TO DO EXTRA-ORDINARY THINGS**

While the majority of the Book of Acts details the acts of the Holy Spirit through the lives and exploits of those we often call apostles, the eighth chapter of Acts relates an episode in the life of an “ordinary man” who, until this time, had only been listed as a deacon of his local church. The previous chapter of Acts had been given to extensively detailing the oration of Stephen, prior to his martyrdom; another deacon in his local fellowship. But nothing was recorded of the content of Philip’s preaching; only that he spoke of “the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus” (Acts 8:12).

In a number of verses the fact that his preaching was confirmed by the Holy Spirit with accompanying signs and wonders is presented. Acts 8:6 explains that “the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.” Verse 13 of chapter 8 explains that Simon, a sorcerer, repented of his practicing sorcery and after being baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus “continued with Philip, and was amazed, seeing the miracles and signs which were done.”

Philip was the second example of non-apostles performing signs and wonders in the book of Acts; the first was Stephen in Acts 6:8: “And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and signs among the people.” In neither case are the signs or wonders of either of these men described in the same detail as are the Lord’s or the apostles. We are allowed only to know that the Holy Spirit chose to graciously confirm His word through them in this promised fashion. We have no scriptural reason to believe that the same thing is not possible for ordinary disciples today.

### **THE MULTIPLYING FACTOR**

Acts 6:7 “Then the Word of the God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.”

Acts 9:31 “Then the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified. And walking in the fear of the Lord and the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they (the churches) were multiplied.”

The prophetic Holy Spirit empowerment poured out on the day of Pentecost flowed like a river throughout the region surrounding Jerusalem, affecting Judea, Galilee and Samaria. In Acts 8:14 we read that when the apostles who were still remaining in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the prophetic Word of God, they sent Peter and John to Samaria to affirm Philip and the ministry among the people. Peter and John joined Philip in mutually reciprocating submission and equality, not taking over the ministry in Samaria, but partnering together in it; guaranteeing the transmission of the prophetic empowerment of the Holy Spirit through the identification and impartation of laying on of hands (Acts 8:15-17).

As a historical record of the march of the Genesis church to free men’s souls from the tyranny of and bondage to sin and death, the chronicles of Acts is not an exhaustive account of all that was taking place, but more of an overview of certain selected events to convey the general theme of the reformation of the manner in which God would forever relate to mankind until His Son’s

glorious return to the planet. As such, Luke was careful to include certain foundational principles in telling of the events, but one should not conclude from this brief account that what has been written is all that was taking place at any particular time.

Acts 8:4 says “Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word.” Then in the very next verse Luke focuses upon one person and one location as a representative example of what may have been occurring in countless additional circumstance throughout the region at that time in the Church’s history. Acts 21:8 makes it clear that Luke had been a guest at Philip’s house for many days. He was a member of an apostolic mission’s team of which Paul was a part. It is very likely that at such a time conversations may have sprung up relating the early years of the movement; this is especially likely because Luke may have been writing a chronicle at that time. It is interesting that Luke makes mention of Mnason of Cyprus, “an early disciple” in verse 16.

Back in the eighth chapter of Acts we see the whole team of Philip, Peter and John return to Jerusalem, (vs. 25). As they went they shared the responsibility and privilege of preaching of the gospel of the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, in many villages. There is no indication that one particular person did more than another or was considered more of a leader than any of the others. These men were walking through many villages of the Samaritans in humility and team for the sake of Christ.

## **SUPERNATURAL DIRECTIONAL GUIDANCE**

Proverbs 3:5-6 <sup>(5)</sup> “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; <sup>(6)</sup> in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your path.”

There are at least four direct methods of divine guidance in this eighth chapter of Acts and perhaps six.

1. **EXTERNAL CIRCUMSTANCES:** Persecution scattered believers out of their comfortable “nest” in Jerusalem to begin influencing a broader spectrum of society in the region (vs. 1,4).
2. **NATURAL COMMUNICATION - COMMITTEE ANALYSIS:** The apostles heard testimony of what the Holy Spirit was accomplishing to convert Samaritans, non-Jews, to faith in Jesus of Nazareth and obedience to the gospel of the Kingdom of God, receiving the prophetic Word of God (vs. 14).
3. **ANGELIC VISITATION:** An angel of the Lord spoke to Philip directly, (not in a dream or in a vision) instructing him to leave Jerusalem and begin walking along a road towards Gaza, a city on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea (vs. 26).
4. **HOLY SPIRIT:** The Holy Spirit spoke to Philip instructing him to approach a particular chariot, (vs. 29).
5. **WORD OF KNOWLEDGE:** Peter’s discernment of the condition of Simeon’s heart (vs. 21, 23).
6. **TRANSLATED:** The Holy Spirit apparently whisked Philip away from one spot and deposited him elsewhere some distance away (vs. 39).

There is such a desire in the heart of God to speak to those who love Him and are seeking first His kingdom. In truth, God desires to communicate with all humanity, which is why Jesus was manifest in the earth: to adequately abolish the sin barriers between God and the object of His affection and passion; and to restore reciprocating, revelational relationship, by which God might dwell within man and communicate with each one in a unique specific manner.

Romans 8:14 “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.”

When a disciple cultivates, nurtures and guards a restored privilege to hear the voice of God, then the potential of such experiences as Philip had in Acts 8, and so many other places throughout the scriptures, will become more common place and not the exceptional or rare occurrence. These types of communication will greatly impact the efficiency of our express-ing, extending, expanding and establishing the Kingdom of God upon the earth as it is in heaven. There seems to be no scriptural precedence or evidence which declares or demonstrates that the manner of divine guidance paraded throughout the New Testament should altar, diminish or cease to operate altogether. Indeed the evidence and testimony

**The fact that the vast majority of Christendom has no idea or anticipation of such experience does not diminish, in the slightest, the validity of such practice.**

of Scripture might indicate the exact opposite; that we should anticipate an increase in the prophetic voice of God being manifest towards, in and through His Church and His Bride, especially in an antagonistic and hostile environment of persecution and turmoil. The fact that the vast majority of Christendom has no idea or anticipation of such experience does not diminish, in the slightest, the validity of such practice. Once the admonition of Proverbs 3:5-6, mentioned above, is cultivated and nurtured in the expectation and lifestyle of a disciple, as though it were a commandment of God rather than a suggestion of Solomon, the results are usually rather dramatic, providing compelling evidence and testimony of the Kingdom of God.

## **PROPHETIC PRONOUNCEMENT & APPLICATION OF THE WORD OF GOD**

Throughout the text of this book the case has been repeatedly put forward that the phrase “the word of the Lord,” or “the word of God” in the New Testament often refers to the spontaneous, prophetic declaration of the heart of God into the heart of the circumstances in one manner or another, usually with the spoken word. In reviewing Acts 8 we see three distinctly different expressions of “the word of the Lord” being manifest.

The first example is the preaching of “the word of the Lord” to multitudes, villages and small groups (vs. 4-6, 12, 25). For His own reasons the Holy Spirit chose not to chronicle even a small fragment of the text of Philip’s sermons, only the general topic. There are far to many potential reasons for this to speculate why this occurred; we should simply be encouraged by the fact that the preaching of the gospel of the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ (vs. 12) was accompanied by miracles, signs and wonders to confirm the authenticity and authority of the word (vs. 6-6, 13) resulting in many coming to faith in Christ, (vs. 5, 12, 24) and widespread joy throughout the city of Samaria (vs. 8).

The second example is the correctional discernment to redirect and instruct an individual, possibly producing deliverance and healing in that person’s life, as in the case of Simon, who had been a sorcerer, prior to his conversion to faith in Christ (vs. 6, 12, 14). As a “word of knowledge” and “discerning of spirits” this prophetic word through Peter provided and opportunity of release and healing from the “root of bitterness” that had poisoned Simon’s soul in the past, and the lawlessness that may have bound his heart from fully following after God in the future. It is not reasonable to consider that the few words recorded here as the full content of Peter’s counseling session with Simon; nor is it appropriate to speculate what else may have been said.



The third example is the prophetic, inter-relation and application of the written Word of God, what we now call the Old Testament, towards faith in Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ of God (vs. 35). The Holy Spirit used Philip to open the understanding of the Ethiopian that he might understand the Scriptures, (see Luke 24:45). Preaching the mystery of Christ from the Prophets, the Law and the Psalms, Philip was able to apply the written testimony prophetically into the eunuch's life to address the pain, anguish of heart and searching that he would have experienced through his own circumstances. The Holy Spirit had brought the rider of the chariot to a unique, specific scripture to address the woundedness of his own soul. At the same time the Holy Spirit brought Philip alongside to aid in understanding and applying a particular written word to his life in a specific manner. One of the defining terms of the Holy Spirit used by Jesus in the early Greek language text is "Paraclete, Parakletos" which means "one called alongside to help or aid," and is interpreted "Comforter/ Helper" in John 14:16, is beautifully demonstrated in this event.

Philip demonstrated a measure of strength, courage and confidence in hearing the Holy Spirit which God is restoring to His Body today, especially among younger disciples. We must rediscover this aspect of "prophetic evangelism" in order to truly impact the nations in the name of Jesus of Nazareth.

(See Appendix for comment of the content of Philips' preaching.)

### **A THREE CHORD STRAND IS NOT EASILY BROKEN**

When each of the three methods of communicating the heart of God mentioned above are practiced in balance with one another, the results can be as dramatic as those seen in Acts 8. Through out the whole earth ordinary people, disciples are still being directed by the Holy Spirit in the same fashion as demonstrated in this chapter of Acts. They are the unsung heroes of the expression, extension, expansion and establishing of the Kingdom of God upon the earth in this hour. Where communities of believers are walking in the fear of the Lord and the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they will multiply in similar ways as the Church displayed in Luke's history.

**Chapter Thirty-Eight Study Notes:**

1) God wants to use \_\_\_\_\_ people to do \_\_\_\_\_ things.

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2) Who were the first and second examples of non-apostles performing signs and wonders in the Book of Acts. \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

3) In which chapter of the Book of Acts do we see the disciples beginning to be multiplied instead of simply “added” to the Church? \_\_\_\_\_

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4) Name six methods of divine guidance displayed in the eighth chapter of Acts:

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5) Philip’s ministry to the Ethiopian eunuch in the desert was a good example of “\_\_\_\_\_ evangelism”.

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## CHAPTER THIRTY-NINE

# BEING RECEIVED IN THE NAME OF A PROPHET



Matthew 10:40-42 <sup>(40)</sup> “He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me. <sup>(41)</sup>He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet’s reward. And he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man’s reward. <sup>(42)</sup>And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward.”

Romans 12:3-8 <sup>(3)</sup>“For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. <sup>(4)</sup>For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, <sup>(5)</sup>so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. <sup>(6)</sup>Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophecy in proportion to our faith; <sup>(7)</sup>or ministry. Let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; <sup>(8)</sup>he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.”

Ephesians 4:16 “from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.”

Revelation 22:12 “And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.”

**O**ne of the greatest woundings and discouragements in the Body of Christ at large is the general lack of “discerning the Body of Christ” among its various members. By this I mean that we fail to recognize or acknowledge the role and function which other believers have been placed in by the Holy Spirit. Nor do the majority of believers understand that they have been placed in the Body of Christ with a purpose and a destiny. The goal of the Christian message is not simply to get men into heaven, but is ultimately to get heaven into men – to make us more like Jesus now, in order that we may reign with Him in the course of the Millennium, and through the hidden ages to come.

As each believer’s life is “in Christ,” so the “Spirit of Christ” is in each one of us (Romans 8:9-10); therefore, there is a realistic expectation that there is a potential for some manifestation of some aspect or portion of Christ in each member of the Body of Christ. As we grow in the grace and knowledge of God we should come to a functional understanding and practice of our positional placement within the Body of Christ, and the release and flow of the life and grace of

God through us to the other members of the Body of Christ and to the world around us.

Ephesians 4:11-12 <sup>(11)</sup> “And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, <sup>(12)</sup>for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ...”

As the five-fold ascension gifts of Ephesians 4:11 fulfill their function in God, there will be a greater realization of the worth and esteem of the individual members of the whole Body of Christ. As we mature in our fellowship with the Holy Spirit we should move increasingly further away from our fleshly aggrandizement of “celebrity ministries” and move towards a place where we are able to receive from one another what the Lord may choose to provide. The current pyramidal religious hierarchy system that permeates the life of the Church greatly hinders the emergence process. The Holy Spirit is continuing to dismantle the clergy-laity class distinction that has crippled the Church for centuries. He is replacing it with a practical, scripturally functioning, mutually reciprocating submission and equality among the fellowship members of a covenant community (family of believers). Then the wholeness which the Lord has desired and purchased for mankind, since before the beginning of time, will be demonstrated for all to witness; not in heaven after we die, but here on the earth right where we live.

All that having been said, we return to our initial concern of Matthew 10:40-42. God, our Father, intends that we would humbly receive one another and accept from one another that which the Spirit of God has placed in that person, “their reward.” Each believer has a measure of “his reward” resident within him. A believer’s gifting, calling and function will provide insight and evidence of his reward. The manifestation of that reward will vary depending upon the degree and type of ministry each person is engaged in at a specific time and place, and also to the degree that each person is recognized and received in their respective and appropriate functions.

We can sit and listen to a wonderful teaching and leave the meeting place with a notebook full of ideas and great concepts, but never receive the impartation of the grace of God to fulfill the functional hope of the teaching. Why? Because the person teaching was never truly “received” in their God given, set apart role in Christ, after the Spirit. He was only received after the appearance and courtesies of the flesh. Our hearts were not interested in becoming organically united with the “teacher” as a member of Christ’s Body; we simply wanted the teaching or information and then we would go along our own way without responsibility to either the teacher or the teaching. We should be responsible to the teacher or the teaching as to the Lord, from whom the teaching originated, if it is of the Spirit and not of the flesh. We want the privilege of information without the accountability of formation of character. In part, this is what was on display in the Garden of Eden.

We must begin, at some point, to connect in meaningful, inter-relatedness with one another in the Body of Christ; this is especially important within individual fellowships and communities of faith. During His earthly ministry many people wanted to be where Jesus was because they wanted the benefits of being in fellowship with Him, i.e. healing, deliverance, food, acceptance, etc.; but they did not necessarily want Him to be their Lord or to come into the relational responsibilities required by the Kingdom of God. There was a fellowship of selfish convenience and self seeking fulfillment without the responsibility of reciprocating His love with the dedication of their lives for His cause and Kingdom. There have always been those who have called, ‘Lord, Lord,’ but then refused to do the things which He commanded (Luke 6:46). Sadly, the same could be said of many designated Christians today. Tragically, the “Christ” that many people worship is not the same “Christ” of the New Testament, but a “false Christ” made in the imagination of and probably in the image of some humanistic philosopher and promoted through the practice of ignoring the Holy Spirit and the written and prophetically spoken Word of God.

Fellowship in the Holy Spirit is not a “means to an end,” but is the “end” for which God has

provided the means. When we fellowship one another with a goal or motive of using that person in some fashion, to obtain some goal, how be it worthy in every respect, we cheapen or lessen the value of that person and ultimately the fellowship in Christ. This is precisely what has transpired in our societies across the globe. The “Power of Performance” demands that we produce in order to be of value, and therefore we judge our value and the value of others on the basis of what can be produced through our performance rather than “the benchmark” value that God has established for each human being -- the blood and life of His only begotten Son, Jesus of Nazareth.

The balance to this demonically inspired perversion of the Roman religious system is that of wholesome, worthwhile, meaningful work and employment which is satisfying to the soul and necessary for wholeness and integration of body, mind and spirit. Reward and work are appropriately portrayed in the scriptures in many different ways. Ultimately our identification and identity should not be in what we do or even what we produce, but in who we are and in our relationship and fellowship with others. For the most part, our earthly societies and cultures are built upon the perverted “power of performance” and the principle of “production,” but the Kingdom of God is to be a manifestation of a different reality. While retaining the Godly values of production, it is primarily based upon authentic relationship and fellowship with God and one another manifested by a willingness to lay down our lives in sacrificial service to both.

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Matthew 10:40-42 <sup>(40)</sup> “He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me. <sup>(41)</sup>He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet’s reward. And he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man’s reward. <sup>(42)</sup>And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward.”

In returning to the scripture of Matthew 10:40-42, Jesus is demonstrating that there is a reward resident within each person that we may share in or receive for ourselves, but we will only receive the heavenly reward as we appropriately receive the person or earthen vessel of that reward. God has created His Kingdom to function primarily relationally, not necessarily positionally; although there is no doubt that there are positions of authority and function within the Body of Christ, as I have mentioned earlier. As the Gospel of the Kingdom of God is functionally restored to the Church, then this aspect of Kingdom Life shall be increasingly displayed and demonstrated as the “Word of God” becomes flesh and dwells among us... we shall behold His glory.

Discerning if you are being received after the manner of the spirit or simply after the cultural courtesies and appearance of the flesh will guard the investment of God within each of His people. Matthew 10:40-42 is a principle of the Kingdom of God which is most often contrary to the political tendencies and various cultures of men. Receiving and honoring one another in love is a primary distinction and attribute between those who are seeking first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness after the manner of the Holy Spirit, and those who are not. Woundedness and suspicion hinder many carnal believers from entering into this aspect of Kingdom lifestyle. As a result, the flow of the Holy Spirit and the “Life of Christ Jesus” resident in each one is severed or stopped between the various members. The idea that one can live his life outside of an authentic, organically inter-related community of other believers and disciples is unfounded by the scriptures. Separation and isolation are hallmarks of the enemy of our souls and our sensual, fleshly nature. As we grow and mature in our spirit we become increasingly inter-dependant with those with whom the Holy Spirit has assembled us.

Ephesians 4:16 “from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does it’s share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.”

When there is true, “authentic” connection or reception of one another in the spirit then there will be a “transfer” of the “Life of Christ Jesus” between the members of the Body of Christ. This will result in mutually reciprocating edification and growth of the Body as each part supplies that which is lacking in the other. If the receiving of one another after the Spirit (spirit) is severed in any manner or for any reason, then the flow of the “life” of Jesus Christ between them will cease and our fellowship with God will be hindered to one degree or another. In the bylaws and constitution of the Kingdom of God which Jesus laid out in the Sermon on the Mount, the idea of a reconciled lifestyle between the redeemed members of a community of the Kingdom is conveyed in a number of different scriptures. In Matthew 5:23-24 Jesus admonishes the reconciled lifestyle as a necessary prerequisite to acceptable fellowship, worship and bringing of our offerings to the Father. Peter later reveals how this principle law of the Kingdom affects the marriages of the Kingdom.

1 Peter 3:7 “Husbands, likewise, dwell with them (your wives) with understanding, giving honor to them as the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, **that your prayers may not be hindered.**”

## **YOUR POSITIONAL PLACEMENT AND THE REWARD WITHIN YOU**

If a disciple knows his functional, positional placement within the Body of Christ and the reward of the “Life of Christ” within him, he can determine if he is being received by another believer after the spirit when there is an exchange between them, and he is able to witness that the other person demonstrates the “reward” in their own life. This may take some time and is greatly dependant upon the quality of the time spent together in fellowship. Mutually reciprocating submission and equality will greatly enhance and facilitate this exchange of Christ’s life between members of His Body.

**Knowing who you are in Christ is an important aspect of “discerning the Body of Christ” and growing in healthy holiness and wholeness.**

Knowing who you are in Christ is an important aspect of “discerning the Body of Christ” and growing in healthy holiness and wholeness. It is also a guard against various perversions and distortions so prevalent in human nature such as pride, self-determination, pre-eminence of others, false humility and a wide array of other ungodly attitudes and actions. If a person is unable to accurately discern who they are “in Christ,” it is unlikely that they will be able to discern others and how they are “fitted together” for mutual edification and growth. The result is an “Orphan Spirit” that lacks a sense of identification, impartation and affirmation. It is a parent’s responsibility to provide these things for their children, either in the natural or in the spirit.

2 Peter 1:10-11 <sup>(10)</sup>“Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your calling and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble, <sup>(11)</sup>for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

Having an experiential, practicing knowledge of your placement and the reward that is within in you in Christ will guard your heart from deception and discouragement while greatly enhancing your fruitfulness in the Body of Christ and personal experience and expression of the

Kingdom of God. For one reason, knowing your functional place in the Body of Christ will aid in restraining you from pursuing agendas and arenas of activity that the Holy Spirit has not called or anointed you to engage in. Misplaced efforts or trying to be something God has not made you to be will be frustrating and unfruitful in your pursuit of the Kingdom of God. Years and whole seasons of our lives can be virtually exhausted in unfruitful pursuit of realms of activity, due to the lack of being adequately recognized and established in our calling and election in Christ by nurturing, affirming “spiritual parents,” family members and spiritual siblings.

Discerning the “realm of relational responsibility” in the Holy Spirit will result in producing a peace within our souls unlike any placebo of religious activity. The parental admonition not to think more highly of yourself than you ought, speaks directly to this issue. Recognizing the reward of Christ’s life within us individually will greatly aid in determining the where and how and when we function in the gifts and ministries of the Holy Spirit. There is a measure of grace and faith given to each believer, and when we operate to the full extent of what God has created us for, the joy and celebration of Christ will be resident and displayed in our lives.

Romans 12:3-8 <sup>(3)</sup>“For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. <sup>(4)</sup>For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, <sup>(5)</sup>so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. <sup>(6)</sup>Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; <sup>(7)</sup>or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; <sup>(8)</sup>he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.”



So much more could and possibly should be written about this particular aspect of our Christian life and fellowship, but not in this volume. Please seek the Holy Spirit to lead you into “all truth” including the truth of this feature.

**Chapter Thirty-Nine Study Notes:**

1) What does it mean to “discern the Body of Christ” among its various members?

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2) When Jesus walked the earth people wanted the \_\_\_\_\_ of being with Him without coming under the Lordship. This is sadly true today,

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3) Define the “power of performance.” \_\_\_\_\_

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4) “He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a \_\_\_\_\_.” Matthew 10:41

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5) We must learn to respect and receive one another in the Body of Christ after the \_\_\_\_\_ and not after the \_\_\_\_\_.

6) When there is true “authentic” connection or reception of one another in the spirit, then there will be a transfer of the “\_\_\_\_\_” between the members of the Body of Christ.

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# Appendix

## **ONE POTENTIAL DANGER OF “PERSONAL PROPHECY”**

When people are unable to discern the will of God for themselves they often consult someone they consider to be a prophet, or at the very least “prophetic,” seeking a “word from the Lord.” For many reasons this is an extremely dangerous posture of the heart and practice of faith. Often the person they may consider to be a prophet, who is operating in this fashion, is no more than a shaman or witch doctor. Another may give “a word” to draw people to himself or herself in order to develop a following or make a name for himself. Such a practice is totally foreign to the spirit and the teaching of the New Testament. There is no example recorded to validate such a practice. New Testament prophecy is primarily conformational in nature, not directional, although directional prophecy is not unprecedented. Such a practice promotes the unscriptural clergy domination and class distinction over the laity or ordinary people, and Jesus hates it. Great care must be taken to guard against the false comfort and reliance upon others to acquire what God desires to provide directly to each believer. This is not to discount the benefit of receiving a “confirming word” from others in the body of Christ, but this is better suited from the fellowship and community among whom the Holy Spirit has set the disciple.

When a believer is in a place where he cannot hear directly from God himself, there is something wrong with that believer’s life, or perhaps the Lord is trying to instruct him in a new and precious way. There are many reasons for not being able to hear from God for a season, but we should not replace our direct communion and fellowship with God with seeking for a “prophetic word” from someone we consider to be a prophet on an ongoing basis. We should be training and equipping disciples to hear and speak the Word of the Lord for themselves and to trust and obey the Word of God, the Bible in the practical daily experience.

There is a balance that must be sustained in this arena to guard against an independent, “Lone Ranger,” self-sufficient, self-contained attitude of heart that says, “I get everything directly from God. I have no need that any man should instruct me.” This is an equally inappropriate posture of the heart and is usually the result of pride and self-reliance. Inter-dependence of mutually reciprocating submission and equality is a healthy reproducible model of Christian fellowship that can be multiplied in any culture or society on the earth, and results in wholeness of community, healing of soul and strength of spirit.

## THE PREVELANCE OF SUPERNATURAL ENCOUNTERS

As we open each of the Gospel accounts in the New Testament we are confronted with individuals who experienced supernatural encounters of one type or another. The most prevalent encounters were those of angels, dreams or direct vocal communication with God. The following is only a partial list, taken from only two of the gospel records.

Mt 1:2	Angel/dream	Joseph	Instruction to wed Mary
Mt 2:12	Warning/dream	Wisemen	Instruction to Wisemen
Mt 2:13	Angel/dream	Joseph	Instruction to go to Egypt
Mt 2:19	Angel/dream	Joseph	Instruction return
Mt 2:22	God/dream	Joseph	Warned, went to Galilee
Mt 3:17	Voice from heaven	John/Jesus	Affirmation of Jesus
Mt 4	The devil/serpent	Jesus	Dialog with supernatural
Mt 4:11	Angels	Jesus	Minister to His needs
Lk 1:11	Angel/appeared	Zacharias	Dialog/prophecy
Lk 1:26	Angel/Gabriel	Mary	God sent to instruct her
Lk 1:42-45	Elizabeth prophesies	Mary	Affirming her obedience
Lk 1:46-55	Mary prophesies	Elizabeth	Regarding her condition
Lk 1:67-79	Zacharias prophesies	Crowd	Destiny of his son John
Lk 2:9-12	Angels appeared	Shepherds	Announcing birth of Jesus
Lk 2:13	Multitude of angels	Shepherds	Praising God
Lk 2:25-35	Simeon, led by Spirit	Mary/Joseph	Propheying destiny
Lk 3:22	Holy Spirit/bodily	Jesus	Affirming as Messiah
Lk 3:22	Voice from heaven	Jesus	Affirming as God's Son

There are so many more examples that could be provided; the miracles, signs, wonders and manifestations of supernatural encounters continued throughout the Gospels and the remaining books of the New Testament. It is impossible to imagine what would happen to the overall theme and impact of the New Testament if all elements of supernatural encounters were to be removed from the historical record. And yet, the vast majority of Christendom live out their lives oblivious to the fact that their faith originated as perhaps the most supernatural and mystical faith on the globe in the history of humanity. The same can be said of Christianity today, if it is lived out in a similar fashion as that written of in the New Testament; there is no other religious faith structure on the planet that has such a potential of being lived out experientially with supernatural, mystical encounters as does authentic Biblical Christianity. At this moment in history, from one generation to another, a passionate desire and expectation of encountering the Holy Spirit is increasing within the heart of God's people. Multiplied thousands upon thousands of disciples are aggressively pursuing the Kingdom of God in this hour with all of their strength. God is faithfully rewarding them.

**...the vast majority of Christendom live out their lives oblivious to the fact that their faith originated as perhaps the most supernatural and mystical faith on the globe in the history of humanity.**

Hebrews 11:6 "But without faith it impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is the rewarder on those who diligently seek Him."

Proverbs 8:17 "I love those who love me, and those who seek me diligently will find me."

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## PHILIP'S PREACHING

Although no record is provided of the content of Philip's preaching or teaching in Acts chapter 8, there is an interesting article that can be seen. Clearly, water baptism was a significant aspect and important focus of his preaching, seen in verse 12-13 recording the baptism of the Samaritans. It is noteworthy that it was recorded that both men and women were baptized, indicating an equality, of sorts, at this point in the Church's history. While no sample of Philip's teaching on water baptism is offered for us to examine, the act of obedience in following our Lord's example and being identified with Christ Jesus, the Messiah, are provided; indicating that something must have been said about water baptism during the preaching of the gospel of the Kingdom of God and Jesus of Nazareth. In Acts 8:36 the text indicates an insistence on the part of the Ethiopian eunuch to be baptized in water, even if it meant doing so in an undignified puddle/pond on the side of the road. This is made the more significant by the explanation that the area was "desert" only a few verses earlier.

Another interesting note is that both men had been in Jerusalem, prior to this divinely orchestrated encounter out in some desolate tract of land. Why hadn't the Lord brought them together within the city? Why take them both out of the city? Is it possible that the cultural differences that separated them in their "normal" environments within the city would have been difficult to negotiate? Perhaps, while out on the desert road, away from the view of others, the potential for interaction was more feasible?

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## 10 POINT PRAYER FOCUS FOR REVIVAL AND SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

While reading *“The Church Triumphant At The End Of The Age”* by Nate Krupp in 1988, I was challenged by the prospect of the promises of God’s Word for revival, restoration, unity, world evangelization and persecution. Among the wealth of historical information and current global statistics I found two lists composed by two respected men of God of recent history: one a Methodist leader, Dr. A. Skevington Wood, and the other a Baptist leader, Charles Spurgeon. Inspired by these two lists I developed a single list of 10 points, which became a foundation for a booklet entitled, *“The Pearl of Revival,”* published in 1989. Since then I have used this same list in many different formats.

As you read through, meditate and pray, I hope that you will recognize that praying for revival within your life and the Church in your community, and for spiritual awakening among the multitudes lost without hope in Christ, is both a privilege and a responsibility uniquely available to the disciples of Jesus Christ. No one else on the face of the earth has such an awesome opportunity to impact the destiny of mankind in this hour as you do, as you unite your heart together with others in fervent, concerted prayer for revival and spiritual awakening.

### **Point 1**

#### **An intensified awareness of God’s manifest (near) presence in your daily life.**

Exodus 33:13-18 “Now therefore, I pray, if I have found grace in Your sight, show me now Your way that I might know You and that I might find grace in Your sight.’ And He (God) said, ‘My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.’ Then he said to Him, ‘If Your Presence does not go with us, do not take us up from here. For how then will it be known that Your people and I have found grace in Your sight, except You go with us? So we shall be separate, Your people and I, from all the people who are upon the face of the earth.’ So the Lord said to Moses, ‘I will also do this thing that you have spoken; for you have found grace in my sight, and I know you by name.’ And he (Moses) said, ‘Please, show me Your glory.’”

Deuteronomy 4:29 “But from there you will seek the Lord your God, and you will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul.”

Job 42:5-6 “I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You. Therefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes.”

Proverbs 3:6 “In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.”

Psalms 84:1-2 “How lovely is Your tabernacle, O LORD of hosts! My soul longs for, yes, even faints for the courts of the Lord; my heart and soul cry out for the living God.”

Isaiah 26:7-9 “The way of the just is uprightness; O Most Upright! You weigh the path of the just. Yes, in the ways of Your judgments, O LORD we have waited for You; the desire of our soul is for Your name and for the remembrance of You. With my soul I have desired You in the night, yes, by my spirit within me I will seek You early; for when Your judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.”

Jeremiah 29:11-13 “For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.”

Hosea 6:1-3 “Come and let us return to the Lord; for He has torn, but He will heal us; He has stricken, but He will bind us up. After two days He will revive us; on the third day He will raise us up, that we may live in His sight. Let us know, let us pursue the knowledge of the Lord. (“Let us press on to acknowledge Him.” [NIV]) His going forth is established as the morning: He will come to us like the rain, like the latter and former rain to the earth.”

Matthew 5:8 “Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God.”

Hebrews 11:6 “But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is the rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”

## **Point 2**

**An acute sensitivity towards sin, (a pre-emptive, preventive sensitivity) in your own life and in the community... a Holy Spirit revelation and redefinition of what constitutes ‘sin.’**

John 16:7-11 “Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but, if I depart, I will send Him to you. And when He has come He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in Me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.”

Acts 17:29-31 “Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man’s devising. Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.”

1Peter 4:1-3 “Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the lust of men, but for the will of God. For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the gentiles, when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries.”

1Peter 4:17-18 “For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God. Now, ‘If the righteous one is scarcely saved, where will the ungodly and the sinner appear.’”

1John 1:8-10 “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His Word is not in us.”

Psalms 101:1-3 “I will sing of mercy and justice; to You, O LORD, I will sing praises. I will behave wisely in a perfect way. Oh, when will You come to me? I will walk within my house with a perfect heart. I will set nothing wicked before my eyes; I hate the work of those who fall away; it shall not cling to me.”

Ephesians 4:29-30 “Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it might impart grace to the hearers. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.”

James 4:11 “Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.”

### **Point 3**

**A jealous concern for the truth of God’s Word (the Bible) and the display, declaration and demonstration of the gospel of the Kingdom of God in an accurate, adequate and appropriate manner.**

Psalms 119:9-16 “How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed to Your Word. With my whole heart I have sought You; oh, let me not wander from Your commandments! Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You. Blessed are You, O LORD! Teach me Your statutes. With my lips I have declared all the judgments of Your mouth. I have rejoiced in the way of Your testimonies, as much as in all riches. I will meditate on Your precepts, and contemplate Your ways.”

Psalms 119:36-38 “Incline my heart To Your testimonies, and not to covetousness. Turn away my eyes from looking at worthless things, and revive me in Your way. Establish Your Word to Your servant, who is devoted to fearing You.”

Psalms 119:133, 136, 139 “Direct my steps by Your Word, and let no iniquity have dominion over me.” “Rivers of water run down from my eyes, because men do not keep Your laws.” “My zeal has consumed me, because my enemies have forgotten Your words.”

Psalms 119:106-107 “I have sworn and confirmed that I will keep Your righteous judgments. I am afflicted very much; revive me, O LORD, according to Your Word.

Psalms 119:111-112 “Your testimonies I have taken as a heritage forever, for they are the rejoicing of my heart. I have inclined my heart to perform Your statutes forever, to the very end.”

Psalms 119:126-128 “It is time for You to act, O LORD, for they have regarded Your law as void. Therefore I love Your commandments more than gold, yes, than fine gold! Therefore all Your precepts concerning all things I consider to be right; I hate every false way.”

1 Timothy 6:3-5 “If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. From such withdraw yourself.”

2 Timothy 2:15 “Remind them of these things, charging them before the Lord not to strive about words to no profit, to the ruin of the hearers. Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth.”

2 Timothy 3:16-17 “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for

doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

#### **Point 4**

**An eagerness to hear and read the Word of God (the Bible) and to hear and speak about the ‘things of the Holy Spirit’ and our Lord... a desperate, determined desire for and dependence upon the Word of God.**

Job 23:12 “I have not departed from the commandment of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food.”

Psalms 119:25 “My soul clings to the dust; revive me according to Your Word.”

Psalms 119:105-107 “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. I have sworn and confirmed that I will keep Your righteous judgments. I am afflicted very much; revive me, O LORD, according to all Your Word.”

Psalms 119:130-131 “The entrance of Your Word gives light; it gives understanding to the simple. I opened my mouth and panted, for I longed for Your commandments.”

Psalms 119:161 “Princes persecute me without a cause, but my heart stands in awe of Your Word.”

Psalms 119:165-169 “Great peace have those who love Your law, and nothing causes them to stumble. LORD, I hope in Your salvation, and I do Your commandments. My soul keeps Your testimonies, and I love them exceedingly. I keep Your precepts and Your testimonies, for all my ways are before You.”

Isaiah 66:2 “‘For all those things My hand has made, and all those things exist,’ Says the LORD. ‘But on this one will I look: on him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word’”

Mark 4:24-25 “Then He said to them, ‘Take heed what you hear. With the same measure you use it will be measured to you; and to you who hear, more will be given. For whoever has, to him more will be given; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him.’”

Luke 8:16-18 “No one, when he has lit a lamp, covers it with a vessel or puts it under a bed, but sets it on a lampstand, that those who enter may see the light. For nothing is secret that will not be revealed, nor anything hidden that will not be known and come to light. Therefore take heed how you hear. For whoever has, to him more will be given; and whoever does not have, even what he seems to have will be taken from him.”

John 8:31-32 “ Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, ‘If you abide in My Word, you are my disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.’”

Romans 10:17 “So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.”

#### **Point 5**

**An absorbing concern, concentration and commitment to intercessory prayer, praise, worship and fasting.**



Psalms 5:1-3 “Give ear to my words, O LORD; consider my meditation. Give heed to the voice of my cry, my King and my God, for to You will I pray, My voice You shall hear in the morning, O LORD; in the morning I will direct it to You, and I will look up.”

Psalms 119:147-149 “I rise before the dawning of the morning, and cry for help; I hope in Your Word. My eyes are awake through the night watches, that I may meditate on Your Word. Hear my voice according to Your loving kindness; O LORD, revive me according to Your justice.”

Ezekiel 22:30 “So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it, but I found no one.”

Matthew 26:40-41 “Then He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, ‘What? Could you not watch with Me one hour? Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.’”

Luke 18:1 “Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart.”

Luke 22:40, 46 “When He came to the place, He said to them, ‘Pray that you may not enter into temptation.’...Then He said to them, ‘Why do you sleep? Rise and pray, lest you enter into temptation.’”

Romans 8:15 “For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, ‘Abba, Father.’”

Romans 8:26-27 “Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.”

Ephesians 6:18 “Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints...”

1Timothy 2:1-2 “Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.”

1Peter 4:7 “But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers.”

Jude 20 “But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.”

## **Point 6**

**An enhanced standard of conduct and holiness in your own life and in the Church throughout the community.**

Romans 6:19, 22 “I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for

holiness.” “But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life.”

2Corinthians 7:1 “Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”

Ephesians 4:17-20 “This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; who, being past feeling have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. But you have not so learned Christ...” (Also read v. 21-32)

Ephesians 5:1-5 “Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. And walk in love, as Christ also has given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling aroma. But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and God.” (Also read v. 6-21)

Colossians 3:5-9 “Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them. But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds.” (Read also v. 10-17)

2Thessalonians 3:5 “Now may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ.”

Hebrews 12:10, 14 “For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness.” “Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord.”

James 1:19-22 “So then my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God. Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.”

1Peter 1:15-16 “But as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, for it is written, ‘Be holy, for I am holy.’”

### **Point 7**

#### **A strengthening discernment of, concern for and loyalty towards the blood-bought Church of our Lord Jesus Christ among all its members.**

Mark 9:38-40 “Now John answered Him, saying, “Teacher, we saw someone who does not follow us casting out demons in Your name, and we forbade him because he does not follow us. But Jesus said, “Do not forbid him, for no one who works a miracle in My name can soon afterward speak evil of Me. For he who is not against us is on our side.”

John 13:34-35 “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples.”

John 17:20-22 “I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word, that they all may be one, as You Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.”

Romans 12:4-5 “For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.”

Romans 12:9-10 “Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another.”

Hebrews 10:24-25 “And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another as you see the Day approaching.”

1Peter 4:8-9 “And above all things have fervent love for one another, for ‘love will cover a multitude of sins.’ Be hospitable to one another without grumbling.”

1Corinthians 12:12-14 “For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body – whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free – and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. For in fact the body is not one member but many.”

Galatians 3:26-28 “For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

1Peter 4:10 “As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.”

### **Point 8**

**A growing realization and manifestation of unity in the purpose and motive of heart among Christians in the community; (PURPOSE: To bring Him pleasure, MOTIVE: For His great name’s sake.)**

Psalms 147:11 “The Lord takes pleasure (delights) in those who fear Him, in those who hope in His mercy.”

Romans 15:1-6 “We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples (weaknesses) of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, leading to edification. For even Christ did not please Himself, but as it is written, ‘The reproaches of those who reproached You fell on Me.’ For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope. Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus, that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Galatians 5:25-26 “If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.”

Philippians 2:1-4 “Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.”

Revelation 4:11 (KJV) “Thou art worthy, O LORD, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.”

Psalms 133:1 “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!”

Romans 12:2 “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”

Colossians 1:17-18 “And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things he may have the preeminence.”

2Timothy 2:19-21 “Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: ‘The Lord knows those who are His,’ and ‘Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.’ But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor. Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work.”

### **Point 9**

**An increased zeal to express (present), extend (penetrate), expand (permeate) and establish (perpetuate) the kingdom of God through the evangelization and discipleship of a lost and dying Christ-rejecting world.**

Psalms 119:136 “Rivers of water run down from my eyes, because men do not keep your law.”

Matthew 28:18-20 “And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’ Amen.”

Mark 16:15-18 “And He said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. And these signs shall follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.’”

Matthew 6:9-10 “‘In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your Kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.’”

Matthew 6:33 “But seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”

Matthew 24:14 “And this gospel of the Kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all nations, and then the end will come.”

Romans 14:16-17 “Therefore do not let your good be spoken of as evil; for the Kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.”

Acts 1:8 “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

Colossians 1:13-14 “He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.”

2Timothy 2:1-2 “You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that You have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.”

#### **Point 10**

##### **A passion for social justice based upon the Word of God.**

Psalms 72:12-14 “For He will deliver the needy when he cries, the poor also, and him who has no helper. He will spare the poor and the needy, and will save the souls of the needy. He will redeem their life from oppression and violence; and precious shall be their blood in his sight.”

Psalms 94:16 “Who will rise up for me against the evildoers? Who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity?”

Psalms 103:6-10 “The Lord executes righteousness and justice for all who are oppressed. He made known His ways to Moses, His acts to the children of Israel. The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in mercy. He will not always strive with us. He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor punished us according to our iniquities.”

Psalms 94:20-21 “Shall the throne of iniquity, which devises evil by law, have fellowship with You? They gather together against the life of the righteous, and condemn innocent blood.”

Psalms 119:126 “It is time for You to act O LORD, for they have regarded Your law as void.”

Psalms 119:136 “Rivers of water run down from my eyes, because men do not keep Your laws.”

Psalms 118:139 “My zeal has consumed me, because my enemies have forgotten Your words.”

James 1:27 “Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.”

Psalms 139:19-22 “Oh, that You would slay the wicked, O God! Depart from me, therefore, you bloodthirsty men. For they speak against You wickedly; Your enemies take Your name in vain. Do I not hate them, O LORD, who hate You? And do I not

loathe those who rise up against You? I hate them with a perfect hatred; I count them my enemies.”

Psalm 145:5-9 “I will meditate on the glorious splendor of Your majesty, and on Your wondrous works. Men shall speak of the might of Your awesome acts, and I will declare Your greatness. They shall utter the memory of You great goodness, and shall sing of Your righteousness. The Lord is gracious and full of compassion, slow to and great in mercy. The Lord is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works.”

Galatians 6:7-10 “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.”

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## ONE ANOTHER

The following scriptures from the New Testament speak to the issue of mutual reciprocating submission and equality of Christians living in organic community with “one another.”

1. Mark 9:49-50 “For everyone will be seasoned with fire, and every sacrifice will be seasoned with salt. Salt is good, but if the salt loses its flavor, how will you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace with **one another**.”
2. John 13:14 “If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash **one another’s** feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.”
3. John 13:34-35 “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for **one another**.”
4. John 15:12, 17 “This is My commandment, that you love **one another** as I have loved you.” “These things I command you, that you love one another.”
5. Romans 12:3-5 “For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of **one another**.”
6. Romans 12:9-12 “Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to **one another**; not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfast in prayer...”
7. Romans 12:15-16 “Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. Be of the same mind toward **one another**. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion.”
8. Romans 13:8 Owe no man anything except to love **one another**, for he who loves another has fulfilled the Law.”
9. Romans 14:13 “Therefore let us not judge **one another** anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother’s way.”
10. Romans 15:5-7 “Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like minded toward **one another**, according to Christ Jesus, that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore receive **one another**, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God.”
11. Romans 15:14 “Now I myself am confident concerning you, my brethren, that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish **one another**.”
12. Romans 16:16 “Greet **one another** with a holy kiss. The churches of Christ greet you.”
13. 1Corinthians 11:27-29, 33 “Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and the blood of the

Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. Therefore, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for **one another**."

14. 1Corinthians 12:24(b)-27 "But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that part which lacks it, that there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care for **one another**. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually."
15. Galatians 5:13-14 "For you, brethren, have been called in liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve **one another**. For all of the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: 'You shall love you neighbor as yourself.'"
16. Galatians 6:1-2 "Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. Bear **one another's** burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."
17. Ephesians 4:31-32 "Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to **one another**, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you."
18. Ephesians 5:18-21 "And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to **one another** in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to **one another** in the fear of God."
19. Colossians 3:12-13 "Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with **one another**, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do."
20. 1Thessalonians 3:12-13 "And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to **one another** and to all, just as we do to you, so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints."
21. 1Thessalonians 4:16-18 "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort **one another** with these words."
22. 1Thessalonians 5: 9-11 "For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him. Therefore comfort **each other** and edify **one another**, just as you are also doing."
23. 1Thessalonians 5:15 "Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always try to be kind to **each other** and to everyone else." (NIV)



24. Hebrews 10:23-25 “Let us hold fast the confession of our faith, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider **one another** in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.”
25. James 4:11-12 “Do not speak evil of one another, brethren. He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and destroy. Who are you to judge another?”
26. James 5:16 “Confess your trespasses to **one another**, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.”
27. 1Peter 4:8-9 “And above all things have fervent love for **one another**, for ‘love will cover a multitude of sins.’ Be hospitable to one another without grumbling.”
28. 1Peter 4:10 “As each one has received a gift, minister it to **one another**, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.”
29. 1Peter 5:5 “Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to **one another**, and be clothed in humility, for ‘God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.’ Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time.”
30. 1John 1:5-7 “This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with **one another**. And the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.”

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## UNRAVELING DEJA VU

Déjà vu [French, adjective, already seen]: the feeling that one has seen or heard something before (Merriam Webster Dictionary). The sense that one has been somewhere that they have never been, or experienced something they have never experienced.

Psalms 139: 16 “Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them.”

The whole arena of thought regarding time, pre-destination, destiny, God’s sovereignty and man’s freewill can mire down into meaningless discussion that actually serves no purpose, but simply results in hindering our enjoyment and fellowship with and in the Holy Spirit. While all these issues, and so many more, are worthy of serious and extensive study and dialog, we must be leery of becoming bogged down in the mire of unanswerable debate and questions which ultimately foster unbelief and disunity. Jesus assures us that the Holy Spirit will lead us into all truth (John 16:13), and that there is much to learn that remains “closed-up and sealed” in the Holy Spirit (Daniel 12:9-10) until the Lord chooses to open our understanding, that we might comprehend the Scriptures (Luke 24:45).

All that having been said, one day I asked Holy Spirit about this sensation which in the French language is called “déjà vu.” I had experienced many occasions where I thought I had seen something before, heard something or met someone before, or even been to a particular place before. Usually I simply credited such sensations to coincidence or my imagination. But, I began to travel overseas to environments, cities or villages that I knew I had never been to or seen photographs of, and to people whom I had never met, eating and smelling foods that I had never imagined, while listening to languages, sounds and music the likes of which I absolutely knew there was no chance that I could have ever encountered before. And yet again and again, over the years, I would experience that familiar feeling or sense of having been somewhere or met someone or heard something before. At times the sensation would be bizarre when I would be in a remote mountain village; for example showing the “JESUS” film with a generator. Suddenly I would strongly sense that I have been there before. I would know how the evening would proceed and what to expect during the altar services following the presentation of the movie.

I would lay hands on people whom I had never met in cities, villages and countries where I had never been, and something would startle me with a sense of déjà vu. I would know exactly what was going to transpire for the next few moments and it would happen just as I remembered it, but there was no authentic memory to draw upon. Sometimes the sensation is a very brief event, at other times it may remain for several moments or even minutes. At times I have experienced this sensation so seamlessly occurring in my conscious awareness over extended periods of time, even days, that I have labeled such times as “streaming déjà vu.”

As the frequency of these events increased I became concerned enough to inquire of the Lord about them. “What is this Lord?” “What’s happening here?” “What are these déjà vu experiences all about?” I wondered if they were some form of “word of knowledge” or “word of wisdom” or prophetic insight as mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12.

One morning, during my prayer time, our heavenly Father simply explained, “My son, I know how careful you have become in your efforts to hear and obey My voice. In these circumstances where you are experiencing déjà vu, I want you to be assured that I have gone before you to prepare the way and that the things you are doing, saying, seeing were actually established before time began and were written down in My book before even one of them came into being. I love you. I am watching over My word in you and through you to perform it for My great name’s sake.”

Today, my wife and I have become very sensitive to the déjà vu experiences in our lives. We are alert to watch for them, especially when we are in environments and doing those things that we know we have not done before. We often find the Holy Spirit moving in this fashion while we are engaged in the “mundane” and ordinary activities of our day, and not only when we are occupied with “spiritual” behavior or ministry.

When we are walking in “team” with others we endeavor to increase their awareness in order to cultivate and nurture in them such sensations, that they would share such experiences openly with the other team members if they occur. There is such an encouragement of God confirming His word and His will in a circumstance, especially if more than one person has a déjà vu of a particular item or event.

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### **FINAL THOUGHT**

**God is so awesomely, passionately in love with us!**

