

The City Will Be Built

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Revelation 21:9b-11a

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We were prompted to consider writing this manual by our brother from Colombia who is resident in Australia, being trained in apostolic doctrine and ministry. Most of the sessions have been adapted from newsletters that have gone out over the last two years. It always amazes us how the Holy Spirit leads and enables. The city will be built! This is the key revelation that undergirds all of the teaching in this manual.

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REVIVAL MINISTRIES AUSTRALIA

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Who is Jesus? Messiah (Christ) and the Son of God, Matt.16:16, 1Tim.3:16

The restoration of the five-fold ministry, Eph.4:11

Receiving again grace and apostleship, Rom.1:5

Making known the revelation of the mystery, Eph.3:2-11

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All Scripture quotations are from New King James Version unless otherwise annotated. Occasionally an English word in *italics* is left out of the quotation. This is because the words in *italics* have been added by the translators and do not appear in the Hebrew and Greek manuscripts. Sometimes I have changed **LORD** in Old Testament quotes to **YAHWEH**, which is an attempt to translate the Hebrew revealed name of God.

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JESUS AND THE BRIDE

Are you in love with Jesus?

In his first letter Peter is writing to *“the pilgrims of the Dispersion ... elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ” 1Pet.1:1-2*. Peter is not writing only to ‘babes’ but to a body of believers. And yet he addresses them as *“newborn babes”* and tells them to *“desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby” (2:2)*.

Paul reminds us that we have been *“betrothed to one husband”* to be presented *“a chaste virgin to Christ”*; he warns us against the serpent deceiving us so that our *“minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ” 2Cor.11:3*.

While milk is for babes and the writer to the **Hebrews** is chastising them because they *“have come to need milk and not solid food” (5:12)*, there is a reality wherein all of us need to regain or stay focused in *first love (Rev.2:4)*. We need to come back to a simple appreciation of Jesus, the Saviour of us, our Redeemer and fall in love with Him over and over again.

God told Jeremiah to call out to Him because God wanted to reveal to Jeremiah His heart for the restoration of His people, who would become His bride.

Call unto Me

God said to Jeremiah when he was still in the court of the prison, *“Call to me, and I will answer you and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know” Jer.33:3*. The word ‘call’ is a strong Hebrew word meaning *‘to call out to someone, cry out, to address someone, to shout, to speak out, to proclaim’*. The word ‘mighty’ can also mean *‘inaccessible’*. What God wants us to know can only be known if He reveals it to us. The LORD [I AM] then tells Jeremiah some awesome things that He promises to do (**v4-16**) for *“the house of Israel and to the house of Judah” (v14)*.

An abundance of truth

God told Jeremiah that the same houses *“of the kings of Judah, which have been pulled down to fortify against the siege mounds and the sword”* will be rebuilt (**v4,5,7**). He promised *“health and healing”*. He said *“I will heal them and reveal to them the abundance of peace and truth” (v6)*.

To be found faithful

In the ongoing prayer meetings at SHILOH recently, two powerful words of wisdom have been released to us. The first one was **‘God is not looking for successful ministers, but for faithful ministers’**. We have studied the Scriptures concerning being faithful and faithfulness. In **John 17:4**, Jesus said to His Father, *“I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.”* Jesus is referring to His apostolic ministry in founding the church by appointing and raising the twelve apostles and even then, He acknowledges that one of the twelve was the son of perdition. Jesus was faithful to only do what His Father told Him to do; He *“was faithful to Him who appointed Him” Heb.3:2*. Paul tells us, *“Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful” (1Cor.4:2)*.

Speaking the truth in love

The second word of wisdom was ‘it is not enough to trust in relationships; there is a need for honesty’. There has been much emphasis on relationship in the apostolic restoration but sometimes at the expense of *“speaking the truth in love” (Eph.4:15)*. This is the only

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way that we can ***“grow up in all things into Him who is the head – Christ.”*** The failure to speak the truth eventually leads to a failure in relationship! God promised to **reveal an abundance of peace.**

Remission of sin – the basis of restoration

God promised Jeremiah that there would be **restoration**: ***“The captives of Judah and the captives of Israel”*** will return and will rebuild (Jer.33:7).

Restoration can only take place when the people of God have **fully returned to the LORD**. Repentance leads to forgiveness and God said, ***“I will cleanse them from all their iniquity by which they have sinned against Me, and I will pardon all their iniquities by which they have sinned and by which they have transgressed against Me”*** (v8).

A restored people will be to the Lord Jesus ***“a name of joy, a praise, and an honour before all nations of the earth, who shall hear all the good that I do to them [the people of God]”*** (v9).

God is raising a people, albeit a remnant, who will manifest ***“the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory”*** Col.1:27.

The fruit of restoration

“There shall be heard in this place the voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride” (Jer.33:10-11). God’s eternal purpose is guaranteed to be fulfilled: He has already ***“accomplished His eternal purpose in Christ Jesus our Lord”*** (Eph.3:11). There will be a perfect church manifest in the earth!

“The whole creation groans and labours with birth pangs together until now, eagerly waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God” Rom.8:22,19.

Jesus Himself is ***“sanctifying and cleansing the church with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish”*** (Eph.5:26-27).

Preparing the Bride

The message of the bride church being prepared in the earth is slowly permeating our spiritual consciousness! The **voice of the bridegroom is being heard!** The **bride is making herself ready.**

The bride/bridegroom relationship obviously speaks of great intimacy. We need to hear the ***“still small voice”*** (1Ki.19:12). We need to be sensitive to His approach and not say ***“I have taken off my robe; how can I put it on again”*** (Song of Sol.5:3).

We need to be found among the five wise virgins (Matt.25:1-13), prepared and ready for the coming of the Bridegroom. The key to wisdom for the five wise virgins was to have prepared sufficient oil. Oil speaks of the anointing of the Holy Spirit; it speaks of a close relationship with Jesus as we await His coming.

True shepherds

The promise to Jeremiah that guarantees our inclusion in this bride church is that ***“there shall again be a dwelling place of shepherds causing flocks to lie down. The flocks shall pass under the hand of him who counts”*** Jer.33:12b&13b.

It is as we find ourselves in committed relationships in the body of Christ, in the apostolic company where the Lord has placed us, that we will access this intimacy with Jesus. Again in our day, God is raising shepherds after His own heart. He is giving ***“shepherds according to My heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding, says the LORD”*** Jer.3:15.

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The King is given a name

The culmination of God's promise to Jeremiah, for the remnant that is being restored, comes in **33:15-16**. In **Jeremiah 23:5-6**, God has already promised to raise to David "*a Branch of righteousness: a King shall reign and prosper ... In His days Judah will be saved and Israel will dwell safely. Now this is the name by which He will be called: YHWH Tsidkenu – the LORD our righteousness.*" This can be none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the LORD our righteousness.

The Church is given the same name

In **Jeremiah 33**, verse **15** repeats **Jeremiah 23:5**, but then in **verse 16**, it is the bride who is given the same name: "*She will be called YHWH Tsidkenu*".

The church [the bride] is to be called **YHWH Tsidkenu**.

The church [the bride] is predestined to take the Bridegroom's name!! How awesome is that!

Jesus is preparing His bride. Are you being prepared?

How is your relationship with Jesus?

'I just keep falling in love with Him, over and over again'. Are you able to sing such a song? How is your relationship with Jesus?

Ways to check your relationship with Jesus are:

- Do you talk about Jesus?
- Do you talk to Jesus?
- Do you often sing praises and worship Him?
- Are you thankful?
- Are you walking in close relationship with Jesus?
- Are you submissive to Jesus and therefore submissive to the brethren?

Jesus has filled us with His Spirit so that we can walk closely with Him, experiencing His love being "***poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us***" **Rom.5:5**.

The Spirit-filled life is characterised by three, if not four, discernible features: **Eph.5:18-21**.

i "***not drunk with wine***" – not looking for fulfilment in worldly pleasures but "***filled with the Spirit***";

ii "***speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord***";

iii "***giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of the Lord of us, Jesus Christ***";

iv "***submitting to one another in the fear of God***"

If we walk closely with Jesus, living a Spirit-filled life we will truly be happy and be a joy to those around us. Such a people will easily draw people to Jesus. Such a people will encourage those around them to return and do the first works so that we may rediscover our first love for Jesus, and be attentive to Him as He draws near.

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“Behold the days are coming, says the LORD [YaHWeH], that the city shall be built for the LORD from the tower of Hananel to the corner gate” Jer.31:38.

God has promised and will not relent: **the city of God shall be built.** This is the same city that Abraham saw in vision: ***“He waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God” Heb.11:10.***

John saw this city: ***“Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband” Rev.21:2.*** The significant thing about this city is that God is in the midst of her: ***“Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away” Rev.21:3-4.***

One of the seven angels came to John and said, ***“Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb’s wife. And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God” Rev.21:9b-11a.***

We have already come to this city: ***“But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first born, registered in heaven” Heb.12:22-23a.***

THE BRIDE CHURCH IS THE CITY!

How can this city be built? ***“Behold, I am Yahweh, the God of all flesh. Is there anything too hard for Me?” Jer.32:27.*** Jeremiah knew God, ***“Ah, Lord [Adonay] Yahweh! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and outstretched arm. There is nothing too hard for You” Jer.32:17.***

Chapters 30 to 33 of Jeremiah are full of wonderful and magnificent promises that God has made to us. In the midst of these chapters of restoration and exposition of the mystery of God, Jeremiah prophesied, ***“for the LORD has created a new thing in the earth – a woman shall encompass a man” Jer.31:22.***

At first reading this sounds insignificant. God created man and woman in the beginning to become one, but Jeremiah prophesies that God is creating a new thing. What He prophetically demonstrated in creating Adam and Eve and enabling them to become one, He is going to fulfil by creating a bride church for Himself, for His Son, Jesus Christ.

In **Ephesians 5:22-33**, Paul is teaching on marriage but in doing so, he is actually teaching of the bride church. He says, ***“this is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church” v.32.***

What is the relationship of Messiah Jesus with His church?

In the book of **Ephesians** chapter 5, the apostle instructs us how to prepare ourselves to be the bride church and then he outlines for us how Christ is already the husbandman who is preparing us to be His bride church. The instructions are addressed to us as ***“dear children” (Eph.5:1).*** As we faithfully walk in the fulfilment of the instructions Paul gives us, we will grow up in Christ to be part of His bride. The key instruction is ***“be imitators of God” v1.*** The

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only way we can become the bride of Christ is to be imitators of God – we are to become like Him. Remember that in the beginning, God created us in His own image, according to His likeness.

Even so, the bride church will be ***“a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ”*** (Eph.4:13b). Do not be deceived! Anything less than the full measure is not the bride church.

Walk in love

We are to be in love with our husband to be. When one is in love with another, we pursue that one; we long to be in their company; we carry sweet memories of that person. Sometimes when we are young, as children growing up, we ‘get a crush’ on someone, or we become infatuated with someone. It is not wrong to have such feelings toward Jesus, but we are to grow past the stage of being infatuated to being serious about developing our relationship and being faithful therein.

In the context, Paul warns us against ***“fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness ... filthiness”*** etc (Eph.5:3-4). We cannot become part of the bride church if we are part of such things – brethren this means you must govern what you watch on the television.

This means that you forsake all other loyalties to ‘church’ to be wholly devoted to Him. We are not to be deceived by ***“empty words”*** (v6), or to be ***“partakers with the sons of disobedience”*** (v7).

Walk as children of light

Remember that Paul is instructing us how to prepare ourselves for marriage. We are to have ***“no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness”*** (v11). We are not even to speak ***“of those things which are done by them in secret”*** (v12).

The fruit of walking in the light is ***“goodness, righteousness and truth”*** (v9). The key to righteousness is faith and the truth is the word. Goodness is a fruit of the Spirit in our lives (Gal.5:22). We are to find out ***“what is acceptable to the Lord”*** (v10). If we walk as children of light, we walk in the day; we need not stumble.

It is time to wake-up! The church at large is asleep! We have been rocked to sleep by watered down worldly doctrines. The church in society does not look like a bride in preparation for Jesus, but more and more a church that is playing the harlot, taking on and practising worldly ways.

Isaiah called us to ***“Arise, shine; for your light has come! And the glory of the LORD is risen upon you”*** 60:1. ***“Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light”*** Eph.5:14.

Walk in wisdom

The Scripture says, ***“walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise”*** (Eph.5:15). We need to seek for wisdom in every situation. We need to check things out and not be deceived as fools, ***“redeeming the time, because the days are evil”*** (v16). We are to ***“understand what the will of the Lord is”*** (v17). Many Christians who attend church do not know what the will of God is. Many preachers who are preaching in the churches are not preaching the knowledge of the will of God. They are preaching man’s doctrines and man’s interpretations. The wisdom we need is the wisdom from above (James 3:17).

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A Spirit-filled life

To redeem the time we need to be filled with the Spirit. We are not to look for fulfilment in worldly pleasures such as drunkenness. The Spirit-filled life is characterised by three note worthy facets:

- Speaking to one another and singing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs (v19)
- Having a gratitude attitude (v20)
- Submitting to one another *“in the fear of God”* (v21)

The bride is full of the Spirit. It is *“the Spirit and the Bride who say ‘Come!’”* Rev.22:17, at the time that the church is ready to receive her husbandman, Christ Jesus.

This is our preparation as *“dear children”* (Eph.5:1) to be able to grow up in Christ to become His bride church.

Who Jesus is and how He is preparing to receive His bride – Eph.5:22-32

- i) Jesus is the Head of the church (v23). Are you a member?
- ii) Jesus is the Saviour of the body (v23). Are you saved?
- iii) The church is to be subject [submitted] to Christ in everything (v24). Are you submitted to Jesus, or do you please yourself?
- iv) Jesus loves the church (v25). Do you know His love for you?
- v) Jesus gave Himself for the church (v25). He paid the price for each one of us to be saved.
- vi) Jesus is sanctifying the church, that is, setting her apart for Himself (v26). Is your life set apart for God?
- vii) Jesus is cleansing the church from all sin (v26). Are you free of sin?
Jesus both sanctifies and Jesus cleanses the church *“with the washing of water by the word”*. This is the *rhema* [quickened] word of God. Do you receive the *rhema* word?
- viii) Jesus will present to Himself a glorious church (v27). This is the church that is walking in the revelation of the glory of God; the church that knows *“Christ in us, the hope of glory”* Col.1:27. This is the work of the ministry: to make known the revelation of the mystery of the glory of God.
Have you come to know the mystery?
- ix) Jesus loves us as He loves Himself (v28). This is all-consuming love! Do you have an intimate relationship with Jesus?
- x) Jesus nourishes and cherishes the church (v29).
- xi) We are members of His body, *“of His flesh and of His bones”* (v30). We are one with Him: how close can we get!
- xii) There is a leaving [of the old] and a cleaving to Jesus, becoming one with Him (v31).

“This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church”

Jeremiah spoke of this great restoration – Jer.31:1-14

“I will be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be My people, says the LORD” Jer.31:1. Peter said that we *“who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy”* 1Pet.2:10. God promised that through Abraham *“all the families of the earth shall be blessed”* (Gen.12:3). Jeremiah

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addresses Israel but in reality Israel did not exist in the natural at that time. The kingdom of Israel had disappeared and the people of Israel were scattered. Only the kingdom of Judah remained. In referring to Israel the Scripture is capturing a picture of the restoration of all peoples, Jews and Gentiles, to become the new Israel of God (**Gal.6:16**). God is the God of all the families of the earth and He will have a chosen people who will become the city.

Found by grace

v.2 This people were lost in the wilderness; this people had been through serious judgement, but they found *“grace in the wilderness”*. Once we are found by grace, that is, saved in and through Jesus Christ, God wants to bring us into the place of rest (**Heb.4:3**). Finally the place of God’s rest is the heavenly city referred to as Mt. Zion or Jerusalem in **Hebrews 12:22**. This city is a spiritual city and we have already come to it.

Drawn by love

v.3 Yahweh says, *“I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with loving kindness I have drawn you.”* God loves us and out of His love He calls us.

Restoration brings rejoicing

v.4 Restoration is beginning to happen. The role of ministry is to ‘build up’. In His ascension, Jesus has given the five-fold ministry gift for *“the equipping [perfecting] of the saints and the building up of the body of Christ until we all come ... to a perfect man”*. (**Eph.4:11-16**). Part of God’s commission to **Jeremiah** in chapter **1:10** was *“to build and to plant”*. There is a rebuilding of that which has been ‘pulled down and destroyed’. A house is being built for Christ to indwell.

There is also rejoicing! A virgin bride is being prepared ready for her marriage. This is the culmination of the building of the city.

Fruitfulness

v.5 Once restoration has taken place there will be fruitfulness. In the church, many of us have been mourning over the lack of fruitfulness but in these days, those of us who have experienced the apostolic restoration are seeing fruit that lasts (**Jn.15:16**).

Let us go up to Zion

v.6 Prophetic watchman [intercessors] have a key role to play in the restoration and rebuilding of the city. God says, *“I have set watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem; they shall never hold their peace day or night. You who make mention of the LORD, do not keep silent. And give Him no rest till He establishes and till He makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth”* **Isa.62:6-7**. The day has come for the watchmen to speak to Ephraim.

Ephraim represented the northern kingdom that in history disappeared. God is saying prophetically that watchman on Mt. Ephraim will say, ‘let us arise, not stay here and go up to Zion’. Ephraim represents God’s people who have become lukewarm, backslidden. These are the ones God is calling to arise ‘come out; don’t stay in your backslidden state’.

The people are being called to come up to Zion. *“Many people will come and say, ‘Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths.’ For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem”* **Isa.2:3**. If we stay in Ephraim, we will never come to Zion.

Hear the prophetic word: *“Arise, and let us go up to Zion, to the LORD our God”* **Jer.31:6b**. It is time to no longer dwell where you have been dwelling; it is time to come out; it is time to be getting ready to be married to Jesus.

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Salvation for the people

v.7 The people will come with singing, gladness and praise. Jacob will become Israel. Jacob was a man who struggled with his own problems; he wrestled with God and received a revelation of who God is – this revelation changed him forever. He became a new man with a new name – Israel (**Gen.32:28-29**).

The people will cry out ***“Oh LORD, save your people”***. This cry was heard in Jerusalem when Jesus entered the city on Palm Sunday, ***“Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD! The King of Israel”*** **Jn.12:13**. [Hosanna literally means *save now!*]

Peter tells us as believers to lay aside ***“all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking; as newborn babes desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby”*** **1Pet.2:1-2**. Even as mature Christians we are to maintain the purity of our relationship with Jesus.

A great multitude will come

v.8 God will gather the vulnerable ones; the blind, lame, women with children, a great throng of them. ***“For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world ... that no flesh should glory in His presence”*** **1Cor.1:26-29**.

Receive the inheritance of the firstborn

v.9 They will come with weeping – weeping speaks of humbling down, realising we have not attained - and supplications, crying out to God. As a result God will ***“cause them to walk by the rivers of waters, in a straight way in which they shall not stumble”***. What an awesome promise! If we will humble down and begin to seek God earnestly, He will make sure that we find the rivers of water; that we will walk on the straight path [the narrow way].

God is a father to Ephraim. He intends all of His people to become sons. He calls Ephraim ***“My firstborn!”*** The firstborn receives the inheritance. The true church is the church of the firstborn sons (**Heb.12:23**). Everyone who believes in Jesus is born again to be His child and destined to grow up to inherit, because every child of God has the right of the firstborn.

A Shepherd to His people

v.10 God will gather together His people and keep them ***“as a shepherd does his flock”***. Jesus said, ***“I am the good Shepherd. The good Shepherd gives His life for the sheep”*** **Jn.10:11**.

Redeemed and ransomed

v.11 The people are redeemed and ransomed by the LORD. Jesus destroyed ***“Him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and released those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage”*** **Heb.2:14-15**.

Souls restored

v.12 Come and sing in the heights of Zion. ***“Walk about Zion, and go all around her. Count her towers; mark well her bulwarks; consider her palaces; that you may tell it to the generations following”*** **Ps.48:12-13**. Zion is an awesome place in God: He invites us to look in every room, to search out her riches – everything in Zion is streaming with goodness. The provision of the harvest is there. Wheat – the bread of the word; new wine – the joy of the Spirit; oil – the anointing of God.

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“Their souls shall be like a well-watered garden, and they shall sorrow no more at all”. This is a place of refreshing for the soul; learn to sit in the garden with Jesus; allow the water of His word to wash over you; allow Him to refresh and restore your soul and bring healing to your soul. God wants to heal us and release us from sorrow. Many of us carry sorrows from the past but Jesus *“carried our sorrows ... the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed”* (Isa.53:4-5).

Spiritual life will flow forth. *“He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart [innermost being] will flow rivers of living water”* Jn.7:38. Isaiah says, *“with joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation”* (Isa.12:3).

Filled with all the fullness of God

v.13-14 There will be celebration and rejoicing. People will be ‘filled to the full’ and be fully satisfied with the abundance of provision. The people will be satisfied with God’s goodness and will *“know the love of Christ which passes knowledge ... [being] filled with all the fullness of God”* Eph.3:19.

The New Covenant – Jeremiah 31:31-34

All these wonderful promises are possible and will be fulfilled because of the New Covenant, which God promised in that very same chapter in Jeremiah. God sees Himself as a husband to His people; even in the Old Covenant He said, *“Though I was a Husband to them”* (v.32b).

The day is coming when the church will be restored! The city will be built! All will know YAHWEH, that is, all will know God through a personal relationship with, and loving devotion to, Jesus Christ.

*“I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts;
and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. ...
they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,
says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity,
and their sin I will remember no more”.*

AMEN

THE CHURCH HAS FOUNDATIONS

A major work of the apostle is to check foundations, to strengthen foundations and, in some instances, to re-lay foundations. An apostle is to be *“a wise master builder”* (1Cor.3:10); one who is able to facilitate the building of God’s house. The house belongs to Jesus the Christ (Heb.3:6), and we the people of God are the house, being fitted together as living stones into Him (1Pet.2:5).

Every house that will stand the testing and trials needs to be built on the only true foundation, which is Jesus Christ (1Cor.3:11), and built according to His word, not man’s tradition, whether that tradition is Roman Catholic or Pentecostal, or even coming under the current title of ‘apostolic’.

Even as the church has foundations, *“built on the foundation of apostles and prophets”* (Eph.2:19-20), that is, built on the revelation of Jesus Christ that is brought by apostles and prophets, so the individual believer’s faith is to be properly and securely founded on the elementary principles of the oracles of God. When the foundations are properly laid, that is, taught and practiced, the church corporately can grow to maturity and onto perfection. We need God’s permit to go on to perfection (Heb.6:3) and God will not give the permit unless the foundations have been laid thoroughly.

Let us review the foundations which are listed in **Hebrews 6:1-2**.

Repentance from dead works

All sin is a dead work but in the context of the book of Hebrews, the dead works specifically refer to the ‘dead religious works’ of Judaism. The writer is constantly comparing and showing how much better and superior the New Covenant is to the Old Covenant. Every man’s sacrifice is now replaced by Christ’s sacrifice; therefore man’s sacrifices are dead works. So much of our order of service and church programs can easily be religious dead works, actually stifling our growth to maturity, rather than nurturing and facilitating growth.

Faith toward God

Religious dead works are replaced by *“faith toward God”* – turning from works to the obedience of faith: believing in, being baptised into, and being filled with the Spirit of Jesus Christ, and then doing the ordained works (Eph.2:10). So often our ‘local church’ is operating according to prescribed denominational norms and we think we are being successful when we are operating according to these norms; yet all the time the word of God is being neglected. Revelation is rare and the believers are not growing up to maturity, to spirit-motivated good works, functioning in the body of Christ, giving life.

An easy test as to whether we individually and corporately are founded in Jesus properly, and growing up in Him is the Scriptural test Paul prescribes: *“Examine yourselves, whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?”* 2Cor.13:5. Some are being forced to question and recognise that they do not have a relationship with Jesus Christ. Yet He is the only One who can save us, who can deliver us, who can heal us. It is His Name that we are to call upon. There is no other name (Acts 4:12).

Doctrine of baptisms

Baptisms (washings) is in the plural. What is the ‘doctrine of baptisms’? Some say it includes baptism in the Spirit and that is why it is in the plural. However, baptism in the Spirit is the outworking of *“laying on of hands”* and the Greek word for ‘baptisms’ is ‘washings’, referring to water!

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The New Testament teaches clearly on three baptisms: the baptism of John, the baptism of Jesus and the baptism of believers. These are the three baptisms [washings] that we need to be taught in, so that this foundation is thoroughly laid in our lives and experience.

i) John's baptism

- John's baptism was a washing in water. *"Baptised in the Jordan"* Matt.3:6.
- John's baptism was for repentance of sins. *"John indeed baptised with a baptism of repentance"* Acts 19:4 [see also Matt.3:11; Mk.1:4; Lu.3:3].
- John's baptism was a sign baptism, pointing to the One coming after, the Messiah Jesus. *"He shall go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah"* Lu.1:17, [see also Lu.3:16; Mk.1:7-8; Matt.3:11; Jn.1:33]
- John's baptism was the will of God for the people. God sent John to prepare the way for the Messiah. *"But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the will of God for themselves, not having been baptised by him"* Lu.7:30.

ii) Jesus' baptism

- Jesus' baptism was in water. *"Jesus came up immediately from the water"* Matt.3:16
- Jesus' baptism was the baptism of Messiah Himself; the fulfilment of the sign: Jesus the Messiah was baptised. *"Jesus came from Galilee to John to be baptised"* Matt.3:13
- Jesus' baptism, not for repentance of sins, but *"to fulfil all righteousness"* v.15
- When Jesus was baptised *"the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him"* Matt.3:16. The coming of the Spirit in this way is totally new. A man in the earth is able to be filled with the Spirit of God.
- At Jesus' baptism, a voice spoke from heaven, conferring sonship (Matt.3:17). What Adam had lost was now restored in Jesus and much more because the Spirit of God was now fully living in a man. Jesus was not just a 'living soul', but now 'life giving Spirit' (1Cor.15:45)
- Baptism was the will of God for Jesus: *"Permit now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfil all righteousness"* Matt.3:15.

iii) Believers' baptism

- The fulfilment of both John's and Jesus' baptisms.
- Believers' baptism is immersion in water. *"And the eunuch said, 'See, water. What hinders me from being baptised'"* Acts 8:36. Note, the Greek word for 'baptism' means 'immersing or dipping in water', not sprinkling. There are no baptisms by sprinkling recorded in the Bible.
- Believers' baptism is for repentance and remission of sins, (Acts 2:38).
- Believers are baptised into Messiah, the sign outworked. *"Buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life"* Rom.6:4, [see also Gal.3:27; 1Cor.12:13]
- Believers are baptised into the NAME of Jesus Messiah [Christ]. *"Baptising them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit"* Mt.28:19; that is *"in the name of Jesus Christ"* Acts 2:38; *"they were baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus"* Acts 19:5.

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- Believers are to **receive the Holy Spirit** as a result of being baptised for *“the remission of sins”* Acts 2:38. *“When Paul laid hands on them [after their baptism in water] the Holy Spirit came upon them”* Acts 19:6.
- Baptism can be **a time for the prophetic word** to be declared over the believers, as it was for Jesus and for Paul (Acts 9:15-18).
- Baptism is the **will of God for every believer**. [Mk.16:16; Matt.28:19]

iv) Laying on of hands

Primarily to receive the Holy Spirit – the normal way to receive the Holy Spirit is through the laying on of hands. The Jews on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:4), and the Gentiles in Cornelius’ house (Acts 10:44-46), received a sovereign outpouring and infilling of the Holy Spirit. The 3000 new believers on the day of Pentecost would have had hands laid on them (Acts 2:38;41). The baptised believers in Samaria received when the apostles laid hands on them: *“Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit”* Acts 8:17. [See also Acts 9:17 & Acts 19:6]

Laying on of hands is also for healing, blessing and commissioning and ordination, impartation of gifts and ministries.

v) Resurrection of the dead

When we are baptised we are raised with Him in resurrection life. The resurrection of the dead is only a reality because Jesus died and literally rose from the dead three days later, *“the firstborn from the dead”* Col.1:18.

Jesus’ resurrection is the basis of eternal life; because He rose, we can receive eternal life as He is now *“a life giving Spirit”* (Jn.5:25 & 1Cor.15:45). Jesus said *“Whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die”* Jn.11:26. Jesus’ resurrection leads to life in Him for every believer.

The resurrection life is meant to be the normal Christian life but it is also a goal to be attained, *“That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead”* Phil.3:10-11.

vi) Eternal Judgement

It is declared in the gospel *“whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life”* Jn.3:16.

We are governed by eternity; we must choose now, whom we will serve. Eternal judgement is dependent upon our response to Jesus the Christ.

The ‘say the sinner’s prayer’ approach to eternal life – ‘you will now go to heaven’ – has trivialised the Biblical foundation of eternal judgement. Judgement is all around us now, and every day, we either live in life and peace in the kingdom or we struggle and strive in the sea of humanity. *“We have been conveyed out of the domain of darkness into the kingdom of the Son of His love”* Col.1:13.

“He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God” Jn.3:18.

Going on to perfection

When the foundational principles are taught and being practised, then the church can *“go on to perfection”* Heb.6:1. God will give the permit (Heb.6:3). God’s goal is a perfect, fully mature, grown-up body of believers functioning in *agape* love in the body of Christ. Such a people will be imitators of God (Eph.5:1). From such a people, the work of the Lord will sound forth in every place (1Thess.1:8). Such a people have *“turned to God from idols*

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to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come” 1Thess.1:9-10.

LIVING THE PERFECT LIFE

“Therefore leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection [completeness, full maturity, accomplishing the end goal]. And this we will do if God permits” Heb.6:1a & 3.

Once the foundations are laid, let us move on. There are many pictures of the church in maturity, or of the church coming to maturity, or the church practising in a mature way the instructions of Scripture – Jesus said *“teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you” Matt.28:19.*

For example, in **Ephesians 4**, Paul paints an awesome picture of the church coming to maturity through the effective ministry work of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers: a church that has grown *“up in all things into Him who is the head – Christ” v.15.*

In **1Corinthians**, chapters **12, 13 & 14**, Paul shows how a mature church ministers the gifts in love for the up-building of the whole church.

In **Colossians 3:1- 4:6**, Paul describes for us the conduct of the new man, beginning with our mind and affections toward the Lord, dealing with any area of gross sin, dealing with attitudes of heart toward others, and then *“putting on the new man” (v.12)*, and finally instructing us about family and work relationships.

Perspectives of mature lifestyle – Romans 12:9-21

In **Romans 12** verses **9-21**, Paul instructs us how to behave as a Christian. The instructions in these verses are very clear and demand a response on all accounts as we seek to live a Christian life, **to live the perfect life.**

1. *“love without hypocrisy” v.9*: Love is the word *agape* and means ‘affection and benevolence’. It is God’s kind of love and it is the love that we are to have toward one another; it is mature love.
James 3:17 tells us that the wisdom from above is without hypocrisy. A hypocrite is a pretender.
2. *“abhor what is evil” v.9*. Abhor means to ‘detest utterly, to dislike intensely’. It means ‘to shudder at’. This needs to include the evil that pervades the television screen, if you turn it on in your house.
3. *“cling [cleave] to what is good” v.9*. A man and a woman are to cleave to one another in marriage. We are to cleave to what is good with the same intensity.
4. *“be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love” v.10*. In the Old Testament God was known for His kindness and tender mercies toward us – He is still the same today. In **2 Pet.1:2-11**, Peter tells us the steps to maturity – to live in “charity” (KJV). Brotherly kindness is the last step before being able to function in true Christian love.
5. *“in honour giving preference to one another” v.10*: Paul tells us in **Philippians** to *“esteem others better than oneself”* and *“look for the interests of others” (2:3-4)*. We are to *“bestow greater honour on those members of the body which we think to be less honourable” 1Cor.12:23.*
6. *“not lagging in diligence” v.11* [KJV–“not slothful in business”]. We are to *“be diligent [study] to present ourselves approved to God, a worker who does not need to be*

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ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” 2Tim.2:15. Do you have a committed relationship with the word of God? Is it your daily necessary food?

Believers are to be diligent in practical work: *“if anyone will not work neither shall he eat”* 2Thes.3:10. We are to work with our hands *“what is good, that he [we] may have something to give him who has need”* Eph.4:28.

7. *“fervent in spirit”* v.11. Fervency speaks of zeal. Sometimes our zeal can be soulish and lead to striving and disappointment. Our zeal needs to be the fervency in our spirit. It is the word of God that divides between soul and spirit (Heb.4:12).
8. *“serving the Lord”* v.11. Paul said *“whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of His Son”* Rom.1:9. As sons *“shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of our spirits and live?”* Heb.12:9. The Christian life begins with a new birth by the spirit of God enabling us to receive Jesus. We are born again to serve.
9. *“rejoicing in hope”* v.12. Many make the mistake of hoping in things temporal and when that which they hope for does not eventuate, they become disappointed. True hope is for things eternal, things pertaining to the kingdom of God and true hope *“does not disappoint”* (Rom.5:5). If our hope is based upon the word of God, it is as *“an anchor for our soul”* (Heb.6:19). We are to *“hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end”* Heb.3:6. It is this holding fast the hope that establishes our place in the house of God (Heb.3:6).
10. *“patient in tribulation”* v.12. The word ‘tribulation’ means pressure. I think we all know the pressures and stresses of life but probably have not realised that such things are the tribulation the Bible speaks of. God gives us grace through faith in Jesus Christ to *“glory in tribulation, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance [patience]; and perseverance, character; and character hope. Now hope does not disappoint because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us”* Rom.5:3-5. Notice the place of hope and notice what produces hope.
11. *“continuing steadfastly in prayer”* v.12. Prayer is to be continual and like the persistent widow (Lu.18:1-8), it is the one who continues committedly to whom God responds. There are many exhortations to pray in both Old and New Testaments. Is your life characterised by constant prayer?
12. *“distributing to the needs of the saints”* v.13. The first church *“sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need”* Acts 2:45. Each of us is to have paid work so that we can *“give him who has need”* (Eph.4:28).
13. *“given to [pursue] hospitality”* v.13. We are to pursue hospitality, even not forgetting *“to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels”* Heb.13:2. We find that both in our home and in our training centre, having meals together in fellowship is so vital to building relationships in the body and introducing ‘strangers’ to the apostolic teaching.
- 14a. *“bless those who persecute you”* v.14. Jesus said, *“Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you”* Matt.5:11.
b. *“bless and curse not”* v.14. Jesus said, *“Bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you”* Lu.6:28.

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- 15a. ***“rejoice with those who rejoice” v.15*** When a member of the body is honoured ***“all the members rejoice” 1Cor.12:26.***
- 15b. ***“weep with those who weep” v.15.*** When a member of the body suffers, ***“all the members suffer with that one” 1Cor.12:26.***
16. ***“be of the same mind toward one another” v.16.*** As we walk in maturity, we ***“have this mind let us walk by the same rule; let us be of the same mind” Phil.3:15-16.*** There is a mature mind – attitude of mind – that we are to have. We are to be of a sound and disciplined mind, not changing from day to day.
17. ***“do not set your mind on high things” v.16.*** But come to Jesus who is ***“meek and lowly in heart” (Matt.11:29).*** We are to pull down the ‘high things’ and the strongholds that are in our minds, and we are to ***“take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ” 2Cor.10:4-5.***
18. ***“associate with the humble” v.16.*** James warns us that God ***“has chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of His kingdom” Ja.2:5.*** We need to associate with the ones God has chosen. ***“For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise” 1Cor.1:26-27.***
19. ***“do not be wise in your own opinion” v.16.*** Wisdom comes from above and is not dependent upon our ability, our learning or anything of ourselves (***Ja.3:17***). God will give wisdom liberally to anyone who asks in faith (***Jam.1:5-6***).
20. ***“repay no one evil for evil” v.17.*** It is said of Jesus ***“when He was reviled, He did not revile in return” 1Pet.2:23.***
21. ***“have regard for good things in the sight of all men” v.17.*** Paul instructs us to meditate on ***“whatever things are true ... noble ... just ... pure ... lovely, whatever things are of good report ...” Phil.4:8.***
22. ***“live peaceably with all men” v.18.*** The proverb says ***“when a man’s ways please the LORD, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him” Pro.16:7.***
- 23a. ***“do not avenge yourselves” v.19.*** Why? Because your judgement may be wrong and you may punish the wrong person.
- 23b. ***“but give place to wrath, for it is written ‘vengeance is Mine, I will repay’ says the Lord” v.19.*** God judges righteously; He knows the heart of every man. Wrath on our part is anger seeking revenge. God says, ***“Be angry and do not sin” (Eph.4:26).*** God calls us to show mercy and to forgive, committing the one who has hurt us to God’s justice – ***He will repay.***
24. ***“Therefore, if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing, you will heap burning coals on his head” v.20.*** Such behaviour is contrary to the natural man. We do not want to feed our enemy; we do not want to give him a drink! But God says if we do such, our kindness will actually bring God’s judgement on the enemy if he does not repent.

25. ***“Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good” v.21. Jesus has “through death destroyed him who had the power of death, that is the devil, and released those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage” Heb.2:14-15. Because Jesus has destroyed the power of the devil (1Jn.3:8b), we also are able to overcome evil. A simple maxim we should seek to follow is: when someone comes against you in an aggressive [evil] way, respond in the opposite spirit. “A soft answer turns away wrath” Prov.15:1. John says “whatever is born of God overcomes the world” and “the victory that has overcome the world – our faith” 1Jn.5:4.***

This short passage from Romans is a wonderful ‘rule’ of life for us living in Christian community. Recently I have been reading a biography of Count Zinzendorf, who was the ‘father’ of the Herrnhut community of the Moravians. This community, made up of Christian refugees who moved away from persecution in Moravia in the early 18th century, and who settled on the land of the Count, became a unified body of brethren totally committed to serving God and playing their part in fulfilling the Great Commission. In their early development they agreed to live by an ‘apostolic rule’. While I do not know the details of this rule, I understand that it was a lively application of what Paul says in **Philippines 3:16** ***“nevertheless, to the degree that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind.”***

We believe at SHILOH apostolic company that God has called us to be a pattern people, living according to the apostolic example of Paul and the company associated with him; living according to the apostolic example of the early church in the book of Acts. We are concerned that much of the church lives by a pattern set by men in history and much of that pattern has no direct relationship with the word of God and therefore cannot produce the fruit that Jesus is looking for. We appeal to you wherever you are to ask God to give you a vision for true Christian community and to make sure that you are building according to **the revealed pattern**, which is clearly set out for us in the word of God.

WHEN THE CHURCH PRAYS

The nations in uproar

As I travelled and ministered in Liberia in West Africa and ministered in various centres in Kenya in May/June 2008, I became aware that despite recent serious national crises in these nations, the church was not committed to, or active in, congregational prayer led by their ministers. Liberia is still recovering from 14 years [1989–2003] of horrendous civil war that has left the nation traumatized because of the innumerable, senseless killings and maiming and rape of innocent people.

Kenya went through two and half months of serious shaking in early 2008, and I witnessed some of the results of the destruction of properties in towns and cities in rural regions in western Kenya. On Thursday the 29th May 2008, I ministered to a congregation of people who have come back after fleeing murder, violence, theft and destruction of their homes [church buildings and schools].

It was in this context that Paul's instructions to the churches everywhere, to be committed to prayer ***“for all men, for kings and all who are in authority”***, became so important and urgent in my understanding. If we will pray in obedience to the word of God and in agreement with the word of God, we will experience the Biblically promised results: ***“a quiet and peaceable life in all Godliness and reverence”*** (1Tim.2:1-2).

Pray according to the word

In 1Timothy 2:1-4 Paul exhorts the church that first of all, ***“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 quite and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”***

I have been aware for many years that when the church is congregated and corporate prayer is entered into according to these verses, the church begins to stand in the gap with Christ Jesus the mediator: ***“For there is one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus”*** (v5). When the church **prays in agreement with the word of God** then the church will experience the end result of the prayer: peace and quietness. Such prayer is a powerful act of spiritual warfare, as the church has been authorized by God to make such prayer in the name of Jesus the Messiah

In giving us the Lord's Prayer, Jesus has instructed us concerning the important elements of prayer. There is an invocation of God's kingdom; there is to be discernment of God's will. When the church stands in confession of prayer in agreement according to the will of God, then the prayer of the church will be established [answered] and God's will, will be done in the earth.

Prayer for all men – 1Tim.2:1

Paul exhorts us in 1 Timothy 2:1 that it is ***‘of first importance’*** [or ***‘first of all’***] ***“that supplications, prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks be made for all men”***. He mentions three kinds of, or three ways of, praying for all men and as well there should be the giving of thanks.

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- **Supplications**

What are supplications? The dictionary says they are entreaties, or humbly begging, making petition. It suggests a serious pleading and crying out to God for particular people [all men].

- **Prayers**

What are prayers? Prayers include supplications but more generally prayer is our communication with God. This means prayer is a dialogue and we should listen for His answers.

Philippians 4:6 tells us that it is by prayers and supplications that we *“make our requests known to God.”* We know God has answered by the witness of *“the peace of God”* (v7) coming into our spirit.

Prayers and supplications are to be made *“in the Spirit”* (Eph.6:18). This means that in our prayer life we are to move from the soul realm to the spirit realm, where God is able to guide us.

- **Intercessions**

What are intercessions? To intercede is to go on behalf of or to go between. It is to plead in favour of someone else; it can mean to mediate; it means to represent another at the throne of grace.

- **Giving of thanks**

1 Thess.5:17-18 tells us to *“pray without ceasing”* and *“in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”*

Ephesians 5:20 tells us to be *“giving thanks always for all things.”* The giving of thanks is the attitude of a Spirit-filled believer and thankfulness to God is the attitude to undergird all prayer.

- Prayer is to be made for **ALL MEN**.

Praying for all in authority

Paul then goes on to say, *“I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting; in like manner also, the women...”* **1Tim.2:8-9a**.

In many churches the only prayer prayed is to ask God to bless the service and later to ask God to bless the offering and those who have given. The congregated church is meant to be praying *“for all men, for kings and all who are in authority”*. Despite civil war in Liberia and the unexpected upheaval in Kenya, the church can still be caught in the trap of thinking ‘we go to church to get blessed’; and yet **the church is meant to be the fountain of blessing for the nation**.

When Jesus cleansed the temple He proclaimed *“My house shall be called a house of prayer but you have made it a den of thieves”* **Matt. 21:13**. He was quoting from **Isaiah 56:7** where God had said that prayer in His house should be for ‘all nations’. In the context the nations are ‘all men’ that Paul tells us to pray for.

Lifting up Holy Hands

We can only pray genuinely and effectively by *“lifting up holy hands”* **1Tim 2:8**. If we lift up our hands to God with ‘wrath and doubting’ in our hearts we are being hypocritical and our hands are not holy.

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- **Without wrath**

At the end of the Lord's Prayer in **Matthew 6:9-13**, Jesus emphasizes a second time the need to forgive others as a prerequisite to answered prayer.

Wrath is anger seeking revenge. The bible says *"be angry and sin not"* (Eph. 4:26). The Bible says *"Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath, for it is written 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord"* **Rom. 12:19.**

God says He will exercise wrath because only God can judge rightly.

Even though we have good cause to be angry with our enemy we are to ask God for the grace to forgive. Forgiveness is more powerful than revenge. Revenge harms others and binds the avenger. Forgiveness sets you free and places your enemy in the hands of God. *"If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head"* **Rom. 12:20.**

- **Without doubting**

Paul says to pray without doubting. When terrible things happen we can wonder 'where is God?' And doubt comes into our hearts.

James warns that unless we ask in faith we *"will receive nothing from the Lord"* (**James 1:6-7**).

"Without faith it is impossible to please God" **Heb 11:6**. Before we can pray effectively we need to *"Take captive every thought to the obedience of Christ"* **2 Cor.10:5b**.

The church is called to stand in the gap in prayer for the nation. To do this effectively we must help every member of the church to embrace the grace to show mercy and forgiveness toward others; and to have a good confession of faith in the sovereignty of God and His ability to answer our prayers and save our nation.

Therefore pray

Therefore I exhort the church everywhere to be obedient to Paul's instructions in **1Timothy 2**. The church can make the difference in the nation. The church is to know how to conduct itself *"in the house of God"* (**1 Tim 3:15**). Every time the church meets it is good and acceptable to God to pray for your nation, to pray for rulers and those in authority.

The result of such prayer will be peace in the nation and the opportunity for the church to continue the work of the ministry, bringing all to the knowledge of the truth.

Prayer for kings and all in authority – 1Tim.2:2

We are to pray for all men and then we are to pray specifically for kings – presidents, prime ministers – and all in authority, that is, in positions of prominence in our society and nation.

The result of such prayer will be *"quietness and peace"*. How many nations and how many cities do not have the blessing of *"leading a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence"*? Does the church stop to ask ourselves the question: Why is there not peace in our nation? In our city? The answer is: because the church is not giving first priority to prayer for the nation, for all men, for rulers and authorities.

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God's will is good – 1Tim.2:3-4

It is *“good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour”* for us to pray diligently and committedly for all men and for the government of our nation. It is God's will for us to be able to live *“a quiet and peaceable life”*.

The goal of our prayer for all men, including the rulers, is their salvation. God *“desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”* God is *“not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance”* (2Pet.3:9). Men will be saved when they come to the knowledge of the truth. How shall they hear the truth?

There is a Mediator – 1Tim.2:5

Job knew his need for a redeemer; he needed someone to go before God on his behalf. His friends could not help him (Job 19:25). Once Christ has come, Paul declares, *“There is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus.”* The core message of the New Testament is that *“Jesus is the Christ”* Acts 5:42. The result of Christ dying is that we can *“come boldly to the throne of grace”* (Heb.4:16) and we can boldly *“enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus”* (Heb.10:19).

He gave Himself a ransom for all – 1Tim.2:6

A ransom is the cost of redemption. This concept comes from the market place and referred to the buying of a slave's freedom. The ransom for all men to be saved was the blood of Jesus: His life. He gave His life so that we could be set free from the bondage and corruption of sin and death.

It can become a snare for the Christian to be glad to be saved but to forget that Jesus gave His life for **all** men. The practising church so often is only concerned for themselves and for the institutional entity that they are. The message that must be testified is that Jesus *“gave Himself a ransom for all.”* That message is to *“be testified in due time.”*

This is the issue: the truth of who Jesus is, that He is the Christ [Messiah Acts 2:36], that He is the Son of God [God manifest in the flesh 1Tim.3:16], that He is **the only way** to the Father (Jn.14:6), and that through His death men can be saved. Therefore the truth of who Jesus is and the Scriptural reality of what His death on the cross has done, is to be *“testified in due time”*.

Appointed a preacher, an apostle, a teacher – 1Tim.2:7

The expected result of the church fulfilling its responsibility to pray for *“all men, for kings and all who are in authority”* is:

- that God will appoint preachers, apostles and teachers *“of the Gentiles in faith and truth.”*
- these appointed ministries carry the primary responsibility to *“testify”* concerning Jesus the Christ and the ransom He paid for men to be saved.
- these appointed ministries carry the primary responsibility to preach and teach *“the knowledge of the truth”* so that *“all men”* can be saved.
- for God's will to be done, there is to be the appointment of preachers [this could include both prophets and evangelists as both these ministries are preaching ministries], apostles and teachers again today.

The commission is the same as Paul received

These appointed ministries are to convey the message of the gospel to the Gentiles. Gentiles are those who are not saved. The majority of the human race is not saved. There is a

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huge need for concerted committed prayer for all men so that God will respond and appoint again preachers, apostles and teachers of the calibre of Paul.

Paul's calling was ***"to bear My name [Jesus] before Gentiles, kings and the children of Israel"***, Paul was to ***"suffer many things for My name's [Jesus] sake"*** (Acts 9:15-16). In these days God is sending us to the nations as preachers, apostles and teachers and He has authorised us to testify to the Gentiles, and also to the lost sheep of Israel which is the church. We are to preach that Jesus is the Christ [Messiah – the King who came]; that Jesus is God manifest in the flesh.

To Kings

The apostolic message that is going forth and being received in many nations already often reaches to the highest levels of civil government and political office in those nations. I have personally had a minister of a government request a home meeting with me and the team and he had us lay hands on him and pray for him. One of our sons, preaching in Central Africa, had a president's wife and a minister of State attend his meetings. As a result the President of that country asked for a young apostle in that country to come and teach in his home church.

In faith and truth

These appointed ministries are ***"in faith and truth"***. ***"Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God"*** Rom.10:17. The faith here refers to the doctrines, the apostles' doctrine (Acts 2:42) and ***"the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints"*** (Jude 3).

"Thy word is truth" Jn.17:17. The preaching and teaching of the truth is the preaching and teaching of the word of God which engenders faith in the hearers. This is God's means by which ***"all men can be saved"***.

Because of the ineffectiveness of the church in making disciples of all nations, some have doubted the God-given means of fulfilling the Great Commission. The God-given means are the way to reach the nations. The problem has been the disobedience of the church. We have spread denominationalism [denominated doctrines] rather than the gospel ***"in faith and truth"***.

A new generation of preachers, apostles and teachers

It is time for a new generation of Biblical preachers, apostles and teachers to be raised. These ones will not repeat and promulgate denominational tenets of faith; they will preach and teach the word of God, the word of truth, the word of the Gospel, as it is written. It is not time for the church fellowships of a city to gather together to say the Apostles' Creed, which was written by bishops in church history and is not the apostles' doctrine.

The church of the city needs to receive the five-fold ministers

It is time for the church fellowships of the city to gather together to hear the apostles' doctrine in faith and truth. This requires real apostles who have been called and appointed by Jesus and who understand the mysteries of the kingdom and the glory of God. This requires teachers who have received and understood the apostles' doctrine. This requires preachers who are able to preach the Gospel of the kingdom of God, the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and not some watered down, man-arranged version.

Prayer and ministry of the word

When the church prays according to the will of God in obedience to the Scriptures as written, the results will be awesome. God has delegated to His church the responsibility of the Great Commission. Prayer and the ministry of the word are the two vital components of the

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ministry of apostles and therefore of all the ministries (**Acts 6:4**). Let us commit ourselves to prayer and see that God will raise apostles, preachers and teachers who will speak the word of God. AMEN!

STEPS TO GLORY

Submission is the Key

“Submitting to one another in the fear of God” Eph.5:21. All of God’s people are to be in submission to one another. ***“Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble” 1Pet.5:5.***

Submission is the bottom line, being an attitude of the heart as well as a decision of the will. Submission is linked to lowliness of mind. Jesus said, ***“I am gentle and lowly in heart”*** and He will teach us how to be like Him (**Matt.11:29**). Paul said, ***“Walk with all lowliness and gentleness” Eph.4:2.*** Lowliness and gentleness are necessary prerequisites to keeping ***“the unity of the Spirit”***. James said that the wisdom from above is ***“gentle and willing to yield” James 3:17.*** Submission to God is the key to victory over the devil (**Jam.4:7**).

It seems that God will place all of us in situations that may seem contrary to His ‘good, acceptable and perfect will’ so that we can learn submission. Even in our church placement or work position God can be at work in us by placing other people in our lives so that we learn submission. Submission is not only to those to whom it is easy to submit – submission is an attitude of the heart and can be learnt.

Submission is first to God and surely He is to be submitted to. Submission is secondly to those ***“who have the rule over us” (Heb.13:17).*** We live in an un-submitted and lawless generation and even in the church many resist leadership. Thirdly submission is to one another in the body of Christ.

Humility the key to grace

Submission is the key to humility. A submissive person is a humble person and humility is the key to receiving grace. **James 4:6** says, ***“But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: ‘God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.’”*** This confirms **1Peter 5:5b**. Peter goes on to say, ***“Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time” 1Pet.5:6.*** The exaltation of us by God is a work of grace and grace is accessed through faith. Faith is the gift of God that is discovered in our lives when we become desperate enough to turn to God; in other words, we exercise faith toward Him which comes out of humility – we cannot do it ourselves.

Humility is the opposite to pride. The proud man will be resisted by God and will fall. The humble man will be helped by God and will find favour [grace] in every situation, in every relationship. There is no law to govern humility but pride leads to an unfortunate end.

“Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up” Jam.4:10.
“A man’s pride will bring him low, but the humble in spirit will retain honour” Prov.29:23. God dwells with him who ***“has a contrite and humble spirit”***, and He will ***“revive the spirit of the humble” (Isa.57:15).***

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Grace the key to ministry

“As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If anyone speaks, speak as the oracles [utterances] of God. If any one ministers, as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ” 1Pet.4:10-11. Ministry in word and service is only possible by grace. It is *“the grace of God with me”* that labours *“more abundantly”* through Paul that accomplishes the work of God (1Cor.15:10). Effective ministry is a work of grace.

Paul said that he received a *“dispensation of grace”* to make known the revelation of the mystery (Eph.3:2-4). Paul said that he *“became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God”* (Eph.3:7), and that he was able to *“preach among the Gentiles”* according to this grace that was given to him as a minister. Again in Colossians Paul refers to the dispensation of grace given to him *“to fulfil the word of God”* (1:25).

Many of us have come through years of the Charismatic movement where the emphasis was on power and gifting and even though both power and gifting are of grace, we did not walk in that grace. Now that the spirit of sonship is being shed abroad in our hearts, we are beginning to walk in this great grace that God has freely bestowed upon us in the beloved (Eph.1:5-6).

Ministry the key to the mystery

“It has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven” Matt.13:11, but we need a teacher to unfold the mysteries. In fact, we need an apostle or a prophet who have been given the revelation of the mystery by the Spirit (Eph.3:5). It is God’s will *“to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles” Col.1:27*. The knowledge of the mystery is to be *“revealed to the saints”* (v.26). It is through ministry of the word that the knowledge of the mystery is made known. This is the teaching of the deeper wisdom (1Cor.2:6-7).

Most read the Bible at a very simple level and most preach and teach the word at a very simple level. Because of the dearth of true apostles and prophets who are able to make known the revelation of the mystery, the church in general has been left in immaturity. In our day God is raising true apostles and prophets who are able to make known the mystery, and once again the church is becoming apostolic by adhering to the apostles’ doctrine (Acts2:42 & Jude 3). Once the church is taught the doctrine then the doctrine is passed on by the ministers at every level (2Tim.2:2).

The mystery the key to the glory

It is through the ministry of the word to those who are no longer babes in Christ (Heb.5:12) but to those who are mature (1Cor.2:6) that the *“wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory”* (v.7) is made known. Paul says that it is this wisdom that reveals the glory of God in us. To the Colossians he said that it is through fulfilling the ministry of the word that the mystery is made known to the saints, and this is *“the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory” Col.1:25-27*.

What is the glory? Can we recognise it? Can we apprehend it? Grow in glory? Jesus is the manifestation or revelation of the glory of God: *“And the word became flesh and dwelt*

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among us and we beheld His glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth” Jn.1:14. Glory is ‘grace and truth’ in a man or a woman. The glory of God is revealed in and through Jesus Christ – He reflects and manifest’s God’s glory! (2Cor.4:6). His glory is to be seen in us, *“in earthen vessels”* (v7).

Glory the key to Oneness

Jesus asked the Father to restore the *“glory which I had with You before the world was”* (Jn17:5). Jesus then said that He was *“glorified in them”* (v10), His disciples, and as a result of the glory being manifested in the disciples, they would be **ONE** (v11).

Then Jesus prayed for *“those who believe in Me through their [apostles] word; that they all may be one”* (v20-21). Jesus was giving His glory to His disciples so that through them believers would receive glory. *“The glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are ONE”* v.22. God’s goal is for His glory to be revealed through His disciples so that *“the earth shall be filled with the glory of YAHWEH”* Num.14:21.

Oneness the key to becoming perfect

The result of the glory being bestowed upon the disciples and through them upon all believers was that all believers would be one in the revelation of the Godhead. Remember that the *“fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily in Christ”* (Col.2:9), and *“Christ in you is the hope of glory”* (Col.1:27), and *“You are complete [perfect] in Him”* (Col.2:10).

When Jesus is in us and the Father is in Jesus [which He always is], then *“they [disciples and believers] may be made perfect in one”* (Jn.17:23). When the glory of Jesus Christ the Eternal One is revealed [or beheld] by the believers then the awesome eternal love of God will be revealed in the earth through the believers and *“the world will know that the Father sent Jesus”* (v.23).

Submission is the Key to humility

Humility the key to grace

Grace the key to ministry

Ministry the key to the mystery

The mystery the key to the glory

Glory the key to Oneness

Oneness the key to becoming perfect

THE DWELLING PLACE OF GOD

“His foundation is in the holy mountains.

The LORD [Yahweh] loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob.

Glorious things are spoken of you, O city of God!” Ps.87:1-3.

This verse suggests that Jacob, representing God's people, has more than one dwelling place, but God loves His people to dwell with Him in Zion more than all. Where else do God's people dwell other than in Zion?

The Scripture says ***“Yahweh loves the gates of Zion”***. Gates represent the place of entry into a city and the authority in the city. This city of Zion is the city of the great King. In the natural it was known as the city of David, but Zion is the dwelling place of God:

“Yahweh has chosen Zion; He has desired it for His dwelling place: this My resting place forever; here I will dwell, for I have desired it” Ps. 132:13-14.

God's intention is clear: He will dwell in Zion. Therefore the people of God need to come to Zion.

You have come to Mount Zion

The New Testament confirms that as believers in Jesus Christ we have come to Mount Zion: ***“But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem” Heb.12:22.***

Many have assumed that the writer to the Hebrews is describing 'heaven', and we are yet to go to heaven. However the Scripture is clear: ***you have come*** to Mount Zion'.

Mount Zion is described to be the same as **the city of the living God** and the city of God is a corporate reference to the church of the living God. In fact understanding Zion is part of the great mystery that God is revealing in these days.

The church on earth desires revival and times of refreshing to strengthen them in faith as they wait for Jesus to come and yet God is revealing to us in the Scripture that the church on earth is already vitally linked to God in heaven and that the church has already come to dwell with God and God is desiring to dwell in the midst of His people.

Which Mountains are God's Foundations?

If God's foundations are in the holy mountains and Zion is the mountain of God's choice for a permanent dwelling place with His people, what are the holy mountains that constitute God's foundation?

In Scripture there are a few mountains of significance in terms of what took place on them, but in coming to Zion there are two mountains specifically that signify foundational experiences for the people of God in coming to know Him and being prepared to dwell with Him in Zion.

The two mountains are:

- Mount Moriah – the mountain of sacrifice
- Mount Horeb in Sinai – the mountain of God's manifestation and the giving of the law.

Let us look at these two mountains and understand the necessary foundations in our experience of coming to maturity in our life in Christ with God.

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MOUNT MORIAH

In **Genesis 22**, God instructed Abraham to *“Go to the land of Moriah and offer Isaac there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you”* v.2. When Abraham had bound Isaac and had taken the knife to slay his son (v.9-10), *“The Angel of Yahweh called to him from heaven”* and counseled Abraham (v.11-12); and then Abraham saw *“a ram caught in a thicket”* and he offered the ram instead of his son (v.13).

An important point to note is that Abraham **did not see** the LORD but **only heard His voice**. *“Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God”* Rom.10:17. The first step in coming to know God is to hear His voice [His word] and believe – we are saved through faith (Eph.2:8).

Hundreds of years later the temple of Solomon was built on Mount Moriah and this was the same place where *“the LORD had appeared to his father David, at the place that David had prepared on the threshing floor of Ornan, the Jebusite”* 2Chron.3:1. The mountain of sacrifice points to the cross of Jesus Christ and His perfect sacrifice for our sin. It is in the context of the mountain of sacrifice that we are saved by faith, and we are able to be saved, because Jesus died as the Lamb of God *“who takes away the sins of the world”* (Jn.1:29).

The **Feast of Passover** is based on the sacrifice of the lamb and this Feast also points to the cross of Jesus Christ and saving faith.

The place of blood sacrifice for sin was in the outer court of the **Tabernacle of Moses** and that altar also points to the cross of Jesus Christ, and the laver of water points to baptism of the believer and the word of God having a place in the believer’s life.

The first foundational mountain represents the experience of coming to salvation: **repentance and faith including water baptism for the salvation** of the person. This is represented in the Scripture by Mount Moriah.

Note again that God did not appear to Abraham at that mountain but he only heard the voice from heaven. He and Isaac were saved in that instance by faith – Abraham was obedient to the voice.

Many in the church today are camped [dwelling] at Mount Moriah, that is, they believe in the atoning sacrifice of Jesus on the cross and may even be baptized in water but their Christian experience is limited to that basic foundation of salvation. Many churches purposefully dwell at Mount Moriah, even assuming that they have arrived at their destination in God.

MOUNT HOREB IN SINAI

The second foundational mountain of significance, in understanding the establishment of God’s dwelling place with His people in the earth, is Mount Horeb.

Horeb was where Moses first met God in the burning bush (Ex.3:1). There was a manifestation of the Angel of the LORD in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush (v.2). It was to Horeb in the wilderness of Sinai that Moses brought the Israelites from Egypt (Deut.1:6,19; 4:10,15 & other references).

What happened at Horeb?

God manifested in frightening ways with *“thunderings and lightnings, and a thick cloud on the mountain; and the sound of the trumpet was very loud so that all the people who were in the camp trembled”* Ex.19:16.

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At Horeb God gave the law. This was the first **Pentecost!** And the feast of Pentecost was the second annual feast celebrated by Israel until the time Jesus came. Pentecost was fulfilled by the Holy Spirit coming and writing the law on the hearts of believers.

The pentecostal experience is characterised by a manifestation of God through the Spirit in the life of the believer. There is still no clear vision of the Lord Jesus Christ in His fullness but an empowerment by the Spirit to serve Him. There are signs and wonders, healings and miracles in the Pentecostal experience.

The second foundational experience is also represented by the second compartment of the Tabernacle of Moses, that is, the Holy Place where the priests entered to minister to God. Believers who have received the Holy Spirit are able to minister to God through praise and worship.

The destination

However, the destination of the Israelites coming out of Egypt was not the Mount of Horeb. Rather the Mount of Horeb was a designated meeting place with God to prepare and equip them for the wilderness journey but the destination was always to reach the land.

The second foundational mountain is important and essential in preparing the people of God to come to a more permanent dwelling place in God which is represented by Mount Zion. However the people of God cannot stay camped at Horeb. In the contemporary church millions of believers and many thousands of churches are camped at Horeb. God's people have congregated around the Pentecostal experience – signs, wonders, manifestations [tongues] and mistakenly believe that they have arrived at the fullness of what God has for His people.

But **God intends to dwell in Zion!** God loves all of His people wherever they are dwelling but His intention and His clearly stated purpose is for His people to dwell with Him in Mount Zion.

MOUNT ZION

Zion was originally established by David as **the seat of his government [throne]** and it was to Zion that David brought the Ark of the Covenant so **the Lord's presence dwelt in Zion.**

i) There are springs in Zion

The secret to David being able to capture the stronghold of Zion was to know that there were **underground springs**. Joab went up the watershaft and overcame the Jebusites (**2Sam.5:8**). From the time that David established 'God's government' on Mount Zion, Zion became symbolic of God's throne and symbolic of God's final and permanent dwelling place with His people.

ii) God prepares Zion

There is a time when God ***"will arise and have mercy on Zion. For the time to favour her, yes the set time has come"*** Ps.102:13.

"For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance among the remnant whom YAHWEH calls" Joel 2:32 (cf. Isa.37:31-32).

iii) God's government is in Zion

"The LORD said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand, till I make your enemies your footstool.' The LORD shall send the rod of Your strength out of Zion. Rule in the midst of your enemies!" Ps.110:1-2

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Psalm 110 makes it clear that God rules from Mount Zion through Messiah Jesus. He exercises judgment over kings, nations and heads of government.

iv) The glory is in Zion

God has promised to *“build up Zion; He shall appear in His glory”* in Zion (**Ps.102:16**).

The glory shall be revealed in Zion. *“Then YAHWEH will create above every dwelling place of Mount Zion, and above her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day and the shining of a flaming fire by night. For over all the glory there will be a covering”* Isa.4:5.

v) Judgment comes out of Zion

“Then saviours [deliverers] shall come to Mount Zion to judge the mountains of Esau, and the kingdom shall be YAHWEH’s” Obad. v21.

When the saints come to maturity, having grown through the foundational experiences of salvation and of ministering in the power of the Holy Spirit, they will be as *“saviours/delivers”* coming out of Zion. Judgment is released in the earth through the saints.

It is the preaching and teaching of the word of God through the ministries that Christ has set in the church that the church comes to maturity. Finally it is the mature word coming out of the whole church, that brings judgment on principalities and powers who currently rule the nations through unjust men exercising authority outside of Christ (**Eph.3:8-10**).

Our destiny is Zion

The Scripture has much to say about Zion. Our destiny is *“to appear before God in Zion”* **Ps.84:7**. The ones who will come to Zion are those *“whose heart is set on pilgrimage”* (v.5). This pilgrimage is a reference to the people of God coming up to Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. All of the Feasts were to be remembered every year but the first two feasts of Passover and Weeks [Pentecost] had originally taken place outside of the land. The **Feast of Tabernacles** could only take place in the land of inheritance, at the end of the journey or pilgrimage from Egypt to the Land.

The feast of Tabernacles became the most important feast and it is related inextricably to understanding Zion – God’s dwelling place with His people. The Feast of Tabernacles is a type of God dwelling with His people in the earth.

The Holy of Holies, the third and final compartment of the Tabernacle of Moses, was where the glorious presence of God dwelt. His glory was referred to as the *Shekinah*, and His glory shone forth from the Ark of the Covenant.

In church history and practice, the Feast of Tabernacles has been forgotten and ignored and replaced by the Christmas festival which worships a baby Jesus and ignores the King who rules and reigns out of Zion. The reality of the fulfillment of the Tabernacle of Moses being found in the church of Jesus Christ has been replaced by denominational Christianity. The glory of Zion has been replaced by the glory of Rome and the Papacy, by the protestant-ism of Lutheranism, by the glory of the Church of England and her royal head, by the doctrine of the Presbyterians etc. The members of those churches and the Christian world in general look to worldly grandeur and success rather than submitting to the word of

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God and humbly and boldly making the pilgrimage to Zion, going on the walk of sanctification to maturity in Christ.

It is time for the church to come to Zion; to come to the Feast of Tabernacles in fulfillment; to come into the experience of the glory of God. This is what Paul is referring to in **Colossians 1:26-28** when he is talking about the riches of God's glory being revealed in the saints. It is ***"the riches of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory"***. Therefore it is time for the word of God to be preached again; it is time for the word of God to be taught, precept upon precept, setting the foundations in place and warning every man that perfection in Christ is the goal (**Col.1:28**).

God spoke on Mount Moriah

Every Christian life must be properly founded on the clearly taught Biblical foundations of repentance from dead works and faith toward God through Jesus Christ. This includes Biblical baptism, not the sprinkling of infants on the faith of their parents in an institutional ceremony, but on the basis of the individual person being born again by the Spirit of God to believe in and experientially know Jesus Christ.

God manifested His presence on Mount Horeb

Every Christian needs to know the empowering of the Holy Spirit; to know the power of God to heal the sick; to know the authority of the name of Jesus to cast out devils; to be able to worship and minister to God through praise and prayer and intercession.

But God dwells with His people in Mount Zion

God is calling His people home. God spoke on Mount Moriah, and Abraham's faith was proven.

God manifested His presence in signs and wonders and gave the law written on tablets of stone to the people of God on Mount Horeb [Sinai].

But God did not stay at Mount Moriah. God did not stay at Mount Horeb. God declared through David that He would dwell in Zion. He led David to capture Mount Zion in the natural and to establish David's throne there. Through the Psalms and through the later prophets, God began to speak about Zion as His permanent dwelling place. He spoke many things about Zion. We have only summarily referred to some of them in this teaching.

The New Testament declares ***"But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem"*** Heb.12:22. We have come! Everything that God intends for His people is now available to us. We are to come! We are to be a people of pilgrimage. The church has not arrived but rather the church is meant to be a people of pilgrimage. The success of our denomination or even our local fellowship is not the goal but the embracing and entering in to God's purpose is the goal.

***"Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,
and to the house of the God of Jacob;
He will teach us of His ways and we will walk in His paths.
For out of Zion the law shall go forth,
and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem"***
Micah 4:2.

THE CHURCH! THE KINGDOM!

The kingdom of God is the place where God is fully obeyed. That obedience is by faith. God is not fully obeyed in nature because nature [the creation] is under a curse (**Rom.8:20-21**). God is not obeyed by the demonic forces [principalities and powers etc] for they remain in total rebellion to the kingdom of God.

The kingdom of God is the manifestation of God's righteousness (**Rom.14:17**). God's righteousness is imputed to the believer through faith, even as it was to Abraham (**Rom.4:5-25**). We can only be righteous through faith in Jesus the Son of God and therefore the kingdom of God can only be manifest through the saints, the true believers, the members of the body of Christ.

Jesus is the Christ, which is the translation of Messiah. Messiah is the Anointed One, that is, the Anointed King and the Anointed Priest, who are one and the same person. There is a lack of understanding of Christ: who is Christ? Whose Son is He? What does Christ/Messiahship mean?

Paul tells us in **Ephesians 3:8**, that he was graced especially to preach the **unsearchable riches of Messiah to the Gentiles**. Why only to the Gentiles? Why not to the Jews as well? Paul's commission was *"to bear His name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel"* **Acts9:15**.

The children of Israel had an historic and Scriptural understanding of Messiah and an expectation of His coming. The Gentiles to this day have no such understanding or expectation and as a result of that, we have preached a Saviour only, not understanding who Jesus is as the King manifest in the flesh and the King now ruling from the throne of David above.

Jesus is the Messiah.

As Messiah, Jesus is the Anointed King. When Jesus manifested as the Son of God in the earth, He was the manifestation of the Anointed King, the one who had been prophesied as **"SHILOH"**, a great ruler to come out of Judah (**Gen.49:10**). He was the greater son of David (**2Sam.7:12-14a**). He was the one who would rule the nations (**Ps.2 & 110**). Jesus is the KING! There is no kingdom without Jesus.

Jesus told the Pharisees *"the kingdom of God is in your midst"* (**Lu.17:21**). Were the Pharisees in the kingdom? No! They wanted to kill the king who was in their midst. Where the King is, there is the kingdom.

The kingdom of God is the manifestation of God's righteousness, peace and joy; **the kingdom of God is in the Holy Spirit** (**Rom.14:17**). Jesus said *'My kingdom is not of this world'* (**Jn18:36**). The kingdom of God is a spiritual kingdom! There are no demons in the kingdom of God. When demons are cast out, Jesus said the kingdom has come (**Matt.12:28**).

The only place where the kingdom of God can be found is among God's people who are obediently submitting to Him! The only body of people who can manifest the kingdom of God is the church, that is, the true church: members who have been joined to the Head, placed in the body by the Spirit through baptism! (**1Cor.12:12-13,18**).

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Prior to baptism which places us in the body, we must be **born again [from above] of the Spirit of God to enter the kingdom**. Baptism does not cause us to enter the kingdom. We enter the kingdom through the new birth (**Jn.3:5-6**). We cannot even see the kingdom until we are born again (**Jn.3:3**). Once we are born again, that is, receiving Jesus by faith into our hearts, knowing our sins have been forgiven (**Jn.1:12-13**), then we are baptised into Christ, the Messiah, the King. The church is the body of Christ; the body of the King.

What is the church?

The church is the *ecclesia*. This is the Greek word used by the Holy Spirit for church. Most say it simply means *the called out ones*. That is true, but what is the origin of this word?

The word comes from ancient Greek culture and specifically from the city state of Athens. It was the popular assembly of citizens [all males over the age of 30]. In Athens, the *ecclesia* was a body of citizens responsible for appointing magistrates and having the final say on legislation and on war and peace. The *ecclesia* elected, on an annual basis, a council which was responsible for the government of the city.

When Jesus said ***“I will build my church”*** (**Matt.16:18**), what was He saying? He told Peter that because Peter had been given revelation of Jesus being both **Christ [Messiah]** and **Son of God [God manifest in the flesh]**, He could now go ahead and build His *ecclesia*. This *ecclesia* would have such authority that the gates of hell [authorities of evil] would never overcome the church [the governing body] that He was building.

The keys of the kingdom

Then Jesus said to Peter ***“I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven”*** (**v.19**). The authority of the church is expressed as **the keys of the kingdom**, the power to bind and to loose with heavenly authority [the authority of the King].

Because of tradition, we have many different ideas and views about church. Because of such views many today are talking about kingdom, that is, understanding the authority of God in the earth, as if it is something separate to church. We judge and dismiss church on the basis of our own experience in denominations and other institutional forms of men governing the church rather than understanding that:

**the church is the appointed body of King Jesus to rule in the
earth as the vehicle and expression and manifestation
of His kingdom, the kingdom of God.**

Jesus the Man embodied the kingdom of God because He was fully obedient to God in the earth. The body of Jesus Christ will embody the kingdom as we become fully obedient. In **2 Corinthians 10:3-6**, Paul tells us how to walk in a growing exercise of governmental [spiritual] authority that is manifest through the power of God to pull down strongholds, cast down arguments and every high thing. We are to bring every thought [device or contrivance of the mind] captive to the obedience of Christ. What will be the result? When our obedience is fulfilled or complete, we will be ready to punish all disobedience.

Jesus said ***“I will build My church”***. Men took over from Jesus and built the church according to their own idea. Jesus never said ‘I will build My kingdom’. In more recent times some have realised that Jesus is building His church, and that is good; but now we say we are to get on with building or extending the kingdom. Again this expression of what we are to do

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is just as faulty as wanting to build the church because inevitably we can only build something of ourselves.

The kingdom of God is in existence in the realm of the Spirit;

- **It is the eternal kingdom of God**
- **It is the rule of God**
- **It cannot be built**
- **It cannot be extended by us**
- **But it is to be preached by us**
- **And will be manifested through us as we come to a mature obedience**

Apostles and Prophets

Apostles and prophets are not the foundation of the kingdom; they are the foundation of the church (**Eph.2:20**). The work of the ministry is not to build the kingdom but to *“equip/perfect the saints and build up the body of Christ, doing the work of the ministry until”* the church comes to perfection (**Eph.4:11-13**), fully revealing the rule of God in the earth.

Apostles and prophets are to make known the mystery of the church; firstly, that the Gentiles are one body in Christ with the Jews, and secondly, that when the fellowship of the mystery is known, *“the manifold wisdom of God will be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly realm”* (**Eph.3:5-10**). This will lead to the full submission of *“things in heaven, things in the earth and things beneath the earth”* to the Lordship of Jesus the Christ (**Phil.2:9-11**).

The kingdom is revealed in the church

It seems that many are reaching out to grasp a concept of the kingdom and no doubt the kingdom is the subject of the gospel, but in so doing, there is a lot of imbalance being preached and the church is not understood.

- **The kingdom of God is the inheritance of the church in the earth.**
- **The church is meant to be the governing expression of the kingdom of God.**
- **The King, Jesus, will rule, legislate and have His commands carried out through His *ecclesia*, the church.**
- **The church are the ambassadors of Christ!**
- **The members of the church are appointed as ministers of reconciliation on behalf of God in Christ!**
- **The church is the body of Him who is the King and the King is in us!**

The whole church is the *ecclesia*

It is interesting to note that in the church council of **Acts 15**, that the apostles and elders *“came together to consider the matter”*. The council was resolved by the Holy Spirit leading James to share from **Amos** and give understanding of what God was doing. The council then involved the whole church in their decision and *“it pleased ... the whole church”* (**Acts 15:22**). The letter, that was written, was written by *“the apostles, the elders and the brethren”* and it was written to *“the brethren who are of the Gentiles”* v.23. This is a wonderful example of the *ecclesia* at work. The citizens of God’s kingdom [heaven above

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Phil.3:20] exercising their appointed role as the ones called out of the world system to govern in the kingdom of God on the earth.

The kingdom and the church are inseparable

Prophetically, both **Isaiah (ch2)** and **Micah (ch4)** speak of the kingdom [the mountain] and the church, [the LORD's house] as being *“established upon the top of the mountains and exalted above the hills. Many nations shall come and say, ‘Come and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob’”*. The mountain is referring to the establishment of God's kingdom in the earth – it has become the kingdom above all other kingdoms, and at the pinnacle of the kingdom is the house of God, *“which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth” 1Tim.3:15.*

The church is the *ecclesia* of the kingdom of God. The word that the nations will receive does not come from the kingdom; it comes from the church. The church is absolutely essential in bringing forth the kingdom by preaching the gospel and teaching the word of God, making known His laws. The result of the *ecclesia* of God being established as the ruling/legislative body of Christ in the earth, fully preaching and expressing and manifesting the kingdom of God, is that nations will cease from war. Have you ever imagined what will happen when nations stop spending billions of dollars on armaments and instead build houses and provide health and education services to all peoples of the earth. *“Everyone shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree, no one shall make them afraid; for the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken” Mic.4:4.*

In the meantime the *ecclesia* is to exist in the city; it is to exist in the regions; and it is to exist in the houses of brethren. As the church grows to maturity, the kingdom of God will be manifest through the church in the city; through the church of the towns of the region; and in every local area through the houses of the saints. God's eternal purpose will be fulfilled in manifestation. His eternal purpose has already been fulfilled through Jesus Christ's appearing (**Eph.3:11, 2Tim.1:10**).

APOSTLES – THE MASTER BUILDERS

What is an Apostle?

To understand 'what is an apostle', we need to first of all understand or 'consider' the apostle, Jesus Christ. **Hebrews 3:1** says *“Therefore holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus.”* As the apostle, Jesus is building the house of God, *“whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end.”* v6.

Literally the Greek word *apostolos* means 'a sent one'. Jesus is the 'sent one' of God. An apostle is sent by someone. The first twelve were sent by Jesus (**Jn.17:18**). We need to note that the word 'sent' in **John 17:18** and in a number of other verses, is the Greek word, *apostello*, which means to send, to send as a delegate or to set at liberty.

An apostle is sent by someone and is meant to represent that one. Jesus was sent by the Father and represented the Father, that is, He made the Father known to men. Whoever received Jesus received the Father (**Jn.14:9-10a**). In **Matthew 10:40** Jesus told the apostles when He was first sending them out, *“Whoever receives you receives Me and whoever receives Me receives Him who sent me”*.

Apostles in the New Testament

In fact when one begins to look for apostles in the New Testament, we find that they are talked about everywhere. It is very surprising that in the church that we are a part of, we mostly only hear of pastors. We do not hear of apostles; we are told that there are no apostles today; yet we automatically assume that there are pastors today. By what authority do we make such decisions?

In the New Testament, apostles are referred to many times and at least 26 people are called apostles, and it seems that others are referred to. There are no direct references to pastors except in **Ephesians.4:11** *“He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers”*. No one person is actually called a pastor in the New Testament.

By what authority do you say you are a pastor? For many it is on the basis of denominational authority or man's practice only; it is not by divine appointment, and yet all of the ministries in the New Testament church are by divine appointment. *“God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues”* 1Cor.12:28.

Apostles mentioned by name

The **twelve apostles of the Lamb**, Matthias replacing Judas.

The twelve in Matt.10:2-4; Matthias in Acts 1:26;

Other apostles given by Christ in His ascension Eph.4:11

Paul and Barnabas in Acts 13:2 & 14:14;

Andronicus and Junia [and other apostles referred to] in Rom.16:7;

Apollos by inference in 1Cor.1:12 & 4:6; Apollos is spoken of along with Paul & Peter

Titus in 2Cor.8:23, - messenger in KJV is literally *apostle*.

James, the brother of the Lord in Gal.1:19; The brothers of the Lord in 1Cor.9:5 - they are named in Mark6:3 to be James, Joses, Judas, Simon;

Epaphroditus in Phil.2:25 – messenger in KJV is literally *apostle*, same Greek word *apostolos*.

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Silvanus and Timothy in 1Thess1:1 & 2:6

Who sent Paul as an apostle?

Acts 13:2-4a says the Holy Spirit told the leaders at the church in Antioch to *“separate to me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them. Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit ...”*. They were sent out by the Holy Spirit but the Holy Spirit used the gathered leaders, *“certain prophets and teachers”* (v1) to actually send them.

In **Acts 14:4 & 14**, Barnabas and Saul, now called Paul, are identified as apostles. They are no longer referred to as a prophet and a teacher, but as apostles. They are not apostles of the Lamb (**Rev.21:14**). There can only ever be 12 of them, and Matthias (**Acts 1:25-26**) replaced Judas to be the twelfth apostle.

So what sort of apostles are Paul and Barnabas and others referred to in the New Testament? They are apostles according to the ascension gift ministries given by Jesus when He ascended (**Eph.4:7-12**). Note that the gift ministry of apostle was finally released to the twelve by the Spirit after Jesus had ascended - they were empowered by the gift on the day of Pentecost, but the twelve are always unique because *“they had been with Jesus from the baptism of John to that day when He was taken up”* (**Acts 1:21-22**).

All other apostles are appointed by Jesus in His ascension. To deny that there are apostles today is to deny that Jesus is seated on the throne.

What is the task of the Apostle?

To build the house of God

It has already been mentioned that the task is firstly to represent and to make the sender known. The mission or task of an apostle is then to **build the house of God**. Jesus declared in **Matthew 16:18** that He would build the church. He had already appointed the twelve apostles and it was by training them and preparing them that Jesus knew that the church would be founded according to His will. Then **in His ascension He gave the five-fold ministries to build on His behalf**.

To lay the right foundation

Paul tells us in **1Corinthians 3:10-11** that as an apostle he is a *‘wise master builder’* who is able to **lay the right foundation** - which is Christ Jesus - and to set the building plan in place so that other ministries can build on that right foundation. The foundational role of the apostles is confirmed in **Ephesians 2:19-22** where Paul says that the house of God is built on the foundation of apostles and prophets. Even though the church has ignored the ministries of apostle and prophet for centuries, the Scripture is clear that they are necessary foundation ministries for the building of the church.

What is the grace of an apostle?

To be a father

Firstly the apostle is to be a father, bringing up the children to be sons. In **1Corinthians 4:14-16**, Paul talks to the Corinthian church as *“my beloved children”*. He said *“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”*.

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Paul writes to the Galatians in a similar way. *“My little children, for whom I labour in birth again until Christ is formed in you” Gal.4:19*. The Galatians are already saved and Paul was the one who preached to them. As an apostle Paul took responsibility to bring up the ones he brought to Christ. He was a father to them and he was concerned that they would grow to maturity in Christ.

Are apostles the only ones to be fathers in the body of Christ? No! All mature ones are to be as fathers, but one of the manifestations of apostolic grace is the fathering spirit, that brings up the children to maturity, becoming fathers in due time. The apostle John recognized three generations in the church at any given time: little children, young men and fathers (1Jn.2:12-14).

To bring forth revelation

Secondly the grace on the apostle is to bring forth revelation, to make known the mystery (Eph.3:2-8). Paul talks about the grace that God gave him to understand and to explain the mystery of Christ and His church. He refers to this again in Colossians 1:25-26a *“I became a minister according to the stewardship which was given to me from God for you, to fulfill the word of God, the mystery ...”*.

Oh, how the church needs accurate preaching and teaching of the word today!

Oh, how we need the exposition of the Scriptures, not the opinions and concepts of men!

Oh, how we need *“the deeper wisdom, the mystery, which God ordained before the ages for our glory”* 1Cor.2:7.

To be a master builder

Thirdly the grace on the apostle enables the apostle to be a master builder (1Cor.3:10); to have the vision to build the church and to facilitate the other ministries to work together to bring the church to maturity (Eph.4:12-13). As we return to the New Testament pattern of ministry, making disciples rather than building churches, as we follow the apostolic example of the apostles and brethren in the Scriptures we will become *“a pattern for others to follow”* (Phil.3:17).

To recognise the calling of others to ministry

Fourthly the grace of the apostle is to discern and recognise the calling upon individuals' lives to become ministers; to raise them up in the ministry; and finally to send them out to do the work of the ministry.

Timothy in the Scripture is a marvelous example of this. It is recorded in Acts 16 that Timothy was a disciple *“well spoken of by the brethren”* (v2). Paul wanted Timothy to go with him, and he did. Paul trained Timothy for the ministry and in due time was able to send Timothy out in ministry as *“a beloved and faithful son in the Lord”* (1Cor.4:17). Even when Timothy is operating autonomously in ministry, Paul writes to him, exhorting him to *“stir up the gift of God which is in you”* (2Tim.1:6).

To love the church

Fifthly, the grace of the apostle is to love the body of Christ. Paul loved the church dearly. He said to the Corinthians *“Our heart is wide open”* (2Cor.6:11). In another place he talks of the all-consuming burden of the churches that he carried (2Cor.11:28).

The reality of Apostleship!

The word apostleship is used four times in the New Testament. It is the Greek word *apostole*. This word means 'commission'. We call the instructions that Jesus gave to the apostles in **Matthew 28:19-20** the Great Commission. The Great Commission is to go to nations to make disciples. Notice that in the making of disciples, bringing them to faith and baptism is only the first part of discipleship; and yet, worldwide, the church only concentrates on "getting people saved" so they can go to heaven, and fails to teach them the word of God so that they can be effective disciples in the world, demonstrating the reality of Christ and His kingdom.

1) The specific calling to be an apostle

Apostleship is mentioned in **Acts 1:25**, and refers specifically to one of the disciples becoming the 'twelfth apostle of the Lamb'. In general **apostleship here refers to the specific calling of a person to be an apostle**. Two men qualified to become the twelfth apostle but one was chosen - this was his predestination based on God's calling and choice, not on man's qualifications or choosing.

A person needs to know the specific calling and appointment to be an apostle. Paul bore witness that he had **seen the Lord**! Many have said that an apostle today needs to have seen the Lord. While this is not strictly stated in Scripture, the principle is important. Many are confused today about **who are apostles**?

My testimony is that I have seen the Lord; I know I am an apostle by His commissioning and appointment. Therefore the opinion of others holds no sway with me. If you are a minister of Christ you need to know His appointment.

2) A ministry to the nations

Apostleship is mentioned in **Romans 1:5**, and here Paul tells us that **"grace and apostleship"** are the means whereby nations are brought to **"the obedience of faith"**. **Grace and apostleship are the means God gives to fulfill the Great Commission.**

The Great Commission is to make disciples of all nations. We can have a vision to reach a certain people or to plant so many churches, but God has commissioned us to reach all nations by making disciples and it is by the grace He gives and by the gift and ministry of apostleship that we are enabled to reach whole nations.

This is done not primarily by preaching the gospel nor by planting churches but by making disciples, which includes preaching, baptizing and teaching. Making disciples is the means to multiplication, and thus fulfilling the Great Commission.

In Christ we have received grace and apostleship to reach whole nations and to reach all nations.

In our ministry to the nations, as the teams go out from SHILOH, we are seeing nations being reached. An example of this has taken place in Kenya. A brother who was the presiding bishop of the largest Pentecostal denomination [4000+ churches] in that nation, came to Australia in late 2006. In Australia he met some disciples who gave him some of my teaching material that opens up the apostles' doctrine.

When I went to Kenya in '07, he asked me to come and teach his pastors the apostles' doctrine. We did this as a team in a small way in 2007 and then in 2008 I spent two and a half weeks serving with the bishop in a number of seminars for pastors of that denomination.

The leader of another denomination in Kenya [2700 pastors] is a personal friend who has received revelation of the apostolic and openly makes teaching available to the pastors of that denomination. It is not a Pentecostal denomination.

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By faithfully teaching the apostles' doctrine, which is all that Jesus commanded us (**Matt.28:19**) and all that the Holy Spirit revealed to Paul and others as written in the New Testament, we are witnessing nations being reached. The apostles' doctrine is non-denominational; it is not bound in any way; it is the straightforward teaching of the word of God as it is written.

3) The fruit of the ministry

Apostleship is mentioned in **1Corinthians 9:2**, *"You are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord"*. This refers to the home-based fruit of the individual apostle. Paul is saying that the Corinthian brethren are the proof of his apostleship.

Each apostle who is truly ministering as an apostle will be able to develop a home base or a number of churches who are the fruit of the ministry and thereby the certification of apostleship. Then the apostle or apostles or an apostolic delegate such as Barnabas in **Acts 11** being sent to the new church in Antioch (**v22**), are sent out from the home base. There needs to be someone to send and a base to be sent from!

Apostleship is much more than being a successful itinerant minister. There needs to be fruit of the apostle's ministry in the home base and in the ministries [sons] raised by the apostle. For example Paul was able to send Timothy *"my beloved and faithful son in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways in Christ"* **1Cor.4:17**. Paul was confidently able to send out Timothy and to know that he would fully represent him. Timothy was fruit of Paul's ministry.

In sending Onesimus home to the master, Philemon, Paul said, *"I appeal to you for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten while in my chains ... I am sending him back. Therefore receive him, that is, my own heart"* **Phile. v10-12**. The change in Onesimus that would be evident to Philemon, was the fruit of Paul's ministry.

Paul says that he was *"an apostle of Jesus Christ according to the faith of God's elect"* **Tit.1:1**. He said to the Corinthians *"If I am not an apostle to others, yet doubtless I am to you"* **1Cor.9:2**. If you are an apostle, then who are you an apostle to? This question must be able to be answered.

4) The sphere of the ministry

Apostleship is mentioned in **Galatians 2:8** and here it refers to the sphere of ministry of particular apostles. Peter was recognised as the one responsible to take the gospel to the 'circumcised', and Paul to the 'uncircumcised'.

These were very large spheres of responsibility and we know that many other apostles were involved in both spheres. Thomas, one of the twelve, took the gospel to India. Recently we were ministering in India and found that the legacy of Thomas is still a reality today.

Paul speaks of the sphere of ministry in **2 Corinthians 10:12-18**. He makes some important points:

- we are not to compare ourselves *"with those who commend themselves"* **v12**
- we are not to try to measure ourselves or compare ourselves with others **v12**
- we need to know the limits or boundaries of the sphere of ministry *"which God has appointed us"* **v13**
- we are to know where we have authority **v14**
- we are not to boast *"beyond measure"* or *"in other men's labours"* **v15a**
- the faith of the brethren in the apostle's own sphere enlarges the apostle's effectiveness **v15b**

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- we are to preach the gospel ***“in the regions beyond” v16a***; the apostolic message is to cover the whole earth.
- we are ***“not to boast in another man’s sphere of accomplishment” v16b***

The sphere of ministry of an apostle has to begin somewhere. For Paul it was to be sent out on a missionary journey. He came back from that journey having effectively planted churches, by having made disciples.

When we began our ministry in Toowoomba at the beginning of 1998, we began by teaching the word, breaking bread and praying from house to house. Within time, we had disciples who had become part of the ministry. By mid 2001 there were enough disciples to form an apostolic company. Out of this base I personally have been able to go to the nations with teams and many others have gone in teams from SHILOH apostolic company to the nations.

From mid 1999 we had been able to establish short term training schools and now we have a functioning apostolic training centre.

There is a plan

The church cannot be built without functioning apostles. Paul said, ***“as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it” 1Cor.3:10***. The typical church scene today is one of confusion. Every church leader, including pastors of denominational churches, are building after their own vision, after their own will. They do not relate to an apostle; they have not been trained in apostolic doctrine and understanding of the word of God; and therefore the church is being built in every which way, not representing the church of the Scripture and failing to reflect the glory of God.

It is important to understand apostles, the ministry of an apostle and apostleship in these days of restoration. Many are called apostles or are calling themselves apostles in these days. Many are asking how do we know who is an apostle? I trust this short teaching helps us recognize and receive the ministry gift of the apostle, that Christ has set in the church.

APOSTOLIC THEOLOGY

Lack of Bible knowledge

Returning from Asia in March '08, where I had taught in pastors and leaders seminars in Myanmar and India for one month, I was concerned by the lack of Bible knowledge. Many of the brethren who gathered had degrees in Theology, some even with Masters and Doctorates. However, no matter what degree they had, there seemed to be a prevailing ignorance of the Scriptures, 'as it is written'.

I found it necessary to ask the seminar delegates to agree with me at the beginning of the seminar that a fundamental precept of our faith is to believe that **“the Scriptures are our only authority for faith and practice”** and that **“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine [teaching], for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” 2Tim.3:16.**

Theology

The word *theology* comes from two Greek words: *theos* meaning *God* and *logos* meaning *the word*. Strictly speaking, theology should be the study of the word of God. However extensive disciplines and schools of theological thought have developed over the centuries and most who attend Bible College or Seminary are taught according to one or other of these schools rather than actually taught the word as it is written.

In referring to apostolic theology, I simply mean a profound return to Scripture as it is written, understanding context and applying the word as the apostles in the New Testament did.

The Canon of Scripture

The Scriptures are complete! This was agreed upon at the beginning of the church age and those responsible for the Canon of the New Testament received amazing inspiration and confirmation by the Holy Spirit to carry out this very important responsibility. It is fundamental for us to accept that Canon of Scripture, both the Old and New Testament, not adding to nor subtracting from the written text.

We must be very careful in giving our interpretations of Scripture and teaching our 'revelation' of types and shadows in the Old Testament. **‘In the beginning was the word, not an interpretation.’**

SEVEN TENETS OF BIBLICAL THEOLOGY – HOW TO STUDY AND INTERPRET SCRIPTURE:

1. The Bible is the Word of God

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God” 2Tim.3:16.

“For prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit” 2Pet.1:21.

Fundamental to our study of the word of God is the acceptance that **the Bible is the word of God**. There is a denomination in Australia that has written in their foundational document that 'the Bible contains the word of God'. In the case of that denomination they now justify the ordination of practising homosexuals.

Jesus overcame the temptations of the devil by knowing 'what is written' (**Matt.4:1-11, Lu.4:1-14**).

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Jesus makes it clear that the word of God is our judge (**Jn.12:48**). Jesus made it clear that He was not speaking His own word but the command of the Father, *“What I should say and what I should speak. And I know that His command is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak”* **Jn.12:49-50**.

Paul is adamant that we should *“not think beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up on behalf of one against the other”* **1Cor.4:6**. Our only authority for faith and practice is the word of God. As soon as we go beyond that, we have no reliable *“plumb line”* to judge the reliability of what is being shared.

“For these seven [referring to Holy Spirit] rejoice to see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel. They are the eyes of the LORD, which scan to and fro throughout the whole earth” **Zech.4:10**. Zerubbabel is a type of the apostle; his task was to build the house of God. The primary apostolic task is to build the house of God. The plumb line is *“the word of YAHWEH to Zerubbabel”* v.6. Therefore we are to be judged and to judge all things by the word of the Lord Jesus as it comes through His apostles (**2Pet.3:2**), and as the *rhema* [quicken word] comes to each one of us (**Rom.10:17**).

2. The New Testament is Found in the Old Testament; the Old Testament is Fulfilled in the New Testament

“And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself” **Lu.24:27**. Jesus only had Old Testament Scriptures as did the first apostles, but they were able to preach the gospel powerfully from the Old Testament.

“Then He said to them, ‘These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and Psalms concerning Me.’ And He opened their understanding that they might comprehend the Scriptures” **Lu.24:44-45**.

The key is to have our understanding opened. Paul’s prayer in **Ephesians 1:17-18** is a key for us: ask God for the spirit of wisdom and revelation and for our understanding to be opened to know Christ in both New and Old Testaments.

“For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope” **Rom.15:4**.

“Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come” **1Cor. 10:11**. The Old Testament Scriptures are meant to instruct us in patience and comfort us, bringing us to a living hope in Christ at the end of the age.

“The gospel of God which He promised through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures” **Rom.1:1-2**. To understand the gospel, we need to understand the teaching and promises of God from the book of **Genesis** to **Malachi**, and to see that those promises and that teaching is fulfilled in the New Testament.

Philip preached Jesus from the book of Isaiah (**Acts 8:30-35**). He preached so effectively that the Ethiopian man asked for baptism immediately.

The book of **Hebrews** is a marvellous interpretation of the Old Testament, showing the fulfilment of the Old Testament in Jesus Christ and therefore the Old Testament is fulfilled in the New.

3. Compare Scripture with Scripture

The teaching of the Bible on any particular subject is the sum total of all that the Bible says about that subject. Through the use of a Concordance we are able to do exhaustive studies of words, characters, places and even themes in the Bible. We can find out what the Bible says about a particular subject and preach and teach the word of God with authority.

The character of Enoch, the son Jared, is a simple example of comparing Scripture with Scripture. Enoch is first mentioned in **Genesis 5:18-24**; he is mentioned in the genealogy of Jesus in **Luke 3:37**. Then we have the interpretation [fulfilment] in **Hebrews 11:5-6**, and the only other mention is in **Jude 14-15**, where Enoch is shown to be a prophet and having insight to the second coming of Christ. From these few direct references to the man Enoch, the seventh from Adam [not to be confused with Enoch the son of Cain], we are able to preach and teach a wonderful message concerning the glorification of the church.

4. Scripture interprets Scripture

The temptation for Bible students is to rush to look up commentators and what Bible scholars have said about the Scripture or to simply believe doctrines that one has been taught that do not stand the test of Scriptural authority or the true interpretation of Scripture [this is called hermeneutics].

Some examples of Scripture interpreting Scripture:

In **Revelation 1:20**, Jesus interprets the stars and the lampstands. Because of this interpretive verse we can then understand the symbolism of the golden lampstand in the Tabernacle of Moses, and in **Zechariah 4**, and we receive help to understand **Revelation 11:4** which identifies the two witnesses as *“two lampstands”*.

In **John 3:5-6**, Jesus interprets the *water* as *flesh* birth or natural birth. We need no further interpretation of the water in this context!

In **Matthew 13**, Jesus interprets the first two parables word by word. Therefore we have in the Scripture the authoritative interpretation of those parables.

5. Teach and Interpret Scripture in Context

Every verse of Scripture always appears in a **passage** so that is the first context; every passage of Scripture is in a **chapter**; every chapter is in a **book**. Each book appears in a **Testament** and finally the complete context is the **whole Bible**. Someone has said: *a text without a context is a pretext!* Every cultish teaching derived from the Bible comes about by taking texts out of context to make a sectarian doctrine.

Women in ministry – should a woman teach or even speak?

An example of this context principle in the context of the whole Bible is ‘the ministry of women’. Many have made the error of taking **1Tim.2:11-12** as commands that women must not teach men but *“learn in silence”*, thereby not even being allowed to speak in the church meeting. Even the text itself speaks of *“a woman”* and is not speaking of women in general.

In the context of the passage the particular woman is likened to Eve who usurped her husband’s position and led him to accept false teaching.

In the context of the chapter Paul has already given instructions to both men and women to *“pray, lifting up holy hands”* (v.8-10). In v.10 he speaks of *“women professing godliness”*; professing means confessing and therefore women are expected to speak about their faith to whomsoever.

The City Will Be Built

In the context of Paul's letters to **Timothy**, there is reference to Timothy's mother and his grandmother both being responsible for sharing and teaching the Scriptures and the faith to Timothy (**2Tim.1:5 & 3:15**).

In other books written by Paul, he refers to women '**both praying and prophesying**' (**1Cor.11:5**) and in **Titus**, women are to be "*teachers of good things*" (**2:3**).

In the context of the New Testament, no one has any objection to the woman of Samaria witnessing to the men in her city (**Jn.4**).

In the context of the whole Bible, God Himself chose Deborah to be the Judge of Israel (**Jud.4:4**), also a prophetess and '*a mother in Israel*' (**Jud.5:7**).

6. Do not Major on Minor Subjects

Paul told Timothy to not "*give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which cause disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith*" **1Tim.1:4**. Many want to argue and make laws about women's head covering. In Paul's discussion in **1Cor.11:2-16**, Paul finally says that it is only a *custom*.

We need to teach and preach "*all things that I [Jesus] have commanded you*" **Matt.28:20**. We need to "*speak the things that are proper for sound doctrine*" (**Tit.2:1**). We should not make up sermons about the five stones that David took in his pouch, to fight Goliath. It is not a reference to the five-fold ministry or any such thing.

7. Ask your Questions of Scripture and Wait for Scriptural Answers

For example in **Habukkuk 2:1-3**, the prophet wrote the vision but then he had to wait for it to come to fulfilment.

Some 'end time preachers' have tended to use newspaper headlines and modern history to answer Scriptural questions and believers have grasped onto such ideas, convinced that it is Scriptural. Even Jesus told His disciples that He did not know "*the day and the hour*" (**Matt.24:36**). How much more care should we take before we pronounce the interpretation of Biblical references to what we call 'end-time' prophecy.

The Bible has all the answers and the Bible will answer itself.

A helpful way to approach the New Testament in general

- In the Gospels Jesus tells us what to do: "*all things that I have commanded you*" **Matt.28:20**.
- In the book of Acts, the apostles show us how to do it, that is, how to obey the commands of Jesus.
- In the Epistles the apostles explain or teach why we do the things that have been demonstrated in the book of Acts.
- In the book of Revelation there is the fulfilment of all things in Messiah Jesus

An example is baptism

- i) Jesus commanded baptism in **Matthew 28:19 & Mark 16:16**.
- ii) The apostles obeyed Jesus by baptising all who came to faith in Him. The apostles showed us how to baptise in obedience to Jesus' command.
Jesus said to baptise "*in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.*"
Peter commanded them "*to be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ*" **Acts 2:38**.

The City Will Be Built

In Samaria the new believers were baptised *“in the name of the Lord Jesus”* Acts 8:16. Philip had been taught by the apostles in Jerusalem.

The Philippian jailer was baptised on the basis of *“believing on the Lord Jesus Christ”* Acts 16:31,33.

Paul rebaptised the disciples of John *“in the name of the Lord Jesus”* Acts 19:5.

- iii) In the Epistles we are taught the doctrine of baptism, that is, the explanation or the reason why we are baptised.

In **Romans 6:3-14**, Paul teaches that we are baptised into the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Without water baptism, are we fully in Christ?

In **1Peter 3:21-22**, Peter confirms that we are baptised into the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

- iv) As for the fulfilment in the book of **Revelation**, there is *“a great multitude which no one could number of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb”* 7:9. These ones are true believers who have been baptised into Jesus Christ. They are at one with Him.

Let us return to apostolic theology

Many who have accepted the call to the ministry of the word are ill-equipped for such ministry, and many of these ones are driven to make great sacrifices to attend Bible College or Seminary. They spend dollars that are very difficult to raise in order to earn a certificate or a diploma or a degree or even a higher degree; and yet what they really need is a properly trained Bible teacher who has embraced and fully understood apostolic doctrine.

Through the authentic preaching and teaching of the word of God, ministers can be trained to become *“preachers, apostles and teachers of the Gentiles in faith and truth”* (1Tim.2:7).

We should search for the truth! We should study by faith and in the faith! We should not attend institutions for the sake of being awarded a piece of paper. **It is time to return to apostolic theology.**

This term was first spoken to me in a Bible College in Yangon, Myanmar. I had been invited to graduate Bachelors and Masters students. I agreed to do this if I was given three days to teach the graduating students. At lunch on the second day, the Rev. Dr. who was the principal of the College said to me, ‘brother Paul, we have had systematic theology in this College but we have never heard Apostolic Theology before.’ What had they heard? They were hearing the Scriptures being expounded as they are written, line upon line, verse by verse. They were amazed because so many of their favourite doctrines were shown up to be un-Scriptural.

Apostolic theology is propounding the word of God as it is written; preaching Christ *“warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus”* Col.1:28.

