

APOSTOLIC COVERING

LEADERSHIP

BIBLICAL HOUSE CHURCH

LORD OF HOSTS

IN THE

APOSTOLIC DOCTRINE

BIBLICAL ELDERS

LAST DAYS CHURCH

INTERCESSION

Paul Galligan
Revival Ministries Australia

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INTRODUCTION

It is always a joy to complete a new manual, to put into print the teachings from the Word of God that have been quickened to us. This study manual is probably quite different to many books and seminar presentations on leadership, as we are looking at the leadership that the last days church is called to effect in the world today. God is raising up His church in these last days and this church is apostolic. God is raising apostles, sending them forth and as they are received by the church, the anointed leadership that God has ordained for the church will be restored.

It is our conviction that leadership is primarily the result of God's anointing coming upon a person. The anointing is an anointing of wisdom, revelation and understanding; we need to '*know the mystery*'. Hence the two sessions on apostolic doctrine. If a brother or sister is ignorant of the apostles' doctrine, the leadership they give as ministers will be limited and lacking ultimate direction for the Body of Christ.

The double session on the LORD of hosts, in which we seek to understand the real supernatural nature of the covering God wants us to walk in, is likewise essential to true biblical leadership. The awesome leadership given by Abraham, Moses, Elijah, Jesus and the apostles Peter and Paul, is obviously characterised by the real covering and anointing of the Spirit of the LORD of hosts, including the ministry of angels and the open revelation of the supernatural realm of God's kingdom. Anyone who is truly anointed of God will automatically be a leader.

The key to leadership is the anointing; the anointing is the supernatural covering of grace that comes through the Word and the Spirit. Without true intercession within the veil, there will be a lack of anointed leadership. **Ezekiel 22:30** reveals the partnership between the apostle and the intercessor, the wall builder and the prophetic watchman.

The session on biblical house church reveals the basic nature and function of the church to salt every local community and be the light of the world in the midst of the world. This is the outworking of biblical leadership.

Paul Galligan, 05.03.03.

CHAPTER ONE

LEADERSHIP

“Men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit
and of wisdom”

LEADERSHIP

In Acts 6:3 we find three vital **spiritual endowments** listed that a person must have to be appointed to leadership in the church of Jesus Christ:

1. **Men of good reputation**
2. **Men full of the Holy Spirit**
3. **Men full of wisdom**

[Obviously the same spiritual endowments apply to women serving in leadership]

We have called these ‘three’ endowments because none of them can be earned.

These attributes are given by God through grace.

A STUDY OF ACTS 6:1-7

Acts 6:1-7 gives us **an understanding of the qualifications required for leadership**. The seven men who were appointed are really the **first deacons** in the church.

A problem arose in the first church

v. 1 *“Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution.”* We see here that the number of disciples was increasing; they are all Jews, but some are Hebrew speaking and some are Greek speaking. The Greek speaking Jews in Jerusalem at that time claimed that their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution of food.

The ministry of the Word and the ministry of serving

v. 2 *“Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, ‘It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables’.”* The twelve apostles called the multitude of disciples together. Remember **3000** had been saved on the day of Pentecost. **5000** had been saved through the miracle in the temple [Acts 4:4], and the Lord had been adding to their number daily, those who were being saved [Acts 2:47]. So there was a great multitude of believers in Jerusalem at that time. The apostles said, *“it is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables”*.

Here we see two different ministries:

1. **The ministry of the Word, and**
2. **Ministry [serving] in practical ways.**

The apostles responded to a problem in the midst. They did not just discuss it, or have a debate about it.

**True leadership will respond to problems that arise
and resolve them in a Spirit-lead way**

Qualifications for leadership

v. 3 *“Therefore brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.”* This was the apostles’ plan. Seven men were to be chosen, [why seven? Perhaps this is an application of the perfect number – the **right number** of ministers was chosen to meet the need at the time].

There were three endowments that the seven men had to demonstrate:

1) MEN OF GOOD REPUTATION

They had to be **‘of good reputation’**, this does not refer to a good reputation in the eyes of the world, but **evidence of a changed life**. A true Christian is someone who has repented, [changed from their old lifestyle]. Whatever their reputation had been in the past, to qualify for leadership in the church, there had to be evidence of a changed life, that is, behaviour being now governed by sound doctrine.

2) FULL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

They had to be **‘full of the Holy Spirit’**. A leader has to be full of the Holy Spirit. Paul says in **Ephesians 5:18** *“do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit,”* v.20-21 *“giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another in the fear of God.”* A spirit filled lifestyle is a submitted lifestyle, it is a lifestyle that is able to give thanks to God continually, because we are walking in the grace of God continually. A person who is ready for leadership is one **who has overcome fleshly desires and is walking in the manifold grace of God**.

When Jesus was first filled with the Holy Spirit, He was led into the wilderness to fast for 40 days and to be tempted by the devil and to overcome. He then returned from the wilderness in the power of the Spirit. In a very short time His fame went throughout all Syria because of the ministry He was doing (**Matt.4:24**). A Christian who is fit for leadership is one who is truly spirit-filled.

3) FULL OF WISDOM

They had to be **‘full of wisdom’**. The wisdom from above which is *“first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy,”* **James 3:17**. This is not worldly wisdom. People who have practical gifts and talents do not automatically make good leaders in the church. It is an age-old temptation to appoint somebody to leadership who looks good and seems to have suitable gifts and abilities. Israel made this mistake in appointing Saul to be King and Samuel wanted to anoint David’s oldest brother because he looked good. The wisdom that makes a good leader is **the wisdom that comes from God by grace**.

The apostles intended to appoint these seven men over the business of daily food distribution: to be table servers. **These are the first deacons of the church**, another level of leadership emerging in the church.

Ministry of the Word and Prayer

v.4 *“But we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the Word.”* The apostles clarify that their key ministry is the ministry of the Word, that is, teaching the apostles doctrine, (**Matt.28:20**). To enable the ministry of the Word to go forth powerfully they had to be in continual prayer. The minister [elder] responsible for the teaching of the Word of God in the local fellowship [house church] needs to be free to spend time in prayer and the study of God’s Word so that the ministry of the Word [the ministry of teaching] is *“living and powerful”* **Heb.4:12**.

Leaders are called by name

v. 5 *“And the same pleased the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch.”* The decision of the apostles was pleasing to the whole church because it was ‘*wisdom from above*’. The congregation had no trouble finding the seven men. Notice that Stephen stands out as not only having the three spiritual endowments that the apostles insisted upon but he was also ‘*full of faith*’ and also remarkably ‘*full of the Holy Spirit*’. In some Christian circles there is an anti-leadership belief and practice but the New Testament clearly shows that **leaders are called into ministry by name.**

They prayed first ...

v. 6 *“Whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them.”* Notice that the apostles **prayed before they laid hands on them**; they waited on God; they waited on the anointing because the laying on of hands is not a ceremonial practice but a time of **impartation through the Spirit.** **2 Tim.1:6** Paul says to Timothy *“Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.”* The gift is imparted through the laying on of hands.

Revival is a result of setting the church in order

v. 7 *“Then the word of God spread, and the number of disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.”* A problem had arisen in the church. The godly solution was for the apostles to ordain more ministers. They were setting the church in order, **Titus 1:5.** As a result revival broke out. This was the result of setting the church in order. The apostles were released to continue in prayer and thus ‘the word of God’ spread. The result of the word of God spreading was many more disciples being made, including many of the religious leaders.

The key to revival is the leadership ministry being released to pray and minister the word.

QUALIFICATIONS OF DEACONS

Deacon: Gr.#1247 ‘*diakoneo*’ to be an attendant, i.e. wait upon [menially or as a host, friend, or teacher]. It comes from another Gr. Word #1249 ‘*diakonos*’ which means an attendant or waiter, at tables or other menial duties.

1Tim.3:8-13

v. 8 Deacons are to be reverent, that is to be dignified, honorable, decent in behaviour, worthy of respect. They are to set a good example; *“Not to be double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy for money.”* This is sound doctrine in practice; it is speaking of lifestyle issues.

v. 9 *“holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience.”* The deacon, that is, the person being entrusted with leadership ministry, needs to know the mystery of the faith. Paul often refers to this mystery in his letters and this is the revelation of the Word that God is restoring in our day through the raising up of apostles and prophets. A true deacon is one who knows the mystery. This assumes that the church is set in apostolic order. This is having a proper respect for the church, which is the ‘bride of Christ’.

v. 10 ***“But let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons, being found blameless.”*** Those who are to be deacons should be tested, not a new believer. They should be someone who has begun to prove themselves as a disciple, being willing to serve. They are to have a **blameless** lifestyle. **BLAMELESS!**

When we are first saved, we become a disciple, someone who is beginning to learn the word. Once you become a disciple you learn to serve in the church. As soon as you begin to serve you take on a leadership role. Taking a step to be a server is taking a step to be a leader. The greatest leader is the servant of all. From being a servant we step into son-ship, knowing we have a relationship with the Father, and we receive our inheritance. This is a progression from discipleship to functioning in the Body as a servant to walking in the inheritance of sons.

v. 11 ***“Wives must be reverent.”*** If deacons are married, their wives should also set a good example, not to be given to gossip. They should be temperate and faithful. This suggests a team ministry for married deacons, where the wife is just as committed and faithful as the husband.

v. 12 ***“the husband of one wife”***, this has particular application in cultures where polygamy is practiced. A man with more than one wife is disqualified from leadership in the Christian church. They are to have godly order in their home.

There is a reward for deacons who serve well

v. 13 ***“For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.”*** For some such as Stephen and Phillip in the Scriptures, serving as a deacon is a preparation for other ministry. Stephen was a gifted ‘miracle worker’ and Phillip became a great evangelist. Many fulltime preachers and ministers of the five-fold today served as deacons and gained for themselves ***‘a good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.’*** For others service as a deacon is their lifelong calling and the grace of God is upon such to serve and fill an important role in every local fellowship. The deacon is often the pastor’s ‘right hand person’.

HELPS AND ADMINISTRATIONS

1 Cor.12:28 This verse lists the three primary leadership [eldership] ministries in the church: 1st apostles, 2nd prophets, 3rd teachers. After these three, a number of other ministries are then listed. Miracles, healing gifts and tongues are gifts of the Holy Spirit, taught in **1 Cor.12:8-10**. In the midst of the list are two ministry gifts: **helps and administrations** [KJV administrations = governments] , not specifically mentioned elsewhere in the New Testament.

There is a ministry gift called ‘helps’

This is a gift of God that He has set in the church. Some people love to help and it is a ministry gift by the Spirit of God. Most significant fivefold ministries have many people with the ministry of helps working with them, who contribute to the success of the ministry. In the early church, the ministry of helps was also the person delegated by the church to look after the poor.

This ministry of helps could be seen as being set innately in the life of the deacon. God sets members in the church to exercise this ministry of helps.

The gift of administrations or governments

The Greek word actually means ‘steering or pilotage’, translated in other places as the master of a ship. God has set in the church some people who are able to **‘steer the ship’**. It is not necessarily doing the financial books for the ministry, that is, an administrative job in contemporary understanding. Neither is it the gift of the apostle or the prophet; this is a different gift. It is a gift of ‘steering’; it can mean **one who plots the right direction, who keeps things on course or from getting off track.**

The person who has this gift in a worship meeting can help keep the meeting on track by going into prayer calling on the Holy Spirit to draw the meeting back on focus, or the leader of the meeting is gifted to keep the meeting flowing in the anointing.

A gifted administrator, or a leading deacon, can have this gift. It is a gift ministry from God to enable the church to be ‘steered’ in the right direction, following the doctrine of apostles, prophets and teachers, applying the doctrine; administering the doctrine.

HE WHO LEADS, WITH DILIGENCE

Rom.12:6-8, lists seven gifts of grace: 1) prophecy, 2) ministry [serving], 3) teaching, 4) exhortation, 5) leadership, 6) giving and 7) mercy.

These are gifts given by the Father God at birth; sometimes called creational gifts, or motivational gifts. They are given “to the just and the unjust” alike. In every given group of people, there will be natural leaders, natural servers, people who encourage etc. When a person is born again, water baptised and baptised by the Spirit into the Body of Christ, the creational gift [or gifts] will continue to operate but now with extra grace enabling each member to function in the Body.

One of these gifts is **leadership**. God expects the ones gifted in leadership to work hard as leaders. A true leader leads by example. A true leader leads by grace and learns to lay his (her) life down in leading others.

However, because this is a grace gift, it means that any believer can draw on this gift by grace if that believer is put in a situation where godly leadership is required and no one else is available.

CONCLUSION

In life, most people are looking to follow a leader. A Christian by definition is “one of Christ’s” and therefore a leader in life, able to lead others to Christ and in godly lifestyle.

The first level of leadership is: if a person follows you, will they be following Christ? Will you lead them to Christ? (**Jn.1:41**)

The second level of leadership is: do you serve in the church, or are you still waiting for someone else to serve you, teach you, greet you, meet your need? At this level we begin to reach out, offer to do jobs, reach out to new ones.

The third level of leadership is to take responsibility for a new believer, teaching foundations (**Heb.5:12**), following up, visiting.

At all levels of leadership there needs to be **accountability** to one of the designated [ordained] leaders in the church.

Leadership is a God-endowed ability; it is a gifting. Ordained leadership is restricted to those proven in the faith, who also demonstrate evidence of a changed life, full of wisdom and full of the Holy Spirit. However, every person who is given an ascension gift ministry or who is set in the church as a miracle worker or a healer, or any gifted ministry, will begin to attract others by the anointing that is upon them. In such cases, each minister needs to draw on the gift of leadership as the anointing they have because of the gifting, means that people are looking to that person for leadership.

CHAPTER TWO

ELDERSHIP

“Ordain elders in every place”

ELDERSHIP

The first mention of elders in the New Testament church is in **Acts 11:30** “*this they also did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul*”. The elders referred to are the elders in the church in Jerusalem. These same elders are next referred to in **Acts 15:6** “*Now the apostles and elders came together to consider this matter.*”

WHO ARE ELDERS?

1. Elders are the leading men

Acts 15:22 Judas and Silas are named among others as “*leading men among the brethren.*”

SC. Gr.#4244 Eldership [presbuterion] – a body of elders (literally aged men), composed of men of dignity, wisdom and maturity. Refers to the ordained leaders of the Christian church.

2. Elders are ordained by apostles

In **Acts 14:23** Paul and Barnabas “*appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, commending them to the Lord in whom they had believed*”. Paul and Barnabas were returning to the cities where they had already made disciples and now were ‘*setting the church in order*’ by ordaining elders in each city. Notice that there is only one church in each city and that the elders are the elders of the church in the city.

Titus 1:5 “*For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you.*”

Titus was an apostle, sent by Paul to go back to those places where he and Paul had ministered and to ordain elders.

3. Elders are appointed over a city

In **Acts 20:17** we read of Paul calling for the elders of the church in Ephesus to bring exhortation, encouragement and warnings to them.

When Paul wrote to the church in Philippi in **Phil. 1:1**, he gives his greeting, “*to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons.*” When Paul addresses the bishops he is addressing the ‘elders’, as we will see in our next point, bishop and overseers are elders.

Acts 14:23 “*So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.*” Elders were appointed to each church in each city. (We have already looked at **Titus 1:5**, which is another confirming verse).

4. Elders are bishops / overseers

BISHOP (Overseer) Gr. ‘*Episkopos*’ literally an overseer (*epi*, over, *skopeo*, to look or watch), English “bishop”, which has precisely the same meaning, is found in **Acts 20:28; Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:7; 1 Pet. 2:25**. [Taken from Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words.]

The elders are to serve as overseers and to shepherd the flock of God. In the Scripture the words ‘bishop’ and ‘elder’ are used interchangeably. ‘Bishop’ means ‘overseer’

Titus 1:5 “*... and appoint elders in every city...*”

v 7 “*For a bishop must be blameless ...*”. In telling Titus to appoint ‘elders’, Paul then goes on to describe the sort of men that qualify to become ‘bishops’.

5. Elders are pastors

Acts 20:28 *“therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.”*

Paul is exhorting these elders to ‘shepherd the flock’. So elders are shepherds.

The ministry of the pastor is to look after i.e. shepherd, the flock.

1Pet. 5:1–4 *“The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed; Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.”*

Peter the apostle confirms Paul’s instructions:

- i elders are to shepherd the flock of God;**
- ii elders are to serve as overseers;**
- iii elders are to be an example to the flock.**

The instructions given to elders in the Scripture reveal that the primary ministry of an elder is that of a pastor.

6. Prophets and teachers are elders

Acts 13:1 *“Now in the church that was at Antioch, there were certain prophets and teachers,”* they are named and among them are Saul and Barnabas.

Acts 15:22 & 32 reveal that Silas and Judas, who accompanied Paul and Barnabas from the council of Jerusalem, were part of the eldership in Jerusalem and they were prophets.

7. Apostles are elders

1 Pet.5:1 *“The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder.”* Peter is an apostle but here he also calls himself an ‘elder’.

Acts 15:6 *“Now the apostles and elders came together to consider this matter.”* The apostles are always included in the eldership.

8. Can evangelists be elders?

Both Paul and Peter give clear guidelines as to who can be elders. The Scriptures already looked at, show that ‘elders’ are those who are appointed by the Holy Spirit to give oversight and to shepherd the flock of God, and there are elders appointed over a city church.

The primary ministry of the evangelist is to go out and win the lost.

However in the case of Philip, who was ministering as an evangelist in **Acts 8**, by the time Paul visited him in Caesarea in **Acts 21:8** he was hosting the church in his own home, his daughters are ministering in prophecy [so he has spiritual daughters]. It is probable that Philip was functioning as an elder in the church of that city. An evangelist is not excluded from being an elder but in general the itinerant nature of the ministry would preclude that person being an elder.

CAN WOMEN BE ELDERS?

The literal answer is ‘no’, because by definition a body of elders in the Scripture is a group of ‘aged men’, but eldership is not spiritually confined to men, but to people who qualify.

The apostle John Alley gives this understanding in answering this question. In the Old Testament leadership was generally in the hands of men with some exceptions. So there are some very famous women leaders in the Old Testament. In the New Testament all ministries are open to men and women alike, but there are some exceptions where women do not normally function. Men are to take the leadership role in areas of headship.

In **Acts 18:26** Priscilla is mentioned exercising a *‘teaching ministry’* with her husband, she is a ‘helper’ or **‘fellow worker’** with Paul (**Rom.16:3**) and the church in Corinth met in her home (**1Cor.16:19**). The impression is that Priscilla had the prominent ministry in that relationship, and that she was teaching.

The apostle John writes to *“the elect lady”* in **2 John**. The letter reads as if addressed to a person ‘exercising oversight’ in the house of God. She has spiritual children. She is obviously exercising spiritual oversight, which is a qualification for eldership.

‘Junia’ which could well be a female name, is mentioned in **Rom.16:7** as an apostle.

In **Rom.16:1** Paul commends Phoebe and exhorts the church to give her all the help she needs for the successful conduct of her ministry. **She is a minister of the church.**

In the Scriptures, only men are referred to, but then in some letters, the “brethren” are addressed, (**Rom.12:1**). Do we assume from that, that the church only really consists of the brothers and does not automatically include sisters? Are sisters not also ‘sons’? Where does it say women cannot minister in gift ministries?

QUALIFICATIONS FOR ELDERSHIP

It is worth noting that the only instructions in the Bible on qualifications for eldership are written by an apostle to apostles who are responsible for ordaining elders.

In **1 Tim. 3:1-7** we read **the guidelines for bishops:-**

He must be blameless	Husband of one wife
Temperate	Sober-minded
Of good behaviour	Hospitable
Able to teach	Not given to wine
Not violent	Not greedy for money
Be gentle	Not quarrelsome
Not covetous	
One who rules his own house well	

v 7 *“Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.”*

The qualification listed in **Titus 1: 5 – 9** are similar, v 6 *“if a man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination. v 7 For a bishop must be blameless, as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, v 8 but hospitable, a lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled, v 9 holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.”*

Verse 9 emphasises the need for an elder to be a good student of the word, himself, and to be able to teach sound doctrine.

WHAT DO ELDERS DO?

1. They consider biblical doctrine and practice

The elders were called to a council in Jerusalem in **Acts 15:6** to consider some important issues of doctrine and practice.

After that council the apostles and prophets who had joined them, [functioning as elders,] *“went through the cities, they delivered to them the decrees to keep, which were determined by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem,”* **Acts 16:4**. What was determined by the ‘eldership’ became the practice for all the churches.

2. They give oversight to the church

In **Acts 20:28** Paul exhorts and commissions the church in Ephesus to *“take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.”*

The apostle Peter also exhorts the elders in **1 Pet.5:2**, *“shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly.”*

The overseer must give an account

Heb.13:17a speaks of another aspect of the ministry of the elder, *“Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account”*.

The ministry of oversight of the pastor is to watch out for your soul and to give account to the Lord.

Elders will be held accountable by the Lord for the way they give oversight to the sheep.

Acts 21:18 Speaking of one of Paul’s visits to Jerusalem says, *“On the following day Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present.”* Even the apostle Paul felt accountable to the apostles and elders in Jerusalem.

3. Elders are to Shepherd the flock of God

We have already looked at **Acts 20:28** which is exhorting elders to *“shepherd the church of God.”* These instructions are repeated again in **1 Pet.5:1-4**.

4. Elders are to rule well

1 Tim 5:17 *“Let elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labour in the word and doctrine.”* An elder rules well by being a good teacher of the word.

Jesus rules as a shepherd King

Rev.2:27 *“He shall rule them with a rod of iron...”* The word ‘rule’ in this verse is the same Greek word *poimaino* - to tend as a shepherd, to supervise. The way Jesus rules is as a shepherd.

Rev.19:15 *“... and He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron, the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.”* Again the word rule means the same as to shepherd the flock of God. **Jesus rules as a Shepherd King.**

King David ruled the nation as a shepherd king, he is a wonderful example of one who ruled as a shepherd king. He shepherded Israel *“according to the integrity of his heart and guided them by the skillfulness of his hands,”* Ps.78:72.

5. Elders are to pray for the sick

James 5:14 *“Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.”*

6. Elders are to share in the sufferings of Christ and partake of His glory

1 Pet.5:1 *“The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed.”* We will not partake of His glory unless we are prepared to share in His sufferings, [**Phil.3:10**].

7. Elders lead the worship in heaven

In the book of **Revelation** this seems to be the main role of the elders who are around about the throne. They are leading the worship. **Rev.4:10** *“The twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne.”* [also see **Rev. 5:8-10 & 14**].

This heavenly pattern is to be followed in the earth: elders are to be effective worship leaders.

8. Elders can ordain imparting gifts

1 Tim.4:14 Paul says to Timothy, *“Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership.”* Timothy had been ordained by elders/pastors through the laying on of hands.

9. Elders are to teach the word

1 Tim.5:17 *“Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine.”* As we have already seen in looking at the qualifications for elders, they should be able to teach sound doctrine. **Titus 1:9** *“Holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.”*

1Tim. 3:2 *“A bishop then must be ... able to teach.”*

10. Elders are to lead by example

Peter instructs those who are overseers of the flock to lead by example. **1 Pet.5:3** *“nor as being lords over those entrusted to you; but being examples to the flock.”*

HOW DO WE RELATE TO ELDERS?

By submitting to them

1 Pet. 5:5 *“Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for ‘God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble’.”* Peter is referring to the elders in the church here. One of the ways to learn how to walk humbly is to respect elders.

By exhorting them and showing respect

1 Tim.5:1 *“Do not rebuke an older man, but exhort him as a father, younger men as brothers.”* Paul is speaking to Timothy, who is a young apostle. We are to show respect to those who are older in the Lord.

1 Tim.5:2 *“Older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, with all purity.”* Older women are also to be treated with respect.

Do not accuse an elder

1 Tim. 5:19 *“Do not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses.”* We are not to accuse an elder, neither are we to listen to accusations against an elder unless it is backed up by two or three witnesses.

WHO CAN BE ELDERS OVER A CITY?

In **Acts 13:1** it appears the elders [pastors] of the church at Antioch were designated prophets and teachers. When we study the New Testament thoroughly, searching out the ministry of pastor, we find that elders are to be appointed in every city, (**Tit.1:5**). These are the ones appointed and gifted [anointed], to function as pastors, i.e. exercising oversight and shepherding [feeding and tending] the flock of God.

In Antioch the elders over the city were prophets and teachers. **1 Cor.12:28** *“And 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.”*

The elders are apostles, prophets and teachers. In **Eph.4:11** the gifts of pastor and teacher often combined. In general the elders of a city are apostles, prophets and teachers.

Elders over a city should be:

1. Those who meet the requirements of the letter to **Titus** and the letter to **1 Timothy**.
2. Those who have been appointed first in the church according to **1 Cor.12:28**, apostles, prophets and teachers, although not all apostles, prophets and teachers will be elders over the city. The eldership will be drawn from those in these ministry giftings. [Note that all these ministries can also function as elders, according to the Scripture, **1 Pet.5:1, Acts 13:1, Acts 15:6**]. The full revelation of this is still unfolding, as God reforms the church of Jesus Christ according to His revealed will in the Holy Scriptures.
3. Those who have been appointed/ordained by an apostle to whom God has given the oversight of that city

Meanwhile, let us re-examine what we call ‘elders’ and what ‘elders’ are charged to do, according to Scripture. Let us unravel our man-made hierarchies of bishops, overseers, reverends, pastors, evangelists, elders, deacons and set the church in order. When the church is set in order revival comes.

Apostles and Elders

God is raising apostles to give over all leadership to His church.

There are clearly two levels of God ordained ministry leadership in the church of Jesus Christ:

1. the apostle and the apostolic company that gathers around and works with the apostle, give headship/leadership ministry to the whole church. The apostle brings the apostolic doctrine and specifically the revelation of the mystery of Christ and the Church (**1 Cor.2:6-10, Eph.3:2-11, Col.1:24-29**). The apostle is also responsible for laying a proper foundation for the church to

be built upon (**1 Cor.3:10-13**). New Testament prophets are being raised as part of the apostolic companies to work with the apostles.

2. the elders that God is raising in each city to give leadership to the church of Jesus Christ in the city. The elders will be recognised by the apostles and ordained. Meanwhile some pastors in each city are receiving a heart for the city, to build the body of Christ in that city.

The main ministry function of the elders is to exercise oversight through the Holy Spirit and to shepherd the flock of God. The elders are to follow the apostolic pattern which they have learnt from the apostle/s and the apostolic company.

CHAPTER THREE

PART ONE

LORD OF HOSTS

The covering, Zechariah 4

LORD OF HOSTS PART ONE

THE COVERING, ZECHARIAH 4

A STUDY OF ZECHARIAH CHAPTER 4

The main text is from **Zechariah 4:6** *“This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel; ‘Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit,’ says the LORD of hosts.”* This is the word of the LORD to Zechariah the prophet for Zerubbabel. The Lord is making it clear that in terms of building the temple, it is not going to happen by human might or power. This verse records for us a wonderful vision that the angel of the LORD gave to Zechariah to instruct him and to give to him a specific word to share with Zerubbabel.

Zerubbabel as the governor of Jerusalem was commanded by the Lord to rebuild the temple. An angelic vision came to the prophet Zechariah. Through the interpretation of the vision the word of the Lord is making it clear that the temple will not be rebuilt by man’s effort.

We need to look at the context of this verse.

Zechariah 4 records **the vision of the lampstand and the olive trees.**

v.1 Zechariah had been ‘slain in the spirit’, and the angel came and wakened him out of this ‘sleep’.

What do you see?

v.2 The angel asked Zechariah *“what do you see?”* This is a significant phrase. Zechariah replies and says *“I am looking and there is a lampstand of solid gold with a bowl on top of it, and on the stand seven lamps with seven pipes to the seven lamps.”* The lampstand is found in the Holy Place in the Tabernacle of Moses.

v.3 *“Two olive trees are by it, one at the right of the bowl and the other at its left.”*

v.4 Zechariah asks a question of the angel with great respect.

v.5 The angel expects that Zechariah should know something from this vision. But Zechariah needs interpretation.

Then we come to **verse 6** which gives us the angel’s answer to Zechariah. The vision is an expression of the Word of the LORD. It is addressed to Zerubbabel who is the Governor, the one who has been charged by God to rebuild the temple of God.

The church builder is the apostle

Zerubbabel is a type of Christ, who said in **Matt. 16:18** *“I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.”* This is the temple of God, and Jesus said that the gates of hell would not stand against it. Zerubbabel is also a type of the apostle. This is the word of the LORD to the church builder *“Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, Says the LORD of hosts.”*

The glory of the latter house shall be greater

A contemporary prophet to Zechariah was Haggai. He was also prophesying in the days of Zerubbabel the Governor, who was charged by God to rebuild the temple of God. In **Hagg.2:9** he prophesies *“the glory of this latter temple shall be greater than the former,” says the LORD of hosts.* The glory of the church that the LORD is rebuilding at the end of the age will be greater than the glory of the church in the book of Acts.

We are speaking of the church of Jesus Christ being built in this present age.

It will not be built by human might.

Word Wealth SFLB page 1368

‘**Might**’ SC # 2428: strength, power, force, might (especially an army); valor, substance, wealth. Its basic meaning is force, especially military strength. God informs the rebuilder of the temple that the task would not be accomplished through the force of an army nor through the muscular power or physical stamina of the workmen.

The church is not going to be built by our own gifts, abilities or talents. Nor will it be built by human organisation.

It will not be built by power.

Word Wealth SFLB page 267

‘**Power**’ SC # 3581: vigor, strength, force, capacity, power, wealth, means of substance. Generally the word means “capacity” or “ability”, whether physical, mental or spiritual.

The church will not be built by any capacity or human ability, which we have received.

It will be built ‘by My Spirit, says the LORD of hosts’

Who are the ‘hosts’? The hosts are the angelic beings of heaven. God identifies Himself as the LORD of the hosts of heaven. He is saying that the building of His church can only take place through His Spirit with the hosts of heaven being released into the earth realm to work with the Holy Spirit.

A mountain of opposition

Verse 7 is a continuation of the vision; it speaks of a mountain of opposition, of principalities or powers; it declares that **before** the one who is the church builder, this mountain shall be brought down, it shall be come a plain. [cf **Luke 3:5** the commissioning of John the Baptist]. The capstone speaks of the completion of the temple and it shall come forth with shouts of ‘**grace, grace to it**’. The church is built by grace through faith, not of works least any man should boast, **Eph.2:8-9**. The church is going to be completed by a work of grace, any opposition will be pulled down.

The apostle lays foundations and sees the work completed

v.8-9 The same man who laid the foundations of the temple is going to bring it to completion. Jesus is the one who laid the foundation. He is the apostle of God, He is building the church and knows the beginning from the ending of the church, and He is the one as head of His church who is overseeing the building so it will be brought to its completion. He is doing this by restoring the five fold ministry gift of **Eph.4:11** and especially the restoration of apostles whose ministry is that of church builder.

The plumb-line

v.10 We are not to despise the day of small beginnings. The seven eyes of the LORD represent the Holy Spirit. Zerubbabel is the master builder and he has the plumb line and is measuring the building; he is the type of the apostle. The plumb line for the apostle is the Word of God. Everything has to line up with the Word. The Holy Spirit will enable the whole church to measure up to the Word of God because the goal is for us to become a “*perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,*” **Eph.4:13**.

Ask for understanding

v.11-12 Zechariah still does not understand the vision of the olive trees and the lampstand, so he asks the angel. Paul prays for us in **Eph.1:17-18** for *“the spirit of wisdom and revelation, that the eyes of our understanding will be enlightened.”*

Two anointed ones

v.14 The angel explains *“these are the two anointed ones, who stand beside the Lord of the whole earth.”* The angel is referring to the two olive trees as the two anointed ones. **Who are the two witnesses who stand beside the LORD of the whole earth?**

Jesus

Jesus came into the earth to bear witness to the Father. He said *“if you have seen Me you have seen the Father.”* He came to the earth to reveal the Father to us, and now He is seated at the Father’s right hand.

Holy Spirit

When Jesus left the earth He promised to send the Holy Spirit and said, *“He will bear witness of Me.”* Now the Holy Spirit is in the earth witnessing into every person’s heart that there is one true God who is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. The olive trees are representing the two witnesses who stand beside the LORD of the whole earth.

From the Scripture it would appear that the two who bear witness to the Father are Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

Oil is flowing

From the olive trees there is oil flowing into a golden bowl, from which are pipes running to each golden lampstand. The oil represents the anointing and there is an unlimited flow of the anointing to each lampstand. In **Rev.1:12** John had a vision of Jesus in the midst of seven golden lampstands and in v.20 Jesus interprets the lampstands to be the seven churches.

The lampstand represents the church. The two anointed ones anoint the church.

Jesus and the Holy Spirit always point us to the Father; we are on a journey from the cross to the glory; **from Passover to Tabernacles.**

The Word and the Spirit lead us to the Father, the LORD of the whole earth.

The Lord of Hosts

In the midst of this vision the LORD says to Zechariah *“Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the LORD of hosts.”*

The LORD and His hosts are needed for the work to be done.

At the end of this age we need the Spirit of the LORD of hosts to come again.

We need the angelic hosts released!

**The apostolic covering renewed and restored;
the spirit and power of Elijah released!**

Rebuilding the church

The context of **verse 6** is **the rebuilding of the church at the end of the age.** The apostle of God oversees the building of the House of God. At the beginning of the age, Jesus appointed

twelve to be the foundation builders of the church. They taught the new disciples what Jesus had taught them. Then the Lord appointed Paul and another generation of apostles to continue the building of the church. **God is raising up apostles in these days to build His church of the last days**, even as Zerubbabel was commissioned by God to rebuild the temple in his day.

Eph.4:8 “*When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men.*” These gifts are listed in **verse 11**, “*and He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists and some pastors and teachers.*” The purpose of these gifts is given in **verse 12** “*for the equipping of the saints, for the work of ministry, for the edifying [i.e. building up] of the body of Christ.*” **Verse 13** “*till we all come to the unity of the faith and [the unity] of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.*”

The LORD of Hosts will oversee the building of His church.

It is the LORD of Hosts who makes this statement to Zerubbabel. It is by the Spirit of the LORD of Hosts that His church will be built. **2 Cor.3:17** “*Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty.*”

Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there will also be the hosts of heaven!

COME AND SEE!

In **Jn.1:45-47** we read of Nathaniel being brought by Phillip to meet Jesus. Phillip invited Nathaniel to “*come and see*” something (**v 46**)! Jesus says in **v 47** “*Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!*” Jesus has a word of knowledge and in **v 49** Nathaniel responds with a revelation of who Jesus is, “*You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel.*” Nathaniel ‘**saw**’ something. The Lord wants to open our eyes so we will receive revelation. Jesus says to Nathaniel in **v 51** “*hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.*” Jesus is telling Nathaniel that he is going to ‘see’ even more because he was sensitive to spiritual things, because he believed in the Son of God.

There are angels around about the Son of Man. Jesus, the Son of God, in His incarnation walked in the company of angels; His ministry was empowered by the Spirit of the Lord of Hosts. Jesus said to Nathaniel “because you believe, *you will see greater things than these.*” When Jesus was baptised the heavens opened and the Spirit of God descended upon Him. Jesus then walked in the realm of the LORD of hosts, “*the Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He has anointed Me ...*” **Lu.4:18a.**

Jesus received the Spirit without measure, **Jn.3:34.**

Jesus is giving us an insight into His supernatural walk with God here. He is virtually saying that He is the fulfillment of **Zechariah 4:6**. Jesus said, “*I will build My church*” (**Matt.16:18**), “because the Spirit of the Lord is with Me”.

The ‘hosts’ of heaven watched over Jesus, [the Lord of Hosts]

An angel announced Jesus birth. (**Lu.1:26**)

Angelic hosts proclaimed his birth to shepherds. (**Lu.2:9-13**)

When Jesus overcame the devil in the wilderness angels came and strengthened Him. (**Matt.4:11, Mk.1:13**)

When Jesus was praying in the Garden of Gethsemane, angels came and strengthened Him. (**Lu.22:43**)

An angel proclaimed to Mary that Jesus had risen from the grave. (**Matt.28:2-7**)

Angels were seen in the tomb where the body of Jesus had lain. (**Jn.20:12**)

When Jesus ascended back into heaven, angels spoke to those who stood looking up. (**Acts1:10**)

These are the recorded instances only. Jesus expected there would be a constant visitation of angels, “*ascending and descending*”. **The hosts of heaven were with the Lord Jesus who had been anointed with the Spirit, (Lu.4:18, Matt.3:16, Acts 10:38).**

This was the source of His power, His authority and His anointing.

This was God’s provision, “*by My Spirit*” says the LORD of Hosts.

The last days church will receive the help of angels, **Heb. 1:14**. The house of the Lord will be built “*‘by My Spirit,’ says the LORD of Hosts.*”

We are building an understanding from the Word of God as to the awesome nature of the covering Jesus walked in and has provided for His church. His apostolic, totally committed, sold out, cross-bearing, self-denying, overcoming church.

CHAPTER FOUR

PART TWO

LORD OF HOSTS

The covering, Elijah-Elisha relationship

LORD OF HOSTS

PART TWO

THE COVERING, ELIJAH-ELISHA RELATIONSHIP

What is the nature of the covering Elijah and Elisha walked in?

What is the spirit and power of Elijah that is coming upon the last days overcoming company?

How can we receive a “double portion” of God’s anointing?

A STUDY IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

Elijah had a standing before the Lord

In **1 Kings 17** we read of Elijah the Tishbite. Who was Elijah? Scripture does not give us any background to Elijah. We simply know that he was a man who had awesome authority in God. He was able to say “*As the LORD God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, except at my word.*”(v1). He was a man who had an intimate relationship with God, he had a personal standing in Christ (**Rom.5:2**). What Elijah said would happen, happened. He was also a man who had a reputation that the Spirit of the LORD would take him from one place to another, (**1 Kings 18:12**).

Elijah was ministered to by angels

After Elijah had the victory on Mt. Carmel, he ran away from Jezebel. He was ministered to by angels who provided him with food; then he went “*in the strength of that food,*” for 40 days and 40 nights until he came to Mt. Horeb, (**Chap.19**). This is the same mountain where the LORD appeared to Moses and gave the Ten Commandments. Here God also appeared to Elijah and told him to do three things, (v.15-16). He was to anoint two Kings and to anoint another prophet, Elisha, as a replacement for himself.

Our inheritance is settled in heaven

Elisha’s inheritance was established in heaven, but it still needed to be ‘apprehended’ by Elisha on earth. Our inheritance is established in heaven and guaranteed by the Spirit sealing us, but still needs to be apprehended, (**Phil.3:12-14**).

Elijah obeyed God and as he passed by Elisha he threw his mantle over him, (**1Kin.19:19**). Elisha chose to follow after Elijah, (v21) and became his servant. Elisha perceived something in his spirit; he was **‘touched by a greater anointing’**.

Elisha had a covering

In **2 Kings 2:1-18** we read of Elijah being taken up to heaven. Elisha was accompanying Elijah as he went from Gilgal to Bethel and on to Jericho. In each place there were prophets who spoke of Elijah being taken from them, and in each place Elijah encouraged Elisha to remain but Elisha refused. Elisha would not listen to the prophets or be put off from his purpose by them. The LORD had shown Elisha something about Elijah and he was not going to be put off.

He was persistent, not put off by others or tempted by good offers; he was determined to go after all that God had for him, to gain a full inheritance. The prophets recognised that Elisha had a ‘covering’ over him that came from his spiritual father, Elijah, because they said “*Do you know that the LORD will take away your master from over you, [from your head] today?*” v 3 & 5.

Elisha followed Elijah through the river

Finally they crossed over the Jordan river, v 8. Elisha went through the river with Elijah. [Remember Gideon’s 300 – they also passed the test – went through the river]. He had passed the test, so Elijah said to Elisha, “*Ask! What may I do for you, before I am taken away from you?*” Elisha said, “*Please let a double portion of your spirit be upon me,*”

Elijah replied, “*If you see me when I am taken from you, it shall be so for you; but if not, it shall not be so,*” v9-10. For Elisha to receive his request, he had to ‘see’ something.

He had to ‘see’

v.11 “*Then it happened, as they continued on and talked, that suddenly a chariot of fire appeared with horses of fire, and separated the two of them; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.*”

v.12 “*And Elisha saw it, and he cried out, ‘My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and its horsemen!’ So he saw him no more.*” Elisha saw the secret of Elijah’s power and authority! He picked up Elijah’s mantle and returned. When he reached the Jordan he used the mantle to strike the water saying, “*Where is the LORD God of Elijah?*” The river parted, just as it had done for Elijah. The prophets who were watching said, “*The spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha,*” v15. He had received a double portion of the Spirit that was upon Elijah.

He ‘saw’

The key to Elisha receiving Elijah’s mantle was that he ‘saw’ the hosts of heaven, [he saw into heaven], he saw the secret of Elijah’s power and authority. Elijah was a man who moved in the spirit realm by the Spirit of the LORD of hosts. Elisha followed after Elijah from his first meeting. No doubt he had heard of the great man’s reputation, but he may not have been expecting him to come by the farm. All over the world, people have met Jesus, have been disappointed by church, even held back for a season but right now the Spirit of the LORD is stirring hearts around the globe:

it is time for the Spirit and power of ELIJAH to be restored to the church!!

This is how the last days church is going to be built, by the Spirit of the LORD of hosts coming upon the men and women of God who will be an apostolic people in the last days. They will be church builders who will plant, grow and mature the church. God is coming back for a mature church. It will happen not by might nor by power but by the Spirit of the LORD of hosts!

The servant of the man of God ‘saw’

In 2 Kings 6:8-23 we read of the Syrian army making war against Israel. The attempts of the army always failed because the Israelites knew where the enemy was going to attack. The king of Syria thought there was a traitor in his army, but one of his servants knew the truth, “... Elisha, the prophet who is in Israel, tells the king of Israel the words that you speak in your

bedroom,” v.12. The king of Syria sent his army to capture Elisha, and they surrounded the city were Elisha was.

v. 15 “And when the servant of the man of God, arose early and went out, there was an army, surrounding the city with horses and chariots. And his servant said to him, ‘Alas, my master! What shall we do?’”

v. 16 & 17 “So he answered, ‘Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them.’ And Elisha prayed and said, ‘LORD, I pray, open his eyes that he may see.’ Then the LORD opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw. And behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.”

The horses and chariots were all around Elisha!

This was the same covering that Elijah had.

**Where the Spirit of the LORD of hosts is,
there will be the chariots and horsemen of Israel.**

The Commander of the LORD’s hosts

In **Joshua 5:13-15** the LORD revealed Himself to Joshua as a “... *Man ... with His sword drawn in His hand.*” When Joshua asked this man if He was for them or for their adversaries, He said He was the “... *Commander of the army of the LORD ...*”. The LORD of hosts!

NEW TESTAMENT CONFIRMATION

Heb.12:22 “*But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels...*”

v. 23 “*to the general assembly and church of the first born who are registered in heaven [referring to us], to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect [referring to those who are already in heaven].*”

Acts 12:1-11 Peter delivered from prison by an angel.

Open our eyes Lord

In **Acts 9** when Saul was on the road to Damascus, a voice spoke to him from heaven. Saul cried out “*who are You, Lord?*” The Lord spoke to him and said “*I am Jesus ...*”. Saul was blinded by the appearance of Jesus.

We need to ask the Lord to open our eyes that we might see as Elisha did. We need to move in the spirit realm by the spirit and power of Elijah; we need the ‘double portion’ and we need to go after it like Elisha did; we need the power and authority that Elijah had. This is the anointing that will enable us to build the house of God. “*Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the LORD of hosts.*” The key to Elijah’s authority was that he was moving by the Spirit of the LORD of hosts. The church is being built by the Spirit in the spirit, **2Cor.3:2-3; 2Cor.3:5-6; 2Cor.3:17-18.**

Our Elijah is Jesus

He was anointed with the Holy Spirit and power (**Acts 10:38**).

What was the key to Jesus’ authority and power? **Lu.4:18** “*The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me ...*”. When Jesus was baptised the heavens opened and the Spirit of God came down upon Him in the form of a dove.

Jesus was always surrounded by the hosts of heaven

When He was arrested in the garden, one of His disciples tried to defend Him with the sword, but Jesus rebuked him and said, “... *do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels?*” (Matt.26:53).

**Jesus walked in a power and authority that was given
to Him by His Father in heaven.**

True spiritual authority comes from a father to a son

God is Father and God is Son. Wherever Jesus went He said, “*I only do the things that I see My Father doing and I only speak the words I hear My Father speaking*”. Elisha inherited a double portion and God wants us to inherit a double portion. Jesus calls us His children, **Heb.2:13** “... *Here am I and the children whom God has given Me.*” We belong to the church of the **first born**, and we have an **inheritance** as sons. We can ask for the anointing that our Master, Jesus, had. We can ask for the double portion, as Elisha did. Jesus said “... *he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do. Because I go to My Father.*”(Jn.14:12). Jesus wants us to have the inheritance – a double portion.

Jesus has appointed apostles to be ‘**fathers**’ in the church. He says if we receive the ones He sends, we will receive Him; and if we receive Him through the grace given to apostles we will receive the Father, **Matt.10:40**.

Jesus said that because He was going to the Father we would do greater works.

Now both the Father and Jesus are in heaven and they are going to pour out their Spirit on the church.

**If we receive the apostolic fathers He sends we will receive
the anointing of the Father and the Son.**

That is why we will do ‘greater works’, because we have a double portion;

both the Father and Jesus are pouring out their anointing upon us.

Jesus is our Elijah

Elijah is a type of Jesus and Elisha is a type of each one of us, [the church]. Elisha went after what his master Elijah had. Elisha followed his master, he washed his master’s hands; he served his master. We are to follow our Master, to serve Him and do what He commanded us to do.

The apostles ‘saw’

The apostles ‘saw’ what Jesus did; they received His Spirit and they did greater works. **Acts 5:15** “*so that they brought the sick out into the street and laid them on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might fall on some of them.*” When the Holy Spirit came, the disciples received the inheritance. The promise of the Spirit (**Acts1:4**), sent by the Father and the Son. The disciples stepped into ‘sonship’.

The death of Elisha

2 Kings 13:14-21 records the death of Elisha. King Joash of Israel came to Elisha and wept, saying, *“O my father, my father, the chariots of Israel and their horsemen!”* This king had ‘seen’ something, he knew the source of the power and authority of Elisha. He was a **spiritual son** of the prophet and he could have inherited this anointing. Elisha had no other person to pass his anointing on to, as his other servant, Gehazi, inherited leprosy instead of the anointing because of his greed, (**2 Kin.5:20-27**). Many today settle for less than that to which the Lord is calling them. Few *“press on to lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has laid hold of them for,” Phil.3:12.*

The obedience of faith

Elisha asked the king to perform a prophetic act, (**v.15-17**), then told the king to strike the ground with arrows, (**v.18**). Elisha was giving the king a test, and the king failed the test. The prophet was angry with the king because he was not prepared to keep going, (**v.19**). The king was not like Elisha, who did not let anyone or anything keep him back from going after what he knew Elijah had. This king gave up too easily and so did not receive the full inheritance he could have had. God wants His church to receive its full inheritance. So many of God’s people settle for something less than full victory. They accept defeat in their lives. He who endures to the end will be saved, **Matt.10:22**.

There has been a shift between the life of Elijah and the life of Elisha

Elijah’s secret was not revealed until he left, but Elisha’s secret was much more openly known. Elijah did not appear to have any place to call his own, and he was not welcome anywhere. He kept moving around and hid in caves. Elisha lived in his house and listened to what the LORD was saying. He was able to communicate to the king of Israel what their enemies were going to do, so they could be prepared. He was totally accepted in the kingdom of Israel; the previous king of Israel had hunted Elijah and tried to kill him. Jesus had nowhere to lay His head; He had enemies who were trying to kill Him. But Jesus promised that He would establish many dwelling places for His people in the kingdom of God, **Jn.14:2-3**. He is doing this: *“in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit,” Eph.2:22.*

The church that the LORD is raising up in these last days is going to move in all the power and authority of Jesus in this earthly realm.

We are seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus right here. We are the fullness of Him who fills all in all. We are joined with our head who is in the heavenly places.

Elisha who was the next generation to Elijah received a double portion. The church has inherited the double portion from Jesus and so can now move in great power and authority, and rule and reign on the earth. If one or even many are imprisoned, persecuted, even martyred, many more rise in their place because Jesus has already overcome the world; the gates of hell will not prevail, **Matt.16:18**.

The anointing Elisha had went to the grave with him, (**v.21**). The anointing the early apostles had went to heaven with them, but there remains an anointing, a revelation of grace, that will be restored to the church through the receiving of the apostles Jesus is raising in these days.

Jesus said to Nathaniel, *“hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.”* We are the body of the Son of man and the heavens are open and the angels are still ascending and descending on the body of Christ. We need to rise up and walk in this level of authority as the last days church.

The same anointing (unlimited) of our LORD Jesus is available to us.

The prophet Zechariah was told by the angel of the LORD that the interpretation of the vision he had seen was this, *‘the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel’*. Zerubbabel was the man of God charged with building the house of God.

The church of Jesus Christ, led by apostles is charged with building the ‘house of God’ in these last days, and the word of the Lord is, *“not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the LORD of hosts.”*

The church will be built through the laying of an apostolic foundation, and by the whole church receiving the leadership of true apostolic fathers. It is to the apostles that the Lord gives the master plan of how to build the house. We have had many pastors and even teachers, but now God is restoring apostles, fathers.

**Any last days work will be characterised by awesome power and authority,
as the men and women who are moving in an apostolic mantle
will be surrounded by the hosts of heaven;
will be under the authority of the LORD of hosts;
and it will all happen by the Spirit of the LORD of hosts**

THE TWO WITNESSES

The two witnesses spoken of in **Rev. 11:3-6** inspire us toward powerful uncompromising last days ministry in the earth. In Scripture ‘two’ is the number of witness.

v. 4 The two olive trees are the two anointed ones who stand beside the LORD of the whole earth, in **Zachariah 4**. Jesus tells us in **Rev.1:20** that the seven lampstands are the seven churches. In this verse we have two olive trees [two anointed ones] and two lampstands [two churches]. The lampstand represents the church.

The two witnesses prophesy, that is, to speak forth the truth of God, **Rev.19:10** *“... For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”* They will prophesy for a set period of time. It was the same amount of time that Jesus ministered on earth for.

They were clothed in sackcloth, **v.3**. Sackcloth speaks of repentance as people sought the face of God to repent of the sin that was going on all around them.

v.5 The fire coming out of their mouths speaks to us of judgement. The Word of God is the plumb line by which people will be judged. The fire is going to burn up all the ungodliness that is round about those who are proclaiming the truth.

v.6 These witnesses have power to shut heaven. Elijah had this power, and Jesus has promised that the spirit and power of Elijah is coming over the last days church.

They also have the power to strike the earth with plagues; this is the power that was given to Moses. Moses is also the one who spoke forth the **law of God**. Elijah was known for **acts of power**, but Moses is known as the lawgiver. These witnesses are speaking forth the Word of

God with authority as Moses did and moving in power and authority with mighty signs and wonders as Elijah did, delivering judgement on the ungodly. These two witnesses are a type of the last days church which is going to speak forth the truth of God's word in power and authority with signs and wonders and proclaim the judgements of God on the earth. Elijah said **"... there shall not be dew nor rain these years, except at my word," 1Kin.17:1**. Moses was told by the LORD to take his rod and strike the rock and water would come out of it, **Ex.17:6-7**.

v.7 They were not killed until they had finished their testimony. They could not be killed before their time. Jesus could not be killed until 'it was finished'. These witnesses finished their work on earth before they were killed. Run the race, fight the good fight, reach for what lies ahead, **"I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus," Phil.3:14**.

v.12 ***"And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, 'Come up here.' And they ascended to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies saw them."***

GET READY TO MEET THE LORD IN THE AIR!

CHAPTER FIVE

WHAT IS
'APOSTLES
DOCTRINE'?

APOSTLES DOCTRINE

Acts 2:42 “*And they continued steadfastly in the apostles doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.*”

WHAT IS THE APOSTLES’ DOCTRINE?

The Four Gospels

The first example of the apostles’ doctrine in the New Testament is the testimony of the four gospel writers. Matthew and John were apostles of the Lamb and directly share their experience of Jesus. While there is no evidence that Mark and Luke were apostles in the ministry of the church they both worked with apostles very closely over a long period of time and passed on the teaching and testimony.

The actual gospels as written are primary apostolic doctrine.

They include **the actual teachings of the Lord Jesus and testimony of His acts.**

The Gospel of Mark

Mark 1:1 “*The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God.*” The gospel is the good news which includes the promise of salvation and its fulfillment in the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Gospel of John

Jn.20:31 “*But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.*” John wrote his gospel so that people could believe and be saved.

Apostolic doctrine is teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ, Acts 5:42.

The Gospel of Luke

Luke 1:1-4 “*Inasmuch as many have taken in hand to set in order a narrative of those things that have been fulfilled among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivered them to us, it seemed to me also, having perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you an orderly account, most excellent Theophilus, that you may know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed.*”

In introducing his gospel, Luke gives us important insights as to the nature of apostolic doctrine:

1. **It is a clear, ordered narrative [story] of the life, teaching and ministry of the Lord Jesus.**
2. **It is delivered by eyewitnesses and ministers of the word, (1Jn.1:1-3)**
3. **Luke has received perfect understanding from their (the apostles) testimony** [remember Luke is a Gentile who became a disciple of Paul a number of years after Jesus’ death and resurrection]
4. **Having been instructed, Luke is able to write an orderly account so that another may ‘know the certainty of those things’ which Luke has come to know from receiving apostolic teaching.**

Apostolic doctrine is to be passed on

2Tim.2:2 “*And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.*” Paul gives us a similar understanding of how apostolic doctrine is to be received and passed on to others. **The apostle teaches and trains others to become ministers** [not all are apostles, this includes all five-fold ministers] **who then pass on the apostolic doctrine to disciples.**

The Gospel of Matthew

Matthew’s gospel amongst other things, shows the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. **The interpretation of the Old Testament is an important aspect of apostolic doctrine.** The book of **Hebrews** demonstrates this aspect of apostolic doctrine more fully as it is a total interpretation [showing the fulfillment of] of Old Testament types and shadows.

THE APOSTLES DOCTRINE IN THE BOOK OF ACTS

Acts 2:42 “*And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.*” The four things that they continue in are really the ‘*first works*’ of the early church. In **Revelation 2** Jesus is writing to the church at Ephesus and in **verse 4** He says, “*Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love.*” In **verse 5** He goes on to say, “*Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place – unless you repent.*” This church had lost its first love and was being told by Jesus to repent and do the first works again. In order to find out what the first works are, we need to look at the practice of the first church.

The first church included the 120 believers, [including the 12 apostles of the Lamb, on whom the Holy Spirit fell on the Day of Pentecost] and the 3000 men who had believed and were baptised on that day. These believers continued in the four things listed in **Acts 2:42: the apostles’ doctrine, fellowship, the breaking of bread and prayer.** They continued in the fellowship of the apostles’ doctrine, the fellowship of breaking bread and the fellowship of prayer.

If we continue steadfastly in these four things, the ongoing result will be that we will be in love with Jesus and we will not lose that love.

It will increase - every time we share the Lord’s table;

- every time we come together in prayer;

- every time we meet in faith filled fellowship, which cares and shares for one another’s needs,

- and every time we share the apostles doctrine, which is the teaching of the Word of God, [the teaching which has been faithfully taught by apostles].

This verse specifically says “*the apostles doctrine*”, not simply the teaching of the word. So we need to understand what is the ‘*apostles doctrine*’.

THE REVELATION OF THE WORD OF GOD IS GIVEN TO APOSTLES AND PROPHETS

Basically the whole New Testament is the apostles doctrine, but **the revelation of the word of God is given specifically to apostles and prophets, Eph.3:5**. In these days we need apostles to be raised up in the anointing to teach the Scriptures. The Scriptures can be taught by pastors, teachers and evangelists, but a lot of key revelation is given to apostles and prophets.

The Dispensation of Grace

Ephesians 3:2 *“If indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you.”* Paul as an apostle had received a certain dispensation of grace. The outworking of that grace is **verse 4** *“by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ.”* The Lord Himself reveals to apostles and prophets the mystery. [This mystery is also referred to in **1 Cor.2 & Colossians**]. Paul had knowledge of the mystery of Christ and he shared that knowledge: he shared it and taught it. Each member of the Body then receives grace by receiving the apostolic doctrine, **Eph.4:7**.

v.5 *“which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets.”* This mystery had not been revealed to Abraham or other men of God in the Old Testament. These Old Testament men cannot come into fulfillment until Jesus has raised up His church, (**Heb.11:40**)

The mystery has been revealed *‘by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets’*.

WHAT IS THE MYSTERY?

1. The mystery is oneness in Christ

Eph.3:6 *“That the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel.”* It is only the gospel that can bring Jew and Gentile into oneness, (**Eph.2:14-18**). Jesus is our peace and has made both one, creating one new man from the two. God wants *‘one new man’*, the wall of separation having been removed.

2. The mystery is the “bride church”

Eph.5:23-33 *“This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church,” v 32.*

3. The mystery is the grace of God

Eph.3:7 Paul became a minister *“according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power.”*

The result of that grace was **v.8** *“...that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.”*

2 Tim.1:9-11 God has *“saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began, but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, to which I was appointed a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.”* The mystery of the grace of God is that Paul, of the circumcision, is appointed as a teacher to the Gentiles. This grace was given before time began.

4. The fellowship of the mystery

Eph.3:9 *“To make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ.”* They had the

revelation that all things, even thrones and dominions in the invisible realms were created by God through Jesus Christ, (**Colossians 1:16**). There is a fellowship of the mystery that God wants us to see. Part of the revelation of this mystery is that God created all things. Another part of the revelation of the mystery is *“that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might bring together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth in Him, Eph.1:10.*

5. Displacement of principalities and powers by the church

Eph.1:22-23 *“And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.”* This means that God has made the church, which is His body, the head over all things in Christ.

1Cor.2:6 *“... the rulers of this age are coming to nothing”*, because of the revealing of the mystery, the teaching of the deeper wisdom.

Eph.3:10 *“To the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly place.”* Then the mystery becomes known, then the **manifold wisdom** of God will be revealed. This verse suggests that the church has been designed by God, so that when it comes into this apostolic and prophetic revelation, it will speak and preach with such power that the principalities and powers will be disempowered and the gospel will begin to fill the atmosphere.

This is illustrated in **Acts 8** when Phillip went to Samaria and began to preach in that city. He preached the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus and mighty signs and wonders were happening to confirm the preaching. Men and women believed the gospel and were baptised. Through Phillip’s preaching, the manifold wisdom of God was made known to the principalities and powers in the city of Samaria, so that even the chief strongman of the city, Simon the sorcerer, wanted to become obedient to the gospel and be baptised.

6. The revelation of the glorious church

Eph.5:27 *“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.3:11 *“according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.”* This is in accordance to His eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus. As we understand this deeper wisdom, [the mystery of Christ]; who He really is and as we, the church, begin to preach out of that revelation knowledge of who Jesus Christ is, the principalities and powers are disempowered, by the manifold wisdom of God, and by the revelation of this mystery.

1Cor.2:9-10 God is revealing this glory to His perfect church, **v16** *“... we have the mind of Christ.”*

FOUNDATIONAL DOCTRINES OF CHRIST

Apostolic doctrine is to ground the church in the elementary principles or fundamental teachings of Christ. These foundational doctrines are listed for us in **Heb.6:1-2**, they must be properly laid before the church can go on to perfection.

- 1) **Repentance from dead works:** this is the foundational doctrine of the faith of the gospel. To repent is to change. Repentance is to be preached, (**Luke 24:47**). If people repent, their sins are remitted.
- 2) **Faith toward God:** when we repent we turn from something, to something. Turn away from sin, toward God. The gospel of Jesus Christ is to be preached, so people will get a revelation of who Jesus Christ is.

- 3) **Doctrine of Baptisms:** be baptised in water in the name of Jesus Christ, following the practice of the apostles. In **Rom.6** Paul teaches the doctrine of baptism. Peter teaches on baptism in **1 Pet.3**. Baptism saves us and we are raised to newness of life. Both apostles teach that through baptism the believer is raised in resurrection life, (seated in heavenly places).
- 4) **Laying on of hands:** when Saul was saved, the disciple Ananias came and laid hands on him. Saul was healed and filled with the Holy Spirit. Primarily the doctrine of laying on of hands is all about receiving the Holy Spirit.
- 5) **Resurrection of the dead:** the basic doctrine is three fold. Firstly – Jesus Christ literally rose from the dead. This means we will receive a body again, even though we have died. Secondly – in **John 5:25** we are told *“the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live.”* We can be ‘born again’ and live in resurrection life now. Thirdly – every soul will rise, some to the resurrection of the just and some to resurrection of damnation, **Jn.5:28-29**.
- 6) **Eternal Judgement:** the doctrine of eternal states – preaching and teaching heaven and hell.

The seventh doctrine or the fulfillment of being born again and properly founded in Christ is, **to go on to perfection.**

THE WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD

Acts 20:27 Paul is speaking to the elders that he has called from Ephesus. He is in Miletus, after he had ministered in Ephesus for over two years. He says, *“I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God.”* The apostles doctrine is ‘the whole counsel of God.’ It is to the apostles and prophets that God has revealed the mystery.

THE DEEPER WISDOM: UNDERSTANDING THE SPIRITUAL MAN

In the first five verses of **1 Cor.2**, Paul is reminding the Corinthians of their salvation through power evangelism, there was a demonstration of power to back up the gospel message. **Verse 5** *“that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.”* We are to start in signs and wonders. They are meant to accompany every believer, (**Mark 16:17-18**), but we are not meant to stay there, v. **6-7** *“We speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory.”*

Verse 10 reveals this hidden wisdom to us, *“God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.”* It is the Spirit that brings these things to our spiritual understanding, it is by revelation.

THE MIND OF CHRIST

1 Cor.2:16 *“For who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct Him?” But we have the mind of Christ.”* We can receive the Lords instructions into our mind. God gives us understanding, **Eph.1:8** *‘prudence’*. We can begin to know the mystery once we are born again. Every spirit filled child of God can move in revelation knowledge. We are blessed because we are living in the end of the age where God has and is continuing to restore apostolic and prophetic ministry and set the body of Christ in order.

Eph.1:17-19 *“that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding*

being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power.”

APOSTLES ARE FIRST

Apostles are the leadership ministry; apostles give oversight to the church in matters of doctrine and practice. **1 Cor.12:28** *“And 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.”*

The apostles’ doctrine is the teaching of the apostles.

They are the ones commissioned and appointed by Christ to fully represent His power and authority, wisdom and knowledge in the earth today. It is a gift given to some by Christ, for His church, **Eph.4:11**.

The purpose of that gift being given is:

- * **to equip or perfect the saints to build up the body of Christ**
- * **to teach the deeper wisdom of God**
- * **to declare the “*whole counsel of God*”**
- * **to “*preach the mystery of Christ and His church*”**
- * **to bring the whole church to the “*unity of the faith*”, and to the “*knowledge of the Son of God*,” Eph.4:13.**

CHAPTER SIX

ASPECTS OF
APOSTOLIC
DOCTRINE

ASPECTS OF APOSTOLIC DOCTRINE

In **Matt.10:40** Jesus is speaking in the context of the appointing and commissioning of His apostles. He says ***“He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me.”*** It was the Father who sent Jesus. Jesus is saying that apostles who are truly appointed and commissioned by Him, **fully represent Him**. In the church age, such apostles are ones who have received the ascension gift of the apostle from Jesus the ascended Lord according to **Eph.4:7-11**.

Jesus says that whoever receives a true apostle who comes in the name of the Lord, who comes non-denominationally, who comes not representing a part of the church or a particular group, but who comes in the name of the Lord with the true heart of Jesus for His people and for His body.

When anyone receives that one as an apostle of Jesus Christ, they receive Jesus.

In **Matt.23:39** Jesus is speaking to the Jews when He says ***“for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!’”*** For the Jews of today this means that they will not see the Lord until they say ‘blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord’. The one who came in the name of the Lord was Jesus. Who is the one who comes in the name of the Lord today? Firstly His apostles whom He sends, and secondly, His church which is His apostolic body which He sends to the whole world.

WHAT IS THE REVELATION OF THE MYSTERY?

Isaiah 60:1 ***“Arise, shine; for your light has come! And the glory of the LORD is risen upon you.”*** God is saying to His people, ‘Arise, shine for the glory of the LORD is risen upon you’. This is present tense. The Light, Jesus, has come, but today the glory of the LORD is rising upon His people. ***“The whole earth is full of His glory,”*** the seraphim said in **Isa.6:3**. This glory will be revealed as the church becomes the true sanctuary of the LORD’s presence in the earth.

v. 2 ***“For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and deep darkness the people; but the LORD will arise over you, and His glory will be seen upon you.”*** This is what we are experiencing in the world now, it is increasing. The beast is arising. The darkness is spreading all over the world, but the church is to arise in Him, in His glory.

v. 3-5 ***“The Gentiles shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising. Lift up your eyes all around, and see; they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from afar, and your daughters shall be nursed at your side. Then you shall see and become radiant, and your heart shall swell with joy; because the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you. The wealth of the Gentiles shall come to you.”*** This is the revelation of the mystery, that in these last days, Gentiles are coming to the Lord in increasing numbers. This is happening because the time of the Gentiles is almost fulfilled.

v. 7 ***“All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together to you. The rams of Nebaioth shall minister to you; they shall ascend with acceptance on My altar, and I will glorify the house of My glory.”*** Kedar and Nebaioth were the first born sons of Ishmael. Prophetically it is possible to believe that many Muslims will be saved in the last days. Leaders and their congregations will be saved and come into God’s kingdom. ***“They will ascend with acceptance***

on My altar'; this altar is Jesus. Many Muslims are going to come to Jesus and He will accept them.

SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF APOSTOLIC DOCTRINE

1. THE GREAT COMMISSION

The clearest thing that Jesus told the church to do is to preach the gospel. **Mark 16:15-16** *“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.”* Everyone made in God's image and likeness needs to hear the gospel, some will believe and be saved and some will believe not and be condemned.

In **Matt.24** where Jesus is explaining signs of the end times and signs of His coming, He says, *“and this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come,”* v14. One of the clearest signs that we can look for and recognise and know that the end of the age is near is worldwide evangelism. The 1990's were declared to be the decade of worldwide evangelism. There has been enormous growth in evangelism world wide in the last 13 years. Christianity is by far the fastest growing faith or religion.

In **Matt.28:18-20** *“All authority has been given to Me in Heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”* We are called to go to 'all the nations', all the people groups, baptising them and teaching them. Jesus promised to be with us until the work is finished at the end of the age. Unreached people groups are now receiving the gospel. There has been a quickening of the work in the last 10-15 years. The sign of the gospel in **Matt.24:14** is being fulfilled very quickly. Praise the LORD!

We are told in **Mark 16:16** that some will hear the message and be saved, others will not believe and be condemned. **2Thess.1:8** says that those who are going to be punished at the coming of the Lord are *“those who do not know God, and ... those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.”* It seems that there will be those who will refuse to believe in God even though they have heard the message and there will be those who hear the gospel but refuse to obey it.

The Promise of the Holy Spirit

The key to fulfilling the Great Commission is the Holy Spirit whom Jesus promised His disciples, **Lu.24:49** *“Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.”*

Acts 1:8 *“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”* We send teams out in power of the Holy Spirit.

An inheritance: the Nations

In **Psalm 2:7-8** the psalmist wrote prophetically *“I will declare the decree; the LORD has said to Me, You are My Son, today I have begotten You. Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations for Your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for Your possession.”* The nations have been promised to Jesus as His inheritance, but we are also partakers of this inheritance. **Gal.3:16** *“Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, ‘and*

seeds,' as of many, but as of one, 'and to your Seed', who is Christ." Verse 29 *"And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."* Jesus has been promised the nations, Jesus is the Seed of Abraham to whom the promises were made and if we are Christ's we are also heirs according to the promise.

Overcomers: an apostolic people

Jesus says in the letter written to the church in Thyatira, **Rev.2:26-27** *"And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations. 'He shall rule them with a rod of iron; they shall be dashed to pieces like the potter's vessels', as I also have received from My Father."* Jesus has promised to His church, power over the nations if we hold fast to what we have been taught and if we overcome and keep His Word. As Jesus has received from the Father, so He has given this power to His apostolic people. **We are an apostolic people.**

The rod of iron: the uncompromising Word of God

The psalmist prophetically recorded the promise of the Father to Jesus, that is, the plunder of the cross, the nations, and the very ends of the earth. God is raising up a church to rule the nations with a rod of iron. [Jesus ruled as a shepherd king]. The rod of iron is the uncompromising Word of God. **It is time to teach the truth of the gospel!**

2. PERFECTING THE SAINTS

Colossians 1:24-29 speaks of sacrificial service for Christ. **Are you willing to suffer for the gospel?** Paul is saying that to be an effective preacher you must be willing to suffer because that is part of what it means to be in Christ. Perfection comes through suffering. **Verse 24-25** *"I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church. Of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God which was given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God."* Paul is saying that he is going forth as a preacher in much suffering, for the sake of *'His body'*, which is the church. We are ministers *'according to the stewardship from God'*, which has been given to us.

v. 26 *"the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints."* There are generations to whom the mystery is still hidden. They have not yet heard the gospel.

v. 27 *"To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory."* The glory of the Lord is risen upon us, now, today. **We are to tell the church the mystery!** If we faithfully impart the message of the gospel, it will spread and multiply. To be born again is a mystery to those who do not believe.

v. 28-29 *"Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. To this end I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily."* It is Christ's mighty power that works through us.

In **Phil.3:12-14** Paul says, *"Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press*

toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” We are going on to perfection, by apprehending [taking hold of] that which we have been called to do. We are to forget what lies behind and press on to the new thing that God is doing. Take hold of the apostolic revelation that God is now revealing, **Phil.3:15** *“Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind.”* There is an agreement coming about apostolic doctrine.

3. BUILDING THE CHURCH

Jesus said in **Matt.16:18** speaking to Peter *“you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.”* He said, ‘you are Peter [a stone] and upon this ‘rock’ [Christ] I will build my church’. Peter was a foundational apostle set in place by Jesus Christ. Later Peter speaks about his revelation of being a foundation stone and that the church [temple] is built of living stones. **1 Pet.2:4-5** *“Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house.”* Jesus said to Peter, “you are a living stone and because you have faith in me, I am going to use you to build my church”.

Jesus said He would build His church and He is going to use apostles as the foundation. He is also going to use prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers and every other ministry and gift that the Holy Spirit is going to release into the church. This church will prevail over hell. **Jesus said, “I give unto you, the church apostolic, the keys of the kingdom of heaven.”** These are the keys spoken of in **Matt.16:19** *“And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”*

What is Christ’s gift?

Eph.4:7 *“But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ’s gift.”*
v.11 *“And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers.”*

Why were they given?

To build the church - *by equipping the saints;*
by doing the work of the ministry and
by building up the body of Christ, (v. 12).

To build the church - *until it comes to maturity.* The goal is perfection. There is a state of maturity to grow into as an individual believer and there is a state of maturity to grow into as a church. **v.13** *“Till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”*

Heb.3:3 Christ as Son is building God’s house and is Head over the house – the church.

4. PREPARING FOR THE LORDS RETURN

Eph. 5:22-32 Paul is teaching on Christ and the church in the context of marriage.

v. 25-26 *“... just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word.”* When the word of God is preached and taught, it is being used by Jesus to cleanse His church. Thank God for every opportunity you have to preach or teach. The word that goes forth, sanctifies the church, so that the church might be presented to Jesus, *“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,”* v. 27.

How do we prepare for the Lords return? By sanctifying and cleansing the church, through teaching the word, bringing her to a glorious, pure, perfect body. The church is the bride of Jesus Christ, and is to be treated as holy. If we preach a ‘rapture’ that rescues the church out of a troubled world, believers will believe for the rapture. If we preach the perfecting of the church, the preparation of a glorious bride church, if we preach the grace of God to endure tribulation and exalt in it (**Rom.5:3-5**) then we will be preaching and teaching the Word of God accurately and declaring the whole counsel of God. Believers will believe for what is taught, **Rom.10:17**.

1 Thess.4:13-18 also speaks about the return of the Lord. The words about the coming of the Lord are meant to bring comfort and encouragement, (v. 18).

1 Jn.3:2-3 “*Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is, and everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.*” We are to purify ourselves, this is how we are to prepare for the Lords coming. Preach perfection according to **Heb.6:1-3**. We are to go on to perfection having laid a proper foundation.

5. EXALTING IN TRIBULATION

Every teaching in the New Testament about tribulation tells the saints to exalt in tribulation, to glory in tribulation. Paul says in **Rom.5:3-5** “*we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; 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.*”

2Thess.1:3-12 again speaks of the coming of the Lord, in the midst of tribulation in the church, to rescue the church and deal with the enemies of the church. **Chap. 2** speaks of the terrible things that are happening at the end of the age. **V3** clearly says that we are not to be deceived about when the LORD is coming and our gathering together to Him (v1). That day will not come unless the falling away comes first and the man of sin is revealed. **V8** says that the Lord will consume the lawless one with “*the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming.*” Many teach and many believe there are two comings but **2 Thess. 1–2** clearly declare that the gathering of the saints to meet the Lord in the air is the same coming of the Lord Jesus Christ that will destroy the lawless one.

Matt.24:13-28 also speaks of the great tribulation that ushers in the coming of the Son of Man.

Phil.3:10 Paul prays to know the “*fellowship of His suffering*” and to be conformed to “*the image of His death.*” Come on church! Let us preach and teach the Word of God and not a doctrine whose title does not even appear in the Word of God.

6. THE PROPHETIC REVELATION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

Matt.5:17-19 Jesus is saying that He did not come to destroy the law, but to fulfill it. He is declaring that the law will be fulfilled. Jesus wants us to teach the word of God from the Old Testament, prophetically. He wants us to give to the people of God the understanding of the law and of the commandments, of the prophets and the writings.

We need to have a revelation of Christ and His church in the Old Testament so that we can teach the prophetic fulfillment.

We need to have understanding of the Mosaic Covenant, **Lu.24:27, 44-45**

the faith of Abraham, **Rom.4, Gal.3**
the revelation of the Book of Genesis, **Matt.19:4-5**
Enoch and his walk with God, **Heb.11:5-6**
the 'seed' from **Gen.3:15** to **Gal.3:16-29**

There are three vital components of the **Mosaic Covenant**:

1. The law given through Moses – the commandments that told the people how to live. The first four commandments tell us how to love God; the second six commandments tell us how to love our neighbour.
2. The Tabernacle of Moses – teaches the way of worship in spirit and truth, **Heb.9:1-5**.
3. The Feasts of Israel – which are like a prophetic map which show us the journey we are on, from the cross to the glory, from Passover to Tabernacles, from Egypt to the Land of promises.

WHAT IS APOSTLES DOCTRINE?

It is the teaching of the Word of God, **2Tim.3:16**.

It is the whole counsel of God, **Acts 20:27**.

It is the revelation of the mystery, **Eph.3:3-5**.

It is the deeper wisdom of God, **1Cor.2:6-10**.

It is Christ revealed, **Eph.4:1, Phil.3:8-11**.

It is the continual preaching and teaching of Jesus as the Christ, **Acts 5:42**.

The final picture we have of Paul in the Book of **Acts 28:30-31** is of him *“preaching the kingdom and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him.”*

CHAPTER SEVEN

BIBLICAL
HOUSECHURCH

BIBLICAL HOUSECHURCH

WHY HOUSE CHURCHES?

As the apostolic church is restored we need to teach from the Scriptures concerning the house church or the church that meets in the house. The model and practice of 'local church' in recent times is not biblically valid, except if we were to see the local church meeting as simply the house church meeting in a hired hall; but this is not the case. The idea of dedicated buildings that are not used as part of every day Christian life is not scripturally sound. We do not need to build a sanctuary for God on the earth, there is only one sanctuary and that is the one mentioned in **Heb.9:11-12 & 24**. In **Matt.18:20** Jesus says "*For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.*" This is a sanctuary, two or three gathered with Jesus present in the midst.

The church of a city

In the Scripture the apostles wrote to **the church of a city**. In Jerusalem that church was led by apostles and elders [which included prophets, **Acts 15:22 & 32**]. In Antioch the church was led by prophets and teachers (**Acts 13:1**), and from **Acts 14:23**, the practice was for apostles to ordain elders in every place. So there was the church of the city with either apostolic leadership or apostolically ordained elders in leadership.

Meeting in homes

In the Scripture **the church of the city met in various houses**. The apostles attended the house meetings and taught the apostles doctrine, **Acts 2:42 & Acts 20:20**. The development of local churches numbering hundreds and thousands of saints is not a biblical development. A church that meets in the home is by definition limited in number. This means that **every person who is saved is very naturally included in the life of the church**. The church of the city will in time number hundreds and even thousands of saints but they meet in house churches with a common eldership overseeing the church of the city.

WHERE DID THE CHURCH MEET?

The Church Met in Houses

There is no evidence of large single congregations in the New Testament except in the precincts of the temple of Jerusalem in the very early days of the church's life. The indisputable evidence of the New Testament is that **the church met in houses**, **Acts 2:46-47** tells us they met daily, from house to house; everyone's needs were met in the fellowship; they broke bread together, sang praises to God and people were getting saved every day.

Establishing the Church in Friendly Houses

As the church spread to other towns and cities the disciples followed the instructions Jesus had given them in **Matt.10:6-15** and **Luke 10:1-12**, **establishing the church in friendly houses**. Throughout the book of **Acts** and Paul's epistles there are many instances of the church meeting in the house.

Paul greets the various fellowships in Rome

For example in **Rom.16:5** there was a church in Priscilla and Aquila's house; in **verse 10** Paul greets the household of Aristobulus; in **verse 11** he greets the household of Narcissus; in **verse 14** he greets a number of brethren who are together; in **verse 15** he greets the saints who are with the five brethren mentioned. There are five churches mentioned, and these fellowships are part of the church of Rome to whom Paul is writing.

The Myanmar experience

In the Union of Myanmar [formerly known as Burma] the indigenous church is generally not allowed by the authorities to construct dedicated church buildings. This is a blessing in disguise – there has been some resentment among believers over this law. So the church meets from house to house. Some of the house meetings that gather to receive the visiting apostle number over one hundred, but it is normally 20-40 people who gather. In such gatherings there can be as many as half of them coming for salvation. Here we see the biblical example working, the lost are being added. It has been an absolute delight to minister in the outlying areas of Myanmar going from town to town into house churches. It is a very biblical experience. On one occasion in a very isolated place the Holy Spirit came as on the day of Pentecost to a crowded house meeting of approximately 60 people, the majority of them being school students. Students and adults were speaking in new tongues [including English which they did not naturally know], prophesying, singing new songs in the Spirit and weeping in deep intercession. Some were drawn from the street to come up to see what was happening.

THE FIRST HOUSE CHURCH

It could be said that the first house church in the Bible met in the Garden of Eden, in the cool of the evening at Adam and Eve's place. This is where they met with the LORD. Jesus said in **Matt.18:20**, when two or three come together in his Name, He will be there in the midst. In Jesus our fellowship with God is restored, and that fellowship is with the Lord whenever we gather in His name. We are blessed to enjoy our Lord's fellowship "in the cool of the evening."

What happened in Adam and Eve's house church?

We assume that the LORD God taught the word, making it clear to Adam and Eve what the Divine purpose was and warning them to beware of the wiles of the devil, that is, to not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Jesus said that if you receive the apostle you receive me, (**Matt.10:40**). Jesus still comes into the midst where there are people gathered together in His name.

One can imagine that life in Adam's household after they had been expelled from the garden, included **Adam training up his sons to walk with God**. In the account of **Gen.4** we find that both Cain and Abel had a personal relationship with God and had obviously been taught the doctrine of redemption through the offering of a lamb.

The godly line from Seth through to Noah, suggests the ongoing training from generation to generation in their fathers' households. Each first born son was prophetically named and trained up in the knowledge of God's redemptive purposes. Finally in Noah's family, his wife and his three sons and their wives, were all involved in building the ark of salvation in that generation. **The house church, consisting of the four families, worked together under the apostolic leadership of Noah**. This was a mighty work they were called to, but the work we

are called to is of equal significance as we prepare an ark of salvation in our generation through the biblical ministry of **planting the church in every place, in friendly houses.**

ABRAHAM A VERY SUCCESSFUL HOUSECHURCH LEADER

Gen.18:19 *“For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the LORD, to do righteousness and justice, that the LORD may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him.”* God says He chose Abraham because He foresaw that he would manage his own household well and thus be qualified to become the father of many nations, releasing the blessing of faith to every family, **Gen.12:3.** This blessing is through Christ and is for every family.

The church is primarily to be planted in the home: it is a family church.

Long before Abraham had his own son Isaac, he had **many spiritual sons.** **Gen.14:14** tells us that he had 318 trained men [servants] in his own house, who were able to go to war with him. If most of these men were married imagine how many souls were under Abraham’s care. This house church was really a traveling village: hundreds of families living in tents, caring for their flocks and herds. And this was in the early years of Abraham’s ministry. In **Gen.18:1-15 the LORD Himself actually visited Abraham and Sarah in their own tent.** This was when the LORD prophesied the conception and birth of Isaac. The word of the LORD is to be released in the house church. **Whenever two or three gather together in His name, I AM is present.** HALLELUJAH! As we share in the faith of Abraham we receive the blessing.

God will visit us in our fellowships and His word will be precious and powerful.

A LAMB FOR A HOUSEHOLD

Reading from **Exodus 12** reveals to us that the Israelites living in Egypt, lived in households that included more than the immediate family. God instructed Moses that each household was to prepare a lamb, **Ex.12:3.** If the household was too small to consume in total the lamb, they were to join with another smaller household, **v4.** There was an optimum number of people to make up a household and in the context it appears the average household was of that optimum size. This is exciting teaching: **God has provided a lamb for every household.** For every fellowship of God’s people who come together **there is a lamb.**

In the new covenant house church, God has provided a lamb, His own Son.

Each household [house church] has been provided for and is authorised to break bread in the home (Acts 2:46).

Jesus Christ is the Lamb for every household

There is a wonderful example of this in **Acts 10** when Peter was invited to go the house of Cornelius to share the good news of Jesus Christ with Cornelius together with his relatives and close friends. **The household that gathered received Jesus the Lamb of God, through the preaching of the apostle.** Even as God provided deliverance for His people from Egypt through Moses, household by household, so now He has provided salvation for all people through Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ has appointed apostles and other ministers to establish the church in every house that will receive them.

MOSES' INSTRUCTION FOR HOUSE CHURCH

Moses taught how the house church is to function daily, **Deut.6:4-9**. The people of God in loving God with their whole heart and soul and strength must function in their houses as believers from day to day.

Deut.6:7-9 *“You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the door- posts of your house and on your gates.”*

ESTABLISHING THE HOUSE CHURCH

Luke 10:1-24 The church is established in ‘friendly houses’ by preachers [apostles and evangelists] being sent out in the will of the Lord. In this chapter of Luke, Jesus gives us clear instructions to establish house churches in every place.

Going to every place before the Lord comes

v. 1 The Lord appointed seventy others; sent them out two by two, before His face, to every place where He would go. We are to prepare every place for the coming of the Lord.

Labourers for the Harvest

v. 2 Why do we need to establish a church in every place? Because Jesus said, *“The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.”*

Plenty of Opposition

v. 3 Jesus said He was sending them out as lambs among wolves. There will be wolves, beware! You will not be popular going out to plant a church in every place. You may meet with opposition from other established churches, if they are already there, and from the evil spirits in areas controlled by sorcery and false religions.

Walking in the Obedience of Faith

v. 4 We are not to take anything with us but trust that God will supply; we are not to get off focus [no missionary tourism]. Jesus said *“greet no one along the road.”* Don’t allow other distractions to take you off focus.

Led by Peace

v. 5 Enter the house where a man of peace resides; in other words, where you are received.

Find a Friendly House

v. 6 Have discernment: is this a ‘friendly’ house? If it is not a friendly house don’t remain in it.

Minister from that House

v.7 Remain in the friendly house; receive their hospitality; minister from that house. We are not meant to go knocking on every door, remain in the place where you are received.

A city is judged by their hospitality

v. 8 A city will be judged by the way they receive the preachers that the Lord sends.

Heal the Sick and Preach the Word

v. 9 In the friendly house offer to pray for the sick. Jesus instructs us to heal the sick and to preach the kingdom of God. Others may be brought to the house to receive prayer for healing as the news spreads. The power of God is present to heal in that house! This opens up the opportunity to testify about Jesus.

Judgement comes to people and cities who do not receive preachers

v. 11-12 Wipe the dust of that city off your feet [a prophetic act of judgment because they did not receive the Word], but in so doing warn the city of the judgement to come.

Receiving the Lord

v. 16 *“He who hears you hears me, he who rejects you rejects Me, and he who rejects Me rejects Him who sent Me.”* It is as people receive Jesus, believing on His name that they are born again, **Jn.1:12**. If people reject the preaching they are rejecting the Lord. We receive Jesus by believing on this Name. People will only know His name if we preach about Him.

Authority over the devil

v. 17-19 The devil and demons are subject to us. Satan has been defeated, Jesus said *“I saw satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means harm you.”* Our lives are hidden with Christ in God, **Col.3:3**.

Salvation

v. 20 Jesus emphasises that the greatest miracle is the new birth, bringing people into salvation. The goal is to see people saved.

Salvation comes by revelation from God

v. 21-22 The Lord sends us so He can save people through our preaching. Jesus reveals the Father to those that He wills, (**Matt.16:17**). People are saved through revelation.

The Mystery Revealed

v. 23-24 This gospel we have received is the revelation of the mystery which was hidden from the Old Testament saints.

FUNCTIONING IN THE HOUSE CHURCH

In the Book of **Acts** we see the church planted and functioning from house to house. In this study we are looking at aspects of the church functioning in the house.

Foundations Being Laid

Acts 2:1-13 The coming of the Holy Spirit; giving power for ministry and witness as Jesus had promised in **Acts 1:8**,

v. 14-40 Peter preaches Jesus, the Lord and Christ,

v. 37 The listeners were cut to the heart by the preaching of Jesus crucified, dead and risen.

v. 38-41 Peter tells them how to be saved; repent and believe the word, and *“they received the word gladly”*; be baptised; receive the Holy Spirit

The foundations of the new church are being laid by the apostles.

Five fundamental functions of church life

Acts 2:42 This verse reveals the five vital components of church life

1. They **continued steadfastly** – this means what it says: the early believers continued devotedly or steadfastly in the other four components. Without a regular, full-on commitment to the things of faith, the church will not fulfill its purpose.
2. **Apostles doctrine**: the revelational teaching brought by apostles
3. **Fellowship**: the committed sharing together of the first church so that the needs of every person were met
4. **Breaking of Bread**: the Communion Table
5. **Prayer**: daily prayer meetings

The results of continuing steadfastly in these vital components of church life

- v. 43 Great fear came upon all the believers. This ‘fear’ is the fear of the Lord, which in the Old Testament is the equivalent of faith. Mighty signs and wonders were done by the apostles. The fear [faith] released the miraculous.
- v. 44 The believers were all together and shared all things in common. A true community emerged.
- v. 45 Possessions and goods were sold, and the proceeds used to meet needs in the community.
- v. 46 Daily – continuing daily
 - in one accord – in agreement, no private agendas [dealt with severely in **Chap. 5:1-11**]
 - in the temple – they presented as a coherent, compact, committed body of believers
 - in the church world of their day [the temple]
 - in the houses.

They broke bread from house to house, “a lamb for a house”. The communion is fundamentally essential in the house church. They shared meals together with gladness and simplicity (check Amplified Bible). Many churches authorise home meetings, but never authorise the breaking of bread. Until all control (doctrine of the Nicolaitans) is taken off the believers, and Christians meet daily in homes, fulfilling the five fundamental functions of church, we will not experience “our first love” for Jesus and fulfill His good acceptable and perfect will.

- v. 47 *“Praising God and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.”* The Lord added to the church, daily, those who needed salvation.

The house church was the house of the saints, where they were praying late in the night.

Acts 4:23 *“And being let go, they went to their own companions and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them.”* Peter and John went to their companions and reported to them. They found their companions **meeting together in a house.**

In one accord

Acts 4:24 *“So when they heard that, they raised their voice to God with one accord and said ...”* They prayed together.

Renewed boldness

Acts 4:31 *“ And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.”*

The place (house) where they were meeting together was shaken and they were filled with the Holy Spirit. They went out from that place preaching boldly.

All things in common

Acts 4:32 *“Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common.”* The result was revival broke out!

True community releases revival; many others want to belong.

Acts 4:33 *“And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the*

Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all.”

*‘Great power’ and ‘great grace’ was upon the apostles. The apostles were preaching Christ.
Jesus is the DOOR to the community.*

At the apostles feet

Acts 4:34 – 37 reveal the level of giving and sacrificial generosity of these disciples. The people were prepared to lay their money *“at the apostles feet”* and allow them to distribute it. This is a principle of God’s word.

DAILY – THEY DID NOT CEASE!

Acts 5:42 *“And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching the preaching Jesus as the Christ.”* AMEN!

Until we return to the biblical model and practice of preaching and teaching Jesus as the Christ in every house that will receive us and in public places such as the temple represents, we will not see the life and witness of the glory of Christ Jesus that we long for. We still only give partial approval to church in the home. Most churches forbid the breaking of bread in the home and yet this is the right place for the breaking of bread. It is neither biblical nor practical to break bread in large congregations.

The work of the Gospel is continuous, publicly and from house to house, daily.

The elders of the church in the city work in unity to plant the church in every friendly house. There needs to a real soul-winning, apostolic housechurch in the midst of every locality, in every city, town and rural area, so that every soul is contacted and impacted by the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

A testimony

Recently I was in city overseas and on the Sunday I preached in four Sunday meetings. The first was in a suburban area, which was quite poor. It was a humble housechurch meeting which included the breaking of bread. Three souls were saved in that meeting. I led them to the Lord before I ministered communion. Then they were able to receive the communion.

The next meeting was held in the upstairs of a large house which has been set apart for meetings of the church. There was a regular Sunday meeting here, with communion. No one came for salvation. The third meeting was held in a small church building. It was packed. There was no communion and no one for salvation. The fourth was an evening meeting in a pentecostal church building, with 3-400 present. Again, no communion and no one for salvation.

The first meeting was held in a humble house in a humble street and unsaved folks were drawn into the meeting. The breaking of bread in such a meeting is easy, natural, intimate and powerful to save as we experienced. This is the biblical breaking of bread in the house, with the apostle present to teach the word in the house.

Multiplication

Those pastors with congregations meeting on Sundays in dedicated buildings have the potential to plant multiple housechurches. Such a work is truly apostolic and must be done for the effective witness of the Gospel to every creature. This is the Biblical way to go: the planting of churches in every friendly house.

CHAPTER EIGHT

INTERCESSION

Within the veil

INTERCESSION – Within the Veil

WHAT IS INTERCESSION?

The Word ‘intercession’ means “the act of going between, or a mediator”. An intercessor is one who stands between another person, or situation and God. Jesus is our example, He is the one who represents man to God.

The ministry of intercession is becoming an increasingly more accepted ministry in the church today. Intercessors in the past have often spent hours hidden away in prayer and have been largely unrecognised by the church. Today it is recognised that intercession plays a vital part in the fulfillment of the apostolic reformation of the church. Intercessors can be called to pray at odd hours, or in the privacy of the prayer room, but the ministry of intercession is now becoming a much more public ministry.

JESUS OUR INTERCESSOR

Rom 8:34 “*Christ Jesus, who died – more than that, who was raised to life – is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.*” Jesus represents us before the Father. He is at the right hand of God, this is the place of honour, power and authority.

Jesus has open access to the throne of God.

Heb 7:24-25 “*because Jesus lives forever, He has a permanent priesthood. Therefore He is able to save completely those who come to God through Him, because He always lives to intercede for them.*” **We come to God through Jesus. Through Him we also have access to the throne of God.**

1 Tim 2:5 “*For there is one God and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus.*” Jesus is the one who stands between God and man. He represents God to us, and as our intercessor He represents us to God. In the context of salvation, Jesus is the mediator from **God to man**. But in His High Priestly role, being seated in heavenly places, seated at the right hand of the Father interceding for us, is representing **us to God**. In evangelism, preaching the gospel of Jesus, He is the mediator from God to man. When we preach Christ people get saved because they receive this one who represents God. But when we are saved and we pray to God in Jesus name, Jesus takes our prayers as the Great High Priest and represents us to God.

There are two roles here – **a) as intercessor Jesus represents us to God,**

b) as mediator He represents God to us, specifically in the context of salvation.

Just as Jesus is our intercessor, **we are also called to be intercessors on behalf of others.** Right now God is raising up intercessors everywhere, who will stand in the gap on behalf of others or for situations, that through prayer will know His heart and then release His will unto that need.

Intercession is more than a simple prayer, making a request known to God. In **Phil.4:6-7** we are told to make our requests known to God through prayer, everyone can pray. Intercession is different; it is a much deeper level of prayer.

Intercession involves being totally yielded to God.

Anyone can enter into intercession at any time but there are some who have a specific ministry of intercession and who have made themselves totally available to God for this ministry; giving Him permission to pray through them in whatever way and whenever He chooses.

THE MINISTRY OF INTERCESSION

There are three main ways that the LORD can use us in intercession.

1. **Intercession can create an ‘open heavens’** for the power of God to be released. Through intercession the hosts of heaven are released to go into battle against the principalities and powers. Our battle is against the principalities and powers, the rulers of darkness of this age and against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places, **Eph.6:12**. The main effect of intercession happens in the heavenly realm, when through intercession angelic armies [the hosts of heaven] are released to go into battle against these forces of satan. Thus creating an open heavens for the power of God to flow.

Elisha the prophet was an intercessor who knew he had the ‘hosts of heaven’ around about him. In **2 Kings 6:17** when Elisha prayed for the eyes of his servant to be opened, the servant saw *“the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.”* He moved in a realm of intercession, so at his prayer the angelic hosts overcame the Syrian army.

An example of this is found in **Ex.17:8-16**. Joshua was fighting a battle with the Amalekites in the valley. Moses was up on the mountain interceding. While ever he held his hands up in prayer Joshua and the Israelite army would prevail but when his hands became weary and dropped down the Amalekites would gain the upper hand. Eventually there had to be those who came along side of Moses to support him in his intercession, so the victory could be won.

We have been in situations where spiritually it has been ‘tough going’. The Lord has released intercession which has brought a ‘break through’ and then the Word has been able to go forth in power, confirmed with signs following. (example from Uganda)

2. **An intercessor attracts the presence of God**, because of their relationship with God. The intercessor needs to have an intimate relationship with God, to know the heart of God and to be willing to make themselves available to God, as one who He can trust to pray through the burdens that He gives. In the natural we do not share our heart, our most intimate needs, with just anyone. We will only share them with our closest and most trusted friend. God is the same. He will only share the intimate depths of His heart with those He knows He can trust to pray according to His will.

The intercessor can draw the presence of God into the meeting. Where there is no anointing flowing, or there is a struggle for the release of the word, intercession will draw the presence of God into the meeting and change the spiritual atmosphere. This is an example of the gift of ‘steerings’, referred to as ‘administrations’ or ‘governments’ in **1 Cor.12:28**. The primary meaning of this word in the Greek means to pilot or steer a ship. So the intercessor can ‘steer’ the meeting back on track, if that is needed, though this gift. The intercessor is used like a lightning conductor, which attracts the lightening and transfers it to the earth. The intercessor can be used as a channel for the Holy Spirit’s power to come into a meeting.

3. **Through intercession we act as an anchor**, gathering in, in prayer, those whom the Lord lays on our hearts and anchoring them securely to God in prayer, (**Heb.6:19**). The intercessor has gone behind the veil and through their ministry of intercession for the saints they are able to anchor people securely there, behind the veil. Family, loved ones,

fellowship members, related fellowships in this country and overseas, as we bring them to the throne in intercession we are anchoring them firmly to the ‘rock’ who is Jesus.

THE THRONE OF GOD

There is a place of prayer within the veil, a place we can enter into when we are praying, and it is when we are able to enter into that place, we will see things happen. It is a place of being right in God’s presence and being in intimacy with Him. There is a place of intercession, and that place is at the very throne of God.

Heb. Chap. 9 says that under the first covenant there was an earthly sanctuary. The first part in which there was the lampstand, the table and the showbread, is called the sanctuary. In the Tabernacle of Moses the altar of incense was also in the sanctuary, but in the Book of **Hebrews** we are told that the golden censer, [literally altar of incense] was before the ‘ark of the covenant’ in the Holy of Holies. This is the altar of intercession within the veil. The veil was torn when Jesus died. The veil is Jesus, who was ‘torn apart’ for us. Only through Jesus can we enter into the most Holy Place where we are to offer up our prayers of intercession.

Heb 4:16 *“Let us come boldly to the throne of grace [within the veil], that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”* Because of Jesus, our great High Priest, and what He has done for us, we can come boldly to the throne. The throne is the seat of power, where the King sits to rule and reign. God is on the throne. Jesus is also at the throne, seated at the right hand of the Father.

Heb 1:8 *“Your throne, O God is forever and ever...”* God’s throne is forever; it can never be removed.

Seated at the right hand

Heb. 8:1 *“Now this is the main point of the things we are saying; we have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens.”* Jesus is the king/priest who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens.

Heb.12:2 *“looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”* Jesus has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. This is where He makes intercession for us. This is the place we are to enter in intercession.

The LORD is our Banner

Ex.17:15-16 *“And Moses built an altar and called its name, The-LORD-is-My-Banner; for he said, ‘Because the LORD has sworn;...’”*. Whenever an altar was built and a name of the LORD proclaimed over it, it became the throne of God revealed in the earth. The revealed name of the LORD here is ‘YHWH NISSI’ - *The LORD is My Banner*. This revelation came through intercession because **v. 16** literally says ‘because a hand is upon the throne of the LORD’. Moses’ intercession only prevailed when his hands were raised and God released victory; his hand was upon the throne of God.

**Through intercession God allows us to touch His throne
and release His power in the earth!!**

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND INTERCESSION

The Holy Spirit releases grace

Rev.1:4 *“Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne.”* The Holy Spirit is before His throne and He releases grace to us. **Isa. 11:2** tells us that the Spirit of the Lord, is the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord. When we are interceding we need to be listening to the Holy Spirit so that we can be led by His wisdom and counsel and will be praying according to His will. Intercession is all about listening to the Holy Spirit, waiting on Him, He comes and reveals what is in the Father's heart to us. If the intercession comes in a way that we do not fully understand what is happening, ask the Holy Spirit to show what is happening. What is the intercession for? He will show you.

The Holy Spirit helps us with our praying

When we have a burden on our heart we may not know how to pray – but the Holy Spirit will help us. **Rom 8:26** *“Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.”* The Holy Spirit will pray through us according to the will of God, **Rom 8:27** *“Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.”*

Hearing what the Holy Spirit says

The key to overcoming is to hear what the Spirit is saying. God's promise in **Rev 3:21** is that *“To him who overcomes, I will grant to sit with Me on My throne as I overcame and sat down with my Father on His throne.”* God wants us to be overcomers; to overcome the flesh, so we are no longer controlled by the ‘old man’.

There is a place for us at the throne of God and in that place we will be able to command awesome things in prayer.

INTERCESSION IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Worship and Intercession

Rev 4:2-11. These verses give a description of what it is like at the throne of God. When we approach God in intercession, we need to have a sense of his awesomeness. There are visions of God at the throne because intercessors are worshipers. We worship at the throne of God! We are coming to a Holy God who is worthy of our praise and deserving of all honour. At His throne in heaven there are the same powerful signs of His presence as there was when He appeared to Moses on the Holy Mountain. (lightning and thundering). This was where God appeared to Moses and spoke to him. This is where we have to come to in prayer to speak with God, and to hear what He wants to tell us. We come to intercede before the throne of grace.

Rev 5:1-13.

v.1 God is on the throne; Jesus is in the midst of the throne, the seven Spirits of God are at the throne, **v.6.** This is the awesome place of God's presence. This is the place He allows us to come to in intercession. There are angels there who are gathering up the prayers of the saints, **v8** (golden bowls full of incense). Our prayers are heard and received at the throne.

The Scroll

v.8 God has the scroll, as we read on in Revelation we see God's plan revealed as the scroll is read. How do we know what God's plan is? By coming to His throne, into His very presence in prayer, worship and intercession. He will reveal His plan to us, tell us what He is going to do.

v.11 There are many angels around the throne. Intercession releases angels to go forth and do the Father's will.

Rev 6:15 &16 *“And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every freeman, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, ‘Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!’”* If there is sin in our hearts we will not be able to draw near the throne and come into His presence. We will want to hide from Him. To draw near to God in intercession, we need to have humble hearts, and to be walking in purity and holiness.

Salvation

Rev.7:9-10 *“After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, saying, ‘Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.’”*

We can plead for salvation of souls before the throne. Multitudes will be saved from every tongue and tribe and nation.

v.13-15 We can only come into His presence dressed in white linen garments, washed in the blood. The ones who are able to come to the throne are the ones who are totally committed to Him. Who know the reality of their salvation and value it and are clothed in the right robes. These are the ones He will receive when they come before Him – day and night serving Him in His temple. God's way of honouring or rewarding those who have been cleansed and washed in the blood and are now totally committed to Him, is to allow them to serve Him day and night in His temple, (**v15**).

The example of Anna

Lu.2:36-38 Anna was a prophetess, but she was also an intercessor. She stayed in the place of prayer, she knew the place of intimacy in the Lord's presence and she *“served God with fastings and prayers night and day.”* God rewarded her – she received prophetic revelation and was able to recognise the day of visitation of the Lord. Intercessors of the last days will see the coming of the Lord.

Intercession releases judgement

Rev 8:3-5 Intercession releases God's power, His fire, His judgements. God has given us authority to command things in prayer.

Intercession releases the river of God

Rev.22:1-3 The river of God proceeds from the throne. Intercession at the throne will release the river of God to flow. It will release refreshing into peoples lives, it will release healing to people.

Rev.22:17 Finally intercession calls the LORD to return. **V.20** “... *Even so, come, Lord Jesus!*”

APOSTLES AND INTERCESSORS

The intercessor has a role to cover or support in prayer those who are in the ‘front line’. Those who are apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers need to have intercessors raised up to support them and cover them in prayer.

An illustration of this is **Eze 22:30** “*So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the Land, that I would not destroy it.*” This verse is often used as an illustration of the role of the intercessor. There is a sense where the intercessor is able to build walls in prayer and to hedge people about, but the Lord has also revealed another interpretation of this verse. It is speaking of one who will make a wall – in the context of the five-fold ministry gift –

the wall builder is the apostle.

He is the one called to set foundations in place and build upon that – but until that work is done there are gaps and weaknesses that the intercessor is able to cover in prayer so that the enemy will not be able to get in.

Nehemiah, an apostle

Neh.4:16 is an example of this “*So it was, from that time on, that half of my servants worked at construction, while the other half held the spears, the shields, the bows and word armor.*” While the wall was being built there were those who had to stand in the gap and protect the ones who were doing the building. As soon as the intercessor prays there is a release for the work to go forward. This is an illustration of the **apostle and the intercessor working together so that the work of building will be completed.** The role of the intercessor is vital in standing along side of each of the ministry gift expressions.

AN OLD TESTAMENT EXAMPLE OF AN INTERCESSOR

1 Kings 18:41-46 Here we see Elijah coming before God to pray for the rain to come after his confrontation with the prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel.

- v. **41** Elijah tells Ahab what is going to happen. He already knows what God is going to do. God reveals to the intercessor what He is going to do, the intercessor then brings it to birth through prayer.
- v. **42** The position that Elijah adopted was that of an Eastern woman about to give birth, this was a position of travail and birthing.
- v. **43** Elijah continued to intercede for the period of time it took for his servant to go seven times to see if there was evidence of rain coming.
- v. **44** Once there was a sign, Elijah knew he was released from his intercession, he knew he did not have to keep on until it was actually raining. Elijah accepted the sign as Gods answer.
- v. **46** Supernatural power was released through Elijah’s intercession.

AN EXAMPLE OF INTERCESSION IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

John 11 is where we read of the death of Lazarus.

- v. **4** Jesus already knew what was going to happen, He already knew that God was going to

be glorified through what was about to happen.

When Jesus arrives at the tomb the spirit of intercession came upon Him.

v. 33 says that Jesus ***“groaned in His spirit and was troubled.”***

v. 35 ***“Jesus wept.”*** These were tears of intercession!

v. 38 ***“Then Jesus, again groaning in Himself, came to the tomb.”***

When the work in the Spirit is complete the burden of intercession will lift.

v. 41 Jesus then prays a prayer out loud and says, ***“Father, I thank You that You have heard Me.”*** What had the Father heard? Jesus had not prayed one spoken prayer but the Father had heard His groaning and tears of travail.

v. 43 The work in prayer being complete, Jesus commands Lazarus to come forth.

v. 44 The awesome result of this intercession is the mighty resurrection power of Jesus being released.

WHAT DO YOU SEE?

Be a watchman

Isa. 62:6-7 ***“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 all the earth.”***

Intercessors are to be watchmen, who are continually before the Lord, not giving Him any rest, until we see the results come.

Watch and see

Hab. 2:1 ***“I will stand my watch and set myself on the rampart, and watch to see what He will say to me, and what I will answer when I am corrected.”***

v. 2 ***“Write the vision and make it plain on tablets.”***

The Lord will show us what he wants to do, or what will happen through our intercession. Write down what the Lord is showing and saying.

Speak into being that which God is showing

Rom. 4:17 ***“God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did.”*** We pray ahead into what we know is coming up and God will begin to reveal the future. He will show His servants the prophets [prophetic intercessors] what He is going to do. **Amos 3:7** ***“Surely the Lord God does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets.”*** We pray the vision [the revelation] into place. We will know ahead of time what God is doing and be prepared.

Then we pray believing and see things happen. **Mk.11:22-23** ***“Jesus ... said to them, ‘Have faith in God, for assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be removed and be cast into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says.’”***

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"Walking in Our Inheritance" a book by Paul Galligan