

WALKING IN OUR INHERITANCE

This book will challenge your concepts and ideas of what church is and your place in it. Jesus said “In vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.” Mark 7:7

Read this book to understand:

- Becoming a son
- Being part of an apostolic company
- The mystery of the church
- Relating to Jesus as the Apostle
- Walking in our inheritance
- The day of the saints;
- Ruling and reigning with Jesus Christ

by

Paul Galligan

WALKING IN OUR INHERITANCE

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Paul Galligan

Revival Ministries Australia

P.O. Box 2718 BC

TOOWOOMBA Qld. 4350

AUSTRALIA

E-mail: paul@revivalministries.org.au

Web site: www.revivalministries.org.au

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DEDICATION

I DEDICATE THIS BOOK TO THE LORD JESUS
AND TO THE MEMBERS OF HIS BODY

This book has been written in obedience
to the Lord Jesus Christ,
the Head of the Church
and Saviour of the Body.

It is presented to you, the saints,
to encourage you to
*“press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call
of God in Christ Jesus.”* Philippians 3:14

We at SHILOH are praying for you
*“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.”* Ephesians 1:17-19a

CONTENTS

Page

Glossary of Terms	6
Introduction - Coming to know the revelation of the mystery	8
- Transforming experiences	
- God is preparing hearts to receive the apostolic	
- Times of restoration	
Chapter 1 Becoming the Sons of God	10
The Journey to Maturity	
Spiritual Fathers	
The Third Experience	
The Spirit of Sonship	
A Child was born: a Son was given	
Who are the sons of God	
The spirit and power of Elijah	
Chapter 2 Called to be an Apostolic Company	18
The first apostolic company	
Called to be an apostolic person	
Called to be an apostolic church	
Reaching nations through grace and apostleship	
Apostolic reformation of the church	
The formation of apostolic companies	
What is an apostolic company	
Old Testament example of apostolic company	
New Testament apostolic companies	
God's plan outworked at end of the age	
Chapter 3a The Mystery of the Church – part one	26
The Church in Jerusalem	
The Church in Antioch	
The Church at Ephesus	
Blessed with every spiritual blessing	
Where Christ and His church are positioned	
I will build My church	
The revelation of the mystery	
There is ONE	
The mystery of the five-fold gift	
Chapter 3b The Mystery of the Church – part two	34
Grace to grow to maturity	
The eternal purpose of God	
Five-fold ministry brings the body to perfection	
Three purposes of the five-fold	
Signposts of maturity	

We are the house of God
The mystery of Christ and His church
The church manifest

Chapter 4	Jesus our Apostle	41
	The High Priest	
	Jesus our Apostle	
	A dwelling place for God in the earth	
	How is Jesus building the house of God today	
	How do we receive Jesus as our Apostle today	
	What is missing in the church today	
	Jesus as our Father	
	It is time to receive Jesus our Apostle	
Chapter 5	Walking in our Inheritance	49
	Inheritance is in the earth	
	Jesus was promised an inheritance	
	Jesus received the inheritance	
	Our inheritance	
	A certain son receives his inheritance	
	A slave becomes a son	
Chapter 6	The Day of the Saints	58
	God's kingdom rules all people in the earth	
	Understanding the call of God	
	An apostolic people in the book of Acts	
	A new wineskin	
	Called out to follow Jesus	
Chapter 7	Ruling and Reigning with Christ	66
	Parable of the tares	
	Thy kingdom come	
	The coming of the King	
	It is time to make Jesus King	
	Jesus has made us kings and priests	
	Characteristics of the last days saints:	
	Jesus is coming as King	
	The church is the ambassador of the kingdom	
Conclusion	78
Prayer to enter into sonship	80

Glossary of terms

Apostle: Jesus raised the ministry of the apostle. This ministry was not known as such in the Old Testament. An apostle is a commissioner of Christ, delegated and sent by Him to represent Him. An apostle is 'one sent' on behalf of another with the authority of the sender to successfully fulfil that for which he is sent, and to fully represent and make known the sender.

Apostolic: Refers to the church and all things Christian that are seen and done through the New Testament, according to the word of God and not the traditions of men.

Apostolic Christianity: New Testament Christianity, being obedient to the word of God and building according to the pattern set in the word, not denominationally.

Apostolic Company: A group of committed disciples and ministers under the leadership of an apostle(s) who are of one mind and heart to serve the purposes of God.

Church: The body of Christ made up of born-again believers who are separated unto Jesus Christ through baptism, called out of the world and all worldly associations, which include man's organisations and institutions which are currently seen as the church.

Fathers: Firstly, apostles whom Christ has given to father the church; secondly, mature ministers and saints who have grown into maturity and have become fathers to younger ones in Christ.

Five-fold ministry: Refers to the five gift ministries Christ gave to the church when He ascended into heaven; *"he gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, some to be pastors and teachers."* Eph.4:11. Also referred to as the 'ascension' gifts.

Grace: The undeserved, freely given, enabling power of God that equips the saints to walk in the ways of God; grace is received through faith.

Impartation: A specific experience of receiving more of the anointing which is often the way that God releases more grace in our lives.

Inheritance: That which is ours to receive in the earth when we come to maturity in Christ; God has made this available and it is reserved for us until the time we are ready to receive. The inheritance includes grace, power, wisdom and revelation, victory over the devil, blessing and glory, and the real promise of His coming.

Maturity: Coming of age in Christ; ready to receive the inheritance. One must mature to begin the walk to perfection. We are not to remain babes in Christ.

Mystery: The hidden wisdom which God has ordained from the beginning of time for our glory (1Cor.2:7); something secret that needs to be searched out and understood. The New Testament refers to many 'mysteries'.

Restoration: God is restoring all things that are spoken of in His word. The restoration of apostles is a pivotal element in the restoration of the church.

Revelation: The Bible is God's revelation to man; as we diligently seek Him through His word, He makes known to us His will by giving us insight and understanding of His word.

Saints: The holy ones; those who are called and are faithful in following Jesus and being obedient to Him in the fellowship of His body.

Sonship: Coming to the age of maturity to receive the inheritance, walking with God in the reality of His fatherhood; sonship begins with a transforming experience.

Transforming experience: Refers to the key life changing experiences in the Christian walk; the first transforming experience is to be born again; the second transforming experience is to be filled with or receive the power of the Holy Spirit; the third transforming experience is to know the reality of sonship, the spirit of adoption.

INTRODUCTION

The Revelation of the Mystery

Ephesians 3:4,6 *“How that by revelation He made known to me the mystery, ... 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.”*

A Deeper Fellowship

1 John 1:1,3 *“that which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life, ... we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us.”*

Times of Restoration

Acts 3:21 *“the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken of by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.”*

We believe we have entered into a crucial time in the purposes of God internationally. God is raising apostles in every nation. The apostolic revelation is for the whole church. It is time for maturity - for the saints to grow up and receive the grace of sonship. This is a transforming experience which God is releasing to His church in preparation for the Lord's coming for "a glorious church".

Coming to know the Revelation of the Mystery

On a mission trip in March/April 2004 into Mauritius and four African nations [Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda and Democratic Republic of Congo], we received further understanding of the apostolic revelation.

The insights we are sharing were received as we gave ourselves *‘to the work of the ministry’*. The main expression of ministry on the trip was in conferences for pastors and leaders. God had gone before us, preparing hearts and there was an open reception to the apostles’ doctrine and the receiving of revelation of the mystery as referred to in Ephesians 3:4,6 *“How that by revelation He made known to me the mystery, ... 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.”*

In our day, God is once again making known this revelation by the Spirit. Paul says that by reading what he has written we will understand his knowledge of the mystery; as you read the revelation the Lord is giving today, He will give light and understanding of the Scriptures, bringing the revelation of the mystery.

Transforming experiences

We saw the Lord doing an awesome work in Africa and Mauritius as many bishops, pastors and leaders received a grace of revelation and understanding; many having a transforming experience in their lives, **as radical as the New Birth or as receiving the Holy Spirit in power.**

Everywhere we went, in the five nations, leaders received us, received the teaching and received the Lord as He came with conviction, releasing impartations of grace and truth and confirming signs and wonders. In one conference in West Kenya, a dear bishop with thirty

years' experience in the ministry and the oversight of numerous churches testified that he had never experienced the power of the Holy Spirit in his life until we prayed for him. He said, *'for the first time in my life, when the team laid hands on me, the power of the Holy Spirit entered my body.'* He was overcome by the power of the Spirit, as was every person who was in the conference – every person came forward for prayer [approximately 180 persons were present].

God is preparing hearts for the Apostolic Revelation

As John wrote in his first epistle, *“that which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life, ... we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us”* 1 John 1:1,3. There is a deeper fellowship being experienced by those who receive this apostolic revelation that God has released by His Anointing to the church. All over the world God is preparing hearts.

There is a holy dissatisfaction in the hearts of many saints and ministers. They can see that the *“glorious church not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that is holy and without blemish”* (Eph.5:27), which Jesus will present to Himself when He comes, will never be prepared in the present system that exists as the *status quo* in most churches.

Times of Restoration

We are blessed to be living in *“the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken of by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began”* Acts 3:21. The Scripture says *“heaven must receive {retain} Jesus Christ until”* that time. Jesus is not coming back until all things we read of in the Scripture that pertain to the New Testament church are restored.

*The church is to be restored in preparation for the coming of the Lord.
He is coming for a glorious church, for a mature body of saints,
or the sons who are ready to be received into glory,
and to rule and reign in the earth with Christ when he comes.*

Chapter One

BECOMING THE SONS OF GOD

To become the sons of God *“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become the sons of God, to those who believe in His name”* John 1:12.

Little children, young men, fathers

“I write to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for His name’s sake.

I write to you, fathers, because you have known Him who is from the beginning.

I write to you, young men, because you have overcome the wicked one.

I write to you, little children, because you have known the Father.

I have written to you, fathers, because you have known Him who is from the beginning.

I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the wicked one” 1 John 2:12-14.

Led by the Spirit *“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God”* Rom.8:14.

The Spirit of sonship *“For you did not receive the spirit of bondage to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship {adoption} by whom we cry out, ‘Abba, Father’”* Rom.8:5.

The revealing of the sons of God *“For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God”* Rom.8:19

The Journey to Maturity

When we are born again, that is, when we are born of God, *“He gives us the power {authority, right} to become the sons of God”* (Jn.1:12-13). This is the beginning of our life in Christ.

There are three major transforming experiences:

- i** being born again – becoming a child of God;
- ii** receiving the power of the Holy Spirit – experiencing the Spirit-filled life;
- iii** coming into sonship - stepping into a mature walk with God; there is a third experience for the believer.

Each of these experiences in Christ introduces us to a new and deeper phase on the journey from being little children to becoming mature sons.

A babe in Christ

When we are first saved, we are a babe in Christ and the Scripture says that we ought to *“desire the pure milk of the Word, that we may grow thereby”* 1 Pet.2:2. Once we have received basic nurturing in Christ we then walk as children. John says in 1Jn.2:12-14 that little

children “*know their sins are forgiven them*” and “*have known the Father*”.

The two wonderful treasures that a new Christian knows are: that Jesus has forgiven all our sins and that we now belong to God’s eternal family. Many of us can remember this awesome good news that dawned on us when we were born again.

Make disciples

Our walk as children is the walk of discipleship. A disciple is one who is being taught and, in the Christian context, being taught the word of God. Jesus clearly commissioned His disciples, specifically the apostles, to “*make disciples of all the nations ... teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you*” Mt.28:19-20.

Disciples need a teacher and it is during the phase of ‘childhood’ that we need continual discipleship – being taught the word of God. Thus, the main ministry of the teacher is to make disciples [this is the fivefold ministry gift of Eph.4:11]. In the natural we send our children to school for at least twelve years to be ‘discipled’ in the education of this world. How much more should we be discipling Christians, including Christian children, in the knowledge of God’s word?

Disciples are to become teachers

Children need the daily bread of God’s Word. A disciple is to be taught the Word of God until the disciple is able to teach the Word of God.

The apostle writing to the Hebrews (5:12) admonishes the believers saying “*by this time though you ought to be teachers you have need of someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food*”. From the passage of Scripture in Hebrews 5 & 6, we understand that the basic teachings that every disciple needs to be grounded in are the first principles of Christ as detailed in Heb.6:1-2. There has been a failure in most churches in this fundamental area of discipleship. As a result, most believers are not grounded in the first principles of Christ and remain immature.

*We are meant to grow from childhood to become
young men, and then to grow into maturity,
perfection being the goal.*

The goal is Maturity

God’s goal for every believer is to grow from being a babe to maturity. There are three stages of growth:

- * little children – disciples who need to be taught,
- * young men – ready for training for ministry or service,
- * fathers – mature ones, able to have spiritual children.

In Ephesians 4:11-16 the apostle is teaching us that the five-fold ministry gift given by Christ is to function until the church comes to full maturity: “*we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting*” v14. Mature believers will not be tricked or deceived or believing false doctrine because they have been properly discipled, that is taught the word of God.

“*Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples. If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them*” (Isa.8:16 & 20).

From babes to young men

We begin our Christian life as babes who are nurtured on the milk of the word, and then as little children we grow as we receive our daily bread.

The second stage of our Christian life is to function and serve as ‘young men’ who “are strong and have overcome the wicked one because the word of God abides in them” 1 Jn.2:13-14. The source of strength of young men is the abiding word of God. Jesus said, “If you continue in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” Jn.8:31-32. As a result of the word of God abiding in them, ‘young men’ know the victory over the devil – they are overcomers and thus able to minister to others.

Training and equipping for ministry

Such ones are ready for the Timothy training phase – to link up with an apostle, or apostolic team or company, and be trained for leadership ministry. In the natural, when children have completed primary and high school, they then go to university or college, take up a trainee-ship or go straight into a work situation. They have become young men and women ready for training, ready for service, ready for work. So in the spiritual it is the same.

Once believers have been disciplined to the extent that they can now teach the word, they have become as ‘young men’; and as young men in Christ are now ready for training and equipping for ministry.

From disciple to minister-in-training

Timothy was a disciple in Lystra. “He was well spoken of by the brethren who were at Lystra and Iconium” Acts16:1-2. Paul took him on his journeys with him, but not until he circumcised him – quite a high price for this young disciple! Timothy had become a ‘young man’ in Christ. The local elders in Lystra and Iconium had been effective in making a disciple of Timothy.

The role of discipleship is the responsibility of the elders, that is, the pastors and teachers who have been ordained in the local churches “to shepherd the flock of God” (1Pet. 5:2 & Acts 20:28).

Once the believer is properly disciplined the believer is now ready for training and equipping for ministry, and that is the responsibility of the apostles and prophets.

Timothy entered into a time of training by going on team with Paul and was part of Paul’s “school of Tyrannus” (Acts 19:9-10) in Ephesus. Later Paul refers to this time of training in 2 Timothy 2:2 when he says, “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.” By that time Timothy is in fulltime ministry as an apostle and is charged by Paul to impart the teaching to those he is training for ministry. Those who have been trained up are then able to impart apostolic doctrine to others.

Spiritual Fathers

The reality of having spiritual fathers

This reality is like a mystery to the contemporary church because the reality of having fathers in the church has been missing. However, ministers and saints everywhere are embracing such relationships and delighting in having spiritual fathers and mothers. We testify that this has become our experience in recent years and these relationships are the result of a transforming experience and walking in a grace that we never knew existed.

Fathers are being restored according to the prophetic word: “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children.” Children [sons] are being restored: “And he will turn the hearts of the children to their fathers.” This is something that God does (Mal.4:5-6).

Relationship to an apostolic father

This experience of sonship is released when one comes into relationship with an apostolic father, or is ministered to by an apostolic father. Unfortunately, most ministerial leaders in the church are not fathers. They are leaders without a father's heart, keen to teach, preach and minister and serve the Lord, genuinely doing their best, but often performing, striving and protecting their own ministry, their own calling, their own tithe income, their own ... whatever. This is largely the result of there having been no fathers to father the ministers when they were growing up.

Restoration of apostolic fathers

There has been a dearth of apostolic leaders in the church. Paul says *"For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers"* 1 Cor.4:15. Unfortunately most of us have grown up under leaders who were not fathers so our own growth and training has been marred, stilted, malnourished and orphan-like. Praise God! Today he is restoring apostolic fathers and the ministry of the apostle to the church. Ministers of many years of service who have raised up many churches and others into ministry are now finding spiritual fathers, are now receiving the grace of sonship and coming into a secure place as sons. One very senior minister shared with us that he had raised many sons in ministry but they had all left him. When he heard the message of sonship, he realised it was because he had never been fathered himself.

The third stage of Christian growth is to step into sonship, to receive the grace to walk in maturity; as a mature one, now able to reproduce, that is have spiritual sons, being a father.

Disciple servant son

A disciple learns from the teacher, serves the master, becoming a son to the father. There is no quick entry into sonship. Elisha, one of the more famous 'sons' in Scripture, was a disciple and then a servant for some years. He *"poured water on Elijah's hands"* 2 Ki.3:11. Elijah was his master until the day he was taken up; the prophets at Bethel and at Jericho both acknowledged that Elijah was the master 'over' Elisha (2 Ki.2:3,5). However, on that day Elisha 'saw' and cried out, *"My father, my father"* (2 Ki.2:12). He came into sonship, receiving his inheritance as a first-born son which was a double portion of all that the father had.

The trainee becomes a son

Later in the Scripture Paul sent Timothy to Corinth saying, *"I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful son in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church"* 1Cor 4:17. Timothy had been discipled in the local churches at Lystra and Iconium and then taken by Paul to be trained for the ministry. In the verse above, Timothy had by this time become a son in the faith and is able to be sent by his spiritual father to fully represent the apostle in the ministry of the word.

In due season the disciple graduates to be a trainee and then the trainee grows to maturity, becoming a son. Entering into sonship only happens when the believer has reached a spiritual age of maturity. John refers to these ones as *'fathers'*. Fathers by definition have children and of course we are speaking of spiritual children.

This age of maturity is not something that we can attain to as such but it is decided by the father, *"Now I say that the heir, as long as he is a child, does not differ at all from a slave, though he is master of all, but is under guardians and stewards until the time appointed by the father"* Gal.4:1-2. And now is the time that God the Father is calling His church into maturity.

A transforming experience

Being born again is the outworking of the mystery of God's grace received by faith. Receiving the Holy Spirit with power, that is, being baptised with the Holy Spirit (Matt.3:11), is a mystery of God's grace received by faith. Likewise, to receive the grace of sonship, having a transforming experience, is the outworking of the mystery of God's grace received by faith. The result is a transformed walk in the Lord, which is outworked in a depth of relationship that releases courage, security, godly discipline, identity and success.

An impartation of the Spirit's power

It is difficult to explain but there is a release of the love of God which is the Father's love. This is the work of the Holy Spirit by impartation that leaves no doubt that we are the sons of God; and that we have a spiritual father in that one, whom God sent to us, to release His grace. In the ideal situation everyone who is in leadership has caught the father's heart. The evangelist who leads you to Christ can have a father's heart. The pastor/teacher who nurtures and disciplines you can have a father's heart for you. We are children growing up in a family and we need a dad.

We testify that God has been releasing this grace that enables us to enter into sonship; we are saying this is a third experience. This experience is entered into by saints whose hearts have been prepared. God is giving this impartation sovereignly in meetings where an apostle is speaking, even while the word is being proclaimed, and on altar calls through the laying on of hands.

This experience comes as a revelation and as an impartation of the Spirit's power. The Scripture says *"them that are led by the Spirit of God these are the sons of God"* (Rom.8:14). The resultant change in the saints, once this impartation is received, begins to reveal the glory of God.

The result of entering into sonship is an internal spiritual change manifest in greater courage, a deeper security, an enhanced ability to receive correction and to practice a disciplined lifestyle, an unfolding of one's destiny in Christ, fulfilling the calling and being successful therein.

The Spirit of Sonship

"For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship [adoption] by whom we cry out 'Abba, Father'" NIV Rom.8:15. The word adoption is used five times in the King James Bible in Paul's writings. The word adoption is a poor translation for the Greek word *huoithesia* which means 'the placement of a son'. It does not refer to being born again into God's family (Jn.3:3-6).

When we are born again, we are born of God legitimately by the Spirit (Jn.1:12-13). From the moment we are born again we have *"the right [power] to become the sons [children] of God"* Jn.1:12. When we are first born again, we are a babe, but innate within us by the Spirit is the power to grow up to the age of maturity. In biblical terms and in biblical culture, this was the age of sonship whereby a son at the age of thirty inherited.

"He chose us in Him ... having predestined us to be sons [to adoption as sons] by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace" Eph.1:4-6. Not only were we predestined to be born again but by the very reality of being born again we become by faith the sons of God and in due season will inherit (Gal.3:26). However, 'sons' refers to those who have grown to maturity and have inherited, thus fully representing the father, *"being filled with all the fullness of God"* Eph.3:19b.

In Galatians 4:4-7 the Scripture does seem to say that being born of the Spirit of God is equivalent to the 'adoption'. That is literally true but there still is a time of growing up because

a child does not receive the inheritance. Romans 8:17 tells us that as children we are “*heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ*” but only if “*we suffer with Him*”. It is in the process of growing up in Christ that we pass through times of suffering. James calls it “*falling into various trials*” that we may “*let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing*” James 1:2-4. Galatians 4:1-2 are clear: children, though heirs, do not inherit until “*the time appointed*”.

The inheritance is for sons

It is sons who receive an inheritance from their fathers, not children or even young men, but those who have reached the age of maturity. Stepping into sonship is beginning to walk in the inheritance that has been laid up for each one by the Father. The inheritance is from God our Father. God releases the inheritance to us by an impartation of grace as our hearts are prepared and we are able to step into sonship. We never qualify according to works but even as we are saved by grace through faith, so it is a work of grace received through faith that enables us to step into sonship (Eph.2:8). This is very important! Everything comes from God through our Lord Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit. It is a free gift. He has given His Holy Spirit! He has given His grace!

*The release into sonship is a work of grace
equivalent to being Born Again
or equivalent to receiving the Holy Spirit.*

The experience of sonship

This is a specific experience which like the previous experiences of being born again, and being filled with the Holy Spirit, is different for each person, but becomes a reality in the life of each person once they have experienced it. If a person is unsure as to whether they are born again, they probably are not. Likewise, if a person is unsure as to whether they have received the Holy Spirit, they probably have not. Even so there is something to experience when a person steps into sonship. One is able to testify to the change and the reality of God’s grace outworked in the person’s life.

Sons manifest

*There comes a time and a place of readiness
to receive the grace of sonship,
to receive the inheritance and begin the walk in
maturity, going on to perfection.*

The inheritance is in Christ; it is guaranteed to come to us. God has given to us the spirit of adoption unto sonship (Eph.1:5). The Holy Spirit is with us to teach and train and guide us into all truth. The truth of sonship has always been in the Scripture.

- “*As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.*” Rom.8:14
- “*All of creation is awaiting the manifestation of the sons of God.*” Rom.8:19
- “*And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, ‘Abba, Father!’ Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.*” Gal.4:6-7

It is the manifest sons who will lift the curse of futility off creation, as they walk in the Spirit (Gal.5:25), being fully obedient to the Father (2 Cor.10:6), even as Jesus demonstrated for us.

A Child was born: a Son was given

Jesus the child

Jesus was born as a human child but God gave Him as a Son. *“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given”* Isa. 9:6. *“For God so loved the world He gave His only begotten Son ...”* Jn.3:16. Undoubtedly Jesus was the pre-incarnate Son of God [‘He always existed’]; He was one and the same as God (Jn.1:1). However, as a human person Jesus was a normal baby with the wants and needs of a baby. I am sure He was a lovely child but it is true that He went missing at the age of twelve and caused His parents considerable consternation. The Bible says that after this incident, *“Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them”* Lu.2:51.

Jesus the young man

As a young man we assume that Jesus trained and worked as a carpenter. We also know that He was regular in attending and participating in Scripture services at the Synagogue (Lu.4:16). It was at the age of about thirty that Jesus came to be baptised and subsequently began His ministry (Lu.4:23).

Jesus the Son

Jesus came into sonship at His baptism - the Spirit of God, His Father, came upon Him conferring sonship; the voice of the Father spoke, confirming sonship, *“This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased”* Matt. 3:17.

Jesus had done nothing as yet but at this point He stepped into the fullness of sonship and began to receive and walk in His inheritance (Ps.2:8). Jesus now began His ministry work. Receiving the Holy Spirit without measure was the key to Jesus walking in His inheritance. Jesus was conceived of the Holy Ghost; that means He did not need to be born again; He always knew His Father. Therefore, He said to His mother *“Did you not know that I must be about My Father’s business?”* Lu.2:49. However until He received the Spirit of the Father fully, He could do no mighty works. The questions He asked as a twelve-year-old boy in the Temple, He now answered by the Spirit of God.

Who are the sons of God?

“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God” Rom.8:14. Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil and came out of the wilderness *“in the power of the Spirit”* Lu.4:14. From that time He only did that which His Father showed Him through the Spirit. Even as Jesus was fully led by the Holy Spirit and walked in His inheritance, so it is for the believer who has grown up in Christ through childhood and through the experience of ministry as a ‘*young man*’, to be now fully led by the Holy Spirit as a son, doing the works of the Father.

Jesus is the *“first born among many brethren”* Rom. 8:29; we are predestined to be conformed to Him. We are to be conformed to His sonship. When Jesus came into sonship and was perfected, He then led many sons to glory (Heb.2:10). This is God’s goal for all believers: to become manifest sons. Sons are those who are led by the Holy Spirit; those who have received the Spirit without measure.

The glory is revealed through the sons of God

The Spirit of sonship comes into us when we fully receive the Spirit of the Father and now *“the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God”* Rom.8:19, and *“the creation itself will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God”* v21. The church is to walk in glory. All the earth will be filled with God’s glory (Num.14:21) through the manifest sons. *“The knowledge of the*

glory of the LORD” will fill the earth “*as the waters cover the sea*” Hab.2:14.

Have you wondered: how can this be? How will God’s glory cover the earth? The verses in Romans 8 give us some insight. It is as we are led by the Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit will lead us into all truth; the Holy Spirit will empower us and release all His gifts through us. The Scripture also makes it clear that sons are perfected through suffering and that is the key to the glory being released.

The spirit and power of Elijah

Coming into sonship is receiving the spirit and power of Elijah. The zenith of Elijah’s ministry was to turn the hearts of the people back to God in 1 Kings 18. Elijah was walking in sonship. Apostles are the ones to whom God gives the spirit of Elijah. The spirit of Elijah gives to the apostle the father’s heart for the people of God, enabling the church to grow up into maturity. The same spirit of Elijah is given to the children of God to receive the fathers, thus coming into sonship. When we come into sonship, we are now walking in maturity, that is, as fathers, and the result will be that we are blessed with many spiritual sons.

The age of maturity

All born again believers are heirs, but children generally do not inherit – they must wait until they are of age. In the Jewish practice the age of maturity [sonship] whereby a son received that which was stored up for him was thirty. So Jesus was about the age of thirty when He came to John for baptism. John also had only begun ministry at about the age of thirty. King David became king at Hebron at the age of thirty (2 Sam.5:4). Joseph was the age of thirty when he was released from prison to become the prime minister of Egypt. The candidate for high priesthood had to be thirty.

Grace released

The grace that God has released to bring His people into sonship is awesome. This grace is real, able to be experienced and life changing. It is the release into sonship whereby we receive and begin to walk in our inheritance. We begin the walk unto maturity when we are of age. Even as Jesus received and walked in the inheritance His Father had for Him, so now God is calling us into a mature walk with Him.

We are no longer to be children! We are no longer to be compromised by unbiblical church structures! We to be no longer controlled and limited by man’s tradition, or by man’s authority! We are to walk in the authority and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ which is unlimited, which is freeing, which is fruitful and effective.

Praise God! He has promised ‘to send Elijah’ and that is exactly what He is doing, raising up fathers, apostolic leaders with true ‘parental concern’ for the next generation of leaders-in-training and those already in leadership and for all the saints.

*Praise God! The spirit and power of Elijah has been released
and now many sons are being given.*

*The children of God have come of age and are receiving an outpouring of the
Spirit, releasing the grace to walk in maturity.*

*We become sons by grace through faith,
it is the gift of God, not of works,
lest anyone should boast.*

Chapter Two

CALLED TO BE AN APOSTOLIC COMPANY

With one accord

Acts 1:13a -14 *“And when they had entered, they went up into the upper room where they were staying:*

These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.”

They continued steadfastly

Acts 2:41-47 *“Then those who gladly received His word were baptised; and that day about 3000 souls were added.*

And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.

Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need.

So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, Praising God and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.”

The Spirit outpoured

John 7:37-39 *“On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, ‘If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.*

He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’

But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing would receive.”

The first apostolic company

As we read the first chapters of the Book of Acts, we see the formation of the first apostolic company. This company included the apostles who had been with Jesus, *“the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and His brothers”* Acts 1:14, as well as other believers, *“about one hundred and twenty”* Acts 1:15b. They were men and women who were in unity and in one accord (Acts 1:14 & 2:1); they were of *“one heart and one soul”* Acts 4:32. This apostolic company was committed to prayer. It was through prayer that Peter was led by the Holy Spirit to appoint Matthias to replace Judas as a twelfth apostle.

Set in order, ready to receive thousands of new converts

The apostolic company had to be set in order. Jesus had trained twelve apostles and many other disciples. The company that waited in the upper room consisted of eleven apostles and many other disciples of varying levels of training and experience. Obviously Jesus’ own mother and brothers were very new believers (1 Cor.15:7). The setting in place of the twelfth apostle, Matthias, was the final act in preparing for the coming of the Holy Spirit. It was to this

apostolic company which was 'set in order' and 'in one accord' that the Holy Spirit came.

Peter was able to stand up on behalf of the eleven and preach a powerful gospel message calling for people to "repent be baptised, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" Acts 2:38. This apostolic company was prepared and ready to receive 3000 new converts on one day! And together "they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers" Acts 2:42.

*We are called to be part of such an apostolic company:
to be joined together 'in one accord',
of one heart and one soul' as this body of believers.*

In these days the Lord is raising up apostolic companies, led by apostles, with all the five-fold ministries in place, to fully function as a body. Each part of the body is "joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causing growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love" Eph.4:16.

God is looking for apostolic companies to whom He can add 3000 souls in one day!

Called to be an apostolic person

The call of God is the call to be an apostolic person: called out of the world to follow Jesus, forsaking all to seek first for the kingdom of God, taking up the cross of personal self-denial and embracing suffering for His sake, and going forth to witness and minister wherever the Lord sends. Obedience to this call requires a total reorientation of one's lifestyle and a prioritising of all of life's goals and practical involvements to fit in with the call of God.

The call of God is not to be a good Christian only; is not to be successful in family life as an end in itself; is not to be successful in business pursuits, except it be the will of God. The call of God is to fulfil the purpose of God: "we are called according to His purpose." The purpose of God is made known to us through the knowledge of the mystery according to Ephesians 3:1-11.

Called to be an apostolic church

The apostolic church of the New Testament was not denominational nor institutional and neither is the apostolic church of the last days. Everywhere around us believers and Christian leaders are settling for compromise, apparently not comprehending the call of God as clearly set out by Jesus and the apostles in the Bible or simply ignoring what the Bible clearly says. Such Christians prefer the ways and traditions of men above obedience to the word of God, mistaking loyalty to a denomination or tradition for faithfulness to the word of God.

Jesus is to have pre-eminence

So often if a person testifies to their faith in Jesus, the immediate question is, 'what church do you go to?' Man's idea and practice of church historically has been lifted up above Jesus and yet Jesus is always to have the pre-eminence in all things (Col.1:18). Christians generally talk more about their church and what is happening in their church [programs] than about Jesus and what is happening in their walk with God. This is because we have made the church 'ours' rather than being the church of Jesus Christ according to the New Testament.

Reaching nations through grace and apostleship

In Romans 1:5, Paul says that he and the church of his day, the body of Christ, "have received grace and apostleship through Christ for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name." It is not the Catholic Church of Rome, nor the ancient church of St. Thomas in

Southern India, nor the successful charismatic churches claiming to reach thousands and even tens of thousands, nor even the contemporary networks of independent churches or pastors' prayer fellowships that will reach the nations with the gospel and will be salt and light in the community.

*The Bible says it is through grace and apostleship
received from the Father through Christ that leads
to the obedience of faith among all nations.*

Because Christians have forsaken God's ways for church life and the biblical conduct of ministry, the Christian church in general has lost its true place in the world to be salt and light. Historically in Australia, the Marriage Act of Parliament upheld that marriage is exclusively that of a male and a female. But in 2017 the Marriage Act was changed and now Australia accepts that two homosexuals can be 'married'. The sad comment on this, is that one of the largest denominations by number, went ahead of the Government and was blessing 'same sex partnerships', and saying that homosexuality is okay. Such policy is a sad reflection on the public profile of the church. There needs to be a full reformation of what we call church to become the church of Jesus Christ that He is building.

Apostolic reformation of the church

The Historic Reformation

In these days, God has raised apostles and some of the apostles are calling for the reformation of the church. Such a reformation calls for much greater change than the Luther-led reformation of the sixteenth century. At that time historic changes were wrought upon the church but many institutional structures and practices of the church did not change. The Lutherans soon became an organised State-sponsored church in Germany, as did the Calvinists in Switzerland and the Dutch Reformed in Holland. The Anglicans of course in England have always existed with the support of the crown. From the fourth century, the Roman Catholic church had been fully aligned with the ruling authorities of the Roman empire and later throughout Europe. The Protestant churches are in reality daughter-churches of Rome and while there were many radical changes in doctrine and preaching and truth was in part restored, there was never a concerted effort to return to apostolic Christianity as taught and practised in the New Testament.

Apostolic Christianity will be persecuted

Meanwhile throughout the history of Christendom, there have always been pockets of apostolic Christianity. * Wherever the apostolic doctrine and practice was established in church history, tremendous persecutions arose against those preachers and churches. This persecution was inflicted upon them by the established State-sponsored churches. In the time of Luther, those believers were called Anabaptists; this was because they practised re-baptism of believers who had already been christened as babies. The Lutherans opposed this as much as the Catholics had always opposed it. Jesus clearly warned the twelve apostles when he first commissioned them that they would face much persecution (Mt.10:16-36).

*** ['The Pilgrim Church', by E.H. Broadbent, a Pickering classic, 1931 – an excellent history of the true, Scripture-based church throughout the church era. This book has recently been republished]**

Institutionalised church versus apostolic church

Today many of God's people are involved in institutional churches. Some are

preachers, teachers and ministers who are convinced that they will do some good remaining in the institutions, and they will. However, we need to learn from history and especially we need to be obedient to the words of our Lord Jesus Christ. He did not die on the cross to establish denominational churches. Denominations are man's idea from start to finish. He appointed twelve apostles to be the foundation stones and the builders of His church.

Jesus trained and appointed twelve apostles: to them He entrusted the birthing and formation of the church; to them He gave the keys of the kingdom of heaven. He is building His church through apostles and that is the church that will withstand the gates of hell.

The Formation of Apostolic Companies

Today we are seeing the formation of apostolic companies in preparation for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit that will release the last days revival prior to the Lord's return.

The Holy Spirit came to fulfil Pentecost

In Acts 1&2 we see the preparation and final setting in order of the first apostolic company and the coming of the Holy Spirit to that company in fulfilment of what Jesus had told them and in fulfilment of the Feast of Pentecost. [Feast of Weeks in Old Testament – see Leviticus 23:15-22] The one hundred and twenty disciples were all gathered in obedience to Jesus' command to, *'wait in Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high'* Lu.24:49. While they waited in prayer and supplication in one accord, the Lord showed Peter that the twelfth apostle must be set in place. When this was done by divine guidance, then the day of Pentecost could *'fully come'* Acts 2:1. The Holy Spirit came in fulfilment of the Feast, which was first instituted when God gave the Law to Moses on Sinai 1500 years before.

The Feast of Tabernacles to be fulfilled

Jesus has also clearly prophesied a powerful coming of the Holy Spirit to fulfil the Feast of Tabernacles [the latter rain of Joel 2:23] in John 7:37-39. John 7 is in the context of the Feast of Tabernacles. Jesus went up secretly but then appeared in the midst of the great convocation of the eighth day, *'the great day of the feast'* v.37. Leviticus 23 tells us that for seven days the people of God were to dwell in booths made of leafy boughs and branches of trees, but the eighth day was a day of gathering for the sacrifice, a holy day, a sabbath (v.33-43).

The Feasts are a Prophetic Calendar

The Feasts of Israel were given by God to Moses and they are a prophetic calendar by which we see the outworking of God's purposes being fulfilled.

- Passover and Pentecost have been fulfilled in Christ, through His death and resurrection and the coming of the Holy Spirit, and have been fulfilled in the experience of the born again, Spirit-filled Christian.
- The blowing of Trumpets and the Day of Atonement and the Feast of Tabernacles have been fulfilled in Christ and are now being fulfilled in the church at the end of the age.

Initially God said to Moses that the Feast of Tabernacles in the seventh month was not to be celebrated until the people of God came into the land. The land for us is the promises of God and at the end of the age, the church is to come into maturity [the land] according to the promises of God.

Prophetic understanding of the Word

The **blowing of Trumpets** can be interpreted as the prophetic word of God coming forth to prepare the church for the coming of the Lord. Since the second World War there has

been an amazing quickening of the word of God in the earth. In 1948 there was tremendous release of revelation through what is known as the Latter Rain Revival. The late 1940s and fifties saw the emergence of the great healing evangelists and ever since that time, there has been continual restoration of truths, ministries and revival movements, preparing the church for the culmination of the end times.

A Sin Free Life

The **Day of Atonement** was already fulfilled in Christ when He entered the Holiest with His own blood (Heb.9:11-12) making a way for us. However the Day of Atonement is to have an outworking in the life of the church and in the life of the believer whereby we walk free of all sin, knowing that Jesus has fully atoned for all sin. This is the release to walk in maturity unto perfection. This is the goal spoken of in 1 Thessalonians 5:23, *'The God of peace Himself is sanctifying us completely; and may our whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.'*

Drink for the lost through the Believers

The **Feast of Tabernacles** consisted of seven days of dwelling in temporary booths, followed by the eighth day when all the congregation were to gather together for the sacrifice by fire. Jesus spoke on the eighth day. He stood in the midst and cried out to two different sets of people (Jn.7:37-38):

- Firstly, He cried to the 'thirsty', that is the unsaved, those thirsty for truth, for salvation;
- Secondly, He cried out to the believers, *"he who believes in Me"*, out of whose innermost beings, the rivers of living water would flow to give drink to the multitudes of the thirsty in that day.

That day is speaking of an end day, prior to the Lord's coming in glory when Jesus will be seen in the midst of His glorious, perfected church. He will give the Holy Spirit, *"the latter rain"*, pouring out His Spirit in fulfilment of Joel and in fulfilment of His own awesome prophetic promise in John 7. Verse 39 says He was speaking of the Holy Spirit.

What is an apostolic company?

An apostolic company is a body of saints who have been called together in commitment to see the kingdom of God established on the earth among the nations. These saints have been called out of institutions and organisations wherein clear obedience to Christ has been subjugated to institutional and organisational rules and practices. In such companies, all the ministries and gifts that God has given in the New Testament find their place and full expression.

*These companies stretch across nations; are led by an apostle;
are characterised by all of the company members having a clear understanding
of the call of God and a powerful revelation of sonship.*

An Old Testament example of apostolic company

The Rechabites

In Jeremiah 35 we read of a clan of people called 'Rechabites'. They are a demonstration of an apostolic company and the powerful influence that a true spiritual father can have. This clan was living under the covering of their apostolic father generations after he had lived.

The Rechabites are set a test

The scene is set in Jeremiah 35:1-2, *“The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD in the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, saying, ‘Go to the house of the Rechabites, speak to them, and bring them into the house of the LORD, into one of the chambers, and give them wine to drink.’”* Jeremiah was a trusted prophet of the Lord and God told him to do something very specific. He was to go to the Rechabites, bring them into the house of the Lord and give them wine to drink. Jeremiah was obedient to the word of the Lord: *“I brought them into the house of the LORD, into the chamber of the sons of Hanan the son of Igdaliah, a man of God ...”* (v 4) *“Then I set before the sons of the house of the Rechabites bowls full of wine, and cups; and I said to them, ‘Drink wine.’”* (v 5)

The Rechabites passed the test

However these sons of Rechab did not do as Jeremiah told them, *“they said, ‘We will drink no wine, for Jonadab the son of Rechab, our father, commanded us, saying, ‘You shall drink no wine, you nor your sons, forever’”* v6. They knew how to respond on the basis of ‘sound doctrine’ that had been taught to them. Their conduct was based on the teachings that had been passed down to them from generation to generation. Paul the apostle appointed Timothy to entrust to *“faithful men”* things he had learnt and received from Paul so they could teach others. Sound doctrine, based on the word of apostolic fathers, specifically Jesus and Paul, is to be passed on from generation to generation and is to be adhered to, even in the twenty first century.

Jonadab’s instructions covered all of life

This man Jonadab lived over 200 years before this event took place. None of the present generation would have ever known this man, but his descendants are still being obedient to the command given by their father [their apostle]. *“Thus we have obeyed the voice of Jonadab the son of Rechab, our father, in all that he charged us, to drink no wine all our days, we, our wives, our sons, or our daughters”* Jer.35:8. Their ‘father’ had also told them, *“You shall not build a house, sow seed, plant a vineyard, nor have any of these; but all your days you shall dwell in tents, that you may live many days in the land where you are sojourners”* v7 and they had obeyed this word (v 9&10).

These people were not sons of Israel, but they dwelt in the land of Israel. For over 200 years they had remained faithful to the voice of their apostolic father who said, ‘If you obey my voice you will have success and be blessed’. [2 Kings 10:15 &16 introduces Jonadab: he is the one whose heart was one with King Jehu to fulfil the purposes of God in that day.]

God wants us to learn from this apostolic company

The Lord gave some more instructions to Jeremiah, *“Go and tell the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, ‘Will you not receive instruction to obey My words?’ says the LORD. ‘The words of Jonadab the son of Rechab, which he commanded his sons, not to drink wine, are performed; for to this day, they drink none, and obey their father’s commandment’”* v13-14. This is an example of an apostolic company who, after hundreds of years, were still obeying the voice of their apostolic father and because they had been obedient, they were blessed.

An apostolic people are identifiable

God had kept this clan as an identifiable people group even though they were aliens and sojourners in a foreign land for hundreds of years. They had a testimony among the people where they dwelt as being people who were different. Everyone knew who they were. When the Lord told Jeremiah to go to the Rechabites, he didn’t have to ask, ‘who are they?’

Keep the commandment of the father

The Lord wanted to use the response of the sons of Rechab to speak to His people, *“But although I have spoken to you, rising early and speaking, you did not obey Me. I have also sent to you all My servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them, saying, ‘Turn now everyone from his evil way, amend your doings, and do not go after other gods to serve them; then you will dwell in the land which I have given you and your fathers.’ But you have not inclined your ear, nor obeyed Me. Surely the sons of Jonadab the son of Rechab have performed the commandment of their father, which he commanded them, but this people has not obeyed Me”* Jeremiah 35:15-16.

God rewards the faithful

Through a prophetic act, God used this apostolic family as an example to His people to show them what He expected of them. God pronounces judgement on His people because they have not obeyed the word He spoke to them (v17) through Moses and the prophets. This obedient apostolic family will always have a right standing before God: *“therefore thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: ‘Jonadab the son of Rechab shall not lack a man to stand before Me forever’”* v19.

New Testament apostolic companies

In the New Testament, there are clearly apostolic fathers and examples of companies but as in the Old Testament, the majority of God’s people have not hearkened to the word of the fathers [apostles]. The Rechabites illustrate the nature of an apostolic company. Historical and contemporary Christian churches have been divided into denominations, everyone with their own doctrines and dogmas, not agreeing with each other because they have no father whose word they are obeying.

Apostolic fathers

Apostolic fathers wrote the Scriptures under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Jesus is our Apostle (Heb.3:1) and we are His sons (Heb.2:13), and specifically Paul is the apostle to the Gentiles (Gal.2:8). Therefore, the church down through the ages should have been obedient to Jesus’ word in the Gospels and the words of the apostolic fathers in the Epistles. If the church had been obedient, we would not have the divided weak Christian church that is largely unrecognisable from the Scripture. However today God is restoring apostles [fathers] and raising up apostolic companies which are founded upon and being built upon the apostolic pattern of the Scripture.

When we humble ourselves and return to the Lord, to keep His word and do all He has commanded us through Jesus and through the writings of the apostles of Christ in the New Testament, we will be blessed, we will prosper and have success.

It is time to rediscover apostolic life

The word that the Lord has opened up in Jeremiah 35 is very relevant. It is an example in Scripture of an apostolic company – a family of people related through a common father, still being obedient to his commands over 200 years later and being blessed because of their obedience. However the church today has been like the people of Israel and has not been obedient to the commands of our apostolic fathers, therefore coming under God’s judgement instead of His blessing.

It is time for the church to become obedient to the words of our apostolic fathers so that every member will be properly fitted together being *“built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone”* Eph.2:20. Then we will be *“no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the*

household of God” v19. Like the obedient Rechabites we will have a testimony and will have favour in the community as the first apostolic company had in Acts 2:42-47.

God’s plan is outworked at the end of the age

- *At the end of the age God is gathering together groups of committed believers into apostolic companies to be trained and equipped and set-in place to function.*
- *These companies will be together in one accord, of one heart and of one mind to serve the purposes of God, to reach nations and to be communities of light and truth and love.*
- *It is to these committed, truly united companies of believers with apostolic leadership that the Lord will pour out His Spirit in such a way that thousands can be saved in every place.*
- *It is out of the innermost heart of the believers formed into these companies by the very hand of God that the rivers of living water will flow to give drink to the thirsty.*
- *This will be a worldwide phenomenon and to this end saints in every nation are responding to the apostolic message and receiving the grace to walk in the fulfilment of the call of God. Every soul will hear and every thirsty soul will receive salvation.*

Chapter 3a

THE MYSTERY OF THE CHURCH - Part one

Knowing the mystery - Ephesians 3:3-6

“By revelation He made known to me the mystery, by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ, 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; that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel ... v8-11 that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ; to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

He Himself gave some - Eph.4:8-11

“‘When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive and gave gifts to men.’ ... And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers.”

A glorious church - Eph.5:26-27

“That Christ might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of the water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. v.32 This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.”

The church in Jerusalem

An apostolic church

The first church grew up in Jerusalem with multitudes being joined to their number. In time the Jerusalem church became a ‘sending’ church, that is an apostolic church. In fact, it took some persecution to get the disciples out of Jerusalem to fulfil Jesus’ command to go to Samaria and to the uttermost parts of the earth (Acts 1:8 & 8:1,4).

A sect of the Jews

Once the Gospel spread and churches were planted in other places, the church in Jerusalem became a ‘mother’ church. This church consisted exclusively of converted Jews and for many years the believers were known as a sect of the Jews but also referred to as the ‘people of the Way’, acknowledging that they were believers in Jesus, and were different. When Peter reported his going into the Gentile house of Cornelius to preach Jesus, he was not easily received among his Jewish brethren. Until that time the believing Jews had no concept of non-Jews becoming a part of the church unless they became proselytes of Judaism as well.

Judaism and Gentiles in the church

Later in Acts 15, a special church council was convened in Jerusalem to consider further

the issue of Gentiles coming into the church. By this time there were many Gentile believers, with Gentile and Jewish believers in the church together in other cities. However there were serious problems because many of the Jewish believers based in Jerusalem still openly practised the law of Moses and were part of Temple worship. Their belief was that Gentile converts needed to practice the law and even be circumcised. Paul's letter to the Galatians addresses these issues faced by Gentile converts as he condemns the teaching of the Judaizers.

The failure of the Jerusalem church

The mother church in Jerusalem never broke free of Judaism and after the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in AD 70, the Jewish church disappeared from history. The original church in Jerusalem never completed the transition from Judaism to Christianity, even though mighty works were done in Jerusalem through the power of the Holy Spirit and in the name of Jesus Christ.

Gentiles receive the Holy Spirit

In Acts 10, Gentiles heard the word through the apostle Peter. We know from the Scriptures that this was a divinely arranged meeting. The Scripture says, "*While he was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word*" v44. This demonstrated an enormous breakthrough in the heavenly realm for the gospel. As a result the Spirit of God was able to be received by Gentiles. A further breakthrough came in Antioch where those who had been scattered "*spoke to the Hellenists, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord*" Acts 11:19-21. Because of the breakthrough in Cornelius's house Gentiles were now being saved into the church, alongside of Jews.

The church in Antioch

First called Christians

As a result, the church in Antioch consisted of both Jews and Greeks. This was a significant change from the mother church in Jerusalem where the Christians were known as a sect of the Jews. Now in Antioch the church is more fully representing the body of Christ [made up of Jew and Gentile Eph.3:6] and there they were first called Christians (Acts 11:26). Now the church was a discernible group of people separate from the Jews.

Great grace upon the church

The Bible says that the grace of God was able to be seen at work among the believers in Antioch (Acts 11:23). Something special was happening at Antioch! Something new and very different was happening from what had happened in Jerusalem. The great change was the inclusion of Jewish believers and Gentile believers in the same church and initially there were no problems because of the grace of God they were experiencing. Ephesians 2:14-16 tells us that Jesus created "*one new man from the two*"; because of the cross there was no longer any separation between Jews and Gentiles in the church of Christ.

An apostolic church

Quickly the church at Antioch became a mother church, that is, a sending church, that is, an apostolic church. In the record of the book of Acts it appears that this church replaced the Jerusalem church in time as the apostolic church out of which apostles were sent and new churches were planted and raised up.

Problems in the church in Antioch

However, even in Antioch, the problem over the law and circumcision arose. There were mixed loyalties, so strong, that even Barnabas “*played the hypocrite*”, turning back from the freedom he had found in Christ to refuse to eat with Gentiles (Gal.2:13). Paul attempted to address these problems at the highest level, openly challenging the apostle Peter. Unfortunately, after this problem surfaced, it seems that Paul no longer regarded the church at Antioch as a suitable mother church and except for a visit on his trip to Jerusalem Paul returned there no more.

The church at Ephesus

By the time Paul came to Ephesus in Acts 19, he was experienced in preaching the gospel and planting churches. The testimony of Paul in Ephesus is quite remarkable and we find that the church in Ephesus becomes the most talked about church in the Bible. The whole of Acts 19 is devoted to the planting and raising up of the church in Ephesus. Acts 20:17-38 records Paul’s counsel to the elders from Ephesus. The book of Ephesians [six chapters] contains the most revelation concerning the church in the whole Bible. The church at Ephesus was one of the churches that Jesus wrote to in Revelation 2. Timothy was probably based in Ephesus as an apostle when Paul wrote the letters to him.

History tells us that the Ephesian church became the mother church and the apostolic base of leading ministries for many decades after the New Testament was written. It is believed that the apostle John was based there; that Mary the mother of Jesus lived her final years there. Much of the revelation of who and what the church is comes to us in the book of Ephesians. There is an unfolding revelation of the church in this book beginning with the spiritual blessings that are ours through Christ as the church. In Ephesians Paul sets out the walk of the church unto maturity.

Blessed with every spiritual blessing

Ephesians chapter one tells us of the spiritual blessings that we have received in Christ. There are at least seven blessings:

- v 4 chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and without blame;
- v 5 predestined to adoption as sons;
- v 6 made accepted in the Beloved;
- v7 redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins;
- v8-9 abounding in wisdom and understanding to know the mystery of His will, “*that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, in Him*” v 10.
- v11 we have obtained an inheritance;
- v13 we were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance.

We need the spirit of wisdom and revelation

From verse 15-19 Paul prays for us to have “*the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him [Jesus Christ]; that the eyes of our understanding may be enlightened to know 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 towards us who believe.*” Let me tell you: if you pray this prayer earnestly and regularly God will reveal to you the knowledge of the mystery. Paul begins his exposition of the mystery by praying this prayer for us in chapter one.

Many years ago, in a season of prayer and fasting to seek the knowledge of God's will and His message for the church today, I personally prayed this prayer over my own life more than once a day. The result has been astounding! I have found God answering these prayers in many wondrous ways in terms of the revelation of His word. The spirit of wisdom and revelation is available to every saint.

Where Christ and His church are positioned

The last part of chapter one reveals where Christ is, "*raised ... far above all principality and power, ... all things under His feet,*" and shows that the church is His body; that the church is "*the fullness of Him who fills all in all.*" Paul makes it clear that we have been "*raised up together, and made to sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus*" Eph.1:20-23 & 2:6. The revelation of the mystery has begun!

Recreated a new man

2 Corinthians 5:17 says that we are new creations in Christ; in Ephesians 2:10, Paul says, "*we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works*". We have been "*brought near by the blood of Christ*" v13; and God has made "*one new man from the two*" v15 through Jesus Christ, there no longer being any enmity between Jew and Gentile in the true church of Jesus Christ. There is a revelation of the church in these verses: we are new creations, His workmanship, brought near by the blood of Christ as one corporate new man.

"I will build My church" - Matthew 16:18

Biblical foundations

The church is the household of God and it is built on the foundations of apostles and prophets (Eph.2:20). There is no other foundation on which to build the church other than the ministries of the apostle and prophet that God has given through Christ to the church for the building of the church. For 1800 years the church in general has not had Biblical foundations. Soon after the close of the New Testament writing time, the church began to replace the ministry of the apostle with the man-made office of a bishop. The bishop was raised up to rule over the church of a city in contradiction to the clear teaching of Scripture, which says that the church of each city is pastored [shepherded] and given oversight by elders. These elders were ordained by the apostles. This is the Biblical pattern (Acts 14:23, 20:28 & Titus 1:5).

Restoring proper foundations

In Scripture, elders and bishops refer to the same office or ministry. There is no situation in the Scripture where a single elder was given rulership over other elders or over the church of a city; rather eldership was meant to be a plurality. Now at the end of the age, God is restoring apostles and prophets so that the last days church can be built upon proper foundations. Jesus is coming back for His church, built His way, not for some conglomeration that man has mixed up and is now trying to put together, without due regard to the Scriptures and the pattern revealed therein.

The Cornerstone

The Scripture says Jesus Christ is the Cornerstone. A cornerstone in a building is set in place after the foundations have been laid. Once the cornerstone is in place, then the walls of the building can be erected. In the Scripture there is only one church and that church is built upon non-denominational apostles and prophets who have been appointed in the church by God Himself (1 Cor.12:28). The church that has emerged historically has not been built upon the foundations of apostles and prophets and so we have numerous denominational divisions in the

church as people have followed the leadership and traditions of men. The church of Jesus Christ is not the coming together of these various divided denominations but rather a reformed church according to the Scripture.

Once Biblical foundations are restored and Jesus Christ is recognised and received again as the cornerstone, *“the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit”* Eph. 2:21-22.

The revelation of the mystery

All things gathered together in Christ

God will grant us *“wisdom and revelation to know the mystery”* Eph.1:17. This mystery is outworked in the gathering of all things in Christ, things in heaven and on earth (Eph.1:10). This refers to the coming of Christ in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, when God will bring with Jesus those who sleep, that is, the dead in Christ (v14). When the Lord descends from heaven *“the dead in Christ will rise first”* v16. *“Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air”* v17. This is the gathering together of all things in Christ to usher in the new age of Christ ruling and reigning with and through His saints.

Revealed by the Spirit

The revelation of the mystery is *“revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets”* Eph.3:5, so that now *“the unsearchable riches of Christ”* can be preached (Eph.3:8), leading to *“the revelation of the manifold wisdom of God to principalities and powers in the heavenly realm through the church”* Eph.3:10. God’s goal is to fully displace the principalities and powers in the heavenly realm and replace them with His church. This church understands the mystery because the unsearchable riches of Christ are being preached by apostles and prophets whom God appoints, enabling the saints to understand and walk in the knowledge of the mystery.

The revelation of the true church

It is as the church comes into the revelation knowledge of the mystery of God’s will being outworked through the church in the earth that the glory of God will be revealed. This revelation is the revelation of the true church as revealed by the Holy Spirit. The Spirit gives the revelation firstly to apostles and prophets who then through *“the dispensation of the grace of God which was given”* Eph.3:2, preach the unsearchable riches of Christ, enabling all the saints to *“see what is the fellowship of the mystery”* v 9. There is much more for the saints to enter into; God wants to make known *“the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints”* Eph.1:18. Until now most saints have never heard the preaching of Christ in such a way as to reveal the mystery.

The knowledge of the mystery was hidden

This mystery *“has been hidden in God from the beginning of the ages”* Eph.3:9. When God created all things through Jesus Christ, this mystery, called *“the hidden wisdom”* 1 Cor.2:7, was present in creation but not known or understood. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 2:6 that this wisdom is not understood by the demonic rulers of this present age but is to be understood by the saints who have come to a place of maturity in their Christian understanding, knowing the mind of Christ (1 Cor.2:16). Throughout history, men in their civilizations and tribal communities have searched for this wisdom outside of Christ. This deeper wisdom can only be known through the Gospel, revealed by the Holy Spirit.

Displacing demonic powers

As the church comes into the revelation knowledge of who Christ is and that the church is “*the body of Him who fills the all in all*”, then this revelation will be made known to the demonic rulers through the church (Eph.3:10). A great change has taken place because Jesus died on the cross. The fruit of His death and resurrection is the formation of His body, the church. As His church is truly joined to Christ the Head then the manifold wisdom of God, understood by the church through the prophetic preaching of the word, fills the heavenly realm, displacing the rule and reign of demonic powers. These powers currently rule through deception and false religion. When the church comes to know the revelation of the mystery, the demonic kingdoms become fully subject to the kingdom of Christ.

The revelation of the mystery releases glory

This wisdom is not for babes - babes need the ‘*milk of the word*’; this wisdom is not for children - children need the ‘*meat of the word*’; this wisdom is ‘*the hidden manna*’ for those growing into maturity. Paul says “*God ordained this wisdom before the ages for our glory*” and now the Spirit is revealing this wisdom to us (1 Cor.2:10). This wisdom is never understood by man’s intellect; it is by revelation to the spirit of man. To ensure that His saints understand the revelation of His will, God has actually given to us “*the mind of Christ*” 1 Cor.2:16. This means that the saints who have grown up into maturity, and even young ones in Christ, can comprehend the word of God; can actually think the thoughts of God. God is always working to fulfil His “*eternal purpose*”; He has already accomplished His eternal purpose “*in Christ Jesus our Lord*” Eph.3:11, and now it is through the church that the outworking of God’s eternal purpose will be seen.

It is time to understand the mystery

Amazingly, God has now entrusted the revelation of this mystery of His eternal purpose to the foolishness of preaching. In these last days God is again dispensing His grace to apostles and prophets to make known the revelation of His mystery. It was to Paul the apostle that Jesus chose to reveal much more and deeper truth of the mystery of His church. Even today, well-meaning gifted ministers are opposing what God is doing. Many are consciously refusing to receive the apostles Jesus is raising in these days. Many are defending institutional Christianity unnecessarily against the clear dictates and teaching of Scripture. In his day Paul called such preachers Judaizers. They were attempting to bind the new Christian church into the institutions and practices of Judaism. Religious teachers of any age and those who hear them, miss out on the revelation of the mystery which is essential for the glorification of the church. Such ones have no vision for the church other than what they already know.

There is ONE ...

*“There is one body and one Spirit,
Just as you were called in one hope of your calling;
One Lord, one faith, one baptism;
One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all,
and in you all” Eph.4:4-6.*

This quote from Scripture needs to become the catchcry of every believer and every Christian fellowship in the nation until the Christians believe the message of the word of God, that there is only one church.

Unity of the Faith

The first real mark of the mature church according to Ephesians 4:11-16 is the ‘*unity of the faith*’ v.13. This unity of the faith clearly refers to our attitude to the Bible. If we have the

revelation that the Bible is the word of God and faithfully teach and preach Jesus, the Christ, from the word, the faith doctrines of the word will be taught to every believer, not the dogmas and partial truths of the denominated church groups. The unity of the faith can never come to those compromising the word of God, promulgating church doctrine and practice which is unscriptural. The Reformation of the sixteenth century professed that ‘Scripture is our only authority for faith and practice’. Unfortunately, they did not carry out their profession. However, the same profession of faith in the Word of God and obedience to the Word of God is foundational and crucial to the reformation of the church today.

God’s goal is a perfect church

God loves all of His people eternally and according to His grace, mercy and wisdom, has raised up leaders and movements throughout history to bring repentance [change], refreshing, fresh life and direction and revival to His people. But now we are living in the last days in which the Lord Himself is “*sanctifying and cleansing the church through the washing of water by the word, that He might present to Himself a glorious church*” Eph.5:26-27. There are no homosexual ministers in Christ’s church. God’s goal is a perfect church and Jesus Himself after “*descending and ascending, gave gifts to men*” Eph.4:8-10. “*He gave some to be apostles ... for the perfecting of the saints ... until we all come to the unity of the faith ... unto a perfect man*” Eph.4:11-16.

Apostles are needed to reach the goal

Some are saying ‘*we don’t need apostles*’, ‘*there are no more apostles since the early church*’ and such like. However, the Bible clearly says we need apostles today to:

- * “*perfect the saints*” Eph.4:12;
- * so that the church can be “*built upon the foundations of apostles ...*” Eph.2:20;
- * to bring “*the revelation of the mystery*” Eph.3:5;
- * to be the leadership/headship of the church 1 Cor.12:28.

In the Bible church governance overall is in the hands of the apostles and locally in the hands of elders who are ordained by apostles. This is the clear Scriptural pattern. As it was in the beginning, so shall it be.

The mystery of the five-fold gift

The message of the cross

The normal message of the cross which we have all heard and all rightly preach is that Christ “*was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification*” Rom.4:25. In preaching the gospel to win souls Paul says, “*I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified*” 1 Cor.2:2. This is a great mystery: through Jesus’ death and resurrection, we can be saved eternally.

The ascended Christ gave the ministry gifts

Paul also teaches us that through Jesus’ death - He descended into the lower parts of the earth - and through His ascension (Eph.4:9-10), He delivered to the church the five-fold ministry gift of apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher (v11). These gifts are essential in the raising up of “*a perfect man*” Eph.4:13, speaking of the church growing up into perfection. Jesus did not die only for our salvation from sin and hell and death, but He also died for our glorification (Rom.8:29-30). The church will only come to glory when all of these ministries are fully functioning. These ministries must work “*for the perfecting of the saints,*

and the building up of the body of Christ” Eph.4:12, until the church is perfected corporately. In 1 Corinthians 2:6-8, Paul teaches us that “the rulers of this age would not have crucified the Lord of glory” if they had knowledge of the mystery. A part of the mystery that neither the demonic rulers understood nor unfortunately most believers today, is that Jesus recovered in a mysterious way the five-fold ministry gift by descending into hell and taking captivity captive. Herein lies a mystery.

Jesus Christ gave everything for His church

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, went through the humiliation of being incarnate as a man, “*making Himself of no reputation*”, and suffering death, “*even death on a cross*” (Phil.2:7-8) in order to gain for Himself the church. He is the Saviour of the body (Eph.5:23). Through His descension and ascension, Jesus gained an awesome cosmic victory that changed history forever and as a result of His redemptive work He was able to deliver to His church the fivefold ministry gift.

Without these gifts the church could not be brought to maturity and perfection. The role of the fivefold ministry gift is manifold in producing the mature body of Christ, “*from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love*” Eph.4:16.

*This is the mature body that the Lord is bringing forth in the earth
and He is doing it by releasing the gifts
of apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher.*

Chapter 3b

THE MYSTERY OF THE CHURCH - Part two

GRACE TO GROW TO MATURITY, EPHESIANS 4:7-16

The goal is maturity [perfection]

God's goal for the church of Jesus Christ is for the church to grow into maturity and then to be perfected. There will be a glorious church without spot or wrinkle or any such thing as befits an eternal companion for the Son of God! Ephesians 4:7-16 is the only place in Scripture where the fivefold ministry is clearly presented. It is in this context that we find that grace is given to each member of the body of Christ through the ministry of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers to enable each member and thus the whole body to grow into maturity.

Through each of these gift's grace is released to the body of Christ. If any of these gifts is not released and operating then the body of Christ does not receive all the grace she needs to grow into maturity.

Jesus Christ is the five-fold gift

Jesus Himself is the full representation of the fivefold gift:

- * **the Apostle of God**, sent into the world to build the church [the house of God] (Heb.3:1);
- * **the Prophet** raised up by God from among the brethren (Deut.18:18) to speak the words of God, (Lu.24:19);
- * **the Evangelist** who came to seek and to save the lost, (Lu.19:10, Mk.1:14);
- * **the Pastor**, the Good Shepherd who gives his life for the sheep, (Jn.10:11, Heb.13:20);
- * **the Teacher** come from God, who taught as one having Authority, (Jn.13:13-14, Jn.3:2).

The eternal purpose of God

In the book of Ephesians and elsewhere Paul speaks of the mystery which has been revealed and he speaks of the eternal purpose of God which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. We need to understand that God is about His own eternal purpose. He has never wavered from His purpose for which He created the universe and for which He created us humans in His own image and likeness. All that was lost in the first Adam through sin has been regained by our Lord Jesus Christ, and much more. It is possible to see that these gifts were innate in the first Adam but were taken into captivity through Adam's sin and submission to the devil. God has always intended for the glorious church to be formed and raised up in the earth for His Son. God had always made provision for this to be possible but it took the death of Jesus and His descent into hell and His glorious ascension to fully release the means whereby God's purpose can be realised.

Jesus is building His church through the fivefold

Jesus Christ is the cornerstone of the church which is represented as a building. He is the foundation stone, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation (Isaiah 28:16). We are the living stones that are built upon Him to make up the walls of the temple of God in the Spirit (1Pet 2:5 & Eph.2:22). Jesus has given the ministries of the apostle, prophet,

evangelist, pastor and teacher to enable His building work to go ahead and for the eternal purpose of God to be fulfilled.

Fivefold Ministry Brings the Body to Perfection

Three purposes of the fivefold

“For the equipping of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ” (Eph.4:12).

1. For the equipping of the saints

The fivefold ministry is given for the equipping [perfecting] of the saints.

Equipping, *katartismos* (kat-ar-tis-moss); S.C.#2677 Greek: *a making fit, preparing, training, perfecting, making fully qualified for service*. In classical Greek the word is used for setting a bone during surgery [SFLB word wealth p1651]. The understanding of this word teaches us that the body of Christ must be set in order so that every part can function properly.

God intends for every member of the body of Christ to be equipped to function in the gifts and ministries God has given to each one. Obviously not all are destined to be fivefold ministers but everyone has specific works to fulfill. Until every saint is equipped to minister the body of Christ will not grow into maturity.

2. For the work of the ministry

The fivefold is given for the work of the ministry: each of the fivefold ministries must function. Much of the church does not receive the grace that has been given by Jesus the Head of the Church because apostles and often other fivefold ministers are not received. If I am called to be an apostle but I function only as a pastor in a local church then I am not doing the work of the ministry I am called to do. One of the wonderful restorations that is happening across the body of Christ worldwide is that the saints are being released into ministries because Jesus is raising up apostles and sending them to do the work of the ministry.

People already functioning in ministry are boldly stepping out into fivefold ministries as the Holy Spirit calls and separates particular people to these ministries. This is illustrated in the life of the apostle Paul who was not ordained to be an apostle until Acts 13 but he was already functioning in ministry prior to that. Even so many in ministry today will experience a change and begin to minister in another gifting. Currently many are functioning in pastoral eldership who are actually called into apostolic and prophetic ministries across the body of Christ.

3. For the edifying of the body of Christ

The fivefold is given for the edifying of the body of Christ, that is, the building up of the body. Jesus promised in Matthew 16:18 that He is building the church. How is He building the church? He is building the church through the fivefold ministry gift that He has given. This is why the restoration of all five ministries is crucial to the fulfilment of God’s purposes. The glorious church which is to grow into maturity will not be built without the fivefold ministry gift fully restored and functioning. The apostolic gift needs to be restored so that the other gifts can begin to function in fullness.

SIGNPOSTS OF MATURITY

“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” Eph.4:13.

1) The unity of the faith

The first measure of maturity is the unity of the faith. This means we agree concerning the word of God. Such agreement is based upon receiving the apostles' doctrine, not adhering to the doctrines of men, whatever the church tradition may be. The first church continually devoted themselves to the apostles' doctrine (Acts 2:42). Peter tells us "*that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation*" 2 Pet. 1:20. Unfortunately the church historically has divided on the basis of a particular leader's doctrine and often that doctrine is taught rather than the Scriptures. The emphasis has been on what the man said rather than what the Scripture says.

The unity of the faith is the holding fast of the faithful word that has been taught; it is adherence to sound doctrine in matters of faith and practice. "*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*" Titus 1:9. The unity of the faith is having sound doctrine, that is, believing and living by the word of God. The unity of the faith is that faith [apostles doctrine] "*which was once for all delivered to the saints*" Jude 3. The apostle Jude exhorts us to contend earnestly for that faith: the doctrines given by the word of God through the apostles.

*The first church devoted themselves to the apostles' doctrine.
The last days church will only come to maturity in the faith
as once again the apostles' doctrine is taught and received.
It is only by the word of God that we can judge whether a particular
doctrine or practice is of the Lord or not.*

2) The knowledge of the Son of God

We are to come to the 'knowledge of the Son of God', understanding all the references to the Son in Hebrews chapter one. We are to come to the knowledge of the mystery of godliness in 1 Timothy 3:16. The knowledge of the Son of God is understanding that God was manifested in the flesh, that God became a man in Jesus Christ (John 1:1 & 14). Jesus demonstrated His relationship with the Father in John's gospel, finally declaring to Philip "*If you have seen Me, you have seen the Father*" (John 14:9).

3) Unto a perfect man

The body of Christ is to become a mature man, conformed to the image of His Son (Rom. 8:29) and knowing the word of righteousness (Heb. 5:13). We are to fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith (Heb. 12:2), and "*to press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus*" Phil. 3:14.

4) The measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ

We are to be like Christ, the Anointed One, the Son of God, "*that He might be the firstborn among many brethren*" Rom. 8:29. The church is the fullness of Him who fills the all in all (Eph. 1:23). The glory of the Lord is the fullness of Christ as He fills His church.

5) No longer like children ...

"*That we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting*" Eph. 4:14. It is time to grow up, living by the anointing that we have received. The anointing will teach us all things and will not lie (1 Jn. 2:20,27). Jesus said in Matthew 24:5 "*For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ', and deceive many.*" Beware of false teachers; many will come in Christian ministry garb! We are to be established and rooted in the faith, not led astray by philosophy and vain deceit (Col. 2:6-8). We are to be strongly founded and grounded on the Rock and in the Word of God. What does Matthew 7:24-27 teach us? We are all to look to Jesus, not to any man, and to obey His word.

6) Speaking the truth in love

“But speaking the truth in love” Eph. 4:15a. Disciples growing into maturity no longer involve themselves in gossip or back-biting; they do not speak behind another’s back; rather we speak the truth in love! The maturing church is a body of people growing in relationship. For relationships to grow in godliness and true Christian love, the truth needs to be spoken in love one to the other. There is no place for criticism of one another. If a problem arises among brethren and is dealt with according to the guidelines of Scripture, then the love will cover a multitude of sins (1Pet.4:8).

7) Growing up in all aspects into Christ

“May grow up in all things into Him who is the head, Christ” Eph.4:15b. The Christian individually and the church corporately are to grow. Every aspect of our lives is to measure up to God’s word as the work of grace is completed in us. We are to be found in Christ [Anointed One] not having a righteousness of our own, but having the righteousness that comes through faith in Him (Phil.3:9). Everything we do in word or deed, we are to do *“all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him”* Col.3:17.

8) God’s love revealed in the mature church

“From whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love” Eph. 4:16. This is a powerful picture of the mature church; notice the key characteristic of the mature church is LOVE, God’s kind of love, sacrificial, self-giving love! The mature church is mature because every part functions effectively, having been joined and knit together – true unity, having become one! Each part and every joint [in the body a joint is where two members are able to fully cooperate to function] supplies life and every part works for the up-building of the whole. All of this life flows from the Head, our Lord Jesus Christ.

THE CHURCH MANIFEST

We are the house of God

‘We are the house of God’ (Heb. 3:6) and Jesus Christ is the Son over God’s house. *“He shall build the temple of the LORD”* Zech. 6:12. *“When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men”* Eph. 4:8. He gave these gifts to ‘build up the body of Christ’ (Eph.4:12). The church is to come into maturity [perfection], to be the expression of His glory in the earth, *“that the world may know that You have sent Me”* Jn 17:22-24. *“That He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish”* Eph.5:27. God has glorious intentions for the church: she is the body of Christ.

Through the church God intends to reveal His Son. For this to eventuate there will be a full restoration of apostolic ministry along with all the ministry gifts. This is happening in our day and is being quickened for God intends a quick work to be done in the last days (Is. 60:21-22).

One of the key roles of the apostle working in tandem with the prophet is to lay a foundation for the church of Jesus (Eph.2:20). Such a foundation releases the other ministries of evangelist, pastor and teacher to function fully and thus the saints are properly ministered to and raised up to function in the body. The apostle is responsible for doctrine [that is, accurately teaching the word of God] and for the building strategy. Paul says he was a wise master builder (1 Cor.3:10). God reveals to the apostle how to lay the foundation; others are

to build on it. The prophet has a role alongside of the apostle and together they provide a firm foundation in Christ for the training and equipping of the saints and the raising up of other ministries. The house of God will be built.

It is written

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work” 2 Tim.3:16-17. Much of that which we have inherited as ‘church’ is not according to the Scripture. One Bible translator refers to the church in the book of Acts as the ‘young church’. He suggests that the church that developed in history is the older and therefore more mature church and that the structures and practices that have developed in church history are those of a mature church. This is not the case!

The church of Jesus Christ is found in all its fullness in the New Testament, from the first church in Acts 2 to the pattern of the mature church in the book of Ephesians.

We are measured by the Word of God

“For these seven [referring to the Holy Spirit] rejoice to see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel” Zech.4:10. Zerubbabel is the builder of the temple; he is a type of the apostle – the church builder. The plumb line speaks of a measuring instrument – the word of God. The fivefold ministry of Eph.4:11 must minister *“till we all come ... to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”* Again, there is a measuring instrument! Here it is *“the fullness of Christ”*, but really it is the Word of God. Christ is revealed to be the Word of God. It is only as we return to the Scriptures and diligently obey the word of God that we will *“prove to be His disciples, bearing much fruit, bringing glory to the Father”* Jn.15:8.

Purge out the old leaven

The Uniting Church of Australia openly declares in its Basis of Union that ‘the Bible contains the Word of God’. An apostolic Christian believes and knows that the Bible is the Word of God! Therefore, the Uniting Church has chosen to reserve the right to decide which Scriptures are the word of God. Such an approach is clearly in error [see 2Tim.3:16 & 2 Pet.1:19-21] and has led to the present despicable situation where a large majority of national representatives of the Uniting Church, mainly leaders, voted overwhelmingly [July 2003] in favour of the ordination of homosexual and lesbian ministers for their congregations. There has been the public ordination of a homosexual man to be a bishop in the Episcopalian [Anglican] Church in USA. This man left a marriage and children to practice homosexuality, all the time being a minister of the Episcopalian Church and now a bishop of that church. Brethren, it is past time to wake up. Paul says *“purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.”* (1Cor.5:7) This situation in America is surely even worse than that which Paul had to deal with in the Corinthian church.

Come out from among them

The Lord is preparing for Himself a *“glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish”* Eph.5:27. It is time to decide whether we are following Jesus and desire with all of our hearts to be part of His glorious bride church.

The Lord Jesus, the head of the church, is calling His people out! The word of God is very clear: *“Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers”* 2Cor.6:14. Unbelievers are people who do not believe that the Bible is the word of God. *“For what fellowship has righteousness*

with unrighteousness?” 2Cor.6:14. “The unrighteous shall not enter the kingdom of God” 1Cor.6:9, because the kingdom of God is “righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost” Rom.14:17. It is time for Christians to get real! To come to grips with the word of God as it is written!

Come out and be separate

True Christians are *“the temple of the living God”* and *“God says: I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they will be my people” 2Cor.6:16. “Therefore come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you” v.17.* God is telling His people to be separate from all that is unclean. It will be a very powerful witness when all of God’s people come out of all mixture and compromise. Now is the time! Do not put it off any longer. God promises us that when we separate ourselves unto Him, to be obedient to the Gospel, *“He will be a Father to us and we shall be His sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty” 2Cor.6:18.*

The mystery of Christ and His church

In Ephesians 5:22-33, Paul is speaking concerning a great mystery; he likens the relationship of Christ with His church to the relationship of a man with his wife. He is showing us that as a husband to be, Jesus not only died for His church but now as the resurrected bridegroom in waiting, He is preparing His church to be a glorious bride. The Scripture is clear: He will *“present her to Himself a glorious church” v27.* Anyone looking at the church as it has been in present history would say, ‘this is impossible!’

Washing of the water by the word

However, Paul says that he is speaking of a mystery! What is impossible with man, is possible with God. The key that the Scripture gives is simply that Jesus will do this: He will present the church perfect. How will He do this? Jesus has already justified those He called, and Jesus has already glorified those He justified (Rom 8:30). All this was done through His death, resurrection and ascension.

He is now *“sanctifying and cleansing the church with the washing of the water by the word” Eph.5:26.* It is as the word is spoken by Jesus into the life of the saints, individually and corporately, that change is effected. Therefore, as the Lord quickens His word today concerning the glorification of the church through the perfecting of the saints, those who hear His word by faith will be changed.

Those who know a real relationship with Jesus Christ, who are unfettered by the traditions of men and loyalty to institutionalized church, are able to receive His word. His word sanctifies us, that is, separates us unto God. We are positioned to hear and obey the word. His word cleanses us from religious mindsets that we have received from various ‘church’ experiences. Currently one of the religious mindsets that is blocking the church from growing, and going from glory to glory, is the non-acceptance of apostles, even though the apostolic ministry is by far the most taught and demonstrated ministry in the New Testament.

The church manifest

To know the reality of the church of Jesus Christ is only possible through the revelation of the mystery. The church is a mystery, not in the sense of the ‘mystical body’, popularised by some teachers in the past, but in the sense of a real body of people linked around the globe through God-given relationships. This body is formed together in Christ by Him.

He is the Saviour of the body - this makes it His own and no one else's - and as the Head of the body, it is His right and His responsibility to raise up the body to conform to His own indestructible life.

Up until now the church has failed to manifest the life and power of the Lord. The church has been easily dismissed with all of her religious ways.

*The church we read of in the Scripture will
reveal the glory of the Lord.*

*This church is to grow into a glorious body
of righteous, spirit-filled, fruit-bearing saints
throughout the world,
manifesting the kingdom,
the power and the glory of the risen Christ*

*so that the world will know that Jesus Christ
is the Son of God,
that He came from God
and that His death on the cross
has borne awesome fruit in the earth.*

Chapter 4

JESUS OUR APOSTLE

Jesus the Apostle, builds the house - Heb.3:1-6 *“Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus, who was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was faithful in all His house. For this One has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as He who built the house has more honour than the house, For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God. And Moses indeed was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which would be spoken afterward, But Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house, we are, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end.”*

Jesus was sent by the Father - John 20:21 *“So Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace to you! As the Father has sent me, I also send you.’”*

Jesus sends us to reveal His glory - John 17:18 *“As you sent Me into the world I also have sent them into the world.”* v.20-22 *“I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which you gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one.”*

In September 2002 the Lord showed me in a vision that the apostolic anointing had been released to build His last days church. Jesus clearly says in Matthew 16:18, *“I will build My church”*. Through the restoration of apostles and prophets to the church currently Jesus has released the giftings and anointings to build His church. It is through this church that the glory of the Lord shall be revealed. *“The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of the LORD has spoken”* Isa.40:5.

Consider Jesus the Apostle

“Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus” Heb.3:1. In this verse are told to consider two major aspects of the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ: He is the Apostle and He is the High Priest. The verse says that Jesus Christ is the Apostle and High Priest of our *‘confession’*. He becomes real as the Apostle and He becomes real as the High Priest as we understand and confess Him to be so. Therefore it is essential that we have a full understanding of Jesus our Apostle, so that we can confess Him.

Confession [Profession in KJV] SC Gr. # 4671, homologia, meaning literally the same word; homologia is the acknowledgment of the truth, coming from SC # 4670, homologeō, lit., to speak the same thing; to declare openly a confession based upon a deep conviction of facts.

THE HIGH PRIEST

Most Christians have some appreciation of Jesus and what He has done as our High Priest, that is, His perfect sacrifice upon the cross that has atoned for sin once and for all. However, few Christians have ever considered Jesus as the Apostle. Firstly let us revise the High Priestly Ministry.

He offered the perfect sacrifice

Jesus' offering of Himself upon the cross, the perfect sacrifice for sin, is a clear expression of High Priestly ministry, "*but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself*" Heb.9:26. The subsequent resurrection and ascension of our Lord into heaven whereby "*with His own blood He entered the most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption*" Heb.9:12, is the fulfilment of Christ's High Priestly ministry, dealing with sin by the shedding of His blood. Jesus fulfilled the Great Day of Atonement by becoming both the scapegoat and the sacrificial goat. [see Leviticus 16]

He makes intercession

Jesus "*always lives to make intercession for them*" Heb.7:25, having entered the Presence behind the veil as a forerunner for us, "*having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek*" Heb.6:19-20. [See also Rom.8:34 for Jesus the intercessor] "*For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathise with our weaknesses, but was in all tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace*" Heb.4:15-16. As intercessor Jesus represents us at the throne and releases grace to us from God.

He is in heaven

Where is Jesus the High Priest? He "*has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God*" Heb.12:2; He is "*a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God*" Heb.4:14. "*For Christ has not entered the Holy Places made with hands, copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us*" Heb.9:25.

Because Jesus is our High Priest in heaven, we are able to come boldly to the throne of grace. Therefore having a 'right' confession, that is, speaking in agreement with and according to the word of God, is essential to receiving the answers to our prayers. Jesus Christ becomes an effective High Priest to each saint according to their *confession*. As High Priest, Jesus represents His people to God. He is forever our intercessor at the right hand of God (Rom.8:34), having already offered the perfect sacrifice for us.

*Jesus our High Priest is in heaven, having obtained
eternal salvation through His blood and is now
interceding continually for us.*

JESUS OUR APOSTLE

What is an apostle?

Apostle SC Gr. # 652 *apostolos*, from SC # 649 *apostello*: to set apart, to send out; a delegate; an apostle is an *ambassador* of the gospel, officially a *commissioner* of Christ with miraculous powers; translated *apostle, messenger, he that is sent* [SFLB word wealth p.1598]. Literally an apostle is *one sent forth*. An apostle is one sent on behalf of another with the authority of the sender to successfully fulfil that for which he is sent, and to fully represent and make known the sender.

Consider the apostle of our confession, Jesus Christ

Jesus is called the apostle of our confession. Our confession is speaking of Jesus the apostle according to the word of God. Jesus is *one sent forth* to represent the Father to us.

*As the apostle of God, Jesus represents God to us.
In Him, God is revealed; through Him God's kingdom
is released and God's authority becomes operational
in the earth.*

Who sent Jesus?

“God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son” John 3:16. *“So Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you’”* Jn.20:21. It is clear that God the Father sent Jesus from heaven to earth. Jesus came as the apostle, the ambassador of heaven; He came with the authority of the one who sent Him.

What was Jesus sent to do?

What did Jesus come to do as an apostle sent by God? What is the main work of an apostle? Jesus announced in Matthew 16:18, *“I will build my church and the gates of Hell will not prevail against it.”* In Hebrews 3:3 it is clear that Jesus is the builder of the house of God. God has always sought to dwell with His people. He created us in the earth and He has always desired and intended to dwell with us and that is one of the final declarations in the Book of Revelation *“Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men and He will dwell with them and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God”* Rev.21:3.

Paul says of himself in 1 Corinthians 3:10 *“according to the grace of God that was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation and another builds on it”*. Paul had already said that the church is God's building. Jesus is the builder, *“He who built the house has more honour than the house”* Heb.3:3. Then Hebrews 3:6 tells us that we are the house that Jesus is building: *“Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are.”* The church that Jesus is building is the house of God and it is being built with people who believe. Peter refers to the church as a spiritual house built of living stones who are the believers (1 Pet.2:5).

A DWELLING PLACE FOR GOD IN THE EARTH

The primary work of the apostle is to build the house of God

God is to have a suitable place to live in the earth. God has desired to make His dwelling place with men. When God first created man, male and female, in the earth, He enjoyed open fellowship with them. The Tree of Life was in the midst of the Garden and man was able to fully commune with God. Man was created like God, and was to live forever in God's fellowship, growing up into maturity in Him.

Adam was the first apostle, created by God and placed in the earth to represent God and to bring God's kingdom rule to bear over all the earth. Adam and his children were to fill the earth, restoring and replenishing the earth, reflecting God's glory. It has always been God's intention to fill the earth with His glory.

After the fall, there was a sanctuary in the earth

Because of man's disobedience, he had to leave the garden. However God left a sanctuary of some magnificence in the earth so that man could still approach God and fellowship with Him. Genesis 3:24 says *“He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life.”* The cherubim guard or cover the very presence of God: this means God's presence was in the earth. But man continued to walk away.

The altar was the meeting place with God

After the Flood, Noah built an altar and God spoke to Noah, renewing covenant with man through Noah. But man continued to walk away.

When God raised up Abraham and called him to go to a far-off country, the first thing Abraham did was to build an altar and call upon the name of the Lord. God appeared to Abraham and made a covenant with him and through him to all who would come to faith in the true God. God has continually sought man's fellowship in the earth

God chose to dwell in the Tabernacle

God appeared to Moses and showed him how to build a Tabernacle in which God's presence could dwell so He could be with His people and God made a covenant with Moses and the people of God. This tabernacle contained both the sanctuary and the altar(s).

God allowed David to build a tabernacle in which God was happy to dwell so that He could have fellowship with His people and God made a covenant with David and his household forever.

The Temple: a more permanent dwelling place

God enabled Solomon to build Him a house, the Temple. In terms of the Old Testament the Temple is a type of God's permanent dwelling place in the earth, no longer a temporary residence in a tent, and points to the future permanent dwelling of God in the earth in His people.

The New Testament dwelling place

Jesus the Apostle laid the foundations of God's house through His ministry in the earth by raising up the twelve apostles through whom He would begin to build the house of God. Finally, by the end of the book of Revelation the Holy City is complete and comes down upon the earth so that God can tabernacle among us fully.

The apostle builds the house of God

In the Old Testament, Zerubbabel, the governor of Jerusalem after the Babylonian exile, was the one charged to rebuild the house of God [temple] in Jerusalem (Zech.4:6-10). The Scripture says "*the hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it*" v9. Zerubbabel is a type of Christ the apostle, charged with the responsibility to build the house of God. In that day it was a house made of wood [cedar] but God's house today is the church of Jesus Christ built of living stones, that is, the people of God. Jesus laid the foundation of the church at the beginning of the age and now at the end of the age He is going to finish the building of the church.

HOW IS JESUS BUILDING THE HOUSE OF GOD TODAY?

Through the fivefold ministry gift

In Ephesians 4:7-16, the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers are to do the work of the ministry to build the church, bringing it to maturity. These gifts are needed to do the work of the ministry so that every saint is equipped, set in order and able to function, being built into the body, properly linked and joined, so that the body grows unto maturity.

By laying the foundations.

In the Scripture there are two important aspects to the foundations of the house of God:

- **The first foundation is Christ Himself:**

"For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ" 1Cor.3:11. Jesus has come to build the church and He Himself is the foundation. He is the rock on which the house is built (1Cor.10:4).

- **The second foundation is the ministry of the apostles and prophets.**

“You are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built upon the foundations of the apostles and prophets” Eph.2:19-20. The foundations of the apostles and prophets link the building to the rock, which is Christ.

By Jesus Christ being the cornerstone of the building

“Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone” Eph.2:20. The walls can only be built when the cornerstone is set in place. The walls are made of *“living stones”* 1Pet.2:5. These are the saints who have been joined to the Head and placed in the body to function. The strength of the church is dependent on the degree it is joined to Christ.

By the whole building being fitted and joined together

“In whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord” Eph.2:21. The house is being built into God through Christ in every place. When the house of God is finally built in every place it will manifest as the city of God mentioned in the book of Revelation. This is the world-wide church that the Lord is building in the earth.

Through the Spirit who builds the saints together

“In whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit” Eph.2:22. In every local place there needs to be a discernible church that believers are part of, for God to indwell. The church is a spiritual house, built by the Spirit. Again we need to say that the house of God is a spiritual house made up of living stones who are the saints. 1 Peter 2:10 says that we *“who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy”* are the ones who have become a spiritual temple.

HOW DO WE RECEIVE JESUS AS OUR APOSTLE TODAY?

By receiving the apostle(s) He sends

“He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me” Matt.10:40. We receive Jesus the apostle by receiving the apostle or apostles He sends. This is the way God has chosen to reveal Himself to the world - through apostles, even as God revealed Himself through Jesus, the apostle of God sent from heaven.

By understanding Jesus as our Father

“His name shall be called ... Everlasting Father” Isa.9:6. One of the names of Jesus is *‘Everlasting Father’*; He is a Father to us and we are His children. *“Here I am and the children whom God has given Me” Heb.2:13.* Because of attempts to explain God through the teaching of the Trinity, most believers do not realise that Jesus is our Father; Jesus and the Father are one. *“For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through suffering” Heb.2:10.* We become sons through Jesus. He is our Father and He brings us as sons to His Father.

By receiving the revelation that Jesus and the Father are one

John 14:4-6 tell us that Jesus is the way to the Father. Jesus says, *“if you had known Me, you would have known My Father also”* John 14:7. Then Jesus says to Philip *“He who has seen Me has seen the Father”* Jn.14:9. When you come to a mature knowledge of who Jesus is, you will realise that Jesus and the Father are one. The Father is revealed in Christ Jesus. *“Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me?”* Jn.14:10.

It is the Holy Spirit who brings this revelation to us. When we fully receive Jesus as the One sent from heaven, we will see the face of God. *“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!’”* Matt.23:39. It is as we receive the one God sends that we will see His face. *“For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ”* 2 Cor. 4:6.

By allowing Jesus to present us to the Father

In John 17:6-18 Jesus prays for His disciples, presenting them to the Father and in John 17:22-23 He prays *“that they may be one just as We are one; I in them, and You in Me”*. This is the revelation of where the Lord is leading His church. He wants His body to be ‘one’, even as He and the Father are one. The church can only become one as a body when we are found in Christ and therefore in oneness with the Father. This is a deeper oneness than pastors and leaders coming together and working together in unity movements, experience.

As Jesus and the Father are one, so the church is to be one in Him and with each other. We can only become one by receiving Jesus Christ, the one whom God sent. If we do not have the Son we do not have the Father (1 John 2:23). When someone looks at the church, they are meant to see Christ, and in seeing Christ they will have seen the Father. This is the apostolic work that Jesus is doing in His church today by restoring its apostolic nature.

What is missing in the church today?

The church in general has not considered Jesus the apostle of our confession. Historically and currently, we have considered Jesus the High Priest and we have confessed Him as our Saviour and our Redeemer but never have we considered Him as our Apostle.

- **The church is being built in the earth**

We have not understood that the church is being built in the earth: a body of overcomers who transform the society they live in by the power of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who become the dwelling place of the living God.

- **The saints are as living stones being built together**

We have not understood that the saints are as living stones being built together, a spiritual house for God to indwell (1Pet.2:5). Our fathers in the Old Testament built altars of natural stones and there they met with God. In the New Testament God has made us to be living stones and as we are built together as the house of God, the presence and reality and power of God is revealed in the earth.

- **A body joined and fitted together in Christ**

We have not understood that the church is not an institution or an organisation but a body, joined and fitted together in Christ. Jesus the apostle is the foundation of the church; He is the cornerstone from which and into which the whole body is built (Eph.2:20); He is the head into whom the whole body grows up in all aspects and is fitted and joined together (Eph.4:16).

- **The acceptance of apostles sent by Jesus to build today**

We have not understood nor accepted apostles who are sent by Jesus Christ in these days to build the church, the house of God, by laying foundations, teaching the deeper wisdom of the word and releasing the grace for the church to grow up into maturity. These apostles are sent by Jesus, authorised by Him and through them Jesus is revealed. Through them Jesus will complete His apostolic work of building the church.

Jesus as our Father

The oneness of God

Some do not understand how Jesus can be our Father but this is because of a confused understanding of the triune nature of God, whereby the persons of God are separated to not be one in our understanding because of the teaching we have received. Jesus clearly says that He and the Father are one. This oneness can only be known by revelation; it will never be understood by trying to explain who God is by the intellectual doctrine of the Trinity. The doctrine of the Trinity was introduced hundreds of years after the Scripture was written. Man added to Scripture, seeking to explain God. The revelation of God is only found in the Scripture and the Scripture says that God has been declared [made known] through Jesus Christ. *“No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him”* Jn.1:18.

If we know Jesus, we can know the Father; if we have truly seen Jesus, not after the flesh but after the spirit, we have truly seen the Father. The revelation of God is in Christ: *“God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself”* 2 Cor. 5:19, and in Christ *“dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily”* Col.2:9.

As the church comes to maturity, the revelation of the fatherhood of God is given to the church in Jesus Christ – He has pre-eminence in all things (Col.1:18); He is the exact representation of God’s person (Heb.1:3); He is the image of the invisible God (Col.1:15). John says that fathers [mature ones] *“know Him who is from the beginning”* 1 Jn.2:12-14. This speaks of a mature relationship with, and understanding of, God - who He really is!

Everything of God comes to us from the Father through Jesus the Son by the Holy Spirit: this is how God reveals Himself to us. Jesus has already told us in Matthew 10:40 that if we receive the apostle He sends, we receive Him. In John 20:21 Jesus clearly says that He is sending the apostles forth in the same way that the Father sent Him. So He is sending the apostles to bring the revelation of God. As we receive Jesus the Apostle through the preaching and teaching of His apostles, we will receive a revelation of the fatherhood of God, bringing us more fully into sonship. God’s goal is many sons coming to glory. God will be revealed in the earth through His sons.

It is time to receive Jesus our Apostle

Sonship is the key

There is an age at which one is accepted fully into sonship, receiving the inheritance of grace and revelation through the fullness of the Holy Spirit. This is the age of maturity. In historic Israel a man reached maturity and was eligible for the inheritance [*“the portion of goods that falls to me”* Lu.15:12] at the age of thirty. When Jesus came for baptism, he was *“about thirty years of age”* Lu.3:23. When Jesus came up from the waters of baptism *“the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him”* Lu.3:21-22.

The Holy Spirit brings the Inheritance

The Holy Spirit was the promise of the Father and it was by the Holy Spirit that Jesus walked in His inheritance. From the day of His baptism, He was a different Man.

When the Holy Spirit came on the day of Pentecost, the apostles whom Jesus had chosen were ready to receive the inheritance; they were ready to receive the same Spirit that Jesus had received and they became different men - men empowered! Men able to be Spirit-led! able to do the works of the Father! Jesus walked in His inheritance from the time of His baptism. Jesus stepped into sonship at the time of His baptism, having received the Holy Spirit.

*When Jesus had completed His work on the earth,
He said 'I am going to the Father'.*

Jesus went to the Father.

*Now God works through the apostles and the saints
He has raised up
to express and represent Himself in the earth.*

We are saved by receiving Jesus as our Saviour

*We will experience sonship by receiving
Jesus our Apostle*

*It is time for the church to grow up into
maturity, to become sons.*

*It is time to receive Jesus our Apostle,
becoming sons to the Father.*

Chapter 5

WALKING IN OUR INHERITANCE

Jesus' inheritance

Ps.2:6-8 *"Yet I have set My King on My holy hill of Zion." "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 Spirit of God

Matt.3:16-17 *"When He had been baptised, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased'."*

The father gives an inheritance to sons

Lu.15:22-23 *"But the father said to his servants, 'Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry'."*
v.31 *"And the father said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours'."*

Coming to glory

Heb.2:10 *"For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings."*

Inheritance is in the earth

Recently I was teaching in a seminar for pastors and leaders in Central Africa and I asked the question, 'What is our inheritance?' The answers came back immediately, 'Heaven!' Most Christians think that their inheritance is heaven. Truly Peter says that there is an inheritance reserved for us in heaven (1Pet.1:4) but he goes on to say that this inheritance will be *"revealed in the last time"* v 5. Heaven is our reward, not our inheritance. We need the inheritance now even as in the natural, an inheritance is received in the here and now. An inheritance is something that adds to, provides for and enriches our life now.

Rewards are in heaven

It is interesting that Moses never walked in his inheritance. The Bible says Moses *"was faithful in all His house as a servant"* Heb.3:5, but in these verses in Hebrews he is being compared to Jesus the Son, who owns the house by inheritance. Moses was allowed to see the land, which was his inheritance, but he was not allowed to enter the promised land. Moses has received his reward in heaven, but it was Joshua, his spiritual son, who inherited.

Jesus was promised an inheritance

Victory over Satan

There are many Scriptures in the Old Testament that tell us what His inheritance is. It begins in Genesis 3:15 where God, speaking of Eve, is prophesying to the devil, *“and I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.”* This is the first direct indication of what Messiah would do in the earth, that as the Son of Man, He would win back what had been yielded to Satan.

There are many ‘types’ of Christ in the Old Testament. In fact most of God’s appointed leaders and many of the prophets represent Christ in a specific way. For example, Joshua is a type of Christ leading the people of God in victory over the enemy and inheriting the land. David is a type of Christ, ruling and reigning as the king.

The nations and all the earth

A specific promise was given to Jesus of His inheritance in Psalm 2. In verse 6 the Father God is speaking, *“Yet I have set My King on My holy hill of Zion.”* Then in verse 7-8 Jesus speaks of what God’s decree is, *“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 and all the earth were promised to Jesus as His inheritance. Inheritance is something received in the earth.

Ruling the nations

In Ps.110 the Father God is speaking to the Son, *“The LORD said to my Lord, ‘Sit at My right hand, till I make your enemies Your footstool.’ The LORD shall send the rod of Your strength out of Zion. Rule in the midst of Your enemies”* v1. Part of His inheritance is to sit and rule the nations and to have victory over His enemies. He shall also *“judge among the nations”* v6.

There are many aspects of God’s promises to Jesus in the Psalms and the Prophets which speak of His inheritance. *“Behold! My servant whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul delights! I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles”* Is.42:1. In Isaiah 45:1 the Lord is speaking to a Persian king, but these words can also be referring to the promise given to Messiah: *“Thus says the LORD to His anointed ... to subdue nations before him and loose the armour of kings, to open before him the double doors, so that the gates will not be shut.”*

Jesus received the Inheritance

Jesus was born as a normal human baby with all the needs of a baby. He grew up through childhood and adolescence and was subject to His parents. When He became a young man He probably worked with Joseph as a carpenter. It was His custom to go to the synagogue and read the Scriptures (Lu.4:16). But something happened when He came to the age of thirty, which was the age of maturity in Jewish culture. This is the age when a young man in Israel came into the fullness of his inheritance.

“Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptised by him. And John tried to prevent Him, saying, ‘I need to be baptised by You, and are You coming to me?’ But Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfil all righteousness.’ Then he allowed Him” Matt.3:13-15. Jesus’ baptism was to fulfil the righteousness of the Law. He was being washed by the son of a priest, who was of a true priestly family, to be the eternal High Priest. This is His heavenly calling.

Inheritance is received in the earth

Jesus in coming to His baptism was also receiving His inheritance; this was His earthly calling. *“When He had been baptised, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased’”* Matt.3:16-17. This account is also recorded in Luke 3:21-22, and v.23 says *“Now Jesus Himself began His ministry at about thirty years of age.”*

Jesus knew God had a specific call for Him to fulfil and now from the time of His baptism it would unfold. He had been sent by God and now He was of full age to receive His inheritance. He had grown up, but since the age of twelve He was being prepared for His life’s mission. Even at the age of twelve they were amazed at His understanding.

The Holy Spirit without measure

Jesus received the Holy Spirit without measure at His baptism. He could not receive the Holy Spirit while still a babe;

He did not receive the Holy Spirit at the age of twelve; even as a young man sharing the Scriptures in the synagogue, He did not receive the Spirit without measure. He was still Joseph’s son, Mary’s boy.

How did Jesus step into His inheritance?

Jesus came to be baptised in obedience to His Father. This was the key to Jesus receiving His inheritance. He came in submission to His Father’s will, *“to fulfil all righteousness”*. Receiving the Spirit of God without measure enabled Jesus to walk in His inheritance. The Spirit of God came upon Jesus conferring Sonship; the voice of the Father spoke confirming Sonship.

Part of the inheritance is victory over the devil

The first step was to be led into the wilderness to confront the devil. Jesus was able to overcome temptation, thus overcoming the devil in the earth. The devil had already lost his place in heaven. Part of our inheritance is victory over the devil in the earth. As a result Jesus came out of the wilderness empowered to preach the gospel with signs and wonders, having authority to heal and to cast out devils (Matt.4:1-25).

The inheritance is actualised by embracing suffering

“For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings” Heb. 2:10. Children are not meant to suffer; not even young adults are meant to suffer. Children in Christ are meant to grow up in a safe place under the covering of fathers. But sons, those who have grown into maturity, are able to embrace suffering and grow through suffering.

“Though He was a son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him” Heb. 5:8-9. Jesus did not suffer until He was mature and entered into sonship. He did not have to confront the devil until after His baptism. Hebrews 12:5-8 says that sons are chastened by the Father. The Father does not chasten little children; He deals with mature sons, so that they will reach the goal of perfection. It was through the cross and the resurrection that Jesus received the fulfilment of His inheritance which is many sons walking in His glory.

Our Inheritance:

When we begin to walk in our inheritance in Christ, He releases many others into sonship through us. Our inheritance is revealed by the Holy Spirit; it is a fuller walk with the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit was promised and is the blessing of Abraham *“That the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith”* Gal.3:14. We enter the kingdom through the new birth by the Spirit but we are only children, not yet receiving our inheritance. We then receive the Holy Spirit in power and with gifts to enable us to grow but we have not yet received our inheritance.

The Pentecostal experience of the twentieth century, that is, speaking in tongues or experiencing some other gift of the Holy Spirit, does not equal what the twelve apostles and the other disciples in the upper room received on the day of Pentecost. These brethren had been discipled and trained by Jesus. The apostles particularly had reached the age of maturity in their spiritual growth and were ready to receive the Spirit without measure. It is when we reach the age of maturity that we as sons receive our inheritance which is receiving the fullness of the Holy Spirit, thus being able to do the same works that Jesus did (Jn.14:12).

The kingdom is our inheritance

It is as we are led by the Holy Spirit that sonship is manifested. *“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God”* Rom. 8:14. Walking in our inheritance is being led by the Holy Spirit in this life, not living according to the flesh. The inheritance is walking in the kingdom of God, in righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (Rom.14:17).

Creation is to be restored

All of creation is to be restored as part of our inheritance. The word of God promises that creation *“will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God”* Rom 8:21. This seems incredible! Few Christians have really considered the implications of Paul’s teaching. We find it hard to imagine what it will really be like when the sons of God will be manifest in the earth, reflecting the glory of Jesus Christ fully. When Jesus was momentarily transfigured, *“his face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light”* Matt.17:2. This supernatural transformation happened to Jesus in His natural body, in the earth. When the glory of God is revealed through the sons of God all of creation will be transformed.

Preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ

The means that God has chosen for His glory to be revealed in the earth is through the preaching of the gospel. The gospel is to be preached in all the world (Matt.24:14). The word concerning Christ must be noised abroad. All are to hear! When the gospel has been fully preached to the nations, everyone on the earth will have had the opportunity to choose Jesus Christ and to have a future with Him in a renewed earth in which righteousness reigns. Paul tells us in Ephesians 3 that through the preaching of Christ, *“the manifold wisdom of God will be made known to the principalities and powers in the heavenly realm”* v10.

When I visited Kenya in 2000, it was my first experience of widespread revival. I came home to Australia saying ‘Jesus is very popular in Kenya’. It seemed everyone was talking about Jesus. It was easy to talk to anyone about Jesus. The number of churches and outreaches had multiplied. However, the church in Kenya, as everywhere else, now needs to grow up to maturity and walk in their inheritance. The result will be transformation of the nation, village by village.

The return of the Lord is the culmination

The culmination of our inheritance in the earth is the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is coming back to be fully joined to His glorious church, which is being prepared in the earth (Eph.5:26-27). His return will usher in a new age of Christ reigning on the earth, His saints ruling and reigning with Him.

A Fresh Wind of the Spirit of God blowing across the nations

The people of God are responding everywhere. There is a cry for freedom, to come out of the bondage of traditional church practice. *"Now the Lord is the Spirit and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty"* 2Cor 3:17. The gospel is the Lord's and through the gospel the realm of heaven, that is the kingdom of God, is revealed. God is delivering His people from the curse of denominationalism and institutionalism and opening His word according to His promise.

In Ephesians 3, in 1 Corinthians 2:6-10 and in Colossians 1:24-29, the apostle Paul speaks of the mystery that was hidden for long ages. The first church, which was led by apostles and in which all the gifts and ministries of the New Testament functioned, was replaced by man's organised ways and the revelation of the mystery was lost. Now at the end of the age God is raising apostles and prophets again to bring the revelation of the mystery to the saints, enabling them to walk in the inheritance.

There is a new mood beginning to grip believers

There is a desire for reality among the saints; a desire for personal involvement in the life of the church and the work of the ministry. There is a desire to function in the body and to walk in victory. There is an impatience with pastors and leaders who are holding the saints captive to denominational mindsets, and who are dominating the church meetings, not allowing the saints to function.

It is actually a great joy to be in fellowship meetings where every member, including children, is received and their particular gift and ministry finds expression. There is a great need for accurate, straight-forward preaching and teaching from the Scripture. There is a need for new believers to be nurtured with the milk of the word; for all saints to be disciples of the word, able to preach and teach Jesus, and practise life-style Christianity.

It is time for partisanship [party spirit] and sectarianism to cease among those who have already left the denominational structures but have made new alignments in structured, delineated networks. These ones have not understood that the original church both scripturally and historically was not organised as such but was a body of people built together through relationships with true apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Apostolic Christianity is based wholly on the Word of God

Apostolic Christianity is non-denominational, non-institutional, based purely and wholly on the word of God, not the traditions or the desires of men. As one has said, *"there is nothing to own, nothing to join"*, but there is a life to live, grace to receive, and loving relationships to be developed between all, as we serve with joy in the manifest purposes of God in our generation.

A certain son receives his inheritance

The Inheritance

The inheritance has been gained for us by Jesus Christ. The Bible says we are joint heirs with Him (Rom.8:17.). He always had an inheritance which His Father had promised Him. He received this inheritance at His baptism and began to walk in it. His baptism was the beginning of His walk to perfection. He was then *"perfected through sufferings"* Heb.2:10, finally making the perfect sacrifice on the cross, thus guaranteeing an inheritance for us. Jesus is leading many sons to glory (Heb.2:10). God has given us to Jesus; we have received the spirit of sonship. There comes a time [a *'kairos'* time: a grace time] when we are ready to receive the inheritance – it is an inheritance of grace, received through faith as we walk in obedience to the word of God.

The inheritance is laid up for sons

In Luke 15:11-32, we have the story of the prodigal son. “*A certain man had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me.’ So he divided to them his livelihood*” v11-12. This father had two sons; they were both sons. The younger asked for his inheritance. Both sons must have reached the age of maturity - they were entitled to receive their inheritance. In Jewish practice, the father laid up for his son a portion that would enable the son to establish his own livelihood, independent of his father.

This son misused his inheritance initially

The younger son was foolish; he did not ask for advice about what to do with his inheritance; he was not accountable. Finally he repented, realising what he was doing was unfruitful and unnecessarily unpleasant. This son knew his father and had received his inheritance but had lacked wisdom. He then repented, changed his mind; but there needs to be evidence of repentance. He remembered how it was at home, and from that he knew what it could be like for him now, because he had been a child growing up in his father’s house.

He thought he could revert to being a servant

He decided to go back home and was willing to be a servant. He felt disqualified to be a son. He still had a servant mentality: a servant expects to be punished for wrong doing and only rewarded if he has done well. Even though he had grown up in the father’s house, he did not know the father’s heart.

The servant mentality has ruled in the church

Most of us have not grown up in a father’s house; rather we have grown up in churches led by servants [ministers]. Ministers can disqualify themselves or be disqualified, but a son is always a son and nothing can change that.

Sonship is a reality

The father saw him and had compassion [true godly fathers have compassion]. Some do not yet understand that they are sons so they expect punishment and retribution and disqualification rather than the rebuke and chastening of a father to bring them more fully into their inheritance. There is a reality of walking in sonship; there is a reality wherein no matter what happens, one cannot be disqualified. Once a believer comes of age and asks for their inheritance, the relationship that believer has with the Lord as their Father, and the relationship they have in the church, guarantees their future.

*There is a security and a provision made by the Father
that is not known fully until one becomes a son.*

Apostolic fathers pass on the inheritance

2 Timothy 2:2 speaks of the inheritance being passed on from generation to generation in the church. The apostle Paul as a father had trained Timothy along with many others and now charges Timothy to pass on to “*faithful men*” what he had received from Paul. The faithful men in turn then pass it on to others. There has been a lack of inheritance being passed on from one generation of ministry leadership to the next generation in the church. We have been prodigals; but more likely we have been orphans. It is as though we have been in a far country; we have certainly lost our inheritance. Many did not even know they had an inheritance. If we have never been in the father’s house, we do not know what it is like in the father’s house.

The father ran, fell on his son and kissed him. This is the heart of the father manifest. He yearned for his son to come home. The son tried to speak to his father, offering to be a servant but the father did not listen. He received his son.

The robe, the ring and the sandals

The father covered his son with a **robe**, put a **ring** on his finger and **sandals** on his feet.

The **robe** speaks of the father's covering. We all need to be covered, and today God is restoring apostles who are able to extend the covering of Christ Himself over His children. Sons especially have a mature appreciation of what it is to be covered by an apostolic father. There is an identification here as well. Whenever the son was seen in the father's robe he would have been identified by that robe to be the father's son. The understanding of 'the son' being one and the same as 'the father' is a cultural thing that many of us do not understand today and yet that understanding is necessary to understand Jesus and His Father.

The **ring** represents the authority of the father being given to the son. Pharaoh gave such a ring to Joseph (Gen.41:42) and in Haggai 2:23, YAHWEH appoints Zerubbabel to be "*like a signet ring*" as YAHWEH's apostolic representative.

The **sandals** are for walking in, that is, walking in the inheritance the father has given. The giving of the robe, the ring and the sandals are in reality a spiritual inheritance. The son wasted his natural inheritance but having learnt his lesson, repented and returned to his father's house, coming into a much greater inheritance.

Christ gives apostles to cover His people

"A man will be as a hiding place from the wind, and a cover from the tempest, as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. The eyes of those who see will not be dim, and the ears of those who hear will listen. Also the heart of the rash will understand knowledge, and the tongue of the stammerers will be ready to speak plainly" Isa.32:2-4. This is an awesome prophetic picture of what it is like to belong to an apostolic company, to have an apostolic father and to know the reality of sonship. In other words these verses show forth vital aspects of the inheritance that we are to walk in.

- Security and protection: the apostle gives security - "*as a hiding place*", and protection from the ravages of life - "*a cover from the tempest*".
- Spiritual drink and covering: "*Rivers of water*" are released through the apostle Jesus; this happens in the apostolic company; "*as the shadow of a great rock*": this speaks of Christ, the rock, revealed through the apostles as He said in Matthew 10:40; it speaks of covering. We are under the covering of Christ when we are set in apostolic order.
- The mystery revealed: the revelation of the mystery will be seen "*the eyes ... will not be dim*", and the revelation will be understood "*the ears ... will listen.*"
- Revelation is received and spoken: godly discipline brings understanding: "*the heart of the rash will understand*", and even those who were unsure will be able to speak of the mystery, "*the tongue ... will be ready to speak plainly.*"

We bear witness that these aspects of the inheritance that are released through an apostolic father are real and are being experienced in the apostolic company based at SHILOH.

God is restoring fathers in the church

Fathers have a parental concern for their children. A parent with a true heart rejoices when a son does well and will sacrifice for the children; and will rejoice in seeing them do better than they did. A father rejoices in the success of a son. However when a servant rules as master in the house, that one makes sure no one else ever rises to challenge his position. This

has been the way of many senior pastors and bishops in the church up until now. As fathers are restored to the church, there is great rejoicing! Every saint knows that they belong, are appreciated and encouraged to grow and flourish.

The father of the prodigal son saw the change of heart; he did not look at what the son had been like. In the world's eyes the son would have been disqualified. In the eyes of many churches today, such a one would certainly not qualify to be 'an elder'. But to the father he was a son. We often apply tests by what we see externally but a father sees with the heart.

Coming home

In Luke 15:23 there was 'a coming home'. Coming into sonship is such an experience: it is being received by a father. That was the only way I knew how to describe my own experience of coming into sonship. I told my friends, *'I have had this amazing experience, I have come home'*. This experience came partly as a result of being publicly accepted by another apostle in a conference.

There is rejoicing when a son comes home. The father commanded that the fatted calf be prepared to honour his son. Remember in Genesis 18, when the Lord visited Abraham, he prepared the fatted calf; it is reserved for honoured guests. A true father honours his sons.

The older son had not asked his father for his inheritance but had received when the younger son asked. The older son had not appreciated his inheritance; he was still caught in a servant mentality, too busy serving to be a son (Lu. 11:29).

We are all first born sons in the kingdom of God. The older son had inherited but had not realised it. The younger son asked for his inheritance but did not appreciate it or really understand it. The younger son was restored to the father. If he had only been a servant and had gone off with the father's money, the father would have sent after him and had him arrested. Because he was a son the father longed for his return and he was fully restored. In fact he received even more.

A slave becomes a son

In the book of Philemon there is an awesome account of a runaway slave who could have faced death if apprehended. He had been born spiritually into sonship to the apostle Paul. He was then sent home to his master, no longer a slave but a son. Paul appeals to Philemon, the master, not to penalise him, but to receive Onesimus back as a son to the apostle and one who will be profitable to Philemon as well. Paul says *"I appeal to you for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten while in my chains, who once was unprofitable to you, but now is profitable to you and to me. I am sending him back. You therefore receive him, that is, my own heart"* v10-12 *"for perhaps he departed for a while for this purpose, [to minister to Paul in his chains] that you might receive him forever"* v15.

Paul had *"begotten"* Onesimus as a spiritual son. This young man previously had no inheritance, no future, no hope! He was a slave for life even though he was probably a believer and part of the church at Colossae that met in Philemon's house. Also he must have known Paul to have gone all the way to Rome to minister to Paul in jail.

Through his ministry to Paul who was an apostolic father, he quickly grew to the age of maturity, becoming a son, receiving his inheritance. When Paul sent him back to Philemon, he said *"receive him as my own heart"*. Paul assures Philemon that this young man will be a blessing to Philemon *"forever"*. The inheritance we have in Christ knows no bounds and has no end.

Father-son relationship

This story illustrates so powerfully the reality of spiritual sonship to an apostolic father. It demonstrates the difference in a person's life once he has become a son and is walking in the

inheritance of God's grace. The apostolic father, Paul, took personal responsibility for the welfare of his spiritual son, even to the extent of offering to pay any debts the young man had incurred. There is a strong suggestion in the epistle that he had stolen from Philemon when he had run away.

Apostle-elder relationship

This story also illustrates the reality of relationship between an apostle and an elder of a local church. Paul and Philemon enjoyed a mutual relationship of friendship; they were fellow labourers and partners. Paul speaks of Philemon's testimony in verses 5-6, and shares how Philemon has been a joy to him and has been as refreshing in his life. Paul asks Philemon to prepare a guest room for him to visit. There was no hierarchical exercise of authority; they worked together not because they belonged to the same organisation or network but because of their relationship in the Lord.

Paul says in verse 8 that he could have commanded Philemon to receive Onesimus back without penalty as a son in the Lord, but in verse 9 he says "*yet for love's sake I rather appeal to you*". It is clear Philemon is "*a beloved friend and fellow labourer*" (v1) with Paul, but there is no indication that he has a relationship with Paul as a son to a father. Philemon is obviously the elder of the church in his own house and relates to Paul as the apostle to that church and to himself. A true apostolic father shows love and acts out of love, whereas an overseer may be commanding, exercising spiritual authority out of his position. Paul demonstrates for us how true spiritual authority is exercised - in love.

Walking in our Inheritance

The restoration of apostolic fathers to the church in general is very recent. Most of us have grown up in the church without fathers. Even when there has been some awareness of inheritance being passed on, because of the systems operating in the church and the insecurity and lack of identity among ministry leaders, the inheritance has not been passed on. In fact sometimes the very opposite has happened where 'sons' have actually been disinherited not because of any wrong doing on their part but because of problems in the leadership.

Now we are living in the days of restoration.

*We are discovering that there are
true spiritual fathers.*

*As a result, we are beginning
to receive and walk in our inheritance.*

We have not been this way before.

Chapter 6

THE DAY OF THE SAINTS

The kingdom is the inheritance of the saints

Daniel 7:18 *“But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever.”* v.27 *“Then the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom and all dominions shall serve and obey Him.”*

We are all called to be saints

I Corinthians 1:2 *“To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours: grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”*

Church members are saints

Ephesians 1:1 *“Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus.”*

The saints are to be perfected

Ephesians 4:12 *“For the perfecting [equipping] of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.”*

Jesus comes to His saints

2 Thessalonians 1:10 *“When He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe, because our testimony among you was believed.”*

God’s kingdom rules all people in the earth

“I was watching in the night seasons, and behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed” Dan.7:13-14. The kingdom is the kingdom of God in the earth. It is God’s kingdom ruling all people and nations on the earth. It is the same kingdom that is preached by Jesus through the gospel when He came to earth.

Remember the gospel is the Gospel of the Kingdom of God.

Finally God’s kingdom replaces all other kingdoms

“Those great beasts, which are four, are four kings which arise out of the earth. But the saints of the Most High shall receive a kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever” Dan.7:17-18. The saints first receive the kingdom by hearing the gospel preached and being born again. Jesus clearly said that we enter the kingdom via the new birth (Jn.3:5-6). This kingdom is not of this world but it is entered into on this earth and it will eventually fill this earth with the glory of the King (Dan.2:44).

That kingdom is given to the saints

“I was watching; and the same horn was making war against the saints and prevailing against them, until the Ancient of Days came, and a judgment was made in favour of the saints of the Most High, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom” Dan.7:21-22. There is coming a time, and now is, when the saints are to possess the kingdom. A lot of believers have negative, defeatist attitudes to the end times in the earth. The beast prevailed for only a season. Daniel is prophesying 2600 years ago. Judgment has been made [will be made] in favour of the saints. They will possess the kingdom. Jesus has told us to pray for the kingdom to come! It is coming in the earth. *“It is the Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom”* (Luke 12:32).

The beast has authority over the saints for a season

“It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation” Rev.13:7. It appears that Revelation 13 is referring to the same beast as Daniel 7.

The authority given to the beast is only for a short time, *“here is the patience and the faith of the saints”* Rev.13:10. The beast is allowed to overcome the saints for a season but the saints will be overcomers through faith and patience. Remember Hebrews 6:12 tells us that it is through faith and patience that we inherit the promises. There are no short cuts. Faith is not like opening a can of instant coffee; faith is more like planting a seed in the ground to grow into a plant, harvest the coffee beans and then grind them for use. Faith and patience work together. Patience represents the time element as we wait for the word of faith to produce the fruit that is promised.

“He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, shall persecute the saints of the Most High, and shall intend to change times and law. Then the saints shall be given into his hand for a time and times and half a time” Dan.7:25. There are the saints and there is the beast and there is war.

Twentieth Century history saw a number of dictators arise in nations who were like forerunners or types of this beast, even as the Roman emperors were types of the beast at the beginning of the church age. Adolf Hitler and Nazism, Joseph Stalin and Stalinism in the USSR, Mao Tse Tung and Communism in China and lesser examples such as Idi Amin in Uganda are all examples of beastly rule. These ones all persecuted Christians, spoke pompous words against God, developed cultish worship of themselves and changed times and law. They even changed languages in the USSR; for example, in Kazakhstan, the Bible had to be re-translated after seventy years of communism because the rulers had changed the language to gain power over the people. The present situation in North Korea demonstrates the fruit of ‘beastly’ rule.

Finally the beast loses dominion

“But the court shall be seated, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and destroy it forever” Dan.7:26. Satan’s rule and authority in the earth is destined to be destroyed forever.

And Christ shall reign

“The kingdoms of this world have now become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever” Rev.11:15. Jesus Christ has all authority in heaven and on earth (Matt.28:18), and He has given His authority to the apostolic church. The gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world to every nation (Matt.24:14). This age is fast

coming to an end. Satan's time to rule is coming to an end. The time of anti-Christ is short lived. There is a final attempt by the beast right now, worldwide, to try to change times and seasons through false religions and worship of false gods. A god by another name and a non-Biblical prophet have arisen, *"who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God"* 2 Thess.2:4. This is demonstrated by the religions of the world today which enforce allegiance and subservience to their own proscribed way of worship and law.

Then the saints will reign in the earth

"Then the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him" Dan.7:27. This is the day of the saints!

The day of the saints is that day in which every member of the body of Christ is perfected, that is, fully adjusted and equipped to function freely and fully as a saint of the Most High God, carrying His glory, demonstrating His power, and speaking the truth of His word, enabling many others to come into the freedom that the saints have as sons in the kingdom of God.

Understanding the call of God

Even after Jesus had risen from the dead, His apostles did not comprehend His kingdom or the way the gospel is to work in this age, between the resurrection and ascension of our Lord and His return. In Acts 1:6, they were still asking questions based on a worldly, temporal view of Jesus and His kingdom.

Today in much of the church the attitude of many in leadership in the body is permeated by worldly, temporal thinking. Most seem afraid to ask basic questions of God and His word. Rather men shore up their own traditions and ways of doing things, particularly their institutions and power structures, against the word of God. So many are unwilling to question, to challenge, to speak the word of God only, and unwilling to step out in obedience to the calling of the Lord. What do you do when the denomination you have been part of departs from the Scripture into public sin? Jesus wants to give the overcoming saints power over nations, over peoples; a rod of iron that smashes the potter's vessel; this is the uncompromising word of God (Rev.2:26-27).

When Jesus called the first disciples, His call was unmistakable and unavoidable: *"Follow me and I will make you become fishers of men"* Mk.1:17. Simon and Andrew *"immediately left their nets and followed Him"* v18. Jesus is saying 'I will change you; set new patterns in your life'.

It is time for the fivefold ministry to equip the saints

All over the church world, there are high levels of dissatisfaction. Many saints and generally younger leaders in the church, are no longer prepared to go along with the system, whether it be the mainline traditional church order, or even the supposedly successful Pentecostal church. The church in Australia is full of 'underground' Christians, hanging in where they are, but knowing that the local church as it is, will not produce the fruit.

What is the Biblical nature of Church Membership?

There are and always have been viable alternatives to the present practice regarding church membership. A basic question that troubles church leaders is this question of 'church membership'. The saints are referred to as 'my church members' which does not refer to their God-given place as members in His body (1 Cor.12:18), but refers to their membership of the local fellowship. Pastors speak as if the people of God belong to them. We are a long way from

Paul's description in Acts 20:28 where he refers to *"the church of God which He purchased with His own blood."* Currently many pastors have divided the body of Christ in each town and city into their 'own' fellowships, claiming their own pulpits, wanting God to bless their own vision, their own work.

Jesus said to make disciples

There seems to be an ignoring of the commands of Jesus to make disciples (Matt.28:19-20), and to raise up workers for the harvest (Lu.10:1-2). The mistake of the great missionary movements to African and Asian nations was that they planted denominational churches; they did not make disciples. After salvation the new believers need to be taught the word of God, not inculcated into some church system. The main work of the church is to teach, teach, teach at every age, not for one hour per week but daily in the temple and from house to house (Acts 2:46-47, 19:9, 28:31).

It does not matter how many souls our church or denomination or ministry win to the LORD, it will never fulfil Jesus' command, because the commands of Jesus go far beyond winning souls and filling seats in church buildings. The preaching of the gospel in obedience to Jesus' command means much more than gathering converts (Mk.16:15-16). The church of Jesus Christ is more than evangelistic; it is apostolic! it is prophetic! it is pastoral! Mass evangelism is great, but how many of the people who make decisions become disciples.

The teaching ministry

The church is to exercise an awesome teaching ministry that changes the new believers into committed disciples, every one of them; then equipping them to go out to preach the gospel and make more disciples! While ever we continue to build local churches where believers are gathered together, preached to, taught to some extent, but never disciplined and equipped for ministry, we are not fulfilling Jesus' clear command, and the believers will never grow up to be the saints of the Most High God, of age, to inherit the kingdom. The kingdom on the earth is our inheritance but most believers are kept permanently immature due to the systems that are in place. There is a tendency in some church groups to run the same training courses year after year, but there is never any sending out, never any opportunity given to apply the training.

An Apostolic People in the Book of Acts

"At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles" Acts 8:1. *"Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the Word"* Acts 8:4.

Acts 11:19 is speaking of the same people *"now those who were scattered after the persecution that arose over Stephen travelled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to no one but the Jews only."* They were all preaching the word. They had been disciples of the twelve apostles who obviously had taught them well in all that Jesus commanded (Matt.28:20).

These disciples are examples of saints who have inherited the kingdom of God, going out as ambassadors of that kingdom, walking in a mature relationship as sons.

"Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them and has committed to us the word of

reconciliation. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God" 2 Cor.5:18-20. God has entrusted this ministry of reconciliation to each one of us. The day of the saints is when everyone goes out preaching the word, being able to stand in faith and patience in the face of persecution, to stand even when serious opposition comes against the saints and tries to overcome them.

The grace of God was seen

"But some of them were men from Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they had come to Antioch, spoke to the Hellenists preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord. Then news of these things came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent out Barnabas to go as far as Antioch. When he came and had seen the grace of God, he was glad, and encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord" Acts 11:20-23.

The grace of God was seen at work. What is grace? We can see it, feel it, be touched by it. It changes our lives. Grace is tangible and the result is seen in a person becoming softer, more humble and more able to love others. The gospel prospers because of God's grace at work. The community of Christians becomes a distinguishable group of people. This grace has been given to us *"in Christ Jesus before time began" 2Tim.1:9.*

A deacon functions as an evangelist

Acts 8:5-40 tells of the awesome ministry of Philip, which impacted a whole city (v8) and eventually reached the kingdom of Ethiopia through the eunuch. After departing from the eunuch *"he preached in all the cities till he came to Caesarea" (Acts 8:40).* Philip had been ordained as a deacon in Acts 6, but he is now functioning as an evangelist. This is another example of the day of the saints: ordinary people doing extraordinary things.

A certain disciple baptises a future apostle

In Acts 9:10, a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias received a vision. The Lord chose 'a certain disciple'; he was not an apostle or any specific ministry but a disciple. It was this disciple whom the Lord sent to lay hands on the future apostle Paul, to heal him, to baptise him and to impart the Holy Spirit to him. It is time for disciples to be empowered to serve the risen Lord Jesus Christ. In verse 17 he went his way in obedience to the Lord's instruction, laid his hands on Saul, spoke prophetically over him, and baptised him. The church had peace; they were edified and they multiplied (v.31). Why? Because their chief opponent had been saved. Jesus said His will was to do the will of the Father. We are to believe on Him, wait on Him for His strategies; He will perform it.

A New Wineskin

An ill wind is blowing against denominational structures of the church as it has been. God has provided a new wineskin, a new covering for His church, the body of Christ. The new wineskin is specifically apostolic relationships wherein God is restoring fathers and raising sons; the new covering is specifically the grace released as God raises fathers and grants sonship to the saints. This new covering is in reality not new: it is the covering of Christ; it is the anointing that our Lord gave to the church when He sent the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost to the apostles He had appointed and trained.

Father-son relationships are not just for leaders but as leaders receive the grace of sonship, then many saints receive the grace of sonship. As the saints step into this walk in maturity, they become 'fathers' as in 1 Jn.2:12-14 and fathers have children. The mature ones give fatherly care and guidance and security of relationship to all believers. Love increases so

that all the saints can come into security in the call of God. There has been a lack of fathers in the church; a lack of kind leaders; there has been mistreatment and bad training. A radical change comes with the revelation of sonship and the receiving of grace whereby God works in each individual, birthing at a deeper level the revelation. This is the sense of having ‘come home to the father’s house’.

A Heart for the ‘Perfect’

The Lord is pleased when we walk in obedience to His word and He will release His glory in an obedient people who love Him and continue in His word. In these days God is joining together like-minded ministers and saints who have a heart for the ‘perfect’ [the saints walking in maturity, being perfected in readiness for the Lord’s return].

It is time for the formation of deeper relationships between such like-minded people and God is doing this by joining people to apostolic companies where each member is received; where each member is secure, disciplined and released to fulfil the calling and purpose of God in their individual lives.

A Manifestation of the Glory of God

It is time to get real about Jesus: who He really is! It is time to get real about what He says in His word! What He is doing in and with His church! It is time for God to lift up the saints and release in them a demonstration and manifestation of that which is coming: the very glory of God revealed in all the earth; the raising up of a church full of light and glory! (Isa.60:1-7). “*He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him*” Jn.14:21. It is the manifestation of Jesus in His people.

It is Time

It is time for the blessing of the womb – fruitfulness, many sons begotten (Philemon 10). The blessing of Joseph is many sons being born.

It is time for the blessing of the breast – nurture [not babes, but sons being nurtured], to feed and guide young apostles, prophets and every saint who is finding their place in the body and their ministry expression into the world! (Gen.49:25) The ministry of Joseph is the ministry of nurturing others into ministry.

It is well with my soul! Becoming a son is becoming everything you were created to be; predestined, pre-ordained; to come into fulfilment, to fulfil your destiny; destined to rule and reign with Christ.

- You are not ordinary - but extraordinary!
- You are not natural but supernatural!

It is time to stand firm and strong in the Lord – strength! Upon His shoulders shall the government rest! (Isa.9:6) To be strong! To preach the word of God without fear or favour! Pull your shoulders back; lift up your head, walk majestically in the earth, getting ready for the millennial reign as a son of God. It is time to walk in His authority and in His grace – ‘*we are unstoppable!*’

The Grace of GOD is available to every believer!

It is according to the measure of Christ’s gift. By receiving the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers Christ has given in His ascension to the church, we receive

the full measure of grace that God has made available through Christ for the church to come into her inheritance (Eph.4:7-16).

*Now is the time to ask God to give you His grace!
Now is the time for you to receive the apostles God is raising!*

You are Unstoppable!

Together in the Gospel we are unstoppable! The apostolic anointing has been released upon the church in the earth to bring restoration, reformation and release to the saints [not changing the organization but releasing the saints into the freedom of the Holy Spirit to grow up and function fully]. The people shall know their God and do exploits because Christ is in us, the hope of glory (Dan.11:32)! It is not what we do ourselves but it is Christ in us. The Scripture says, *“To them He gave the power [right] to become the children [sons] of God, even those who believe in His name [the name of the Lord Jesus Christ] who are born of God”* Jn.1:12-13. There is only one name given under heaven Acts 4:12; there is no other name Phil.2:9-11. Power comes through faith, believing in the Name of Jesus!

*It is not what we have done but what we have become or are becoming.
We are meant to be growing and changing all the time,
becoming that which God has predestined us to be,
conformed to the image of His Son.*

“Then saviours [delivers] shall come to Mount Zion to judge the mountains of Esau, and the kingdom shall be the Lord’s.” (Obadiah v.21). Christ will be manifested in a many membered body; He will be manifested in the saints as each one does the work of the ministry they are created in Christ Jesus to do (Eph.2:10). The day is coming and now is when Christ shall be seen in His people. *“And these signs shall follow those who believe”* (Mk.16:17-18).

Called out to follow JESUS

It is time to move on from the institutional, denominational, traditional structures of Christendom. That which has been called the church in contemporary times is largely unrecognizable in the Scriptures. The word ‘church’ in the Scriptures refers to ‘those ones called out of the world to be the people of God’. We are to go *“outside the camp, bearing His reproach”* Heb.13:13. Too many Christians stay within that which they know and are comfortable with. Even when their denomination publicly steps outside of Biblical boundaries, they still remain, vaguely hoping everything will work out, without realizing judgment has come to the household of God.

In Antioch they were first called Christians (Acts 11:26). In the 2001 census in Australia, 68% of Australians claimed to be Christian. Hardly Christians according to the New Testament! The ones in Antioch were no longer a Jewish sect but now a congregation of believers made up of Jews and Greeks, separated by the gospel, clearly distinguishable as followers of Jesus. Jesus is Himself *“sanctifying and cleansing the church [those called out] by the washing of the water of the word”* Eph.5:26. This is the ‘rhema’ word, the word that brings faith (Rom.10:17). What word are you hearing? And are you obeying the word?

It is time for the saints to take their place in the body and function in their God-given gifts for the upbuilding of the whole body. Jesus is to be seen by every man through the church which is His body. *“And the glory of the YAHWEH shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together”* Isa.40:5. God is raising His saints in the earth to reveal His glory. The Palm Sunday

welcome of Jesus into Jerusalem, recorded in the Scripture, while it stirred the whole city, was mild in comparison to the triumphal entry of the King returning at the end of the age.

“Then the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him.” (Dan. 7:27)

*It is the saints who will inherit the kingdom
in the earth.*

*When the church is fully functioning in
fulfilment of the Scriptures,
then*

*“Many nations shall come and say,
‘Come, and let us go up to the mountain
of the YAHWEH,
to the house of the God of Jacob;
He will teach us His ways,
and we shall walk in His paths.’*

*For out of Zion the law shall go forth,
and the word of the YAHWEH from Jerusalem.”
Micah 4:2*

Chapter 7

RULING AND REIGNING WITH CHRIST

The kingdom of God on earth - Matt. 6:9-10 *“In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”*

Born again to see and enter the kingdom - Jn. 3:3,5 *“Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom.’”*

Reigning in life - Rom. 5:17b *“Those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.”*

Kings and priests - Rev. 1:5-6 *“And from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, And has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever.”*

Rev. 5:10 *“And have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth.”*

For a thousand years - Rev. 20:4 *“And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgement was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.”*

Ruling and reigning with Christ

The final preparation for the coming of the Lord is for the saints to begin to rule and reign in Christ now, so that they will be effective servants and co-workers with Him in the age to come. Have you ever thought what is next in God’s plan and purpose? Many saints and ministers have put all their effort into understanding the Second Coming. Associated ideas such as the Rapture and the rule of Antichrist in the earth have filled books and have been the subject of many meetings and studies. Little thought or Bible study has been given to the realities and expectations of the next age.

Ruling and reigning with Christ is meant to be our condition in the here and now but it is also the preparation of the saints to receive the kingdom in the earth that God has promised and to rule and reign with Christ in His Coming.

Parable of the tares

In Matthew 13:24-30, Jesus tells the parable of the wheat and the tares and then from verse 36-43, Jesus interprets the parable. It is a parable of *“the kingdom of heaven”*, which is equivalent to the kingdom of God. When one carefully compares the Scriptures, one finds that the kingdom of heaven in Matthew is called the kingdom of God in Luke in comparative verses.

While there may be some fine distinctions, in general the Scripture is talking about the same kingdom. There is only every one kingdom.

The good seed - sons of the kingdom - is sown by the Son of Man into the world [field], and the tares are the sons of the wicked one, sown by the devil. The harvest is at the end of the age and the reapers are the angels [messengers]. Even as the tares were burnt at harvest time, so at the end of the age the Son of Man will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness. *“Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father”* Matt.13:43a.

The kingdom of God is a real kingdom

As with so much other teaching of our Lord Jesus in the Gospels, in this parable Jesus is clearly talking about a real kingdom being manifest in the earth. The righteous ones remain in the earth.

The sons of the kingdom

At the end of the age the kingdom of God [heaven] will be manifest in the earth, in and through the righteous saints who have come to full maturity in their Christian growth, having been obedient to the Lord, the Son of Man. Truly these are the sons of the kingdom.

Thy kingdom come

In the Lord’s prayer Jesus clearly taught us to pray expectantly for the kingdom of God to come in the earth and for the will of God to be done on earth as it is done in heaven. Many religious Christians have prayed this prayer for centuries but few have seen evidence of the kingdom coming and being established in the earth. However, this is clearly the will of God.

Persevering in tribulation

Many instead are praying today for a rapture to come, in the hope that they will be taken out of the earth and in the expectation that the devil will establish an antichrist kingdom on the earth. This is in contradiction to the Lord’s teaching both on prayer and in the parables. This is also a difficult proposition to put to saints who have been through years and even decades of severe persecution, including martyrdom, at the hands of anti-Christ governments in the world today.

The will of God in the earth

Jesus taught His disciples how to pray. He said *“pray in this way {manner}”* Matt.6:9. So how do we pray for the kingdom of God to come? How do we confess God’s will in the earth in specific situations, people problems, community issues, national concerns, international crises? It is first dependent upon understanding that the gospel is the gospel of the kingdom of God; in other words, there is a king who is God and He has a kingdom over which He rules and in which His will is to be done. For example, Revelation 1:5 says that Jesus is *“the ruler over the kings of the earth”*. This means that Jesus is the ruler of presidents, prime ministers and other government leaders. Therefore, we pray with authority when we hear of international issues or issues in particular nations, knowing that the One we pray to has the authority to hear our prayers and answer them.

The next challenge is to pray the will of God into place as the answer to that crisis. How do we know the will of God? Obviously, the will of God is revealed through the word of God. Throughout Scripture the word of God is addressing personal, community, national and international issues. As disciples of the Word, we are expected to know the word and be able to pray for the will of God to be done on earth as it is in heaven.

The church has become separated from the kingdom

One of the issues that holds many saints in bondage to a small introverted vision is the lack of understanding as to the true nature of the church. In history the church has developed as an institution with its own power structures and governmental systems quite independent of the kingdom of God. The church has become disassociated from the kingdom and the gospel has become a gospel of salvation through which people can be saved and become part of the church but never understand what it is to “*enter the kingdom of God*” John.3:5.

The ambassador of the kingdom

In fact, the church is the corporate ambassador of the kingdom! The church has been given the ministry of reconciliation to the world (2 Cor.5:19-20). Jesus never intended for His church to become an organisation with a life of its own, separate to the kingdom. The kingdom is in the Holy Spirit (Rom.14:17) and the church, through the individual saints and through the ministries Christ has given, is to preach the gospel of the kingdom so that others will hear and be born again to enter the kingdom. We are not born again to enter the church, but because the church has lacked the knowledge of the kingdom, we have preached a gospel of salvation only and have not understood the authority and dominion and kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Coming of the King

In Matthew 23 Jesus is condemning and bringing to an end the Jewish religious system practised by the scribes and the Pharisees and then in Matthew 24, He tells of the signs of the end of the age and His coming. One of the key signs that must be fulfilled before the end of this age can come is the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom “*in all the world as a witness to all the nations*” v.14. The King is coming in the context of a prepared world: the gospel of the kingdom has been fully preached. If the gospel of the kingdom has been fully preached as a witness to all nations, then every human being on the earth will have heard of Jesus Christ and His right to rule. Every nation will have been warned of the judgment to be faced by the nations when Jesus comes (Matt.25:31-46).

Food in due season

Jesus then speaks the parable of the faithful and wise servant as compared with the evil servant. The wise servant has been appointed over the master’s household “*to give them food in due season*” Matt.24:45. There are many churches today who have totally forgotten this warning and now we have institutionalised sinful practices among the servants in the Master’s household. As well, much of the teaching [food] given in many churches is not preparing the saints for the end of the age and the Coming.

Anointed and ready

In Matthew chapter 25 there are two parables and a powerful warning concerning the judgment of the nations, all exhorting us to be ready for the coming of the King. The parable of the virgins (v.1-13) suggests that all of them knew Christ in this present age - they had ‘*lamps*’, but five had plenty of oil to enable them to be ready in the final hour. The foolish had to go looking for the necessary oil at the last hour and missed His coming. Notice the bridegroom comes! The saints who are ready, prepared and waiting for Him go into the wedding with Him. They do not go away somewhere else with Him.

Serving profitably now

The second parable (Matt.25:14-30) concerns the king of the kingdom going on a far journey, having distributed his goods to his servants in the form of talents. There will be a reckoning when he returns as to how the servants used the talents they were given. The master

is returning, not to whisk His servants away suddenly, but to receive an accounting of how they have been conducting the affairs of his kingdom during his absence. The emphasis is on the king returning, not on the church going away.

Inheriting the kingdom in the earth

Then the Lord warns the nations concerning the judgement they will face. Jesus assures us that the Son of Man will *“come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory”* Matt.25:31. The nations come before Him to be judged. This is speaking of nations on the earth and they will be judged according to how they treated *“the brethren”* of Jesus, that is the Christians. The righteous ones - the sheep nations - *“inherit the kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world”* v.34. This kingdom has been prepared by God to be fully functioning in the earth.

It is time to make Jesus King

It was time to make David king over all Israel

In the book of Chronicles, we learn how David became king over all Israel. The key to this happening was that some of the leaders *“had understanding of the times.”* *“Of the sons of Issachar who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do, their chiefs were two hundred; and all their brethren were at their command”* 1 Chron.12:32. The context of this verse is that, after the death of Saul, David had been made king of Judah, which was his own tribe. But one of Saul’s sons had taken over the kingdom of Israel in place of Saul. This was not according to the perfect will of God. God had pronounced judgment on Saul and David had been anointed to be king. It is now thirteen years at least since David was anointed to be king. He has already been king of Judah for seven years, but now it is time for David to become king over all of Israel.

It was a time of great change, an historic time, an out-working of history in the nation of Israel to fulfill the purpose of God. It was time for the kingdom of God to find expression through David and the nation of Israel.

They had understanding of the times

These sons of Issachar *“had understanding of the times”*. They were listening to the voice of God; they were aware that something needed to happen and they knew *“what Israel ought to do.”* What should Israel do at that time? It was time to make David king over all Israel.

It is time for us to have understanding of our times

It is time to listen to God: listening prayer is spending time before the Lord, humbling ourselves with no agendas and allowing Him to reveal Himself and His purpose to us through His word. It is waiting upon the Lord, receiving the counsel of God, out of which His mighty works will come forth. Then as the church is obedient to the revealed will of God His purpose will be established.

All Israel can represent the whole church and it is time to make somebody king today.

It is time to make Jesus King!

Jesus has been the priest of the church

Jesus’ priesthood of the church has been manifested in intercession, prayers, worship, healing; many good times have been experienced in the presence of the Lord. But Hebrews 3:1 tells us to *“consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Jesus Christ.”* For one thousand eight hundred years Jesus has been the Priest of the church and to the believers,

offering salvation, forgiveness, cleansing but always being hidden within the confines of the church.

Now He is to be known as King

When we consider Jesus as the Apostle we are moving into the realm of the kingly anointing. Jesus is *“a Priest according to the order of Melchizedek”*. In Genesis 14:18-20 and Hebrews 7:1-10 we are introduced to Melchizedek, King of righteousness and King of peace and Priest of the Most High God. From the book of Genesis to the book of Revelation, we have the revelation of Jesus as King, a King Priest.

He is the King Priest

“For He testifies: ‘You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek’” Heb.7:17. In Genesis 14:18 Melchizedek is twice king as well as being *“the priest of God Most High.”* Jesus therefore is a King Priest forever. This Melchizedek was not made like the son of man; he had neither father nor mother, no beginning of days, nor end of life. He was made like the Son of God. He was the one to whom the father of the faith Abraham gave his tithe (Heb.7:3-4).

Jesus, the son of David

Under the Law of Moses there was a clear distinction between the priestly ministry and the kingly ministry. King Uzziah trespassed into priestly ministry in the temple and was struck with leprosy as a result (2 Chron.26:16-21). He did not respect the clear division that God had set. King David was an exception in that he had a special dispensation of grace to minister as prophet, priest and king, being a type of Christ; but nevertheless, his primary ministry was that of king. Jesus is the one to occupy David’s throne eternally. David’s throne always pointed to Jesus ruling and reigning as the King, and the kingdom of God being fully established in the earth.

Priests offer sacrifices & kings have authority to rule

Under the law when kings overstepped the God-given boundaries of their ministry and offered sacrifices they were judged. King Saul did not wait for Samuel who was in the office of priest, to offer the sacrifice to God (1Sam.13). Samuel was anointed as a priest to offer the sacrifice. Kings were anointed to rule; they were anointed to exercise authority. As soon as the young prophet anointed Jehu to be king of Israel, the captains of the army immediately acknowledged his kingship (2 Kin.9:4-13).

The priest shall be crowned as ruler [king]

“Take the silver and gold, make an elaborate crown, and set it on the head of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, then speak to him saying ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts, saying “Behold, the Man whose name is the BRANCH! From His place He shall branch out, and He shall build the temple of the LORD. Yes, He shall build the temple of the LORD. He shall bear the glory and shall sit and rule on His throne. So He shall be a priest on His throne and the counsel of peace shall be between them both” Zech. 6:11-13.

Here the high priest is being crowned a king! This priest is to build the temple of the Lord, an apostolic work, and bear the glory. Kings normally bear the glory. Majesty belongs to kings. Jesus is Priest and King, and He is building the church, God’s temple, and He bears the glory. He wants us to not only minister as priests but to rule and reign with Him as kings, and thus bear His glory. He has appointed apostles to lead the saints in building the house of God, to fulfill His own calling to build the temple of the Lord. The building of the house of the Lord is a kingly task.

Zechariah is one of the last prophets of the Old Testament and he is speaking of a transition from the division between priest and king under the Law to the restoration of the original order of priesthood which is the order of Melchizedek.

In Jesus Christ, the order of Melchizedek has been fully established and now the saints are entering into their inheritance to rule and reign as kings.

Jesus has made us kings and priests

“And from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen” Rev.1:5-6.

We are to reign as kings

We are *“a royal priesthood”* 1Pet.2:9. That means we are kings and priests. The Lord wants to strengthen our hand today in kingship, in rulership. A royal priesthood does not mean a priesthood that serves kings but a priesthood of the same kind as our Lord Jesus: of the order of Melchizedek, the king priest. In Melchizedek, this eternal order (Heb.7:3) is demonstrated. In Jesus Christ this order is brought into being for the church. It is not the case that some are priests in terms of ministry unto the Lord, and some are kings in terms of ruling in the society at large. No!

We have been made a royal priesthood of the order of Melchizedek, in whom there is “the counsel of peace between the two offices.”

All the saints are kings and priests

Some have incorrectly taught that there is a division between those who minister as priests, suggesting this is the role of a clergy group, and those who minister in business, politics etc. in the community, they being the kings. There is no Scriptural basis at all for such a claim and this wrong teaching misrepresents the order of priesthood which is so clearly taught in Scripture. The priesthood of the order of Melchizedek preceded the only other order of priesthood in the Scripture, that is, the priesthood of Aaron. The order of Melchizedek has now clearly succeeded the order of Aaron.

Another misconception popularised by certain versions of the Bible which misquote Revelation 1:6 to say Jesus has made us *“a kingdom of priests”*, robs the saints of the role of kingship, which is to rule and reign in Christ Jesus. A kingdom of priests suggests that all the citizens in the kingdom are priests ruled by a king; this infers that the only ministry of the saints is to minister to the King as priests. This is far from the truth of the Scripture and a totally misguided understanding of God’s intention to give the kingdom to the saints who are meant to be ruling and reigning with Christ now.

What sort of people came to make David king?

By studying the characteristics of the men who came to make David king we can understand what sort of people the saints need to be to enter in to the final preparation for the return of our King, the Lord Jesus Christ. They were armed men, men of war. In history kingdoms were established through war. *“Now these were the numbers of the divisions that were equipped for war, and came to David at Hebron to turn over the kingdom of Saul to him, according to the word of the Lord”* 1 Chron.12:23. In the days of the Old Testament it was the

kings who led the armies into battle; who led the nation into war against their enemies.

With the coming of David into kingship over all of Israel, the government [kingdom] of God had passed from the Judges to a God appointed king. Samuel, the last Judge, had also functioned as a priest but now there was to be a clear distinction between the role of the priest and the role of the king in the nation.

Mighty valiant warriors

All the tribes sent a certain number of their armed men to support what was happening but of the tribe of Issachar every man came; all of their chiefs – 200 of them were in agreement, and all their brethren were at their command (1 Chron.12:32). The whole tribe came! The whole tribe marched to Hebron to make way for the king. Even of Judah, David's tribe, only a portion came. A number of priests came, but the whole tribe of Issachar came because they were men who had understanding of the times! They knew what Israel ought to do!

The characteristics of these tribesmen mentioned in 1 Chronicles 12:24-37 illustrate the type of saints that will be raised up in the last days. These men were armed for war; they were mighty men of valor fit for war. Zadok is called a valiant warrior (v.28); the men of Ephraim were mighty men of valor. They came with weapons of war; they were stout-hearted men who could keep rank; men who could keep battle formation; they were armed for battle with every kind of weapon of war. There were close to 350,000 men of war who gathered. This is more men than went into Iraq in 2003.

The apostolic church receives Jesus as King

In the church today there are some men called apostles, who know what the church ought to do. God is raising up apostolic companies now to give leadership to the church to come to make Jesus king. This apostolic message is going out to all the nations. God is joining key people together in committed submitted relationships. Whole church movements are receiving the apostolic message and are making changes to more fully reflect the church of the Scripture.

Characteristics of the Last Days saints

The key attributes of these men are summarised in verse 38 *“All these men of war, who could keep ranks, came to Hebron with a loyal heart, to make David king over all Israel; and all the rest of Israel were of one mind to make David king.”* These attributes are to characterise the last days church.

It is as the church becomes the church militant, set in order, recognising the apostolic leadership that the Lord is setting in place, giving their loyalty to that which the Lord is doing and receiving Jesus as King, that the saints will be ready to inherit the kingdom.

i. MEN OF WAR

These men were armed and experienced. We also are in a battle and need to be armed and experienced in using our weapons. *“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places”* Eph.6:12.

Notice that the call to be fully armed, enabling the church to stand against the evil powers, comes in Ephesians chapter six. The previous five chapters of Ephesians, tell us how to be ready and equipped for that great battle.

What is our armor?

Ephesians 6:14-18 describes the armor that is available to the Christian and should be *“put on”*.

- The **belt of truth**: the truth is the word of God according to Jesus: *“Your word is truth”* Jn.17:17. Peter instructs us to *“Gird up the loins of your mind”* with truth (1 Pet.1:13). The belt of truth as a piece of armor is all about receiving the word of God into our minds, and basing our thoughts upon that word.
- The **breastplate of righteousness**: covers the heart; we are to believe the truth of the word in our heart. *“With the heart one believes unto righteousness”* Rom.10:10. We are to believe the truth in our hearts and understand the truth in our minds.
- The **shoes of the gospel of peace**: refer to our walk. Once we have heard the truth and believe it in our hearts, we are to walk in that truth.
- The **shield of faith**: applying faith to extinguish the fiery darts; dealing with the doubts of the mind. Remember faith comes by hearing the word, *“the word that proceeds from the mouth of God”* Matt.4:4; that is the word that needs to be heard to release faith in the heart of the believer (Rom.10:17).
- The **helmet of salvation**: being immersed in the word of God; understanding the doctrines of the word. The head represents authority; it represents our decision making. Putting on the helmet of salvation means that we will make decisions according to the word of God, because the word of God abides in us.
- The **sword of the Spirit**: using the word of God to overcome the devil, as Jesus did in the wilderness (Matt.4:1-11). This is the word that proceeds from the mouth of God, coming with power and releasing faith.

What is our Warfare?

“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled” 2 Cor. 10:3-6.

God wants us to be ‘men of war’, experienced in using our weapons, knowing how to pull down strongholds. When our *“obedience is fulfilled”*, we are to *“punish all disobedience”*. This is not what the church is doing currently. We are neither walking in obedience nor dealing effectively with the disobedience all around us. We are neither living in nor effectively preaching the kingdom of God.

Victory in Battle

“And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death” Rev.12:11. The saints are to win! They are to overcome the devil! The victory is for overcomers!

ii. THEY KNEW HOW TO KEEP RANK

These men knew their place, and they knew whom their leaders were. We need to know our place [rank] in the body of Christ, to be secure in it and not to step out of it! The structure of the body of Christ, of the church, is not a hierarchy, but there is an order. God has set His body in order. *“But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased”* 1 Cor.12:18. God places each member in the body and each member is meant to function fully in the placement God has given. Therefore, it is ridiculous to imagine a toenail trying to be a shoulder or vice versa.

Jesus has prepared a place for each one

Jesus spoke of placements or dwelling places in John 14:2. This Scripture has often been misunderstood and misapplied and people have dreamed of having a rich man’s house in heaven.

The Greek word is SC #3438 *'mone'* from #3036 which simply means 'to stay'; *'mone'* means 'a staying', i.e., 'residence' [the act of residing or the place of residing]. This word is used only twice in the New Testament: in Jn.14:2 as *'mansions'* and in Jn.14:23 as *'abode'*, in the King James Version. It is also translated 'dwelling places' in other versions.

Jesus has prepared a place for you and me; a place where we belong; a place where we fit and can function. Unfortunately, in the past many of us have been born again to become orphans, children without fathers. The result has been a whole body of people not fitted and joined together, and therefore not able to function, not able to grow up into all that God has planned for each person, because we have not come into that place that Jesus prepared for us.

The appointed ministries

"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" 1 Cor.12:28. There is also an order in the appointed ministries that function in leadership in the church. This clear order has been replaced in the history of the church by a different order according to man's system, not according to the word of God. As a result, much of the church is out of order and not functioning properly.

Order in the local Church

"For though I am absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ" Col.2:5. The church is being brought back into good order to enable it to function. This order is not based on institutional organization but it is based on "the steadfastness of faith in Christ" and relationship to an apostle that Christ has appointed for that local church, with elders in place in the local church [by local church I mean the church of the town or the city in its various fellowships].

Order in the Lord's Table

"But if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, lest you come together for judgment. And the rest I will set in order when I come" 1 Cor.11:34. There is to be order in the conduct of the Lord's table.

Order in the foundational experiences

There is an order in the foundational experiences of the faith: Peter said *"repent and be baptised ... and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit"* Acts 2:38; Jesus said *"make disciples of every nation, baptising them ... and teaching them"* Matt.28:19-20. The church has ignored the order given in so many areas of Scripture; for example, most churches have insisted on teaching new converts thoroughly before baptism - that is not the right order! Order is similar to pattern. God instructed Moses to build the tabernacle exactly according to the pattern he had been shown. The apostle Paul sets out the order and pattern of the New Testament church and yet there have been few modern-day church leaders who have been obedient to build according to the pattern.

There were orders of priests

In Hebrews 5, 6 & 7 the order of Melchizedek is mentioned a number of times and the order of Aaron once. In Luke 1:8 Zacharias was ministering in the temple. He was a priest in the *'order of his division'*. Even as there were orders and divisions in the priesthood so there are orders and divisions in the ministry leadership of the church today. However institutionally organized church bodies cut across and ignore these orders and divisions that the Spirit wants to establish in the church.

iii. THEY CAME TO HEBRON

They knew where to gather; they knew the place to come to. Hebron was an historic place in the history of Israel. Abraham had lived for a time in that area. It could have been the main place of Abraham's sojourn in the land. They recognised that a change was about to happen and they wanted to be part of it. Their hearts were tuned in to what God was doing, so they gathered together in one accord. God had prepared their hearts and they wanted to be positioned to be ready for what God wanted them to do.

Hebron was where the man of God was

David was already living in Hebron. He was destined to be king in Zion but no one knew that yet.

They came to where God's anointed authority was in place and functioning. God's anointed authority represents the kingly anointing. As God raises apostles today and the saints begin to gather to the apostles to be set in order to fully function, this kingly anointing is released.

It is as the saints begin to function in the kingly anointing of Jesus Christ that there will be a real preparation for the return of King Jesus. The word of God promises that the saints will rule and reign in the earth and that the kingdom will be given to them. Jesus is not coming back to rescue a 'priestly', heavenly-minded group of believers and take them to heaven. He is coming as King of a kingdom that is already functioning in the earth through His saints who are ruling and reigning. Christians are to rise up in the earth, walking in righteousness in every area of life. Christians are not to be as Pharisees judging everything as a legalist but they are to rule and reign in life. It is time for a true uprising of Christians against the corruption that is in the world and which comes against Christians at every turn.

iv. WITH A LOYAL HEART

These men were committed. They were faithful and could be relied upon. They were prepared to give their loyalty to the one whom God had chosen and raised up. We need to develop a loyal heart. However, their loyalty was first to God. That is why they came to Hebron – their hearts were loyal to God.

Loyalty

This question of loyalty needs close scrutiny. Today many saints are remaining in denominations because of loyalty. For some years after the death of Saul all of the tribes except Judah remained loyal to Saul's kingdom even though God had finished with Saul's kingdom. God had moved on. Denominations have had a legitimate historical beginning but they were not meant to last forever. Because their beginning is not in Scripture neither will they be there at the end. Jesus is coming for His church. We are called out of all other organizations, denominations etc. Every believer and every fellowship is to line up with the word of God. When we put the word of God first, our loyalties change. We are not to stay loyal to something that God has called us out of.

Joshua and the people had to move on

God said in Joshua 1:2, "Moses My servant is dead. Now therefore arise and go." As great as Moses was, he died. Joshua and the people of God had to move on. Church denominations and movements have a life time but God is forever. It is time to come out and go on with Jesus.

Jonathon's loyalty to Saul meant death

Saul's son made a covenant with David. He recognised that David was the Lord's

anointed and the one chosen by God to be the next king. But Jonathon's fatal flaw was that he finally did not separate himself from the old order and this cost him his life. He knew what the new order was, and even recognised what God was doing through David, but he still chose to remain faithful to the old system with a misplaced loyalty.

Today the new order that is emerging is the apostolic church, a non-institutional, relationship-based church, that has a vision for the whole body of Christ being raised up; being ready for the coming of the Lord; having fully preached the gospel in all the world.

v. TO MAKE DAVID KING

These men knew what Israel ought to do. They were discerning of the times and thousands joined them from other tribes to make David king. All the rest of Israel then agreed with what was happening and "*were of one mind*" 1 Chron.12:38. They would never have come to that agreement unless the sons of Issachar and others had stepped out. And even before the sons of Issachar and others stepped out, a small band of men and their families had stepped out long before to be with and support David in the wilderness years (1 Sam.22:1-5).

The whole church agreed!

In Acts 2:1 when all the believers were gathered in one place, *with one accord*", then the Holy Spirit came. The one hundred and twenty disciples had stepped out in obedience to Jesus; they were totally separated unto the purpose of the Lord. There was a unity of heart and mind among the believers in the early church. They were in agreement. Jesus entrusted the future of His church and the kingdom of God in the earth to this group of people. God is looking for people who are one in heart and mind to fulfill His purposes for His last days church.

Jesus is coming as King

Worship Jesus, make Him King! Jesus is King and Priest; He saves, He heals. The church preaches Jesus as Priest not as the King Priest. Many people understand the priestly ministry of Jesus and walk as priests. Priestly ministry brings salvation and healing. We enjoy the priestly ministry and it is easier to be a priest than a king.

*Priests worship & minister & offer sacrifices.
Kings go to war! Kings rule and reign! Kings bear the glory!*

God is raising a new leadership

Apostles are being raised up to take leadership in the church. God has appointed in the body, first apostles. "*And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations'*" Mat. 28:18. Jesus had all authority and He gave that authority to His disciples: authority over demon spirits; authority over sicknesses; authority to do "*greater works*" Jn.14:12. It is kings who have authority not priests.

The gospel of the kingdom of God

We are to preach the gospel of the kingdom of God. When Philip went to Samaria, he "*preached the things concerning the kingdom of God*" and many believed and were baptised (Acts 8:12). Most preach a gospel of salvation, emphasising the priestly sacrifice of Jesus for sin. The gospel of the kingdom emphasises the rule of Messiah. He is "*the ruler over the kings of the earth*" Rev.1:5.

What will happen when Jesus returns?

It is time to make Jesus King! It is time for Jesus to gather together men of war: who can keep rank! who understand the times we are in! who will be of one mind and heart to make

JESUS KING! We are to rule and reign with Him on the earth. When Jesus comes, He will come to a kingdom prepared and operational.

The church is the ambassador of the Kingdom of God

It is time for us, the church, to repent, to have a change of mind about who and what the church is. The church is meant to be the ambassador(s) of the kingdom of God, sent forth by Him to represent and present the kingdom of God through the accurate and Spirit-empowered preaching of the Gospel.

Preaching the kingdom of God

The kingdom of God was “*at hand*” when John the Baptist first began preaching. Jesus Himself came preaching “*the kingdom of God is at hand*”. When Jesus sent the seventy out in Luke 10, He told them that after they healed the sick in the house that received them, they were to tell them “*The kingdom of God has come near to you*” v.9. Ever since we have been commanded to preach the gospel of the kingdom of God, preparing the earth and the people who live thereon for the coming of the King.

The kingdom of God will triumph

“Then the seventh angel sounded: and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, ‘the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!’” Rev.11:15

The saints who overcome the kingdom of the beast will rule and reign with Christ

“And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgement was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast and his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.” Rev.20:4

Conclusion

To be born again

After the woman had met Jesus at the well in **John 4**, she went into the city, having been transformed through her encounter with Jesus and told many people about this one she had met. The Bible says many began to believe in Jesus because of what she said. But then they went and met Jesus for themselves and they said *“now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard Him and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world”* v42. Everybody needs a personal experience of meeting Jesus, which is to be born again.

To receive the Holy Spirit

After Philip had successfully preached in Samaria in Acts 8, the Bible says many men and women believed and were baptised. However they had not received the Holy Spirit. The apostles Peter and John came down from Jerusalem and laid their hands on the new believers and they received the Holy Spirit. Everyone needs a personal experience of the Holy Spirit; an experience of God’s power that enables the believer to witness to Jesus and the gospel.

Similarly in Ephesus in Acts 19, after Paul had preached Jesus to a group of disciples who only knew of John the Baptist’s teaching, they were baptised in the name of Jesus. They were born again and baptised. Then Paul laid his hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit. We know they had a personal experience of the Holy Spirit because they were speaking in tongues and prophesying.

To become a son

On October 31st 2002, I had a personal experience that I can only describe Scripturally as ‘becoming a son’; of stepping into maturity; of knowing that a profound security had come over my life. The way I described this to my friends was, ‘I have come home’! And that home coming was ‘to the Father’s house’. There is another experience for all believers once you have been saved and have received the Holy Spirit. This experience comes at the age of maturity; it is the experience of entering into sonship and sonship is to be entered into by everyone. It is receiving the Spirit of adoption [sonship] that is, being placed as a son to receive the inheritance.

The reality of sonship

The reality of sonship is an enhanced relationship with Jesus Christ. The experience of sonship is a deeper and greater revelation of the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, in and through whom the Father God is revealed. Many believers when they are young in the Lord, assume that one day they will meet the Father, as if they are going to meet someone else other than Jesus. However when a person has the revelation of sonship, God as Father is revealed to them in Christ Jesus. Jesus and the Father are one.

We return to the confession of Scripture *“one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all”* Eph.4:4-6. How is the one God and Father able to be in us, above us and through all? It is through the revelation of *“Christ in us the hope of glory”* Col.1:27 and Christ is in us by the one Spirit.

Jesus Himself quotes from the book of Deuteronomy, confirming that God the Lord is one. *“Jesus answered him, the first of all the commandments is: ‘Hear, O Israel, the LORD*

our God, the LORD is one. And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ This is the first commandment” Mk.12:29-30. The experience of sonship brings a deepening experience of who God is: He is the Father experienced through the Son by the Spirit.

Walking in our inheritance

Entering the rest of God in Hebrews 3-4 is likened to entering the land in the natural. In other words entering the rest of God is the reward and the state of those who are walking in their inheritance; those who have *“ceased from their own works”* Heb.4:10. Those of us who have entered in to the experience of sonship have experienced this rest; we have ceased from our own works; the sense of being driven has left us; the compulsion to minister and to work hard for God has lifted off us totally. We are now able to serve as sons who know we belong in the house; who know that we only need to do the works the Father has pre-ordained for us.

Doing the works of the Father

Jesus said *“I only do the works I see My Father doing; I only speak what the Father tells Me.”* It is the same for us today: Jesus only wants us to do whatever He tells us. He promises us that if we will obey His commandments, *“He will come and manifest Himself in us”* Jn.14:21 and if we keep His word, *“the Father will love us and both Jesus and the Father will come and dwell with us”* Jn.14:23.

Now is the time

We are no longer to be children (Eph.4:14) but we are to be sons, mature ones whom the Father has disciplined (Heb.12:5-9), who have received the deeper wisdom of the word which is the mystery (1 Cor.2:6-7). The calling of God upon His church today is to ‘grow up’. It is *“the time appointed by the Father”* Gal.4:2 for the heirs who have been children to now inherit as young men who have come to the age of maturity. Maturity is not something we can attain to by works but rather by faith and by faith we *“lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of us”* Phil.3:12. Paul says that we can have a mature mind and therefore we can *“walk by the same rule”* and *“be of the same mind”* v.14-16.

The result will be a group of brethren walking in maturity, walking in apostolic relationships and becoming a pattern people for others to follow (Phil.4:17).

*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit
as you seek to understand these things.*

A PRAYER YOU CAN PRAY

Entering into sonship: a transforming experience

The following is a **prayer** that you can pray, believing God to confirm His will in your life through a transforming experience.

Father in heaven, I ask You to lead me by Your grace and Your Holy Spirit to understand and to enter into sonship.

I acknowledge that it is time for me to grow up, to accept that I am of age to receive the inheritance from my Heavenly Father through Christ Jesus.

Lord I thank You that You called me to be Your disciple and I have diligently learnt Your word.

Lord I thank You that You have called me to be Your minister and I have sought to serve You in every way.

I now know it is time for me to become a son. I ask for your grace to understand; I ask for revelation to know; I ask for Your anointing to be transformed.

Lord I want to become your son. I want to receive courage into my heart so I can boldly stand for You. I yearn to be totally secure as Your child and now, as Your son; to no longer feel I have to strive or prove myself; that I can be secure in You and in Your body.

I submit to the 'chastening of the Lord' as a son, knowing that as my Father You will bring me to perfection through Your godly discipline. Lord, reveal my identity to me as I walk in sonship, receiving my inheritance and fulfilling the call of God that is on my life.

Lord I ask Your blessing on my life to enable me to be successful in my life.

Father, 'give to me that which You have stored up for me', since before time began.

AMEN