

Jesus Prays For His Own

(A few thoughts on John chapter 17, by Alister Hamilton, W Turner and Others)

(By Verse)

Contents

1) Foreword – Page 1

2) Introduction – Page 3

3) Section I: The Lord Jesus Prays For Himself (John 17v1-5) – Page 53

4) Section II: The Lord Jesus Prays For The Apostles (John 17v6-19) – Page 62

5) Section III: The Lord Jesus Prays For All Who Would Believe in Him Through Their Word (John 17v20-26) – Page 159

6) Appendices – Page 171

The King James Version follows the vast majority of Greek texts in the order of about 1,000 to 10, and it is also confirmed by the ancient manuscripts in other languages, like the Gothic and Peshitta. It is in my opinion still the most accurate translation from the original Scriptures, and is my preferred version, and other translations quoted in this study, are tested against the King James Version. The Hebrew and Greek texts are taken from The Interlinear Bible.

Foreword By William H Turner.

I heartily recommend this excellent study, "Jesus prays for His Own," by Alister Hamilton. It is the result of about two years of study, and usually at least eight hours a day in prayer. Alister did not really want me to include the facts about his deeply prayerful life, but I feel that this is absolutely necessary in order to inspire others to pray, and to motivate them to read and study this exceptional work. The prayerfulness of Alister can be felt in the spiritual content of this study. This book will warm the hearts of all Christians, and its thoughtful content will enlighten the minds of those who prefer a deep and scholarly study of the Word of God. Alister has produced many original thought provoking expositions and comments in this study, he has also drawn from some of my own material, and has often improved and upgraded it. Alister has also consulted and drawn from other important sources, and has produced an outstanding scholarly work.

The book is in two formats, one in verse form and one with headings, the reader can choose which one best suits them. The contents page gives a synopsis of Alister's book, and will aid people to get a birds eye view of the contents of this study, and I feel that this will aid people in the study of this important work.

W H Turner, 4th September 2009

Foreword By Alister Hamilton.

There are very few examples in the four Gospels where the words that the Lord Jesus used in His praying are actually recorded, but here in John Chapter 17 we get a wonderful insight into the tremendous prayer ministry of the Saviour. The words spoken here by Jesus, were inspired by the Holy Spirit, from the heart and mind of His Father, so that He might petition His Father correctly, firstly for Himself (John 17v1-5), then for His Apostles (What the Lord Jesus prays here for His Apostles, also applies to **ALL** those who would believe in Him through their word), (John 17v6-19), and thirdly, for everybody else who would believe in Him. (Also note that what the Lord Jesus prays for in these verses, also applies to the Apostles), John 17v20-26.

It is not recorded that the Lord Jesus spoke in Tongues, nor does it say that He did not speak in Tongues. Paul said that he desired to pray with the mind and also with his spirit, (i.e., that is with the Gift of Tongues) and speak divine mysteries in that exalted Heavenly language (1Cor 14v14,15). Surely the perfect union of that the Lord Jesus had with the Holy Spirit cannot rule out this prayer ministry of the Holy Spirit's gift of tongues, should not it find its perfect expression through the Lord Jesus? Paul said we know not how to pray as is necessary because of the limits of human knowledge, the Holy Spirit solved this by giving Paul the gift of Tongues, and he prayed for the saints according to the will of God. In John chapter 17 we see the perfect example of the Holy Spirit guiding Jesus to pray with the understanding, which is essential for us to realise the caring love that the Trinity have for us. John chapter 17 is the perfect example of praying with the understanding; Jesus always prayed aright, the words of His prayers being inspired by the Holy Spirit. John 12v49, 14v10, 1Cor 14v2,14,18, Rom 8v26-28,34.

The prayer in John 17 is the result of His secret prayer ministry during the hidden years at Nazareth, where He lived the life of prayer, and constant communion with His Father. Psalm 69v10,11, Isaiah 50v3-7, Matt 6v6. It was the thirty hidden years at Nazareth that prepared Him not only for His earthly ministry, but just as importantly, for His Heavenly

High Priestly ministry. Heb 7v25.

The Lord Jesus here is praying as our Great Saviour (Himself man, Luke 2v11, 1Tim 2v5 (Weymouth)) about His approaching High Priestly ministry, that would begin on the day of His Resurrection and continue right up until His Second Coming. John 10v36, Acts 2v34,25, Heb 5v4-6. With death only hours away, we see our Lord praying from the depths of His very being for His people, His motivation (as always) being that of the greatest Love. John 13v1 (Amplified Bible). In this prayer He is petitioning His Father for the different requirements that He will need to carry out in His High Priestly ministry for each individual believer, to perfect their faith and character, by sanctifying them (by the Truth) and transforming them from glory to glory, to make them Christ like and priests after the order of Melchizedek, so that they can minister His love and power to all during their earthly life, and also prepare for them, a useful ministry, and honour and glory in Heaven. John 14v3, 17v19, 2Cor 3v18, Heb 2v11, 5v6.

From this prayer we can see and gauge for ourselves the wonderful love and compassion that motivates our Great High Priest as He prays for each of us individually every second of every day. The tremendous burden and weight of the Church upon His great heart causes him to pray for us "with unspeakable yearnings and groanings too deep for utterance." Amp. Heb 7v25, Rom 8v26.

This prayer is a petition to His Father, that those who would believe in Him would have exactly the same spiritual walk and experience as He Himself had during His earthly lifetime.

The subject that is most concerning Our Lord at this time is that of procuring "eternal life" for His people (both OT and NT saints), those who would accept His great sacrifice, the shedding of His blood as an atonement for their sin. At this point in time (30 AD), the success of the Eternal Kingdom had not yet been established, and the Creation still had not been assured of not ending in failure, due to the entrance of sin into it through the wilful rebellion of angels and humans, in the full light of the character and works of God. His OT saints were not in Heaven in God's presence, but were in Hades, awaiting the Resurrection of their bodies, and until that time, being comforted by the Holy Spirit and their faith. Job 10v21,22, 19v25-27, Psalm 139v7,8, Luke 16v25.

Although the knowledge of His descent into Hades (where He would suffer the "birth-pains of death") was beginning to cause Jesus tremendous anguish, conflict and terror; He also knew that after He had made atonement, His Father would give Him back His spirit (which He would loose at His death, as it would return to God who gave it, Eccles 12v7, Luke 23v46. Jesus then would preach the Gospel to the ignorant and wicked dead in the Abyss, and "proclaim" (Greek, ekeéruxen, first aorist active indicative of "kerusso" 2784, to proclaim after the manner of a herald, to preach, 1Pet 3v19. Jesus proclaimed in the Abyss His victory over the world, the flesh, the Devil, Death and Hades. Jesus preached (Greek, "ekeéruxen," first aorist active indicative of "kerusso" (NT:2784)) first to the spirits in prison, in the Abyss, and also offered the good news of salvation to the ignorant dead. After this He would cross over the great gulf between the Abyss and the other part of Hades, where the Old Testament saints were waiting for the Deliverer to come and take them home, and there He preached the Good News to the dead (1Pet 4v6, "Was the gospel preached," "euangelisthe," the aorist passive indicative of "euangelizo") to the dead Old Testament saints (who were looked upon as being in Abraham's bosom). Matt 26v36-46, Mark 14v32-42, Luke 16v19-31, 22v39-46, Acts 2v24, Col 1v20, 1Pet.3v18-20, 4v6.

Having preached the Gospel to all the inhabitants of Hades, He would then take all of those who had received His words into Heaven with Him, however, after leaving Hades and before entering Heaven with His people, His soul would enter back into His earthly body in the tomb, His Father then resurrecting His body. It was just after His Resurrection that He went to Mary Magdalene and the other women, to alleviate their great sorrow and grief that they were experiencing over His crucifixion. Jesus then went back to the waiting OT saints and those who had believed the Truth of the Gospel from His preaching, and He led them all into Heaven, filling all things with His presence, and giving gifts unto men, and thus began His High Priestly Ministry for the New Testament Church. Matt 28v9,10, John 20v11-18, Acts 2v22-31, Eph 4v7-16 (with Judges 5v12, Psalm 24) Heb 5v5,6. (See Appendix 3)

So, the result of our Lord making Atonement for sin would bring about the following:

- 1) Ensure that the Eternal Kingdom would be brought into existence at the Second Coming of Christ, and that God's "Plan of the Ages of Ages" could be fully implemented, so that the Creation would be a complete success. Eph 3v1-13 (esp. v11 ("eternal purpose," would be better translated "Plan (or Purpose) of the Ages"), Rev 11v15-19, 14v9-13, (esp. v11 ("forever and ever", translate as "unto the Ages of the Ages").
- 2) Bring in the New Covenant, and ensure the progression of the Age of Grace, ending with the Second Coming of Christ, the opening of Heaven to His people, and the start of the High Priestly Ministry of the Lord Jesus (and it is with the subject of His High Priestly Ministry, that this 17th chapter of John deals with). John 11v25,26, Heb 5v5,6, 8v8-13, 9v28.

In this study I have stated some points more than once, however, this is only because these points are of prime importance for the believer and vital Truth for their survival during the last seven years of this Age, especially during the Great Tribulation!

Introduction."Interventions," Greek, "Entugchano." (NT:1793).

The words "I pray" (more strictly, "I make request," the "I" is emphatic) are used 4 times by the Lord Jesus in John Chapter 17 (v9,15,20), in all 4 cases it is the same Greek word, "erootoo," the present active indicative of "erotao" (NT:2065), and it means to interrogate; by implication, to request, ask, beseech, desire, entreat.

The Greek phrase used of our Lord's intercessions (Heb 7v25) in His High priestly ministry is, "eis to entungchanein", ("to make intercession"), "entungchanein" is the articular infinitive of "entugchano" (NT:1793), and means, to deal with, "to light upon or fall in with; to go to meet" for consultation, conversation, or supplication, and it speaks of active intervention (with power) rather than merely intercession, (see Vincent's (New testament Word Studies) comments on Heb 7v25). This Greek word, "entugchano" 1793, is also used in Acts 25v24, Rom 8v27,34, 11v2, but it does not occur in the Septuagint (the Greek version of the Old Testament).

This Greek word "entugchano" (NT:1793), also occurs in Rom 8v26 in relation to the Holy Spirit, it is prefixed by "huper," "huperentungchanei" (maketh intercession), the present active indicative of "huperentugchano" (NT:5241). It is a picturesque word of rescue by one who 'happens on' (entugchano) one who is in trouble, and 'in his behalf' (huper) actively intervenes (with power) 'with unuttered groanings' (instrumental case) or with 'sighs that baffle words,' to effect a change.

The noun, "enteuxis" (NT:1783), from "entugchano" (NT:1793), occurs in 1Tim 2v1 ("enteuxeis", feminine plural accusative), and 1Tim 4v5., "enteuxeos," feminine singular genitive, and means, a falling in with, meeting with, an interview, a coming together, that for which an interview is held, a conference or conversation. Like "entugchano" (NT:1793), and "huperentugchano," (NT:5241); "enteuxis" (NT:1783), also has the meaning of "an intervention (with power) to effect a change". It also does not occur in the Septuagint.

In our Lords earthly life, during the hidden years at Nazareth, Jesus learned how to intercede "entugchano" (NT:1793), Isaiah 50v3-7, and in His ministry, this was the method He used in His intercessions, He actively intervened in situations by manifesting God's power in the Heavenly places through the Gifts of the Holy Spirit to change the situations and circumstances that were before Him.

The Lord Jesus makes the following very instructive statement in Mark 10v27, Matt 19v26, Luke 18v27: "And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God: for **with God** all things are possible." "...for with God **all** things are possible" is a general statement and applies to **ALL** situations and circumstances!

"With God", is in Greek "para toó Theoó," "para" (NT:3844), is a primary preposition; properly, near, it is in the dative case, which means, at (or in) the vicinity of (objectively or subjectively), beside, by the side of, **alongside**, in the presence of. When we humble ourselves, submit and draw near to **alongside God**, we are able to take His great power and change situations and circumstances by making "interventions," even making the Devil himself flee. Eph 3v20, James 4v5-7

Such were the "interventions" (with power) made by the Lord Jesus during His earthly life, that He was able to say in Matt 17v20 (with 21v21, Luke 17v6): "...Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to **you**, if **you** have faith as a mustard seed, **you** will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and **nothing** will be impossible for **you**."

The Lord Jesus followed the example of the OT prophets, who also "actively intervened" (with power) to change circumstances, we read in 2Kings 13v14-19, the following about Elisha (the prophet): "Now Elisha was fallen sick of his sickness whereof he died. And Joash the king of Israel came down unto him, and wept over his face, and said, O **my father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof** (the very words that Elisha had spoken about Elijah when he was to be taken away from him, 2Kings 2v12). And Elisha said unto him, Take bow and arrows. And he took unto him bow and arrows. And he said to the king of Israel, Put thine hand upon the bow. And he put his hand upon it: and Elisha put his hands upon the king's hands. And he said, Open the window eastward. And he opened it. Then Elisha said, Shoot. And he shot. And he said, The arrow of the Lord's deliverance, and the arrow of deliverance from Syria: for thou shalt smite the Syrians in Aphek, till thou have consumed them. And he said, Take the arrows. And he took them. And he said unto the king of Israel, Smite upon the ground. And he smote thrice, and stayed. And the man of God was wroth with him, and said, Thou shouldest have smitten five or six times; then hadst thou smitten Syria till thou hadst consumed it: whereas now thou shalt smite Syria but thrice."

Even King Joash realised that it was not he, but Elisha (by his interventions with Divine power) who had been the real Defence of Israel, so much so that King Joash called him, "**the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof**." King Joash knew that with the death of Elisha, the real defence of Israel would disappear, as there was not another great prophet, who stood before the Throne of God (in spirit), and who had the "double portion" of the anointing of the Holy Spirit that Elijah, and Elisha experienced. 2Kings 2v9.

Note: When Elisha asked Elijah for a "double portion" of his spirit, he did not mean that he wanted twice the anointing that Elijah had, but this phrase refers to the "double portion" which the first-born received of the father's inheritance (Deut 21v17); Elisha wanted the same anointing that Elijah had, so that ALL Israel would know that he was Elijah's

successor, the first prophet in Israel, who, like Elijah was Israel's defence, i.e. "the horsemen and chariots of Israel." 2 Kings 2v12.

Elisha then performed (possibly) his last "intervention" on behalf and for Israel, however, King Joash, having little faith only struck the ground three times, when he should have struck it at least five or six times, which would have seen Syria destroyed for good. Certainly the words of the Lord Jesus in Matt 9v29 aptly apply to King Joash: "...According to your faith be it unto you." And in 2Kings 13v20 we read: "Then Elisha died, and they buried him. And the raiding bands from Moab invaded the land in the spring of the year." The (spiritual) defence (and protection) of Israel had completely disappeared with the death of the great prophet Elisha ("the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof"), and the result was the immediate inrush of Israel's enemies into the land.

Although the Greek word "entugchano" (NT:1793) does not occur in the Septuagint, Paul uses it in Rom 11v2 of Elijah, Rom 11v2-4 (with 1Kings 19v1-18) states: "God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he **maketh intercession to God against Israel**, saying, Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal." In this passage of Scripture, "entugchano" (NT:1793) is used with "katá," (against) in the following way: "entungchánei toó Theoó katá toú Israeél." Which means, "he maketh intercession to God **against** Israel." Elijah was "intervening", to bring God's judgement down on Israel, however, because of the seven thousand men, who had not bowed the knee to Baal, God did not let this occur, because The Judge of all the earth will do right, and will not slay the righteous with the wicked. Gen 18v16-33.

However, in Rom 8v26., "entugchano" (NT:1793) is used with "huper," for, or on behalf of, to speak of an operation of Divine power in mercy for anyone. (See Rom 8v27,34, Heb 7v25). In 1Kings 18v1-46 (esp. 30-20) we see Elijah doing just that: The fire of God that fell and consumed the sacrifice fell in "mercy," to open the people's eyes to the true God.

"Then Elijah said to all the people, "Come near to me." So all the people came near to him. And he repaired the altar of the LORD that was broken down. And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the word of the LORD had come, saying, "Israel shall be your name." Then with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD; and he made a trench around the altar large enough to hold two seahs of seed. And he put the wood in order, cut the bull in pieces, and laid it on the wood, and said, "Fill four water pots with water, and pour it on the burnt sacrifice and on the wood." Then he said, "Do it a second time," and they did it a second time; and he said, "Do it a third time," and they did it a third time. So the water ran all around the altar; and he also filled the trench with water. And it came to pass, at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near and said, "LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that You are God in Israel and I am Your servant, and that I have done all these things at Your word. Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that You are the LORD God, and that You have turned their hearts back to You again. Then the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood and the stones and the dust, and it licked up the water that was in the trench. Now when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, "The LORD, He is God! The LORD, He is God!" And Elijah said to them, "Seize the prophets of Baal! Do not let one of them escape!" So they seized them; and Elijah brought them down to the Brook Kishon and executed them there." (NKJV)

We also see Elijah "intervening" to bring God's judgement down on the wicked, 2Kings 1v1-18 (esp. 9-16.):

"Then the king sent to him a captain of fifty with his fifty men. He went up to Elijah, who was sitting on the top of a hill, and said to him, "O man of God, the king says, 'Come down.'" But Elijah answered the captain of fifty, "If I am a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty." Then fire came down from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty. Again the king sent to him another captain of fifty with his fifty. He went up and said to him, "O man of God, this is the king's order: Come down quickly!" But Elijah answered them, "If I am a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty." Then the fire of God came down from heaven and consumed him and his fifty. Again the king sent the captain of a third fifty with his fifty. So the third captain of fifty went up, and came and fell on his knees before Elijah, and entreated him, "O man of God, please let my life, and the life of these fifty servants of yours, be precious in your sight. Look, fire came down from heaven and consumed the two former captains of fifty men with their fifties; but now let my life be precious in your sight." Then the angel of the LORD said to Elijah, "Go down with him; do not be afraid of him." So he set out and went down with him to the king, and said to him, "Thus says the LORD: Because you have sent messengers to inquire of Baalzebub, the god of Ekron, — is it because there is no God in Israel to inquire of his word? — therefore you shall not leave the bed to which you have gone, but you shall surely die." (NRSV)

This time the fire that fell from Heaven, did **not** fall in "mercy" **but** fell in "judgement".

In Numbers 16v1-50. (esp. v28-34), we also see Moses "intervening" to bring judgement down on Korah and those with him who rebelled against the Lord, with the ground splitting apart under them and swallowing them and everything of theirs up:

"And Moses said, Hereby ye shall know that the LORD hath sent me to do all these works; for I have not done them of mine own mind. If these men die the common death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men; then the LORD hath not sent me. But if the LORD make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up, with

all that appertain unto them, and they go down quick into the pit; then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the LORD. **And it came to pass, as he had made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground clave asunder that was under them: And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods.** They, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation. And all Israel that were round about them fled at the cry of them: for they said, Lest the earth swallow us up also."

It was also through "interventions" (with power) by Deborah (the prophetess) that gave the land of Israel rest for forty years; it was she who was Israel's chariots and horsemen, not Barak! **Judges chapters 4 & 5.**

So we see that "interventions" (with power) made by the believer, can either be in "mercy" or in "judgement." **Any believer can (and most definitely should) exercise this great authority of "interventions" (with God's power).** In one of his hymns, William Cowper penned the following words: **"Satan trembles when he sees, the weakest saint upon their knees"**

In the 1870s, an elderly woman in England who was in a wheelchair and didn't get out, had read about D. L. Moody and his gifts as an evangelist, she had begun to pray that one day he would come from America to visit her little church. Sure enough after praying for twenty years, God answered her earnest prevailing prayer and he came to her small church, however, she did not know that he actually had come. When he preached his first sermon, at the end of it, he asked all those who wanted to receive the Lord Jesus as their Saviour to stand up, and everybody stood up. He thought they had misunderstood him, so he told them to sit down, and he then asked again that whoever wanted to be saved should stand up, and once again they ALL stood up. **This went on for a number of weeks, and then on one occasion, the congregation in the Sunday morning service was the coldest and most apathetic he had ever seen.** He was glad when the service was over, and he dreaded going back that evening, but it had already been advertised. When he went back, Moody found that everything was different. There was a little warmth in the crowd, then a lot of warmth, and then revival broke out so dramatically that Moody promised to come back in a few days. **When he returned, he learned what really happened on that unusual Sunday.** The elderly woman in the wheelchair had heard sarcastic and accusing thoughts in her mind in the following manner, **"what can your prayers achieve" etc, so she didn't pray for that morning service. It was only in the afternoon of the Sunday when D L Moody had had such a bad experience in the morning service, that a relative came to her home and reported that Moody had been in the pulpit.** When she heard that, the lady skipped lunch and went to her bedroom and began to pray that God would send his Spirit upon that church and fill the people with a desire for new life in Christ. She prayed all afternoon, and what happened that evening, Moody said, was not his doing, but it was the work of the little woman in her wheelchair and her prevailing prayer that had brought about revival and a powerful move of the Spirit of God which swept over the congregation and changed their hearts. **It was the dear elderly woman, who, through her earnest prevailing prayer, was the powerhouse and cause of the revival that broke out, NOT D L Moody. Eph 6v18-20.**

The Lord Jesus states in **Mark 10v31**, "But many (or "the most") that are first (in leadership within the church upon earth) shall be last (in the eternal kingdom); and the last (those who are looked upon as least in the church upon earth) first (in the eternal kingdom)." This dear godly woman will occupy a position of great authority in the eternal kingdom, and will always see the face of her Heavenly Father. Rev 22v4.

This authority and ministry is available to **every** believer; the believer does not have to have an apostolic, prophetic, evangelistic, or pastoring ministry to exercise it. As already stated this was the Lord Jesus' practice, and indeed the early Church followed our Lord's example in this most important ministry (of making "interventions," (with power) Greek, "enteuxis" (NT:1783)). Matt 6v6,9-13, James 4v6-8, Eph 4v7-16.

And so in **1Tim.2v1-8**, Paul gives the following exhortation:

"I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, **intercessions**, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity. I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting."

Every believer is to make their top priority, "...supplications, prayers, **intercessions** (Greek, "enteúxeis," feminine plural accusative of "enteuxis" (NT:1783) which means, "an intervention (with power) to effect a change"), and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority." Paul is teaching here, that the individual believer can change the whole atmosphere of the country, society and community that they live in, from one of great hostility and unrest, to one of peace and quietness. Paul wrote 1Timothy in 67 AD, and at this time the great persecution of Christians, started by the Emperor Nero in 64 AD, was at its height, and from this exhortation it is clear that the Christians, living at this time, were **NOT** fulfilling this very important injunction. It is also interesting to note, that Nero died by committing suicide in the thirty-second year of his life, on 9th June 68 AD (although a few authorities say he died in July 68 AD), a month after Paul had been beheaded, which would seem to indicate that the believers in the Roman Empire took this exhortation of Paul, made in 67 AD, very seriously, and started to intervene with Divine power," so that they might experience rest from the persecutions started by Nero, and experience peace and quietness in their societies.

By these "interventions" (with power) the believer is actively restraining the Devil and his evil angels from putting their evil plans and purposes into operation through evil worldly rulers and leaders, and this becomes immensely important in the last three and a half years of this Age of Grace, (the period known as The Great Tribulation), when God completely removes His restraint upon the Devil and the powers of darkness, so that the "Mystery of Iniquity" (or better "Lawlessness") will begin to work fully.

It will be through these "interventions," during "The Great Tribulation", that believers will manifest great power and authority to bring Divine judgement, by Angelic ministry and through the gifts of the Holy Spirit, upon the powers of darkness and the wicked upon earth, who are, persecuting and killing God's children and destroying and wrecking the earth. Rev.11v18,19. These evil people are destroyed at Christ's Second Coming, and are consumed by the breath of His mouth. These Divine judgements will have a restraining effect upon the wicked, and will make them think twice before they carry out their evil deeds. So, after Michael and his angels have cast the Devil and his evil angels out of the Heavenlies into the earth, and God has removed His restraining hand upon the Devil and the powers of darkness, which results in the Mystery of Iniquity working fully, the Church will have the responsibility, to be an active restraint upon the powers of darkness, and wicked people in the world through their "interventions with Divine power." Isaiah 26v9, Daniel 12v1, 11v32, Luke 18v1-8, 2Thess 2v1-12, Rev 7v9-17, 11v3-6, 12v1-17.

In Acts chapter 12 (v1-25), 44 AD, we see what happened when **the whole Church** at Jerusalem (v5 "but fervent prayer for him was persistently made to God **by the church** (assembly)" Amplified Bible) got down to persistent "interventions" (with power) for the release of Peter from prison, who had been arrested by Herod Agrippa I (the grandson of Herod the Great), because after he had killed James (the elder brother of the apostle John), he saw that it pleased the Jews. An Angel of the Lord came and got Peter out of prison, in a most miraculous fashion, who then went promptly to John Mark's mother's (Mary) house. Having knocked on the door, Rhoda, the servant girl heard his voice, and was so overcome with joy that she forgot to let him in, but went and told everybody that Peter was alive, which they ALL promptly refused to believe, saying that she was mad (a case of persons praying in unbelief, for when the answer came they wouldn't (at first) believe and accept the report of it). After letting Peter into the house, he explained how the Lord had freed him from prison, he then left that house and went to another place (for safety).

Immediately after this Herod went down to Caesarea, and during a festival in honour of the Emperor Claudius (possibly his birthday), Herod was sat upon his throne (arrayed in royal apparel), giving an oration before the crowd, which then started to hail him as a god, at which point an Angel of the Lord struck him, because he did not give glory to God, with the result, he was eaten by worms and died.

It was the result of the "interventions" (with power) of the Church at Jerusalem which brought about Divine judgement upon Herod, for this ruler refused to let the believers have a quiet and peaceable life in the society that they lived in. 1Tim 2v1-8.

Through the "interventions" (with power) of God's people not so many years ago (in the early 1990s), we saw the collapse of Communism in the USSR and Albania, and also a softening in the attitude of the hard-line Communist rulers of China.

Paul states in 1Tim 2v3 that these "interventions" (with power) are **"good and acceptable** in the sight of God our Saviour." "Good and acceptable" is in Greek, "kalón kai apódekton", "kalón" is singular nominative of "kalos" (NT:2570), which denotes, that which is intrinsically "good," beautiful, fair, excellent. "Apódekton" is the singular nominative of "apodektos" (NT:587), "acceptable," in the sense of what is pleasing and welcome. So God welcomes our "interventions" (with power) and finds them beautiful and pleasing.

We should remember that officers of the state are God's ministers, appointed by Him to deal with earthly matters. Rom 13v1-7. See Dan 4v17,25,35, Isaiah 44v28 to 45 v7, Ezra 1v2. They are, therefore, to be obeyed conscientiously as of Divine authority. If, however, these rulers step beyond their authority and impinge on spiritual matters, then God is to be obeyed rather than men. Acts 4v19. The help of rulers is legitimately to be sought in worldly matters, Paul appealed to them for help. Acts 16v37,38, 22v25, 23v11 with 25v11. Ester relied on Divine help, but did not neglect to do her best in influencing the king. Ester 4v1-17, 6v1-3, 7v1 to 8v17.

In 1Tim 2v8, Paul states the following: "I will therefore that men pray every where, **lifting up holy hands**, without wrath and doubting." The "lifting up holy hands" is not only an act of adoration and worship to God, but also has the effect of directing the power of God against the powers of darkness, which removes their ability to use their evil power, and causes them to flee. James 4v5-7. When it says, "that men pray every where..." it does **NOT** mean that women are not also to pray everywhere "lifting up holy hands" as well. This is seen by the Scripture references giving clear instructions for woman (and for **ALL** believers) to pray. Matt 5v44, 6v5-13, 7v7-11, Luke 11v1-13, Acts 16v11-15, 1Cor 11v5, 14v26-31 1Thess 5v17 etc.

We read in Exodus 17v8-16 the following: "Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim. And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek: to morrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in mine hand. So Joshua did as Moses had said to him, and fought with Amalek: and Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. And it came to pass, **when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed: and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed.** But Moses' hands were heavy; and they took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat thereon; and **Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side;**

and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword. And the LORD said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovah-nissi: For he said, Because the LORD hath sworn that the LORD will have war with Amalek from generation to generation."

The only thing that gave Israel victory, was the "interventions" (with power) of Moses (which included invoking the Covenant Names of God, especially Yahweh Tsabaoth, "The Lord of Hosts," and Yahweh Nissi, "The Lord our Banner and Conqueror"), combined with his hands being held up and supported until the sun went down. **NOTE:** it was the raised hands that made **ALL** the difference between victory and defeat.

The "interventions" (with power) of the believer become more effective, when they also follow the example of Moses and lift up their hands as well! The subject of uplifted hands occurs in the following places, Exodus 9v29,33, 1Kings 8v22, Ezra 9v5, Neh 8v6, Psalm 63v4, 88v9, 143v6, Lam 2v19, Isaiah 1v15.

"Interventions with Divine power," In The Last Days.

As the last seven years (the 70th week of Daniel's 70 week prophecy, Dan.9v20-27) of this Age of Grace rapidly approaches, especially the last three and a half years of this Age (the period known as, "The Great Tribulation," Dan 9v27, Matt 24v15-28, Rev 7v9-17), the Devil is busy endeavouring to put his evil servants into positions of power and authority, wicked people who will put the Devil's and Antichrist's evil plans into operation, (which is to kill as many people and destroy as much of God's Creation as he can before he and his followers are destroyed by Jesus at His Second Coming, by being consumed by the breath of His mouth. 2Thess 2v8). It is during the last three and a half years of this Age, that the Mystery of Lawlessness (the Devil's evil plan) will work fully, which starts with the Devil and his evil Angels being expelled from the Heavenly places by Michael and his Angels into the Earth, and God's restraint upon the Devil and the powers of darkness being removed. This starts The Great Tribulation, which is due to the "great wrath of the Devil, because he knows that he has a short time," and NOT the wrath of God. Rev 12v7-17 (esp. v12), 2Thess 2v1-12.

The Devil will then proceed to put his evil plans (the Mystery of Lawlessness) into operation through Antichrist and other evil persons, whom he has put into positions of power and authority. (Matt 4v8-10, Rev 13v1-10, 16v12-16). It is **NOW** most vital, that we, the believers, are obedient to this most important injunction made by Paul in 1Timothy 2v1-8, to make "interventions," (with God's power "for all men, for kings and all who are in authority," that God will put honest, upright, wise and compassionate persons into places of power and authority, and thwart the Devil's attempts to put his own evil servants into these places, for it is the Most High Who rules in the kingdom of men and gives it to whomsoever He wishes, and sets over it the lowest of men. Dan 4v17.

In Revelation 12v1-17, the glorious woman of v1-2, at the beginning of the Great Tribulation, is given wings (which could well be the kind of supernatural transport that Elijah and Philip enjoyed) by God to escape from Antichrist, and she flees into "the wilderness" where she has a place prepared for her by God. This seems to be an obvious fulfilment of the prophetic warning in Matt 24v15-20, other Christians in and around Jerusalem, who are not supernaturally transported, will make their own way to "the wilderness") where she is protected and fed by God for three and a half years. "The wilderness" that is referred to here (Rev 12v6,14) is in all probability the wilderness area in the region of Edom, Moab and Ammon (present day Jordan), which, according to Dan 11v41, never falls into the hands of Antichrist. All the countries round about Israel, at this time, fall under the control and dominion of Antichrist, except Edom, Moab and Ammon; the question therefore arises, why do these three countries escape and are never occupied by Antichrist? The answer is quite simply, because of the great "interventions" (with power) exercised by this glorious woman (who flees there at the start of the Great Tribulation), who represents a group of people, who are foreknown, designed, specially created and empowered by God for the Great Tribulation. **It is a group of praying people, with prepared hearts and special ministries for the last days, who will operate with awesome power as a prayer-warrior group behind the scenes.** The effect of their "interventions" with Divine power, will be felt and seen around the whole world, and not just locally in the Middle East, even as the "interventions" (with power) of the Lord Jesus, during His earthly life, were seen and felt around the whole world, and not just around the rim of the Mediterranean sea. Their "interventions" (with power) will not only bring judgment upon the wicked, but also through vision ministry, they will protect other groups of Christians and form the character of Christ in these same believers, even as Paul made "interventions" (with power) for the believers at Colossae and Laodicea. The Christians who have escaped to "the wilderness", are said to be fed by God (the "they" of v 6, are most probably Angels); they will have miraculous provision of food stuffs through their "interventions," (with power) and will be cared for in the same manner as Yahweh cared and fed the Israelites in the Wilderness for forty years. Their provision will also be similar to that of the feeding of the four and five thousand during the earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus, which were the result of His great "interventions" (with power) beforehand, for having seen in vision what the Father was going to do, He then prayed it into reality. Neh 9v15, Daniel 11v32, Matt 14v13-21, 15v32-39, Luke 18v1-8, John 5v19-20,30, Col 2v1-5, Rev 11v1-6.

This ministry will be most vital if the individual believer is to come through the dark evil days of the Great Tribulation victoriously (and not to lose heart and faint) and stand before the Lord Jesus at His Second coming, and be granted to wear white garments in the Eternal Kingdom. Luke 18v1-8, 2Cor 5v1-10, Rev 3v1-5, 12v1-6, 19v7-9.

With all these things in mind, the Believer should endeavour to imitate the Lord Jesus, Who, in all things is their example,

in this most important ministry (of making "interventions" with power, Greek, "enteuxis" (NT1783)). 1Cor 11v1.

"Interventions," Greek "Proseuchomai." (NT:4336).

Another important Greek word (in reference to making "prayer") that is used in 1Tim 2v1-8 (see v1), is the noun "proseuchás" the accusative of "proseuche" (NT:4335), which means to pray earnestly, prayer, a request for help, made by speaking to God, the verb is the Greek word, "proseuchomai" (NT:4336). The English translation ("prayer") that is used in the Bible in any of the different versions, of this Greek word, is an extremely poor one, because on further investigation it actually means much more, and indeed it can have the same meaning as the Greek word "enteuxis," (NT:1783), which means "an intervention (with power) to effect a change)." Although it can have the same meaning as "enteuxis," (NT:1783), it is also clear it has another meaning, because it is used by Paul in 1Tim 2v1 with "enteuxis," (NT:1783). So the verb "proseuchomai" (NT:4336) more fully means "to make active intervention (with power) to change circumstances."

We read in James 5v13-18): "Is any among you afflicted? let him **pray** (NT:4336), Is any merry? let him sing psalms. Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them **pray** (NT:4336), over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he **prayed** (NT:4336), **earnestly** (NT:4335), ("he prayed earnestly" literally means "he prayed with prayer") that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he **prayed** (NT:4336), again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit." The verb "proseuchomai" (NT:4336), is used four times and the noun "proseuche" (NT:4335), is used once.

In the first instance of its use, an injunction is given by James, that the person who is "afflicted" should "pray." "Afflicted" is in Greek "kakopatheí" the present active indicative of "kakopatheo" (NT:2553), which means to be afflicted, endure afflictions (hardness), suffer trouble, to suffer (endure) evils (hardship, troubles), the present tense indicates continuous action, i.e. continuous affliction, not just a single incident. James tells us that the remedy for this continuous affliction is that the person suffering should "pray." "Pray" in Greek is "proseuchésthoo" the present middle imperative of "proseuchomai" (NT:4336), the present tense once again indicates continuous action, i.e. "let him keep on praying" until the affliction ceases. This continuous praying and seeking of God has the effect of perfecting faith, character and patience. There will have been Divine purpose in the actual affliction that the individual has suffered, and will have been permitted by the Lord for the very purpose of perfecting the individual. James 1v2-4,12, 5v10,11, 1Pet 1v3-12.

The second instance of its use is given for a sick person to call for the elders (who are also the Pastors Teachers and Overseers of a local Church) **to "pray" over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord (i.e. calling upon the Lord Jesus, and invoking the covenant name of Yahweh Rophi (the Lord our Healer)**, Exodus 15v26, Isaiah 53v4, Matt 8v16,17), and the prayer of faith (of the elders) will heal them. Acts 20v17-38 (esp. v17,28), Eph 4v7-16, Titus 1v5-9. "Pray" is in Greek, "proseuxásthoo," the first aorist middle imperative of "proseuchomai" (NT:4336), to pray to God, i.e. supplicate.

James then gives in 5v17,18, the example of how the elders should pray over the sick for their healing, as that of Elijah's persistent praying (shameless persistence, Greek "anaideían" the accusative of "anaideia" (NT:335), which means literally shamelessness in Luke 11v8) until the answers came for both making the rain (and dew) to cease and then for bringing it again, both events being fully manifested for ALL to see and experience. 1Kings 17v1, 18v41-45, Luke 11v1-13.

The third and fourth occurrences are linked together in James 5v17, where it is stated about Elijah that, "he prayed earnestly." "He prayed earnestly" is in Greek, "proseuchéē proseeúxato" (which means literally, "he prayed with prayer") where both "proseuche" (NT:4335) and "proseuchomai" (NT:4336) are used together to emphasize the intensity that Elijah exercised in prayer to cause the rain and dew to cease. A similar mode of expression can be found in Gen 2v17 (Septuagint), "ye shall surely die" "thanatoo apothaneisthe"; literally, "ye shall die with death." Compare Luke 22v15, John 3v29, Acts 4v17 (Majority Text). The addition of the cognate noun (in imitation of the Hebrew infinitive absolute, see also Gen 31v30) gives intenseness to the verb.

Elijah started "praying with prayer" sometime before he went and spoke to Ahab in 1Kings 17v1, as God had given him the vision of what He was going to do (which God knew in His foreknowledge would bring Israel to repentance)...that the Heavens would be shut so that no rain fell, neither would there be any dew produced. Elijah then commenced his "praying with prayer" to bring the vision that God had given him into reality. It should also be noted that once the rain stopped and the dew ceased, Elijah did not sit back and stop "praying with prayer," BUT continued the whole of the three and a half years, so that no weather systems were able to bring any conditions into the area over Israel, that would either produce rain or dew. Also to be noted, it took greater effort in prayer by Elijah to initially cause the rain and dew to cease, than it took for him to cause it too start again (compare 5v17, "he prayed with prayer" with 5v18, "he prayed")....this is because judgment is difficult to the God of Love (it is "His strange act"), Who's great Heart was overwhelmed with sorrow and grief at having to bring such judgment upon His people Israel. God is full of mercy and compassion and longs to forgive, restore and heal. Exodus 34v6,7, Psalm 86v5, Isaiah 28v21, Hosea 11v1-12, 1John 4v8.

The last occurrence is in James 5v18, where "proseuchomai" (NT:4336) is used of Elijah praying the vision that God had given Him (1Kings 18v41, "...there is a sound of abundance of rain") into reality, so that "a great rain" fell, with the

result that "the earth brought forth her fruit." 1Kings 18v41-45 states: "And Elijah said unto Ahab, Get thee up, eat and drink; for there is a sound of abundance of rain. So Ahab went up to eat and to drink. **And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and he cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees,** And said to his servant, Go up now, look toward the sea. And he went up, and looked, and said, There is nothing. **And he said, Go again seven times.** And it came to pass at the seventh time, that he said, Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand. And he said, Go up, say unto Ahab, Prepare thy chariot, and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not. And it came to pass in the mean while, that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel."

Notice how Elijah, having been given the vision that it was going to rain, did **NOT** stop praying **UNTIL** the vision was completely fulfilled, i.e., "that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain." This is the example that we as believers should follow, even as the Lord Jesus also followed Elijah's example. The vast majority of Christians today simply "say" prayers, but do NOT pray in the Biblical sense, i.e., like the examples of Elijah, Paul, James and the Elders and believers of the early Church. Simply "saying" a prayer will NOT really achieve anything, and will bring little or no results, but only disappointment. Mt.6v5, James 3v1, 5v13-18.

Paul gives us the perfect example that we, the New Testament believers, should follow when praying in 1Cor 14v15:

"What is it then? **I will pray** (Greek, "proseúxomai" (NT:4336)) **with the spirit, and I will pray** (Greek, "proseúxomai" (NT:4336)) **with the understanding also:** I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also." When Paul says, "I will pray (Greek, "proseúxomai" (NT:4336)) with the spirit" this is a reference to how he used the gift of tongues in his private prayer life, for this is the primary use of this most precious gift. When we pray in tongues, it is not our minds that are being exercised but out spirits, the Holy Spirit being the One Who prays through us. As it is the Holy Spirit Who is inspiring the prayer and praying through us, when we exercise this wonderful gift, we shall always pray aright. Praying and praising in tongues also has the effect of building up and edifying our faith and spirits, producing love in us, and resting and refreshing our minds, souls and bodies. Rom 8v26,27, 1Cor 14v4,5,21 (with Isaiah 28v11,12),39, Jude v20,21.

Paul looked upon the gift of tongues as the most important of all the nine spiritual gifts that are mentioned in 1Cor 12v7-11 to be used in private prayer and devotion, for he says in 1Cor 14v18: "I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all." Paul's devotional and loving use of the gift of tongues in the secret place resulted in the other gifts being manifested in public, and if the New Testament believer imitates Paul, they can expect the same results. Matt 6v6, 1Cor 11v1, 14v2,4,18, with 2Cor12v12.

The other two uses of the gift of tongues are when a tongue is uttered in an informal fellowship meeting for someone to interpret, and when a tongue is spoken as a known language to a person as a sign to them that God is speaking to them, as on the Day of Pentecost. Acts 2v1-13, 1Cor 14v5,13,22,27.

For a full study on the gift of tongues and the other eight gifts of the Spirit mentioned in 1Cor 12v7-11, please see Bill Turner's studies entitled:

- 1) The Baptism And Gifts Of The Holy Spirit
- 2) The Nine Gifts Of The Holy Spirit
- 3) A Brief Study Of The Gifts Of The Holy Spirit
- 4) The Comforter Is Come

At the following websites: www.truthforthelastdays.com

This Greek word, "proseuchomai" (NT:4336) is also used of our Lord's private devotional praying, Luke 5v16,17, states: "And **he withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed** ("proseuchomai" (NT:4336)). And it came to pass on a certain day, as he was teaching, that there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judea, and Jerusalem: **and the power of the Lord was present to heal them.**"

"Withdrew" is in Greek, "eén hupochooroón," the present active participle of "hupochooreo" (NT5298), the present participle indicates "continuous or repeated action," the literal translation of the Greek from "...withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed" (Greek, "...eén hupochooroón en tais ereémois kaí proseuchómenos," periphrastic imperfects) is "...kept retiring in the desert places and praying." This continual retiring into the wilderness to pray was because the impartation of spirit through the "laying on of hands" (one of the seven Foundation Truths of Christianity, Heb 6v1,2) means that the blesser is the poorer and the blessed the richer for the transaction (Luke 5v17, 6v12-19, 8v46), and therefore the blesser needs a continual refilling if he is to continue imparting. Hence, the Lord's habit of retiring for prayer in the midst of such ministry, e.g., Luke 5v16.

It was during one of these private devotional prayer sessions, that inspired one of His disciples, having watched Him during His time of prayer, to ask Him (Luke 11v1-13 esp. v1), after He had finished praying, "Lord, teach us to pray (Greek, "proseúchesthai" (NT:4336)), as John also taught his disciples." It would also appear that the disciple was not

just asking for himself, but for all the disciples present, because he asks “teach **us**.” What inspired the disciple to ask the Lord Jesus this question? It could only have been the great power that was released by His praying, which emanated out from Him and was felt by all His disciples in His immediate vicinity. By the end of the Lord’s prayer session, He had become filled again with the power of the Lord (Luke 5v17, “the power of the Lord was present to heal them”), which by then was crackling round about Him. The effect of the Lord’s praying on His disciples must have been very great, even as those persons who were in the same room with Smith Wigglesworth when he was praying had to leave it shortly after he had started praying, simply because they could not bear the overwhelming sense of the presence of God, and would break down into tears and sobbing.

We read in Luke 11v1-13:

“And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples. And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth. Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him? And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his **importunity** (Greek, “anaideian,” the accusative of “anaideia” (NT:335)) “shameless persistence) he will rise and give him as many as he needeth. And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?”

We get a wonderful insight into just how the Lord Jesus was praying in Luke 5v16,17, it was with “shameless persistence” (Luke 11v8, Greek, “anaideian,” the accusative of “anaideia” (NT:335)) that He sought His Father for His power and guidance (bread from Heaven) so that **ALL** who came to Him would be healed of whatever sickness or disease they had (Matt 12v15 etc, “...and he healed them **all**”), for so the Old Testament prophecies spoke concerning “The Coming One” (Messiah), which the Lord Jesus wonderfully fulfilled (Matt 11v3 (NKJV), Isaiah 35v5,6, with Matt 11v5; 61v1,2 and 58v6, with Luke 4v18,19; Isaiah 53v4 with Matt 8v16,17).

It should be noted that Peter, James, John and Paul, followed their Lord’s example of prayer that is recorded in Luke 11v1-13, because we read in Acts 5v12-16:

“And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon’s porch. And of the rest durst no man join himself to them: but the people magnified them. And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.) Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them. There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: **and they were healed every one.**”

(See also Rom 15v18,19, 1Cor 11v1, 2Cor 12v11,12, 1Tim 1v16)

Such was the anointing (the power of the Lord (Yahweh)) upon Peter, that even if the sick and diseased had his shadow falling upon them and these persons were healed. This kind of anointing was not unique to Peter, but James, John and Paul (and others), experienced this level of spiritual power upon them as well, we read in 2Cor 12v11,12: “I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me: for I ought to have been commended of you: **for in nothing am I behind the very chieftest apostles**, though I be nothing. **Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds.**”

Notice also the great humility of Paul, “though I be nothing” (see also Matt 11v28-30, 1Cor 1v26-31, 15v9, Eph 3v8), a humble attitude and spirit is essential if a person desires a great anointing from the Lord.

The Lord also did special miracles through Paul at Ephesus, Acts 19v11,12:

“And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.”

The early Church certainly believed wholeheartedly what the Lord had told His Apostles on the night that He ate His last Passover meal with them (John 14v12-14 states):

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, **He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do;** because I go unto my Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.”

There has also been many other of God's dear children, down through the centuries, who have also believed the words of their Lord in John 14v12-14, and done mighty signs, wonder and miracles, by the Holy Spirit's power upon them. Persons of note in the last couple of hundred years, have been, Maria Woodworth-Etter, Smith Wigglesworth, William Branham, Kathryn Kuhlman and William F P Burton.

One of the things (amongst others) that the Lord Jesus, Peter, James, John and Paul (and the persons of note of the last two centuries, that are mentioned above), had in common, was that ALL of them had a tremendous prayer life (especially our Lord), and lived in constant communion with God, for such communion with God the Father is required so that they operate completely under His guidance. Psalm 69v7-12, Mark 1v35, Luke 6v12, Acts 1v14, 3v1, 6v4.

The Humanity Of Christ.

Another point that John 14v12-14 clearly highlights, is that the Lord Jesus COULD NOT have said that those believing in Him would be able to do the same works (and greater ones) that He had done, unless those whom He was speaking of (and to) had EXACTLY the same humanity as Himself! How could He be an example to His people UNLESS, their humanity was exactly like His, and His like theirs.

The following Scriptures **ALL** clearly teach in **NO** uncertain terms Our Lord's true humanity, i.e. The humanity He came into this world with, was the exact same as the humanity that every other human being came (and comes) into the world with, and **NOTHING** different!

"And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him (Maj Text)... And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man." Luke 2v40,52.

"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." John 1v14.

"For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.." Rom 8v3.

"But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Phil 2v7,8.

"Made himself of no reputation" is in Greek, "heautón ekénoosen," "ekénoosen" is the aorist active indicative of "kenoo," which means "to make empty," thus "heautón ekénoosen" literally means "emptied Himself." The question must be asked, "what did He empty Himself off?" The answer is that He emptied Himself of His power and glory, i.e. His omnipresence, omnipotence, omniscience, transcendence, and immutability. It **MUST** also be noted, He did **NOT** empty Himself of His deity (essence/substance), He, at no point in time, stopped being God. **What He was before the incarnation, He continued to be after the incarnation.... God!** (The true force of the participle "hupárchoon" ("being" Phil 2v6) is well expressed by Dean Gwynn in his interpretation of the epistle in the "Speaker's Commentary": "Its tense (Imperfect) contrasted with the following Aorists points to indefinite *continuance* of being"). Isaiah 7v14, 9v6, John 8v58 with Exodus 3v14, Rom 9v5.

"And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." (Maj Texts) 1Tim 3v16.

"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil...Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted." Heb 2v14,17,18.

"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Heb 4v15.

"Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me" (with Luke 3v23-38, which is the Lord's lineage through Mary down to Adam). Heb 10v5.

"Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God..." 1John 4v2.

"I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and **the offspring of David**, and the bright and morning star." Rev 22v16. **With:** 2Sam 7v12,13, "And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever." **And: Isaiah 11v1,10**, "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots....And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be

glorious."

Note 1John 4v1-6, which states the following: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And **every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist**, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error."

Note also 2John v7, "For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist."

These Scriptures clearly teach that the person who believes and teaches that Christ was **NOT** born with a humanity like their own, is **NOT** of God (in their thought and doctrine regarding this issue), but inspired by the Devil, **being of the spirit of Antichrist! It is nothing less than the destructive heresy of Docetic and Cerinthian Gnosticism!**

The Docetic Gnostic heresy, which denies Christ's true humanity, is automatically generated in the minds of believers who accept and believe Augustine's doctrine of Original Sin, in the following way: Believers conclude that if we have been "born in sin," with sinful natures, which compel us to do evil; and since Jesus was without sin, He obviously did not possess this same sinful nature, so then He **MUST** have had a different kind of "humanity" to us. So the thought arises in the believer's mind, that the humanity of Jesus was different from theirs. Thus, in a very subtle and cunning disguise, the destructive heresy of Docetic Gnosticism has come into the Church, and has corrupted the theology about the humanity of Jesus.

Those who accept and believe Augustine's doctrine of "Original Sin," will find many of the truths contained in two of the most important books of the New Testament, Romans and Hebrews, impossible to comprehend. Understanding Paul's letter to the Hebrews is based upon a correct knowledge of our Lord's true humanity, and that the Lord Jesus and the believer share exactly the same kind of humanity. Failure to grasp this means that the believer cannot comprehend our Lord as their sympathetic Great High Priest. This truth (the Lord's True humanity) is a part of the doctrine of "repentance from dead works," etc., in Heb 5v12-6v12, which is "the doctrine of the first principles of Christ," ASV, "the basic teaching about Christ," Heb 6v1, NRSV, "the first principles of the oracles of God." Heb 5v12, KJV. To get the doctrine about the Lord Jesus wrong destroys the Christian's foundation.

A correct knowledge of the truth of our Lord's humanity, and other vital truths about Him, is essential for Christians in the last days of this age, the Age of Grace. We will need to know our Lord as our Great High Priest as well as our Saviour, to enable us to overcome the appalling evil conditions that will come upon the world during the last three and a half years of this age, known as "The Great Tribulation." **We need to know that Jesus was indeed, "tempted in ALL points like as we are, yet without sin" during His hidden years at Nazareth, and during His Ministry, in a humanity exactly like our own.** The knowledge of His tried humanity will strengthen and equip us for the evil last days. This is vital truth. Through His "interventions" (with power) and High Priestly ministry, Jesus will keep, guard, protect and strengthen us "in soul," and give us victory and bring us through this terrible evil time. At the sounding of the last trumpet, we shall rise to meet Him in the air at His Second Advent, immediately after the tribulation of those days. 1Thess 4v13-18, Heb 7v25.

It is certainly not without reason that Paul, in writing to Timothy in 1Tim 3v16, states the vital truth that, "God was manifest in the flesh," and then immediately in the next verse, 1Tim 4v1, goes on to state; "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils!" Paul knew that the destructive heresy of Docetic Gnosticism would still be in the Church in the last days and so he warns us against it, by stating that our Lord Jesus did indeed, "come in the flesh," and had a humanity like our own. The doctrine of "Original Sin" attacks the humanity of Christ, and the end result of this attack will be apostasy, Paul says, the effect will be that "some will depart from the faith."

Augustine's doctrine of "Original Sin" also has catastrophic effects on the mind of the Christian that accepts and believes it, in that "Light and Truth" are unable to penetrate their mind on these most important and crucial doctrines, their minds having become reprobate, Romans 1v28 states: "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to **a reprobate mind**, to do those things which are not convenient." "A reprobate mind" is in Greek, "adókimon nóún," "adókimon" is the accusative of "adokimos" (NT:96), and means literally "unapproved", and so an "unapproved" mind regarding the Truth of Christ's real humanity and High Priestly Ministry, which has become imprisoned by false unscriptural traditions handed down by their blind (spiritual) father and teachers. Matt 15v1-20, 1Pet 1v18.

The doctrine of "Original Sin" is "another" Gospel (Greek "héteron," another of a different kind). Gal.1v6. It is certainly not what the Lord Jesus, Paul, or the Apostles in the early Church taught, who taught that children come into the world spiritually alive to God, with a pure spirit and soul, which God Himself created at conception, the child taking its flesh from their parents. It is in the flesh, and flesh alone where the result of Adam's sin is felt, which Paul refers to as "dead sin in the flesh." Rom.7v7-8v4 (esp. 7v9,18).

(Please see the study "Repentance From Dead Works" in "Foundation Truths" and "The Bible Doctrine Of Dead Sin In The Flesh" in "Original Sin & Eternal Punishment" at: www.truthfortheLastDays.com for a fuller study on Paul's doctrine of "dead sin in the flesh.")

The Lord Jesus stated of little children in Matt 18v1-10 (esp. v3), 19v14: "And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven....But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

Paul speaks **VERY** strongly against the false apostles who taught a different Gospel from that which he had preached, he states in Gal 1v6-9:

"I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto **another** (Greek "héteron," another of a different kind) **gospel: Which is not another** (Greek, "állo," another of the same sort) ; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, **let him be accursed.**"

This should be a real warning to those preachers and teachers, who hold, teach and preach Augustine's evil doctrine of "Original Sin." They should re-examine what they believe in this area of their faith, taking to heart and making a full note of the words in Acts 17v11: "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that **they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.**"

"Searched" is in Greek, "anakrínontes," the present active participle of "anakrino," which means to scrutinize, i.e. (by implication) investigate, interrogate, determine, to sift up and down, make careful and exact research as in legal processes as in Acts 4v9, 12v19. The present participle expresses repeated or continuous action, which indicates that they kept up their research on a daily basis until they came to a firm conclusion that what Paul was speaking was indeed the Truth as stated in the Scriptures and became believers. The Jews at Berea were more "noble" (i.e. open minded) than the Jews at Thessalonica, and by searching the Scriptures, they found and took their doctrine from them. They did **NOT** come to the Scriptures with prejudiced preconceived ideas and then try and make the Scriptures fit they unscriptural traditions by twisting them. This kind of evil and dishonest interpretation of the Scriptures can lead to the destruction of those who practice it, especially during the last seven years of this Age of Grace.

Peter states in 2Pet 3v15,16: "And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, **which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.**"

It is a correct interpretation of the (prophetic) Scriptures that will fill our minds with Truth, and give us light in the great darkness during the last seven years of this Age, especially during the last three and a half, which is the period known as the Great Tribulation. Jer 30v7, Matt 24v21, 2Pet 1v16-21, Rev 7v14.

(For a fuller study on Docetism and Augustine's Doctrine of "Original Sin", please see the following study: "The Disastrous Effects Of The Doctrine Of "Original Sin," by Bill Turner, which can be found at the following website: www.truthfortheLastDays.com)

In Luke 11v1, a certain disciple asks the Lord Jesus the following: "...Lord, teach us to pray (Greek, "proseúchesthai," present middle infinitive of "proseuchomai" (NT4336)), **as John also taught his disciples."**

This Greek word, "proseuchomai" (NT:4336), is also used of the fervent prayer life of John the Baptist. The thirty years that he was in the wilderness preparing for his ministry, were spent praying, John's great ministry was birthed through those thirty years of prayer, so that when he was revealed by God to Israel, he went before the Lord Jesus "in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." The start of John's ministry in the early part of 26 AD, heralded the beginning of a great revival, multitudes flocked out to the wilderness to hear him, even the Pharisees and Sadducees came out to hear him, and to question whom he was. It should also be stated that the reason generally why the Pharisees and Sadducees came out to him, was not because they wanted to repent of their sin (although some did do so), but simply because the religious leaders of Israel felt greatly threatened by him, because of the great multitudes that were going out to him in the wilderness. The Scribes and Pharisees challenged both John Baptist and Christ as to the source of their authority; they looked upon them as insubordinate rebels, and divisive troublemakers.

The Church of Jesus has always had the same problem; Christ's heaven-sent ministries have always been looked upon as "insubordinate" and "divisive," by people who are determined to preserve their religious power structure and position. The apostles were insubordinate to men, but obedient to God; the Scribes and Pharisees were obedient to men but insubordinate to God. Dissension always comes between those who seek influence from men, and those who seek authority from heaven. Authority from Heaven is not decided by human opinion; it is proved by Divine gifting and conformity to Biblical teaching and experience. The people who murdered Jesus claimed that they had been given authority from God to kill Him; this false claim to Divine authority has been repeated again and again in Church history, by those who have murdered many dear children of God, who had received a definite authority from God. Indeed, it

almost seems impossible not to be called a heretic by men, when you have God's authority, and we should certainly doubt if our calling and ministry is from God, when all men speak well of us. Mal 4v5,6, Matt 3v1-12, 5v10-12, 17v12, 23v19-39, Luke 1v17, 6v26, John 1v19-28.

John taught his disciples by example how to pray. (Greek, "proseuchomai" (NT:4336)).

It is also worth noting that the great revival that started at the beginning of John the Baptist's ministry was not only the result of his praying, but was also the result of the great "interventions" (with power) of the One Whom he went before, the Lord Jesus. The Lord Jesus, during His hidden years at Nazareth, was not only being prepared for His own Earthly and Heavenly High Priestly ministries, but also prayed John the Baptist through into power and revelation. If Paul was able to watch the Christians at Colossi and Laodicea by revelation ministry in vision, "intervening" (with power) for them that Christ may be formed in them, then it is certain that the Lord Jesus (who was a Prophet like unto Moses), exercised the same kind of prophetic revelation ministry towards John the Baptist (and others, i.e. the apostles and seventy evangelists, Matt 10v1-8, Luke 10v1-9), to ensure that he (and they) was FULLY prepared and equipped for his great ministry to prepare the way before Him. Psalm 69v10, Isaiah 40v1-5, Luke 3v1-6, Acts 7v37, 1Cor 5v1-5, Col 2v1-5.

The great anointing that John the Baptist experienced, was the same level of anointing that Elijah had known, the words that he spoke to the people of Israel were filled with life and power. He preached a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, which brought many people to repentance and to the Lord. Unfortunately however, very often the repentance among the people of Israel, was very shallow, so that they quickly fell away when temptation came (Luke 8v4-8,11-15). We read in Luke 3v7-9:

"Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, **O generation of vipers**, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? **Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance**, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire."

John the Baptist addressed the following phrase, "O generation of vipers" to ALL the multitude (not just the Pharisees and Sadducees) that came out to him, and although there was a very shallow degree of repentance among many in Israel at his preaching, a number of his disciples became the disciples and then Apostles of the Lord Jesus, Andrew, Simon Peter, James, John, Philip and Nathanael (and possibly one or two others) all had a deep spiritual experience under John the Baptist. John 1v36-51. It is interesting to note how many brothers were in the twelve, Simon Peter and his brother Andrew; James and his brother John; Philip seems to have been Bartholomew's brother, otherwise known as Nathanael, Luke 6v14 with John 1v43-51; James the son of Alphaeus could have been the brother of Matthew as well as the brother of Judas, not Iscariot. Tradition says that James the son of Alphaeus was brother to Matthew, Simon Zealotes, and Judas, not Iscariot. Luke 6v16. Families, who have learned to live together and love one another, can be really used by God; they are a strong unit for God, if they keep close to Him.

In answer to the request of the disciple in Luke 11v1, in Luke 11v2-4, the Lord Jesus then gives them a "pattern" of how to pray (i.e. this is the "pattern" He had used during the first thirty years of His life at Nazareth and in His Earthly ministry, except He had NO sin to confess in connection with the phrase "and forgive us our sins/debts, Matt 6v12, Luke 11v4). This "pattern" is commonly referred to as "The Lord's Prayer," however, it is not an actual prayer, but the "pattern" of how we should pray (Greek, "proseuchomai" (NT4336), which is used in both Matt 6v9 and Luke 11v2). This is the 2nd place in the New Testament where this "pattern" has been recorded, the first being in Matt 6v5-15 (esp. v9-13).

Matt 6v9-13 states:

"After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen."

Luke 11v2-4 reads:

"And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth. Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil."

The Essential Attitudes Of Heart And Mind In Prayer.

Jesus tells us the attitudes of heart and mind that bring a knowledge of God, a fullness of the Spirit and answered prayer.

We must realise our position in Christ, we are sons of God.

"When you pray, say, Father." In Jesus we have a new and blessed relationship with the Father; we are brethren of Christ, joint heirs with Christ, and God's own beloved children. 1John 3v1, John 15v9, 17v23, Rom 8v17, Heb 2v10-20,

6v13-20. Hallelujah!

We must have a continual spirit of worship.

"Hallowed, revered, and honoured, be thy name." God is seeking worshippers, not empty flattery, which God deplores. True worship recognises with sincere gratitude and deep love that we owe everything we are, have and will have to our Creator and Redeemer. John 4v23,24, Matt 15v7-9, Mark 7v6-9, God is worthy of all our respect, adoration, love and esteem. Rev 5v11-14.

We must desire to see God's kingdom and will to be manifested on earth.

"Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." There is not only desire and longing; there is positive action and costly sacrifice, under God's direction, to see His kingdom extended. This is a personal matter between ourselves and God, we must always be very careful to distinguish between people who put pressure upon us to build up their personal kingdoms, or other human pressure groups, and the will of God. John 21v19-22, Matt 10v37-42, Acts 15v25,26.

We must be free from anxiety over material needs.

"Give us this day our daily bread." We must believe, as it is absolutely true, that our heavenly Father loves us intensely and will meet all our needs. Phil 4v19, Matt 6v25-34. A spirit of materialism and worldly anxiety will effectively incapacitate us from useful service for the kingdom of God. 1John 2v15-17. This does not mean, of course, that we have to neglect our families, those who do this "have denied the faith," and are "worse than unbelieving heathen." 1Tim 5v8.

We must have a tender conscience and repentance from any known sin.

"Forgive us our sins." In Luke 11v4, Luke uses the word "hamartia," "sins;" whereas, Matt 6v12 uses "opheilemata;" a word that Paul uses in Rom 4v4 to speak of legal debts. Christ obviously used both; He taught that our sins are debts to God and others. Wilful sin closes our hearts to the blessing and love of God. Heb 10v19-39, 1John 1v5 to 2v6.

We must have a forgiving spirit towards those who have sinned against us.

We must beware of roots of bitterness and an unforgiving spirit, for Jesus warns us that we can only ask for forgiveness "in proportion as, or like as," "hos," we forgive others, a truly solemn warning, which is reiterated by Christ elsewhere. Matt 6v12,14,15, Mark 11v25,26. Jesus tells us to rebuke Christians who sin against us, and IF they repent, we must forgive them. Luke 17v3,4. Let us make every effort to achieve reconciliation and forgiveness with Christians, and make it easy for those who have offended us to repent, and exercise a forgiving spirit to them. However, Jesus said that repentance is necessary before fellowship can be restored, and failure to repent after the procedure laid down in Matt 18v15-17, means that a person loses their rights to be treated as a Christian. Let us remember that God's forgiveness is always conditional upon repentance. Matt 5v23,24, 18v20-35, Mark 11v22-26, Luke 6v37, 23v34, Eph 4v30-32, Gal 6v1-3, 1John 4v20,21.

Jesus certainly did not try to be reconciled with Israel's religious leaders; His attacks upon them were extremely contentious. Matt 23v13-39, Luke 11v39-54. Christ asked the Father to forgive the soldiers who were crucifying Him, they really did not know what they were doing; however, there was no such prayer for the religious leaders of Israel, who knew full well what they were doing, Jesus said they had seen God and hated Him. Luke 23v34, John 15v22-25. Stephen manifested a forgiving spirit to his implacable enemies, and asked God not to lay his murder to their charge; however, God could not forgive them, for He cannot forgive unrepentant sin, even though He may long to restore and pardon. Acts 7v59,60, Matt 23v37-39, Luke 19v41-44. Christians who hurt and offend others, and do not repent, face an inevitable discipline from their heavenly Father, and so do those who fail to forgive others, when those who offend them repent. We know that we have a genuine revival when Christians get right with each other and fervently love each other. Rom 12v14-21, 2Cor 13v1, Gal 6v1. Our enormous debt to God should keep us from fighting over our comparatively trifling debts to each other. Matt 18v21-35, Heb 12v14,15.

We must allow God to lead us from dangerous paths.

Christians should have a fear of sin, and a fear of getting out of the will of God. As someone has said, "lead us not into temptation," is an Eastern way of saying, "Father, please keep us from going out of your will, into paths that lead to spiritual danger or sin." God can, by various means, stop us from going into spiritual danger, if we are prayerful and willing to be led by Him. Psalm 141v4, 1Cor 10v13, Acts 16v6-9. We should always be prepared for our heavenly Father's stops or diversions.

We must trust God to deliver us from evil, and the Evil One.

In the phrase, "lead us not into temptation," Jesus was speaking of dangers and temptations that can be avoided by prayerful living. See Luke 22v40. Here He speaks of conflicts with evil that we cannot avoid and must face. These conflicts demand a prayerful life and a real faith in God, for we cannot defeat Satan on our own, we must draw near to God before we can effectively resist the Devil. James 4v6-8. Persecution or opposition of some kind or other will always come against

the consecrated child of God, and supernatural opposition from Satan is often channelled through his earthly friends. Matt 4v1-11, Acts 13v50-52, 2Cor 1v8-10, Eph 1v2, 6v10-20, 2Thes 3v1-3, 2Tim 2v12, 3v12. We must believe that God will deliver us, and will answer our prayers, as we follow and obey our Lord's pattern of prayer, and if our prayers accomplish anything, we must remember that His power has brought it to pass, and we must give Him all the glory.

The Transfiguration.

Another interesting place where this Greek word "proseuchomai" (NT:4336), to pray, occurs, is in Luke's version of the account of the Transfiguration of the Lord Jesus on Mount Hermon, Luke 9v27-36 reads:

"But I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God. And it came to pass about an eight days after these sayings, he took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain **to pray** (Greek, "proseúxasthai," aorist middle infinitive of "proseuchomai" (NT:4336)). And as he **prayed** ("proseúchesthai," present middle infinitive of "proseuchomai," 4336)), the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening. And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias: Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem. But Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep: and when they were awake, they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him. And it came to pass, as they departed from him, Peter said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias: not knowing what he said. While he thus spake, there came a cloud, and overshadowed them: and they feared as they entered into the cloud. And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him. And when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone. And they kept it close, and told no man in those days any of those things which they had seen."

See also Matt 17v1-13, Mark 9v1-13, Heb 2v9, 2Pet 1v16-21.

It should be noted that from before creation, God had planned the Transfiguration (for the purpose of strengthening the Beloved One), for He knew by His foreknowledge the great pressure that His Beloved Son would be under at that particular time, with the Cross looming before Him but even more terrifying to Him, was His descent into Hades, where His soul would be made an offering for sin. And so, we see from Psalm 8v4,5 (with Heb 2v6,7) that the Lord Jesus (during His earthly lifetime) had known for some time that He would be Transfigured, and from Luke 9v29 we understand that He knew that it was going to occur at that time upon Mount Hermon.

At this particular time in the ministry of the Lord Jesus, His impending death upon the Cross was looming ever greater before Him, and He was really feeling this burden greatly upon Himself. It was shortly before the Transfiguration, that He revealed (and made it most plain) to the Apostles that He would suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day (Matt 16v21). However, none of His Apostles either received it or believed it, and just didn't want to know about it, indeed, Peter tried to put His Lord "right" regarding this issue, which earned Him a stiff rebuke from the Lord, in that He said to him, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offence to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men." (Matt 16v23). Because He was getting no succour or any kind of help or support from the Apostles, this was making the burden almost intolerable to bear, and so He takes, Peter, James and John up onto Mount Hermon to pray that He may receive strength through earnest seeking of His Father. It was while He was praying (Greek, "proseuchomai") that He experienced the Transfiguration: He was "crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man." (Heb 2v9, KJV). It was His Father's way of strengthening, encouraging and imparting His grace, so that "His hands would not hang down, nor His knees become feeble." (Heb 12v12).

It should also be understood that the Transfiguration was NOT for any of the following reasons:

It was **NOT** for the Saviour to find out the will of God, for He already knew the will of His Father. Neither was it just a spiritual experience for the enjoyment of the Lord Jesus, He didn't go up the slopes of Mount Hermon to, "have a good time with God." And neither was it primarily for the sake of the three Apostles, Peter, James and John.)

The words of the Lord in Mark 9v1, which He had spoken 6 days before He went up the slopes of Mount Hermon (with 1Pet 2v16-18):

"And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power...(For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were **eyewitnesses of his majesty**. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.)"

Were about to come to pass!

It is also important to understand what actually happened to Our Lord during the Transfiguration, Matt 17v2, states:

"And **He was transfigured** before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light."

"He was transfigured" is in Greek, "metemorphoóthee," the aorist passive indicative of "metamorphoo," (NT:3339), and means to transform (literally or figuratively, "metamorphose"), change, transfigure, "to change into another form" (meta, implying change, and morphe, "form:"). The word is the same as the metamorphoses (cf. Ovid) of pagan mythology. "Morphe" is properly the nature or essence, not in the abstract, but as actually subsisting in the individual, and retained as long as the individual itself exists. The usual outward expression of our Lord in His humiliation was that of the Man Christ Jesus, the Man of Sorrows, the One acquainted with grief. He, to the world, was the travel-stained, itinerant preacher, the claimant to the Jewish Messiahship. What the world saw was a peasant from Galilee, clad in homespun, the son of the carpenter of Nazareth. But now, that outward expression was changed. Out from within the inmost being of the Son of God, there shone that dazzling glory of the essence of Deity which He possesses co-eternally with God the Father and God the Spirit. His human body was changed into another form ("metemorphoóthee" (NT:3339)), into the Glorious body that was His immediately before He "emptied" ("ekénoosen" aorist active indicative of "kenoo" (NT:2758) Phil 2v7) Himself (of His glory and power) at the time of the incarnation (Phil 2v5-11). It was that same dazzling radiance which the angels saw in His preincarnate state (Phil 2v6).

Mark says, "His raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow, so as no fuller on earth can white them;" and Matthew adds "His face did shine." Here was no borrowed radiance, even from the skies, which might shine on the Lord Jesus. **This effulgence of glory came from within, and was an inherent possession of the Lord of Glory.** The Greek word for "shining" in Mark 9v3 is "stilbonta" (the present active participle of "stilbo" (NT:4774) and being a participle, it indicates that the shining was active. The word is used of a flashing sword and of sunshine on shields. This is what occurred at His Transfiguration, and how He appeared to the Old Testament saints as Yahweh Malak, Yahweh Messenger. In The Angel (of) The Lord, there is no "of" in the Hebrew). Jesus is the Great "I Am," and this is how He will appear to the whole world on the last day of this Age (the Age of Grace), when He comes in great glory to destroy the wicked. At this time Jesus will raise the saints (both Old and New Testament) from the dead, and Rapture both the resurrected saints and the Christians who are living, so that we will always be with Him. It is also how He will appear during the Millennium and the Ages of Ages. Exodus 3v1-15, 33v18-34v8, Isaiah 24v23, 63v1-6, Matt 24v29-31, John 8v58, 1Thess 4v13-18, Heb 1v1-3, Rev 1v7, 11v18, 19v11-21, 21v1-22v21.

When the transfiguration occurred, and He entered into His pre-incarnate glory, this entailed entering into and experiencing fully the unlimited (divine) abilities of the Godhead ("Godhead" in Greek is "theóteetos," from "theotes," (NT:2320), and means the essential and personal deity as belonging to and subsisting in the Lord Jesus, Greek, "deitas" Col 2v9,10), i.e. He entered into the Omnipotence, Omnipresence, Omniscience, Transcendence and Immutability, that He had (voluntarily) emptied Himself off at the Incarnation. Phil 2v7.

The experience of having partaken fully of His pre-incarnate glory caused Him to remark in **Luke 12v50** the following: "But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and **how am I straitened** till it be accomplished!"

The words "how am I straitened" is a reference to how greatly he felt constrained by the limitations of His human body (after having entered into His pre-incarnate glory at the Transfiguration) and how (in one sense) He was longing to complete the work of the Cross (but in another sense dreading it), descend into Hades (the Abyss), and having made atonement for the sin of the world, and being quickened in spirit, preach the Gospel to the inhabitants of that place, lead ALL those who received the Truth of His preaching out of Hades, be raised from the dead, and thus have the glory that He had with the Father (and the Holy Spirit) before the foundation of the world restored to Him, and then lead the waiting saints into Heaven, at which time He received "power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." Matt 26v36-46, Acts 2v22-31, Heb 5v7, 1Pet 3v18-22, 4v6, Rev 5v12.

A couple of other points brought out by the Transfiguration is that, whereas our present earthly bodies may entirely mislead our neighbours about the state of our souls, our resurrection bodies will correspond to our souls, and so will differ in glory. 1Cor 15v25-50. That recognition, therefore, will be not solely of the body but more essentially of the personality, e.g., the distorted body of a hunchback will give way to the glorious form of a Son of God. Peter knew that he had been with Moses and Elijah, but he had not recognised their bodies! Luke 9v33.

The appearing of Moses and Elijah (in glory) with the Lord Jesus to talk about "His decease" (Greek, "éxodon" from "exodos" (NT:1841) which means "an exit," and is a reference to not only His death, **BUT** especially to the Lord Jesus leading the Old Testament saints (and all the other inhabitants of Hades who accepted and received the Truth that He preached) out of Hades into Heaven, after He had preached the Gospel to ALL the occupants of that dark place, Eph 4v8-10) which He should accomplish at Jerusalem;" (Luke 9v31) was made possible by His Father, by allowing Moses to be given a special resurrection, at which the Devil contended with Michael, the Archangel, over Moses' body (Deut 34v5,6, Jude v9), and Elijah, who never tasted off death, but was taken up into Heaven by a whirlwind (2Kings 2v11), to both now come and succour their Lord at this critical time in His Life and Ministry, so that He could then set His face as a flint to complete the work which His Father had given Him to accomplish (Isaiah 50v3-8, Luke 9v51). Apart from the purpose of encouraging the Lord Jesus, they also greatly stressed to Him the vital importance of the necessity of His going through with His death upon the Cross, descent into Hades etc. to make Atonement for the sin of the world, otherwise, the rest of the Old Testament saints, would be left for eternity in the darkness of Hades, Heaven would remain shut to them, neither would there be any eternal Kingdom and the creation would end in failure. Job 10v21,22, Psalm 16v8-11, Luke 16v19-31, Heb 2v9.

Also notice, that during the ministries of both Moses and Elijah, the Lord Jesus, in His pre-incarnate state had encouraged both of them in no small way, Elijah in the cave at Horeb, the mountain of God (1Kings 19v8-18), and Moses in the cleft

of the rock, also at Horeb. (Exodus 33v1-34v7), so now, at the Transfiguration, they come to minister, strengthen and encourage their Lord! Another interesting fact is that the height of ministry of **BOTH** Moses and Elijah was reached **AFTER** death and when taken to Heaven, and **NOT** during their lifetime!

A Brief Explanation Of The "Apparent" Appearance Of Samuel To Saul

In 1Sam 28v1-25, it "appears" that Samuel (the prophet) comes out of Hades in response to Saul's request for one that had a "familiar spirit" to "divine unto him by the familiar spirit" and bring him up. However, this is certainly not the case, because 1Chron 10v13,14, states: "So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the Lord, even against the word of the Lord, which he kept not, **and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to inquire of it; And inquired not of the Lord:** therefore he slew him, and turned the kingdom unto David the son of Jesse."

It states here quite plainly that he asked counsel of one that had "a familiar spirit, to **inquire of it**, and **inquired NOT of the Lord.**"

The "form" that was seen ascending out of the earth, was **NOT** Samuel, but simply a demon impersonating him (as is indeed always the case when an individual tries to communicate with the dead, which God has strictly and repeatedly forbidden, Lev 19v31, 20v6,27, Deut 18v1-22, Isaiah 8v18,19). **Something else that is worthy of note, is that the demon, impersonating Saul, knew more about Saul, than Saul knew about himself.**

We read in 1Sam 28v15-19 the following:

"And Samuel said to Saul, Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up? And Saul answered, I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams: therefore I have called thee, that thou mayest make known unto me what I shall do. Then said Samuel, Wherefore then dost thou ask of me, seeing the Lord is departed from thee, and is become thine enemy? And the Lord hath done to him, as he spake by me: for the Lord hath rent the kingdom out of thine hand, and given it to thy neighbour, even to David: Because thou obeyedst not the voice of the Lord, nor executedst his fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore hath the Lord done this thing unto thee this day. Moreover the Lord will also deliver Israel with thee into the hand of the Philistines: and to morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me: the Lord also shall deliver the host of Israel into the hand of the Philistines."

The reason for this is because God had already decreed and made it known to **ALL** in Heaven (including the Devil and the evil angels), what was going to happen to Saul, Israel, and Israel's army, even as He had decreed and made known to **ALL** in Heaven what was going to happen to Ahab. 1Kings 22v1-40. 1Kings 22v20,22,34,37 states the following:

"And the LORD said, 'Who will persuade Ahab to go up, that he may fall at Ramoth Gilead?' So one spoke in this manner, and another spoke in that manner... So he said, 'I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.' And the LORD said, 'You shall persuade him, and also prevail. Go out and do so.'... Now a certain man drew a bow at random, and struck the king of Israel between the joints of his armour. So he said to the driver of his chariot, "Turn around and take me out of the battle, for I am wounded.".. So the king died, and was brought to Samaria. And they buried the king in Samaria."

It is the Most High [God] that rules in the kingdom of mankind and gives it to whomever He will and sets over it the humblest and lowliest of men. Dan 4v17.

Another interesting fact is (seen in 1Sam 28v1-25), that as soon as Samuel had died, the Philistines came up against Israel with a great army (1Sam 28v4,5), this was simply because Samuel, like Elijah, Elisha, and the rest of the Old Testament prophets in different generations, was the real defence of Israel (he was "the chariots of Israel and its horsemen," it was certainly NOT Saul and the army that was Israel's defence, 2Kings 2v12, 13v14), for it was his practice to pray (the Greek word, "proseuchomai" (NT:4336) is used in the Septuagint for Samuel's act of praying for Israel), by "making interventions with power" for ALL the people of Israel including Saul, and all it's rulers. 1Samuel 7v5, 12v19,23 states:

"And Samuel said, Gather all Israel to Mizpeh, and **I will pray** ("proseuchomai" (NT:4336)) for you unto the Lord...And all the people said unto Samuel, **Pray** ("proseuchomai" (NT:4336)) **for thy servants** unto the Lord thy God, that we die not: for we have added unto all our sins this evil, to ask us a king...Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing **to pray** ("proseuchomai" (NT:4336)) **for you:** but I will teach you the good and the right way."

Notice that the great prophet Samuel considered it a sin **NOT** to pray ("proseuchomai" (NT:4336)) for ALL the people of Israel, including, the King (Saul, whom he still prayed for, even after having gone into apostasy) and all the rulers of it, so it is not without reason that Paul wrote to Timothy in **1Tim 2v1,2:**

"I exhort therefore, that, **first of all** (i.e. the first priority for **ALL** Christians), supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty." Let us follow the great example set by the godly prophet Samuel and make "supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority!"

It is hard for us to grasp, just how the Lord Jesus felt when He entered back into His pre-incarnate glory, He certainly would have thought that He was "back home." He also would have had a very difficult decision to make, and that was whether He simply walked back into Heaven, and forgot about His Cross, or walk back down the slopes of Mount Hermon, to face rejection, a scourging, crucifixion, and decent into the Abyss, where He would suffer the pangs of death. However, what certainly removed any fleeting thought of walking back into Heaven was that when he entered back into His glory (at the Transfiguration), He also saw the results of His Cross, descent into the Abyss (where His soul was made an offering for the sin of the world) and His Resurrection; which were that the Creation would not end in failure, but would be eternally established, culminating in the Ages of Ages, when billions of His redeemed creatures would enjoy the riches and treasures of His mind for all eternity! In His foreknowledge He saw ALL the redeemed (and each one individually); and it was His Great Love for each one of all the redeemed that He saw, which was His motivation to turn around and walk back down the slopes of Mount Hermon. Isaiah 6v3, 2Tim 1v10, 1John 4v8,16, Rev 4v8, 21v1-22v21.

When Moses and Elijah departed from the Lord Jesus, the divine glory, which He had had with the Father before the foundation of the world, departed from Him, and His glorified spiritual body was replaced with His own human body again. However, although He received back His human body again, the effects of the divine glory that He had entered into still lingered on, even as the face of Moses glowed after having spent forty days and forty nights on Mount Horeb in the presence of the Lord of Glory, Who was the preincarnate Christ (Exodus 34v30-35, 2Cor 3v13 Heb 11v26), for we read in Mark 9v15:

"And immediately all the crowd, when they saw Jesus [returning from the holy mount, His face and person yet glistening], they were greatly amazed and ran up to Him [and] greeted Him." (Amplified Bible)

After having come down from Mount Hermon, the Lord Jesus, (with Peter, James and John), is greeted by a crowd, and it soon came to light that the Apostles had been unable to cast out a demon from a man's only son. The Lord's opinion of His Apostles inability to do so is given in Matt 17v17:

"Then Jesus answered and said, **O faithless and perverse generation**, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him hither to me."

"O faithless and perverse generation" is in Greek, "Oo geneá ápistos kaí diestramménee."

"Apistos" is from "a" (a negative participle) and "pistos" (faith), and so means, "without faith," (actively) disbelieving, i.e. without Christian faith (specially, a heathen); (passively) untrustworthy (person), or incredible (thing), that believeth not, faithless, infidel, unbeliever (-ing).

"Diestramménee" is the perfect passive participle of "diastrepho" (NT:1294), and means, to distort, i.e. (figuratively) misinterpret, or (morally) corrupt, perverse (-rt), turn away, to turn aside from the right path, in the perfect participle, passive voice, it is translated "perverse," lit., "turned aside, corrupted."

These are strong words from the lips of the Lord Jesus, to the Apostles of the Church, and are undoubtedly a reference to how their minds had become corrupted and darkened, by imbibing the unscriptural traditions of the Scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees. We have already seen an example of this in Matt 16v21-23, when the Lord had made known to them how He would suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day, at which point Peter thought he knew better than His Lord, and tried to "put Him right," which brought this reply for His Lord, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offence to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men." The teaching (which the Apostles had received and believed) from the Scribes and Pharisees regarding Messiah, was that of a great leader and soldier who would rise up and throw off the yoke of the Romans from off Israel's neck, which was the complete opposite of the Truth, which was that the Messiah was meek and lowly, full of mercy, compassion and love, and had come to die upon the Cross, to make Atonement, by the shedding of His blood, for the sin off the world, He was the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world! Matt 11v28-30, 15v1-20, 23v1-39, John 1v29, Acts 20v28, Eph 2v1-10, Rev 13v8.

And it was because that their minds were so darkened and devoid of the Truth, that they were faithless. How binding are the unscriptural traditions of men, which shackle in chains the minds and spirits of God's dearly beloved children! 1Pet 1v18, 2Pet 2v1-3, 3v14-18. The Lord Jesus then proceeds to heal the man's son, by casting the demon out of him.

(For a more detailed study on demon possession please see the study, "A Study In Demon Possession, Is The Exorcism Of Christians Of God?" by Bill Turner at: www.truthforthelastdays.com)

When the Lord Jesus and the Apostles had gone into the house, the Apostles ask him privately why they could not cast it out, his reply was (Matt 17v20,21):

"And Jesus said unto them, **Because of your unbelief**: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. **Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer** (Greek, "proseuche" (NT:4335)) **and fasting.**"

The Lord is really telling them how He did it, and obviously the Apostles had not been exercising prayer (Greek,

"proseuche" (NT:4335)) and fasting, for if they had, they would have been able to heal the boy by casting out the demon, because they had already been given that authority previously by the Lord, see Matt 10v1-15 (esp., v8).

Another interesting fact is that a number of the Apostles (Andrew, Simon Peter, James, John, Philip and Nathanael, John 1v36-51) had also been disciples of John the Baptist, and we know from Luke 11v1, that he had taught his disciples (and that includes also those Apostles of the Lord Jesus that had been with him) how to pray (Greek, "proseuchomai" (NT:4336)), and yet even now (Matt 17v14-21), in late 29 AD, when they had been with the Lord Jesus well over two years, they still were not exercising such prayer (Greek, "proseuche" (NT:4335)).

Even when the Lord Jesus went to the Garden of Gethsemane and was in great agony from the tremendous temptation He was suffering under, due to the Devil's final attempt to thwart Him from going to the Cross, Peter, James and John (and the other eight Apostles) were still not exercising "prayer" (Greek, "proseuche" (NT:4335)), for Matt 26v40,41 reads:

"Then He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, **"What! Could you not watch with Me one hour? Watch and pray** (Greek, "proseuchomai" (NT:4336), **lest you enter into temptation.** The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

The first time we read of the Apostles exercising "prayer" (Greek, "proseuche" (NT:4335)) is after the Lord's Ascension, which had been preceded by His 40 day post resurrection ministry to them, Acts 1v14:

"These all continued with one accord in prayer (Greek, "proseuche" (NT:4335)) and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren."

And from that time forward, this is how they "prayed," and the same kind of praying that they lead their converts into. Acts 2v41-47:

"Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. **And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers** (Greek, "proseuche" (NT:4335)). And fear came upon every soul: **and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.** And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."

Notice how that after the Apostles started praying (Greek, "proseuchomai" (NT:4336)), "many wonders and signs were done by" them. Acts 1v14, 2v43.

We now see the fulfilment of the Lord's words in John 14v12-14, because they had started "praying" (Greek, "proseuchomai" (NT:4336)). This type of praying (Greek, "proseuchomai" (NT:4336)) is essential to sustain an Apostolic and Prophetic ministry (and indeed any of the ministries listed in Eph 4v7-16) at a level of spiritual power so that ALL the needy of the Church and world are healed and delivered from their sicknesses, diseases and great burdens, through the gifts of the Holy Spirit, when they come for healing from the Lord Jesus through His ministries. 1Cor 12v7-11, 14v15,18.

Also notice that by praying (Greek, "proseuchomai" (NT:4336)), a wonderful unity of purpose, soul and mind was achieved in the Church at Jerusalem amongst ALL, "And they continued steadfastly.... in prayers (Greek, "proseuche" (NT:4335)).... continuing daily **with one accord** in the temple" Acts 2v42,46.

"With one accord" is in Greek, "homothumadón," an old adverb in -don from the adjective homothumos and that from homos, "same," and thumos, "mind or spirit, with the same mind or spirit. This beautiful unity of mind, soul and purpose is the fulfilment of John 17v11,21,22,23.

The 2nd Cleansing Of The Temple.

Another significant place where the Greek word (for "prayer"), "proseuche" (NT:4335) is used is in the passage of the 2nd cleansing of the Temple at Jerusalem (the first being at the beginning of His ministry, John 2v13-22), Matt 21v12-17 (v13), Mark 11v15-19 (v17), and Luke 19v45-48 (v46), Mark 11v17 states:

"And he taught, saying unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer (Greek, "proseuche" (NT:4335))? but ye have made it a den of thieves."

The word "thieves" is in Greek "leestoón" which is from "leistēs" (NT:3027) (which in turn is from leizomai (to plunder); and means a brigand, robber, "one who plunders openly and by violence" (in contrast to kleptes (NT:2812), "a thief," one who takes property by stealth), to practice robbery, piracy, one who robs by force and violence, a highwayman. So "a den of thieves" would be better translated "a cave of robbers," The Lord Jesus alludes here to those dens and caves in Judea, in which robbers either hid or kept themselves fortified. The phrase "den of robbers" comes from Jeremiah 7v11 and is part of a long sermon that Jeremiah delivered in the gate of the Temple, rebuking the people for the same sins that Jesus saw and judged in His day. Jeremiah, in Jeremiah chapter 7, is challenging ALL of Judah, who felt so secure because of the presence of God's Temple that she believed it was safe to do all kinds of detestable things. Her vileness had actually

turned the Temple into a den of robbers (cf. Matt 21v12-13). What she failed to realize was that God had been watching and was aware of her deeds. Jer 7v9-15.

Jeremiah pointed to Israel's past to expose the fallacy of believing that the mere presence of God's Temple would avert disaster. He asked the crowd to remember the place in Shiloh where the tabernacle of God had first dwelt (Josh 18v1, Jud 18v31, 1 Sam 1v3, 4v3-4). They were to observe what God did to it because of Israel's wickedness. The Bible is silent on the fate of Shiloh; but after the Philistines captured the ark of the covenant (1 Sam 4v10-11) the priests evidently fled to Nob (1 Sam 22v11) and Shiloh was abandoned as Israel's central worship centre (cf. Psalm 78v56-61). Archaeological studies also indicate that the village of Shiloh was destroyed about 1050 BC, probably by the Philistines. The point of Jeremiah's message was that what God did to Shiloh He would also do to the Temple. If Judah did not change her ways God would thrust her from His presence just as He had done with the Northern Kingdom (Ephraim) in 722 B.C. (2 Kings 17v5-20, esp. v 20).

The false prophets in the time of Hosea (when Israel was about to be carried off into captivity by the Assyrians, Hosea 1 to 14, and in the time of Jeremiah (when God was about to have Judah carried off into captivity by the Babylonians, 2Chron 36v1-21), ALL prophesied of **"peace and safety"** when the true prophets of God were prophesying that there was only impending destruction around the corner (i.e. "sudden destruction"), and the blind false teachers in our Lord's day also were saying the same thing (Matt15v1-20, 23 all), when destruction was also looming again for Jerusalem, its inhabitants and the Temple, even as the Lord Jesus prophesied in Luke 19v41-44. Today we have the exact same situation, with false prophets and teachers. Matt 24v23-31,48-51. ALL saying the there will be **"peace and safety"** for the Church because it will be removed from the earth by a secret Advent and Rapture, just before the Great Tribulation starts. However, this evil seed that the Devil put into the Church in the 1830s (see "The Hope Of Christ's Second Coming" by S. P. Tregelles, for an account how this occurred) will be the reason why so many Christians will be so overwhelmed by the great deluge of evil coming into the world at the beginning of the Great Tribulation, so it is **VITAL** that Christians fill their minds **NOW** with the Truth on this **MOST** important subject, so that they will have **LIGHT** in the darkness of those evil days, to be able to come through the Great Tribulation victoriously. 1Thess 5v3, 2Thess 2v1-12, 1Pet 1v19-21.)

It should also be noted that the account of the cleansing of the Temple in Luke19v45-48., happened on Monday, 3rd April AD30, and is preceded by Luke 19v41-44., (by the following words on Sunday 2nd April AD30:

"And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. **For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another;** because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation."

The Lord Jesus had seen in vision what was soon going to happen to Jerusalem, the Temple and the Jewish people **IF** that did not repent (for if they had repented, the vision would not have been fulfilled, nor would Jerusalem and the Temple been destroyed, or the Jewish people slaughtered and dispersed amongst the nations, for God is abundantly rich in mercy and has NO pleasure in the death of the wicked, One who relents from doing harm. Jonah 3v10-4v2, Eph 2v1-10, 1Tim 2v4, 2Pet 3v9), and one of the reasons for the cleansing of the Temple by the Lord Jesus, was to try and bring them to a realization of the great peril Israel was in because of their gross moral and spiritual depravity, and that the same conditions that prevailed in the days of Jeremiah (which ended with the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, and the carrying away into captivity of the Jews to Babylon, 2Chron 36v15-21) were at that present time prevailing with them, and that their (Israel's) end would be the same as that which happened to their forefathers in Jeremiah's day. All the mighty signs, wonders and miracles, which the Lord Jesus had done during the three years of His ministry (including the raising of Lazarus from the dead, who had been in the tomb for 4 days) had failed to bring Israel to repentance. And so, after He had seen the vision of what was going to happen to Israel on Sunday, 2nd April (as Jerusalem came into view, and spread out before Him, from the Mount of Olives), having entered Jerusalem and looked around, He then left it and went to Bethany, where He lodged for the night. It was during His time of prayer at Bethany, that His Father directed Him once again to go into His Temple, and cleanse it, in a last ditch attempt to try and bring those in the Temple and Jerusalem to their senses, and a realisation of the terrible danger that Israel was in because of their moral and spiritual depravity. It was the tremendous frustration in the great heart and mind of the Father (which was also shared by the other two members of the Trinity), that drove Him to direct the Lord Jesus to carry out the second cleansing of His Temple, in a last and final attempt to bring Israel to repentance. John 5v19,30, 12v37-41, Acts 7v51-53.

The Greek word "leistes" (NT:3027) is also used in Matt 27v38 of the two robbers who were crucified on either side of the Lord Jesus.

"Then **two robbers** (Greek, "leestaí" (NT:3027)) were crucified with Him, one on the right and another on the left." (NKJV).

The "Judge of all the Earth" at this 2nd cleansing of the Temple, expressly states that the religious leaders of the Temple were "robbers who plundered openly, with violence," and thus, by the sentence of the law, these evil religious leaders had committed crimes which were punishable by crucifixion, even as the two robbers had been crucified on either side of the Lord. Gen 18v25. This Greek word, "leistes" (NT:3027), is also used of Barabbas in Jn.18v40:

"Then cried they all again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber ("leesteés" (NT:3027))."

So we can see exactly what the Lord Jesus thought of the religious leaders of Israel and the Temple, and just how evil they were! Matt 23v1-39.

The circumstances that brought these stinging words for the lips of the Lord Jesus, was that the area of the Temple, that God had set aside for the Gentiles to come and worship and pray to Him (and get their needs met), had been turned into a bazaar, where extortion on a vast scale was daily going on. In Matt 21v12, the tables of "the money-changers" ("ton kollubistoon," from "kollubos," a small coin) were overturned. In John 2v15, the money-changers, (Greek, "kollubistoon" (NT:2855) from "kollubos," "the rate of exchange") sat in the Temple, in the court of the Gentiles, to change the foreign coins of pilgrims (Roman and Greek money, which had heathen markings on them) into the shekel of the sanctuary for payment of the annual tribute. It was in this transaction of currency change, that the money changers only gave a small fraction of the true value of the Roman and Greek money in exchange for the shekel of the sanctuary to the worshippers. Also, the religious leaders insisted that in the Temple the people could not use money that had been circulating in society, but had to change their money into Temple money first (for a fee and at extortionate exchange rates), and then use the Temple money to purchase animals for sacrifice, also at inflated prices. Even though the dealers charged exorbitant prices, no one could compete with them or oppose them, and Historians tell us that Annas, the High Priest, was the controller of this enterprise, assisted by his sons. It was into their pockets (and some of the priestly leaders) that the vast amount of this great wealth taken by extortion (under the guise of religion) went, the actual dealers and money changers getting only a very small fraction of what they actually charged (and extorted). All this was going on in the Outer Court, which God had specifically set aside for the Gentiles, so that they could come and make prayer ("proseuche" (NT:4335)) and entreaty to Him so that they would get their needs met, and go away uplifted and energised by God's Presence and power. Isaiah 56v1-7.

Because all this was happening in the Temple "enclosure," not the "naos" (NT:3485), or "sanctuary," the people were carrying vessels, etc., through it, in order to save a long circuit, and this was because the court of the Gentiles, was not regarded by the Jews as entitled to the respect due to the other part of the enclosure. The Temple authorities had prohibited using the outer court of the Temple through the Precinct as a sort of short cut or by-path from the city to the Mount of Olives, but the rule was neglected and all sorts of irreverent conduct was going on. From Jewish writings we know that most improper transactions were carried on, to the taking undue advantage of the poor people who came to offer their sacrifices. It was by popular indignation, three years before the destruction of Jerusalem, that swept away the Bazaars of the family of Annas, and this, was on account of the sinful greed which characterized their dealings. Of the avarice and corruption of this High-Priestly family, Josephus and the Rabbis give a most terrible picture. Josephus describes Annas (or Ananus), the son of the Annas of the New Testament, as 'a great hoarder up of money.' The Talmud also records the curse which a distinguished Rabbi of Jerusalem (Abba Shaul) pronounced upon the High-Priestly families (including that of Annas), who were 'themselves High-Priests, their sons treasurers (Gizbarin), their sons-in-law assistant-treasurers (Ammarkalin), while their servants beat the people with sticks.' Josephus Antiquities 20:9. 2-4. (See Edersheim, "Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah," I, 367-372)

Tithes And Tithing.

The tithe was the means of supporting the Levites and priests and for caring for the poor, fatherless, widow and stranger. Deut 10v18, 14v29, 16v11,14, 24v17,19,20,21, 26v12,13, 27v19. Levi was the third son of Jacob and Leah. Gen 29v34, 35v23, Exodus 1v2, 1Chron 2v1. The three sons of Levi, Gershom, Kohath, and Merari, were born before Israel's exodus from Egypt. The family of Levi had some nasty skeletons in their cupboard. When Dinah, the sister of Levi, was assaulted and violated by Shechem the Hivite, Levi and Simeon pillaged the city of Shechem and killed all the males there. Jacob condemned this evil act at the time, and in his final prophetic blessing and estimation of his sons, he pronounces God's curse upon Levi and Simeon for this cruel and evil act. Gen 34v1-31, 49v5-9. The priests in the Temple settled into a state of formal worship and hypocrisy, and became the opponents of true spirituality; the martyr Stephen said that they had always resisted the Spirit of God. Acts 7v51-53.

We read in Deut 14v28,29, and Numb 18v21-24,27, that the tithe was to be used to financially support the Levite, because the Levites had "no portion nor inheritance with you." In Numb 18v21, God states, "And, behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel for an inheritance, for their service which they serve, even the service of the tabernacle of the congregation." cf. Heb.7v5. **The Levites service included caring for the poor in Israel's welfare state, and they had more than enough for this, for Hooker says that the tithes given to the Levites meant that their worldly estate was four times as good as any of the other tribes of Israel.** Even if Hooker was speaking of a double tithe, then a single tithe meant that the Levites still had twice as much as the other tribes to service Israel's welfare state. The tithes were a tithe of the seed and crops of the land, the fruit of the trees, the oil and wine, and the herds and the flocks. Deut 14v22,23. As the herds and flocks passed under the rod, every tenth animal was taken. Lev 27v30-33, Jer 33v13, Ezek 20v37. The animals could not be redeemed, but the fruit and seed of the land could be for an extra fifth on the tithe price. In Numb 18v26-32, we read that the Levites were to take a "tithe of the tithe --- from all the best of them" and give it to the priests. Neh 10v39. Some have suggested that a second tithe of the remaining nine tenths of the tithe was given for the feast at Jerusalem, they feel that this would harmonise the accounts. But this is not necessary, **it seems clear enough that the Levites shared the tithe with the people who gave it, and with the poor, fatherless, stranger and widow, and saved the rest for themselves and the needy. God's laws are very thoughtful and kind.**

The place where tithes were taken to under the Law.

Tithes were to be brought once a year, "to the place which the Lord your God shall choose." However the tithes could be eaten and distributed locally, "within thy gates," if the Temple was too far away. Deut 14v22, 12v5,11,14,18,21. The tithes of corn, wine, oil and animals were to be eaten not only by the Levites, but also by the people who brought the tithe. Deut 12v17,18. Some think it better to distinguish between tithes and first fruits; however, Deut 26v1-15 mentions them together, which implies that they are the same, or that the first-fruits could be part of the tithe, they were given to the priests. Deut 18v4.

Every third year all who tithed were to give their tithes to the Levites and poor and needy from "within their gates." Deut 14v28,29. However, they still had to go to worship at Jerusalem after distributing their tithes in their local community, and there proclaim that they had given their tithes to the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless and the widow. Deut 26v12-19.

We read in Deut 12v20,21, that if the distance to Jerusalem was too far to travel, the tithe was to be shared among the poor and the Levites and eaten "within the gates" of the person who tithed them, the tithe was to be used as a contingency fund for the poor.

NB Have you ever heard any Bible teachers tell you that you are to invite the poor and needy to your home and consume some of your tithe in a religious party of thanksgiving and worship, and the rest of your tithe is to be used as a contingency fund to provide for the poor? How different from the modern teaching and demands on tithing!

The tithe was also Israel's Income Tax to be used for Israel's welfare state.

In Deut 10v16-19, God commanded the Levites to administer justice for the stranger, fatherless and widow and feed and clothe them. We read, "Therefore circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be stiff-necked no longer. For the Lord your God is a God of gods, and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality nor takes a bribe. He administers justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the stranger, giving him food and clothing. Therefore love the stranger, for you were strangers in Egypt." These are strong words, and emphasise God's loving concern for the poor and needy. **This is why our Lord was so angry with the Jews in Mal 3v7-10, and said there would be a curse upon them, if they failed to bring the tithes into the storehouse. God said that they were robbing Him, when they robbed the Levite and the poor. The Levites and priests also came under a curse if they robbed the poor.**

In Deut 14v28,29, we read that our Lord gave the Law on tithing to Moses out of a concern for the poor, we read that the tithe was not only for the Levite, but also for "the stranger and the fatherless and the widow." Our Lord castigated the Jews for their arrogant pride and self-deception over their tithing, and pointed out that it availed them nothing when they omitted and neglected the weightier matters of the Law, judgement, mercy, faith, and love of God. The judgement and mercy mentioned here is undoubtedly the ministry to the poor mentioned in the Scriptures. Matt 23v23, Luke 11v39-44. **Our Lord was very angry with Israel's religious leaders, because they devoured widow's houses, neglected the poor, and turned God's Temple into a "den of robbers," and He warned them that they were bound for Hell because of it.** Matt 21v12,13, 23v13-39 (NB v14,33), Luke 20v46,47.

A House Of Prayer For All Nations.

God had specifically decreed in the Scriptures that the Temple at Jerusalem should be a place where **ALL** the Gentile nations could come to worship Yahweh, the God of Israel, and to pray (Greek, "proseuchomai" (NT: 4336), Hebrew, "palal" (OT: 6419), to entreat), so that they would get ALL their needs met. God was clearly showing the Gentiles, that He loved and cared for them as well (as Israel), and greatly desired to meet **ALL** their needs and requirements, no matter what they were. His house was not just a place of worship, but a place where **ALL** peoples (Jew and Gentile alike) could come and get deliverance from all their problems, and be energised, empowered and filled with His joy from His Presence.

The quotes from Mark 11v17, "And he taught, and said unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations? but ye have made it a den of robbers." ASV (See also Matt 21v13 and Luke 19v46) are taken from Isaiah 56v7, **"for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples." Note Isaiah 56v1-8 which states:**

"Thus saith Jehovah, Keep ye justice, and do righteousness; for my salvation is near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed. Blessed is the man that doeth this, and the son of man that holdeth it fast; that keepeth the Sabbath from profaning it, and keepeth his hand from doing any evil. Neither let the foreigner, that hath joined himself to Jehovah, speak, saying, Jehovah will surely separate me from his people; neither let the eunuch say, Behold, I am a dry tree. For thus saith Jehovah of the eunuchs that keep my Sabbaths, and choose the things that please me, and hold fast my covenant: Unto them will I give in my house and within my walls a memorial and a name better than of sons and of daughters; I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off. **Also the foreigners that join themselves to Jehovah, to minister unto him, and to love the name of Jehovah, to be his servants,** every one that keepeth the Sabbath from profaning it, and holdeth fast my covenant; even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt-offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; **for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.** The Lord Jehovah, who gathereth the outcasts of Israel, saith, Yet

will I gather (others) to him, besides his own that are gathered." **ASV.**

God had decreed that the Temple should be a place where the poor, the widow, the stranger and fatherless (who have a special place in God's loving heart, because they cannot fend for themselves, and are so often downtrodden by the rich, James 2v6) could come and receive, not only spiritual refreshment, and healing for their spirit, soul and body, but to receive financial help so that they could feed and keep themselves and their families. The Temple was supposed to be a place that "gave", and "gave" liberally to all in need, to reflect the wonderful selfless giving character of God, who gives liberally to ALL, indeed one of His names in Exodus 34v6, is "the bountiful Being"; He who is exuberant in His beneficence, Hebrew, "cheched" (OT:2617), Exodus 34v6,7 John 3v16, James 1v5,17.

However, by the time of the incarnation of the Lord Jesus' and His earthly ministry, the Temple had become the exact opposite of what God had intended it to be. It had become a place, that instead of giving to ALL in need, it openly **plundered ALL** with violence, even the poor! The "character" of the Temple that should have reflected God's giving nature, now reflected that of the Devil, being completely corrupt and evil ("poneros" (NT:4190)), which means an active evil corrupting influence, that is not content until it has brought all down to the same level of depraved corruption as themselves. Matt 3v7, 16v6, 23v15, Acts 7v51-53.

Although God the Father had directed the Lord Jesus to cleanse the Temple this 2nd time in an attempt to convince those in the Temple and all of Israel of their dire moral and spiritual condition, (and consequently the great danger, of not only the destruction of Jerusalem, but also the strong possibility of eternal judgement). Great frustration filled Christ's being, because of their rejection of His ministry and their deeply ingrained wilful stubbornness. The Trinity was also angered by the terrible treatment of the poor by the religious leaders, the Scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees. Matt 23v1-39.

After the Lord Jesus had finished turning over the tables of the money changers and putting out of the Temple those that bought and sold, He then demonstrates to ALL (once again), the true purpose that God had decreed for the Temple (which was healing for all), Matt 21v14, states: "And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple; and he healed them."

The signs, wonders and miracles Jesus did (in the healing of the blind and the lame), filled the chief priests, the scribes, and the leaders of the people with jealous fury, and they sought how they might kill Him, for they feared Him, because the ordinary people (made up mostly of the poor) were very attentive in listening to His teaching. The religious leaders were jealous of Him, because Christ's preaching, teaching and miracles exposed them truly as the frauds and charlatans that they were. Matt 27v18. The words that Jesus spoke were "spirit and life," and were delivered under a great anointing, so when the people heard them, they brought power, comfort, faith and hope to their spirits and inner beings from the God of Love. The words He spoke to them had come directly from the heart and mind of His Father, via the Holy Spirit. The mighty signs, wonders and miracles that the Lord Jesus did during His ministry, had either one of two effects upon the individual that heard and saw those things, it either produced repentance and faith, and therefore salvation, or they became irrevocably hardened in sin, and therefore perished, because when they saw God they hated Him. Matt 7v28,29, Luke 19v47, John 3v34, 6v63, 12v60, 15v22-25, 1Cor 1v18.

Because of the corruption of Israel's religious leaders, and the great evil that was taking place in the Temple at Jerusalem, the name of God was maligned and blasphemed amongst the Gentile nations. The same criticism of God and the Gospel still happens today, when so called Christian pastors, teachers and preachers make long appeals for money, sometimes with veiled threats, from the people that they are supposed to be pastoring and caring for, and the money goes to line their own pockets (or those of their denominations which they belong to), to give them a life of great wealth. These appeals and sometimes actual demands for money, are supported by false appeals to the Scriptures which they have twisted and wrenched out of context. When the worlding hears these appeals, they know straightaway that these so called Christian leaders care nothing for their flock, but are only coveting and strongly desiring people's money. The people who make such demands for money from God's dear children, have at the very least definitely lost their reward, and at the very worst won't even get into heaven, even as the Scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees coveted the people's money and put it into their own pockets, whom the Lord Jesus said concerning in Matt 23v33, "Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell? (Greek, "geena" i.e. "the lake of fire" Rev.19v20.)" Isaiah 52v5, Ezek 36v20, Mal 3v5-12, Matt 7v15-23, 23v1-39, 24v48-51, Rom 2v24, 2Pet 2v1-3.

In Matt 21v15,16 we read: "And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, **Hosanna to the Son of David**; they were sore displeased, And said unto him, Hearest thou what these say? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea; have ye never read, **Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?**"

The Old Testament Scripture, "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise" is taken from Psalm 8v2 (the Septuagint) and reads, "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger." From this Old Testament passage, we can see that extra information is given. The praise of these "babes and sucklings" was not only perfect, but it put strength into the Lord Jesus ("hast thou ordained strength"), and such praise will also put strength into the other ministries of His Church. This "perfect praise" of these children also shut down the powers of darkness completely and rendered them totally powerless, ("that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger"). 2Chron 20v1-30, Eph 4v11-16.

Also observe that these "babes and sucklings" knew full well who Jesus was, that He was the long promised Messiah, born

of the seed of David, the Lord of Glory, whereas the religious leaders of Israel wilfully and stubbornly resisted the full light and revelation of the character and works of God revealed to them through the mighty signs, wonders and miracles that Jesus did during His ministry! John 12v37-41, Rom 1v3,4, Rev 22v16.

Cornelius, A Perfect Example!

In Acts 10v1-11v18, we have the amazing account of God's dealings with a Gentile (a Roman centurion of the Italian Cohort (see William M Ramsay's book, "Was Christ Born In Bethlehem" (Pages 260-269) for a discussion on the subject of the Italian Cohort). Cornelius had a living faith in the God of Israel, he had had a previous encounter with God, at which time his spirit had been born again. Ezek 18v21-23,31, John 3v1-8), Cornelius is derived from Latin "*cornu*", meaning "horn" (coloured), his meeting with Simon Peter, occurred in 40/41 AD, and marked a major turning point in world evangelism for the Church. Cornelius was a devout (Greek, "eusebes," (NT:2152) from "eu" (which means, good or well) and "sebomai" (which means, to worship or revere), so "eusebes" means literally, "to worship well." Here was a Gentile, who was NOT a Christian, but who "worshipped God well"! and was just (Greek, "dikaios" (NT:1342), he had been justified by faith, and so was saved on an Old Testament basis, just as Abraham and Job were. Job 1v8, Ezek 14v14, Hab 2v4, Rom 1v17, James 2v23. Cornelius feared God, with **ALL** his household (Although he was not a Christian, he still had evangelized ("euangelizo" 2097) his whole family, household and friends to a faith in God. Cornelius had a living faith, because he knew and had a relationship with the Living God, that was maintained and fortified by a continuous prayer (Greek, "proseuche" (NT:4335)) life, his faith being fed with the Old Testament Scriptures. Cornelius not only had a living faith and prayed continually, but his faith was demonstrated to be "living" because of his "works," in that (amongst other things) he gave alms generously to the poor, and such was his generosity to the poor, that he was well known throughout the whole of the Jewish nation for his alms giving, and was held in great esteem by **ALL**. Acts 10v1,2,22, James 1v27, 2v14-26.

NOTE: From the wonderful report that is given about Cornelius in Acts 10v1,2,4,22, it is very apparent that God also held him in very high esteem, indeed, it is clear that God's opinion of Cornelius was of a higher nature than the opinions that He had of the twelve Apostles or of the Elders of the Church at Jerusalem; for nowhere in the New Testament scriptures do we read of such a glowing report, that has come directly from God, or an angel about any of them!

On a particular day, Cornelius was fasting and praying ("proseuchomai" (NT:4336)); earnestly seeking the Lord, that He would intervene and deal with the reluctance of the Apostles (and the leaders of the Church at Jerusalem) to fulfil the great commission, given by the Lord Jesus, to His Apostles, that the Gospel was to be preached to **ALL** the nations, and not just reserved for a "select" few (i.e. the Jews)! He knew from the Old Testament prophecies and the discourses of the Lord Jesus during His earthly ministry, repeated by others in his own hearing, and also Peter's own discourse on the day of Pentecost (which also would have been repeated to him); that the Coming One, (the Lord Jesus) would not only be a light to His people Israel, but would also be a light to the Gentiles and His Salvation for the whole world. Isaiah 42v1-9, 49v1-13, Jer 31v31-34, Ezek 36v25-27, Matt 28v16-20, Mark 16v14-18, Luke 24v44-49, John 10v1-30 (esp. v16), Acts 1v4-8, 2v16-40 (esp. v17-21,38,39), 10v30,31,36,37, 11v13,14.

However, although the Lord Jesus had given a definite command to the Apostles (on different occasions during the forty days of His Post Resurrection ministry), to preach the Gospel to every creature, this definite command also being His very last words to them before His Ascension into Heaven on Thursday 18th May 30 AD (Acts 1v6-9): "Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, **and to the end of the earth**. Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight."

The Apostles had stubbornly refused to preach the Gospel beyond the borders of Samaria (and that was done through Philip, NOT the Apostles, who refused to leave Jerusalem, but who did send Peter and John down to Samaria, AFTER the Samaritans had been converted, Acts 8v5-8,14-25), so that by 41 AD, the Gentiles, whom God was longing to bring into the Kingdom, still had not had the Gospel preached to them! The reason for this stubborn refusal of the Apostles to preach the Gospel to every nation was simply because of sectarian bigotry. Their minds were still in great darkness (and indeed, it was only when Jerusalem and the Temple was destroyed by Titus in 70 AD, that the light began to finally dawn upon the Jewish Christians, that the Jews were not held in a higher esteem than the Gentiles by God, who had made both Jew and Gentile one, through the shed blood of the Lord Jesus, Gal 3v28, Eph 2v11-22), because they were still filled with the unscriptural traditions (handed down from their spiritual fathers) of the Scribes and Pharisees, who taught every Jew that the Gentiles were fuel for the flames of Hell, and that the Jews were on a level with the angels of Heaven. Matt 15v1-20, 16v6, Rom 1v28, 1Pet 1v17-19.

And so, because of this terrible state of affairs, Cornelius fasts and earnestly "prays" ("proseuche" (NT:4335), seeking for God to intervene and change this situation, which brought about the divine "intervention" that he had been praying for. An angel appeared to him, and spoke the following words to him, Acts 10v4., "Thy prayers ("proseuche" (NT:4335)) and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God." And Acts 10v2 states that Cornelius was: "A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always ("diapantos" (NT:1275))." (Majority Texts). "Always" is in Greek, "diapantos," and means literally, "through all the time," i.e. (adverbially) constantly, continually, the time throughout which a thing is done.

The spiritual walk of Cornelius was of the highest order, because he lived a life that was continually in communion with the Living God, he knew and lived in His presence, with the result that he had developed a beautiful Christ like character, even as the great Old Testament saint, Job, had. Cornelius really was meek and lowly, there was no pride in him at all. Notice, that when Peter comes into his house, he is overwhelmed (probably due to the report that had preceded Peter, of the great manifestation of signs, wonders and miracles that God had done through him, like the raising from the dead of Dorcas. Possibly also because the great anointing that was upon Peter was manifested as a glory on his countenance, even as Moses and the Lord Jesus had experienced. Mark 9v15, Acts 9v36-43, 2Cor 3v7. Cornelius starts to worship Peter, which Peter promptly refuses to accept, telling him to stand up as he was only a man as well. Acts 10v26. The extent of the great love that was part of the character of Cornelius was clearly revealed day by day, by the alms he continually gave to the poor, he really knew what the will of God was towards the poor, which was the complete opposite of the religious leaders at Jerusalem, and in particular, in the Temple, who cared absolutely nothing about them, but indeed despised them and looked down upon them. Job.1v1,8, 16v17, 42v8. Jn.7v49.

The angel said to Cornelius that his prayers and alms came up for a memorial before God, the angel here is likening the prayers and acts of giving alms of Cornelius, to that of the burning of sweet smelling incense (upon the altar) that arise up to the nostrils of God, and which is very pleasing to Him. Lev 2v2, Psalm 141v2 (In Psalm 141v2, in the Septuagint, the Greek word for "prayer" that is used is, "proseuche" (NT:4335), Luke 1v9, Rev 5v8 (In Rev 5v8, the Greek word, "proseuche" is also used for "prayer").

The term "for a memorial" spoken by the angel to Cornelius in Acts 10v4, is only used in two other places in the New Testament (which reads, "as a memorial"), and that is in Matt 26v13 and Mark 14v9, which are both speaking of the same event, and that is the anointing of Jesus for His burial, by a woman who is not named. Robertson states that the anointing of Jesus with the precious ointment in Matt 26v6-13 and Mark 14v3-9 and John 12v1-8 was performed by Mary of Bethany. (The Greek word that is use for "memorial" in all three places is, "mnemosunon" (NT:3422), and means, a reminder (memorandum), i.e. record, that which keeps alive the memory of someone or something. The anointing of Jesus by the un-named woman was that of a single beautiful loving act, which being recorded in the Gospels is certainly a memorial to her. However, the angel said of Cornelius, that his life of continuous prayer and alms giving came up as a memorial before God, and so, it was not just one act (lovely as the un-named woman's acts was), **BUT** it was a life of **continual** prayer ("proseuche" (NT:4335)) and alms giving. The word "memorial" (Greek, "mnemosunon" (NT:3422) is used in the Septuagint for all occurrences of the Hebrew words) is used 29 times in the Old Testament, but it is not used of anyone in the sense of which it is used of Cornelius, which really highlights just how much God thought of Cornelius and his walk of faith. Acts 10v2,4,35, Heb 11v6.

Cornelius was not only "acceptable" to God, but he pleased Him very much, even though Cornelius was not a Christian; the fact of the matter is, as pointed out by Peter in Acts 10v34,35: "...of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."

And this was also the case with the Centurion of Matt 8v5-13 (with Luke 7v1-10) and the Greek (a Syro-Phoenician by birth) woman of Mark 7v24-30 (with Matt 15v21-28). In both of these encounters, the Lord Jesus was greatly surprised (and marvelled) by the great faith they displayed and also the great love that energised that faith in both of these individuals to seek Him for healing for those whom they were seeking it for (even when they knew that the Lord Jesus had only been sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, Matt 10v6, 15v24). During His ministry, the Lord Jesus generally didn't find faith where He expected to find it (i.e. amongst the Jews), but found great faith where He least expected to find it (i.e. amongst the Gentiles)! Matt 11v20-24, Mar 6v1-6, John 12v37-41, Gal 5v6 (see also Jonah Chapters 1-4).

With the change of one word in Acts 10v34,35, the following is also very true: "...of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every denomination he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."

In many countries around the world today, there is great sectarian bigotry in and between Christians of different denominations. The usual reason for this terrible state of affairs is generally over differences in non-essential doctrines, and very often the warring factions are BOTH wrong in the doctrines they hold! Doctrine should be used as a means to UNITE (and build up) Christians and NOT to divide them. Indeed, when Christians use differences in (non-essential) doctrine, as an excuse to separate themselves from having fellowship with Christians of another denomination (who don't believe exactly the same as themselves), it springs from those Christians (who are being sectarian) being spiritually immature and carnal in nature, and this can be seen by the fact that Paul includes "factions" ("Heresies" – KJV) in the list of the "works of the flesh." 1Cor 3v1-17, 11v19, Gal 5v16-26, Eph 4v7-16.

From the words that the angel spoke to Cornelius, he then knew that God was intervening in this matter in response to his "prayer" (Greek, "proseuche" (NT:4335)), and was going to rectify the terrible failure by the Apostles of the Church (at Jerusalem), to fulfil the divine command given to them, immediately before the Ascension of the Lord Jesus into Heaven on Thursday 18th May 30 AD, to preach the Gospel to ALL the nations of the world. Acts 1v6-9, 10v31, 11v14.

Cornelius responded immediately to the command given by the angel, to send men to Joppa, to locate Peter (who was at the house of Simon the tanner), and bring him back with them. The Tanner's occupation was regarded as unclean by the Jews, and the tanners were commanded to dwell apart. Also, "If a tanner married without mentioning his trade, his wife was permitted to get a divorce. The law of levirate marriage might be set aside if the brother-in-law of the childless widow

was a tanner. A tanner's yard must be at least fifty cubits from any town." (F. W. Farrar, "Life and Work of Paul"). Peter, who was with Simon "many days" (which basically means a long time), saw the wonderful sacrificial character of this lovely godly generous man, and thus came to understand that the Jewish (unscriptural) tradition that a tanner was unclean was a complete fallacy. God, by having him stay with Simon for such a long time, had enabled Peter (who was so bound by the unscriptural traditions of the Scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees) to take a big step towards meeting Cornelius and interacting with him, his family and friends in his house, which was completely forbidden by Jewish tradition. Acts 9v43, 10v28. The angel said that Cornelius should send "men" (plural), not just one man, simply because the witness of two or more persons to a certain event is far more compelling than the actual event that is being reported actually happened, and this was very important indeed, because of the deeply ingrained sectarian bigotry in Peter, and indeed in ALL the Jews! Acts 10v28,45.

It was as the three men sent from Cornelius were drawing close to Joppa, that Peter experienced a "trance," (KJV) an "ekstasis" from God. The Greek word, "ekstasis," (NT:1611) literally means, "a standing out," and so it means a transportation out of a person's normal condition or state of mind. It is also used of people being carried out of themselves with extreme astonishment and amazement in Mark 5v42, 16v8, Luke 5v26 and Acts 3v10. God even spoke to the sorcerer Balaam in a trance. Numb 24v4,16. "Ekstasis," speaks of an elevated consciousness during which God suspends ordinary perceptions and the awareness of natural surroundings, and the person is only conscious of the vision imparted by God. On rare occasions children of God have become quite unconscious to their surroundings, and have been transported out of the natural world to behold the supernatural and spiritual. Paul said that on one occasion, when he was having visions of heaven, he did not know if he was in or out of the body. 2Cor 12v1-4. This does not mean, of course, that the intellectual powers of Paul were suspended, they were enlightened and carried to the greater heights of spiritual revelation. This is in direct contrast to the experience of mediums, who completely lose consciousness when they go into a trance. Raphael Gasson, in his book, "The Challenging Counterfeit;" tells us from his own pre-Christian experience as a medium, that he lost consciousness when he went into a trance, and had to be told what had taken place during a séance.

The Lord Jesus had said to the Apostles at the Last Supper in John 16v12-14 (with 1Cor 3v1-4):

"I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you."

It was therefore because of the Apostles' carnality and spiritual blindness, (due to having lived a life of imbibing the unscriptural false traditions of the Sadducees, Scribes and Pharisees), that the Lord Jesus was not able to teach them (either during the whole three and a half years of His ministry, or the discourses that He gave to them on His last night with them. He could not tell them the most important Truth; that the New Covenant (that He was then making with them, through the breaking and eating of the bread, and drinking of the wine), which He would purchase by the shedding of His own blood, and His descent into the Abyss, was not only for the Jews, but for every individual of every nation. And so, because of this, one of the Holy Spirit's functions, being, to the Apostles (and indeed to every child of God), when He came on the day of Pentecost, was to reveal vital Truth to the believer. And this is just what God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, were doing, they were dealing with Peter's (and indeed the whole (Jewish) Church at that time) sectarianism and bigotry towards the Gentiles. Matt 16v6, 26v26-30 (esp. v28, "For this is My blood of the new covenant, **which is shed for many** for the remission of sins."), 2Pet 3v9.

The emphasis within the communication of the Lord to Peter in the "trance" is actually missed in our English translations; Acts 10v13-15 reads the following: "And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean. And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common."

In the Greek, there is a strong emphasis on the word "thou" in Acts 10v15 ("make not **thou** common" is in Greek, "sú meé koinou"), we should note the emphatic position of "su" (NT:4771), "thou." "Do **THOU** stop making common what God cleansed," "Greek "ekatharisen" (NT:2511). The idiom of Greek, "mee" (NT:3361) with the present active imperative Greek, "koinou" (NT:2840) means precisely this. Peter had just called "common" what God had invited him to kill and eat.

This whole event, of the sheet (containing all kinds of animals and reptiles and birds of the air) being let down from Heaven to Peter, and the command from the Lord for Peter to eat, and his refusal to do so, was done three times. Peter knew (full well) it was His Lord who was speaking to him and giving him a command to eat, but yet on the three occasions he was told to eat, he point blankly refused, and this really highlights to us, just how deeply ingrained the unscriptural traditions of the Sadducees, Scribes and Pharisees were rooted in Peter's (and indeed the whole of the Jewish nation, Christians included) mind, soul and being, chaining him (and the whole Jewish nation) with sectarian bigotry. This was not the first time that Peter had been told some great Truth by His Lord, and then blatantly refusing to accept that Truth.

Another instance of this wilful refusal to accept Truth for the lips of the Lord Jesus is given in Matt 16v21-27, which states the following:

"From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not

the things that be of God, but those that be of men. Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works."

Peter thought he knew better than His Lord, and taking Him aside began to rebuke Him and (supposedly) set Him right on this issue, however, we see in the reply of Jesus, just who was behind the words that Peter spoke, none other than the Devil, who was using Peter's fear of death and also (once again) the unscriptural traditions of the Sadducees, Scribes and Pharisees (whose teaching was that the Messiah would come in great glory and power and deliver Israel from the yoke of the Romans, and restore the kingdom to Israel), to try and turn the Lord Jesus out of the path that led to the Cross!

Immediately before this event, in Matt 16v13-20, Peter had been given a great revelation from God the Father, as to the identity of Whom the Son of Man was, that He was none other than the long promised Messiah. The Lord Jesus had called Peter "blessed" upon receiving this revelation from His Father, and it was this event and the words from the Lord Jesus, that made Peter think more highly of himself than he should have, and give him a wrong estimation of himself, in that he thought he knew better than His Lord as regards to important doctrinal truth. We need to make sure that we receive Truth and Revelation from God with humility of mind, and not get puffed up! As in all things the Lord Jesus is our example in this, He whose mind was filled with Truth, and indeed Who is The Truth, was also meek and lowly in heart and mind. Matt 11v28-30, John 1v14, 14v16.

Even though the vision had been repeated three times, to drive home to Peter the great Truth that was being conveyed to him through it, Peter still was completely ignorant as to the meaning of it, for Acts 10v17 states, "Now while Peter doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen should mean..."

"Doubted" is in Greek, "dieepórei," the imperfect active indicative of "diaporeo" (NT:1280), and means to be thoroughly nonplussed, (be in) doubt, be (much) perplexed, to be entirely at a loss.

We get another fascinating insight here, into just how great a darkness had been created in Peter's mind through the unscriptural traditions of the Sadducees, Scribes and Pharisees, Peter was completely puzzled as to the meaning of the vision. Very often a vision can be given to a person, and the meaning is completely hidden from them, and it is only through real prolonged earnest seeking of God that the meaning is revealed to them by the Holy Spirit. This was how the Prophets of the Old Testament obtained the revelation and meaning of the visions that God had given them. In 1Pet 1v10-12, three very strong Greek words are used for the process by which the Old Testament Prophets earnestly sought God, for illumination on the meaning of the visions imparted to them by God:

"Of which salvation the prophets **have inquired and searched diligently**, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: **Searching** what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.

"**Have inquired**" is in Greek, "exezeéteesan", the first aorist active indicative of "ekzeteo" (NT:1567), and means, to search out, i.e. (figuratively) investigate, enquire, seek after (carefully, diligently), to exert considerable effort and care in learning something - 'to make a careful search, to seek diligently to learn, to make an examination.'

"**Searched diligently**" in Greek is, "exeeraúneesan," the first aorist active indicative of "exeraunao" (NT:1830), which means, to explore, search diligently, to search anxiously and diligently.

"**Searching**" in Greek is "eraunoóntes" the present active participle of "eraunao" (NT:2045), meaning, to search, examine.

The two verbs ("exezeéteesan" and "exeeraúneesan") taken together give emphatic expression to the earnestness with which enlightenment was sought!

Dan 7v15,28 reads the following: "I Daniel was grieved in my spirit in the midst of my body, and the visions of my head troubled me. Hitherto is the end of the matter.....As for me Daniel, my cogitations much troubled me, and my countenance changed in me: but I kept the matter in my heart."

Daniel (one of the greatest Old Testament Prophets) was completely mystified as to what the vision meant, and thus earnestly sought the Lord for illumination as to the meaning of it.

And so, Peter, between the end of the "ekstasis" and actually meeting Cornelius (which was a time period of 2 days), he sought the Lord earnestly in prayer (he followed the example of the Old Testament Prophets) until he got the full meaning of the Truth the vision was conveying to him. His task, of discovering the meaning of the vision, was also made easier by the circumstances, that being the timely arrival of the three men that Cornelius had sent to find him, and their account of the angelic visitation that Cornelius had experienced. Acts 10v17-23, 1Pet 1v10-12.

Peter, having lodged the three men who came from Cornelius, then set out the next day, with six of the brethren (Jewish Christians), arriving at the house of Cornelius the following day, making a total of four days from when Cornelius had originally seen the vision of the angel, until Peter actually met him. When Peter entered Cornelius's house, he found it packed with his relatives and close friends; we have here another insight into Cornelius's wonderful walk of faith. Such was his godly example that his whole family and many of his friends had also become to believe in the Living God. They saw in him a beautiful Christ like character, and recognised the genuineness of his living faith through his very generous alms giving and great needs being met, with "mountains" being completely removed through his wonderful prayer (Greek, "proseuche" (NT:4335)) life, he was a real bright shining light for God. The knowledge of his great walk of faith had spread far and wide. Matt 5v14-16, Acts 10v22,24,27.

Cornelius then gives the account of the vision he had of the angel, and finished with the words in Acts 10v33, "Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things **that are commanded thee** (Greek, "prostetagména soi" the perfect passive participle of "prostasso" (NT:4367), with the dative case "soi;" Cornelius being a military man employs a military term, "prostasso," meaning "to command") of God." Peter had received a definite command from God, to preach the Gospel to Cornelius, his family, household and friends, and thus to ALL the nations from that time forth, when the words of the Lord in Acts 1v8 would at long last begin to see complete fulfilment.

The full meaning of the Lord's last words (before His Ascension into Heaven) to Peter (and the rest the Apostles) in Acts 1v8, are now (after having been spoken eleven years before) beginning to fully dawn upon his mind and spirit, and thus the full meaning of the "ekstasis" that he had on the roof top of Simon the tanner's house, for he speaks the following words in Acts 10v34,35:

"Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that **God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.**"

However, it is quite apparent that the six brethren that came with Peter, still were in complete darkness (and still thought that God **DID** show partiality to the Jews) as to God's plans and purposes for the Gentiles, for we read in Acts 10v45,46: "And they of the circumcision which believed **were astonished**, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God...." "Were astonished" is in Greek, "exésteesan," the second aorist active indicative, intransitive of "existemi" (NT:1839), and means "they stood out of themselves," to be amazed, thrown into wonderment.

Many Christians today think (because it is what they have been taught by their Pastors and Teachers) that if a person does not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, that they are bound for Hell and are completely unacceptable to God....But this is certainly **NOT** the case, because Peter clearly states the following (Acts 10v34,35): "...God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."

And this is in complete harmony with Paul's teaching in Rom 2v1-16, in which he deals with "The Judgement By God Of The Gentiles." Paul clearly states in Rom 2v6-11,16 the following:

"Who will render to every man according to his deeds: To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: For there is no respect of persons with God.... In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel."

Other persons who have been fully accepted by the Lord (and indeed who are noted for their wonderful examples of a living faith in the Living God), and who were **NOT** belonging to the Old or New Testament Churches, are Abel, Enoch, Noah, Job, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Sarah, Joseph, the Ninevites (after their repentance), Lydia etc. Job 1v1,8, Jonah 3v10, Matt 12v41, Acts 16v14, Heb 11v1-22.

Peter then proceeds to preach the Gospel to Cornelius and those persons who were in his house, he states that Christ is, "Lord of all" i.e. Lord of both Jew and Gentile, another indication that the Truth about God's plan for the Gentiles was now starting to permeate into his mind and understanding!

A Brief Overview Of Acts 10v38.

"How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him."

In Acts 10v34-43, when Peter preached to Cornelius and his friends, he stated in Acts 10v38, "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good, and healing all who were oppressed of the Devil, for God was with Him." We see: **"God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power."**

"Anointed," is "echrisen," the first aorist active of "chrio," "to anoint:" from which "Christos" is derived; Jesus was the Messiah, the promised "anointed one" of the prophecies. Acts 2v6, Isaiah 11v1-5. Jesus received this anointing for ministry at Jordan, when the Holy Spirit came upon Him. Matt 3v16,17, John 3v34, Luke 3v21,22, 4v1,2,14, Heb 1v8,9.

"Who went about doing good," "Hos dielthen euergeton."

"Dielthen," is the aorist active of "dierchomai," "to go through, or pass through, to go about from place to place." The travelling that our Lord did was truly amazing, and the pressure that this put upon Him was absolutely enormous. "Euergeton" is the present active participle of "euergeteo," "to do well, to do good;" it is from "eu," "well," and "ergon," "work." The substantive "euergetes," which means "benefactor," (see Luke 22v25), was used as a title of Ptolemy, "Ptolemy Euergetes," and it was used by other Hellenistic kings. The Lord Jesus was the only one who really deserved this title, it beautifully describes His totally sacrificial ministry. Christians, who have a ministry of healing to those who are oppressed by Satan, are doing good.

"And healing all who were oppressed by the Devil."

Vincent says, "The 'and,' 'kai,' has a particularising force: doing good, 'and in particular,' healing." Robertson says, "And healing (kai iomenos). And in particular healing." The main emphasis of our Lord's ministry was healing. The Lord Jesus healed, "all who were being oppressed;" "pantas tous katadunasteuomenous:" the present passive participle of "katadunasteuo," "to exercise power against someone, to oppress, to exploit, to dominate someone."

Satan uses his powers to dominate and oppress mankind with sickness and numerous other ills. 2Tim 2v26. Satan is the evil potentate, "dunastes," who dominated a dominion of death until Jesus destroyed Satan's power by His death on the cross. Heb 2v14. "Katadunasteuo" only occurs here and James 2v6, where it is used in the present active indicative of the rich oppressing the poor.

"For God was with Him." "Hoti ho theos en met autou." These words are used in John 3v2, by Nicodemus of the Lord Jesus; and by Gabriel of Mary, and of John Baptist in Luke 1v28,66, and of Joseph in Acts 7v9. This Scripture shows that Jesus did His miracles by the Holy Spirit's anointing, and not by His own power. Isaiah 11v1-15, 61v1 with Luke 4v18, John 5v18,19,30.

Peter uses "oppressed" to cover all of Satan's activities against mankind (it includes possession and all kinds of external "energising" by evil power, sickness, and his ruthless domination of mankind).

It has become common practice for Christians to use Peter's word "oppressed," in Acts 10v38, to speak of the attack of evil spirits from outside the body; however, Peter uses "oppressed" to speak of all of Satan's evil activities against mankind. The ministry of Jesus delivered all who were being oppressed by Satan, as John states; "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the Devil." Hallelujah! 1John 3v8.

Satan's attempts to corrupt, afflict, and cause pain to God's Creation.

The Scriptures inform us that evil angels have the power and ability to create human and animal bodies. Exodus 7v8-13,22, 8v7, Gen 6v4, Jude v6. In Luke 10v19, Jesus links creatures, like snakes and scorpions, which cause pain and death, with the power of the enemy. Is our Lord saying that Satan has created some of these harmful animals? Satan is also called by the name "Beelzebub," "the lord of flies," or "lord of dung and filth;" one could easily believe that mosquitoes, which cause so much sickness and death, are a creation of the Evil One. Our Lord and His Church rebuked sickness and disease in the same way that they rebuked demons, and they are certainly looked upon as enemies of the desire and will of God. Jesus indicates that many of the evil things in creation have been created by the malignant minds of evil angels. One cannot believe that a good God has created viruses, which cause (for example) the likes of German Measles (Rubella (Rubella virus)), which can cause deafness, heart defects, and mental retardation; and many other hurtful things, that cause pain and death to mankind. Some bacteria have a useful and essential function in nature, like those that take part in the nitrogen cycle; but others can be very definitely called evil, because of the great suffering they inflict upon the human race. It is quite conceivable that evil spirits, who delight in sadism, would desire to create evil things to cause mankind suffering and death, they certainly have both the desire and ability to do so. Heb 2v14.

Paul states in Rom 8v19-23, that the whole creation has been groaning in pain, and that it has been subject to "unreality." The word for "unreality," is "mataioteti," which means, aimlessness, futility, vanity, the inability to reach a goal, or achieve results. Eph 4v17, 2Pet 2v18. We see in Isaiah 11v5-9, that when Jesus returns the violence will go out of the creation; the wolf will lie down with the lamb, and the lion will eat straw like an ox, and the effect of God's blessing and presence will be health and blessing forever. Isaiah 65v17-25, Rev 21v1-8, 22v1-7.

The importance of having a correct terminology and genuine revelation gifts.

If we use Paul's descriptions of the attacks of Satan and his angels upon us; and define them as "fiery darts" and "energising;" we shall have a greater precision in our terminology about spiritual realities, and this will aid us in our spiritual warfare, and save us from wrong diagnosis in spiritual matters. We need both a correct theology on spiritual warfare, and a genuine operation of the revelation gifts of the Holy Spirit, if we are to accurately discern those who are really possessed by evil spirits, from those who are being attacked by demons that are outside of them. Eph 2v1-10, 6v10-20.

As we can see from these verses (Acts 10v34-43), Peter gives his listeners the basic Truth of the Gospel, and it is during

this very short time that they are “born again” and then immediately after their new birth (for a person must be “born again” first, before they can receive the Holy Spirit), the Lord Jesus baptises them (to the great amazement of the six (Jewish) brethren who came with Peter) in the Holy Spirit. Peter and the six Jewish brethren knew that Cornelius, his family and friends, had been “born again” and baptised with the Holy Spirit, **because** they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. They had received the same gift (of tongues) as the one hundred and twenty had received on the Day of Pentecost (Friday, 26th May 30 AD), when they received the promise of God the Father (being baptised in the Holy Spirit). Cornelius, his family and friends had the Holy Spirit “with” them, before they were “born again” but when they became Christians, and were baptised in the Holy Spirit, He Who was with them, then entered them, filling the Temple of the Living God, which is their body (soul and spirit). John 3v1-21, 7v37-39, 14v15-18, Acts 1v4-8, 2v1-47, 10v44-48, 11v17, 1Cor 6v19, 2Cor 6v16.

The Apostles (including the rest of the one hundred and twenty in the Upper Room) had been with the Lord Jesus for well over three years, having had close intimate fellowship and teaching from Him, then a period of forty days of His post resurrection ministry, and finally eight days (the Ascension of the Lord Jesus, having taken place on Thursday, 18th May 30 AD) in the Upper Room of seeking God in prayer (Greek, “proseuche” (NT:4335)) and supplication (Greek, “deesis” (NT:1162) in one accord (Greek, “homothumadon” (NT:3661))). This was the least amount of preparation that they ALL required, so that their heart, minds, souls and spirits were ready to receive the promise of the Father, the Holy Spirit, on the Day of Pentecost. This was in great contrast to Cornelius, his family, household and friends, who had never met the Lord Jesus (in the flesh), nor had the close intimate fellowship and teaching, or the forty days post resurrection ministry that the Apostles and the rest of the one hundred and twenty had enjoyed. This also is another wonderful insight into just how sanctified and godly Cornelius and those gathered in his house, to hear the Truth from Peter’s lips, were, in that they were “born again” as soon as they heard the Gospel, and then immediately afterwards, they were baptised in the Holy Spirit. This is in tremendous contrast to the preparation that the Apostles and the rest of the one hundred and twenty required to receive the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. To say that God made His criteria lower (i.e. the spiritual condition of each individual), so that He could baptise Cornelius and those gathered in his house with the Holy Spirit, simply to demonstrate to Peter and the six brethren, that Gentiles were “acceptable” to Him as well as the Jews, is completely false. The fact of the matter is, that if Cornelius et al, had not been sanctified and spiritually prepared to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit, God would NOT have done so, because their in absolutely NO partiality with God.

With this being the case, we need to ask ourselves, what made the difference between the length of time it took to prepare the Apostles and the rest of the one hundred and twenty and Cornelius and those gathered in his house? Well, it is quite simply this, the minds of the Apostles and the one hundred and twenty had been filled with such great darkness, because of the unscriptural traditions of the Sadducees, Scribes and Pharisees that they had imbibed during their lifetime up until the time they had met and believed in the Lord Jesus. And so, because their minds were reprobate on so many important spiritual Truths, it took such a long time to prepare them and get their hearts and minds into a correct spiritual state to receive the Holy Spirit. The Lord Jesus really had a very difficult time in reversing the terrible effects upon His disciples’ minds and spirits from the leaven of the Scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees that they had imbibed. We get a real glimpse of the darkness they were still in at the time of the Ascension of the Lord Jesus into heaven; Acts 1v4-8, states:

“And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. **For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.** When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, **Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?** And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and **ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.**”

The most important Truths regarding the Church, the New Covenant and everything pertaining to it, were still completely veiled to the minds and spirits of the Apostles (because of the great darkness still upon their minds). It is also necessary to understand that of all the many victories that the Lord Jesus won at Nazareth (during the thirty hidden years of His preparation), the one that is most outstanding and glorious is that which He won over the false unscriptural traditions of the Scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees...absolutely amazing! In a place of great moral and spiritual depravity (Nazareth), His Father taught Him day by day spiritual Truths (from the Scriptures) and important lessons that can only be learned from the experiences of life (so that He would be a perfect Saviour and High Priest for His people, being able to sympathise fully with them, Heb 2v10,17,18, 4v15), so that by the age of thirty His heart was filled with Grace and His mind with Truth. The written Word (of the Scriptures) had taken possession of His soul, mind and being, transforming the Babe of Bethlehem into the Christ of God, so that He could say to the Devil during His Temptation in the Wilderness that, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God,” (which Christ had done at Nazareth for 30 years, and would continue to do, right up until the His crucifixion). During the thirty years at Nazareth, the Lord Jesus, saw His past, present and future clearly laid out in the Scriptures, which He Himself had given to the Old Testament prophets. Exodus 3v1-15, Deut 8v3, Isaiah 49v1-13, 50v3-8, Matt 4v4,15,16, John 1v14,46,47, 8v58, Heb 11v26.

Another important fact worth noting is that many of the Lord’s people today (and indeed since His Ascension), are no different than the Apostles, and the rest of the one hundred and twenty, for the Lord still has to deal with so much darkness in their minds and spirits (because of the unscriptural traditions that has filled them) before He can baptise them in the Holy Spirit and bring them onto perfection (of their faith and character), and indeed, far from “going onto maturity,” many believers remain as “non speaking babes and sucklings” for the whole of their Christian life, which is a

great tragedy! Matt 15v1-20, Luke 11v52, Eph 4v7-16, Heb 5v5-6v8.

With Cornelius and those with him in his house, being baptised in the Holy Spirit, Peter then makes the following statement (Acts 10v47): "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?"

This was levelled at the six Jewish brethren who came with him, who were at this point, bowled over completely with utter amazement at the fact that the Lord Jesus had baptised "these Gentiles" in the Holy Spirit, giving them the "same gift" as the one hundred and twenty had received on the Day of Pentecost (the lovely gift of tongues). With no reply coming from them, Peter then commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord, which is a reference to "baptism in water" (which is one of the first principles of the oracles of God listed in Hebrews 5v12-6v8 (esp. Heb 6v1,2, "Baptisms" (plural) which is a reference to "Baptism in Water" and "Baptism in the Holy Spirit")). The Holy Spirit is the agent of regeneration, "baptism in water" is the outward sign and ordinance of regeneration. Acts 2v38,39, Titus 3v5, 1Pet 3v18-22.

Baptism In Water.

Divine Energies are brought to play at "baptism in water", it is not just an empty form, it gives us a new, real, and lasting experience of God, when we accept and take hold of God's covenant with us in God's way, with true repentance and faith.

The Greek Word That Is Used For Baptism In Water Is "Baptizo."

This is full of significance; it is not "bapto," to dip, but "baptizo," to "immerse."

This shows why there was the need for "much water."

We see the need for "much water" to immerse people when John Baptist immersed people in John 3v23, and Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch went "down into the water," in Acts 8v38,39.

The relationship between "baptizo" and "bapto" are very similar to our English "to immerse" and "to dip." "Baptizo" gives the indication of people staying permanently under the water; "bapto" gives the thought of a temporary immersion. People obviously come up out of the water after baptism, or all would be drowned. Why, then, did God use "baptizo" instead of "bapto?" God wanted to convey that baptism in water instituted permanent and eternal realities and attitudes, and it was not just a brief rite and formality. We see:

In the baptism for repentance and remission of sins, God wanted to convey that a person should continue to live under the influence of repentance and remission of sins, not for a moment, but for ever.

The baptism into the name of the Father Son and Spirit, was to impress us with the fact that as believers we are going to live under the loving and gracious guidance and gentle Lordship of the Trinity, not just for a time, but for eternity. Matt 28v19.

The baptism into the body of Christ means that after baptism a person is eternally linked with the body of Christ. Baptism inaugurates us into Christ's Church. It is not just a momentary thing, it is permanent. 1Cor 12v13.

The baptism in the Spirit, likewise, is not a temporally thing for the Spirit comes to surround and guard us, and abide with us, and immerse us in Himself for ever. John 14v16,17, 16v13-15. "to immerse."

Both "baptizo" and "bapto" "to dip, " carry the thought not only of immersion, but dyeing and impregnation.

This is seen in the use of "bapto" in Rev 19v13, we read that our Lord's garments are dyed with His own precious blood, "his garments are dipped in blood." His garments proclaim to all, that He who comes to judge has died for all those who will receive it. So we see that the abiding influence of repentance and regeneration, the abiding influence and fellowship of the body of Christ, and the abiding influence and presence of the Father, Son, and Spirit, are intended to dye and impregnate the soul with divine life and purity, and help to conform every child of God to the image of Jesus. Rom 8v28,29, 2Cor 3v18.

Paul's Important Statements On Baptism In Water.

The baptism service is a burial service for the old life.

Rom 6v4: "Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." (NKJV)

Rom 6v4: "By our baptism, then, we were buried with Him and shared His death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from death by the glorious power of the Father, so also we might walk in newness of life, and live a new life." (TEV)

Paul rejoices in the glorious fact that baptism is not just a picture, but a definite event in which the believer shares in Christ's death, burial and resurrection, and starts to live and walk in a totally new life. "In newness of life," is "en (NT:1722), kainoteti (NT:2538), zoes (NT:2222)." Baptism points backwards to Christ's death and burial and to our death

to sin, Rom 6v1, and forward to Christ's resurrection from the dead, and to our new life in Jesus on the other side of the baptismal grave. This is not just a picture but a glorious living reality.

"Therefore we are buried with him," is "sunetaphemen," (NT:4916), rather, 'we were buried with Him;' for it is looked upon as a past act, which was finished and completed at our reception of the Gospel, and sealed at our baptism in water. "Sunetaphemen" is the aorist passive indicative of "sunthapto" (NT:4916), to bury together with, it only occurs in the New Testament here in Rom 6v4 and Col 2v12. Our old lives were buried "by baptism into death," with Christ's death, and we started to "walk in newness of life," by union with the risen Saviour, and by sharing in His resurrection life. We should never go back to "those things whereof we are now ashamed," Rom 6v21, if we do, we deny our burial and resurrection with Christ to newness of life, and "forget, that we have been purged from our old sins." 2Pet 1v9.

As the baptism service is a burial service for the old life. This means:

God has buried our sins, and He forbids anyone to dig up the stinking corpses of our past.

Anybody who digs up, or tries to pry into, our past, is in real trouble with God. Don't let Satan resurrect condemnation over your past, when you repent of your sins, they are buried with Jesus, never to be remembered any more. Psalm 32v1, 51v1,9, 73v38, 103v12, Isaiah 1v18, 43v25, 55v7, Jer 31v34 with Heb 8v10-12, Acts 3v19. God delights in mercy. Micah 7v18,19 states: "Who is a God like unto Thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He retaineth not his anger for ever, because He delighteth in mercy and loving-kindness. He will turn again, He will have compassion upon us; He will subdue our iniquities. Thou wilt cast all our sins into the depths of the sea."

We should make sure the old life remains dead and buried and crucified with Jesus. (Rom 6v2-6).

Our old desires and life should be crucified with Christ. Rom 6v6. We should "mortify" and "put off the old man" and "put on the new man," "put on "agape" love," and "put on Christ." Col 3v5-14. We read in Gal 3v26-28, "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. **For as many of you as have been baptised into Christ have put on Christ.** There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." Paul in Rom 13v14 appeals to the Romans, "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." We read in Eph 4v22-24, that Paul similarly instructs the Ephesians, "That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."

The baptism service is a resurrection service for life in the heavenly places. (Rom 6v4,5).

Walking in newness of life, and experiencing the glory of the Father. Planted in the likeness of Christ's resurrection. Rom.6v4,5.

Crucifixion of the old life is through the law of the spirit of life in Christ. Rom 8v1,2. Christ's victory over the flesh, is the grounds of our victory. Rom 8v3,4. The life of Jesus energising our souls and spirits is our means of victory.

Seated in heavenly places in Christ. (Eph 1v3, 1v20, 2v6).

However, we have to fight spiritual wickedness, Greek, "poneros" (NT:4190) which is an active corrupting evil, much worse than "kakos" (NT:2556) which is abstract evil. Satan is "Ho poneros," the one who is actively corrupting people into evil.

Peter Tells Us That Baptism In Water Gives Us A Good Conscience Towards God. (1Pet 3v21).

Baptism in water does not wash away the filthiness of the flesh.

Paul had to beat his body under. 1Cor 9v24-27, "...So I fight, not as one who beats the air; But I discipline my body and buffet it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified." (NKJV) This is best accomplished by fellowship, fasting and prayer. John Wesley would not allow anyone to be a local preacher who would not fast until 4:00 pm on two days a week. We read that even Jesus found it necessary to discipline His body by prayer and fasting. Psalm 69v9-11, Matt 4v2.

A good conscience means I have done what God told me to do.

You know that you have obeyed God's command to be baptised, and have accepted God's covenant in God's prescribed way.

In Acts 22v16, we read, "Arise and be baptised and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."

So linked is baptism with forgiveness that this was the method of appeal to seekers in the early Church. The appeal was not "Would you please raise your hands," it was, "Please come forward and be baptised." Titus 3v5. The cleansing bath of regeneration is linked with baptism in the New Testament. The Bible does not teach baptismal regeneration, but it does

teach baptismal obedience and good conscience that is obtained by obeying God's Word.

In Heb 6v2 We Read That Baptism In Water Is A Foundation Truth Of The Christian Faith.

Baptism in water and the Spirit are among the Foundation Truths of Christianity, they are vital and indispensable Christian practices and experiences, not the way out doctrines of fanatics.

The Example Of Our Lord Jesus. Matt 3v13-17.

Our Lord was baptised "to fulfil ALL righteousness," Matt 3v15. "plerosai (NT:4137), pasan (NT:3956), dikaiosúnen (NT:1343)." Jesus took our place as a sinner, this shows that we have got to be baptised. The dying thief shows we can get to heaven without being baptised, but it is best to follow our Lord's command and example.

Baptismal Formulae's And Confessions.

NB It is what the baptised convert says that is critical, not what those who are baptising them say.

Baptism in the name of Jesus means more than just the statement of a baptismal formulae over a person. It is a statement of repentance and remission of sins through faith in Jesus. Acts 18v25, Acts 19v1-6. **We read in Mark 1v5, that people who were baptised by John confessed their sins as they were being baptised.** Christians should not only "confess their sins" they should confess their faith in Jesus. It is the statement of the convert that really counts, not what the person who is baptising them says.

The "Jesus only" doctrine has caused great division in some churches, particularly over baptism in water, it states that God is one person who manifests Himself as three persons, this doctrine is called Modalistic Sebellianism, and is so called because this doctrine was introduced and preached by Sabellius who lived about 240 AD. Great division occurred because people disagreed over the baptismal formulae that was to be proclaimed over those who were being baptised. Converts have been told that they needed to be re-baptised because they had not had the statement said over them, "I baptise you in the name of Jesus," as they were being baptised. Others have insisted that people were not baptised properly because they were not baptised in the name of the Trinity. All this is foolish faith destroying nonsense, that brings division to the Church of Christ.

In Matt 28v18-20, the apostles were told to baptise in the **NAME** of the Father, Son and Spirit; and we see the early Church did baptise in the **NAME** of Jesus. Acts 2v38, 8v16, 10v48, 19v5, and 22v16. The Greek word for "name," is "onoma," and it is used in the New Testament in the same way that it was used in the Septuagint and papyri, for someone acting with the delegated power and authority of the person's name they used; as with our police, when they say, "I arrest you in the name of the Queen." Disciples were to baptise with the authority of the Father, Son, and Spirit. Matt 10v41, Acts 3v6,16, 4v7,17,18,30, 5v28,40, 16v18, 19v13. Our recognition of this delegated authority does not in any way lessen our appreciation of the spiritual and mystical union with the Trinity implied in baptism.

Robertson says that "eis" should be translated as "in" in Matt 28v19, whereas, Vincent feels that "into" is the best translation. It is interesting to note that Peter uses "en," "in," in Acts 10v48, and uses "epi," "upon," in Acts 2v38. It is tragic to see Christians being re-baptised in the name of Jesus, because they have been taught that the baptismal formula of the Trinity, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit," spoken over them in baptism, was not correct. However, is not "the Son," the Lord Jesus? Does anything have to be said, if baptism is done in His name? Is Matt 28v19 to be ignored, and without authority?

To save Christians from controversy with those who have a strong baptismal axe to grind, I say at baptism, "I baptise you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, the Lord Jesus, and of the Holy Spirit." This stops both sides from harassing the person being baptised. Let us remember that baptism is intended to unite Christians, not divide them. 1Cor 12v13, 1v10-17, 3v1-16.

"What Mean Ye By This Ordinance?"

What is the doctrine that water baptism teaches? What relationship with the Lord Jesus does baptism in water reveal?

We Proclaim A Covenant Seal And Sign Between Ourselves And God.

We proclaim that we are accepting God's covenant in God's way.

This involves bringing forth fruits worthy of repentance. Luke 3v8. We read in Mark 1v4, that it is a baptism obligating repentance. "Repentance," in Mark 1v4, is "metanoia," which means a change of mind that results in a change of life.

We also read in Mark 1v5, that as people were being baptised, they were confessing their sins. "Confessing," is "exomologoumenoi," the present middle participle of "exomologeomai" 'to confess publicly, to vow openly'. "Baptizo" to baptise in Matt 3v6, is "ebaptizonto" the imperfect passive of "baptizo," which shows the continual ministry of John and the continual stream of people being baptised by him.

We Proclaim The Reality Of Our Lord's Death And resurrection.

We proclaim that Jesus died and rose for us. We proclaim that we are identified with Jesus in His death. Our old life and sins are buried with Jesus. We proclaim our repentance and remission of sin through faith in Jesus.

We Proclaim Our resolve To Walk In Newness Of Christ's Resurrection Life. (2Cor 6v14-17).

We are "baptised into Jesus." Rom 6v3,4, Gal 3v27, we are not baptised to enter a denomination, we were baptised to receive the benefits of Christ's atoning death, and His resurrection life.

Some Of Those Who Were Baptised.

Believers, young and old, who knew their sins are buried with Jesus.

Jesus was baptised as an adult. Matt 3v13-16. God was well pleased with His life and this act of obedience.

Even Scribes, Pharisees, soldiers were convicted of their sins. Luke 3v7, also Tax-collectors, Luke 7v29.

Repentance first. Repent and be baptised everyone of you. Acts 2v38.

Receive word first, "those who gladly received His Word were baptised." Acts 2v41.

Men and women. They were baptised both men and women. Acts 8v12.

Ethiopian Eunuch. Acts 8v36. "What doth hinder me to be baptised." he asked for baptism in water.

Paul. Acts 9v18. In Acts 22v16, Ananias said, "Why tarriest thou? arise and be baptised and wash away thy sins calling on the name of the Lord." This shows the close connection between forgiveness and baptism.

The House of Cornelius. Peter commanded them to be baptised. Acts 10v47,48.

Lydia was baptised and her household. Acts 16v15. Did she have grown up children? There is no mention of a husband.

The household of the jailor also could have been grown up, he could have been an old soldier. Acts 16v33.

Corinthians baptised. Acts 18v8.

Ephesians were baptised. Acts 19v1-6. NB 3v5.

Household of Stephanas. 1Cor 1v16. NB 13-16.

In 1Cor 12v13, "By one spirit were ye baptised into one body and were all made to drink of one spirit."

"Drink," is "potizo." "One body," the whole Church, not a part of the Church. The Church is not a denomination, local church, or fellowship, it is the whole body of Christ. "Baptism for the dead," was a false doctrine invented by some of the Corinthians. 1Cor 15v29.

Teach all nations baptising them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Matt 28v19.

The imperfect knowledge of baptism of Apollos. Acts 18v25; and the Ephesians. Acts 19v3. They only knew the baptism of John. Apollos preached accurately what he knew, but his knowledge was limited. Priscilla and Aquila filled up the gaps in the knowledge of Apollos and taught him the way of God more accurately, Acts 18v26, the adverb "akribesteron." NB Eph 4v5. One Lord, one faith, one baptism.

What to do when you are baptised.

Repentance first, faith next, then baptism. Acts 2v38. Confess your sins Mark 1v5. Confess your faith in Jesus.

The Posture And Prayer In Baptism.

Pray, praise, and worship. Jesus was praying as He was baptised. Luke 3v21. Ananias tells Paul to call on the name of the Lord in Acts 22v16, this is an invocation of His name in prayer. The posture of baptism is therefore important. Some throw people backwards in baptism, and this causes water to run up the person's nose who is being baptised and greatly discomforts them. The normal posture of prayer is kneeling, Eph 3v14, and it also gives far less discomfort to those who are being baptised, they do not have to worry about getting the water out of their sinuses. I have known people who were baptised in the sea, to be lost in worship and prayer for over 15 minutes after they were baptised.

Like your Lord have an attitude of submission and dedication to God.

Expect the Holy Ghost.**Expect your Heavenly Father's expression of pleasure.**

Expect God to give you the maximum of spiritual benefit, and adore and thank Him for His gracious gifts and goodness to you.

Recapitulation.**Immersion In Water And The Holy Spirit Are A Glorious Reality, Not Just A Theological Exercise.**

The Greek word for baptism, "baptizo," is used for both baptism in water and the baptism in the Spirit. The basic word of this Greek root, "bapto," "to dip," only occurs three times in the New Testament, Luke 16v24, John 13v26, and Rev 19v13. In Rev 19v13, "bapto" is used in its secondary sense, "to dye or stain." It is also necessary to note both the primary and secondary meanings of "baptizo." Though the primary meaning of "baptizo," is "to immerse," or "to submerge," its secondary meaning, which is derived and developed from its primary meaning, can refer to the influence which one thing exercises over another. "Baptizo," then, can speak, like "bapto," not only of an immersion, but also of an impregnation and infusion of the element of immersion, as in dyeing and staining. It speaks of a bringing into complete subjection to an influence, and an imbibing of the virtues and nature of that influence. We should also note that in many cases, though not in every case, the same distinction occurs between "bapto" and "baptizo," as between their English equivalents, "to dip" and to "immerse;" "dipping" speaking of a momentary or temporary covering, "immersion" usually implying a prolonged or permanent covering. To be baptised with the Holy Spirit and fire, should mean that our whole personality is permanently influenced by, and deliberately submitted to, and stained and dyed, by the transforming influence, presence, power, and sanctifying purity of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit comes to transfigure us into Christ's likeness, and conform us to His image, as well as to empower us. Rom 8v28,29, 12v1,2, 2Cor 3v17,18.

In the New Testament, "baptizo" is used in the sense of permanent immersion and infusion, in regard to baptism for repentance and remission of sins, baptism in the name of Trinity, or baptism into the body of Christ, or baptism in the Holy Spirit. Matt 3v11, 28v19, Mark 1v4, Luke 3v16, 1Cor 12v13, These baptisms do not speak of a temporary dipping in an element, they speak of a permanent immersion under the influence of the thing suggested. Though "baptizo," "to immerse," is used in the weaker sense of "bapto," "to dip," in water baptism, (otherwise all who are baptised would be drowned); the actual spiritual realities connected with baptism, abide and continue. To be baptised unto repentance and remission of sins, means being brought under the power and influence of repentance and remission of sins, not for a moment, but for all time.

To be baptised into Christ's death and resurrection, is to be permanently identified with Christ in His death and resurrection, not for a moment, but for ever. Rom 6v9-11. To be baptised into the body of Christ, is the permanent placing of ourselves under the influence and power of Christ and His body, the Church. To be baptised into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, is not just a mere baptismal formula, it is to come under the power and influence of the Trinity, not for a moment, but eternally and permanently.

Immersed in the transforming, sanctifying and miracle-working Holy Spirit.

In Luke 24v49 and Acts 1v4,5, Jesus called the baptism in the Holy Spirit, "the promise of the Father," and instructed His disciples to tarry until they received it. In Acts 2v38,39, Peter said that this baptism in the Spirit was promised to every Christian. The Samaritans, Paul, Cornelius and his friends, are stated to have received the Holy Spirit after the initial outpouring on the day of Pentecost. Acts 2v1-16, 8v14-17, 9v17,18, 10v44-48, 19v1-6. The reception of the Holy Spirit is spoken of as a "baptism" six times in the New Testament; four times in the Gospels, by John the Baptist, and twice in Acts. Matt 3v11, Mark 1v8, Luke 3v16, John 1v33, Acts 1v5, 11v16. The phrases "filled with the Holy Spirit," Acts 2v4, 9v17, "the gift of the Holy Spirit," Acts 2v38, 10v45, 5v32, Rom 5v5; "received the Holy Spirit," Acts 8v14-21, 10v47, 19v2, 1Cor 2v12, Gal 3v2; "the promise of the Spirit," Gal 3v14; "the seal of the Spirit," Eph 1v13, 4v30; are all used to speak of the baptism in the Spirit. The words "anointing" and "dwell in" are also used to speak of the result of the baptism in the Spirit. 1John 2v20,27, 3v24, 4v13, Rom 8v9,23, 1Cor 6v19,20, John 14v16,17.

The phrase "filled with the Holy Spirit," is used to speak of other operations of the Holy Spirit's work, as well as the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Luke 1v15,41,67, Acts 2v4, 4v31,8, 13v9. In the Old Testament men and women of God were filled with the Holy Spirit just to fulfil a mission; however, in John 7v35-37, we are told that they were not baptised in the Holy Spirit, this is a New Testament experience, given to the Church by our glorified Lord; God's New Testament children receive the permanent filling of the Spirit, "He shall abide with you forever." John 14v16,17.

Some think, and I feel correctly, that 1Cor 12v13, "For by one Spirit we were all baptised into one body," is referring to water baptism and not to the baptism in the Spirit, as O. M. Norlie translates it, "And by one Spirit we have through baptism been made members of one body." The Holy Spirit is the agent of regeneration, the baptism in water is the outward sign and ordinance of regeneration. The second part of this verse, "were made to drink into one Spirit," clearly gives the picture of the baptism in the Spirit; for the Greek word for "drink" is "potizo," which is used in the Septuagint in Isaiah 43v20, to speak of a wilderness flooded by abundant waters. "Potizo," truly conveys the thought of Isaiah 44v3, "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and FLOODS upon the dry ground." This Spirit-flooded life, is the

Spirit-baptised life. In the Septuagint (the Greek Old Testament), "potizo" is used to speak of the abundance of water that brings abundant fruitfulness. In Gen 2v6, it is used of the heavy dew that God used to water the ground before the flood; in Gen 2v10, of the river that watered the garden of Eden into abundant fruitfulness. In Gen 13v10,11, we read that before God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, the land around them was "well watered," and like the garden of God; Lot greedily chose this area for himself, and spiritually ruined his life. In Gen 21v19, it is used of the well of water that God provided for Hagar in the desert; and in Gen 24v14,17,18,43,45,46, of the drink that Rebekah drew from the well for Abraham's servant, Eliezer. This Spirit-flooded abundantly fruitful life, is the Spirit-baptised life.

Conclusion.

Baptism in water, then, is more than an outward sign of allegiance to Christ; it is the deliberate placing of oneself, under His influence and headship. The important thing is not a baptismal formula, the essential thing is the total submission of our whole personality to Christ; to be imbued, stained, impregnated and influenced, abidingly and permanently, with the presence and power of our dear Lord Jesus, and to experience all the benefits of His death and resurrection life. In the same way, to be baptised with the Holy Spirit and fire, means that our whole personality is deliberately submitted to, and permanently submerged under, influenced by, and saturated and impregnated with, the presence, power, and sanctifying purity of the Holy Spirit. Our personality is still our own, but the Holy Spirit comes to transfigure our lives by His presence, and to imbue us with His virtues, abilities, life and love. 2Cor 3v18. However, I do not want to give the impression that we cannot fall from a state of grace, we can, let us be careful not to grieve or resist our gracious guest. 1Thess 5v19-22, Eph 4v30.

The news that Peter had preached the Gospel to the Gentiles (Cornelius et al) had reached Jerusalem by the time he had returned there, and as soon as Peter got there, "they that were of the circumcision contended with him." Acts 11v2. "They that were of the circumcision" in Greek is "hoi ek peritomeés" and means literally, "those of circumcision" (on the side of circumcision, of the circumcision party), and refers to the Judaizers within the Church, who furiously held that the individual (male) had to be circumcised and that all had to keep the Law of Moses to be saved. Acts 15v5. These are those of the sect of the Pharisees which "believed", and certainly NOT a reference to Jewish Christians in general. Note: In Acts 15v5, it says, "certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed," these people were still Pharisaic in word, thought and deed, and there had been no change of heart or mind, but only a mere lip service to Christ. Their minds were still filled with their unscriptural (oral) traditions, which meant that they were still filled with lawlessness and uncleanness, and the words of the Lord Jesus, "ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones" still held true for these evil persons. Matt 23v1-39.

The Judaizers blindly refused to see that Christ had fulfilled the Law with its types and prophecies, so the type was no longer necessary; they had Christ the living fulfilment of the type, not the shadow. Heb 8v1-13, 9v15,23,24, 10v8,9. They caused great havoc within the whole Church, from this time (41 AD) onwards, right up until Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 AD by Titus. Acts 15v5, Gal 2v12. This is the first reference to this group of persons within the Church at Jerusalem, Paul says of them in 2Cor 11v13-15:

"For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works."

The people within this sect in the Church were under the control of the Devil, and were the tools which he was using to try and destroy the beautiful liberty, love, unity, and fellowship of Christ's Church, and bring them back under "law" again, into legalism and bondage. They would have fallen from Grace and been estranged from Christ, and the Presence and Power of God would have departed from the Church. If this had succeeded, the Church would just have become another "sect" within Judaism. Gal 5v1-6.

An important question to ask is; "why did the twelve apostles of the church at Jerusalem allow these persons to gain such authority, standing and foothold in the church?" After all it was the Scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees whom the Devil had used to crucify the Lord Jesus, and also who had persecuted the young church at Jerusalem so ruthlessly, immediately after the Ascension of the Lord Jesus, and the coming of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. John.11v57, Acts 4v1-21, 5v17-42.

There are two reasons for the apostle's failure to deal with the great threat from the (supposedly converted) Sadducees and Pharisees who had infiltrated the church at Jerusalem:

NB The apostle's minds were still in darkness regarding all the Truth pertaining to the Church and the New Covenant, and those things associated with it (God's plan for the Gentiles etc). The Lord Jesus had said to them at the Last Supper, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." **John 16v12.** Jesus had also said of the twelve apostles in Matt 11v25, that they were spiritual "babes" (Greek, "neepiois," from "nepios" (NT:3516), which means literally, "without the power of speech," and refers to a little child or infant, immaturity is always associated with this word. When Peter wrote his second epistle in 68 AD, just before his death, he wrote in 2Pet 3v15,16: **"even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood,** which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction."

So we see that even in the closing months of Peter's life, he still did **NOT** have a full understanding of some of the vital truths that Paul taught, and still found some things difficult to understand. This was even **AFTER** all the Christians had heeded Christ's warning and departed from Jerusalem to Pella in Decapolis. This was before Vespasian and his son Titus surrounded and besieged Jerusalem, and fulfilled the prophecy that the Lord Jesus had spoken on Sunday, 2nd April A.D. 30. The prophecy of Luke 19v41-44. was being fulfilled before their very eyes!

If this was the condition of Peter, who was, along with John, the most spiritually minded and "open" to the Truth, we can really see how entrenched the other ten apostles must have been by the end of their lives. And indeed we get a striking picture of the terrible blindness of the apostle James (the Lord's half brother) in Acts 22v18-27, who along with the elders of the Jerusalem church, suggested that Paul should undertake a Nazarite vow. This involved the sacrifice of burnt offerings, sin offerings and peace offerings, as well as a basket of unleavened cakes and a libation of wine. Num 6v1-21. While it is true that God had ordained the ceremonies of the Law, and the Jews had practised them in God's will for fifteen centuries, and the apostles had used the Temple for a period, Luke 24v53, Acts 3v1, there can be no doubt that the Old Covenant had passed away when Christ came and died. John 1v17, Matt 11v11-14, Heb 8v7-13, 10v1-9.

It is almost unbelievable to see Paul, the chief exponent of justification by faith, not only standing in the Temple and submitting himself to the Law, but also to the petty ceremonial additions of the Rabbis, and all this was **AFTER** God had told Paul **NOT** to go to Jerusalem. This disobedience of Paul brought about tragic results. Acts 20v22,23, 21v4,11-14. Why did Paul disobey the Lord and go to Jerusalem? **Paul's love for his people drove him to Jerusalem; he was willing to be accursed from Christ, if it could only have saved them.** Rom 9v1-5. It is very sad that the apostles and elders of the church at Jerusalem were the means of bringing the prophetic warnings to pass. They should have defended Paul's teaching of the New Covenant, but their appeal was based on an unscriptural expediency, and it nearly cost Paul his life. It all shows how difficult it is to break free of our (unscriptural manmade) traditions, and how the fear of man (which is the second reason why the apostles did not deal with the Sadducees and Pharisees in the church at Jerusalem) can hinder and harm the church of God. If we are not careful we can be as presumptuous and disobedient as the Israelites, who disobeyed God's command to Moses that nothing was to be added or taken away from the pattern that He had given, Heb 8v5, they ignored this command and added thousands of their own traditions and rules and so made the Word of God of none effect. In the end they persuaded themselves that their tradition was God's truth and rejected Christ in favour of their own tradition and murdered their Messiah. Matt 15v1-20, Luke 11v52.

This was the Devil's third (and most devastating to date) planned attack against the Church at Jerusalem, the first being that of the incident involving Ananias and Sapphira and the second was the great persecution that occurred after the stoning of Stephen, which lasted up until just after Paul left Jerusalem and went to Tarsus in 37 AD. When the Devil was not able to destroy the Church at Jerusalem through lust for money and great persecution, he then used the Pharisees (including the Scribes) and Sadducees (the majority of the "priests" mentioned in Acts 6v7 would have been Sadducees) in an attempt to try and bring destructive heresy into it. Acts 5v1-11, 6v1, 8v1, 9v31, Eph 6v10-20.

In the letters to the seven Churches in the book of Revelation, Jesus reveals the people and means by which Satan attacks these churches, and these "means" are still used by the Devil today. (Rev 2 & 3).

False Religion. This, rather than atheism, is Satan's objective, for by this means he can deceive more people, and his real aim is worship of himself. False religion is seen in the following ways in these churches.

Synagogue. Rev 2v9. Even the order laid down by God can become the instrument of Satan, if only the outward form is carried out, and truth and Christ are rejected in favour of man-made tradition. The Temple of God at Jerusalem became a den of thieves instead of the house of prayer for all nations, and Israel's religious leaders rejected and crucified their Christ. Many Churches today have a "form" (Greek, "mórfoosin" from "mórfosis" (NT:3446), which means "an outward form without any inner essential reality," 2Tim 3v5) of godliness, but denying its power. The persons in these Churches have filled their minds with the unscriptural traditions of men (which have been taught to them by their pastor teachers), which shuts out Truth completely from their beings, thus bringing great darkness upon them. Neither do they have any inner communion with the Lord Jesus. The Lord Jesus is firmly shut out of these Churches, the leaders of which seek only the glory and honour of men, and not that which comes from God alone. John 5v44, Rom 2v17-24.

Paganism. Rev 2v20. The gods of the heathen are really demons, or Satan, who desires to be like God and be worshipped, he is the god of this degenerate world. 1Cor 10v19-21, 2Tim 3v7,8, 2Cor 4v4, 2Thess 2v7,8, Rev 13.

False Doctrine. John 8v44. Satan had infiltrated several of the seven churches with deadly false doctrines that included immorality and idolatry. Sensuous evil teaching such as this was part of the teaching of the Nicolaitanes, Baalamites, and the followers of Jezebel, and this kind of lawless Antinomianism has been a bane of the Church throughout its history. The voice of God repeats again and again, "Be ye holy, as I am holy." 1Pet 1v15,16, Rev 3v7, 4v8, 15v4, 6v10, 22v11.

Martyrdom. Rev 2v10. What Satan cannot win by seduction he tries to destroy by persecution, he has often used those who have unscriptural traditions, or practice false religion, or have political power, to persecute God's dear children.

Worldly Interests. Rev 3v14-22. Satan once offered Christ the world in exchange for His cross and he still comes with the same offer to the brethren of Jesus. The church at Laodicea had succumbed to this temptation, and many others who resist Satan in other ways often fall prey to prosperity. We are urged to keep ourselves from the idols of the world and all worldliness. 1Tim 6v17-19, 1John 2v15-17, 4v4,5, 5v4. A struggle for power in the church is one of the most dangerous

and sinful of the worldly attitudes that can attack the church, this sin cost Satan his place in Heaven, this struggle for power is sometimes disguised by a false claim to divine illumination and prophetic authority, we judge all such claims in the light of the Scriptures. God reveals the truth about the activities of seducing spirits to spiritually minded Christians. 1Cor 14v29, 1Thes 5v19-21. Godly spiritual elders can guide the flock of God out of spiritual danger and deliver the flock from ambitious persons. Heb 13v7,8,17, 1Tim 3v1-13, Titus 1v5-16.

An attack on their personal communion with God and their love for God. Rev 2v1-7. Our Lord's rebuke to Ephesus was absolutely necessary, for if a church is lacking in prayer and communion with God, it is totally defeated. If Satan can defeat us here, he has defeated us everywhere. A church can have a reputation for evangelism and spirituality, that is quite false, its inner communion with God can be almost non-existent, like Sardis it can be said of it, "thou hast a name that thou livest and art dead." Prolonged earnest seeking of God is essential, if we are to preserve the spiritual effectiveness of a church.

Satan's Throne. Rev 2v13. Satan follows God's pattern and puts angels in charge of the nations. Dan 10v13,20,21. It could be that Satan made himself personally responsible for Pergamos, but it could refer to the Caesar worship that was practised at Pergamos, Satan was certainly the power behind Caesar's throne. Rev 12v3,9, 17v10.

The Judaizers confronted Peter with the following accusation, Acts 11v3: "Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them."

Here we see very clearly just how "Pharisaic" in thinking these Judaizers were, this was the same kind of accusation that the Lord Jesus often had flung at Him from the Scribes and Pharisees. Matt 15v2, Luke 11v38. However, to deal with this (false) accusation, Peter then recounts the whole affair regarding the conversion of Cornelius, his family and friends to them. In Acts 11v16-18, Peter states the following:

"Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God? When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life."

As the Holy Spirit fell upon **ALL** those in the house of Cornelius, the very last words that the Lord Jesus had spoken to Peter (and the rest of the apostles) immediately before His Ascension, were brought into Peter's mind by the Holy Spirit, Acts.1v5-8:

"And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. **But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."**

Peter had already "witnessed" in Jerusalem, Judea and (only after great persecution) Samaria, however it was only NOW that he began to see the light (and Truth) regarding "unto the uttermost part of the earth," as these born again, Holy Spirit filled Gentiles were speaking in tongues and magnifying God. We can only imagine how Peter must have felt now, after having lived the whole of his life, up to that time, thinking that the Gentiles were common and unclean, and only fit to be fuel for the fires of Hell! What a great blast of light must have penetrated the darkness in his mind on this most important subject, and this major turning point in world evangelism for the Church was brought about by the prayers (Greek, "proseuche" (NT:4335)) of a godly Gentile called Cornelius and **NOT** by the twelve Apostles!

(This episode with Cornelius really highlights how the minds of the twelve Apostles had been completely darkened through imbibing the unscriptural traditions that had been handed down to them by their spiritual teachers, the Scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees. Because of the brainwashing by Israel's religious leaders, it took the apostles a long time to grasp and comprehend God's plans and purposes for the Gentiles, and many other important doctrines as well. The Lord Jesus had warned them on more than one occasion to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, Sadducees and Herod, however they did not listen to these warnings, but thought they knew better. Christians down through the centuries, since the Lord Jesus' Ascension, have also failed to listen to these warnings from the lips of the Lord Jesus, for today, the Church is full of "leaven" (even as Jesus said it would be), and it can be difficult to find Truth in it. It is VITAL, as the dark evil days of the Great Tribulation rapidly approach, that Christians seek to fill their minds with truth, even as the Jews at Berea did, and we know from Rev 12v1 that indeed many Christians around the world will indeed do this! Matt 16v6, Mark 8v15, Luke 13v20,21, Acts 17v10-12, 1Pet 1v18.)

To drive the point fully home to the Judaizers, Peter states: "Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; **what was I, that I could withstand God?"**

"What was I, that I could withstand God?" in Greek is, "egoó tis eémeen dunatós koolúsai tón Theón." Note the order, "I, who was I," (egoó tis eémeen). "That I could withstand God," (dunatós koolúsai tón Theón), literally, "able to withstand or hinder God." It is a rhetorical question, really two questions. "Who was I? Was I able to hinder God?" Peter's statement

of the facts made an unanswerable defence. Peter said much the same thing to the Judaizers in Acts 15v7-11, especially pertinent is v10, where he states, "Now therefore why tempt ye God...."

In Acts 15, Peter stands up and repeats how God directed him to preach the Gospel to Cornelius and his friends (about ten to twelve years before), all of whom were Gentiles. Peter then asks the telling question, "Why tempt ye God?" that is, how could they accuse God of making a mistake, or refuse to follow His guidance as the Israelites had done at Massah and Meribah. Exodus 17v7, Deut 6v16, 1Cor 10v9. Peter then says that the Christian Gentiles should not be compelled to carry a yoke, which they as Jews had never been able to bear. Matt 11v30, 23v4. Peter finishes by saying that salvation is by faith in Christ not in ceremony or ritual, and it is fitting that the last words of Peter in Acts are for forgiveness and liberty in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is, however, a great pity, that the directions that were given by the God, the Holy Spirit, the apostles, elders and church at Jerusalem, to the Gentiles believers (Acts 15v22-29), were not fully embraced by all the Jewish Christians. For if this had been the case, the terrible disaster of Paul getting arrested (and almost killed) in the Temple at Jerusalem in 58 AD would not have occurred, and neither would have the disastrous consequences that followed after that in the Gentile churches (because with Paul being out of circulation, he was not able to guard and protect them), which was the rise of Docetic and Cerinthian Gnosticism. In 58 AD, all those in the church at Jerusalem (Jewish Christians, apostles, elders, etc.), to a great degree, still were bound by the unscriptural traditions of the Scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees, and desiring to please men rather than God! Acts 21v15-36 (esp., Acts 21v18,20,21,24,25).

If you shut God out of His Church with man-made structures and traditions you can't expect revival. Stephen said these man-made structures and traditions always resist the Holy Spirit and hinder revival. Acts 7v51-53.

When Peter had finished speaking the words, "what was I, that I could withstand God?" in Acts 11v17, the whole assembly (including the Judaizers) fell silent. ALL the persons that had been listening to Peter, when he had stopped speaking would have remembered the incident regarding Ananias and Sapphira, when through their covetous and lust for money almost destroyed the beautiful fervent love, unity and oneness of the church at Jerusalem, had God not stepped in and executed them. The two dead bodies of Ananias and Sapphira being carried out for burial, still haunted their minds and was a great deterrent against anyone attempting to destroy the unity and oneness of the church at Jerusalem again, which God was guarding and protecting. John 17v11,15,21,22,23, Acts 5v1-11, 1Cor 11v23-34.

There are many lessons to be learnt today from God's dealing with Cornelius, Peter, and the Church, as recorded in Acts 10v1-11v18, but the main ones are as follows:

- 1) Unscriptural tradition (that has been handed from our spiritual fathers and teachers) is a very real enemy of spiritual revival, as it shuts God firmly out of His Church, which He has purchased with His own blood. Acts 6v8 to 7v60.
- 2) The amazing extension of the Gospel through one person's prayers (Greek, "proseuche" (NT:4335)), in this case Cornelius, this changed the direction of the whole Church, worldwide. 1Kings 17v1-18,46 (esp. 18v39), James 5v17v18.
- 3) Sectarian bigotry shuts a person's mind and spirit to God's will and Truth, and completely hinders a Christian from going onto spiritual maturity. John 16v12, 1Cor 3v1-4, Heb 5v11-6v8.

May we, as Christians emulate, Cornelius's living faith and prayer life! ("proseuche" (NT:4335)).

Praying, "proseuchómenoi," They Sang Hymns To God. (Acts 16v25).

We read in Acts 16v16-40, that when Paul and Silas went to Philippi, having been followed by a slave girl who had a "spirit of divination" (which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying, Deut 18v10-22, Isaiah 8v18-20), for many days, Paul getting very annoyed by this turned around, and cast the evil spirit (that was responsible for her possession) out of her, which resulted in her masters dragging Paul and Silas into the market place, to the authorities (because the girl would no longer be able to make them any money, having lost the ability to soothsay). They then proceeded to bring charges against both Paul and Silas about propagating "unlawful customs" amongst the people of Philippi, when the real reason of bringing Paul and Silas before the ruling authorities was simply because of the loss of money. The authorities then had their garments ripped off and beaten with rods, and then had them thrown into prison, with a charge to the jailor to keep them securely (which having received he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks).

Acts 16v23-25 states: "And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely: Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks. And at midnight Paul and Silas **prayed, and sang praises unto God:** and the prisoners heard them."

Paul tells us that he was beaten by rods on three different occasions. 2Cor 11v25. However, Luke only records this incident. Paul and Silas, in excruciating pain through painful bruised and bleeding backs, were locked up in the inner prison with their feet securely fastened in wooden stocks. How did they react?

"They were praying and singing hymns to God," which in Greek is, "proseuchomenoi humnōn ton Theon." Literally, "praying, they sang hymns." "Proseuchomenoi humnōn," is the present participle (of "proseuchomai" (NT:4336)) and imperfect active indicative (of "humneo" (NT:5214)): Praying they were singing, or singing they prayed. Their praying and the praise are not described as distinct acts. Their singing of hymns was their prayer, probably some Psalms, for

"humnoun," is the very word that is used to describe the Paschal hymn sung by our Lord and His disciples after their last Passover. Matt 26v30. We know the Jews sang Psalms 113 to 118, at the Passover festival, and every devout Jew would certainly know them by heart. Like Job; Paul and Silas could say, "He giveth songs in the night." Job 35v10. **This was powerful evangelism**, for the other prisoners heard them singing, and they were obviously amazed how people with bleeding backs, and tortured in the stocks, could make the prison resound with joyful song. The presence of their living God enabled them to joyfully sing, worship and pray even in their great suffering. Christians can have more true joy in tribulation and trials, than a worldly person can find in pleasure, prosperity and ease.

God answered their prayers in song with an earthquake, and released them from their chains. The jailor knew that this was an outstanding miracle, and he and his whole family accepted Jesus as their Saviour. Gospel singing and preaching that is confirmed by the acts and power of God, produces remarkable and lasting results. Rom 15v18-21.

In Mel Tari's, "Like A Mighty Wind," we read how the singing of sacred songs raised a man from the dead.

On pages 76 to 78 of "Like a Mighty Wind," (ISBN 0-89221-123-7) we read of a man, who had been dead for two days, being raised from the dead when Christians sang sacred songs around his corpse. God directed some Christians to stand around the dead body of the man, and sing hymns until he came back to life. The person had been dead for two days, and in the warm and humid atmosphere of Amfoang in Indonesia, the body had begun rapidly to decay, and it smelled so badly that the Christians found it difficult to stand around the body. However, they did as God commanded them, and after singing about six hymns the toes started to move on the dead body. After singing eight hymns, God raised the corpse to life, and the man sat up and was perfectly whole, and gave a forceful and eloquent testimony to his experience on the other side of death. He told of the reality of Heaven and Hell, and told people that only faith in Jesus could save them from going to Hell. Through his testimony and ministry, more than 21,000 people came to know Jesus as their Saviour in that area. Singing they prayed, and God answered their prayers in the most remarkable way. **God will do the same for us as well! Anointed singing is often the very best form of praying, and it can bring outstanding and mighty operations of the Holy Spirit, and a wave of Divine healing to the body of Christ.**

It is well known that the Welsh revival was birthed and sustained by God-anointed singing

It certainly was not due to the preaching, for preachers usually preached once in about six to nine months. They had the sense to get out of the way and let God the Holy Spirit work. Evan Roberts was hardly ever seen in the pulpit; he was crouched down behind the pulpit and was worshipping God in song with the congregation. The result of this worship and prayer in singing was a great revival that brought most of Wales in sincere repentance to God. There can be no doubt that singing hymns and sacred songs are often our very best way of praying, and it can bring genuine revival.

Thou Hidden Source of Calm Repose, (Charles Wesley, 1707-1788).

(Music: Warwick Gardens, T C Gregory)

1. Thou hidden source of calm repose,
Thou all-sufficient love divine,
My help and refuge from my foes,
Secure I am if thou art mine;
From sin and grief and shame
I hide me, Jesus, in thy name.

2. Thy mighty name salvation is,
And keeps my happy soul above,
Comfort it brings, and power and peace,
And joy and everlasting love;
To me with thy dear name are given
Pardon and holiness and heaven.

3. Jesus, my all in all thou art,
My rest in toil, my ease in pain,
The medicine of my broken heart,
In war my peace, in loss my gain,
My smile beneath the tyrant's frown,
In shame my glory and my crown.

4. In want my plentiful supply,
In weakness my almighty power,
In bonds my perfect liberty,
My light in Satan's darkest hour,
In grief my joy unspeakable,
My life in death, my heaven in hell.

Pray (Greek, "proseuchomai" (NT:4336)) And Not Faint. (Luke 17v20-18v8 (esp. 18v1) with Rev 8v2-6).

The parable that the Lord Jesus spoke to the Apostles in Luke 18v1-8, is connected with what He had just told them in Luke 17v20-37, which had arisen from a question asked by the Pharisees about when the Kingdom of God would appear. The vast majority of people look upon the following words in Luke 17v34-36: "I tell you, in that night there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left."

Some say that this is speaking of the Rapture, however, this is not the case. In Luke 17v31-37, Jesus warns us that Antichrist will send out his soldiers and secret police to seek out and murder those who have repented and turned to God in Jerusalem and Judea during the Great Tribulation (especially towards the end of it). The conversion of many thousands of people due to the remarkable happenings at that time (the resurrection of the Two Witnesses, the great earthquake etc. Rev 11v7-13), finally causes Antichrist to sack Jerusalem. Antichrist, Jerusalem's false ally, sends his armies to rend loot and burn Jerusalem with fire, as a punishment and warning. Rev 17v16,17, 18v2,14. Jesus tells us of this destruction of Jerusalem in Luke 17v37, and says that Jerusalem becomes like a carcass with the vultures of Antichrist's armies around it picking its bones.

Jesus said that the overall picture of the conditions in the world just prior to His coming will be as bad as they were in the days of Noah and Lot. Luke 17v26-31. The expulsion of evil angels from the heavenly places into the earth results in a great increase in wickedness, and a wilful ignorance of the promised judgement of God. Gen 6v1-13, 1Pet 3v19,20, Rev 12v7-12. The wicked despise the riches of God's goodness, forbearance and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God is trying to lead them to repentance and salvation. Rom 2v1-4,9, 2Pet 3v3-9, Jude v14-16. Many signs are now being fulfilled; they are a great warning to the Church that it is time to put on the armour of God, for no lukewarm Christian will stand in this evil day. Matt 24v12, Rom 13v11-14, Eph 6v10-20.

"As it was in the days of Noah." Luke 17v26.

A major cause of lawlessness will be a greed, which results in escalating crime and violence on a world scale, just as in Noah's day, when every thought of men was only evil continually, and violence filled the whole earth. Gen 6v5-13. This moral degeneration was also caused by evil spirits infiltrating mankind by taking upon themselves fleshly bodies, which though outwardly similar to human bodies were basically different (genetically) from those of mankind. 1Pet 3v19,20, Jude v6. These were the "giants" of Scripture, these giants are called: The Nephilim, Gen 6v4, Numb 13v32,33. The Anakim, Deut 1v28, 2v10,11,21, 3v11,13, 9v2, Josh 11v21,22, 14v12-14. The Emims, Deut 2v10,11. The Zamzummins, Deut 2v19-21. The Rephaim, Deut 2v11,20, 3v11,13, Josh 12v4, 13v12, 15v8, 18v16, 2Sam 21v16,18,20,22, 1Chron 20v4,6,8. The valley of the giants, Josh 15v8, 18v16. etc. Goliath and his compatriots were evil angels in flesh, the sons of the giant. 2Sam 21v15-22. The children that were born to the giants did not have souls and spirits given to them by God, they became the abode of evil spirits, these products of Satan's biological engineering will not be resurrected, for in Isaiah 26v14, we read the "dead," who are "deceased" (Hebrew is "rephaim" (OT:7496) "giants") will not be resurrected by God. It is when Michael and his angels cast the Devil and his angels out of Heaven into the earth, and God's restraining hand is removed from the Devil and his evil hosts, that the Great Tribulation then ensues, with the result that these evil angels that have been cast down into the earth will again mingle with the seed of men, which will result in giants once again upon the earth. Dan 2v43, 2Thess 2v1-12, Rev 12v7-17.

It is of great importance to have the correct interpretation of the Typology of Noah and Lot. Some teach that Enoch, Elijah and Lot prove that the Church will be saved from the Great Tribulation. Our Lord clearly teaches the very opposite of this in Luke 17v26-30; the flood that destroyed the world and the fire that fell and consumed Sodom, are used as pictures, not of the tribulation, but of the day of the Lord that follows that great tribulation. Christ uses these Old Testament characters as illustrations of truth, not as types, they are used to illustrate known facts, not to produce supposed facts. Christ stresses in Luke 17v22-37, that the day the saints are raptured is the day of God's wrath on the wicked, "they did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all...The same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all, even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed." The day that shall burn as an oven is the day that the Son of righteousness shall rise with healing in His wings. Mal 4v1-3.

In Luke 18v1-8, Jesus informs us that persecuted Christians who are alive at this time (during the Great Tribulation) will pray that these evil people will be judged by God. It is also of great importance to understand and note, that the souls of the saints in heaven (who certainly cannot be out of the Spirit in the very Presence of God, (see Rev 6v9-11, the opening of the fifth seal)), who had been killed by Antichrist and his followers, and other evil people, cry to God for vengeance upon their murderers. These martyrs in Heaven are told to rest for a little while and wait until their fellow servants and brethren are also killed as they have been. Matt 24v9, Luke 21v16, Dan 11v32-35, Rev 12v11,17, 13v7, 17v6. These Christians overcome the terrible darkness of the last days and are faithful unto death, and pure in soul, for they are clothed with white garments. Rev 3v5, 16v15, 19v8. This vision proves that a great number of Christians will be martyred during the Great Tribulation. We need to remember that the key words for this time are "endure," "beware," and "watch and pray," for failure to pray through in these evil days will almost certainly result in backsliding or apostasy. Matt 10v17,22, Luke 21v36.

These Christian martyrs address God as "Ho Despotess," which means one who exercises absolute authority, Lord, Master, Ruler; it is applied to God in Luke 2v29 and Acts 4v24, and to our Lord in 2Pet 2v1 and Jude v4. Though "Ho Despotess," speaks of God being the ruler who has absolute power, there is no thought of tyranny here, for these martyrs also call

God, "the holy and true," "ho hagios kai alethinos," that is, He rules with perfect dedicated love, and faultless truth and justice. The answer to the world's problems will never be found in human politics; it will only be found in the perfectly loving and selfless rule of the God of love. God's benevolent rule is infinitely superior to the rule of selfish and sinful men, whose desire to rule often springs out of a corrupt ambition for political, worldly and religious power and wealth.

The torture and murder of God's dear children produces tremendous anger in God, and He pours His judgement out on the wicked. Isaiah 42v13-17, 63v1-6, Rev 15 and 16. The souls that had been slain are spoken of as under the altar, because they had been slain for God's sake, their blood had been poured upon the altar and flowed down beneath it. Their blood will cry from the ground, like the blood of Abel, the first martyr. Gen 4v10, 9v4, Matt 23v35. The blood of the sacrificial animals was received by the Old Testament priests and poured out at the foot of the altar. Exodus 40v29, Lev 4v7, 8v15, Isaiah 29v1. The souls of the righteous receive white garments and rest in Paradise, but they are first seen under the altar, the place where righteousness, justice and the Law, as well as forgiveness, was established by Christ's shed blood. Rom 3v31. The place where mercy is bestowed is the place where justice is dispensed. Christ's atoning death established the Law and righteousness, and ensures pardon for every repentant sinner, but it also makes condemnation sure for every hardened impenitent sinner. Rom3v21-31.

The Great Tribulation (which is the result of the Devil's great wrath, because he and his evil angels are cast out of Heaven into the earth, and God also removing His restraining hand from them at the same time, 2Thess 2v1-12, Rev 12v7-17) does not start gradually over a period of weeks, but rather starts with a bang overnight. On a particular day at the very end of the first three and a half years of Daniel's seventieth week, conditions on the earth will be quite bad, but still bearable, however, a day or two later (Satan and his evil angels having been cast into the earth), conditions will have got drastically worse, with evil and lawlessness greatly multiplied. The whole atmosphere of societies around the world will be one where an individual will be able to "feel" great evil all about them, it will in effect have a "smothering" effect on them. From the time of the start of Our Lord's earthly ministry, until the last few days of the first three and a half years of Daniel's seventieth week, the emphasis has been upon Grace, Mercy and Forgiveness (as illustrated by the Lord's words, regarding those who crucified Him, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do," Luke 23v34), however, this will all change during the last few days at the end of the first three and a half years of Daniel's seventieth week and the start of the Great Tribulation. It is at this time that Christians (worldwide) will start praying for God to avenge them of their adversaries, the Two Witnesses (who will have power and authority "to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire," and shall be like God. Zech 12v8, Rev 11v6) having stated their ministry about 7-10 days before the start of the Great Tribulation. Matt 24v12, Mark 13v19, Luke 18v1,3,8.

The periods of time covered by the blowing of the Seven Trumpets (Rev 8v2-9v21, 11v15-19), and that referred to in Luke 17v20-8v8 are exactly the same, the period (of three and a half years) known as the Great Tribulation; and the parable that the Lord Jesus uses in Luke 18v1-8, is referring to the events in Rev 8v2-9v21 and 11v15-19, that is God's response to the prayers (Greek, "proseuche" (NT:4335)) of the saints (Luke 8v1, Rev 8v3). The geographical area where the judgements of the Seven Trumpets fall is in the middle east (an area that is under the direct control of Antichrist, the Temple in Jerusalem being the place where he sets up his headquarters to rule from, 2Thess 2v1-12), especially Israel, and we see in Luke 18v1-8 an illustration of Truth, as to just how the Christians referred to in Rev 8v3 will be praying (Greek, "proseuchomai" (NT:4336)), they will be asking God to avenge them of their adversaries (which God will do speedily, though He bears long with the wicked, Luke 18v7,8). It will not only be the Christians in the middle east who will be asking God to avenge them of their adversaries, but believers around the whole world will also be exercising this same kind of prayer (Greek, "proseuche" (NT:4435)), because the Great Tribulation will be worldwide as well. Matt 24v21,22.

The Seven Trumpets. (Rev 8v2 to 9v21, 11v15-19).

The seven trumpets are stated in Rev 8v2-6 to be the direct response of God to the prayers (Greek, "proseuche" (NT:4335)) of His people on earth. From these verses we see the close link between the angels of God, and the Church of God and its prayers. Heb 1v14. Our heavenly Father and the heavenly hosts take very definite action on the behalf of the Church during the Great Tribulation, the world cannot do what it likes to the children of God and get away with it. The trumpets are judgements on the world for their evil treatment of God's saints; the wicked know this but do not repent. Rev 8v13, 9v20,21, Exodus 9v13-35. The seven trumpets do not come out of, or follow on, the seven seals, for the second coming of Christ and the end of the age occurs at the sixth and seventh seals and the seventh trumpet. The fifth and sixth trumpets themselves take over 18 months to run their course, so the trumpets must start several years before the sounding of the seventh trumpet and the sixth and seventh seals on the last day. This stepping back in time and viewing the events of the last few years of this age from various aspects, occurs several times in Revelation. The ministry of the two witnesses is shown to run at the same time as the seven trumpets by the account of the ministry of the two witnesses being placed between the sixth and seven trumpets. Rev 11v3-6.

When these trumpets are blown God intervenes in the affairs of men in the Great Tribulation in answer to the prayers (Greek, "proseuche" (NT:4335)) of the saints. The first four are distinguished from the latter three by the fact that the first four deal with nature as it affects man, and the latter three with man himself, and they are particularly terrible and are called "woes." There is no reason why we should not interpret the effects of these trumpets literally, for the plagues of Egypt came true as Moses had promised and these plagues will too. Like the Egyptian plagues, the first four of the trumpet plagues and judgements will effect a limited area in the Middle East around Palestine, for, "the earth" can mean "the land," that is, the land of Palestine.

Luke 18v1-8 states the following:

"And he spake a parable unto them to this end, **that men ought always to pray (Greek, "proseuchomai" (NT:4336)), and not to faint**; Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them (that is the wicked)? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth (or "in the land")?"

"That men ought always to pray" is in Greek, "prós tó deín pántote proseúchesthai," and means literally, "with reference to its being necessary always to pray." "And not to faint," is in Greek, "kaí meé engkakeín," and literally is, "and not to give in to evil" (en (NT:1722), kakeoo, from kakos (NT:2556), "bad or evil"), "to turn coward, lose heart, behave badly." The Amplified Bible renders it thus: "...that they ought always to pray and not to turn coward (faint, lose heart, and give up)."

Luke 21v38 is stating the same truth: "Be on watch and pray always that you will have the strength to go safely through all those things that will happen and to stand before the Son of Man." (Today's English Version)

The believer's prayers (Greek, "proseuche" (NT:4335)) will accomplish different things for them during the Great Tribulation, it will be the means by which they will receive Grace, strength and blessing from the Lord to help them overcome the great evil that will be in the world at that time. Their prayers (Greek, "proseuche" (NT:4335)) will also be the means by which God will bring judgement upon the wicked (amongst other things, the execution of the wicked) who are persecuting them. God's judgements upon the wicked will also have a restraining effect upon evil in the world. The prayers (Greek, "proseuche" (NT:4335)) of the saints will also shut down the powers of darkness, with numbers of them being removed from the earth and put into the Abyss (This will occur from the beginning of the Great Tribulation up until the time of the blowing of the 5th Trumpet, which occurs twenty four months after the beginning of the Great Tribulation (The 5th Trumpet lasts for 5 months (Rev 9v1-12), the 6th Trumpet for 13 months (Rev 9v13-21), and the 7th Trumpet sounding on the last day of the Age of Grace, (Rev 11v15-19), so with the Great Tribulation lasting 42 months (Rev 12v6,14), this then shows that the 5th Trumpet is blown 24 months after the start of the Great Tribulation); for with the blowing of the 5th Trumpet, the Abyss will be emptied of evil spirits that had been imprisoned there, which are given authority to torment the wicked upon the earth). At the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus, all the evil angels (except the Devil, who is put into the Abyss) upon the earth will be cast into the Lake of Fire. Isaiah 24v21, Matt 25v41, 2Cor 12v9, Phil 4v19, James 4v6,7, 2Pet 2v4, Jude v6, Rev 9v1-12, 20v1-3,10.

Although the unjust judge would not, at first, avenge the widow of her adversary, because of her continual coming, and the judge's concern that she might "weary" him, he then gives her justice, and avenges her of her adversary. The English word "weary" that is used in Luke 18v5, is in Greek, "hupoopíazee," the present active subjunctive of "hupopiazō" (NT:5299), (from hupopion, "the part of the face below the eye"; hupo, "under," ops, "an eye"), which means to hit under the eye and so to blacken it (buffet or disable an antagonist as a pugilist), i.e. (figuratively) to tease or annoy (into compliance), subdue (one's passions), keep under, weary. The unjust judge is actually afraid that the widow may come and assault him, literally "beat him under the eye," and so with this possibility of being injured (and that by a woman), the unjust judge gives the widow justice, by avenging her of her adversary. This word is only used once again in the New Testament, by Paul, in 1Cor 9v27, and in its literal sense, "I buffet my body;" (treat it as the boxer does his adversary). Paul says that he has to severely discipline his flesh, so that he would not become disqualified, and lose his heavenly reward. This was exactly how the Lord Jesus disciplined His flesh during His earthly life, and it was this example that Paul followed, which we should **ALSO** follow! Psalm 69v7-11, Isaiah 50v3-8, 1Cor 11v1.

Although the unjust judge lingered long before dispensing justice for the widow, God will certainly **NOT** procrastinate on this issue, but will avenge His elect speedily by bringing judgement upon the wicked for their evil treatment of His children. (**NOTE:** it is the Church, not Israel, that God looks upon as the "elect" during the Age of Grace, Rom 11v5,6, Gal 6v16). The Lord Jesus then ends this parable with the words: "...Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?"

The words "on the earth" can also be translated, "in the land" i.e. the land of Israel (Palestine), and of course it will be very hard to find many believers in the land of Palestine, at the time of the Lord's second coming, immediately after the days of the Great Tribulation, because of the following reasons:

Firstly, many believers will have lost their faith. By backsliding and going into apostasy, because they did NOT pray (Greek, "proseuchomai" 4336) through, but fainted, or because they were expecting a secret pre-tribulation Advent and Rapture, and when that did not happen, their faith waned (saying within themselves, "my Lord delayeth His coming," Matt 24v48, and not being spiritually prepared were overcome by the great inrush of evil into the world when the Great Tribulation starts. Matt 24v12, Rev 2v12.

Secondly, many believers will have been killed by Antichrist's security services and secret police. Matt 24v9, Luke 17v31-37, Rev 12v4,5,11,17, 20v4-6.

Thirdly, a large group of believers (the Glorious Woman of Rev 12v1) will have escaped from the land of

Israel (Palestine) into neighbouring Edom, Ammon and Edom, ("the wilderness" of Rev 12v6,14), which is never overrun and taken by Antichrist and his armies. Believers escape from the Great Tribulation, when they see the image (the abomination of desolation) that Antichrist erects in the Temple in Jerusalem. Dan 9v27, 11v31,41, Matt 24v15,16, 2Thess 2v1-12, Rev 12v6,14-16, 13v1-18.

A Few Important Notes!

NB1: Rev 12v6,14 states:

"And the woman fled into the wilderness, where **she hath a place prepared of God**, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days...And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that **she might fly into the wilderness, into her place**, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent."

This group of specially prepared Christians (that flee from Antichrist in Jerusalem and the surrounding area) is definitely said to have a place prepared by God for them to escape to at the beginning of the Great Tribulation. It is **MOST** important that Christians should pray (Greek, "proseuchomai" (NT:4336)) **NOW**, for God to prepare the areas of Edom, Moab and Ammon to be ready to receive this "Glorious Woman" at the beginning of the Great Tribulation.

Christians firstly should invoke the following covenant names in the Heavenly places over these three areas (and modern day Jordan). Yahweh Tsabaoth, the Lord of Hosts, and Yahweh Jireh, the Lord Who See and Provides, that these areas will know continuous angelic protection from this time forth, right up until the second coming of the Lord Jesus, but especially during the Great Tribulation, and that **ALL** things will be **FULLY** "prepared" by the Lord Who Sees and Provides for His people.

Secondly, Christians should also impart the divine benediction. By using the priestly blessing of Numbers 6v22-27 upon Edom, Moab, Ammon and modern day Jordan. If Christians pray like this **NOW**, these areas of Edom, Moab and Ammon, will most certainly be **FULLY** prepared and protected by God, to receive His people at the beginning off the Great Tribulation, so that they are fed, kept and protected right up until the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus. **NOTE:** Rev 5v8, "...which are the prayers (Greek "proseuche" (NT:4335)) of saints." 2Pet 3v12. (We see in Rev 4 and 5, the preliminaries in Heaven just before the seals are opened, that is, before the events of the last seven years this Age start to come to pass (Daniel's Seventieth prophetic week, Dan 9v27). The seven seals reveal Satan's evil plans for the world during the last seven years of this age. Paul calls Satan's plans "the mystery of iniquity." 2Thess 2v7. The seals reveal the major catastrophic stages of the career of Antichrist from the time when he makes the covenant, until the great day of the wrath of the Lamb brings his evil career to a close.)

NB2: We read in Matt 9v37,38: "Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, **but the labourers are few**; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, **that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.**"

It is also most essential for Christians (especially those Christians in Israel) to pray (Greek, "proseuchomai" (NT:4336)) **NOW** for God to raise up the Two Witnesses, and other Christians whom He will set in the body of Christ with the same level of power and authority as the Two Witnesses. We **MUST** also pray (Greek, "proseuchomai" (NT:4336)) for God to give these "labourers" the same kind of power and authority that He gave unto the prophet Elijah (1Kings 17v1-21v29, 2Kings 1v1-2v11 Dan 11v32, Rev 11v3-6), and then to "send them forth into His harvest." It is also a necessity for us to pray (Greek, "proseuchomai" (NT:4336)) for God to fulfil such prophecies and promises, as those stated in Rev 11v3-6 and Zech chapter 4, but especially the wonderful promise and prophecy that He spoke through His servant Malachi in Mal 4v5,6 (with Luke 1v17): "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to the fathers, the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

Christians MUST pray (Greek, "proseuchomai" (NT:4336)) NOW for "last day Elijah ministries" to be set in the Body of Christ by God! Rev 5v8.

The number of "last day Elijah ministries" that God will be able to set in the Church will be directly proportional to the amount of praying (Greek, "proseuchomai" (NT:4336)) performed by the Church for God to set such ministries in it; i.e., the more the Body of Christ prays (Greek, "proseuchomai" (NT:4336)) for God to set such ministries in the church, the **MORE** "last day Elijah ministries" will **actually be set in it by God!**

Behind every great prophet and prophetess, there has **ALWAYS** been someone behind the scenes, who has earnestly sought the Lord and prayed (Greek, "proseuchomai" (NT:4336)) them into their ministry. Very often this is the result of the prayers (Greek "proseuche" (NT:4335)) of a godly loving mother or aunt; as in the case of Jeremiah, when his aunt, the great Old Testament prophetess, Huldah, was the person responsible for praying (Greek, "proseuchomai" (NT:4336)) him into his prophetic ministry as a young man. We can gauge the depth of her spirituality and prophetic ministry from the incident when King Josiah asked Hilkiah, the high priest, to inquire of the Lord as what should be done at that time, Hilkiah promptly went and sought out Huldah, and as soon as he had asked for the word of the Lord, Huldah was able to give it too him straight away. However, when the remnant of those left in the southern kingdom came and asked Jeremiah to seek the word of the Lord for them, it was ten days before the reply came from the Lord for them (which they didn't heed anyway); and so from this, we can see just how in touch with the Lord Huldah was and the depth of her

prophetic ministry! 2Kings 22v3-20 (esp. v14), Jer 1v1-19 (esp. v6), 32v7, Jer 42v1-22 (esp. v7).

NB3: Rev 12v1 (with Rev 12v2-17) states: "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars."

The vision of this glorious woman reveals to us one of God's major purposes for the last days. She represents a group of people, who are foreknown, designed, specially created and empowered by God for the Great Tribulation. It is a group of praying (Greek, "proseuchomai" (NT:4336)) people, with prepared hearts and special ministries for the last days, who will operate with awesome power as a prayer-warrior group behind the scenes. God also gives a definite promise that He will protect, provide and empower the seeking hearts in His Church in a new and special way in the last days, and will not leave His Church defenceless in the Great Tribulation. This glorious woman reveals that part of the Church will be clothed with the fullness of God's power, and will be transported, protected and fed by God. This group is a major part of God's answer to the mystery of iniquity, and it is one of many such groups, who operate in Israel and other parts of the world.

One of the great desires upon the great Heart of our Heavenly Father, is the necessity for His people to get ready and prepared for the dark evil days of the Great Tribulation, however at the present moment in time, very few, if any, Teachers or Preachers in the Church are talking about these vital Truths, and when they do mention it, it is nearly always to state that the Christian does not need to be concerned about the Great Tribulation, because they will miss it, having been raptured before it starts. I wish to state here and now, that those (so called) preachers and teachers who propagate such lies, the Lord Jesus plainly states are amongst the false prophets and teachers of the last days, and a severe judgement awaits them! The Lord Jesus clearly states that His Second Coming will be visible to every eye, and will be with great power and glory, the elements melting with fervent heat, which will be accompanied by the greatest earthquake that the earth has ever known! It is **NOW** vital for **EVERY** Christian (especially those Christians in Israel) to get close to the Lord Jesus, and pray (Greek, "proseuchomai" (NT:4336)) that He will prepare His people into such groups (as represented by the glorious woman in Rev 12v1) in every country around the world, but **ESPECIALLY** in Israel! Dan 11v32, Joel 2v28-32, Zech 12v8, Matt 24v21-30,48-51, 28v20, Luke 18v1-8, 2Pet 3v10, James 3v1, Rev 1v7, 12v1-17, 16v18.

NB4: Psalm 2v8 and Rev 5v7 reads: "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession...And **he came and took the book** out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne."

The "He came and took the book," is the fulfilment of the "ask of me" of Psalm 2v8, it is when God brings to pass the prophetic events that will close the Age, and bring in Christ's kingdom. Psalm 2v8, Dan 2v44,45, 7v13.

It is most important for **ALL** believers to pray (Greek, "proseuchomai" (NT:4336)) **NOW** that God will invite the Lord Jesus to come and ask Him for His inheritance and possession, so that He takes the book out of His Father's right hand, so as to open the seven seals thereof. **NOTE:** Rev 5v8, "...which are the prayers (Greek "proseuche" (NT:4335)) of the saints..." with Matt 6v9,10, "After this manner therefore pray (Greek "proseuchomai" (NT:4336)) ye...**Thy kingdom come.**" Matt 6v5-15, Luke 11v1-13 (esp., 11v2), 2Pet 3v12.

(The seven seals show the major stages in the career of Antichrist, from the covenant, to seven years later, when he and his evil system is destroyed on the great day of the Lamb's wrath. An angel asks who is worthy to rule the world after Antichrist has brought the world to almost complete ruin; the answer is only Christ and His faithful brethren. Rev 5v5,9,10, Rom 8v19. This age will close when Jesus has enough brethren to rule the Millennial kingdom with Him. Rev 14v1-5, 17v14, 2Pet 3v12. John's vision in Rev 4 and 5, was not a revelation of events in Heaven in the time of John, it was a vision of events in Heaven just prior to the last seven years of this age. When Jesus opens the seven seals, it starts the last 7 years of this age, and the mystery of iniquity. Dan 9v20-27.

Satan's plans are restrained by God, and even when the mystery of iniquity is allowed to have its final fling, God reigns and His kingdom will surely come quickly. All of Heaven's inhabitants are perfectly satisfied at Christ's worthiness to open the seals and receive the kingdom, and they rejoice that divine love will rule the nations, after the evil rule of men. John was heartbroken and wept because no one could open the book and loose the seals, but one of the elders comforted John and said, "Weep not; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the book, and loose the seals thereof." As God, Jesus was the source of David's family and the means of its sustenance, anchorage and strength; as a man He was the offspring of David. Isaiah 11v1,10, Rom 1v3,4, Rev 22v16. John looks for this Lion of Judah, but sees a Lamb as it had been slain. The most courageous act of the Lion of Judah was His death as the Lamb of God, this shows His courage and love more than all else. The title "Lamb" occurs 29 times in Revelation, but it is only applied to Jesus 4 times in the rest of the New Testament. John 1v29,36, Acts 8v32, 1Pet 1v19. Men often use mighty beasts and birds of prey as symbols of power, but God uses a Lamb to show the greatest act of courage, strength and love the world has even known; Calvary is the ultimate act of power and love. The Lamb of God is worthy to reign because of the sacrificial love revealed in His death upon Calvary.

The Lamb of God has not only redeemed sinners, but has made them kings and priests unto God as well, and the faithful saints will reign with Christ in the Millennium and eternity. Rev 5v10, 20v4-6, 22v3-5. Christ has won the right to reign, the Father has no favourites, He has "no jobs for the boys," those who rule will have to prove their worthiness to rule, even as Jesus has proved His worthiness to reign. Rev 3v21, 5v5, Phil 2v6-11, Rom 2v11, Acts 10v34, Heb 5v5-10, Dan 7v13,14. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!)

NB5: On the day of Pentecost, Peter stood up and said in Acts 2v16-21 (with Joel 2v28-32): "...This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; **And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh:** and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, **before that great and notable day of the Lord come: And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved."**

The Lord Jesus, during the His Post-Resurrection ministry to the Apostles, had told them "I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high," when He (the Holy Spirit) that was with them, would then enter them, which was the Baptism in the Holy Spirit that they would receive. Luke 24v49, John 7v39, 14v17, Acts 2v4,38. It was during the Post-Resurrection ministry that the Lord Jesus had instructed them regarding Joel's prophecy, that this was the glorious prophecy which referred to the "Promise of the Father" (i.e. power from on high), and that it was **vital** for them to tarry in the Upper Room, and pray (Greek, "proseuchomai" (NT:4336)) this great prophecy and promise into reality. The Lord Jesus did not tell them the precise timing of when they would receive the Promise of the Father (this was because that if they had known, some of them might have just sat back and said, "well I don't need to pray (Greek, "proseuchomai" (NT:4336)), God is going to do it anyway"), but simply said, "ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." Acts 1v5. The Apostles were obedient to His command, and with other disciples (one hundred and twenty of them in all), they prayed (Greek, "proseuchomai" (NT:4336)) Joel's great and wonderful prophecy and promise into reality. Acts 1v14,15, 2v1-4. The great outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost was only a partial fulfilment of Joel's prophecy, which also had a fulfilment throughout the whole of the Age of Grace to encourage the Church to pray for revival, blessing, spiritual gifts and ministries from their risen Lord. 1Cor 12v7-11, Eph 4v7-16.

Joel's great prophecy and promise has a final and complete fulfilment at the end of the Age of Grace, for it specifically says, **"it shall come to pass in the last days...I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh...before that great and notable day of the Lord come."** Even as the one hundred and twenty disciples in the Upper Room, prayed (Greek, "proseuchomai" (NT:4336)) Joel's wonderful prophecy and promise into reality on the Day of Pentecost, it is also **VITAL** for the Church to pray (Greek, "proseuchomai" (NT:4336)) **NOW** for God to pour out of His Spirit upon, the Church, and the world...i.e. "upon ALL flesh." God's people need to claim the complete fulfilment of Joel's great prophecy and promise **NOW**, and **MUST** continue to claim the complete fulfilment of it right up until the Lord's Second Coming. There will certainly be a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit when Daniel's Seventieth week starts, when Antichrist "confirms a covenant with many (including Israel) for one week," which also refers to the opening of the First Seal. Dan 9v27, Rev 6v1,2. And another, even greater outpouring will occur, when Antichrist breaks the covenant, and sets up his image in the Temple in Jerusalem (at the beginning of the Great Tribulation). During the last seven years of the Age of Grace, the Church and the world will know a time of the greatest worldwide revival that has ever been experienced, and **NOW** is the time for the Body of Christ to pray (Greek, "proseuchomai" (NT:4336)) so that this great outpouring becomes a reality very soon, and also is **FULLY** experienced during the last seven years of this Age. Acts 2v16-21, Rev 5v8, 11v3-6, 12v1.

The believer, by praying (Greek, "proseuchomai" (NT:4336)) as indicated in these five NBs ("nota benes"), will surely "hasten the coming of the Day of God." 2Pet 3v12. End Of "Important Notes." (Appendix 1)

With the Devil and his evil angels being cast out of the heavenlies into the earth, and God's restraining hand being removed from them, the Great Tribulation then ensues. As already stated, the responsibility for the restraint upon the powers of darkness and the wicked on the earth, during the Great Tribulation, will be the Church's, and it will be through the believer's prayers (Greek, "proseuche" (NT:4335)) and "interventions" (with power), (Greek, "enteuxis" (NT:1783)), that this restraint will occur. The amount of evil and wickedness that will be found in any society around the world, during the Great Tribulation, will be inversely proportional to the amount of prayer (Greek, "proseuche" (NT:4335)) and "interventions" (with power), (Greek, "enteuxis" (NT:1783)), that the believers of that society will make, in other words, the more prayer and "interventions" (with power) that the believers make for their society in which they live, the less evil and wickedness will be manifested in it. When the wicked see Divine judgement falling upon other evil persons (which will be via the believer's prayers (Greek, "proseuche" (NT:4335)) and "interventions" (with power), (Greek, "enteuxis" (NT:1783))), many (although not all) will think twice before putting their evil desires into practice to hurt, harm or kill God's dear children, hence, the believer's prayers and "interventions" (with power) will actively restrain the wicked. It will be during the Great Tribulation that the last World War will occur (before the 2nd coming of Christ), and the desire of the Devil (through Antichrist) will be to smash the world completely, which Antichrist will do with vast conventional armies and limited exchanges of nuclear weapons. So, it is vital for Christians to exercise prayer (Greek, "proseuche" (NT:4335)) and "interventions" (with power), (Greek, "enteuxis" (NT:1783)) **NOW**, so that they are spiritually prepared for those terrible dark evil days, and can act as an effective restraint upon the powers of darkness and the wicked during the last three and half years of this Age, so that the country and society in which they live is not completely destroyed by Antichrist's armies and followers. Dan 11v32,41, Zech 12v8, Luke 18v1-8, 1Tim2v1-8, Rev 9v13-21, 11v3-6,18, 12v13-17.

The parable told by the Lord Jesus in Luke 18v1-8, is to teach **ALL** believers that they can (and should) protect themselves (and others) during the Great Tribulation against the wicked; the means by which God will bring judgement (as a result of the believer's prayers (Greek, "proseuche" (NT:4335)) upon the wicked will be by angelic ministrations.

Heb 1v14, Rev 8v2-6. However, God will also raise up and set full Apostolic and Prophetic ministries into the Church (with the same kind of power and authority that Elijah had) during the first three and a half years of Daniel's seventy weeks prophecy; persons with the same anointing, power and authority as the Two Witnesses will have. However, it is of the utmost importance for the Body of Christ to understand, that these great ministries (including the Two Witnesses), will **ONLY** be set in the Church by the Lord, **IF** the Church prays (Greek, "proseuchomai" (NT:4336)) for God to fulfil His promises and prophetic Word to do so. **EVERY** believer should be praying (Greek, "proseuchomai" (NT:4336)) **NOW** for God to raise up and prepare the Two Witnesses (and other persons with the same level of power and authority), to take their place in the Church at the beginning of the Great Tribulation (so that they might act as an effective restraint upon the powers of darkness, the wicked and wickedness in the world), so that they might fulfil the ministries that the Trinity had prepared for them in Their foreknowledge before time began (Because this last point is so important I have repeated it again! 2Per 1v12,13). Dan 9v27, 11v32, Zech 12v8, Mal 4v5,6, Rev 11v3-6.

When Israel was carried off to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar, and the Word of the Lord came to Jeremiah, stating that Israel would be in captivity for seventy years (Jer chapter 29), when the seventy years was coming to an end, the prophet Daniel (who was probably only a teenager when he was carried off to Babylon in 606 BC) was reminded through the reading of Jeremiah chapter 29 (Dan 9v1,2,), that the time of Israel's captivity was nearly at completion. But Daniel did not just say to himself, "well, I don't need to do anything, God's going to do it anyway, because He has promised it through the prophet Jeremiah." Dan 9v3, tells us what he did immediately when he found out and understood that the time of the seventy year captivity was almost at an end. Dan 9v3 (Septuagint) states: "And I set my face unto the Lord God, **to seek by prayer (Greek, "proseuche" (NT:4335))** and supplication, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes: **And I prayed (Greek, "proseuchomai" (NT:4336))** unto the Lord my God..."

He also wore the attire of deepest mourning, sackcloth and ashes, and fasted. Psalm 69v10,11, Rev 11v3. Believers really need to follow this example of Daniel's **NOW**, and earnestly seek the Lord for Him to set His Two Witness (and others with the same level of power and authority) into the Church, and to keep on praying (Greek, "proseuchomai" (NT:4336)) until they appear on the scene.

In the years preceding the birth of the Lord Jesus, spiritual Old Testament saints in Israel, like Simeon and Anna, saw that the time for the Coming of their promised Messiah was close at hand, by Daniel's Seventy Weeks prophecy. However, like Daniel, they did not just sit upon their laurels; saying that it was just going to happen, no, their diligently sought their Lord in prayer (Greek, "proseuche" (NT:4335)), for Him to fulfil His prophetic Truth and Promises to send forth the Beloved One into the world as the Saviour of both Jew and Gentile. Indeed, we get a wonderful glimpse of just how in touch with his Lord Simeon was, in that the Holy Spirit had promised him, that he would not see death until he had seen the Lord's Christ. And Anna (who departed not from the Temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day), also being told by the Holy Spirit that the Promised One was in the Temple, went to gaze upon her Saviour, and "spoke of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem." Dan 9v20-27, Luke 2v25-38.

The Lord Jesus also followed the example of Daniel and the other Old Testament prophets, by seeking His Father, and praying (Greek, "proseuchomai" (NT:4336)) the prophecies regarding His forerunner (John Baptist) into being, these prophecies are as follows:

"Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts." Mal 3v1 (with Matt 11v9-11).

"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers..." Mal 4v5,6 (with Matt 11v14).

"The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." Isaiah 40v3-5 (with John 1v23)

The Lord Jesus, during His hidden years at Nazareth, watched John Baptist in the Wilderness by prophetic vision (even as Paul watched the believers at Colossi, Col 2v1-5), and prayed (Greek, "proseuchomai" (NT:4336)) him through during his years of preparation, so that he had reached the same spiritual condition that Elijah had experienced, standing before the Throne of God (in spirit), and going forth "in the spirit and power of Elijah." 1Kings 17v1, Mal 4v5,6, Luke 1v17.

It is **NOW** that **EVERY** believer needs to fulfil the command given by the Lord Jesus to His Church in Matt 9v37,38 (for it takes a considerable time to prepare someone to fulfil a full apostolic or prophetic ministry, i.e. Moses, 80 years, the Lord Jesus, 30 years): "Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray (Greek, "proseuchomai" (NT:4336)) ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest."

Praying (Greek, "proseuchomai" (NT:4336)) that God will raise up His Two Witnesses (and other believers with the same level of power and authority) and set them into His Church, revealing them to the world just before the beginning of the Great Tribulation, so that they might fulfil their ministry. As the believer exercises this kind of prayer (Greek, "proseuche" (NT:4335)), Peter tells us in 1Pet 3v12 that they are "hastening the coming of the day of God." (NKJV).

It is simply because the Church has **NOT** been fulfilling this great command for so many centuries, that only a very few true full apostolic and prophetic ministries have arisen since the end of the 3rd century! God finds it **VERY** difficult to locate persons who will let Him prepare them for these kinds of ministries, He still is saying to His Church, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" (Isaiah 6v8).

Each individual believer should also be seeking the Lord for a ministry for the last days, especially for the Great Tribulation, preparation now for those evil days will be vital!

Another ministry that will be vital for the Church during the Great Tribulation will be that of Pastor Teacher (also known in the New Testament Church as "Elder" and "Bishop" (Overseer)), for this ministry will either make or mar the local church over which they have spiritual oversight (in the early church it was the Deacons who had the financial oversight of a local church (which was basically looking after the poor), **NOT** the Pastor Teachers, Acts 6v1-7, 1Tim 3v8-13). The Pastor Teachers of a local church will need to guard and protect their flock from attacks inspired by the Devil through ungodly evil people and carnal worldly and unspiritual Christians. When the last great Divine visitation starts upon the earth (before the second coming of the Lord Jesus) in the not to distant future, with widespread revival, the ministry of Pastor Teachers will be vital in keeping it going on in the Lord, and not being hijacked by the Devil through his servants, and brought to a halt. We should also pray (Greek, "proseuchomai" (NT:4336)), that God will prepare such persons, who fulfil the criteria laid down by Paul in 1Tim 3v1-7 and Titus 1v5-9, and James in James 5v13-18 (also see 1Pet 5v1-11 (esp., 1Pet 5v5 ("gird yourself with humility"), with John 13v4 ("and took a towel and girded Himself," the greatest example of "humility")), for this vital ministry. Acts 2v17-21, 20v17-38 (esp., v17,28), Eph 4v7-16.

How Britain was Delivered By God Through The Prayers ("proseuche" (NT:4335)) Of Its People.

The catastrophic circumstances that Britain found itself in during 1940 are as follows: In May 1940, the political and military situation in Europe was catastrophic. Seven years earlier, Adolf Hitler had gained absolute power in Germany and immediately set about rearming his bellicose nation. On September 1st, 1939, he invaded Poland and then turned his fury on the nations of Western Europe. Hitler's "Lightning War" rumbled almost unopposed through Norway, Denmark, Holland, Luxembourg and Belgium. The French Army, which most military experts believed would hold its own against Germany, was humiliated in only 40 days. Nearly 500,000 British and French troops were trapped in a tiny coastal enclave called Dunkirk, where they faced certain annihilation. Hitler's armoured divisions, commanded by Generals Heinz Guderian and Karl von Rundstedt, were only 15 miles away, while Hermann Goering's air force (the Luftwaffe) bombed and strafed the hapless armies below. What a tragic moment that was in history.

It is difficult to comprehend the panic that gripped peace-loving nations at that time, especially Britain. Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain (who resigned in early May 1940 and was replaced by Winston Churchill) and other political leaders were staggered by the realization that this German madman and his henchmen had not only enslaved and dominated most of Europe in less than a year, but that they would be next. The Fuhrer was never closer to his ultimate victory than during those five days, May 24th to 28th, in 1940.

The loss of the British and French armies at Dunkirk would have left them naked in response to the anticipated Nazi invasion. If the British had surrendered without a fight, which was plausible in those bewildering days, the Nazi reign of terror could conceivably have continued for decades. Millions more Jews, Gypsies, Poles and other "undesirables" would have been gassed or shot, and 1,000 years of British history would have come to an inglorious end.

Winston Churchill stood firm during this frightening time, although privately he was also shaken by Britain's circumstances. For once, even his legendary appetite for food and drink was gone. Still, he told the French Prime Minister, Paul Reynaud, that England would go on alone if necessary: "We would rather go down fighting than be enslaved to Germany," he said. Unfortunately, Churchill didn't yet have a firm grip on the government. Lord Halifax and the other defeatists wrestled with him for the reins of power. If they had gained control at that critical juncture, the world would look very different today. Instead of offering Churchill's policy of "blood, sweat, toil and tears," they would have wrung their hands and whined, "Can't we all just get along?" Hitler would have chewed them into pathetic little pieces by the end of the year.

Well, that is the predicament in which Britain and France found themselves on May 24th, 1940. A half-million of their soldiers huddled hopelessly at Dunkirk, waiting for inevitable death or imprisonment. **It was at that desperate moment that the churches in Britain called for a national day of prayer** (Greek, "proseuche" (NT:4335)). It had been suggested during April, but the Archbishop of Canterbury had opposed it. He said he didn't want the call to prayer to be misinterpreted, whatever that meant. But with the alarming deterioration of the military situation in France, he and many others decided that it was, indeed, time to pray. **On May 23rd, numerous political leaders, newspaper editors and King George VI issued a call for a national day of prayer** (Greek, "proseuche" (NT:4335)) **to be held on Sunday, May 26th 1940. (NB 1Tim 2v1-8).**

No one could have anticipated what was to happen during those three momentous days. Just 24 hours after the call for prayer, Adolf Hitler inexplicably ordered his armies to halt, to the surprise and dismay of even his own generals. **Two days later, on May 26th, the nation gathered to pray** (Greek, "proseuchomai" (NT:4336)). Church attendance skyrocketed, including a large gathering at Westminster Abbey, during which people pleaded with the Almighty to spare their husbands, sons and fathers at Dunkirk.

Former Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain wrote this in his diary: "May 26th. Blackest day of all ... This was the National Day of Prayer." In reality, it turned out to be one of the most dramatic turning points of the war. At seven o'clock that evening, a critical order was issued to attempt a desperate evacuation of Dunkirk. Every tiny vessel and private craft was sent across the often treacherous waters of the English Channel with orders to rescue as many men as possible before the arrival of the Germans.

Hitler's armies remained largely in place not only on the 24th, 25th and 26th, but, incredibly, until early June. To this day, no one knows exactly why. The Fuhrer held victory in the palm of his hand, and yet he prevented his combat troops from finishing the job. Some have speculated that Hitler didn't want to risk unnecessary losses in a final battle. Others think Hermann Goering prevailed upon Hitler to let his Luftwaffe get the credit for destroying the British and French armies. As for Hitler's own view, he said he wanted to give Churchill "a sporting chance." However, the dictator never gave anyone a sporting chance. There is a more valid explanation. His armies were halted by the same God who shut the mouths of the lions during Daniel's night of peril. Dan.6v1-28. Just as the Lord repeatedly heard the prayers (Greek, "proseuche" (NT:4335) of the Israelites so long ago (e.g. Esther chapters 1-10, esp. Est 4v1-17), He was listening when hundreds of thousands of believers in the UK were praying for divine intervention. He is the Lord (Yahweh), He changes not, the One Who is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Praise His name! Mal 3v6, Heb 13v8.

For nine critical days, the Germans were content to shell and bomb Dunkirk from the air and from a distance (also a great part of the German air-force was stranded in Flanders, hemmed in by a furious storm), but casualties were very low. Meanwhile, the English Channel became still and calm, and large numbers of Allied soldiers were scrambling aboard the little boats and yachts. On May 29th, 47,000 were rescued; on May 30th, 53,000; on May 31st, 68,000; on June 1st, 64,000. In all, 336,000 men found their way to safety in the British Isles! The British leaders were jubilant, and astounded. Alexander Cadogan, Permanent Undersecretary at the Foreign Office, called the evacuation "marvellous" and "a miracle," and Churchill himself called it 'a miracle of deliverance.' The same miraculous deliverance was also granted by God to the British people in The "Battle of Britain" which raged in the skies over Britain, during the months of August and September in 1940.

God is more than willing to respond to the prayers (Greek, "proseuche" (NT:4335)) of His people and deliver them from impending danger. However, the great torrent of evil that will be unleashed upon the world during the Great Tribulation by Antichrist will **FAR** surpass that which Hitler (and the rest of the Axis powers) meted out during WWII (Rev 6v7,8, 9v13-21). If the countries of the West want to survive until the second coming of the Lord Jesus, the believers of those countries will have to pray (Greek, "proseuchomai" (NT:4336)) and **NOT** faint, or they will face complete destruction and annihilation. The nuclear missiles that Antichrist have pointing at the countries of the West, if not dealt with by believer's prayers (Greek, "proseuche" (NT:4335)) and "interventions" (with power), (Greek, "enteuxis" (NT:1783)), will certainly be launched by him and completely destroy and incinerate those countries upon which they fall. The nuclear weapons of today are 100s-1000s of times more powerful than those that fell upon Hiroshima (15 kilotons) and Nagasaki (22 kilotons), and will cause (if exploded) complete and utter destruction of a vast area. The dark evil days of the Great Tribulation that are rapidly approaching, will require prayers and interventions "with unspeakable yearnings and groanings too deep for utterance" by the believer, if they want to overcome victoriously! At the start of the Great Tribulation, if a believer's house is built on sand, it will collapse into a heap of rubble very quickly, so let us make sure that our "houses" have deep foundations and are built on rock, i.e. that our minds are filled with Truth (as revealed in the Scriptures, and **NOT** unscriptural man made traditions), and that we have a living faith and relationship with the Lord, that is fortified and energized by continuous communion with Him. Matt 7v24-27, Mark 13v19,20, Luke 6v46-49, Rom 8v22,23,26,27, Eph 6v10-20, 1Thess 5v17, 1Tim 2v1-8, 2Tim 3v1-9.

God empowers two prophets to Israel with the ultimate in prophetic power.

The strategic timing of the start of the prophetic ministry of the Two Witnesses.

The Two Witnesses appear to start their ministries a few days before Antichrist's image is set up in the Temple, and they warn of the terrible events that are about to overtake Israel and the world. In spite of innumerable attempts to kill them, their ministries continue for 1,260 days, until their death, a few days before the return of Jesus. Isaiah 59v19, Dan 11v32, Zech 12v8, Mal 4v5,6, Rev 11v3-6.

The conflict in Jerusalem between God's Two Witnesses and Satan's Antichrist and False Prophet, will be similar to the conflict that took place between Moses and Aaron, and Jannes and Jambres, Pharaoh's sorcerers. 2Tim 3v8,9, Exodus 7v11,12,22, 8v7,18,19. Prophesying against this kind of determined opposition by evil occultists, and the powers of darkness, demands great power and great spiritual gifts. God has in time past spoken to the Israelites by the prophets, and He will speak to them again in the Great Tribulation, through His two mighty Christian prophets, the Two Witnesses. Where it has been possible, God has usually sent His prophets in two's and three's, so that the truth and reliability of their prophecies could be confirmed out of the mouths of several trustworthy witnesses. 1Cor 14v29, Deut 19v15, Eccles 4v9-12, 2Kings 2v1,3. Isaiah, Hosea and Micah confirmed God's Word through each other, before the captivity; Haggai and Zechariah did the same, after the captivity.

God will give the ultimate in prophetic power and judgement gifts to His Two Witnesses.

God describes the Two Witnesses as two olive trees, to show that they are full of heavenly oil and that He pours His life and power through them. Rev 11v4, Zech 4 all, Mal 4v5. God likens them to two lamp stands that shine brightly by their

continuous manifestation of His power gifts. These Two Witnesses, like Elijah of old, stand in the presence of God in spirit, and operate in the fullness of His power for 1260 days. 1Kings 17v1. God commissions them to be prophets to Israel and the world. Their great ministries and godly lives stand out in sharp contrast to the evil lives of Antichrist and the False Prophet, who manifest Satan's power. They prophesy in sackcloth, the clothing of deepest mourning, to express their great sorrow over the gross evil around them, and by God's gifts bring judgement on this evil. Those who God sends to pronounce great woes, must have the same sorrow of heart that He has, over the sin that makes those judgements unavoidable and necessary. Matt 23v37-39, Luke 19v41-44.

The Two Witnesses will manifest God's power gifts in judgement, fire will devour those who try to hurt or kill them. Like Elijah, they will stop the rain from falling on Israel for the 1260 days of their ministry. Like Moses, they will turn water to blood, and smite the earth with every plague. **However, God gives them authority to manifest judgement gifts, "as oft as they will," a striking new level of authority**, for even Moses did not dispense plagues as he willed, he followed out God's orders. No one has manifested judgement gifts at their own will like these two prophets, but the circumstances of that time will demand this great power. However, even as Pharaoh and the Egyptians hardened their hearts in the face of God's power and judgements, so do Antichrist and his followers, and they refuse to repent of their evil deeds.

God allows the Two Witnesses to be killed to manifest a greater miracle.

When the Two Witnesses have finished their testimony, God allows the Beast to kill them. Rev 11v7. This is the first of many references in Revelation where Antichrist is called "the Beast," the Greek, "to therion," speaks of a fierce wild animal. Antichrist is the last and worst ruler of a Satan dominated world system, which has always been ugly and beastly. Matt 4v8,9, Luke 4v5-7, John 14v30, 18v36, Rev 11v15, 2Cor 4v4, In Rev 11v7, The Beast is said to arise out of the bottomless pit, or abyss, ("abussos," it occurs in Luke 8v31, Rom 10v7, Rev 9v1,2,11, 11v7, 17v8, 20v1,3). This indicates that Antichrist will be raised from the dead, for to ascend out of the abyss, a person must have been dead, for it is God's prison for the unconverted and evil spirits. Dan 11v29,30, Rev 13v3,12, 17v8. This is the place to which unbelievers go to when they die, and it is the place to which our Lord went on His death, to purchase our redemption. Matt 12v39,40, Rom 10v7, Eph 4v8-10, Heb 2v14, 5v7, Isaiah 53v5,6,10-12.

It appears that God will allow Satan to openly resurrect Antichrist from the dead in a devilish parody of Christ's resurrection. It is after this resurrection that Antichrist comes to the fullness of his evil power. Satan has, of course, no control over the dead in Hades, Christ has the keys of Hades. Rev 1v18. Satan needs God's permission to raise Antichrist from the dead, and it is this resurrection of Antichrist that causes many to follow him. God performs a greater sign when He raises the dead bodies of His Two Witnesses to life before the eyes of the whole watching world, after their mangled corpses have lain in the streets of Jerusalem for 3½ days. For these 3½ days, "they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations," will rejoice over their death, elated that they can now continue in sin without the rebuke and judgement of these two mighty prophets. They deceive themselves into thinking, that because these two men of God are dead, that their God is dead also, and that they will escape the judgement of God, that these two prophets had warned them about.

After killing the Two Witnesses, Antichrist's followers feel that they have won the final victory and have nothing to fear. How well this agrees with 1Thess 5v2,3, "the people will cry peace and safety," but "sudden destruction will come upon them." Judges 16v23-30, Jer 6v14. God raises His Two Witnesses from the dead and openly translates them to Heaven, and puts a stop to the godless revelling and rejoicing of the wicked. This is not the first resurrection and rapture, that occurs soon afterwards as Rev 11v14-18, states, at the seventh trumpet. Their resurrection is a personal resurrection, like that of Lazarus, or the daughter of Jairus, with the difference that it is done before the eyes of the whole world. The world's television cameras record the Two Witnesses being resurrected from the dead and taken to Heaven in triumph, a tremendous sign and warning to all of God's power and glory. John 11v41-46, Luke 8v51-56, Matt 27v50-54, Acts 14v19,20.

The Two Witnesses are killed in Jerusalem, which God calls Sodom, Egypt, and Babylon.

The bodies of the Two Witnesses lie in the streets of Jerusalem, "the great city...where the Lord was crucified." Rev 11v8. The phrase "the city, the great one," is in Greek, "tes poleos tes megales," which is used in reference to "Babylon" in Rev 14v8, 16v19, 17v18, 18v10,16,18,19,21, is here applied to the city of Jerusalem. In Rev 17 and 18, God calls Jerusalem Babylon," and in Rev 11v8, says that Jerusalem would be better named as "Sodom" and "Egypt," for its abominable wickedness and rebellion against God. This wickedness will bring about its destruction. One commentator writes the following: "Those who, like Alford, have decided that "the great city" is not Jerusalem but its spiritual antagonist, Rome or Babylon, find great difficulty in dealing with this plain statement: . The historical allusion is too definite to be thus explained away (i.e. as Rome or Babylon); it loses its whole point if it does not identify the place where the witnesses lose their lives with that where their Lord Himself was crucified, let those beware who feel that they know better than the Word of God."

The great earthquake of Rev 11v13, takes place earlier than the even greater earthquake of Rev 11v19, which shakes the whole world, and occurs when the feet of Jesus touch the Mount of Olives. Rev 6v12,14, 16v18-20, Zech 14v4,5. In the smaller earthquake a tenth of the city falls, and 7,000 men are slain, this brings some of the population to a state of fear and repentance. It certainly does not bring Antichrist and his armies to repentance, for they fight Jesus at His return. Rev 19v19. It seems that Antichrist burns and sacks the city, because the resurrection of the Two Witnesses and the earthquake turn many to the Lord. Rev 17v16. The armies of Antichrist are around the stricken city when Jesus returns,

they are the vultures surrounding the carcass of Jerusalem that our Lord spoke about in Matt 24v28, and Luke 17v37. When the seventh trumpet sounds, the Father and Son take over the rule of a shattered and shocked world, all the redeemed creation rejoice that the Lord has come to bring righteousness and peace to the world, and claim that which is rightfully His own. Isaiah 32v1,2,17,18. The earth and the heavens ring with triumphant Hallelujahs. Rev 19v1-6. Even so come Lord Jesus. Amen.

The spiritual qualities that make up the character of The Overcomer.

Mention must be made of this subject as it is so important, the promises given to the overcomer are so great that the subject deserves special consideration. Christ has solemnly warned the Christians of the last days that they will have to live very careful, prayerful and godly lives if they are to overcome and come through the gross darkness with flying colours. Matt 7v24-29, 24v11-13, 42-25v13, Mark 4v19, Luke 8v14, 18v1-8, 1John 2v28. Let us consider the spiritual qualities that cause a person to be an overcomer and the things an overcomer does and is.

They Love The Word Of God. They are not lazy in Bible study, they learn the doctrines and truths of God's Word, they know truth and long for more, it is the joy and rejoicing of their heart. Joshua 1v8, Psalm 1 all, John 17v17,26, Acts 17v10,11, 20v32, Rom 6v17, Eph 6v14,17, 2Tim 3v15-17, Heb 5v11-14, 2Pet 2v2.

They Love To Do God's Will. They actively serve God, they seek the lost, and they have an evangelical fervour. Isaiah 52v7, Matt 6v10, 26v42, 28v18-20, John 4v34, 5v30, 12v26, Rom 12v1,2, Col 1v9, Heb 10v7, 12v23. They obey the will of God as revealed by the Spirit of God. Rom 8v14, Eph 4v30, 1Thess 5v17, Rev 2v7,11,17,29, 3v6,13,22. They obey the will of God as revealed by the Word of God, e.g. "follow after love and desire spiritual gifts." Matt 7v21, 12v30, Luke 6v46, 11v34, John 14v21-24.

They Love To Seek Their Father's Face. They love to pray (Greek, "proseuchomai" (NT:4336)), they have a life of public and private praise and prayer, they tarry for the Spirit, they wait on God. Psalm 27v8, 34v3,6, 37v9, 62v1,2,5,6 84v4-10, 91v1,2,9,14,15, Matt 6v5-15, Luke 11v1-13, 18v1-8, Eph 6v18,19, 1Thess 3v10, 5v17, Jude v20,21.

They Love To Walk With God In Their Daily Lives. They live a practical holy life. Rom 8v5-14, Gal 5v16-26, Eph 4v1-3,17-32, 5v1-6v9. By the grace of God they keep themselves pure and in victory. They are not in bondage to sin. By the grace of their Saviour they have overcome the world, the flesh and the Devil. Psalm 37v23,24, Matt 5v8, John 16v33, Rom 6v14-23, 2Cor 7v1, Phil 3v7-21, 1Thess 4v2,3, 1John 2v13-17, 3v1-10, 4v4, 5v4, Rev 14v1-5.

They Love the Brethren. Psalm 133v1-3, John 13v34,35, 15v12-15, Acts 1v14, 2v1,44-47, 4v32,37, Phil 4v1, 1Thess 2v11, 1John 3v10-24, 4v7-5v3. They love to have fellowship with God's people, and dwell on the things of God together. Deut 6v4-9, Prov 27v17, Mal 3v16-18, Heb 10v24,25. In the home as well as the church building. Matt 23v37-39, Acts 2v1-4 with 1v13, Rom 16v5, 1Cor 16v19, Col 4v15, Philemon v2. Our conversation should be centred on Heavenly things and should be such as becomes the Gospel of Christ, gracious and loving like those of our gracious Lord, "They were all astonished at the beautiful words that fell from His lips." Luke 4v22 cf. Col 4v6. If this is not so, there is a definite need of reconsecration. Matt 15v10,11, Mark 7v20-23, Eph 5v4,5.

The letters to the seven churches in the book of Revelation give us a very good idea of what the Lord expects of the Christian, and what an overcoming Christian is like. We read that Christians are to have works, love, service, faith, patience, increasing works, a willingness to be faithful unto death, a separation from the world, spiritual alertness, and the thing that will assure all these, they must keep their fervent first love for Christ. Perhaps more qualities of the overcomer could be added to these, but these will suffice. In ALL things we are to follow the example of Christ, for by His grace we can overcome ALL that comes our way. Matt 11v28-30, 13v23, Luke 8v8,15, John 15v1-8, 1John 2v6, 4v17, Rev 12v10,11.

The Scriptures place great emphasis upon the second coming of Christ. It has been said, "There is more Scriptural authority for Christ's second coming than for all the other doctrines of the Bible put together." This statement soundly condemns the lack of interest shown by far too many of God's people today towards this vital subject. The silence of most preachers on the theme of this blessed hope of the Church gives cause for great alarm, particularly when the signs of the times indicate that the coming of Christ is near. What we believe regarding this subject will matter a great deal in the not so distant future. The lack of interest in Christ's second coming is a sure sign of a loss of first love for Jesus, and a spiritual apathy and lethargy among the people of God. Someone who noted the longing for Christ's coming and the zeal for this truth in the first part of Church history, wrote, "It would have been deemed a kind of apostasy not to have sighed after the day of the Lord." Those who have neglected the subject of our Lord's second coming should repent and meditate afresh upon this blessed hope that purifies. 1John 3v3.

The Scriptures warn us to take the subject of His Second coming very seriously. God warns us that judgement will fall upon those who misinterpret the book of Revelation and add to, or take away, its prophecies. Rev 22v18,19. An added secret rapture means an added judgement upon those who teach it. The subject of prophecy demands a teachable spirit, diligent study and trembling at the Word of God. 1Tim 4v14-16, 2Tim 2v15, Isaiah 66v2.

God has already executed preachers for wrong doctrine on the Second Coming of Christ.

In 1Tim 1v19,20, we read that Paul delivered Hymenaeus and Alexander to Satan that they might learn not to blaspheme.

We learn from 2Tim 2v16-18, that Paul did this because they had overthrown the faith of some Christians, by saying that the resurrection and the second coming of Christ had already taken place. Paul said their wrong doctrine ate like a canker and gangrene, and they died for their dangerous heresy, executed by the operation of God's judgement gifts through Paul; just as Peter had executed Ananias and Sapphira with those same gifts. Acts 5v1-11. Note in Acts 5v11, how "great fear fell upon all the Church, and upon as many as heard these things." The deaths of Hymenaeus, Philetus, and Alexander, show how serious and dangerous it is to misinterpret prophecy.

In Matt 24v48-51, Jesus warns us that if Christians believe that His second coming and the rapture take place before the great tribulation; then, when it does not happen, their faith will be overthrown, and they will say, "My Lord delays His coming;" and as a result go and live bad lives. Will the Lord Jesus feel any more tolerant of such faith destroying teachers and teaching, than He did of Hymenaeus and his false doctrine? Our Lord reveals the striking fact that these people will blame God for a delay, rather than examine and question their own doctrine. Let us be very careful what we teach about our Lord's second coming.

We can always find the truth if we really want to. The Bible is not so badly written that we cannot find the truth; if that were so we should rename the Bible, "Man's Word," instead of "God's Word," and give up the doctrine of the inspiration of the Scriptures. We can absolutely rely on the Holy Scriptures, for God has made the cardinal Truths of the Gospel perfectly clear for the sincere seeking heart. Unfortunately, however, the glorious truths connected with the second coming of Christ, like many other truths, have suffered at the hands of teachers, who for a variety of reasons have held down the truth. Truth has been perverted by pride, laziness, mercenary motives, false reverence for the traditions of men, and seeking the praise of men rather than the praise of God. Fear of suffering for the truth, or being thought unorthodox has blinded the minds of many to the truth.

Let no one think that they can treat this subject lightly, Truth is our shield and buckler, and our sword. Psalm 91v4, Eph 6v14,17. It will not be enough to say when the Great Tribulation arrives, "we were wrong after all." The false prophets of Israel said the same in their day, and we know what God thought of them. It is for pastors and teachers to prepare their flocks for the Great Tribulation **NOW**, before the evil day comes. This subject is so important in the eyes of God, that He has made it by far the most prominent Truth in the Bible, to fill people with lies about this subject will certainly **NOT** please the Lord. It behoves us all to tremble at this Word of the Lord and take it as seriously as God has! Isaiah 66v2, Rev 22v18,19.

The Lord Jesus told His apostles again, and again and again, that He was going to be rejected by that generation, betrayed into the hands of men, scourged, beaten and killed, and the third day He would be raised up. However, the twelve apostles refused continuously to believe the Truth that He was trying to give to them (which was the result of their minds being filled with the unscriptural traditions of the Scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees), which if they had received, when the time came, they would have had the Truth firmly fixed in their minds (of a suffering Messiah), and have been spiritually prepared for it. But because they point blankly refused to accept His words on this vital matter (especially when it was confirmed by mighty signs, wonders and miracles), their minds became reprobate on this issue, and so, when it did happen they **ALL** failed and forsook Him! And the same thing will happen to believers who continuously refuse to receive and believe the Truth regarding a post-tribulation Advent and Rapture. When the Great Tribulation starts, and no Advent and Rapture have occurred, those Christians who are looking for a pre-tribulation Advent and Rapture, not being prepared for it, will be so overwhelmed by the tremendous inrush of evil into the world, that the vast majority of them will lose their faith (they will be saying "my Lord delayeth His coming"), backslide and go into apostasy, ending up with other evil people persecuting believers, who were their former brethren. The people who are looking for a pre-tribulation Advent and Rapture think that by continuously believing it and saying it is so, that they will make it such, however, this is such a tremendous folly! It is Truth that will give a believer victory in the evil day, not a pack of half-baked lies! Matt 16v21-23, 17v22,23, 24v48-51, 26v47-56, Luke 17v25, 18v31,33, Rom 1v28.

Section I: The Lord Jesus Prays For Himself. (John 17v1-5).

"These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee." John 17v1.

The Lord Jesus prayed this wonderful prayer while He and the Apostles were on their way to the garden of Gethsemane, it appears from John 18v1, that it was between the time they had left the upper room and before they got to Brook Kidron. His posture was one of lifting His eyes to Heaven before beginning it. The Lord Jesus addresses God simply as "Father," which occurs four times in this chapter, along with "Holy Father" and "Righteous Father." The term "Father" was His normal way of addressing the Ancient of Days, Dan 7v9. The Blessed and Only Potentate, 1Tim 6v15. The Father of Lights, James 1v17. The Lord God the Almighty, "Ho Kurios ho Theos ho Pantocrator." Rev 21v22. We too can address our Almighty God the Father, as Father, because we have been adopted into the family of God, we can also address Him indeed as "Abba, Father," even as the Lord Jesus did. Mark 14v36, Rom 8v15, Gal 4v6.

"Father, the hour is come."

"The hour" that the Lord Jesus refers to here is that of His "decease (literally "exodus") which he should accomplish at Jerusalem" (Luke 9v31) (i.e. His death upon the Cross, decent into Hades (where His soul was made an offering for sin), preaching to its occupants, leading those who received the Truth from His preaching out of Hades, His Resurrection and then taking those Whom He had led out of Hades into Heaven. Psalm 24 all, Isaiah 53v10, Zech 12v10, Acts 2v24-28,

1Pet 3v18-22, 4v6). In stating "the hour is come," He has in mind a definite time that is contained in a prophetic utterance that had to be (and indeed would be) fulfilled. The prophecy that He is thinking about is that contained in Daniel's Seventy Week prophecy (Dan 9v20-27), where it states, "...after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself." Everything in the life of the Lord Jesus was done at a Divine epochal time. In Gal 4v4,5, "when the fullness of time had come," "chronos" (NT:5550) is used in the sense of "kairos" (NT:2540), God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, to redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." "The fullness of time," speaks of a special time appointed by God, a divine epoch. John Baptist and Jesus started and finished their ministries on prophetic time epochs. Isaiah 40v3 with Matt 3v3. "Now after John was put into prison, Jesus came into Galilee preaching the Gospel of the kingdom of God, v15 and saying, "The TIME ("kairos" (NT:2540)) is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe the Gospel." Mark 1v14,15. Christ had come to fulfil the prophecies concerning Himself. "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears." Luke 4v21. This was the epochal time of Israel's visitation and they closed their eyes to it and missed it, and went on to tragedy and genocide. Luke 19v41-44, v44 "kairos" (NT:2540).

God's epochal times

The Greek word "kairos" (NT:2540), means an epochal and strategic time; a critical niche in time.

"Kairos" (NT:2540) is used to speak of such ordinary events as, "the time of the figs," in Mark 11v13, and of, "the time of harvest," in Mark 12v2, in our Lord's parable of the vineyard. However, "kairos" (NT:2540) usually speaks of a divine epoch in time, a time of divine appointment and fulfilled prophecy; a time when God's will and purposes are fulfilled, and His mighty ways and acts are revealed. The plural, "kairos" (NT:2540), speaks of epochal events in time; "chronos" (NT:5550), speaks of ordinary chronological time.

The epochal times and seasons are in God's hands. Acts 1v7, 17v26. Many types and prophecies in the Scriptures speak of a divinely ordained time of fulfilment. 1Pet 1v10-12. NB v11. See God's marvellous plan of the ages. Eph 3v11. Note God's appointed times of refreshing and revival. Acts 3v19.

God's strategically born children and servants.

The epochal time of the birth of Moses. Moses was born for a divine purpose, at a strategic time of God. Acts 7v20.

The epochal time of John Baptist's birth. John was a child of divine purpose; Gabriel told Zachariah that the promise of a child, which Zachariah did not believe, would be fulfilled as God had promised, at the strategic divine time. Luke 1v19,20.

The epochal time of our Lord's birth and ministry. Gal 4v4,5.

The epochal time of our Lord's temptation by Satan in the wilderness. Satan attacks us when we are most vulnerable to temptation, even Jesus experienced these attacks. In Luke 4v13, we read that Satan left Jesus until an opportune time "kairos" (NT:2540), when he could tempt and test Jesus again. God restrains Satan, and he can only test us when God permits him to do so. 1Cor 10v13. Peter had one of these epochal trials of faith at Satan's hands. Luke 22v31-34 with 22v54-62. The early Church had epochal times of temptation from Satan by persecution. Acts 19v11,23. Special miracles brought special persecution.

The epochal time of temptation, backsliding and apostasy. Our Lord uses "kairos" (NT:2540) twice in Luke 8v13, to warn us, that some who hear the Gospel only "believe for a time," and in a time of temptation fall away." The decisions to serve or reject Jesus and the Father are epoch making decisions for eternal joy, or eternal judgement.

The strategic and epochal times of revival. When John was cast into prison, God extended the ministry of Jesus by giving Him twelve ordinary men to be His apostles, it is twice said that this was an epochal time in our Lord's ministry. Matt 11v25 and 12v1. God the Father and Jesus rejoiced over these men, it was good in their eyes. Matt 11v25-27. See Luke 10v21-24. There are strategic times of visitation, revival and refreshing sent from the presence of the Lord. Luke 19v44, Acts 3v19. The day of Pentecost was such a time, when the type was fulfilled in divine and blessed reality. Acts 2v1.

The epochal time when Herod the tetrarch beheaded John Baptist. Matt 14v1. When Jesus heard about Herod's murder of John and of his reaction to His ministry, He departed into the desert and fed the five thousand; He walked on the water; He healed multitudes of sick people; as many as touched the hem of His garment were made whole. Matt 14v1-36, NB v36. There was an extension of our Lord's ministry, and greater signs, wonders and miracles. Our Lord shows us that when great leaders die, we need not retreat; we can advance to even greater things in God.

The epochal time of the death of Paul and God's saints. Paul says his death is the epochal time of his release to meet his Lord, a time of divine appointment. 2Tim 4v6, Phil 1v21-23, 2Cor 5v6-8, 2Tim 1v10. Jesus has the keys of death and Hades. Rev 1v18. Jesus destroys the destroyer. Heb 2v14,15.

The epochal time of atonement and redemption in Christ. God promised eternal life in Jesus before the ages began, or any creature was made; and at His appointed epochal time, God entrusted the former rebel and blasphemer Paul with

the proclamation of these truths. Oh, the wonderful grace of God! Titus 1v2,3, 1Tim 1v12-17. **In Rom 5v6** we read that in due time ("kairos" (NT:2540)) Christ died for the ungodly. **In 2Cor 6v2**, we read, "I heard thee in a ("kairos" (NT:2540)) time accepted.....now is the acceptable ("kairos" (NT:2540)) time of salvation." 2Cor 6v2. We are in the age of grace, the time of prophetic fulfilment of redemption truth. 1Pet 1v10-12, NB v11.

As we have seen, "the fullness of "chronos" (NT:5550) time," is used in the sense of "kairos" (NT:2540) in Gal 4v4,5, to speak of the supreme epoch in the history of mankind, the atoning death of Christ. In 1Tim 2v6, the plural "kairos" (NT:2540) is used to say that, the testimony to Jesus is to be given in due epochal times. Matt 12v31,32. Jesus spoke of the time of His death as "My time," in John 7v6,8 and Matt 26v18, both are "kairos" (NT:2540).

The epochal "times of the Gentiles." Luke 21v24, Rev 11v2. Jerusalem will be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. Luke 21v24. These times of the Gentiles started at the captivity in Babylon, and they will continue until the second coming of Christ. The pride of the Gentiles is being broken by the proven failure of all nations to rule righteously.

The Events Of The Epochal Last Days.

The perilous times of the Last days. 2Tim 3v1, 4v3. This is one of the signs of Christ Second Coming. Acts 1v7, Mark 13v33. Terrible signs and appalling world distress precede Christ's Second Coming. Matt 24v3-29. Antichrist will be revealed in his epochal time, but then he and Satan will only have a short time. Rev 12v12. Antichrist's coming is an epochal time of disaster for the whole world. 2Thes 2v6,7. Antichrist and Satan make the last 3½ years of this age epochal years of woe. Rev 12v9-12. "Kairos" (NT:2540) is used three times in Rev 12v14, "times, time and half a time." God allows Satan to do his worst with the world, to expose Satan's evil character and the effect of his evil plans on mankind.

The strategic epochal time to feed people with prophetic truth. Our Lord in Luke 12v54-56 called the religious leaders hypocrites when they failed to discern the "kairos" (NT:2540) time of their day. It was a "kairos" (NT:2540) time of decision. Luke 13v1. In Luke 12v35-48 Jesus gives a warning of the necessity of Christian leaders to feed people with truth in the days before His coming, Luke 12v42., is "kairos" (NT:2540). In Matt 24v45-51, Jesus warns us that correctly interpreting prophetic truth will be a vital ministry at that epochal season, "kairos" (NT:2540) Mt.24v45. The parables of the servants and the ten virgins warn us of the effect of lack of truth and prayer. Matt 24v45-25v13.

The epochal time of the resurrection of the dead. Isaiah 25v6-9, 1Thess 4v13-17, 1Cor 15v50-53, Rev 11v18, 20v4-6.

The epochal time of rewards and the joy of being in our Father's kingdom. 1Pet 1v5.

The epochal time of judgement. The time is come when judgement begins at the house of God. 1Pet 4v17. Herod was executed at one of God's strategic times. Acts 12v1.

Elymas the sorcerer was judged for a divinely appointed "kairos" (NT:2540) period of judgement. Acts 13v11. The time of judgement on demons and evil angels. Matt 8v29.

The time of the harvest and the time of judgement. Matt 13v30. See 31-50, 25v30-46. Judge nothing before the "time." 1Cor 4v5.

All who are in "Hades" will come out for the Great White Throne judgement, but no one is said to come out of "Gehenna." Rev 20v11-15. "Hades" is the temporary abode of the dead, "Gehenna" is the God's prison for unrepentant evil people and unclean angels. We read in Rev 20v14., that "Hades" is cast into "Gehenna," the lake of fire, after the Great White Throne judgement. See the study, "The Issues of Death and Judgement."

The epochal "fullness of times." Eph 1v10.

The most epochal time for this world will be when the kingdom and rule of Christ take place at the fullness of "kairos" 2540, times; all other "kairos" (NT:2540), times await this start of the eternal kingdom of God. Eph 1v10. The "time of reformation." Heb 9v10.

Conclusion

We need to know the time we are in, and put on the armour of God. Rom 13v11. We need to redeem the "kairos" (NT:2540) time because the days are evil. Eph 5v16, Col 4v5. We need to humble ourselves and God will exalt us in due time. 1Pet 5v6. The time is short. 1Cor 4v29. The time is at hand. Rev 1v3, 22v10

"Glorify thy Son." The glory and unique nature of Christ's Sonship.

In the opening words of this prayer Christ claimed again a unique Sonship, which Christ's enemies and the apostle John knew was a claim to absolute deity. John 5v17,18, 10v30-33. Christ's claim to be the Son of God was a claim to coequal deity with the Father.

Christ's Unique Sonship Proves His Absolute Deity. The sonship of Christ is unique and superior to any other person who is called "a son of God."

Christ's Sonship is unique and superior to the sonship of angels. Angels are called "the sons of God," in Gen 6v4, Job 1v6, 2v1, 38v7. However, Heb 1v1-14 emphatically declares that Christ's sonship is greatly superior and different to the sonship of angels, these verses clearly state that Jesus is the great Yahweh who created all things, and whose throne is for ever and ever.

Christ's Sonship is unique and superior to the sonship of men

Christ's Sonship is Superior to Adam's sonship. In Luke 3v38, in the genealogy proving Christ's physical descent from Adam; Adam is called a son of God. However, this is only showing that Adam was the direct creation of God, and had no human parents. The Scriptures clearly state that the sonship of Adam is inferior to that of angels and the redeemed sons of God. John 1v12,13, Psalm 8v4,5 with Heb 2v5-7, 1Cor 15v45-50.

Christ's Sonship is superior to Israel's sonship. In Hosea 11v1, we read that God looked upon the whole of Israel as His son. God also calls the judges and rulers of Israel by the name "elohim," because as judges they represent Him and take an oath to perform justice. Psalm 82v1,6, Exodus 7v1, 21v6, 22v8,9,28, John 10v34-39. The sonship of Christ is far superior to that of any Israelite or earthly ruler.

Christ's Sonship is superior to the sonship of the New Testament sons of God. Believers in Christ are also called "sons of God." John 1v12, Rom 8v14-19, 9v25,26, Gal 3v26, 4v4-7, Phil 2v25, 1John 3v1,2. However, this sonship is only by adoption and grace, and not by right of divine primacy and absolute deity, which is the origin of Christ's sonship.

Christ's unique sonship is stated and proved in the Scriptures. God the Father testified to the unique sonship of Christ. God twice openly declared, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Matt 3v17, 17v5, 2Pet 1v17,18, 1John 5v9-13.

The Jews recognised that Christ's claim of unique Sonship meant equality with the Father. In John 5v15-18, and 10v30-39, the Jews were infuriated over Christ's claim to a unique Sonship and oneness with God, they said He was claiming absolute deity, and making Himself equal to God, and were so enraged that they tried to kill Him. In John 8v56-59, our Lord's claim to "I Am" deity also angered them to the point of attempted murder.

Our Lord was crucified for His claims to a unique sonship and absolute deity. At His trial our Lord Jesus could have escaped death by denying His claim to unique Sonship and deity, but He affirmed His divine sonship more strongly, even though it meant His death. Matt 26v63-65, John 19v7.

Many Scriptures state that our Lord's unique Sonship affirmed His absolute deity. Jesus is called "the Son of God" in a definite unique sense of absolute deity in the following passages. Matt 4v3,6, 8v29, 14v33, 16v16, Mark 1v1, 3v11, Luke 1v32,35, John 1v34,49, 6v69, 9v35, 10v36, 11v27, 20v28-31, Acts 8v37, 9v20, Rom 1v4, 2Cor 1v9, Gal 2v20, Eph 4v13, Heb 4v14, 6v6, 7v3, 10v29, 1John 3v8, 4v15.

The title "The ONLY begotten Son of God" is proof of Christ's deity. Jesus is called the "ONLY begotten Son of God." John 1v14,18, 3v16,18, 1John 4v9. The French Bible translates "His only begotten Son," as "Son Fils unique," which means, "His unique Son," and "monogenes" certainly carries the meaning "unique," and "only one of its kind."

In John 1v18, Burgon, follows the vast majority of manuscripts and a majority of Church Fathers, and says that "vios," "Son;" is the correct text, and rejects the reading "only begotten God," and says that it is an alteration introduced into the text by the Gnostic Valentinus, and his followers. (Valentinus lived about 150 AD when Gnosticism was at its height)

The Scriptures also state that, "The son who was to be given was Christ the Lord, God with us." Isaiah 7v14, 9v6, Matt 1v18-26, Luke 1v35, 2v11. In John 1v1,14, John tells us that the only begotten Son of God, is none other than God the Word manifested in human flesh. In John 1v14, "the only begotten from the Father," "hos monogenous para Patros," does not mean that Christ was created, it declares His unique relationship with the Father, for the Scriptures teach that as God, Jesus had no beginning: His goings forth have been "From Everlasting." Micah 5v2, Psalm 90v1,2, John 1v1, Heb 1v8, 7v1-3, Rev 1v8-11, etc.

NB The quotation in Heb 1v5, from Psalm 2v7, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee;" is a declaration by the Father of Christ's unique Sonship and Deity. The context in Heb 1v1-14, affirms Christ's eternal deity by saying that Jesus is "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of His person:" and in a quotation from Psalm 45v6,7, we read in Heb 1v8 that the Father says to Jesus, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." In another quotation from Psalm 102v25-27, we read in Heb 1v10-12, that Jesus is the immutable and unchangeable Yahweh who laid the foundations of the earth. People have to be spiritually blind to miss, or wilfully ignore, such clear Biblical declarations from God the Father of Christ's unique sonship and absolute deity.

In Heb 1v5,6, "begotten," refers to the time when Jesus took upon Himself our humanity. The day of the incarnate Saviour's birth, "Thou art my Son, This Day Have I Begotten Thee;" the day is specifically said to be, "when He bringeth in the first begotten into the world." It is interesting to note that the quote from Psalm 2v7, "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten Thee;" that is applied in Heb 1v5,6 to the incarnation and birth of Christ upon a certain day; is applied in Acts 13v32-34 to Christ being raised from the dead on a certain day; and in Heb 5v5,6 to the start of Christ's high priestly ministry on that day of resurrection and ascension.

In asking the Father to "glorify thy Son," the Lord Jesus is referring to His sure Resurrection out from amongst the dead, and His Ascension into Heaven, after His Resurrection. After having made atonement and been quickened "in spirit," He would lead ALL the Old Testament saints, and all the other inhabitants of Hades who had received the Truth He had preached unto them into Heaven. Psalm 24, Jphn 20v17, 1Pet 3v18-22, 4v6. The restoration of His pre-incarnate glory which He had had with His Father from before time, began on the day of His resurrection, (which He had also experienced (for a short time) at the Transfiguration on Mount Hermon.) The beginning of His High Priestly ministry started on the day of His Resurrection, with the giving of spiritual gifts and ministries to the Church. Matt 17v1,2, Luke 9v32, Acts 2v25-28, 1Cor 12v7-11, Eph 4v7-16, Heb 5v5,6, 2Pet v16-18.

"That thy Son also may glorify thee."

This would occur by the Lord Jesus fulfilling His High Priestly ministry during the Age of Grace, when having redeemed men to God, by His blood, He then makes them Kings and Priests unto God (We are made "kings and priests" by being "washed" from our sins in His own blood." Zech 13v1,6,7, John 13v8,10, Acts 20v28, 1Cor 6v11, Rev 7v14), for Paul tells us in Heb 2v10, that God the Father is "bringing many sons unto glory." Rev 5v10, 20v4-6, 22v3-5.

(In Rev 5v10, the A.V. and T.R. "kings and priests," "basileis kai hieres," is correct and occurs in Mabcede, the Syrian Harklean, and Hodges and Farstad; the reading "basileian kai hieres," "a kingdom and priests," occurs in Codex A, a few Latin, the Syrian Philoxenian, the Coptic, and the Critical Texts. Codex Aleph reads, "basilian kai ierateian.")

When we read the first fifteen chapters of the book of The Acts of The Apostles, we also see how the Lord Jesus glorified His Father through His continuous "interventions" (with power) ("entugchano" (NT:1793)) for each individual member of the Body of Christ (every second of every day, Heb 7v25) by the wonderful love, unity, oneness and great explosive power that was manifested in and through the Church at Jerusalem. Although the Apostles got some Truth wrong, especially regarding God's plans and purposes for the Gentiles, they certainly got **ALL** the basics right!

The Distinguishing Features Of Christ's Church At Jerusalem.

The Church at Jerusalem manifested the essential characteristics and distinguishing features that God desires in His Church.

They had a vital encounter with their risen Saviour. They knew His precious blood had cleansed them from sin, and had opened the way into the presence of God the Father. 1Pet 1v19-22, Heb 10v25, Rev 12v10,11. Jesus was intensely real and precious to them; many infallible proofs confirmed their experience. Acts 1v3, 1John 1v1-7. The substitutionary atoning death of Christ was personally accepted and applied to the soul; this sharply divides the false prophet from the child of God. Cults manifesting demon power always reject Christ's atonement, and Christ as the only Saviour. 1John 4v1-6.

They believed God's promise of blessing for them. They earnestly sought for the promise of the Father and the accompanying blessing; they did not try to find an excuse for not seeking the baptism and gifts of the Spirit, by twisting the Scriptures. Those who refuse to accept that spiritual gifts and spiritual ministries still function today, very often do so, because they desire to make Christianity an intellectual exercise of God's dealings in the past, they do not want a living experience of God in the present. It is certainly not honest or consistent to believe in a Christianity that has none of the New Testament love, life and power; as the body is dead without the spirit, so is an intellectual Christianity that is devoid of the manifestations and gifts of the Holy Spirit that occurred in the New Testament. James 2v26. All the promises of God are still "Yea" and "Amen" in Christ. 2Cor 1v17-20. We can experience God's love, gifts and power today, Christianity is not a doctrinal exercise, it is a vital experience of the living God. Those who refuse to seek God's power and gifts for fear of receiving some false spirit, have already been defeated by Satan, and have shown a lack of faith in God's ability to care for His children. Luke 11v9-13. Satan kept Israel out of Canaan by fear and unbelief, they could not trust God to look after them, or believe for His miraculous interventions. Indeed, the Scriptures reveal that it has always been those who have failed to seek God for His promised blessings and spiritual gifts, who have been influenced by evil spirits. See Hebrews 3 and 4, Matt 23v34-39, John 8v38-44.

They earnestly sought God in prayer. The early Church realised that only earnest prayer could bring victory, blessing, and spiritual safety. It is God's presence, love, gifts and guidance that cause us to triumph. Exodus 33v11-23, NB v14. The New Testament is full of promises of spiritual blessing and power, and the early Church earnestly sought God for them. Acts 1v14,24, 3v1, 4v31, 6v4,6, 8v15, 9v11,40, 10v4,9,30,31, 11v5, 12v5,12, 13v3, 14v23, 16v13,16,25, 20v36, 21v5, 22v17, 28v8. etc. (There are so many Scriptures upon this that I have just confined myself to the book of Acts). Earnest and prolonged seeking of God is a searching test of our spirituality and love of God, and it really shows whether we own the Lordship of Christ or not. Those who have clean hands and pure hearts love to seek God, "This is the generation of them that seek Him." Psalm 24v3-6. True Christians, like David, love to wait upon and seek God, their hearts pant for Him. Psalm 40v1, 62v1,5, 42v1-3.

The last thing that backsliders, heretics and apostates want to do is to feel the presence of God; but Christians who are walking in the light long for it. The early Church loved to seek God in prayer and spent hours and days doing it. There is all the difference in the world between a short prayer aimed at the hearers instead of God, and the prolonged and earnest seeking of God that took place in the early Church. Christ-rejecting false cults may say short prayers, but the prolonged

seeking of God is a thing that they will not do, for the evil spirits that influence them will not allow them to do this. John informs us in 1John 4v1-5, that Christ-rejecting cults are under the influence of evil spirits; seeking God and a full recognition of Christ's deity, eternity, and redeeming blood, is diametrically opposite to seeking or pursuing evil spirits. Deut 18v9-19, Lev 19v31, 20v6, Isaiah 8v19,20. Prolonged, earnest seeking of God is the acid test of one's source of inspiration. Heb 11v6.

Many of the disciples in the upper room were Galileans, and it was a real sacrifice for them to obey Christ's command to tarry for the promise of the Father in the upper room at Jerusalem. Lk.24v49, Acts.2v7, 1v13,14. For a variety of reasons, at least 380 out of 500 brethren of 1Cor.5v6 were missing, more if we count the women in the upper room. Without a doubt, many had perfectly legitimate and good reasons for not being present, such as working to provide for their families, and looking after dependants, and so on. Whatever the reasons for not being in the upper room, they missed God's initial and most remarkable outpouring of the Holy Spirit on His Church. They missed one of God's great epochal purposes for the Church through their absence, and we miss Divine blessing if we fail to obey the command of Jesus to tarry and pray for the promise of the Father. Lk.11v9-13.

They manifested God's character and love in their lives. We should follow the example the church at Jerusalem, when it was moving in its initial power and sweet first love, immediately after the outpouring on the day of Pentecost. What tender concern and love they manifested to each other! Their unity, which sprang from a common love for each other, is one of the outstanding features of the early Church. The apostles, elders and church members promptly and wisely dealt with practical matters that caused division and friction. There was a healthy fear of God and sin through God's prompt dealings with satanic infiltration and intrigue. Acts 5v1-11, 6v1-7, 15v1-35, 2v42-47, 4v31,32. In sharp contrast to this was the church at Corinth, which Paul had to rebuke for disunity and lack of love. 1Cor 15v34.

Jesus said, "By their fruits ye shall know them." Matt 7v15-23. This does not mean the size of a church organisation, for Christianity does not consist of statistics or empty talk, but rather of consecration to God, practical holiness and a real love of people. It is true that even godly men, like David or Peter, may badly fail God under strong temptation, but undesirable and unnecessary as this is, it is totally different from the sinful wallowing in the mire spoken of in the Scriptures. 2Pet 2v1-22, Judev3-25, Rev 2v13-16 and 3v20-24. Hypocrites may have a pleasant veneer, and may pretend and play-act, but Christian love is inimitable. Christians will not only die for their brethren, but also for their enemies. 1John 5v1,2, 2v1-22, Matt 5v43-48. Christian love and purity cannot be truly imitated or counterfeited by Satan's children. John 13v34,35.

They believed Christ's teaching and doctrine. The apostle John said in 1John 4v1-5, that those who are inspired of God accept the Lord Jesus as the Messiah of the Old Testament, whereas those who are inspired of Satan reject this. Many Scriptures state that Christ is the eternal Creator God of the Old Testament. John 1v1-3, Eph 3v9, Col.1v16,17, Heb 1v2,8,10. A person's source of inspiration is revealed by their attitude to Christ; if Satan moves them, they reject Christ's deity, atonement and Scriptural teaching, but accept the truth about Jesus if they are inspired of God. As soon as a person is taken over by an evil spirit, their doctrine is corrupted and bears no resemblance to New Testament truth, and in particular the truth about Christ. The personal appropriation of Christ's sacrifice for sin is always the cleavage point between Christian and Satanic doctrine. Rev 12v10-12. False cults manifesting demon power reject the Christian doctrine about sin, God's judgement upon sin, and state that personal redemption by Christ's blood is unnecessary. False cults manifesting demon power also either reject completely the idea of a personal God, or so pervert the idea of God that He is unrecognisable as the Christian's God. False prophets may pray to God and Christ, but when they deny Christ and distort His doctrine, they in reality preach "another Christ, and another Gospel." 2Cor 11v3,4, 1John 2v22,23, 4v1-5,15, 5v1. A curse rests on those who distort Christ's Gospel. Gal 1v6-9. The converts at Jerusalem continued steadfastly in the doctrine that the apostles had received from Christ, and so should we. Acts 2v42, Jude v3,4.

They had an evangelistic fervour. The early Christians had to tell others about their Saviour, they even made ruthless persecution an opportunity for spreading the Gospel. Acts 8v1-8, 11v19,20, Phil 1v7,12-14. The apostles preached Christ before Pentecost, and this was their passion afterwards. Acts 2v14-41, 8v35, 9v19-22. We cannot expect great blessing and gifts, if our zeal and outlook are confined to spiritual selfishness. We experience Christ's heavenly riches in the greatest degree when we minister them to others; "Give and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over." Luke 6v38. This applies to the giving of spiritual things as well as the giving of material things. Churches that are not evangelistic will die spiritually, for it is only as we obey the command of Jesus, to go into all the world to preach the Gospel, that we shall really prove the full meaning of the words, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age." Mark 16v15, Matt 28v18-20. Even when persecuted for the Gospel the apostles preached Jesus consistently and urgently as often as opportunity arose. Acts 5v41,42.

They answered Satan's lying wonders with God's miracles. God inspired and empowered the evangelism of the early Church; they did not rely on human oratory or ability. It was easy for the early Church to witness and win souls, they had such proofs of a risen Christ in the signs, wonders and miracles that Jesus was doing through His Church. It is only difficult for Christians to witness effectively, when these New Testament ministries, gifts and power are missing. If we refuse to recognise the need of these mighty ministries and their accompanying spiritual gifts, we are as spiritually crippled as a man without arms and legs. Paul emphatically tells us in 1Cor 12v21, that we cannot do without any of these ministries and gifts. They are all essential today, if Christ's body is to function as He intends. Indeed, the Church cannot minister in power without them.

How illogical, inconsistent, and unscriptural it is to say that the Almighty God no longer does any miracles and that only

Satan does miracles today. God is a God that only does wonders, and the sons and daughters of God are expected and commanded to manifest His power and love. Exodus 3v20, 15v11, Job 9v10, Psalm 77v11,14, 136v4, Isaiah 8v18, Acts 2v38,39 with Luke 24v49, Acts 4v22,43, Rom 4v2,3, Heb 2v4. God has promised great miracles throughout this age; it is folly to say, as some do, that God no longer does miracles and that any miracles that take place are the work of the Devil. God has promised that this age will close with the greatest show of spiritual power the world has ever seen, God's two witnesses, and many others have mighty spiritual gifts given to them to answer Satan's lying wonders through Antichrist and other children of the Devil. Rev 11v1-12, 2Thess 2v7-12, Acts.2v16-21, Dan 11v32,33, Zech 12v8.

None of the Old Testament or New Testament men of God vindicated God by mere talk; they had spiritual gifts and spiritual ministries. When God sent His men to answer Satan's servants, He has always given them spiritual gifts; He never sent them in their own power. The early Church was victorious because it answered the lying wonders of men like Simon the sorcerer, and Elymas the sorcerer, with the miracles of God. Acts 8v8-24, 13v6-13. Evil occult forces operating through idolatry, sorcery, witchcraft, Spiritualism, etc., were one of the greatest obstacles to the spread of Christianity. The early Church did not defeat these powers of evil by mere intellectual argument, they out-miracled them with the power of God; see the tremendous revival at Ephesus in Acts 19v10-20. The message of the crucified Christ was foolishness to both Jews and Greeks, but because it was confirmed by God's miracles, many were compelled to believe. Rom 15v18,19, 1Cor 1v23, 2v1-10. Can we hope to succeed without the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which the early Church, and God, felt, was essential for the effective preaching of the Gospel? We face the same challenge of evil occult powers; we need the same equipment from God to defeat them.

They acted as a body under Christ's leadership. Paul taught that all the members of Christ's body, from apostles to young converts, are intended by God to act together under the guidance of Christ the Head, as a body. 1Cor 12v11-31, Rom 12v3-5, Eph 4v7-11. Every child of God has the right to minister something from Christ, when Christ moves them. 1Cor 14v26,31. This is, of course, speaking of a Christian fellowship; pioneer evangelism should be left to the mature spiritual ministries of the Church. Paul said the Christians at Corinth had the right idea of ministering as a body; the trouble was that they all wanted to do everything and to do too much. The object of the New Testament leaders was to produce ministries in each local church. Those who fail to do this are not fulfilling a New Testament ministry. Eph 4v8-14. In Eph 4v14, Paul speaks of immature believers who do not possess any ministry from Christ, and he says that they are at the mercy of false teachers. Heb 5v13,14. The Holy Spirit is the overall superintendent of the whole Church of Christ, His aim is to produce ministry in the Church.

The continuous prayer life of the early Church at Jerusalem shows they realised the need of being subordinate to the lordship of Jesus and the Holy Spirit. There was a sense of eagerness in the early disciples, to see God work in His Church; if we insist on keeping to our programmes and routines, we will find that we have missed the things that the early Church experienced. Are we as willing to let the Holy Spirit forbid some of our activities and plans, or stop us preaching as Paul was in Acts 16v6-10? Until we are, we shall only be students of the book of Acts; we shall know little or nothing of "the Acts of the Holy Spirit." The Holy Spirit comes to lead us on to maturity, **but unless we acknowledge His leadership and guidance we will not attain it, we may become old Christians, but we will never become mature Christians.** Eph 4v12, 2Cor 3v18, Luke 6v40, Heb 5v11-14.

A word of warning about (spiritually) immature Christians (i.e., "babes," Greek, "nepiois," (pl) literally, "without the power of speech," or "non-speaking ones," Matt 11v25-30, Heb 5v12-6v2) manifesting spiritual gifts, the Lord said to William Branham, "You can't teach Pentecostal babes supernatural things, it will only result in carnal impersonations."

They were prepared to suffer for their Saviour. The early Christians had to count the cost of their faith, they, like their Lord, were despised and rejected by worldly men. They were looked upon as followers of a crucified heretic, their faith meant persecution. Acts 5v40-42, 8v1-4, 1Thess 1v5,6. There were periods of rest from persecution, e.g. Acts 9v31, but Paul warned Christians that if they lived godly lives, they could expect persecution. 2Tim 2v9, 3v11,12. We are not to invite persecution; indeed, Paul told us to influence the lives and actions of political leaders, by our prayers and godly living. 1Tim 2v1-3. Christ told us to run away from those who persecute us, and try to kill us; there is no place for a false bravado in the Church of Christ. Matt 10v23. The early Christians triumphed over militant opposition because they esteemed the reproach for Christ's sake, as greater riches than all the treasures of the world. Heb 11v26. The Christians treasure is in heaven, not on earth; our eternal home is with our heavenly Father, and what a wonderful Father and home we have! Matt 7v19-34, 1Pet 1v3-9. We are pilgrims and strangers on the earth, we seek a better company and country, and we have a heavenly hope; for God is preparing for us a city. Heb 11v13-16, 1Pet 2v11.

When we seek God for the fullness of the Holy Spirit, with the same attitudes of heart and mind as the early Christians at Jerusalem, we shall have the same powerful manifestations of the Holy Spirit's power. Nothing will be able to stand before us; multitudes will be saved, healed, and filled with the Holy Spirit. We shall be the blessing that God intended all His children to be.

Let us therefore be obedient to God, and follow the wonderful example of the early Church at Jerusalem, so that the Lord Jesus may glorify God the Father through His "interventions" (with power) ("entugchano" (NT:1793)), as He fulfils His High Priestly ministry, for if the Body of Christ (His Church) is disobedient it will become like a paralysed leper, were the head (the Lord Jesus) is ok, but the body is leprous and paralysed!

"As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him." John 17v2.

"As thou hast given him power over all flesh."

The Lord Jesus had already stated in Matt 11v27: **"All things are delivered unto me of my Father:** and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him."

"Are delivered.." is in the Greek, "paredóthee," which is the aorist passive indicative of "paradidomi" (NT:3860), and means to surrender, i.e., yield up, entrust, transmit, cast, commit, deliver (up), give (over, up). Like the Greek word "edothē" (NT:1325) in Matt 28v18, it is the timeless aorist, and points back to a moment in eternity, and implies the pre-existence of the Messiah. As the Great Creator, Christ has always had "authority" (exousia" (NT:1849)) over all flesh, and indeed over ALL His creation, and being subject to the His Father would not change that. John 1v1-3,10, Rom 9v5.

The making of a creation made it necessary for the Trinity to take up different activities and responsibilities, and this is particularly true regarding the work of mediation and redemption, so God the Word and God the Holy Spirit became subject to God the Father, although all three were (and are) coeternal, and have coequal deity and glory. Christ in His work as Mediator and Redeemer has always been subject to the Father, He has only done the will of Him who sent Him, and has acted in complete subordination to the Father. John 4v34, 5v30, 1Cor 15v24-28.

"...that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him."

Jesus, as the Great Creator and Redeemer is the Saviour of **ALL** men, especially of those that believe (not just New Testament saints, but Old Testament as well, and ALL those who received and believed the Gospel when, He, stripped of His (fleshly) body, after making atonement, preached to ALL the inhabitants of Hades, whom He then led into Heaven immediately after His Resurrection and (first) Ascension, which also resulted in giving spiritual gifts and spiritual ministries unto the Church); for God **SO** loved the world that He **GAVE** His **ONLY** begotten Son, Who was the Lamb of God slain from before the foundation of the world, the One taking away the sin of it. As our Great God and Saviour, it is His prerogative to give eternal life to **ALL** who repent by seeking His mercy and forgiveness, having called upon the name of the Lord (Yahweh, Yeshua), for He will in no wise cast out those who come to Him for salvation, no matter in what Age that may be, **for His MERCY endures FOREVER!** Job 19v25-27, Psalm 136 all, Joel 2v32, John 1v29, 3v16, 6v37, 10v28, 11v25,26, 20v17, Eph 4v7-16, 1Tim 4v10, Titus 2v13, 1Pet 1v19,20, 3v18-22, 4v6, 1John 4v8,16.

"And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." John 17v3.

An Expanded Translation by Kenneth S. Wuest reads, "And this is the eternal life, namely, that they might be having an experiential knowledge of you, the only genuine God, and of Him whom you sent on a mission, Jesus Christ."

Eternal Life.

In John 17v3 eternal life is stated by our Lord to be, **"that they might know thee** the only true God, and Jesus Christ." The words "that they might know thee" in Greek is "hina ginoōskoosin sé," "ginoōskoosin" is the present active subjunctive of "ginosko" (NT:1097), which means, be aware (of), (have) know (-ledge), perceived, to understand, to be taking in knowledge. In the NT "ginosko" (NT:1097) frequently indicates a relation between the person "knowing" and the object or person known; in this respect, who or what is "known" is of value or importance to the one who knows, and hence the establishment of the relationship, i.e. it frequently implies an active relation between the one who "knows" and the person or thing "known." The present tense marks "a continuance, a progressive" perception of God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, i.e., "should keep on growing eternally in the knowledge of God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."

In the vast endless "Ages of Ages" of eternity we will never stop learning about our wonderful Heavenly Father, our Great Saviour, the Lord Jesus, and the Comforter, the Holy Spirit; even after a billion, billion years, They still will have an endless revelation of Themselves to show to the redeemed. Rom 11v33-36, 1Cor 2v6-16, Eph 2v1-10, 3v8-11.

In John 17v3, the Lord Jesus addresses the Father as "the only true God," He uses this phrase in opposition to all false gods, and what is said here is in opposition to idols, and not to the Holy Spirit or to the Jesus himself, Who, in 1 John 5v20, is called "the true God and eternal life." We rejoice that we are accepted in the beloved, and are one in the Father and the Son. Jesus is no less God because the Father is called "the only true God," here in John 17v3, than the Father is not God, because Jesus is called "the only Potentate," in 1Tim 6v15, and "the true God," in 1John 5v20, and "the true Lord," in Mal 3v1, and "the one Lord," in 1Cor 8v6. When Jesus said the Father is "the only true God," He is speaking as a man, and as Mediator and Redeemer, He is certainly not excluding Himself from deity. Jesus is one with the Father; in the Son dwells **ALL** the fullness of the Godhead, and he who has seen Jesus has seen the Father. John 14v7-14, Col 2v9,10.

"I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." John 17v4.

During His life upon earth (the hidden years at Nazareth and during His ministry), the Lord Jesus lived a beautiful life, manifesting perfect love to all. Everything He did, He did in the name of His Father, Yahweh (even as we, the believer, are

to do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, Col 3v17), be it in His work as a Carpenter, or during His ministry, and even though He was the Lord of Glory (emptied), the Lord Jesus always gave the glory to his Father. John 5v43, Phil 2v7. The work He had finished (John 17v4), refers to not only that of His earthly ministry, but, includes that of the 30 years hidden away at Nazareth, where His Father prepared Him, not only for His earthly ministry, but also for His High Priestly ministry. Without this preparation there would have been no earthly ministry, He could not have been the sinless Lamb of God (that taketh away the sin of the world), no Atonement would have been made (hence, no New Covenant), the Old Testament saints could not have been delivered from Hades, no Resurrection, or Ascension, no High Priestly, and thus no Second Coming, and no Eternal Kingdom. The 30 years of being hidden away at Nazareth was the time that the Father changed the Babe of Bethlehem into the Christ of God. Isaiah 49v1-13, 50v3-7, 53 all.

For the work of Redemption, God the Word had to "empty" (Greek, "ekénoosen", the aorist active indicative of "kenoo" (NT:2758) which means to make (of none effect, of no reputation, void), be in vain, to empty) Himself of His Glory and Power, i.e. of His Omnipotence, Omnipresence, Omniscience, Transcendence and Immutability ("He stripped himself of the insignia of majesty" (Lightfoot)), and veiled Himself in human flesh, so that He (Phil 2v7,8): "took upon him the form ("form" is in Greek, "morfeén," from "morphe" (NT:3444)) of a servant, and was made in the likeness ("likeness" Greek, "homoioómati" from "homoionoma" (NT:3667)) of men. And being found in fashion ("fashion" is in Greek, "scheémati" from "schema" (NT:4976)) as a man..."

By using these three Greek words ("morfeén," "homoioómati" and "scheémati"), Paul demonstrates in a most unequivocal way the real humanity of our dear Lord Jesus, so that in 64 AD he could write to the Hebrews (Hebrews 4v15) that He "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." He had no mere phantom humanity as the Docetic Gnostics held, and today as the followers of Augustine and Calvin hold, but He was a partaker of real and true "sinful flesh" (literally "the flesh of sin" (marked by sin)) Romans 8v3, 1John 4v1-6, 2John v7.

In Phil 2v6 it states: "Who, being (better "existing") in the form of God..." which is in Greek, "hós en morfeé Theoú hupárchoon." As already stated, the true force of the participle "hupárchoon" is well expressed by Dean Gwynn in his interpretation of the epistle in the "Speaker's Commentary": "Its tense (Imperfect) contrasted with the following Aorists points to indefinite **continuance** of being."

Phil 2v7 states: "**Was made in the likeness of men,**" which is in Greek, "en homoioómati anthroópoon genómenos," genómenos, "was made," is the aorist middle participle of "ginomai" (NT:1096), or better, "becoming," definite entrance in time upon his humanity. So we should note the difference in tense between "huparchoon" (eternal existence in the "morfee" of God) and "genomenos" (second aorist middle participle of "ginomai," "becoming", definite entrance in time upon his humanity), so even after the Lord Jesus took upon Himself our humanity, He was still God, so that John could say in John 1v14: "And the Word was made flesh..." And Paul in Col 2v9, states the same Truth: "For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily."

"Godhead" is in Greek, "theóteetos" which is from "theotes" (NT:2320), this is derived from "Theos and deitas" and expresses the divine essence and nature of God. "Theotes" is not to be confused with "theiótees," (NT:2305), (Godhead) which is used in Romans 1v20, from "theios" 2304, and refers to God's Divine attributes.

Archbishop Trench gives the following helpful comments on these two Greek words.

Of "theiótees" Trench states: "Paul is declaring how much of God may be known from the revelation of Himself which He has made in nature, from those vestiges of Himself which men may everywhere trace in the world around them. Yet it is not the personal God whom any man may learn to know by these aids: He can be known only by the revelation of Himself in His Son; but only His divine attributes, His majesty and glory..... And it is not to be doubted that St. Paul uses this vaguer, more abstract, and less personal word, just because he would affirm that men may know God's power and majesty, His **theia** "dunamis" (divine power) (2 Pet 1:3), from His works; but would not imply that they may know Himself from these, or from anything short of the revelation of His Eternal Word."

"Motives not dissimilar induce him to use "to theion" rather than "ho theos" in addressing the Athenians on Mars' Hill. Acts 17v29."

And on "theotes" Trench remarks: "Paul is declaring that in the Son there dwells all the fullness of absolute Godhead; they were no mere rays of divine glory which gilded Him, lighting up His Person for a season and with splendour not His own; but He was, and is, absolute and perfect God; and the apostle uses "theotes" to express this essential and personal Godhead of the Son." End Of Quote.

In Col 2v9 Paul is speaking of the essential and personal deity as belonging to Christ. So **Bengel:** "Not the divine attributes, but the divine nature."

(Please refer to the work, "**The Incarnation by Rev E H Gifford**" for a reference on the most important Scripture passage of Phil 2v5-11.)

"And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." John 17v5.

The Lord Jesus prays for His pre-incarnate Glory (which He had "emptied" Himself off for the work of redemption) to be restored to Him after He has made Atonement. John 20v17. This same Glory Peter, James and John saw in the Mount of Transfiguration (Matt 17v1-14, John 1v14, 2Pet 1v16-21). **This, we see, was done by His Father, for in Matt 28v18-20, we read the following:**

"Jesus approached and, breaking the silence, said to them, **All** authority (all power of rule - Greek, "exousía" (NT:1849) which means, authority, power) in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Go then and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Teaching them to observe everything that I have commanded you, and behold, I am with you all the days (perpetually, uniformly, and on every occasion), to the [very] close and consummation of the age. Amen (so let it be)." (Amplified Bible)

And it was this same Glorified Jesus who appeared to Paul on the road to Damascus. Acts 26v12-18.

"...At midday, O king, along the road I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining around me and those who journeyed with me...So I said, 'Who are You, **Lord?**' And He said, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.'"

His Great Glory will brilliantly light up the sky at His Second Coming, on the last day of this Age, the Age of Grace, at which time He comes to destroy the wicked, deliver His saints (by Resurrection and Rapture) and bring in the Eternal Kingdom. 19v11-21 (with Matt 24v27,30 & Rev 11v15-19):

"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war....and his name is called **The Word of God**.....he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, **KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.**"

Section II: The Lord Jesus Prays For The Apostles. (John17v6-19).

(It should also be noted, that what the Lord Jesus prays for His apostles also applies to everybody else who would believe in Him through their word. John 17v20-26.)

"I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word." John 17v6.

What's In A Name?...Everything!

The Lord Jesus manifested the name of the Father (and would continue to manifest it after His Resurrection and Ascension), Yahweh, to the disciples. John 17v6,26. This took place in 2 ways:

NB Jesus manifested perfectly the character of the invisible God (Exodus 34v6,7, (33v12 to 34v9), John 14v9, Heb 1v3, 1John 4v8,16) in every area of His life (His home life, His work, His religious life, in friendships, personal relationships etc, even to those who were His enemies, who hated and persecuted Him, Matt 5v43-48, Col 3v1-17), all of which were a prelude to its manifestation in His Ministry. (see also Neh 9v17, Psalm 86v15, 103v8, Jonah 4v2).

It states the following in Exodus 33v18-20, 34v5-7, Deut 5v9:

"And he said, I beseech thee, shew me thy glory. And he said, **I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee;** and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy. And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live.....And the LORD descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, **The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth,** Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.... of them that hate me"

The first of His names recorded in Exodus 34v6,7 is "merciful," which in Hebrew is "**rachuw**m" (OT:7349), which means, full of compassion, merciful, to be full of embracing compassionate tender love. God's first Name is Compassion. Jesus truly manifested the "more excellent way" during His Ministry; how often He was "moved with compassion" to minister to the people to meet their great needs, and He healed ALL the sick and diseased amongst them. Matt 14v13-21, 1Cor 12v31.

"Gracious" is in Hebrew, "w^achanuwn," it is from "channuwn" (OT:2587), which comes from "chanan" (OT:2603) and means, "to stoop in kindness to an inferior, to one who is in distress for the purpose of ministering to them," and so "the Gracious One"; He whose nature is goodness itself; the loving God. Matt 20v34.

"Longsuffering" in Hebrew is "'erek 'apayim," two words, "'arek" (OT:750) and "'aph" 639, and means literally, "a long time before one breathes hard through the nose (in anger)," not easily provoked, "long-suffering,"; the Being Who, because of His goodness and tenderness, is not easily irritated, but suffers long and is kind even after suffering for a long time. 1Cor 13v4, 2Pet 3v9.

Who is "Abundant in" which is in Hebrew "w^arab-" from "rab" (OT:7227), abounding, rich, much, many, great, abundant (in quantity, size, age, number, rank, quality). James 1v5. **"Goodness" is in Hebrew, "cheched"** (OT:2617), loving-kindness, steadfast love, goodness, and so "the bountiful Being; He who is exuberant in His beneficence," the Beneficent One, God's "cheched" is always open to those who seek Him. Matt 5v45, Luke 6v35, John 6v37, James 1v17.

"Truth" in Hebrew is "we^amet" which is from "'emeth" (OT:571), stability; (figuratively) certainty, truth, trustworthiness, faithful, right, sure, true (-ly, -th), verity, firmness etc, "the truth or true One"; He alone who can neither deceive nor be deceived who is the Fountain of truth, and from whom all wisdom and knowledge must be derived. Isaiah 65v16, John 14v6.

The question needs to be asked, "What did Moses actually see and experience?" God said to Moses in **Exodus 33v19: "I will make all my goodness pass before thee"** **"Goodness" is in Hebrew, "Tuwbiy,"** which is from "tuwb" (OT:2898), which means, good (as a noun), in the widest sense, especially goodness (superlative concretely, the best), beauty, gladness, welfare, and often, when applied to God, His benignity. It was **ALL** His inner beauty that God showed and revealed unto Moses; His Being, divine nature and character that Moses not only saw, but also felt the transforming glory of God, it was manifested to him as wave after wave of God's Divine power and love swept over him and enveloped him. John 1v14, Hebrews 1v3, 2Pet 1v4. The result of having this wonderful revelation and experience, was that the face of Moses shone (Exodus 34v29-35 esp. v30): Exodus 34v20 states: "So when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face **shone**, and they were afraid to come near him."

"Shone" is in Hebrew, "qaaran" from "qaran" (OT:7160), which means, "to send out rays," his face emanated light. This is the same experience that the Lord Jesus had, after He came down from the Mount of Transfiguration. Mark 9v1-15 (esp. v15) states: "And straightway all the people, when they beheld him, **were greatly amazed**, and running to him saluted him."

"Were greatly amazed" is in Greek, "exethambeétheesan," the first aorist passive ingressive aorist with perfective compound [ex-] of "ekthambeo" 1568, to astonish utterly, affright, greatly (sore) amaze, to be greatly astounded, to throw into amazement or terror.

The result of this with Moses, was that he had to cover his face with a veil every time he would speak to the Israelites; and with the Lord Jesus, was that He set His face as a flint to go to Jerusalem, having been greatly strengthened by the Transfiguration on Mount Hermon. Luke 9v27-36,51 (with Isaiah 50v3-7), 2Cor3v1-18, Heb 2v9.

We read in 2Cor 3v7-11,16-18:

"But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excellet. For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious...Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away. Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

Paul contrasts the glory of the Old Covenant with that of the New Covenant, and states in 2Cor 3v9, "much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed (**how infinitely more abounding**) in glory."

And Revelation 12v1-6 states:

"And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; **a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet**, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne. And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days."

The vision of this glorious woman reveals to us one of God's major purposes for the last days. She represents a group of people, who are foreknown, designed, specially created and empowered by God for the Great Tribulation. Here we see part of the Church filled with the power and glory of God. The symbols used are very striking and significant. **The moon of Mosaic dispensation shone with the light of the Gospel, as the moon shines with the light of the sun.** The woman is not shining with the light of the moon of Judaism; she is clothed with the light of the Gospel sun. Jewish worship was a shadow of things to come. Many of the Old Testament types, shadows and prophecies have been fulfilled in the birth, life, death, resurrection and intercessory ministry of Christ. These revelations of Christ, and other prophetic and moral truths in the Old Testament Scriptures, constitute the moon under the feet of the woman, for the Church is founded upon the truths revealed to the Old Testament prophets, as well as the truth given to New Testament apostles. Eph 3v5, Col 2v17, Heb 8v1-13, 10v1-16.

The glories of the Old and New Covenants are contrasted by the moon of Mosaic dispensation shining with the (borrowed) light of the Gospel sun, the moon simply reflects the light of the sun, which is infinitely brighter (and has a source of light within itself), than the moon, such is the contrast between the glory that accompanied the Old Covenant and that which fills the New. It is a great shame that the vast majority of Christians today, do not experience this glory (His Presence) in their lives.

In 2Cor 3v16-18. Paul states: "Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord (Yahweh), the veil shall be taken away. (There is an allusion here to the removal of the veil from Moses' face whenever he returned to commune with God. Exodus 34v34). Now the Lord (Yahweh) is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord (Yahweh) is, there is liberty. But we all, **with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord (Yahweh)**, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord (Yahweh)."

Paul informs us that the New Testament believer can have the same experience as Moses had. As we seek His face in prayer, and sit in His Presence, our whole beings become impregnated with His spirit, so that our very souls are aware of the names of His beautiful character (which is His Glory)...**merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth**. We should also remember that when we are baptized in the Holy Spirit, He Who was with us, then enters into us, which brings to the believer an even greater sense of His Presence in their being and soul. Exodus 34v6,7, Psalm 24 (esp. v3-6), John 14v17, Acts 2 (esp. v4), 1Cor 3v16, 2Cor 6v16, Eph 1v13. If the believer is not willing to seek the Lord in prayer and sit in His Presence, there will be very little, if any, experience of His wonderful character and divine nature in their inner being, and so, very little change in them. However, if they were to seek Him and abide in His Presence, the believer will experience a beautiful change in their character, for Paul informs us in 2Cor 3v18, that it is as we behold the glory of the Lord (by abiding in His Presence), that we **"are changed into the same image** from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord (Yahweh)."

"Are changed," is in Greek, "metamorphoúmetha" the present passive of "metamorphoo" (NT:3339), derived from "meta" (NT:3226), denoting "change" or "transfer," and "morphe" (NT:3444), "form", and means to transform (literally or figuratively, "metamorphose"), change, transfigure, to change into another form, to change the inward reality to something else, the present tense denotes continuous action, so literally, "are being transformed" (into the same image), it is a work in progress. It is the word used for pagan mythological metamorphoses. "Morphe," "form," denotes the form regarded as the distinctive nature and character of the object, and is distinguished from "schema" (NT:4976), the changeable, outward "fashion:" in a man, for instance, his gestures, clothes, words, acts. The "morphe" partakes of the "essence" of a thing; the "schema" is an "accident" which may change, leaving it unaffected.

"Into the same image," is in Greek, "teén auteén eikóna," accusative retained with passive verb "metamorphoúmetha," into the likeness of God: "eikóna" is from "eikon" (NT:1504), a likeness, i.e., (literally) statue, profile, or (figuratively) representation, resemblance, image, a "derived likeness." The word involves the two ideas of representation and manifestation. "The idea of perfection does not lie in the word itself, but must be sought from the context." (Lightfoot). Thus the monarch's (Caesar's) head on the coin is "eikon," (Matt 22v20), or the statue in stone or other material is "eikon." (Rev 13v14). Thus by sitting in the Lord's Presence, the believer is "changed" into His "image."

The Greek word, "metamorphoo" (NT:3339) is also used in Rom 12v2; which states the following: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And **be not conformed** (suscheematizesthe) **to this world: but be ye transformed** (metamorphoústhe) **by the renewing of your mind**, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

"Conformed," is in Greek, "suscheematizesthe," the present passive imperative of "suschematizo" (NT:4964), with "mee", and means to stop being fashioned or do not have the habit of being fashioned.

"Transformed" in Greek is "metamorphoústhe," the present passive imperative of "metamorphoo" (NT:3339), be ye transformed in your inmost nature. Paul beseeches the believer not to be squeezed into the mould of the world, but by filling their minds with His Truth, and sitting in His Presence, they should be transformed into the image of Christ, their Saviour.

By contemplating our Lord's glory and wonderful character, by seeking His face and sitting in His Presence, and filling our minds with His Truth, we can put off the old man and put on the new man, and be progressively transfigured from glory to glory by the Spirit of God into our Lord's image; when this occurs the divine purpose to conform us to the image ("eikon") of Christ will be fulfilled. Rom 8v29, 12v1-2, 2Cor 3v16-18, Col 3v10, Heb 6v1,2 (also see Eph 3v14-21). In Rom 8v29, "conformed to the image," is "summorphous tes eikonos," the use of the adjective "summorphous," from "sun," which means "with," and "morphe," "form," shows that the conformity to the image is inward, deep and real. See Phil 2v6. We are not deified, that belongs to God alone, but Peter informs us that through the precious promises of God, we are made partakers of the divine nature. 2Pet 1v4.

Jesus revealed, and used, all the covenant names of Yahweh during His earthly ministry. The divine name, the tetragrammaton, was God's covenant name with Israel, as set forth in the Old Testament. The sacred name of "Yahweh," or "Jehovah," depending on which form you prefer to use, comes from the Hebrew verb "to be," as Exodus 3v14,15, states, "And God said to Moses, **I AM THAT I AM**, (Hebrew, EHYEH ASHER EHYEH), and He said, You shall say to the

Israelites I AM has sent me to you. This is my name for ever, and by this name I am to be remembered to all generations." Hebrew scholars have stated that "EHYEH ASHER EHYEH" means, "I AM WHO I AM, AND WHAT I AM: AND I WILL BE, WHAT I WILL BE." The name "EHYEH ASHER EHYEH" and its context can mean, "I will be with you ALL the time, in ALL situations." However, it means more than that, rather, "I will be with you, at all times, and in all situations, to be what I am to you." God comes to make His abilities and love available to us. The name of "Jehovah" or "Yahweh," whichever way you prefer to pronounce it, encapsulates the meaning of the great name of God, "EHYEH ASHER EHYEH," "I AM THAT I AM," and manifests the eternal availability, of God's love and power. The name of Jesus has been given to us, it is covenanted to us by His own shed blood, and when we call on His name, He comes to give us what we need, His Name carries all the Divine love, power and presence of the covenant names of God. Exodus 34v6,7.

An important fact that needs to be explained, is that in Exodus 6v3, it states the following: "I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob as God Almighty [El-Shaddai], **but by My name the Lord [Yahweh — the redemptive name of God] I did not make Myself known to them [in acts and great miracles]**. [Gen 17:1.] I have also established My covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their temporary residence in which they were strangers." (Amplified Bible)

Abraham certainly knew the name Yahweh, for it is recorded in Gen 22v14: "And Abraham called the name of that place '**Jehovah-Jireh**,' because it is said this day in the mount, '**Jehovah doth provide**.'" However, what Exodus 6v3 is stating, is that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob did NOT know God in Covenant relationship as "Yahweh" BUT as "**El-Shaddai**" (God Almighty).

All The Covenant Names Of Yahweh Are Given To Us In The Name Of Jesus.

Yahweh Elohim. The Lord our God. Deut 6v4, etc. This manifests the Trinity, Gen 1v26. "And God said, Let **US** make man in **OUR** image, after **OUR** likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth." Elohim is plural, it is used to describe the plural evil Gods of the Canaanites, and the demon powers behind them. Exodus 20v3. In order to try and deny this obvious reference to the Trinity, heretics, like "Jehovah's Witnesses," have tried to prove, but without any success, that "Elohim" is, "The plural of majesty."

Yahweh Adonai. Our Sovereign Lord. Gen 15v2,8. Often with "Lord of Hosts." Isaiah 34v15, 10v23,24, 22v5,15, 28v22.

Yahweh Rophi, or Yahweh Rapha. The Lord our Healer. Exodus 15v26, Isaiah 53v4, Matt 8v16,17.

Yahweh Jireh. The Lord will see and provide, or equally correctly, The Lord will appear, or be seen. Gen 22v8-14. It was a place in Jerusalem, later called Moriah. God provided His Lamb in Jerusalem, on the cross at Golgotha. Matt 27v33, Mark 15v22, Jn.19v17.

Yahweh Nissi. The Lord our Banner and Conqueror. Exodus 17v15. The battle cry of Moses, 1491 BC. The uplifted hands of Moses, and the invoked Divine Name, defeated the Amalekites; Moses built an altar to commemorate this victory.

Yahweh Tsabaoth. The Lord of Hosts. 1Sam 1v3. This battle cry of the saints occurs 281 times in the Old Testament. Psalm 46v7,11. Our Lord said He could CALL for "twelve legions of angels," in Matt 26v53, it was part of His normal practice in His ministry to the multitudes. It seems Elisha also invoked the name of Yahweh for angelic help, and got it, for he says in 2Kings 6v15-18, "They that be with us are more than they that be with them." David beat Goliath by calling on the name of Yahweh. 1Sam 16v45.

Yahweh Shalom. The Lord our peace. An altar erected by Gideon about 1256 BC. Judges 6v24. Gideon's act and expression of faith. It was also the Aaronic blessing on Israel; it brought physical, spiritual and material peace, blessing and well-being. Numb 6v22-27. "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you." John 14v27. He gives us the peace of Heaven.

Yahweh Shammah. The Lord is present, or there. Ezek 48v35. The promised future kingdom presence.

Yahweh Mekaddishkim. The Lord our Sanctifier. Exodus 31v13, Lev 20v8, 21v8, 22v9,16,32, Ezek 20v12. etc.

Yahweh Ra-ah or Rohi. The Lord my Shepherd. Psalm 23v1.

Yahweh Tsidkenu. God our Righteousness. Jer 23v6, 33v6. Christ's atonement justifies us. Rom 5v1,2, 1John 4v9,10.

Yahweh Hoseenu. God our covenanted Creator. Psalm 95v6, Heb 3 and 4. Praise and worship give victory over foes.

Yahweh Elyon. The Lord Most High. Psalm 7v17. Supreme in love and power, he reigns in perfect justice over all.

Yahweh Eloheenu. The Lord OUR God. Psalm 99v5,8,9. OUR God of joyful fellowship and worship. Acts 1v14, 2v1.

Yahweh Elokeka. The Lord THY God. Exodus 20v2,5,7. The eternal God with whose name we encourage each other.

Yahweh Elohay. The Lord MY God. Zech 14v5. MY eternal God of personal encouragement.

The Covenant Names Of Yahweh That David Called On, And Proved. 2Sam 22v1-4, 14v22, Psalm 18.

Yahweh is my Rock, The God of my rock. Yahweh my Shield. Yahweh my Salvation. Yahweh my Saviour, Thou savest me from violence. Yahweh, Who gave David victory over the giants and his other enemies. 2Sam 21v15-22, 22v1-3. Yahweh my Refuge, Yahweh my High Tower. Yahweh my Fortress and my Deliverer.

David proved that the Divine Name could be invoked at all times and in all situations; this was the reason for his victories. We see from 2Sam 22v1-3, 14v22 and Psalm 18, that David took God at His Word and called upon, and proved, the Divine Name in defence and deliverance. Solomon realised the source of his father's victories, he had seen David prove the power of the invoked Covenant Names of God, and invoked and proved them personally for himself, he wrote in Prov 18v10, "The name of Yahweh is a strong tower ("migdol," "a great tower"), the righteous runneth into it and are safe." The Covenant Names of God are weapons of power and love for the children of God to use, they are all available to us, and are included in the Name of Jesus. Invoke His Covenant Names at all times, into all your situations, and He will be there to be to you, what He is, and what His Names declare Him to be. 2Cor 1v20.

So we can see that God's character and His covenant names are vitally linked and interconnected.

(For a more in-depth study on the covenant names of Yahweh, please see Bill Turner's study titled, "The Name Of Jesus Gifts To Us All The Covenant Names Of Yahweh" which can be found at www.truthfortheleastdays.com)

Moses spent 40 years in Egypt to learn what the world, the flesh and the Devil were doing; then 40 years in the wilderness to learn that walking with God was more valuable, precious, and rewarding than anything that the world and the Devil could offer. Heb 11v26. "He esteemed (Greek, "hegeomai" (OT:2233)) the contempt, shame and disgrace for the sake of Christ as greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, for he turned his eyes away and fixed his gaze steadfastly ahead to the reward." As he kept the sheep he learned the ways of God. Or as somebody has stated: "Moses spend the first forty years being a something, the second forty years learning to be a nothing, and the next forty years learning to do what God could do with a person who believed he was a nothing."

In Exodus 3v1-22 (esp., v5), it was the Presence of God that made the place where Moses stood, Holy Ground, the Lord of Glory had come down from Heaven to deliver His People Israel, in great power, from the bondage that they were experiencing from the Egyptians and to judge that nation (Gen 15v14). In Joshua 5v13-6v5, there is a record of another Divine appearance, this time the Lord appears to Joshua outside the city of Jericho, His Presence making the place where Joshua was standing, Holy Ground also. Here, Joshua sees Him with His sword drawn, in other words, Jericho was going to be given over to the sword for the slaying of all its inhabitants. The Lord had given the inhabitants of Canaan over 400 years to repent, and they had not done so, with the result that the iniquity of the land had now come to it's full, i.e. full iniquity which had brought about full disease (complete defilement of the flesh) from the gross immorality they had practised, which required full judgement. The state of "full iniquity" will also occur during the Great Tribulation, which also brings about "full judgement" at the Lord's Second Coming. Dan 8v23, Matt 24v12, Rev 6v12-17, 11v15-19). Gen 15v13-16, Jude v8.

Although the inhabitants of Canaan trembled with fear, there was absolutely no repentance, they suppressed their great fear and went out to fight against the God of Israel. Joshua 2v9,11. It is incredible, that out of all the inhabitants of Canaan, there was only Rehab and her family saved (because of her repentance and faith), the rest were put to the sword. Heb 11v31, James 2v24,25. In the case of Rehab the harlot, we see a tremendous demonstration of the wonderful tender embracing mercy and grace of God as revealed in His first name, "rachuwim" (full of embracing compassionate tender love). Exodus 34v6,7. Through her repentance and faith, there was full cleansing and healing from God, upon her spirit, soul and body from the effects of having lived the sinful life of a prostitute. Rehab was not only saved from death at the hands of Israel, not only forgiven and cleansed from all her sin, but she also got into the Messianic lineage, as she married a prince of Judah, and became one of the ancestors of the Lord Jesus. 1Chron 2v10,11, Matt 1v5, Luke 3v32.

Holy ground is the place where God desires to cuddle and embrace the believer and repentant sinner. So often the believer and sinner alike, thinks that because of God's holiness, He does not want them to come near Him because of His purity, however this is simply not true. The meaning of holiness, when applied to the believer, is that of being separated from sin, and being devoted to God, in the case of God, it speaks of His total, dedication, consecration and devotion to His people and creation, the devotion of a Lover to the one He Loves. Rev 4v8-11, Isaiah 6v1-4. We see the wonderful manifestation of this love and tenderness from God in the parable of the Prodigal Son, it states in Luke 15v20: "And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, **and kissed him.**"

"And kissed him" is in Greek, "kaí katefileesen auton," "katefileesen" is the aorist active indicative of "kataphileo" (NT:2705), and means to kiss earnestly, to kiss fervently, to kiss much, kiss tenderly: Note perfective use of kata, "kissed him much, kissed him again and again." Or as the Wuest Expanded New Testament puts it: "And while he was yet a long distance away, his father saw him and was moved with compassion, and having run, he fell on his neck **and tenderly kissed him again and again.**"

God, the Father, runs as fast as He can to meet the repentant sinner (who is filthy dirty, and stinks to high heaven, because he had been living amongst the pigs), and throwing His arms around their neck and embracing them tenderly,

kisses them repeatedly.

Both Moses and Joshua sought the plans and purposes of the Lord in how He desired to do His work through them, it was not a case of them “doing their own thing” and then asking God’s blessing upon it. They were both men of prayer who spent long hours and days in His Presence seeking His direction for His way forward, both knew that it was His Presence with them that distinguished them from all the other peoples in the world, and only His Presence with them would give them victory over the inhabitants of Canaan, bringing to pass the fulfilment of the promise He made to Abraham, to give the land of Canaan to Israel, Abraham’s seed. Gen 15v17-21, Exodus 24v18, 33v11,16, 34v28.

One of the greatest problems today in His Church is that the vast majority of the Body of Christ sees no reason to seek His Presence, power, plans or purposes; they are more than happy to make their own plans and then ask God to bless them. In going about things in this way they accomplish little or nothing for the Lord, and shackle Him completely, and frustrate His loving desires at every turn, they keep the Lord of Glory, who died for them a horrible painful death to make atonement and purchase their redemption, firmly out of their lives, hearts and Churches. They generally think that to do God’s work (to preach the Gospel) the Church needs, money, wealth and power, but having this, they fool themselves into thinking that God has given it too them and that they require nothing else from Him. However, nothing could be further from the truth, this mindset and attitude produces a spiritually dead powerless “form (Greek, “mórfoosin” from “morphosis” (NT:3446) a shadowy pencilled outline of the “morphe” (form) without any inner essence, substance or reality) of godliness”. The truth of the matter is that God longs to fill His Church with his Presence and Power, so that He can meet the needs of both the world and Church through His Body, nothing less than this will satisfy His loving heart. **NOTE:** It is possible to preach the Gospel and still resist the Holy Spirit at every turn (Acts 7v51-60)! Matt 28v18-20, Acts 1v4-8, 2Tim 3v5, Rev 3v14-22.

Between Exodus 2v15 and Exodus 3v1, another forty years had passed, making Moses eighty years of age, it had taken God eighty years to prepare Moses for the work that He had for him. During his time of forty years in Egypt, as the son of Pharaoh’s daughter he “was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds.” (Acts 7v22). He had been fully educated in all the sciences, astronomy, medicine, mathematics, poetry, music, philosophy, had a knowledge of hieroglyphics, and religions of Egypt, this also included all the mysticism and occult practices of the priestly caste and magicians. He had also learnt the art of soldiering and had become a great leader of the armies of Egypt. All these things that he had learnt in the first forty years of his life would be required again later in his life, when he would return to Egypt, by the direct command of God, to lead His people, Israel, out of that land. His intimate knowledge of the Egyptian court, people, customs, culture, Priests and Magicians were essential when he would come face to face with Pharaoh and require of him that Israel should be given leave to depart from Egypt. The experience of soldiering and leading armies would also be called upon again, enabling him (under God’s direction) to lead Israel out of Egypt and through the wilderness, fight battles against armies of various kings, and train Joshua in the art of soldiering and the leading of armies, and oversee the training and moulding of (the men of) Israel into a fighting army, under God’s direction. Exodus 2v17, 17v8-16 (esp. v9,10,13), Deut 34v9, Joshua 1v1-18.

God uses the ordinary things in the life of the believer, their work, home life, private devotions, public worship, friendships etc., to prepare them not only for their earthly ministry, but also for their position in Heaven in the Eternal Kingdom, and, as we see that this was also the case with Moses; neither is it any less true for the Lord Jesus and the New Testament believer. Col 3v1-25 (esp. v17,23,24), Heb 2v17,18, 4v15. Like the Lord Jesus, who was hidden away at Nazareth for the first thirty years of His life, where He was prepared in secret by His Father, so the Lord hid Moses away in the Wilderness of Midian for forty years for his preparation. Isaiah 49v1-7, 50v3-7. It took the Lord eighty years to prepare Moses for his ministry and the Father thirty years to prepare His Beloved Son, and they both reached the highest pinnacle of spiritual authority and experience, for it is stated that the Lord Jesus was a Prophet like unto Moses. Deut 18v1-22, Acts 3v22. The real glory of the Lord Jesus was that He lived a beautiful, sinless, and loving life in the great spiritual and moral depravity of Nazareth, and didn’t sin; He came out victorious, having overcome the world, the flesh, and the Devil in a human body like our own, whereas, Moses (and everyone else) fell into sin. Matt 4v13-16, Rom 3v23, Phil 2v5-11, Heb 7v26, 1John 2v15-17.

From where did Moses receive his spiritual education and “knowledge of God”? It can only have come from his Godly parents, Amram and Jochebed, especially Jochebed (his mother) who must have had a revelation from God of His plan regarding the hiding of Moses in the reeds, his protection there, and Jochebed being summoned (at the suggestion of Miriam) by Pharaoh’s daughter, to care for him. Hos 4v6, 6v6, Exodus 2v1-10, 6v20, Heb 11v23. By the age of forty he already had had from God a revelation of the Incarnation of Christ, His birth, life, ministry, crucifixion, decent into Hades (Hebrew, Sheol) to make atonement for his sin (and for the sin of the world), the deliverance (by Him) of the Old Testament Saints from Hades, whom He then would lead into Heaven, His Resurrection, Ascension, High Priestly ministry, Second Coming, the Eternal Kingdom, and the great (spiritual) riches of that Kingdom. It was this wonderful revelation of the Lord Jesus that gave him the strength and faith to forsake Egypt and flee to Midian. Deut 18v15-19, Eph 4v8-10, Heb 11v13,16,24-26,39,40.

Heb 11v26 states: “Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the **treasures in Egypt**; for he looked to the reward.” Moses rejected all the treasures of Egypt, that he might lift up his cross and follow his Lord (Yahweh). There is a strong inference, that the position that would have given him the treasures of Egypt was that of Pharaoh, or certainly another very high position in Egypt, as he was the son of Pharaoh’s daughter. Instead of laying up treasure on Earth, he was laying up treasure and riches in Heaven. Matt 6v19-21.

Paul, in Heb 11v26, in writing to the Hebrews, in using the term "Christ" clearly teaches that Moses' Lord was none other than the pre-incarnate Christ, "God the Word" (John 1v1-3), Who in Exodus 3v2 is also called "The Angel of The Lord," (which is in Hebrew, "Yahweh Mal'ak" i.e. "The Angel, The Lord" (two nouns in opposition), there is no "of" in the Hebrew, and better translated "Yahweh Messenger," Christ was not only "The Sent One" of the Father under the New Covenant, but He was also "The Sent One" of Yahweh (the Father) under the Old Covenant. John 6v57.) and in Exodus 3v14, "I AM THAT I AM" "Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh," which is translated into the Greek of the Septuagint as, "ego eimi ho ohn." In the second half of Exodus 3v14, "Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh" is shortened to "Ehyeh," that is, "I am," that the Septuagint translates as "oh ohn," i.e. "the one who is." However, in most other places in the Septuagint, "ego eimi" is used to translate the Hebrew "Ehyeh." e.g. Deut 32v39. And in John 8v58 it states, "Before Abraham was, 'genesthai,' I am," "egoó eimí," i.e. timeless existence." Out dear Lord Jesus is none other then the Great "I AM" of the Old Testament. (In the passage where Jesus walked on the water, He was not merely saying, "It is I," but rather, as "ego eimi" really means, "I Am." Matt 14v27, Mark 6v50, John 6v20, John 8v24,28, 13v19).

When the Lord appeared to Moses in Exodus 3 (1491 BC), He had in mind the prophetic words that He had spoken to Abraham in Genesis 15v13-16, approximately 430 years earlier in 1922 BC (Gal 3v17):

"And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance. And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full."

The iniquity of the Amorites was now full, and it was the time that God was going to fulfil His promise to Abraham, that his seed should have the land of Canaan, God was going to execute judgement, through Israel, upon the inhabitants of Canaan, the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and the Jebusites.

God had seen the oppression of His people by the Egyptians (which had occurred because the vast majority of Israel had gone into idolatry Ezek 20v1-32), and heard their cry because of their taskmasters, He knew their sorrows by reason that everything each individual Israelite suffered, He felt in His very being, as it is stated in Isaiah 63v9: "In all their affliction he was afflicted..."

And in Heb 4v15: "For we have not an high priest which cannot **be touched with the feeling of** our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." "Be touched with the feeling of" is in Greek, "sumpatheésai," the first aorist passive infinitive of "sumpatheo" (NT:4834), and means, to suffer with another, to be affected with the same feelings as another, to be affected similarly, and so to feel and experience the same pain and suffering as another.

The forty years of preparation in Midian, had produced a Christ like character in Moses, we read in Numbers 12v3: "Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth."

"Meek" is in Hebrew, "aanaayw," which is from "anav" (OT:6035), which means, depressed (figuratively), in mind (gentle) or circumstances (needy, especially saintly), humble, lowly, meek, poor. In the Greek Septuagint it is translated by the Greek word, "praus" (NT:4239), which means, mild, i.e. (by implication) humble, gentle; in the person spoken of as such, it speaks not only of them being gentle, but also having strength of character.

The Greek words, "praios" (NT:4235) and "praus" (NT:4239) both adjectives, are used three times in the New Testament (Majority Texts), Matt 5v5, 11v29, 21v5, speaking once of the believer and twice of the Lord Jesus.

It is also recorded in Exodus 3v11: "And Moses said unto God, **Who am I**, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?" (KJV). Or as "Today's English Version" puts it: "But Moses said to God, **I am nobody**. How can I go to the king and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?"

We see the same great gentleness and lowliness of spirit in Moses that was exhibited by Our Lord, **Matt 11v28-30** states: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; **for I am meek and lowly in heart**: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

It was because of this great humility and gentleness in the character of Moses, that set him apart as one of the greatest (if not the greatest) Old Testament's prophets, it goes on to state in verses 6-8 of Numbers 12: "And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the LORD will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house. **With him will I speak mouth to mouth**, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and **the similitude of the LORD shall he behold**: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?" And in Exodus 33v11 it is written: "And **the LORD spake unto Moses face to face**, as a man speaketh unto his friend..." And Deut 34v10: "And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom **the LORD knew face to face**."

If we, as believers, desire the Lord Jesus to use us for any great work or ministry, we need to have this same gentleness and lowliness of spirit in our characters that both Moses and the Lord Jesus exhibited, 1Cor 1v26-31 states:

"For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are

called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."

This Scripture is **NOT** speaking about Salvation, **BUT** Service (for the Master), God uses the despised, foolish and base things of the world, to bring to nought, and to confound the mighty and (unspiritual worldly) wise. God simply refuses to use those people who seek their own glory and who will not seek to glorify God. Isaiah 42v8, John 5v44. It is God who makes us, the believer, to be able ministers of the New Covenant, not of the letter, but of the spirit; for the letter kills, but the spirit makes alive. 2Cor 3v5,6.

So then let us follow the examples of Moses and the Lord Jesus, and let God prepare us for the ministry He has for us.

We should also be aware that the Lord Jesus partook of the same level of spiritual experiences as Moses, and because He was without sin, His level of experience was in all possibility greater. Acts 3v22, Heb 4v15.

The purpose for the Lord Jesus manifesting the name of Yahweh (both His character and the Covenant names), and the continued manifestation after His Resurrection and Ascension was so that the believer might be a partaker of the divine nature and manifest true "Agape" (NT:25) Love, even as God does. Matt 5v48, John 17v26, 2Pet 1v3,4, 1John 4v8,16.

In Exodus 3v14,15 (with Exodus 6v3), it states the following: "And God said unto Moses, **I AM THAT I AM** ('EH^aYEH 'a^aSHER 'EH^aYEH): and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, **I AM** ('EH^aYEH) hath sent me unto you. And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, **The LORD God** (Yahweh 'Eloheey) of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: **this is my name for ever (ETERNAL COMMITMENT), and this is my memorial unto all generations.**"

In these verses Yahweh clearly states and makes known His Name, and that He should be remembered and called upon by this name by ALL successive generations; however, it is a sad fact that by the time of our Lord's Incarnation, the religious leaders of His time, the Scribes, Pharisees and the Sadducees, although the name YHWH was still written in the Scriptures, would not pronounce The Name, but substituted it with "Adonay" (Lord), with the result that the correct pronunciation of The Name became almost completely lost. They refused to speak it (and knowledge of its pronunciation was reserved only for the religious leaders), and forbade the ordinary people also not to speak it (even if they happened to know it), in spite of Yahweh's injunction to Moses that, "this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations." This terrible situation came about sometime between 400 BC (shortly after the writing of the last book of the Old Testament, Malachi) and 285 BC (when the Septuagint, the Greek version of the Old Testament was started). However, although the Scribes, Pharisees and the Sadducees hid it, our Lord manifested it during His hidden years at Nazareth and during His ministry by invoking ALL the covenant names of Yahweh. We read in Matthew 26v53: "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than **twelve legions of angels?**"

The Lord Jesus was referring to the fact, that if He had invoked the covenant name of "YAHWEH TSABAOTH" - "The Lord of Hosts," this would have resulted in the Father sending more than "twelve legions of angels," to deliver Him.

The early Church followed their Lord's example and continued to invoke the Covenant names of Yahweh on **ALL** occasions, in their lives, ministries, informal fellowship meetings etc. so that **ALL** their needs and requests were met. John 14v13,14, 15v7,16, 16v23,24,26, Acts 22v16, 2Cor 1v20, 2Tim 2v22.

James 5v4 also states the following: "Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries ("cries" is in Greek "boai" the nominative of "boe" (NT:995), to shout, cry or call for aid) of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the **Lord of sabaoth** (Greek, "Kuríou Sabaoóth", Hebrew "Yahweh ts^abaa'owt." This Scripture and Romans 9v29, is a quotation from Isaiah 5v9).

James also remembers how his (half) brother, the Lord Jesus, called upon and invoked these Great (covenant) Names constantly, when they both were living at Nazareth, during the 30 years when Jesus was being prepared by His Father, for both His Earthly and Heavenly ministries. After Joseph died, Jesus (the carpenter) became the bread winner for the whole family, which consisted of four brothers, at least three sisters and Mary, Matt 13v55,56, Mark 6v3 (Note: in Matt 13v56, it states "all" **not** "both" which indicates that He had at least three (half) sisters), a total of at least nine persons He was working for, to feed, clothe and keep. It was through invoking the covenant names of Yahweh, which enabled Him to care for His family in such a complete way, even when His brothers and sisters despised and rejected Him because His beautiful unselfish loving life manifested the darkness and sin in theirs. Even with the terrible animosity that they manifested towards Him for most of His life at Nazareth, He still lovingly prayed them through, so that on the Day of Pentecost, Mary and His four brothers were in the Upper Room, awaiting for the coming of the promise of the Father, the Holy Spirit. Psalm 69v7-11, Matt 5v39,44, John 3v19,20, 7v5, Acts 1v4-8,14, 2v1-47.

From James 5v4, we also see that **ALL** the believers (even the poor despised labourers and workers) of the early Church, were taught to call upon and invoke the covenant names of Yahweh, even to the extent of when they had been defrauded, crying out to God to deal with their defrauders.

History has repeated itself again, because even though the Lord Jesus re-introduced the covenant names of Yahweh into the Church during His earthly ministry, and the early church followed His example by invoking them during the first three centuries (up until the time that Constantine issued the Edict of Milan (Toleration) in 313 AD), the Devil then made sure that once again, with the introduction of the Edict of Milan, they became forgotten about (because he knew that invoking them by the believer (in both Old and New Testament times) ensured his defeat), so that today the vast majority of Christians do not even know what they are, never mind invoking them. Matt 13v33, 16v6.

As the end of this Age (of Grace) rapidly approaches (especially the last seven years, the last week of Daniel's seventy weeks prophecy, Dan 9v20-27), it is most important that the believer learns about these Great Names and invokes them constantly (for the covenant names of God are names of POWER for the people of God to use to defend themselves), for therein lies their victory over the world, the flesh and the Devil, especially for protection during the dark evil days of the Great Tribulation (Rev 7v9-17). As Elijah (and the rest of the Old Testament prophets) of old used the Covenant Names of Yahweh most effectively, so the Two Witnesses (and other believers with the same kind of power and authority as Elijah had) will do so also, and bring devastating judgements upon the armies and followers of Antichrist who try to hurt or harm them. 1Kings 18v15, 2Kings 1v1-18, 2Kings 6v8-23, Daniel 11v32, Mal 4v5,6, Rev 11v1-6. Even the ordinary believer, during the last seven years of this Age, will use the covenant names (especially "Yahweh Tsabaoth"), in crying out to God for Him to avenge them of their adversaries, which He promises to do so speedily, Luke 18v1-8, states the following:

"And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint; Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: And there was a widow in that city; and she came (kept coming) unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary ("she weary" is literally "beat him under the eye, and thus blacken it") me. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. **And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry** ("cry" is in Greek, "booóntoon" from "boao" (NT:994), the same Greek word ("boai" nominative case of "boe" (NT:995), which is derived from "boao" (NT:994) and used in James 5v4, of the labourers crying out to God for justice) **day and night unto him, though he bear long with them** (that is the wicked)? **I tell you that he will avenge them speedily.** Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?"

James, the half brother of the Lord Jesus, in penning the epistle of the same name, had the teaching of the Lord Jesus, on the subject of the last days in his mind (especially Luke 18v1-8), writes the following in James 5v1-12:

"Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries ("cries" is in Greek "boai" the nominative of "boe" (NT:995)) of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth. Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter. Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you. Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door. Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience. Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy. But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation."

Titus Flavius Josephus informs us that James was martyred in 62 AD at Jerusalem, he wrote this epistle just before his death, probably sometime in 61 AD. James, like the other New Testament writers, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, in this passage, is not only dealing with his own time, but also the last days, i.e. the last seven years of the Age of Grace. At the time of writing, there were the beginnings of "great tribulation" like conditions in Jerusalem, Judea and Galilee, and the Christians were suffering great persecution for their faith, many were backslidden and a great number had gone back into Judaism and apostasy, as Paul reveals in his epistle to the Hebrews. Hebrews 5v11-6v8.

James informs us, that in the last days, the poor believers will (once again) be defrauded by their employers (also believers, as the persons addressed in this epistle are Christians, **NOT** unbelievers), who are heaping up riches for themselves, by stealing from their (poor) workers. There must be an awaking of God's people, by the Holy Spirit, to the great importance of God's covenant Names and their necessity for coming victoriously through the Great Tribulation, so as to be Raptured, with the Resurrected saints, to meet the Lord Jesus in the air, and stand before the Throne of Judgement, that our works, done by the grace of God, may be examined and scrutinized by the Judge of the whole earth, the Lord Jesus. 1Tim 4v1-11, 1Pet 1v16-2v22, Jude v1-25.

It is a sad fact, that these rich believers that James criticises, will backslide and go into apostasy during the Great Tribulation, and will fool themselves into believing that it is money they need, rather than the great strength, blessing and power that only comes from God, through His grace. These rich persons, who have defrauded the poor out of their wages, are amongst the ones whom the Lord Jesus was speaking about in Luke 18v1-8, whom He will bring judgement upon speedily in response to the cries of those who are being defrauded, persecuted and murdered by them. Those who are not

judged by the Lord through the "interventions" of believers will be consumed by the breath of His mouth at the Second Coming. Luke 16v19-31, Eph 3v14-21, 2Thess 2v8.

James tells us that the way the believer will overcome those terrible dark evil days (of the Great Tribulation) is by "endurance" (James 5v11) and being "patient" (James 5v7,8,10). "Endurance" is in Greek, "hupomone" (NT:5281), (which is from "hupomeneo" (NT:5278), which is literally "an abiding under"), it means endurance, constancy, enduring patience, patient continuance (waiting), patient courageous endurance, to bear up courageously with triumphant fortitude. In Classical Greek it is used of the ability of a plant to live under hard and unfavourable circumstances. It is the virtue which can transmute the hardest trial into glory because beyond the pain it sees the goal.

"Patient" is in Greek, "makrothumeo" (NT:3114), from "makros" 3117, "long," and "thumos" 2372, "soul or spirit," but with the sense of strong passion, and means (objectively) forbearing or (subjectively) patient, bear (suffer) long, be longsuffering, have (long) patience, be patient, patiently endure. In James 5v7 it is used for the believer to "catch their wind for a long race (long-tempered as opposed to short-tempered)." The noun "makrothumia" and the corresponding verb do not occur in classical Greek at all, and only very seldom in later Greek, and so are looked upon as characteristically biblical words. It is that spirit of "patience" and faith which will ultimately inherit the promise. Chrysostom defined "makrothumia" as "the spirit which could take revenge if it liked, but utterly refuses to do so...and so the spirit that will never retaliate." The great obligation which rests on the Christian is just this – he must be as patient with his fellow-man as God has been with him.

As Archbishop Trench observes, "hupomone is perseverantia and patientia both in one." Thus Dr. Ellicott: "The brave patience with which the Christian contends against the various hindrances, persecutions, and temptations that befall him in his conflict with the inward and outward world." Makrothumia is exercised toward "persons;" hupomonee, toward "things."

Both of these words ("endurance" and "patient") speak off aspects of the human character, indeed, one of them, "patient" (longsuffering) Greek, "makrothumia" (NT:3115) Paul lists as one off the beautiful "fruits of the Spirit" in Galatians 5v16-26. These aspects of character do not appear over night, nor can we wave some kind of magic wand and they immediately start being exercised by us, no, they take time to develop in the believer, as they fill their mind with Truth from the Scriptures and are obedient to it and the Holy Spirit. The believer **MUST** put off the old man and be renewed in the spirit of their mind, and put on the new man. Eph 4v17-24, Col 3v1-11. It is therefore vital for the believer to actively pursue and cultivate these most beautiful aspects of character in preparation for the dark evil days of The Great Tribulation, for in all probability it will be too late to think about getting them once it is upon them, because so great will the deluge of evil be into world (with God removing His restraint upon the Devil and the powers of darkness), that any believer who does not have them will be overwhelmed by it, thus backsliding and going into apostasy. **Now** is the time for us to dig deep and lay a strong foundation within our characters in preparation for the violent storms ahead. Matt 24v12, Luke 6v47-49, 2Thess 2v1-12, Rev 12v7-17.

James then goes on to give the Old Testament prophets as examples of those "who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience (makrothumia (NT:3115))." We know that these great men and women suffered most terribly at the hands of evil ungodly persons, and this is at least the level of suffering that Christians can expect to go through during the Great Tribulation, so great patience will be needed. 2Tim 3v12, James 5v10.

Another person whom James uses as an example to demonstrate the importance of possessing "endurance" (hupomone (NT:5281)) within one's character during the last days of the Age of Grace, is that of the great Old Testament Saint, Job (which means, "object of enmity" and so hated (i.e. persecuted), because his godly and loving life manifested the darkness that was in those around him. 2Tim 3v12). God let the Devil sift Job as wheat, to perfect his faith, patience and character. The Devil had previously gone in before the Throne of God and slandered Job before Him, saying that Job only loved God and obeyed Him because of all the great wealth that God had given him; and so the Devil was "permitted" to go out and remove his family, wealth and household from him. The accusation the Devil made about Job before God was that if he lost these things, he would surely curse to God to His face, but Job held fast to his faith, and didn't sin with his lips. Job 1v1-22, Luke 22v31-34, Romans 5v1-5.

The next accusation that the Devil made before God about Job, was that if he was struck with sickness he then would surely curse God to his face (severe sickness produces the greatest of all tests of faith and character). God then gave permission (**NOTE WELL:** without this permission from God, the Devil could not and indeed daren't not, touch Job or **ANYTHING** that belonged to him, the Devil may be in charge, **BUT** God is in Control!) to the Devil to go out and strike him with sickness, which manifested itself with Job being struck from head to foot with "sore boils" (rather, as it is singular in the Hebrew, "a burning sore" or "a burning ulceration", Job was covered all over (The Septuagint, "helkei poneeroo") "with a foul ulcer"). It is rather difficult to say with confidence what the actual disease possibly was, however, rather than being an actual disease that had a definite known pathology, it was probably simply a condition that "mimicked" one. The origin of this "burning ulceration" was the Devil, and he achieved this by energising Job with evil power, and the effect of the evil power being directed against Job's body caused this severe dermatological condition to appear. This kind of evil sadistic behaviour is used by the powers of darkness (generally demons) to cause great suffering upon believers and unbelievers alike. The woman, who was bent double, having a spirit of infirmity, was being energised with evil power by the powers of darkness, and it was these energising that were causing her great suffering. Notice, the Lord Jesus did NOT exorcise her (i.e. she was NOT possessed), but laid His hands upon her and healed her. Luke 13v10-17. This evil energy (energisings), not only produces great physical suffering, but it also causes great suffering, agony and

torment of soul, which nothing can relieve, and only stops when the energisings stop. Job 2v1-13, Eph 2v1-10, 6v10-20.

At the beginning of the Great Tribulation, the Devil and his evil angels are cast out of the Heavenly places by Michael and the Holy Angels into the earth, God also removing His restraint upon the Devil and the powers of darkness, which then lets the Mystery of Iniquity work fully, i.e. the Devil is then allowed to put his evil plans and purposes into effect, which is total destruction of mankind and the earth. As soon as the restraint of God is removed, and the Devil and the evil angels are cast out of the Heavens into the earth, there is a great deluge of evil manifested in the world, which amongst other things will bring a great increase of these energisings from the Devil and the powers of darkness against Christians. From the time of Job, to this moment in time (and up to the start of the last seven years of this Age, especially up to the last three and a half years of this Age), the severe testing experience that Job went through (i.e., that which is related to in the whole of the book of Job) happens very rarely to God's Saints (and **ONLY** with God's specific permission), and this is simply because of God's restraint upon the Devil and the powers of darkness. But during the last three and a half years of the Age of Grace, with God's restraint totally removed, this terrible experience (of evil energisings) of believers will rise dramatically (and during of time of the Great Tribulation, the Devil will not need God's permission to energise God's Saints or unbelievers); thus great endurance (hupomone (NT:5281)) will be required to come through those dark evil days. During the last three and a half years of this Age, the believer will require the whole armour of God, His Covenant Names and His great strength and power to overcome triumphantly. Matt 24v12,13, Eph 6v10-20 (esp. v10,11,13), 2Thess 2v1-12, Rev 11v15-19, 12v7-17.

James informs us, that although there will be great evil in the world during the Great Tribulation, there will also be the greatest out-pouring of the Holy Spirit ever experienced upon the Church on earth, to enable God's Saints to have a great anointing and grace upon their lives and beings, which will enable them to be the restraining influence (through their "interventions") upon the powers of darkness and wicked people upon earth, as God has intended them to be. Even as God promised the early and latter rains upon the earth to produce a harvest for the farmer, He also gave the promise of the early rains (of revival) at the start of this Age (which He has already fulfilled), and subsequent times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, and also the later rains of the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit at the end of the Age of Grace, which will be world wide upon groups of divinely appointed and prepared earnestly praying Christians. "Elijah" has also been promised to appear just before the start of the Great Tribulation, manifesting great power and authority. This promise that God would send "Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord," (Mal 4v5) does not refer to the actual person of Elijah (as Our Lord said that this Malachi Scripture had a (partial) fulfilment in John the Baptist, and he certainly was not the actual person of Elijah who appeared after some kind of temporary resurrection. Matt 11v1-19), but persons (there will be more than one, in fact many) who will stand before the Throne of God in spirit and manifest the same level of power and authority as the great Old Testament prophet Elijah did, but with far greater devastating effects upon the wicked. Dan 11v32, Mal 4v5,6, Luke 18v1-8, Acts 2v1-39 with Joel 2v1-32, Acts 3v19-21, 1Tim 2v1-8, James 5v7, Rev 11v1-6.

Let us now seek the Lord Jesus (Who has His winnowing fan in His hand) with all our hearts, to prepare ourselves for the dark evil days that are certainly coming, and to receive a mighty anointing from Him who baptises with the Holy Spirit and with Fire. Matt 24v12,21, Luke 3v1-18, 11v9-13, Acts 1v4-8,14, 2v1-4, Heb 11v6.

The Believer Is The Father's Special Gift to His Son.

In John 17v2,6,9,11,12,24, our Lord states that all "believers" have been "given" to Him by His Father (this act of "giving" is due to the fact that Christ (and the Holy Spirit) are subject to the Father for the work of Creation, Mediation and Redemption). The Greek word that is used in all of these verses for the act of the "giving" of the believers to the Son is "didomi" ((NT:1325) - a prolonged form of a primary verb (which is used as an alternative in most of the tenses); to give (used in a very wide application, properly, or by implication, literally or figuratively; greatly modified by the connection)). In vs2,9,11,12,24, the same tense, the "perfect active indicative", of this Greek word is used. The perfect (tense) denotes the permanence of the gift (i.e., the believer will spend eternity with their Lord, Psalm 23v6), and this is further confirmed by the Lord Jesus saying (John 17v2,3) that all the believers whom have been given to Him by the Father will be given "eternal life" by Him and so dwell eternally with the Trinity in the New Jerusalem. (Rev chapters 21 & 22).

The Apostles (even Judas until he backslide and went into apostasy) had received and kept the words that Jesus had spoken to them. The words that He gave to them were not His own, but He only spoke the words that the Father gave Him to speak via the Holy Spirit (John 3v27, Heb 12v25). John 12v49,50 states the following: "For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak. And I know that His command is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak."

The Lord Jesus only communicated to the Apostles (as well as to the rest of His disciples and the multitudes) exactly what His Father gave Him to speak (Deut 18v18,19). In Rev 3v14, the Lord Jesus is called the "Faithful and True" witness, and in Rev 1v5, He is called "the faithful witness, " Greek, "ho Mártus ho Pistós."

Jesus was the Father's faithful witness to us. God, desires a faithful witness even more than men, He longs to tell the world of His loving purposes and gracious character, and the evil consequences of sin. However, God often has great difficulty in finding those who are willing to face this great task. Many preachers refuse to preach the Truth, preferring to teach the traditions of men, foolish fables or even Satan's lies. Matt 15v1-9, Mark 7v1-13, Col 2v8, 1Pet 1v18-20, 2Pet 1v16-21, 2Tim 4v1-5, Titus 1v14. God rejoices when His children preach and love the Truth, great is their reward in the kingdom of Heaven. Prov 25v13, Isaiah 6v8, 2John v4, 3John v1-4, Rev 17v14.

In John 17v6, it says: "...and they have kept thy word."

"They have kept" is in Greek, "teteéreekan," the perfect active indicative of "tereo" (NT:5083) which means to guard (from loss or injury, properly, by keeping the eye upon), hold fast, keep (-er), (pre-, re-) serve, watch. Jesus claims loyalty and fidelity in these men with the one exception of Judas. John 17v12. He does not claim perfection for them (see John 17v17-19, where He sanctifies Himself (i.e., He dedicates Himself to the work of being their (and ours) Great High Priest), so that His brethren might be sanctified through the Truth, He is "The Sanctifier," Greek, "Ho hagiázoon." Heb 2v11). However, they have at least held on to the message of the Father in spite of doubt and wavering. John 6:67-71, Matt 16:15-20.

"Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee." John 17v7.

The words (full Truth, wisdom and knowledge) from the lips of Jesus which the Apostles had "kept" (John 17v6), they now knew and were fully convinced had come from His Father. Although the Lord Jesus states that they had received and kept His words, He did have a terrible time trying to get them to believe that He would face, rejection, persecution, scourging and crucifixion at the hands of the religious leader of Israel, and then would rise again after 3 days, in fact these very important facts they repeatedly refused to believe, when spoken from the lips of their Lord. Matt 16v21-23, Mark 9v30-32, Luke 18v31-34. Because of their repeated refusal to receive the Truth on this very important subject, light could not come into their minds on this issue, and so their minds became reprobate regarding this great and vital Truth (Greek, "adókimon" from "adokimos" (NT:96), which means "unapproved"). Rom 1v28.

This continuous rejection by the Apostles of this Truth, was simply the result of their continuing to hold onto and believe the corrupt traditions (that which had been handed down from their (spiritual) fathers, Greek, "patroparadotos" (NT:3970) literally means "handed down from your fathers" 1Pet 1v18) of the Scribe, Pharisees and Sadducees. How binding are the unscriptural "traditions of men" upon the mind! Matt 15v1-20, 16v5-12, 1Pet 1v17-19.

Indeed, after the first recorded rejection of the Truth about His coming passion, descent into Hades, and subsequent Resurrection in Matt 16v21-23, which had been "inspired" by the Devil through Peter (in an attempt to turn the Lord Jesus away from the Cross), while on the Mount Of Transfiguration (Mount Hermon), just after Elijah and Moses had appeared to Him, for the sole purpose of talking to the Lord Jesus about this terrifying event (to strengthen and encourage Him to go through with it), because His disciples (including the twelve Apostles) refused point blankly to even contemplate it, or discuss it with Him; God the Father spoke the following words (Matt 17v5): **"...This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!"**

These words were not spoken for the benefit of or to the Lord Jesus, Moses or Elijah, but to Peter, James, and John, quite simply because they had **NOT** been "hearing Him," so now the command of the Father to Peter, James and John was that they should start, not only "hearing" Him, but to listen to Him and believe the Truth that was coming forth from the lips of His "Beloved Son," on this most important subject.

It is a most amazing fact, that even after this tremendous revelation, they still did **NOT** bother to listen to the Lord Jesus in the near future when He again, on at least two separate occasions, told them what was going to happen to Him. This really highlights the terrible binding effect of the corrupt unscriptural traditions of men upon the mind, especially when Truth is confirmed with mighty signs, wonders and miracles, and is then rejected. Mark 9v30-32, Luke 18v31-34, Rom 1v18-32.

"For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me." John 17v8.

The Apostles now definitely "received and recognized truly" (Greek, "égnoosan aleethoós") that He had come from Heaven (at the Incarnation), where He had existed in the true form (morphe) of God (Phil 2v5-11), that He was not only the Son of David, but also the Root of David (the Great "I AM", Exodus 3v14,15, John 8v58). As God, Jesus was the source of David's family and the means of its sustenance, anchorage and strength; as a man He was the offspring of David. Isaiah 11v1,10, Rev 5v5, 22v16. They fully believed that Christ's mission had its origin in God, His Father, and that He was indeed not only the "Sent One" of the Father under the New Covenant, but also the "Sent One" ("The Angel, The Lord," Hebrew, "Yahweh Mal'ak," which is literally "Yahweh Messenger," Exodus 3v2,4) of the Father under the Old Covenant as well, and that they should not look for "another," as He was the "Coming One" who had fulfilled all the Old Testament Messianic prophecies (Matt 11v3, NKJV). Gen 3v15, 22v18, 49v10, 2Sam 7v12, Isaiah 40v3-5, 61v1-2, Malachi 3v1-3, Matt 11v1-19.

"I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine." John 17v9.

Our Lord definitely states, that He is praying for those who believe in Him, and **NOT** for the World (i.e., unbelievers), however, some Commentators have stated that because Our Lord uses the words in 17v20: **"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;"** He is referring to the worlding, but this is not the case. Our Lord had seen the many multitudes (by revelation from His Father, and from the Scriptures, Gen 22v18, Isaiah 49v1-13, 53 (all)) who would believe in Him through the testimony of not only the Apostles, but His other disciples

who would preach the Good News about Him, and it is from the point in time of the individual's belief in Him and the subsequent believer's walk with Him that He now, here in John 17, is praying about, i.e., the operation of His High Priestly Ministry in the individual believer's life, after they believe, and not as a sinner before they believe.

"And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them." John 17v10.

As the Incarnate Son, every believer is a "precious gift" from the Father to Him, however, as God the Word, Who (i.e., in His Deity) is co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and the Holy Spirit, all things that belong to the Father (and the Holy Spirit), also belong to Him.

"And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are." John 17v11.

We can see here just how confident the Lord Jesus was that He was going to leave the earth and return to His Father; for in Luke 9v51 we read that having been "crowned with glory and honour" (on the Mount of Transfiguration); He had "steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem," and indeed not just to Jerusalem was His face set as flint, but to His first Ascension into Heaven, immediately after His Resurrection, when He would have accomplished "His decease" i.e., the exodus of **ALL** the Old Testament saints and those who had received the Gospel which He had preached to ALL the occupants of Hades, after having made atonement for sin and been "quickened in spirit." The Lord Jesus is "the" example of One Who walked by faith and not by sight, the One Who is the Pioneer of our faith, the very One that every Christian should (permanently) fix their eyes, minds and thoughts upon and "consider" fully! Isaiah 50v3-8 (esp. v7), Luke 9v31, 2Cor 5v7, Eph 4v8-10, Heb 2v9, 12v1-3, 1Pet 3v18-22, 4v6.

God's Protection Of His People And Creation.

Our Lord uses the word, "tereo," (NT:5083) in John 17v11, when He prays and asks the Father to guard His disciples. He asks the Father, **"keep** in Thy Name those whom Thou hast given me;" "keep" is "tereson," the aorist active imperative of "tereo" (NT:5083). Again, in John 17v12, our Lord said, "I kept them in Thy Name," "I kept" is "eteroun," the imperfect active of "tereo" (NT:5083); "I constantly kept and guarded them." Also in v John 17v12, "Those whom thou gavest me I guarded;" "guarded" is "ephulaza," the aorist active of "phulasso" (NT:5442); Christ was their "phulax," their sentinel and guard, and He is still our sentinel and guard; He ever lives to protect us, and make "interventions" (with power) for us. Heb 7v25.

Peter informs us in 1Pet 1v4,5: "To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, **Who are kept by the power of God through faith** unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." Believers in Jesus, "are always kept, protected and guarded by the power of God through faith." The word for, "are always kept" is "phrouroumenous," the present passive participle of "phroureo" (NT:5432), a military term, Acts 9v24, 2Cor 11v32, meaning, "to guard or garrison," from "phrouros," "a sentinel." **Vincent says, "The present participle indicates something in progress, a continuous process of protection."** Peter assures us that the heirs of God's heavenly kingdom are guarded as securely as our heavenly inheritance. When Peter tells us in 1Pet 1v4 that our heavenly inheritance is **"reserved"** for us, he uses "teteremenen," the perfect passive participle of "tereo" (NT:5083); which signifies, "taking care of and keeping by guarding," the same Greek word that is used in John 17v11,12.

Paul informs us in 2Thess 2v7, that God continually restrains the activities of the powers of darkness in the world, and His merciful goodness protects even the unbeliever from their malice. We read in Amos 9v7, that God delivered the Philistines from Caphtor, and the Syrians from Kir. We also read in 2Kings 6v1, that God gave victory to Syria through Naaman. God sends His rain on the just and the unjust, and is kind, good and merciful, even to the evil, unjust and ungrateful. Matt 5v45, Luke 6v35,36. The inhabitants at Lystra had unclean lives and were idol worshippers, but Paul tells them that God had been very kind and good to them in spite of all their sin; "The living God, did not neglect to leave some witness of Himself, in that He did you good and showed kindly acts, and gave you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling your hearts with food and gladness." Acts 14v14-17.

God has always given special protection for the children of God. God's Old Testament saints rejoiced again and again over the wisdom, and protecting power and love of God; He is a sure refuge and shield from Satan and his demons. "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms." Deut 33v27. "But Thou, O Lord art a shield for me; my glory and the lifter up of my head." Psalm 3v3. "Thou art my hiding place, thou shalt preserve me from trouble." Psalm 32v1. "Thou art my hiding place and my shield." Psalm 119v14. "He that dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." Psalm 91v1. These are but a few of many such Scriptures; let us rejoice in the reality of these exceeding great and precious promises, they "are Yea, and Amen, in Christ." 2Pet 1v4, 2Cor 1v18-22.

At Bethel, the reality of God's total and dedicated caring love and protection was revealed to Jacob; he saw a continual stream of angels coming to minister to him, and returning for more directions from their Lord, for Jacob's well-being. Gen 28v11-19. The Scriptures reveal that God's children have, not just one guardian angel, but multitudes of guardian angels. 2Kings 6v15-18. Children also have many angels, which are devoted to their care. Matt 18v10. "The Lord of Hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge," was the joyful cry of the psalmist, and it is our joy too. Psalm 46v7,11, Heb 1v14. Satan bitterly complained to God about the hedge of divine love and power that protected Job, and **"ALL THAT HE HATH,"** from his malice. Job 1v10. In 1Pet 1v4,5, we are assured that God guards and protects His New Testament children of God, in the same way as His great servant Job. It is necessary not to allow the powers of darkness to harass us; they

should be trembling in fear at what our Father will do to them. By putting on God's armour and resisting the powers of darkness they will flee from the believer. James 2v19, 4v7, Eph 6v10-20. In Christ we are always sure of victory, for God has called us to triumph not defeat. 2Cor 2v14. The powers of darkness know they are defeated and Hell awaits them. Matt 8v29, Luke 8v31, Rev 12v12.

In Luke 10v19, Jesus definitely states; "Behold, I give unto you the authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over ALL the power of the enemy; and nothing shall by any means hurt you." Jesus used a very strong triple negative when He said, "Nothing you, in no way shall hurt". It is difficult to adequately convey the strength of our Lord's words in English, unless we express it as, "Not one thing, in no way, shall not hurt you," God assures us, that at the point of conflict with evil angels, God will protect us and there will be no hurt to us.

The seventy were not mature Christians, for in Luke 10v21 our Lord calls them "none-speaking babes," or, "little children" (Greek "neepios" (NT:3516)). The revelation of this power and authority had been hidden from the wise and prudent and given to babes, because it was good in the eyes of our Heavenly Father. They were given authority over ALL the power of the enemy and the powers of darkness were terrified at their coming. The seventy returned with joyful surprise that demons were subject to them in the name of Jesus. The demon that resisted the sons of Sceva, knew they had no authority to use the name of Jesus because they were not born-again Christians, and ripped their clothes off and caused them to flee. Acts 19v13-16. How different from the promise to babes in Christ, that they can even cause Satan to flee in the name of Jesus. Luke 10v19, James 2v19, 4v5-7. "The name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous runneth into it and are safe." Prov 18v10. **Every knee must bow to the name of Jesus and recognise its authority, Phil 2v9-11, Rom 14v11,12, both quoted from Isaiah 45v23.**

In Matt 10v1 we see that God's amazing love gave full delegated authority, "exousia" (NT:1489), and power, "dunamis" (NT:1411), to the apostles, even though our Lord also describes them as "babes" (Greek, "neepíois" from "nepios" (NT3516) lit. "without the power of speech," denoting "a little child") in Matt 11v25,26. These Christian babes had authority over all the power of the Devil in the name of the Lord Jesus. The source of this authority is the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, as John tells us in 1John 4v4, "He that is in us, is greater than he that is in the world."

God's ceaseless care and devoted love for His Creation fills the angels with continual amazement and worship. The Seraphim forever extol, praise and worship God for His incredible and continual caring dedicated holiness and love towards His creation. Isaiah 6v1-5, Rev 4v8-11.

The Unity Of The Body Of Christ Is Paramount! "that they may be one, as we are."

The Lord Jesus in John 15v12 gives the Apostles (and indeed the whole Church) a new commandment: **"This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you."**

The fulfilment of this commandment by each believer is the basis for unity in the Body of Christ.

The Lord Jesus, in four separate verses (out of 26), in John chapter 17, prays for the unity of His people, in John 17v11,21,22,23 He states the following:

"And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, **that they may be one, as we are.....That they all may be one**; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, **that they also may be one in us**: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; **that they may be one, even as we are one**: I in them, and thou in me, **that they may be made perfect in one**; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me."

If this request (for the unity of His body), had only been made in one verse, this would be been considered an important point to take note off...however, the Lord, in using four verses, was sending a very clear and unequivocal message to His Church of the **GREAT** importance of the unity and oneness of His people.

What the Lord Jesus is praying for here, is that there should be a beautiful unity of mind and purpose of His people, in the Trinity; with each member of the Body (of Christ) having a fervent love for every other member. He desires the unity of His people, here on earth, to be the same, as that of the redeemed in the Eternal Kingdom of God in the Ages of Ages, and nothing else will satisfy Him, or the other two members of the Trinity.

Just shortly before the Lord Jesus started this great prayer (in John 17), the disciples had been fighting and squabbling about who would be the greatest in the Kingdom of God. He then demonstrates to them, by washing their feet, how they were to serve one another in love and unity, as one who "serves" (Greek, "diakonoón," from "diakoneo" (NT:1247), which means to be an attendant, i.e., wait upon, to wait at table and offer food and drink to the guests, to minister or serve). Luke 22v24-30, John 13v1-17.

Also, in the passage about dealing with a sinning brother (Matthew 18v15-20), the Lord Jesus states in the 3rd option, if the first two do not work, that He should bring the sinning brother before the Church, and in verses 19 & 20, He states: "Again I say unto you, That if two of you **shall agree** (Greek, "sumfooneésoosin" from "sumphone" (NT:4856), which means literally "to be harmonious") on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my

Father which is in heaven. For **where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.**"

The context of this Scripture is still that of a local Church whether they are 2-3 in number or many 1000s, and which demonstrates that the Lord Jesus expects His people in a local Church "to be harmonious," i.e., being in harmony one with another, by being one in mind and purpose.

It is clear that the early Church saw the great importance of this, as from the very 1st Chapter of the Book of Acts, in verse 14, it states: "These all continued **with one accord** in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren."

"With one accord," is in Greek, "homothumadón" (NT:3661), an old adverb from the adjective **homothumos** and that from homos, "same," and thumos, "mind or spirit, with the same mind or spirit." This beautiful unity was the result of their "continued prayer" (Greek, "proseuche" (NT:4335)) and supplication..."

"Continued" in Greek is, "eésan proskarteroúntes," the periphrastic imperfect active of "proskartereoo" (NT:4342), an old verb from *pros*, (a perfective use) and *kartereoo* from *karteros*, "strong, steadfast, and means originally to "persist obstinately in," hence to "adhere firmly to," like the English "carry on." They "stuck to" the praying "**tee proseuchee**," (note the article) for the promise of the Father until the answer came.

In Acts 2v1, it is written: "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were **all with one accord in one place.**" "All with one accord in one place," is in Greek, "pántes homothumadón epí tó autó," "homothumadón" occurs in the Majority Texts (i.e., 100s of actual texts), and is the correct reading, whereas, the Minority Texts (only a few texts, 4-5) read, "pántes homou epí tó autó" which translated is, "all together in one place," which has a completely different sense from "all with one accord in one place," i.e., you can have a number of people in a bar, i.e. "all together in one place," **BUT** they certainly will not be "with one accord" in one place."

The Greek word, "homothumadón" occurs 12 times (in the Majority Texts, 11 in the Minority Texts) in the New Testament, 11 of these are in the Book of Acts and once in Romans, it occurs in the following places: Acts 1v14, 2v1,46, 4v24, 5v12, 7v57, 8v6, 12v20, 15v25, 18v12, 19v29, Rom 15v6. In eight of these twelve occurrences, the reference is too the oneness and unity of the Body of Christ.

The occurrence of it in Acts 15v25 (with v22,23,28) is worthy of mention, it reads: "Then pleased it the apostles and elders, **with the whole church**, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren: And they wrote letters by them after this manner; The apostles and elders and brethren send greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia:...It seemed good unto us, being assembled **with one accord**, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul.... **For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us** to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things..."

The **whole** Church at Jerusalem had come together to consider, prayerfully, this most important emergency, regarding the issue of how the Gentiles stood in relation to the Law. The Church at Jerusalem was a large one, and consisted of many 1000s, yet, Luke quite clearly states that every member of the Body of Christ in Jerusalem was "homothumadón" (of the same mind) with every other member, on the outcome of this most important issue. **EVERY** member of this Church had sought and found the heart and mind of God in (prolonged) prayer (Greek, "proseuche" (NT:4335)) on this subject, there were **NO** differing opinions, **NO** dissensions, just **complete** unity; they **ALL** truly owned Christ's Lordship.

Absolutely everyone could have their say...including the Judaizers, to fully state their views and there was "much questioning and disputing," "polles zeteseos," (Acts 15v7) but there was no attempt to silence them, or to rush things to a decision by a majority vote, or to limit discussion and debate. There was a prolonged controversy and discussion over what to believe, it was a question of faith, and all could take part, not just a select few. This questioning, debate and discussion, was a blessing, it made everyone think through the implications of the New Covenant.

It seems the Judaizers either withdrew, or submitted to the decision for a while, whatever they did at this point, they later certainly started up their divisive and satanically inspired activities again. 2Cor 11v13,14.

There was prolonged discussion, then decision; nothing was done until unanimity was reached, "having come to one accord," v25, "then it pleased the apostles and elders, **WITH THE WHOLE CHURCH**," v22, "it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us." v28. The decision was confirmed to be of God by the unanimous decision of the whole church, and the Holy Spirit. A local Church cannot expect to get God's will with a prayerless and worldly "rule by majority vote," this is a carnal expedient.

A Church must seek "the mind of the Lord," and recognise Jesus as the Head and Guide of His Body the Church. Rom 12v4,5, 1Cor 12v12-27, Eph 4v11-16. A body goes into convulsions when it is sick and is not directed by the head, this is a true picture of Christ's Church, when we do what we want, and not what He wants. **A Church must be willing to pray until every member comes to the same mind, this proves subjection to Jesus.** John 17v20-22. Jesus desires us to be one as He was with the Father, this oneness springs from mutual love, and this alone gives an effectual testimony to the world. A public practical unity of the spirit is essential, and **the God who brought the Christians of the early**

Church, with their different ways, thoughts and backgrounds, to one accord, will do the same for us if we will humble ourselves and seek His face.

To obtain the mind of the Lord, earnest and prolonged united prayer has to be exercised by a church; there is no short cut!

Paul, in many of his Epistles, emphasizes the great importance of being: "(ye be) likeminded", " (with) one mind," "that there be no divisions," "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace," "same mind," "be at peace amongst yourselves" etc... Rom 15v5-7, 1Cor 1v10-13, 2Cor 13v11-14, Eph 4v1-6,14-32, Phil 1v27, 2v1-5, 4v2, 1Thess 5v12-15.

The importance of God's people being one in unity amongst themselves and in the Trinity has always been important, under the Old Covenant, we see how the 2nd Generation, under the leadership of Joshua went into Canaan, and under the Headship of Yahweh conquered the land, this oneness of mind, purpose and spirit amongst them, made them "the head and not the tail," and made it so, that "an hundred...shall put ten thousand to flight." Lev 26v8, Deut 28v13.

One of the distinguishing features of the Church at Jerusalem was the beautiful love that each member of the Body of Christ had for the other members, this ensured a wonderful unity in that Church, which resulted in God "commanding" His blessing upon it. The Presence of Christ filled His body, the Church, at Jerusalem, which ensured that great power and great grace rested upon it. Psalm 133, Acts 4v33. This great Presence (of the Holy Spirit) and power upon the believers at Jerusalem, in turn brought about an even greater unity amongst them. John 17v22.

Such was the importance of this beautiful unity, that when a situation arose, inspired by the Devil (the root cause of which was money, 1Tim 6v10), to ruin it, God acted very quickly, by executing the culprits, Ananias and Sapphira, in a most dramatic fashion, which demonstrated to all the members of that Church, the great necessity to maintain this beautiful atmosphere of unity and fervent love, untainted (Acts 5v1-11). The result of God's intervention was that (Acts 5v11): **"great fear came upon all the church and upon all who heard these things."**

Apart from maintaining the lovely unity in the Church, this "intervention" (with power) through Peter, really brought a healthy "fear" (i.e., "reverence and respect", not some kind of terror, as this has its origin in Satan, and not God) of God upon ALL the believers AND unbelievers, alike, with the result that (Acts 5v12): "Through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people. And they were all **with one accord** (Greek, "homothumadón")..."

The Lord Jesus prayed in John 17v11: "...Keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are one." "Keep" is "tereson," the aorist active imperative of "tereo," and means to guard (from loss or injury, properly, by keeping the eye upon).

This incident of the execution of Ananias and Sapphira by God, is simply the result of God guarding and protecting the beautiful unity and oneness of believers (with each other and the Trinity) in the Church at Jerusalem in answer to the request that Christ made in John 17v11. **This should be a real warning** to those who even consider attempting to destroy the unity of the Body of Christ in the local Church, for what God has done once, He will (if the necessity arises) do again, even though judgement is a "strange act" to the God of Love! (Isaiah 28v21, 1John 4v8). We do not read again in the Book of Acts, that the coveting of money (by believers), was ever the reason again through which the unity of the Church was attacked.

We also see that God protected and guarded the unity of His people between themselves and with the Trinity under the Old Covenant, the sin of Achan and his family highlights this in a most dramatic way (Joshua 7v1-26), Joshua 7v11,12,20,21,24,25 states:

"Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them: for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put it even among their own stuff. Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed: **neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you.....** And Achan answered Joshua, and said, Indeed I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done: When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it.... And **Joshua, and all Israel with him**, took Achan the son of Zerah, and the silver, and the garment, and the wedge of gold, and his sons, and his daughters, and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent, and all that he had: and they brought them unto the valley of Achor. And Joshua said, Why hast thou troubled us? the Lord shall trouble thee this day. **And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire**, after they had stoned them with stones."

In this incident, the sin of Achan (and his family, for all partook in this sin) caused the defeat of the whole of Israel before their enemies, one sin carried out by one family completely and utterly destroyed the lovely unity that Israel and the Lord had enjoyed. When there is a great manifestation of the Presence and Power of God, the unity and oneness of His people is most important, for, as we have seen with the example of Achan, the sin of one family, can bring defeat to two and a half million (approximately, for this was the population of Israel at this time) people, because in the Lord's eyes (in these circumstances of the manifestation of great power) the sin of this one family was looked upon as the sin of Israel (v11), hence the defeat of all Israel before the men of Ai. God did not execute them Himself, but ordered ALL Israel to stone

them, with the result that unity and fellowship with Yahweh was restored, which in turn ensured victory, as Joshua 8v1 states:

"And the Lord said unto Joshua, Fear not, neither be thou dismayed: take all the people of war with thee, and arise, go up to Ai: see, I have given into thy hand the king of Ai, and his people, and his city, and his land..."

Paul, in his first Epistle to the Corinthian Church tells them, that they are "carnal" spiritual babes because of the "envying, and strife, and divisions" that they were creating and pursuing, 1Cor 3v1-4 states the following: "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto **carnal**, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet **carnal**: for whereas there is among you **envying, and strife, and divisions**, are ye not **carnal**, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not **carnal**?"

"**Envying**" is in Greek, "zeélōs" (NT:2205), which is from, "zeo" ((NT:2204), to be hot (boil, of liquids; or glow, of solids)), and so means "zeal" (in a favourable sense, ardour; in an unfavourable one, jealousy), excitement of mind, ardour, fervour of spirit, an envious and contentious rivalry, which is the meaning in 1Cor 3v3.

"**Strife**" in Greek is, "éris" (NT:2054), and means, a quarrel, i.e., (by implication) wrangling, contention, debate, strife, variance.

"**Divisions**" is in Greek, "dichostasis" (NT:1370), which means literally, "a standing apart", and so, disunion, i.e.. (figuratively) dissension, division, sedition.

"**Carnal**." In 1Cor 3v1-4, Paul uses the Greek word "sarkikos" four times (Majority Text), "sarkikoí" is used three times (v3,4) and "sarkikoís" (v1) is used once. "**Sarkikos**" (NT:4559) means literally "pertaining to flesh," i.e., "fleshly" and so, "having the nature of flesh," an individual who is totally dominated by the flesh and its desires. "Sarkikos" is a far stronger word than "sarkinos" (NT:4660), which means "consisting of or composed of flesh," i.e., "fleshy". (See Archbishop Trench's "Synonyms Of The New Testament" for a discussion on these two Greek words ("sarkikos" (NT:4559) and "sarkinos" (NT:4660)). Paul also uses this strong Greek word, "sarkikos," in Rom 7v14 (Majority Text) (see Rom 7v7-25): "For we know that the law is spiritual: but **I am carnal** (Greek, "sarkikos" (NT:4559)), sold under sin."

In this passage, he is describing his pre-conversion experience (it is certainly **NOT** his post-conversion experience), when, by exercising his own freewill he deliberately (in full knowledge of the Truth) rejected God and good, and chose the way of sin and the Devil (It should be duly noted, Paul sinned because he wanted to, and **NOT** because he had to), with the result that he died spiritually and sold himself under sin....he was **NOT** born in sin, nor was he spiritually dead at birth, because he says quite clearly in Rom 7v9: "For **I was alive** without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." He then goes on to say that having "sold himself under sin," sin became his master and dominated him, hence he says in Rom 7v19: "For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do." He then gives a heart-rendering inward cry of despair (Rom 7v24): "O wretched man that I am! **who** (Greek, "tis," (NT:5100) referring to a "personal" deliverer) **shall deliver me** from the body of this death?" He then gives the answer in the following verse (Rom 7v25): "**I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord**. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin."

So we can see that Paul uses the same Greek word to describe the "carnal" Corinthians, that he used of himself when he was "sold under sin"....how striking to say the least! This Greek word, "sarkikos" also occurs in another six places in the New Testament (in the Majority Text), Rom 15v27, 1Cor 9v11, 2Cor 1v2, 10v4, Hebrews 7v16, 1Pet 2v11. Paul says that the result of this carnal behaviour (their "envying, and strife, and divisions") amongst the Corinthians had caused there to be "factions," 1Cor 11v19, states: "For there must also be **factions** among you, that those who are approved may be recognized among you." (NKJV).

"Factions" ("Heresies, KJV) in Greek is "hairéseis" from "hairesis" (NT:139), and denotes (a) "a choosing, choice" (from haireomai, "to choose"); then, "that which is chosen," and hence, "an opinion," especially a self-willed opinion, which is substituted for submission to the power of truth, and leads to division and the formation of sects, Gal 5v20 (marg., "parties"); such erroneous opinions are frequently the outcome of personal preference or the prospect of advantage; see 2Pet 2v1, where "destructive" (RV) signifies leading to ruin; some assign even this to (b); in the papyri the prevalent meaning is "choice" (see Moulton and Milligan, "Vocabulary Of The Greek New Testament"); (b) "a sect"; this secondary meaning, resulting from (a), is the dominating significance in the NT, Acts 5v17, 15v5, 24v5,14, 26v5, 28v22.

Paul includes "Heresies" (KJV) in the list of the "works of the flesh" in Gal 5v16-26:

"This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, **heresies**, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let

us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another."

The English word "heresies," is a transliteration of the Greek word "haireseis;" the English word speaks of false doctrine which is opposed to orthodox Truth; whereas "haireseis," means "choosings, preferences," and is derived from "haireomai," or "haireo," "to choose, to select." (See Phil 1v22, 2Thess 2v13, Heb 2v25). It can be used either for a good or bad choice, or preference. In the New Testament, "hairesis" usually speaks of a form of opinion, and is used in the sense of a sect; of the sect of the Sadducees in Acts 5v7; of the sect of the Pharisees in Acts 15v5 and 26v5; of Christians, as the sect of the Nazarenes in Acts 24v5, which Paul says his opponents contemptuously called heresy, "haireisin," in Acts 24v14; in Acts 28v22 the Jews at Rome said to Paul, "concerning this sect, "hairesis," we know that it is everywhere spoken against."

The plural "haireseis," is also used to speak of preferences or choosings, which cause division in the church. In 1Cor 11v19, "heresies," could be "sects," separating on doctrinal lines. Christians can have different preferences and different doctrinal views, and yet remain in perfect love and accord. However, intellectual differences can lead to the actual separation of Christians from one another, and this is what Paul is thinking of in Gal 5v20, and 1Cor11v19. This difference of opinion, "hairesis," can lead to actual schism, "schisma," in the body of Christ; and even to "damnable heresies," that destroy the soul, and fragment the Church. 2Pet 2v1.

Please Note: Some books on demon possession name the evil spirits that possess a person as spirits of envy, of lust, of anger, of pride, etc., and in some books dozens of such names are given. There is no basis in Scripture for this. These preachers have confused the works of the flesh with demon possession, for what they call demon possession; Paul clearly calls "**works of the flesh**" in Gal 5v19-25. The Bible clearly distinguishes between the world, flesh and the Devil, and so should we. 1John 2v15-17, 1Pet 5v6-9.

(For an excellent study on the "works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit" (Gal 5v15-26), please see William Barclay's small volume "Flesh And Spirit")

These "carnal" Christians at Corinth were (mis) using doctrine to cause splits in the Church, when Paul clearly teaches that doctrine should be something that "unites" believers, NOT something to be used in a destructive way to cause divisions and disunity. Ephesians 4v11-16 states:

"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: **Till we all come in the unity of the faith**, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

Until we come to the unity of the faith and have the mind of Christ, we **must** "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." 1Cor 2v16, Eph 4v3.

It is therefore very necessary for the pastor/teachers (i.e. elders/bishops, these names all refer to the same ministry, i.e., the pastors of a local Church, like that at Corinth), to maintain the unity of the Body of Christ within that local Church that the Lord Jesus has set them in, which is part of their spiritual responsibility, and should be done by speaking the Truth in Love and by example (see Acts 20v17-38 (esp. v28), 1Tim 3v1-7, Titus 1v5-16, James 5v13-20).

Paul says that because of the Corinthian's carnality he had "fed them with milk and not with meat" because they were not able to bear it, as they were still spiritual "babes". "Babes" is in Greek "neepiois", which is from "nepios" (NT3516), and means literally, "non speaking ones", and so, "without the power of speech", an infant, little child.

This mindset that they had, was having the effect upon them, that they would experience absolutely no spiritual growth whatsoever, unless they repented of their "envying, and strife, and divisions", and started to exercise true unconditional (agape) love towards **ALL**, especially believers, without exception and without favouritism to any one "group".

This is exactly the same mindset that the Apostles had had all the time they had known and been with the Lord Jesus (during His ministry), and on the night that the Lord Jesus was betrayed, He had so much that He wished to say to them but they could not bear it (i.e., receive, and understand it), John 16v12-14 states: "**I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now**. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you."

The Lord Jesus, also refers to the Apostles as "babes" (Greek, "neepiois" from "nepios" (NT:3516)), "non speaking ones" in Matt 11v25.

The Lord had therefore been greatly hindered right up to that time from giving them the Truth that He so desired to impart to them, and so this Truth would have to be declared to them by Him during His 40 day post Resurrection Ministry,

but really this responsibility would belong to the Holy Spirit (Who would abide with them forever), after the Lord Jesus' Resurrection and Ascension. Luke 24v13-35, John 14v16,26, Acts 1v1-11, 6v1-7, Rev all.

By manifesting this "party spirit" ("haireisis" (NT:139)) the Corinthians greatly hindered the Lord Jesus working effectively (as He so desired to) through His body (the Church), so that although they came behind in no Gift of the Holy Spirit, they had completely missed His way (the way He had ministered to people while upon earth), as how He desired to minister through them. The Lord Jesus, during His earthly ministry, manifested the gifts of the Holy Spirit from a heart full of compassion and love for the lost sheep of the House of Israel, so that during His ministry He always manifested them using "the more excellent way." His motivation for desiring and manifesting the gifts of the Holy Spirit, was one of (agape) love for **ALL** people, and not only for the Jews, but also for the despised Samaritans and Gentiles. So often when He saw the multitudes he was moved with compassion to minister to them and heal the sick, and because of His wonderful character and loving heart the gifts of the Holy Spirit operated spontaneously under the guidance of the Father. Matt 15v21-28, Mark 6v34, John 4v1-42, 5v19,20, 14v10,11, 1Cor 1v7, 12v31, 14v1, Gal 5v20.

NB A brief note on Church Federation.

By departing from the government, structure and practices of the early Church, Church federation ensued which by its very nature caused sectarianism within the Church (which is the Body of Christ).

The local church is not a building; it is a group of born-again Christians. There is no church federation seen in the New Testament. NB People joined the Church by baptism in water.

The great evils that church federation can lead to:

Church federation almost invariably leads to a sectarian bigotry that shocks the world.
 Church federation usurps Christ's authority and frustrates His plans, purposes, and appointed ministries.
 Church federation usually replaces body ministry with one-man ministry.
 Church federation usually leads to self-dependence and pride.
 Church federation usually leads to unscriptural and worldly power structures.
 Church federation makes it easy for Satan to corrupt and persecute the Church.

Note: The subject of "Church Federation" will be dealt with in a fuller measure later on in this study.

Paul also followed the example of the Lord Jesus in ministering to the needy, and so he writes 1Cor chapters 11-14, to correct the Corinthians wrong attitude and motivation for manifesting spiritual gifts. Although these chapters are directed as to how they should behave in their informal fellowship meetings in their houses, they are also divinely inspired direction as to how **every** believer should desire and manifest the gifts of the Holy Spirit in every instance. 1Cor 11v1, Eph 4v7-16.

The chapter on love, 1Cor 13, is placed between two chapters which speak about the gifts of the Holy Spirit to emphasise the need of love in the manifestation of the gifts of the Spirit, and the need that love has for the manifestation of these gifts; for without spiritual power love cannot meet the needs of the Church or the world. Love is very often powerless without the Holy Spirit's gifts, and even His gifts can be profitless to us without love. God knew that Satan would attack the power-house of the Church, and He knew that it was in the area of spiritual gifts and love that the Church would fail most, and so through Paul He gives some direction and advice on these great subjects. The oil of love is never needed anywhere more than in the powerhouse of the Church.

The more excellent way that Paul directs us to follow is (1Cor 14v1):

"Follow after love, and desire spiritual gifts."

It is certainly **NOT** what some preachers and teachers would have us think, love in opposition to the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and it is **NOT** following after love, without desiring spiritual gifts, for love is helpless and cannot meet the needs of a needy world without God's power. Nor is it desiring spiritual gifts without having love within one's heart, because spiritual power requires real love to enable the spiritual power to be used correctly, and so the proper balance is that stated in An Expanded Translation by Kenneth S. Wuest, of 1Cor 14v1, "Be constantly pursuing this love, earnestly endeavouring to acquire it. Moreover, be earnestly desiring the spiritual gifts, and do this in order that you might more efficiently impart to others the divine revelations you have received. The ESV of 1Cor 14v1, reads, "Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy."

Constantly manifesting the noun "agape" (NT:26), and the verb "agapao" (NT:25), love in one's character, which is the fruit of the Spirit, is absolutely essential, because a church (or indeed any abode) in which there is constant "envying, strife, and divisions" is a most unhappy and joyless place to be, it forces Christians to "endure" their salvation, rather than enjoy and rejoice in it. Gal 5v15.

There is a wonderful healing power and exceedingly precious fellowship in mature Christian love. When a spiritually sick or oppressed Christian comes into the fellowship of Christians who have had this beautiful love and affection for one another they experience a wonderful healing balm and comfort. There is a wonderful blessing upon churches where Christians

really love one another, but churches, which lack love and have strife and division, are very unhappy places. Spiritual gifts manifested in thoughtful love for others produce a beautiful fellowship and blessing. Spiritual gifts manifested without this beautiful love and affection will lack much of the ability to bless, and, indeed, with a hard and bitter spirit, the effect can even be harmful.

"Agape" love is, then, not only an emotion, it is a standard of life, a warm and righteous attitude of mind, "a deliberate assent of the will as a matter of principle, duty and propriety." It is a matter of the heart as well as the decision of a benevolent and loving mind. It is usually distinct from "philia" (NT:5373), the love of emotion and friendship, for "philia" speaks of a love that could be fervent and tender, and, at the same time possibly short-lived and weak, whereas "agape" only speaks of a constant, unwavering, practical love. A good example of the difference between "agape" and "philia" is found in John 21v15-19, the Lord Jesus twice asks Peter if he still lays claim to the constant, unfailing practical "agape" love. Peter can only answer that bitter experience has taught him that his love is only the fervent, tender but weak "philia" love. When the Lord Jesus asks Peter if he loves Him with a "philia" love, it breaks Peter, he said in effect, "You know my heart Lord, and you know how broken it is because my warm but weak "philia" love has failed you. I have professed more than I could perform, but from now on I will perform before I will profess." The Lord Jesus comforts His distraught apostle with the disclosure that his life would end in a magnificent display of "agape" love, Peter would lay down his life for his Saviour and His sheep, John 15v13, until that occurs he is to follow Him and feed His sheep and lambs. Oh, the wonderful "agape" love of Jesus for us. He accepts our "philia" love and transforms it by His grace into "agape" love. No one can be a disciple of Christ without having a "philia" love for Him. 1Cor 16v22.

We can see, then, that "agape" love in the New Testament speaks of love and affection on the very highest level, whereas "philia," the love of emotion and friendship, is usually dependent upon circumstances, and it is only occasionally used to describe the very highest kind of love and affection, e.g. the Love of the Father for His Son. John 5v20. The love of Christ for Lazarus. John 11v3,36. Christ's love for the beloved apostle John. John 20v2. The affection and love that the Father has for His beloved children. John 16v27. So we can see that only on occasions "philia" is lifted from the lower levels of secular Greek to the highest levels of divine love. Another striking example of this is seen in Rev 3v19, where Christ says, "as many as I love, "phileo," I rebuke and discipline." The love and affection of Christ do not change even when His disciples are unworthy of it and are "wretched and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." The affection and love of Christ are constant to His brethren, as believers we are always dear to Him, even if we may be a grief and disgrace to Him.

"Agape" love is usually distinct from "philia" love, the love of emotion and friendship; it is quite distinct from "storge," natural affection; and "eros" and "epithumia" (NT:1939) illicit sexual lust. "Eros is a passionate love, and in secular Greek it is used almost entirely to describe love between sexes." However, the word had degenerated to describe a lust that was evil. The New Testament nowhere condemns sexual love as unholy or unclean; it says that marriage is honourable and not defiling. Heb 13v4, 1Tim 4v3. The Bible only condemns sexual lust and uncleanness, and this is what the word "eros" had come to mean. In the world today there is an emphasis upon this kind of love, the erotic is made to look the desirable and the good, the lowest love is pictured as the highest, and much advertising and entertainment is aimed at appealing to and stimulating the fleshly passions. Aristotle rightly tells us that this passion is stimulated by the pleasure of the eye, so we need to take care of "eyebath." The lust of the flesh is stimulated by the lust of the eye. There are no decent ideas of love in the word "eros," and this word is not used in the New Testament at all, however, the sin that it represents is condemned in many places in the Scriptures, and in the New Testament "epithumia" is used to describe evil "eros" love. How grand it is to come from the evil and murky depths of "eros" love, to the pure and lovely air of "agape" love, the word that describes the lovely love of God and pure Christian love, which is far more beautiful and grand than the best love that the world can conceive and achieve.

NB The Attributes Of Love 1Cor 13v4-7:

The Amp Version reads, "Love endures long and is patient and kind; love never is envious nor boils over with jealousy, is not boastful or vainglorious, does not display itself haughtily. It is not conceited (arrogant and inflated with pride); it is not rude (unmannerly) and does not act unbecomingly. Love (God's love in us) does not insist on its own rights or its own way, for it is not self-seeking; it is not touchy or fretful or resentful; it takes no account of the evil done to it [it pays no attention to a suffered wrong]. It does not rejoice at injustice and unrighteousness, but rejoices when right and truth prevail. Love bears up under anything and everything that comes, is ever ready to believe the best of every person, its hopes are fadeless under all circumstances, and it endures everything [without weakening]."

The NKJV reads, "Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things."

Here we see the fifteen qualities of character that will be manifested from a heart of love. These qualities are essential constituents of a real revival, they are the only means of keeping a revival going on smoothly forward in the will of God, they alone will give value to our work for God. Paul tells us the attributes of character that we must manifest if we are to receive the full profit from the manifestations of the Holy Spirit's gifts.

If we use the gifts of the Holy Spirit with these fifteen lovely Christian qualities in mind, we shall experience revival in our churches, and we shall see the Lord Jesus abundantly glorified. These qualities of character make the use of spiritual power safe and profitable, and will result in a dynamic manifestation of the gifts of the Spirit. The fruit of the Spirit and

the gifts of the Spirit must accompany one another if the Church of Christ is to fulfil its great commission and be a blessing to mankind.

The Unity Of The Body Of Christ In The Last days.

The great divisions in the Body of Christ worldwide at this present time, must be really heart breaking for the Trinity, especially since they have made such great provision through the death of the Lord Jesus on the cross, to make atonement for sin by the shedding of His blood, His descent into Hades, Resurrection, first Ascension when He lead the Old Testament believers (and those in the Abyss, who repented when He preached the Gospel to the dead) into Heaven, His Ascension after 40 days, and His High Priestly ministry. The enmity created by the Mosaic Law, between Jew and Gentile (male, female, slave, free person, etc), has been completely removed through the Cross of Jesus; for **ALL** who believe in Him, are **ALL** one in Christ Jesus. Acts 2v14-39, Rom 8v31-39, Gal 3v28, Eph 2v1-22, 4v8-16, Col 3v11, Hebrews 7v25, 1Pet 3v18-22, 4v6.

Between now and the last seven (especially the last three and a half) years of this Age, God is going to do a quick work to bring unity, oneness and purity to the Body of Christ and thus prepare it for the dark evil days of the Great Tribulation. **It is written in Rev 12v1:** "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars." This woman represents a group of people, who are foreknown, designed, specially created and empowered by God for the Great Tribulation, a group of praying people, with prepared hearts and special ministries for the last days, who will operate with awesome power as a prayer-warrior group behind the scenes. God also gives a definite promise that He will protect, provide and empower the seeking hearts in His Church in a new and special way in the last days, and will not leave His Church defenceless in the Great Tribulation. Dan 11v32, Luke 18v1-8, James 5v1-6, Rev 12v1-17.

The method by which God is going to prepare His people for these dark evil days, will be the same way as He has always prepared His people (in similar dark evil times) throughout the Age of Grace, and that is by a return to the practices of the early Church, in Government, informal fellowship meetings, Ministries, Evangelism etc, because, if we follow the divinely ordained spiritual practices of the early Church, we shall also experience revival, however, if we replace God's order with the traditions of men, we shall experience spiritual barrenness, as, unfortunately, the vast majority of Christians do at this present time. John 7v17,37-39, 17v17, Acts 2v16-21, 2Tim 3v5, 1Pet 1v18.

The thing that brought the squabbling fearful Apostles and Disciples to a beautiful oneness and unity of mind (Greek, "homothumadon" (NT:3661)) and purpose, was that they all gathered together (in obedience to the Lord's command) in the Upper Room, and "continued in prayer ("proseuche" (NT:4335)) and supplication." Hence the great necessity for a return to the informal fellowship (house) meetings that the early Church practised, which enabled it to have revival for 300 years, without any Church buildings or the practice of Tithing, until the Edict of Toleration (Milan), issued by Constantine in 313 AD (who was the sixth head of the Beast, and directly under the control of the Devil), which heaped, wealth, riches, and worldly power onto the Church, which in effect stopped the Church seeking the Lord for His plans, purposes and power, because they then relied upon their new found wealth, and not God, Who gives His Presence and Power liberally to **ALL** that seek Him. Luke 22v44-53, Acts 1v12-2v4, Acts 2v46, Hebrews 10v25, 11v6, Jude v12, Rev 13v1-11, 17v7-18.

Donald Gee (Principle of the Assemblies of God college at Kenley) said the following in 1952/53: "**We have now got enough organisation in the Assemblies of God to manage without God.**" He had recognised that the resources in the natural were the very things that could keep God from having control of what was supposed to be built up for Him.

In 1956 in Skegness, James Wallace (Chairman of the AOG conference), spoke the following words: "In the early days of Pentecost (a reference to the Pentecostal revival that started in the early part of the 20th Century), we used our resources to uplift the name of Jesus, but now we are uplifting Jesus to increase our Organisation and resources. We do the same thing, but there is a subtle difference of emphasis in the motive, which is to increase the number of Pentecostal churches."

God is **NOT** interested in increasing the number of Pentecostal churches; He is interested in increasing the number of Pentecostal Christians. It is **NOT** a denominational thing, **BUT** getting the children of God filled with the Holy Spirit, no matter what denomination they belong to, and let God move in their area.

Let us never forget that the first and greatest commandment of all is: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength." Mark 12v30.

We must take great care **NOT** to abandon our "First Love," especially as the last seven years of this Age (and in particular the Great Tribulation) rapidly approaches, which if done, would result in disastrous consequences! Matt 24v12,13, Rev 2v4.

It is only as the believer forsakes their cherished unscriptural traditions of their spiritual fathers and teachers and opens their mind to Truth, will they then start to bathe in the glorious liberty of the children of God, and enter into the real freedom of the Truth. John 8v32, Rom 1v28, 8v21, 2Cor 10v4,5.

If **ANY** Church (that is a group of believers) desires to experience times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, they

MUST return to the Truth, by searching and seeking it out as the Jews at Berea did (Acts 17v10-15), Acts 17v11 states:

"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and **searched the scriptures daily**, whether those things were so." Or as the Amplified Bible translates it: "Now these [Jews] were better disposed and more noble than those in Thessalonica, for they were entirely ready and accepted and welcomed the message [concerning the attainment through Christ of eternal salvation in the kingdom of God] with inclination of mind and eagerness, **searching and examining the Scriptures daily** to see if these things were so."

"Searched" is in Greek, "anakrinontes," the present active participle of "anakrino" (NT:350), which means, to scrutinize, i.e., (by implication) investigate, interrogate, determine...the Bereans, instead of resenting Paul's new interpretation, examined ("anakrino" which means to sift up and down, to make careful and exact research as in legal processes as in Acts 4v9; 12v19, etc.) the Scriptures for themselves. The present participle denotes continuous or repeated action, so the Bereans kept their studying of the Scriptures up until they arrived at a full understanding of what Paul was talking about, and concluded that the Good News that he reported to them, was indeed the Truth, and so (Acts 17v12): "Therefore many of them believed..." **And we, as Christians, should ALL follow the wonderful example of the Jews at Berea, and search and study the Scriptures daily!**

The Training of the Lord Jesus, Our Great High Priest.

Hebrews 5v1-5, 7v11-19 states the following:

"For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins: Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity. And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins. **And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee...If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron?** For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. **For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood.** And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest, Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God."

Before Creation, when the Trinity conceived "the plan of the Ages" in their minds, in their foreknowledge they foresaw that "when the fullness of time was come" when God would send forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the Law, that the Old Covenant structures, that had been brought into existence by God on Mount Sinai, with such a great manifestation of His Presence and Power, would become completely corrupted and devoid of Truth, and been replaced with the unscriptural traditions of men (that is, those of the Scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees). So if His Son Jesus had been born of the seed of Aaron, He would also have been under great pressure to follow the corrupt and unscriptural traditions of the Pharisees and Sadducees, which had been handed down from their spiritual fathers. We see in Caiaphas, the High Priest, and the chief priests, the type of evil and corrupted character, that the unscriptural traditions of the Sadducees produced in those who received them, and based their religious experience upon them. Matt 15v1-20, 16v11, 24v57-68, Mark 12v18-27 (esp., 24), Eph 3v9-11, Gal 4v4, 1Pet 1v18.

God was absolutely determined that His beloved Son, Jesus, was not going to be put under the pressure of a priestly line, dominated by a corrupt theology and so Jesus was born within a different tribe, the tribe of Judah. God the Father also made sure that Jesus was hidden away at Nazareth for thirty years, during which time the Father prepared Him for both His Earthly and Heavenly ministries. **The wisdom and knowledge of Jesus was so well hidden from the people of Nazareth that when Jesus preached there in Luke 4v22, we read: "So all bore witness to Him, and marvelled at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth. And they said, "Is this not Joseph's son?" (NKJV)**

Then after His sermon they tried to kill Him. The rejection also continued in His second sermon at Nazareth, we read in Mark 6v1-3: "Then He went out from there and came to His own country, and His disciples followed Him. And when the Sabbath had come, He began to teach in the synagogue. And many hearing Him were astonished, saying, "Where did this Man get these things? And what wisdom is this which is given to Him, that such mighty works are performed by His hands! Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?" So they were offended at Him." (NKJV)

If Jesus had been born into the priestly line, the vicious conflicts that He experienced in His ministry would have happened in His childhood and teenage years. The all wise God of love was not going to allow this to happen, and protected His Son Jesus from a premature exposure of His ministry to the Scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees. When Jesus went into the Temple at twelve, He astonished the teachers there with His understanding and answers; years later, in His ministry, Christ's questions and answers brought Him vicious persecution, and death.

Even Christ's earthly parents did not understand what God the Father was doing with the Lord Jesus. **We read in the NKJV of Luke 2v40-52, 3v23:**

"And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him. His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. And when He was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast. When they had finished the days, as they returned, the Boy Jesus lingered behind in Jerusalem. And Joseph and His mother did not know it; but supposing Him to have been in the company, they went a day's journey, and sought Him among their relatives and acquaintances. So when they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking Him. Now so it was that after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. **And all who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers. So when they saw Him, they were amazed; and His mother said to Him, "Son, why have You done this to us? Look, Your father and I have sought You anxiously." And He said to them, "Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?" But they did not understand the statement which He spoke to them.** Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them, but His mother kept all these things in her heart. **And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men.**"...Now Jesus Himself began His ministry at about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, the son of Heli." (NKJV)

It was the custom of all Hebrew parents to watch eagerly for any signs of spirituality in their children. Those who showed promise in this way were naturally sent at an early age to the Bible School in Jerusalem that as the pupil of one or other of the great Rabbis (like Gamaliel) they might learn the Hebrew language in which God's Word was written; unintelligible to the ordinary Jew, who spoke Aramaic or Koine. However, no such thought seems to have entered the minds of Mary and Joseph concerning Jesus. Luke 11v52, Acts 5v34, 22v3.

We read in Luke 2v47: "And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers." "Understanding" is "sunesei," from "sunieemi," "to bring together." Jesus not only grasped and comprehended spiritual truth, He understood how to compare, relate, and combine the facts and truths of Scripture. Cf. Mark 12v33. The boy Jesus manifested an amazing grasp of spiritual truth, intelligence, and wisdom, which totally astounded Israel's leading religious teachers."

"Were astonished" is in Greek, "exístanto," the imperfect indicative middle of "existemi" (NT:1839), which means to put (stand) out of wits, i.e. astound, or become astounded, amaze, be astonished, be beside self, wonder. The imperfect tense reveals their continued and repeated astonishment. The verb "existemi" meaning that they stood out of themselves as if their eyes were bulging out. The theology of Jesus hit them hard and challenged their false traditions.

ALL that heard him were not only greatly amazed at His questions, **BUT**, more so at His answers. The answers that He gave to their questions not only revealed His great knowledge, understanding and experience of the Scriptures, but also showed that He had a full understanding of the questions He asked. The reason all were totally amazed, was not because he had a level of the knowledge of Truth which someone of far more advanced years may have, but simply, the depth of the Truth that He had (which **ALL** that heard Him didn't have), regardless of His age; and this depth of Truth being found in a boy of twelve years old, made it even more remarkable. This episode in the Temple really highlights the real and gross spiritual inadequacies of the religious leaders of Israel at that time, for there was no reason why they could not also have had the revelation of Truth that the boy Jesus had, for to get this Truth Jesus had to learn the language in which the Scriptures were written in, and they (the doctors (of the law)) already knew it, but they were simply not willing to give up their cherished unscriptural traditions handed down from their spiritual fathers! Matt 15v1-20, 1Pet 1v18. **Nor did the Doctors of the Law desire to be shown up by a twelve year old boy, whom they would certainly have tried to corrupt by their false traditions if Jesus had He been sent to and accepted by the theological School at Jerusalem.**

The question arises, why had the young Jesus never been put into the Bible School at Jerusalem or why after this episode in the Temple did the Teachers that heard Him not suggest that He should be enrolled at their Bible School? **The answer is to be found in Isaiah 49v2: "And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me, and made me a polished shaft; in his quiver hath he hid me..."** The Trinity, before Creation, whilst conceiving the "plan of the Ages," foresaw also the great corruption in the souls of the Scribes and Pharisees, whom both John Baptist and the Lord Jesus described as a "generation of vipers." Matt 23v33, Luke 3v7. **So God hid Jesus away at Nazareth, and personally trained Jesus in Divine truth away from the corruption and spiritual darkness of these "so called" Teachers of Israel. Jesus overcame this same theological corruption and darkness at Nazareth and started His ministry full of grace and truth. John 1v14.**

The life and experience of Saul of Tarsus reveals the result of feeding one's mind upon the unscriptural traditions of the Scribes and Pharisees, he underwent their "religious instruction," and became a member of the sect of the Pharisees, and ended up persecuting the Church in a most vicious way, even casting his vote against Christians for their execution, when he was a member of the Sanhedrin, and Paul because of this even referred to himself as the chief of sinners. Acts 8v3, 26v10,11, 1Tim 1v15. It took an appearance of the Lord Jesus Himself, to Saul, to bring him to a realisation of the Truth of a risen Lord and Saviour, and to reveal to him that his cherished unscriptural traditions, handed down from his spiritual fathers were anything but Truth, and were in fact a pack of lies based upon falsehood and not the Scriptures. Matt 23v1-39, Mark 7v1-23 (esp. v9), Luke 11v37-54.

We see that the religious structure of Judaism in the time of Our Lord, which had been brought into existence with such great glory, had become completely unrecognizable and wholly corrupted, a structure that made it impossible for God to work through it, a structure which relentlessly persecuted and finally murdered the Promised Christ, because it was firmly under the control of the Devil. Hence, the necessity for God to raise up a new pure uncorrupted structure, the New Testament Church, which is The Body Christ, for the purpose of preaching the Good News of the forgiveness of sin, the salvation and healing of spirit, soul and body through the shed blood of Christ on the Cross. God wanted groups of believers, who would seek the heart and mind of their risen Lord for His plans and purposes, and having found them, carry them out. Matt 8v16,17, 18v20, 26v26-30, John 13v27, 18v1-14, Acts 2v40-47, 2Cor 3v7-18, Rev 3v7-13 (esp., v9).

And so, as God looks to prepare His Church for the dark evil days that will soon be upon us, He will again raise up a completely new structure than that of the established denominations, because many have strayed from the Truth, in their beliefs, government, practices, evangelism etc., Many of these structures, will be just about as impossible to revive, as the structure of Judaism was in the days of Our Lord's earthly ministry. It is often easier for God to raise up a new church than to give life to a dead form. The Lord Jesus often brings out a remnant out of the church that is almost spiritually dead, or raises up another group of spiritual Christians. John 16v1-4, Acts 7v51, Rev 2v5.

One of the most important aspects of the New Testament structure, were the informal fellowship meetings: the early Church, in their informal fellowship meetings, followed the example of the Last Supper, Matt 26v17-30, Mark 14v12-26, Luke 22v14-38, John 13-17. We see in 1Cor 11v21 to 14v31, what actually happened at a New Testament communion service, it consisted of spiritual ministry plus spiritual gifts, the Lord's Supper was part of the fellowship that took place in the body ministry of the local church.

When our Lord instituted the communion service, He did so in a private house, and with close friends. The Passover feast was a family occasion, a social event, as well as a spiritual event; there was the divine order of informality and spirituality. The Lord's Supper was also an informal occasion, part of a Christian's social fellowship with other Christians, part of an ordinary simple meal, and after a family meal, it was naturally supernatural. God intends Christians to **ENJOY** spiritual fellowship together, not to be formal, distant and restrained with each other. Notice the sweet, conversational, natural, informal nature of the Lord's last supper. We see the conversation between Christ and John, Christ and Peter, Christ and Judas, Peter and John, and separate conversations between other disciples. Jesus gave informal teaching, prophetic insights from the Scriptures, and prophetic warnings of His death and betrayal, mixed with encouraging promises, sublime praying, and a telling practical lesson in humility, when He washed their feet. The early Church linked the Lord's Supper and Christian fellowship with social fellowship. The whole aim of the Lord's Supper in the early Church was not just listening, but also the development of ministry and spirituality through sharing fellowship and experience in a conversational manner. The joy of the Lord that makes us strong is developed in this environment. Neh 8v10.

In many churches today Christians gather for the Lord's Supper, but there is little communion or fellowship of the saints. If there is no informal, conversational sharing of experience and loving ministry to one another, we have not reached the New Testament ideal of a communion service. There can be no communion, where there is disagreement and division; deep love, trust and fellowship was the New Testament basis of fellowship. 1Cor 10v17, Matt 5v23,24. Paul warned the Galatians that if they did not walk in love to each other they would bite and devour one another. Gal 5v13-16. Fellowship is based on mutual love for each other. We are one body, united by one spirit, having one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one Father. Eph 4v1-6, Rom 8v9.

This glorious woman of Revelation 12v1, who is clothed with the full power of the Holy Spirit, represents groups of prepared believers in different locations around the world, during the Great Tribulation. Each individual believer (within these groups) will walk in love to God and other believers, and they will experience a oneness and unity as the early Church at Jerusalem experienced, as recorded in the first 15 chapters of the "Acts of the Apostles." In the last seven years of this Age, believers will fall into either of two categories, those who are prepared for the Great Tribulation, and those who are not. The Christians who feel it unnecessary to get ready for the last days, will be those who have a "form of godliness, but denying the power thereof," whom Paul tells us to turn away from (2Tim 3v5). The period of time during which God is preparing the Church for those dark day, there will be a period of great rival to quicken the process of preparation in believers, to get them equipped and ready faster than if there was no revival at all. Acts 2v16-21.

This glorious woman (of Revelation 12) in her preparation by God, will have as the basis of their faith, filled their minds with Truth, and so as these days approach, we will see a great return, by the Church, to the doctrines and practices of the early Church. And so with the return of the informal fellowship meetings, Christians will be able to come into them and receive great blessing, strength and energisings from the Presence of the Holy Spirit, right up until the Lord's Second Coming, immediately after the dark days of the Great Tribulation. Matt 24v21,29,30, Heb 10v25.

(For a more complete study on the government, practices, ministries and evangelism of the early Church I refer the reader to Bill Turner's study, "The Organisation Of The Early Church" which can be found at: www.truthforthelastdays.com)

To come through the Great Tribulation triumphantly, the believer will need to put off the works of darkness and put on the whole armour of God, **Rom 13v12**, states: "The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light." "Let us therefore cast off.." is in Greek, "apothoómetha oún,"

"apothoómetha" is the aorist middle subjunctive (volitive) of "apotitheemi" (NT:659), to put off from oneself "the works of darkness" "ta erga tou skotous" as we do our night-clothes. It must be a definite decision and act by the individual believer to cast off the works of darkness, as it must be a definite act of putting on the armour of light.

"The armour of light," in Greek is, "tá hópla tou footós," the weapons of light, that belong to the light (to the day time), this is also a reference to "the whole armour of God" referred to in Eph 6v10-20, with Rom 6v13, 2Cor 6v7, 1Thess 5v8. Nearly all of these different pieces of armour refer to a correct knowledge of the Scriptures, i.e., Truth.

The Lord Jesus, on a few occasions, warned the Apostles of the great danger of the leaven of the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Herod, which amounted to (amongst other things), the love and strong desire for political and kingly power and authority, hypocrisy and formality, and love of unscriptural traditions (which made the word of God of no effect). Matt 16v5-12, Mark 7v13, 8v13-21, Luke 12v1-3, 1Pet 1v18.

These unscriptural traditions, which the Lord Jesus had escaped from, during His thirty years of preparation at Nazareth, however, had bound the Apostles, and which took great effort by the Lord Jesus (by mighty signs, wonders and miracles and feeding them Truth, which example Paul followed in his ministry, Rom 15v18,19, 1Cor 11v1, 14v37), to help them escape from them (and indeed some of these, the Apostles seem not to have done so). We also see, in the example of Paul, what a complete turn around, the great mercy and grace of God can affect in an individual's life, if they are just willing to let go of all their cherished unscriptural traditions, and receive Truth into their spirits and minds. His wonderful grace and mercy transformed Paul, by turning him from the chief of sinners to the chief of Apostles. Acts 9v1-30, 2Cor 12v11,12, Gal 1v11-21, 1Tim 1v15,16.

These strong warnings, that Our Lord spoke almost 2000 years ago, hold fully true today, for when these evil attitudes of mind are found in a Church (which, sadly, is all too often the case today), in the leadership and members of that local Church, it makes unity and oneness amongst the members of the Body of Christ absolutely impossible. It also renders impossible the unity of the (local) Body of Christ with the Trinity, for God cannot work through a structure (which bears no resemblance to that of the early Church as revealed in the Scriptures) whose members will only stick rigidly to a set form of religious worship that has been done by their fathers for many generations before them. God requires His people to seek Him for His plans and purposes, and His Presence and power to carry them out, not for them to just "say" prayers, "sing" hymns and listen to spiritually dead persons preach half truths and even down right lies to them, having a form of service that does not change from one week to another, nor the possibility of it changing in the future, because the leadership and most of the members of that Church just don't want change, because their unscriptural traditions have so totally bound them, and are so much easier to perform than maintaining a relationship with the Living God. Matt 9v14,17, Luke 5v33-39.

This evil leaven of the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Herod, also leads to hardening of the heart, **Mark 6v52**, states: "For they considered not...**for their heart was hardened.**" "Was hardened" is in Greek, "eén pepoorooménee," it is the perfect passive participle of "poroo," (NT:4456), which means, to cover with a thick skin, to harden by covering with a callus, to petrify, i.e. (figuratively) to indurate (render stupid or callous), blind, harden, also "a kind of marble," metaphorically, with "kardian", to make the heart dull. "Was hardened" is a periphrastic perfect, emphasizing a settled state of dullness, callousness, and lack of understanding.

We get a wonderful insight into just how bound the Apostles were by these different leavens, when, on the night of the Passover, when the Lord Jesus was in the deepest despair, and in need of so much succour, comfort and support from them, that instead of giving this to Him, they were squabbling about who would be the greatest, and sit at the Lord's right and left hand in the Kingdom of God. None of these would become a reality, unless Jesus was crucified (shedding His blood), and He descended into the Abyss (where His soul was made an offering for sin), and raised from the dead again to make atonement for (their) sin). The Lord, even in His hour of need and great agony of soul, gives them (and us) a wonderful example (of humility and service) to follow, by washing the disciples' feet. Luke 22v24-30, John 13v1-17, Phil 2v1-11.

This leaven that the Lord had warned them strongly against, was also responsible for hindering them from understanding fully the significance of the great miracle of the feeding of the five thousand men (and that did not include the women and children), which was another wonderful "sign" (Greek, "semeion" (NT:4592)) miracle, like that of the turning of the water to wine at wedding feast in Cana of Galilee. John 2v1-12.

We also read in v5 of Mark 3v1-6 the following: "And "when he had looked round about" (Greek, "periblepsámenos") on them with anger, **being grieved for the hardness of their hearts**, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it out: and his hand was restored whole as the other." "being grieved for the hardness of their hearts" is in Greek, "sullupoúmenos epí teé pooroósei teés kardías." The Lord's anger was tempered by grief (because of the self inflicted injury these religious leaders were inflicting on their own souls by the hardness of their hearts, hardening them even further by refusal to repent when confronted by such a great sign miracle. The present participle (sullupoúmenos), brings out the continuous state of grief whereas the momentary angry look is expressed by the aorist participle (periblepsámenos). The word "hearts" is singular in the Greek text, "the hardness of their heart," being singular, gives the idea that the whole class had but one hardened heart.

This leaven had so hardened the hearts of the Scribes, Pharisees and Herodians, that their minds were completely corrupted and blinded, and instead of such a wonderful miracle (the withered hand being restored completely, so that it

was whole again, like his other one) giving them light, and bringing them to repentance, they could only see God and hate him (without a cause), making repentance impossible. Eccles 8v11, John 15v18-25, Rom 2v1-16, 1Cor 1v18, Heb 6v4-8.

So we see that the leaven of the Scribes, Pharisees and Herodians had not only completely blinded them to His Person, but was also responsible for causing the minds of the Apostles to become reprobate ("adókimon" from "adokimos" (NT:96) and means literally, "not standing the test"), to a certain degree, so they did not understand the miracle of the loaves, and many of the things that the Lord Jesus was trying to teach them. Matt 17v1-13 (esp., v5, "hear ye Him"), John 16v12.

How often today, when revival comes, the Churches that came into being by the previous revival (and have now become spiritually dead and darkened by prayerlessness and unscriptural traditions), are the very ones that persecute and oppose the new move of the Holy Spirit with such vigour, blindness and arrogance, even as the Scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees and Herodians persecuted the Lord Jesus and the early Church, and even more so, shall these self appointed "apparent" protectors of their truth also do, as the last days rapidly approach. Acts 2v16-21, 2Tim 3v1-9.

So, once again at the end of this Age (of Grace) when the last great revival starts, the words of Isaiah the prophet will find fulfilment (complete and final), as it is written in Mark 7v6,7 (with Isaiah 29v13): "Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."

The Lord Jesus, goes on to add in Mark 7v8,9: "For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men.....Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition."

To these (spiritually blind) people the Truth will be firmly sealed, as Isaiah reports (Isaiah 29v11,12): "And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed: And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned."

All this will occur simply because they will refuse to receive a love of the Truth (which will be confirmed by mighty, signs, wonders and miracles) that they might be saved, which will result in God sending them strong delusion. Acts 2v16-21, 2Thess 2v10,11.

God does not rejoice when the wicked seal their eternal destruction, and make their destiny the Lake of Fire, but is broken hearted, for His desire is that **ALL** should come to knowledge of the Truth and be saved. Hos 11v1-12 (esp. v8), 1Tim 2v4, 2Pet 3v9.

Luke 19v41-44 states the following: "And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and **wept** over it, Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now...(an "Aposiopesis" (a sudden breaking off in the midst of a sentence, as if from inability or unwillingness of the speaker to proceed) occurs here in the original Greek, the conclusion is not expressed and the sudden breaking off and change of structure is most impressive, Jesus could not carry on speaking here, because he was so overwhelmed with such great heart breaking grief, about the sure future destruction of Jerusalem and its inhabitants in 70 AD, by Titus (Luke 21v20-24), which He saw in (prophetic) vision, see Books, 5,6,7 - "Wars Of The Jews" by Titus Flavius Josephus)...they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation."

"Wept" is in Greek, "éklausen," the ingressive aorist active indicative of "klaio" (NT:2799), and means, to sob, i.e. wail aloud, mourn, weep, lament, "burst into tears, with audible weeping." It is used for the weeping that a mother would do, when her only son has died. Luke 7v11-17 (esp., v13).

These Scriptures give a great revelation of the Great Loving Heart of the Trinity for their Creation. Isaiah 6v1-3, Rev 4v2-11. With all these things in mind, let us take great care and strive to walk in oneness and unity with God and every other member of the Body of Christ!

"While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled." John 17v12.

Judas, The Son Of Perdition.

This phrase, "the son of perdition" Greek, "ho huiós teés apooleías" (which means "the son marked by final loss") it occurs in only one other place in the New Testament, and that is in 2Thess 2v3, where it is used of Antichrist...so in the end Judas became as antichrist as The Antichrist will become. The phrase is a Hebraism, see 2Samual 12v5, Isaiah 1v4, 1John 4v1-5, 2John v7.

What was the process by which Judas ended up as he did, irrevocably hardened by sin, which made repentance by him impossible? Hebrews 6v4-8. The Lord Jesus states of Judas in John 17v12 the following: "...and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled...." The Scriptures He is referring to here are from Psalm 69v25,

and Psalm 109v8, which are used by Peter in Acts 1v20: "For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishopric let another take."

In the fulfilling of the Scriptures by Judas, there are two principles at work, God's foreknowledge and the operation of the "free will" of Judas. God in His foreknowledge, knew that no matter how well the Lord Jesus and the rest of the Trinity treated him, Judas would in the end (having heard the Truth, and having it confirmed by the greatest miracles ever performed upon earth by God, thus giving him full and complete light of the character and works of God), chose the way of sin, evil and the Devil, thus backsliding and going into apostasy, bringing eternal destruction upon himself. God did not "force" Judas to choose sin and the Devil; it was an act of the "free will" choice by Judas, which brought about the fulfilment of the prophetic Scriptures regarding Judas. Matt 26v24, John 15v22-25.

A Note on God's foreknowledge, and Judas.

The Predestination and Election of God are represented in Scripture as being dependent upon His Foreknowledge, and not vice versa. Men are not depicted as acting because God has forced their wills: but God is said to predestinate them to do what His Foreknowledge knows they will want to do, "whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate," Rom 8v29.

The Lord Jesus, in choosing the twelve Apostles, spent the whole night in prayer, to get the mind of His Father on this very important issue. It needs to be noted that the relationship that the Lord Jesus had with His Father during His earthly life, (although God) was that of an ordinary man who had a humanity like the rest of mankind, taking His flesh from Mary, whose lineage can be traced right back to Adam, He had the same kind of flesh as every other human being had. Thus, to overcome the World, the Flesh and the Devil, He was totally dependant upon His Father, and His grace and strengthening Power, and lived a life of faith, and did his miracles by believing in the Father and the Spirit's power upon Him. Jesus in no way "turned on His deity" to communicate with His Father, or do any miracles by the same means, He was **NOT** a Docetic Phantom, which is a destructive heresy, and is not of God, but is of the spirit of antichrist. 1John 4v1-6, 2John v7. Jesus was God "emptied" of His power and glory, His Omnipotence, Omnipresence, Omniscience, Transcendence and Immutability. Luke 3v23-38, 6v12-16, John 1v1-3, 3v34, 5v19,30, 6v57, 14v10, 16v33, Rom 8v3, Phil 2v5-11, Heb 2v14,17,18, 4v15.

God, in His foreknowledge, knew that Judas would betray the Lord Jesus, by handing Him over to the religious leaders of Israel to be crucified, so He gave directions to the Lord Jesus, during His night of prayer, that Judas should be picked as one of the twelve Apostles, so that he would betray him, for the purpose of the fulfilment of Scripture. The motivation of Judas for this treacherous act, was because of his greed and love of money, his slandering (of the Lord Jesus, arising from his hatred and contempt for Him) and desire for worldly (political) power, position and authority (which sprang from his strong nationalism), the exact same things that turned Lucifer, the Bringer of Light, into the Devil, the lying Slanderer, and Prince of Darkness! Although the rest of the Apostles also were filled with strong nationalistic feelings and desire for power and position, the difference between the eleven Apostles and Judas was that they got close to Jesus and had a heart relationship with Him, whereas, the exact opposite was true of Judas; he never got close to the Lord Jesus, and certainly neither had he any heart relationship with Him! Isaiah 14v12-21, Matt 20v20-28, 27v3-10, Luke 22v24-30, John 6v70, 8v44, 12v6, Acts 1v4-8,18,18, 1Tim 6v10, Rev 12v10.

The spiritual condition of Judas at his birth, was that he (like every other child) was spiritually alive to God, and because of this he was in receipt of God's grace, and so, as he grew and moral law entered his soul, with the receipt of God's grace, would have been, if he so chose, able to resist temptation and sin. He was not, like some heretics (Augustine and Calvin) state, "born in sin", or predestined by God to be cast into the Lake of Fire (Hell), because God simply chose it to be so. It is the individual soul (by the operation of their free will...and **NOTHING** else) who chooses where he or she will spend eternity, whether in Heaven (in the Kingdom of God) or in the Lake of Fire (Hell), by their final choice of either God and good, or sin and the Devil. If it was left to God alone, **ALL** would be saved, for His great desire is that **ALL** should come to a knowledge of the Truth and be saved, for He has (absolutely) **NO** pleasure in the death of the wicked, however, that just never could be, due to the fact that Angels and Humans possess "free will." Gen 4 v1-15 (esp. v7), Matt 18v1-4,10, 19v14, Rom 7v7-12 (esp. v9), 1Tim 2v4, James 1v13-15, 2Pet 3v9.

In Romans 7v7-8v4 (esp., 8v3), Paul gives his doctrine of "sin in the flesh" which he received directly and personally from the Lord Jesus. Gal 1v11,12. Paul is giving his own (and everybody's, **including Judas's**) pre-conversion experience. He goes to great lengths to show that he was definitely **NOT** "born in sin", but was born spiritually alive to God. Paul informs us in Romans 7v9-12, "**I was once alive** apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died; the very commandment which promised life proved to be death to me. For sin, finding opportunity in the commandment, deceived me and by it killed me. So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and just and good."

In Rom 7v9, "I was alive," is the imperfect active, "ezon" (NT:2198). Paul is speaking of the time, when as an infant, he did not know the difference between right and wrong; this was before his conscience awoke and he became morally responsible for his actions. ("Apart," is "choris" (NT:5565), an adverb meaning without, apart, separate).

NB Rom 5v13-14, "For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come." See Rom 4v15. "For the law brings wrath, **but where there is no law there is no transgression.**"

When **"the commandment came,"** and was applied to Paul's heart and conscience, and Paul knew right from wrong, "sin revived, "he" (NT:3588), "hamartia" (NT:266), "anezesen" (NT:326). Sin came to life; the period of innocence was over, and because Paul had broken the Law he died spiritually. The word "anazao" (NT:326), means to live again, it is usually applied to a renewal of life, Rom 14v19, Luke 15v24,32, but here it means sin, which was before dormant, was now quickened into life. The Jews thought that the Law would sanctify and give comfort to the soul, but both Jesus and Paul say that the broken law produced guilt, woe, and a bad conscience. "And I died," is "ego" (NT:1473), "de" (NT:1161), "apethanon" (NT:599). Paul had become conscious of his sin through his violation of The Law, and realised that it brought about his spiritual death.

Paul is here talking about his own consciousness of sin. As a child he did not really understand the Law or God's purpose in giving the Law. The failure to understand the demands of the Law is not confined to children. The young adult, the rich young ruler, mistakenly asserts, "I have observed all these things from my youth." Mark 10v20, Matt 19v20, Luke 18v21. But there came a day in Paul's life when the commandment, "Thou shalt not covet," condemned him, and revealed that he was not living according to that commandment. Through the commandment Paul realised that sin had first deceived him, and then had brought about his spiritual death. Satan had been behind this and his objective was the eternal ruin of all mankind.

Paul teaches that it was not corruption in the soul from Adam that led him astray, but rather the temptations that come from the body, from the flesh, this Paul calls, "sin in the flesh," in Rom 8v3. In Rom 7v18 to 8v4, Paul graphically describes his bondage to the flesh in his pre-Christian days, and then in Rom 8v2, describes how "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made him free from the law of sin and death." Paul informs us in Rom 8v3,4, "For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit." (NKJV)

This was also the exact same pre-conversion experience that Judas had (although it may not have been the same commandment, "Thou shalt not covet," that condemned Judas), and when he met Jesus, he had a born again experience, which "made him free from the law of sin and death." John 3v7, Rom 8v2.

However, Judas, when he received the "word of God," he received it with joy, but only having a very shallow repentance, when temptation came along he fell away. Luke 8v4-8, 11-15 (esp. v6,13). All the apostles, except Judas, were cleansed by the Spirit and the Word. Judas was unclean (Greek, "akathartos" (NT:169)); being defiled by, bitterness through thwarted ambition, slander, insatiable greed, and finally by betrayal and apostasy, which allowed Satan to possess him. We should guard against following the example of Judas, and not become filled with gall and a root of bitterness! Mark 14v10,11, John 6v66-71, 12v4-6, 13v2,26,27, 15v3, Heb 12v15.

Judas being one of the twelve Apostles, along with the other eleven, was given an Apostolic ministry with power and authority, to "heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, and cast out demons." Peter informs us in Acts 1v17: "For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry." Judas was sent out, by the Lord Jesus, with the eleven other Apostles, to preach the Gospel, by telling the people they should repent, because "the kingdom of heaven was at hand." Matt 10v1-15, Mark 6v7-13, Luke 9v1-6.

Mark 6v13, tells us: "And **they** (including Judas) cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them." The twelve were sent out by Jesus, on their Apostolic ministry in the winter (beginning) of 29 AD. The night of prayer that the Lord Jesus had, to find the mind of His Father, on whom should be chosen to be in the Apostolic band, was probably around the end of April, beginning of May 28 AD. Luke 6v12-16. The first appearance of the name of Judas Iscariot in the New Testament, is when after this night of prayer, the Lord Jesus makes known whom He has chosen, to be of the twelve. Matt 10v4, Mark 3v19, Lk.6v16.

As Judas was from Jerusalem, it is in all probability, that Judas became a follower of Jesus, when he heard Him, during one of His visits to that place. There were two such previous visits (before the twelve Apostles were sent out on their missionary journey) to Jerusalem:

At the Passover Feast in 27 AD, at which time the first cleansing of the Temple and His discussion with Nicodemus occurred. John 2v13-4v3. The date of this Passover Feast was from Thursday, 10th April 27 AD to Wednesday, 16th April 27 AD (inclusive). At the Passover Feast in 28 AD, when He heals a man at the Pool of Bethesda, whom had an infirmity for thirty eight years. John 5v1-47. This Passover feast occurred from Tuesday, 30th March 28 AD to Monday, 5th April 28 AD (inclusive). It is highly unlikely that it was the Passover of 28 AD, because that would not have given enough time for the Lord Jesus to train him for his Apostolic ministry. The Lord Jesus made three circuits of Galilee, during the first one, the Apostles observed the Lord Jesus, how He manifested His miracles etc, the second circuit, they acted under supervision, i.e. manifesting miracles etc, and then on the third circuit, they were sent out in pairs, with power and authority to do signs, wonders and miracles, to confirm the Gospel they preached. Some of the Apostles had been disciples of John Baptist, but Judas is not mentioned as being one of them. So it must have been during the first Passover visit in 27 AD that Judas heard and saw the Lord Jesus, and became a follower of His. Judas, therefore lived, in the closest proximity with the Lord Jesus for approximately one year and nine months from the time he became a follower of His, until he was sent out with the eleven other Apostles on their missionary journey, during this period of time, he was given the full light and full revelation of the character and works of God in a most full and complete fashion, due to the continuous manifestation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit on the very highest level that they have ever been manifested on

and His manifestation of perfect "agape" Love.

The defining time when Judas departed completely (apostatised) from the Lord Jesus (This was the "epochal time," Greek "kairos" (NT:2540), when Judas apostatised. Luke 8v13, John 6v66), it was just a few months later (after having been sent out with the eleven to preach the Gospel, at the beginning of 29 AD) in the Spring (April/May) of 29 AD.

It was at the occurrence of a few strategic signs and wonders:

The Feeding of the Five Thousand. Matt 14v13-21, Mark 6v30-44, Luke 9v10-17, John 6v1-15.

Jesus and Peter walked on the sea of Galilee, Jesus calmed the storm, and the boat that the Lord Jesus and the twelve Apostles were in, was supernaturally transported, from the middle of the lake to the shore. Matt 14v22-36, Mark 6v45-56, John 6v16-21.

Although it is not stated, it is certainly inferred, that at this time the Devil was given permission to sift as wheat (Luke 22v31-34), the disciples and Apostles of the Lord Jesus, for we read in John 6v66: "From that time **many** of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him." And it is only by this kind of activity by the Devil, that such a mass apostasy can take place at any one time.

These great signs, wonders and miracles occurred the day before the apostasy of John 6v66, See John 6v22, and they were done by the Lord Jesus to strengthen the faith and experience of His "true" Apostles and disciples, those who would remain steadfast in their faith in Him, and do not go into apostasy. Trials and temptations are inevitable in the ordinary course of life, and they are used by the Lord to strengthen and prove our faith, patience and character, with the idea of bringing us to perfection, and forming the character of Christ within us. God uses the Devil, to make a person make an eternal choice for either good (and God) or evil (and the Devil) more quickly than if they had to make it without that intervention. God does not permit the Devil to tempt the individual person more than what they are able to bear. Rom 5v1-5, 15v18, 1Cor 10v13, 1Pet 1v3-12.

It is of first importance to remember that against God Satan has absolutely no power. No evil being, demon or man can do anything other than what God permits. 2Chron 18v18-22, Job 1v12, Matt 8v31, Psalm 76v10. Satan is wholly a tool in the hands of God to punish the wicked, to correct the righteous, 1Tim 1v20, 1Cor 5v5, to bring glory to the Sons of God, Eph 6v10-20, Job 1 and 2, James 1v12, and to test the true character of everyone. Rev 20v7,10, Matt 4v1. Against us Satan only has the power that is given to him by God. Job 1 all. Against God he is helpless. Rev 20v1-3.

As already stated, at this time, many of his disciples went into apostasy, for in John 6v66, this is what the phrase "many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him" actually means. It was at this time that Judas also "went back, and walked no more with him," for although he continued to accompany the Lord Jesus and the Apostolic band "in body," he did not do so with his heart, mind and spirit (which were far from Him), but became "twice dead," i.e. he died spiritually a second time. Ezek 18v24, Matt 15v8,9, Luke 8v13, John 15v6, Heb 6v4-8, Jude v12.

The Lord also says of Judas in John 6v70,71: "Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and **one of you is a devil? He spake of Judas Iscariot** the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve."

"A devil" is in Greek, "Diabolos" (NT:1228), it is from, "diaballo" (NT:1225), which means "to throw over or across," and so, "Diabolos" means one who "throws" false accusations at another, hence a calumniator, a false accuser, a slanderer. Satan is called "Ho Diábolos," "The Slanderer," Satan is the slanderer who tries to take away a persons character. 1Tim 3v11, 2Tim 3v3, Titus 2v3, John 6v70. In Rev 12v1, Satan is called, "the accuser of the brethren," "ho katorgor," is one who brings a legal charge against another, it is a legal term and is used in John 8v10, Acts 23v30,35, 24v7,8, and 25v16,18.

In Rev 12v10, "accused," is "kategoron," the present active participle of "kategoreo," to bring a legal accusation; the present participle again shows the evil persistence, continual action, and habitual character of Satan's accusations. Satan, the father of lies and falsehood, accuses Christ's brethren day and night before their heavenly Father. Note the amazing malice and hate of Satan and the wonderful patience of God. The Devil, the greatest lawbreaker of all, claims the right to appear before God in Heaven, on the grounds of the Law of God, to make a legal accusation against the children of God. Envy will see a spot in a bright sky and dwell on it, failing to see the beauty and brightness in a life that love delights to dwell on. When a disciple gives the Devil grounds for accusation, the whole of Heaven knows about it, and when he sees, or thinks he sees, a weakness in one of Christ's brethren, he demands an opportunity to sift them, just as he did in the case of Peter and the other Apostles. Luke 22v31,32, 1Pet 5v8,9.

The slandering that the Lord Jesus is referring to, was that being done by Judas (in his heart and mind) against the character, ministry, and person of the Lord Himself. These "slandering" by Judas must have been occurring for some time and on a regular basis, for the Lord to actually refer to him as a slanderer; Judas by this time was habitually slandering the Lord of Glory. The slanderings coming out of the heart and mouth of Judas, were of the same character and nature, as those coming from the Devil before the throne of God, against the brethren of Christ. Rev 12v10. It is most lightly, that Judas also slandered, not only the Lord Jesus, but also the other eleven Apostles and the (true) disciples of Jesus, for we read in John 12v5: "Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?" Notice, the malice and hatred that Judas manifests against, not only the Lord Jesus, but also Mary, in carrying out this

beautiful act of love towards her Lord in preparing Him for His burial. It is interesting that Mary's pound of oil of spikenard was worth three hundred denarii, almost a year's wage for a labourer, and Judas got thirty pieces of silver from the chief priests for his treacherous act of betrayal, which was a labourer's wage for almost six months; Mary's act of love and devotion was two as costly as Judas's act of betrayal! Matt 26v15, John 12v5.

Hebrews 6v4-8, states the following:

"For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened ("those who were once enlightened," more literally "the once for all enlightened" Greek, "footisthéntas," first aorist passive articular participle of "photizo" (NT:5461)), and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: But that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned."

The ground that drinks in the rain that regularly falls upon it, producing herbs, can also, instead of producing herbs, (continuously) produce thorns and briers. And so the individual person who at one time produced good fruit, can at a later time (because of going into apostasy) produce only evil fruit, thus bringing upon themselves the curse of the Law, and being condemned to eternal punishment in the Lake of Fire, repentance being impossible, because they have become irrevocably hardened by sin. Matt 7v15-20.

It is no wonder then that Peter tells use in 2Pet 1v10 (see v5-11) that we (the believer) are to make our "calling and election sure" **NOTE WELL:-** The responsibility for the sureness of the believer's calling and election is the believer's **NOT** God's!

The idea that a person is "once saved always saved" (without any regard to how that person lives) is a lie of the Devil, and was **NOT** taught by the Lord Jesus or the Apostles of the early Church. There has been a great deal of controversy over whether the eternal security of Christians is conditional or unconditional. Is the will of God irresistible regarding salvation, or can a believer frustrate the will of God and become an apostate from the faith? The Scriptures teach that believing in Jesus does not take away our free will, and that it is possible for Christians to apostatise and lose their salvation. However, the Scriptures also emphasise the eternal security of those who cling to and follow their Lord. John 10v27-29.

So, the approximate period of time from Judas (initially) believing in the Lord Jesus, to Judas apostatising, was probably from April 27 AD to April/May 29 AD, a time period of approximately two years, one month (Or, just over 3 years, if we assume that Judas became a disciple of the Lord Jesus from the beginning of His ministry).

The Devil (only by God permitting it) had got his man (Judas) into the Apostolic band, someone who was totally under his control, who would do his will, and be used by him, in the murder of the Lord Jesus. Over the coming (ten or) eleven months (until the Passover of 30 AD), the hatred grew in Judas, against the Lord Jesus, being filled full of bitterness and scorn, at the Lord Jesus' complete lack of desire for worldly power and position. Matt 4v8-10, Luke 4v5-8, John 6v15.

It is an interesting fact, that in the Temptation of the Lord Jesus, in the wilderness, by the Devil (of which there appears to have been two, Luke 4v1-13 (being the first temptation, see Luke 4v13, "he departed from Him until an opportune time"), Matt 4v1-11 being the second, see Matt 4v11, when the angels came to minister healing to His battered body, soul and spirit), the Devil endeavours to entice the Lord Jesus into seeking worldly power and authority on two separate occasions. The Devil then tries to seduce Him a third time with this very same temptation again, for we read in John 6v15:

"When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone." The Devil had used his evil seducing power to energise these carnal worldly people (who's minds were darkened and gripped by the leaven of the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Herod), to take the Lord Jesus by force and make Him their king, however, the Lord Jesus, by Divine revelation, was forewarned what was going to happen, so He departed to the mountain to escape this.

The English historian, Lord Acton (full name John Emerich Edward Dahlberg Acton), 1834-1902, wrote in a letter to Bishop Mandell Creighton in 1887 the following: "Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely."

Not only does the possession of power, but also the strong desire and lust for worldly power, authority and position, also corrupts totally. This "seduction," that was one of the three evil seeds that Judas pursued to a state of apostasy; the Lord Jesus overcame victoriously. This should be a real warning to every Christian against harbouring such evil desires, and ensure we follow after the example of Jesus. Phil 2v1-11, Heb 13v5.

In Mark 8v15 the Lord Jesus speaks the following to the Apostles "And he charged them, saying, Take heed, **beware...of the leaven of Herod.**" This was a very strong warning against the love and strong desire for political and kingly power and authority, however, we see that this warning fell on deaf ears, for we read in Luke 22v24-30 (with Matt 20v20-28, Mark 10v35-45):

"And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest. And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but **I am among you as he that serveth.** Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

The Lord Jesus then washes their feet to correct their wrong thinking on this issue, and to demonstrate to them, what a King (and servant) is truly like. John 13v1-17.

There is no mention of Judas in the 4 Gospels after John 6v71, until John 12v1-8 (v4), which gives a record of a supper (prepared for the Lord Jesus, which appears to be a different supper to that mentioned in Mark 14v3-9) in the house of Mary, Martha and Lazarus, which He attended, six days before the Passover, which in 30 AD ran from Thursday, 6th April (the day on which the Lord Jesus was crucified) until Wednesday, 12th April (inclusive). The time period between John 6v71 and 12v1 is from April/May 29 AD to Friday, 31st March 30 AD (six days before the Passover), which would be around ten to eleven months. During this period of time, the hatred and scorn within Judas against the Lord (and the rest of His true followers) grew considerably, which by the time of this visit to the house of Mary, Martha and Lazarus, was completely consuming him. We get a good insight into this from his comment in Mark 14v5 (with John 12v4), which reads: "For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor. **And they** (only Judas is mentioned by name in John 12v4, but we can also be sure that he was also one of those in the group mentioned in Mark 14v4,5) **murmured against her.**"

"And they murmured against her," is in Greek, "Καί εnebrimoónto auteé", "enebrimoónto" uses the imperfect tense (of embrimaomai) (NT:1690), which means, to be very angry, sternly to charge), and is used of the snorting of horses and has been seen already in Mark 1v43; 11v38. It occurs in the Septuagint in the sense of anger as here (Dan 11v30).

It was at this supper in the house of Mary, Martha and Lazarus, that Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, worth about three hundred denarii (almost a year's wages for a labourer, which today's equivalent would be about £20,000), and anointed Him for burial. Mary was one of only two persons (the other being Simeon), that fully understood, that the Lord Jesus would have to die to make atonement for her sin (and the sin of the world), and then be raised from the dead. Mary felt and experienced the great pain, grief and sorrow that the Lord Jesus was experiencing at the prospect of His descent into the Abyss, and it was at the feet of Jesus, that this handmaiden of the Lord received and perceived this most vital Truth, which His Apostles had repeatedly refused to accept, though told by the Lord on at least three occasions (Matt 16v21-23, 17v22,23, Luke 18v31-34). It should also be noted that the picture of Mary sitting at the feet of Jesus, listening to what He was teaching her, is that of a disciple sitting at the feet of their Teacher, being prepared, so that they themselves might then teach others, even as Paul sat at the feet of Gamaliel being discipled by him, that he may then disciple others. The Lord Jesus looked upon the women who believed in Him without any male chauvinism whatsoever, unlike the attitude of the Apostles, who had been corrupted by the terrible attitude (propagated by the Religious leaders) held by the male populace of Israel at that time, regarding women, that they were inferior to men, who were neither reliable or to be trusted. However in the eyes of the Lord Jesus there was neither male nor female, they are all of one in Him. It is also of note that ALL eleven Apostles, after they fled and deserted their Lord (in the garden of Gethsemane), ended up in the Upper room, frightened out their wits and behind locked doors, because of fear of the Jewish Religious leaders. It was the women (who believed in Him), who went to the Tomb early on the Sunday morning to anoint His body and found the stone rolled away from the entrance of it, His eleven Apostles were to frightened to venture outside of the Upper Room at all. Also of note, the Lord Jesus, did **NOT** appear first to His Apostles after His Resurrection, **BUT** to the women, and this He did, first of all to comfort them and remove their great pain and suffering, and to replace it with His great joy and peace and, secondly, to let these women know just how important and precious they were to Him, and also to rectify the terrible wrong attitude that the Apostles held regarding women. Matt 28v9,10, Mark 16v9-11, Luke 2v25-35, 10v38-42, Luke 24v11,25,26, John 12v1-8, 20v11-18,19, Acts 22v3, Gal 3v28.

It is mentioned in this passage of Scripture (John 12v1-8), in v6 the following: "This he said, not that he cared for the poor; **but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.**" Judas on a regular basis, because of his greed, covetous and love of money, stole money from the (money) bag that was used to give to the poor. It should be noted that this act of deliberate theft from the poor, is no different than pastors and other ministries who claim Tithes and demand offerings from God's people and then using these funds for any other purpose other than giving to the poor, either within the body of Christ or in the world. The different ministries within the Body of Christ that use their positions to fleece God's people are in for a real shock when they meet the Lord Jesus, who takes a real dim view of such behaviour. When worldlings hear pastors making long appeals for money from a congregation (or gathering), they know straight away, that the only thing they want is the people's money and that they care nothing for the people themselves. The Christian (whether he has a ministry or not) should have complete financial integrity, and follow the wonderful example of their Lord, who though He was rich, became like a beggar (financially destitute) that we may become spiritually rich. Matt 6v19-21,24, Romans 2v17-24, 2Cor 8v9, 2Pet 2v1-3.

From quite an early time in His ministry the Pharisees, Sadducees and Herodians were bent on killing Jesus. John 5v18, Mark 3v6. The Feast mentioned in John 5, is the Passover, which occurred in 28 AD from Tuesday, 30th March to Monday, 5th April (inclusive), the incident recorded in Mark 3v6, occurred shortly after that which is mentioned in John 5v18. So the Devil had been continuously energising his evil plans and purposes into the minds of his evil servants, the Pharisees,

Sadducees and Herodians with great evil seducing power for a period of two years, and now at the Passover of 30 AD, they make definite plans to carry out this evil deed. The Lord Jesus was crucified for the same motive that Judas had, one of envy. (Matt 26v1-5, 27v18, Mark 14v1-2, Luke 22v1-2, John 11v45-57). John 11v53,57 states the following: "Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death.... Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a commandment, that, if any man knew where he were, he should shew it, that they might take him."

We see here the evil strategy of the Devil clearly at work (Eph 6v10-20 esp. v 11 "the wiles of the devil" is in Greek, "tás methodeías tou diabolou" "methodeías" accusative of "methodeia" (NT:3180) which means, to lie in wait, trickery, cunning arts, deceit, craft, and so "methodical scheming"), because, after putting it into the minds of the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Herodians, to make a definite plan to kill the Lord Jesus, he then entered Judas (he possessed him) for the sole purpose of making sure that Judas carried out the Devil's evil plan to hand the Lord Jesus over to the Religious leaders for them to murder Him (in the absence of the people). It is recorded in Luke 22v1-6:

"Now the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the Passover. **And the chief priests and scribes sought how they might kill him;** for they feared the people. **Then entered Satan into Judas surnamed Iscariot,** being of the number of the twelve. **And he went his way, and communed with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray him unto them. And they were glad, and covenanted to give him money.** And he promised, and sought opportunity to betray him unto them in the absence of the multitude."

Judas obviously had heard that the Religious leaders were looking to "take Him" and that if any man knew where He was they should tell them. John 11v57. Judas saw an opportunity to make some money, as he was in the possession of that knowledge (of the Lord's whereabouts) which the Religious leaders were seeking. And so being filled with envy, hatred and scorn for the Lord Jesus, it only came naturally to him to do the deeds of his father, the Devil, who was a murderer from the beginning (John 8v44). Matt 26v14-16 gives great light upon the motives of Judas in betraying the Lord Jesus, it states: "Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, And said unto them, **What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you?** And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver. And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him."

The idea that Judas was trying to "force" the hand of the Lord Jesus to rise up and throw off the yoke of the Romans from Israel, by handing Him over to the Religious leaders, so that Israel, as a country would have its independence again, **is utter nonsense**. It is **VERY** apparent, that the motivation of Judas was one of **envy, sheer greed and covetousness**, and nothing else! 1Tim 6v10.

The "thirty pieces of silver" mentioned in Matt 26v15, that Judas received from the Religious leaders for handing the Lord Jesus over to them, was equivalent to thirty silver shekels which was equal to 120 denarii, a working man's wages for almost six months would be, and so equivalent to almost £10,000 in today's value. This "thirty pieces of silver" is a reference to Zechariah 11v12: "And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. **So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver.**" These pieces were shekels of the sanctuary, of standard weight, and therefore heavier than the ordinary shekel. This was the price which, by the Mosaic law, a man was condemned to pay if his ox should gore a servant (Exodus 21v32). Our Lord, the sacrifice for men, was paid for out of the temple-money, destined for the purchase of sacrifices. He who "took on him the form of a servant" was sold at the legal price of a slave. Phil 2v7.

The passage of Scripture (Luke 22v1-6) that informs us that Satan entered Judas (It was the apostasy of Judas (John 6v66) that allowed Satan to enter him, and thus possess him), in order to ensure that the Devil's plan to kill the Lord Jesus was carried out, refers to the evening of Tuesday, 4th. April, 30 AD. For this first possession to occur (for there were two, the 2nd. takes place during the Last Supper John 13v27), the Devil had to go in before the Throne of God in Heaven and ask for permission to carry it out (Luke 22v31,32, Job chapters 1 & 2). It must have been exceptionally difficult for the Father to give the Devil the permission to do what he asked, for by His foreknowledge, He knew that this was setting in motion what would culminate in the horrific crucifixion of His Beloved Son and His descent into Hades, where His soul would suffer the (birth) pangs of death, in order to make Atonement for the sin of the world and bring into existence the New Covenant and make salvation available for both Jews and Gentiles alike, for all had sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Psalm 22v13-18, Isaiah 50v3-7, 53 (all), Zech 12v10, Acts 2v23-31, Rom 3v23).

Long before He gave the Devil permission to possess Judas (indeed before time began), and so set in motion this chain of terrible events, the Father had already personally experienced in His own being, the great pain and suffering that the Lord Jesus would experience and suffer to make Atonement and bring in the New Covenant (Isaiah 63v9, Titus 1v2). We can only imagine the terrible agony and tremendous conflict in His Great Heart at this time when He gave permission to the Devil to possess Judas. We do catch a small glimpse of the great suffering of the Father as He could only "stand back" and watch the awful suffering of His Beloved Son on the cross and even greater sufferings when He descended into Hades, for we read in Luke 23v44,45: "And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. And the sun was darkened..."

We will have to wait until we get to Heaven to begin to know and understand what terrible suffering the Father really went through at this particular time. 1Cor 13v10-12.

Because of our Lord's statement in Matt 12v38-40, that He would be three nights as well as three days in the heart of the earth, it demands that the crucifixion took place on Thursday, 6th April 30 AD, and **NOT** as tradition states on the Friday.

Therefore the Lord Jesus ate the Passover with His Apostles on the evening of Wednesday, 5th April 30 AD (which was the 13th day of Nissan, the 14th day starting at 6pm on Wednesday, 5th April), about twenty hours before the usual time for slaughtering the lambs, at which time He was dying or dead upon the cross. Earlier on in the day (of Wednesday), He sent two of His disciples to prepare for the Supper, which would be eaten later on that evening. Matt 26v17-20, Mark 14v12-17, Luke 22v7-13.

During the Supper, Jesus predicts His betrayal and points out Judas to John as the one who would do the treacherous act, as soon as the Lord Jesus had given Judas the bread, Satan entered Judas (the second possession) to bring his plan to murder the Lord Jesus to fulfilment. Matt 26v21-25, John 13v21-30. The Lord Jesus and the eleven Apostles then leave the Upper room for Gethsemane (John 14v31), and as they make their way there, the Lord makes further discourse and prayer:

Christ the True Vine, and the hatred of the world of Christ and His Church. Jesus again promises the Holy Spirit (which He had already promised in John 14v15-18) and real power in prayer. John 15v1-27, 16v1-33.

Our Lord's agonising praying in Gethsemane. The betrayal by Judas. (John 17v1-26).

They reach the Garden of Gethsemane later on Wednesday evening, with the following events occurring into early Thursday morning:

The prayers, agony, strong cryings and tears of Jesus. Heb 5v7, Matt 26v30,36-46, Mark 14v26,32-42, Luke 22v39-46, John 18v1.

Jesus is betrayed by Judas with a kiss, and arrested and forsaken by **ALL** the Apostles in Gethsemane. Peter cuts off the ear of Malchus, the High Priest's servant, which the Lord Jesus then heals. Matt 26v47-56, Mark 14v43-52, Luke 22v47-53, John 18v2-12. It is worthy of note that the Lord Jesus states the following in Luke 22v48: **"But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?"**

"Betrayest thou" is in Greek, "paradídoos," present active indicative of "paradidomi" (NT:3860), which means, to give into the hands, to surrender, i.e. yield up, entrust, transmit, betray, bring forth, cast, commit, deliver (up), give (over, up), hazard, put in prison, recommend, and so to deliver up treacherously. The Lord Jesus definitely states that this action of Judas's was one of blatant evil treacherous betrayal, and nothing else, Judas (and Judas alone) was completely responsible for his own deliberate actions! Matt 26v24.

Shortly after the Lord Jesus is arrested by the Officers of the Temple, with the help of the soldiers from the Roman garrison in the tower of Antonia, Judas commits suicide. The Devil, after using Judas, destroyed him, by attacking his mind with guilt, until he committed suicide. Matt 27v3-10, Acts 1v15-20,25.

Matt 27v3 states: "Then Judas, which had betrayed him, **when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself**, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders..." (KJV) **Or as the Amplified Bible translates it:** "When Judas, His betrayer, saw that [Jesus] was condemned, [Judas was afflicted in mind and troubled for his former folly; and] with remorse **[with little more than a selfish dread of the consequences]** he brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders, [Ex 21:32.]"

"Repented himself" is in Greek, "metameletheís" first aorist passive participle of "metamellomai," (NT:3338), and would be better translated "was remorseful" and means to care afterwards, i.e., regret, it is intended to express the "mere desire that the done might be undone, accompanied with regrets or even remorse, but with no effective change of heart or mind," i.e., "sorrow of the world (that) worketh death" (2Cor 7v10). "Metamellomai" (NT:3338) is not used in the New Testament for genuine repentance that is produced by "godly sorrow", another Greek word is used, "metanoia" (NT:3341), which means literally "after knowledge," and so a change of mind (and life) consequent of this "after knowledge." (2Cor 7v2-12, esp. v9,10). A prime example of "metanoia" produced by "godly sorrow" is seen in the parable of the Prodigal Son. Luke 15v11-32.

(For further study on the differences between the two Greek words, "Metamellomai" and "Metanoia" please see the following text: Archbishop R C Trench – Synonyms Of The New Testament)

It should also be noted that because Judas was irrevocably hardened by sin, (as already stated) repentance was impossible for him, and so the Greek word "Metanoia" could definitely not be used in relation to him, and so the Holy Spirit in inspiring this Scripture uses "Metamellomai." John 17v12, Hebrews 6v4-8.

As already stated, the title given by our Lord to Judas in John 17v12, "the son of perdition," is only used in one other place in the New Testament, and that is in 2Thess 2v3, where (the exact same Greek phrase, "ho huiós teés apooleías") it is used by Paul in speaking of Antichrist. In comparing Judas with Antichrist, there are some interesting similarities between them:

NB1 Both had a desire to kill their Creator. Matt 26v14-16, Psalm 2.

NB2 Both have had a tremendous revelation of Truth confirmed by a continuous manifestation of the mightiest signs,

wonders and miracles that have ever been done upon earth. Matt 14v13-36, Mark 6v45-56, John 6v16-21, Rev 11 v3-6, Dan 11v32.

NB3 Both have rejected this **GREAT** revelation of Truth. John 6v66,70, Rev 13v7.

NB4 Because of their apostasy, both became possessed and used by the Devil, so that he can put two of his evil strategic plans into operation through them, which both have eternal effects and consequences upon mankind, angels, the eternal Kingdom of God, and the whole of creation. Luke 22v3,4, John 13v27, Eph 6v10-20, Rev 6,7,8, 13v2,4.

NB5 Both lust after and desire political power and authority. John 6v15,66,70, Rev 6v1-8.

NB6 Both Judas and Antichrist had their characters, minds and beings destroyed by their love of evil, sin, and the ways of the Devil, whom they become like in character, thought and practice, their end being eternal confinement in the Lake of Fire, so as to protect the inhabitants of the eternal Kingdom of God. Psalm 2, Matt 25v41, 26v14-16,24, John 8v44, 15v22-25, 17v12, 2Thess 2v3, Rev 19v20.

It is most unfortunate that many Theologians and Teachers (in the history of the Church) have been completely blinded to the real evil (Greek, "poneros" (NT:4190), an active corrupting evil that is not content until it has brought all down to the same level of sin and death as themselves) acts perpetrated by Judas, and given him almost a fool's pardon!

In full consideration of the horrific end of Judas (and the reasons for it), let us (the believers), put off the old man, and put on the new, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him, so as to make our calling and election sure. Col 3v10, 2Pet 1v3-11.

"And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves." John 17v13.

Christ's Joy is Ours.

The Joy Of The Lord. Joy "Chara" (NT:5479), is included in the list of the "fruit of the Spirit" in Gal 5v22,23.

The Greek greeting, both written and spoken was "chairein," "joy be with you." "Chairein" is the present infinitive of "chairō," it means, "joy be with you." "Chairein" was used by the Roman officer Claudius Lysias to Felix, when he wrote to him concerning Paul. Acts 23v26. Judas came to Jesus with the word "chaire," the present imperative of "chairō," which means, "rejoice." Judas kissed Jesus fervently, "katephilesen," the compound word means "to kiss fervently." What dreadful, hypocritical play acting, Judas kissed Jesus with murder in his heart. There is a great difference between the world's insincere greetings, and the greetings between members of Christ's Church.

The greetings of the churches has a much deeper meaning, than the greeting of the worldling. In James 1v1, "Greetings," is "chairein," "joy is with you." In 2Cor 13v11, "Farewell," is "rejoice," "chairete," the present active imperative of "chairō," "to rejoice;" it means, "keep on rejoicing." In Acts 15v23, "Greeting," is "chairein," "joy be with you." God's joy can be manifested in us and in our homes and it should surprise and astonish the worldling.

Our Lord states in John 17v13 (with John 15v11): "And now come I to thee; and **these things** I speak in the world, that they might have my **joy** (Greek, "charán" the accusative "chara" (NT:5479) and means, cheerfulness, i.e. calm delight, gladness, greatly, (be exceeding) joy (-ful, -fully, -fullness, -ous)) fulfilled (and filled full) in themselves."

"...these things" is a reference to all the Truth that the Father had given Him to speak to His Apostles during the previous three years that they had been with Him, but more especially, it refers to the fulfilment of this prayer in John chapter 17 by His High Priestly ministry after His Resurrection and Ascension.

At this time, the Apostles' hearts were filled with sorrow and greatly troubled ("troubled" (John 14v1) is in Greek, "tarassésthoo" present passive imperative of "tarasso" (NT:5015), and means to stir or agitate (roll water), to trouble (a thing, by the movement of its parts to and fro), so the hearts of the disciples were tossed like waves in the wind by the words of Jesus), as the Lord Jesus was preparing to leave them and return to Heaven. He had tried on at least three previous occasions to get them to believe and understand that He would be rejected, scourged and killed (by crucifixion) by the Religious leaders of Israel, and then would rise again on the third day. However, all the Lord's attempts to get His Apostles to receive this most vital Truth were rejected by all of them, they just didn't want to know, as they were so bound by the unscriptural traditions of the Scribes and Pharisees. If they had listened to these three warnings from the lips of Jesus, they would have been prepared for what was going to happen to Him, and they would not have failed and forsaken Him. Neither would there have been any need for the Father to send Moses and Elijah to Him on the Mount of Transfiguration to strengthen Him, in regard to His coming Passion, but especially His descent into Hades, because He would have been able to receive the help, strength and succour that He needed from His Apostles. Matt 16v21-23, 17v1-13,22,23, Luke 18v31-34, John 14v1-6, 16v6.

The Lord tells them that although at this time they are filled with sorrow, they would soon be filled with His joy, He states in John 16v20-22: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but **your sorrow shall be turned into joy**. A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born

into the world. And ye now therefore have sorrow: but **I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.**"

The Lord promises them, that when they have His Presence back again with them, after His Resurrection, they will be filled with joy, and it is this Presence of the Lord that would fill them (and us) with joy, Acts 2v28 (from Psalm 16v11) states: "You have made known to me the ways of life; **You will enrapture me [diffusing my soul with joy] with and in Your presence.**" (Amplified Bible)

It is this joy of (and from) the Lord that strengthens us, Neh 8v10 states: "...the joy of the Lord is your strength."

The joy of the Lord is an impregnable stronghold, let us defend our homes with it. Neh 8v10. In Neh 8v10, the Hebrew word for "strength" is "maoz," which means "fortress, stronghold, rock," as well as "strength." It speaks of an impregnable defence. This joy was received in joyful social fellowship, at a festival, in a love feast, as they ate a meal together. The same is true of the communion services of the early Church, **they were feasts of love and joy.** Paul and Jude condemn those who abused and spoilt the love and joy of these feasts. 1Cor 11v17-22,33,34, Jude v12. Paul makes it clear that it was a simple meal, and gluttony was frowned upon and forbidden. The feast was in the joy and love of prayerful social fellowship and the presence of God, and in remembrance of our Lord's death and resurrection, not in the food.

By this (divine) joy our spirits, souls and bodies are protected!

This promise was completely fulfilled by the Lord after His Resurrection and Ascension, His Presence brought great joy into the souls of His fearful Apostles and disciples. Matt 28v8, Luke 24v52. Their joy was greatly increased by the coming of the Promise of the Father, the Holy Spirit. Acts 8v8, 20v24, 1Pet 1v8. Even in great persecution they knew great joy from the Presence of the Lord, filling to saturation, their spirits, souls and bodies, Acts 13v50-52 states: "But the Jews stirred up the devout and honourable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts. But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium. And the disciples were **filled with joy**, and with the Holy Ghost."

We see Paul and Silas, having been beaten with many stripes and thrown into prison in Philippi, praying, by singing hymns to God (Acts 16v25, they were affirming their faith by singing hymns, which was an act of prayer), filled with great joy from His Presence, and the Lord coming in with great power and delivering them, with the result that the jailer and many others are saved. Let us follow this wonderful example of Paul and Silas by singing hymns that are filled with divine Truth so that we also may experience the Presence of Him in the same way, so that the very foundations of the buildings we are in are shaken also, and this the Lord will do for us as well, for there is **NO** partiality with Him. Acts 16v16-34, Rom 2v11.

The New Testament is full of joy, and God wants to fill our homes and marriages with joy.

The feminine noun "chara" occurs sixty times; it is derived from the verb "chairō," "to rejoice," which occurs seventy two times. "Chara," "joy," is from the same Greek root as "charis," grace; Christian joy springs from a life filled with the beauty of grace and love; joy come through serving others in love, and joy in people and God. 2John v12. Joy can never be obtained through selfishness, things or possessions. Jesus said, "Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life does not consist in the abundance of things which he possesseth." Luke 12v15. The selfish person in the end destroys their own happiness; it is only by following the example of the totally unselfish dedicated love of God, that we can enjoy true and lasting heavenly joy.

The Spirit of God imparts His full joy to us, not solemn misery.

The joy that the Holy Spirit gives is much more than ordinary happiness; the word happiness comes from "hap," which means "chance, luck, or fortune;" Christian joy does not depend on chance, luck, good fortune, pleasant circumstances, or the superficial, empty and transient pleasures of the world. It is a "joy unspeakable, and full of glory," the full joy of Heaven. 1Pet 1v11. "The kingdom of God is not in meat and drink; but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Rom 14v17, 15v13. God comes to impart His joy to us, and fill our homes with His joy. 1Thess 1v6.

Jesus has promised to give us His full joy.

Jesus said, "These things have I spoken unto you, **that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be FULL.**" John 15v11, (with 17v13). In 1John 1v1-4, the apostle John states that we can have a full joy through fellowship with the Father and the Lord Jesus. **We are given the joy that angels enjoy, an everlasting joy, the joy of God.** Isaiah 35v10. Angels shout and sing for joy, and so can we. Job 38v4,7, Luke 15v7,10. Nothing and no one can take this joy from us. John 16v22. Our joy flows from God's love for us, and nothing can separate us from God's love. Rom 8v28-39. Christ's joy, like His peace, can fill our hearts even in the greatest of trials and difficulties. 2Cor 7v4-6,13, 8v2.

There is great joy in faith in God our Father and the Lord Jesus.

The joy of faith is a fact. Matt 13v20, 28v8, John 3v29, Luke 8v13, Phil 1v25, 1Pet 1v8,9, 1John 1v1-4. In Luke 2v10,

"Chara," joy, is linked with "megas," "great;" in the angel's message of "good tidings of great joy." In Luke 24v52,53, the disciples great joy over Christ's resurrection. In Acts 8v8, the converts at Samaria had great joy. In Acts 15v3, there was great joy over the conversion of the Gentiles. In 1Pet 1v6-8, "Chara" is linked with "agalliao," "to exult, to rejoice greatly," to speak of our exultation and unspeakable joy in Jesus, "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." We will "rejoice exultantly at the revelation of His glory" at His second coming. 1Pet 4v13. Jesus will present us "in exceeding joy," "en agalliasei," to God our Father. Jude v24. Joy in Jesus is part of Christian daily living. The Church is God's joy and exceeding treasure. We are "the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints." Eph 1v18. God is the person who sells all to buy the field with the treasure in it. Matt 13v44.

The Foundation Of Our joy, Is Joy In Our Lord.

Joy in the birth, life and ministry of our Saviour.

In Luke 1v28, Gabriel said to Mary "Be rejoicing ("chaire"), for you have been encompassed with favour." The angel said to the shepherds, in Luke 2v10,14, "I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." The angel adds "and peace on earth and good will towards men;" which is the reading of the vast majority of texts; "goodwill towards men," is the nominative case "eudokia," showing that God's great good will is extended to all fallen mankind, just as the good news was in verse 10. The minority reading has the genitive case, "eudokias," and so reads, "peace among men of good will," this limits the boundless good will of God towards all of mankind, to a select group, and so it cannot be correct. David, in Psalm 145v8,9, confirms that God's good will extends to all; "The Lord is gracious, and full of compassion: slow to anger, and of great mercy. **THE LORD IS GOOD TO ALL:** and His tender mercies are over **ALL** His works." The desire of God to show mercy is revealed in the ministry of Jesus, in His teaching and the countless manifestations of the healing mercy gifts of God. Multitudes found healing and forgiveness through Christ's ministry.

Joy in our resurrected conquering Lord.

Christ is our joy. Peter says in 1Pet 1v8, "in whom....ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." When Jesus met the women after His resurrection, His first words to them were, "Rejoice," "chairete," the present imperative of "chairō," to rejoice, it can be translated as "Be rejoicing." Matt 28v9. This salutation is only used in the Gospels, Gabriel used it to greet Mary in Luke 1v28, Christ's enemies used it to mock Jesus in Matt 26v49, 27v29, Mark 15v18, and John 19v3. The Church is God's joy and exceeding treasure. We are "the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints." Eph 1v18. God is the person who sells all to buy the field with the treasure in it. Matt 13v44.

The joy imparted by the Gospel. Luke 15v5,7,9,10,25,32.

The aim of the Gospel is to give men joy; there is joy in heaven over sinners repenting. Matt 18v13. There is joy in believing. Rom 15v13. The Samaritans had "great joy," when Philip preached the Gospel to them with signs and wonders. Acts 8v9. The Ethiopian Eunuch also went on his way rejoicing, after hearing the Gospel from Philip, and after witnessing Philip's supernatural transport. Acts 8v37-40.

The Joy Of Christian Fellowship. The early Church was filled with a joy that was both attractive and triumphant.

The joy of true Christian fellowship and home life, is something that the world cannot comprehend. Phil 2v1,2. It is a foretaste of the joy and fellowship of the kingdom. Joy comes from people not possessions or things. Christian joy, like Christian peace, is much more than worldly happiness. Christian joy is "not as the world gives." It is the joy of God in the soul, it is an abounding joy. This joy comes from the Holy Spirit's presence and fullness. It is a triumph of Divine grace and power.

The joy of praise and worship together. "Rejoice ever more." 1Thess 5v16.

Even before Pentecost the disciples were continually praising God in the Temple, because their Lord and Saviour was alive and still with them. Luke 24v52,53. There was joy in the simple home fellowships of the early Church, around a simple meal. Acts 2v46. Joy in the singing of the Spirit-inspired psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. Eph 5v18,19. Col 3v16. Through Jesus we should continually offer up a joyful sacrifice of praise, even the fruit of our lips. Heb 13v15.

The Joy Of Service.

Joy in God's acts of power.

The healing of the man at the beautiful gate shows the real joy in healing. Acts 3v8. The seventy returned with joy at the miracles God had done through them in the name of Jesus. Luke 10v17. Jesus directed them to rejoice more in the fact of their salvation; however, He also exults that God had given these Christian babies such great power and blessing. Luke 10v17-24. They were more privileged than the prophets. Our Lord also rejoiced over the ministry of the twelve Apostles. Matt 11v25-27.

Joy in converts.

Jesus rejoiced with all of heaven over converts to the truth. Luke 15v1,5,7,9,10,32, Matt 18v13. Paul said his converts and flocks were his glory, crown and joy. Col 4v1. 1Thess 2v19,20, 3v9. Paul rejoiced and kept a prophetic eye upon his converts. Col 2v5. True joy springs out of relationships, out of people, not possessions. In 2John v4 and 3John v3,4, John rejoices that Christians and his "children," were walking in the Truth. In Col 1v24, Paul rejoices in his suffering on the behalf of his converts and Christ, and rejoices that he completes what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ. Christian leaders will have to give an account of their charges at the judgement seat of Christ. Heb 13v17.

Joy in fulfilled answers to prayer together.

It is wonderful when we pray through for one another, and see God's exceeding more abundant answers. We are to ask and receive that our joy may be full. John 16v24, Luke 11v9-13, Eph 3v20, James 5v13-18. We should rejoice over all the wonderful answers from our generous Heavenly Father, His interventions through friends, healings, circumstances, finances, etc...

Joy in fulfilling God's will and finishing the course planned for us.

In Acts 20v23,24. Paul said that he wanted to finish his course with joy. In Rom 15v32, Paul states his desire to come to the Romans "in joy," "en chara," "in the will of God." God wants us to fulfil our proper and godly ambitions.

The joy of the Lord triumphs even in persecution and trial.

Persecution could not break the spirit of the early Church, they rejoiced in the Lord. This joy was a fact in severe persecution, we read, "And the disciples were filled with joy and the Holy Ghost." Acts 13v50-52. The Thessalonians had joy in severe persecution. 1Thess 1v6. Paul and Silas sang for joy of heart in the stocks in prison, even after a terrible beating. Acts 16v19-26. "A broken spirit drieth the bones," so rejoice in God. Prov 17v22. We have a joy and peace that overcomes trial. John 16v33. Our trials can be a great blessing, even when they cause us to be in heaviness through manifold temptations. 1Pet 1v4-7, James 1v12. Paul said in 1Thess 5v16-18, "Always be joyful;" he lived his advice, for in 2Cor 7v4, he writes, "I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulations." Our joy in trial is derived from the presence and promises of our Lord; "I have spoken these things unto you that My joy may abide in you, and that your joy may be full." John 15v11.

The eternal joy and eternal joyful creativity of the kingdom of God.

The angels shared with God in the joy of creativity. Job 38v7. We will share in God's creative joys and pleasures for ever more. Psalm 16v11, Eph 2v7. "That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." "The unsearchable riches of Christ." Eph 3v8. "Unsearchable" is "anexichniaston," from the privative "a" and "exichniazo," "to trace or track out;" it is only in Rom 11v33, where it speaks of the amazing untraceable wisdom and ways of God. Christ's riches and God's ways are inexhaustible and untraceable even to angels as well as men. Job 5v9, 9v10. Satan and his angels, evil men and sin are banished forever. There will be joy without pain or tears. Rev 21v1-8,27. Oh the beauty and the glory of that kingdom! Eternal joyful activity, no boredom, eternal creativity, eternal joy with God.

The believers who are upon earth, during the Great Tribulation, even when things are looking very bleak due to the outworking of the Mystery of Iniquity, will also know the fulfilment of this lovely promise of the Lord, of having His joy filling (to overflowing) their souls, especially if they are in the countries under the control of Antichrist, and are experiencing great persecution. These same believers will have their minds filled with Truth regarding the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus, so that although the worldlings (and Christians living in sin) are filled with great fear and trembling at the terrible events happening around them, they will not be in darkness, so that the Day of the Lord should overtake them as a thief. We see the Glorious Woman in Rev 12, fleeing into the Wilderness at the beginning of the Great Tribulation (Rev 12v6,14), this is obviously a fulfilment of Matt 24v15,16. For these Christians to flee from Jerusalem and the surrounding areas (into the mountains) when they see that Antichrist has set up his image in the Temple at Jerusalem, they must have been expecting it, and so could only have been expecting it if their minds were filled with the Truth on this most vital subject. Matt 24v9, Rom 13v11-14, 1Thess 1v6, 5v1-5, 2Thess 2v1-12, 1Pet 1v3-12.

"I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." John 17v14.

Hatred From The World

In John 17v14, the Lord Jesus states that because He had given them His Father's "Word" (which they had received, John 17v8), the world had hated (hated in Greek is, "miseo" (NT:3404), and means, to detest (especially to persecute), malicious and unjustifiable feelings towards others, and by extension, to love less, in John 17v14, it has the meaning of having "malicious and unjustifiable feelings towards others") them, even as it hated Him, because they were not of the world (through the washing of regeneration and renewings of the Holy Spirit, the Apostles (and indeed **ALL** "believers") were delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the Kingdom of His dearly-loved Son. Col 1v13, Titus 3v5). Evil people in the world have always hated Truth and Light (light in the believer is the result of the Word of God upon the obedient hearer, and which is also radiated by them. Matt 6v22), and so try to extinguish it. John 1v6-13, 3v19-21,

15v18-25.

There is a short story by H. G. Wells entitled "The Country of the Blind," which is an apt illustration of this condition. In this tale, a man with eyes strays into the kingdom of The Blind and is taken captive. The fact that he can see, however, is not a help to him but a hindrance, since it rouses the jealousy and dislike of the blind, who prefer to think that no such thing as sight exists. In the end they will allow him to live in their midst only upon the condition that they may put his eyes out and make him as one of themselves. So would the world put out the Christian's eyes, and pull him down into their chosen darkness. Isaiah 53v6, Ezek 18v4, Luke 9v60, John 3v19, 8v31-34, Rom 1v18-32, 5v12, 6v12-16, 7v9-11, Gal 5v15-16, Eph 2v1-3, 1Tim 5v6, James 1v14-15.

Romans 12v1-2 states the following: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that **ye present** your bodies a living sacrifice, **holy**, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind (which is the result of feeding upon and obeying the Word of God. 1Pet 2v1-3), that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

Or as the Amplified Bible translates it: "I APPEAL to you therefore, brethren, and beg of you in view of [all] the mercies of God, to make a decisive dedication of your bodies [presenting all your members and faculties] as a living sacrifice, holy (devoted, consecrated) and well pleasing to God, which is your reasonable (rational, intelligent) service and spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world (this age), [fashioned after and adapted to its external, superficial customs], but be transformed (changed) by the [entire] renewal of your mind [by its new ideals and its new attitude], so that you may prove [for yourselves] what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God, even the thing which is good and acceptable and perfect [in His sight for you]."

The word "present" (in Rom 12v1) in Greek is "paristemi" (NT:3936), and means to place beside or near, to present, to offer, to put at one's disposal. It is the same word used in Romans 6v13 translated, "yield." Vincent says; "It is the technical term for presenting the Levitical victims and offerings. See Luke 2v22. In the Levitical sacrifices the offerer placed his offerings so as to face the Most Holy Place, thus bringing it before the Lord." The "body" here is the physical body of the believer. It is to be a living sacrifice.

Vincent comments: "Living in contrast with the slain offerings. Compare Romans 6v8,11." He quotes Chrysostom, "How can the body become a sacrifice? Let the eye look on no evil, and it is a sacrifice. Let the tongue utter nothing base, and it is an offering. Let the hand work no sin, and it is a holocaust (Webster gives as a definition of "holocaust," a sacrifice wholly consumed by fire). But more, this suffices not, but besides we must actively exert ourselves for good; the hand giving alms, the mouth blessing them that curse us, the ear ever at leisure for listening to God." "Holy" in Greek is "hagios" (NT:40), the root meaning of which is "separated," (among the Greeks, dedicated to the gods). The Greek word has no idea of holiness about it in the sense of purity, and freedom from evil. The pagan Greek worshipper, the pagan Greek temple, was "hagios" (holy) in the sense that both were set apart for the worship of the Greek deity, but both were sinful, since the Greek deities were merely divinities formed after the human pattern (the worship of idols is really the worship of demons. 1Cor 10v20). But the Christian meaning of "hagios" (NT:40), is that of being separated from sin, and being devoted to God, in the case of God, it speaks of His total dedication, consecration and devotion to His people and creation, the devotion of a Lover to the one He loves. Rev 4v8-11, Isaiah 6v1-4. The physical body of the believer, put at the disposal of God, presented to Him, is holy, in the sense of being set apart for His use, and free from sinful practices. The believer is to be holy even as He is holy. 1Pet 1v16.

In Rom 12v1,2, Paul entreats the Romans by the mercies of God, to live a consecrated life, and have a transfigured mind and life. "Transformed" is the same word that is used of Jesus being transfigured in Matt 17v2 and Mark 9v2, both Gospels use "metemorphothe" the aorist passive of "metamorphoo" (NT:3339). Here, in Rom 12v2, "metamorphousthe," the present passive imperative of "metamorphoo" (NT:3339) is used. In 2Cor 3v18, we are told that we will be transfigured as we behold the glory of the Lord; here "metamorphoumetha," the present indicative of "metamorphoo" (NT:3339) is used. So our transformation should be a continuous ongoing thing as we yield to the Lord. Our inward beings can be transformed from glory to glory as we refuse to be conformed to the world and renew our minds (by imbibing the Scriptures, i.e., by His Word, John 17v14) and behold the glory of God.

In 2Cor 11v13,14,15, Paul warns us that Satan transforms himself into an angel of light, and Satan's deceitful servants can transform and disguise themselves as apostles of God. Here the word is "metaschematizomenoi," the present middle indicative of "metaschematizo," (NT:3345) from "meta" after; and "schema," the form or habit. The change is on the outside, the inside is unchanged and evil. The "schema" is the external, the "morphe" the internal reality, Christ was eternally in the essential form, "morphe" (NT:3444) of God. Phil 2v7. People can put on clerical garb and look like servants of God, when they serve Satan well by their doctrine and manner of life. The word "metaschematizo" (NT:3345) is used in a good sense in 1Cor 4v6, where Paul speaks of himself and Apollos as illustrations of truth; and again in Phil 3v21, where it means the transformation of our outward bodies at the resurrection and second coming of Christ.

The hatred from evil persons in the world, towards Christians who are walking in the Light, and abiding in Him, will be particularly great during the last seven years of this Age, but particularly during the Great Tribulation, when this hatred of Christians will be worldwide, and will give rise to great persecution and murder of believers. To be forewarned is to be forearmed, so let's get ready for these fast approaching dark evil days of the Great Tribulation! Matt 24v9, Luke 21v17, John 15v1-8, 1Thess 5v1-11, 1John 1v7.

"I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil." John 17v15.

"I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world..." Contrary to what those who teach a secret pre-tribulation Advent and Rapture say (that God will not allow the Church to suffer the pains of the Great Tribulation), the Lord Jesus did **NOT** teach His Apostles and Disciples that they would avoid persecution and death for His sake, indeed He taught them the very opposite! He even told Peter that he would glorify Him by partaking of the same kind of death as Himself, i.e., crucifixion. If the Lord Jesus was not going to let His people suffer for His Name, during the Age of grace, **NOW** was the time for Him to petition His Father for that very thing! However, the Lord Jesus, during His earthly ministry, repeatedly told His listeners, that His disciples would suffer greatly for His name during the whole of the Age of Grace, but especially during the Great Tribulation. Matt 5v11,12, 24v9,21, 2Tim 3v12, Rev 6v9-11, 7v9-17 (esp., 7v16,17), 12v4,5,12,13,17.

Is It Unkind Of God To Let Us To Go Through The Great Tribulation?

Some Christians become afraid when they learn of the horrific events of the Great Tribulation. This is the real reason why people prefer to believe the theory of a secret advent of Christ and a secret rapture of the Church before the Great Tribulation. One exponent of this doctrine has said, "If the Church is to pass through the Tribulation, then farewell blessed hope, then welcome the coffin, then thrice welcome the undertaker." This attitude springs from several false assumptions:

The false assumption that the Great Tribulation is the wrath of God.

Some Christians say that the Great Tribulation is the wrath of God, so on the basis of 1Thess 5v9, "God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ," they say Christians may be quite sure that they will escape going through the Great Tribulation. How unscriptural this reasoning is will be seen from the following facts. In Rev 7v9,14, God says that there will be a great number of Christians who will not only be in the Great Tribulation, but will come through it in glorious victory. God says that He will allow "a great multitude, which no man could number of **ALL** nations" to go through the Great Tribulation. How dare people say that God will not let His saints go through the Great Tribulation, when God has already said that He will. Dan 7v21,22, 11v35, Rev 6v9-11, 12v4,11,17, 13v7,10, 14v12,13, 15v2. 20v4.

NB The Great Tribulation is the result of Satan's wrath, not God's wrath.

We read in Rev 12v12, that the Great Tribulation is caused by the wrath of Satan, who knows that he only has a short time of freedom before he is put in God's prison, Hades. Rev 12v7-17, 13v7. God allows the career of Antichrist in order to reveal the horrific end of sin, and the malevolent and destructive nature of Satan, and the folly of going his way. Only God can give true pleasure, joy and happiness. Matt 24v15-22, John 10v10, 2Thess 2v7,8, Rev 9v11, 11v18, 1Pet 5v8, Isaiah 35v10.

The wrath of God will be poured out on the wicked during the Great Tribulation through the ministry of the two witnesses and others, or directly by angelic action. But these judgements will only come on the wicked; God's people are sealed and safe from them as they have always been in the past. The faithful Israelites were safe from God's judgements upon the wicked, in Egypt, the wilderness, and Canaan. Rev 9v4, 11v36, Num 11v1-3,33,34, 16v1-3, 28-35,49, Ezek 9v3-6. God has power over His plagues, they don't fall on the saints, and even the wicked can escape them by turning to God in real repentance. Rev 16v9. The vials of the wrath of God appear to be poured out during the last weeks or months of the Great Tribulation. There is the final great act of judgement on the great day of the wrath of God. Isaiah 42v13-15, 63v1-6, Rev 6v16,17, 11v18, 14v9,10,19, 15v1,7, 16v1. Some have suggested that the Great Tribulation and the day of the Lord are the same, however, a comparison of Matt 24v29,30 with Acts 2v20, proves that this is incorrect, the great day of God's wrath is a single day. The Christian is safe from the wrath of God, but not from the wrath of wicked men, as our Lord has warned us. John 14v30.

Some say that it is no comfort to look for Christ's return, if His Church is to expect great tribulation before it. This is foolish, for the greater the extent of the darkness, the greater will be the comfort that our Lord's coming will bring. Paul informs us that the day when the saints are comforted by Christ's return and find rest from their persecutors, is the same day that our Lord punishes the wicked with everlasting destruction from His presence. 2Thess 1v5-10, 2v8, Titus 2v13. In Luke 17v26-30, Jesus emphasises this same point, when He states that His persecuted Church will be delivered on the same day that Antichrist is destroyed, just as the day of Lot's deliverance was the day of the destruction of Sodom.

The pre-tribulation rapture teachers say that God would not let His children suffer so.

However, God has always allowed His people to suffer tribulation, temptation and trial, because they purify and perfect faith, and "we are to arm ourselves by recognising this fact." Heb 11v35-38, 1Pet 4v1, James 1v2-4,12, 1Pet 1v3-7, Rom 5v3-5. Christ's Church has been warned that it can expect persecution for Christ's sake, and it is our glory and privilege to suffer for Him, for, "If we suffer with Him, we shall reign with Him." 2Tim 2v12, 3v12. See John 15v19,20, 16v33, 17v15, Acts 5v41, 14v22, 2Cor 1v7, 1Thess 1v4-6, 3v3,4, Phil 1v29, 3v10, 1Pet 4v13, 2v19-24. Jesus said that faith in Him would bring death, suffering and persecution upon Christians, in addition to the normal suffering that comes upon men and nations. Jesus rebuked Peter, when Peter rebuked Him for saying that He must suffer and die, Jesus said Peter was thinking like men. Matt 16v22, Mark 8v31-38. What of the glorious company of martyrs of whom our Lord was the leader?

John Wesley says, "Some have computed, that, from the year 1518 to 1548, fifteen millions of Protestants have perished by the Inquisition. This may be over charged; but certainly the number of them in those years, as well as since, is almost incredible. To these we add innumerable martyrs, in ancient, middle, and late ages." The Scriptures and Church history prove that God does allow His people to suffer at the hands of evil men. In the Great Tribulation the Church again has to endure suffering for Christ's sake. However, we read that because God loves His children (and because of their prayers (Greek, "proseuche" (NT:4335)), He will limit the length of the Great Tribulation, "For the elect's sake those days shall be shortened." Matt 24v22, 1Cr 16v22, Rev 22v20.

NB The early Church Fathers expected the Church to suffer at the hands of Antichrist.

Mr. G. Ladd in his book, "The Blessed Hope," writes, "Every Church father who deals with the subject expects the Church to suffer at the hands of Antichrist." Ladd cites amongst others, The Didache, (early 2nd Century), Justin Martyr, (150 AD), Irenaeus, (115-202 AD), Tertullian, (160-240 AD), Lactantius, (Late 3rd early 4th Cent), Hippolytus, (3rd Cent). Certainly the early Church fathers do not support the pre-tribulation advent and rapture theory.

Those who make Paul's statement in 1Thess 5v9, "For God has not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ," as one of their main proof texts for Christians being raptured before the Great Tribulation, have clearly twisted the Scriptures. Paul is dealing with the truth of salvation from sin, and how we can escape from the wrath of God by repentance and a holy life. 2Pet 3v16, 1Thess 1v10. Paul, like our Lord, warns us to be watchful lest we should be led away with the error of the wicked, like the evil servant of Matt 24v48-51, and share in his punishment. The fact that people have to resort to such texts proves the weakness of their arguments.

In spite of the fact that Jesus said that the prophecies concerning the events at the close of the age do not start until Rev 4v1, some use Rev 3v10, to prove the Church is going to be delivered from the Great Tribulation by a secret advent and rapture. There is no proof that "the hour of temptation," is the Great Tribulation, or that "keep thee from the hour of temptation," means the rapture. Indeed, it is a fact that this was spoken by Jesus to meet the local circumstances at Philadelphia in John's time. When people are driven to confirm their viewpoint with texts like this, texts which have nothing whatever to do with Christ's second coming, it shows the weakness of their arguments. **So, as the Lord Jesus was not going to remove His disciples from the world (so that they would avoid suffering), He then prays, in John 17v15: "But that thou shouldest keep them from the evil."**

"Kept from The Evil (One)."

In v15, the Lord Jesus prays the following: **"...Thou shouldest keep..."** "Thou shouldest keep..." is in Greek, "teereésees," the aorist active subjunctive of "tereo" (NT:5083), which means, to guard (from loss or injury, properly, by keeping the eye upon), it expresses watchful care and is suggestive of present possession, to preserve, hold fast to, keep, follow, to watch. It is the same Greek word that the Lord Jesus uses in John 17v11,12 (along with another Greek word (John 17v12), "phulasso" (NT:5442), which means, to guard, to act as a sentinel, also see 1Pet 1v5, where the Greek word "phroureo" (NT:5432), which means to protect by guarding, is used of God's power **always** protecting the believer through faith), of keeping, guarding and protecting His people.

"...from the evil," is in Greek, "ek toú poneeroú," ablative case with "ek," and can also read **"from the evil one."** This can mean either from "the evil one" that is, the Devil, or from "evil" in general, i.e. from being overcome by temptation and so going into apostasy; as the original Greek includes both these meanings. 1Cor 10v13, 1John 5v18.

"From The Evil One."

John writes in 1John 5v18, "We know that whoever is born of God does not sin; but he who has been born of God keeps himself, and **the Wicked One does not touch him.**" "Does not touch him," "ouch haptetai autou," is the present middle indicative of "hapto," which means to lay hold of or to grasp rather than a momentary touch, which is "thiggano;" both words are used by Paul in Col 2v21. John only uses "hapto," here in 1John 5v18, and in John 20v17, where Jesus asks Mary to "cease holding and clinging to me;" "me mou haptou" is the present middle imperative of "hapto." Jesus explains that Mary cannot keep holding and clinging to Him, because He has to ascend to the Father. There was no prohibition against Mary touching or holding the Lord, for in Matt 28v9 the women took hold of our Lord's feet (ekratesan) and worshipped Him. Mary was filled with joy at finding our Lord risen and alive, and did not want Him to go away; our Lord said that He could not stay because He had to ascend to the Father.

We can say with absolute certainty, that the Wicked One cannot possess a Christian. This is God's sure promise to us, for in 1John 5v18, John said that the Wicked One cannot lay hold of, or grasp a child of God. In 1John 5v18, John states that truly regenerated Christians do not live an evil life, or keep on being dominated by continual sin. John is not speaking of an act of sin, which would be indicated by the aorist tense; but the continuous life of sin, which is indicated by the linear present tense of "hamartano," "to sin." We have victory over sin through the new birth, and the law of the spirit of life in Christ frees us from the law of sin and death. Rom 8v1-3. We are to keep ourselves in the love of God, and Christ's devoted and continuous intercession for us, is a glorious and wonderful fact. Jude v21, James 1v27, Heb 4v12-16, 7v25, Psalm 121v3,4.

John uses "oidamen," for our knowledge and experience of divine truth and certainties. 1John 3v2,14, 5v15,19,20. See "Ye know." 1John 2v20, 3v5,15. See 1John 3v6,9.

In the phrase, “he that was begotten of God,” “ho gennetheis ek tou theou,” “he that was begotten,” is “gennetheis,” the aorist passive participle of “gennao,” which only occurs in the second part of 1John 5v18. Some think it is equivalent to the, “he that is begotten of God,” “ho gegennemenos ek tou theou,” the perfect passive participle of “gennao,” which is used in the first part of this verse and 1John 3v9, and refers to a Christian who is begotten of God. The perfect tense speaks not only of the act of birth, but also of its continuous present efficacy, from the point of birth up to the present. The Majority Text reading, “keeps himself,” “terei heauton,” means that it is referring to born-again Christians. Others feel that the reading of the manuscripts A and B and others, and the critical texts, of “terei auton,” “keeps him;” makes, “He that was begotten of God,” refer to Christ, as “ho gennetheis ek tou theou,” is not used to refer to any Christian elsewhere in John’s writings. The New English Bible reads, “it is the Son of God who keeps him safe.” There is no problem here, both thoughts are true; we are to keep ourselves in the love of God and our Lord’s devoted and continuous intercession for us is a glorious and wonderful fact. Jude v21, James 1v27, Heb 4v12-16, 7v25, Psalm 121v3,4.

When the Devil and his evil angels are cast out of the Heavenlies into the earth, by Michael and his angels, and God’s restraint is removed from the powers of darkness, resulting in the mystery of iniquity (or “lawlessness”) working fully and the start of the Great Tribulation (which is the result of the Devil’s great wrath (Rev 12v12), **NOT** God’s), the believer is promised to be fully kept, guarded and protected by God’s mighty Presence and Power in a special way, from the Devil and his evil angels! Psalm 18v2,3, 34v7, 91 (all), 121 (all), Matt 28v18-20, John 17v11,12,15, 2Thess 2v1-12, Heb 7v25, 1Pet 1v5, 1John 5v18, Rev 12v1-17.

During the Great Tribulation, the believer can certainly be most sure of the Lord’s word in Hebrews 13v5 (with Gen 28v15, Deut 31v8, Joshua 1v5, 1Chron 28v20): “...For He hath said, I will never leave you nor forsake you.” Which in Greek is: “..Autós gár eíreeken, ou-meé se anoó oud ou-meé se engkatalípoo”

“The words “He hath said,” are intensive in the Greek text, “He Himself hath said.” Also, note the five negatives strengthening each other “ou mee” with the second aorist active subjunctive “anoo” from “anieemi,” to relax, as in Acts 16v16; “oud’ ou mee” with second aorist active subjunctive “engkatalípoo” from “egkataleipoo,” to leave behind, as in Matt 27v46, 2Tim 4v10. All of which means that God’s Presence and Power will **ALWAYS** be with us to help us in **ALL** our circumstances (when we invoke and call upon His name), **BUT** even more so in troublesome times. Exodus 3v1-15, Romans 8v26-39, Heb 2v17,18, 7v25.

The Amplified Bible translates it as “...For He [God] Himself has said, I will not in any way fail you nor give you up nor leave you without support. [I will] not, [I will] not, [I will] not in any degree leave you helpless nor forsake nor let [you] down (relax My hold on you)! [Assuredly not!]”

And Wuest’s Expanded New Testament gives it as: “...For He himself has said, and the statement is on record, I will not, I will not cease to sustain and uphold you. I will not, I will not, I will not let you down.”

Imparting The Divine Benediction With The Covenant Names of God.

As believers in the Lord Jesus we are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, chosen to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Him (1Pet 2v4-10). As priests, under the New Covenant, we, having the authority to, and should use, the priestly blessing found in Number 6v22-27 (with 2Cor 1v20) to put God’s protection, blessing, enlightenment and complete (spiritual, physical and material) wholeness on (ourselves and) others, and **EVEN MORE SO** during the last seven years of this Age, **BUT** especially during the dark evil days of the Great tribulation:

Numbers 6v22-27 states: “And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them, The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: The Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel; and I will bless them.”

Or as the Amplified Bible puts it (my additions are in *italic*): “And the Lord said to Moses, Say to Aaron and his sons, This is the way you shall bless the Israelites. Say to them, The Lord (*Yahweh*) bless you and watch, guard, and keep you; The Lord (*Yahweh*) make His face to shine upon and enlighten you and be gracious (kind, merciful, and giving favour) to you; The Lord (*Yahweh*) lift up His [approving] countenance upon you and give you peace (tranquillity of heart and life continually). And they shall put My name (*Yahweh*) upon the Israelites, and I will bless them.”

The Jews Hid The Great Name Of God Away, And Would Not Repeat It.

Traditionally, the priests blessed the people every morning after the sacrifice at the Temple. Today, many synagogues end their services with this blessing as a benediction. Although God told Israel to use His name “Yahweh”, and put it on the people, they hid it away and only used it on the very odd occasion, they didn’t even manage to write it down properly, they simply put it on one side and didn’t use it. The name that the Jews have now long invoked when using this blessing, is “Adonay,” and **NOT** “Yahweh,” which means that there is absolutely **NO** Presence, power or blessing imparted upon the people, the priestly blessing simply becomes empty and meaningless! Exodus 3v14,15, Num 6v27.

The sacred name was made up of the Hebrew consonants; Yude-Ah-Vau-Ah, or in English, Y, H, W, H; the Hebrew Vau

being pronounced as W. The Jews left out the vowels and **hid away** the sacred Name for fear that it would be **misused**. They should have let God defend His Name and let Him deal with those who used His name in vain. This has resulted in the Divine Name being largely **unused**; for though the Rabbis know the sacred Name, they will not repeat it, or write it down. So the Divine Name which was intended to be an instrument of power, blessing, and means of deliverance in the hands of **ALL** the people of God, has been hidden away and not used. What a tragedy! In the time of Moses, all the people could hear Aaron pronounce the Divine Name, and were able to invoke it for themselves.

The Jews invented a replacement for the Divine name by taking the vowels a, o, a, from the Hebrew "Adonay," which means "Lord," or "Master," and then inserted them into the sacred tetragrammaton, Y, H, W, H; and so made YaHoVaH, or as we pronounce it Jehovah. Many have suggested other variations of the sacred Name. Some Third Century Manuscripts from Egypt have stated the Divine name was "Yabeh," or "Yahweh." Clement of Alexandria in the third century AD said it was pronounced "Yaoweh." Theodoret of Cyprus in the fourth century said the Samaritans pronounced it "Yabeh" or "Yahweh."

Many scholars believe that the Divine Name is "YahWeH;" for from the often-repeated exhortation to "Praise you Yah," "Hallelujah," we know that the first part of the sacred name was "Yah." The second part of the Divine Name starts with the Hebrew letter "Vau," which is pronounced as a "W," and ends with "H;" so "Yahweh" could be the Divine Name. The Hebrew "Halelu-Yah," "Praise you Yah," is not a single compound word in Hebrew, even though it has become a compound word in Greek and other languages. "Halelu-Yah," is derived from the abbreviated Divine name, "Yah;" and "halal;" to be bright, to shine, to praise, to celebrate, to glorify; it carries the thought of radiance and ebullience in praise and worship to God. The Greek "Allelouia," occurs in Rev 19v1,3,4,6; where we see the saints and angels rejoicing that the kingdom of God has been set up, and that evil men and wicked angels have been judged and executed, and everlasting righteousness has been brought in, and prophecy fulfilled. Dan 9v24, Rev 10v7. Fifteen of the Psalms either begin or end with "Hallelujah," and Psalms 104 to 109 are called, "the Great Hallel," and were sung mainly at the feasts of Passover and Tabernacles.

The use of "Yah" in the expression of praise "Hallelujah," reveals that God accepts "Yah," as an abbreviated form of the sacred name, not only in praise and worship, but also as a name to be called upon for our defence and provision, and as an instrument of power in invocation. The Divine name conveys even more than God's eternal nature and immutability, "He who was, and is, and is to come." Gen 21v33, Exodus 3v13-16, 6v6, Psalm 83v18, Isaiah 12v2, 26v4 with Rev 1v8. Nor is God just "The Almighty," "Ho Pantocrator," Rev 4v8, 11v17, 15v3, 16v7,14, 19v15, 21v22. Through Jesus, the relationship has become a personal family matter; we are now the sons and daughters of God. Luke 11v2,13, 2Cor 6v18. Our Father is, "The Almighty I Am," and He will be to us what His covenant names say He is. "Yahweh," "The existing One," or as the French translate it, "The Eternal," will convey to us **ALL HIS NAME IS**, through the covenant blood of Jesus.

The Great I Am, the Eternal, the Self Existent One, He who has always been, and always will be, is our Father. Psalm 90v2. "From everlasting to everlasting thou art God." Jesus said in John 8v58, "Truly, truly, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I Am;" the Jews fully understood that He was claiming to be "The Great I Am;" and tried to stone Him, Jesus miraculously hid Himself, and escaped from them. Jesus is, "That eternal life that was with the Father," 1John 1v2, "Ten zoen ten aionion," literally, "the life, the eternal." "Which was with the Father," is "en pros ton patera;" not "egeneto," "came into being," but "en and "pros," "facing," with the accusative of eternal intimate fellowship, exactly as in John 1v1, "en pros ton theon," face to face intimacy with God the Father in eternal love and fellowship. The Godhead has made an eternal covenant with us, to share all they are in eternal love and fellowship, with us. 1John 1v3,4. How unspeakably generous and kind they are!

Numbers 6v24 (first half): "The Lord bless thee, and keep thee." "Bless thee," is in Hebrew, "Ybaarekkaa" which is from "barak (baw-rak') (OT:1288), it is a primitive root, and means "to kneel," by implication to bless, praise, salute, thank. The thought is that as we kneel in worship and praise of God, He comes to kneel with us and turns His face towards us in blessing.

In "The Name" of Jesus (which means "Yahweh is salvation," or "salvation of Yahweh"), we have the name of Yahweh (or Jehovah) and **ALL** the covenant names of Yahweh **FULLY** revealed to us. These names **FULLY** reveal the beautiful character of God, and what He is, and will do for His people, and they are ours to use through the covenant blood of Jesus.

NB Those who believe in Jesus as their Lord and Saviour, already have God's protection:

New Testament sons of God are guarded by God and His Legal Decrees.

God, as Judge, Creator, and Redeemer, has made and proclaimed His legal decrees, and has enforced them with His power and judgements. The powers of darkness tremble at His decrees. James 2v19. Woe to those evil spirits, or men, who try to defy the decrees of the King of Heaven, or oppose His saints; many have tried, and as a result, are in chains of everlasting darkness. Dan 4v17-23, 2Pet 2v4, Jude v6,13. These decrees are:

The invincible legal covenant barrier of Christ's atoning blood.

There is the legal covenant decree and defence of redemption through the blood of Christ. Satan has no hold, or claim, on

those who are redeemed through the blood of Christ; for the blood of the covenant includes protection as well as forgiveness. The blood of the Passover lamb preserved Israel, how much more does the blood of Jesus protect the New Covenant children of God, as we read in Rev 12v11, "And they overcame him (Satan), by the blood of the Lamb, and the word of their testimony."

The legal barrier of identification with Christ's death in baptism.

Baptism in water is God's way of accepting God's covenant. Our old life is buried with Jesus in baptism, and we rise to walk in newness of life, not in fear of demons, or of being possessed by them. Rom 6v3,4. Our heavenly Father erects an invincible wall of protection around us, and cuts us off from former evil and occult connections. 1Pet 1v4,5.

The legal barrier of adoption as sons and the new birth.

Christians have a God-protected sonship. The Father loves us like Jesus, and He wants the world to know it; and Jesus loves us as the Father loves Him. John 17v23, 15v9, 13v34. Jesus said that His enemies committed blasphemy when they said that He was possessed by evil spirits. Mark 3v28-30. Is it not blasphemy to say that God will break His covenant with us, and allow Christians, who are loved just like Jesus, to be possessed by demons? God keeps His covenant, and He assures His children of His continual protecting presence.

The Holy Spirit is an abiding eternal protection for the Christian. 1Pet 1v4,5.

The Holy Spirit has come "to abide with us for ever," and as, "He that is in you is greater than he that is in the world;" it is impossible for Christians to be possessed by demons as long as they keep their faith in Jesus, and don't fall away from God. John 14v16, 1John 4v4, Luke 8v13, Matt 24v12,13, 2Thess 2v1-3, Heb 6v1-8, 10v26,27. We are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise; the word for seal in Eph 1v13,14, is "sphragizo," (see Eph 4v30 and 2Cor 1v22). In Paul's time a seal was used as both a sign of ownership and a guarantee. God the Father puts His seal of ownership upon us and by the Holy Spirit's abiding presence, warns the powers of darkness that we belong to Him. Eph 1v13,14. Indeed, evil spirits are in great danger when they try to attack God's children, for the Holy Spirit does not just passively protect us; He actively sends to Hades the powers of darkness that attack us. His presence makes us quite immune to demon possession.

The Holy Spirit also protects Christians who have not been baptised in the Holy Spirit; for His protection is there, whether He is "with us," or "in us." John 14v17. We have a good Heavenly Father who protects and defends His children, and only gives them the Holy Spirit and good gifts. Luke 11v9-13. God our Father guarantees that through the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit we cannot get serpents, scorpions or stones. This protection springs from the "much more" love of God for us. In John 17v23, Jesus tells us that the Father loves Christians just as He loves Him. Our heavenly Father would no more allow a demon to enter His dearly beloved children, than He would allow a demon to enter His dearly beloved Son, our dear Lord Jesus.

The powers of darkness fear Christians who know their position and security in Christ; because God's presence with us makes us a very definite threat and danger to them. In James 4v7. "submit" is the aorist passive imperative of "hupotasso," a military term meaning, "to place or range under;" as we array ourselves under God and resist the Devil; God is with us, and His awesome might causes Satan to flee. In verse 7, "resist," "antistete," is the aorist active imperative of "anthistemi," "to take a stand against," as we take a stand with God against Satan, Satan flees from us.

Even though Christians have the aforementioned protection, they, as priests of God, can greatly increase that protection around others and themselves (at this present time, **BUT** especially in the Great Tribulation), by invoking and using the great name of Yahweh Jesus, by using this wonderful priestly blessing in Number 6v22-27.

Numbers 6v24 (second half): "The Lord bless thee, and keep thee." "...And keep thee" is in Hebrew, "w-yishm-rekaa," which is from "shamar" (shaw-mar')(OT:8104), and means to hedge about (as with thorns), i.e., guard; generally, to protect, attend to, keep, watch, preserve. The believer, by putting the name of Yahweh Jesus and these words in Number 6v24 on themselves and others, should then also take power from the Lord Jesus, in the Heavenly places, and put that around the person or persons whom the Name and blessing has been put upon. This has the effect of putting a hedge of thorns of Divine power around that person (or persons) and ALL that they have, even as there was a hedge of thorns of Divine protection and power around Job, his family, household and ALL THAT HE HAD. Such was this protection that the Devil went in before God and complained bitterly to Him that he could get nowhere near him, his family, household or anything that belonged to him. Job chapters 1 & 2; esp., Job 1v10 which states the following: "Hast not thou made an hedge about him, **and about his house**, and about all that he hath **on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land.**"

PLEASE NOTE: At NO time was the great Old Testament saint Job possessed by the Devil, or any other evil angel or demon! Satan himself could not get near anything that belonged to Job, never mind Job himself. Job was not even under the covenant of the Law, but Satan had to obtain permission from God to test Job, and he certainly has to get permission to test God's New Testament sons. Satan had to get permission from God before he could test Peter, "asked" in Luke 22v31-34 is "exeitesato," the first aorist middle indicative of "exaiteomai," to beg, ask, or demand, only here in the New Testament; the middle voice shows it was for himself. Through Jesus and His precious covenant blood, we are under the most secure and the very best covenant of all. 2Cor 3 all, Heb 10v19-21. Our heavenly Father makes absolutely

sure that we don't get a serpent, scorpion or stone. Luke 11v9-13.

In 1Pet 1v4,5, we are assured that God guards and protects His New Testament children, in the same way as His great servant Job. God's protection of His dear children will be even more pronounced during the Great Tribulation, when the Mystery of Iniquity will work fully, so that each of them can have **FULL** confidence in His wonderful protection of them, that flows from His great Love for them, for He loves each one of His beloved children even as He loves His dear Son Jesus! Psalm 121 all, John 17v23, Rom 8v31-39, 2Thess 2v7,8.

The terrible physical suffering that Job experienced, by being struck from head to foot, with "sore boils" (the Hebrew for "sore boils" is "shechiyn" "raa' bishchiyn," which means "an evil inflammation"), was caused by the Devil energising evil spiritual power against his physical body; this evil power also caused Job tremendous suffering and torment of mind, being and soul. Eph 2v1-10 (esp., Eph 2v2, "the spirit that now worketh..." or better, "the spirit that now energises..."). Our dear Lord Jesus, during His whole life upon earth, also experienced continuous blasts of evil power being directed against His spirit, soul and body (with the exact same effects that Job and many others have experienced, in physical and mental sickness and diseases), from the Devil and the powers of darkness, but to a greater degree than what Job, or any other human being has experienced.

We can then better understand, by knowing that the Lord Jesus experienced this evil power directed against himself, during the whole of His life, the words of the prophet Isaiah in Isaiah 53v11, "He shall see of the travail of his soul." "Travail" in Hebrew is "amal" (OT:5999), it speaks of a lifetime of arduous and exhausting labour and toil, which produces sorrow, grief, trouble and trials. It is a dark word that speaks of burdensome and protracted toil, a life of toil, trials and trouble, not a short period of trials, problems and difficulties. Jesus was badly bruised throughout all His life. A lifelong trial of unrelenting bruising and hurt!); or as "Today's English Version" puts it, "After a life of suffering," which better conveys the meaning of the original Hebrew. The whole of our Lord's earthly life was one of a continuous hard grinding pressure upon Him, which had the effect of almost driving Him to the ground in utter exhaustion on a daily basis. It is only by having first hand experience of what His "brethren" would experience and go through, that he could be a faithful and compassionate High Priest, and be able to succour them when they are tempted. Heb 2v17,18, 4v15.

With the Devil and his evil angels being cast out of the Heavenlies into the earth at the beginning of the Great Tribulation, and God's restraint being removed from them, these "energisings" will also greatly increase, being directed against both believers and unbelievers, to achieve different purposes. It is therefore of paramount importance that the believer prepares **NOW** for that time, by fighting their way into the Heavenly places (in Christ), and manifesting His power and spiritual gifts in those places against the Devil and the powers of darkness, bringing judgement upon them and putting them into the Abyss. By doing this **NOW**, the believer will be fully prepared to deal with these greater "energisings" that will occur during those dark evil days when the Mystery of Iniquity will work fully. If, however, the believer follows the unbelieving example of the generation of Israelites that came out of Egypt, who couldn't (and indeed wouldn't) trust Yahweh to bring them into the Promised Land, because of an evil heart of unbelief, it is certain, that like the unbelieving Israelites of old, the Christian who follows their evil example will end up backsliding and going into apostasy not long after the Great Tribulation begins. John 3v13, 17v24, Eph 6v10-20, Col 3v1-11, Hebrews chapters 3 & 4.

The "giants" in the land of Canaan, that the Israelites who came out of Egypt had to conquer to possess it, are the exact same "giants" that the Christian has to conquer and overcome to get into and stay in their "Heavenly" Canaan; in both cases, they are evil angelic beings. During the Great Tribulation, the Christian will have conflict not only with the evil angels who have been cast out of the Heavenlies into the earth, by Michael and his angels, but once the Devil and these evil angels have been cast down into the earth, and God's restraint is removed from them (and the Mystery of Iniquity works fully), some of these evil angels will follow the example of the "Sons of God" mentioned in Gen 6, in that they will create giant "look-alike" human type bodies (the genome of these giant "look-alike" bodies will not be human) and inhabit them, for the purpose of having sexual relations with the "daughters of men," for Daniel 2v43 says that "they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men," in an attempt to corrupt mankind, and bring them down to the same level of death and destruction as themselves. Gen 6v1-12, Num 13v1-14v38, 2Sam 21v15-22, Isaiah 26v14, 1Pet 3v18-22, 2Peter 2v4, Jude v6.

Because of the impregnable wall of divine power that God has put around His people, we can say, with Joshua and Caleb (Num 13v30, 14v9): "Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it....for they are bread for us: their defence is departed from them, and the Lord is with us..." Even as we can take power from the Lord Jesus (in the Heavenly places) and put it around others and ourselves to increase protection, we can also take this very same power from our Lord, and instead of using it to put around others for protection, we can use our spirits to reach out in faith, and put it around demons and evil angels, for the purpose of putting them into the Abyss, into chains of everlasting darkness, to await the judgement of the Great Day. The operation of taking power from the Lord Jesus in the heavenly places, and using it to put around the powers of darkness for the purpose of putting them into the Abyss, will be vital for the Christian to defend themselves (and others), and therefore for their survival during the evil dark days of the Great Tribulation. Demons and evil angels, like the Devil, tremble with great fear, when they come up against a Christian who knows the authority that they have in their Lord, and who takes His power and uses it against the powers of darkness. Luke 8v26-39 (esp., Luke 8v31, "the deep", is in Greek, "teén ábusson," which would be more correctly translated "the Abyss," also see Rev 20v1-3 (bottomless pit)), Eph 6v10-20, James 2v19, 4v6,7.

The following facts were related to me not so long ago. A certain prophet was being attacked (in the spiritual realm) by one of the leading occultists in the United Kingdom, he felt something like a "wire" go around his neck (in the spirit),

which he also saw, which he immediately rebuked in the name of the Lord Jesus, and the power of the Lord instantly and totally disintegrated it. Not long after this, it was reported to him, that the occultist had died, and when the time of her death was made known to the prophet, it was only four hours after she had tried to kill him. The Lord Jesus had immediately stepped in and removed the "wire" from around his neck (by disintegrating it), and then executed her for this evil deed against a son of God. It is vital that we grasp the fact that, "The Name of the Lord (Yahweh Jesus) is a strong tower, the righteous man runs into it and is safe," and that we are **ALWAYS** kept, guarded and protected by God's power! God's protection of his dearly beloved children is complete and **VERY** real of every second of every day. Prov 18v10, 1Pet 1v3-5.

The words of the Lord Jesus in Luke 10v19 (the authority of which belongs to **EVERY** believer, even "babes in Christ," Luke 10v21) are most comforting, where He states: "Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and **nothing shall by any means hurt you.**" Our Lord Jesus used a very strong triple negative when He said, "nothing shall by any means hurt you," which is in Greek, "ouden humas ou me adikese." It is made up of, "nothing," "ouden;" "in no way," "ou me;" and "shall not hurt," "adikese," the aorist active subjunctive of "adikeo." "Adikeo," is made up of the negative prefix "a," and "dikos," which means, "to act unjustly, to do wrong, to injure, to harm." It is difficult to adequately convey the strength of our Lord's words in English, unless we express it as, **"Nothing, in no way, shall not hurt you,"** The Majority Text has "adikese," the aorist active subjunctive of "adikeo," other texts read, "adikesei," the future active indicative of "adikeo." Both of these readings are theologically correct; the aorist tense assures us, that at the point of conflict with evil angels, God will protect us and there will be no hurt to us; the future tense informs us that God will protect us from harm in any future conflict with the powers of darkness. So, it is most vital for the Christian to believe and fully understand, that during the Great Tribulation, even as at this present time, their protection by God, from the Devil and the powers of darkness, will be total and complete; no created being will be able to snatch them out of their Heavenly Father's or Saviour's hand! John 10v28,29, 1John 5v18.

Numbers 6v25 states: "The Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee." It should be noted that both the words, "face" in Num 6v25, and "countenance" in Num 6v26, in Hebrew use the same word, "paanaayw," which is from "paniyim" (NT:6440), and although they are rendered in the English in the "singular," in the actual Hebrew they are in the "plural," and so would be better rendered, "faces" (v25) and "countenances" (v26), which is clearly showing the plurality of persons in the Godhead. The Israelites clearly understood this, because the Lord (Yahweh) who led them in the Pillar of Cloud by day, and the Pillar of Fire by night, is also called "The Angel of The Lord", which in English would be better translated, "The Angel, The Lord", for there is no "of" in the original Hebrew, which is "Yahweh mal'ak" and would make better sense if translated as "Yahweh Messenger," which clearly involves two persons, firstly, "Yahweh," (the Sender) and secondly, the "Yahweh" who is "sent" i.e., "The Messenger," Who also is clearly divine, for worship is given to Him and He is called both "Yahweh" and "Elohiym," the "sent" One being none other than the pre-incarnate Christ, God the Word. The Israelites were also aware of the 3rd Person in the Godhead, the Holy Spirit, Whom God gave to them, to instruct them. Exodus 3v1-4v17, Neh 9v20, John 8v58, Heb 11v26. "Make...shine" is in Hebrew, "Yaa'eer," which is from "owr (ore)" (OT:215) and means to be (causative, make) luminous (literally and metaphorically), to lighten, illuminate, cause to shine. God desires to illuminate our spirits and minds, and give to each one of us a revelation of Himself, His plans and His purposes to our souls. Eph 1v15-23 and 3v14-21.

Eph 1v15-23 states:

"Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: **The eyes of your understanding being enlightened;** that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all."

The Individual Need Of A Revelation. (Eph 1v15-23).

We need to have a spirit of wisdom and revelation imparted to us to open our eyes, after we have been saved and baptised in the Holy Ghost, to the following four truths.

The revelation of the Father of glory. v18.

The hope of His calling. v18, Heb 3v1, Eph 4v1.

The joy awaiting God when He can manifest those children of His who have overcome. v18.

The ability of God to do what we cannot attempt to do, and to make us fit for our wonderful destiny. v19, 1Thess 5v25, Phil 1v6.

The evidence that God is able to do this wonderful thing for us, raising desperate sinners into His own presence, is contained in the historical fact that He has already raised Jesus to His own throne, although Jesus for our sakes was made sin and suffered the pains of a sinners doom for us. This man, broken and smashed in body, forsaken and cursed by God in soul, separated from the Father in spirit, yet has been raised to the loftiest position of all. This is a proof that God is able to do the same for us, however broken in body, sick in soul, dead in spirit we may have been. God has the same

power and is willing to use it in the same way for all who trust in Jesus.

The essential thing for us to remember in meditating on this great salvation is that the whole glory belongs to God. It is marvellous that He should be willing not merely to save drunken murderers from Hell, but actually to place them near Jesus and Himself in Heaven: and if this were not enough to give them power, glory and authority, and that forever. But God insists that we should remember and proclaim that this is His work and not ours, and left to ourselves we would not even believe His Word, much less raise ourselves from our fallen condition. Heb 2v1-5.

The Christian's Calling. Eph 1v18.

The Christian after he has passed from death unto life hears his Saviour calling him to honour and glory. 2Thess 2v14, 1Pet 5v10, 1Thess 2v12, 2Tim 2v10. This calling is to mount up into Heaven, and to live in God's kingdom not as subjects, but as kings. Heb 3v1, Phil 3v14, Col 3v1. We need to have the full glory of this calling revealed to us by God. Eph 1v17,18, Phil 3v15. We are not to suppose that we are certain to enter into our calling but are to strive and press forward lest we lose it. 1Cor 9v24-27, Phil 3v12-14, 2Pet 1v10,11. Indeed many are called but few are chosen, and they that are with the Lamb are "called chosen and faithful." Matt 22v14, Rev 17v14, 2Thess 1v11, Heb 3v15-19, 1Cor 10v1-13. God alone is able to make us worthy of this calling, as we humble ourselves and cry for grace. Eph 1v19,20, 2v6, 1Thess 5v24, Josh 5v13-15, Psalm 44v1-8, Jude v24.

Although God will not reward us according to our works of fleshly determination or ability, which lead to pride, but rather the gracious fruits of the Spirit. Heb 12v28, Gal 5v22,23 (though they are not works of fleshly determination or ability they are works of diligence. These rewards are the reward for works of faith working by love).

The Church The Body Of Christ. Eph 1v22,23.

The Lord being absent in body now, can no longer work in person as He used to do, but requires the bodies of His own people. They are therefore called in the Bible His Body, i.e. that through which He acts. Eph 1v23, 1Cor 12v27, Col 1v24, Eph 5v29,30. The head of the body is that part in which the mind and directive faculty lies. i.e. The head is Jesus. Col 2v14-19, 1Cor 2v16, Eph 4v15, 5v23. If the body is unwilling to do, or ignorant of what the head desires, Jesus is paralysed and unable to get His will done on earth, unable to move. Jesus wants to be a mighty man of war but it depends on our obedience. John 15v1-6, Col 2v19.

The body has different members with different faculties and functions, so the members of the church have different offices, works and gifts. Rom 12v4,8, 1Cor 12v12-31, all members are vital, the prominent ones are not the most important. e.g. heart and arm. Each member shall apply himself to his own particular calling, remembering that he is not an individual, but part of an organism.

The various members of a body are dependant upon one another; the pain or dishonour of one is the sorrow of all, the ability or success of one brings blessing to all. 1Cor 12v20-23, Eph 4v16, Col 2v19. **The members are held together by a common love one for the other. 1Cor 12v25,26, Eph 4v15,16.**

Jesus cares for His Church as a man cares for his body and a husband for his wife. Eph 5v25-32.

Just as in a human body, the whole body is dragged down by a sick part, and all the unaffected members supply strength to the diseased or sick part in an endeavour to heal it, so it should be in the body of Christ. A diseased member is a common danger and all the members should be dissatisfied until it is healed. 1Cor 12v25,26, Gal 6v1,2. Division in the body of Christ is traceable to carnality and pride. 1Cor 3v1-9. There are diseases so dangerous and infectious that they need to be isolated or cut off lest all be infected. For such members constant prayer should be made, and all feeling of enmity avoided. Love hopeth, suffereth and endureth all things. Rom 16v17, 2Thess 3v12-15, Titus 3v10,11, 1Cor 11v29-31, 13 all.

It is clear that just as a man whose body is sick or paralysed cannot do what he would, so also our Lord cannot do what He would unless we, His Body are in perfect health.

It is therefore not hard to see, that any member who through self-will has continually thwarted the Head, will in the end be rejected as useless in the service of the Lord Jesus. Though for the present Jesus is hindered by the body being sinful and disobedient and ignorant of His will, yet in eternity He will choose for His executives only those to whom He can say "well done, good and faithful servant," the bad servant will lose all opportunity of future great services for Jesus. After being called to the throne we must be faithful in the work we are given here, and prepare ourselves faithfully so that we may be chosen, Rev 17v14, with Matt 22v1-13, for the throne and a co-heir with Christ. Rev 2v26,27, Rev 3v21, 21v7.

Eph 3v14-21 states:

"For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by

Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."

A Prayer For The Revelation Of God's Love And Purpose In Jesus.

God is willing and able to do mighty things for those of His children who trust Him.

By the things which God does for us, we have brought home to us the real nature of His purpose, love and power.

But before God can command deliverance for Jacob; or rescue David, or fight for Jehoshaphat, or set Peter at liberty, they, for their part, must put their faithfulness to God (not folly), have allowed themselves to get into difficulties and dangers.

To do this demands from us spiritual strength and vision. If Jesus is to dwell in our hearts we must be willing to face the world's hatred for Him, which will surely come if we believe Jesus is able to work on our behalf.

Four stages are shown here clearly:

Strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man. **That**

Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith. **That**

Ye being rooted and grounded in love may comprehend and know Christ's love. **That**

Ye might be filled with all the fullness of God.

Numbers 6v25 (second half): "And be gracious unto thee," is in Hebrew, "wiychunekaa," which is from "chanan" (khaw-nan') (OT:2603), which is a primitive root, and has the basic thought "to bend or stoop in kindness to an inferior"; to favour, bestow; causatively to implore (i.e., move to favour by petition), this word implies the extending of "favour," often when it is neither expected nor deserved. God especially is the source of undeserved "favour," Gen 33v11, and He is asked repeatedly for such "gracious" acts as only He can do, Gen 43v29 etc.. The psalmist prays: "...grant me thy law graciously," Psalm 119v29. God's "favour" is especially seen in His deliverance from one's enemies or surrounding evils, Psalm 77v9, Amos 5v15.

"Channuwn" (khan-noon') (OT:2587), which is from "chanan" (khaw-nan') (OT:2603), is declared by God, in Numbers 34v6, to be His second name, the first being, "merciful", "rachuwmm (rakh-oom') (OT:7349), which is from "racham" (raw-kham') (OT:7355); a primitive root; to fondle; by implication, to love, especially to compassionate, and so means to be full of embracing, compassionate, tender love. The first thing God wanted the Israelites (and us) to know was that He desired to love and cuddle them, indeed He desires to love and cuddle us, the same way that He loves and cuddles His dear Son, Jesus, for we are loved by our Heavenly Father, even as He loves Jesus. John 17v23. We are given a wonderful demonstration of the full meaning of this Hebrew word, "chanan" (khaw-nan') (OT:2603), by the Lord Jesus in John 13v1-17, where it is written:

"Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end. And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him; **Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God; He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.** Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter. Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all. For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean. So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."

In the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament), the Greek word, "eleeo" (NT:1653) is used to translate the Hebrew, "chanan" (khaw-nan') (OT:2603), and means to compassionate (by word or deed, specially, by divine grace), have pity, be sorry for, help (out of pity), be merciful. It is what God desires in His people, along with the knowledge of Himself, rather than sacrifice and burnt offerings. Hosea 6v6 with Matt 9v9-13.

James tells us in James 2v13, "For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment." "Mercy is clothed with the divine glory, and stands by the throne of God. When we are in danger of being condemned, she rises up and pleads for us, and covers us with her defence, and enfolds us with her wings." (John Chrysostom, meaning "golden mouthed," cited by Gloag) The Living Bible translates James 2v13, "For there will be no mercy to those who have shown no mercy. But if you have been merciful, then God's mercy toward you will win out over his judgment against you."

Numbers 6v26, states: "The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace." "And give thee peace" is in Hebrew, "wayaaseem lakaa shaalown," "shaalown" is from "shalown (shaw-lome)"; or shalom (shaw-lome'), (OT:7965), which is from "shalam" (shaw-lam'), (OT:7999), a primitive root, meaning wholeness, soundness and completeness (spiritual, physical and material, peace, prosperity and well-being), the same thought found in 3John v2 and 1Thess 5v23. William Barclay says that "shalom" means "all the things that produce man's highest good." "Shalom" carries with it the thought of total peace and well-being of body, Psalm 38v3, soul, spirit and prosperity of circumstances, Job 15v21.

NB God's Peace Is Accompanied By Divine Protecting Power.

The blessing of peace given in Num 6v22-27, caused divine power to operate on Israel's behalf, it was not a negative thing, it was a positive blessing and reality, which brought protection and health to the people of God. With prophets like Moses, Aaron and Miriam pronouncing the divinely ordained benediction of Num 6v22-27, blessing was sure to follow. God kept His Word, even when the people of Israel were rebellious in the wilderness, there was not one feeble person among all their tribes, Psalm 105v37, their clothes did not wear out, nor did their feet swell over a period of forty years. Deut 8v3-5, N.B.v4, Neh 9v14-21.

In the Septuagint "eirene" (NT:1515) describes a life which is serene and secure because of the protecting and enriching presence of God. David said he could sleep in peace because of God's safe-keeping. Psalm 4v8. The Millennial kingdom will be secure and at peace, because Christ and His brethren will reign in righteousness, "the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever." In Jer 29v11, "eirene" (NT:1515) is used in God's thoughts of good will and peace towards mankind. See also Isaiah 54v10, God's covenant of peace is guaranteed to last like the mountains and the hills.

Christian peace is not natural peace. It is Christ's peace; it is the peace that pervades all of heaven. John 14v27. It is a peace that passeth all understanding. Phil 4v7.

The Heathen Philosopher's False Ideas Of Peace.

God emphatically states that the wicked cannot know peace; Isaiah 48v22, 57v21, and that they do not know the ways of peace. Rom 3v17, Isaiah 59v7,8. The heathen Greek philosophers tried to find ways of peace without following and finding and following the true and living God. Their highest idea of peace falls far short of the Christian idea of peace. They sought for tranquillity, "ataraxia," and in their works several ideas occur which are quite contrary to the Christian idea of peace.

The elimination of desire. They said that human desires that brought one into conflict had to be taken away, and looked upon asceticism as the answer to obtaining tranquillity.

The elimination of emotion. They refused to have emotional ties with others, saying that if they did this peace was lost forever. Emotional sterility, apathy, and emotional unattachment, "apathes," was their idea of tranquillity and peace; and brought emotional famine, in the disguise of peace.

The elimination of concern for others. These philosophers tried to isolate themselves from people's problems. The Stoics taught that the idea of caring for anyone or anything was to be strangled before it was born. How dreadful!

The elimination of dependence upon others. They said that attainment of total self-sufficiency and self-dependence, was the way to tranquillity. Total independence of others, or anything, "autarkeia," and insulation from life, brought peace. Epicurus said that peace was, "absence of pain in the body, or trouble in the mind;" and he and his fellow philosophers said that this was attained by having a self-contained life without any dependence upon others, or care for others. These self-centred, selfish ideas of peace are totally different from the Old Testament ideas of peace, and far below the theology or reality of Christian experience. Unfortunately these ideas are still followed by many people today, but this kind of peace, is a false peace, and a false foundation that will not stand the storms and floods of life.

In our day it has come to mean the elimination of war. However, the peace that is the fruit of the Spirit, is much more than the absence of war, it is the peace that accompanies the all-pervading presence of God.

The New Testament Usage Of Peace, "Eirene." (NT:1515). Christian peace, "eirene" (NT:1515) carries all the positive attributes that are seen in the divine "shalom" (OT:7965), they are yea and amen in Christ. 2Cor 1v20.

Peace "Eirene" (NT:1515), Is Used In Greeting With Grace, "Charis." (NT:5485)

The normal Jewish greeting was the Hebrew "shalom" (OT:7965), but grace and peace is the greeting used in some New Testament epistles. Rom 1v7, 1Cor 1v3, 2Cor 1v2, Gal 1v3, Eph 1v2, Phil 1v2, Col 1v2, etc. "Eirene" (NT:1515) occurs 88 times in the New Testament, and occurs in every book. The first greeting of the risen Christ to His fearful apostles was "Peace be with you." John 20v19,21,26. Peace is Christ's gift. John 14v27. To the weeping women and the fearful men, the resurrected Lord Jesus gave His joy and peace. These greetings carried in them the power and grace of God, it was not the formal greeting of the unbeliever. The deep spirituality and dedicated prayer lives of the early Church brought real power and protection to the people of God. When "shalom" (OT:7965) was used in invocation with the great name of God,

it was just as effective under the new Christian covenant as it was under the covenant of the Law.

Peace Is A Result Of A Right Relationship With God.

The natural result of believing in Jesus is peace. Rom 5v1,10. We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Rom 15v13. The God of hope fills us with all joy and peace in believing. Col 1v20. The blood of Christ has secured peace for us. God is called the God of peace six times. Rom 15v33, 16v20, Phil 4v9, 2Cor 13v11, 1Thess 5v23, Heb 13v20,21.

Christian Peace Has To Be Jealously Guarded And Earnestly Kept.

In the Church, we are to strive to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. Eph 4v3.

We are to seek peace and earnestly pursue it. 1Pet 3v11.

We need zeal to be found by Him in peace at His coming. 2Pet 3v4.

Peace is the basis of fellowship, "koinonia," and unity, "henotes." Eph 4v3. Churches can be miserable places when peace has gone through bickering. All can, and should be one, in Christ, whether Jew, Greek, slave, male or female. Gal 3v28.

NB Be warned! Even The Two Greatest Missionaries Of The Church had An Angry Dispute.

In Acts 15v36-40, we read that Paul and Barnabus had "a sharp contention" over John Mark; "sharp contention" is "paroxusmos," "a sharp fit of anger, sharp contention, angry dispute," our "paroxysm," only here and Heb 10v24, it is derived from "paroxuno," "to sharpen," metaphorically, "to incite, to stir up." See Acts 17v16. Paul had an angry dispute with Barnabus, the very thing he wrote against in 1Cor 13v5; "love is not provoked to anger." In Acts 15v37, we read that Barnabus had made up his mind to take Mark with him on their proposed missionary journey. In v38 we read, "But Paul kept on thinking it right and wise not to be taking along with them this one;" and refused to take Mark with them on their missionary journey. Paul said Mark was the one who withdrew from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work." For "withdrew" Paul uses "apostanta," the aorist participle of "aphistemi," which means "to depart, to desert, to apostatise from;" indeed, it is our very word for "apostasy. Both of their minds were made up so they parted and their ministry together was severed asunder, "apochoristhenai," "to sever, to separate." Barnabus went off with his cousin Mark, and Paul departed with Silas. This is the last we see of Barnabus in the New Testament, except for a reference by Paul in 1Cor 9v6. Barnabus earned his name, he was full of compassion and encouragement, a great and noble soul; he saved and developed Paul's ministry, and here he tries and succeeds to save the ministry of Mark. Mark made the grade, and both Peter and Paul recognised his valuable ministry. 1Pet 5v13, Col 4v10, 2Tim 4v11. Mark's lasting work is his Gospel, which is the ministry of Jesus through the eyes of Peter. (Papias, the Church Historian wrote early in the 2nd Century, "Mark having become the interpreter of Peter, wrote down accurately whatsoever he remembered. It was not, however, in exact order that he related the sayings or deeds of Christ...).

In the heart. We can destroy our peace if we are not careful. God's peace is the sentry of the heart. Col 3v15.

Let the peace of God rule, "brabeuo," arbitrate, umpire, guard, or govern, your hearts. Anything that destroys peace must be told to move on. Against worry and worldly anxiety, and the pressures of life. Matt 6v7,8,25-34. Let us watch our ambitions; and learn to be content with what we have. Phil 4v11, 1Tim 6v8 Heb 13v5.

Against physical or mental weariness. Exhaustion, moods, negative attitudes, and hormones have to be carefully watched. Against Satan's attacks.

Against carnality. The life that is dominated by the flesh cannot know peace.

Against sin. Peace can only be sustained by godly living. Rom 2v10. Peter wept bitterly when he denied Jesus; he speaks out of his own experience of the grace of God, when he prays for grace and peace to be multiplied to his hearers. 1Pet 1v1,2.

Over doubtful things. Rom 14 v1.

Peace with all men.

We are to strive for peace with all men. Heb 12v14.

The wall of hostility is broken down between Jew and Gentile through Christ's death. Eph 2v14-17.

In the home and marital affairs.

In the home we must have Christ-like attitudes to each other; Eph 5v21-33, NB v25,33. 1Pet 3v7-9. God has called us to peace. 1Cor 7v15. Too much activity can destroy peace, as with the case of Mary and Martha. Luke 10v38-42.

Over God's will and guidance. God's guidance has the following characteristics:

It will agree with and not contradict God's Word.

It will be confirmed by spiritual people in the body of Christ.

It will be confirmed by the Holy Spirit. God will guide us by deep inward conviction, vision, voice and prophecy, and confirm that guidance with His peace. **God's peace will always confirm God's guidance.**

It will agree with our circumstances.

It will make the best use of our talents and abilities.

It will be validated by good common sense. Psalm 32v8,9.

Conclusion.

Christian peace Can Only Be Maintained By Fellowship With God And Obedience To God. We can have peace through prayer and communion with God. Rom 5v1,2, Isaiah 26v3, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee." It is a result of abiding in Christ and subordination to the Holy Spirit. NB Perfect peace. Christ's peace sprang from obedience to God and our peace will too. The flesh dominated life cannot know peace, it brings spiritual death. Rom 8v13.

Christ's Peace Is proof Against Any circumstances.

Christ's peace is proof against any circumstance, as He proved by His victorious life at Nazareth, the pressure and opposition of His ministry, and the awful suffering of His death on the cross and in Hades.

We can have perfect peace within through Jesus. Jesus said to Peter, "I am going to be betrayed by one of you and suffer and die; and you will deny me Peter, but let not your heart be troubled, believe in me." John 13v21,36-38, 14v1.

We can convey peace through our lives and our prayers, even to changing the affairs of the nations. 1Tim 2v1-8. There is peace through the Gospel, let us have our feet shod with it. Eph 6v16.

The Great Necessity Of Using The Priestly Blessing and Melchizedek Ministry During The Great Tribulation.

Psalms 105v37,40,41, and Neh 9v15-21 makes it clear that the Lord (Yahweh) kept Israel (a nation of at least two and a half million people) in the Wilderness for forty years, without any help from the surrounding nations, who indeed were hostile towards them. Neh 9v21 makes the following declaration, "Yea, forty years didst thou sustain them in the wilderness, so that they lacked nothing; their clothes waxed not old, and their feet swelled not." All this was achieved by Moses, Miriam, Aaron and his sons following the Lord's command to impart this Divine Benediction upon the whole nation of Israel. It is also important to understand that this Benediction will only be effective (i.e. all its promises being fulfilled by God, bringing His Presence and power upon those whom it is put), if the person who is imparting it has a living faith in the Living God, which is nourished by feeding upon the word of God, and continual fellowship with Him. If the person who is trying to impart it, only has a "form" (Greek, "mórfoosin," from "morphosis" (NT:3446), which means "a shadowy pencilled outline without any inner essence, substance or reality") of godliness without any power, it will simply be an empty form of words which will achieve absolutely nothing, and indeed, with nothing happening, the persons upon whom it is put will despair and become despondent. John 6v63, 2Tim 3v1-9.

The Lord (Yahweh Jesus), who changes not, will also certainly do for Christians, what He did for His Old Testament saints, especially when the New Covenant was made by the shedding of the precious blood of His dearly Beloved Son (Who is the True Passover Lamb), and not an ordinary (Passover) lamb (which was of the types and shadows), and which makes "all the promises of God in him yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us." Mal 3v6, Acts 20v28, 2Cor 1v20, Heb 13v8, 1Pet 1v19.

The efficacy of the Priestly Blessing when it is imparted by spiritual Christians on others during the Great Tribulation (or indeed anytime), will have the same supernatural effects, as when it was imparted by Moses, Miriam, Aaron and his sons on Israel, during the forty years in the wilderness. Rev 12v1,6,14,15,16 states:

"And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars...And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days...And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth."

As already previously stated, this woman represents a group of people, who are foreknown, designed, specially created and empowered by God for the Great Tribulation (and it is one of many such groups, who operate in other countries all around the world). It is a group of praying people, with prepared hearts and special ministries for the last days, who will operate with awesome power as a prayer-warrior group behind the scenes. God also gives a definite promise that He will protect, provide and empower the seeking hearts in His Church in a new and special way in the last days, and will not leave His Church defenceless in the Great Tribulation. This glorious woman reveals that part of the Church will be clothed with the fullness of God's power, and will be transported, protected and fed by God, even as Israel was in the Wilderness. This group of Christians, like Moses, Miriam, Aaron and his sons, will daily invoke the name of Yahweh (Jesus) and impart the Divine Benediction of Numbers 6v22-27, putting all that it has to offer on Christians (and unbelievers), not only amongst those who have escaped from Antichrist to "the wilderness" (Edom, Moab and Ammon), but also upon others (both believer and unbeliever) throughout the world. And likewise, all the other groups of Christians around the world who are foreknown, designed, specially created and empowered by God for the Great Tribulation (i.e., like those represented by the glorious woman in Rev 12v1), will also impart this Divine Benediction upon others worldwide, especially the Christians who are in Israel and in the countries under the control of Antichrist. This Divine Benediction will not only be put upon groups of people (i.e. families, local Churches etc), but will also be put upon individual nations, even as Moses et al, did with Israel, of whom many during the forty year period in the Wilderness were in apostasy, yet God still looked after each individual Israelite, so that none of them lacked anything. The Two Witnesses, will also impart this Divine Benediction, every day of their ministry, both before and after the Great Tribulation begins. Deut 8v3-5, Psalm 23v1, Dan

11v32,41, Zech 12v8, Mal 4v5,6, Luke 18v1-8, Acts 2v17-21, Rev 11v3-6.

The "Wilderness" (Rev 12v6,14) where the Christians in Israel flee to, when Antichrist sets up his image in the Temple at Jerusalem at the beginning of the Great Tribulation, is the area of Edom, Moab and Ammon, which is part of modern day Jordan. Christians should **NOW** be praying (Greek, "proseuchomai" (NT:4336)) and making interventions (with power) (Greek, "entugchano" (NT:1793)); invoking the Covenant Names of God in the Heavenly places over Jordan (especially the Covenant Name of Yahweh Tsabaoth), so that God will remove the present spiritual hosts of wickedness, the Principality and Powers, that are the real rulers behind the King of Jordan and the Government of it, and that He will send His angelic host to occupy and guard the Heavenly places over Jordan, so that the areas of Edom, Moab and Ammon, will be safe, secure, and fully "prepared," ready to receive those Christians that flee from Israel to the "Wilderness" at the beginning of the Great Tribulation. It is also important for Christians to fulfil the injunction in 1Tim 2v1-8 (supplications, prayers (Greek, "proseuche" (NT:4335)), intercessions (Greek, "enteuxis" (NT:1783)), and giving of thanks be made) for **ALL** persons in authority in Jordan, and that God will remove the "iron" from any level of government in Jordan, and instead replace them with persons who are godly, wise, compassionate and truthful. Like Moses, Aaron and Miriam of old, Christians should follow their example and put the Priestly blessing upon **ALL** the inhabitants of Jordan, so that God will bring His Power, Presence, Provision and Blessing upon that country and its inhabitants, not only **NOW**, but also right up until the Second coming of the Beloved One. Num 6v22-27, Dan 2v40-43, 11v41, Matt 24v15-21, Eph 6v10-20, 2Thess 2v1-12, Rev 12v6,14,15,16.

Each individual believer, in their preparation for the "last days" of this Age, should **NOW** obey God's injunction in Numbers 6v22-27, and start invoking the name of Yahweh Jesus, to bring God's Presence, power, protection, provision, revelation and blessing upon ALL! 1Pet 2v4-10.

"Keep them from The Evil" (v15 cont)

Paul writes in 1Cor 10v13: "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

The Amplified Bible renders it: "For no temptation (no trial regarded as enticing to sin), [no matter how it comes or where it leads] has overtaken you and laid hold on you that is not common to man [that is, no temptation or trial has come to you that is beyond human resistance and that is not adjusted and adapted and belonging to human experience, and such as man can bear]. But God is faithful [to His Word and to His compassionate nature], and He [can be trusted] not to let you be tempted and tried and assayed beyond your ability and strength of resistance and power to endure, but with the temptation He will [always] also provide the way out (the means of escape to a landing place), that you may be capable and strong and powerful to bear up under it patiently."

The words "with the temptation" and "the" (NKJV) way of escape imply an "adjustment" of the deliverance to each particular case. "The way out" is always there right along with "sun" (NT:4862) the temptation. This is not an escape from temptation, but a present power to endure in the midst of temptation. Heb 2v17,18.

The Amplified Bible translates Heb 2v17,18: "So it is evident that it was essential that He be made like His brethren in every respect ("kata panta"), in order that He might become a merciful (sympathetic) and faithful High Priest in the things related to God, to make atonement and propitiation for the people's sins. For because He Himself [in His humanity] has suffered in being tempted (tested and tried), He is able [immediately] to run to the cry of (assist, relieve) those who are being tempted and tested and tried [and who therefore are being exposed to suffering]."

The American Standard Version translates Heb 2v17: "Wherefore it behoved him in all things to be made like unto his brethren, that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people."

"It behoved him," is the Greek "opheilen," the imperfect active of "opheilo" (NT:3784); to owe: money, service and love, to be under obligation, a moral necessity, a debt to be paid. Before the foundation of the world Jesus promised to redeem us by His own death, He came to fulfil His obligation, and pay the debt for our sins. This verse refers to the incarnation of Jesus. Before creation Jesus obligated Himself to be properly equipped for the work of Redeemer and High Priest, this meant that He had to fully take upon Him our humanity. So Jesus was made, "in all things ("kata panta") like unto us," and knew what real temptation was, but did not yield to it and sin. Wuest translates Heb 2v17, "For this reason it was an obligation for Him in all things to be made like His brethren, in order that He might become a compassionate and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God."

In Heb 2v17, "to be made like unto his brethren," is "tois adelphois homoiotēnai," the aorist passive of the verb "homioo" (NT:3666). Thayer says the passive means, "to be, or to become like to one." See Matt 6v8, Acts 14v11. The humanity of Jesus was real. Phil 2v7 states that Jesus, "was made in the likeness of men," "en homiomati anthropon genomenos." Not "was," but literally "becoming in, became," Jesus entered into a new state at His incarnation. In Phil 2v6, "being," is "huparchon" (NT:5226), the present active participle of "huparcho," and should rather be translated as, "existing." "Huparchon" emphasises the eternal existence of Jesus in the "morphe" of God, and "genomenos," the aorist participle of "ginomai" (NT:1096), to become, i.e. to come into existence, begin to be; it speaks of the time when Jesus took upon Himself our humanity at His incarnation. Jesus was not a Docetic phantom, His likeness to humanity was real.

The word "form," "morphe" (NT:3444), in Phil 2v7, confirms the reality of our Lord's humanity, just as in Phil 2v6 it confirms His absolute deity.

Vincent makes the following excellent note on Phil 2v6, "Christ was in the form of God and did not think robbery to be equal with God, but" (instead) "emptied Himself." Christ held fast His assertion of divine dignity, but relinquished it. Taking the word "harpagmon" (the King James Version, "robbery") to mean "a highly prized possession," we understand Paul to say that Christ, being, before His incarnation, in the form of God, did not regard His divine equality as a prize which was to be grasped at and retained at all hazards, but, on the contrary, laid aside the form of God, and took upon Himself the nature of man. The emphasis in the passage is upon Christ's "humiliation." The fact of His equality with God is stated as a background, in order to throw the circumstances of His incarnation into stronger relief. Hence, the peculiar form of Paul's statement. Christ's great object was to identify Himself with humanity; not to appear to men as "divine" but as "human." Had He come into the world emphasizing His equality with God, the world would have been amazed, but not saved. He did not grasp at this. The rather He counted "humanity" His prize, and so laid aside the conditions of His pre-existent state, and became man." End of quote.

We read in 1John 3v2, that when we see Jesus we shall be "like Him," "homoioi auto," the adjective "homoios" (NT:3664), from the base of "homou," (NT:3674), which means, "the same." John reveals that seeing Jesus is the event that transfigures us, "we shall see him even as he is," "opsometha auton kathos estin." The transforming power of this open revelation and vision of Jesus, will complete our sanctification and transform us into Christ's image and likeness. This conformity to the image of Jesus is the purpose of God. We read in Rom 8v29, "For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren." (NKJV). Through our response to life's trials and difficulties, God is conforming us to the image of Jesus. If we face the fiery trials of life with God, they will bring us praise and glory at the appearing of Jesus. 1Pet 1v4-7. This is the consummation of our salvation, and the end of the transforming process begun at our new birth. 1Cor 13v12, 2Cor 3v18, Rom 12v1,2.

In Heb 1v1-3, Paul declares the majesty and glory of Jesus and His superiority over even the greatest of the prophets by the following statement: "God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high."

NB Wuest translates Heb 4v15, "For we do not have a High Priest who is not able to enter experientially into a fellow feeling with our infirmities, but one who has been tempted and tested in all points like as we are, without sin." The KJV reads, "For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points ("kata panta,") tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

Jesus was truly the Son of Man, as well as the Son of God. The phrase, "Son of Man," was one of our Lord's favourite descriptions of Christ's glorious victories over the World, the flesh and the Devil, which fill Him with total understanding and sympathy towards us, not criticism. The sacrifices that He made for us, and the victories that He won for us are too wonderful for words, no praise can be too great for His matchless sacrificial love, and wonderful total victory. Jesus absolutely deserves all the glory and praise that He receives. Glory is something that is a reward for what we have done, it is something accomplished, it is merited favour, not unmerited favour. The Lord Jesus received the inheritance mentioned in Heb 1v4, because He fought for it; He had to fight all the way through intolerable emotional and physical suffering. Heb 2v8-11. He did not fight through for personal prestige, He fought through for us, to save, redeem and bless us. Jesus is not ashamed to call us brother and sister, for through Him we belong to the same Father. John 20v17, Heb 2v9-18. Our faith binds us to Jesus and the Father. We believe the same things that Jesus believed; we are brethren and have one Father. Isaiah 8v17,18, Psalm 22v22,30.

In Heb 2v17, "to be made like unto his brethren," is "tois adelphois homoiothenai, the aorist passive of "homoioo." Christ, our Elder Brother, was made exactly like us in His humanity, this is also stated in Phil 2v7, Jesus was made "in the likeness of men." Jesus was the "first-born among many brethren." Rom 8v29. One day, when He returns, the transforming glory of our Lord's presence will transform us, and "we shall be like him," "homoioi auto esometha." 1John 3v2.

In Phil 2v7, "the form of a servant," is "morphen doulou," Jesus took the attributes and form ("morphen" as in Phil 2v6, where it states that He was in the form of God) of a slave. His becoming a bond slave and association with our humanity was as real as his pre-incarnate deity and eternal majesty. "In the likeness of men," is "en homoiomati anthropon." Jesus had a real likeness to us, He was really human, and He was not a Docetic phantom, a spirit being with a false imitation humanity, which was what the Docetic Gnostics taught. Note the difference in tense between "huparchon," which states Christ's eternal existence in the form, "morphe," of God, and "genomenos," the aorist participle of "ginomai," becoming, which speaks of a definite entrance in time upon his humanity.

In Phil 2v7, "morphe," translated as "form," in "form of a servant," is used in Phil 2v6, for "form of God." The word "servant" is the translation of the Greek word "bond slave," "doulou," which Paul used in Phil 1v1, to describe himself. The word "took," "labon," is an aorist participle; Greek grammar states that the action of an aorist participle precedes the action of the leading verb. The leading verb here is "emptied," so the act of taking preceded the act of emptying, and so the taking by Jesus of the form of a bond slave came before, and was the cause of His emptying. So the translation should read that Jesus "emptied Himself, having taken the form of a bond slave." Jesus said that His ministry was that of

a servant, He said, "The son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." Matt 20v28.

We are told in 2Pet 1v15-21, that in the Mount of Transfiguration Jesus experienced for a short time, the glory He had left behind, and the glory He would have at His second coming. Jesus could have walked straight back into Heaven when He was "transfigured," but instead He set His face like a flint and steadfastly walked on to rejection, abuse, beating, crucifixion, and Hades, out of pure love for us. Blessed, indeed, be His Holy Name!! Isaiah 50v6,7, Luke 9v51. See Matt 17v2, "And the mode of His outward expression was changed before them, and His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light." He was setting aside His legitimate and natural desires and prerogatives as Deity. Jesus girded Himself with a towel, knelt on the floor, and washed the feet of the disciples, and did the work of the lowest kind of slave, a bond slave.

In Phil 2v7, "But made himself of no reputation," is "heauton ekenosen." "Ekenosen" is the aorist active indicative of the verb "kenoo," means literally, "to empty, to make empty, to make void." It is translated "made void" in Rom 4v14; "made of none effect," in 1Cor 1v17; "make void," in 1Cor 9v15; and in 2Cor 9v3, it is rendered, "should be vain." "Kenoo" does not occur anywhere else in the New Testament, except in these places and here in Phil 2v7. "Kenoo" expresses the thought of bringing to emptiness, or nothingness; and it describes well how Jesus divested Himself of His heavenly rank, glory and abilities and changed the form of God for the form of a bond slave, "morphen doulou." The same word that is used for "form" in the phrase, "form of God," is used here with the same meaning. Jesus "counted not equality with God the Father a thing to be held on to, even though it was His by right. At His incarnation Jesus took hold of and grasped being a bond slave and servant, He did not grasp and hold on to His right of Divine equality and sovereignty with the Father. Jesus was made in the likeness of man, and took upon Him the form of a servant; He emptied himself and laid aside the effulgence of his glory, and the majesty of His position in Heaven as God the Word, and the Word became flesh. John 1v14.

Many theologians have erroneously said that the emptying mentioned in Phil 2v7, cannot mean that Jesus literally divested Himself of his divine nature and perfections. They say that this was impossible, for Jesus could not cease to be omnipotent, and omnipresent. Some have said Jesus could not cease to be most holy, and true, and good, implying that the babe in the manger had all the abilities and full perfected character of Godhead. This is exactly what the Gnostics taught, and the Apostle John said that those who did not accept the true humanity of Jesus were "not of God," and had "the spirit of Antichrist." 1John 4v2,3. There can be no doubt that when Paul said that Jesus emptied Himself, he meant it.

We read in Heb 2v18, "for in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted." "Hath suffered" is "peponthen," the perfect active indicative of "pascho," the perfect tense shows this suffering was a permanent part of Christ's experience. "Being tempted," is "peirastheis," the first aorist passive participle of "peirazo." The temptation for Jesus to escape the shame and suffering of the Cross and Hades, was repeatedly offered to Him by Satan in the wilderness, and many times afterwards, Matt 4v8-11, Luke 4v13, by Peter acting under the inspiration of Satan, Matt 16v22, by the emotional and physical shock of the continual ruthless, merciless, and vicious opposition of Christ's enemies, Heb 12v3, and by the relentless, malicious, and implacable spiritual attack by Satan and the powers of darkness during His ministry and in the intense emotional sufferings of Jesus in Gethsemane. Matt 26v39, Luke 22v44, Heb 5v7,8. NB Psalm 69v20,21. "Insults and reproach have broken my heart; I am full of heaviness and I am distressingly sick. I looked for pity, but there was none, and for comforters, but I found none. They gave me also gall [poisonous and bitter] for my food, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar (a soured wine) to drink. [Matt 27v34,48.]" (Amplified Bible)

It was because of His great suffering through being tempted in all points like as we are (and yet not sinning), that enables Him to fully sympathise with His brothers and sisters, and to fully succour and strengthen them, when they fall into divers temptation and difficulties, through His interventions (with power) made as our Great High Priest, and thus give the saint who is being tempted a way of escape, so that they can bear it. 1Cor 10v13, 2Cor 12v9, Phil 4v19, Heb 2v17,18, 4v15, 7v25.

In Phil 2v7, the fact of Jesus becoming man is expressed in the words, "and was made in the likeness of men." The words "was made" are the translation of a word meaning "to become." The text says, "He became in the likeness of men." Our Lord's humanity was a real likeness. He was not a Docetic phantom, nor was He a deceiving counterfeit and phoney copy of humanity. The true humanity of Jesus was authentic, irrefutable, and undeniable.

An Expanded Translation by Kenneth S. Wuest gives an excellent and meaningful translation of Heb 2v14-18:

"Therefore, since the children share in common with one another blood and flesh, He himself also partook with them in the same, in order that through the aforementioned death He might render inoperative the one having the dominion of death, that is, the devil, and effect the release of those, as many as who by reason of fear of death through the entire course of their lives were held in bondage. For, as is well known, He does not take hold of angels for the purpose of helping them, but of the offspring of Abraham He takes hold, with a view to succouring them. For this reason it was an obligation for Him in all things to be made like His brethren, in order that He might become a compassionate and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, with a view to offering that sacrifice for the **sins of the people that would perfectly meet the demands of God's justice. For in that He suffered, having himself been tempted and put to the test, He is able to run to the cry of those who are being tempted and put to the test, and bring them aid.**"

In Heb 2v17, "that he might be," is "hina genetai," the aorist subjunctive of ginomai, to become, "that he might become."

For Jesus to become a merciful and faithful High Priest He had to be fully like his brethren in actual human nature, and fully tried and tested in all the trials and tests of life, and in the battlefield of destitution, privation, persecution and adversity. These two adjectives "eleemon" and "pistos" reveal the chief points in the function of His High Priestly ministry, compassionate sympathy and faithfulness to God and the people. These attributes of character were noticeably lacking in the characters and ministries of Israel's high priests. Hos 4v4-9. The Sadducean high priests, Annas and Caiaphas, were chosen by Rome, and were their political and ecclesiastical tools and puppets, and they were totally lacking in compassionate sympathy for the people, and in faithfulness to God and the people.

In Heb 2v17, "faithful," is "pistos," this attribute of a priest, is seen in 1Sam 2v35, a faithful priest that will do all that is in God's mind. Compare Heb 3v2. It includes not only "trustworthiness," but also a faithful representation of the true ideal of priesthood, not just carrying out the ceremonies of the Law, but a kind-hearted person, who has compassion on the ignorant and those who are out of the way. Heb 5v1,2. In Heb 2v17, "In things pertaining to God," "ta pros ton Theon," sums up the totally equipped High Priestly ministry of Jesus, our "compassionate" and "faithful high priest."

In Heb 2v18, "He is able," is "dunatai," the present passive indicative of "dunamai" (NT:1410), "to be able, or possible, to have power." The power of Jesus to help us is derived not only from His Divine abilities, but also from the sympathy and understanding He obtained from His true humanity. Heb 4v15. "To succour," is "boethesai," the aorist active infinitive of the verb "boetheo," from "boe," a cry, and "theo," to run, and so means to run at a cry or call for help. See Matt 15v25.

"Them that are tempted," is "tois peirazomenois," the present passive participle of "peirazo." These Christian Jews were tempted to give up Jesus and apostatise from Christianity. Jesus understands their problem and enables them to be faithful.

We read in 2Cor 5v17-19, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. 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." (NKJV)

"Who reconciled us to himself through Jesus Christ," is "tou katallaxantos hemas heauto dia Iesous Christou." Paul uses one of his great doctrinal words, "katallasso," (NT:2644), an old word for exchanging coins. Rom 3v25, Col 1v20, 1John 2v2, 4v10. Paul states that God needs no reconciliation, but is engaged in the great business of reconciling us to himself through "dia" Christ.

1John 4v16-19. "And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God and God in him. Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love. We love Him because He first loved us." NKJV.

In Heb 1v4-14, Paul shows Christ's superiority to angels by an exhaustive appeal to the Old Testament Scriptures. Paul was addressing Jewish Christians, who were familiar with the prominent part accredited to angels in the Old Testament, especially in the giving of the law. See Gal 3v9. For "being made" (Heb 1v4), is "genomenos," the aorist participle of the verb "ginomai," (NT:1096), to cause to be, to become, and is better translated "having become." After Jesus passed through the "emptying" and humiliation described in Phil 2v6-8, He sat down on the right hand of the Father's Throne, and so "became" again, what He had been from eternity, superior to the angels, though for a brief period, He had been lower than the angels. Heb 2v7. "He hath by inheritance obtained," is "kekleronomeken," the perfect active indicative of "kleronomeo," from "kleronomos," a heir." Jesus "hath inherited," and still inherits a more excellent Name, "onoma," than either prophets or angels. Jesus has been appointed "heir of all things," because of His glorious victory over His humanity, and Satan and sin, and the violent hatred, opposition and rejection by evil men, and His suffering, and death on our behalf. Heb 1v2. See Rom 8v17, and 1Pet 1v4.

Paul writes in Heb 7v24 (Wuest): "But this [priest], because He is abiding forever, has the priesthood which is untransferable."

His High Priestly ministry is untransferable: Firstly, because there is absolutely **NO** one better qualified to do it, because our dear Lord Jesus, Who is full of compassion and able to sympathize fully with us, has been tempted in **ALL** points like as we are, yet **WITHOUT** sin! And secondly, **ONLY** God (the Son) is able to bear the immense burden (and great pain) of making interventions (with power) for **ALL** the Church (every individual believer upon earth), **ALL** the time, every second of every day! The Lord Jesus partook of real human flesh (He was **NO** Docetic Phantom), and also is truly God! Rom 8v3, Col 2v9, Heb 4v15, 7v25, 1John 4v1-6.

The Lord Jesus is more than able to keep His people from being tempted beyond what they can bear, even during the Great Tribulation (which will be worldwide) at the end of this Age (of Grace), when great pressures will come upon each member of the Body of Christ, from the World, the Flesh and the Devil. These exact same kind of pressures, are they that came upon the Lord Jesus, during His thirty hidden years at Nazareth (during which time His Father prepared Him for both His Earthly and Heavenly (High Priestly) Ministries), although, what He experienced and tasted during that time was greater than what any believer (or human being) will experience during the dark evil days of the Great Tribulation, or at any other time since Adam was created. The suffering and temptation that He experienced, was even greater than what the great Old Testament saint Job experienced. Job chapters 1 & 2, Heb 4v15.

We get a wonderful factual account of God's ability to sustain and keep His people from being tempted beyond what they can bear during the Great Tribulation in Rev 7v9-17 (esp., 7v9,10,13,14):

"After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.....And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation (the literal Greek is, "the Tribulation, the Great One"), and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

God the Father, is going to sustain and keep, through the "interventions" (with power) made by our Great High Priest, the Lord Jesus, "a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues," bringing them safely through the Great tribulation (fully preserving their souls), to present them before His Throne in the Eternal Kingdom, so that they can be clothed with white robes (which are the righteous acts of the Saints), and who, like their Lord, will love righteousness and hate wickedness, because they will have had the **FULL** revelation of evil and the hideous end of the effect of sin, upon the souls of humans and the spirits of angels! Psalm 45, Matt 24v12, Heb 1v9, Luke 21v19, 2Cor 12v9, Rev 12v11, 19v1-9.

The people who feel that they cannot trust the Lord Jesus to look after them during the Great Tribulation, are amongst the "cowardly and unbelieving..." of Rev 21v8, and so they fool themselves into believing a lie that the Church will not go through the Great Tribulation, when the Lord Jesus clearly says (in Rev 7v9,10,13,14) that His Church will go through it!

It will be by His great Grace, Strength and Blessing that God will bring each believer through the Great Tribulation victoriously! God the Father (the Lord Jesus and the Holy Spirit) will protect every believer (whom God looks upon as His dearly beloved child) during the whole of the Age of Grace, but especially during the Great Tribulation, as securely and completely, as He protected and guarded His own beloved Son during His own earthly lifetime, for every believer is loved by Him like His own dear Son, Jesus! Zech 4v6,7, John 15v9, 17v23, 1Cor 3v16, 6v19, Eph 6v10-20, Heb 2v11, 1John 3v1-3, 4v4.

"They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." John 17v16.

This is the third time that the Lord Jesus speaks these words (or similar) during the evening of His sharing the Feast of Passover with the Apostles, the first, being in John 15v18,19, where it states: "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because **ye are not of the world**, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."

And the second instance being in John 17v14. Although they are "not of the world," at one time they had been "of the world", because John 17v6 states that "the men (the Apostles) which thou gavest me **out of the world**: thine they were, and thou gavest them me."

"Out of the world" is in Greek, "ek toú kósmou," and you can only come "out of" something that you have previously "been in." When they believed in the Lord Jesus, as the promised One (i.e. the promised Messiah), and were "born again," this is when His Father gave them to Him, as a special gift. Indeed, all believers, when they are born again, are given to the Lord Jesus, by the Father as "special gifts," because **ALL** are most precious, and greatly beloved by God! Luke 15v1-32 (esp. v20), John 3v1-21, Rom 1v7, 1John 3v1-3.

Although at this time the Apostles were spiritually immature and carnal (demonstrated by the squabbling amongst themselves at different times as to who would be the greatest in the Kingdom of God, and refusing to receive and believe the truth about the coming crucifixion of their Lord, etc.), because they believe in the Lord Jesus, He says that "they are not of the world." Matt 11v25-30 (esp., v25, "unto babes" is in Greek, "neepíois," which is from "nepios" (NT:3516), and means literally, "without the power of speech," and denotes "a little child"), Mark 9v33-37, Luke 22v24-30, John 16v12, 1Cor 3v1-8.

"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." John 17v17.

And so, because they are still spiritually immature (and carnal) the Lord Jesus then in John 17v17, makes the following petition, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." "Sanctify" is in Greek, "hagíason," the first aorist active imperative of "hagiazō" (NT:37), which is from "hagios" (NT:40), and has the basic meaning of "separation," and so when used to speak of Christians, it means, "to consecrate or set apart persons or things to God," to be completely devoted to God, the devotion of a lover to those he loves. It is a denial of personal aims or ambitions, and absorption in ministering to others. It should also be noted that the Lord Jesus needed to "sanctify Himself" (as Saviour and Great High Priest) but He **NEVER** needed to purify Himself for He was **ALWAYS** perfectly pure, likewise although He was perfectly pure He had to be "perfected" through suffering, that He might become a compassionate and faithful Great High Priest (and Saviour). Luke 2v40,52 (KJV, i.e., Majority Texts), John 10v36, 17v19, Heb 2v10,17,18, 4v15, 5v8,9, 7v26.

The sanctification of the believer occurs by their obedience to the Word of God, the beginning of their sanctification occurring at the Cross, when they repent of their sin, and believe in Christ as their Lord and Saviour. Immediately upon

believing their spirits are "born again", and they are given a thorough wash by the Holy Spirit, by the partaking of the cleansing bath (Greek, "loutrou" from "loutron" (NT:3067), a bath, and that from "louo" (NT:3068), to bathe the whole person), of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost. Indeed, even the person's mortal body is affected by the new birth, it being quickened and healed by the Holy Spirit. John 3v1-8, Rom 8v11, Titus 3v5.

The Lord Jesus answered Peter in John 13v8-10: When "Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. Jesus saith to him, **He that is washed** needeth not save to wash ("to wash" is in Greek, "nipsasthai" the first aorist middle infinitive of "nipto" (NT:3538), and means to wash a part of the body) his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all."

"He that is washed," is "Ho lelouménos," the perfect passive articular participle of "louo" (NT:3068), which means to bathe the whole person, and is a reference to "the cleansing bath of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost," mentioned in Titus 3v5.

As the true state of affairs enters the believer's heart (as they feed upon the Word of God, and their mind is renewed), they are more and more powerfully drawn not only to forsake sin, but also to throw themselves heart and soul into their Master's business. For sanctification is not the cultivation of one's own soul, which leads to Pharisaism, but the whole-hearted interest in the souls of others. Luke 15v25-30, Isaiah 65v1-5, John 8v31-2, 15v3, 17v17, Eph 5v26, Col 3v1-11, 1Per 2v1-3.

Christian weakness is due generally, not to inherent inability or wickedness, but simply to malnutrition or positive starvation (of the Word of God). This God-given food, rightly used, is sufficient to ensure spiritual victory on earth, and to give us our inheritance in heaven. Job 23v12, Jer 15v16, Matt 4v4, Acts 20v32, 1Tim 4v13-16, 2Tim 3v14-17.

The Trinity work together for our sanctification, and as already stated, the Holy Spirit regenerates us and cleans us up at the new birth, sanctifying us. Titus 3v5, 2Thess 2v13, 1Pet 1v2. All Christians are "called to be saints," that is, "holy ones" (Greek, "hagiois," from "hagios" (NT:40)). Rom 1v7, 15v25,26,31, 16v2,15,16, 6v1,2, 2Cor 1v1, Eph 1v1, 3v8,18, Rev 5v8, 8v3,4, 15v3, etc. They are saints in the respect that their faith in Christ has "set them apart" from the world, and this should result in a very practical and real holiness. Sanctification begins at the cross of Jesus, when we repent of our sin and believe in Him as our Saviour. Holiness develops and deepens as we grow in grace, and as we are more and more drawn into the ways and service of God. Eph 4v15, 1Pet 1v2,14-25, 2v2, 2Pet 3v18. In Mal 3v1-3, we see Christ likened to a refiner of silver, these refiners used to sit over a pot of molten silver and draw the scum off until their faces were clearly mirrored in the silver, Christ desires to clean us up until we reflect His beauty, love, and holiness to others. If we do not let the Lord Jesus refine and beautify us now with His sacred fire, then the fire will try and burn up our works at the judgement seat of Christ. 1Cor 3v12-17, 2Cor 5v8-11. Failure to yield our lives to the purifying presence of Christ and the Holy Spirit can result in a painful chastening from our loving Heavenly Father, the aim of which is to make us partakers of His holiness, and to save us from being ashamed at Christ's coming. Heb 12v10, 1Cor 11v27-34, 1John 2v28. Under the New Covenant, there is a definite emphasis upon purity of life, and a heart cleansed by the fire of God, and devotion to God. Luke 3v8,16,17, John 1v33, Acts 2v3,4,38,39, 2Cor 3v18, 1Pet 1v13-18.

The process used by God the Father, to sanctify the believer, is exactly the same as that which He used to sanctify His own dear Son, Jesus, during the thirty years of His preparation, when He was hidden away at Nazareth, which was by obedience to the Word of God. Deut 8v3, Isaiah 50v3-8, Matt 4v4, Heb 2v11, 5v8,9.

Why did the Lord Jesus never sin? Why did He have such a wonderful ministry? If we say that it was because He was the Son of God and was incapable of failure, we rob Him of His glory and make His trials and temptations a farce. The Scriptures clearly tell us that the Lord Jesus on many occasions found it very difficult to do the will of His Father. When the Lord Jesus "emptied Himself," Phil 2v7, Greek, "ekenosen," and became flesh, He laid Himself open to all the difficulties, trials and temptations that come to man. John 1v14, Heb 2v14,18, 4v15, Rom 1v3. The Lord Jesus was not bound to grow up pure and perfect, Christ could not be prayerless, or neglect the Scriptures, or live carelessly in any way and escape the consequences. He led a diligent, spiritual and careful life; He fulfilled the beatitudes at Nazareth before He preached them at the Sermon on the Mount. The Lord Jesus knew that to live right you had to feed on and live every word that proceeded out of the mouth of God the Father. The growth of Christ's character (His sanctification) was not automatic, He responded to the grace of God. Luke 2v40,52.

To become flesh the Lord Jesus had to empty Himself of all His wisdom and knowledge, and so he had to learn again the Truth that He had known in heaven. Luke 2v40,52. The Lord Jesus would first learn about His mission from what His mother and relatives told Him. He would hear about the angels that visited Mary and Joseph, Zachariah, and the shepherds, and how Simeon and Anna recognised Him as the Messiah, and without a doubt Zachariah and Elizabeth were a tremendous help to the young Saviour. Luke chapters 1 and 2.

There must also have come to the young Christ a similar revelation to the one that the young Samuel experienced long before. It was probably the Father that revealed Himself to the Son in His younger years, telling Him His identity and His mission more explicitly; for one cannot believe that the child Samuel would have a greater spiritual experience as a child than the Lord Jesus. 1Sam 3v1-21. Christ's communion and fellowship with the Father was perfect, complete and unique, for there was no shadow of sin between them. John 10v14,15,37,38.

Though the Lord Jesus learned a great deal by supernatural revelation from His Father, He also learned a lot about His mission from the Scriptures. He said to His disciples, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken," Luke 24v25, and he said to His enemies, "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God." Matt 22v29, Mark 12v24,27. The Lord Jesus loved the Scriptures and during the 30 years at Nazareth He was continually meditating on them, and planning His life around them. Our Lord was living a life that was devoted to the task that lay ahead of Him, and by prayer and meditation He prepared Himself for it. We are told in Isaiah 49v1-7, that the Father prepared His Son in secret for the task that lay ahead of Him. "He hath made my mouth like a sharp sword," speaks of wisdom, Christ was an able exponent of the Scriptures, He was able to discern between good and evil. Heb 4v12,13. "A polished shaft," speaks of obedience, the Lord Jesus went where His Father aimed Him, there was no flaw in His character, no spiritual weakness, no ignorance or lack of wisdom and knowledge that would cause any deviation from the target.

In Isaiah 50v3-5 we again see the Creator and Controller of the universe in the position of the pupil, being taught by the Father the things that he needed to know. In Luke 2v40,52 we read that the Lord Jesus "grew and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him," and "Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man." The Lord Jesus grew in spiritual strength and knowledge until at 30 He was "full of grace and truth," He had a beautiful and gracious disposition and a mind that was full of truth," and this is exactly what our Heavenly Father is longing to accomplish in the rest of His dear children, to fill their hearts with grace and their minds with Truth. John 1v14,16.

Even as the Lord Jesus now desires to take His brethren into the Heavenly places (and later into Heaven), the Lord Jesus, during His hidden years at Nazareth (like the believer now), had to fight His way into the Heavenly places, by conquering the Devil and the powers of darkness (He had to bind the strong man, before He could enter his house and plunder his goods, the final testing being the forty day Wilderness Temptation), and then once having got through into the power of God (to manifest it in the Heavenly places through the gifts of the Holy Spirit), He had to continue to fight to remain in it, by exercising a prophetic prayer ministry directed by visions. It was also during these hidden years at Nazareth, that He prayed (Greek, "proseuchomai" (NT:4336)) the great revival that was going to occur (which started at the time that John Baptist was revealed to Israel in the Wilderness of Judea, and continued in a greater degree after the Baptism and Anointing of the Lord Jesus at the Jordan, where He was "filled with the Holy Spirit" and after the forty day Wilderness Temptation, when He went forth "in the power of the Spirit," having received the "Spirit without measure," Luke 4v1,14, John 3v34) into actual being, for the Scriptures clearly foretold, that the Promised One (the Messiah) would have a great anointing so that He might fulfil His great healing ministry (that was part of the Messianic Ministry), to bring deliverance and healing to **ALL** that came to Him for such. This really tested the spirituality of the Lord Jesus, for there had been no revival or miracle performed in Israel for centuries, and it had to be prayed in from ground zero (the earnest praying (Greek, "proseuchomai" (NT:4336)) of the godly prophetess Anna, was also instrumental in bringing revival to Israel at the time it did in the days of John Baptist and the Lord Jesus, Luke 2v36-38). The idea that the revival was "just going to happen" no matter how the Lord Jesus lived at Nazareth is utter nonsense and complete rubbish. **EVERY** revival that has ever occurred since Adam, has come into being through the earnest prevailing prayer (Greek, "proseuch" (NT:4335)) of God's people, and the revival that occurred during the time of Christ was **NO** different! Psalm 69v7-12,20,21, Isaiah 42v1-9, 35v5,6, Mark 3v20-27, Luke 4v1-14,18,19, (with Isaiah 61v1,2 and 58v6), John 3v13, 17v24, Col 3v1-11, Heb 3v1-4v16.

As the Lord Jesus was praying the revival into existence; through His obedience to the Word and the will of God, His Father was sanctifying Him and preparing Him for His ministry. The common thought in the Church today (and indeed for many centuries past) has been that the Lord Jesus simply turned on His deity and His divine power to do His miracles. But this kind of thinking is **NOT** of God, indeed it is of the spirit of antichrist, and is the old destructive heresy of Docetic Gnosticism. 1John 4v1-6. The Lord Jesus clearly stated that the very opposite of this was true, John 5v19,20,30, 14v10,11:

"Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, **The Son can do nothing of himself**, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth: and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel...**I can of mine own self do nothing**: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me...Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but **the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works**. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake."

Failure of the believer, to grasp the **VITAL** Truth regarding the real humanity of the Lord Jesus, will result in the total stifling of their spiritual growth, so that they remain unsanctified carnal spiritual babes (Greek, "nepios" (NT:3516), the whole of their lifetime. If we miss the Lord's hidden years at Nazareth, we have missed so much vital Truth about our Beautiful Lord (which is **ESSENTIAL** for the believer's sanctification and spiritual growth to maturity). The maturity that we reach as a Christian (and hence our position in the Eternal Kingdom), will be directly proportional to the amount of Truth, that we make our own, regarding the Lord's hidden years at Nazareth, and the countless thousands of victories that He won during that time.

In Eph 1v15-23 and 3v14-21, Paul states what He continually prayed (Greek, "proseuchomai" (NT:4336)) to God for, that each individual Christian in the Ephesian church might experience:

"Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, **Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers** (Greek, "proseuchoón," the feminine plural genitive of "proseuche" (NT:4335)); That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all...For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."

It was Paul's deepest desire that each believer at Ephesus (and indeed every believer in **ALL** the churches that he founded through his Apostolic ministry) might experience the same kind of spiritual revelation of Truth (and hence sanctification and spiritual growth to full maturity) that the Lord Jesus Himself had experienced during the thirty years when He was hidden away at Nazareth, and indeed what the Lord Jesus is now praying for every believer under the New Covenant to experience, through the "interventions" (with power) (Greek, "entungchánein," the present active infinitive of "entugchano" (NT:1793)) that He is making for them in fulfilling His High Priestly ministry, which started on the day of His Resurrection. John 14v21,23, 17v3,6,26, Phil 1v3-11, Col 1v1-3, Heb 5v5, 7v25.

This letter to the Ephesian Church is one the most spiritual (if not the most spiritual) of, not only all the letters that Paul wrote, but indeed of all the New Testament writings (so they must have been in an appropriate spiritual condition to understand this epistle). It was written to the Ephesian Church in 63 AD from Rome, where Paul was a prisoner, and delivered to them by Tychicus. Eph 6v21. Paul had been in custody since the middle of May 58 AD, when he was arrested in the Temple, after having gone up to Jerusalem (against the express command of the Lord Jesus and the Holy Spirit **NOT TO GO UP**, Acts 20v23, 21v4,11,12, 22v18-21) for the Feast of Pentecost (the Feast of Pentecost being on Tuesday, 16th May, in the year of 58 AD). Acts 20v16.

The church at Ephesus had enjoyed many privileges; Paul first visited there in 54 AD, while on his way to Jerusalem, to keep the Feast of Passover. (Acts 18v19,21). The Apostle Apollos then arrived and ministered to them, and being heard by Aquila and Priscilla (they are mentioned five times in the New Testament, and on two of these occasions, Priscilla is mentioned before Aquila, which would indicate that Priscilla took the leading role in the teaching of the Scriptures, so here we have a woman instructing an apostle, i.e. Apollos, in the way of Truth. Acts 18v2,18,26, Rom 16v3, 1Cor 16v19), they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately. Acts 18v26. Luke states that Apollos was mighty in the Scriptures and fervent in spirit, he was full of passionate sincerity and heavenly energy, even before Priscilla and Aquila instructed him more thoroughly in Christian things. Acts 18v24-28. Luke uses the word "zeo" (NT:2204) to describe Apollos, it means "to be hot," and is used to describe boiling liquids and glowing solids. "Zeo" (NT:2204) and its derivatives is used in either a good sense or a bad one, either of fervent godly zeal, or ungodly jealousy, covetous anger. John 2v17, Rom 10v2, 12v11, 13v13, Acts 7v9, 13v45, 17v5, 1Cor 3v3, 12v31, 13v4, 14v1,39, 2Cor 7v7,11, 9v2, 11v2, Gal 4v17, Phil 3v6, Col 4v13, James 3v14-16, 4v2, 5v16, Rev 3v15,16,19. Let us glow with heavenly love and zeal, not boil with anger, envy or jealousy. Paul then returned to Ephesus, and was there for three years. Acts 19v26, 20v31. There was a tremendous revival with great persecution because of the financial loss that the idol makers suffered due to the reformed lives of many of their former customers. Acts 19 all NB v8,10, Acts 26v18-20, 1Thess 1v9.

Luke writes in Acts 19v9,10: "But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus. And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks."

At Ephesus Paul had a mission in the hall of Tyrannus to reach the entire district. Acts 19v8,9. This was the place for Paul's daily evangelism, and seekers came to him there. The Codex Beza adds "from the fifth hour to the tenth," that is, from just before midday and the noon meal to the close of the afternoon. What a Challenge! Paul had at least five hours evangelism a day in a public building or lecture hall. Paul needed quite a time to fully evangelise these strategic areas of evangelism, with their constant change of population. The local Christians would doubtless gather to listen to Paul's superlative theological discussions, and they would learn much from them, and this is certainly another reason for the spiritual maturity of the Ephesian believers when Paul wrote the epistle to them from Rome, when he was in prison, in 63 AD.

The Greek word "kerusso," (NT:2784) "to proclaim as a herald," obviously implies that there was a place for an uninterrupted discourse in preaching, teaching, and evangelism in the early Church. However, in both evangelistic and fellowship meetings, the more usual pattern was dialogue, discussion, reasoning, and question and answer in an informal conversational manner. There was far more participation and discussion in Paul's preaching hall, than there is in today's church services. "Dialogue," "dialegomai," (NT:1256) is used in Acts 17v2,17, 18v4,19, 19v8,9, 20v7,9, 24v12,25.

"Peitho," (NT:3982) to persuade, occurs in Acts 28v23,24, in connection with Paul's evangelism. "Suzeteo," (NT:4802) to reason, is used of Paul's and Stephen's irresistible Scripture reasoning with those who opposed them. The arguments of these great Christians were unanswerable, so their opponents murdered Stephen, and planned to murder Paul. Acts 6v9,10, 9v29,30. Modern Christianity has cramped and straightened even the Gospel mission to a formal service, which it certainly was not in the early Church. This wonderful practice in the early church of dialogue, discussion, reasoning, and question and answer in an informal conversational manner, for both evangelistic and fellowship meetings, caused those participating to understand and perceive far more Truth, than if they were just sitting and listening impassively!

Paul then meets with the elders of Ephesus at Miletus in 58 AD, on his way to Jerusalem (where he was intending to be for the Day of Pentecost, Acts 20v16). Acts 20v17-38, NB v31. Paul reminds them of his sacrificial and loving ministry among them in the past, and asks them to care for their flocks in the same way. Paul then gives them a prophetic warning that they would be attacked by false teachers from without and ambitious leaders seeking a following of disciples from within. It seems from Paul's letter to the Ephesians in 64 AD, that his warning was heeded for a time, for there is no mention of any problems in it. However, by 66 AD or 67 AD (probably 67 AD), when Paul wrote in 2Tim 1v15, "This thou knowest, that **ALL** they which be in Asia are turned against me;" it seems that even Ephesus was estranged from Paul for a while. It appears that by the time that the letter in Revelation was written, any false prophets and ambitious leaders had been rejected. Rev 2v6. We also need to beware of wolves who wear the sheepskin of the Gospel. Matt 7v15-23, 2Cor 11v13-15,26, 2Pet 2v1-3, 1Tim 1v19,20, 1John 2v19, 3John v9-10.

Tradition informs us that Timothy was an overseer here for a long period of time. 1Tim 1v3, 2Tim 4v19,20, with Acts 18v24-26, Phil 2v19-22. John had a long ministry there, it was his home and administrative centre, and he returned there from Patmos.

However, when the Lord Jesus addressed the Ephesian Church in Rev 2v1-7, there was one vital thing missing. The Ephesian church had many commendable points and by modern standards we would say it was a good church. They had "works," "erga," John 5v17, 6v29; had "toiled hard with exhausting work," "kopos;" had "steadfastly endured," "hupomene," and had not grown weary or flagged, "ou kekopiakes," in their service for God. They had faithfully served God and had rejected false apostles and false doctrine, which other churches had accepted. This church had enjoyed the most spiritual and loving leaders possible, but they had failed in the most vital part of Christianity, **they had lost their first love for Jesus** (Rev 2v4), and probably because of this their fervent love for each other. "Aphekes," the aorist active of "aphiemi," to leave, forsake, or abandon, is a strong word, they had left their first enthusiastic love for Jesus. What had cooled off their love and zeal for Christ? Was it the loss of their pastor John, the apostle of love? Had they neglected fellowship, earnest prayer and love of God's Word? Did they feel that supreme spiritual effort was no longer necessary? Had they cooled off to become more accepted by the worldlings and Jews to avoid persecution to give their families security? Had the church become more worldly-minded and gone after material possessions? Whatever the cause of this loss of first love, remember nothing can take the place of love for Christ and communion with Christ. We need a tender heart full of deep affection for Jesus, as well as a clear well-informed mind.

Jesus tells them to keep on remembering ("mnemoneue," the present active imperative of "mnemoneuo," continue mindful), from where they are fallen and to repent and do (the aorist active imperative of "poieo," "Do at once") the first works ("ta prota erga") and renew the first love which had grown cold. Acts 19v20, 20v37, Eph 1v13-16. Action was needed; **we cannot live on past memories, even though we may be encouraged by them.** Our love for God must be nourished and kept alive day by day, or the first love, and first works that spring out of that love, will die away. The first and greatest commandment directs us to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, this will decide the quality of work that we do for our Lord.

The Ephesian Christians still laboured for Christ, they had evangelistic endeavour and good works, but they had lost some of their original power to bless; for Christ demanded a return to both first works and first love. A fullness of ministry can only flow from fervent and genuine Christian love. Acts 2v1 to 4v37, 1Cor 12v31 to 13v13, 1Pet 4v8. Christ knew that unless they repented, they would degenerate to the place where they would have all the words and outward form of Christianity, without the inner reality of the power and love of God, and would end up with a dead form. In 2Tim 3v5, "form," is "morphosin," which means, the outline of the "morphe," without its substance and reality. (also see Rom 2v20). Jesus, therefore, told them to remember the spiritual loss that they had sustained, and to repent and do the first works. This church had great privileges; it must therefore have a corresponding life. To whom much is given, much shall be required. Luke 12v48.

In the first "repent" in Rev 2v5, Jesus uses the aorist active imperative "metanoeson," of "metanoeo," to change one's thinking, to repent, when He said that He would come and remove their lamp stand if they did not repent. The aorist imperative suggests a decisive break; this is in contrast to the present imperative, "repent," which suggests a continuing attitude. The second "repent" in Rev 2v5, is "metanoeseis," the aorist active subjunctive of "metanoeo." The removal of the lamp could mean either that the church would cease to exist as a light for Christ, or He was going to move the shining of His light to another place. Since Jesus said he would remove the lamp, not extinguish it, the second is more likely. Jesus could have meant that He would bring a remnant out of the church, or raise up another group of spiritual Christians. It is often easier for God to raise up a new church than to give life to a dead form. Churches can carry on for centuries with a dead form without God's blessing, and can drift so far from the Truth that they shed darkness instead of light, and even persecute the true Church of God. John 16v1-4. It is our personal affection for Christ that determines our position in the Christian life. This love will be manifested in the fruits of the Spirit and not just in lip praise or emotion. Matt 5v1-16, Mark 4v25, John 14v15.

False apostles, True apostles and elders. (Rev 2v2, 2Cor 11v12-15, 12v12).

These false teachers arrogantly proclaimed that they had an apostolic ministry, and assumed an air of authority; the Ephesians had tested them and proved that they were deceivers and not apostles. Paul often had to write in defence of his apostleship, and he tells us how to recognise a true apostle. He states that God, not men, sets apostles in the Church, and confirms their ministry by signs, wonders and miracles. Rom 15v18-20, 1Cor 12v28, 2Cor 12v11-13, Eph 4v11, 1Thess 2v1-14. True men of God have an outstanding revelation of Christ and Truth from Christ. Gal 1 and 2, 2Cor 12v1-10. They also manifest a Christ-like life. Gal 1v15,16. 1Thess 2v10, 1Cor 11v1. True apostles have to suffer for their ministry, it is the way of the cross. Paul bore in his body the scars that he had received for Christ's sake, they proved his love for Jesus. 2Cor 11v23-33, 12v7-10, 1Cor 4v9-13, Gal 6v17. Paul had continual opposition from the Judaizers, right from his first controversy with them over whether Gentile Christians should keep the Law in Acts 15v1-34, NB v1,24. Some Judaizers falsely claimed that they were apostles, and they won the allegiance, and corrupted the faith, of many of the churches that Paul founded.

Here we see that over 30 years after Paul's warnings, the church at Ephesus is again plagued by false apostles and by evil false doctrine through the Nicolaitanes and Baalamites. Some say that Nicolas is the Greek version of the Hebrew Balaam, however, Jesus differentiates between them in Rev 2v15,16. Both groups had immoral teaching in their doctrine, and they appear to have said that it did not matter what your morals were as long as you believed, and that sin made the grace of God to abound more. This evil antinomian doctrine is with us today, those who teach unconditional eternal security go a long way down this dark road. We have been redeemed from the curse of the Law, but we will always have to obey the moral law of God, it will be the basis of the happiness of Heaven. We can never sin and get away with it, for wilful sin destroys the soul. 2Pet 2v9-16, Jude v4,11, Rom 6 all, Prov 3v18, 11v30, 13v13-15, Ezek 18v4,20,30-32.

Jesus closes his exhortation by encouraging the Ephesians with the promise of eternal life in Paradise for those who overcome and faithfully follow Him. Jesus knows all about our lives, and knows if there is any cooling off of our love for Him.

The following is a prophecy, which was given when Howard Carter was the Principal of the Pentecostal Bible College, which was later to become known as the Hampstead Bible School. **"Let me never lose the all important truth that to be in Thy will is better than success and grant that I may ever love Thyself more than Thy service."**

It was the continuous earnest praying (Greek, "proseuchomai" (NT:4336)) of Paul (motivated by the deepest tenderest love), and his helpers, that transformed the Ephesian believers (and those in every other church that Paul had founded through his Apostolic endeavours) and brought them to such a mature spiritual state (his desire was that Christ should be formed in them), that they were able to fully understand the Epistle that he wrote to them (from Rome) in 63 AD. It should also be noted that the Ephesian believers were also praying (Greek, "proseuchomai" (NT:4336)) for Paul. Eph 6v18,19. May we follow the wonderful example of both Paul and the believers at Ephesus, and pray (Greek, "proseuche" (NT:4335)) unceasingly, for **BOTH** the different ministries and saints in the Church (which is the Body of Christ). Gal 4v19, Eph 1v22,23, Col 1v1-3, 4v12, 1Thess 5v17.

"As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world." John 17v18.

"As thou hast sent me into the world..."

The Lord Jesus was "the sent One of the Father" under both the Old and New Covenants. Under the Old Covenant, He appeared unto Israel and many of the Old Testament saints as "Mal'ak Yahweh," The Angel, The Lord (there is no "of" in the Hebrew, i.e., it is not The Angel of The Lord), or better still "Yahweh Messenger," Who was also "Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh," (or in the Septuagint, the Greek is, "Ego eimi ho Oon"), which He also shortens to "Ehyeh," (in the Old Testament), and "Ego eimi" (in the New). Exodus 3v2,4,14,15, John 8v58.

The first sending forth of the Lord Jesus in connection with the New Covenant, was at the Incarnation, when the Father sent forth His son, born of a woman, and born under the law. This is when He "emptied" (Greek, "ekénoosen," the aorist active indicative of "kenoo" (NT:2758)), to make empty, make (of none effect, of no reputation, void, be in vain) Himself of His omnipresence, omnipotence, omniscience, transcendence, and immutability, being veiled in human flesh, by becoming an embryo in Mary's womb, and waking up in her arms forty weeks later. John 1v14, 10v36, Rom 8v1-4 (esp., v 3 "God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh"), Gal 4v4, Phil 2v5-11, Heb 1v6 (KJV), 2v10-18.

There then came a definite (epochal) time in the life of the Lord Jesus at Nazareth, when the Father informed Him that He was fully prepared to be revealed to Israel (He had learned by years of patient endurance that God values patience above success, and obedience above ability), as their long promised Messiah, and to fulfil His healing ministry which was a cardinal feature of Messiah's ministry to His people. Isaiah 35v5,6, 61v1,2 with 58v6, Acts 10v38, Gal 4v4. But before this actual time came, the Lord Jesus had already known for a considerable time (from Daniel's seventy weeks prophecy, Dan 9v20-27), that His crucifixion would occur at the end of the four hundredth and eighty third year from the commandment going forth to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem (and it actually being built); this commandment was issued in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes Longimanus, which was (according to Ussher, after thirty nine years of deliberation) 454 BC (Neh 2v1-8). From this information, the Lord Jesus knew that His crucifixion would occur in 30 AD, when He was in His 34th year, His birth being at the Feast of Tabernacles 5 BC. He also knew from the prophetic Scriptures, that His Messenger (John

Baptist), would be revealed, by His Father, to Israel (shortly before His own revealing to them), and that he would, "Prepare the way of the Lord, and make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain, at which time the glory of the Lord shall be revealed..." Isaiah 40v3-5, 50v3-7, Mal 3v1-3.

On a certain day, probably after the Feast of Tabernacles in 26 AD (when He had turned thirty years of age), the Lord Jesus laid down His tools for the last time, and announced to Mary, and the rest of His family, that He must be about His Father's business, and took His leave of them, heading off to the Wilderness of Judea, where He was to be baptised by John the Baptist, to fulfil all righteousness, and be anointed with the Holy Spirit and with power, so that He might perform His ministry. Matt 3v13-17, Luke 3v1-23, Acts 10v38.

"...Even so have I also sent them into the world."

The Lord Jesus would not just have "chosen" (Greek, "eklegomai" (NT:1586), Luke 6v13, John 15v16) the twelve apostles after His night of prayer (both Greek words, "proseuchomai" (NT:4336) and "proseuche" (NT:4335) are used in Luke 6v12) mentioned in Luke 6v12-16, He would have known (having been told by His Father) some time before His ministry started who was going to be in the apostolic band. From the time His Father informed Him as to the identity of these persons, until the actual night He spent in prayer, he would have, by vision ministry, been praying them through, so that they would have matured spiritually enough to be sent forth, by the Lord Jesus to preach the Gospel immediately after this night of prayer. Psalm 69v7-11, 50v3-7, John 5v19,20.

Matt 10v1-4 states (with Mark 3v14-19, Luke 6v12-16): "And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples (then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him (for companionship and to give spiritual succour, Matt 26v37,38, Luke 8v51, 9v28) and that He might send them out to preach, Mark 3v14), he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease. Now the names of the twelve apostles are these; The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus; Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him."

"Firstly Apostles." (1Cor 12v18,28 with Eph 4v11-16).

We read in 1Cor 12v28, that apostles are "placed, appointed, and set in the Church by God," and as long as the Church exists God will exercise His prerogative. Apostles, like all the other ministries, are permanently set in the Church, "en tei ecclesia," by God during this age. It is only rank unbelief and a resistance to God's Word and Spirit that makes Christians say that God has amended this Scripture, and now only appoints non-miraculous ministries. God looks upon apostolic ministry as the most important ministry of the Church. Who are we to resist His will?

In the New Testament we see the chief apostle, our Lord Jesus Christ, Heb 3v1; then there are the twelve apostles who had a unique position, and were chosen (finally) by Christ after a night of prayer. Mark 3v13-19, Luke 6v12-16, Matt 10v1-5, Acts 1v13,26. After the apostasy of Judas, the remaining eleven apostles taught others their hallowed memories of Christ's life, glory, and His public and private teaching, they also enjoyed additional special revelation and outstanding personal spiritual experiences. See Acts 1v1-4, for Christ's 40 days of ministry to them after His resurrection. It is interesting to note how many brothers were in the twelve, Simon Peter and his brother Andrew; James and his brother John; Philip seems to have been Bartholomew's brother, otherwise known as Nathanael, Luke 6v14 with John 1v43-51; James the son of Alphaeus could have been the brother of Matthew as well as the brother of Judas, not Iscariot. Tradition says that James the son of Alphaeus was brother to Matthew, Simon Zealotes, and Judas, not Iscariot. Luke 6v16. Families, who have learned to live together and love one another, can be really used by God; they are a strong unit for God, if they keep close to Him.

There are other apostles besides the original twelve mentioned in the New Testament. Matthias, Acts 1v26; Paul and Barnabus, 1Cor 9v5,6, Acts 14v4,14; Gal 2v9; Apollos, 1Cor 4v6-9; Timothy and Silas, 1Thess 1v1, 2v6. "Messengers" in Greek can sometimes mean "apostles," Epaphroditus and Titus could have been apostles, the word for "messenger" in Phil 2v23 is "apostolos," and "messengers" in 2Cor 8v23 is "apostoloi," it could mean that Titus and Epaphroditus were "sent-ones" of the churches as distinct from the "sent-ones" of God, but they could have been apostles for God as well as men. James the Lord's half brother also became an apostle. Gal 1v19, 2v6, James 1v1. It is also possible that Andronicus and Junia were apostles, they had been Christians before Paul, and had suffered imprisonment with him it seems from the words "fellow-prisoners." Rom 16v7. "Of note among the apostles" could mean "highly esteemed among the apostles," but it probably more likely that they were "distinguished among the apostles," or literally, "stamped, marked, bearing a mark, among the apostles." They had by their suffering for Christ certainly fulfilled an essential qualification for apostleship. 1Cor 4v9-13. If Junia was an apostle, it could mean that there was one woman apostle. Church leaders of the first few centuries have written that Junia was a woman, and that she was also an apostle. Leaving all conjecture aside, we see around 20 apostles in the New Testament Scriptures.

"Apostle" was used by the Greeks to speak of any responsible person "sent" by someone who did a job for them. There were throughout the Middle East thousands of people called "apostles" in the business and political world, who were sent to do work for their master or ruler. "Apostle" means literally "one sent forth," from "apo" meaning "from," and "stello" meaning "to send." Apostles in the Church are, and were, the messengers, workers and "sent-ones" of God, with "a mission," "apostolee," from God. Acts 1v25, Rom 1v5, 1Cor 9v2, Gal 2v8. The ministries of prophet, teacher and

evangelist may be "sent" on a mission by God, as were the ministries of Acts 13v1, and Agabus and Philip, but this does not mean that they had the ministry, authority or office of apostles. Apostles were Christians who were sent by God with His full-delegated authority, and fully equipped by God to found and care for churches.

NB The New Testament shows the ministry of apostles consisted of the following qualities and gifts:

"The most eminent Apostles" had great spiritual power and spiritual revelation from Christ. 2Cor 11v5, 12v11.

A miraculous ministry was an essential part of apostolic ministry, whether a person was a major or minor apostle. Apostles had a heavenly power and commission that manifested itself in miracles, it was not a formal title, it was a ministry and commission from Christ. Gal 1v1, 2Cor 12v12, 1Cor 9v1,2, Col 1v11. The miracles that God performed through apostles gave them great ability to win converts and found churches. The "chiefest apostles" also had a great prophetic revelation from God, and it seems that it was this difference in degree of revelation ministry that made the difference between major and minor apostles. 1Cor 9v1,2, 2Cor 11v5, 12v11,12. It is only those who have had this kind of tremendous revelation of God, and from God, who can stand true in the malicious persecution that comes against those who have a truly apostolic ministry. Apostles had Christ's Truth and mighty gifts and keys of authority to open doors of blessing and healing, but it was all because of God's grace. Matt 16v19, 18v18,19, John 20v23. Jesus alone has the keys to eternal life, or death. Rev 1v18, Rev 3v7, Isaiah 22v22.

Apostles had a God-given ability to pastor churches.

What the young apostles of Christ lacked in age they received through contact with their Lord, and through His gifts. They later exercised a pastoral care of the flock, as we see from Christ's instructions to Peter. John 21v15-17. Once a church was founded the work of an apostle was pastoral, so apostles needed great fruits of character and a real love for their converts. They had to be spiritual fathers to the flock, not just teachers; Paul said that the Corinthians had many teachers, but not many fathers. 1Cor 4v15. Paul speaks of "all patience," and "much patience." 2Cor 6v4, 12v12. Great power demands great grace, and the need for tenderness towards God's babes. Acts 4v33, Gal 4v19, 1Cor 9v1. We see from 1Thess 2v5-13, the tender feelings that Paul and his associates had towards their converts, it is an example that every ministry should imitate. There was no flattery, covetousness, or self-seeking, by Paul and his companions; they were gentle and affectionate to their converts. The whole aim of the apostolic ministries was to bring people into living contact with God, and to establish Christian fellowships that were dominated by "agape" love. Paul totally rejected any thought of glorifying himself, or of increasing his sphere of influence, or of establishing a personal kingdom or denomination. He recognised that apostolic ministry demanded a tender love for people, and a willingness to give his all for the welfare and blessing of people, just as his Lord had done. 1Thess 2v8.

Apostles were responsible for the foundation of Christian doctrine.

Apostles laid the necessary foundation of faith, we read in Acts 2v42, that the converts at Jerusalem "continued steadfastly in the apostles doctrine." Eph 3v5. God fully equipped His Church with the doctrine for this age, at the start of this age, so no one can now lay claim to new doctrine outside of the Scriptures. Anyone who does so charges God with folly, because they suggest that God allowed His Church to carry on without vital truth for nearly 2,000 years. The Scriptures are the only foundation for doctrine and practice; any claim to vital new revelation on doctrine should be treated as heretical. New doctrinal revelation is not given today, even to people with a genuine apostolic ministry. Eph 2v20, 3v5, Rev 22v18,19, Acts 15v28, 1Cor 2v13, 1Thess 4v15, 1John 5v9-13. We can receive personal guidance from God, but not new doctrinal revelation.

The apostles were inspired in their doctrine, because they received it directly from Jesus, but they were not infallible in other things. Peter denied his Lord, and on another occasion had to be corrected by Paul. Luke 22v54-62, Gal 2v6,11-14, Acts 14v15. From Acts 17v10-12, we see that the Bereans carefully examined Paul's apostolic teaching in the light of the Scriptures, and they were said to be "noble-minded" because of this. These sincere people believed Paul's teaching, when they found that it was foreshadowed in the Old Testament, and was wholly in agreement with God's previous revelations to His children. 1Thess 5v21, 1John 4v1-5, Heb 8v5, 10v1. The vague shadows of the Old Testament were illuminated by divine revelation. Eph 3v1-11. The apostles taught eternal Old Testament moral Truth with the new Christian Truth, this Truth was passed on to other Christians with a teaching ministry. We see Timothy teaching local elders in 2Tim 2v2. Paul had valuable helpers who were able to assist him in the foundation and care of churches. Acts 17v10-15, Col 4v7, etc.

Apostles had a God-given ability to develop spiritual ministry in their converts.

Apostles experienced in some measure certain aspects of prophetic ministry, particularly in the impartation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit to Christians. Paul wanted to visit the Roman church in order to share and impart some "spiritual grace-gift," "charisma pneumatikon," to them. Rom 1v10,11. The first essential was to get the converts baptised in the Holy Spirit and manifesting spiritual gifts, so that they could edify themselves and minister Christ's power and love to others. Acts 1v4-8, 2v4, 8v15-18, 9v17, 10v44-48, 19v1-6. Paul did not just give intellectual teaching on doctrine, essential as this is; he brought his converts into a living experience of God, His gifts, and His Truth. Paul, like Moses of old, had the power and authority to impart spiritual gifts and spiritual ministry. Deut 34v9.

We see from Col 2v1-5, that Paul watched over the condition of churches by the revelation gifts of the Holy Spirit, and

exercised the gift of faith in prayer to transform the lives of Christians he had never met in the flesh. Gal 4v19. In Cor 5v1-5, we see that Paul was present in spirit in the Corinthian Church, when the man who had committed incest with his father's wife was being disciplined, and he exercised spiritual power in that discipline. We need to remember that Paul did not only rely upon spiritual revelation for knowledge about the churches under his care, he also wrote letters, and relied on the reports of others about the spiritual progress of his converts.

Apostles were responsible for appointing elders in the churches they founded.

The New Testament states that Paul ordained elders in all the churches that he founded, and instructed Titus and Timothy to do the same and told them the qualifications that an elder must have. Titus 1v5-10, 1Tim 3v1-7, Acts 14v23. However, their choice was not autocratic or arbitrary; they chose those who the local Christians had confidence in. The popular will of the local Christians was prayerfully considered, for they knew which leaders were trustworthy, godly, wise and spiritual, and to whom the Holy Spirit had given a definite ministry. The advice and agreement of the local people was sought, and they nominated those who had the necessary qualifications of character and spirituality to perform this ministry.

The local church, then, had an important say in the ordination of both elders and deacons. Acts 1v25,26, 6v2-6, 14v23. Elders were chosen by the popular vote, and ordained by elders as well as apostles, in the will of the Holy Spirit. Acts 20v28, 14v23, 1Tim 3v2-13, 4v14. In Acts 14v23, "appointed," is "cheirotoneo," the aorist active participle of "cheirotoneo" from "cheirotoneo," which means "extending the hand," it is derived from "cheir," "hand," and "teino," "to stretch." It means "to vote and elect by a show of hands," and as in 2Cor 8v18,19, to appoint with the approval of an assembly of people. Ellicott says of Acts 14v23; "The word for ordained occurs in the New Testament here and in 2Cor 8v19, where it is translated 'chosen' and certainly seems to imply popular election (election by a show of hands), which is, indeed, the natural meaning of the word." Quote ends. The seven deacons of Acts 6v1-6, were first selected by the Jerusalem church, and then chosen, "eklego, and appointed, "kathistemi," by the apostles, this was almost certainly what Paul did in Acts 14v23, and what he advised Titus to do in Titus 1v5.

Paul appointed the elders of local churches in the churches that he had founded; modern prelates, who have never founded a church and never manifested spiritual gifts, cannot claim the right to ordain elders, never mind the exclusive right of apostolic succession. There is no such thing as humanly ordained apostolic succession, it is only a miraculous ministry of the most conspicuous kind that proves a person has apostolic ministry. From Acts 13v1-4, we see that the leaders of the church at Antioch gave themselves to prayer and fasting for guidance in their work for God, and when God revealed His will for Paul and Barnabus, they earnestly prayed for their ministries, and sent them on their divinely appointed work. In like manner, Paul and the local church, not only appointed spiritual and godly men; they prayed earnestly for them, that God might impart further blessing and ministry to them. 1Tim 4v14, 5v22, Acts 6v6, 13v1-3, 14v23, 2Tim 1v6.

NB1 The time lapse before elders were appointed by apostles.

We see from Acts 14v23, and the instructions to Timothy and Titus, that there was a definite time lapse between a church being founded and ministries being appointed in that church. Time was given for ministry in the local church to develop, there was no premature ordination and so mistakes were cut out.

In Acts 13v1-3, we see the Christians at Antioch were guided by prophets and teachers from outside for about three years before their own local ministries had developed enough for God to send Paul and Barnabus on their way to other work. From Acts 14v23, we see that Paul ordained elders within about two years of churches being founded. It appears that up to this time the Christians had gathered together for Bible study, prayer, the Lord's supper and fellowship, and the baptism of new converts, without any formally appointed elders or deacons. Christ Himself made leaders in these churches by giving His ministry gifts to some of them, and when these divinely given ministries manifested themselves, they were accepted and recognised by the people, and then appointed by Paul. Ministries were proved before they were appointed. 1Tim 3v10. God Himself sets ministries in the Church, men's ordination does not mean a thing if God is not in it, the churches should recognise those who God has ordained and given a ministry gift. Acts 20v28.

NB2 Apostles were not despotic; they exercised the superintendence of love.

A prolonged apostolic mission in a city did not hinder the body ministry of the local church, or the development of ministries, it encouraged both. Paul did not stay in a place to be the permanent pastor of the flock, he always appointed local elders to guide and care for the local church. Paul followed our Lord's direction in Matt 20v25-28, and never "lorded it over" or dictated to the local Christians. He had the humility to look upon himself as, "the least of the apostles," and "less than the least of all saints," and even as "the chief of sinners," and this genuine humility won people's hearts to him, and accomplished far more than autocratic, bombastic claims could ever have done. 1Cor 15v9, Eph 3v8, 1Tim 1v15.

Paul founded and established churches and moved on, and then returned to confirm and give spiritual guidance and oversight to the churches, but he never took over the rule of the local church from the local elders. Paul stayed in Ephesus almost 3 years and at Corinth for about 18 months to evangelise these strategic areas, not just to pastor the flocks formed by his evangelism. At Ephesus he had a mission in the hall of Tyrannus to reach all the district. Acts 19v8,9. This was the place for Paul's daily evangelism, and seekers came to him there. However, Christian fellowship and body ministry could not take place in a public meeting place for evangelism, so the Christians gathered in homes like that of Priscilla and Aquila. 1Cor 16v19, Acts 18v26. The Christian fellowship had plenty of scope at night, and Paul would do his

very best to inspire body ministry and develop spiritual ministries, he was not in agreement with one-man ministry in Christian fellowship groups. 1Cor 12, etc. One-man ministry in a local church is wrong, even if, like the apostle Paul, a man has all the ministry gifts; body ministry is God's way for developing spiritual ministries and healthy Christians.

The elders were local men, the apostles itinerant men.

Through their itinerant ministries the apostles cemented fellowship between the churches, but they did not constitute either central government, or even an organisational fellowship of churches. Apostles, prophets and elders had the work of overseeing the flock of God, but they were not to dominate it, their work was the superintendence of love. Apostles were not to lord it over God's Church, "all ye are brethren and one is your Master, even Christ." Matt 23v8,10. Indeed, they were to humble themselves as little children, otherwise they would not even enter the kingdom of God. Matt 18v3. They were to be the servants of God's people, not their lords. Matt 20v20-28, John 13v4-17. They were not to be put upon a pedestal and called Rabbi. Matt 23v1-8. The aim of these ministries was to bring people into a living experience of God and develop ministries among them; they helped God's babes to grow into mature Christians. They showed the same grace to young Christians in developing their ministries, as God had shown to them in developing their ministries.

After Paul had appointed the first elders in a local church, it was the responsibility of the local church and local elders to appoint other elders, as it became necessary or desirable. As long as a person had the necessary qualifications, they could be an elder; there is no restriction as to numbers in the New Testament. It is only when men follow worldly principles of government and one-man ministry that a plurality of elders becomes inconvenient; in spiritual oversight a plurality is a blessing not a hindrance. Prov 11v14, 24v6.

If a person has an apostolic ministry they manifest signs, wonders and miracles, and are also able to found, establish and care for churches. The office is proved by results, not by hollow claims. Paul had to refute the false claims of false apostles ("pseudapostoloi") in his day. 1Cor 11v13. Paul also speaks not only of the power, gifts and revelations, but also the sufferings and persecutions that are the essential characteristics of true apostolic ministry. 2Cor 11v1 to 12v21, 1Cor 9v1-27. Christians need to pray continually that God will raise up truly apostolic ministries in these dark days, so that the fullness of Christ's ministry can shine out to the world. Matt 9v35-38.

(For a full study on the ministries, government and practices of the early Church, please see the study entitled, "The Organisation Of The Early Church" by Bill Turner at: www.truthforthelastdays.com)

"And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." John 17v19.

"And for their sakes I sanctify myself..."

"I sanctify myself" is in Greek, "egoó hagiázoo emautón," "hagiázoo" is the present active indicative of "hagiázo," which literally means "separated" (in this case it has the meaning of being totally consecrated and devoted to His Father and brethren in fulfilling His High Priestly ministry, Heb 2v11,17,18), the present active indicative indicates the continuous every moment active dedication to His Father's will and purposes while He was on earth, and this total dedication continues to us and the Father's will and purposes through His High Priestly ministry in Heaven. From Heb 7v25, we see that immediately from the start of His High Priestly ministry (on the day of His Resurrection, Heb 5v5,6) until the present time (and indeed, right up until His second coming), He is "continually making "interventions" (with power)" (Greek, "tó entungchánein," the present active infinitive (continuous action) of "entugchano" (NT:1793), which has the meaning of "continuous interventions with power") for each individual believer; hence we are continuing to see the fulfilment of this wonderful statement, "I sanctify Myself" at this present time; and we will continue to see the fulfilment of it, right up until His second coming. It should also be noted, that it was for **"our sakes"** that He "sanctified Himself," and **NOT** for any other reason, a complete selfless devotion to us, which was going to bring a huge amount of work, pain and suffering to each member of the Trinity during the Age of Grace, which, with the setting up of the Eternal Kingdom, at the second coming of Christ, would result in endless work and activity for them, as the Millennium gives way to the Ages of Ages (how wonderfully great and good they are; eternal dedication and devotion to their creation, Isaiah 6v1-4, Rev 4v8-11). Psalm 121, Rev 11v15-19 (with 1Cor 15v50-58), 20v4-22v21.

As the Lord Jesus makes this statement, "I sanctify Myself," He has in mind that He would be **"the author and finisher of our faith."** Heb 12v1,2.

Looking Away Unto Jesus The Author And Perfecter Of Our Faith. (Heb 12v2).

The authorship of Hebrews.

Tertullian, one of the most learned writers of the second and third centuries ascribes Hebrews to Barnabus, however, it must be remembered that Tertullian was prone to being dogmatic, and this was undoubtedly one of His personal opinions; for this viewpoint was never widely accepted in Christendom, **and Hebrews was not received as the work of Barnabus either in Africa, Tertullian's country, or in Cyprus, the country of Barnabus.**

The epistle to the Hebrews was primarily and specially addressed to the Hebrews of the East, particularly those of Jerusalem and Palestine. The Christians there personally knew the author of the epistle, even though he did not append His name to the epistle, for we read in Heb 13v18,23, "Pray for us, for we are persuaded that we have a good conscience,

in all things willing to live honestly; but I beseech you the rather to do this, in order that I may be restored to you the sooner.... And again, know ye that our brother Timothy has been set at liberty, with whom, if he come soon, I will visit you."

The churches of Alexandria, Asia, Syria, Jerusalem, and Palestine, the people to whom the epistle to the Hebrews was primarily addressed, say that Paul wrote Hebrews. Cyril of Jerusalem attributes the epistle to Paul. Theodoret also states that Eusebius wrote that Paul was the author of the epistle to the Hebrews, **"and that all the ancients entertained this opinion concerning the authorship of the epistle."** Jerome also confirmed that Paul was the author of Hebrews, he wrote, **"All the Greek writers received it as His."** The Church at Antioch confirms the Pauline authorship of Hebrews, which was the centre from which Paul's missionary journeys originated by Divine commission and command. Chrysostom of Antioch and Constantinople, ascribes Hebrews to Paul, as do Theodore of Mopsuestia in Cilicia, of Paul's own country, and many other important witnesses. The Council of Nicea, 325 AD, and the Synod of Laodicea, 363 AD, received Hebrews as a genuine work of Paul.

The fact that Clement of Rome does not mention that Paul was the author of Hebrews, may simply be due to the fact that He respected Paul's desire and reasons for keeping the work anonymous, and did not desire to betray His personal and intimate friends confidence. Phil 4v3. The name of Paul was not only abhorrent to the Jews, it was anathema to the Judaizing Christians, and so Paul did not want an epistle specifically designed to help people from a Hebrew background, to be hindered from reading it by putting His name to the document.

Hebrews was also written to rouse sleepy Christians to seek the promises of heavenly blessings. (Eph 1v3).

Paul wanted to awake these sleepy Christians and make them realise that they were pilgrims and strangers in this world. As in 1Cor 10, Paul uses the Old Testament experiences of Israel passing from Egypt to Canaan to drive home His lessons. Abraham was an immigrant from Mesopotamia into Canaan, and Hebrews draws attention to the fact that like Him all Christians are pilgrims and strangers in this world. Although probably written primarily to Hebrew Christians familiar with the Old Testament and Temple worship, it is equally applicable to all who have a knowledge of the Old Testament. The epistle should be read in conjunction with the prison epistles of Paul, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians, which deal especially with the heavenly places, which the Christian is called to enter by conflict with the powers of darkness.

Christians are called to be a Royal Priesthood. (1Pet 2v9).

We read in Exod 19v6, that God called Israel to be "a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation," but their sin frustrated this Divine desire. However, in Jesus Christians are made and called to be kings and priest to God. We read in Rev 1v6, "And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." (KJV) And again, in Rev 5v10, Heaven declares of Christians, "And Thou hast made them {to be} a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth." (NAS) We are called to be priests after the order of Melchizedek with Jesus our Great High Priest, and operate God's mercy gifts. This is a very great calling indeed.

Paul uses the picture of the games and competitors being encouraged to finish the race. (Heb 12v1).

Paul uses the example of the great saints; prophets and martyrs who had run well and finished their course with honour, praise and glory to inspire us to run well in the Christian race.

Paul's writes Hebrews to show that Jesus is the inspiration and cure for all the ills of our souls.

After considering the Old Testament hero's of faith and their magnificent victories of faith, Paul states that Jesus is not only the source of all faith and justification by faith, but that He is also the incentive of all Christian holiness. "Looking away" is, "aphorontes," the present active participle of "aphorao" to look away and to concentrate on another. If we desire to run well and win the race, we must look away into ("eis") all that Jesus was and is, His majestic life, character and sacrificial love. We must look away even from the greatest of Old Testament saints, and concentrate our gaze on Jesus our Lord. It is good to be inspired by the saints, but the inspiration they give in the up building of the soul, is limited. Jesus is God's Word to speak to the depths of our soul. If we desire victory in the Christian life, we must concentrate our gaze on Jesus.

Paul was also defending the Church from the Docetic Gnostics, who denied Christ's humanity. (Heb 2 all).

Both the apostle John and Paul realised the great danger that the acceptance of Gnostic doctrine would have on the Church, and wrote with the strongest words possible against it. John said that those who deny the humanity of Jesus are "not of God," and have the spirit of Antichrist. 1John 4v2,3, 2v18. This is a very present danger in the Church today, Docetic Gnosticism has invaded the Church again (through Augustine's doctrine of Original Sin); it has always been one of Satan's major weapons against the true knowledge of Christ Jesus.

Looking Away Into Jesus The Pioneer Of Faith. (Greek, "ton-archegon").

"Looking unto Jesus" is "aphorontes eis." "Aphorontes," is the present active participle of "aphorao" a verb meaning "to turn the eyes away from other things and fix them on something," it only occurs here and in Phil 2v23. "Unto," is "eis," into;" so, Paul exhorts us with the present continuous tense, to be actively and always "looking away," "eis" "into," and

"unto Jesus."

The Greek word for "author," is "archegon." (NT:747). "Archegon" speaks of a chief, leader, prince, and of anyone who takes the lead in anything, a pioneer, a predecessor and example. "Archegon" occurs four times in the New Testament. In the Authorised Version it is twice translated in Acts, as "Prince;" in Acts 3v15, "And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses;" and Acts 5v31, "Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. "Archegon" occurs twice in Hebrews, in the Authorised Version it is translated as "Captain," in Heb 2v10, "For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." It is translated as "Author" in Heb 12v2, "Looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the Cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

Jesus the Pioneer and greatest Victor of faith.

After considering some of the great heroes of faith, the writer to the Hebrews, asks us to consider the greatest victor of faith, our Lord Jesus Christ; His faith was tried to the greatest extent, and He overcame all the trials and difficulties of His life and ministry with triumphant faith. Jesus is not only our example in holy and loving living; He is our example in believing God. Jesus pioneered the way of faith, He not only inspired the faith of all those great saints of old (even as He is the Inspirer of the Christian's faith), and He is also the most shining example of personal faith in God. The Scriptures state, "The just shall live by faith," Rom 1v17, Gal 3v11, Heb10v38. This was the experience of Jesus, throughout all His life; Jesus lived by faith, just as we should do. Jesus said in John 6v57, "As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me." **When Jesus did His miracles, He turned His faith on, NOT His deity.** In John 14v10, Jesus said the Father did the miracles, "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works." We read in John 5v19, "Then Jesus answered and said to them, Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner." In John 5v30, Jesus stated, "I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgement is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me." Jesus walked in the Father's will, and His own great personal faith and love was the channel of the Father's power and mercy healing gifts.

Jesus The Pioneer Of Faith In Victorious Daily Living.

The life of Jesus at Nazareth was a triumph of faith, a life of faith in God His Father. Our Lord was not a protected hothouse plant; He conquered the pressures, problems, and temptations of life by sustained communion with God His Father. We read in Heb 2v17,18 and 4v15, that Jesus was "made in all points like unto His brethren," and was "tempted in all points like His brethren." Jesus was victorious, sinless and perfect, in childhood development, teenage temptations, and the temptations and trials of manhood, work and daily living. Luke 2v40-52. His life was continual manifestation of awe-inspiring wonderful faith.

Jesus Pioneered Faith In Victorious Education And Training By God!

The Need For preparation For Ministry.

Isaiah 49v1-3 and 50v3-6, show our Lord's preparation by God the Father. We need to follow His example of victorious preparation for service. In John 1v14 we see our Lord full of grace and truth. A triumphant victorious faith over the circumstances, spiritual darkness, and backslidden people of Nazareth. John 4v6. Nathanael was amazed that anything good could come out of the notoriously spiritually dark town of Nazareth, Nathanael knew well the evil state of Nazareth by personal experience, for he lived about nine miles away in Cana of Galilee. John 21v2. Jesus overcame the evil of Nazareth and lived the same perfect and beautiful life that He had lived in Heaven with the Father. John 1v46-51.

Our Lord's faith and purity triumphed over the spiritual darkness of Nazareth.

We read in Psalm 69v19-21, that Satan stirred up opposition against Jesus and got people, including His family, to criticise and mock Christ's life of prayer and fasting. Reproach broke His heart, He looked for sympathetic companions who would understand, and there was none. The soul loneliness of Jesus was horrific, His heart was broken, but He set His face like a flint and overcame it all through His Father's grace, and a determined faith in His Father's care and love. Isaiah 50v3-9, Luke 9v51, Heb 2v8,9. These awful problems at Nazareth were part of Christ's preparation and training by God His Father, for both His earthly ministry and His High Priestly ministry. The vicious reproach and persecution Jesus endured at Nazareth is revealed in Psalm 69v7-21, there was bitter rejection by His brothers and sisters. Mark 3v21, John 7v5. Town leaders criticised and mocked Jesus, and drunkards sang vile songs about Him. All this brought deep waters into the soul of Jesus. Psalm 69v14. The sinless and prayerful life of Jesus at Nazareth stirred up pitiless continual opposition against Him. We read in Psalm 69v8-12, "I have become a stranger to my brothers, and an alien to my mother's children; Because zeal for Your house has eaten me up, and the reproaches of those who reproach You have fallen on me. When I wept and chastened my soul with fasting, that became my reproach. I also made sackcloth my garment; I became a byword to them. Those who sit in the gate speak against me, and I am the song of the drunkards." Scholars say, "Your House," refers to God's children, not just the Temple.

In Isaiah 53v10-12, we read "He shall," five times, and "shall," three times. Jesus must have repeated these verses in

faith and love many times in the dark nights of His soul, when Satan and men attacked Him. He lived on, and claimed, the precious promises of God His Father, just as we do. Jesus, like ourselves, had a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, in the immutable, counsel and promises of God's Word, and His Father's unbreakable oath of confirmation. Heb 6v13-20.

From Mark 6v1-6, we see that Jesus had four brothers and at least three sisters, and they came to forcibly take Jesus home when Jesus upset Israel's religious leaders, and these leaders started to oppose and persecute Him. We read in Mark 3v21 and John 7v5 that Mary's other children did not believe in Jesus, and thought that He was mad, when He upset Israel's religious leaders. Mark 3v21,31-35. In Mark 3v21, "hoi para autou," "His family," means literally "those from the side of Him," a phrase used commonly in the Greek Septuagint Old Testament, to speak of a persons family and kinsfolk, and the mention of our Lord's family in Mark 3v31-35, confirms that it is referring to His family. They said, "He is beside Himself," "exeste," the aorist active indicative of "existemi," a charge which was made against Paul by Festus in Acts 26v24, he said that Paul's much learning had turned Him insane. Festus uses "maine," the present indicative of "mainomai," to be mad, to be out of one's mind. Paul stated that he was certainly not mad, but spoke words of truth and soberness, ("sophrosune," means a rational control and soundness of mind). It was the minds of Israel's religious leaders and Festus, which were controlled by the delusions of the Devil, and the madness of spiritual insanity.

The attack on Christ's faith and Sonship. (Matt 4v1-4).

When Satan tempted Jesus to turn the stones into bread, our Lord replied from Deut 8v3. The context speaks of discipline and training, and humbling and proving by trial. Our Lord was saying, "My faith is being tested and I believe God My Father." The discipline and testing of the wilderness proved our Lord's victorious faith.

Jesus The Pioneer Of Faith In Victorious Sanctifying Truth.

Jesus had inspired the prophets with Truth; He came down to live it. Jesus lived in worldly, carnal, and unspiritual Nazareth, the life of holiness and love He had lived in heaven. Wonderful Jesus!

Jesus had to believe God's Word when everything and everyone around Him denied it and rejected Him. Even Mary and Joseph had fallen into unbelief over the purpose of our Lord's ministry by the time that Jesus was twelve. We read in Luke 2v42-52, that they did not understand what Jesus meant when He said, "I must be about my Father's business."

We read in John 1v14, that the Lord Jesus came out of Nazareth full of grace and truth, fully equipped by the Father for the task that lay ahead of Him. We read in John 17v19, that our Lord sanctified Himself to do the Father's will, and that doing the will of God was His delight. Psalm 40v6-8, Heb 10v5-10. Jesus prayed in John 17v17, "Sanctify them through Your truth. Your Word is truth." He also states in John 7v17, "He who does the will of God shall know the doctrine." When you walk with God and live a life of love, Truth burns with light. Jesus lived a life of perfect love, and the Truth He perceived burned with life and energy in His heart and mind, and His words and sermons were filled with spirit and life. John 6v63. Jesus had a faith that was energised by a life of perfect love. Gal 5v6. He lived out the more excellent way. 1Cor 12v31. He perfectly lived out the Word of God, and claimed, experienced, and demonstrated the sure promises of God. Jesus had a victorious conquering faith, which desired to do the Father's will and provide spiritual bread and healing of body and soul for others. Luke 11v9-13.

NB Trials through life's problems, that test our faith in God's Word, impart qualifications for ministry to us. Rom 5v1-5. Our Lord came out of Nazareth not just with an intellectual faith but a living experimental faith through tens of thousands of victories of faith over the problems, trials and temptations of life. Hallelujah.

Moffat accurately translates Isaiah 53v3, "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," as, "a man of pain who knew what sickness was." The Hebrew states that Jesus, "knew by personal experience sickness." Jesus experienced, and had personal victories of faith over the sicknesses that afflicted Him. In Isaiah 53v3, "sorrows," "makob," means, grief, pain; and in "acquainted with grief," grief is "cholly," disease. It is translated in the Authorised Version as "sickness," in Isaiah 38v9,12, Deut 7v15, 28v61, 1Kings 17v17, 2Kings 13v14, 2Chron 21v15,19, Psalm 41v3, Deut 28v59; as "disease," in 2Kings 1v2, 8v28,29, 1Chron 16v2, 21v18, Job 30v18, Psalm 38v7, Eccles 6v2; as sick in Isaiah 1v5. To be our perfect High Priest, Jesus had to be tempted in all points like ourselves, and this meant that He had to experience sickness. He really knows what we go through, He has personally experienced all the trials and temptations of life, and we are assured of His sympathetic understanding and merciful love, He has compassion and deals gently with those who are ignorant and are going astray. Heb. 5v2.

Jesus, The Pioneer Of Faith In Victorious Inspiring Grace.

Jesus calls us, and inspires us, to cast away every encumbrance and to run the race of life.

There is a vast cloud of witnesses to God's faithfulness. "Nephos marturon," is in the plural "Nephele" is a single cloud, "nephos," a vast mass of clouds. "Marturon," does not speak of mere spectators, which would be described by "theatai;" "marturon" speaks of witnesses who testify out of their own personal experience. Heb11v2,4,5,33,39.

Laying aside us, like the putting off of old clothes, Col 3v8. Runners ran nearly naked. Every weight that hinders, "ogkon panta." "And the sin which does so easily beset us." "Which doth so easily beset," is "euperistaton," it is derived from

"eu," "well," and "peri," "around," and "statos," "standing," and so means easily encompassing, and describes the sinful environment of the world around us, and the difficulty to avoid its defiling influence. God recognises the difficulty of fighting against the defiling sin in our environment, and our personal fleshly and spiritual problems, but there is victory in Jesus. Rom 8v1-4.

Let us run, is, "trechomen," the present active, i.e., let us keep on running, the race that is set before us. "With patience," is "di hupomones," with brave endurance, **NOT** with doubt, despair, self-criticism and impatience with ourselves.

Jesus experienced sickness and pain and had a great many victories of faith over them. Our Lord was tempted in all points like we are and this included sickness. In Job 2v4-7, Satan said that severe sickness is the greatest test of character, and God did not contradict Satan. It cannot be that Job was tempted more than our Lord, and is a more sympathetic person to those who are sick, because of it. Jesus is our perfect sympathetic High priest; He was made perfect and complete by experiencing and suffering the problems of life, as well as His suffering and dying on the Cross. Heb 5v8. Our Lord had a victorious triumphant faith over sickness; He personally believed and proved the promises of divine healing.

The Keil & Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament, states of Isaiah 53v3, "He was despised and forsaken by men; a man of griefs, and well acquainted with disease; and like one from whom men hide their face: despised, and we esteemed Him not."..."Moreover, He was [mak'a'obowt (Heb 4341) 'iysh (Heb 376)], a man of sorrow of heart in all its forms, i.e., a man whose chief distinction was, that His life was one of constant painful endurance."

NB Paul tells us to consider Jesus as the pioneer of faith.

He not only won the victory on the Cross; His whole life demanded constant endurance over painful trials. Jesus experienced a continuous and total victory of faith and love over all the trials that came against Him.

Jesus The Pioneer Of Faith In Ministry, And A Life Of Prayer.

Our Lord's ministry was the result of a life of prayer and communion with God the Father. His love for God and people drove Him to pray through for others. When Jesus began His ministry, He was so busy that daily manual labour was impossible. This was quite different from Paul at Corinth, Ephesus and Thessalonica. Jesus believed God for the material provision, not just for Himself, but also for: The twelve apostles; the faith of Jesus had to provide for them for 3½ years. God provided for Jesus and the twelve apostles through women of substance. Luke 8v1-3. And also, "The Seventy", the thirty-five bands of preachers. Luke 10. Jesus believed for them, and gave them authority.

Looking Away Into Jesus The Perfecter Of faith.

In Heb 12v2, Paul coins the word, "teleiotes," (seemingly from "teleio"), it means, "Perfecter", one who brings us to the goal, (the Latin Vulgate has "Consummator"). In Heb 12v3, "consider," is "analogisasthe," the aorist imperative of "analogizomai," to reckon up, to compare, to weigh, it only occurs here in the New Testament. In Heb 3v1, "consider is "katanoesate," the aorist imperative of "kataneo," a compound verb, from "kata," down, and "nous," mind, and so means, to put the mind down on a thing, as in Matt 7v3 and Luke 12v24. These Hebrew Christians are exhorted to think hard about Jesus as their Apostle and High Priest, and not to give way to the temptation to give Jesus up, and backslide from the grace of God. Jesus can, and will, perfect our faith if we follow Him. This is the only place in the New Testament where Jesus is called an apostle, "apostolos," though the verb "apostello" is often used of God's sending Him forth. See John 17v3. "Profession" is "homologeo," from "homon," same, and "lego," say, and so, to say the same thing, to agree, to confess, to profess. Fixing the mind and heart on Jesus, and confessing the Truth about Him is the cure for spiritual weariness, doubt and fear.

Jesus is the example of perfect patient endurance.

Jesus endured the Cross. "Hupemeinen," the aorist active indicative of "hupomeno," to patiently and bravely endure, a triumphant endurance. "Prokeimenes," the present participle, "the laying before Him joy", this joy was the joy of seeing us saved and blessed. **Jesus endured the Cross for us, not for self glory, or exaltation and praise by others. The motive was pure love for us.**

Jesus endured the shame of the Cross; "stauros." "Shame," is "aischune," shame, disgrace. "Despised it," is "kataphronesas," the aorist active participle of "kataphroneo," to think down on something, here with the thought of despising, and treating as contemptible the shame and disgrace of the Cross. He treated the shame of the Cross with contempt, but not you; He endured it all for you.

Jesus endured the contradiction of sinners. Heb 12v3. In "endured the contradiction of sinners", "endured, is "hupomemenekota," the perfect active participle of "hupomeno," the perfect shows the abiding effect of Christ's redemptive sufferings and brave endurance. "Contradiction" is "antilogian," a hostile and vicious speaking against. In "lest you be weary," weary is "kamete," the aorist active subjunctive of "kamno," to be weary, or as in James 5v15, to be weary and exhausted through sickness. In "fainting in your souls," "fainting" is "ekluomenai," the present passive participle of "ekluo," which mean to loosen out, to be set free, but in the passive it means to be tired out, or enfeebled.

The Throne of Authority Jesus sits on. In Heb 12v2, "Sat down at the right hand of God", is "kekathiken," the perfect active indicative of, "kathizo," to take one's seat and sit down. The perfect tense shows that Jesus is still there at the throne of infinite power and authority, to perfect the believer's faith. "Consider," is "analogisasthe," the aorist middle imperative of "analogizomai," to reckon up, count up, to consider, to compare and weigh, it can also speak of meditation. It only occurs here in the New Testament.

Jesus is the perfect Perfecter of faith.

As we have seen, "teleiotes," "Perfecter", is one who brings to the goal. In Heb 5v9 we read, "And being made perfect, He became the Author of eternal salvation to all those that obey Him." "Perfect," is "teleiotheis," the aorist passive participle of "teleio," to complete, to perfect. Jesus perfected faith in: In the woman at the well; in the dying thief; in Peter; in Paul, etc, etc.

Jesus will perfect our faith, transfigure us, and conform us to His image. We read in 2Cor 3v18, that as we behold the glory and beauty of God our Father and the Lord Jesus, we are transfigured from glory to glory by the Spirit of God. Beholding the glorious Trinity changes us, and perfects our faith and love. The power of the Holy Spirit, Communion with God our Father, and contemplation of Jesus transfigures us.

We read in Rom 8v28-39:

"And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, and these He also glorified. What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: "For Your sake we are killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (NKJV)

Before creation God the Father knew who would truly respond to the Gospel call, and He set His mind to conform us to the image of the Lord Jesus. Nothing can separate us from God's love and His eternal purposes for us. Jesus came into the world with a totally unselfish magnificent desire to save us, and share with us the eternal riches and blessings of the kingdom of God. Jesus will perfect our faith and love and bring us to His everlasting kingdom.

Paul Warns Us About Failing Under Discipline And Life's Trials. (Heb 12v3-17).

Jesus is the cure for weariness and fainting under opposition. Heb 12v3-15. Jesus was victorious in His conflict with Satan and evil men. We read in Heb 12v3, that Jesus bravely endured the violent and vicious verbal abuse and opposition of sinful men. "Endured," is "hupomemenekota," the perfect active participle of the same verb "hupomeno," which is used in Heb 12v2, of our Lord's brave and triumphant endurance of the Cross. A prayerful consideration of Our Lord's determined bravery will keep us from weariness ("kamno," as in James 5v15), fainting and enfeeblement. The bitter hostility and hatred did not quench His faith in God or zeal for God. Jesus conquered by faith.

Jesus the cure for fainting and weariness under discipline. Heb 12v5-11. We read in Deut 8v5, that God chastens us as sons, for "chastening," in Heb 12v5, is "paideias," from "paideuo," to train a child, and "pais," instruction, see 2Tim 3v16, "instruction in righteousness." The primary thought is the instruction, training, and development of character, which is given to children. God is conforming His dearly beloved children to the image of Jesus, and this sometimes means, as with a child, that there is the necessity of gentle reprimand, rebuke, and even punishment. Rom 8v28-34. In Col 3v21, Paul warns fathers, that excessive discipline can discourage children and hinder the growth of personality and character. See also Eph 6v4. The thought behind "paideia," is of instructive discipline not punishment. Our Lord personally experienced temptation and "training as a child," in His time of preparation for His ministry at Nazareth, and when Satan tempted Him in the wilderness, and on many other occasions too. The discipline proved His Sonship, and matured His personality, for we read in Heb 5v8, that our Lord was "made perfect through suffering."

Problems and pressure produce character as 1Pet 1v3-7 tells us, "the trial of our faith is much more precious than gold." When Jesus experienced the many trials of His faith at Nazareth, He undoubtedly said to Himself, what He tells us to say, "these trials are more precious than gold." His faith triumphed over them. Jesus was a victorious pioneer of faith.

Feeble knees and faint hands in the body of Christ should be encouraged onward by the loving ministrations of the church, and the direction to look to our sympathetic Saviour, who has been through it all, and conquered. Heb 12v12,13.

Jesus is the cure for a defiling root of bitterness. Heb 12v15. In Deut 29v18, we read of "a root of bitterness," and here it speaks of departure from God. Bitterness is "pikria." The departure from the living God is here manifested in two

ways.

Carnality and impurity; any fornication v16. "Pornos" immoral.

Worldly-mindedness and despising of sacred and eternal things. "Profane," is "bebelos," a despiser of sacred things, an irreligious person. 1Tim 1v9, 4v7, 6v20, 2Tim 2v16.

Bitterness against God produces a bad life. We are warned that a large number of believers, and even the majority of believers, like the Israelites, can be infected with bitterness, unless great care is taken. Contemplation of Jesus is the cure.

NB The warning of Esau. Esau lost His birthright and blessing through carnality; we can lose our inheritance if we are not careful. Heb 12v16,17. The blessing was gone and had been given to another. We can lose our place in the kingdom by similar carnality and worldliness. Contemplation of Jesus is the cure for the Esau spirit.

Meditating and feeding on Jesus, and His living Truth, is the cure for all the ills of our souls.

"Consider" in Heb 12v3, is "analogisasthe," to reckon up, to count up, to consider, it includes the thought of meditation. In John 6v51-71, Jesus informs us that it is vitally necessary for us to eat His flesh and drink His blood; He means that we must meditate upon His life and words, to grow spiritually strong. Judas never fed his soul with a heart relationship with Jesus. Judas hardened his heart, and refused to turn from his evil ways, even after Jesus had fed the five thousand, walked on the water, stilled the storm, and miraculously transported the boat from the middle of the lake to the shore. Judas failed to feed on Jesus and His words, and so his soul shrivelled and died spiritually, and he started to slander Jesus, and then betrayed Him. John 6v1-71, Matt 26v15,16. Meditate upon Christ's words of spirit and life, and you will have His life in you. The depths of your soul will be inspired, fed, and filled with Jesus, and changed by the living Word of God, and you will be transfigured from glory to glory, by beholding the beauty and splendour of His majestic being. 2Cor 3v18. The gentle humility and loveliness of Jesus invite us to come to Him, and we will find rest and rejuvenation for our souls. Matt 11v28-30.

In Heb 6v1, Paul pleads with us to allow God's gale of the Spirit to propel us along to maturity. We are to walk with God and be diligent in spiritual matters, and seek for God's "enabling" to carry us forward, and not rely on self-effort. We read in Heb 6v1, "Therefore leaving the elementary doctrine of Christ, let us be borne on to maturity. No longer babes on milk, but mature adults, able to eat solid spiritual food, and able to comprehend the deeper truths about Jesus." The translations, "let us go on", or "press on", to perfection, gives the idea that the effort is ours. However, "pherometha," the present subjunctive passive of "phero," literally means, "let us be borne on to completeness, or maturity". We must rely on God's enabling grace and power, and not on our human efforts. We must put up our sails by communion with God, and let the gale of the Spirit blow us on.

The Scriptures teach that the prophets were impelled and borne along by the mighty energies of the Holy Spirit.

We read in 2Pet 1v20,21, "Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin, or came, by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved ("pheromenoi," the present passive participle of "phero;" AMP "borne along, moved and impelled;" Phillips "inspired," NIV "carried along") by the Holy Spirit." "Moved" is the same verb as "came," it literally means, "being borne along." It is a favourite word with Peter, occurring six times in his two epistles. 1Pet 1v13, 2Pet 1v17,18,21, 2Pet 2v11. It speaks of someone being powerfully spoken to, and carried along, by God, and as a result being mightily used by God.

We are to be blown along by God like a sail ship before a mighty wind. The spiritual impetus comes from God.

"Phero," is used in Acts 27v15,17, to describe the ship in which Paul was on being "borne along" ("epherometha," the imperfect passive of "phero"), and "driven," ("epheronto," the imperfect passive again) before the mighty wind.

In Acts 2v2, "phero" is used in the present participle, passive voice, to describe the "rushing" sound of a mighty wind, literally, a mighty wind borne along violently, ("hosper pheromenes pnoes biaias"). We read in Acts 2v2, "And suddenly there came an echoing sound out of heaven as of a mighty wind borne along violently. And it filled ("eplerosen") the whole house where they were sitting." ("Echos," our echo, is used in Luke 4v37 for "rumour," and Luke 21v25, for the last days "roaring of the sea.") The Pythagorean Schools used "pherometha" in the sense of being carried on to a higher stage of instruction, but this Scripture goes much further than mental instruction, it speaks of a deep experience of the mighty energies of God.

God, through Paul, urges us to put up our sails, and allow ourselves to be borne along in the gale of the Spirit to maturity, to an experience of Jesus as our great High Priest. Heb 5v10-6v1. "Unto perfection," is "epi ten teleioteta," from "teleios," mature, adults, as in Heb 5v14; it only occurs twice in the New Testament, here in Heb 6v1, and Col 3v14. The writer appeals to us to leave Christian babyhood, and go on to be mature adult Christians, who are able to masticate solid spiritual food, and able to comprehend the deeper Truths about Jesus. Paul assures and promises us that the Divine energisings and powerful transforming and enabling gale of the Holy Spirit will impel and carry us along to Christian maturity and Christ-like character. See 2Cor 3v17,18, "Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transfigured into his likeness

from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit." Beholding the glory of Jesus will transfigure our lives, so let us look to and into Jesus, who will inspire and perfect our faith and character.

"...That they also might be sanctified through the truth." (John 17v19).

Paul's primary purpose (in Hebrews) was to reveal the Truth about the person of Jesus.

Paul revealed vital Truths about the person of Jesus in order to correct wrong ideas and dangerous error about Him. Paul, when writing to different Churches, to refute error within them, does not give elaborate details about what the error is, but simply states the Truth on that particular issue. So in the first and second chapters of Hebrews, we are greeted with the greatest refutation, within the New Testament, of any error regarding the true deity and real humanity of the Lord Jesus. Even the very important passage in Phil 2v5-11, which deals with the "emptying," (Greek, "ekenosen") of the Lord Jesus at His Incarnation, does not have the same amount of detail. **There can be no doubt that Hebrews 1 and 2, contain an outstanding revelation of the deity and humanity of the Lord Jesus, and God intended that they should have a special impact upon the soul, spirit and mind of the believer, and prepare them to enter their heavenly Canaan and to be priests after the order of Melchizedek.**

The Difficulty Of Feeding The Unwilling. (Heb 5v11-6v20).

A child with normal feeding should leave its milk diet and take to solid food suitable for an adult. The talk that is to follow about Melchizedek is solid food, which demands chewing. Will his hearers be able to follow it? By milk, Paul, means the Foundation Truths or A. B. C. of Christianity, which must first be learned before anything else is attempted.

A pastor's first priority is to make sure that his flock is fully instructed in these fundamental doctrines.

Nothing can be done with those who in the light of full understanding and experience decide to go back and give up their faith. For them, there only waits the fire of judgement. Heb 10v26-39, 2Pet 2 and Jude. Determination, faith and patience are necessary if we are to obtain the promises of God, which He has confirmed by His oath, so that the hope of Heaven is, as it were, the anchor on the shore, to which the ship attaches its rope that it may ride out the storm.

NB1 The Bible Speaks Of Three Assurances. Of hope, Heb 6v11; of faith, Heb 10v22, and of understanding. Col 2v1, worth "a great conflict."

NB2 All Sons of God should expect by right reading of the Word of God to arrive at the stature of being able to instruct others. This, however, demands determined and diligent Bible study. Eph 4v11, 1Cor 12v28, Psalm 1 all.

NB3 The Seven Foundation Truths Are (Heb 6v1,2):

Repentance from the things, which a man who is dead to God does, and the choice to live in the presence of a Living God.

Faith towards God, which God counts as righteousness. Being justified by faith we have peace with God.

Baptism in Water and: -

Baptism in Spirit, which followed the New Birth as soon as possible.

The Laying on of Hands, which a young convert would see in church meetings from their first attendance. In sickness, and in seeking the Baptism and ministries of the gifts.

Resurrection of the Dead, without which life has no meaning.

Eternal Judgement, after which our place in the Kingdom of Heaven is finally settled, if we are saved, or Hell if we are lost.

NB4 Some would teach that Heb 6v4-8 and Heb 10v20-36, are descriptions of an unbeliever, who was never born again. An unprejudiced reading of these verses however will soon convince us that such words could never be applied to an unbeliever, who certainly do not "taste the powers of the age to come," nor are sanctified by the blood of Jesus.

NB5 There is no statement that God ever refuses forgiveness to the repentant, for God will always forgive the repentant; the trouble is that men, like Satan and the powers of darkness, absolutely refuse to repent. The eternal security of John 10, describes the eternal security of those who follow the Good Shepherd, against external foes. The will of men remains eternally "free." Rev 22v11-12,17. A gift can be thrown away. Heb 10v35.

The Order Of Melchizedek. (Heb 7-10).

It is amazing to find that "the order of Melchizedek" of which Christ is High Priest, was instituted long before the Aaronic Priesthood, but so far as we know, was not in operation until Christ Jesus revived it after the resurrection. The Genesis passage (Gen 14v1-24) should be read together with John 8v56, Luke 22v19,20, Psalm 110v1. Hebrews 7 and 8 are

taken up with showing the shortcomings of the Aaronic Priesthood, which necessitated a better one being raised up. The Melchizedek priesthood is eternal; the Aaronic priesthood was a temporary part of the Law. We read in Heb 8v13, "In speaking of "a new covenant," he has made the first one obsolete. And what is obsolete and growing old will soon disappear." (NRSV)

Hebrews 9 and 10 point out that, although the old Law and Priesthood were insufficient, yet, as coming events cast their shadows before, so all the details of the old were typical of the good things to come in the new. In asking the Jewish Christians to give up the Temple and its Aaronic God-ordained ministry of Priests and Levites and sacrifices, Paul is careful to point out not only the ineffectiveness of the Old Covenant. Acts 13v39, 15v10, Gal 2v16, Rom 8v4; but also the vast superiority of the Christian Priesthood, which resumed the Melchizedek order, so that they might be willing to exchange the Jewish shadow for the Christian substance. Rev 14v17, 15v5,8.

NB1 It is amazing that the Melchizedek order, like all the Christian Blessings, went back to Pre-Jewish Days. e.g. Circumcision John 7v22, justification by faith. Rom 4v1-3. Here the Christian breaking of bread is seen to date back to the days of Abraham (Gen 14v18). Both Melchizedek and Abraham must have known the significance of the bread and wine. Possibly it was at this very meeting when Abraham was tempted to fall as Lot did, into close and profitable fellowship with the king of Sodom (Gen 19v1), that John 8v56 was fulfilled and Abraham had explained to him the coming sacrifice of God's Son at Calvary and His resurrection. If so, then Heb 11v17-19 receives fresh light. The God, who was going to raise His own Son from the dead after he was killed by evil men, could also raise Isaac!

Abraham's meeting with Melchizedek was no chance meeting. Melchizedek came to strengthen Abraham in an hour of trial. The fact that Abraham gave him tithes shows that he recognised his superior authority and dignity. He was received by Abraham as the messenger of the most High God.

NB2 Lot, who had already moved towards Sodom for the sake of earthly prosperity. Lot had been shown that he would be safer with Abraham, now adds this terrible sin of accepting what Abraham had just refused. When we next come across him he is in an official position in Sodom in spite of his dislike for their dreadful ways. So he ruined his wife and family and ended up in abject fear in a cave! Gen 19, 2Pet 2v7. The admonition and exposition of Melchizedek found no lodging place in his heart. How deep and grievous was the breach between uncle and nephew is seen by the fact that Abraham, when praying for Sodom, never took his appeal below ten souls, and never mentioned Lot's name to the Lord. So far as we know the breach was final and irremediable. If Abraham is a type of the overcomer, Lot certainly reminds us of those who suffer loss and are saved through fire. 1Cor 3.

NB3 Theologians have found it difficult to decide who Melchizedek was or what the description of Heb 7v2,3 means.

Three main theories are held:

That it was Christ Himself: but it is difficult to believe that he lived on earth as king of Salem.

That it was an angelic being who was sent upon earth by God as a kind of counter blast to Satan's wicked angels.

That he was a man, about whom the Scriptures left out all details, and made him in this way a type of Christ. We see that Heb 7v3 could then mean that Melchizedek was a mere nobody of whose birth and death no one was sufficiently interested to leave any record. We can imagine a godly king being as despised in those days as he might be now.

Salem means "peaceful." It is the name of a place linked with Melchizedek as its king. Gen 14v18, Heb 7v1,2. See Psalm 76v2. The main identification of Salem according to Jewish commentators, from Onkelos (Targum) and Josephus (War, 6, 10; Ant. 1, 10, 2; 7; is that Salem is Jerusalem, on the ground that in Psalm 76v2, Jerusalem is so called. However, the Samaritans have always identified Salem with Salim, East of Nablus. Jerome states without hesitation, though he was apparently alone in his belief, that the Salem of Melchizedek was not Jerusalem, but a town near Scythopolis, which in his day was still called Salem, and where the vast ruins of the palace of Melchizedek were still to be seen. There can be no doubt that a Salem existed where Jerome places it, for a Salem is mentioned in Judith 4v4, among the places which were seized and fortified by the Jews on the approach of "The valley of Salem," as it appears in the Apocrypha, this Salem must surely be that mentioned by Jerome.

"Without father, without mother, without genealogy "apator, ameter, agenealogetos." There is no record concerning his parentage, or his genealogy. This indicates a totally different type of priesthood from the Levitical, in which genealogy was most important. No one could exercise priestly functions who was not of the lineage of Aaron. The phrase, "Having neither beginning of days nor end of life," does not mean that he was a miraculous being, without birth or death; it probably means that history is silent concerning his birth and death. This could mean that the pedigree of Melchizedek was of no consequence, and his parentage did not count in any way, and so they never troubled to keep a genealogy. In this way he would be like our Melchizedek, the Lord Jesus, whose parents were nobodies and whose occupation was despised. All priests of this Melchizedek Order seem to be despised and rejected by worldly people. **When Jesus became High Priest of this order by being raised by God His Father from the dead, He created a heavenly Brotherhood of the Kings and Priests of the Most High God.**

NB4 The faulty nature of the Aaronic Priesthood was shown:

By the inability of law to perfect man. Rom 8v4.
 By the faulty character of the Priests. Heb 2v27, Luke 3v2.
 By the death of the Priests who could not continue to do their good work.
 By God's mention of a new covenant, which should supersede the old.

NB Christian tithing is not authorised by Abraham's tithes to Melchisedec.

Systematic tithing is certainly not authorised or justified by appealing to the tithe that Abraham gave to Melchizedek about 430 years before the Law. Gen 14v18-20, Heb 7v1-11. NB v4. This tithe was almost certainly given to Melchizedek to give him some financial security; however, it was a voluntary once only gift. We also need to remember that Abraham's tithe was not a tenth of his wealth; it was a single gift of "the tenth of the spoils" of victory in war. In Heb 7v4, "the spoils," is "akrothinion," which means, "the top of the heap of spoils." Melchizedek had the first choice of a tenth of the best of the spoils. Abraham obtained these spoils through a miraculous military defeat of the four kings who attacked Sodom and captured Lot. One king was Amraphel king of Shinar (Babylon), who has been identified as the great king and renowned law-maker Hammurabi, whose "Hammurabi Code" was a landmark in history, for it not only stated legal rights and responsibilities, it also fixed the rates of wages. There was also the great and famous Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Arioch king of Ellasar (Larsa), and Tidal king of Goiim, usually rendered as "nations." Abraham won a miraculous victory over the vastly superior forces of these four kings and successfully rescued Lot out of their hands. Gen 14v5-20. Those who use Abraham's tithe to Melchizedek to demand tithes, must realise that this would mean that we would only have to give tithes of the spoils of victory in war, and then only once!

(See Appendix 6 "The Evil Seed Of A Perverted And Unscriptural Emphasis On Tithing," in the study "The Epistle To The Hebrews" at www.truthforthelastdays.com)

NB Christian tithing is not authorised by the tithes that Jacob gave to God.

Jacob promised to give God tithes of all that God had promised to give him after the wonderful vision of the ladder to Heaven at Bethel. Gen 28v11-22. This again was a voluntary gift, and not demanded by God. Jacob obviously used this tithe to minister to the poor and needy people that he came across in his travels, for there was no Levitical priesthood to support; Jacob himself was the spiritual head of his family. There is no record that Jacob gave tithes to the successors of Melchizedek, indeed, according to Heb 7v1-3, Melchizedek had no genealogy, and his priesthood was confined to himself.

NB5 The Old Testament shadow of the New Testament Substance.

Each part of the Tabernacle spoke of some part of the work of Christ for us:

Brazen altar - Christ's atoning death.
 Laver - Christ's sanctification of us.
 Shewbread - Christ's teaching of us.
 Lamp stand - Christ's gifts of the Spirit for us.
 Table of Incense - Christ's intercessions and interventions for us.
 The Golden Pot - Christ's decent from Heaven.
 The Tables of Law - Christ's sermon on the Mount.
 Aaron's Rod - Christ's resurrection.
 The veil Rent - Christ's Human Body Torn Apart.
 The blood of Bulls - The Blood of God's Son.

The Contrast: An Unsatisfied Conscience After Many Sacrifices; A Satisfied Conscience By Christ's ONE Sacrifice.

Psalms 40v6-8 had foretold the passing away of the old sacrifices and the bringing in of the real will of God, "mine ear hast thou opened," Isaiah 50v4-6 this looked forward to the time when the Son of God would possess an earthly ear, which needed to hear and accept obediently, tidings, which might well have been rejected. Matt 26v39. So great is the penalty that has been paid for our sins that we are able to believe that God will allow us to enter even the Holy Places of Heaven trusting in its efficacy, which is pleaded by our High Priest at the Fathers side. Rom 8v32. It was in the faith of His resurrection that Christ sanctified Himself for this Heavenly Priesthood in John 17 (esp., v19), and explained His ascension "for us" in John 16v7.

The Importance Of The Melchizedek Priesthood During The Great Tribulation.

The Truth on this most vital subject is completely hidden from the believer who has not received, believed and fully understand the seven Foundation Truths mentioned in Heb 5v9-6v8 (esp., 6v1,2), and it is the first Foundation Truth, "repentance from dead works," that the other six, and all other Truth, including the Order of Melchizedek, stands upon. So, it is vital that this first "Foundation Truth" is fully understood and grasped, so that the individual believer may go on to full understanding of the other six, the Melchizedek Priesthood, and all other Truth, so that they may be "borne unto perfection" by the Holy Spirit.

During the study of the "Foundation Truths," and "repentance from dead works," Paul's doctrine of "dead sin in the flesh"

should be fully studied and understood, as failure to grasp this Truth will lead into great error by embracing the destructive heresy of Augustine's doctrine of "Original Sin," which will also lead them unknowingly into accepting a second destructive heresy, "Docetic Gnosticism," which caused endless problems in the early Church, and which Paul, Peter, John, James and Jude **ALL** wrote against in the strongest possible way. Phil 2v5-11, Heb 2 all, James 1v12-18, 2Pet 2v1-3, 1John 4v1-6, Jude 1-25.

Failure to grasp and understand the first Foundation Truth, "repentance from dead works", will result in that individual believer failing to enter and conquer their Heavenly Canaan, with a result that they will only have a "form of godliness, without any power" (just like the first generation of Israelites that came out of Egypt, Heb 3v16-19) i.e., they will only have an outward empty "form" (Greek "mórfoosin" from "morphosis" (NT:3446)), which means a shadowy pencilled outline, without any inner essence, substance or reality). Being devoid of any inner spiritual experience or reality, they will as soon as the Great Tribulation starts, be completely overwhelmed by the great in-rush of evil into the world, with the result that they will backslide and go into apostasy. Matt 24v12, Luke 6v46-49, 2Tim 2v1-12, 2Tim 3v1-9, Rev 12v9,12.

(Please see the study "Repentance From Dead Works" in "Foundation Truths," "The Bible Doctrine Of Dead Sin In The Flesh" in "Original Sin & Eternal Punishment" and "The Disastrous Effects Of Augustine's Doctrine Of "Original Sin"" at: www.truthfortheendtimes.com for a fuller study on Paul's doctrine of "dead sin in the flesh" and other relevant Truth.)

The actual process that the believer has to go through, to conquer the powers of darkness, to get into and stay in their Heavenly Canaan, will actually prepare them to face the Great Tribulation and enable them to go through it victoriously. Facing the powers of darkness, trials and temptations and getting into their Heavenly Canaan, develop in the believer **ALL** the necessary spiritual qualities and character that will be required for the believer to come through the Great Tribulation with an overcoming faith, and they will take part in the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, and be arrayed in white robes. They will receive an abundant entrance into the Kingdom of God. Matt 7v24-27, 1Cor 5v50-58, James 1v2-4,12, 1Pet 1v3-9, 2Pet 1v1-11, Rev 7v9-17, 19v1-10.

The person who accepts the Lord Jesus as Saviour during the Great Tribulation will not have the problem of contending with the heresy of a secret pre-tribulation Advent and Rapture, because the time of that "supposed" event will have passed, and the "new" believer should be told by their pastors and teachers (and the other ministries of the Church) the great necessity to pray (Greek, "proseuchomai" 4336, and not faint, and to watch for the different world events that have to come to pass, during the three and a half years of the Great Tribulation. As the Great Tribulation proceeds, and these different world events take place, they will be the signs that the Lord Jesus, and the Apostles of the Church warned believers to look out for, as an indication as to the approximate time that the Lord would come. We will not know the exact day or hour of His Coming, **BUT** we will most definitely know the week, because of Daniel's Seventy week prophecy, and the same time period mentioned in the books of Daniel and The Revelation Of Jesus Christ (a period of three and a half years). Dan 9v20-27, 12v1-7, Matt 24v3,15,42-44, Luke 18v1-8, Rev 6v1-17, 8v1, 12 all.

One of the primary functions of the Melchizedek priesthood during the Great Tribulation will be to exercise a restraint upon the powers of darkness, wicked people and wickedness in the world through their prayers ("active interventions with power," Greek, "enteuxis" (NT:1783) and "proseuche" (NT:4335)). Dan 11v32 states: "And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he corrupt by flatteries: **but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits.**"

Some other different translations of Dan 11v32 are:

"...but the people who know their God shall stand firm and take action." (Revised Standard Version)

"...but those who follow God will fight back." (Today's English Version)

"...but the people who know their God shall prove themselves strong and shall stand firm and do exploits [for God]." (Amplified Bible)

The Hebrew word used for "that do know" (in Dan 11v32) is "yoda'eey" which is from "yada`" (OT:3045), which is a primitive word and means to know (properly, to ascertain by seeing); and is used in a great variety of senses and in the Septuagint (the Greek Old Testament), the word used is "ginwskwn" which is the present active participle of "ginosko" (NT:1097), which is a prolonged form of a primary verb; to "know" (absolutely) in a great variety of applications and with many implications. Here it means to have an "experimental knowledge of" and speaks of a person who has an experimental knowledge of God based upon a relationship with Him, the present active participle indicates continuous or repeated action, and shows that their inception of the knowledge (of God) is ongoing (and will never end). This continuous inception of the knowledge of God (during the believer's lifetime), is through the individual believer feeding upon Truth from the Scriptures and seeking His face, which, put another way, is the ongoing process of "sanctification."

The Melchizedek priesthood during the awful dark evil days of the Great Tribulation will be charged (and given the authority) by God to bring divine judgement (through their prayers, Greek, "enteuxis" (NT:1783) and "proseuche" (NT:4335)) upon the wicked (humans and evil angels), thus effecting restraint upon the manifestation of evil in the world. Quite simply, when evil people will see how the wicked are being executed by Divine judgement (through the Church), they will think twice before carrying out their evil desires, and likewise the judgement upon evil angels will be such that they also will be put into the Abyss (God's temporary prison) by believers, thus effecting a restraint upon evil in the world. Isaiah 26v9, Zech 12v8, Luke 18v1-8, Rev 11v3-6, 12v1.

God's desire during the Great Tribulation, is that through the Melchizedek priesthood **ALL** the wrath of man that does **NOT** praise Him, should be restrained (by the Church) through "active interventions with power" (Greek, "enteuxis" (NT:1783) and "proseuche" (NT:4335)). Psalm 76v10, 1Tim 2v1-8. Divine judgement falling upon the wicked, through the "interventions" (with power) of believers, will also have the effect of bringing deliverance for those in danger. Rev 12v1,13-17.

During the Great Tribulation the Church is going to have the same kind of experience that Israel had in the Wilderness, in that they will be supernaturally fed and kept by God, this also will be the result of believers prayers ((Greek), "enteuxis" (NT:1783) and "proseuche" (NT:4335)). Deut 8v3,4, Neh 9v20,21, Phil 4v19, Rev 12v14.

The spiritual authority and power to bring judgement upon the wicked through the gifts of the Spirit will be available for **ALL** those who desire to seek God for it, for there is absolutely **NO** partiality with Him. The actual process of seeking God for this spiritual authority and power will prepare the character of the individual so that they use it in a correct and proper manner. Although this level of spiritual authority and power will be seen in a most widespread manner around the world during the Great Tribulation through the two Witnesses and other Christians, these believers will be given this authority and power some time before the Great Tribulation begins; probably around the beginning of the last week of Daniel's Seventy weeks prophecy, i.e. seven years before the second coming of the Lord Jesus, and three and a half years before the Great Tribulation begins. Although this great authority and power is available for **ALL** to seek God for, the reality is that very few believers are willing to do so, because of the continuous prayer ((Greek), "enteuxis" (NT:1783) and "proseuche" (NT:4335)) life that is required to obtain and maintain such a prophetic/apostolic ministry. It is only those who seek the face of God in a persistent and determined manner, who get through into this level of power and authority with God, for God does not have any jobs for the boys, and there is **NO** favouritism with Him. It is only by following the same "road" and example of the Lord Jesus (i.e. by denying oneself and taking up their cross and following Him), that this level of power and authority will be obtained by the individual believer from their Lord. Psalm 24 all, 69v7-12,20,21, Dan 9v27, Mal 4v5, Matt 16v24-27, Rom 2v11, Gal 2v20, James 1v2-4, 1Pet 1v6,7 2Pet 1v3-11, Rev 6v1,2, 11v3-6.

Another function of the Melchizedek priesthood will be to manifest God's power and love not only within the Church (which is the Body of Christ), but also to the world. Since the Glory of God departed from The Temple in Jerusalem, the Lord of Glory took up residence in the Body of Christ, and it is through the body of each individual believer that the Lord Jesus desires to carry on His Ministry from Heaven, that He started while He was upon earth. It will be through the manifestation (by the Church) of God's power and love to the world, that the world will come to know and recognise that God the Father, sent His dearly Beloved Son into the world to save sinners, and that each individual believer is loved by His Father, even as He loves His own dear Son Jesus. Isaiah 53v10, John 3v16-18, 17v21-23, Rom 15v18,19, 1Cor 12-14v40, Eph 2v14-22, 1Pet 1v10-12.

It has always been God's desire to save, heal, restore and bless both angels and humans; judgement is a strange and alien act to Him, which, when He is forced to do, by the rebellion and stubbornness of His freewill creatures, causes Him great pain and suffering of heart. And because of this great desire, He has promised the Church that it will know His Presence and Power in a way that will be unparalleled in the history of mankind since Adam, so that vast multitudes of people worldwide will come face to face with the living God, receiving healings, deliverance and untold manifold (spiritual) blessings from His wonderful Presence and Power. Isaiah 35v4-6, 61v1-3, (with Luke 4v18,19), Hosea 11v1-9, Matt 24v14, 28v18-20, Mark 16v15-18, Luke 19v41-44, Acts 2v17-21 (with Joel 2v28-32), 5v12-16.

The starting point for each believer, to get into their Heavenly Canaan, is the same for **ALL**! It is a correct and **FULL** knowledge of the true humanity and the real deity of the Lord Jesus, and failure to grasp the TRUTH on these two most important subjects (especially the true humanity of the Lord Jesus), will result in the mind of that believer being full of darkness and reprobate on these issues, and until that individual person is willing to unlearn their corrupt unscriptural man-made traditions, their mind will remain in a reprobate condition, and thus they will fail to conquer the Devil and the powers of darkness and get into their Heavenly Canaan. With such a failure, that believer will remain in a spiritual wilderness only having a form (Greek, "morphosin" from "morphosis" (NT:3446), meaning "a mere appearance without the corresponding inner reality") of godliness, with absolutely no power whatsoever, either in the fruits or (spiritual) gifts of the Spirit, and is in grave danger of backsliding and going into apostasy. Luke 6v46-49, 1Cor 12v7-11, Gal 5v16-26, Hebrews 1 & 2, 5v12-6v8, 2Pet 2v1-3, 1John 4v1-6.

For the Melchizedek Priesthood to operate and function as God intended it to, during the Great Tribulation (or at any period of time during the Age of Grace), there **MUST** be a return by the Church to the principles, practices and government that the early Church at Jerusalem operated in, because this was the divine pattern laid down by the Lord Jesus during His earthly ministry, and the Truth He gave to His apostles and prophets (by the Holy Spirit) after His Resurrection and Ascension. John 16v13, Eph 2v20. It was also the pre-incarnate Christ, Who gave the pattern for the Tabernacle to Moses while upon Mount Sinai, with strict instructions that; "See that you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain." Heb 8v5, 11v24-26. Moses was very careful to fulfil the Lord's command correctly, so that everything was made exactly as he was shown upon the holy mount, and if Moses was careful to obey the Lord's command regarding the structure and practices of the Tabernacle (under the Old Covenant), how much more should the Church obey and fulfil the divinely revealed structure and functions (that are clearly and fully revealed in the New Testament Scriptures), for the body of Christ which ministers in the Heavenly sanctuary!

The Church Was Planned And Ordained By God, NOT Men.

Christ Gave Us The Full And Permanent Teaching On Church Organisation.

Our submission to the Lordship of Christ is proved by our submission to His will and Truth, "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine." John 7v17. The doctrine on Church government is as inspired and permanent a part of the foundation of Scripture Truth as any other Truth. Eph 2v20, 3v5, John 15v16, 16v13. When Christ founded the Church, He instituted its doctrine on organisation as well as its other doctrine. **God conceived and planned the Church before Creation; it is NOT a man-made institution.** Eph 1v4,5,11, Col 1v26,27, Rom 8v28-30, 1 Cor 2v7. The New Testament Scriptures are our only basis for doctrine on Church organisation as well as the other Christian doctrine. Our standard of Church organisation is not even early post-apostolic Church organisation, for the traditions of even this early period can lead us astray. The Scriptures alone are the sole rule of faith and conduct. 2Tim 3v14-17, 1Cor 14v37, 2Pet 3v2,15,16, Rev 22v18,18. God was not negligent of the organisation of the Church; He did not leave it to the discretion or ingenuity of its leaders, or to the customs of the people, district, or land where the Gospel was preached. Before creation the Trinity had ordained, planned and predestined all things in relation to the Church and its organisation. **They considered what was the best method of Church organisation to encourage spiritual growth and evangelistic success, and at the same time be suited to every age, nation and circumstance, and would survive best in persecution. When Christ founded the Church, He built it to His own specifications, design, plan and order. Matt 16v18.**

God did not leave Church organisation to human ingenuity.

The same ingenuity of man, that has produced many different systems of worldly government, has been applied to Church government. This has inevitably resulted in a departure from New Testament organisation, doctrine and practice; and a consequent loss of the spiritual life and power that the early Church experienced. God did not leave the pattern of Israel's worship to the ingenuity of godly Moses. Indeed, God warned Moses to follow the exact pattern of organisation and worship that He had given him. Heb 8v5, 1Chron 28v19. God did not leave the structure of Church organisation to men's desire, ingenuity, discretion, accommodation or expediency, He has given clear details of how His Church should be organised and run. Unfortunately, Christian leaders throughout Church history have followed the example of Israel's religious leaders and built religious power structures, and replaced the divinely ordained organisation of the Church with their own unscriptural false traditions. This has resulted in the frustration of the Divine purposes and the disappearance of the manifestations of Divine love, life and power that were so apparent in the early Church. If it were not for the godly praying hearts in many churches, all that would be left is a dead form, which brings disillusionment and discouragement to needy souls desperately seeking God's power and blessing.

Unscriptural Church Organisations Often Violate Christ's Lordship.

Church history reveals that men have arrogantly and presumptuously altered the structure of Christ's Church; they felt that they could improve upon Christ's form of Church organisation. Psalm 19v13,14, Col 1v18-20, 2v6-10. If we lay aside His Truth for our own ideas, we can end up with a religion, which though called Christianity, has really little to do with it. Gal 1v6-10, 2Cor 11v1-6. The Church is Christ's Church; converts are born at God's will, not at the will of men; the Church is God's flock; it is bought with Christ's blood, and it is under the superintendence and guidance of the Holy Spirit. John 1v12,13, Isaiah 53v11, Acts 20v28, Titus 3v5, 1Pet 1v3,23. God can, and does, overlook genuine ignorance, but he cannot overlook wilful ignorance and rebellion. Acts 17v30, 1Sam 15v23.

The unity of Christ's Church cannot take place around the constitutions of men, it can only take place when the Church is subordinate to the Lordship of Jesus and the Holy Spirit and follows their directions. The true Christian finds no appeal in the organic unity of church federations; he looks and longs for a true fellowship and unity of the Spirit, and a genuine body ministry of believers, who own Jesus as Lord. If we refuse to accept the Lordship and leadership of Christ, there is always barrenness in our organisations and constitutions no matter how doctrinally correct or adequate they may seem to be. When the Church lost its first love and began to get away from God, men began to usurp God's authority and build their own religious kingdoms, while claiming that they were building God's kingdom.

The Church As God's (Greek, "Ecclesia," (NT:1577)) Is Under His Direction And Control.

When God used the Greek word "Ecclesia" (NT:1577) to describe His followers, it signified an assembly or congregation to the Jews. "Ecclesia" (NT:1577) had been used by Israel for many years to signify a united group of people under God's control. In the Old Testament the Hebrew words for the gathering together of the Israelites are "edhah," (OT:5712) which means "congregation;" and "qahal" (OT:6951) which means "assembly." In the Septuagint (a Greek translation of the Old Testament), "edhah" (OT:5712) is almost always translated as "synagogue" (NT:4864), and "qahal" (OT:6951) usually as "ecclesia" (NT:1577). Young states that "edhah" (OT:5712) is "an appointed meeting," and "qahal" (OT:6951) is "an assembly called together, a called and invited gathering."

To the Greeks, "ecclesia" (NT:1577) meant the gathering together of the citizens of a town by an heralds trumpet, and according to Num 10v1-3, the Israelites were gathered together in this way. So when God used the word "ecclesia" (NT:1577) it signified an assembly to His hearers. The Hebrew equivalents had been used by Israel to signify a united group of people under God's control. God intended the Church, like Israel, to be under His permanent control, supervision and guidance. In the Gospels Jesus only spoke twice of the "ecclesia" (NT:1577); in Matt 16v18, He speaks of the universal and complete Church; in Matt 18v17, He speaks of the local Church which can consist of as few as two or three Christians. We see from Matt 16v18,19, that there is a close connection between "the Kingdom of Heaven" and the "ecclesia" (NT:1577). The "ecclesia" (NT:1577) are not only God's assembly, they are the visible representatives of God on earth, and under His direct control and guidance. **The direction and guidance of the Church should come from**

God, not from organisations, committees, or conferences directed and guided by men.

God's All-Embracing Church Compared With Judaism And The Jewish Synagogue.

The Christian Church, "ecclesia" (NT:1577) was no longer only Jewish, it included every person of every nation who accepted Christ as his or her Saviour. Gal 3v26-29. God's worldwide Church fully embraced Gentiles which the Jews did not do. The use of the word "ecclesia" (NT:1577) would distinguish Christ's people from the Jews in their synagogues; synagogue (NT:4864) is from "syn," which means "together," and "ago," which means, "to bring." Though "synagogue" is used of a Christian meeting in James 2v2, Christ's words in Matt 16v18, give a strong hint of separation from the Jewish synagogue, for Jesus speaks of "My Church," as distinct from the Jewish synagogues. Christians gathered together and recognised Christ as their Lord, which the Jews certainly did not do. In Acts 19v32,39,41, the citizens of Ephesus formed an "ecclesia" (NT:1577) that is, an assembly; the citizens of the kingdom of heaven should form an assembly in the locality where they live. The Church is not the kingdom of heaven or the kingdom of God, it is part of that kingdom, and its visible representative upon earth, and it preaches the coming of that kingdom on earth. **Let us never forget that the headquarters of the Church of Christ is in heaven, NOT upon earth.**

The norm today (and indeed for many centuries), has been, instead of a local Church seeking the face of the Lord Jesus (Who is the Head of the Body) for His plans and purposes, they simply make their own and then ask God to bless them. Very rarely does the Lord Jesus get His plans and will carried out upon earth through the Body of Christ. In response to this terrible situation, the Lord Jesus, on one occasion, gave this prophecy to C L Parker for the Church: **"I do so much that I have no pleasure in!"**

And on another occasion, the Lord spoke to him again regarding the condition of His Church, in the following manner: **"I am like a paralysed leper, the head is ok, but the body is leprous and paralysed, how would you like to have children in that condition."** The "head" of course is the Lord Jesus, but because His Church (the body) did it's own will and lived in sin, to Him it had become completely unusable, even as a human body that is suffering from leprosy and is completely paralysed from the neck down. This has been the condition of almost all the Church for many centuries, how the great loving heart of the Lord Jesus (and the rest of the Trinity) must have suffered such tremendous pain, as each successive generation imbibed the false unscriptural traditions of their spiritual fathers, so that for centuries they only had a "morphosin" (NT:3446) without any "morphe," (NT:3444) i.e. the outer shell without the inner kernel!

The complete removal of the Melchizedek Priesthood (along with its operation) from Christ's Church and the obliteration of the Truth pertaining to it, was inspired by the Devil and brought about by him through his willing servant Constantine, who was the 6th Head of the Seven Headed Beast, when he issued the "Edict Of Toleration" (also known as The Edict Of Milan), in 313 AD. Through this edict, wealth, power and position was given to Church leaders, and they became corrupted by it, and the purity of the Gospel was lost, and the Church became indistinguishable from the world. A terrible, Laodicean type, spiritual state started to permeate much of the Church, from 313 AD onwards. Rev 3v14-22, 13v1,2, 17v7-12.

At the start of the Great Tribulation there will be two types of pastors and teachers ("Overseers" Acts 20v28, Eph 4v11-16, 1Tim 3v1-7, Titus 1v5-9) in the Church, one who is "a faithful and wise servant" and the other who is an "evil servant." (Matt 24v45-51, Luke 12v41-46). The "faithful and wise" servant feeds those within his Master's household with Truth, so that they have sanctified hearts and are being borne onto maturity by the Holy Spirit, fully prepared to do their Master's work, having been lead into an experience of that Truth, so that they can minister God's Love and Power to other members of the Body of Christ, and to the world (i.e. they are priests of the Order of Melchisedec). The members of this household will also have been taught a correct knowledge of prophetic Truth, so that they have light in the dark evil days of the Great Tribulation; so that they fully know the certain terrible events that have to come pass, and are expecting them, knowing that they are signs that indicate that the Lord's second coming is rapidly getting closer. They will come through the Great Tribulation triumphantly, with an overcoming faith, so that they are changed and raptured at the Lord's second coming, enabling them to stand before His Judgement Throne to be judged and welcomed into the Kingdom. These believers are represented by the five wise virgins, who each took extra oil for their lamps in their vessels. The oil in the vessel represents two things, the first being the correct interpretation of prophetic Truth which enables them to keep their shield of faith up, they know what terrible events are going to come to pass, and so are not overwhelmed by them when they occur. The second thing it represents is that they will have an anointing of the Holy Spirit, Who will strengthen, guide, keep and support them during those dark evil days. Psalm 133, Matt 24v3-31, Eph 4v11-16, 6v10-20, Heb 5v9-6v3, 1Pet 1v3-5, 2Pet 1v16-21.

The "evil servant" (the Greek word used here for "evil" is "kakós" (NT:2556)), the sense in which it is used here, refers to a person who's character is bad, and can cause real problems, but is not like a person who is "poneros" (NT:4190), which speaks of a person whose whole mind, character and personality has been destroyed by evil, a person who manifests an active corrupting evil, and who is not satisfied until they have brought **ALL** down to the same level of death and destruction as themselves, they love evil and delight in it, Rom 1v18-32) at the beginning of the Great Tribulation, when the Lord Jesus does **NOT** appear, as they are expecting Him to, says to himself, "My lord delayeth his coming." The question arises as to why he says, "my Lord delayeth His coming"? Simply put, the "evil servant" was expecting the Lord Jesus to come **BEFORE** the start of the Great Tribulation (they will hold and believe the secret pre-tribulation Advent and Rapture heresy), and when He doesn't come (as He definitely won't) and the dark evil days of it starts, they will be completely bewildered and overcome by the great deluge of evil into the world, and will start racking their minds as to what has happened concerning the promised coming of Lord Jesus, i.e. they will be saying within themselves, "my Lord delayeth His coming." Notice how (with the Lord Jesus not appearing) they do **NOT** seek out the Truth concerning the

correct time of the coming of their Lord, but simply go into drunkenness and dissipation, and begin to persecute those who formerly were their brethren, backsliding completely and going into apostasy. (Matt 24v49, Luke 21v34). And this will happen to them simply because they did not receive the love of the Truth that they might be saved, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. 2Thess 2v1-12. Although at one point the "evil servant" is "kakos" (NT:2556); as soon as the Great Tribulation starts, having backslidden and gone into apostasy, they will become "poneros" (NT:4190).

It should also be pointed out that those believers who follow the "evil servant's" teaching and example (who represent the five "foolish" virgins, Matt 25v1-13) will also be saying within themselves at the beginning of the Great Tribulation, when the Lord Jesus does not appear, "my lord delayeth his coming," and neither will they seek out the Truth regarding the coming of their Lord, but like the "evil servant" will backslide and go into apostasy. If those believers who had listened to the teaching of the "evil servant" had followed the example of the Jews at Berea (Acts 17v10-12), who "searched" (Greek, "anakrinoō" (NT:350), which means to sift up and down, make careful and exact research as in legal processes as in Acts 4v9, 12v19) the Scriptures daily to see whether those things spoken by Paul were so, they would have quickly established that he was teaching lies, and would therefore have rejected the heresy of a secret pre-tribulation Advent and Rapture, and would have then sought out and found the Truth on this most vital subject. The Scriptures are not so badly written that they can not be understood by a heart that is seeking for Truth, indeed, God reaches out to those who seek after His Truth, and reveals it to them! He delights to reveal His Truth to spiritual "babes" (Greek, "nepios," which literally means, "non speaking ones"), and hide it from the unspiritual worldly wise.

Also Take Note: Although God still sets His ministries (Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers, 1Cor 12v28, Eph 4v8-16) in the Church today, to teach believers Truth and lead them into an experience of that Truth (i.e., for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry), at the end of the day, it is primarily the individual believer's responsibility to seek out Truth for themselves, and make it a part of their spiritual experience, for it is only by filling their minds with Truth and putting on the full armour of God, that they will be able to stand in the evil day! Matt 11v25-27, John 7v17, Eph 6v10-20.

Church Organisation Is NOT A Progressive Revelation.

Some would say that there is no systematic explanation of Church government in the Scriptures, and that Church government is a progressive revelation, which varies according the varying circumstance or need. There may be no systematic and logical explanation of Church government in the Scriptures, but neither is there systematic teaching on other Christian doctrines and theology. There are general principals and incidental references to Church government in the Scriptures, and these combined together give a clear picture of the early Church teaching on Church organisation. It is very difficult for many Christians to follow the formal prolonged doctrinal treatises and systematic theologies on Christian doctrine, as good and necessary as these may be. God, in His great wisdom, gave the basic truths of Christian doctrine simply, so that all can understand, and the Scriptural teaching on Church organisation is no exception.

The New Testament Scriptures give no support to the idea of organisational development. Indeed, these Scriptures condemn any deviation from their revelation. Gal 1v6-12, Jude v3,4. To believe in progressive revelation outside of the Scriptures, is a most dangerous doctrine, and it has led to many soul-destroying heresies, and a denial of our Lord Jesus Christ. 2Pet 2v1, 3v16. There are many cults today that have been founded on the claim of extra revelation outside of the Scriptures. The Scriptures are the only foundation for Christian doctrine and practice. These Scriptures are the revelations of God to His Old Testament prophets and New Testament apostles and prophets, and the accounts of His dealings with mankind. Eph 2v20, 3v5. A church organisation that defies God's pattern cannot preserve the purity and power of the Church. The statement that progressive organisational development of the Church was necessary to preserve the Church from heresy and fanaticism has no support from Scripture or Christian experience. Church federation has nearly always led to persecution of godly Christians, and has caused far greater evils than it has cured. John 16v1-4, 2Tim 3v12.

Do We Experience The Essential Heart Of Living Truth, Or Do We Have An Empty Outline Of Truth?

Paul uses the word "morphosin," in Rom 2v20 and 2Tim 3v5, to speak of "an outline of Truth without the substance," the "morphosin" (NT:3446) without the "morphe" (NT:3444). In Rom 2v20, Paul says that it was folly for Jews to be proud of being chosen recipients of divine Truth, when they did not obey that Truth, or experience God and His Truth. In 2Tim 3v5, Paul tells us to turn away from Christian forms which lack the reality and power of God. Though Scriptural constitutions and fundamental beliefs may give us a necessary outline and code of faith, they will not on their own preserve the purity of the Church. We need a heart cry for mercy, earnest prayer, and a return to early Church practices, if we are to be preserved from error. We can have correct rules of faith and conduct and resist the Holy Spirit. Jesus said that we could only preserve our spiritual life only by abiding in Him and obeying His words. The impartation of God's life comes from seeking God, and not from church constitutions, or even from a correct doctrinal outline of Truth, as valuable and necessary as this can be.

It is a disturbing fact that the constitutions of men often deny, reject some vital Scripture Truths, and their teaching on Church government. It is not so spiritually demanding to depend on an organisation, or follow a formal Church order and service. To recognise and follow our Heavenly Father's directions and plans, and to have His love and power operating in our churches demands real humility, prayerfulness, and a close walk with God. This is directly opposite to man's carnal nature, for flesh dominated people love their own ways, and seek for power, position, prestige, influence and wealth. The unconsecrated carnal mind loves to build its own kingdom and say, "Is this not great Babylon that I have built?" and, "I am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing." Dan 4v30, Rev 3v17. Many have decided against seeking

God for a manifestation of His love and power, and have chosen instead, power, popularity, and influence within a religious structure. It can be difficult and frustrating for earnest Christians to operate or manifest the love and power of God through His spiritual gifts, in churches where the leadership manifests these wrong motives, and resists the Holy Spirit and His gifts.

Are We God's "Ecclesia" (NT:1577), Or Are We Only His "Kuriakon" (NT:2960)?

Our English word "church," like the Scottish "Kirk" and the German "quirt," is derived from the Greek "kuriakon," (NT:2960) which means, "belonging to the Lord," or simply, "the Lord's." The adjective "kuriakon," (NT:2960) only occurs twice in the New Testament, where it speaks of "the Lord's supper," and "the Lord's day." 1Cor 11v20, Rev 1v10. In the New Testament the word "kuriakon" (NT:2960) is not used in reference to Christian believers, instead it uses "ecclesia," (NT:1577) which, as we have already seen, conveys not only the thought of a people belonging to God, but also a people under His direction and control. Church federation can take the control of the Church out of the hands of God and put it in the hands of men. Christians in such churches belong to God, but as they are so often under men's control instead of God's, it is more correct to call them by the word "kuriakon," (NT:2960) than by the word "ecclesia" (NT:1577). The belief in the progressive revelation of Church government, and the consequent development of church organisations, has proved to be an unmitigated disaster for Christ's Church. The evils that have come as a result of a departure from New Testament organisation, and the resultant affiliation and federation of churches, cannot be over-emphasised or exaggerated. The blood of the millions of Christian dead, who have been killed in the name of God, cry out against the religious kingdoms of men that have committed the sin of Cain. Gen 4v10,11, Jude v11.

The Early Church Was Guided By Christ Into Body Ministry.

The Church is described as Christ's building and temple, Eph 2v21; as Christ's beloved bride and wife, Eph 5v22,23, Rev 19v6,7, 21v2,9, 22v17; as Christ's household. Eph 2v19, Gal 4v10, 1Tim 3v14, Heb.3v5. However, here I want to consider the Church as Christ's body. 1Cor 12v11-31, Rom 12v3-5, Eph 4v7-11. **Christ desires all the members of His Church, from apostles to young converts, to act together as a body under His guidance. Under the inspiration of Christ every member has something to contribute to the spiritual ministry of the Church, this is what we mean by body ministry.**

Body Ministry Took Place In Fellowship, Worship, Evangelism And Ministry.

Body ministry involves the participation of all believers in fellowship, worship, evangelism and ministry. There was no division between clergy and laity in the early Church, all believers are priests (i.e. **ALL** are members of the Melchizedek Priesthood). 1Pet 2v5, Rev 1v6. Every child of God has the right to minister what they receive from God. "Everyone hath,"..."ye may all prophesy one by one." 1Cor 14v26,31. Paul said that the Corinthians had the right idea in desiring body ministry, but they selfishly wanted to do everything, and did not make way for other people's ministries. Paul said we need a Holy-Spirit co-ordinated body ministry, not all-ministry. All rights in the Church spring from Christ; the Quaker principle is correct, members have the right to minister only as Christ directs. The prophets and pastor-teachers in the local church should only act under the inspiration of Christ, like the rest of the believers. This is spiritually much more demanding than a program. It also demands real humility and gentleness in the pastor-elders, who may have to call a halt to unprofitable ministry, or correct wrong teaching and fanaticism.

In many churches, Christians are judged to be faithful and true by their ministers, if they sit passively in their church pews for years. Paul did not teach this kind of spiritual decadence, he certainly did not want Christians to be passive listeners, or "none-speaking babes" (Greek, "neepios" (NT3516)), he desired them to develop ministries and grow spiritually. Eph 4v11-15. This shows the importance of having a fellowship meeting where Christians can develop their gifting and ministries. Paul taught that in these fellowships there was to be a real participation of all the local church members in body ministry. Today, many Christians fear body ministry, because of the demands that it will make upon them. Others feel that young Christians will make mistakes, and will not be as presentable to the world as a polished well-spoken minister. However, unless "everyone has" something from Jesus in our fellowships, they are not genuine New Testament church fellowships. Some modern Christians, who go regularly to church services, have never been to a New Testament fellowship meeting at all. In most churches a "minister" has replaced Christ-directed body ministry, and this has kept multitudes of Christians in spiritual infancy and immaturity.

The Greek word "kerusso," "to proclaim as a herald," obviously implies that there was a place for an uninterrupted discourse in preaching, teaching, and evangelism in the early Church. However, in both evangelistic and fellowship meetings, the more usual pattern was dialogue, discussion, reasoning, and question and answer in an informal conversational manner. There was far more participation and discussion in Paul's preaching hall, than there is in today's church services. "Dialogue," "dialogomai," is used in Acts 17v2,17, 18v4,19, 19v8,9, 20v7,9, 24v12,25. "Peitho," to persuade, occurs in Acts 28v23,24, in connection with Paul's evangelism. "Suzeteo," to reason, is used of Paul's and Stephen's irresistible Scripture reasoning with those who opposed them. The arguments of these great Christians was unanswerable, so their opponents murdered Stephen, and planned to murder Paul. Acts 6v9,10, 9v29,30. Modern Christianity has cramped and straightened even the Gospel mission to a formal service, which it certainly was not in the early Church.

Body Ministry Encourages And Develops Ministries In God's Flock.

The Holy Spirit is the overall superintendent of the whole Church of Christ, His aim is to produce ministry in each local church. The object of the New Testament leaders, therefore, was to produce ministries in the flock by informal body ministry. Eph 4v8-14. In Eph 4v14, Paul speaks of immature believers without the ability to minister; the word he uses for "children," is "neepios," which means literally, "none-speaking ones," or "without the power of speech," its literal meaning was lost in general use, but immaturity was always associated with it. "Neepios" occurs in Matt 11v25, 21v16, Luke 10v21, Rom 2v20, 1Cor 3v1, 13v11, Gal 4v1,3, Eph 4v14, Heb 5v13. Paul says in Eph 4v14, that those who remain children, and do not grow and minister, are at the mercy of false teachers, who though seeming to play the game, are really using loaded dice and trickery. "By the sleigh," is "en tei kubia," which means literally, "in the throw of a dice." By craft and trickery is "panourgia," and methodical deceit is "methodia." Crafty false teachers can fool God's babies as easily as a conjurer or trickster can deceive a young child. Paul's statement has been proved true again and again by the way that false cults have deceived many Christians, because they have been kept in doctrinal and spiritual infancy by the churches which they have attended.

We read in Heb 5v13,14, that the Hebrew Christians had been converted long enough to have grown into able teachers of God's Word, but most of them were still immature non-speaking babies, when they should have grown to maturity. Christians who are mature ("teleios," (NT:5046), full grown, perfect), have "by constant use" ("hexis," (NT:1838), habit), had their senses "exercised" ("gumnazo," to exercise vigorously) and are "able to discern" ("diakrisis," (NT:1253), judge thoroughly) between "good" ("kalos," (NT:2570), properly beautiful, but also that which is good, virtuous, valuable and precious) and "evil" ("kakos," (NT:2556), worthless, depraved, injurious, pernicious, evil). Elders are to bring their flocks to maturity as soon as possible; this involves giving them moral example, doctrinal stability through correct teaching, and leading them into an experience of spiritual gifts. Elders are to make sure that the doctrine and experience of their charges is sound and healthy, "hugiaino." 1Tim 1v10, 6v3, 2Tim 1v13, 4v3, Titus 1v9,13, 2v1,2.

The maturity of their flocks is the test of an elder's ministry.

Many Christians have been kept in spiritual infancy by their religious leaders for decades, and are "none speaking ones," they have been taught only to listen, and have not developed any ministries. This is very dangerous for the Christians concerned, and disastrous for the effectiveness of the Christian witness. Ministers who keep their members in spiritual immaturity, and don't allow God's babies to grow, frustrate God's longing desire for the spiritual and doctrinal growth of His children. Those who thwart the spiritual growth of God's children in this way, certainly cannot expect a, "Well done," when they meet Jesus. God gives a ministry of some kind to every Christian (Eph 4v7), but if people are not given a chance to develop their ministries, they will wither and die, instead of grow and develop. Happy, indeed, is the Christian fellowship, or church, that allows the Holy Spirit to give and develop ministries, it can be a veritable heaven upon earth.

Christians are stultified by passivity and formality in one-man ministry meetings. However, in the freedom of informal meetings, with sympathetic friends we know, love and trust, there is far less stress and strain, and we feel much more at ease and are less likely to be nervous, and we know that our friends don't mind if we do stutter, stammer or hesitate. The informality, sympathy and friendliness, enable and encourage even the most timid to discuss God's Word and manifest spiritual gifts. Informal, body ministry meetings bring greater interest, absorption and increase in Scripture knowledge. Christians can learn far more by dialogue and discussion, than they can by passively listening to one speaker, and if they get something from God's Word for themselves and minister it to others, it will mean far more to them than if they are just a passive listener. In Luke 11v5-13, Jesus said that God will abundantly bless with the Holy Spirit, those who earnestly seek Him to obtain "bread for others." This determined seeking of God for something to meet the needs of people, brings greater dependence upon the Holy Spirit, this will certainly bring greater operations of the Holy Spirit. In 1Cor 14v23-25, Paul says the revelation of the secrets of people's hearts will make them acknowledge that God is in the midst. This shows that we can manifest the same gifts that Jesus manifested when the Samaritan woman had the secrets of her life revealed by Jesus. This brought about her salvation and brought revival among the despised Samaritans, this can happen today, when we submit to the leadings and ministry of the Holy Spirit. John 4v1-42.

I have found that informal meetings have a really beneficial effect upon children. When children associate Christianity with formal, dead services, they grow up not wanting it. However, when they see the liberty, fellowship, love and joy in Christian meetings, and feel the presence of God, and see His acts and manifestations, they desire and enjoy Christian experience.

Informal Body Ministry Meets Deep Spiritual Needs In The Church.

There are important ministries of the Holy Spirit that rarely take place in many churches; such as the healing of memories and hurts, and a release from burdens and worries, by the gift of faith. This is not a kind of Christian psychology, which under the guise of spirituality is really an invasion into people's privacy. It is a sin to resurrect and demand the details of people's past sins and lives, they are buried with Jesus. Woe betide anyone who digs up what God has buried. Rom 6v1-4. The Christian who operates God's power and revelation gifts, often never needs to know what that need is; there is often simply the revelation of a burden and need, and the knowledge when God has met that need. The Holy Spirit is a perfect gentleman, He does not want to parade people's innermost secrets and problems before all. He will only show us specific needs, if He thinks that it is absolutely necessary, and many times this information will only be for the person praying to know, and it should not be spoken out to others. Many of the Holy Spirit's revelations are for secret prayer, not public utterance. It is also often very wise and necessary to seek God for the lifting of people's hurts and burdens without them even knowing it, or openly praying for them, just as our Lord did for people in need when He attended the synagogue services at Nazareth.

I have found, through over 50 years experience that people come into formal meetings with burdens and time after time go out with the same burdens. Christians just don't get to know one another, or each other's needs in formal meetings. In an informal meeting, or in a time of prayer after a formal meeting, these burdens can be met by the power and revelation gifts of the Holy Spirit. Formal meetings can have a definite place, but they need to be followed by informal fellowship and ministry, if we are to meet people's needs and experience the fullness of God's blessing. Informal Body Ministry Produces A Remarkable Fellowship Of "Agape" (NT:26) Love.

Body ministry makes Christians depend on one another instead of themselves, and this is not only a real antidote to pride, it also produces real love between Christians. 1Cor 12v20-26, John 13v35. We are to learn from, and help each other. 1Thess 2v4-9. In genuine body ministry, there is an exercise of mind over doctrine, and controlled emotion in worship and praise. There is also an exercise of spirit in contact with God and in ministry to others, and a remarkable fellowship of love between Christians and their God. It is this contact with God and love for each other that gives life to our doctrine and worship. Jesus said that we must worship God in spirit and in Truth, and this involves loving our brothers and sisters in Christ. John 4v24, 13v35. Those who have experienced this remarkable love and fellowship of spirit with other Christians, know what Christ meant when He said, "I pray that they may be one, as we are one." John 17v20-22. When Christ ministers through the local church as a body, there develops a remarkable fellowship of saints, which is as real as their fellowship with God. It is this deep ministry of the Holy Spirit and real fellowship in Christ, that creates and constitutes the liberty Paul speaks of in 2Cor 3v17,18. Freedom and liberty in the spirit, does not consist in the repetition of twenty lively choruses again and again, this can be the worst form of bondage, if it is not led by the Holy Spirit. True liberty comes from a God anointed worship, and a love impregnated body ministry, which produces real fellowship and friendship in Christ.

In many modern churches there is no fellowship of the saints, Christians just don't get to know one another. In the early Church there was the atmosphere of love and friendship, which enabled Christians, not only to share their blessings, but their burdens too. They could talk of their deep problems, and even their sins, knowing that they would be lovingly and thoughtfully prayed with, until their spiritual and physical needs were met through the power and love of Christ. James 5v14-20. When Jesus is in control, a friendship, fellowship and tender burden bearing, can take place in an informal house fellowship that can never take place in formal church meetings.

We can have fellowship without membership and membership without fellowship. Many Christians are looking to the wrong "ship" for blessing. In many churches fellowship takes place in loving conversations after the services, but often there is little or no fellowship during the services. This is certainly not a New Testament Christian fellowship, where all were of "one accord," "one soul" and "one mind." It says in Acts 4v32, "There was one heart and soul in the multitude of those who believed." This shows that there can be a real unity in a multitude of Christians, and Christians should gather together in these large groups for teaching and fellowship, but they should also break up into separate small meetings for closer fellowship and body ministry participation. Where numbers get large, there can, of necessity, only be a limited number of people taking part. This is why John Wesley divided a church into a number of class meetings, and limited the size of these class meetings. This deep and loving fellowship of saints with God and each other, will preserve us from backsliding in these evil last days. Heb 10v24,25.

The depth and beauty of true Christian fellowship can be seen in Phil 2v1, Paul speaks of "consolation in Christ," "parakleesis;" and "comfort of love," "paramuthion;" and "bowels of compassions," "tis splagchna," tender higher emotions; and "mercies," "oiktirmoi," pities. All these beautiful, heavenly emotions, spring from a "fellowship of the spirit," "koinonia," a partnership and sharing of the common fountain of their life in God. "Koinonia," means a common sharing, communion, joint participation and fellowship; it occurs in Acts 2v42, Rom 15v26, 1Cor 1v9, 10v16, 2Cor 6v14, 8v4, 9v13, 13v14, Gal 2v9, Eph 3v9, Phil 1v5, 2v1, 3v10, Philemon v6, Heb 13v16, 1John 1v3,6,7. **In Phil 2v2**, Paul speaks of Christians being "one in soul," "sunpsuchoi;" and "of one mind," "to hen phronountes," we are to have harmony of desires and feelings, and unity of thought. The book of Acts is full of this unity; when Christian's enemies are of one accord, Acts 7v57, 18v12, 19v29, Christians certainly need to be united and of "one accord." See Acts 1v14, 2v1,46, 4v24, 5v12, 15v25, Rom 15v6, in every case the word is "homothumadon." See Acts 8v6, 12v20.

The early church at Jerusalem experienced a glorious unity, fellowship and love, and a joint participation in the Holy Spirit's ministries. It is true that Satan tried to spoil this unity, and succeeded in many churches, but in Acts 2 and 4, we certainly see this lovely fellowship in Christ. The fruit and influence of the Holy Spirit is love, and where He is in control, there is entreaty, tender consolation, tender higher emotion and pity, and a real sharing, trusting and binding together in Christ.

Body Ministry Even Took Place In Newly Formed Churches.

Infant churches depended upon their founders for the majority of their teaching and spiritual guidance, however, they were also encouraged to exercise body ministry. 1Cor 12v4-31. Indeed, body ministry participation in teaching was a normal part of synagogue services, so the Jews would be used to this. The Jewish synagogues were more conformed to the New Testament pattern of body ministry, than most of today's churches. Modern ministers would die of shock if their sermon was interrupted by a question, or their statement challenged, or someone else asked permission to comment or give a contribution, yet this was the normal procedure of the synagogue and early Church. The Jewish converts in Paul's churches already had a good knowledge of the Old Testament Scriptures, and already knew how to practice body ministry in relation to teaching, they just had to learn and practice body ministry in relation to spiritual gifts. The Jews in Paul's

churches, knew the Old Testament Scriptures very well, but it was not just a question of learning the doctrines and teaching of the New Covenant, it was also essential for them to experience the powers of the Age to come. It was not just a question of theology, but of spiritual dynamic as well. The rapid spiritual development of the churches through body ministry enabled Paul to appoint elders within two or three years of churches being founded.

Unlike Paul, many Christian leaders today, resent rather than encourage developing ministries in their churches, however, to keep God's children in an infantile state is a serious sin, for it frustrates God's purposes and ministrations. When ministries are not allowed to function, or are suppressed, there are only two alternatives, frustration or separation. The early Church members developed rapidly in spiritual strength in the informal meetings in believers' homes, they got to know each other well, and shared each others burdens and joys.

Body Ministry Took Place In The Lord's Supper.

We see in 1Cor 11v21 to 14v31, what actually happened at a New Testament communion service, it consisted of spiritual ministry plus spiritual gifts. The Lord's Supper was part of the fellowship that took place in the body ministry of the local church.

The Lord's Supper nearly always took place in a home.

The insistence that the Lord's Supper should only take place in a church building under the control of a paid minister, is quite unscriptural. For well over 250 years, the Romans did not allow Christians to own church property, they met in homes, catacombs, the open air, or hired buildings. With so many believers in the churches, Christians had to celebrate the Lord's Supper in many homes, and this they did. Acts 2v46. When our Lord instituted the communion service, He did so in a private house, and with close friends. Church leaders usually object to the Lord's Supper taking place in homes, because they desire to uphold their power structure, and to have things firmly under their control. It was for this reason that the religious leaders of our Lord's time persecuted Jesus and His Church. Love is content to see others blessed and rejoices to see God's Word fulfilled. How often has clerical tyranny disguised itself as zeal for God and righteous indignation. We can celebrate communion and remember our Lord's death, whenever, or wheresoever it is desirable, in a church building, a home or in the open air. Only two or three believers are necessary, and any believer can administer and partake of the Lord's Supper. **The Lord's Supper had the divine order of informality and spirituality.**

The Passover feast was a family occasion, a social event, as well as a spiritual event; there was the divine order of informality and spirituality. The Lord's Supper was also an informal occasion, part of a Christian's social fellowship with other Christians, part of an ordinary simple meal, and after a family meal, it was naturally supernatural. God intends Christians to **ENJOY** spiritual fellowship together, not to be formal, distant and restrained with each other. Notice the sweet, conversational, natural, informal nature of the Lord's last supper. We see the conversation between Christ and John, Christ and Peter, Christ and Judas, Peter and John, and separate conversations between other disciples. Jesus gave informal teaching, prophetic insights from the Scriptures, and prophetic warnings of His death and betrayal, mixed with encouraging promises, sublime praying, and a telling practical lesson in humility, when He washed their feet.

It is a striking fact that the early Church linked the Lord's Supper and Christian fellowship with social fellowship. Their Christian fellowship was also a glorious free informal Holy Spirit anointed social fellowship, "And day by day continuing with one mind in the Temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart." Acts 2v46, 1Cor 11v20,21,32-34. The idea that we should fast before taking the Lord's Supper has no Scriptural basis; Jesus instituted it, "as they were eating in the Passover night." Matt 26v26. The whole aim of the Lord's Supper in the early Church was not just listening, but also the development of ministry and spirituality through sharing fellowship and experience in a conversational manner. The joy of the Lord that makes us strong is developed in this environment. Neh 8v10.

In many churches Christians gather for the Lord's Supper, but there is little communion or fellowship of the saints. I am not saying that the formal communion services are wrong, or that Christians are not remembering their Lord's death, they certainly are. I am saying that if there is no informal, conversational sharing of experience and loving ministry to one another, we have not reached the New Testament ideal of a communion service. There can be no communion, where there is disagreement and division; deep love, trust and fellowship was the New Testament basis of fellowship. 1Cor 10v17, Matt 5v23,24. Paul warned the Galatians that if they did not walk in love to each other they would bite and devour one another. Gal 5v13-16. Fellowship is based on mutual love for each other. We are one body, united by one spirit, having one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one Father. Eph 4v1-6, Rom 8v9.

We see from Acts 20v7-12, that hours of fellowship, instruction and talk could take place both before and after the Lord's supper. There was prolonged informal fellowship, discussion, teaching and worship, as there was at the actual Last Supper. It is a sign of spiritual inertia and weakness, when a great deal of time is given to singing, and there is hardly any teaching and discussion of the Scriptures. At the actual last supper we only read of one hymn being sung, this obviously is not the rule, for we read in Eph 5v18,19, of Christians thanking God and admonishing one another in "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs." We read in Col 3v16, that these songs are to be based on the Scriptures, like the marvellous hymns of the Wesley's, their content being full of glorious doctrinal and experimental Christian Truth. Beautiful church music may be elevating, but without the blessing of God it can degenerate to the level of mere entertainment. Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs are indeed very blessed, when we are filled with the spirit, and make melody in our hearts to the Lord.

The Lord's Supper took place at any time, any number of times a week, anywhere, and by any believer.

The Lord's Supper was instituted, not on the first day of the week, but on a weeknight, as a supper. We read in Acts 20v7, that Christians gathered on that occasion on the first day of the week, however, this is not the only day, for the Lord's supper can be celebrated on any day. Though the Passover meal was a supper, it does not mean that the communion service should only take place in the evening, for Acts 2v46, indicates that it can take place at any time during the day, though evening was probably the best time for most believers. The head of the house administered the Passover feast, however, all Christians are kings and priests and can administer the Lord's Supper. Men have replaced the simplicity, beauty, and freedom of the communion service with their own forms, and have taken much of the blessing away, however, if we follow the pattern laid down by Jesus, we shall always find blessing, and God.

Christ Inspired Women To take part In Body Ministry.

The New Testament tells us that women were anointed by God to participate in the worship and ministry of the Church. Indeed, the Scriptures reveal that women sometimes led in God's work. Miriam, a notable prophetess, led the women in praise and prophecy; she is given the credit with Moses and Aaron for delivering Israel from Egypt. Exod 15v20,21. Micah 6v4. Deborah was not only a prophetess, she was also the leading judge of Israel; notice that she was not made the leader of Israel by men, God appointed her, and led her to victory over overwhelming foes. Through her spiritual power, Israel had victory for 40 years. Judges 4v1-5v31. The prophetess Huldah was the spiritual giant and spiritual leader of her day, when anyone wanted to have a word from God they went to Huldah. Jeremiah was alive at this time, but when good king Josiah needed a word from God, he sent the high priest to Huldah for God's guidance; she had a superior prophetic ministry, and could get the word of the Lord far quicker than Jeremiah. (See Jer 42v7, it took ten days for Jeremiah to get the word of the Lord.) Huldah's prophecy brought about Josiah's revival. 2Kings 22v13-23v25. Anna the prophetess was the person closest to God in Israel at the time of Christ's birth, Israel's male religious leaders were spiritually dead, and were spiritual babes compared to this godly prophetess. God used Anna to minister His love and life, and to meet the needs that they missed. God can, and often does, do the very same today. Luke 2v36-38. History reveals a vast army of godly women, like David's mother, "the handmaid of the Lord;" and Hannah, the mother of Samuel; Jochebed, the mother of Moses, and many others, who have been the channels of God's love and power to their children and their generation. They changed history by their prayers and spiritual ministries. When men have grown spiritually cold and formal, it has often been left to godly praying women to rekindle the fires of revival. Men nearly always monopolise the pulpits and positions of authority, women usually take the lead in love, spirituality, prayerfulness and faith.

The Devil and misguided men have tried to squash the ministry of women by misquoting certain texts.

An examination of these verses shows that both are concerned with domestic matters.

The first Scripture is 1Cor 14v34,35: "Let your women keep silence in the churches; for it is not permitted unto them to speak...it is a shame for women to speak in the church." In 1Cor 14v34,35, we see that the wife had to ask their husbands at home, this was certainly not over teaching, for in the informal house meetings of the early Church there was always liberty to do this. Paul had just stated in 1Cor 11v4, 5, that women could pray and prophecy in the church, and you cannot do this and be silent, and an examination of 1Cor 11v16-20, proves that Paul had been considering church practice, not private prayer. 1Cor 14v4,5,22-24,29-33, Acts.2v16-18. Paul said they must not discuss domestic matters at church fellowship meetings. Paul had said in Gal 3v28, that in Christ there is neither male nor female.

The word "speak," "laleo," in 1Cor 14v34, has been translated "chatter" by some scholars, because "laleo," literally means, to chatter like a bird, to talk much, to prattle. It is true that in the New Testament the word is more used in the sense, "to talk," "to speak," but who is to say that Paul was not using it in its basic meaning, which would make very good sense in the light of the Christian fellowship gatherings in the Middle East in Paul's time. The synagogues did not possess our modern order, propriety, formality and "reverence." While the synagogues did not have the drunken, uproarious and disgraceful revelry that accompanied heathen religions; they enjoyed a real freedom and informality. The word "silence" was spoken to the restless, emotional and talkative Orientals, Greeks and Latins in Corinth, who were not used to any discipline, routine and order, not even in the informality of the synagogue meeting. In the synagogues there was a very definite informality; extempore prayers were permitted, and those who desired to read the Scriptures and make comments upon them, could do so. Anyone who was thought to express wrong teaching in prayer or preaching was immediately stopped. Acts 13v45-47, 18v6.7. Dialogue freely took place in the synagogue meeting. Acts 17v2,17, 18v4,9, 24v12,23, Greek, "dialegomai," Matt 2v34, Jude v9.

In "A New Testament Commentary," Howley, Bruce and Ellison, state with commendable honesty, that the verb "lalein," translated as "speak" in 1Cor 14v34, is used to generally to refer to any specific kind of speaking. They say that the suggestion cannot be ruled out, that Paul is merely speaking of irregular talking, in the form of soothing or rebuking babies, shouting out a remark or query, or just plain chattering. There can be no doubt that Paul is referring to unedifying abuses of their freedom to speak, pray and prophecy in church gatherings, which Paul says is their right in 1Cor 11v5,6. Since two or three Christians could make up a New Testament fellowship, Matt 18v20, when two or three Christian women meet and pray together, they make up a church meeting, must they be silent? of course not! The New Testament meetings were nearly always informal meetings in a home, and it was certainly not disgraceful for women to talk in this social fellowship, which accompanied Christian fellowship. Satan is delighted over the restrictions that men have placed on the ministries of the Holy Spirit through God's handmaids; he knows that the Church has lost a great deal through these restrictions.

The ordinance in 1Cor.14v34, is said to be based on the law, "but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law," however, no Scripture states that a woman could not pray, prophesy or preach. In Gen.3v16, God warns women that men would ruthlessly dominate them; however, this was a warning of bad home relationships, not church practice. In Gen 3v16, God did not curse women, it is a bad translation. (See Appendix 2) In Eph 5v21-33, Paul instructs husbands to love their wives as Christ loves His Church, there is to be no bossing or hardness, but the fellowship of love. In 1Pet 3v7, Peter warns that God will cut off and not listen to the prayers of a bad or inconsiderate husband. Ill-treatment of wives or women will have to be answered for on judgement day.

The second Scripture is, 1Tim 2v11: "Let the women learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man," should be viewed strictly in the context of which they are spoken. In 1Tim2v11,12, Paul is also referring to domestic matters, as the context clearly shows, for in v 13,14, Paul speaks of Eve's relation to Adam and to child-bearing. Paul said that women should not usurp a man's place, and this is certainly true in the home; however, if God gives a woman a ministry, she is not usurping a man's place, she is taking her Christ-appointed place, she is only usurping a man's place if God has given her no ministry. The trouble with the Church today, is not that women are usurping men's authority in the Church, but rather because men are usurping God's authority over the Church, by their traditions and practices. It is true that Miriam tried to usurp Moses place and authority and suffered a very necessary chastisement from God for it. Numbers 12v1-16, however, there are far more cases in Scripture of men resisting and usurping God-appointed ministries, than there ever are of women. It is a fact that women have manifested apostolic, prophetic, evangelistic, and pastor-teaching ministries. Women are ideally suited to a prophetic ministry, for God has given women a love and gentleness of spirit to care for their children and husbands, which is really the basic essential for a prophetic ministry. As Paul said, love towards others is the best and most powerful channel of spiritual gifts, and so women, who have developed love, by loving and caring, are often able to manifest the higher gifts of revelation, power and comfort, with great blessing. The women that do this are certainly not usurping men's authority; they are fulfilling the ministry that God has given to them.

Women certainly did not keep silent in the early Church, God told them to speak and minister.

Women were included in the great commission, they can proclaim the Gospel, and be used in healing the sick. Women first announced that Jesus had been raised from the dead. Matt 28v5-10,18,20, Mark 16v16,17. They also spoke out in tongues in the upper room, on the day of Pentecost. Acts 1v8,12-14. Women are looked upon in the same way as men regarding worship and ministry by the apostle Paul. Gal 3v28. We read in the New Testament of women who were recommended for their spirituality and ministry. There were the women without whose help Christ's ministry could not have continued in the way that it did. Luke 8v1-4. There was godly Priscilla, helper of Apollos, she had a church in her home. Acts 18v24-26, Rom 16v3-5,19, 2Tim 4v19. We see Paul's women fellow labourers, Junia, Rom 16v6,7; Phebe, Rom 16v1,2; and other women. Phil 4v3. Luke was impressed by the prophetic gifts of Philip's four daughters. Acts 21v8,9. Dorcas had a spiritual as well as a practical ministry; she was loved by all for her practical godliness. Acts 9v32-42. We read of the "elect woman" of 2John v1, another notable spiritual woman. Besides these there were a multitude of women who prayed, prophesied and preached, as the Hebrew of Psalm 68v11 states, "The Lord gave the word, and great was the multitude of women who published it." Blessed are those who publish the good tidings of Christ's Gospel. Isaiah 52v7. I feel that it is dishonest and hypocritical to give a woman a place in the ministry in difficult mission fields, and refuse them the same place in much easier conditions at home.

Women can make their homes a ministry, and men should co-operate with them in this. Paul said that older women should teach younger women sound doctrine and wise practice in the home. Titus 2v1-5, 1Thess 4v11. It is often better for Christian women to minister to women's needs for prayer, where this is possible, to save from criticism. It is certainly very unwise and dangerous for men to pray with women on their own, if a man does have to pray with a woman, others should be present if it is at all possible. If we practice this it will save from appearance of evil, and will in particular save young people from emotional involvement, which can injure their feelings and spiritual growth, and cause even greater problems. Women, who have children, already have a congregation in their home, and they can minister love, faith and teaching to their children, which will never leave them. I owe an incalculable debt to my own dear departed mother for her constant love, concern, and support, and the inspiration of her prophetic ministry. God has often changed history through the ministries of godly mothers; think of godly Hannah, the prophetess, the mother of Samuel; Elizabeth the prophetess, the mother of John the Baptist; godly Mary the prophetess, the mother of our Lord. 1Sam 2v1-11, Luke 2v1-16. We thank God for women, like Hannah, who have made their grief, problems and frustrations, an incentive to seek God, and as a result have blessed whole communities and nations. Mary of Bethany was the one above all others, even more than John, to minister to Jesus in His hour of need. Mary's faith, genuine affection, concerned love, and fellowship of spirit, strengthened and sustained Jesus, and her name is recorded in the Gospel for all time because of it. Luke 10v38-42, John 12v3-8, John 11v1,2,5,6. Godly praying women are the spiritual backbone of most churches.

There are millions of Christian women today who are winning souls, blessing saints, preaching, prophesying, teaching, comforting the needy, and labouring on very difficult mission fields, with a ministry from Christ, out of a pure love for Him and mankind. May God richly bless every one of His handmaids! God puts His Spirit upon those He commissions, and Spirit-filled women have the right to minister as God directs. Numbers 11v29. God has poured out His Spirit, not only upon His menservants, but upon His handmaids as well, and given them a very definite ministry and place in His Church, therefore, those who resist women's ministry, resist God. Acts 2v15-20. Sister, obey God, not men's traditions. You must pray, prophesy, and preach as God leads and enables you, and do not allow anyone to make you bury your God-given talents, in the soil of silence.

Body Ministry Took Place In Church Decisions And Church Discipline.

We have already seen in the section titled, "Firstly Apostles," (under, "...Even so have I also sent them into the world," John 17v18), how the local churches put forward those Christians who had a definite ministry from Christ, to be their pastors. We see from Acts 6v2,3, that all the Christians in Jerusalem gathered to discuss the problem of looking after poor widows, "then the apostles called the multitude of the disciples unto them and said, 'Look ye out, seven men'...and the saying pleased the multitude." There was leadership, but not exclusive leadership or exclusive authority, not even by the twelve apostles; all the believers were consulted, and they put forward the men they knew would do the job the best. It was a family matter decided by all. There seems to have been no disagreement at all in the choice of the seven deacons. This is Divine wisdom; there is nothing more divisive than clergy or councils making decisions regardless of the feelings of "the multitude of the disciples." The regular meeting in the Scandinavian Pentecostal churches, at which policy is discussed and problems ironed out, where all can take part, is an essential part of New Testament Christianity. This means that problems in the churches are not allowed to carry on without being dealt with, so undercurrents of criticism or frustration of ideas do not occur. Important decisions should not be imposed on the local churches by the leadership of the churches with a "take it or leave it" attitude, they should be tested to see if they "please the multitude" of the disciples. Acts 6v5, 15v28.

In the church at Antioch, prophets and teachers gathered for fellowship and prayer together. Acts 13v1-4. However, they were not deciding church policies, they were "ministering to the Lord," and waiting upon Him, for His blessing, guidance, and a deepening of their ministries. It was God who sent Barnabus and Paul on their apostolic mission, the church at Antioch recognised this call and stood behind them in it.

The "Council" Of Jerusalem.

Many church leaders believe that councils of ministers should make decisions for their churches, and they quote "The Council of Jerusalem" to prove their point. However, if we examine Acts 15 closely, we will find that it gives no authority for councils, or synods composed of ministers, or representatives, autocratically deciding the policies and running of the churches.

Dean Farrar writes on page 243 of his, "The Life And Work Of St. Paul:" "It is only by an unwarrantable extension of terms that the meeting of the Church of Jerusalem can be called a 'Council,'.....It was not a convention of ordained delegates, but a meeting of the entire Church of Jerusalem to receive a deputation from the Church of Antioch." End of quote. Notice who gathered at Jerusalem and why.

God had opened "a door of faith" to the Gentiles, but Satan tried to destroy the basic and essential Truth of justification by faith, through those who had joined Christ's Church. Satan had tried to destroy the Church by persecution, but his attack by intrigue from within was far more deadly and dangerous, and but for the apostle Paul would undoubtedly have succeeded. Certain "false brethren" from Judea tried to close "the door of faith," and bring the lovely converts at Antioch into the bondage of their own belief, they demanded obedience to the Law of Moses, instead of proclaiming the glorious liberty and freedom of the New Covenant. These Judaizers refused to accept the obvious implication of God's dealing with Cornelius and his friends. Satan through them tried to destroy the Church with the God-given tradition of the Old Covenant. The Judaizers blindly refused to see that Christ had fulfilled the Law with its types and prophecies, so the type was no longer necessary; they had Christ the living fulfilment of the type, not the shadow. Heb 8v1-13, 9v15,23,24, 10v8,9.

The Judaizers inferred that the Gentile Christians were not only inferior to unregenerate Jews, they systematically taught that Gentile converts had to be circumcised and keep the Law of Moses, or they could not be saved. Acts 15v1,5. "Except," is "ean me." In Acts 15v1, the word "taught," is "edidaskon," the imperfect active of "didasko," to teach, to teach or speak in a public assembly, the imperfect shows that they began to teach and kept it up. The Judaizers made a systematic attempt to bring the converts at Antioch into legalism, they practised a determined espionage and proud indoctrination of these lovely young converts. Antioch had proved its love and friendship with the church at Jerusalem with a very generous gift. Acts 11v30.

These Gentiles' hearts burned with love for Christ and their Jewish brethren in Christ, Paul was determined that this was not going to be extinguished by legal bondage. Paul and Barnabus challenged these Judaizers, "they had no small dissension and disputation with them," Acts 15v2, the word for "dissension" is "staseos," which means "insurrection" or "violent disruption;" the word for "disputation," is "zeteseos," which means dispute or discussion. It was a prolonged row, and these Judaizers refused to accept the revelation of the Church Age as preached by Paul, Satan made a determined attempt to destroy the New Covenant Truth through these Judaizers. Gal 5v1-4. Even the combined mighty ministries and Scriptural knowledge of Paul and Barnabus failed to convince these self-appointed guides of Christ's Church of the error of their ways. The church at Antioch appointed Paul and Barnabus and some others to go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and elders to settle this matter.

On their journey to Jerusalem Paul and Barnabus reported to the churches of Phoenicia and Samaria how the Gentiles had turned to God, and their news was received with great joy and praise. At Jerusalem Paul and Barnabus again "declared all things that God had done with them." Acts 15v3,4. After the welcome of the Jerusalem Church and the elders and apostles, battle is joined, the Christian Pharisees insist that these Gentile converts "must," "dei," be circumcised and

charged to keep the Law of Moses. They evidently were still as narrow in their outlook as when they challenged Peter over his preaching to the Gentiles in the home of Cornelius. Acts 15v5 with 11v2-18. We read in Acts 15v24, that the Judaizers from the Jerusalem Church had greatly troubled and subverted the church at Antioch. "Troubled," is "etaraxan," the aorist of "tarasso," to agitate, to disturb, to throw into confusion, to make the heart palpitate. John 14v1,27. "Subverting," is "anaskeuazontes," the present participle of "anaskeuazo," to plunder, ravage, pervert, and destroy," it has the thought of the reversal of good that had been done, or the tearing down of what had been built, and is used to describe the plundering of a town. The idea of deciding the matter with the church at Jerusalem, came from the church at Antioch, not from the church at Jerusalem, and so all the Jerusalem church, and representatives of the Antioch church, gathered to discuss the problem. The Judaizers had greatly damaged the church at Antioch, and were severely censured for it. It seems the Judaizers either withdrew, or submitted to the decision for a while, whatever they did at this point, they later certainly started up their divisive and satanically inspired activities again.

This conference at Jerusalem was not a conference of ministers from many churches, but appointed representatives of the church at Antioch, meeting the whole church of Jerusalem. This is the only meeting of this kind recorded in the New Testament, even though, by modern standards, many more would have been thought necessary, and held on a regular basis. It was a meeting to decide the answer to a fundamental doctrinal point. The decision had consequences for the Church universal, for it decided whether the Church and Gentile believers were to keep the Jewish Law, or be separate from Judaism.

When Christian leaders insist that they have the right to lead and decide matters on their own, they are departing from New Testament principles, and in particular Acts 15v22,25, where we see that "the whole church" was involved and of "one accord" in this critical decision. The Holy Spirit confirmed their decision, "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us." Acts 15v28.

NB It is obvious that the first gathering at Jerusalem in Acts 15v4 was adjourned, for 15v6, speaks of another gathering. It is between these two gatherings that the private conferences of Gal 2v1-10 undoubtedly took place. Dean Farrar writes (in *The Life And Work Of St Paul*): "I have here assumed without hesitation that the visit to Jerusalem of Gal 2v1-10, though here mentioned as though it were a second visit, was identical with that of Acts 15, and therefore was in reality his third visit." End of quote.

Farrar then details the five visits of Paul to Jerusalem, which I have detailed as follows in my own words.

- 1) Paul's visit after his conversion on the Damascus Road. Acts 9v26.
- 2) When Paul brought the contribution for the poor at Jerusalem. Acts 11v30.
- 3) Paul's visit to resolve the problem of the Judaizers at the Council of Jerusalem. Acts 15v2.
- 4) Paul's visit after his second missionary journey. Acts 18v22.
- 5) Paul's visit to fulfil a vow at Jerusalem, and before his imprisonment at Caesarea. Acts 21v17.

Farrar continues: "Now this visit of Gal 2, could not possibly have been the first; nor as it is proved by Gal 2v7, as well as by the whole chronology of his life, could it have been the second; nor, as we see from the presence of Barnabus (compare Gal 2v1 with Acts 15v39) could it have been the fourth; for no one can assume that it was without accusing Paul of disingenuous suppression when he spoke to the Galatians of this sole intercourse which he had with the apostles; and that it was not the fifth is quite decisively proved by Gal 2v11.

By the exhaustive method, therefore, we see that the visit dwelt on in Gal 2 must have been the third. It would, indeed, be inconceivable that it was some visit not recorded by the author of the Acts if there were any reason whatever for such a supposition; but when we consider how impossible it was that such a visit should have occurred without the knowledge of St. Luke, and how eminently the facts of it accorded with the views which he wished to further, and how difficult it is to find any other occasion on which such a visit would have been natural, we have no reason for adopting such an hypothesis. Nor, indeed, can anything be much clearer than the identity of circumstances in the visits thus described. In the two narratives the same people go up at the same time, from the same place, for the same object, in consequence of the same interference by the same agitators, and with the same results. Against the absolute certainty of the conclusion that the visits were one and the same there is nothing whatever to set but trivial differences of detail, every one of which is accounted for in the text." End of quote.

Luke would hardly have passed over the events of Gal 2v1-10, if they had taken place in Acts 11v29,30; it is also difficult to fit 14 years between Acts 9v27 and Acts 11v29,30; also Gal 2v1-10 cannot be Acts 11v29,30, for Paul saw the elders, not the apostles, and in Gal 2v1-10, Paul proved that he was not behind the greatest apostles in experience and knowledge. So, we come to the conclusion that in Acts 15v5-29, we have the public narrative of events, and in Gal 2v1-10, we see the private discussions of Paul with the other apostles. Paul and Barnabus saved the Church from staying within the Old Covenant.

We see, then, leading men among the brethren meeting for discussion, but not for decision without the approval of the rest of the church at Jerusalem. In Acts 15v4,6,12,22, the whole church at Jerusalem gathered to consider the problem of the relation of Gentile Christians to the law and circumcision; not only apostles and elders, but "all the multitude," and "the whole multitude of disciples," and "the whole church," were involved in the discussion and the decision.

Notice the freedom of participation in discussion and the unanimous decision.

The apostles did not assume authority over the meeting of the two churches, they let discussion freely take place, they did not direct by apostolic authority, or by prophetic revelation. Nor did the elders, who were the pastors of the two flocks, insist that they were the only ones to hear and decide the matter. The apostles and elders did not decide the issue on their own, all the Jerusalem church was there, and all God's local family was at the discussion. Considerable time was given for people to air their points of view, grievances and objections. The Judaizers were given opportunity to fully state their views and there was "much questioning and disputing," "polles zeteseos," but there was no attempt to silence them, or to rush things to a decision by a majority vote, or to limit discussion and debate. There was a prolonged controversy and discussion over what to believe, it was a question of faith, and all could take part, not just a select few. This questioning, debate and discussion, was a blessing, it made everyone think through the implications of the New Covenant.

After there had been much debate, Peter stands up and repeats how God directed him to preach the Gospel to Cornelius and his friends (about twelve years before), all of whom were Gentiles. God saved these Gentiles and filled them with the Holy Spirit just as He did the Christian Jews. Peter then asks the telling question, "Why tempt ye God?" that is, how could they accuse God of making a mistake, or refuse to follow His guidance as the Israelites had done at Massah and Meribah. Exodus 17v7, Deut 6v16, 1Cor 10v9. Peter then says that the Christian Gentiles should not be compelled to carry a yoke, which they as Jews had never been able to bear. Matt 11v30, 23v4. Peter finishes by saying that salvation is by faith in Christ not in ceremony or ritual, and it is fitting that the last words of Peter in Acts are for forgiveness and liberty in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul and Barnabus follow up Peter's account and conclusions from God's dealings with Cornelius, with their own account of God's dealings and mighty workings with the Gentiles. Peter's words had silenced everybody, Acts 15v12, and prepared the way for the appeal to Christian experience, these facts were far more eloquent than any intellectual argument. James then gives the Scriptural proof to back up God's directive to Peter to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles, by quoting Amos 9v11,12, from the Septuagint, and finishes by recommending four simple prohibitions for the Gentiles, which would stop them stumbling the Jews. These were abstaining from eating food offered to idols; from things strangled, Gen 9v4, Lev 3v17, 7v26, Deut 12v16, 1Sam 14v33, Acts 10v15, Rom 14v14; from blood, dishes made from blood were common among Greeks and Romans; and from fornication, which was treated very lightly, indeed, as natural and permissible, by the heathen. Acts 15v21. Notice the insistence of appeal to God's workings and God's Word, not only to God's Word, or just God's workings, but also to both. Peter, Paul and Barnabus, tell of God's workings, Peter gives a very strong Scriptural warning as well, and James concludes with Scriptural proof and the practical application of that Truth.

Note well, the unanimous decision.

There was prolonged discussion, then decision; nothing was done until unanimity was reached, "having come to one accord," v25, "then it pleased the apostles and elders, **WITH THE WHOLE CHURCH**," v22, "it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us." v28. The decision was confirmed to be of God by the unanimous decision of the whole church, and the Holy Spirit. We cannot expect to get God's will in a church with a prayerless and worldly "rule by majority vote," this is a carnal expedient. We know that elders were elected by the popular vote of Christians, but this was a statement of confidence in proven ministries, and this was done prayerfully, and is quite different from worldly majority voting. Both Christian and worldly experience has often proved the majority to be wrong and the minority right. The report of the twelve spies proves that the carnal and unbelieving often outnumber the spiritual and full of faith. Num 13v1 to 14v45. Rule by majority vote often brings dissension, disagreement, confusion and distrust, and hinders fellowship, which is certainly against the divine desire that God's children should be one. Rule by majority vote has led to families and friends being either estranged, or indoctrinated to vote certain ways, and has resulted in fights for power behind the scenes, which can only be described as worldly and wicked. It is a tragedy when churches are divided into voting power groups, these power struggles destroy fellowship, and frustrate the desires of the Holy Spirit, and instead of the unanimity that brings certain victory, there is a division that brings sure defeat.

We must seek "the mind of the Lord," and recognise Jesus as the Head and Guide of His body the Church. Rom 12v4,5, 1Cor 12v12-27, Eph 4v11-16. A body goes into convulsions when it is sick and is not directed by the head, this is a true picture of Christ's Church, when we do what we want, and not what He wants. We must be willing to pray until we all come to the same mind, this proves our subjection to Jesus. John 17v20-22, Rom 15v5-7, 1Cor 1v10-13, 2Cor 13v11-14, Eph 4v1-6,14-32, Phil 1v27, 2v1-5, 4v2, 1Thess 5v12-15. Jesus desires us to be one as He was with the Father, this oneness springs from mutual love, and this alone gives an effectual testimony to the world. A public practical unity of the spirit is essential, and the God who brought the Christians of the early Church, with their different ways, thoughts and backgrounds, to one accord, will do the same for us if we will humble ourselves and seek His face.

To obtain the mind of the Lord, prolonged united prayer has to be exercised by a church; there is no short cut. Prophecy may well confirm guidance from God, but it can never do away with the necessity of a person or church earnestly seeking God for His will. All local church members must have God's peace in their hearts before important decisions are made, if there is no unanimous decision, the matter should be left week by week, month by month, again and again, until all are of one accord. The China Inland Mission of Hudson Taylor practised this method, the secretary said, "When there has been a delay, it has always proved to have been a wise step, and the necessary guidance has come later on...no inconveniences have been found to arise from the plan." In an age of rush, quick decisions and worldly government and management techniques, churches have to be careful not to partake of the spirit of the world, or they can miss the good and perfect will of God. The Trinity works by unanimity of plan, and churches should too, we should seek and follow the perfect plans that God has for His churches. If the early Church had been as prayerless as many modern churches, Satan's attack by

cherished tradition would certainly have succeeded. Without diligent waiting upon God in prayer and worship, defeat is inevitable.

Some have objected to the practice of unanimity on the grounds of 2Cor 2v6. "Hoi pleiones," "the many," or "the majority," of 2Cor 2v6, means all the church except the sinning brother. A church should restrain action until there is unanimity of opinion, this demands the fruit of the Spirit, longsuffering and self-control, but it is the divine highway to divine guidance.

Notice the appealing and reasonable spirit of the decrees to the churches.

The apostles and elders at Jerusalem gave their decisions to the Gentile churches in a gentle manner, they did not pontificate, or act as lords. Matt 20v25-28, 1Pet 5v3. The decrees are given in an appealing advisory spirit, for Acts 15v28,29, reads, "For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well." "Ye shall do well," is certainly not hard legalism, it is the language of love and reasonableness.

We read in Acts 16v4, that the decisions of the apostles and elders and members of the church at Jerusalem are called, "the decrees," "ta dogmata," meaning decisions, or decrees, from "dokeo," to give an opinion. The Greek work, "dogma" (NT:1378) is used in Col 2v14 and Eph 2v15, of the legal requirements of the ordinances of the Law, and in Luke 2v1 and Acts 17v7, of the decrees of the Caesars. The decrees of Acts 16v4, are said to be, "ordained of the apostles and elders;" "ordained," is "kekrimena," the perfect passive participle of "krino," to judge, to decide, the perfect emphasises the permanence and abiding nature of the decrees. In Eph 2v20 and 3v5, Paul confirms that the foundation of doctrine was laid down by apostles. The important thing about the Jerusalem decree was that the heads of the church at Jerusalem, and the apostles, admitted that circumcision was not essential to salvation, and a Gentile was not to be compelled to be circumcised or keep the Law. This brought temporary peace to the Gentiles, but it did not finally settle the problem, as we see from our next point.

Notice the danger of being restricted by a former God-blessed tradition.

There was a great conflict in the early Church over the relation of the Law to Christianity; even genuine Christians were very slow to realise that Christ had fulfilled the types and prophecies of the Old Covenant, and He had instituted a completely New Covenant. The early Jewish Christians still followed and cherished their old forms and traditions, we are no different from them, and we too are often slow to follow the Lord Jesus to the blessings of the New Covenant. In our day we often still see former God-blessed cherished traditions being a hindrance to Christians experiencing the fullness of New Testament Christian experience. The numbers of zealous Jews who became Christians was so great, that it appears that Peter, James and Barnabus were overcome by them, as it can be seen from Gal 2v12 that they had compromised New Testament Truth through fear of offending them. This proves how we all need to watch our hearts, if men of God of this calibre can be inconsistent and compromise Truth when pressured to do so by Jews who were loathe to put on one side their former Jewish traditions. We can all fail God if we do not keep close to Jesus. It is only as we seek the mind and will of God in earnest prayer, that we shall be clear-sighted enough to discern God's will, and strong and courageous enough to perform it.

We read in Gal 2v11-21, that Paul reproved Peter and Barnabus, for living like Christians one day and like Jews another day. It was very wrong for them to treat Gentile Christians as brothers one day, and then to shun them as Gentiles another day, because of the fear the Jews and the Judaizers in the Church, so Paul publicly rebukes Peter and Barnabus for this. Paul's words were obviously received by Peter, for we find no trace of bitterness in Peter towards Paul, he recognised his great ministry, and his divinely inspired New Testament Truth. 2Pet 3v15. Peter and Paul honoured and respected each other, and Paul's correction did not spoil their affection for each other, they parted in friendship, a lesson we need to note. Barnabus did not separate from Paul on the grounds of this correction; it was on the issue of Paul's rejection of Mark, a relative of Barnabus. Paul later as good as admitted that he had been wrong over Mark, when he asked for his help, and Peter spoke well of Mark also. Col 4v10, Philemon v24, 2Tim 4v11, 1Pet 5v13. This teaches us that even the judgement and actions of apostles and notable Christian men, can be suspect at times, "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." 1Cor 1v26-31.

When Paul came to Jerusalem after his third apostolic mission, the issue of the relation of Christianity to the Law came to a head again. The church praised God for what He had done through Paul, but they were obviously suspicious of Paul's doctrine. They asked Paul to take part in a Nazarite vow, to show that he did not teach "apostasy from Moses," as the Judaizers had said that he did. Paul did not teach "apostasy from Moses," this was a devilish parody of his teaching, he taught the fulfilment of Mosaic type and prophecy in Christ.

Paul had made a vow in Acts 18v18, and undertook a Nazarite vow in Acts 21v23-27. This involved the sacrifice of burnt offerings, sin offerings and peace offerings, as well as a basket of unleavened cakes and a libation of wine. Num 6v1-21. While it is true that God had ordained the ceremonies of the Law, and the Jews had practised them in God's will for fifteen centuries, and the apostles had used the Temple for a period, Luke 24v53, Acts 3v1, there can be no doubt that the Old Covenant had passed away when Christ came and died. John 1v17, Matt 11v11-14, Heb 8v7-13, 10v1-9. It is almost unbelievable to see Paul, the chief exponent of justification by faith, not only standing in the Temple and submitting himself to the Law, but also to the petty ceremonial additions of the Rabbis. Paul must have realised that he was giving

the Judaizers, who had seized on his circumcision of Timothy as a proof of his inconsistency, Acts 16v3, some real ammunition to use against him. Why did Paul do it? Some have tried to justify Paul's visit to Jerusalem and his involvement with Temple worship on the following grounds, which I personally am not happy with.

Those who try to justify Paul's observation of Temple rites, say that Paul did not give way on the issue of justification by faith, the brethren at Jerusalem admitted that this was not the issue. Acts 21v25. They say Paul was acting on the principle he laid down in 1Cor 9v19-23, it was an act of love, to the Jews, he became a Jew to win them to Christ. However, this expediency involved a considerable compromise with Truth. Paul had called the Judaizers, who said that keeping the Law was essential to salvation, "false brethren," "dogs," "false apostles," "deceitful workers," and servants of Satan. 2Cor 11v13-15, Gal 2v4, Phil 3v2. In both Galatians and Corinthians, Paul had said that no one could be justified by the Law, and said that all who taught they could were accursed. Gal 1v6-10, 2v16, 3v10-14. Paul had called the ceremonies of the Law "weak and beggarly elements," as a means of justification, and said that circumcision was an unnecessary mutilation. Gal 4v9-11, 5v12.

Those who try to justify Paul's observation of Temple rites, say that when Paul withheld Truth from those who could not bear it, he was following the example of Jesus who withheld Truth from those who could not bear it. John 16v12. Jesus did veil the Truth of the implications of the New Covenant from His apostles, even after His cross and resurrection, because of their inability to bear that revelation, because they were so bound by the traditions of the Old Covenant. Jesus had to leave that to the ministry of the Holy Spirit. It is evident from the apostles' question, "Lord will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" that even after the forty days ministry of the risen Christ, the apostles did not understand the Truth about the Church. Paul might have tried to justify his observation of Temple rites by thinking that if Jesus had been limited in what He could say to His apostles, then he had the right to act in the same way, and that if the matter had been thrashed out immediately, it would have produced great disorder in the Church, and great opposition from the Jews.

However, nothing can justify Paul's visit to Jerusalem, for the Lord had told Paul not to go there. The problem of the relation of the Church to Judaism was going to be solved a mere twelve years ahead, when the destruction of Jerusalem ended the Jewish state and religion. Those who defend Paul's action, say that he looked upon his vow as an act of public consecration to God and as an appeal to the Jews, not as a means of justification, however, it was an act of expediency, and was a carnal attempt to remove barriers and win people over, but instead of doing this it produced a riot and more persecution, just as the Lord had warned Him.

NB Paul disobeyed God when he went to Jerusalem.

The above reasons are not satisfactory, for in Acts 21v4, God told Paul **NOT** to go to Jerusalem, and his disobedience brought about tragic results. Acts 20v22,23, 21v4,11-14. Why did Paul disobey the Lord and go to Jerusalem? Paul's love for his people drove him to Jerusalem; he was willing to be accursed from Christ, if it could only have saved them. Rom 9v1-5. It is very sad that the apostles and elders of the church at Jerusalem were the means of bringing the prophetic warnings to pass. They should have defended Paul's teaching of the New Covenant, but their appeal was based on an unscriptural expediency, and it nearly cost Paul his life. It all shows how difficult it is to break free of our traditions, and how the fear of man can hinder and harm the church of God. If we are not careful we can be as presumptuous and disobedient as the Israelites, who disobeyed God's command to Moses that nothing was to be added or taken away from the pattern that He had given, Heb 8v5, they ignored this command and added thousands of their own traditions and rules and so made the Word of God of none effect. In the end they persuaded themselves that their tradition was God's truth and rejected Christ in favour of their own tradition and murdered their Messiah. Matt 15v1-20, Luke 11v33-54.

Excommunication and Discipline.

Jesus personally instituted the procedure for discipline in the Church. Matt 18v15-22. Not every private wrong has to be brought before the local church as the Lord makes clear in Matt 18v15-17, the person wronged should first aim at a private reconciliation, then, if there is no repentance and reconciliation, before witnesses, and finally before the whole church; then if they do not repent, they are not to be treated as a Christian brother until repentance is forthcoming. Matt 5v23,24, Luke 17v3,4. Jesus insisted that the whole local church performed the discipline of a member of a local church. Charges must be established in the presence of all, and confirmed by at least two or three witnesses, there is to be no conviction or hearsay or tittle-tattle. 2Cor 13v1. In the whole of the New Testament there is no such thing as a group of ministers gathering to discipline and excommunicate at their own will; there must be no secret sessions or private condemnations, justice has not only to be done, it has to be seen to be done by all the local church. Failure to do this puts the 'judges' in the way of discipline from Christ Himself. If we fail to follow Christ's pattern of church discipline, then Jesus, as the Head of the Church, personally disciplines the saints that He loves. This is why some of the Corinthians had died, and many others of them were very ill, so that they would not be condemned with the world. If we will judge ourselves, we will have no need of Christ's discipline and judgement. 1Cor 11v23-33. The Lord's supper is either a place of cleansing or a place of condemnation.

Immorality, dishonesty, heresy, and the like have to be publicly dealt with by the whole local church, and believers who will not repent of wrong are to be shunned. Matt 18v17, 1Cor 5v1-5,9-13, 1Cor 6v4-10. However, the aim of discipline is not mere punishment, it is the preservation of the church and the restoration of the offender. 1Cor 5v5, 2Tim 2v17, 1Tim 1v20, Rom 12v19-21, Gal 6v1. The Scripture also makes it clear that a person is a heretic who rejects Jesus as their Saviour and divine Lord. 1John 4v1-5, 2John v9,10, Gal 1v6-9. Rejection of apostles and their writings by Christians, was to result in their company being shunned and the person looked upon as a perverted and sinful Christian. 2Thess

3v6,14,15, Titus 3v10,11. If a person loved the pre-eminence they could be cast out. 3John v9,10. No one can be accused unless there is firm evidence; the elders are not to be accused unless there are two or three positive witnesses. 1Tim 5v19. The emphasis should always be upon mercy and longsuffering, where this is at all possible. However certain sins are so serious that severe spiritual discipline has to take place, this can involve direct judgement from God, as in the case of Ananias and Sapphira; or the delivering to Satan for discipline as in the case of the wicked man of 1Cor 5v1-5, and Hymenaeus and Alexander. 1Tim 1v20. Notice, those who upset the faith of Christians with wrong doctrine are dealt with in the same way as the immoral. The exercise of the gift of faith in judgement was performed in the New Testament by the whole local church, or by apostolic ministry. 1Cor 5v1-5, 4v21. 2Cor 1v23, 13v10. This kind of disciplines brought a very healthy fear of God upon the early Church. Acts 2v43, 5v11.

The Lord Jesus warns us that religious people will excommunicate us, when we fulfil His words, and follow Him and others who have prophesied and preached God's Word. Luke 6v22,23. This was certainly fulfilled; the Jewish Christians knew what it was to suffer the temporary and permanent cutting off of religious and social privileges (the "Niddui" and "herem,") and even the solemn handing over, with fearful curses, to God for judgement and final perdition, (the "shammata").

Religion that rejects God's workings, loves to act as if it was acting on His behalf, many solemn excommunications done in the great name of God, have really been the workings of Satan. The true Christian must expect to be slandered, opposed, criticised and persecuted by religious people, just as the Lord Jesus was. If there is no Satanic opposition we should really doubt if we are really serving the Lord as we should. Luke 6v26. When the Church of Christ acts as His body and ministers His life and love, there is an inevitable response from the dark powers that control the minds of men. Let us go forward in the steps of our crucified and risen Lord, in Heaven it will all seem such a small sacrifice for what He has done for us.

Christ Ordained Local, Self-Governing Churches.

The Local Church Is Not A Building, It Is A group Of Born-Again Christians.

The early Church had no external visible organisation in the form of buildings; there was not even an official meeting place for Christians. Christian believers gathered for fellowship at any place or hour that was suitable. These meetings usually took place in homes, the open-air, or even in the catacombs, the place and time being decided at the convenience of each group of Christians. There was liberty as to where and when Christians could worship. Christ stated in Matt 18v20, that two or three Christians gathered together in His name could know His blessing and presence. In John 4v19-24, Jesus said that Christian believers can worship God anywhere and at any time, without a Temple, or any kind of building. Christ's Church organisation did not follow the empire building and power structures of men, or even of Old Testament Jewry. The Israelites spoke with great reverence of the Temple as, "The house of the Lord," and they had consecrated buildings for worship, yet in the New Testament, there is no mention of Christian church buildings, and no hint that they are thought to be desirable or necessary. Paul states that every Christian is a temple of God, and God's glory is going to be manifested through Christians, not in buildings made of bricks and mortar by human hands. Acts 7v46-50, 17v24, 1Cor 3v16,17, 2Cor 6v16, John 2v21.

A New Testament local church consisted of all the Christians in an area or locality. It was not a Gospel Hall, Mission, or any other kind of church building. All churches in the New Testament are local churches; there are no churches larger than a locality. The smallest part of a local church was the church in a house, but it was linked to the other Christians in that area, who met in other homes. If the locality was large and there were many thousands of converts, as at Jerusalem and Rome, there were many house fellowships. Paul instructs these fellowships not to be cliquish, and so they gathered together for fellowship, and to discuss matters of importance, or to hear outstanding ministry. The whole church in a locality made up the body of Christ in that area. If a church is not as wide in its outlook as the body of Christ in a locality, it is sectarian. We should recognise that every truly born-again Christian is part of the Church of Christ in that area. We should follow the divine pattern and wisdom of meeting together to hear outstanding ministry, and also gather in house meetings for fellowship, and sharing in order to develop ministry and spiritual growth. Acts 2v46, 4v31, 5v12,42, 6v2-7, 10v27,28,30, 15v4,12,22,23,30, 20v7,17-37. Evangelism can take place both in large meeting, or small house meeting. Acts 5v12,42, 28v23-30.

Quite a considerable part of the remarkable things that took place in the life and ministry of Christ, took place in homes. The worship of Christ by the wise men took place in a home. Matt 2v11. Christ healed Peter's wife's mother in Peter's home. Matt 8v14, Mark 1v29, Luke 4v38. Christ ate with, and ministered to, sin-sick, needy souls in Matthew's house. Mark 2v15, Luke 5v29. Jesus brought peace to a sinful woman in a home. Matt 7v36-49. Jesus had wonderful fellowship in the home of Martha, Mary and Lazarus. Luke 10v38, John 11v5. Jesus and His apostles centred their operations around the homes of sympathetic friends and helpers. Matt 13v1, 17v25, Mark 2v1, 9v33, 10v10, Acts 10v6,17,32, 16v15, 18v7,8, 28v40, Matt 10v12,13,14, Mark 6v10, Luke 9v4, 10v4,5,7. Jesus raised the daughter of Jairus from the dead in a home. Matt 9v23, Luke 8v51. He healed the Syrophenician daughter lying sick and demon-possessed a distance away in her home. Mark 7v24-30. Christ healed a paralytic in a person's home. Mark 2v1-12. The Lord's supper took place in a home. Matt 26v3, Luke 22v10.

The early Church carried on Christ's practice of ministering in homes. It was in a house that the Holy Spirit fell on the day of Pentecost. Acts 2v2. The disciples who were converted on the day of Pentecost used their homes for fellowship and the Lord's Supper. Acts 2v46. The risen Christ sent Ananias to help Paul in a house, and Paul was healed and filled with the Holy Spirit as a result. Acts 9v11,17. God instructed Cornelius to ask Peter to come to his house to preach the Truth; the

result was a glorious revival. Acts 10v2,22, 30,44-48, 11v12-14. The disciples had a prayer meeting in Mark's house for Peter's deliverance, and God answered their prayers. Acts 12v12-19. The early Church fellowship meetings were centred around homes, this is an indisputable fact of Scripture as well as of Church history. Acts 2v2,46, 5v12, 12v12, 20v7-9, 21v8-12, Rom 16v3-5,23, 1Cor 16v19, Col 4v15, Philemon v2. Paul persecuted the Christians who were meeting in homes, before he himself became a Christian. Acts 8v3.

The fellowship between Christian groups was wisely limited in times of severe persecution, to protect the Christians in these groups. When the Prefect Rusticus examined Justin Martyr (scourged and beheaded for Christ in approx. 166 AD), and asked him, "Where do you assemble?" Justin answered, "wherever it suits each ones **PREFERENCE and ABILITY**. You take it for granted we all meet in the same place; but this is not so, for the God of the Christians is not circumscribed by place, but being invisible fills heaven and earth and is everywhere worshipped and glorified by the faithful." Rusticus then asked, "Tell me where you meet together, or in what place you collect your disciples?" Justin answered, "I am staying at the house of one Martinus, and I know no other place of meeting besides this, and if one wished to come to me I communicated to him the words of Truth." A quote of Neander from Justin Martyr.

We can see, then, that when Paul speaks of there being divisions at Corinth, in 1Cor 1v10-14, 3v1-9, he is not speaking of the Christians in Corinth dividing up into separate groups for fellowship; in a city of 100,000, as at Corinth, and many converts, the division into smaller groups for close fellowship was essential. Acts 18v9-11. The thing that Paul is condemning is the lack of recognition, love and fellowship between these groups, it appears some refused to fellowship in larger groups with the whole local church in that area, or when they did they were full of pride, criticism, and a sense of superiority. This kind of attitude made profitable Christian fellowship quite impossible, and Paul tells them that while they persisted in this attitude, they were carnal and immature babies, and could not hope to progress spiritually. 1Cor 1v2,12, 3v4. This same condemnation applies today to those who will not recognise other truly converted Christians.

A.T. Robertson says the Greek "hairesis," our "heresy," means simply a choosing, from "haireomai," to choose, to take for oneself, and then a chosen opinion, then in a bad sense as a party or faction. Gal 5v20, 1Cor 11v19. It is used to describe a school of thought, like that of the Sadducees in Acts 5v17; of the Pharisees in Acts 15v5; and in Acts 24v5, Paul uses it of Christians. Christianity was a sect everywhere spoken against. Acts 28v22. In Gal 5v20, "haireseis" means "choosings," or "preferences," and is division on the grounds of doctrinal belief.

Vincent says "haireseis" means 'parties', into which divisions crystallise." The word occurs in Acts 5v17, 15v5, 24v5,14, 26v5, 28v22, 1Cor 11v19, Gal 5v20, 2Pet 2v1. Paul tells us that if we make emphasis upon certain nonessential doctrines and Christian teachers a cause of division, we are working after the flesh. Damnable heresies will of necessity produce division, 2Pet 2v1, Titus 3v10, 1John 4v1-5, but there should be no antagonism or division between local leaders or Christians, on the grounds of human personality, doctrinal preference, race, politics, social standing, denominational affiliation, or like or dislike of various ministries. **The Body is one!** However, we see in Acts 13v42-48, 14v19 and 19v8-10, how Paul could no longer have fellowship with the Jews because they contradicted Paul and blasphemed the Truth that he taught, and persecuted him. One can well understand how very upset the Jews were when they saw their members accepting Paul's teaching and leaving their fellowship, but what alternative was there when they were so hard-hearted, stubborn, malicious and unbelieving. When the Jews spoke against Paul's doctrine and refused to believe, he had no other alternative but depart from them and separate the disciples from the corrupting influence of these Jews. The same thing can happen today between Christians experiencing revival, and those who are content with their church tradition, and reject the Holy Spirit's ministries, and so separation may be unavoidable. However, bitterness should be avoided like the plague; we may, like the Lord Jesus, speak the Truth with feeling, but not in a bad temper. Matt 23v1-39, Acts 28v23-30.

Churches can vary a great deal in their spiritual condition. Having local churches and house fellowships does not automatically solve every problem, there has to be wise leadership and permanent abiding in Christ for spiritual progress. Some churches and house fellowships are centres of revival, Bible teaching, fellowship, and manifest God's power and love through spiritual gifts. Others churches, like some of the churches in Revelation, have serious problems, and even grave sin in them. Some are self-centred, religious clubs with no evangelistic emphasis. Some have merely transferred one-man ministry and formality from the church building to the home, and the same cast iron bondage with it.

There is NO Church Federation Seen In The New Testament.

The New Testament local church was a voluntary, self-supporting, self-propagating society, with no subordination to outside ecclesiastical centres or civil authority. There is certainly no church federation seen in the New Testament, we read that all the believers in a city were a church, 1Cor 1v2; there are the churches of a district or an area. 2Cor 8v1, Gal 1v2, Acts 9v31. The smallest expression of the universal Church was the church in a house. Meetings in various homes or other suitable places soon replaced the meetings in Temple or synagogue. Acts 2v2,46, 5v12,42, 10v2,22,30,44-48, 12v12-19, 20v7-9, 21v8-12, Rom 16v3-5,23, 1Cor 16v19, Col 4v15, Philemon v2. Each local church was made up of all the Christians in an area, and each house fellowship had to answer to its spiritual oversight.

The ministries that founded infant churches, obviously had a real interest in the spiritual welfare of those that they had brought to Christ, and nourished in the faith, they did, however, leave the oversight of the local church in the hands of local men as soon as possible. Paul exercised a loving apostolic oversight, but it was not just an official position, it was a divine ministry gift and the superintendence of love. No apostle had the right to found a private church or denomination; the authority of an apostle was moral and spiritual not official.

Apostles have a very real and definite delegated spiritual authority from God, not only to be a channel of blessing, but also to act in spiritual discipline and judgement. This was not just mere talk, but a very real operation of the power of God in judgement. Acts 5v1-11, 13v9-12, 1Cor 5v1-5, 4v21, 2Cor 1v23, 13v10, 1Tim 1v20. The leaders of Bethlehem trembled when Samuel came to them, because of his ministry and authority from God, they realised that you could not play the fool with someone who manifested mighty spiritual gifts and acted on God's behalf. For the same reason there was a very healthy respect for apostles in the New Testament, and great fear fell on all the Church and the outsiders, when Ananias and Sapphira died through Peter's authority in God. 1Sam 15v1-5, Acts 5v1-13.

NB People Joined The New testament Church By Baptism In Water.

Baptism in water proclaims to all that we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and demonstrates our faith in Jesus, and identifies us with Him in His death and resurrection. It is a public witness to all that Jesus not only died but rose again, and that we are now dead to the old life and walk a new life in Christ. Rom 6v3-5,11, Gal 2v20, 1Cor 15v1-4, 2Cor 5v17. In Rom 6v4, "buried," "sunthapto," does not mean, to put down under the ground and cover up, it speaks of the performing of burial rites, and the disposing of a dead body, by either burial or burning. However, though Christ was not buried under ground, He was entombed, which for all practical purposes had the same effect. Our old life has been disposed of, for we account ourselves as dead with Christ to the old life, and publicly witness to our determination to follow our risen Lord. It is not just adults, but believers who are to be baptised, that is, people who are old enough to believe and receive the Gospel Truth. Acts 2v37-42, 8v12,13,36-38, 9v17,18, 10v44-48, 16v14,15,31-33, 18v8, 19v1-7, 22v16, Matt 28v19, 3v2,3,6.

The New Testament baptism is always linked with repentance and faith, and people should be baptised almost immediately after conversion. Baptism followed repentance and faith in Jesus, it did not precede it, only those who believe in Jesus should be baptised. Any believer, not only New Testament leaders, could baptise a convert. Acts 8v12,13, 1Cor 1v13-17. Every believer should be baptised, but unbaptised believers should not be excluded from the Lord's Supper or Christian fellowship. In the New Testament there is no other kind of church membership recorded other than baptism in water. In 1Cor 12v13, we see the Holy Spirit was the agent of regeneration, baptism in water was the outward sign of regeneration, no other act of church membership was necessary. It is a remarkable thing that Christ took the sinners place, not only on the cross, and in Hades, He identified Himself with us in baptism. Mark 1v11, Luke 3v21, Matt 3v15.

The Greek word "baptizo" is used for both baptism in water and baptism in the Spirit. "Bapto," "to dip," only occurs three times in the New Testament, in Luke 16v24, John 13v26 and Rev 19v13. In Rev 19v13, "bapto" is used in its secondary sense to dye or stain. The primary meaning of "baptizo," is "to immerse," or "to submerge," but in its secondary meaning, which is developed from its primary meaning, refers to the influence which one thing exercises over another. "Baptizo," then, can speak not only of an immersion, but also of an impregnation, and infusion of the element in which it is baptised, as in dyeing or staining, it speaks of a bringing into complete subjection to an influence, and an imbibing of the virtues and nature of that influence. We should also note that in many cases, though not in every case, the same distinction occurs between the Greek words "bapto" and "baptizo," as between the English equivalents, "to dip" and "to immerse," the one being a momentary or temporary covering, the other usually implying a prolonged or permanent covering.

In reference to baptism in water, "baptizo" is used in the weaker sense of "bapto," to dip, otherwise all those who are baptised would be drowned. "Baptizo" is used in the New Testament in its sense of permanent immersion and infusion, in regard to baptism unto repentance and remission of sins, and in baptism in the name of the Trinity, and baptism into the body of Christ, and baptism in the Holy Spirit and fire. Matt 3v11, Mark 1v4, Luke 3v16, Matt 28v19, 1Cor 12v13. These baptisms do not speak of a temporary dipping in an element; they speak of being permanently and abidingly under the influence of the thing suggested. To be baptised unto repentance and remission of sins, means being brought under the power and influence of repentance and remission of sins, not for a moment, but for all time. To be baptised into Christ's death and resurrection, as Paul states in Rom 6v3-11, is to be permanently identified with Christ in them, and receive all the benefits and influences of them, not for a moment, but for ever. To be baptised with the Holy Spirit and fire, means that our whole personality is permanently impregnated with and under the influence of the presence, power and sanctifying purity of the Holy Spirit. To be baptised into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, is not just a mere baptismal formula, it is to come under the power and influence of the Trinity, not for a moment but permanently and eternally. To be baptised into the body of Christ, is the permanent placing of ourselves under the influence and power of Christ and His body, the Church. Baptism, then, is more than an outward sign; it is the placing of oneself, under the headship of Christ. The important thing is not just to go through the form of water baptism, but also to have the whole personality imbued, stained, impregnated, and influenced, abidingly and permanently with Christ's death and resurrection life, and all their accompanying benefits.

Scholars admit with Dean Stanley, that baptism means "a plunge, an entire submersion in deep water," and say it was the universal form of baptism until the 13th. Century. The Greek word for "sprinkle," "rhantizo," is used in Heb 12v24 and 1Pet 1v2, but it is not used in relation to Christian baptism. The words for "pour," such as "ballo," John 13v5 and "katacheo," Matt 26v7, and "ekcheo" Rev 16v1-4,8,10,12,17, "ekchuno" Luke 22v20, and "epicheo" Luke 10v34, are not used in relation to Christian baptism. It is a monstrous lie to say that infants who die unsprinkled or unbaptised are lost eternally, it can be said to those who say such things, "in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines, the precepts of men." Matt 15v7-9.

Though we see infant churches being helped by the leading ministries of other churches, Acts 13v1-4, there is no trace in the New Testament of any church being directed by another church, the unity of Christ's Church was a spiritual fellowship

and unity, not an organisational unity. Churches could give "the right hand of fellowship" to visiting Christians or Christian ministries, or give "letters of recommendation" to well-respected Christians who had ministry gifts, but there was no central government by men. Gal 2v9, Acts 15v25, 18v27, 1Cor 16v10, Col.4v10, 2Cor 8v22. The right hand of fellowship was not church membership, it was recognising a person as a fellow Christian. In Gal 2v9, we see the right hand of fellowship pushed to one side the accusing Judaizers, and united Paul with the apostles as an equal in God's work. In the New Testament, there was a lovely spiritual fellowship, not a formal membership; a formal membership, which has no spiritual fellowship and unity, is like a skeleton without flesh and life. The New Testament Church had a recognised doctrinal standard, but it was the simple and lovely bond of love for Christ and each other that was the basis of New Testament membership. In Acts 2v42-46, we see a truly lovely fellowship of saints, a mutual love of indescribable beauty. The blessing of God upon their informal, spiritual, friendly gatherings, not only made them enjoyable, but spiritually enriching and heavenly, so different from so many of today's formal and dry meetings, that have to be endured rather than enjoyed.

Even as late as the middle of the third century, the independence of each local church was still insisted upon; Cyprian, martyred 258 AD, was probably one of the strongest advocates of Church unity, but he insisted that in each community each shepherd was only responsible to God. Christ is the Head of a body united by love, and Church unity is built upon mutual love, not upon ecclesiastical discipline and authority. To the outsider, the early Church looked very fragile and easy to destroy, but actually it was very strong and grew with incredible speed. There is no stronger bond than that of fervent Christian love, and no organisation and direction better than that received from Christ. The early Church enjoyed the loving superintendence of apostolic and other leading ministries, and recognition of other churches and their ministries, but there was no domination of the local church by people outside of the local church.

How The Departure From Early Church Organisation Took Place.

The first things to go were the leadership of Christ and the Holy Spirit, and a Christ-directed body ministry. Then elders, plural, were replaced by a presiding elder, who later took over the rule of the whole local church. The second stage was an affiliation of churches in conference, whose decisions, though at first advisory, became more and more binding upon the churches, and power became concentrated into the hands of the representatives of these churches. The representative's authority then came to depend, not upon his spirituality, but on the size and importance of the population of the area that he represented. The third stage of church federation was the upholding of ecclesiastical traditions and decisions by civil power. Those who desire a much more complete study upon this can read Dr. Hatch's outstanding book (The Organisation Of The Early Christian Churches – The Bampton Lectures) on this subject.

We need to remember our Lord's anger at the unscriptural traditions of the religious leaders of His day; when we reject the Word of God and replace it with the traditions of men. Matt 15v1-13, 23v1-39, Mark 7v1-23, Luke 11v37-54. God is just as unhappy today with traditions that make void His Word, and frustrate His will and purposes. Religious leaders, who cling to men's traditions and reject God's Truth, will never have a revival. They invariably reject Christians who have been given ministry gifts by Christ, just as the religious leaders of Christ's day rejected Christ and the ministries that He had appointed, and hindered the workings of the Spirit of God. 1Pet 2v4. Christ called Israel's religious leaders "hypocrites," and He said that their worship was vain. Christ told His disciples to leave these blind leaders of the blind alone, for God was going to root them up and deal with them, this is good advice for us to follow. Matt 15v1-14.

The Great Evils That Church Federation Can Lead To.

I again want to make it quite clear that I am not against denominational churches. I certainly do not want to censure and destroy the beautiful, inspiring and beneficial acts of worship that take place in denominational buildings, but I do want to see an end to denominational bigotry, unscriptural tradition, and resistance to the Holy Spirit's workings. Denominational buildings can, like the school of Tyrannus, be centres of evangelism, teaching, fellowship and revival, if godly men lead them.

We must above all remember that love suffers long and is kind; we must speak the Truth in love and not in condemnation. Let us exercise patience and Christian love with those who are seeking God, but find it difficult to break from the mental prisons of their own traditions. Jesus has been so loving, patient and kind to us in our stupidity, slothfulness, waywardness and pride. Let us forgive one another as Christ has forgiven us. Eph 4v31,32. The way to break down the barriers between churches is for Christians to have fellowship and prolonged prayer together, in Christ's presence barriers disappear and love and mercy triumph.

Let us now go on to consider the dangers of denominationalism.

Church federation almost invariably leads to a sectarian bigotry that shocks the world.

The unbeliever will accept the fact that when there are many Christians, they will need to meet in different places, but they are greatly hindered from becoming Christians by denominational bigotry and the consequent bitter spirit and rivalry that many Christians manifest to each other. Christ said, "by this shall all men know that ye are my disciples; by your love to one another." John 13v34,35, 15v10-14. A false imitation unity and love and denominational mergers will not deceive the world, they want to see genuine Christian love between Christians, then, and not before, the world will believe. John 17v20-23.

The beloved Grimshaw, though a Church of England minister himself, built three churches for other denominations when they moved into his area, he was not going to have competitive division in Christ's body, we need to imitate his magnanimous spirit. Organic unity into one massive ecclesiastical system is entirely unscriptural and undesirable, we do not want one great denomination governed by men, we need one body united under the Lordship of Christ. Indeed, ecclesiastical central government by men, in reality usurps Christ's prerogative of guiding His local and universal Church, as He thinks best, and shows a real unbelief in the fact that Christ is personally guiding His local and universal Church.

Denominationalism and church federation produce and perpetuate division in Christ's Church.

It is a striking fact that in a few years after 1848, the Wesleyan Methodists lost about one hundred thousand members, because they insisted on the supremacy of the Methodist Conference, instead of the independence of the local church fellowships like those of the early Church. Churches whose basis of fellowship is mutual love springing from recognition of Christ as Saviour and Lord, give a real testimony to the world. Many Christians have restricted their view of the Church and Christian fellowship to one denomination, instead of recognising, embracing, and fellowshipping with all true believers in Christ. Indeed, Christians who have this wider New Testament view of Christ's Church, are looked upon as "unfaithful to our movement," or as "unreliable rolling stones," if they do not restrict their ministry and fellowship to one denomination. Whatever a person's denomination, if they are "born again," and know Christ and the Father in a living way, they are our brother or sister in Christ. Paul tells us that if we perpetuate these man-made divisions and do not recognise other Christian believers, we are carnal and immature spiritual babies. 1Cor 3v1. Those who say "I am holier than thou" are a smoke in God's nostrils. Isaiah 65v5.

A denominational spirit narrows a Christian's outlook and limits a proper vision of Christ's Church.

The early Christians called themselves believers, brethren, disciples, saints, followers of the way, and Christ's Church, they did not recognise any need for an organisational name, or man-made ecclesiastical structure. Faith, fellowship and love were the uniting bonds of the early Church. It is possible that the name of "Christian" has been given divine approval, for in Acts 11v26, "called," is "chrematisai," the aorist infinitive of "chrematizo." For Peter uses it in 1Pet 4v16, to describe believers in Jesus. "Chrematizo," is also used in the sense of a Divine command in Matt 2v12,22, Luke 2v26 and Acts 10v22, and in Rom 7v3 for "called." See also Matt 2v12,22, Luke 2v26, Acts 10v22, Rom 7v3, Heb 8v5, 11v7, 12v25, for "chrematizo." Some think the Gentiles gave this name to the Christians to distinguish them from the Jews. Acts 11v26, 26v28, 1Pet 4v16. It is only used once to describe Christians in the apostolic writings, by Peter in 1Pet 4v16, the more tender and intimate words of "beloved," "believer," "sister," "brethren," "disciple" and "saint" are the words that are used to describe Christians and their relationship to each other and to Christ. Jesus is the Head of a remarkable family, linked together by our love for Him and each other. It is love that binds the Church together and gives a testimony to the world, not constitutions or ecclesiastical machinery.

Church federation usurps Christ's authority and usually frustrates His plans and ministries.

Christ is the head of the Church, but men love to usurp His authority and to take the power into their own hands. Even church affiliation is very dangerous if it results in power being concentrated into the hands of a very few representatives, for this inevitably leads to Christ's Lordship over His flocks being replaced by men's rule. When Christian leaders become spiritual dictators and are touchy about their position and authority, they have never partaken of the Spirit of Christ, and lost the view of Christ's Lordship over His Church. The rule of men nearly always results in the rejection and isolation of the ministries that Christ has set in the Church, and they are not able to minister in churches because of denominational closed-shop attitudes.

Though the New Testament apostles are universally praised by today's modern churches, it is very doubtful if any of them would be accepted by the vast majority of today's churches. Healings, tongues, miracles, and hot sermons, are certainly not wanted, and are often opposed by most of today's church leaders. Most of the religious leaders of Christ's day opposed Him, and in the end succeeded in killing Him. We need "the authority from Heaven" that Jesus and John Baptist experienced.

Jesus did not desire or seek position in men's organisations, or their approval, authority and backing, He was content to do His Father's will, and be a blessing. Jesus never tried to join or start a religious hierarchy, He bypassed the religious leaders of His day and chose simple, unlearned men, of poor education, to be His apostles and lead His Church. God chose men who had a burning love for Jesus, and whose limitations made them depend on Him. Paul said that Christ chooses nobodies to lead in His Church, and said that he gloried in everything that made him Christ-dependent, so that Christ's power would rest upon him. 1Cor 1v26-32, 2Cor 12v7-10. The idea that a person should not be allowed to minister unless they have high academic and intellectual qualifications is completely foreign to the New Testament.

Church federation usually replaces body ministry with one-man ministry.

When divine ordination is replaced with human ordination, and one-man ministry replaces body ministry; the effect upon the spiritual life of a church is disastrous. Paul tells us that Christians should minister to each other as a body works together, often the least talented, naturally speaking, being the greatest blessing because of the manifestation of God's "charismata" (Greek, "charisma" (NT:5486)) through them. 1Cor 12v4-7,21-25, Rom 12v4-13. This was a fundamental principal of New Testament ministry and fellowship. The churches recognised teachers should not monopolise ministry, all have a part to play in the local church. Eph 4v1-16.

There was also a very definite place for an evangelistic mission in the New Testament, with one person having the leading part in debate, as in Paul's missions. Acts 14v12, 19v8-10. However, if we are to completely follow the New Testament; dialogue and reasoning should take place in both local church fellowship and evangelistic mission. "Dialegomai," occurs in Acts 17v2,17, 18v4,19, 19v8,9, 20v7,9, 24v12,25. "Reasoning," "suzeeto," occurs in Acts 6v9, 9v29. Some church buildings fulfil well the purpose of missions, even if they do not permit New Testament dialogue. We must also remember that Paul did not found missions buildings, he founded local churches with body ministry. It is quite Scriptural and correct to rent a building for evangelistic purposes, as it appears Paul did at Ephesus, but it is wrong only to have an evangelistic mission, missions should found churches with New Testament body ministry. The problem with buying and building consecrated buildings, is that it is so financially demanding and time consuming, that it can seriously restrict the practical helping of the poor and needy, which was the main use of New Testament church finances.

The Old Testament guild of priests, which left God's people in a state of permanent dependence and religious pupillage, has no place in Christianity. **There is a change from the Old Testament prophetic and priestly offices, which had a mediating and exclusive ministry, to the New Testament priesthood and ministry of all believers. 1Pet 2v5,9, Rev 1v6. All Christians can minister, as God illuminates and leads. 1Cor 12v7.** The Old Testament priestly and prophetic offices were imperfect, because by being mediatory, they excluded God's people from close fellowship with God. In this Age of Grace, only Christ, the High Priest, has a ministry of mediation between the Father and Christians. Though the Church has important and leading ministries, they do not mediate between Christians and their God.

The guidance of a local church was not placed in the hands of one person. The local church was to be centred on God, not on any human leader. The domination of a church by even a gracious person can check the development of ministry in the church and hinder the movings of the Holy Spirit. Many modern church leaders resist the New Testament pattern of body ministry, and follow the Old Testament idea of exclusive priestly office, and desire their congregations to remain babes (Greek, "nepios" (NT:3516)) forever. This denies the New Testament principle of body ministry, and keeps Christians in a state of permanent pupillage and dependence on their religious leaders. It is a tragedy that the training of many modern clergy is aimed at producing priest-dependence. Denominations usually choose leaders who have the intellectual and academic qualifications and ability to lead churches, without any help from their congregations.

We do not place a premium upon ignorance, but we must note that Jesus chose unlearned men of poor education to be His apostles; they had to depend on God or fail. Natural ability can be a hindrance instead of a help in God's work, if we depend on it instead of God. In 1Cor.1v26-31, we read that God's choice of leaders humbles human pride and brings greater glory to God. **What was true in New Testament times is often true today, a person ordained by men, and given a religious status, is not necessary ordained by God, and a person who is ordained by God, is often not recognised by religious denominations.**

Church federation usually leads to self-dependence and pride.

Denominationalism encourages a false feeling of power, pride and self-sufficiency. A large or growing organisation can give a completely false sense of achievement, and lead to something even worse, a reliance in a denomination's resources instead of God. When churches or denominations feel that they can say, "I am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing," or "Is not this great Babylon that I have built," they are in a very dangerous spiritually bankrupt condition. Pride of denomination and reliance on human resources, should be seen for the serious sins that they are. Dan 4v28-37, Rev 3v17. Uzziah was marvellously helped by God until he was strong, then his heart was lifted up and he did corruptly. 2Chron 26v1-21. The same feeling of security and worldly influence has often had the identical effect upon churches and denominations. When a denomination directs and supplies every material need, church leaders feel very little need to seek, trust, or wait on God for His guidance and power, and so churches become spiritually dead and lifeless. It is a tragedy when church leaders equate worldly influence and power, with spiritual power and spiritual success, they usually mean the very reverse.

Many churches that manifest spiritual gifts can suffer from the same spiritual complacency and self-sufficiency as the church at Laodicea. Many churches seldom, or never, experience any spiritual gifts other than tongues, interpretation of tongues, and prophecy, yet it is the other six gifts that make all the difference between victory and defeat for churches. People come into most of today's churches, with deep spiritual, physical and emotional burdens and other great problems, and yet there is no real attempt to meet these poor people's heart-cries to God for help. Teaching or tradition is looked upon as sufficient, and leaders are content with the superficial, and people never have their deep needs met, year in and year out. The churches that do this are in the same condition as the church at Laodicea, and like that church, they do not know, or will not admit their need, as Christ said, "Thou knowest not, that thou art wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked."

In many churches, Jesus is longing to meet the heart-broken needs of people, but is firmly excluded from doing so by the arrogant self-satisfaction, stubborn self-will, and crippling traditions of these churches. Even though the Lord Jesus looks upon even Laodicean churches with His great and wonderful compassion, He can only look upon such a state of affairs, as criminal negligence, and on the day when He judges His Church He will certainly say so. Rev 3v19-22.

Paul did not depend on oratory or excellency of speech, when he came to Corinth; he relied on the demonstration and power of the Spirit. 1Cor 2v1-5. This is just the opposite of most churches today, who imitate David's great sin of numbering Israel, and so prove that they are relying on, and glorying in, their numbers, worldly possessions and

influence. 1Chron 21v1-30. God reproved David, and started to destroy the thing that David gloried in, He can do the same with us, let us "do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God." Micah 6v8. **Let us make sure that we are Christ-dependent, not self-dependent, or denomination-dependent, and let us carefully watch our traditions.** Church tradition, like the tradition of the Jews, can replace the desires, commands, doctrines and workings of God, with men's teaching and practice, and a form can be perpetuated that hinders, or even excludes, the mighty workings of the Holy Spirit.

Church federation usually leads to unscriptural and worldly power structures.

As we have already seen, all Christians in local churches took part in important local decisions; but in modern denominations, the power usually resides in the hands of a few ordained representatives. Men usually ordain those who will do the will of their denomination, and so they perpetuate their own kind of power structure and make the ministry a closed shop, and only those who conform can join. The Lordship of Christ over the Church's ministries is replaced by the rule of men. Denominations can get to the place where they have enough financial wealth and ecclesiastical machinery to perpetuate their own type of power structure and standards without any help from God. Church history has proved that denominations, like the world, will fight to obtain and retain, power, wealth, prestige, influence and position. Satan fell through this same love of power, he lusted after God's position and for adulation and power, and proud men have done exactly the same thing in the Church.

The Struggle For Power.

It is a striking fact that Jesus was totally financially destitute, and came to preach His Gospel to the poor, and that the early Church consisted mainly of people of little political power, wealth and influence. 2Cor 8v9, Luke 4v18, 1Cor 1v26-31. Constantine used the Church as a means of exercising political power and control, and many others followed his example, until church organisations became an instrument of power and influence in the hands of the powerful and wealthy. Love of power has pervaded all denominations and has destroyed their spiritual vitality and effectiveness. It is a great tragedy that most denominations and churches, large and small, have become largely concerned with upholding their power structure, prestige and worldly influence. Some denominations have great worldly wealth and influence, but they are lacking in spiritual power. The spiritual power a church possesses is nearly always inversely proportional to its worldly wealth, influence, and ecclesiastical complexity. Men love to pass minutes, resolutions, and constitutions, and these man-made traditions, like the traditions of Judaism, often replace the Truth of the Holy Scriptures. Matt 15v1-9, Mark 7v1-13. How easily the precepts of men can replace and frustrate the will and Word of God. Some conference resolutions and church minutes have made churches and denominations secure against revival. Every church minute that narrows the fellowship of the local church is not of God, and will have to be answered for at the judgement seat of Christ.

The resistance to the Holy Spirit. (Acts 7v51-53).

It is a striking fact of Church History, that churches or denominations, which have lost God's blessing, use their worldly power and influence to resist a move of the Holy Spirit. Genuine revivals of religion have always been violently opposed by unspiritual religious leaders, who have been determined to preserve their power structures. Churches and denominations, which have been formed out of the fruits of a spiritual revival, and have lost the revival fire, are often the bitter opponents of a new revival, because it exposes their own spiritual need, and threatens their power structure and their position as spiritual leaders. The Jews murdered Christ because they were envious of His spiritual power, and because they thought that He was threatening their power structure. John 11v47,48, Acts 13v44-47, Matt 27v17,18.

The fear of the Ephesian idol makers, of losing their prestige, position, and wealth, caused them to violently oppose Paul, and the same base reasons have always moved men to oppose genuine revival. Men love to have despotic power, and try to make people conform to their standards and system. Acts 19v23-28. It becomes obvious from a study of Church history, that Satan has often used federated churches, and state controlled church systems, to kill and persecute the true children of God. Suppression of truly spiritual Christians has always followed church federation and organic church unity, as surely as night follows day. Church history proves that federated churches have often proved as good an instrument of Satan for persecution, as the pagan Roman Empire. However, persecution of true Christians in a genuine move of God, is by no means limited to state churches or older denominations, the last move of God that has dried up and lost God's power and become a denomination, has often been a great hindrance, and the most bitter opponent, of God's new move of the Holy Spirit.

As denominations, fellowships and churches begin to get away from God and lose the blessing of God, they try to preserve their structure by emphasising faithfulness to that organisation and subservience to its leaders, regardless of whether they are fulfilling a spiritual ministry from Christ or not. Ministers often spend much of their time praising and uplifting their denomination, and emphasise faithfulness to their denomination and its ordained ministers, and there is often little reference to faithfulness to Christ and His New Testament standards. The glorious loving leadership and true fellowship of the early Church cannot be compared to this denominational bondage.

In John 13, Jesus washed His disciples' feet to show them that Christian leaders are to serve God's people in love, not to lord it over them. The love of power in the apostles had blinded their eyes; they were fighting for position and power a few hours before the Cross. Jesus clearly demonstrated to them, by washing their feet that they should serve each other in genuine humility and love. In Matt 20v20-28, James and John asked for position and power in the kingdom, but Jesus told them that the leading positions in His kingdom were for the most humble, sacrificial and loving, and that leaders in

His Church were to be servants not overbearing lords. Jesus said that Christians can be "great," "megaloi," but warned us that true greatness is manifested in genuine humility and humble service. Mark 10v43,44, Luke 9v46-48, 14v11, 1v15. Great Christians never "lord it over" others, "katakuriuousin," or exercise authority as a tyrant, "katexousiazousin." Jesus said the way to be first, "protos," and "great," in God's eyes, is to minister as a bond slave, "doulos," and a menial servant, "diakonos," even as He had done. Matt 20v20-28.

In 1Pet 5v1-5, Peter tells us the very same thing, pastor-elders are not to lord it over their flocks, but are to lead by example. Church history shows us how little heed has been taken to these words of Jesus and Peter. Men have so loved their religious power structures and their position in them, that they have resisted the Holy Spirit, lied, deceived, tortured, murdered, and pillaged, to uphold and preserve their religious power structure, and they have usually done it in the name of God. John 16v1. The Scriptures tells us that those who hate and kill in the name of God, are not God's children, they partake of the spirit of Satan, who was a liar and murderer from the beginning. John 8v44, 1John 2v7-11, 3v10-17, 4v20 to 5v3. When Christ's disciples wanted to call fire down from heaven upon the hostile Samaritans, Jesus rebuked them and told them that their attitude was evil, and that they should seek to save and bless, not destroy. Luke 9v51-56. True Christians are not concerned with power structures or fighting to uphold them, they are concerned with doing the will of God, and being a channel of God's blessing.

Church federation makes it easy for Satan to corrupt and persecute the Church.

If one person, or a group of ministers governs a denomination, Satan has only to influence these ministers to affect all their flocks. If a local church is ruled by one person, and has a one-man ministry, the same is true; Satan has only to influence one person to make it difficult for all. One minister, even if he is kind, moral and good, can bring a church into bondage, if he is lacking in spiritual anointing, devotion and prayer. A minister can be a good intelligent Christian, but if he is not used to the movings of the Holy Spirit and His gifts, and body ministry, he will be a hindrance to revival. It is also true that one can have a gracious veneer and yet determinedly resist the movings of the Holy Spirit. Spiritual gifts and spiritual ministries cannot be received by intellectual training at theological college; they are received through communion with Christ. Indeed, many theological colleges have been corrupted by Satan, and systematically train students in unbelief, not in vital New Testament Christianity, and so a whole denomination is affected and corrupted.

When Christians are organised into denominations, they are more easily controlled, captured, killed and persecuted, by antichristian forces, a thing that we need to take note of in these evil last days. The New Testament house fellowship is the only way that Christians can have fellowship in some countries today. The Church in Communist countries survived spiritually, because it followed the pattern of independent local churches gathered in house fellowships. The fine buildings, organs, choirs, and singing, can fulfil a useful function in our present circumstances in Western countries, but they are a burden in periods of militant persecution, and can be closed in hours, as events in many countries have proved. **Men's insistence upon church federation, really prepares the Church for destruction in times of persecution. Only a love dominated church, which fervently seeks and waits upon God in prolonged prayer, can ensure the spiritual glow that will preserve the church in persecution, and deliver the church, local and universal, from spiritual death and corruption.**

When churches tried to make a powerful system to save themselves from heresy, they brought greater evils upon their churches than they cured. The man-made form that was instituted to preserve the Church has really produced and perpetuated many forms devoid of the Holy Spirit. The form that was produced to preserve from heresy, has often produced and perpetuated that very thing. The Edict of Toleration (Milan) of Constantine in 313 AD, and the consequent enforcement of orthodoxy by the state, was an unparalleled disaster for the Church. The union of the state with the Church did not save the world, the world's wealth corrupted and defiled the Church and rendered it spiritually powerless. The Church exchanged worldly power, prestige, buildings and gold for true spiritual wealth, and authority. God will not manifest His power to uphold the traditions of men. The dangerous and powerful wolves that Paul warns us of in Acts 20v29, have often been church organisations, and they have also spoken "crooked, perverted doctrines," which have greatly damaged the churches. 1Cor 1v11-13, 3John v9, 1Tim 1v20, 2Tim 1v15.

When denominations evangelise other nations, they try to impose on these nations, not a New Testament form, but their own tradition and form of worship, and these traditions and forms are often quite unacceptable to the people of the nations that they are evangelising, and they hinder the evangelistic success and spirituality of the Church. The simple organisation of the early Church appeals to every nation. False tradition is disastrous for evangelistic success, and Satan is happy if he can keep people conformed to these traditions. How often churches expect the unconverted to conform to their method of evangelism, without any thought of whether it is Scriptural or not. The New Testament forms of evangelism were completely successful, Gospel preaching, either by discussion or heralding, in street, home, open-air, as well as consecrated building, such as a synagogue or Temple, brought tremendous results, because it was not only attractive and interesting, but also because it was anointed by the Holy Spirit and confirmed by mighty signs, wonders and miracles.

In Summing Up.

One of the greatest evangelistic forces in the New Testament Church was its practical love and care for people; indeed, the majority of its finances went for caring for people in need. **Church buildings and ecclesiastical systems consume the vast majority of the finances that Christians can give, and often little is left for the needy, and so one of the most powerful evangelistic appeals of the Church is lost.** The early Church appointed deacons in every church

to do works of charity; some modern churches have followed this practice and have brought great relief and blessing to the needy (Acts 6v1-7 (NOTE: esp., v7, which resulted from what was implemented in Acts 6v1-6), Rom 16v1, 1Tim 3v8-13 (Note v13, "obtain.....great boldness in the faith..")). Large building projects and complex organisations are very expensive and time consuming, and hinder rapid growth; the early Church grew very rapidly by following God's simple pattern. Samuel G. Green, on page 55 of his, "A Handbook of Church History," states that Justin Martyr wrote about 140 AD, "There is not one single race of men, whether Barbarians or Greeks, or what ever they may be called, nomads or vagrants, or herdsman living in tents; among whom prayers and giving of thanks are not offered through the name of the crucified Jesus."

Samuel Green continues, on page 56: "Gibbon and Milman estimate the population of Rome at the beginning of the third century as one million two hundred thousand and the calculation of the former that a twentieth were nominal Christians may be adopted as a minimum." This means that there were at least 60,000 Christians in Rome at this time. The spread of the Gospel and the conversion of tens of thousands of people, had taken place without any external form of buildings or denominational organisation. If we follow Christ's New Testament pattern we shall also be amazed at the results. There is a vital connection between following the simplicity and spirituality of the early Church organisation, and revival.

New Testament ministries are intended to bring people into a living experimental knowledge of God and His Truth. Why, then, are there so few of the higher ministries in operation? The following answers suggest themselves. Much of the fog of the dark ages of the Church is still with us, even in evangelical circles. Ministers are often conformed to the denominational mould, and anything outside this mould is viewed with suspicion and opposed. Authoritative decrees from federated church leaders have forced those under them to resist the desires and movings of the Holy Spirit and Satan has used this to keep churches from New Testament principles and practices. Acts 7v51-53. In Church history this has resulted in Christians with God's anointing upon them being rejected, opposed and even murdered. There are few who are willing to stand the sacrifice, suffering and poverty involved in following their Lord in this way. We have to very definitely take up our cross and follow Jesus, if we are to sustain His ministry gifts to us. A divinely directed New Testament ministry gift is almost certain to involve personal Calvaries in manifesting and ministering Christ's resurrection life (The Christian (either an ordinary believer, or one of the greater ministries in the Church), who is operating as a priest of the Order of Melchizedek, and who wishes to continually minister God's power and love to other Christians and to those in the world around them, can only do so, by continual communion with the Lord Jesus; for a prayerless believer will have little or nothing to minister to others. Matt 7v11, Luke 11v1-13, 1Cor 11-17-1Cor 14v40, Eph 4v7-16, Heb 11v6, 1Pet 2v4-10). Many preachers are unwilling to walk this way, preferring to preach and believe in a spiritually sapping and worldly "prosperity gospel." The cry from God's longing, loving, tender heart is still the same, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Let us hear His call and obey His commands, and then we shall not only see Him in glory, but also hear His "Well done." Let us say, "Here I am. Send me!" Isaiah 6v8.

Section III: The Lord Jesus Prays For All those Who Would Believe in Him Through Their Word. (John 17v20-26).

(Please note, that what the Lord Jesus prays for here in this section, also applies to the Apostles. John 17v6-19.)

"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word." John 17v20.

In this verse, at the beginning of Section III, the Lord Jesus specifically mentions **ALL** those who would believe in Him through the preaching of the Gospel, right up until the end of the Age of Grace, which would close with the Glorious appearing of our Great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ, when He would destroy the wicked with the breath of His mouth, resurrect the dead saints, and then rapture and change both the living and the resurrected saints to be with Him for eternity. Isaiah 11v4, Matt 24v14, Acts 2v17-21, 1Cor 15v50-57, 1Thess 4v13-18, Titus 2v13.

"Shall believe" is in Greek, "pisteuóntoon," the present participle of "pisteuo" and means more properly, "that believe," i.e. the future body of believers is conceived as actually existing. The Lord Jesus, when He entered into His pre-incarnate glory on Mount Hermon, at His Transfiguration, saw **ALL** those who would believe on Him, through the preaching of the Gospel right up until the end of the Age of Grace, and so here, in John 17v20, He is able to state that He is praying for each one of them individually, which would be fulfilled by Him in carrying out His High Priestly ministry by making "interventions" (with power) (Greek, "entugchano" (NT:1793)) for each and every one of them, every second of every day. Matt 17v1-13, Heb 7v25.

"That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." John 17v21.

"That They May Be One."

Jesus desires us to experience the oneness of the Trinity and to manifest it to one another.

It is quite an amazing fact, that the Trinity greatly desires and expects the Body of Christ to possess the same kind of spiritual unity that they themselves enjoy and have had from eternity. But it is a sad fact of Church history, that this kind of unity has rarely been experienced by the Church from the fourth century onwards, ever since Constantine introduced his Edict Of Toleration (Milan) in 313 AD. However, this kind of beautiful spiritual unity and love was obtained and clearly demonstrated by the early church, as can be seen from reading the Acts Of The Apostles, and the epistles written by the

New Testament Apostles. Right from Acts chapter 1 (1v14), the Greek word "homothumadon" (NT:3661), which means, to be of the same mind or with one mind, is used of the one hundred and twenty disciples meeting in the Upper Room for prayer and supplication. This Greek word occurs five time in the Acts Of The Apostles to describe the beautiful love and unity that the believers of the early Church obtained and strived to keep, for this was one of the beautiful attributes that gave such a powerful witness to the unbelieving world around them, even as the Lord Jesus had prayed for in **John 17v21-23, which states: "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me."**

Again and again we read in the New Testament epistles, of the great necessity to maintain the unity of the Body of Christ, by striving to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, until we **ALL** come to the unity of the faith.

Lev 26v8, Deut 28v7,10,13 states the following: "And five of you shall chase an hundred, and an hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight: and your enemies shall fall before you by the sword...The Lord shall cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thy face: they shall come out against thee one way, and flee before thee seven ways...And all people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the Lord; and they shall be afraid of thee...And the Lord shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath; if that thou hearken unto the commandments of the Lord thy God, which I command thee this day, to observe and to do them."

The Lord has promised, that if a local Church (which is His Body), is in unity of purpose, soul, mind and spirit, with the Godhead and each other, having their minds filled with the Truth; that the result of their combined united faith will exercise and release great authority and power in the Heavenly places, and in the world, which will produce a most effective spiritual witness for Him, in that they will be the head and **NOT** the tail. This will be especially true during the Great Tribulation, when the Church will be exercising the restraining power in the world, against the wicked (humans and angels). Such will be the power and authority exercised by the Church, that the wicked will indeed tremble with great fear at the thought of being on the receiving end of it in judgement because of their wicked deeds, but very many of them will not repent of their evil deeds. Christians need to grasp the fact **NOW**; that it is vital for them to respond to God's call, **NOW**, and get close to Him (and fill their minds with Truth), so as to get ready for these terrible dark evil days of the Great Tribulation, so that they can be that restraining force in the world that God wants and longs for them to be. Isaiah 26v9, James 4v5-7, Rev 16v8,9. As the Lord said to Joshua as He was about to cross the Jordan River, so He also says to His Church with regards to going through the Great Tribulation (Joshua 1v5): "There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will never, never, never, never, never, fail thee, let thee sink, not uphold thee, nor forsake thee, abandon thee or leave thee in straits."

He was with Moses as " 'EHaYEH 'aSHER 'EHaYEH," which translates as "I AM THAT I AM," and this is how He is (and will be) with his Church. The meaning of " 'EHaYEH 'aSHER 'EHaYEH," can be paraphrased as such: "I will be with you at **ALL** times, and in **ALL** situations, to be what I AM," in other words, no matter what circumstances or situation a believer is in, the Eternal One (Yahweh Jesus) promises to make **ALL** His abilities available to them (through His covenant names, which are covenanted to His people by His blood), when they call upon and invoke The Name, so as to effect a complete deliverance from the difficulties that they find themselves in. Exodus 3v14,15, Matt 28v18-20, John 8v58, 2Cor 1v20, Heb 11v26.

It is such a great tragedy that at this present time, the vast majority of Christians are in a state of comatose, their minds being in great darkness regarding the terrible dark evil days in the not to distant future. However, God is indeed remedying this by restoring the Truth on this most important subject to the Church, through those who are willing to seek Him for it. The revival that is about to come upon the Church, worldwide, is mainly for the purpose of awakening it up from it's self-induced long term comatose state and bring it face to face with the stark reality of the two choices that each individual believer faces; either fill their minds with the Truth, and get close to the Lord Jesus, in preparation for the great evil that is lurking in the not to distant future, or reject the Truth (of a post-tribulation Advent and Rapture), having been confirmed to them by mighty signs, wonders and miracles, which will cause the individual to backslide and go into apostasy, as soon as the Great Tribulation starts. Matt 24v45-25v13, Luke 6v46-49, Rom 13v11-14.

When this great revival begins (with the Church experiencing revival right up to the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus) and the Truth on this subject is spread far and wide, each individual believer will have a stark choice to make, even as it was when Moses spoke to Israel in Deut 30v19: "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that thou may live." **The believer CANNOT afford to take this terribly important subject, lightly!**

"And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one." John 17v22.

The Glory Jesus gives produces perfect unity and Divine love.

There has been much speculation by Theologians as to what the phrase, "And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them" is referring to, however, it can only be a reference to the power and authority given by God to each believer

(if they are willing to seek Him for it), to do mighty signs, wonders and miracles, for the purpose of ministering His Love and Power to a needy world and church. It is a sad fact that the vast majority of Christians, for many centuries, have not partaken of this wonderful experience, simply because their unbelieving, carnal, unspiritual leaders have taught them that these things no longer exist and that God has withdrawn them from the Church, or some other equally erroneous reason. Matt 4v23,24, 10v1,8, 11v5, Mark 16v16-18, John 1v33, 3v34, 14v12-14, Acts 2v16-21, 1Cor 12v7-11.

In 1Cor chapters 11-14, Paul is correcting the improper practices of the Corinthian believers during their informal fellowship meetings that took place in their own houses, **1Cor 12v7-27,31, 14v1,26, and Eph 4v11-16 states:**

"But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: **But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.** For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked: That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular...**But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way...Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy....How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying...**And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; **For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:** Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: **From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."**

A note on 1Cor 12v13: Some think, and I feel correctly, that 1Cor 2v13, "For by one Spirit we were all baptised into one body," is referring to water baptism and not to the baptism in the Spirit, as O. M. Norlie translates it, "And by one Spirit we have through baptism been made members of one body." The Holy Spirit is the agent of regeneration, the baptism in water is the outward sign and ordinance of regeneration. The second part of this verse, "were made to drink into one Spirit," clearly gives the picture of the baptism in the Spirit (John 7v37-39); for the Greek word for "drink" is "potizo," which is used in the Septuagint in Isaiah.43v20, to speak of a wilderness flooded by abundant waters. "Potizo," truly conveys the thought of Isaiah 44v3, "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and FLOODS upon the dry ground." This Spirit-flooded life, is the Spirit-baptised life. In the Septuagint (the Greek Old Testament), "potizo" is used to speak of the abundance of water that brings abundant fruitfulness. In Gen 2v6, it is used of the heavy dew that God used to water the ground before the flood; in Gen 2v10, of the river that watered the garden of Eden into abundant fruitfulness. In Gen 13v10,11, we read that before God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, the land around them was "well watered," and like the garden of God; Lot greedily chose this area for himself, and spiritually ruined his life. In Gen 21v19, it is used of the well of water that God provided for Hagar in the desert; and in Gen 24v14,17,18,43,45,46, of the drink that Rebekah drew from the well for Abraham's servant, Eliezer. This Spirit-flooded abundantly fruitful life, is the Spirit-baptised life.

In 1Cor 12v26, "suffer with it," is in Greek, "sumpáschei" the present active indicative of "sumpascho" (NT:4841), which means, to share in another's suffering, because one is affected with the same pain and suffering of that individual. The informal fellowship meetings that took place in the believers' houses (in the early Church), was the divinely appointed environment for love and unity to blossom (1Cor 14v37), bringing a real closeness in spirit between believers, which also resulted in a unity of soul between them, so that if one believer was suffering in any way, the other believers would feel the same pain and suffering that they were experiencing, which resulted in these believers, being motivated by love, to seek the Lord Jesus (Who is the Head of the Body) for His power, peace and spiritual gifts (Mark 16v16-18, 1Cor 12v7-11), to meet the suffering saint's needs. Hence, Paul writes in Eph 4v15,16: "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to **the effectual working** in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

"The effectual working" in Greek is, "enérgeian," which is from "energeia" (NT:1753), and has the basic meaning of "to

energise," which is referring to those believers who have sought the Lord for His power, peace and spiritual gifts to minister to the suffering to meet their needs, be they spiritual, physical or material. These interactions between the Godhead and the saints, greatly increased the love and unity between the believers, and also between the believers and the Godhead, for this demonstrated to all that every member of the body of Christ was important, and that each member was dependant upon the other members of the Body, with **ALL** believers being totally dependant upon God. John 6v57, 1Cor 12v25, Gal 2v20.

This beautiful love and unity and oneness in soul and spirit enabled the believers (if they kept themselves clean and free from sin) to have real fellowship with one another in spirit, this further enhanced the love and unity between them. Even Paul experienced real loneliness (of spirit), when he couldn't have fellowship with Titus in spirit. This beautiful fellowship between the saints, having been started while upon earth, will continue uninterrupted when we get to Heaven (and that for eternity), but it will be on a far higher level (than when upon earth), as we will have received our glorified spiritual bodies, and will have entered into the **FULL** participation of the powers of that Age. 1Cor 13v12, 2Cor 2v13, Phil 2v1, Heb 6v5, 1John1v3,7.

The Greek word that is used for "fellowship" in the New Testament, is "koinonia" (NT:2842), and means (literally) participation, then, a having in common, partnership, close association, community, communion, contact, impartation, fellowship, an association involving close mutual relations and intimacy. This is the kind of beautiful "fellowship" that we as believers can experience and enjoy, if we simply implement **ALL** the principles and practices of the early Church. However, how hard it is for Christians to let go off, and get free from their cherished unscriptural man-made traditions, which have bound their minds, spirits and souls with chains and darkness. It will be most important for the believer to experience this kind of fellowship in spirit, during the dark evil days of the Great Tribulation, and it will be in the informal fellowship meetings that this will be most vividly experienced. The glorious woman mentioned in Rev 12v1 will have implemented **ALL** the practices and principles that are laid down in Scripture, and which the early Church had fully followed, which resulted in it knowing and experiencing, the explosive Power and Presence of the Risen Lord; this glorious woman will experience the very same, but in an even greater measure. It is the great desire of God to lead His dear children into the **FULL** liberty of the New Covenant, that they may leave behind the old wine, and partake of and drink fully of the new wine, which is a life energised by the Holy Spirit. Isaiah 44v3, Joel 2v23, Luke 5v36-39, John 7v37-39, Acts 2v17-21, 1Cor 11v23-14v40, Gal 2v4, Eph 5v18-20, Heb 10v25, 1Pet 1v18.

"I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." John 17v23.

If the Body of Christ is in a state of unity and oneness, the length of time for the believer to reach maturity in the faith is considerably less than if the Body has divisions within it, as is the case today. The state of unity and oneness in the Body is the divinely appointed environment for the believer to reach maturity in their faith, anything else will hinder the believer's progression towards it. 1Cor 3v1-4, Eph 4v7-16. It was this beautiful oneness and unity in the Church at Jerusalem that also enabled them to enter into, and experience this wonderful fellowship in spirit and soul; they really cared and loved each other greatly, and also felt the great burden upon God's heart for the poor (who are always upon His great Heart), which resulted in nearly **ALL** the finances of the Church at Jerusalem (and indeed this practice was also done in every other local church) being used to help them. Isaiah 58v6-8, Luke 4v18-19, Acts 2v46, 4v32-37, 6v1-7, 15v22, 1John 1v3,7.

This lovely unity also revealed to the "world" that God the Father had sent His dearly beloved Son into the world to be the Saviour of it (because of His **GREAT** eternal love for each of His created free will beings), for **ALL** the signs, wonder and miracles, done by the Church, were done in The Name of the Risen Saviour, the Lord Jesus. He was clearly revealed as the Promised One, Messiah (Who also had fulfilled **ALL** the Messianic prophecies in the Old Testament, and Who is over all, God blessed for ever), being born of the seed of David according to the flesh, and that being revealed as real flesh, He was no Docetic phantom. Gen 3v15, 12v1-3, 26v1-5, 28v10-15, 49v10, Num 24v17, 2Sam 7v12,13, Prov 8v31, Isaiah 11v1-5,10, Luke 2v14 (KJV), 3v23-28, John 1v1,14, 3v16, Rom 1v3,4, 8v3, 9v5, 1John 4v1-6, Rev 22v16.

This beautiful unity and oneness, not only reveals to the world, that God the Father sent His only beloved Son into the world, but shows clearly, that He loves each of His children, even as He loves His Son, Jesus (Whom He had loved from before the foundation of the world); in that even as God the Father was with the Lord Jesus during His earthly ministry, so is He with the rest of His family in the same kind of way when the Body of Christ is in unity and oneness of spirit, mind and purpose. So, it is God's Presence with the believer that reveals to the "world" that The Father loves each of His individual children, even as He loves Jesus. It is God's Presence, and God's Presence alone that distinguishes God's people from **ALL** other peoples upon the earth. Very many Christians today do not even experience God's power with them, never mind His Presence, however the sure way to remedy this terrible lack, is by seeking Him earnestly in prayer and dwelling in His Presence, by which they will be changed from glory to glory. Exodus 33v16,18, 34v5-7, John 17v24, 2Cor 3v17,18, Heb 2v11, 1John 3v1-3, 4v8,16.

"Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." John 17v24.

Obeying The Call To Enter The Heavenly Places With The Lord Jesus.

John 17v24 (with John 3v13), states the following: **"Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be**

with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." "And no man hath ascended up to heaven (refers to His Ascension, Psalm 23v6, 24 all, 68v18, 110 all, Isaiah 50v3-8, 53v10-12, Acts 1v9), but he that came down from heaven (this refers to the Incarnation), **even the Son of man which is in heaven.**"

Note: The words "which is in heaven," (John 3v13) Greek, "ho oon en too ouranoo" are omitted by the Minority texts, which are 5 in number, however, they are included in the Majority texts, which number 995 out of 1000 Manuscripts. It is a great shame that the "Revisers" of 1881 (Drs. Westcott and Hort et al), who were appointed simply to correct any "plain and clear errors" of the English Authorized Version, occupied themselves instead with "falsifying the inspired Greek Text" in countless places, and branding with suspicion some of the most precious utterances of the Spirit. Without a doubt the reason for the omission of these five Greek words by the Minority Text is simply that the writers of them (and also the Revisers of 1881) did not understand what the Lord Jesus was referring to, because they had no personal experience of the Heavenly places in Christ.

(Please refer to pages 132-135 of the volume, "The Revision Revised," by Dean J W Burgon, for a detailed discussion on this most important omission by the Minority Text)

It is the desire of the Godhead, to take each individual believer into the Heavenly places now, and then into Heaven at the second coming of the Lord Jesus. The Lord Jesus, during His earthly lifetime, even though His feet were upon the earth, His mind was in Heaven (in spirit) before the Throne of God, hence the remark He makes in John 3v13, "...even the Son of man which is in heaven." (KJV). And so, it is the deepest desire of the Trinity that **EVERY** believer responds to their individual call to rise up with the Lord Jesus, and fight their way into the Heavenly places and conquer the Devil and the powers of darkness, and then to abide in their Heavenly Canaan (making sure that they remain watchful and alert for any possible attack that might cause them to be ejected from it). Eph 1v1-3, 2v1-10, Col 3v1,2. On three separate occasions in Hebrews chapters 3 and 4, Paul writes to the Hebrew Christians, with a **VERY** strong warning (which is an Old Testament quotation taken from Psalm 95v7-11); in Hebrews 3v7-9,15, 4v7 he writes: "To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation."

Israel's sin and disobedience was the result of a lack of faith in God, we read in Heb 3v19, "So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief." And Paul states in Heb 4v2, "but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it." We have to believe the Word of God and the Spirit of God to conquer our spiritual Canaan, and to retain our spiritual inheritance. They did not listen to the voice of God. **Notice the emphasis upon "Today," we must have a daily walk with God and an open ear to listen to the Holy Spirit.** The first seven verses of Psalm 95 tell us that a joyful worship and communion with God will preserve us from having hardened hearts.

The cure for rebellion and hardness of heart is communion with God along with prayer and praise. I emphasise again that we are informed in Psalm 95 that joyful worship and communion with God will stop us from getting hardened hearts, and enable us to defeat the giants (the Devil and his evil angels), and any other foes, and conquer our Heavenly Canaan. The opposite is also true; that if we fail to have deep fellowship with God in prayer, praise and worship, the giants, and other foes, will defeat us and we will not be able to conquer our Heavenly Canaan.

Paul, in writing to the Colossians, states in Col 3v1,2: "If ye then be risen with Christ, **seek** those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. **Set your affection on** things above, not on things on the earth."

"Seek" is in Greek, "zeeteíte," the present active imperative of "zeteo" (NT2212), and means to seek (literally or figuratively); especially, (by Hebraism) to worship (God), the present tense denotes continuous or repeated action, so in this case before us in Col 3v1, it means, "to seek, and to keep on seeking (those things which are above)."

"Set your affection on" in Greek is, "froneíte," the present active imperative of "phroneo" (NT:5426), meaning to exercise the mind, i.e. entertain or have a sentiment or opinion; by implication, to be (mentally) disposed (more or less earnestly in a certain direction); intensively, to interest oneself in (with concern or obedience), to direct one's mind to a thing, to seek or strive for, the present tense again being used, which denotes continuous action, it has the meaning here to, "keep on thinking about (things above)." **We must not only keep on SEEKING heaven, BUT we must also keep on THINKING heaven to get into and stay in our Heavenly Canaan!**

In this phrase in John 17v24: "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am." The Lord Jesus has two separate thoughts in His mind (regarding the phrase, "be with me where I am"), which He looks upon as the same thing.

Firstly, as already stated, He refers to His own spiritual position (at that present time when He prayed this wonderful prayer) in the Heavenlies, as being before the Throne of God in spirit (by faith He saw exactly what Isaiah saw in Isaiah chapter 6), and: **Secondly**, He also has in mind His Glorious position in Heaven, seated at the right hand of His Father, after His Ascension, the Glory and Power that He emptied Himself off at the Incarnation, having been restored to Him after His Resurrection. Matt 28v18-20, John 17v5, Phil 2v5-11, Rev 19v11-13,16.

And so, in regard to His first thought, He wants to take **EVERY** believer into their Heavenly Canaan, by defeating the Devil and the rest of the powers of darkness, so that they occupy and abide in the Heavenlies places, manifesting His power and spiritual gifts to bring deliverance to **ALL**. This is what the Lord Jesus is referring to in the second part of this verse,

when He states:

"That they may behold (and partake of) "my glory", which thou hast given me." ("My glory" is a reference to His preincarnate "glory" that He had prayed for (in John 17v5), to be restored to Him; having thus been restored to Him after His Resurrection, He sits down at the right hand of His Father after His Ascension, waiting until His enemies are made His footstool. Psalm 110v1)

The words "they may behold" is in Greek, "theoroósin," the present active subjunctive of "theoreo" (NT:2334), from "theoros," "a spectator," it is used of one who looks at a thing with interest and for a purpose, usually indicating the careful observation of details, to behold, consider, look on, perceive. However, here (and in John 8v51) it is used to experience a thing, in the sense of partaking of, and the present tense gives the meaning of "to continually behold and partake of (His Glory)", which as already mentioned, is the taking of power (His Glory) from the Lord Jesus in the Heavens to bring deliverance and healing to **ALL**. The same thought is also contained in the phrase "and have tasted...the powers of the Age to come" in Heb 6v5 (with 1Cor 12v7-11).

The second thought that He has in mind, refers to the believer, who, being in the Heavenly places and partaking of the powers of the Age to come; when they enter Heaven proper, either at their death, or by being Raptured at the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus (after the Great Tribulation), then enters into and partakes **FULLY** of the powers of that Age. Heb 6v5, 2Pet 1v3,4.

"For thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." In this phrase the Lord Jesus looks back to before time began, when only God was; and the wonderful Love and Fellowship that He shared in and partook off, with the other two member of the Godhead. There has **ALWAYS** been (and **ALWAYS** will be) complete unity and agreement amongst the different persons of the Trinity, which springs from the great love that One has for the Others, but this should not be surprising, because **"God is LOVE!"** 1Cor 13v4-8, 1John 4v8,16. The Lord Jesus on two occasions (in John 17v21,23), states that He was not only in the Father **BUT** that the Father was also in Him, and the same holds true for the Holy Spirit also, in that He is not only in the Father and Son, **BUT** that they are also in Him, and this is not only referring to being one in unity and agreement, but refers also to an interfusion and sharing of character and nature. We see this demonstrated in the Old Testament Scripture of Deut 6v4: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord" These words form the beginning of what is termed the "Shema" ("Hear") in the Jewish Services, and belong to the daily morning and evening office.

NB The unity in the Godhead is a compound unity. "Echad" (OT:259).

In Deut 6v4, "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord:" the word "one," which here, and elsewhere, is used to speak of the unity of God, is, "echad" (OT:259), it can speak of a compound unity of distinguishable entities, for the same Hebrew word, "echad," that is used to speak of the unity of God in Deut 6v4, is used in Gen 2v24 to speak of the oneness of Adam and Eve.

"Yachid," (OT:3173), is used to speak of a mathematical unity, it means, sole, unique, and one of a kind; it is never used of the unity of God. "Yachid" is translated, as "darling," Psalm 22v20, 35v17, as "desolate," Psalm 25v16, as "only" Gen 22v2,16, Prov 4v3, Amos 8v10, Zech 12v10, as "only child," Judges 11v34, as "only son," Jer 6v26, and as "solitary," Psalm 68v6. Ruth Rachel Specter (Ruth Specter Lascelle), in her book, "The Bud and Flower of Judaism," writes: **"Yachid" is used forcefully in the Bible as an absolute unity and is found twelve times in the Old Testament, but not once is it used of the unity of God."**

The compound unity of the Godhead is also proved by the fact that the word for "God" in Deut 6v4 is the plural "Elohim;" which is used over 2,700 times in the Old Testament, at least ten times more than the singular "El." The objection that "Elohim" is used just as "a plural of magnitude," is completely invalidated by the fact that in the Bible, "Elohim" is never used to describe the majesty of a king, nor is it used with reference to kings in the Scriptures. In the Old Testament the Israelites always addressed their kings in the singular. It must be noted that "Elohim", though plural, when speaking of God, is nearly always constructed with verbs and pronouns in the singular. Sometimes, however, "Elohim" is sometimes significantly used with plural pronouns. e.g. Gen 1v26, "And God ('Elohim') said, Let us make man in our image." And Gen 3v22, "And the Lord God said, Behold man is become as one of us." In some cases the singular "Yahweh" is united with plural verbs. e.g. Gen 11v6,7, Isaiah 6v3,8. The singular "Yahweh" is also linked with the plural "Elohim" many times in the Scriptures. e.g., Deut 6v3,4,5, Exodus 20v2,5, Isaiah 42v5. God gave a sure indication of the compound unity of the Godhead by the use of these plural and singular words being linked together.

The compound unity of the Godhead is seen in the way that Father, Son and Spirit are linked together in statements of authority and truth, confessions of faith, benedictions and baptismal formula. To link a creature, or an impersonal spiritual power, with God in this way would be out of the question, it would forever destroy the infinite distinction between God and the creature. Only absolute deity can be linked with the Father in the way that the Son and Spirit are. Isaiah 45v5,6,18,21,22, 46v9, 61v1-3, Isaiah 11v1,2 with Jer 23v5,6, Matt 3v16,17, 28v19, Luke 1v35, 3v21,22, John 3v34, 14v16,26, 15v26, 16v7-15, Acts 20v28, Rom.1v1-4, 15v30, 1Cor 2v7-10, 12v4-6, 2Cor 13v14, Gal 4v6, Eph 2v18, 4v4-6, Heb 2v3,4, 9v14, 1Pet 1v2, 3v18, 1John 3v21-24, 5v7. (Though the Codex Montifortii and Vulgate contain 1John 5v7, it is not found in the early Greek manuscripts; however, Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, 200 to 258 AD, quotes this as being written by the apostle John, Vol.5.418, 423, Ante-Nicene Fathers.

There are also numerous salutations, which the name of the Father and the Son are linked together. Rom 1v7, 1Cor 1v3, 2Cor 1v2, Gal 1v3, Eph 1v2, Phil 1v2, Col 1v2, 1Thess 1v1, 2Thess 1v2, 1Tim 1v2, 2Tim 1v2, Tit 1v4, Philemon v3, James 1v1, 2Pet 1v2, 3John v3. In 1Pet 1v2, the Holy Spirit is mentioned with the Father and the Son. In the Scriptures, "God," can sometimes refer to the entire Trinity, or it can at other times refer to separate members of the Godhead. "God" can mean either plural or singular in the same way that "sheep" or even "man" can. There is a perfect oneness of purpose, mind, love and fellowship in the Godhead; however, this oneness and unity goes beyond this, for we read in John 10v38 and 17v21, that the Father is not only in the Son, but the Son is also in the Father. In the Trinity there is an interfusion and sharing of personality and nature and glory. It is no good false teachers saying that this is not so, the Bible says it is so, it clearly says that all (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) are called God. Let God be true and every man a liar who contradicts the Truth of God's word.

Some further comments on John 17v3, where Christ calls the Father "the only true God." This will also help to explain such Scriptures as Gal 3v20, Eph 4v6, 1Tim 1v17, 2v5. In John 17v3, Jesus is not denying His deity, for many Scriptures clearly state that Christ is God, the context of John 17v3 shows why the Lord prayed in this way.

Jesus is praying as our Mediator and Redeemer. Christ in praying to the Father calls Himself "thy Son," He was praying as the incarnate Son who became a servant for the work of redemption. This is why the Father is not only called "the only true God," but also "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." 2Cor 11v31, Eph 1v3, 1Pet 1v3, John 17v3, 20v17. Christ is our Lord and God, yet in His work as mediator and redeemer, God the Father is His God. However, in the opening words of this prayer Christ claimed again a unique Sonship, which Christ's enemies and the apostle John knew was a claim to absolute deity. John 5v17,18, 10v30-33. Christ's claim to be the Son of God was a claim to coequal deity with the Father.

Jesus is praying as the God who emptied Himself to become the Messiah. Jesus is speaking as the Messiah, He calls Himself, "Jesus Messiah whom Thou hast sent," He was speaking as the Messiah of the Israelites, and as the Saviour of the world. We read in Phil 2v5-11 of the humiliation and emptying of God the Word for the work of redemption; and in John 17v5, Christ refers to the glory which He shared with His Father before the world was, and He prays for it to be restored to Him again. Christ uses the striking words, "glorify me WITH THINE OWN SELF with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." The Messiah that was promised to the Israelites was very definitely stated to be God. e.g. Isaiah 7v14, 9v6, Micah 5v2, etc. The Messiah was "the Lord our righteousness." Jer 23v5,6 with Isaiah 43v11, Hos 13v4.

Jesus again affirms His Oneness with the Father. When Jesus said to the Jews in John 10v30, "I and my Father are one," they took up stones to stone Him, "because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God." When Jesus said in John 10v38, "the Father is in me, and I in Him," the Jews again tried to capture Him and kill Him; they well understood it as a clear claim to coequal deity with the Father. See John 17v21. In John 17v3,21, Jesus said that eternal life is found in knowing both the Father and Son, and prays that believers "may be one in us." We rejoice that we are accepted in the beloved, and are one in the Father and the Son. Jesus is no less God because the Father is called "the only true God," in John 17v3, than the Father is not God, because Jesus is called "the only Potentate," in 1Tim 6v15, and "the true God," in 1John 5v20; and "the true Lord," in Mal 3v1; and "the one Lord," in 1Cor 8v6. When Jesus said the Father is "the only true God," He is speaking as a man, and as Mediator and Redeemer, He is certainly not excluding Himself from deity. "The only true God," is applied to God the Father, in contrast, not with the Son, or the Holy Spirit, but with the false gods and idols of the heathen. Jesus is one with the Father; in the Son dwells all the fullness of the Godhead, and he who has seen Jesus has seen the Father. John 14v7-14, Col 2v9,10.

NB Textual note on "vios," "Son," in John 1v18. Burgon follows the vast majority of manuscripts and a majority of Church Fathers and says that "vios," "Son;" is the correct text, and rejects the reading "only begotten God," and says that it is an alteration introduced into the text by the Gnostic Valentinus, and his followers, whose strange teaching denied that "the Word" is the Son of God. (The Gnostic Valentinus lived about 150 AD, when Gnosticism was at its height.) Arius also used the reading, "Theos," "God," in Jn.1v18, for His arguments against the eternal pre-existence of Christ, maintaining that the Son if begotten by God, must have had a beginning, and there must have been a time when He was not. Arius, strangely, believed in the deity of Christ and yet not of His eternal pre-existence, he stated, "The Son...has existed before time and before ages, as Perfect God, only begotten and unchangeable; and that He existed not before He was begotten or created." Valentinus and Arius are about the worst people to follow for textual purity. The solid evidence against the reading "only begotten God," and its association with heretics cannot be ignored, and must be rejected.

"O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me." John 17v25.

John 17v25, could be paraphrased in the following way: "O righteous Father, although the world has refused to recognise and know you (because each individual person has rejected the light of creation and conscience, and also the direct communication by the Lord Jesus to their spirits, John 1v9, Rom 1v16-3v20), I have fully known you continually, and these (the Apostles) have come to know that you have sent me into the world to be the Saviour of all men. (1Tim 4v10)."

In addressing God as "Righteous Father," it is in reference as to how He deals with His creation as their Creator and Judge. God is True and Righteous in **ALL** His dealing with His creation, whether it is in blessing or judgement. Gen 18v25, Isaiah 28v21, 1John 4v8,16, Rev 16v5,7, 19v2. **However, it is a great tragedy that the Lord Jesus has to report that:**

"The world hath not known thee." (with John 1v10). Rom 1v16-3v20 (with Acts 17v23-34) shows the following:

Paul states the two major reasons why the whole adult world is guilty before God, and His anger and judgement is revealed against all sin and unrighteousness. Rom 3v19, 1v18. Mankind can help sinning, and God tells them to repent for their sins. Augustine taught that mankind was born incapable of living righteously, he was probably trying to make up an excuse for the evil life that he lived before he (supposedly) became a Christian. Paul's doctrine directly contradicts this teaching of Augustine, and if we follow this teaching of Augustine we reject the divinely given doctrine of Paul.

Mankind Has Wilfully Suppressed Creation's Testimony To God.

Mankind has wilfully suppressed creation's irrefutable testimony to God's eternal power and deity. Adult mankind has been intellectually dishonest and degraded their intelligence. Love of evil has caused mankind to deliberately suppress and deny the knowledge of God, which He has given to everyone through His creation. The determination of mankind to be intellectually dishonest about the existence and character of God has resulted in mankind sinking, stage by stage, into the greatest follies of idolatry and the vilest excesses of immorality, and finally to the approval and applause of the worst kinds of evil and evil doers, even though they know in their hearts of God's certain judgement on this evil.

The minds which love evil and reject logical thinking about God, in the end become almost incapable of correct judgement about spiritual realities, that is they are reprobate. The delicate machinery of the mind and spirit is easily damaged by evil. Phil 4v8, 2Cor 10v5. The tragic choice to intellectually dispose of God, has resulted in God giving people up to their uncleanness, their vile affections, and to a reprobate mind. Rom 1v24,26,28. "Unto a reprobate mind," is "eis adokim noun," they had tested God, like you would a coin, for "dokimizoi" is used of the testing of coins, and had rejected Him and had turned away from Him, "kai kathos ouk edokimason," so God rejected their mental attitudes and gave them over to their intellectual folly. See 2Thess 3v2, "Unreasonable and evil men" (Weymouth translates as, "wrong-headed and wicked men"), men whose minds won't work right and are out of place, "autopon;" "evil," is "poneron," active evil. The mind is a delicate instrument and is easily damaged, but some people deliberately sear their conscience with a red hot iron, to make sure that it does not disturb them. 1Tim 4v2, Phil 4v8, 2Cor 10v5. Those who do violence to their mind and reject and hold down the Truth will find that the end of evil is truly terrible, the Lord Jesus warns that love of evil and a reprobate mind result in an eternal gnawing worm of evil within the soul. Mark 9v44,46,48. Majority text. Mark 3v28-30.

Christians can have a mind that rejects Truth and becomes reprobate on certain issues, just as the apostles refused to accept Christ's prophecies about His death and resurrection, and suffered greatly for it. Paul said that false doctrine can eat and spread like gangrene or cancer and can destroy faith, like the false doctrine about the second coming of Christ, which was preached by Hymenaeus, Alexander and Philetus, whose doctrine had not only made shipwreck of their faith, but had also overthrown the faith of other Christians. Paul committed these false teachers for judgement, he delivered them to Satan, so that they might learn not to blaspheme. Though the aim of Paul's discipline was to bring these false teachers to repentance, there is no record that they did repent. 1Tim 1v19,20, 2Tim 2v16-18.

We should love every bit of Truth and welcome it, never seeking our own opinion, but **ALWAYS** the Truth. We must have open hearts and malleable minds, our attitude must not be to prove our argument, but to find out what God says. "Oh send out Thy light and Thy Truth; let them lead me: Let them bring me into Thy holy hill." Psalm 43v3. Once we reject Truth, light cannot come in on that line. Prejudice, is a determination to make the facts fit our prior conclusions, it means to pre-judge, and make up our minds before the evidence is given. If we accept the theology of denominations, churches or preachers in order to be accepted, it can blind us to the Truth that God has for us. Peter warns us that we usually have to be delivered from the traditions delivered to us by our spiritual fathers. 1Pet 1v18,19, "Patroparadotos," means "that which is passed on from fathers, or learned by the side of our spiritual fathers." The traditions of the elders often make void the Word and commandment of God. Matt 15v1-9, Mark 7v1-13. Christ is the living Truth for the soul, not the traditions of men. Col 2v8,9.

NB Agnosticism Is Complete Folly In The Presence Of Creation.

There cannot be a creation of such incredible complexity and beauty without an all-powerful and all-wise Creator. Even a child is known by his works. Prov 20v11. The creation declares God's eternal power and divinity (i.e. His divine attributes (Greek, "theiotes" (NT:2305)), majesty and glory; however, the personal God can be known only by the revelation of Himself in His Son, and for this, the Greek word "theotes" (NT:2320), which could be better translated as "deity," would have to be used, John 14v8,9, Col 2v9). Rom 1v20, Psalm 19v1-4. David was awed at God's foreknowledge, and His providential care and love manifested in Creation, he said, "I am fearfully and wonderfully made: wonderful are Thy works; And that my soul knoweth right well." Psalm 139v14.

NB Idolatry Has Sprung out Of A Desire And Love For Evil.

Mankind has desired an object of worship that will allow them to do evil without check or hindrance. This has led to the utter folly of worshipping cows and bulls in India, the ibis and beetles in Egypt, sticks and stones in Africa, demons in China, emperors in Rome, and in our day, political and religious leaders, and stars of films, sport and entertainment. Paul stresses that because men have free will, God is obliged to give them up to evil if they insist on going into it. Rom 1v24,26,28. **There are no more terrible words than, "God gave them up!"**

Mankind Has Suppressed Their Conscience And Been Morally Corrupt. (Rom 2).

Conscience is not the voice of God, for as in Paul's case, he thought it was correct to persecute Christians, and his conscience certainly conflicted with God's Law and desires. Acts 26v9 with 23v1. Indeed, Rom 14v5 tells us that people's consciences can vary. Our conscience is formed by the necessity of passing moral judgements. The law of conscience is that law of conduct, which a person expects their neighbour to behave by in relation to them. Every person will be judged by the standard which they lay down for their neighbour. The people who judge and condemn their neighbour can also judge and condemn their own actions, particularly when, as Paul says here, they condemn in others the things that they are doing. Those who expect others to keep the law, and treat others correctly and in love, are expected so to behave. It is worthy of note that mankind expects others to keep, and believes they are able of keeping, the law of conscience and the Law of God. It is a matter of experience that the moral law is forced out of our own hearts by our automatic and natural reaction to the acts of others; it is involuntary and cannot be stopped; for example, the victim of robbery cannot help saying to the thief, "Thou shalt not steal." Most of the ten commandments of God, are also the involuntary reactions, protestations and commandments of men to those who break the moral law.

The moral law is intended to protect society from wrongdoing. The validity of the moral law rests upon the deepest of natural desires, i.e. to remain in a state of happiness; and obedience to the moral law is the means whereby the happiness, joy and peace of society can be preserved. "The work of righteousness is peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever." Isaiah 32v1,17. Peace will reign when the Prince of peace and the other sons of God reign in righteousness. The whole creation groans and waits for the manifestation and righteous rule of the sons of God. Rom 8v19-21. God Himself has ordained that holiness and happiness is the end of life, and He will allow nothing that defiles that purity and happiness to enter His eternal kingdom. Rev 21v3-8,27. The happiness of Heaven will be preserved for ever by the eternal total dedicated love of the inhabitants of that kingdom for each other and God. Only by loving God and his neighbour can a man or a society live happily. God is the only one who can help us to run this complex universe in a way that produces happiness. The chaos and pain in the world is the result of mankind forsaking God and going on their own selfish sinful way.

In other words, the moral law is not an end, but the means, and only means, to the end of a happy life. True happiness, then, springs out of promoting the happiness of others. The fruits of the Spirit, joy and peace, are based on a life lived to promote the welfare and happiness of others. The wicked seek their own happiness regardless of the pain and distress that it may cause others. Selfish and wicked people end up in destroying their own peace and happiness; there is no peace to the wicked.

The Judgement By God Of The Gentiles. (Rom 2v1-16).

Paul tells us that the Gentiles, who have not known the Law of God, will be judged by the law of their conscience, their conscience is the standard which they expect others to treat them by, and by which they have judged their neighbour; this standard is plainly revealed by the interplay of their own thoughts about their neighbour and about themselves. Conscience, then, is a razor to shave ourselves with, not to cut our neighbour's throat, as it is so often used to do. Matt 7v1-6. Every time you criticise others, you lay a standard by which you will be judged, and if you do the things that you condemn in others, you will lay yourself open to the righteous judgement of God.

The Judgement By God Of The Jews. (Rom 2v17 to 3v9).

Paul warns the Jews who boasted that they were God's chosen people, to whom God had entrusted the Law of Moses, that they will not be acquitted by the possession of that Law, but only by obedience to it. Paul warns the Jews who used the possession of the Law to point out to the Gentiles their inferiority, that a Gentile who does not know the Law, but though being ignorant of it, he keeps it, is better off than a Jew who knowingly breaks it. Paul states that it is a fact of history that the lives of disobedient Jews have brought dishonour to the name of God. Our Lord condemned the Jews who boasted in the Law of God, but did not keep it, and told them that the Law that they prided themselves in, accused them if they did not keep it. Matt 23v3, Luke 11v42,52, John 5v45 Deut 31v26. Likewise the Christian Gospel condemns bad living and disobedient Christians who do not live by its Truths. Matt 7v13-29, John 13v17. In Galatians, Paul stated that the most valuable thing that the Law could do, was to bring us with humbled broken spirits to Christ to ask for mercy. Gal 2v16 to 3v29. NB 2v16, 3v19,24.

NB The True Advantage Of The Jew. (Rom 3v1-8).

Paul strongly asserts, as did also our Lord, that the true advantage of the Jew was not the Law of Moses, which brought condemnation, but the promise given to Abraham which brought justification. John 7v19. God's motive in giving the Law of Moses was not to justify Israel, but to make them conscious of sin, so that they would be thankful for a Saviour. The Jews turned what should have been a humbling blessing into a veritable curse by their pride in the possession of the Law. cf. Gal 3v13 to 4v7. As Pentecostal Christians we have to be very careful that we don't follow their example by thinking that we are superior to others, and we have to take heed that we live up to our privileges and humbly thank God for His undeserved kindness to us.

The Judgement Of God Finds All The World Guilty. (Rom 3v9-23).

The Gentiles are guilty of breaking their own standards, the law of conscience.

The Jews are guilty of breaking the Law of God given to Moses.

Mankind was not born as unregenerate sinners, but voluntarily went into sin.

Paul quotes several Scriptures from the Old Testament to show that all mankind has individually and collectively departed from God and the Truth, and gone into evil. No one has understood and sought out God, instead they have **ALL GONE OUT OF THE WAY, and have BECOME unprofitable**, and no one does good, no not one. Psalm 14v1-3, 53v1-3, Eccles 7v20. Their throat carries the stench of an open tomb, and their tongues are filled with deceit, Psalm 5v9; they bite like asps, Psalm 140v3; and their mouths are filled with cursing and bitterness. Psalm 10v7. They run hot-foot to kill, murderers, who wherever they go cause ruin, misery and destruction; and the way of peace they have not known. Isaiah 59v7,8. They care nothing about God, and do not fear or reverence Him. Psalm 36v1. Paul concludes his argument by saying that all the world is guilty before God, **"For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."** Rom 3v19,22,23.

Mankind Has GONE Astray; NOT Was Born Astray.

Augustine wrongly taught that mankind was born astray. In Rom 3v9-23, Paul states that mankind has gone astray, as does Isaiah 53v6. Paul says in Rom 7v9, that he was born alive to God and went astray when he gave way to temptation, James confirms this theology. James 1v13-15. Jesus is the light that gives light to every person who comes into the world. John 1v9. Jesus said that children's angels always behold the face of God in Heaven, and said, "of such is the kingdom of Heaven." Matt 18v1-5,10, Mark 10v13-16. Children are certainly not bound for Hell as Augustine taught, his main text for this awful doctrine was an incorrect interpretation of Psalm 51v5, "Behold, I was shapen, ("chuwl," brought forth in labour) in iniquity, And in sin did my mother conceive me." Augustine's teaching that David was saying that he was born a sinner, is a total perversion of this text, as the whole verse is talking about the morality of David's mother. All that David got from his mother was his flesh; his soul and spirit were God's work (Isaiah 57v16, John 3v6). Were it not for doctrinal bias we should understand from this verse that it was his mother who was in sin at his conception (it could mean that David's conception was by an act of fornication?), not David. Suppose the verse read "in bitterness, or in joy, did my mother conceive me;" we should unhesitatingly refer the bitterness or joy to his mother not to David, as is grammatically correct: "in sin" is an adverbial phrase qualifying the verb, not the object. Jesse did not bring David in with the rest of his sons even when Samuel asked for them all to be brought before him, a strange disobedience in the light of the fact that he and all Bethlehem trembled in fear at Samuel's visit to Bethlehem. 1Sam 16v3-5,11-13. Or was David excusing his sin on the grounds of being born into a sinful environment? The fact that God tells mankind to repent of the evil they have done shows that mankind could have avoided sinning if they had so wished. God does not tell people to repent of things they could not avoid doing. Luke 3v3,8, 24v47-49, Mark 1v5,14, Acts 2v38, 3v19, 17v30,31, 26v20, 2Pet 3v9.

The Interval Between God's Sentence And His execution Of That Sentence. (Rom 2v4-10).

This delay is designed by God to produce repentance and so avert punishment. Man, however, instead of being broken by the mercy and longsuffering of God, has misused this period of space for repentance, to quieten, hold down, and dismiss their fear of the justice and judgement of God. Because sentence upon their evil works is not executed speedily, the hearts of the sons of men is thoroughly set in them to do evil. Eccles 8v11. They deceive themselves that there will be no wages of sin, they sear their consciences with a red hot iron, and continue in sin without any fear or apprehension of divine judgement. Psalm 10v4-11, Isaiah 26v10. Consider Pharaoh, whose heart was hardened more and more by God's miracles, kindness and mercy, until he had no fear of the justice and judgement of God.

The Day Of Judgement.

Though delayed, the judgement of God will come, and God's justice will be vindicated. The righteous will be delivered and rewarded; the wicked will be taken and punished. The fearsome words of Rom 2v9, "crushing pressure and torturing confinement, on every soul of man who does evil." "Thlipsis kai stenochoria." "Stenochoria," which is translated as "anguish" in the A.V., literally means "confined space, or torturing confinement," Christ told us that eternal confinement in God's prison is a thing to be feared. Matt 10v28, Luke 12v5, Mark 9v42-48.

NB God's Anger Rises From His Position As Creator And Judge.

As a loving Creator. God's wonderful plans have been continually frustrated by angels and men, who for their own selfish ends were willing to tear both Heaven and Earth to pieces rather than pay regard to God's Law. They defied and hated God because He was just and no respecter of persons, and insisted upon His position being recognised. God's love and justice manifested their unrighteousness, and failing to repent, they could only see and hate God. John 15v22-26.

As a just Judge, God is obliged to champion those who suffer injustice, and to avenge those who are wronged. His eyes look continually upon all events in the world, and those who wrong the righteous and oppress the weak will receive the justice and judgement that they deserve. The cries of the afflicted and persecuted continually rise up to His ears. One day God will indeed release His pent up anguish at the suffering of the righteous and innocent, and will deal with and destroy both wicked angels and men in blazing anger and judgement. Isaiah 34v1-8, NB v5 "My sword shall be bathed in heaven." Isaiah 42v13-17, 63v1-6, Amos 2v6-16, Rev 6v17, 16v5-7, 19v11-21, 20v1-3, Matt 13v36-43,47-50, 25v41,46, 2Thess 1v4-10, 2v8.

God's anger is not the bad temper of a despot, but the reasoned righteous anger and indignation of a loving judge. It is aroused, not by His own sufferings, but by the sufferings of others. See our Lord's anger at the Scribes and Pharisees. Matt 23v1-39, especially v4,14,23,30,34,35, and His anger and judgement on the wickedness of the Antichrist. Rev 6v17.

In essence there is no difference between God's problem and that of any ruler. Rulers have to preserve the peace and happiness of society, they have to face the opposition of those who would try to defeat this purpose, and in the end they have to liquidate malicious and malignant enemies. God has to confine eternally to Hell those who oppose His loving purposes, for with the selfish unrepentant wicked at large there would only be pain and distress, and happiness would be quite impossible. The only response that God can make to eternal sin is eternal confinement, otherwise happiness would be impossible for the rest of creation. Matt 12v31,32, Mark 3v28-30. In Mark 3v29, the correct reading is "eternal judgement," not "eternal sin:" the vast majority of manuscripts read "kriseos," "judgement," which occurs in A, C, K, Pi, the massive Byzantine manuscript evidence, the Lectionaries, the Syrian Peshitta and Harclean and others; whereas the reading of "eternal sin," "hamartematos," only occurs in a small number of manuscripts, Aleph, B, L, Delta, and Theta, 28, 33, and 565.

NB God's Anger And Wrath Springs From His Love.

The wrath and punishment of God mentioned in Rom 2v5-11, spring from His love of the righteous, and His determination to provide eternal happiness for them. The wicked are eternally confined to Hell to prevent them from eternally wrecking the peace and happiness of the kingdom of Heaven. The wages of sin is death, because the sinner is too dangerous to be left at large. Since all have sinned, the justice of God would compel Him to judge and execute all sinners, but this would result in the destruction of all mankind and leave the Creation a complete wreck. To leave sinners alive would mean a continuance of the sufferings caused by man's inhumanity to man, to slay them all, would similarly make happiness impossible, so the whole plan of Creation was threatened by sin. God therefore, made the plan of redemption before the foundation of the world, He Himself paying the price of sin for those who repent, the Creator dying for the creature. Unrepentant eternal sin can never be paid for, that demands eternal judgement.

Like the wicked angels, the sinner in the end becomes a total sadist who only finds pleasure in causing pain and suffering to others, and inflicting upon them the most awful depths of sadistic torment, oppression and torture. Hitler's extermination and torture camps show how malign and evil the human heart can become. The only answer to unrepentant evil like this, is eternal confinement in God's totally secure prison, Hell. The torment of Hell is not only caused by the confinement and isolation of everlasting chains of darkness, 1Sam 2v9, 2Pet 2v4,17, Jude v13, it is also caused by the gnawing worm of evil in the soul. The mind that embraces evil is in the end tormented and destroyed by evil. The evil that the wicked embrace, torments, and destroys their mind and personality; Jesus said that evil was a ghastly gnawing worm that would devour and torture the soul and mind of the wicked. In Mark 9v44,46,48, "where the gnawing worm dieth not," occurs in all three places in the Majority Text. God is not thrashing or tormenting the wicked in Hell, for there is no hope of changing the incorrigible wicked; chastening the wicked would do no good, those in Hell love evil so much, and have so hardened their hearts, that it is impossible to bring them to repentance. Heb 6v4-6.

NB The Hedonist, who teaches that happiness is the highest good, and the Utilitarian, who makes the basis of moral distinctions in the utility of actions, by their fitness to produce happiness, both say that happiness is the end of life. However, happiness to the Hedonist means pleasure; and to the Utilitarian, it means the seeking of one's own happiness. Pleasure seeking often leads to the worst kind of unhappiness, for example, drunkenness, immorality, and sadism; there are the pleasures of sin all of which spring from selfishness. One of the signs of the last days is that men will be "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God." 2Tim 3v4.

The true pursuit of happiness involves the pursuit of the happiness of others as well as the happiness of oneself. True happiness is a by-product of the love for other people; **pursue happiness and it eludes you, pursue the happiness and good of others, and you find real happiness.** The pursuit of one's own happiness, makes one indifferent to the happiness of others; the pursuit of other people's happiness brings as a by-product one's own happiness and satisfaction. If everyone seeks their own happiness regardless of others, the result is universal misery. God's plan is that everyone will seek other people's happiness, so everyone would have millions of people trying to make you happy, instead of just one person, yourself.

NB The Law was given by God to show the way of life to those who desired to know it, and needed it. Rom 7v10-12, Gal 3v12. When once the Law was broken, however, it brought a knowledge of sin and death, Rom 7v12,13, for when a person sinned and was dead in trespasses and sins, the Law could not give him life, or offer him any help. Rom 8v2-4, Gal 3v21. The Law could guide a man who was alive to God, but it could not give life to, or revive, a dead one.

The Jews relied on self-justification through keeping the Law of Moses to obtain salvation and justify themselves, so Jesus tried to get them to believe in Him and rely on the promises of God for justification and to live the life of faith; for those who want to be justified by works must keep the whole Law perfectly, and none have, except Christ Jesus.

The Lord Jesus then goes on to state in John 17v25: "But I have known thee." Or, as the Amplified Bible puts it, "I have known You [continually]"

In Acts 2v25, the Lord Jesus, speaking through David (under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit), in this Messianic Psalm (Psalm 16), says: "...I saw the Lord constantly before me..." Amplified Bible. And John 1v18, AMP states: "The only unique Son...Who is in the bosom [in the intimate presence] of the Father, He has declared Him [He has revealed Him and brought Him out where He can be seen; He has interpreted Him and He has made Him known]."

During the earthly life of the Lord Jesus, His Father was always constantly before Him (indeed, Jesus has **ALWAYS** been in His Father's bosom, not only before His Incarnation (from everlasting), but also after His Ascension as well, and for all eternity will be. During His hidden years at Nazareth and while fulfilling His Messianic ministry, it was this wonderful full (experimental) knowledge of His Father that sustained Him when His soul descended into the Abyss to make atonement for sin, after His crucifixion, when His body had been put into the tomb, and His spirit had returned to God. Isaiah 53v10, Luke 23v46,52,53, Acts 2v25-28, Rom 10v7.

It was by filling His mind with Truth from the Scriptures, and sitting in His Father's Presence by living in constant communion with Him (even as we believers are transformed into His image, from glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord, as we sit in His Presence, and behold His glory, by having communion with Him, 2Cor 3v17,18), that turned the Babe of Bethlehem into the Christ of God; the written word formed the Incarnate Word. The Lord Jesus also certainly had the same kind of experience (from His Father) that Moses had around fifteen hundred years previously with Him, in His pre-incarnate state as Yahweh Malak, when he (Moses) had the Glory of God revealed to him, which Exodus 33v18 and 34v6,7 states is His beautiful character. Exodus 33v18-34v7.

The process by which the Lord Jesus, after His emptying at the Incarnation, became "full" (of Grace and Truth) again, is exactly the same as that which God the Father uses to perfect His brethren; for the Scriptures state that it was a "moral necessity (Greek, "oófeilen" perfect active indicative of "opheilo" (NT:3784), which means "to owe") that He be made in all things like unto His brethren," for both He Who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one (family). God the Father uses the things that an individual "suffers" to "perfect" them, and this is equally true for **BOTH** His Beloved Son, and His brethren. The things which the Lord Jesus suffered, during His earthly lifetime, also qualified and enabled Him to become a compassionate and faithful High Priest, so that He is **FULLY** aware (by personal experience) of **ALL** the problems, temptations and frailties that beset His brethren, for He truly was tempted in **ALL** points like as we are, yet without sin! Phil 2v5-11, Heb 2v10,11,17,18, 4v15.

And so, because the Lord Jesus had a **FULL** experimental knowledge of His Father, and was the (express) image (Greek "charakter" (NT:5481), Heb 1v3, and Greek "eikon" (NT:1504), Col 1v15) of His person, He was (and is) able to reveal Him fully to the Apostles (and to the rest of his brethren), and was therefore able to say in Matt 11v27: **"All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him."** Therefore, the Lord Jesus "deliberately willed" (Amplified Bible) to reveal His Father to the Apostles (i.e. He manifested His Father's Name to them, and also states that He will continue to do so after His Resurrection and Ascension. John 17v6,26), through His words (which he received directly from His Father, John 3v34), works and deeds, so that they fully knew that the Lord Jesus had come from the very bosom of His Father, and had been sent by Him to be the Saviour of the world. Matt 1v21, John 10v36.

"And these have known that thou hast sent me." We see in Matt 16v13-20 (esp., v16) Peter's great "confession" of Whom (this incident occurred in the summer of 29 AD), He, the Son of Man was, Peter's declaration (not only was he speaking for himself, but also for all the other Apostles) was that He was none other than, "...the Christ, the Son of the living God." The Lord Jesus states that this revelation had not been given to him by "flesh and blood," but by His Father in Heaven. God had hidden the Truth from the worldly wise unspiritual Scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees, and had revealed it to His spiritual "babes" (Greek, "nepios" (NT:3516), which means, non-speaking ones or without the power of speech), the Apostles. If we want a great revelation of Truth from God, we need to come to Him with humble hearts and contrite spirits, and tremble at His Word; and be obedient to it. Isaiah 66v2, Matt 11v25-27, 1Cor 1v26-31.

"And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them." John 17v26.

He again reiterates that He has "declared" (Greek, "egnoórisa" the aorist active indicative of "gnorizo," and means to make known; subjectively, to know, certify, declare, make known, give to understand) His Father's Name to the Apostles. The Lord Jesus not only fully manifested to them (and indeed to all who observed Him or who came in contact with Him) His Father's beautiful character and nature, but also ALL His covenant Names, through His life, ministry, crucifixion, descent into the abyss (where His soul was made an offering for sin), Resurrection and Ascension. Exodus 3v14,15, 33v18-34v7, Matt 26v53, Luke 4v18,19, John 14v1-6, 15v9, 17v23, Rom 8v32, 10v7, 1Pet 1v3, 1John 4v8.

The Lord Jesus then promises the following: "and will declare it" Or as The Living Bible puts it: "And will keep on revealing you." This would be fully realised through His High Priestly ministry, which would start on the day of His Resurrection, and will continue right up until the end of the Age of Grace (when He comes in great power and glory), which means that He will fully reveal His Father's Name to ALL Christians during the Age of Grace. Matt 28v18-20, Heb 2v12, 5v1-6, 9v28.

His final statement in this sublime prayer is: "That the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them."

The whole purpose of the Lord Jesus manifesting His Father's Name to His brethren, is so that through His "interventions" (with power), in fulfilling His High Priestly ministry, the character of Christ may be formed in each one of them; and that they also may be priests after the order of Melchizedek; or to put it another way, that they may become like the Lord Jesus in word, thought and deed! John 1v14,16, Eph 1v15-23, 3v14-21, 4v7-16, Heb 5v9-6v3, 7v11-28, 1Pet 2v1-10, Rev 1v6, 5v10.

Conclusion.

The effects of this wonderful prayer of the Lord Jesus spans the whole of the Age of Grace (in the operation of the Lord's High Priestly ministry), from the day of His Resurrection, right up until His Second Coming. However, its effects do not only operate during the Age of Grace, but has eternal consequences stretching into the eternity of the Ages of Ages, for it is Christ and his faithful brethren (those who have "proved" their right to rule with Christ, because they have "suffered" with Him, having overcome the world, the flesh, and the Devil, through the operation of His High Priestly ministry, Rom 8v17, Heb 7v25), along with a select group of Angels and Old Testament saints, who will rule the eternal Kingdom. Dan 7v14,27, Col 1v16, Rev 2v26,27, 7v1-8, 14v1-5, 21v9-22v5. **We, as Christians should follow our Lord's example of prayer** ("enteuxis" (NT:1783) and "proseuche" (NT:4335)), and when we get to Heaven we will see that the prayers (Greek, "enteuxis" 1783 and "proseuche" 4335) that we have made upon earth, during our earthly lifetime, will also have eternal consequences. Psalm 69v7-12, Matt 6v6-13, 7v7-11, Luke 11v1-13, John 17 all.

Closing Thoughts.

When I started this work, I did not envisage that it would grow to such a length, however, at all times my prayer was that God the Father would put into my heart and mind the Truth that He wanted to give to His people; so that the beautiful character of each member of the Trinity would be revealed, and that the hearts of His dearly beloved children may be filled with Grace and their minds with Truth, so that they may have light during the dark evil days of the Great Tribulation, which is rapidly approaching, so as to come through it with an overcoming faith, and when they stand before Lord Jesus and are judged according to their works, they may receive white garments and a reward. Rev 19v8, 22v12,13.

Alister Hamilton

Appendices.

Appendix 1: A Few Important Notes!

NB1: Rev 12v6,14 states: "And the woman fled into the wilderness, where **she hath a place prepared of God**, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days...And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that **she might fly into the wilderness, into her place**, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent."

This group of specially prepared Christians (that flee from Antichrist in Jerusalem and the surrounding area) is definitely said to have a place prepared by God for them to escape to at the beginning of the Great Tribulation; it is **MOST** important that Christians should pray (Greek, "proseuchomai" (NT:4336)) **NOW**, for God to prepare the areas of Edom, Moab and Ammon to be ready to receive this "Glorious Woman" at the beginning of the Great Tribulation. Christians firstly should invoke the following covenant names in the Heavenly places over these three areas (and modern day Jordan), Yahweh Tsabaoth, the Lord of Hosts, and Yahweh Jireh, the Lord Who See and Provides, that these areas will know continuous angelic protection from this time forth, right up until the second coming of the Lord Jesus, but especially during the Great Tribulation, and that **ALL** things will be **FULLY** "prepared" by the Lord Who Sees and Provides for His people. Secondly, Christians should also impart the divine benediction by using the priestly blessing of Numbers 6v22-27 upon Edom, Moab, Ammon and modern day Jordan. If Christians pray like this **NOW**, these areas of Edom, Moab and Ammon, will most certainly be **FULLY** prepared and protected by God, to receive His people at the beginning off the Great Tribulation, so that they are fed, kept and protected right up until the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus. **NOTE:** Rev 5v8, "...which are the prayers (Greek "proseuche" (NT:4335)) of saints." 2Pet 3v12. (We see in Rev 4 and 5, the preliminaries in Heaven just before the seals are opened, that is, before the events of the last seven years this Age start to come to pass (Daniel's Seventieth prophetic week, Dan 9v27). The seven seals reveal Satan's evil plans for the world during the last seven years of this age. Paul calls Satan's plans "the mystery of iniquity." 2Thess 2v7. **The seals reveal the major catastrophic stages of the career of Antichrist from the time when he makes the covenant, until the great day of the wrath of the Lamb brings his evil career to a close.**

NB2: We read in Matt 9v37,38: "Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, **but the labourers are few**; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, **that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.**"

It is also most essential for Christians (especially those Christians in Israel) to pray (Greek, "proseuchomai" (NT:4336)) **NOW** for God to raise up the Two Witnesses, and other Christians whom He will set in the body of Christ with the same level of power and authority as the Two Witnesses. We **MUST** also pray (Greek, "proseuchomai" (NT:4336)) for God to give these "labourers" the same kind of power and authority that He gave unto the prophet Elijah (1Kings 17v1-21v29, 2Kings 1v1-2v11 Dan 11v32, Rev 11v3-6), and then to "send them forth into His harvest." It is also a necessity for us to pray (Greek, "proseuchomai" (NT:4336)) for God to fulfil such prophecies and promises, as those stated in Rev 11v3-6 and Zech chapter 4, but especially the wonderful promise and prophecy that He spoke through His servant Malachi in Mal

4v5,6 (with Luke 1v17): "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to the fathers, the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

Christians MUST pray (Greek, "proseuchomai" (NT:4336)) NOW for "last day Elijah ministries" to be set in the Body of Christ by God! (Rev 5v8).

The number of "last day Elijah ministries" that God will be able to set in the Church will be directly proportional to the amount of praying (Greek, "proseuchomai" (NT:4336)) performed by the Church for God to set such ministries in it; i.e., the more the Body of Christ prays (Greek, "proseuchomai" (NT:4336)) for God to set such ministries in the church, the **MORE** "last day Elijah ministries" will **actually be set in it by God!**

Behind every great prophet and prophetess, there has **ALWAYS** been someone behind the scenes, who has earnestly sought the Lord and prayed (Greek, "proseuchomai" (NT:4336)) them into their ministry. Very often this is the result of the prayers (Greek "proseuche" (NT:4335)) of a godly loving mother or aunt; as in the case of Jeremiah, when his aunt, the great Old Testament prophetess, Huldah, was the person responsible for praying (Greek, "proseuchomai" (NT:4336)) him into his prophetic ministry as a young man. We can gauge the depth of her spirituality and prophetic ministry from the incident when King Josiah asked Hilkiah, the high priest, to inquire of the Lord as what should be done at that time, Hilkiah promptly went and sought out Huldah, and as soon as he had asked for the word of the Lord, Huldah was able to give it too him straight away. However, when the remnant of those left in the southern kingdom came and asked Jeremiah to seek the word of the Lord for them, it was ten days before the reply came from the Lord for them (which they didn't heed anyway); and so from this, we can see just how in touch with the Lord Huldah was and the depth of her prophetic ministry! 2Kings 22v3-20 (esp. v14), Jer 1v1-19 (esp. v6), 32v7, Jer 42v1-22 (esp. v7).

NB3: Rev 12v1 (with Rev 12v2-17) states: "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars." The vision of this glorious woman reveals to us one of God's major purposes for the last days. She represents a group of people, who are foreknown, designed, specially created and empowered by God for the Great Tribulation. It is a group of praying ("proseuchomai" (NT:4336)) people, with prepared hearts and special ministries for the last days, who will operate with awesome power as a prayer-warrior group behind the scenes. God also gives a definite promise that He will protect, provide and empower the seeking hearts in His Church in a new and special way in the last days, and will not leave His Church defenceless in the Great Tribulation. This glorious woman reveals that part of the Church will be clothed with the fullness of God's power, and will be transported, protected and fed by God. This group is a major part of God's answer to Satan's mystery of iniquity, and it is one of many God-empowered groups, who operate in Israel and other parts of the world.

One of the great desires upon the great Heart of our Heavenly Father, is the necessity for His people to get ready and prepared for the dark evil days of the Great Tribulation, however at the present moment in time, very few, if any, Teachers or Preachers in the Church are talking about these vital Truths, and when they do mention it, it is nearly always to state that the Christian does not need to be concerned about the Great Tribulation, because they will miss it, having been raptured before it starts. I wish to state here and now, that those (so called) preachers and teachers who propagate such lies, the Lord Jesus plainly states are amongst the false prophets and teachers of the last days, and a severe judgement awaits them! The Lord Jesus clearly states that His Second Coming will be visible to every eye, and will be with great power and glory, the elements melting with fervent heat, which will be accompanied by the greatest earthquake that the earth has ever known! It is **NOW** vital for **EVERY** Christian (especially for Christians in Israel) to get close to the Lord Jesus, and pray (Greek, "proseuchomai" (NT:4336)) that He will prepare His people into such groups (as represented by the glorious woman in Rev 12v1) in every country around the world, but **ESPECIALLY** in Israel! Dan 11v32, Joel 2v28-32, Zech 12v8, Matt 24v21-30,48-51, 28v20, Luke 18v1-8, 2Pet 3v10, James 3v1, Rev 1v7, 12v1-17, 16v18.

NB4: Psalm 2v8 and Rev 5v7 reads: "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession...And **he came and took the book** out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne."

The "He came and took the book," is the fulfilment of the "ask of me" of Psalm 2v8, it is when God brings to pass the prophetic events that will close the Age, and bring in Christ's kingdom. Psalm 2v8, Dan 2v44,45, 7v13.

It is most important for **ALL** believers to pray (Greek, "proseuchomai" (NT:4336)) **NOW** that God will invite the Lord Jesus to come and ask Him for His inheritance and possession, so that He takes the book out of His Father's right hand, so as to open the seven seals thereof. **NOTE:** Rev 5v8, "which are the prayers (Greek "proseuche" (NT:4335)) of the saints..." with Matt 6v9,10, "After this manner therefore pray (Greek "proseuchomai" (NT:4336)) ye...**Thy kingdom come.**" Matt 6v5-15, Luke 11v1-13 (esp., 11v2), 2Pet 3v12.

(The seven seals show the major stages in the career of Antichrist, from the covenant, to seven years later, when he and his evil system is destroyed on the great day of the Lamb's wrath. An angel asks who is worthy to rule the world after Antichrist has brought the world to almost complete ruin; the answer is only Christ and His faithful brethren. Rev 5v5,9,10, Rom 8v19. This age will close when Jesus has enough brethren to rule the Millennial kingdom with Him. Rev 14v1-5, 17v14, 2Pet 3v12. John's vision in Rev 4 and 5, was not a revelation of events in Heaven in the time of John, it was a vision of events in Heaven just prior to the last seven years of this age. When Jesus opens the seven seals, it starts the last 7 years of this age, and the mystery of iniquity. Dan 9v20-27.

Satan's plans are restrained by God, and even when the mystery of iniquity is allowed to have its final fling, God reigns and His kingdom will surely come quickly. All of Heaven's inhabitants are perfectly satisfied at Christ's worthiness to open the seals and receive the kingdom, and they rejoice that divine love will rule the nations, after the evil rule of men. John was heartbroken and wept because no one could open the book and loose the seals, but one of the elders comforted John and said, "Weep not; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the book, and loose the seals thereof." As God, Jesus was the source of David's family and the means of its sustenance, anchorage and strength; as a man He was the offspring of David. Isaiah 11v1,10, Rom 1v3,4, Rev 22v16. John looks for this Lion of Judah, but sees a Lamb as it had been slain. The most courageous act of the Lion of Judah was His death as the Lamb of God, this shows His courage and love more than all else. The title "Lamb" occurs 29 times in Revelation, but it is only applied to Jesus 4 times in the rest of the New Testament. John 1v29,36, Acts 8v32, 1Pet 1v19. Men often use mighty beasts and birds of prey as symbols of power, but God uses a Lamb to show the greatest act of courage, strength and love the world has even known; Calvary is the ultimate act of power and love. The Lamb of God is worthy to reign because of the sacrificial love revealed in His death upon Calvary.

Jesus has not only redeemed sinners, but has made them kings and priests unto God as well, and the faithful saints will reign with Christ in the Millennium and eternity. Rev 5v10, 20v4-6, 22v3-5. Christ has won the right to reign, the Father has no favourites, He has "no jobs for the boys," those who rule will have to prove their worthiness to rule, even as Jesus has proved His worthiness to reign. Rev 3v21, 5v5, Phil 2v6-11, Rom 2v11, Acts 10v34, Heb 5v5-10, Dan 7v13,14. **Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!**

NB5: On the day of Pentecost, Peter stood up and said in Acts 2v16-21 (with Joel 2v28-32): "...This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; **And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh:** and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, **before that great and notable day of the Lord come: And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.**"

The Lord Jesus, during the His Post-Resurrection ministry to the Apostles, had told them "I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high," when He (the Holy Spirit) that was with them, would then enter them, which was the Baptism in the Holy Spirit that they would receive. Luke 24v49, John 7v39, 14v17, Acts 2v4,38. It was during the Post-Resurrection ministry that the Lord Jesus had instructed them regarding Joel's prophecy, that this was the glorious prophecy which referred to the "Promise of the Father" (i.e., power from on high), and that it was **vital** for them to tarry in the Upper Room, and pray (Greek, "proseuchomai" (NT:4336)) this great prophecy and promise into reality. The Lord Jesus did not tell them the precise timing of when they would receive the Promise of the Father (this was because that if they had known, some of them might have just sat back and said, "well I don't need to pray (Greek, "proseuchomai" (NT:4336)), God is going to do it anyway"), but simply said, "ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." Acts 1v5. The Apostles were obedient to His command, and with other disciples (one hundred and twenty of them, in all), they prayed (Greek, "proseuchomai" (NT:4336)) Joel's great and wonderful prophecy and promise into reality. Acts 1v14,15, 2v1-4. The great outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost was only a partial fulfilment of Joel's prophecy, which also had a fulfilment throughout the whole of the Age of Grace to encourage the Church to pray for revival, blessing, spiritual gifts and ministries from their risen Lord. 1Cor 12v7-11, Eph 4v7-16.

Joel's great prophecy and promise has a final and complete fulfilment at the end of the Age of Grace, for it specifically says, **"it shall come to pass in the last days...I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh...before that great and notable day of the Lord come."** Even as the one hundred and twenty disciples in the Upper Room, prayed (Greek, "proseuchomai" (NT:4336)) Joel's wonderful prophecy and promise into reality on the Day of Pentecost, it is also **VITAL** for the Church to pray (Greek, "proseuchomai" (NT:4336)) **NOW** for God to pour out of His Spirit upon, the Church, and the world, i.e. "upon ALL flesh." God's people need to claim the complete fulfilment of Joel's great prophecy and promise **NOW**, and **MUST** continue to claim the complete fulfilment of it right up until the Lord's Second Coming. There will certainly be a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit when Daniel's Seventieth week starts, when Antichrist "confirms a covenant with many (including Israel) for one week," which also refers to the opening of the First Seal. Dan 9v27, Rev 6v1,2. And another, even greater outpouring will occur, when Antichrist breaks the covenant, and sets up his image in the Temple in Jerusalem (at the beginning of the Great Tribulation). During the last seven years of the Age of Grace, the Church and the world will know a time of the greatest worldwide revival that has ever been experienced, and **NOW** is the time for the Body of Christ to pray (Greek, "proseuchomai" (NT:4336)) so that this great outpouring becomes a reality very soon, and also is **FULLY** experienced during the last seven years of this Age. Acts 2v16-21, Rev 5v8, 11v3-6, 12v1.

The believer, by praying (Greek, "proseuchomai" (NT:4336)) as indicated in these five NBs ("nota benes"), will surely "hasten the coming of the Day of God." (2Pet 3v12).

Appendix 2: In Gen 3v16, God Did Not Curse Women.

Several mistranslations of Gen 3v15,16, twist and distort God's statement about women.

The First Mistranslation. "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow." Gen 3v16.

According to Katherine Bushnell, an outstanding Hebrew scholar, "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow," in Gen 3v16, is incorrectly translated, she writes in paragraph 117 of her book, "God's Word To Women:" "We hold that verse 16 should have been rendered, "Unto the woman He said, A snare hath increased thy sorrow," - the word "snare" being, literally rendered, "a lying-in-wait." Instead, it is rendered, "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow." The difference between the two in Hebrew lies wholly in the interlinear vowel-signs of comparatively recent invention. (Footnote) The difference is between HaRBeh, AaRBeh, "multiplying I will multiply," and HiRBah AoReB, "hath caused to multiply, (or made great), a lying in wait." - the verb, as usual preceding its nominative. The capital letters, alike in both phrases, alone constitute the original text. This participle form, ARB, occurs fourteen times in Joshua and Judges. It is translated "ambush," and "liers-in-wait," or "in ambush." It is possible that we should read here, "A lier-in-wait (the subtle serpent) hath increased thy sorrow."

Bushnell informs us why the Jews added the vowel letters to the Hebrew text, in paragraph 6 of her book, she writes: "Hebrew ceased to be spoken by the common people during the Babylonian captivity. It was practically a "dead language" as early as 250 BC. In the absence of expressed vowels, its pronunciation was likely to become lost. So the Scribes took four consonants, "a h v and j," and inserted them into the text to indicate the vowel sounds. While this device helped to some extent, in the end it led to confusion, often raising the question: "Is this letter a consonant, belonging to the original, or is it a vowel-letter, added by the Scribes?" Moreover the insertion of these vowel-letters did not prove sufficient; then, as late as 600-800 AD, a whole system of vowel-signs was added, most elaborately indicating the vowels of each word as tradition had preserved it. These vowel-signs were interlinear, and therefore did not confuse the text, as did the vowel-letters." End of quote.

The rendering in Gen 3v16, "Unto the woman He said, I have greatly increased thy sorrow," is against both the context and character of God, it should be translated, "Unto the woman He said, A snare hath increased thy sorrow," the word snare being literally, "a lying in wait," Satan, in the form of a serpent. Rev 12v9.

Where Did This Attack On Woman And The Character Of God Come From? From "The Days Of Mingling."

The time between the Old Testament and the New Testament has been called "the days of mingling." The Jews tried to adopt Hellenistic ideas from the Greek cities which surrounded Palestine. Greek kings were in control in Syria and Egypt so the Jews decided to obliterate the ideas of Jewish life and religion which were offensive to these Greeks. F. W. Farrar, and others say, "This semi-faithless epoch was described as the days of mingling." This was the time when the Jews mingled freely with the heathen population, F. W. Farrar says that they were "fascinated by the attractions of Greek life and literature, they wished to adopt Hellenistic ideas and to obliterate the most essential distinctions of Jewish life and religion."

Some think that it was during this time that women were given the badge of inferiority and servility. Before this the woman had a place in the tabernacle services as priestesses and Levites, and this is proved by the technical term used in Exod 33v38 and 1Sam 2v22, which is translated as "serving women." It was during those days that the blame was shifted from Adam to Eve, she was linked with the heathen teaching of Pandora (Greek mythology), and Eve was blamed as the one who opened Pandora's box on the world. The city of Alexandria led the way in reconciling the Scriptures with pagan Greek teachings.

From The Talmudic Teaching.

This taught, "From a woman a beginning of sin and because of her all die." Ecclesiasticus 25v24. The wisdom of Ben Sira, and many others, said the same dreadful theology, and greatly disparaged women.

The Ten Curses of Eve in a Talmudic commentary on Genesis.

In Lesson 13 of her book, "God's Word To Woman," Katherine C Bushnell quotes the outrageous and disgusting 10 curses of Eve, from Dr. Hershon's, "Genesis With A Talmudic Commentary." (Bagster London). Bushnell states that some of the details were so obscene and filthy that she was unwilling to print them.

"Greatly multiply" refers to catamenia, etc.

"Thy sorrow" in rearing children.

"Thy conception."

"In sorrow shall thou bring forth children."

"Thy desire shall be unto thy husband." (This is followed by language too coarse and vulgar for reproduction leaving no doubt of the Rabbinical interpretation of desire: it was gross physical lust).

"He shall rule over thee." (More, and even fouler language)

She is wrapped up like a mourner, that is.

Dares not appear in public with her head uncovered.

Is restricted to one husband, while he may have many wives.

Is confined to the house as to a prison.

NB1 Those who teach that woman is under a curse like this, are really putting themselves under a curse for misinterpreting the Scriptures in this fraudulent, contemptible, and insulting way. Those who believe, teach and practice these outrageous and evil doctrines can expect severe censure on judgement day. James 3v1.

NB2 God certainly did not ordain women's servitude to man. We read in Gen 21v12, that God told Abraham to obey Sarah. See 1Cor 7v4, where Paul states, "The wife's body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband's body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife. (NIV)

From Church Leaders Who Were Influenced By The Talmud.

Many Church leaders have been influenced by the Talmud, and by heathen ideas about women.

Tertullian twisted the Scriptures when he said that God visited Eve's sin and guilt on all women.

He stated, "Do you not know that you are an Eve? God's verdict on the sex still holds good, and the sex's guilt must still hold also. YOU ARE THE DEVIL'S GATEWAY, you are the avenue of the forbidden tree. You are the first deserter from the Law divine. It was you who persuaded him (Adam), whom the devil himself had not strength to assail. So lightly did you esteem God's image. For your deceit, for death, the very Son of God had to perish." End of quote.

What a male chauvinist twisting of the facts, and perversion of the truth! Tertullian fails to mention that Jesus was born of a woman and that the Scriptures ascribe the transgression to Adam. Adam is mentioned in Job 31v33 and Hosea 6v7 ("men" can be translated as Adam), and he is the one who gets the blame. Paul also states that Adam is to blame for the fall, in 1Cor 15v22, and seven times in Rom 5v12-19. In 1Tim 2v14, Paul says that the woman was completely deceived, "exapatetheisa," the aorist passive indicative of, "exapatao," "to deceive completely," or "to deceive successfully," and states that Adam was the one "who stepped over the boundary," "parabasis," and transgressed.

In 2Cor 11v3, "beguiled," is "exepatesen," the aorist indicative active of "exapatao," the preposition "ex" in the compound is perfective, and so means to completely deceive. Here we see Satan as the active agent in deception, in 1Tim 2v14, we see Eve as the passive deceived one. God says in Ezek 18v1-32 (NB v2,20), that guilt cannot be transferred from parent to child.

Calvin said that God cast Eve into servitude to men.

This is the same as saying that God made men a curse to women, but God has decreed the very opposite, for the husband who does not treat his wife properly will have his prayers "cut off" by God. In 1Pet.3v7, "egkoptesthai" the present passive indicative of "egkopto," means, to cut in on, and so to hinder, to impede, to detain. Christian men are commanded, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it." Eph 5v25.

The Second Mistranslation About "Conception."

In the Hebrew of Gen 3v16, the word translated as "conception," is HRN, but this not the correct Hebrew for "conception," which is correctly spelt as HRJWN in Ruth 4v13 and Hosea 9v11, it occurs nowhere else in the Hebrew Old Testament. Even though some Hebrew scholars say HRN is "an abnormal formation which occurs nowhere else in the Old Testament," and the lexical authorities Brown, Briggs, and Driver say that it is a "contraction or erroneous," the Septuagint translators, who were outstanding Hebrew scholars, decided that the correct translation of HRN was, "thy sighing." The sentence means, then, "a snare hath increased thy sorrow and thy sighing." Many ancient authorities agree with the Septuagint.

The Third Mistranslation "Desire." "Teshuwqah" or "Teshuqa." (OT:8669).

"Teshuqa," only occurs 3 times in the Old Testament, in Gen 3v16, 4v7 and The Song of Solomon 7v10. In paragraphs 124 and 127, of her book "God's Word To Women," K. Bushnell states: "The correct rendering of Gen 3v16 is this: "Thou art turning away to thy husband, and he will rule over thee," - not as it has been rendered, "Thy desire shall be to thy husband." This assertion, as to the correct meaning of the phrase we shall now prove. As we have said before, a misinterpretation of Scripture can be proved by the misfit. The usual construction put upon the language of this verse fits accurately nowhere, the correct interpretation fits all around."

Bushnell continues, "Thus we see that the context does not prove that this "shall be" of the sentence translated, "thy desire shall be to thy husband" is imperative. We can assert positively that this sentence is a simple future or present, warning woman of the consequences of her action. So it is rendered in all the ancient versions; never as an imperative. As a prophecy it has been abundantly fulfilled in the manner which man rules over woman, especially in heathen lands." End of quote.

According to Bushnell, "teshuqa" is derived from the verb "shuwq," its simplest meaning is, "to run," the prefix "te," "gives "teshuqa" an abstract meaning and corresponds to our termination "ness," as in "goodness," or "kindness," etc.. The ending "a," is added to give the feminine form (of the verb), it can mean, "to run repeatedly," that is to run back and forth," and so have the derived sense of "turning," which most ancient versions give it. In Gen 3v16, Eve's turning. In Gen 4v7, Cain's turning, or sins turning, or crouching ready to pounce like an animal. In Song of Solomon 7v10, the woman states she is her beloved's, and his turning is towards her. Bushnell says, (para. 126): "No verbs are expressed. The conjunction is one for all and also the preposition. This is true of the Hebrew original also. In fact there is no variety in the three sentences, excepting in the proper nouns implied in the pronouns used. The sense of the three passages must be similar."

The Translation Of "Teshuqa" In The Most Ancient Versions.

The Septuagint. Translates "teshuqa," as "turning" in the three places where it occurs; as "apostrophe," "turning away," in Gen 3v16, and 4v7, and as "epistrophe," "turning to," in Song of Solomon 7v10. God said that the consequence of Eve turning away from God to her husband, was that her husband would rule her. Nearly every quotation of the Old Testament in the New Testament follows the Septuagint, which tradition says was a translation of the Hebrew Old Testament into Greek by 72 Jewish scholars in Alexandria that was started about 285 BC. The Septuagint was much favoured by the Jews until Christians used the translations of its prophecies to prove that Jesus was the Messiah.

The Syriac Peshitto. Which some say was translated from Greek manuscripts as early as 100 to 200 AD, renders Gen 3v16, as "thou wilt turn;" and Gen 4v7, as "will turn;" and the Song of Sol 7v10 as "turning."

The Samaritan Pentateuch. About 100 AD. Only has Gen 3v16 and 4v7 readings and translates both as "turning."

The Old Latin. About 200 AD, reads "turning" in all three places, in Gen 3v16, 4v7, and Song of Sol 7v10.

The Coptic Sahidic. About 300 AD, translates "teshuqa," as "turning," in Gen 3v16 and 4v7, but being fragmentary it lacks any reading of the Song of Sol 7v10.

The Coptic Bohairic. About 350 AD, is more reliable than the Coptic Sahidic, but being fragmentary it lacks Song of Sol 7v10, but translates Gen 3v16 and 4v7 as "turning."

The Ethiopic. About 500 AD, renders all three passages by words meaning "turning".

These ancient versions deny that Eve was under a curse from God, and was driven by lust after her husband.

The reason for the mistranslations of "teshuqa" in Jerome's Vulgate.

The Vulgate is a translation from the Greek Scriptures into Latin made by Jerome in about 382 AD. Jerome went to Palestine and studied Hebrew under Jewish rabbis and appears to have been to some extent poisoned by their Talmudic traditions. He translated Gen 3v16, "Thou shalt be under the power of a husband and he will rule over thee;" which is in no way a correct translation of the original. In Gen 4v7, Jerome translates "teshuqa," as "his appetite," which is another strange translation. In Song of Sol 7v10, Jerome gets to the truth when he translates "teshuqa," as "his turning."

Wycliffe's Version. Made in 1380 AD was translated from the Vulgate not the Hebrew, Wycliffe followed the Vulgate in all three places as did the Douay Version of 1609.

NB1 The disproportionate unscholarly influence of the Italian Dominican Monk Pagnino.

Bushnell records in paragraph 142: "After Wycliffe's version, and before any other English Bible appeared, an Italian Dominican monk, named Pagnino, translated the Hebrew Bible. The "Biographie Universelle," quotes the following criticism of his work, **in the language of Richard Simon: "Pagnino has too much neglected the ancient versions of Scripture to attain himself to the teaching of the rabbis."** What would we naturally expect, therefore? That he would render this word "lust," - and that is precisely what he does in the first (Gen 3v16) and third place (Song of Sol 7v10); in the second (Gen 4v7), he translates, "appetite."

Pagnino published his translation of the Hebrew Bible in 1528, and it influenced every older English version in their translation of Gen 3v16, for they render "teshuqa," as "lust," or "desire." What would we expect from the polluted Babylonian Talmud, and those who follow it, but the word "lust;" it is sad that this source and Pagnino had such a bad influence on the English translations of Gen 3v16. Cranmer's Bible of 1539 first translated "teshuqa" as "lust" in Gen 3v16, and the Geneva Bible and the Authorised Version and the Revised Version softened the idea to "desire."

Bushnell states in paragraph 145: "Following him (Pagnino), to the neglect of ancient versions, the English translators have not, in regard to Gen.316, set forth the proper sense of "teshuqa." Lewis in "Lang's Commentary," states, "The sense of this word (teshuqa) is not "libido," or sensual desire." It is a striking fact, that Tyndale, Coverdale, Matthew, (John Rogers) and Cranmer all translated "teshuqa " in Song of Sol 7v10 as "turning."

NB2 The influence of some Church Fathers.

Bushnell states that Church Fathers translate "teshuqa," as "turning." Clement of Rome who died 100 AD. Irenaeus who died 202 AD. Tertullian who was born 160 AD. Origen who was born 186 AD. Epiphanius who was born 310 AD in Palestine. Ambrose who was born 340 AD. Augustus who was born 354 AD. Theodoret who was born 386 AD. All translate "teshuqa" as "turning," in one, two or all three passages. The famous Philo, a Jew of Alexandria who died in 50 AD also translates "teshuqa," as "turning."

There can be little doubt that Gen 3v16 should be translated; "You are turning away to thy husband and he will rule over

thee." This was not a curse, but a prophecy of the domination of women by men, something which has, tragically, been fulfilled not only among the Heathen, but also, all too often, in the Church as well.

"Rule," is "mashal," to rule, to reign, to have dominion, to manage, to rule over. It occurs 83 times in the Hebrew Old Testament, God uses "mashal," to tell Cain that he could rule over and master the sin that was taking hold of him. It is used of Eliezer managing all of Abraham's house, Gen 15v2, 24v2. It is used of Joseph's brothers not entertaining the thought of Joseph ruling over them, Gen 37v2, (44v8,26). It is used of the rule of an oppressive king, as in Isaiah 19v4. Of higher justice in Exod 21v8, Deut 15v6. Of the powerful ruling rich, Prov 22v7. Of political leadership, 1Kings 4v4-21, (Rom.13v1-7). Of self rule and self control, Prov 16v32. And of God's overruling providence, Psalm 89v10.

The Fourth Mistranslation, "Bruise," "Shuph." "Shuph," occurs 3 times in the Old Testament, in Gen 3v15, it is translated as "bruise," in Job 9v17 as "breaking," and in Psalm 139v11. as "cover." "Shuph," is used to mean "bite" (serpent bite), crush, break, and cover." The serpent will bite the heel, and the seed of the woman will crush the serpent's head. Psalm 72v9, Rom 16v20, Gal 3v16, Eph 2v14-18, Col 2v15, Heb 2v14, 1John 3v8, 5v18, Rev 12v7-12, 19v11, 20v1-3,10. Some think that "shuph" means the seed will be in wait for the serpent's head, for some of the ancient versions translate "shuph" as "lying in wait," or a kindred idea, and the Revised Version gives this as an alternative meaning in the margin. This could mean that God, in Christ, would be "lying in wait" for the serpent to crush his head, just as the serpent had lay in wait for Eve and Adam to deceive and destroy them.

The Woman And Her Seed Has Always Been A Threat To Satan.

This prophecy has been like a sword over Satan's head from the day that it was uttered. Christ partly fulfilled this in His life and atoning death, and will fulfil it in great measure, when Satan is cast into the Abyss at our Lord's second coming. It will finally be completely fulfilled, when Satan is cast into the lake of fire, at the end of the Millennium. Heb 2v14, Rev 20v1-10.

The Lessons We Can Learn From The Temptation And Fall In Eden.

Trust God and obey His word. Adam and Eve failed to trust God, and believed Satan's lies. They failed to be open with God, and refused to admit sin and failure, and so missed forgiveness and restoration.

God can still bring our marriage partners to us; "He who finds a wife finds what is good, and receives favour from the hand of the Lord." Prov 18v22. "A prudent wife is from the Lord." Prov 19v1. God provided a helper suitable for Adam. Gen 2v18. God's unsearchable wisdom can direct us in marriage. Rom 11v33-36. However, don't leave it all to God, the decision is yours. In Psalm 32v8-11, God tells us to use sanctified common sense, and not to be like a horse or mule which have no understanding; He wants to throw away the reins, He does not want to dominate our choices. Be glad and rejoice in the guiding mercy of God, He will guide us with His eye, and warn us, where necessary, of possible dangers. God can make our marriages a new creation in Christ. 2Cor 5v17. As Paul states, "Love always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always endures, love never fails." 1Cor 13v7,8.

Another Mistranslation, "Rib."

We read in the Authorised Version of Gen 2v21 that God took a rib out of Adam and made Eve, however, "rib" is not the correct translation. The Hebrew word translated as "rib," in Gen 2v21 (OT:6763), occurs forty-two times in the Old Testament, in most cases it is translated as "side," or "sides," and elsewhere as "corners," or "chambers," but the only place where it is translated as "rib," is in Gen 2v21,22, which describes the creation of Eve from Adam. If the Lord had meant "rib," He would have used the word for "rib" that He uses in Dan 7v5, (OT:5967), which means "rib," and nothing else. In the Septuagint version, the word is "pleura," which is invariably translated as "side" in the New Testament, where it is used of the side of Jesus into which the spear was thrust, John 19v34 and 20v20,25,27, and of the angels smiting Peter on the side to wake him up, when he was asleep in prison, in Acts 2v7. "Pleura is also used to speak of a person's side in the Greek of Homer and Herodotus. Adam stated, "she is flesh of my flesh," not just, "she is bone of my bone." God made a female clone out of the flesh and bone of the side of Adam, a truly remarkable miracle.

In Gen 3v16, God Did Not Curse Woman.

This is a summary of the teaching of the Scriptures that we have just considered.

Some use a mistranslation of Gen 3v16, which twists and distorts God's attitude to women, to justify the domination of women by men. It was not God, but Satan "the liar in wait," who increased the sorrow and pain of women.

According to the outstanding Hebrew scholar Katherine Bushnell, the translation, "Unto the woman He said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow," in Gen 3v16, is incorrect. Bushnell states in her book, "God's Word To Women," that it should have been translated, "Unto the woman He said, A snare (literally, "a liar-in wait) hath increased thy sorrow." The participle form, ARB, occurs fourteen times in Joshua and Judges, and is translated as "ambush," and "liars-in-wait," or "in ambush," so Gen 3v16, could be translated, "A liar-in-wait (Satan in the form of a serpent) hath increased thy sorrow."

The Hebrew HRN has also been incorrectly translated in Gen 3v16, as "conception."

However, HRN is not the correct Hebrew for "conception," which is correctly spelt as HRJWN in Ruth 4v13 and Hosea 9v11. HRN occurs nowhere else in the Hebrew Old Testament, however, the Septuagint translators, who were outstanding Hebrew scholars, decided that the correct translation of HRN was, "thy sighing," "tou stenagmos autes." "Stenagmos," means "groanings," or "sighings," and is so translated in Exodus 2v24, 6v5, Job 3v24, etc. Many ancient authorities agree with the Septuagint. The A.V. rendering in Gen 3v16, "Unto the woman He said, I have greatly increased thy sorrow and thy conception," is against both the context and character of God, it should be translated, "Unto the woman He said, A snare (literally "a liar-in-wait") hath increased thy sorrow and thy sighing." That ancient serpent, Satan, being "the liar-in wait." Rev 12v9.

The Hebrew "teshuqa," in Gen 3v16, has also been incorrectly translated, as "desire," or "lust."

In paragraphs 124, 127, of her book "God's Word To Women," Bushnell states: "The correct rendering of Gen 3v16 is; "Thou art turning away to thy husband, and he will rule over thee," not as it has been rendered, "Thy desire shall be to thy husband."

Bushnell later continues, "Thus we see that the context does not prove that this "shall be" of the sentence translated, "thy desire shall be to thy husband" is imperative. We can assert positively that this sentence is a simple future or present, warning woman of the consequences of her action. So it is rendered in all the ancient versions; never as an imperative. As a prophecy it has been abundantly fulfilled in the manner which man rules over woman, especially in heathen lands." End of quote.

Lewis in "Lang's Commentary," states, "The sense of this word "teshuqa" is not "libido," or sensual desire." "Teshuqa," occurs 3 times in the Old Testament, in Gen 3v16, 4v7 and The Song 7v10. Bushnell states that the Church Fathers translate "teshuqa," as "turning." Clement of Rome (died 100 AD). Irenaeus (died 202 AD). Tertullian (born 160 AD). Origen (born 186 AD). Epiphanius (born 310 AD in Palestine). Ambrose (born 340 AD). Augustus (born 354 AD). Theodoret (born 386 AD). All translate "teshuqa" as "turning," in one, two or all three passages. The famous Jew, Philo of Alexandria (died 50 AD) also translates "teshuqa," as "turning."

Tertullian twisted the Scriptures when he said that God visited Eve's sin and guilt on all women. He stated, "Do you not know that you are an Eve? God's verdict on the sex still holds good, and the sex's guilt must still hold also. You are the Devil's gateway, you are the avenue of the forbidden tree. You are the first deserter from the Law divine. It was you who persuaded him (Adam), whom the devil himself had not strength to assail. So lightly did you esteem God's image. For your deceit, for death, the very Son of God had to perish." End of quote.

What a perversion of the truth! Paul states seven times in Rom 5v12-19, and once in 1Cor 15v22, that Adam is to blame for the fall. In 1Tim 2v14, we see Satan as the active agent in deception, and Eve as the passive deceived one. Paul says that the woman was completely deceived, "exapatetheisa," the aorist passive indicative of, "exapatao," "to deceive completely," or "to deceive successfully," and states that Adam was the one "who stepped over the boundary," "parabasis," and transgressed. In 2Cor 11v3, "beguiled," is "exepatesen," the aorist indicative active of "exapatao," the preposition "ex" in the compound is perfective, and so means to completely deceive. God says in Ezek 18v1-32 (NB v2,20), that guilt cannot be transferred from parent to child.

Calvin said that God cast Eve into servitude to men. However, God has decreed the very opposite, for husbands who do not treat their wives properly will have their prayers "cut off" by God. In 1Pet 3v7 "egkoptesthai" the present passive indicative of "egkopto," means, to cut in on, and so to hinder, to impede. In Eph 5v25, Paul commands Christian men, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it." God certainly did not ordain that women should be in servitude to men.

It is a great pity that some theologians and translators have too been influenced by the perverted ideas of the Babylonian Talmud, and the Italian Dominican monk Pagnino, (who published his translation of the Hebrew Bible in 1528), and as a result have translated "teshuqa," as "lust," or "desire." The "Biographie Universelle," quotes the following criticism of Pagnino's work, in the language of Richard Simon: "Pagnino has too much neglected the ancient versions of Scripture to attain himself to the teaching of the rabbis." The Samaritan Pentateuch, the Old Latin, the Coptic Sahidic and Bohairic, and Ethiopic, translate "teshuqa," by words meaning "turning". The Syriac Peshitto, renders Gen 3v16, as "thou wilt turn;" and Gen 4v7 as "will turn;" and the Song of Sol 7v10 as "turning." The Septuagint, translates "teshuqa," as "turning" in the three places where it occurs; as "apostrophe," "turning away," in Gen 3v16 and 4v7, and as "epistrophe," "turning to," in Song 7v10. Nearly every quotation of the Old Testament in the New Testament follows the Septuagint, which tradition says was a translation of the Hebrew Old Testament into Greek by 72 Jewish scholars in Alexandria started in about 285 BC. The Septuagint was much favoured by the Jews until Christians used the translations of its prophecies to prove that Jesus was the Messiah. These ancient versions deny that Eve was under a curse from God, and was driven by lust after her husband.

In Gen 3v16, "Your desire will be to your husband, and he will rule over you," should be translated; "You are turning away to your husband and he will rule ("rule," is "mashal," to rule, to reign, to have dominion) over you." This was not a curse, but a prophecy of the domination of women by men, something which has, tragically, been fulfilled not only among the Heathen, but also, sadly, in the Church as well.

The glorious Gospel of Jesus reinstates women to a position of equality with men, as Paul states in Gal 3v26-

28, "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." (KJV)

Appendix 3: Peter says that Jesus has preached to the dead in Hades. (1Pet 3v18-20, 4v6).

After seeing the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge in John 17, it is difficult to understand why men and angels have rejected that great love. It is also difficult to understand why Christians refuse to accept that there will be a chance of salvation after death, when Peter, in 1Pet 3v18-20 and 4v6, declares that Jesus has already preached to the dead. Jesus did this preaching after His soul was made an offering for sin in Hades, and He had won salvation for us. Isaiah 53v10. Matt 12v40, Acts 2v24,31, Rom 10v7, Eph 4v8-10. **In 1Pet 4v6**, Peter uses "**euangelizo**" to state that Jesus preached the good news of the Gospel to the dead, that is human beings who had died. **We read in 1Pet 4v5,6**, "They will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. **For this reason the Gospel was preached also to those who are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.**" "Euangelizo" is always used of the preaching of the good news concerning Jesus. Matt 11v5, Luke 3v18, 4v18,43, Acts 8v4,12,25,35,40, 17v18, Rom 10v15, Gal 1v8,9, 1Pet 1v12,25, Rev 10v7, 14v6. **In 1Tim 2v5,6**, Paul states that God will give a full opportunity of salvation to all, for He has no pleasure in the death of anyone. It is inconceivable and unscriptural to say that a God of love will put people into an eternal Hell without a chance of salvation, because, due to no fault of their own, they were not fortunate enough to hear the Gospel.

Is an opportunity given for angels to repent and be saved?

Paul tells us in Col 1v20, that Christ's blood bought the opportunity for salvation for "all on earth and all in Heaven alike," however, whether people or angels repent and accept His sacrifice is another matter, both angels and men can refuse to repent and accept the Divine mercy. Peter also informs us in 1Pet 3v19, that Jesus preached to the wicked angels imprisoned in the Abyss by God, who had taken upon them human flesh in the time of Noah. Gen 6v1-7, Jude v6. Here "preached," is "**kerusso**," to publish, to proclaim, to preach the Gospel as a herald, a "kerux." For "kerusso," see Matt 3v1, 4v17,23, 10v7, 11v1, 24v14, Acts 8v5, 9v20, 28v31, 1Cor 1v23, 2Cor 4v5, 2Tim 4v2. etc. Jesus proclaimed like a herald His great victory to the wickedest beings that have ever lived, the evil angels who were expelled from Heaven with Satan for choosing evil while living with God in Heaven. **We know from 2Pet 2v4,17 and Jude v6,12, that they are so hardened by evil, that they are beyond repentance and redemption, and are "reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgement of the great day."** We know they are beyond repentance, and so they are still imprisoned in Hades in everlasting chains of darkness. 2Pet 2v4,17, Jude v6,13. **Even the revelation of the wonderful dying love of the Lamb of God fails to bring them to repentance. They wail in enragement and frustration, and gnash their teeth in fury and bitter anger. As the Lamb and the holy angels test and scrutinise the souls of the wicked, they find no trace of repentance, or any grounds for their release, they are proved irreconcilable.**

These evil angels were full of sullen rebellion and bitter anger when our Lord Jesus proclaimed His glorious victory and His salvation to them. Jesus told us that the wicked will wail at their fate but will gnash their teeth in bitter anger. Matt 8v12, 13v42,50, 22v13, 24v51, 25v30, Luke 13v28. "Weeping, or wailing, and gnashing their teeth," is, "ho klauthmos kai ho brugmos." The noun "brugmos" (NT:1030), is from the verb, "brocho," (NT:1031), to grind or gnash with the teeth. How different from the wailing and lamentation of the mothers when Herod killed their beloved children. How different too from the grief in Acts 20v37, "And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck and kissed him." Weymouth's Translation reads, in Acts 20v37,38., "and with loud lamentation they all threw their arms round his neck, and kissed him lovingly, grieved above all things at his having told them that after that day they were no longer to see his face. And they went with him to the ship." "They all wept sore," is "hikanos klauthmos egeneto panton." Literally, "There was a great weeping on the part of all." "Kissed him," is "katephiloun auton," the imperfect active of "kataphileo," They kept on kissing Paul, one after the other they kept on falling on his neck and kissed him. See Gen 46v29 and Matt 26v49.

We read in Acts 7v54, "they gnashed on him with their teeth," is the imperfect active of "brucho," (NT:1031) "to bite with loud noise, to grind or gnash the teeth." Literally, "they began to gnash their teeth at him," just like a pack of hungry, snarling jackals. The gnashing and grinding of teeth here demonstrates the meaning of our Lord's words, they speak of the unrepentant bitter anger of the wicked. See Rev 16v9,11,21, where men blaspheme God to His face because of his judgements and will not repent. See Rev 2v21 Jezebel would not repent. Rev 9v20. Many Jews refused to repent even after the powerful preaching of John the Baptist and Jesus, and the mighty miracles of Jesus. Matt 11v20, 21v32.

The noun "klauthmos" (NT:2805), is translated in the AV as "weeping" in Matt 2v18 (the weeping of mothers whose children had been murdered by Herod), Matt 8v12, 22v13, 24v51, 25v30 and Luke 13v28, and as, "wailing," in Matt 13v42,50, and as "wept sore," in Acts 20v37. when the elders of Ephesus heard that they would not see Paul again on earth. The words "cast into outer darkness," and "cast into a furnace of fire," come from the lips of Jesus and cannot be ignored, they could not be more solemn and serious.

We read that Israel's religious leaders gnashed their teeth at the martyr Stephen in Acts 7v54-60:

"When they heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at Stephen. But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. "Look," he said, "I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God." At this they covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their

voices, they all rushed together against him. Then they dragged him out of the city and began to stone him, and the witnesses laid their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul. While they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Then he fell on his knees and cried out in a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he died."

NB The early Church fathers testify that Jesus preached to the dead.

In 1Pet 3v19 and 4v6, Peter gives sufficient proof for an honest person, that the early Church believed and preached that Jesus proclaimed His glorious atonement and victory to the dead in Hades. Plumptre states that the evidence of our Lord's descent into Hades and His preaching to the dead includes all the leading familiar names which are consulted when the early faith and practice of the Church are examined. The weight and authenticity that is attributed these witnesses on vital truths such as the Incarnation, baptism, the Eucharist, and the authenticity of the Gospels, must also be granted to the facts they give on the doctrine of our Lord's preaching to the dead.

Irenaeus says explicitly that the Lord "descended into the regions beneath the earth, preaching His advent there also, and the remission of sins ready for those who believe in Him," and he also states that remission of sins was received by, "all who had hopes towards Him, who proclaimed His advent and submitted to His dispensations." Irenaeus 4.27,2.

Justin accused the Jews of mutilating a prophecy of Jeremiah's, which had read, "The Lord God, the Holy One of Israel, remembered those His dead who slept in the dust of the grave, and descended to them to proclaim to them His salvation."

Clement of Alexander preached that the souls of the Heathen as well as Jews benefited from the revelation of Christ to them in Hades. The Jews being in bonds to the burden of the Law, and the Heathen being "those in darkness," received the proclamation of the truth of the Gospel from Jesus. This proclamation involved the offer of salvation, and the possibility of repentance and forgiveness of all the sins that a man had committed in ignorance, when not clearly knowing God.

Origen, Clement's pupil, as we have already stated, believed that Jesus preached to the dead. A famous infidel named Celsus was speaking with Origen and ridiculed this widespread belief of the Church, he said, "I suppose Christ, when He failed to persuade the living, went down to Hades to persuade those who live there?" Origen answered him, "Whether it please Celsus or no, we of the Church assert that the soul of our Lord, stripped of its body, did there hold converse with other souls, that were in like manner stripped, that He might there convert those who were capable of instruction, or were otherwise in ways known to Him fit for it." Origen c. Celsum, 2.43.

Tertullian also stated that the belief that Jesus descended into Hades and preached there, had been held in the Church since the days of the apostles, his testimony is of great value since Tertullian censured anything that was new.

Cyril of Jerusalem states, in beautiful picturesque language, that: "The holy prophets ran unto Him {Jesus}, and Moses the lawgiver, and Abraham and Isaac and Jacob; David also and Samuel, and Isaiah and John the Baptist, who bore witness when he asked, Art thou He that should come, or look we for another? All the just were ransomed whom death had devoured, for it behoved the King who had been heralded to become the redeemer of His noble heralds. Then each of the just said, O death where is thy sting? O grave where is thy victory? For the Conqueror hath redeemed us." Cyril Hieros., Catech. 14. 9,10.

Athanasius said that more than the Patriarchs and prophets were delivered from Hades, he extended the circle of those who Jesus delivered from Hades through His preaching, "and thinks of the souls of Adam as held fast under sentence of death, and crying to his Lord ever more, and of those who had pleased God, and had been justified by the law of nature, as mourning and crying with Him till the mercy of God revealed to them the mystery of redemption." More evidence could be given, but these quotes will suffice to show that the early Church believed that Jesus preached to the dead.

1) In Rev 20v15, "And whosoever," "kai ei tis," should be translated, "And if anyone."

We read in Rev 20v15, "And if anyone's [name] was not found recorded in the Book of Life, he was hurled into the lake of fire." (Amplified Bible) "If any was not found written in the book of life," is, "ei tis ouch heurethe en te biblo tes zoes." In this short sentence the doom is told of all of the wicked who are out of Christ, they too follow the devil and the two beasts into the lake of fire (the Gehenna of fire of Matt 5v22. In Dan 12v2, there is a resurrection to death as well as to life and also in John 5v29, Acts 24v15. God's mercy is great and rich and is from everlasting to everlasting, Eph 2v4,5, states, "But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)." (NKJV)

We read in Rev 20v15, "And anyone's name was not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire." As someone has said, if there was a crowd at a railway barrier, and it was said that those who had no ticket would not be allowed to pass, it would be taken for granted that some would have tickets. So Rev.20v15., strongly infers that some who are raised at the second resurrection are saved. If Rev 20v15, meant that none of those who were raised at this resurrection were saved, it would have to read, "since none of them were found written in the book of life, they were all cast into the lake of fire." The Gentiles in Rom 2v6-16, are judged at this resurrection, Paul states that those Gentiles who have tried to live righteously receive eternal life, even though they did not possess, or know, either of the Law or the

Gospel, and 1Pet 4v6 states that after death they received Christ's preaching of good news and His offer of salvation, 1Pet 4v6, and so Rom 2v7, promises them eternal life.

2) In 2Cor 6v2, Paul is addressing the Corinthians, who have had their opportunity of salvation.

These people were already saved, they had received the grace of God, and in 2Cor 6v1, Paul implored them not to receive the grace of God in vain. Paul does not use the definite article in 2Cor 6v2, when he writes, "in a time acceptable," "kairo dekte;" and "in a day of salvation," "en emera soterias." There is also no definite article in, "Behold, now a time acceptable," "idou nun kairos euprosdektos," and "Behold, now a day of salvation," "idou nun emera soterias." Paul quotes 2Cor 6v2, from Isaiah 49v8, which reads, "In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee." As there is no definite article either in the original Hebrew Scripture in Isaiah 49v8, or in Paul's Greek quotation, we should accept the translations of Young and Rotheram, and others, who read, "now a day of salvation.

For those who have the opportunity of salvation, like the Corinthians, it is indeed the day of salvation for them. However, one cannot make this Scripture mean that there is no opportunity of salvation after death for those who have never had an opportunity of salvation. The whole age of grace is a day of salvation, but it is not the only time of salvation, and there is no Scriptural evidence to limit the day of salvation to this life, for those who have had no opportunity of salvation. Jesus Himself said that there is forgiveness in the world and age to come for all sin, except blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. Matt 12v31,32.

Some say that Heb 9v27, "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgement," is teaching that there will be no opportunity or day of salvation after death, and no second probation for those who have had no real opportunity of hearing and perceiving the fullness of the Gospel. However, all that Heb 9v27 teaches, is that there will be judgement after death, but this is just as true for Christians as it is for unbelievers. 1Cor 3v10-15, 2Cor 5v8-11. The whole context of this verse teaches that Jesus died to save mankind, it is certainly not teaching that death closes the door of salvation. There is judgement after death, but the final judgement takes place at the end of the Millennium, and 1Pet 3v18-20 and 4v6, state that Jesus has already preached the Gospel to the dead after death.

3) In 1Tim2v5,6, Paul tells us that the Christ who died for all, will give the testimony to all in due times.

The Revised Version reads, "the testimony to be borne in its own times." Rotheram reads, "The testimony in its own fit times." They correctly render "kairois," in the plural as "times." "Kairois," is used in the Scriptures in the sense of divinely ordained epochs, times, and appointments. The vast majority of people who have lived on the earth, have known little or nothing about either the Law or the Gospel, and those who have, have often been put off by the disgraceful lives of Israelites and Christians, who did not obey the Word of God that they preached. Rom 2v17-24. The God who so loved the world will make sure that everyone will hear the good news about His Son's atoning death. How could the Christ who died on Calvary to redeem mankind, conceal from people the fact that He died to save them, or tell them that His death no longer availed for them? Jesus will never cast out those who come to Him in repentance, sincerity and truth. John 6v37. "The mercy of Yahweh is from everlasting to everlasting." Psalm 103v8,17.

4) The Judge of the whole earth will do right. (Gen 18v25, Rev 6v10, 15v3, 19v2).

a) No one will be able to point an accusing finger at God, every mouth will be stopped. (Rom3v19).

The ways of God are far higher and better than our ways, not far worse; God abundantly pardons the repentant sinner. Isaiah 55v7-9. It is very wicked to attribute to God what we would condemn in a man as injustice, cruelty, hardness of heart, and lack of love. Some people take great interest in human welfare, they have laboured to abolish slavery, others care for the sick and old; it cannot be true that the creature pursues such things with greater zeal than God pursues the more important eternal salvation of the souls of men. Therefore, how can a person's salvation depend on whether they are lucky enough to hear the Gospel? Job 4v17-19, 33v12. The only thing that makes Hell tolerable at all, is the fact that it is unavoidable, because the wicked love evil and resist all God's attempts to save them. God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, He desires all to come to repentance and be saved. Ezek 18v23,30-32, 2Pet 3v9. "His mercy endures for ever." Psalm 136v10-26, Jer 33v11.

b) In Matt 12v31,32, Jesus said there is forgiveness in the next age for all sin but blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.

Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, is the unrepentant hardness of heart that rejects Jesus and ascribes the mighty works of the Holy Spirit to Satan. The Judge of the whole earth will do right concerning those who have not heard the Gospel.

c) Jesus said that there was even hope for people who in limited light had come under Divine judgement.

In Matt 11v20-24, Jesus said that the people of the cities of Tyre, Sidon and Sodom, which had come under Divine judgement, would have repented if they had seen the mighty miracles that were seen by the people of Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum, who had refused to repent and had rejected Jesus in spite of His mighty works, and so were doomed to Hell. Jesus was saying, therefore, that on judgement day God will take into account the limited light that the people of Tyre, Sidon and Sodom had received in their lifetime, and also how they would have responded to His ministry; and because of this it will be more tolerable for the people of Tyre, Sidon and Sodom on judgement day, than for the

people of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum. Matt 10v15, Mark 6v11, Luke 10v12-15. This must mean that some of them will be saved, as there are no degrees of tolerability in Hell.

The principle of judgement according to light is a fact of Scripture. Luke 12v47,48. As Paul states in Acts 17v30, "Therefore having winked at and overlooked {"hupereido"} the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all everywhere should repent." God has overlooked and taken no notice of the times of ignorance until the full light of the Gospel was revealed. Jesus Himself gave this full light when He preached the Gospel to the dead in Hades, this must have included the people of Tyre, Sidon and Sodom. 1Pet 3v18-20, 4v6.

Some will say that the second probation doctrine will make us lazy and complacent over the fate of the lost, to this we answer.

- 1) Any Christian who has the love of God in their heart, is broken over the needs of the world, and does something about it.
- 2) The revelation in the Scriptures of the fate and shame of the lazy and disobedient Christian, is enough to spur the laziest Christian on, even if the love of Christ does not constrain them. Luke 12v42-48, Matt 25v26-30, 2Cor 4v3-6, 5v14-16.
- 3) The writer has seen a great number of Christians, who believe that people who never hear the Gospel go to Hell for ever, as complacent and unconcerned over the state of the lost as it is possible to be.

Christians cast a slur on the character, love and grace of God, when they teach that people who have never heard the Gospel go to Hell forever. The death of a person cannot change the desire of God to save them. God could never say to those who had no opportunity of salvation, "I am sorry that the preacher did not arrive in time, I know that you are repentant, but it is too late now and so you are going to Hell forever." Can we really believe that the God of love would say this? Such beliefs put a cloud between Christians and their God. Thank God that this awful lie is not true, death cannot alter God's love, or the efficacy of the sacrifice of Calvary. God will never conceal the fact of Calvary from those who have never heard the Gospel, if He did there would be no possibility of Heaven starting on a happy footing, we would always be thinking that something could have been done and it was not. The eternal destiny of a person cannot depend on the chance of a person hearing the Gospel, it is too important a matter for chance to come into it at all.

The Message of the Third Angel in Rev 14v9-13.

This third angel tries to turn people to the way of righteousness by arming men against the fear of the Beast by warning them of the greater fear of Hell. This angel warns that if anyone worships and follows Antichrist from this time forward, they will be doomed to eternal punishment. At this stage of events, people will see the awful desolation and destruction about them, and the dreadful wickedness of Antichrist. They will also see God as He is, and His wonderful plans, through the ministry of these mighty angels, so at this time, anyone who turns their back on God will have made up their minds in full light to sin for ever, and so are unreconcilable, and when Jesus returns, they will defiantly fight Him, and blaspheme Him to His face. Rev 16v21, 19v19, Psalm 2v1-5. When people see the misery that their sin has caused and say, "I love evil, and I am still going to be evil, and I hate God and righteousness," God cannot show mercy. It would be wicked to be merciful and forgive those who are unrepentant and love evil, and have determined to sin for ever. John 9v41, 15v22-25.

Rev 14v9-12 is truly a most remarkable Scripture.

"Basanisthesetai," the third person singular future passive indicative of "basanizo," is used in Rev 14v10, of the test and examination by Christ and the holy angels of the souls of the wicked in Hell. The justice of Heaven is based on love, mercy, and righteousness. It would be impossible for people in Heaven to be happy if there was anyone in Hell who was genuinely repentant and desired and loved righteousness, so everyone has to see the unrepentant love of evil in the wicked in Hell, and so know, beyond any shadow of doubt, that justice has been done. Rev 14v10, 20v10, Matt 8v29, Mark 5v7, Luke 8v28.

We need to realise that there is no contradiction between the hymn-writers words, "For the love of God is broader than the measure of man's mind; And the heart of the eternal, is most wonderfully kind," and the words in Rev 14v10,11, where the angel states that those who continue to follow Antichrist will be confined in Hell. The angel states that the followers of Antichrist, "shall be tried ("basanizo") with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb; And the smoke of their trial ("basanismos") ascends up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night." In Rev 14v10, "he shall be tormented in fire," is "basanisthesetai en puri;" which Young, in his "Concise Critical Comments, says literally means he shall be "tried in fire," which shows that the thought of being tested or tried can definitely apply here.

"Basanisthesetai," is the third person singular future passive indicative of "basanizo," it is used here in Rev 14v10, of the test and examination by Christ and the holy angels of the souls of the wicked in Hell. The justice of Heaven is based on love, mercy, and righteousness, it would be impossible for people in Heaven to be happy if there was anyone in Hell who was genuinely repentant and desired and loved righteousness, so everyone has to see the unrepentant love of evil in the wicked in Hell, and so know beyond any shadow of doubt that justice has been done. Rev 14v10, 20v10, Matt 8v29, Mark

5v7, Luke 8v28.

The verb "basanizo," to test or try, from "basanos," a touchstone; is used of any severe trial that produces distress, such as the physical trial and distress caused by disease, Matt 8v6, (4v24); or trial caused by severe persecution, as is represented by the birth pangs of the woman of Rev.12v2.; or the severe spiritual trial and mental anguish and distress that Lot experienced through living in Sodom. 2Pet 2v8. It can speak of a boat being tried or tossed by the waves. Matt 14v24, Mark 6v48. It is also used of the trials and suffering inflicted on the wicked on earth through the judgements of God. Rev 9v5, 11v10.

In Rev 14v11, the A.V. "the smoke of their torment," "torment," is the noun "basanismos" it only occurs in Rev 9v5, 14v11, 18v7,10,15; most translators follow the A.V. and render it as "torment," however, Robert Young, in his "Concise Critical Comments," always renders it as "trial," which is its literal meaning.

The noun "basanos," literally, a touchstone, test, trial; it occurs three times in the New Testament, in Matt 4v24 it speaks of persons suffering trial through sickness, etc., but in Luke 16v23,28, it speaks of the severe trial of the wicked selfish man who was suffering confinement in Hades. In one of His parables our Lord spoke of a debtor in prison of whom everything possible was to be exacted, He said they were put in charge of the keeper of the prison, the jailor, the "basanistees," it only occurs in Matt 18v34. Jesus is the jailor, "basanistees," of Hades and has its keys. Rev 1v18. God has His prison where He confines the wicked, the lake of fire which destroys both angelic and human bodies, and protects the rest of society from their evil ways.

God warns everybody that all who follow Antichrist and Satan, will end in the lake of fire, however, He is certainly not saying that people will be gradually roasted alive for ever. The lake of fire will destroy the body in a twinkling of an eye, and physical suffering will be out of the question. Rev 20v14,15, 21v8. Nor do Christ and His holy angels descend to the cruel levels of the Roman Inquisitors, who enjoyed putting their victims through the most dreadful tortures in the name of God. The sufferings of the wicked in Hell are not physical, for the lake of fire has devoured the bodies of angels and men, it is the distress of mind that is the result of being confined in the lake of fire with no hope of coming out and putting their evil desires into practice. The pain in the soul of the wicked is one of their own choosing, it is the suffering which they inflict upon themselves through loving evil and hating righteousness, the torment of a mind that is devoid of the truth and is twisted and deranged by the evil that it loves. Even the prospect of isolation and confinement in the lake of fire will fail to bring the wicked to repentance, they are stubbornly determined to eternally love evil. Rev 21v8. As the Lamb and the holy angels test and scrutinise the souls of the wicked, they find no trace of repentance, or any grounds for their release, they are proved totally unrepentant and unreconcilable.

The dreadful end of the wicked is compared with the blessedness of the dead that die in the Lord. The angel says they "rest from their labours," "kopon," and that "their works, "erga," do follow them" into the heavenly kingdom. The angel says that these Christians who die for their Lord are blessed. This is the second of seven beatitudes in the book of Revelation. Rev 1v3, 14v13, 16v15, 19v9, 10v6, 22v7,14. Jesus warns us that many Christians will die for the faith through dreadful persecution, and that we will need patient endurance to win through, when Antichrist is at the height of his power and fury. Rev 6v9-11, 13v10, Matt 10v22, 24v13,44-51, 25v35-40. "Patience," is the noun "hupomone," which speaks of triumphant fortitude and courageous steadfastness rather than the long patience of "makrothumia." It is worth noting that the Greek word translated "labour," can have the meaning of trouble, vexation, pain and suffering as well as the meaning of labour and toil. Mark 14v6, Luke 11v7, 18v5. Glory and blessing awaits those who are prepared to labour and suffer for Christ.

No rest day or night.

It is important to realise that "day or night" here is in the genitive case form, the same as when Paul said in 1Thess 2v9 that he worked "day and night, and in 1Thess 3v10, that he prayed "day and night." The genitive case informs us that Paul sometimes worked both day and night, and sometimes prayed both day and night, but he did neither continuously without a break. Paul's instruction in 1Tim5v5 for godly widows to pray "day and night," is also in the genitive case. In Revelation John uses the genitival "day and night," to describe the Living Creatures praise of God in Rev 4v8; the accusations of Satan of the children of God in Rev 12v10; and the torment of Satan, Antichrist and the False Prophet in Rev 20v10. The genitival construction also occurs in Mark 5v5, Luke 18v7, Acts 9v24 and 2Thess 3v8.

"Day and night" continual action is expressed in Greek by the accusative case, as when in Mark 4v27, Jesus says a seed springs and grows up in both day and night.; the continuous fasting and prayers of Anna in Luke 2v37; and of Paul's continual tearful warnings to the Ephesians in Acts 20v31; and of Paul's prayers for Timothy in 2Tim 1v3. Some of these may be a case of hyperbole, that is, an obvious exaggeration designed to produce a vivid and compelling impression, but they vividly show the almost continuous nature of prayer and concern for others by these great Christians.

The impenitence of the wicked causes all the righteous, not only to realise that the wicked must go to Hell, but to rejoice that earth and Heaven will be freed from their evil influence forever. Rev19v1-6. They realise that this is the only way which Heaven and earth can be free from sin and sorrow, and that if the wicked were set free, happiness would be impossible. God's prison, Gehenna, will ensure that God's kingdom will be free from sin and sorrow, God has chosen to put the wicked in Hell because life with the wicked would be a continual misery. If the wicked were put in a kingdom of their own it would be utterly destroyed in a very short space of time, and the suffering that they would cause to one another would be worse than the isolation of Hell. Thus we see that social life, or community life of any kind, becomes

impossible to the wicked, it is only mutual love and faith that makes community life a blessing.

It is a terrible fact that evil can so destroy a person's character that even God cannot do anything to change it. The third angels warning proclamation in Rev 14v9-11, is among the most terrifying words in the Bible, no wonder that God says, "work out your salvation with fear and trembling." Phil 2v12. The reaction of the wicked before the throne of God and in Hell will reveal to all the determined impenitence of the sinner and his hatred of righteousness. There will be a fearful looking for of judgement. Heb10v26-30. **The wicked will wail over their confinement in Hell, but they will gnash their teeth in bitter anger and blaspheme God to His face. Rev 19v19, 16v9,11,21, Psalm 2v1-3, Matt 8v12, 13v42,50, 22v13, 24v51, 25v30, Luke 13v28.**

There are several other important things that we must note about Rev 14v9-11.

a) This Scripture is not speaking of the heathen who have never had the Gospel preached to them.

It is referring to people who have seen the ultimate in prophetic ministry through the Two Witnesses, and the ministry of mighty angelic beings, and have rejected the truth in spite of all of this. It is extremely unreasonable and thoughtless to say that because a person has never had the opportunity to hear the Gospel they will go to Hell forever, and will never have the opportunity of salvation, even though they are crying for mercy and repentant when they stand before God. If this were true it would be impossible for anyone in Heaven to be happy, for they would realise that there were millions in Hell who had no need to be there. The only thing that will make Hell bearable is that all God's people know that it is absolutely unavoidable and that all those who are confined in Hell are determinedly unrepentant and totally evil, malicious, pernicious and injurious in their intentions. For God to put people into Hell who are repentant, would be equally as diabolical as the murder of millions of innocent people by Hitler and Stalin. Our God of love cannot, and will not do this. See Rev 20.

b) It is speaking of people who are irrevocably hardened after full light.

When people wilfully continue in sin after God has confirmed His truth by mighty miracles, their hearts can become so hardened that it is impossible for them to repent. Jer 13v23, 17v1, Heb 6v4-6, 10v26-31, 3v6-19. Antichrist and his followers, like Satan and the powers of darkness, come within the category of the irrevocably hardened unrepentant unreconcilables.

c) Someone may ask, "Why does God not immediately annihilate the wicked at death?"

One answer could be that if the wicked were annihilated at death many who will be saved would say, "Let us drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die." There could be many in Heaven because of the fear of Hell, who, if they had thought that only instant annihilation lay at the end of a wicked life, would not have tried to fight the fight of faith and love. Nowhere in the Bible is annihilation of the soul at death taught; the False Prophet and the Beast are still in the lake of fire 1,000 years after they are put in there. Rev 19v3,20, 20v10, 21v8. The words, "for ever and ever," literally, "unto the ages of the ages," which speak of God's judgement of the wicked in Rev 14v11, 19v3, 20v10, are the translation of the same Greek phrase that describes the life, glory, sovereignty, and worship of God and Jesus. Rev 1v6,18, 4v9,10, 5v13, 7v12, 10v6, 11v15, Psalm 45v6 with Heb 1v8. It is used in the epistles to ascribe glory, honour, praise and dominion to God. Gal 1v5, Phil 4v20, 1Tim.1v17, 2Tim 4v8, Heb 13v21, 1Pet 4v11, 5v11. In these contexts it cannot mean anything other than unlimited duration.

NB There cannot be much doubt that Hell endures as long as the throne of God. However, there has been considerable theological controversy between the Western Traditional view point, that God will sustain the soul of the wicked for ever in Hell, and the Conditional Immortality viewpoint that God will after a period of time allow those in Hell to cease to exist. Both viewpoints have been believed by good and godly Christians.

(See the study, "The Issues of Death and Judgement," by Bill Turner for more information on this most important subject at www.truthforthelastdays.com)

The need for balance in Biblical interpretation and exposition.

Error often occurs by emphasising Scriptures revealing one aspect of a truth to the exclusion of other Scriptures on the same subject. The statement by Peter in Acts 4v12, is absolutely true, that there is none other name given under Heaven whereby men must be saved, save only the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Acts 4v12. It is also beyond dispute that no man comes to the Father but by Jesus. John 14v6. All mankind have sinned and have become children of disobedience and wrath. Eph 2v3,12, 4v18,19, Rom 3v9-23. Some emphasise these Scriptures to the exclusion of other vital Scriptures on the subject of salvation.

In Rom 2v7,14, Paul tells us that even amongst the Gentiles, who have not possessed either the Law or the Gospel, there can be a desire for honour, glory and immortality, and their reward is eternal life. God emphasised to Peter that He is no respecter of persons, and that Gentiles "who fear God and work righteousness are accepted with him." Acts 10v34,35., "And Peter opened his mouth and said: "Truly I perceive that God shows no partiality, but in every nation any one who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him." (RSV). In Acts 10v34, Peter says, "I perceive," "katalambanomai," the present middle indicative of "katalambano," (NT:2638), "to take hold of, to take eagerly, to seize,

to comprehend, perceive, the middle voice denotes "mental action, to lay hold with the mind." See Acts 4v13, 10v34, 25v25, Eph 3v18.

The Jews felt that they were the favourites of God and actually sons of the kingdom of heaven because they were descendants of Abraham. John the Baptist and Jesus rebuked them for this false idea. It had been a difficult thing for Peter to grasp, but now "of a truth," "ep' aletheias" the light of truth and the Holy Spirit had cleared away the dark fogs of bigoted false tradition and nationalistic arrogance and pride. It took a visit to the house of the godly Gentile Cornelius to open Peter's eyes to this great truth that these Gentiles were very acceptable to God. "Acceptable to him," is "dektos auto," a verbal adjective. Peter finally recognises that Gentiles do not have to become Jews in order to become acceptable to God, and that Christ can, and will save Gentiles, like this group in the house of Cornelius without them first becoming Jews.

God is "no respecter of persons," is "prosopolemptes," It is composed of "prosopon," face or person and "lambano." The abstract form "prosopolempsia," occurs in James 2v1. see Rom 2v11, Eph 6v9, Col 3v25 and the verb "prosopolempteo," in James 2v9. The separate phrase "lambanein prosopon," occurs in Luke 20v21 and Gal 2v6. The idea is to pay regard to one's looks or circumstances rather than to a person's essential character.

Our just God does not regard the nation, or form of worship of people, but rather the character, and the moral state of their heart. For empty professions, etc., in the sight of our God mean nothing, for He tries the hearts and spirits, and by Him actions are weighed! God seeks for those who worship Him in spirit and in truth. NB John 4v23,24. "But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." (NRSV)

God seeks for a heartfelt response to the grace and privileges he has given, and the manifestation of "agape" love to others, these Cornelius had in abundance. All of Heaven applauds those who follow the shining example of Cornelius, and no one can be accepted with our just God and Father, who does not follow the example of Cornelius. Why was Cornelius accepted with God while most Jews and Gentiles were passed by? We see that even before Cornelius became a Christian the Holy Spirit developed a godly character in Cornelius. Cornelius did not receive the grace of God in vain; he watched, fasted, prayed, and gave alms, and lived a life of "agape" love. If he had not done this he would certainly not have been accepted by God. He was an outstanding servant of God before he heard and accepted the Gospel.

The prayers and alms of Cornelius came up as a memorial to God, BEFORE he was a Christian, for God had already cleansed him on an Old Testament basis. Acts 10v1-4,14-16,22,34,35. Paul also tells us in 1Tim 2v4, that God wills ("thelo," to will) all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. In 1Tim 4v10, Paul states that God is the Saviour of all men, specially of those who believe. In 2Pet 3v9, Peter states that God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. God states in Lam 3v33, that He "does not afflict willingly, or grieve the sons of men." Indeed, God "plans ways so that the banished one may not be cast out from him." 2Sam 14v14. Paul also states in Acts 17v30, that "the times of this ignorance God winked at." "Winked at," is, "hupereido," (NT:5237), it means, to overlook, to take no notice of, to not attend to, i.e., not punish; it only occurs here in the New Testament. Please note, 1Tim 2v5,6, "For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, v6. who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in its own due times," ("kairois," plural). Peter asserts that Jesus even preached the good news of His atonement in Hades to the dead! 1Pet 4v6, 3v18-20. The Scriptures must be taken in balance together, to arrive at the truth.

God has given men and angels free wills, they are free to choose either the dark and evil ways of Satan and his powers of darkness; or we can choose the kind, beautiful, gracious, and eternal ways of the totally unselfish God of love, and His holy angels. The choice is between extreme corrupting evil, and the perfect caring love of the glorious Trinity, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

We read in John 17v17,22,26, in the Amplified Bible:

"Sanctify them [purify, consecrate, separate them for Yourself, make them holy] by the Truth; Your Word is Truth...I have given to them the glory and honour which You have given Me, that they may be one [even] as We are one...I have made Your Name known to them and revealed Your character and Your very Self, and I will continue to make [You] known, that the love which You have bestowed upon Me may be in them [felt in their hearts] and that I [Myself] may be in them."

These are the greatest truths of the Christians life. There could not be more wonderful promises and experiences than these. Let us live and walk in them every day of our lives.

NOTE: This and other studies can be found at:

www.truthforthelastdays.com

www.thesecretsofeternallife.com

www.clparker.com