

HIDDEN IN GOD'S QUIVER. Gen.49v23,24. Is.49v1,2.

Introduction. Both Joseph and Jesus were hidden in God's quiver until God's strategic time. Gen.49v24. Is.49v1,2.

The story of Joseph warns us that we can get into serious trouble if we tell others the revelations that God has given us for our personal encouragement, information, or as a matter for prayer. Just like Joseph we too will find that if we do not hide God's personal and prayer revelation arrows in our quiver, until the right time, we can find ourselves facing a volley of arrows from Satan's quiver, through carnal believers and unbelievers.

In 2Cor.11v29., Paul said, "Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I do not burn with indignation?" Paul experienced anger when people were stumbled and hurt. Jacob was heartbroken when he thought that he had lost the bright spiritual light and comfort of his home, and when with joyful tears he embraced his beloved son again, there must have also mixed with this joy, considerable anger towards the other sons for their duplicity and wickedness. On his deathbed only hours, or even minutes, before he died, Jacob truly became Israel in his parting prophetic warnings, revelations and benedictions to his twelve sons. In his last hours Israel gave far-seeing words of wisdom and knowledge to his children, he gave a heavens-eye view of their character and family prospects. Gen.49v1-33. Israel, a Prince with God, gives a glorious prophetic summary of Joseph's life and character.

A. JOSEPH'S FRUITFULNESS. We read in Gen.49v22., that Joseph was, "A fruitful bough, a fruitful bough growing by a fountain, whose branches run over the wall."

a. Joseph's roots went into the well of God and His Word.

Joseph was inspired and entranced by his father's accounts of how God had met with him at Bethel, Peniel, and of his visions of God's angelic messengers. Joseph longed for God to speak to him and give him similar experiences, and then the visions came, and with them hatred, lies, and persecution. Joseph had dug deep in his earnest seeking of God and had found the well and fountain of a relationship with God. The vivid living vision that God had given to him, could not be denied by the evil events brought about by the wickedness of others. However, we read in Ps.105v19., "Until the time that his word came to pass, the word of the LORD tried and tested him." It took great faith to hold on in faith to the word that God had given to him, when everything seemed to go in the opposite direction to his revelations. What kept Joseph going? God had given His Word and that could not be denied, in spite of all the evil circumstances and the sneers and taunts of the Devil, that his visions were worthless. Joseph was nourished by the well and fountain ("ahyin," 5869) of God's unfailing prophetic word and covenant promise, and His all-sufficient grace, which brings us to our next point.

b. Joseph's experienced sweet fellowship and friendship with God. "The Lord was with Joseph." Gen.39v2-6,21-23.

Joseph experienced God's continual strengthening friendship and presence. The words, "I am with you, all is well," were continually said to him by God. Joseph felt the glory and power of the Divine presence in all his trials, and like ourselves, it was the grace and goodness of God that brought him through. Ps.46v7,11. "The Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob (and Joseph) is our refuge and fortress. Selah."

Joseph must have said to himself, "If only I had not told my brethren the visions, then they would not have sinned so greatly against God and myself, and this would not have happened." But from his later words in Gen.50v20., "You meant it for evil, but God meant it for good, to save life," we gather that God had said to him, "You are in the centre of my will, I am going to work this out for good." When we, through our over zealotry, wrong timing, immaturity, or ignorance, blurt out a personal prophecy, or a revelation for prayer, and get into trouble for it, God can still work it out for good. Gen.50v20. You plotted and intended (2803 "chashab") evil against me, but God planned and intended (2803 "chashab") it for good, in order to bring to pass and accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives."

c. Joseph's fruitfulness was because of his separation from his brethren. Gen.49v26. "Separate from his brethren."

"Separate is "nazir," 5139, which means a consecrated, devoted one, it is used for a Nazarite. Joseph lived a consecrated holy life. He did not give his revelations out of pride, or in a spirit of criticism of his carnal brothers, he was a loving and caring person. Joseph was exhilarated over the fact that God had spoken to him, and he wanted to share it with the family, however, he was very unwise and naïve, to think that his jealous and carnal brothers would be sympathetic to his revelations, for even godly Jacob found them difficult to accept, and rebuked Joseph over them. Gen.37v1-11. However, Joseph knew that God had spoken to him through vivid and compelling revelations, and that was enough, God and time would prove the truth of the revelations. Worldly people did acknowledge Joseph's trustworthiness, and divinely given abilities and fruitfulness, the tragedy was that the children of God had rejected them, this still happens today.

d. Joseph's bough went over the wall. Gen.49v22.

Joseph did not have the attitude, "Me and my wife, Benjamin and his wife, us four, no more. Amen." Joseph's bough and branches went over the wall to save the lives of probably millions. What a good man Joseph was, he produced fruit that delivered his family and much of the Middle East from death by famine. Many would have become very bitter at the unjust and evil treatment that Joseph received, but he was full of forgiving love, and

like our Lord, Joseph gives us a very good example to imitate. Denominational bigotry should have no place in the Church of Jesus, our branches should always go over the wall. We should share our fruit with others, and totally refuse to just build our own kingdom and power base, or our denomination's kingdom.

e. Joseph's eternal blessedness. "To the everlasting hills." Gen.49v26.

Gen.49v26. "The blessings of your father have excelled the blessings of my ancestors, up to the utmost bound of the everlasting hills. They shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him who was separate from his brothers." God's blessing will be on Joseph throughout the ages of ages.

B. JOSEPH WAS SHOT AT BY THE ARCHERS. Gen.49v23._

a. Satan shot out of a dark place suddenly, through people, and it seriously and badly injured Joseph.

The arrow was the most feared and most deadly weapon of ancient times, we read in Gen.49v23., "The archers have **bitterly grieved him**, shot at him and hated him." Joseph was hit with a shower of arrows that could have destroyed him, but they did not for, "Yahweh was with Joseph," and blessed him and protected his emotions, and the trials only made him stronger, and caused him to grow in God. The word "bahal," 1167, "a master," is used to describe the archers, so we should translate Gen.49v23,24., "**The master archers have sorely pierced and grieved him, they have shot at him, and bitterly hated and persecuted him. v24. But his bow remained strong and steady, and the arms of his hands were made strong, by the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob, from thence ("mishaam," 8033) is the Shepherd, the Rock of Israel.**" Satan, the Master of arrows and accusation, was the evil instigator and power behind the people who shot these arrows. Those who manifest the gifts of God can surely expect them too, but we can put ourselves into unnecessary difficulties by telling others of revelations that are for personal information and prayer.

b. These arrows developed Joseph's character and produced a true prophetic ministry in him.

There is an inevitable cost to fruitfulness, and a genuine prophetic ministry. It is an inescapable fact that if you have a prophetic ministry, you will always be shot at, how we respond to these arrows is the critical factor. If, like Joseph and Jesus, we accept the opposition that comes our way and walk with God, Satan's arrows will only develop and deepen our prophetic ministry and gifting. Trial and tribulation produce both growth of character and more effective deeper ministry. Rom.5v1-5. God developed Joseph's ministry in secret, and used the arrows that were shot at him to put strength and godly character in him. Jesus tells us how to react to Satan's arrows in Mt.5v11,12., "Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil things against you for my sake. v12. Rejoice "chairo"), and be exceeding glad ("agallio," literally, jump for joy, and exult), for great is your reward in heaven, for they persecuted the prophets who were before you in the same way."

c. A shower of arrows was shot at Jesus.

We are exhorted in Heb.12v3., to "Consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls." (NKJ). Jesus was "tempted in all points like we are," the trials He experienced were very bitter, and were the greatest trials that anyone has ever known, and because He has been through such an all embracing searching trial of His life and character, we know, and are assured, that He is our perfect and totally sympathetic High Priest. Heb.2v10,17,18. 4v14-16. 5v1-10.

1. THE ARROWS OF ENVY AND JEALOUSY.

We read in Gen.37v1-35. "Now Jacob dwelt in the land where his father was a stranger, in the land of Canaan. v2. This is the history of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brothers. And the lad was with the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives; and Joseph brought a bad report of them to his father. v3. Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age. Also he made him a tunic of many colours. v4. But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peaceably to him."

We read in Gen.39v5. Now Joseph had a dream, and he told it to his brothers; and they hated him even more. v6. So he said to them, "Please hear this dream which I have dreamed: v7. There we were, binding sheaves in the field. Then behold, my sheaf arose and also stood upright; and indeed your sheaves stood all around and bowed down to my sheaf." v8. And his brothers said to him, "Shall you indeed reign over us? Or shall you indeed have dominion over us?" So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words. v9. Then he dreamed still another dream and told it to his brothers, and said, "Look, I have dreamed another dream. And this time, the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars bowed down to me." v10. So he told it to his father and his brothers; and his father rebuked him and said to him, "What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall your mother and I and your brothers indeed come to bow down to the earth before you?" v11. And his brothers envied him, but his father kept the matter in mind." v12. Then his brothers went to feed their father's flock in Shechem. v13. And Israel said to Joseph, "Are not your brothers feeding the flock in Shechem? Come, I will send you to them." So he said to him, "Here I am." v14. Then he said to him, "Please go and see if it is well with your brothers and well with the flocks, and bring back word to me." So he sent him out of the Valley of Hebron, and he went to Shechem. v15. Now a certain man found him, and there he was, wandering in the field. And the man asked him, saying, "What are you seeking?" v16. So he said, "I am seeking my brothers. Please tell me where they are feeding their flocks." v17. And the man said, "They have departed from here, for I heard them say, 'Let us go to Dothan.'" So Joseph went after his brothers and found them in Dothan. v18. Now when they saw him afar off,

even before he came near them, they conspired against him to kill him. v19. Then they said to one another, "Behold, this master of dreams is coming! v20. "Come therefore, let us now kill him and cast him into some pit; and we shall say, 'Some wild beast has devoured him.' We shall see what will become of his dreams!" v21. But Reuben heard it, and he delivered him out of their hands, and said, "Let us not kill him." v22. And Reuben said to them, "Shed no blood, but cast him into this pit which is in the wilderness, and do not lay a hand on him;" that he might deliver him out of their hands, and bring him back to his father. v23. So it came to pass, when Joseph had come to his brothers, that they stripped Joseph of his tunic, the tunic of many colours that was on him. v24. Then they took him and cast him into a pit. And the pit was empty; there was no water in it. v25. And they sat down to eat a meal. Then they lifted their eyes and looked, and there was a company of Ishmaelites, coming from Gilead with their camels, bearing spices, balm, and myrrh, on their way to carry them down to Egypt. v26. So Judah said to his brothers, "What profit is there if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? v27. Come and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he is our brother and our flesh." And his brothers listened. v28. Then Midianite traders passed by; so the brothers pulled Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver. And they took Joseph to Egypt. v29. Then Reuben returned to the pit, and indeed Joseph was not in the pit; and he tore his clothes. v30. And he returned to his brothers and said, "The lad is no more; and I, where shall I go?" v31. So they took Joseph's tunic, killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the tunic in the blood. v32. Then they sent the tunic of many colours, and they brought it to their father and said, "We have found this. Do you know whether it is your son's tunic or not?" v33. And he recognised it and said, "It is my son's tunic. A wild beast has devoured him. Without doubt Joseph is torn to pieces." v34. Then Jacob tore his clothes, put sackcloth on his waist, and mourned for his son many days. v35. And all his sons and all his daughters arose to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted, and he said, "For I shall go down into the grave to my son in mourning." Thus his father wept for him. (NKJ)

a. Joseph was hated because he told his father Jacob of the evil deeds of four of his brothers.

Joseph reported to Jacob the evil deeds of four of his brothers, the sons of Bilhah, Dan, and Naphtali: and the sons of Zilpah, Gad, and Asher: his father's wives. Gen.35v25,26. 37v2. The brothers thought that Joseph's report of their evil deeds was a personal attack, instead of what it really was, a real concern for the family name, and their testimony for God. The children of Israel and their religious leaders, often rejected any criticism by God of their lives through prophecy, and looked upon it as a personal attack upon them by the prophets, and they persecuted and murdered them. 2Chron.36v1-23. N.B. v14-17. Jer.42 and 43. Christians too can look upon genuine prophecy as a personal attack, when it is God's concern for their spiritual welfare. Jesus said, "He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches;" sadly, trembling at, and obedience to the prophetic word of God is all too rare, carnal men often rule God's Church. Is.66v2.

b. Joseph was hated by his brethren because Jacob loved him for his godly character, integrity, and youthful beauty.

We read in Gen.37v3., "Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colours. v4. But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peaceably to him." Benjamin was younger than Joseph and so was more the son of his old age than Joseph, so on these grounds might have been expected to be the favourite. Some have suggested that, "the son of his old age," should be literally translated as, "son of old age to him'," a Hebrew phrase meaning, "a wise son," who had an old head on young shoulders, and who possessed observation and wisdom above his years. Joseph was the bright spiritual light of Jacob's home, but Jacob was grieved by the worldly unspiritual outlook, and carnality of his other sons.

c. Jacob saw Joseph's longing after God and spirituality, and appointed him as the spiritual leader of the family.

Jacob saw Joseph's desires for God and gave him "a coat of pieces of various colours," Gesenius states that it was "a tunic, reaching to the palms of the hands and soles of the feet,"-which was worn by young men and women of the better class. The Septuagint Greek reads, "chitoon," 5509, and "poikilos," 4164, which some say describes a multicoloured striped or variegated tunic, which was made by sewing together pieces of coloured cloth, and was considered a dress of distinction. Others have stated that it was the coat that was worn by the person who was the appointed spiritual leader and priest of the family, the one who made intercession to God on behalf of the family. This was the prerogative of the head of the family in patriarchal times. It could have been that Jacob was stating that Joseph was his appointed spiritual leader of the family when he died., which certainly became a reality when Jacob did die. Joseph's brothers certainly hated such a thought and ordination, they looked upon it as unjust and biased favouritism.

d. Joseph was blessed by God for his strong desire and longing for an experience of God.

Joseph longed for the same experiences of God that his father had known, and he prayed earnestly for a similar experience. Then God gave him a vivid revelation of His plans and purposes and of future events, but with fatherly kindness, did not reveal the emotional pain and abuse that would occur, and was necessary to bring those purposes and events to fulfilment.

e. Joseph was hated by his brethren because of the revelations that God gave to him.

Joseph's brethren reacted very badly to Joseph's dreams, it states twice in Gen.37v5,8., that their hatred for Joseph, which was already there, intensified after he told his brothers of his first dream of his brother's sheaves

bowing down to his sheaf. We read in Gen.37v5-8., "Now Joseph had a dream, and he told it to his brothers; and they hated him even more. v6. So he said to them, "Please hear this dream which I have dreamed: v7. There we were, binding sheaves in the field. Then behold, my sheaf arose and also stood upright; and indeed your sheaves stood all around and bowed down to my sheaf." v8. And his brothers said to him, "Shall you indeed reign over us? Or shall you indeed have dominion over us?" So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words."

The Hebrew word "saw-nay," 8130, means to personally hate, and is used to describe the hatred for a foe or enemy, and of God's hatred of evil, as well as the hatred of people for God and man, and of ethnic hatreds. Like Jesus, Joseph was hated because of jealousy and envy. Pilate "knew that through envy ("phthonos") they had delivered him up." Mt.27v18.

When Joseph told his brothers of his second dream vision, of the sun, moon, and eleven stars bowing down to him turned their hatred into murderous envy. We read in Gen.37v9-11. "Then he dreamed still another dream and told it to his brothers, and said, "Look, I have dreamed another dream. And this time, the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars bowed down to me." v10. So he told it to his father and his brothers; and his father rebuked him and said to him, "What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall your mother and I and your brothers indeed come to bow down to the earth before you?" v11. And his brothers envied him, but his father kept the matter in mind."

"Behold, the dreamer cometh," is literally, "Behold, this master of dreams is coming!" Gen.37v19. _ Joseph's brothers treated the revelations that God had given to Joseph with unbelief, derision, bitter resentment, and antagonism. With bitter sarcasm they said, "Behold, this master of dreams is coming!" In Gen.37v19., we have "bah' al," 1167, from 1166; a master, ruler, lord. "Dream," is "chalom," 2472. They treated God's providential revelations through Joseph with contempt, when their fulfilment through Joseph was going to be the means of saving them and their families from death by starvation in a severe and lethal famine.

In Gen.37v11., "envied" is, "kaw-naw," it means, to be jealous and envious of, and carries the thought of jealous anger. This was displayed in a desire in nine of the brothers (Benjamin was at home) to murder Joseph, only Reuben's intervention frustrated this desire, however while he was away the other nine brothers sold Joseph into slavery for twenty pieces of silver. This greatly distressed Reuben and Jacob. We read in Gen.37v29-35. "Then Reuben returned to the pit, and indeed Joseph was not in the pit; and he tore his clothes. v30. And he returned to his brothers and said, "The lad is no more; and I, where shall I go?" v31. So they took Joseph's tunic, killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the tunic in the blood. v32. Then they sent the tunic of many colours, and they brought it to their father and said, "We have found this. Do you know whether it is your son's tunic or not?" v33. And he recognised it and said, "It is my son's tunic. A wild beast has devoured him. Without doubt Joseph is torn to pieces." v34. Then Jacob tore his clothes, put sackcloth on his waist, and mourned for his son many days. v35. And all his sons and all his daughters arose to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted, and he said, "For I shall go down into the grave to my son in mourning." Thus his father wept for him." (NKJ)

f. The hatred and persecution of his brothers sorely wounded and grieved Joseph.

Joseph's walk with God and fruitfulness cost him a great deal. We read in Gen.49v23., "The master archers have sorely pierced and grieved him, they have shot at him, and bitterly hated and persecuted him." The arrows really hurt Joseph; the implacable hatred and injustice of his brothers hit him very hard and caused him great agony of soul. We read in Gen.42v21,22. "And they said one to another, We are truly guilty concerning our brother, **for we saw the anguish of his soul, when he pleaded with us, yet we would not hear; therefore this distress has come upon us.**" v22. And Reuben answered them, saying, "Did I not tell you, 'Do not sin against the boy'; and you would not listen? Therefore behold, his blood is now required of us."

Paul tells us of the suffering he endured for God.

We read in 2Tim.3v10-12., "But you have fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, endurance, v11. Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me. v12. Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."

The warning is clear, be careful over your revelations and hide away most of them in your quiver; you certainly must not tell them to critical and envious brethren, God may allow you tell some revelations to friends who are sympathetic, spiritual and understanding, and who will diligently pray for you.

2. THE ARROWS OF SEDUCTIVE TEMPTATION.

a. Joseph was sold as a slave into Potiphar's house.

We read in Gen.39v1-23. "And Joseph was brought down to Egypt; and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him from the Ishmaelites, who had taken him down there. v2. **But Yahweh was with Joseph**, and he was **a good, hardworking and profitable man** ("profitable" is "tsalach," 6743, it literally means to push forward, and from this, to be good, be meet, be profitable, to advance, to prosper); and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. v3. **And his master saw that Yahweh was with him, and that Yahweh made all that he did to prosper ("tsalach") in his hand.** v4. And Joseph found grace in his

sight, and he served him: and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he had he put into his hand. v5. And it came to pass from the time that he had made him overseer in his house, and over all that he had, that Yahweh blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of Yahweh was upon all that he had in the house, and in the field. v6. So he left all that he had in Joseph's hand, and he did not know what he had except for the bread, which he ate. And Joseph was handsome in form and appearance."

We read in Gen.39v2., that Joseph was a good, hardworking and profitable man, the Hebrew "tsalach," 6743, literally means to push forward, and from this, to be good, be meet, be profitable, to advance, to prosper. Joseph was a hardworking person who possessed energy and initiative, and everything that he did was profitable for Potiphar, and caused him to prosper. Potiphar saw that God was with Joseph, and made him the overseer of his house.

God's almighty presence and providential comforting love preserved Joseph from Satan's taunts and attacks.

Satan tried to destroy Joseph's faith in the revelations that God had given to him, and derided and taunted Joseph. Satan scornfully said, "Where are your visions now? They will never come to pass. You are a slave, not a ruler." However, "Yahweh was with Joseph," and His comforting almighty presence declared that this was not true. God would fulfil His Word. In Gen.39v2,21., the identical Hebrew words state, "**But Yahweh was with Joseph,**" God was emphatically with Joseph in a special providential way. "Was," is "hayah," 1961, which means to be, to become, to exist, to abide, to come to pass. **Strong** says that it is "always emphatic, and not a mere copula or auxiliary." "With," is "eth," 854, which literally speaks of nearness, so it is used to describe being near, with, by, or among, etc. From these two words we see that God took up His abode with Joseph, and Joseph was under the shadow of the Almighty. Ps.91. This was the experience of Jesus at Nazareth, which was, like Egypt, a spiritual black spot, but the Father was with Jesus and overshadowed Him. Is.50v6-9. Lk.1v35. Jn.8v16,19. 10v38. 14v10,11. 16v 32. We speak of relations who are "near and dear," Joseph experienced and proved that he was dear to God, and that God was always near, and whatever our circumstances may be, all of God's dear children can daily prove this living reality.

c. All went well until Potiphar's wife lusted after Joseph.

Potiphar's wife was strongly attracted to Joseph, the Scripture states that he was a beautiful and attractive person, and handsome in form and appearance. We read in Gen.39v6., "Joseph was goodly("yapheh") looking ("toar") and well ("yapheh") favoured ("mareh")." We see that the Hebrew word "yapheh," 3303, is used twice in this verse, it is derived from "yaphah," 3302, which means to be bright, to be beautiful, to be handsome. "Yapheh," means, beautiful, comely, fair, and handsome. "Looking," is "toar," 8389, from 8388; outline, that is, figure, appearance, form, countenance, visage. "Favoured," is "mareh,"4758, sight, appearance, and visage. The NKJ reads, "And Joseph was handsome in form and appearance." With considerable double emphasis God states that Joseph had an attractive beautiful personality, and was extremely good looking. Potiphar's wife lusted after this beautiful godly person, and desired to make a conquest; she was undoubtedly energised by the Devil as well as by her own fleshly lusts. Eph.2v1-3.

Outstanding personality and remarkable beauty has often proved to be a dangerous snare to men and women, both to those who possess these attributes, or those who behold them, and both possessors and beholders need to keep a watchful eye on their attitudes and emotions. We can admire beauty and be pure in heart; it is the lustful and unlawful desire to possess beauty that becomes a snare and sin. Those who are handsome or beautiful should remember Paul's words in 1Cor.4v7., "For who makes you to differ? and what have you that you did not receive? but if you did receive it, why do you glory as if you did not receive it?"

Joseph resists all of the many attempts by Potiphar's wife to seduce him.

We read in Gen.39v7. "And it came to pass after these things that his master's wife cast longing eyes on Joseph, and she said, "Lie with me." v8. But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Look, my master does not know what is with me in the house, and he has committed all that he has to my hand. v9. There is no one greater in this house than I, nor has he kept back anything from me but you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" v10. So it was, as she spoke to Joseph day by day, that he did not heed her, to lie with her or to be with her. "

d. Joseph fled from the seducer's presence.

We read in Gen.39v11. But it happened about this time, when Joseph went into the house to do his work, and none of the men of the house was inside, v12. that she caught him by his garment, saying, "Lie with me." But he left his garment in her hand, and fled and ran outside." Joseph fulfilled Paul's injunction in 1Cor.6v18., "Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body." The options for Joseph were sin and safety, or purity and prison.

Potiphar's falsely accuses Joseph of immorality.

We read in Gen.39v13., "And so it was, when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand and fled outside, v14. that she called to the men of her house and spoke to them, saying, "See, he has brought in to us a Hebrew to mock us. He came in to me to lie with me, and I cried out with a loud voice. v15. And it happened, when he heard that I lifted my voice and cried out, that he left his garment with me, and fled and went outside." v16. So she kept his garment with her until his master came home. v17. Then she spoke to him with words like these,

saying, "The Hebrew servant whom you brought to us came in to me to mock me; v18. so it happened, as I lifted my voice and cried out, that he left his garment with me and fled outside." v19. So it was, when his master heard the words, which his wife spoke to him, saying, "Your servant did to me after this manner," that his anger was aroused. v20. Then Joseph's master took him and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were confined. And he was there in the prison. v21. **But Yahweh was with Joseph, and showed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison.** v22. And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners that were in the prison; and whatsoever they did there, he was the doer of it. v23. **The keeper of the prison looked not to any thing that was under his hand; because Yahweh was with him, and that which he did, Yahweh made it to prosper."**

Paul states in 1Cor.9v24-27., that he had to beat under and discipline his body. "v24. "Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but {only} one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. v25. And everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then {do it} to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. v26. Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; v27. but I buffet my body and make it my slave, lest possibly, after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified." (NAS)

We read in Ps.69v8-11., that Jesus kept His body under control by fasting and prayer. "v8. I have become a stranger to my brothers, and an alien to my mother's children; v9. Because zeal for Your house has eaten me up, and the reproaches of those who reproach You have fallen on me. v10. When I wept and chastened my soul with fasting, that became my reproach. v11. I also made sackcloth my garment; I became a byword to them." (NKJ)

3. THE ARROWS OF LIES AND SLANDER.

1. Joseph's brother's slandered Joseph and ridiculed and derided his visions.

Joseph knew that his brothers had told many lies about him and slandered him behind his back, as well as accusations to his face. They scoffed at his divine revelations and said they were hallucinations, **"Behold, the dreamer cometh."**

2. Potiphar's wife lied about the whole incident

She completely twisted the facts and accused Joseph of being guilty of her own sin of lust and attempted immorality, and her husband believed her blatant lies, and cast Joseph into prison. Satan again mocked Joseph and told him that his visions would never come to pass. **The blot was put on Joseph's reputation with satanically inspired lies, it was broadcast abroad that he was immoral and fond of the ladies. But Yahweh was with Joseph, and comforted him with his protective presence and love, and guiding mercy.** The chief warder of the prison recognised Joseph's exceptional divinely enhanced abilities, and put Joseph in charge of all the prisoners, and all the activities of the prison. Gen.39v20-23.

3. Jesus was a sign who was spoken against, He was viciously slandered and maligned. Heb.12v1-3.

Jesus was called a drunkard, a wine bibber, a Samaritan, a politically motivated schemer, a demon-possessed person who did his miracles by the power of the Devil. The words of Simeon certainly came to pass, **Jesus was, "a sign which shall be spoken against."** Lk.2v29. The Church of Jesus has suffered the same kind of slanderous attack as their Lord, in Acts.28v22., the Jews said to Paul, "But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as **concerning this sect, we know that every where it is spoken against.**" See Acts.13v45. 24v5. 1Pet.4v14.

4. THE ARROWS OF FRUSTRATED HOPE AND DELAYED PROMISE.

We read in Gen.40v1-23., "It came to pass after these things that the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt offended their lord, the king of Egypt. v2. And Pharaoh was angry with his two officers, the chief butler and the chief baker. v3. So he put them in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, in the prison, the place where Joseph was confined. v4. And the captain of the guard charged Joseph with them, and he served them; so they were in custody for a while. v5. Then the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt, who were confined in the prison, had a dream, both of them, each man's dream in one night and each man's dream with its own interpretation. v6. And Joseph came in to them in the morning and looked at them, and saw that they were sad. v7. So he asked Pharaoh's officers who were with him in the custody of his lord's house, saying, "Why do you look so sad today?" v8. And they said to him, "We each have had a dream, and there is no interpreter of it." And Joseph said to them, "Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell them to me, please." v9. Then the chief butler told his dream to Joseph, and said to him, "Behold, in my dream a vine was before me, v10. and in the vine were three branches; it was as though it budded, its blossoms shot forth, and its clusters brought forth ripe grapes. v11. Then Pharaoh's cup was in my hand; and I took the grapes and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand." v12. And Joseph said to him, "This is the interpretation of it: The three branches are three days. v13. Now within three days Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your place, and you will put Pharaoh's cup in his hand according to the former manner, when you were his butler. v14. But remember me when it is well with you, and please show kindness to me; make mention of me to Pharaoh, and get me out of this house. v15. For indeed I was stolen away from the land of the Hebrews; and also I have done nothing here that they should put me into the dungeon." v16. When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was good, he said to Joseph, "I also was in my dream, and there were three white baskets on my head. v17. In the uppermost basket there were all kinds of baked goods for Pharaoh, and the birds ate them

out of the basket on my head." v18. So Joseph answered and said, "This is the interpretation of it: The three baskets are three days. v19. Within three days Pharaoh will lift off your head from you and hang you on a tree; and the birds will eat your flesh from you." v20. Now it came to pass on the third day, which was Pharaoh's birthday, that he made a feast for all his servants; and he lifted up the head of the chief butler and of the chief baker among his servants. v21. Then he restored the chief butler to his butlership again, and he placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand. v22. But he hanged the chief baker, as Joseph had interpreted to them. v23. Yet the chief butler did not remember Joseph, but forgot him.

a. Joseph was forgotten by Pharaoh's cupbearer for a full two years. Joseph asked "Remember me," but he forgot.

We read in Gen.40v14,15., that Joseph asked the butler, "But remember me when it is well with you, and please show kindness to me; make mention of me to Pharaoh, and get me out of this house. v15. For indeed I was stolen away from the land of the Hebrews; and also I have done nothing here that they should put me into the dungeon." v23. Yet the chief butler forgot Joseph and did not remember him." For many years Joseph had waited for something to happen, when he had the interpretation to the butler's vision, he expected something to happen immediately, he thought that this was surely the time when the word of the Lord would come to pass. But it did not, it seems God did not remind the butler of his obligation to Joseph, the time was not yet right, God said, "Not yet." We read in Gen.41v1., "Then it came to pass, at the end of two full years, that Pharaoh had a dream; and behold, he stood by the river."

b. We read in Ps.105v19., "Until the time that His word came to pass, the word of Yahweh tried and tested him."

Joseph gritted his teeth, trusted in God's word to him and went on believing, "Yahweh was with him," and he knew and felt His almighty presence and love. However, it was severe fight and trial of faith, Satan and his evil angels and worldly friends did not make it easy for Joseph. We read in Ps.105v18., "They hurt his feet with fetters, he was laid in irons." Some translate the second part of this verse, "iron entered into his soul." From this we gather that it was not only a very difficult time, but that this difficult time brought great strength of character into Joseph.

God was not unaware of Joseph's trials and disappointments. **God gave the dream vision to Pharaoh at the divinely ordained epochal propitious time, and this opened the door for Joseph's God-given ministry. When God keeps your ministry hidden, realise that it is for good.**

c. Joseph proved the truth of Prov.13v12.

"Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but when the thing desired ("tah-av-ah") comes to pass "bow`"), it is a tree of life. About fifteen years of frustrated hopes, desires and ambitions, had passed since the vision, fifteen years of severe trial but fifteen years that had thrown him on God, and had developed his prayer and prophetic ministry. His trials had made him grow in God and in character, through these trials God had prepared him for the work that He had called him to fulfil. And thus it always is, our trials become our qualifications for ministry, and give us the ability to sympathise and minister to the needs that come before us.

d. This is how it was with the most tried and tested of all mankind, our dear Lord Jesus Christ.

He is the perfect Saviour and High priest because He was made in all points like unto us, and tempted in all points like unto us. Heb.4v15. "For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathise with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin." Heb.2v17,18. "Therefore, in all things He was obligated ("opheilen," the imperfect active indicative of "opheilo," to owe, to be obligated, it often implies a moral necessity) had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. v18. For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted." The glory of our Lord's victory over temptation while clothed with our humanity, cannot be overstated, it is quite beyond praise. See the Appendix, which declares the glory and victory of Christ's humanity.

C. JOSEPH'S SECURITY UNDER ATTACK.

God carefully plans our trials of faith, and more thought and love is given to them than our instant victories of faith. They are God's "chairoi" events in our lives, which are designed to conform us to the image of Christ. Rom.8 God gives us His presence and power in a special way during these trials. It is important to realise that those who like our Lord endured great trials of faith at the hands of wicked men, receive a good report for their faith, as well as those who wrought great things for God. Heb.11v1-ff

a. "His bow abode in strength." Gen.49v24.

The person who is godly and right, does not have to shoot arrows, they wait for God to vindicate them, and shoot their arrows at the targets that God directs them to shoot at. Joseph shot his arrows at famine and need, he did not fight his carnal and evil brothers, he ministered to their needs, and obviously prayed for them.

b. "His arms were made strong by the mighty God of Jacob." Gen.49v24.

Joseph appropriated divine strength, and God's "charismata. These spiritual gifts had been developed in his trials, he had been forced to lean hard on God by the great trials he had encountered, and they had made him strong and developed his spiritual gifting. As in Deut.8v1-18., Joseph had been led, fed, humbled, educated,

proved and tested, and made to realise and depend on every word that had come from the mouth of God. God had used the Joseph's wilderness trial experiences to develop his Joseph's prophetic vision ministry. It had become second nature for Joseph to walk and commune with God, and receive His guidance and revelations.

God's hands were working with Joseph's hands, God wisdom and strength worked with Joseph to aim and shoot the arrows. The whole of the Middle East was saved from death by famine through Joseph. Joseph shot arrows of mercy and grace, not bitter vengeful arrows.

c. Gen.49v24., "From thence ("mishaam") is the Shepherd, the stone of Israel."

God is often represented in Scripture as a shepherd, and in Is.32v2., "like the shade of a huge rock in a parched and weary land," it speaks well of the strength and durability of God's comforting and protecting grace and power. Jesus was Joseph's Shepherd, Rock, and friend.

-JESUS HIDDEN AND PREPARED.

We read in Isa.49v1-2., "Listen, O coastlands, to Me, and take heed, you peoples from afar! The LORD has called Me from the womb; from the matrix of My mother He has made mention of My name. v2. And He has made My mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of His hand He has HIDDEN ME, and made Me a polished shaft; in His quiver He has HIDDEN ME." (NKJ)

God prepared all the great ministries in the Bible, including that of our Lord, in secret, before they were manifested in public.

a. Moses. 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 (2233 "hegeomai") 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.

David. He was another person who learned the lessons of faith while keeping sheep. His loving concern for his beloved sheep, caused him to walk on "the more excellent way," 1Cor.12v31., and enabled him, through the Name and power of God, to kill the lion and the bear that threatened to kill his sheep. His devotion to his sheep caused God to cry, "I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will." Acts.13v22. Ps.89v20. Jesse did not even think that David should be present when Samuel asked him to bring his sons before him; he left him outside looking after the sheep. 1Sam.16v1-13. Even the godly and wise prophet Samuel thought that Eliab was God's choice, until God revealed Eliab's heart to Samuel, and showed that the uninvited and despised boy David was His choice.

Elijah and Elisha. These were both prepared by God in secret while they were farming, and suddenly burst on to the scene, when the word of the Lord came to them. 1Kings.17v1. 19v15-21. Elisha was ploughing with 12 pairs of oxen, when called to the prophetic office.

Paul. Paul spent several years hidden away in Arabia and Tarsus, and during this time Jesus revealed to him the truth about the Church. Gal.1v17 to 2v1. Acts.9v20-30. Paul's ministry took off after Barnabus brought him to Antioch. Acts.11v22-26. At Antioch Barnabus and Paul were promoted from being teachers to apostles. Acts.13v1-4. God used Paul's previous theological training to prepare Paul for His work, as well as his Christian experience. However, he had a great deal of man-made tradition to unlearn as well as New Covenant truth to learn. Paul's conversion took place around B. C. 34, he came to Jerusalem after being in Arabia for about three years, and he then went to Damascus and Jerusalem in about A. D. 37. Paul was sent to Tarsus by the Jerusalem church because of a death threat, and stayed there until Barnabus brought him to help with the church in Antioch in A. D. 43. In about A. D. 44 God directed the church at Antioch to send Paul and Barnabus on apostolic ministry. So we see that God prepared Paul for ten years before sending him out on apostolic ministry.

1. JESUS HID MOST OF WHAT GOD REVEALED TO HIM DURING HIS MINISTRY. WHY WAS THIS?

Jesus had the greatest revelation ministry of all the prophets; He was a prophet like unto Moses. Deut.18v10-22. However, we only see a few public manifestations of His prophetic revelation ministry. **Why was this?** We see the revelation of the thoughts and prayers of Nathaniel, the name of Peter and his father, and his God-given new name. Jn.1. We see the remarkable effect of one word of knowledge on the Samaritan woman and her townspeople. Jn.4. We see the warnings about our Lord's death, and Peter's denial, and how the apostles would forsake Him, all of which were not believed and ignored. At his entrance on palm Sunday to Jerusalem, our Lord warned all around him with uncontrolled sobbing of the destruction of Jerusalem, and he warned his apostles in private again of this tragic event, on the way to the cross He again warned the weeping women of the most tragic coming event of their history. Lk.19v41-44.

a. Jesus knew the spiritual state of ALL He met and the untrustworthiness of many of those that believed in Him.

We read in John.2v23-25., "Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed and trusted in His name when they saw the signs which He did. v24. But Jesus did not trust Himself to them,

because He knew all men, v25. and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man." Ps.44v21. 139v2.

The verb "pisteuo" is used twice. The first time to show how the miracles caused people to trust and believe in Jesus, the second time to show how Jesus knew the superficial nature of their faith and trust, and He would not accept testimony concerning his ministry from them. This is; a truly valuable lesson for us today, for it is the regular practice of modern evangelists to parade people to give their testimonies of healing, among these are people who are mistakenly testifying in the hope that because they testify to healing, they will be healed, and when these people are later proved not to be healed, or die, the result is positively harmful to the Gospel. Jesus did not make this grave mistake, he did not even ask those who were indisputably and openly healed to give a public testimony, He just let people see the obvious. Jesus was completely free of pride, He never put on a spectacular show; He was humble, gentle and lowly minded.

b. Jesus often charged people, with the strongest words possible, not to publish abroad their remarkable healings.

However, they often did the very opposite. Mt.12v14-21. Lk.5v12-16. Jesus charged the people who saw His miracles not to talk about them, but they did the very opposite and proclaimed them abroad like a herald, "kerusso." In Mk.1v43. Jesus sternly charged [1690 "embrimaomai" {from 1722 and "brimaomai," to snort with anger} to scold, to sternly warn] the cleansed leper not to tell people about his healing, but he disobeyed Jesus and published his healing like a herald, "kerusso." Mk.7v32-36. Jesus strictly commanded Jairus and his wife not to tell others how He had raised their daughter from the dead. Mk.1v42-45. 5v39-43. Lk.8v52-56. Jesus commanded the unclean spirits not to make His deity known. Mk.3v11,12. Jesus sharply commanded ("epitimao") His apostles not to reveal that He was God's Son and the Messiah, Mk.8v27-30. Mt.16v18-20. Lk.9v20-22. Jesus commanded Peter, James and John, not to speak of His transfiguration until after His resurrection from the dead. Mt.17v8,9. All these facts reveal the true humility of Jesus; He refused to be a showman. He only told the demoniac of Gadara to go and tell what great things the Lord had done for him, because He was not going there. Lk.8v35-39. The Roman Catholic Church is quite correct to demand irrefutable medical evidence that proves people have been genuinely ill and have been definitely healed, before such healings are published.

2. THE TEMPTATION TO PREMATURE MINISTRY AND OUT OF TIME REVELATION.

a. Two out of the three temptations of Jesus by Satan were aimed at the premature manifestation of His spiritual gifts.

This was obviously not the first time that Satan had tried to get Jesus to manifest His wisdom and knowledge prematurely. For well over 20 years Jesus had sat in the Synagogue at Nazareth listening to false traditional doctrine, empty preaching, and powerless praying, and had hidden away the truth, wisdom and powerful prophetic gifting that the Father had given to Him. Young Samuel was known throughout the land to be a prophet even while he was a child; here was a greater child than Samuel, with a greater prophetic revelation and power ministry than the young Samuel, but the Father had commanded Jesus not to reveal His spiritual gifts and knowledge until He started His ministry. The proof that Jesus did not reveal any of His knowledge or spiritual gifting to the people of Nazareth before He started His ministry, is seen by the astonished and critical response of the people of Nazareth to our Lord's preaching, "Whence has this fellow these things?" Lk.4.Mk.6v1-6. The theological knowledge that astonished the theologians at Jerusalem, when Jesus was twelve, was hidden from them. Our Lord's ministry had to be hidden away until the right time.

b. We read in Ps.69v8-12., that the holiness and prayer life of Jesus brought considerable persecution upon Jesus.

We read of the unbelief and opposition that Jesus experienced at Nazareth in Ps.69v8., "I have become a stranger to my brothers, and an alien to my mother's children; v9. Because zeal for Your house has eaten me up, and the reproaches of those who reproach You have fallen on me. v10. When I wept and chastened my soul with fasting, that became my reproach. v11. I also made sackcloth my garment; I became a byword to them. v12. Those who sit in the gate speak against me, and I am the song of the drunkards." (NKJ) This was certainly not the experience of David, who was extolled for his victory over Goliath.

c. The world today is taken up with "Instant" food preparations, remedies and solutions.

God does not follow this pattern as regards to ministry God takes time to prepare the ministries of His Church, He gives us time to learn and grow. Our Lord's yoke is gentle and light and not overburdening. His yoke is personally made by Him to perfectly fit our shoulders, and takes into account our temperaments, talents, work, home environment, and desires. God does not desire to dominate our lives, He gently asks us what we would like to do for Him, and He takes into account all that we have and are, and doing His will fills our lives with joy, fulfilment, and delight. In Rom.12v1,2., Paul tells us that the constraint of the compassionate mercies and love of God should cause us to present our bodies as a holy, living sacrifice to God; and we should refuse to be conformed to the worlds standards, and have our minds renewed and lives transformed, so that we may prove God's good, acceptable and perfect will

3. WHY DID GOD THE FATHER HIDE OUR LORD'S SPIRITUAL MINISTRY AT NAZARETH?

It is a fact of Scripture, that God the Father and Jesus did hide most of Christ's perfect revelation prophetic ministry away both before and during His public ministry. As we have just seen from Is.49v1,2., God the Father hid our Lord's knowledge and spiritual gifts away from the people at Nazareth, their astonishment at His ministry can be seen from Lk.4v20-22. and Mk.6v1-6. .

1. God the Father developed the ministry of Jesus secretly in the environment of home and work life.

Paul makes it quite clear in Col.3., that "God's will" does not just involve those in full-time ministry, or just our church lives, God's will involves our daily home relationships and work lives, because this is where most of the lives of believers is lived. Paul states that we are serving the Lord, when we do all our daily duties heartily, and as unto the Lord, and will receive the reward of the inheritance for it. Our Lord Jesus has given us the perfect example; He lived the Sermon on the Mount at Nazareth before He preached it. His life of perfect love and service at Nazareth, was the foundation of His spiritual power and ministry in public.

The ministry of Jesus was developed in secret in a home and work environment, by God the Father and the Holy Spirit. This was in sharp contrast to John Baptist, who spent his years of preparation in the wilderness. Jesus was totally familiar with the problems of life, and He showed sympathetic gentleness with needy and sinful people, which was much kinder and more thoughtful than John's thunderings about the broken Law of God; we read in Mt.11v13., "For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John." See Lk.16v16. Jn.1v17. "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Jesus was "full of grace and truth." Jn.1v14. " And the Word became 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." (NKJ)

The Father developed the prophetic ministry of Jesus and His sympathetic High Priestly ministry.

a. By the pressure and trial of daily living and work, and the hardship of real poverty. Jesus went through the whole range of human trials and temptations on a deeper level than anyone else, in order to have a sympathetic apostolic and High Priestly ministry. Heb.4v14-16.

b. By having to work and provide for at least seven brothers and sisters and His mother Mary, when Joseph died. Mk.6v1-6.

c. By overcoming the false tradition of His times. Real strength comes from rejecting incorrect but orthodox doctrine. Jesus did not openly show His rejection of their false traditions until His ministry started. This is good advice for young students.

d. By the Father's training in revelation and prophetic prayer ministry, and in development of truth. Is.49v1,2. 50v3-7. Jn.1v14.

e. By the revelation of the Scriptures into His experience. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God." Jesus proved by experience the truth of Scripture, and lived it. He fully partook of our humanity and victoriously overcame all areas of temptation.

f. Jesus was hidden until the fullness of His love was manifested, a love filled with the sympathetic experience of practical living and caring. Heb.2v17,18. He was hidden away until His ministry was fully grown and perfected. Is.50v3-7. Jesus grew, until He was "full of grace and truth." Lk.2v40,52. Jn.1v14. The lesson is clear, the premature appointment of immature ministry, is not wise, or of God.

2. Hidden until His prophetic prayer ministry was completely fulfilled, fully developed and perfected.

a. Jesus was hidden away until He was fully equipped by the Father for His ministry, not only in knowledge and truth, but also in a practical experience, on the highest levels of the operation, of all the power and revelation gifts, which were necessary to accomplish His ministry. This training in the operation of the spiritual gifts took place in private as Jesus exercised the greatest prayer warrior ministry there has ever been. Even Jesus had to grow in wisdom and knowledge and spiritual strength, and be put to the test at the hands of the Devil in the wilderness, He knew He was being humbled, proved and tested, "To humble thee, to prove thee, to know what is in thine heart." Deut.8.

b. Jesus had a perfect and totally consecrated prayer life, which prepared Him for His ministry. Ps.69v7-11. Jesus manifested revelation and power gifts in private before He manifested them in public. Mary's words to Jesus at the marriage feast in Cana reveal that she had seen many miracles of provision done by Jesus, we read in Jn.2v3-5., And when they ran out of wine, the mother of Jesus said to Him, "They have no wine. v4. Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? **My hour has not yet come.**" v5. His mother said to the servants, "Whatever He says to you, do it." (NKJ). Obviously no one else knew about these miracles but Jesus and Mary, Jesus had obviously told Mary that no one else was to know about them. The feeding of the 5,000 and 4,000 were not the first miracles of provision that Jesus had performed, He had obviously sent Mary to feed the widows and needy, without anyone knowing the source. These miracles were obviously just kept private between Jesus and Mary, the first public sign miracle ("semeion," 2592) in Cana, was the turning of the water to wine. Jn.2v11. We read in Jn.4v54., that the second sign miracle in Cana was the healing of the nobleman's son. However, we read in John.2v23., that Jesus had done many more sign miracles in Jerusalem

before the healing of the nobleman's son, and "many believed in His name when they saw the signs ("semeia, 4592) which He did."

3. Hidden from the jealousy, envy, and antagonistic pride of worldly people and carnal religious leaders.

a. There was the contemptuous familiarity and angry rejection of Jesus by the people of Nazareth. Jesus was despised and rejected by the people of Nazareth as soon as His ministry was manifested, but there was also a contemptuous rejection of our Lord's holy prayer life for many years before this attempt to murder Jesus after His first sermon.

b. There was the bitter jealousy and murderous envy of Israel's religious leaders. God hid Jesus away to save Him from prematurely coming up against violent and vicious opposition at Nazareth and in Israel.

4. Hidden away until the fullness of time.

We read in Gal.4v4,5., "But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, v5. to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. Everything in the life of Jesus was in the fullness of God's perfect timing. See Jn.2v4. 17v1. Jn.7:6,8.

4. WHY DID JESUS HIDE MOST OF HIS PERFECT REVELATION MINISTRY?

a. It was obviously a command of God the Father.

We read in Isa42v1-4,19-21., "Behold! My Servant whom I uphold, my Elect One in whom My soul delights! I have put My Spirit upon Him; he will bring forth justice to the Gentiles. v2. He will not cry out, nor raise His voice, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street. v3. A bruised reed He will not break, and smoking flax He will not quench; he will bring forth justice for truth. v4. He will not fail nor be discouraged, till He has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands shall wait for His law. --- v19. **Who is blind but My servant, or deaf as My messenger whom I send? Who is blind as he who is perfect, and blind as the LORD'S servant? v20. Seeing many things, but you do not observe; opening the ears, but he does not hear.** v21. The LORD is well pleased for His righteousness' sake; he will exalt the law and make it honourable."

Jesus came to heal the broken reeds and smoking fax of humanity, not expose and criticise broken and needy mankind, He can to save and heal. He knew and felt their sins and needs, but He acted as if He was blind and deaf to them. From Is.42v19-21. We see from our Lord's example, that there is a real need to hide most of what God reveals to us about people, God respects the desire for secrecy in people's hearts, God is a perfect gentleman, He does not want to expose and humiliate people in public. Needs that are revealed are usually for prayer, not proclamation.

b. Was it so that people would not tremble before Him as they did before Moses and Samuel?

See Exod.19v16., "Then it came to pass on the third day, in the morning, that there were thunderings and lightnings, and a thick cloud on the mountain; and the sound of the trumpet was very loud, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled."

See 1Sam.16v4. "So Samuel did what the LORD said, and went to Bethlehem. And the elders of the town trembled at his coming, and said, "Do you come peaceably?" (NKJ)

People can get very nervous and frightened when confronted by genuine prophetic ministry. The Father and Jesus wanted all who felt condemned to freely come to Him, and so the wondrous revelation ministry of Jesus was almost completely hidden away. The Lord's ministry mainly consisted of an enormous number of physical healing mercy gifts, and on a few occasions of the operation of workings of miracles in provision, the turning of the water to wine, the feeding of the five and four thousand, and the miraculous fish catches.

N.B. Our Lord's revelation ministry was hidden away even in His healing ministry.

Our Lord did not call out the illnesses of the sick, or tell the sick what their problem was. Jesus was so full of the power of God that such revelations were not necessary. Such revelations could have frightened the sinful and timid away, and stopped them from coming to Him.

b. It was also obviously because of the envy and jealousy of Israel's religious leaders.

Joseph brothers sold him into slavery because of their jealousy and envy, Jesus was murdered by Israel's religious leaders for the very same reason. Even Pilate knew the Jews wanted to kill Jesus out of envy, Mt.27v18., "For he knew that through envy ("phthonos") they had delivered him up." The manifestation of the fullness of Christ's prophetic revelation ministry would have caused even more hatred and opposition from Israel's religious leaders, in any case this tender healing ministry was reserved for broken and needy people, or genuine seekers, not evil opponents. As we will see, Jesus continually had the critical thoughts and evil and murderous plans of his enemies revealed to him, and sometimes, as the Father directed Him, exposed and answered the evil in their hearts. These remarkable revelations of their hearts failed to bring them to repentance, and they continually made plans to kill Jesus.

Jesus, like Joseph, suffered great persecution because of jealousy and envy. Pilate knew the Jews wanted to kill Jesus out of envy, Mt.27v18., "For he knew that through envy ("**phthonos**") they had delivered him up." Cf. Mt.12v14. 21v38. Mk.3v4-6. Jn.5v16-18. 7v19,25. 8v37,40. 10v31,32,39. 11v53.

Jealousy, "zelos," can be used in a good sense.

In the Septuagint in a good sense of God's zeal; "The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this;" Is.9v7.; and the jealous dedicated love of God. Ezek.16v37,38. 23v25. It describes Christ's passionate zeal for God and righteousness. Ps.69v9. Jn.2v17. Paul uses it to describe the zeal of the Corinthians for him in 2Cor.7v7.; and his godly jealousy for them, 2Cor.11v2.; and their zeal in their repentance, 2Cor.7v11.; and their zeal for the poor at Jerusalem. 2Cor.9v2.. The verb "zeloo" is used of a godly zeal for spiritual gifts in 1Cor.12v31. and 14v39..

Jealousy, "zelos," is also used in a bad sense.

Paul uses "zelos" of his own and the Jews misguided "zeal for God," and the Law. Rom10v2. Phil.3v6. In Rom.13v12,13. Paul warned the Corinthians that jealousy is an evil work of the flesh; and a proof of the domination of the old nature, and told them that he feared that it could return. 1Cor.3v3. 2Cor.12v20. Jealousy cannot stand the light and glory of Christ's holy presence.

However, envy, "phthonos," is even more malignant than jealousy, "zelos."

As we have seen, "zelos," "jealousy," can sometimes speak of noble ambition, and desire for something good, as well as a covetous evil desire; whereas, the noun "**phthonos**," "**envy**," **only speaks of a bitter ill will**. The sin of jealousy, "zelos," casts hostile grudging looks; "phthonos," has arrived at the stage of hostile acts. Envy, "**phthonos**," has grief at another's good fortune, but it is even worse than that. It is not just the pain that they do not possess another's good fortune or blessings; but the bitterness that the other person does. **It is not so much the desire for what another person has; it is the desire to take away what they have, or prevent them from possessing it**. The jealousy, "zelos," of the Jews led to the active opposition of the more malignant "phthonos," "envy;" and caused them to murder Jesus. **They did not possess His ministry, so they did their very utmost to suppress it and destroy it**. Though Satan possessed Judas, it is not recorded that any of the leaders of Israel became possessed; the evil jealousy and envy in their hearts drove them to oppose and murder Jesus. Christ's miracles, anointed preaching, love, and integrity, exposed their lack of ministry, loveless leadership, extortion and wickedness. They looked upon Jesus as a threat to their influence, greed, and power, and were determined to destroy Him. Mk.2v5-7,16,23,24. 3v1,2. 15v10. Mt.27v18. "Phthonos," is not just the pain over an enemy's good fortune; it can also be the grief over the good fortune of a friend's or a member of the family. This envy moved Joseph's brothers to sell him into slavery; they removed his influence from their lives.

The verb "phthonoe," 5354, occurs in the Majority Text in Gal.5v19-22.; Paul uses it in Rom.1v29., to speak of one of the sins which people are filled with when they choose not to retain God in their knowledge; and in Phil.1v15,16., of some who preached Christ to spite Paul and hinder his ministry. God warns us envy is a dangerous and very evil sin. 1Tim.6v4. Tit.3v3. 1Pet.2v1.

The warning is clear, be careful over your revelations and hide away many of them in your quiver; do not tell them to critical and envious brethren, tell them to friends who are sympathetic, spiritual and understanding, and who will diligently pray for you.

5. THE REVELATION OF PEOPLE'S THOUGHTS IN CHRIST'S MINISTRY.

We read in Heb.4v12,13., "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. v13. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." (KJV) Jesus said in Rev.2v23. "I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works." (KJV)

1. Jesus answers the confused thoughts of His apostles.

Jesus answers Peter over the tribute money, and sends Peter to get a coin from the mouth of the fish.

We read in Mt.17v24-27., "When they had come to Capernaum, the collectors of the two-drachma temple tax came to Peter and said, "Does your Teacher not pay the temple tax?" v25. He said, "Yes." And when he had come into the house, Jesus spoke first to him, saying, "What do you think, Simon? From whom do the kings of the earth collect duty or taxes, from their sons or from strangers?" v26. Peter said to Him, "From strangers." Jesus said to him, "Then the sons are exempt (from liability or obligation). v27. Nevertheless, lest we offend them, go to the sea, cast in a hook, and take the first fish that you catch. And when you have opened its mouth, you will find a four drachma coin (a "stater," in our Lord's time a silver stater was equal to four Attic drachmas, or two Alexandrian drachmas, a Jewish shekel); take that and give it to them for Me and you."

Jesus answers the lack of spiritual perception in his apostles due to their hardness of heart.

We read in Mk.8v16,17., "And they reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have no bread. 17. And when Jesus knew it, he saith unto them, Why reason ye, because ye have no bread? perceive ye not yet, neither understand? have ye your heart yet hardened?" Mt.16v7,8.

Jesus answers the confused thoughts of His apostles, which arose when He prophesied of His death.

See Jn.16v19., "Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask him, and said unto them, Do ye inquire among yourselves of that I said, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me?" (KJV)

See Jn.16v19,20,28-33., "Now Jesus knew that they desired to ask Him, and He said to them, "Are you inquiring among yourselves about what I said, 'A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me? v20. Most assuredly, I say to you that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; and you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned into joy. v28. "I came forth from the Father and have come into the world. Again, I leave the world and go to the Father." v29. His disciples said to Him, "See, now You are speaking plainly, and using no figure of speech! v30. Now we are sure that You know all things, and have no need that anyone should question You. By this we believe that You came forth from God." v31. Jesus answered them, "Do you now believe? v32. Indeed the hour is coming, yes, has now come, that you will be scattered, each to his own, and will leave Me alone. And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me. v33. These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

Jesus tries to heal the pain in Peter because of his denial of Jesus, and He reinstates him to his apostolic office.

We read in Jn.21v17., "He said to him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, Do you love me? Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, Do you love me? And he said unto him, Lord you know all things; you know that I love you. Jesus said to him, Feed my sheep."

2. Jesus gives an answer to the dispute among the apostles over which of them would be the greatest.

We read in Lk.9v46-48., "Then there arose a dispute among them, as to which of them should be greatest. 47. And Jesus, perceiving the thought of their heart, took a child, and stood him by His side, v48. and said to them, "Whoever receives this little child in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me receives Him who sent Me. For he who is least among you all, he is the greatest."

We read in Lk,22v20-26., "Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you. v21. But, behold, the hand of him that betrays me is with me on the table. v22. And truly the Son of man goes, as it was determined: but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed! v23. And they began to inquire among themselves, which of them it was that should do this thing. v24. And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest. v25. And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. v26. 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 who serves." Jesus washed their feet to teach them a lesson in humility, and to remove the arrogance and greedy ambition from their hearts,

3. Jesus answers the critical thoughts of some of His disciples who were about to forsake Him.

See Jn.6v61,64,70., "When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Does this offend you? v64. But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. v70. Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil, "diabolos," a slanderer?"

4. Jesus answers His enemies critical thoughts, "This man blasphemeth," when the paralysed man was healed.

Peter's account of the healing of the paralysed man is recorded by Mark, in Mk.2v1-12..

We read in Mk.2v8., "But immediately, when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, He said unto them, Why do you reason these things in your hearts?" Here "perceived," is "epignous," the aorist participle of "epiginosko," to fully know, which shows that Jesus not only knew their thoughts, but that He felt and knew the full intent and nature of their hearts and thoughts. We see in Heb.4v12., that God differentiates between thoughts and intents of the heart. "Thoughts," is "enthumesis," 1761, from "en," "in," and "thumos," strong feeling, passion, and so a rumination, a compelling inward reasoning. It occurs in Mt.9v4. 12v25. Acts.17v29. and Heb,4v12.. "Intents," is "ennoia," from "en," in, and "nous," mind, primarily "a thinking, idea, consideration," denotes "purpose, intention, design," the inward resolute purposes and intentions of reason, it is derived from "en, in, and "nous," mind. "Ennoia," only occurs twice in the New Testament, in the A.V. it is rendered as "intents" in Heb.4v12., as "mind," in 1Pet.4v1.

We read in Mt.9v1-8. Of the healing of the paralysed man.

When Jesus said to the man who was paralysed that he was to take heart for his sins were forgiven, the Scribes said within themselves that Jesus had committed blasphemy, Jesus answered their criticisms, and then healed

the man to prove He had authority to forgive sins. We read in Mt.9v4., "And Jesus knowing (the aorist active participle of "oida," to perceive, to know) their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?" (KJV)

Those who have a developed prophetic ministry will also experience the nature of people and their intents, as well as their thoughts. Jesus "perceived in His spirit," what they were thinking, it was spiritually revealed to Him, He did not hear it with His ears, or judge by their facial expressions, the Father let Jesus hear their critical thoughts and feel their evil intentions in His spirit.

Luke describes this same incident in Lk.5v17-26..

Luke also uses "epignous," the aorist participle of "epiginosko," to become fully and experimentally acquainted with, Jesus had full knowledge of their thoughts and plans. We read in Lk.5v22., "But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answering said unto them, What reason ye in your hearts?" Who were these critics? Luke states in Lk.5v17., "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." The critics consisted of many of Israel's religious leaders and Biblical scholars, God's healing power was present even for them to be healed, but it seems that they came to criticise, not to be blessed.

5. Jesus answers the accusation, that He healed by the power of Beelzebub, when he heals a blind and dumb man.

We read in Mt.12v25. "And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand." (KJV)

Mark's account in Mk.3v22-30., does not say that Jesus knew the thoughts of the Scribes who came down from Jerusalem, when they mentally and privately accused Jesus of casting out devils by the prince of the devils. However, the context shows that He did know their thoughts, for we read that Jesus does give them a terrible warning that they were in danger of committing the unforgivable sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, when they ascribed His miracles to Satan. Jesus answered them in Lk.11v17., "But he, knowing their thoughts, said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house divided against a house falleth. "Knowing their thoughts," is "eidos," the perfect active participle of "oida."

6. Jesus answers the critical thoughts over healing on the Sabbath, and Simon the Pharisee's critical thoughts.

We read in Lk.6v8., "But he knew their thoughts, and said to the man, which had the withered hand, Rise up, and stand forth in the midst. And he arose and stood forth." We read in Lk.7v40., "And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on." Then Jesus went on to answer the critical thoughts of Simon the Pharisee.

7. Jesus knew the inner intent of the smiling deceitful Rabbis who were out to trap Him in His words.

We read in Mt.22v18,-22. "But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, "Why do you test Me, you hypocrites? v19. "Show Me the tax money." So they brought Him a denarius. v20. And He said to them, "Whose image and inscription is this?" v21. They said to Him, "Caesar's." And He said to them, "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." v22. When they had heard these words, they marvelled, and left Him and went their way. (NKJ) See also Mk.12v15., "Shall we give, or shall we not give? But he, knowing their hypocrisy, said unto them, Why tempt ye me? Bring me a denarius, that I may see it."

The hatred and persecution of His enemies, sorely wounded and grieved Jesus.

The vicious verbal attacks upon Jesus made Him emotionally and physically ill. We read in Ps.69v20,21., "Reproach has broken my heart, and I am full of heaviness; I looked for someone to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none. v21. They also gave me gall for my food, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink." "I am full of heaviness," means literally "I am sick," for "heaviness," is "nuwsh," 5136, which means to be sick, and figuratively to be distressed. The Amplified Bible translates Ps.69v20,21., "Insults and reproach have broken my heart; I am full of heaviness and distressingly sick. I looked for pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none. v21. They gave me also gall for my food, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink. [Mt.27v34,48.]"

"Reproach," is "cherpah," 2781, which means reproach, scorn, rebuke, insults, vilification and shameful verbal abuse. The verbal abuse was so vicious that it made Jesus ill. See Heb.12v3., "For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied ("ekluo," 1590), and faint in your souls ("psuche," 5590, it is translated in the A.V. as soul, or life, occasionally as mind)." "Consider," is "analogisasthe," the aorist imperative of "analogizomai," which means to reckon up, to consider, compare, to weigh, it can also speak of meditation. It only occurs here in the New Testament. See "katanoesate" in Heb.3:1., put your minds down to contemplate Jesus. Contemplating and understanding Jesus is the cure for our problems, doubts and fears. "Endured," is "hupomemenekota," the perfect active participle of the verb "hupomeno," to bravely endure, to patiently endure with fortitude, in Heb.12v2., it is used to describe our Lord's triumphant and brave endurance of the cross. See Mt.10v22. 24v13. 1Cor.13v7. 2Tim.2v10,12. Heb.12v7. James.1v12. 5v12. 1Pet.2v20. "Contradiction," is "antilogian," 485, which means, gainsaying, i.e. opposition in the form of vicious and abusive verbal criticism.

In spite of all this opposition Jesus brought His Father's mission perfectly to the goal.

"Tetelestai, "the perfect passive of "teleo," to bring to an end, to fulfil, to accomplish, to complete, and bring to the goal; is used twice in Jn.19v28,30., being translated in the A.V. in v28, as ""were now accomplished," and in v30., as, "It is finished." Jesus brought His Father's work perfectly to the goal, in spite of all the vicious opposition of wicked men, He had hit all the targets His Father had aimed Him at.. How wonderful! What remarkable and unique dedication to the Father, and His will and plans for us. Unspeakable wonderful love for us.

THE NEED FOR KNOWING PEOPLE BY DIVINE REVELATION.

a. One of the key divine weapons of prophetic ministry is the revelation of the thoughts and intents of people's hearts.

We read in Jn.2v23., that many believed ("episteusan") in His name, when they beheld ("theorountes," the present active participle of "theoreo") the manifestation of sign miracles ("semeia"), which Jesus was doing (imperfect tense) at the Passover feast in Jerusalem. However, Jn.2v24., says that, "Jesus did not trust himself to them;" the negative imperfect here, "ouk episteuen," makes this verse read, Jesus kept on refusing to trust Himself to them." So we see that, "Many trusted in Him, --- but Jesus kept on refusing to trust himself to them;" the double use of "pisteuo," to believe, to trust. He examined their faith, and had no faith in it. The fact that a person believes in Jesus does not make them trustworthy.

b. We read in Jn.2v24., that our Lord did not trust some converts "because of the knowing," ("ginoskein.") of all men.

This was the knowledge of all men He met by revelation knowledge. We read in Jn.2v25., "And because he did not have need (the imperfect active). That anyone should bear witness (the aorist active subjunctive of "martureo") concerning man. For He Himself kept on knowing ("eginosken," the imperfect active), what was in man." Vincent states, "The imperfect expresses continuance; He was all along cognisant as the successive crises presented themselves; thus falling in with the next words, 'what was in man,' i.e. in each particular man with whom he had to do." End of quote. Robertson says, "For He Himself knew, "autos gar eginosken." Imperfect active," "for He Himself kept on knowing," as He did from the start." Robinson goes on to say, ". This supernatural knowledge of man is a mark of deity. Some men of genius can read men better than others, but not in the sense meant here." However, Robertson is not wholly correct here, for the Scriptures inform us that God gave Moses a similar experience, and Deut. 18v15,18.,tells us that Jesus exercised a prophetic ministry like Moses. We read in Deut.18v15,18., "The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear, v18. I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him." Jesus also sated that He spoke the things that He received from the Father by revelation, we read in John.5v19,30., "Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Truly, truly, 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. v30. I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgement is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me."

Here is the key to John.3v1., "**But** there was a man of the Pharisees," unlike the people of Jn.2v24., Jesus did trust Nicodemus, and did reveal Himself, and the truth of a New Covenant spiritual rebirth to him. Jesus knew by revelation from the Father that He could trust Nicodemus. Our Lord's manifestation and knowledge of people's thoughts , was not because of His deity, He had to grow in knowledge. Luke.2v40, 52. It was not a manifestation of His Divine omniscience; He emptied of this when He became a man. Phil.3v6,7. Heb.2v17,18.

1. THE REVELATION OF PEOPLE'S THOUGHTS IS AN ESSENTIAL PART OF PROPHETIC MINISTRY.

The revelation of the thoughts and intents of the heart was a part of prophetic ministry in both the old and the new testaments.

a. Samuel's revelations about Saul, his father's asses and his father. 1Sam.9v6. to 10v7.

Samuel not only told Saul of the concerns on his mind, he also gave a completely accurate detailed prediction of events and experiences which were about to happen to Saul, all of which came to pass, "And Samuel answered Saul and said, "I am the seer. Go up before me to the high place, for you shall eat with me today; and tomorrow I will let you go and will tell you all that is in your heart." 1Sam.9v19.

b. Elisha's warnings of the imminent attacks of Benhadad, the king of Syria, on Israel. 2Kings.6v8-12. N.B. v11,12.

We read in 2Kings.6v8-12., "Now the king of Syria was making war against Israel; and he consulted with his servants, saying, "My camp will be in such and such a place." v9. And the man of God sent to the king of Israel, saying, "Beware that you do not pass this place, for the Syrians are coming down there." v10. Then the king of Israel sent someone to the place of which the man of God had told him. Thus he warned him, and he was watchful there, not just once or twice. v11. Therefore the heart of the king of Syria was greatly troubled by this thing; and he called his servants and said to them, "Will you not show me which of us is for the king of Israel?" v12. **And one of his servants said, "None, my lord, O king; but Elisha, the prophet who is in Israel, tells the king of Israel the words (the noun "daw-bah," 1697, speech, a word, matter, or thing, it occurs over 1,400 times) that you speak (the verb "dah-bar," 1696, to speak, to declare, to converse, to command, to promise, to warn, to threaten, it occurs over 1,100 times) in your bedroom."** NKJ)

c. The prophet Ahijah's warning to the wife of king Jeroboam. 1Kings.14v1-11.

God let His aged blind servant, the prophet Ahijah, see the wife of Jeroboam coming to his house, and warned her of the death of her son and the judgement that was coming on the house of Jeroboam. We read in 1Kings.14v1-6,11-13., At that time Abijah the son of Jeroboam became sick. v2. And Jeroboam said to his wife, "Please arise, and disguise yourself so that they may not recognise that you are the wife of Jeroboam, and go to Shiloh; behold, ("hinneh," 2009, behold, lo, see) Ahijah the prophet is there, who spoke concerning me {that I would be} king over this people. v3. And take ten loaves with you, {some} cakes and a jar of honey, and go to him. He will tell you what will happen to the boy. v4. And Jeroboam's wife did so, and arose and went to Shiloh, and came to the house of Ahijah. Now Ahijah could not see, for his eyes were dim because of his age. v5. Now the LORD had said to Ahijah, "Behold ("hinneh," 2009, behold, lo, see), the wife of Jeroboam is coming to inquire of you concerning her son, for he is sick. You shall say thus and thus to her, for it will be when she arrives that she will pretend to be another woman." v6. And it came about when Ahijah heard the sound of her feet coming in the doorway, that he said, "Come in, wife of Jeroboam, why do you pretend to be another woman? For I am sent to you with bad ("qasheh," hard, heavy, cruel severe, obstinate) tidings. --- v11. Anyone belonging to Jeroboam who dies in the city the dogs will eat. And he who dies in the field the birds of the heavens will eat; for the LORD has spoken {it.} v12. Now you arise, go to your house. When your feet enter the city the child will die. v13. And all Israel shall mourn for him and bury him, for he alone of Jeroboam's {family} shall come to the grave, because in him something good was found toward the LORD God of Israel in the house of Jeroboam."

d. Paul's superintendence by vision of the churches under his care. Col.2v1-5. 1Cor.5v1-5.

Paul writes in Col.2v1-5., "For I want you to know what a great conflict (the noun "agona," contest, Paul continues with the metaphor of Col.1v29., where he used the verb "agonizomenai," which literally means, to compete and contend for a prize in the gymnastic games, and figuratively, to fight and contend with an adversary, and to endeavour with utmost strenuous zeal and effort to accomplish something) I have for you and those in Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh, v2. that their hearts may be comforted and encouraged, being knit together in love, and attaining to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ, v3. in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. v4. And this I say lest anyone should deceive you with persuasive words. v5. For though I am absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing and beholding your good order and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ."

Paul tells the Colossian Church of his great spiritual concern and efforts on their behalf, and also for the Christians at Laodicea, who he had not personally met. He states in Col.1v29., "To this end I also labour ("kopiao," to grow weary, to toil to the point of exhaustion), striving ("agonizomenai") according to His working ("energeia," working, this word is only used in the New Testament to describe the supernatural power of God or Satan), which works ("energeo") in me mightily."

Paul is defending the Christian faith and experience against the conceited intellectual Gnostics, who boasted that they knew the sacred mysteries. Paul proclaims that in Jesus the divine mysteries are truly revealed and that in Him are all the rich treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Col.2v3. The Gnostics boasted in a perverted and limited knowledge ("gnosis"), but in Jesus there is true knowledge and a love that comforts, "paraklethosin"), knits and binds ("sunbibasthentes," see Acts.16v10. Col.2v19.) Christians together. In Jesus there is " the full assurance of understanding," this is experienced by spiritual revelation, and not just by the diligent and balanced exercise of our mental powers. The divine purpose is that we might experience "unto full knowledge," "eis epignôsin," "the mystery of God, even Christ." Jesus is "the mystery of God," no longer hidden, but manifested, Col.1v26., and God desires us to know Him to the fullness of our capacity. Every believer can and should experience repeated transforming new revelations of the glories of our risen Lord.

In Col.2v4., Paul tells the Colossians the purpose of his theology and warnings, "I tell you this so that no-one may delude and deceive you by fine-sounding persuasive arguments." People can very gullible, and can be deceived by oratory and crafty arguments. Here the peril was from the arrogant claims of the Gnostics, however, Paul often warns us that there are dangerous theologians within the Church, in Eph.4v14., he states, "As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed to and fro by the waves, and blown about by every wind of doctrine, and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming."

In Col.2v5., Paul informs them of his prayer watchfulness over them by means of a divinely given vision ministry. "Your order," is "ten taxin," (from "tassô," unbroken, intact.), which like "steadfastness," "stereoma," (from "stereos," to make steady), also had a military usage. The Christian ranks had stood firm, a few may have been seduced by the Gnostics, but the line was unbroken. In 2Th.3:6,8,11., Paul warns about Christians who walk disorderly ("ataktos") and don't follow his orderly example and tradition, "taxis." In Acts.16v5., the verb "stereo" (to make firm, to strengthen) is used with "pistis" (faith), and in 1Pet.5v9., the adjective "stereos" (compact, solid, firm, steadfast) is used with "pistis." It is a fact that prophetic prayer ministry can greatly help Christians, who are a great distance away, and under severe attack, to be steadfast in God. This ministry is open to all Christians who walk on "the more excellent way" of "agape" love.

CONCLUSION.

The warning and instruction is clear, most of prophetic revelation should be kept hidden away, and just as in the ministries of our Lord and the apostle Paul, should be used for the purpose of prayer. Dedicated prophetic praying directed by divine revelation is the great need of the Church in this hour. Let us also learn from Joseph, not to let enthusiasm over God's gifting overwhelm our wisdom. Envy and jealousy are still very much at large in the Church today; Joseph's brothers are still with us. Be careful. Be as wise as a serpent, and harmless as a dove.

Jesus said in Matt.10v16., "Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves.

"Wise," is "phronimos," 5429, (from 5424; thoughtful, understanding), and speaks of a sagacious, discreet and cautious person. "Harmless," is "akeraios," 185, the negative "a" makes the word mean, unmixed, unadulterated, unalloyed, or pure, as in wines or metals, and is used to speak of a person whose attitude and mind have no mixture, a person who is guileless,-harmless, and pure in thought.

APPENDIX. THE GLORY AND VICTORY OF OUR LORD'S HUMANITY.

a. A. T. Robertson states that Heb.2v17,18. teaches the true sympathetic humanity of Jesus in his commentary.

Heb.2v17,18. "{It behoved him}" "ōpheilen." Imperfect active of "ōpheilō," old verb to owe, money (Mt.18:28.), service and love (Rom.13:8.), duty or obligation as here and often in N.T. (Luke.17:10.). Jesus is here the subject and the reference is to the incarnation. Having undertaken the work of redemption (John.3:16.), voluntarily (John.10:17.), Jesus was under obligation to be properly equipped for that priestly service and sacrifice. {In all things} "kata panta." Except yielding to sin (Heb.4:15.) and yet he knew what temptation was, difficult as it may be for us to comprehend that in the Son of God who is also the Son of man (Mark.1:13.). Jesus fought through to victory over Satan. {To be made like unto his brethren} "tois adelphois homoiōthēnai." First aorist passive infinitive of "homoioō," old and common verb from "homoios" (like), as in Mt 6:8., with the associative instrumental case as here. Christ, our Elder Brother, resembles us in reality (Phil.2:7. "in the likeness of men") as we shall resemble him in the end (Rom.8:29. "first-born among many brethren"; 1John.3:2. "like him"), where the same root is used as here "hoiōma, homiois." That he might be "hina genētai." Purpose clause with "hina" and the second aorist middle subjunctive of "ginomai," to become, "that he might become." That was only possible by being like his brethren in actual human nature. {Merciful and faithful high priest} "eleēmōn kai pistos archiereus." The sudden use of "archiereus" here for Jesus has been anticipated by 1:3; 2:9. and see 3:1.. Jesus as the priest-victim is the chief topic of the Epistle. These two adjectives "eleēmōn" and "pistos" touch the chief points in the function of the high priest (5:1-10.), sympathy and fidelity to God. The Sadducean high priests (Annas and Caiaphas) were political and ecclesiastical tools and puppets out of sympathy with the people and chosen by Rome. {In things pertaining to God} "ta pros ton theon." The adverbial accusative of the article is a common idiom. See the very idiom "ta pros ton theon" in Ex 18:19; Ro 15:17.. This use of "pros" we had already in Heb 1:7f.. On the day of atonement the high priest entered the holy of holies and officiated in behalf of the people. {To make propitiation for} "eis to hilaskesthai." Purpose clause with "eis to" and the infinitive (common Greek idiom), here present indirect middle of "hilaskomai," to render propitious to oneself (from "hilaos," Attic "hileōs," gracious). This idea occurs in the LXX (Ps 65:3.), but only here in N.T., though in Luke.18:13. the passive form "hilasthēti" occurs as in 2Ki 5:18.. In 1Jo 2:2. we have "hilasmos" used of Christ (cf. Heb 7:25.). The inscriptions illustrate the meaning in Heb 2:17. as well as the LXX.

2:18 {In that} "en hōi." Literally, "In which" "=en toutōi en hōi," in that in which), a causal idea, though in Ro 14:22. "en hōi" means "wherein." {Hath suffered} "peponthen." Second perfect active indicative of "paschō," permanent part of Christ's experience. {Being tempted} "peirastheis." First aorist passive participle of "peirazō." The temptation to escape the shame of the Cross was early and repeatedly presented to Christ, by Satan in the wilderness (Mt 4:8-11.), by Peter in the spirit of Satan (Mt 16:22f.), in Gethsemane (Mt 26:39.), and caused intense suffering to Jesus (Luke.22:44; Heb.5:8.). {He is able} "dunatai." This word strikes the heart of it all. Christ's power to help is due not merely to his deity as God's Son, but also to his humanity without which he could not sympathise with us (Heb.4:15.). {To succour} "boēthēsai." First aorist active infinitive of the old compound verb "boētheō" "boē," a cry, "theō," to run), to run at a cry or call for help (Mt.15:25.). {Them that are tempted} "tois peirazomenois." Dative plural of the articular participle (present passive) of "peirazō." These Jewish Christians were daily tempted to give up Christ, to apostatise from Christianity. Jesus understands himself "autos" their predicament and is able to help them to be faithful." **End of quote.**

b. In Rom.8v3. Paul states Christ's victory over the flesh.

Paul rejoices in Christ's glorious victory over the trials and temptations of true humanity. It is a most glorious and wonderful fact, that out of pure love for us, God the Word became flesh "sarx," and suffered and overcame the trials and temptations of true humanity. Jn.1v14. 1Jn.4v2,3. 2Jn.v7. 1Tim.3v16. Rom.1v4,5. 8v3. Heb.2v17,18. 4v15. 5v7. 10v5. Christ was manifest in flesh, "sarx;" but He never allowed the flesh to dominate Him. In Rom.8v3. Paul states that Jesus was, "in the likeness of sinful flesh," "en homiomati sarkos hamartias," just as Phil.2v7., "in the likeness of men," "en homiomati anthropon," the likeness is real, Jesus had a real humanity, not a false or phantom humanity as the Docetic Gnostics taught. ("Homoioima," occurs in Rom.1v23. 5v14. 6v5. 8v3. Phil.2v7. Rev.9v7.)

The Expositor's Greek Testament also gives light on Rom.8v3..

It states: "But the emphasis in "homoioima" is on Christ's likeness to us, not His unlikeness; "flesh of sin" is one idea to the Apostle, and what he means by it is that God sent His Son in that nature which in us is identified with sin. This was the "form" (and "form" rather than "likeness" is what "homoioima" signifies) in which Christ appeared amongst men. It does not prejudice Christ's sinlessness, which is a fixed point with the Apostle 'ab initio'; and if anyone says it involves a contradiction to maintain that Christ was sinless, and that He came in a nature which with us is identified with sin, it may be pointed out that this identification does not belong to the essence of our nature, but to its corruption, and that the uniform teaching of the New Testament is that Christ is one with us-short of sin. The likeness and the limitation of it (though the former is the point here urged) are equally essential in the Redeemer."

Alford writes on Rom.8v3: "'in the likeness of the flesh of sin' (the flesh 'whose attribute and character was sin). The genitive is not 'hamartolou,' but implies far more-[not merely the contamination by, but] the belonging to and being possessed by."---He had a nature 'like sinful human nature'- but had not Himself 'a sinful nature,' Compare Heb.4v15. --- He was able to be tempted, i.e. subjected to sensuous incitements, e.g. of pain, which in other men break out into sin, but in Him did not."

Jesus conquered the flesh that had corrupted and led all mankind into sin. His victory over sin, not only condemned sin in the flesh, but also enables us to live in victory over sin, through the law of the spirit and life in Christ. Rom.8v4. Jesus partook of human flesh, but did not partake of the sins of the flesh; His holy life condemned sin in the flesh and showed that it was possible to live in victory over it. In Heb.2v16-18., we read that Jesus took on Him the seed of Abraham, and that it was a moral duty and obligation ("opheilen," the imperfect active indicative of "opheilo," to be obligated), for Him to be made in all points like unto His brethren, and experience the same temptations, so that He could be our sympathetic High Priest. To be tempted in all points as we are, He had to be made in all points as we are. Heb.2v17. with 4v15. From the level of our humanity, Jesus conquered the world, the flesh, and the Devil. Blessed be His Name!

NOTE:

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