

The Heavenly Places In Christ During The Great Tribulation

(By Alister Hamilton & William Turner)

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

I have stated some points in this study more than once; however, this is only because these points are of prime importance and vital truth for the believer and should be taken note of.

Introduction

The Church and the world is very shortly going to experience a time of trouble and tribulation like never before experienced since God created the earth, during the last seven years of this age, but especially during the last three and a half years, the period known as "The Great Tribulation," which is also referred to as "the time of Jacob's Trouble." Jer 30v7, Dan 9v27, 12v1, Matt 24v15-21, 2Thess 2v1-12, Rev 7v9,10,14.

In all the Churches that I have visited over the last five (plus) years, I have rarely seen or heard any teaching on Christ's Second Coming, and what I have heard has always put forward the destructive heresy of a secret pre-tribulation Advent and Rapture, which was not known in the Church until the early 1830's. In 1830 Edward Irving was defrocked from the Church of England because his superiors believed that his doctrinal beliefs and preaching on the sinfulness of Christ's nature, was heretical. Irving set up his own church, which he called "The Catholic Apostolic Church," but which others called "The Irvingites." In his congregation there was a Scottish girl called Margaret Macdonald; and in one of his services she went into a trance and gave some prophecies. In this trance she said that she saw the people of God going up in the air to meet the Lord. From this "revelation," Irving preached that the Church would be raptured and miss the Great Tribulation. Irving went over to the conferences in Ireland at Powerscourt, near Dublin, and preached this doctrine. Ironside, who writes in support of the doctrine of the pre-tribulation secret rapture of the Church, states that this "blessed doctrine" came to light in the Powerscourt conferences in Ireland in the 1830's. Mr Robert Baxter, a principal leader in this movement, published the doctrine of a secret coming of Christ everywhere he went, and it was quickly received. This view was also adopted by J. N. Darby,

and it has been earnestly maintained by many who have studied his writings. Scofield wrote this doctrine into his notes in His Scofield Bible, and Larkin drew some charts; and the doctrine infiltrated into the brethren movement. However, Tregelles, Newton, George Muller, and many others, rejected the revelation and doctrine as unscriptural. They realised that Margaret Macdonald's "revelation," had brought into the Church a false doctrine, which was previously unknown in Church history, and was a direct contradiction of the Scriptures.

Jerry Brewer wrote in the magazine "Victorious Life," that the pretribulation rapture teaching came into existence through this young, about fifteen year old Scottish girl Margaret Macdonald, from a "personal revelation," which she claimed was based only upon Scripture, between February 1st and April 14th 1830, in her hometown of Port Glasgow in Scotland.

The Lord Jesus through a prophecy stated that as the Devil had put an evil seed into the early Church that the Messiah would not suffer betrayal and a cruel death, so he has also put an evil seed into the Church today that the Church would not experience suffering during the Great Tribulation, but would be removed from the earth before the Great Tribulation began through a secret pre-tribulation Advent and Rapture. The result of the Apostles believing the lie that the Messiah would not suffer and die was that they ended up behind locked doors and filled with fear, refusing to believe the women and the two disciples on the road to Emmaus that He had risen from out from amongst the dead. The result of believing the lie of a secret pre-tribulation Advent and Rapture will have the same kind of effect on those who believe it, in that not being prepared for it when the Great Tribulation comes (before which they were expecting to be raptured) they will backside and go into apostasy, losing not only their reward but their salvation as well, like the evil servant and five foolish virgins. Matt 16v21-23, 24v45-25v13, Luke 6v46-49.

So many Churches fall into the category in fulfillment of the Lord's words through another prophecy that He gave to the Church: "They worship well but there's no preparation for My time bomb, the "mystery of iniquity" which I have put into human history. The Church, in the main, is taken up with the here and now and has made absolutely no preparation for the terrible dark evil days that are shortly coming upon the Church and world, with the result that the vast majority of those who have made no effort to prepare themselves for this time will backslide and go into apostasy. Luke 6v46-49.

It is now that the Lord Jesus wants every member of the Body of Christ to get ready for the coming dark evil days of the Great Tribulation by filling their minds and spirits with Truth on the Second Coming of Christ, seeking His plans, purposes and divine power for their lives, and getting through into the heavenly places in Him, so as to bind the strong man and like Elijah of old, stand before Him in the heavenly places in Spirit, so as to be a blessing to the world and Church and to deal with the wicked, both angels and humans, with God's power, and so be a restraint upon the wicked and wickedness. 1Kings 17v1, Dan 11v32, Luke 18v1-8, John 3v13, 17v23, Eph 1v3, 6v10-20, Rev 11v3-6, 12v1.

This short study is to help those seeking the heavenly places in Christ and so be prepared for the dark evil days of the Great Tribulation.

Yahweh Shalom

Alister Hamilton 25th November 2018.

Getting Into The Heavenly Places In Christ

We need to think about and remember what it's going to be like in the Kingdom during the Millennium and the Ages of Ages. Rev 21v27 states: "**And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie:** but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."

If we want to get into the heavenly places in Christ, our hearts and lives must be right. 2Cor 6v14-7v1 states: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. **Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.**"

The Lord is saying, "I'll receive you if you clean your lives up, you can come into My presence." We need to get the vital things right for entering into His presence. **We need to get our lives right before God!**

In 1Kings 17v1, Elijah says to Ahab, "As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word." The thought here is Elijah standing in the presence of God in the heavenly places; this is the place of revelation. This is what He wants us to do: stand in heavenly places in His presence worshipping, waiting and loving Him. This is what we have got to do, for this is what our Heavenly Fathers seeks from us. John 4v23.

John 3v13 states: "And no man hath ascended up to heaven, **but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.**" While the Lord Jesus walked upon earth, He was in the presence of God in Spirit, standing in the presence of His Father. This is the place where He wants us content to be, and it is Jesus Who will take us there. John 17v24 states: "**Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory,** which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world."

When the Scriptures talk about walking and living in the Spirit (Gal 5v16-26, esp. v16,25), a walk in the heavenly places is what He is referring to. In our spirits we are walking with the Lord Jesus in the kingdom.

We read that John was in the Spirit on the Lord's day. Rev 1v10. ("The Lord's day" in Greek is "teé Kuriakéé heeméra," this is a reference to the first day of the week (i.e., Sunday), it has nothing to do with "the day of the Lord" (the day of judgement) 2Peter 3v10, which is in Greek, "heeméra Kuriou"). When John would have got up in the morning, he would have felt the weakness of the flesh, and then as he waited on God, God's presence came down and took him straight through into the heavenlies in Christ standing in Spirit.

Psalms 24v3-6 states: "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or **who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.** He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation. **This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob.**" Selah.

It is standing in His presence that the gifts of the Spirit (1Cor 12v7-11) operate. We should be prepared to stand for as long as necessary for the gifts to operate, it could be as long as a couple of weeks or a few minutes. We see one of the great Old Testament prophets, Jeremiah, having to wait in His presence for ten days before the word of the Lord came to him. Jer 42v7. We stand there loving, worshipping, praising and praying. **Standing in the presence of the God in Spirit IS THE PLACE OF REVELATION!**

We see from Psalm 24v3-6 that to stand in His presence in the heavenly places there has to be a time of prolonged earnest seeking to get used to it, and prolonged use of the gift of tongues is essential for over-coming the world, the flesh and the Devil, so as to bind the strongman for the Lord Jesus to take us into the heavenly places so that we stand in His presence in Spirit. Rom 8v26-28, 1Cor 14v2,4, 1John 2v13-17, Jude v20,21. So, by earnestly seeking God we get used to being in His presence, so as Heb 5v14 states: "But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those **who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.**"

We learn to distinguish between His voice and the voice of the Devil. We'll learn to know His voice and if something else comes into our spirit that we are not sure about we'll leave it and pray about it until it becomes clear.

Standing in the heavenly places in His presence we will also experience conflict with the powers of darkness, the principalities and powers. Dan 10v2,13,20, Eph 6v10-20. It is very necessary before we face such conflict that we put on the whole armour of God. **(Please see Appendix I: Put On The Whole Armour Of God)**. We'll have to fight through for the revelation at times. The Devil will challenge us if we choose to stand in the heavenly places, he will do the utmost to turn us aside, but God will do this to spiritually strengthen us and perfect us, not letting us being tempted beyond what we are able to bear. Rom 5v1-5, 1Cor 10v13. The Devil has not only friends in the heavenly places but also friends upon the earth, so we can expect conflict from him through those around us even as the Lord Jesus experienced. Psalm 69v7-12,20,21, Mark 3v21,31-35, Luke 4v16-30, John 7v5.

When God is going to do something for us, you can guarantee that folks around you will cause you trouble. The Devil is really saying, "do you really want to fight through and stand in the heavenly places in Spirit in His presence and if so you'll have to pay the cost." The Devil can also come to us as an angel of light. We need to remember that the Devil used his powers to seduce a third of the angels of God in heaven, in His presence, to go bad. Rev 12v4. But we must not forget that He Who is in us is greater than he who is in the world. James 4v7,8, 1Peter 5v7-9, 1John 2v14-17, 4v4.

Eph 1v3 states: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." Not some, but **ALL** spiritual blessings! They are **ALL** there for us now! The treasure house of heaven is jammed packed full and it's ours, the cheque is written out and it's signed: "paid for by

the Blood of Christ." These heavenly blessings are all ours in Christ Jesus. All the treasures are there by Jesus, and He's the One Who is giving them out. Eph 1v20.

Eph 2v6 states: "And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." He has raised us up to sit there as well, not in the future, but **NOW!** He's sitting up there and we're sitting up there with Him. This is the situation when our spirits are in communion with Him. By sitting with Him in the heavenly places we are educating angels; evil ones mostly. Eph 3v10.

Job 1v8, 2v3 states: "And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?... And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause." God is basically saying to the Devil, "Don't you think my way of love is better when you see such a fine fellow like that?" The Devil's retort is, "He's not serving you for nothing!" When God's hedge of protection was up, Job trusted God, and when it was down he also trusted God. And this is what God does with us sometimes, He'll remove the hedge at times. The Lord wants us to stand in His presence not only when things are going well, but also when he removes the hedge, and this is a real test. John 15v2, Rom 5v1-5, James 1v2-4,12. In the face to face fight with the Devil, we say, "I'm standing up there loving Him" and hence showing the powers of darkness that we can walk in victory in love in an evil world.

Also see: Eph 6v12: "we wrestle...against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high (heavenly) places."

Heb 6v4: "and have tasted of the heavenly gift."

1Cor 2v9-16, esp. v9,10: "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. **But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit:** for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."

The things that God has for us in the future, He wants to reveal them to us **NOW!** Spiritual maturity doesn't mean that you get things easily, but you have to fight for them, we have to wrestle (in the heavenly places) to get them! God takes us into His "Treasure House." In Greek the word for "wrestle" is "pale" (Strong's NT:3823); "pale" is an old word from "pallō," to throw, to swing (from Homer to the papyri, though here only in the New Testament), a contest between two until one hurls the other down and holds him down "katecho," (Strong's NT:2722). It is a Greek athletic term. Thayer defines as follows: "a contest between two in which each endeavours to throw the other, and which is decided when the victor is able to press and hold down his prostrate antagonist, namely, hold him down with his hand upon his neck."

Our fight against these evil principalities and powers takes real persevering prayer (with the mind and spirit), fortitude and faith, but God will not let us be tempted beyond what we are able to bear, and while we are wrestling with them, the Lord Jesus is interceding for us every second of every day making His divine energies and grace available to us to strengthen us. Rom 5v20, 1Cor 10v13, Phil 4v19, Heb 7v25.

When we stand before Him in His presence we partake of His wisdom, He gives us the wisdom and knowledge we need at any time. Matt 10v19,20, Col 2v3. All the riches we need are in Jesus, and as we stand in His presence He'll give us the riches we need. There will be some things He can't give us because we are not spiritually ready for them. John 16v12. He'll give us the things when we are strong enough to bear them. If He gave us some things as immature Christians, we would become big headed and puffed up, which would lean to our ruin. We will only receive the greater things when we are humble before the Lord. Isaiah 66v2. So when we receive something wonderful from the Lord we don't think how great we are, but how great His grace and mercy are.

Something that stops the Christian going onto spiritual maturity (and the heavenly places) is sectarian bigotry.

1Cor 3v1-8 states: "**And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.** I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal? Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour."

The word "carnal" (1Cor 3v1) in Greek is "sarkikos" (Strong's NT:4559, TR), which means "dominated by the flesh." Because of their sectarian bigotry, Paul says that the Corinthians were "carnal" as opposed to "spiritual," Greek "pneumatikos" (Strong's NT:4152), dominated by the spirit/Spirit.

Paul said that he could not talk to the Corinthians as living in the Spirit and walking/standing in the presence of Jesus in the heavenlies, because their souls were dominated by the flesh, they were spiritual "babes" (Greek "nepios" (Strong's NT:3516) which means literally, "without the power of speech") still on milk, and could not bear "the meat."

When we stand in His presence in the heavenlies, we can be the channel of His power to others, in the fellowship meeting we can energise that power onto the Christians in it, or when we are in the secret place of prayer, we can reach out in Spirit in love and energise Christ's power onto those we are praying for, even as Christ felt virtue going out from Him when the woman with a flow of blood touched the hem of His garment. When we reach out in love to others in prayer, we enter into the Holy Spirit's unlimited abilities so that we are actually present there with them. Matt 6v6, Luke 8v44-46, 1John 1v3. When we bless others this way our spiritual "batteries" will go flat, so we need to recharge them by communion with Him. This is operating "the gift of faith." We can also use God's covenant names in blessing upon those we pray for, for they are Names of God's power and love in operation. I.e., Yahweh Shalom, Yahweh Jireh, Yahweh Rophi, Yahweh Nissi, Yahweh Tsabaoth (and so forth). **(Please see Appendix II: All The Covenant Names Of Yahweh Are Given To Us In The Name Of Jesus).**

If there is one thing that will hinder us from getting the gifts and ministries of the Lord, it's being totally set apart to "our little groups." (sectarian division). When a group says, "I'm of Paul," or "I'm of Peter," or even "I'm of Christ" (1Cor 1v12, 3v1-8), if it causes us to separate from other Christians, and don't embrace the whole Church of Christ in love, this scenario creates great hindrances to receiving the blessings and gifts that God greatly desires to give us. The Corinthian Church came behind in no spiritual gift (they had the Greek, "charismati," Strong's NT:5486), but there was no wise man amongst them, because of this sectarianism they were still all spiritual babes. 1Cor 1v7, 6v5. When you hear someone exalting their movement, the only thing they are showing is they are carnal and spiritual babes.

If we don't embrace every member of the Body of Christ (our brothers and sisters) in love, then we are proving that we are carnal and spiritual babes. Psalm 133. The thing that proves that we are out of "the (spiritual) pram" is when we look upon other Christians in love who have different "preferences" to our own. John 15v9,12, 17v23. We must not despise other Christians. The Greek word for "heresies" is "hairesis" (Strong's NT:139), which means "preferences," or "a choice." It is when our "preferences" stop us loving people that it's wrong. We all prefer different things (religious music etc.), but it is when we look down on others that different "preferences" (heresies) become "schisms."

So being clean and standing in the presence of God by abiding in The Vine, God "prunes" us to get rid of any leaves so that we may bear more fruit. The pruning, which can be quite severe at times, will make us love more and be more gentle and gracious. i.e., more Christ like.

John 15v3: "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." (with John 17v17, 1Peter 2v1-3). We need to feed regularly upon His word. (If we read 10 chapters of the Bible every day, we'll get through it in under four months).

John 15v7 states: "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, **ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.**" – **Standing in His presence!**

The Father loves us, as He loves Jesus, Jesus loves us as the Father loves Him, and the Comforter loves us as the Father and Jesus loves us. We **MUST** love our brothers and sisters as the Trinity loves us! John 15v9, 17v23, 1John 4v8. This is our shield of faith when the Devil tells us that God doesn't love us. So we can stand in His presence with great confidence.

John 15v10,12 states: "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love." And He sums it up thus: "This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you." There must be no unforgiveness in our hearts. If we want to stand in His presence in the heavenlies, this is what we have to do... **STAND IN LOVE!** You cannot stand in His presence in envy, bitterness and unforgiving spirit, like the Corinthians were doing. You cannot go back biting about somebody and reaping up their sins, for God will do the same to us, and we won't be forgiven either. Matt 18v21-35, esp. v35 which states: "So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses."

The Heavenly Places In Christ During The Great Tribulation

At the end of the first three and a half years of Daniel's 70th week, the Devil and his evil angels are cast out of the heavenly places into the earth by Michael and his angels; the Devil comes down to earth having great wrath, and as time proceeds the Devil's great wrath increases. God also removes His restraint upon the Devil and the powers of darkness, with the result that the "mystery of lawlessness" (the Devil's evil plan to destroy Israel, all Christians and mankind) will work fully, this results in the start of the second half of Daniel's 70th week (which runs three and a half years), the period known as "The Great Tribulation." Dan 8v23, 9v27, 12v1, Matt 24v15-21, 2Thess 2v1-12, Rev 7v9,10,14, 12v7-12, 13v5.

The greatest revival of all time will very shortly be upon us, when God will visit the whole earth in great power and glory, sometimes referred to the "latter rains." The "former rains" (which occurred at Pentecost, Acts 2v1-4) was to prepare the ground for the planting of the seed; the "latter rains" swelled the kernel in the ear of wheat for the harvest. The "latter rains" are very much greater than the "former rains." There will be an initial fulfillment of Joel's wonderful prophecy (Joel 2v28-32, Acts 2v16-21, 3v18-21) at the beginning of Daniel's 70th week when Antichrist will make a peace treaty with many parties (including Israel in the Middle East). The peace treaty is to bring an end to the civil war in Syria and peace to the Middle East region, for the 7th Head of the Beast comes out of the 5th Head, who is Syria. The 7th Head (Vladimir Putin, along with Abū Bakr al-Baghdadi, the False Prophet, Rev 13 (all)) is already in Syria waiting to be revealed in his proper time. This outpouring of the Holy Spirit during the first three and a half years will be to get the Church ready for the Great Tribulation. Just before the beginning of the Great Tribulation there will be another outpouring of the Holy Spirit, at which time the Two Witnesses start their ministry with great power, however this outpouring will be many times greater than that which occurred three and a half years earlier. This great outpouring will bring a new authority into the Church, that of charismatic gifts extended in discipline and judgement even as given to the Two Witnesses and many other Christians, who will not be crying out for God to save those persecuting them, but will be crying out to God to avenge them of their adversaries. Dan 8v8,9, 9v27, 11v32,33, Luke 17v22-18v8, Rev 11v3-6, 17v9,10.

The great revival that occurs during the last seven years of this age is **NOT** going to come through the denominational Churches, but through small groups (up to 10-12) of spiritually prepared Christians meeting in informal fellowship meetings (in houses and the likes, or whenever or wherever small groups can meet), even as they did in the early Church. These Christians will act as prayer warriors behind the scenes in the heavenly places in Christ. These small groups of Christians when gathering together will have the same kind of authority as the Two Witnesses have and manifest the same kind of spiritual gifts; gifts of deliverance, healing and mercy and gifts in discipline and judgement. Such will be their level of authority during the Great Tribulation that they will regularly experience supernatural transport as Elijah experienced and will also have supernatural provision of food when needed, they will also have great divine protection around them and will minister God's power and love to not only other Christians, but also to non Christians, also acting as a restraint upon the wicked, angels and men. Around and over each of these small informal meetings (which will be happening all over the world) there will be a bubble of God's power and presence in an intensity like never before experienced. Such will be the effect of God's power around these groups of praying Christians that they will be fully protected from hydrogen bombs, chemical weapons, nerve gas and any other kind of ordnance. They will also be able to deal with any missiles that Antichrist and his armies launch against their locations or elsewhere, for God will simply let them know what Antichrist and his armies are planning against their areas and these praying Christians will simply reach out with the power of God in Spirit and set these missiles off before they leave their launch platforms. 2Kings 1v1-16, 6v8-23, Rev 11v3-6. During the last seven years of this age, and especially during the Great Tribulation, the Church will experience a dramatic increase in angelic ministry in all sorts of ways, in defence, in provision of food, for aid in ministry, to strengthen to mention just a few. God is not going to put this "new wine" of the energies of the Holy Spirit of the greatest revival that has ever occurred upon earth in "old wineskins" but into "new wineskins." 1Kings 18v12, Mark 2v19-22, Acts 2v40-47, Heb 1v14, 10v24,25, Rev 12v6,14. **(Please see Appendix VIII: The Great Necessity For Informal Fellowship Meetings During The Great Tribulation).**

Although there will be a terrible rush of evil into the world at the beginning of the Great Tribulation, we also need to remember that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the earth will be unprecedented at that time, for where sin abounded, grace abounded much more, and God's promise not to let us be tempted beyond what we are able to bear, but with the temptation will also make a way of escape, so that we can bear the temptation will also hold true, indeed **ALL** of God's promises are Yea and Amen in Christ Jesus at **ALL** times. Our Dear Lord, during the dark days of the Great Tribulation, will also be interceding for us every second of every day, and we know that He was tempted in **ALL** points like as we are, yet without sin, so He is able to fully sympathize with us at that time, and indeed **ALL** times to enable us to walk in victory. It is also vitally important that we should understand that our faith is a living faith, and it should not let become stagnant, this the Christian will manage by daily continual communion with their living Lord, praying and singing in the Spirit and praying and singing with the mind. The secret behind Paul's wonderful ministry is quite simple, he made great use of the gift of tongues, both praying and singing. By walking in the heavenly places with Our Risen Lord, the authority that we can exercise is that whatever we ask for, it shall be done by Him for us. We will know the exact level of our authority that we can exercise, and this authority exercised in the small fellowship meetings will be greatly increased. As we walk in the heavenly place in Christ's presence, the gifts of the Spirit will

manifest automatically. Lev 26v8, Matt 18v19,20, Mark 11v22,23, (YLT), John 15v7, Rom 5v20, 1Cor 10v13, 14v4,15,18, 15v57, 1Cor chapters 12,13,14, 2Cor 12v11,12, Heb 4v15, 7v25, 10v24,25. **(Please see Appendix III: The Spiritual Qualities That Make Up The Character Of The Overcomer.)**

God's Answers For The Last Days

1) Charismatic Gifts: There will be an emphasis upon deliverance and use of spiritual gifts (i.e., gifts of deliverance, healing and mercy). The critical thing of the last days will be the ministry of prayer exercised by women. The following is a prophecy from praying monks in Russia who prayed for the deliverance of Mother Barbara's father and family in 1911 (who subsequently got out of Russia), one of the monks was given a prophecy, part of which stated that "Britain will lose her empire and all her colonies and will come to almost total ruin, but will be saved by praying women." (Taken from Battle For Israel by Lance Lambert, pages 63-64). This prophecy that Britain would come to almost total ruin is also confirmed by what the Holy Spirit recently spoke to me. He said that "the third seal (Rev 6v5-7 with Mark 13v8) when opened would not only apply to the countries under Antichrist's control, but would also occur to the UK." When the third seal is opened we see another dreadful result of Antichrist's career, a black horse and a pair of balances. This is a period of famine, for the prices for food stated here are famine prices, **£10 for a £1 loaf would convey to us better the prices here mentioned.** Lev 26v24-26, Ezek.4v16. Gen 41v49. A full days wage will only buy a day's ration of wheat for a man, there would only be sufficient food for dependants if barley was bought instead of wheat. **All the income of a family can only buy enough food to keep them alive.** This time of famine could probably be the result of the wars of the previous seal, or the outcome from the UK leaving the EU. It appears that there will be an abundance of oil and wine, the luxuries of the rich, while the necessities of life for the poor will be in very short supply. During this time of famine and hardship, God will undertake for His children, through not only natural means, but supernatural means also, like He did with Israel for forty years in the wilderness. Deut 8v3,4, Neh 9v20,21, Mark 16v15-18, Acts 2v16-21,38,39, 3v19,20, Rev 12v6,14.

Women have more time around the home or can in the home pray more easily, they are the answer and God's primary critical answer to the difficulties of the last days, in praying things through on the Church. It is necessary to get the women to pray and say, "God, take us through the stages of your empowerment for the last days, take us through those levels. **(Please see Appendix IV: Some Practical Advice On Private Prayer and Appendix V: Looking For And Hastening The Coming Of The Day Of God.)**

2) Charismatic Gifts Extended In Discipline And Judgement: At this present time we operate in mercy, but when Satan is thrown out of the heavenlies into the earth by Michael and his angels and God's restraint is removed from the Devil and his evil angels (Dan 12v1, 2Thess 2v7,8, Rev 12v7-17) and the wicked and the vast armies of Antichrist and his allies link up with Satan, there has got to be the extension in the Church of the gifts of the Spirit in discipline and judgement. God will not leave us, the Church, to face the wicked with no teeth; **HE WILL NOT LEAVE US DEFENSELESS!** The Two Witnesses for three and a half years **CANNOT** be killed, these have power to shut heaven, so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy; and they have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues, **as often as they desire** and call fire down from Heaven. Dan 11v32, Rev 11v3-6. For the whole of three and a half years **ALL** the might of Antichrist and his armies **CANNOT** kill them.

WOMEN: GET PRAYING TO RAISE UP LAST DAY ELIJAH MINISTRIES IN THE CHURCH! Mal 4v5,6, Matt 9v38, 17v11.

3) Charismatic Gifts Extended To A New Level Of Continuous Use: Not just the manifestation of one gift here and one there, **BUT** Christians living in the Spirit who will experience continuous revelation **ALL** day, especially in those parts of the world (like the Middle East) where there is **GREAT EVIL!** An increase in the level of God's answer to the revelation of the activity of the powers of darkness.

4) Spiritual Gifts And Ministries Extended To The Level Of Transportation And Angelic Ministry (Matt 24v16, Rev 12v6,14): God will take groups and individual Christians and transport them by supernatural transportation (like experienced by Elijah and Philip, 1Kings 18v12, Acts 8v39,40), plus provision of food and divine protection in safe places. God will be with Christians in the Great Tribulation like He was with Stephen, thus purifying them and making them white. Neh 9v20,21, Dan 11v35, Acts 6v8-7v60.

GOD HAS HIS ANSWERS IN THE POWER GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT!

5) God's Personal Acts Of Power And Judgement: The Seven Trumpets And Seven Vials are God's direct judgement upon the wicked again and again, and the wicked **KNOW IT IS GOD**, but they don't repent but blaspheme and curse Him. These judgements only harden further the wicked, even as it did Pharaoh! They take on the evil nature of the evil spirits that they serve. Rom 9v17,18, Rev 8v2-9v21, 11v15-19, chapters 15 & 16.

6) The Final Stage Of Judgement At Christ's Second Coming: The wrath of The Lamb, as He appears in great power and glory; the wicked **DON'T** repent, **BUT** turn and fight him. Psalm 2, Rev 19v19. But before the Second Coming three angels preach the Everlasting Gospel to **ALL** the earth. Rev 14. Antichrist and his armies are consumed by the breath of His mouth at His Coming. Zech 14, 2Thess 2v1-12.

There is then silence in Heaven for half an hour (7th Seal, Rev 8v1), as the redeemed and the angels look down upon a completely shattered earth. **THE PLAN OF EVIL HAS BEEN MANIFESTED TO THE FULL**, but this is part of God's Plan, that is that **ALL** have a full manifestation of sin and evil and its end burnt into their (our) being! It is **THIS** that will be the basis of the happiness of Heaven in the Millennium and the Ages of Ages. **We must not only LOVE righteousness BUT HATE EVIL!** Eph 3v9-11, 2Thess 2v1-12, Heb 1v9, Rev 10v7.

Conclusion

To conclude this short study on the heavenly places in Christ, I go to Scripture, Rom 13v11-14, with 1Thess 5v4-6 and 2Peter 1v19 states:

"And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof...We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts...But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober."
(Please see Appendix VII: Oil For Our Lamps.)

Appendix I: Put On The Whole Armour Of God. Eph 6v10-20.

To deliver the captives of Satan, we first have to have victory over him in our lives; we have to bind the strong man before we can spoil his goods. We have to overcome Satan by answering every lying temptation with the Truth, we have to put on **ALL** the armour of God. Matt 12v18-30, Mark 3v22-30, Eph 6v10-20. It is as follows:-

The belt of truth: A right knowledge of God's Word and Christian Doctrine.

The breastplate of righteousness: God's Word of Truth is applied to the life and it results in a practical holy life, the heart is kept pure, there is integrity of purpose, truthfulness, sincerity, genuine love and faithfulness.

The feet shod with the Gospel: An evangelistic fervour; a desire to extend God's kingdom and preach God's good news of forgiveness and peace.

The shield of faith: The 4 feet by 2 feet Roman type shield is spoken of here. A complete trust in God and His word at all times can quench all Satan's flaming darts.

The helmet of salvation: A disciplined and pure thought-life. We think what God thinks, and weigh everything up in the light of God's Word and our salvation. False doctrines, impure thoughts, and worldliness are banished from the Christian mind. All is looked upon and judged in the light of an eternal future.

The sword of the Spirit: The ability to use God's Word against Satan and his children. This presupposes a knowledge of the Scriptures and essential Christian Truth.

Prayer: (Greek, "proseuche" (Strong's NT:4335) and "enteuxis" (Strong's NT:1783) which mean "the making of interventions with power so as to affect a change in circumstances"). The spear, or bow and arrow? A vigilant, intelligent and persevering prayer life, for all the saints and the ministries that God has set in the Church. Rom 12v6-8, 1Cor 12v28, Eph 4v8-11.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(For a more in-depth study on the covenant names of Yahweh, please see Bill Turner's study titled, "The Name Of

Jesus Gifts To Us All The Covenant Names Of Yahweh" which can be found at www.truthfortheolddays.com)

Appendix III: The Spiritual Qualities That Make Up The Character Of The Overcomer.

The spiritual qualities that make up the character of the overcomer. Rev 2v7,11,17,26-28, 3v5,12,21.

Christ has solemnly warned the Christians of the last days that they will have to live very careful, prayerful and godly lives if they are to overcome and come through the gross darkness of the Great Tribulation with flying colours. Dan 7v25, 8v23, 12v1, Matt 7v24-29, 24v11-13,42-25v13, Mark 4v19, Luke 8v14, 18v1-8, 1John 2v28, Rev 7v9,14-17.

NOTE: There is no such doctrine as a secret pre-tribulation Advent and Rapture taught in the Scriptures!

The spiritual qualities that cause a person to be an overcomer and the things an overcomer does and is are as follows:

- 1) They Love The Word Of God. They are not lazy in Bible study, they learn the doctrines and truths of God's Word, they know truth and long for more, it is the joy and rejoicing of their heart. Joshua 1v8, Psalm 1 all, John 17v17,26, Acts 17v10,11, 20v32, Rom 6v17, Eph 6v14,17, 2Tim 3v15-17, Heb 5v11-14, 2Pet 2v2.
- 2) They Love To Do God's Will. They actively serve God, they seek the lost, they have an evangelical fervour. Isaiah 52v7, Matt 6v10, 26v42, 28v18-20, John 4v34, 5v30, 12v26, Rom 12v1,2, Col 1v9, Heb 10v7, 12v23. They obey the will of God as revealed by the Spirit of God. Rom 8v14, Eph 4v30, 1Thess 5v17, Rev 2v7,11,17,29, 3v6,13,22. They obey the will of God as revealed by the Word of God, e.g. "follow after love and desire spiritual gifts." Matt 7v21, 12v30, Luke 6v46, 11v34, John 14v21-24, 1Cor 14v1.
- 3) They Love To Seek Their Father's Face. They love to pray, they have a life of public and private praise and prayer, they tarry for the Spirit, they wait on God. Psalm 27v8, 34v3,6, 37v9, 62v1,2,5,6 84v4-10, 91v1,2,9,14,15, Matt 6v5-15, Luke 11v1-13, 18v1-8, Eph 6v18,19, 1Thess 3v10, 5v17, Jude v20,21.
- 4) They Love To Walk With God In Their Daily Lives. They live a practical holy life. Rom 8v5-14, Gal 5v16-26, Eph 4v1-3,17-32, 5v1-6v9. By the grace of God they keep themselves pure and in victory. They are not in bondage to sin. By the grace of their Saviour they have overcome the world, the flesh and the Devil. Psalm 37v23,24, Matt 5v8, John 16v33, Rom 6v14-23, 2Cor 7v1, Phil 3v7-21, 1Thess 4v2,3, 1John 2v13-17, 3v1-10, 4v4, 5v4, Rev 14v1-5.
- 5) They Love the Brethren. Psalm 133v1-3, John 13v34,35, 15:12-15, Acts 1v14, 2v1,44-47, 4v32,37, Phil 4v1, 1Thess 2v11, 1John 3v10-24, 4v7-5v3. They love to have fellowship with God's people, and dwell on the things of God together. Deut 6v4-9, Prov 27v17, Mal 3v16-18, Heb 10v24,25. In the home as well as the church building. Matt 23v37-39, Acts 2v1-4 with 1v13, Rom 16v5, 1Cor 16v19, Col 4v15, Philemon v2. Our conversation should be centred on heavenly things and should be such as becomes the Gospel of Christ, gracious and loving like those of our gracious Lord, "They were all astonished at the beautiful words that fell from His lips." Luke 4v22 cf. Col 4v6. If this is not so, there is a definite need of reconsecration. Matt 15v10,11, Mark 7v20-23, Eph 5v4,5.
- 6) The letters to the seven churches in the book of Revelation give us a very good idea of what the Lord expects of the Christian, and what an overcoming Christian is like. We read the Christians are to have works, love, service, faith, patience, increasing works, a willingness to be faithful unto death, a separation from the world, spiritual alertness, and the thing that will assure all these, they must keep their fervent first love for Christ. Perhaps more qualities of the overcomer could be added to these, but these will suffice. In **ALL** things we are to follow the example of Christ, for by His grace we can overcome **ALL** that comes our way. Matt 11v28-30, 13v23, Luke 8v8,15, John 15v1-8, 1John 2v6, 4v17, Rev 12v10,11.

NOW is the time to prepare for the dark evil days of the Great Tribulation, for those who are unprepared for it will surely backslide and go into apostasy. Luke 6v46-49, 2Thess 2v3.

Appendix IV: Some Practical Advice On Private Prayer.

1) Use your Bible in your prayer time.

I have proved that Bible study with prayer is the best way of seeking God for hours in prayer, recorded Bible readings also have real value, and can provide valuable inspiration and aid to prayer while driving the car, but "watch and pray."

2) Use the gift of tongues that the Holy Spirit has given to you.

The gift of tongues is given primarily for prayer and worship, and if used diligently it will not only bring answers to

prayer for ourselves and others, it will also build faith, love and spiritual strength in us. This gift enables us to praise and worship the Lord as He deserves, and gives us the ability to express the otherwise inexpressible love and devotion that we feel for Him. By using this beautiful gift diligently, God reveals divine mysteries to our spirits. 1Cor 14v2,4,14,15,17, Acts 2v4,11, 10v44-46.

3) Do use your hymn book.

In 1Cor 14v15, Paul said we should sing and pray with the understanding as well as in tongues. Eph 5v18-20, Col 3v15-17. We can do this by reading and singing hymns that express what we feel and desire. In Acts 16v25, the literal sense is, "praying, they sang hymns." Use the great hymns of the Church; for they cover every need and circumstance, as well as every aspect of prayer and praise. Mature Christians need hymns of depth and substance, use this Divine treasury of Christian experience.

4) Use recorded sacred music.

Some recorded sacred music has a great anointing; and it can be a great blessing to listen to them in our prayer times and our tasks around the home. Sacred music is a great blessing, particularly if we are experiencing spiritual conflict, or are in physical need. Elisha used music to carry him into the presence of God; he asked for a minstrel to play while he sought God in prayer; "and it came to pass, when the minstrel played, the hand of the Lord came upon him." 2Kings 3v14-16. In both Bible study and prayer, I have proved the value and divinely ordained inspiration of sacred music, it has been more blessing to me than I can ever tell. Do use this heavenly means of grace.

5) Don't be tied to one posture, or one time of prayer.

We know from Eph 3v14, that Paul knelt in prayer, but he did not limit his praying to kneeling and praying. Paul told us to "Rejoice always; never stop praying; in everything give thanks; for this is God's will in Christ Jesus for you." 1Thess 5v16-18. Paul stresses the importance of a life of prayer, not just a time of prayer. Do not just kneel and pray, sit and pray, walk and pray, work and pray, and rest and relax and pray. We can practice and enjoy prayer at any time. "Sitting." Acts 2v2. With "feet fast in stocks. Acts 16v24,25. "Lifting to heaven holy, loving and devoted hands, which are unstained by anger, disputes and dissensions." 1Tim 2v8. The most important attitude in prayer, is the posture of love and dedication to God and others.

6) Follow the pattern for prayer that Jesus gave us in, "The Lord's prayer."

Jesus tells us the attitudes of heart and mind that will bring a knowledge of God, a fullness of the Spirit and answered prayer. (See Appendix VI: The Lord's Prayer.)

7) Raise your hands (Exodus 17v8-16 with 1Tim 2v1-8).

When Moses let his arms drop due to being weary, Amalek prevailed over Israel, but when his arms were then supported by Hur and Aaron until the going down of the sun, Israel then prevailed and Joshua defeated Amalek. When a believer raises their hands when praying (see also Ezra 9v5, Neh 8v6, Psalm 28v2, 63v4, 88v9, 119v48, 134v2, 141v2), this has the effect of releasing divine power into the heavenlies against Satan and the powers of darkness and shutting them down and de-energising them, making them powerless and so rendering the servants of Satan powerless (whom they energise). Like Moses did, we should also invoke the covenant Name of Yahweh Nissi (The Lord our Banner and Conqueror, Exodus 17v15) against Satan and the powers of darkness.

Appendix V: Looking For And Hastening The Coming Of The Day Of God.

It has been the consensus amongst Christians for many centuries that they individually or collectively can do absolutely nothing to hasten the coming of the day of God. However, it is the complete opposite that is true, 2Peter 3v12 states:

"**Looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God**, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat?" (NKJV)

"Hastening" is in Greek, "speúdontas," the present active participle (accusative also) of "speúdo" (Strong's NT:4692), which means "to speed" i.e., urge on (diligently or earnestly); by implication, to await eagerly, (make, with) haste unto, to cause something to happen soon, to hurry up. Archbishop Trench, in his work "The Authorized Version of the New Testament" makes the following comment:

"...Hastening on;" i.e., "causing the day of the Lord to come more quickly by helping to fulfill those conditions without which it cannot come; that day being no day inexorably fixed, but one the arrival of which it is free to the church to hasten on by faith and by prayer."

Both "looking for" and "hastening" in the Greek are in the present continuous tense (active voice), which shows that each individual believer **MUST** keep praying (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336) and "entunchano" (Strong's NT:1793), both of which have the meaning, "to make "interventions" (with power) so as to affect a change in the circumstances.") and watching for the signs of the Lord's Second Coming to appear and to keep it up until He actually comes in great power and glory to destroy the wicked and to take His people home. Luke v17v20-18v8 (esp. 18v1), Luke 21v36 (RSV), Rev 5v1-14 (esp. v8), 8v2-6 (esp. v3,4).

With this in mind, each individual believer can by praying (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336) and "enteuxis" (Strong's NT:1783), which mean, "to make "interventions" (with power) so as to affect a change in the circumstances.") hasten the coming the day of God. The following seven **NBs** contain the thoughts and great desires that are upon God's heart at this present time that He is seeking His Church to pray ("proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336) and "entunchano" (Strong's NT:1793)) into being and so to quicken the coming of the Day of God.

NB1: As the last seven years (the 70th week of Daniel's 70 week prophecy, Daniel 9v20-27) of this Age (the Age of Grace) rapidly approaches, especially the last three and a half years of this Age (the period known as The Great Tribulation, Dan 9v27, Matt 24v15-28, Rev 7v9-17), the Devil is busy endeavouring to put his evil servants into positions of power and authority; wicked people who will put the Devil's and Antichrist's evil plans into operation (which is to kill as many people (both believers and non-believers) and destroy as much as possible, before they themselves are destroyed at Christ's Second Coming by being consumed by the breath of His mouth, 2Thess 2v8). It is during the last three and a half years of this Age, that the Mystery of Lawlessness (the Devil's evil plan) will work fully; which will be the result of the Devil and his evil Angels being expelled from the Heavenly places by Michael and his Angels into the Earth, and God's restraint upon the Devil and the powers of darkness being completely removed, hence The Great Tribulation will begin, which should be pointed out is due to the "great wrath of the Devil, because he knows that he has a short time," and **NOT** the wrath of God. Rev 12v7-17 (esp. v 12), 2Thess 2v1-12.

The Devil will then proceed to put his evil plan (the Mystery of Lawlessness) into operation through Antichrist and other evil persons, whom he has put into positions of power and authority (Matt 4v8-10, Rev 13v1-10, 16v12-16), so it is **NOW** most vital, that we, the believers, are obedient to this most important injunction made by Paul in 1Timothy 2v1-8 (with Rom 13v1-7), to make "interventions" (with power) ("proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336) and "entunchano" (Strong's NT:1793), 1Tim 2v1), (for and against) "for all men, for kings and all who are in authority," that God will put honest, upright, wise, godly and compassionate persons into places of power and authority, and thwart the Devil's attempts to put his own evil servants into these places; for it is the Most High Who rules in the kingdom of men and gives it to whomsoever He wishes, and sets over it the lowest of men. Daniel 4v17.

NB2: Rev 12v6,14 states:

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

This group of specially prepared Christians (that flee from Antichrist in Jerusalem and the surrounding area) is definitely said to have a place prepared by God for them to escape to at the beginning of the Great Tribulation; it is **MOST** important that Christians should pray (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336)) **NOW**, for God to prepare the areas of Edom, Moab and Ammon ("the wilderness" that is referred to in Rev 12v14 and which are situated in the eastern part of modern day Jordan) to be ready to receive this "glorious woman" at the beginning of the Great Tribulation. Christians firstly should invoke the following covenant names in the heavenly places over these three areas (and modern day Jordan), Yahweh Tsabaoth, the Lord of Hosts (1Sam 17v45, Psalm 46v7,11), and Yahweh Jireh, the Lord Who See and Provides (Gen 22v14), that these areas will know continuous angelic protection from this time forth, right up until the second coming of the Lord Jesus, but especially during the dark evil days of the Great Tribulation, and that **ALL** things will be **FULLY** "prepared" by "the Lord Who Sees and Provides" for His people. Secondly, Christians should also impart the divine benediction by using the priestly blessing of Numbers 6v22-27 upon Edom, Moab, Ammon and modern day Jordan. If Christians pray like this **NOW**, these areas of Edom, Moab and Ammon, will most certainly be **FULLY** prepared and protected by God, to receive His people at the beginning off the Great Tribulation, so that they are fed, kept, guarded and protected right up until the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus. **NOTE:** Rev 5v8, "...which are the prayers (Greek "proseuche" (Strong's NT:4335), "to make interventions with power so as to affect a change in circumstances.") of saints." 2Pet 3v12. (We see in Rev 4 and 5, the preliminaries in Heaven just before the seals are opened, that is, before the events of the last seven years of this Age start to come to pass (Daniel's Seventieth prophetic week, Dan 9v27). The seven seals reveal Satan's evil

plans for the world during the last seven years of this age. Paul calls Satan's plans "the mystery of iniquity." 2Thess 2v7. The seals reveal the major catastrophic stages of the career of Antichrist from the time when he makes the covenant, until the great day of the wrath of the Lamb brings his evil career to a close. It is the "prayers of the saints" (Rev 5v7,8) that precipitates God the Father to invite the Lord Jesus to take the Book out of His right hand so as to loose the seven seals thereof to bring to pass the last seven years of this age. Dan 9v27, 6v1-17, 8v1)

NB3: We read in Matt 9v37,38:

"Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, **but the labourers are few**; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, **that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.**"

It is also most essential for Christians (especially those Christians in Israel) to pray (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336), "to make interventions with power so as to affect a change in circumstances.") **NOW** for God to raise up the Two Witnesses, and other Christians whom He will set in the Body of Christ with the same level of power and authority as the Two Witnesses. We **MUST** also pray (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336)) for God to give these "labourers" the same kind of power and authority that He gave unto the prophet Elijah (1Kings 17v1-21v29, 2Kings 1v1-2v11 Dan 11v32, Rev 11v3-6), and then to "send them forth into His harvest." It is also a necessity for us to pray (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336)) for God to fulfil such prophecies and promises, as those stated in Rev 11v3-6 and Zech chapter 4, but especially the wonderful promise and prophecy that He spoke through His servant Malachi in Mal 4v5,6 (with Luke 1v17 and Matt 17v11):

"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to the fathers, the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

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

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

Behind every great prophet and prophetess, there has **ALWAYS** been someone behind the scenes, who has earnestly sought the Lord and prayed (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336)) them into their ministry. Very often this is the result of the prayers (Greek "proseuche" (Strong's NT:4335)) of a godly loving mother or aunt; as in the case of Jeremiah, when his aunt, the great Old Testament prophetess, Huldah, was the person responsible for praying (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336)) him into his prophetic ministry as a young man. We can gauge the depth of her spirituality and prophetic ministry from the incident when King Josiah asked Hilkiah, the high priest, to inquire of the Lord as what should be done at that time, Hilkiah promptly went and sought out Huldah, and as soon as he had asked for the word of the Lord, Huldah was able to give it too him straight away. However, when the remnant of those left in the southern kingdom came and asked Jeremiah to seek the word of the Lord for them, it was ten days before the reply came from the Lord for them (which they didn't heed anyway); and so from this, we can see just how in touch with the Lord Huldah was and the depth of her spirituality and prophetic ministry! 2Kings 22v3-20 (esp. v14), Jer 1v1-19 (esp. v6), 32v7, Jer 42v1-22 (esp. v7).

NB4: Rev 12v1 (with Rev 12v2-17) states:

"And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars."

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

Another of the desires upon the great loving Heart of our Heavenly Father, is the necessity for His people to get ready and prepared for the dark evil days of the Great Tribulation; however at the present moment in time, very few, if any,

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

NB5: Psalm 2v8 and Rev 5v7 reads:

"**Ask of me**, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession...**And he came and took the book** out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne."

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

It is most important for **ALL** believers to pray (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336), "to make interventions with power so as to affect a change in circumstances.") **NOW** that God will invite the Lord Jesus to come and ask Him for His inheritance and possession, so that He takes the Book out of His Father's right hand, so as to open the seven seals thereof to bring to pass the last seven years of this Age, so that the Father can then, at the end of these seven years, send the Lord Jesus to come and deal with the wicked once and for all, to take His people home and bring in everlasting righteousness by sealing up vision and prophecy and setting up the Millennium Kingdom. **NOTE:** Rev 5v8, "...which are the prayers (Greek "proseuche" (Strong's NT:4335)) of the saints..." with Matt 6v9,10, "After this manner therefore pray (Greek "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT4336)) ye...**Thy kingdom come.**" (It is the "prayers of the saints" (Rev 5v7,8) that precipitates God the Father to invite the Lord Jesus to take the Book out of His right hand so as to loose the seven seals thereof to bring to pass the last seven years of this age. Dan 9v27, 6v1-17, 8v1) Dan 9v27, Matt 6v5-15, Luke 11v1-13 (esp. 11v2), 2Pet 3v12, Rev 11v15-19.

(The seven seals show the major stages in the career of Antichrist, from the covenant, to seven years later, when he and his evil system is destroyed on the great day of the Lamb's wrath. An angel asks who is worthy to rule the world after Antichrist has brought the world to almost complete ruin; the answer is only Christ and His faithful brethren. Rev 5v5,9,10, Rom 8v19. This age will close when Jesus has enough brethren to rule the Millennial kingdom with Him. Rev 14v1-5, 17v14, 2Pet 3v12. John's vision in Rev 4 and 5, was not a revelation of events in Heaven in the time of John, it was a vision of events in Heaven just prior to the last seven years of this age. When Jesus opens the seven seals, it starts the last 7 years of this age, and the mystery of iniquity. Dan 9v20-27, 2Thess 2v1-12.

Satan's plans are restrained by God, and even when the mystery of iniquity is allowed to have its final fling, God reigns and His kingdom will surely come quickly. All of Heaven's inhabitants are perfectly satisfied at Christ's worthiness to open the seals and receive the kingdom, and they rejoice that divine love will rule the nations, after the evil rule of men. John was heartbroken and wept because no one could open the book and loose the seals, but one of the elders comforted John and said, "Weep not; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the book, and loose the seals thereof." As God, Jesus was the source of David's family and the means of its sustenance, anchorage and strength; as a man He was the offspring of David. Isaiah 11v1,10, Rom 1v3,4, Rev 22v16. John looks for this Lion of Judah, but sees a Lamb as it had been slain. The most courageous act of the Lion of Judah was His death as the Lamb of God, this shows His courage and love more than all else. The title "Lamb" occurs 29 times in Revelation, but it is only applied to Jesus 4 times in the rest of the New Testament. John 1v29,36, Acts 8v32, 1Pet 1v19. Men often use mighty beasts and birds of prey as symbols of power, but God uses a Lamb to show the greatest act of courage, strength and love the world has ever known; Calvary is the ultimate act of power and love. The Lamb of God is worthy to reign because of the sacrificial love revealed in His death upon Calvary. Phil 2v5-11.

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

NB6: On the day of Pentecost, Peter stood up and said in Acts 2v16-21 (with Joel 2v28-32):

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

The Lord Jesus, during the His Post-Resurrection ministry to the Apostles, had told them "I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high," when He (the Holy Spirit) that was with them, would then enter them, which was the Baptism in the Holy Spirit that they would receive. Luke 24v49, John 7v39, 14v17, Acts 2v4,38. It was during the Post-Resurrection ministry that the Lord Jesus had instructed them regarding Joel's prophecy, that this was the glorious prophecy which referred to the "Promise of the Father" (i.e., power from on high), and that it was **vital** for them to tarry in the Upper Room, and pray (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336), "to make interventions with power so as to affect a change in circumstances.") this great prophecy and promise into reality. The Lord Jesus did not tell them the precise timing of when they would receive the Promise of the Father (this was because that if they had known, some of them might have just sat back and said, "well I don't need to pray (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336)), God is going to do it anyway"), but simply said, "ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." Acts 1v5. The Apostles were obedient to His command, and with other disciples (one hundred and twenty of them in all), they prayed (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336)) Joel's wonderful great prophecy and promise into reality. Acts 1v14,15, 2v1-4. The great outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost was only a partial fulfilment of Joel's prophecy, which also had a fulfilment throughout the whole of the Age of Grace to encourage the Church to pray for revival, blessing, spiritual gifts and ministries from their risen Lord. 1Cor 12v7-11, Eph 4v7-16. Joel's great prophecy and promise has a final and complete fulfilment at the end of the Age of Grace, for it specifically says, "**it shall come to pass in the last days...I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh...before that great and notable day of the Lord come.**" Even as the one hundred and twenty disciples in the Upper Room prayed (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336)) Joel's wonderful prophecy and promise into reality on the Day of Pentecost, it is also **VITAL** for the Church to pray (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336)) **NOW** for God to pour out of His Spirit upon the Church and the world...i.e., "**upon ALL flesh.**" God's people need to claim the complete fulfilment of Joel's great prophecy and promise **NOW**, and **MUST** continue to claim the complete fulfilment of it right up until the Lord's Second Coming. There will certainly be a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit when Daniel's Seventieth week starts, when Antichrist "confirms a covenant with many (including Israel) for one week," which also refers to the opening of the First Seal. Dan 9v27, Rev 6v1,2. Another and even greater outpouring will occur, when Antichrist breaks the covenant, and sets up his image in the Temple in Jerusalem (at the beginning of the Great Tribulation). During the last seven years of the Age of Grace, the Church and the world will know a time of the greatest worldwide revival that has ever been experienced, and **NOW** is the time for the Body of Christ to pray (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336)) so that this great outpouring becomes a reality very soon, and also is **FULLY** experienced during the last seven years of this Age. Acts 2v16-21, Rev 5v8, 11v3-6, 12v1.

NB7: With the Devil and his evil angels being cast out of the heavenlies into the earth, and God's restraining hand being removed from them, the Great Tribulation then ensues. The responsibility for the restraint upon the powers of darkness and the wicked upon the earth, during the Great Tribulation, will be the Church's, and it will be through each individual believer's prayers (Greek, "proseuche" (Strong's NT:4335)) and "interventions" (with power), (Greek, "enteuxis" (Strong's NT:1783), both of which mean, "to make interventions with power so as to affect a change in circumstances."), that this restraint will occur. The amount of evil and wickedness that will be found in any society around the world during the Great Tribulation, will be inversely proportional to the amount of prayer (Greek, "proseuche" (Strong's NT:4335)) and "interventions" (with power) (Greek, "enteuxis" (Strong's NT:1783)) that the believers of that society will make, in other words, the more prayer and "interventions" (with power) that the believers make for their society in which they live, the less evil and wickedness will be manifested in it. Hence, as soon as Antichrist sets up his image in the Temple in Jerusalem and breaks the peace treaty with Israel, the Great Tribulation then ensues and these are the signs that the Christian should be earnestly watching for, so that as soon as they appear, the responsibility for restraint upon the powers of darkness, wicked persons and wickedness in the world will lie solely with the Church. It is at this time that each individual believer **MUST** start making prayers (Greek, "proseuche" (Strong's NT:4335)) and "interventions" (with power) (Greek, "enteuxis" (Strong's NT:1783)) against the evil angels and wicked people upon earth to restrain their activities. When the wicked see Divine judgement falling upon other evil persons (which will be via the believer's prayers (Greek, "proseuche" (Strong's NT:4335)) and "interventions" (with power) (Greek, "enteuxis" (Strong's NT:1783))), many (although not all) will think twice before putting their evil desires into practice to hurt, harm or kill God's dear children, hence, the believer's prayers and "interventions" (with power) will actively restrain the wicked. It will be during the Great Tribulation that the last World War will occur (before the 2nd coming of Christ), and the desire of the Devil (through Antichrist) will be to smash the world completely, which Antichrist will do with vast conventional armies and limited exchanges of nuclear weapons. So, it is vital for Christians to exercise prayer (Greek, "proseuche" (Strong's NT:4335)) and "interventions" (with

power) (Greek, "enteuxis" (Strong's NT:1783)) **NOW**, so that they will be spiritually prepared for those terrible dark evil days, and can act as an effective restraint upon the powers of darkness and the wicked during the last three and half years of this Age, so that the country and society in which they live is not completely destroyed by Antichrist's armies and followers. Isaiah 26v9, Dan 9v27, 11v32,41, Zech 12v8, Luke 18v1-8, 2Thess 2v1-12, 1Tim2v1-8, Rev 6v7,8, 9v13-21, 11v3-6,18, 12v13-17.

Also NOTE: Another reason why God cannot let the last seven years of this Age (of Grace) begin to come to pass is that the required number of overcoming Sons, who will replace the present world rulers (the Devil and the evil angels) in the heavenly places during the Millennium, must first be begotten, educated and tested; and so when God knows that this number is at hand, He will then invite the Lord Jesus to take the Book out of His right hand, so that He might loose the Seven Seals thereof; which will then bring to pass Daniel's 70th (prophetic) week, which will end with the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus when He comes in great power and glory (so that **EVERY** eye will see Him), to deal with the wicked once and for all, to take His people home and bring in everlasting righteousness by sealing up vision and prophecy. It will be when the six and seventh seals are opened and the seventh Trumpet sounds (these all occur on the last day of this age (the Age of Grace) at the Second Coming of Christ) that the "mystery of God" will be completed. (The "mystery of God" is God's plan to put both Heaven and Earth under the rule of His Son Jesus and His bride (i.e., the Church), and to fulfil upon the earth the promise made to Abraham and his seed, Israel, that they should inherit the earth. The inhabited earth to come is not again to be put under angels, but under Christ and His brethren who overcame.) The believer who accepts the call of their Lord, to rise up with Him into the heavenly places, to conquer and defeat the Devil and powers of darkness, so as to enter into and inhabit their Heavenly Canaan, will be exercising a priestly ministry of the Melchizedek Priesthood (by manifesting God's great power and love to the worldling and Church through the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, upon earth and the heavenly places), with Jesus as their Great High Priest (after the Order of Melchizedek). It is the Christians who are exercising a priestly ministry of the Melchizedek Priesthood who will be praying (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336) and "entunchano" (Strong's NT:1793), which mean "to make interventions with power so as to effect a change in circumstances.") for the Lord Jesus to take the Book out of the Father's Right Hand and so bring to pass the last seven years of this age. These Christians will also be praying (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336) and "entunchano" (Strong's NT:1793)) for God to bring judgement upon the wicked who are persecuting and killing Christians during the dark evil days of the Great Tribulation. These Christians are a group of people, who are foreknown, designed, specially created and empowered by God for the Great Tribulation; a group of praying people, with prepared hearts and special ministries for the last days, who will operate with awesome power as a prayer-warrior group behind the scenes. God also gives a definite promise that He will protect, provide and empower the seeking hearts in His Church in a new and special way in the last days, and will not leave His Church defenceless in the Great Tribulation. Some of these Christians will belong to a group of believers in Israel during the dark evil days of the Great Tribulation, who are represented by the glorious woman of Rev 12v1 (already mentioned in **NB2** and **NB4**), which reveals that part of the Church will be clothed with the fullness of God's power, and will be transported, protected and fed by God. This group is a major part of God's answer to the "mystery of iniquity," and it is one of many such groups, who operate in other parts of the world. It is these Christians who will be exercising a priestly ministry of the Melchizedek Priesthood during the last seven years of this age (and even more so during the dark evil days of the Great Tribulation) and who will be amongst those who will rule with Christ during the Millennium. (Rev 5v10, "...and hast made them kings and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.") Dan 9v20-27 (esp. v27), 10v13-21, 11v32, Matt 25v41, Mark 16v15-18, Luke 17v20-18v8, 19v11-27, 24v46-49, John 3v13, 7v37-39, 12v40, 17v24, Acts 1v4-8, 2v16-21, Rom 1v17, 4v1-25, 8v12-39, 1Cor 9v24-27, 12v1-14v40, 12v31, 15v50-54, Eph 6v12, Col 3v1,2, 1Thess 4v13-18, 2Thess 2v1-12 (esp. v8), 1Tim 2v1-8, 2Tim 4v8, Heb 2v4,5-13, 3v1-4v16, 7v25, James 1v12, 1Pet 2v1-9, 5v1-4, Rev 1v7, 4v1-5v14, 6v12-17, 7v1-8, 8v1,2-6, 10v1-11 (esp. v7), 11v15-19, 12v1,6,7-9,14-16, 14v1-5, 21v7.

The believer, by praying (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336)) and making "interventions" (with power) (Greek, "enteuxis" (Strong's NT:1783)) as indicated in these seven NBS ("nota benes"), will surely "hasten the coming of the Day of God." 2Pet 3v12.

Appendix VI: The Lord's Prayer.

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

Matt 6v9-13 states:

"After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy

will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen."

Luke 11v2-4 reads:

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

The Essential Attitudes Of Heart And Mind In Prayer.

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

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

"When you pray, say, Father." In Jesus we have a new and blessed relationship with the Father; we are brethren of Christ, joint heirs with Christ, and God's own beloved children. 1John 3v1, John 15v9, 17v23, Rom 8v17, Heb 2v10-20, 6v13-20. Hallelujah!

We must have a continual spirit of worship.

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

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

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

We must be free from anxiety over material needs.

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

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

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

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

We must beware of roots of bitterness and an unforgiving spirit, for Jesus warns us that we can only ask for forgiveness "in proportion as, or like as," "hos," we forgive others, a truly solemn warning, which is reiterated by Christ elsewhere. Matt 6v12,14,15, Mark 11v25,26. Jesus tells us to rebuke Christians who sin against us, and **IF** they repent, we must forgive them. Luke 17v3,4. Let us make every effort to achieve reconciliation and forgiveness with Christians, and make it easy for those who have offended us to repent, and exercise a forgiving spirit to them. However, Jesus said that repentance is necessary before fellowship can be restored, and failure to repent after the procedure laid down in Matt 18v15-17, means that a person loses their rights to be treated as a Christian. Let us remember that God's forgiveness is always conditional upon repentance. Matt 5v23,24, 18v20-35, Mark 11v22-26, Luke 6v37, 23v34, Eph 4v30-32, Gal 6v1-3, 1John 4v20,21. Jesus certainly did not try to be reconciled with Israel's religious leaders; His attacks upon them were extremely contentious. Matt 23v13-39, Luke 11v39-54. Christ asked the Father to forgive the soldiers who were crucifying Him, they really did not know what they were doing; however,

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

We must allow God to lead us from dangerous paths.

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

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

In the phrase, "lead us not into temptation," Jesus was speaking of dangers and temptations that can be avoided by prayerful living. See Luke 22v40. Here He speaks of conflicts with evil that we cannot avoid and must face. These conflicts demand a prayerful life and a real faith in God, for we cannot defeat Satan on our own, we must draw near to God before we can effectively resist the Devil. James 4v6-8. Persecution or opposition of some kind or other will always come against the consecrated child of God, and supernatural opposition from Satan is often channeled through his earthly friends. Matt 4v1-11, Acts 13v50-52, 2Cor 1v8-10, Eph 1v2, 6v10-20, 2Thes 3v1-3, 2Tim 2v12, 3v12. We must believe that God will deliver us, and will answer our prayers, as we follow and obey our Lord's pattern of prayer, and if our prayers accomplish anything, we must remember that His power has brought it to pass, and we must give Him all the glory.

Appendix VII: Oil For Our Lamps.

We can gauge the importance of Christ's Second Coming by contrasting the number of times it is mentioned in the Scriptures alongside other teachings:

- 1) The "new Birth" (conversion) is mentioned 9 times in the New Testament.
- 2) Baptism is mentioned 20 times
- 3) Repentance is mentioned 70 times

4) The Second Coming is mentioned 380 times in the New Testament alone!

Matt 25v1-13 states:

"Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish. Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept. "And at midnight a cry was heard: 'Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!' Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' But the wise answered, saying, 'No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.' And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut. "Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us!' But he answered and said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.' "Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming."

The question is: "What does the oil in the lamps represent"?

The "virgins" represent Christians who are waiting for the return of the Bridegroom (Christ), 5 are wise and 5 are foolish, the wise have extra oil the foolish do not. The Bridegroom tarries and they all fall asleep, suddenly at midnight a cry goes up, "The Bridegroom cometh." They all awake, the foolish find that their lamps have gone out, but the wise are prepared. The foolish try to get the necessary oil, but it is too late, there just isn't time!

This is what the oil is NOT:

It is not grace, for we receive grace for the day.

It is not holiness, for all were virgins, all were pure.

It is not prayerfulness and watchfulness every moment, for all (including the wise) fell asleep.

It is not constantly being filled with the Spirit, for the oil was something they (the wise) acquired before they fell asleep.

It is not the Baptism in the Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit, for these don't need to be "stored", they can be received anytime and many will receive these things when they are converted during the Great Tribulation. You only get baptised in the Spirit once, thereafter you keep getting refilled. There are a lot of Christians who get baptised in the Spirit who are not ready for the Great Tribulation. The gifts of the Spirit do not constitute extra oil, for once a gift has been given it is always there; and there are many with the gifts of the Spirit who are scared to death to even think about the Great Tribulation.

What difference is there between the wise and foolish virgins? All were pure and ready to meet the Bridegroom. All were waiting for the Bridegroom to return. The wise were not more watchful and prayerful than the foolish for all fell asleep. The **ONLY** difference was the wise took extra oil. What for? **For THE DARKNESS!** They wanted to be sure they had light for the darkness! (The foolish didn't bother about the darkness.) They didn't need lamps to meet the Bridegroom, they needed the lamps for the darkness that they knew they **WOULD HAVE TO** pass through **BEFORE** they met the Bridegroom!

The oil in the lamps then represents the correct interpretation of end-time prophetic truth! 2Peter 1v19 states:

"And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts."

In Matt 24v3 the disciples had asked the Lord Jesus the following question:

"...Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"

So in response the Lord Jesus had given them the end-time signs to look out for, i.e., end-time prophetic truth. He refers them to Daniel's 70th prophetic week in Daniel 9v27 (with Dan 11v31, 12v11) and the Great Tribulation which immediately precedes His return. The 70th week of Daniel, the time of the 7 year treaty between Antichrist, Israel and many other parties and countries, will be the darkest time in the world's history, midnight representing the start of the Great Tribulation when Antichrist breaks the covenant with Israel and sets up his image in the Temple. 2Thess 2v1-12, Rev 13 (all). Hence the cry goes up, "The Bridegroom cometh." Notice, it doesn't say "The Bridegroom's here," **BUT** that He cometh, i.e., He is on His way. He comes **AFTER** midnight, after the Great Tribulation. Matt 24v29-31. In the parable He comes after midnight when the foolish have gone to try and buy oil (the point being that once midnight comes there won't be time to prepare!)

Why does the lamp of the foolish go out at midnight? Because they did not believe they would see darkness – as far as the Church is concerned the last three and a half years and the reign of Antichrist, they thought the Bridegroom would have come before then. Hence the foolish only take notice of prophecy up to the commencement of the middle of Daniel's 70th week. Once the last three and a half years of this age starts (the Great Tribulation), they have no more prophetic light and their lamps go out. The fact that half of them were foolish shows that half of the Church will find itself in this position!

Why did the wise fall asleep? Well, there are many who have learned, or are learning, about the reign of Antichrist and the Great Tribulation, they believe they have to face the darkness before meeting the Lord. They have learnt the Scriptures and stored the oil of prophetic truth. At first they were very intense and keen about the subject looking for the time of the treaty (and so forth), but as time has passed their interest and zeal has cooled and they have fallen asleep, "the Lord tarrys", nevertheless, when the time comes they will awake and they will have the **ALL IMPORTANT** oil"

Matt 25v1-13 is simply carrying on from Matt 24, especially from the parable of the faithful and wise servant and the evil servant in Matt 24v45-51:

"Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods. But if that evil servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' and begins to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him and at an hour that he is not aware of, and will cut him in

two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

So, these servants represents Pastors and Teachers who are to teach the Body of Christ Truth (including end-time prophetic truth), however, the evil servant not only believes the lie of a secret pre-tribulation advent and rapture, **BUT** has also taught it to those Christians in his church as well, i.e., the foolish virgins, with the result that **BOTH** the evil servant and the foolish virgins backslide and go into apostasy. Matt 24v51, 25v12

Psalm 119v105: “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”

These 2 parables in Matt 24v45-25v13 are teaching the Body of Christ just how important the correct interpretation of last day prophetic truth is, it does **NOT** teach that that is all you need to get through the dark days of the Great Tribulation! In the parable of the 10 virgins the Lord was illustrating how vital it is to have light for the darkness – **THE LIGHT HE (the Lord Jesus) HAS PROVIDED!** You can have everything else like the foolish virgins, purity, grace, looking for the coming of the Lord and so forth and yet backslide and go into apostasy in the time of darkness, during the Great Tribulation.

Let me give you an example of just how important the correct interpretation of prophecy is:

I want you to think of a Christian with a tremendous ministry, someone who has a healing ministry in which he sees blind, deaf, dumb, lame, paralysed, even the leprous and cancerous healed. Someone who has seen the power of God through them alter the forces of nature, who has seen miraculous provision of finance and food, experienced supernatural transport from one place to another. Someone with a ministry where they have seen the dead raised to life again. Someone who has seen Jesus face to face, not once but many, many times. Someone who has even had the Lord Himself give them studies in the Scriptures. Imagine someone who sees demons cast out in his/her ministry. Someone who has seen thousands upon thousands of people come to Christ.

Now let me ask you this question: How many of you believe that such a person would be prepared for any trouble or tribulation that came along? I suppose that very many people would be of the opinion that they definitely would be. However, the people who think that are **VERY** wrong!

The people I had in mind when outlining the above great ministry is the Apostles. Matt 10v1,8:

“And when He had called His twelve disciples to Him, He gave them power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease...Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.”

They saw miraculous provision of finances, food, clothes (Matt 10v9,10), the fish with the coin (Matt 17v27), the miraculous catch of fish (Luke 5v4-7), Peter walked upon the water with the Lord (Matt 14v28-31), the disciples in a boat with the Lord were all transported with the boat to land (John 6v21), they saw the power of the Holy Spirit in preaching (Matt 10v20), the momentous ministry of Jesus, His miracles, raising the dead, casting out demons, stilling the storm, feeding the multitudes with a few loaves and fishes, thousands upon thousands turning to Christ, His tremendous preaching and wisdom, He gave them studies in the Scriptures (Luke 18v31, Mark 8v31 and so forth), they were in His presence not for a few days, **BUT** for over 3 years. Peter, James and John were taken up the mountain where they saw Him transfigured (and so saw His pre-incarnate Glory) and heard the voice of the Father.

Yet in spite of all this, when Jesus was taken prisoner, **WHEN THE HOUR OF DARKNESS CAME**, even though they **ALL** said they were ready to follow Him into prison and to death (Luke 22v33, Matt 26v33-35..) when the time came they **ALL** forsook Him, and fled and were in unbelief, defeat and despair. (Matt 26v56) Luke 24v21 states: “But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel...” Now they even doubted that He was the Redeemer! After His Resurrection the Lord reminded them through the women of what He has previously had told them about His suffering and death but they would not believe! Luke 24v11: “And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not.”

What was the cause of their defeat, unbelief, despair and forsaking the Lord? Why did they fail in the hour of darkness? They had great ministry, power, experience, why did they collapse?

THEY FAILED BECAUSE THEY IGNORED BIBLICAL PROPHECY; THEY DELIBERATELY SHUT THEIR EARS TO THE PROPHECIES CONCERNING THE LORD’S SUFFERING AND DEATH!

Luke 24v25: “Then he said unto them, **O fools, and slow of heart to believe ALL that the prophets have spoken:**”

The disciples only listened to the prophecies they liked, i.e., John 1v45: “...We have found him, of whom Moses in the

law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." They recognised Him as the Messiah of whom the prophets wrote, **BUT** they ignored other things the prophets wrote regarding His suffering and death (Isaiah 53, Psalm 22 and so forth), even though the Lord Jesus pointed out these things many, many times to them! Matt 16v21-23, 17v9, 20v17-19, 26v1,2, Luke 9v43-45, 17v25 and so on...

Luke 24v25-27: "Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? **And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.**"

They refused to accept the Truth of a suffering Messiah, because they had received and believed the false man made traditions of the Scribes and Pharisees, which taught of a Messiah coming in great power and glory, Who would throw the Roman yoke from off Israel and restore the kingdom to them.

They missed the first Coming of Christ completely and only saw the Second! Matt 15v1-20, 16v6, Mark 8v15, 1Peter 1v18

John 16v12: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now."

Indeed, so ingrained in their minds and spirits were these unscriptural man made traditions of the Scribes and Pharisees, that even after the 40 days of post resurrection ministry to them by the Lord Jesus, they still retained the old lies of the Scribes and Pharisees on this. Acts 1v6 states: "When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, **Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?**"

HOW BINDING ARE UNSCRIPTURAL MAN MADE TRADITIONS!

In Matt 24v3, the disciples ask the Lord Jesus this question:

"Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"

So, the first thing to watch out for is when he (the Prince who is to come) makes a covenant (peace treaty) with many parties and nations, including Israel (for one week), which is the start of Daniel's 70th week, i.e., the last 7 years of this age. Three and a half years later, Antichrist breaks the treaty with Israel and sets up his image in the Temple in Jerusalem claiming that he is God, Christ comes at the end of this second three and a half year period (known as the Great Tribulation), i.e., "...immediately after the tribulation of those days..." Matt 24v15-21, 29-31 (with Dan 9v27, 11v31, 12v11) to destroy the wicked and to take His people home. 2Thess 2v1-12, Rev 11v15-18. **NOTE:** Luke 17v20-18v8, esp. Luke 17v26-30:

"And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; **but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom** it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. **Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed.**"

The day that Christ comes to take His people home and destroy the wicked is the SAME day, NOT separated by three and a half years!

Appendix VII: The Great Necessity For Informal Fellowship Meetings During The Great Tribulation.

Heb 10v25 states: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

During the last seven years of this age (of Grace) and especially the last three and a half years (the period known as The Great Tribulation), God is primarily not going to use the mainline denominations to minister His Presence, Power and Life through to the world (and the Church), but He is going to use small groups of Christians who are earnestly and fervently seeking His face in prevailing prayer for His plans and purposes (and His Presence and Power to fulfil them). These groups of praying Christians will meet wherever they can, but mostly like the early church they will be gathering in their homes in informal fellowship meetings, and it is in this kind of meeting that God is going to manifest His Presence and great Power in a way never known or experienced before from the foundation of the world (Acts 2v16-21). During the last few decades, God has been raising up these small groups of earnestly seeking praying Christians and preparing them for the Great Tribulation. **(NOTE:** It will (mainly) be these small groups of praying Christians in Israel (and in every country around the world) that will make up the Glorious Woman of Rev 12v1, a group of people, who are foreknown, designed, specially created and empowered by God for the Great Tribulation. It

will be these believers who will fully trust and rely upon their Dear Saviour for His plans and purposes and His Presence and Power to fulfil them and this will be because they have no finances, political power or position behind them, so they have no choice but to have full faith and confidence in their Risen Lord, not like the many immature believers in the established denominations and worldly minded and unspiritual Pentecostal churches who have been kept in such a state by their blind leaders, who are in that state because they have followed the way of the Laodicean church, who find seeking the Lord for His plans, purposes, Presence and Power to demanding. A large majority of the 'foolish virgins' and 'evil servants' will be those Christians who have belonged to and attended the established denominations and unspiritual worldly minded Pentecostal churches, and likewise the vast majority of the 'faithful and wise servants' and 'wise virgins' will be those who fellowship and attend the small informal fellowship meetings. (Matt 6v6, 15v14, 24v45-25v13, Acts 2v42-47, 4v23-31, Rev 3v14-22.) These groups will contain a considerable greater proportion of women than men and these praying women will be God's instrument in bringing in the last great revival upon the earth as spoken by God through the prophet Joel (Joel 2v28-32, Acts 2v16-21). It will be the same as when He used two elderly sisters, Peggy and Christine Smith, who were eighty four and eighty two years old respectively, one of them was nearly blind and the other bent almost double with arthritis. Unable to attend public worship, their humble cottage became a sanctuary where they met with God, even as godly Anna had done in the Temple in Jerusalem. Luke 2v36-38. These two dear sisters received a promise from God, which was, 'I will pour water upon him that is thirsty and floods upon the dry ground.' Isaiah 44v3. Having received this promise they prayed and sought the Lord incessantly, a group of men in the same district who were also praying in a barn experienced a foretaste of the coming blessing and a young man in this meeting one night stood up and read out Psalm 24v3-6 with his hands held up to Heaven crying out, 'Oh God, are my hands clean? Is my heart pure?' He got no further, but fell prostrate to the floor. An awareness of God filled the barn and a stream of supernatural power was let loose in their lives and this was the beginning of the great Hebraic revival of 1949-52. These two dear elderly sisters had prayed fervently for over twenty years for revival and our wonderful Risen Saviour did not disappoint them. In these informal fellowship meetings, God will bring those Christians to a spiritual maturity far quicker than He ever could in the mainline denominations and unspiritual Pentecostal churches that practice one man ministries ever could (which keeps God's people perpetually in a state of spiritually immaturity), for in these informal fellowship meetings it will only be 'body ministry' operating, i.e., God, the Holy Spirit will use and minister through **every member** of the Body of Christ. 1Cor 12v7 states: 'But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to **every man** to profit withal' and 1Cor 14v26: 'How is it then, brethren? When ye come together, **every one of you hath** a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation...' The Church, which is the Body of Christ, is going to be changed from one that is totally vulnerable, to one that is empowered with the might and power of God and **NOT** only in defence but also in attack. **We need to pray that God will give us the realisation of this and pray it into reality.** It will be this kind of Church in many countries, equipped with the true 'charismata' ('gifts of grace'), which will preserve the 'denominational churches' from total destruction due to the terrible evil and persecution in the world during the Great Tribulation when the Mystery of Iniquity (or better, Lawlessness) works fully. The Christians in these informal fellowship meetings will also collectively exercise the same spiritual power and authority in judgement upon the wicked (through the gifts of the Holy Spirit) during the Great Tribulation, like the Two Witnesses will manifest. Dan 11v32, Zech 12v8, Luke 18v1-8, Rev 11v3-6.

It is also the 'Gideon Principle' that is going to operate during the dark evil days of the Great Tribulation, God will only use those humble trembling souls, who feel their great need of His strength, blessing, power and presence. Judges 6v12,15 states, 'And the Angel of the Lord appeared unto him, and said unto him, The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour...And he said unto him, Oh my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? Behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house,' and 1Cor 1v27,28 states, 'But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are.' The first words that the Angel of the Lord (Heb. Malak Yahweh, which means Yahweh Messenger, Who was none other than the pre-incarnate Christ, not only the Sent One under the New Covenant, but also under the Old as well, John 12v49) speaks to Gideon who had been hiding in the winepress from the Midianites threshing corn, are: 'The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour.' The Lord sees Gideon **NOT** as he felt and saw himself, **BUT** as He would make him, and gives him repeated demonstrations of His power to build up his faith to enable him to carry out the Lord's commission to deliver Israel. The Lord came and visited him on different occasions and gave him the signs of the fleeces, God built up his faith again and again, until he could believe. He did not expect Gideon to believe by raw faith (i.e., He did not just say to him, 'come on now believe the word that I have spoken'), no, the Lord visited him again and again and built up his faith. Judges 6v36-40. (Abraham and Sarah were visited by the Lord and angels, in order to strengthen their faith and overcome their unbelief and failure in the past. Gen chapters 17 & 18 (esp. 17v18, 18v12-15). See Rom 4v20, "was strengthened in faith;" Abraham's faith was strengthened by these visits, and the unveiling of the Divine presence and purposes. An increase of faith is always due to something that God does; either through the deposit of a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the soul and spirit, or through an open revelation of the Divine person and presence, or through angelic revelation, or through some other act and manifestation of Divine power. These divine encouragements transforms our faith to a living faith. This is a great consolation and leads to peaceful trust in God, instead of fretful striving. Let us cling fast to our heavenly Father's unveiling of His presence and purposes, and thank God for His angels, and cherish their help, and even more

the Lord who sends them. James 2v21-26). God then showed Gideon that the Midianites and the Amalekites were trembling with great fear at the thought of the sword of Gideon the son of Joash coming against them for they knew that God had delivered them all into his hand. Judges 7v13-15. With man, the lesser the odds look that a thing will happen increases the probability that it will actually happen, however, it is the reverse that is true with God, in that the greater the odds, the greater the certainty it will happen and we see this in Gideon's three hundred men destroying, by God's Presence and Power, one hundred and twenty thousand men of the Midianites. When it is time for God to fulfil His purposes, **NOTHING** can stop it and the wicked and the powers of darkness tremble in great fear. Hence, as it is written in Acts 2v17, 'And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh...' will most surely come to pass (and we should continue to pray earnestly for this divine promise to be fulfilled until it actually is!), for this is one of the major divine purposes that God has for His people during the last seven years of this age, but especially the last three and a half years of this age, the period known as the Great Tribulation, when God visits His people with His Presence and Power like never before, to give the Church great authority and power over the Devil and the evil angels. God is going to show the wicked that He is not only a God of Love and Mercy, but a God of judgement as well!

It is also God's great desire to give us a revelation of Himself to our souls. Matt 11v27 states, 'All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him,' with Eph 1v15-23, 3v14-21. The Ephesian Christians were saved, filled with the Holy Spirit and for many years experiencing spiritual gifts, but Paul prayed for them to have a revelation of God to their personality. All those in the Old Testament and early Church who did anything for God, all had an open revelation of God, and so we need to pray that we will experience this as well. It is God's great longing to give each one of His dear children the same kind of experience that the Old Testament prophets and early church experienced, for without a vision the people shall surely perish. Proverbs 29v18, Isaiah 6.

It is a fact today, that the vast majority of the Church are like the proverbial ostrich with its head stuck deep in the sand as regards to its being upon earth during the dark evil days of the Great Tribulation, when God's time bomb, the Mystery of Iniquity will explode. In churches today they are so often taken up with the immediate that they miss what is ahead. This situation is just like when Christ entered Jerusalem and the children were singing His praises and Christ said that such praise and worship was perfect; but their knowledge was deficient, in that in another forty years the Temple and Jerusalem was going to be totally destroyed by the Romans, under Titus, Vespasian's son, due to the uprising of the Jews and the war that followed from 66 AD-70 AD. It is vital for the Body of Christ to pray now that God will raise up and set in the Church last day Elijah ministries like the Two Witnesses. It is also important to note, that when God releases His time bomb (i.e., the mystery of iniquity) into human history, He also will bring into the Church new levels of power and authority for judgement gifts. Judges 6v11-23, 1Kings 17v1,7, 18v5, 2Kings 1v2-17, Psalm 8v2, 24v3-6, 133 (all), Isaiah 66v2, Dan 11v32,33, Joel 2v28-32, Zech 12v8, Matt 18v20, 21v15,16, 24v9, Luke 18v1-8, 19v41-44, 21v16,17, John 14v12-14, 15v1-8, Acts 2v16-21,46, Rom 16v5, 1Cor 1v26-31, chapters 11-14, 2Thess 2v1-12, James 5v7,17, Rev 11v3-6, 12v1.

The Church Was Planned And Ordained By God, Not Men.

A) Christ gave us the full and permanent teaching on Church Organisation.

Our submission to the Lordship of Christ is proved by our submission to His will and truth, "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine." John 7v17. The doctrine on Church government is as inspired and permanent a part of the foundation of Scripture truth as any other truth. Eph 2v20, 3v5, John 15v16, 16v13. When Christ founded the Church, He instituted its doctrine on organisation as well as its other doctrine. **God conceived and planned the Church before Creation; it is not a man-made institution.** Eph 1v4,5,11, Col 1v26,27, Rom 8v28-30, 1Cor 2v7. The New Testament Scriptures are our only basis for doctrine on Church organisation as well as the other Christian doctrine. Our standard of Church organisation is not even early post-apostolic Church organisation, for the traditions of even this early period can lead us astray. **The Scriptures alone are the sole rule of faith and conduct.** 2Tim 3v14-17, 1Cor 14v37, 2Pet 3v2,15,16, Rev 22v18,18. God was not negligent of the organisation of the Church; He did not leave it to the discretion or ingenuity of its leaders, or to the customs of the people, district, or land where the Gospel was preached. **Before creation the Trinity had ordained, planned and predestined all things in relation to the Church and its organisation.** They considered what was the best method of Church organisation to encourage spiritual growth and evangelistic success, and at the same time be suited to every age, nation and circumstance, and would survive best in persecution. **When Christ founded the Church, He built it to his own specifications, design, plan and order.** Matt 16v18.

God did not leave Church organisation to human ingenuity.

The same ingenuity of man, that has produced many different systems of worldly government, has been applied to Church government. This has inevitably resulted in a departure from New Testament organisation, doctrine and practice; and a consequent loss of the spiritual life and power that the early Church experienced. God did not leave

the pattern of Israel's worship to the ingenuity of godly Moses. Indeed, God warned Moses to follow the exact pattern of organisation and worship that He had given him. Heb 8v5, 1Chron 28v19. God did not leave the structure of Church organisation to men's desire, ingenuity, discretion, accommodation or expediency, He has given clear details of how His Church should be organised and run. Unfortunately, Christian leaders throughout Church history have followed the example of Israel's religious leaders and built religious power structures, and replaced the divinely ordained organisation of the Church with their own traditions. This has resulted in the frustration of the Divine purposes and the disappearance of the manifestations of Divine love, life and power that were so apparent in the early Church. If it were not for the godly praying hearts in many churches, all that would be left is a dead form, which brings disillusionment and discouragement to needy souls desperately seeking God's power and blessing.

B) Unscriptural Church Organisation often violates Christ's Lordship.

Church history reveals that men have arrogantly and presumptuously altered the structure of Christ's Church; they felt that they could improve upon Christ's form of Church organisation. Psalm 19v13,14, Col 1v18-20, 2v6-10. **If we lay aside His truth for our own ideas, we can end up with a religion, which though called Christianity, has really little to do with it.** Gal 1v6-10, 2Cor 11v1-6. The Church is Christ's Church; converts are born at God's will, not at the will of men; the Church is God's flock; it is bought with Christ's blood, and it is under the superintendence and guidance of the Holy Spirit. John 1v12,13, Isaiah 53v11, Acts 20v28, Titus 3v5, 1Pet 1v3,23. God can, and does, overlook genuine ignorance, but he cannot overlook wilful ignorance and rebellion. Acts 17v30, 1Sam 15v23.

The unity of Christ's Church cannot take place around the constitutions of men, it can only take place when the Church is subordinate to the Lordship of Jesus and the Holy Spirit and follows their directions. The true Christian finds no appeal in the organic unity of church federations; he looks and longs for a true fellowship and unity of the Spirit, and a genuine body ministry of believers, who own Jesus as Lord. If we refuse to accept the Lordship and leadership of Christ, there is always barrenness in our organisations and constitutions no matter how doctrinally correct or adequate they may seem to be. When the Church lost its first love and began to get away from God, men began to usurp God's authority and build their own religious kingdoms, while claiming that they were building God's kingdom.

The Church as God's "Ecclesia," is under His direction and control.

When God used the Greek word "Ecclesia" to describe His followers, it signified an assembly or congregation to the Jews. **"Ecclesia" had been used by Israel for many years to signify a united group of people under God's control.** In the Old Testament the Hebrew words for the gathering together of the Israelites are "edhah," which means "congregation;" and "qahal," which means "assembly." In the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament), "edhah" is almost always translated as "synagogue" (Strong's NT:4864), and "qahal" usually as "ecclesia" (Strong's NT:1577). Young states that "edhah" is "an appointed meeting," and "qahal" is "an assembly called together, a called and invited gathering."

To the Greeks, "ecclesia," meant the gathering together of the citizens of a town by an heralds trumpet, and according to Num 10v1-3, the Israelites were gathered together in this way. So when God used the word "ecclesia," it signified an assembly to His hearers. The Hebrew equivalents had been used by Israel to signify a united group of people under God's control. **God intended the Church, like Israel, to be under His permanent control, supervision and guidance.** In the Gospels Jesus only spoke twice of the "ecclesia;" in Matt 16v18, He speaks of the universal and complete Church; in Matt 18v17, He speaks of the local Church which can consist of as few as two or three Christians. We see from Matt 16v18, that there is a close connection between "the Kingdom of Heaven" and the "ecclesia." The "ecclesia" are not only God's assembly; they are the visible representatives of God on earth, and under His direct control and guidance. The direction and guidance of the Church should come from God, not from organisations, committees, or conferences directed and guided by men.

God's all-embracing Church compared with Judaism and the Jewish Synagogue.

The Christian Church, "ecclesia," was no longer only Jewish, it included every person of every nation who accepted Christ as his or her Saviour. Gal 3v26-29. God's worldwide Church fully embraced Gentiles which the Jews did not do. The use of the word "ecclesia" would distinguish Christ's people from the Jews in their synagogues; synagogue is from "syn," which means "together," and "ago," which means, "to bring." Though synagogue is used of a Christian meeting in James 2v2, Christ's words in Matt 16v18, give a strong hint of separation from the Jewish synagogue, for Jesus speaks of "My Church," as distinct from the Jewish synagogues. Christians gathered together and recognised Christ as their Lord, which the Jews certainly did not do. In Acts 19v32,39,41, the citizens of Ephesus formed an "ecclesia," that is, an assembly; the citizens of the kingdom of heaven should form an assembly in the locality where they live. **The Church is not the kingdom of heaven or the kingdom of God, it is part of that kingdom, and its visible representative upon earth, and it preaches the coming of that kingdom on earth. Let us never forget that the headquarters of the Church of Christ is in heaven, not upon earth.**

C) Church organisation is not a progressive Revelation.

Some would say that there is no systematic explanation of Church government in the Scriptures, and that Church government is a progressive revelation, which varies according the varying circumstance or need. **There may be no systematic and logical explanation of Church government in the Scriptures, but neither is there systematic teaching on other Christian doctrines and theology.** There are general principals and incidental references to Church government in the Scriptures, and these combined together give a clear picture of the early Church teaching on Church organisation. It is very difficult for many Christians to follow the formal prolonged doctrinal treatises and systematic theologies on Christian doctrine, as good and necessary as these may be. God, in His great wisdom, gave the basic truths of Christian doctrine simply, so that all can understand, and the Scriptural teaching on Church organisation is no exception.

The New Testament Scriptures give no support to the idea of organisational development. Indeed, these Scriptures condemn any deviation from their revelation. Gal 1v6-12, Jude v3,4. To believe in progressive revelation outside of the Scriptures, is a most dangerous doctrine, and it has led to many soul-destroying heresies, and a denial of our Lord Jesus Christ. 2Pet 2v1, 3v16. There are many cults today that have been founded on the claim of extra revelation outside of the Scriptures. The Scriptures are the only foundation for Christian doctrine and practice. These Scriptures are the revelations of God to His Old Testament prophets and New Testament apostles and prophets, and the accounts of His dealings with mankind. Eph 2v20, 3v5. A church organisation that defies God's pattern cannot preserve the purity and power of the Church. The statement that progressive organisational development of the Church was necessary to preserve the Church from heresy and fanaticism has no support from Scripture or Christian experience. Church federation has nearly always led to persecution of godly Christians, and has caused far greater evils than it has cured. John 16v1-4, 2Tim 3v12.

Do we experience the essential heart of living truth, or do we have an empty outline of truth?

Paul uses the word "morphosin," in Rom 2v20 and 2Tim 3v5, to speak of "an outline of truth without the substance," the "morphosin" without the "morphe." In Rom 2v20, Paul says that it was folly for Jews to be proud of being chosen recipients of divine truth, when they did not obey that truth, or experience God and His truth. In 2Tim 3v5, Paul tells us to turn away from Christian forms which lack the reality and power of God. Though Scriptural constitutions and fundamental beliefs may give us a necessary outline and code of faith, they will not on their own preserve the purity of the Church. **We need a heart cry for mercy, earnest prayer, and a return to early Church practices, if we are to be preserved from error.** We can have correct rules of faith and conduct and resist the Holy Spirit. **Jesus said that we could only preserve our spiritual life only by abiding in Him and obeying His words.** The impartation of God's life comes from seeking God, and not from church constitutions, or even from a correct doctrinal outline of truth, as valuable and necessary as this can be.

It is a disturbing fact that the constitutions of men often deny, reject some vital Scripture truths, and their teaching on Church government. It is not so spiritually demanding to depend on an organisation, or follow a formal Church order and service. To recognise and follow our heavenly Father's directions and plans, and to have His love and power operating in our churches demands real humility, prayerfulness, and a close walk with God. This is directly opposite to man's carnal nature, for flesh dominated people love their own ways, and seek for power, position, prestige, influence and wealth. The unconsecrated carnal mind loves to build its own kingdom and say, "Is this not great Babylon that I have built?" and, "I am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing." Dan 4v30, Rev 3v17. Many have decided against seeking God for a manifestation of His love and power, and have chosen instead, power, popularity, and influence within a religious structure. It can be difficult and frustrating for earnest Christians to operate or manifest the love and power of God through His spiritual gifts, in churches where the leadership manifests these wrong motives, and resists the Holy Spirit and His gifts.

Are we God's "Ecclesia," or are we only His "kuriakon?"

Our English word "church," like the Scottish "Kirk" and the German "quirt," is derived from the Greek "kuriakon," which means, "belonging to the Lord," or simply, "the Lord's." The adjective "kuriakon," only occurs twice in the New Testament, where it speaks of "the Lord's supper," and "the Lord's day." 1Cor 11v20, Rev1v10. In the New Testament the word "kuriakon" is not used in reference to Christian believers, instead it uses "ecclesia," which, as we have already seen, conveys not only the thought of a people belonging to God, but also a people under His direction and control. Church federation can take the control of the Church out of the hands of God and put it in the hands of men. Christians in such churches belong to God, but as they are so often under men's control instead of God's, it is more correct to call them by the word "kuriakon," than by the word "ecclesia." The belief in the progressive revelation of Church government, and the consequent development of church organisations, has proved to be an unmitigated disaster for Christ's Church. The evils that have come as a result of a departure from New Testament organisation, and the resultant affiliation and federation of churches, cannot be over-emphasised or exaggerated. The blood of the millions of Christian dead, who have been killed in the name of God, cry out against the religious kingdoms of men

that have committed the sin of Cain. Gen 4v10,11, Jude v11.

The Churches Must Obey Jesus As Lord.

A) The early Church owned Christ's Lordship in Evangelism and Worship.

The Scriptures insist that Jesus is the Head of our churches, and so we should seek His will, plans and guidance, and not depend on our plans or programmes. Matt 18v18-20, 28v18-20, Eph 1v20-23, 4v7-16, 5v21-23, Phil 2v9-11, Col 1v18,19, 2v19, 3v9-11, Rev 19v16. The early Church at Jerusalem enjoyed the liberty, flexibility and power of the Holy Spirit in both fellowship and evangelism; this resulted in a great number of converts, and a considerable variety of content and great blessing in their fellowships meetings. It was not like so many modern Churches who extol Jesus as Lord, but do not obey Him, and please themselves in what they do. Peter learned by bitter personal experience that it was wise to obey his Lord; God cleansed him of his bigotry, and made him a great blessing. Acts 10v1-48.

Paul states that the Holy Spirit should direct our Church gatherings, and the person who is moved by the Holy Spirit has the right to minister. All rights in a church fellowship gathering should depend upon the direction and blessing of Christ, and rigid control of a meeting by one person should be unknown. The early church Pastors guided and taught each local church, but they certainly did not monopolise the ministry in a church, several believers could minister on a theme as the Lord led them, and other Christians ministered in "psalm, doctrine, tongue, revelation, or interpretation." 1Cor 14v26. Even the most spiritual and capable were not allowed to monopolise a meeting, they had to give way to others who had something from God, "Let the first hold his peace." 1Cor 14v29-31. The domination of ministry by one person denies Christ's Lordship over His Church. It is not till post-apostolic times and literature that we read of a presiding officer in the worship and fellowship meetings of the local churches. It is true that Paul as an evangelist had a preaching hall and took the lead there as the principle speaker and debater, and he could and did take the major part in a special meeting for ministry, but he did not monopolise the local Church fellowships. Paul said that in the local Church fellowships, the Christians were to act as a body, and to minister to one another under the direction of the Holy Spirit and Christ. Acts 19v8-10, 20v6-12, 1Cor 12v4-27.

The presence of God through communion with Him is the secret of blessing and victory.

Moses was quite unwilling to lead Israel and fight her enemies without the presence, blessing and guidance of God, he had the sense to realise that it was only God's overshadowing providence that made Israel different from the surrounding nations. Exodus 33v11-20, NB v14, 34v5-9. It was the presence and power of God that gave the early Church victory. The acid test of our dependence upon God is the amount of time that we give to prayer and waiting upon God, as groups or individuals. True prayer is not the ability to say long prayers in public, God condemns this. Matt 6v5-15, 23v14, Mark 12v40, Luke 20v47. If we fail to earnestly seek God we shall be in the same lamentable spiritual state as the church at Laodicea. They were "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked;" but they did not know it. They said they had need of nothing, when they needed to seek Jesus and humbly ask Him to open their eyes and heal their pitiful spiritual condition. Rev 3v17-19. Those who really love God love His presence. Heb 11v5,6, Psalm 27 all, NB v4,8. Earnest and prolonged seeking of God is a searching test of ones spirituality and love of God. See how the early Church practised prayer and waiting upon God.

The verb "deomai." Luke 10v2, 21v36, 22v32, Acts 4v31, 10v2, 2Cor 8v4. The verb "erotao," Luke 16v27, John 14v16, 16v26, 17v9,15,20.

The verb "euchomai." Rom 9v3, 2Cor 13v7,9, James 5v16, 3John v2, Acts 26v29, 27v29.

The verb "proseuchomai." Luke 3v21, 5v16, 6v12,28, 9v28,29, 11v1,2, 18v1,10,11, 22v46, Acts 1v24, 6v6, 8v15, 9v11,40, 10v9,30, 11v5, 12v12, 13v3, 14v23, 16v25, 20v36, 21v5, 22v17, 28v8, Eph 6v18, Col 1v3,9, 4v3, 1Cor 14v13,14,15, 1Thess 5v17,25, 2Thess 1v11, 3v1, 1Tim 2v8, James 5v13,14,18, Jude v20.

The noun "deesis." Luke 1v13, 2v37, 5v33, Rom 10v1, 2Cor 1v11, 9v14, Phil 1v4,19, 2Tim 1v3, Heb 5v7, James 5v16, 1Pet 3v12.

The noun "enteuxis." (Intercession) 1Tim 4v5, plural in 2v1. **The noun "entugchano."** Rom 8v26,27,34, Heb 7v25.

The noun "proseuche." Matt 21v13,22, Luke 6v12, Acts 1v14, 2v42, 3v1, 6v4, 10v4,31, 12v5, 16v13,16, Rom 1v9, 12v12, 15v30, 1Cor 7v5, Eph 1v16, 6v18, Phil 4v6, Col 4v2,12, 1Thess 1v2, 5v5, Philemon v4,22, 1Pet 3v7, 4v7.

B) The variety and flexibility of a fellowship led by the Holy Spirit.

In the early Church there was flexibility under the guidance of God, in many modern churches the services are in a cast iron rut and routine, with a resultant spiritual deadness and bondage. **Paul's preaching in the Hall of Tyrannus was to non-Christians, here he preached and defended the Gospel; the Christian fellowship meetings took place in the homes of Christians. We need to clearly see the difference between an evangelistic mission and a Christian fellowship, where Christians are gathered together to build each other up in God.**

a) Informal Christian fellowship gatherings.

This consisted of prayer, praise and worship, conversational sharing of experience, discussion of problems and prayer for them, the manifestation of spiritual gifts, the study of the Scriptures, with all being able to comment, and a meal at which the Lord's Supper took place. In 1Cor 11v1 to 14v40, Paul is correcting disorders at the Lord's Supper, and showing them the correct way to conduct their gatherings for fellowship, prayer and worship. **The Last Supper conducted by Jesus gives us the divine order for Christian fellowship, as well as the celebration of the Lord's Supper.** There was a great blessing produced by the open and flexible informal fellowship meetings, which were under the guidance and control of the Holy Spirit. Nowadays, religious leaders exclude almost all ministry or participation from their flocks, and do not allow God to inspire Christians to give a contribution and to develop their ministries, and so ministries are often strangled at birth. **The ministries that do develop do so in spite of these religious systems, and not because of them.** No matter how competent a minister may be in preaching and pastoral work, he is a failure if he does not practice informal body ministry and develop ministries in the local church. God desires His children to develop ministries, not remain in permanent spiritual babyhood. Some will object to this participation in ministry by all Christians and say, "You open the door to fanatics and encourage the immature to make mistakes by your informal body ministry." To this I answer, "Informal body ministry is God's order, not mine."

Godly, wise, spiritual and gracious elders will preserve churches from the dangers of fanaticism, and gently correct the mistakes of the immature and inspire them to further effort. **We should not restrain profitable ministries, but unprofitable ministries should be restrained.** Jesus has set ministries in the Church, but He has not relinquished the control of the Church to them, He is the Head of the Church. The substitution of Christ's Lordship over His Church and informal body ministry, with one-man ministry, cannot help but produce frustration, barrenness and division. Formal, spiritually lifeless services are as great an abuse of God's order as fanaticism, and are just as great an offence to God. There can only be real growth and blessing when the Holy Spirit is given His rightful place and ministry.

b) An informal evangelistic meeting.

This could take place in synagogues, the open air, hired building, or home; to large groups, or even to one person, like our Lord's conversation with the woman at the well. **There are instances of Jesus and Paul preaching sermons, however, the practice of informal discussion in synagogue, hall, home, or open-air, and the confirmation of the truth by miracles, was the usual Divine pattern for apostolic evangelism.** Rom 15v18-21. This informal evangelism was attractive to the outsider, and was anything but boring, which certainly cannot be said of many modern services, which often have to be endured rather than enjoyed. I am not thinking only of some traditional churches; the lightness and frivolity, spoken of in the King James Version of Jer 23v32, has afflicted many Pentecostal churches. "Lightness," is "pachazuwth," (Strong's: OT6350), frivolity, from (Strong's: OT6348), "pachaz," to bubble up or froth. See 2Cor 1v17, "elaphria," (Strong's: NT1644), levity. **God wants us to enjoy His presence and the fellowship of other Christians in profound depth; this will fill us with "joy unspeakable and full of glory."** 1Pet 1v8.

Jesus and His apostles expected to be questioned or interrupted while preaching, and they experienced this regularly, indeed, it was the norm. In their proclaiming the gospel as an herald, "kerusso," Acts 8v5, 9v26, 10v37,42, 15v21, 19v13, 20v25, 28v36; or telling and announcing good news, "euangelizo," Acts 5v42, 8v4,12,35,40, 10v36, 11v20, 14v15, 15v35, 17v18; they "talked and discoursed, "laleo", Acts 8v25, 11v19, 13v42, 14v25, 16v6; they told thoroughly, "katangelo," Acts 4v2, 13v5,38, 15v36, 17v3,13, 1Cor 9v14; they often did this in a conversational style by reasoning, questions and even heated debate, "suzeeteo," Mark 8v11, 12v28, Luke 24v15,32, Acts 6v9, 9v29; and dialogue, "dialegomai," Acts 17v2,17, 18v4,19, 19v8,9, 20v7,9, 24v12,25 (also occurs Mark 9v34, Heb 12v5, Jude v9). See also "peitho," to persuade," Acts 13v43, 14v19, 18v4, 19v8,26, 26v28, 28v23, 2Cor 5v11. **The best method of evangelism, preaching and teaching is by informal discussion, dialogue and persuasion in friendly and amiable conversations with people.**

The early Church Christians did not invite people to hear the Gospel and sit passively and mutely until an appeal was made; they preached the Gospel in the open air, in their daily contacts, and from house to house, and those who were converted joined their Christian fellowships. Acts 5v42, 8v4. Inviting unbelievers to meetings is not normal New Testament evangelism, the early Church went out to preach the Gospel. **The miraculous was the cutting edge of New Testament evangelism,** in Rom 15v18,19, Paul said that he made the Gentiles receive and obey the Gospel "by word and deed, through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ." Formal Church services will certainly not meet the needs of this modern generation, we need the greater apostolic and evangelistic ministries to win converts and break the ground for the witness of the ordinary church members. The informal New Testament meetings for fellowship, under the blessing and guidance of the Holy Spirit, will sustain those who come to know Jesus as their Saviour. This Divine pattern is suitable, and will be successful, with every age and nation. When Jesus is owned as Lord, the Church is victorious in both evangelism and worship.

C) The New Testament ministry gifts are appointed by God, not by men.

The ministries that God sets in the Church are based on His spiritual gifting and not on natural talent or ability. **The early Church turned the world upside down by spiritual ministry gifts from God, not by their natural talents, and it is these ministry gifts that the Church needs so badly today, not more money, machinery, or better education.** These ministry gifts are the result of divine sovereignty, not human desire, or ordination. God sets these gifts and ministries in the Church, and Jesus directs them. Matt 9v38, 1Cor 12v28, Eph 4v8-11.

Ordination, is it from Heaven, or from men? Matt 21v25, Mark 11v30, Luke 20v4.

Some object to the statement that ordination to ministry comes from heaven, and not from men, and state that elders, deacons, and even apostles, had hands laid upon them to appoint them to a ministry. This was undoubtedly true, however, this appointment to God's work, was really the recognition of the gift and call already received from God, and which was already manifested in their ministries. **The laying on of hands by men is an empty formality without the divine ordination and gifting of God.** The religious leaders who killed Jesus were certainly not ordained by God, they resisted God. Acts 7v51-53. In God's eyes a person has authority in Christ's Church, not because men will it, or because a person has received ecclesiastical training or ordination, but because He Himself has given them a ministry.

The modern term "ordination" has come to have a technical significance not found in the New Testament. The Greek words translated as "ordain" in the Authorised Version simply mean, "to appoint, choose and set apart." Acts 6v5,6, 13v2,3, 14v23, 1Tim 2v7, 4v14, 5v22, 2Tim 1v6. Modern denominations have replaced God's ordination and Christ's commission, with their ordaining councils. I recognise that ordaining councils do choose people who have had a call from God. However, it is also true that many people are ordained to lead in God's work, who have no call or right to do so, and many others who have received a definite commission from Christ are excluded and rejected. **Very few of our modern denominations would have ordained any of the twelve apostles, even though they are so highly regarded by religious leaders today.** Many Church leaders today reject the miraculous powers that the apostles experienced, and oppose those who manifest the same spiritual gifts. **These religious leaders, as in Christ's day, extol the prophets of the past, but oppose the same kind of ministries in the present.** Matt 23v29-39. The apostles of Christ's day were looked upon as deluded, undesirable, unlearned and ignorant men, by the religious leaders of Israel. Christ's apostles had not been taught in the schools of the Rabbis, but they were certainly not unlearned or ignorant in regard to hearing and obeying the voice of God. The apostles were lacking in men's ecclesiastical training, but God Himself had trained them in the essentials of true religion.

Systematic traditional training often disqualifies one from divine ordination.

God did not choose any of the learned Rabbis that men had ordained, the systematic training in men's traditions had made them entirely unsuitable for leadership in Christ's Church. Christ's apostles had the essentials of true religion, faith, hope, love, humility, a love for Jesus, and a thirst for God, and so God chose these simple, earnest, and spiritual young men to lead His Church. Young men, who have received spiritual gifts and spiritual ministries from God, have an important part to play in Christ's Church today. The apostles were chosen by God, and not by men, or by themselves; even Jesus did not appoint Himself. 1Cor 12v18,28, Heb 5v1-10. **It was ordination from heaven that counted.**

Giving people the names of the New Testament offices will not give them that ministry, a person has to have a ministry from God, or they are an empty pretender. In the New Testament it was the actual ministry of a person that decided what they were called. They were not just called apostles, prophets, pastor-teachers, and evangelists, they possessed and manifested these ministries, and they were clearly seen and recognised by the members of the churches. **You can label "treacle," as "best quality jam," but it is still "treacle;" an empty claim to New Testament ministry gifts is even more foolish and wrong.**

Denominational closed-shop ministries often oppose divinely given ministries.

The early Church ministry was not a closed denominational shop. The ministerial certificate of the early Church was a ministry gift from Christ, which was accredited by signs, wonders and miracles. **It is sad that ecclesiastical machinery has replaced God's empowerment in many denominations, and this is a major reason for the lack of revival.**

The elders who pastored and taught the local churches were ordained by Paul, not by his own feelings, it was because they were seen to possess a ministry gift from Christ. The Holy Spirit had given these ministries and made them overseers in their churches. Their ministries were actually in operation in the local churches before Paul appointed them; it was purely a matter of recognising these divinely given ministries. Acts 20v28-32. The seven deacons at

Jerusalem were chosen by the people for their spiritual ministry as well as their wisdom and godly character. They were well-known and well-trusted by all the Christians, not only on the grounds of their wisdom, graciousness, godly character, and ability to “show mercy;” they were also “full of the Holy Spirit,” and possessed a definite spiritual ministry. Deacons should not only be gentle and kind, and good people of “good reputation,” they must be “full of faith and the Holy Ghost.” Acts 6v3,5,8.

The early Church recognised and appointed local people to Church leadership.

When the local church was founded and the elders appointed, the local church recognised and appointed other ministries that the Holy Spirit had given and developed in the church. The local church appointed Timothy, and the elders laid hands on him and asked God to bless him. They recognised that his ministry had developed sufficiently for Timothy to take his place among the ministries of the local church. 1Tim 4v12-16, 2Tim 1v6. When Paul wrote his letters to Timothy, he was between 35 and 40 years of age. **Local elders did not resent developing ministries in their churches, they glorified God for them; and if God gave some younger Christian in the local church a greater ministry than any one else in it, the elders particularly rejoiced, because this was the fruit of their oversight and proof that their ministry was a success.** It is a bitter, sour, Saul-like spirit of jealousy that looks upon developing ministries in the local church as a threat to one’s authority. 1Sam 18v6-14. Love greatly rejoices when others are blessed more than themselves, and heartily thanks God for the part that He has given them in developing these ministries, and the part that they have to play in God’s work. 1Cor 13v4-7.

Paul appointed local people as leaders whose life and ministry gift were recognised, appreciated and loved by the people in the local church. **The question seems to have been, “Who do you have confidence in to lead you?”** After Paul had appointed the first elders in the local church, the appointment of other elders was left in the hands of the local elders and Christians; they knew the spiritual qualifications that were necessary for a man to be an elder or deacon, because Paul had instructed them in this matter. 1Tim 3v1-16, Titus 1v4-16, James 5v13-18. **Paul and the other itinerant ministries exercised a spiritual oversight and moral authority over the local churches, but they did not take the control of the churches out of the hands of the elders, or interfere with their decisions, each church was responsible to God for its own work.** The apostles exercised the oversight of love and fellowship, not of official position, their work was to start churches, and then to instruct and inspire the flocks and develop their ministries, not to dominate, or dictate to them. Eph 4v8-14, 1Pet 5v1-7.

D) The ministries God gives can only be sustained by communion with God.

We must follow the glory cloud.

The New Testament ministries can only be sustained by communion with God. We see in the Scriptures that God gave His authority to those who followed His leadings and commands. Moses was Israel’s leader, but he did not lead them in his way and will, he obeyed God’s orders. God led Israel through His glory cloud, Moses had the good sense to obey God’s directions, and follow His glory cloud. This same is true of the New Testament ministries, only those who have a ministry of divine life and follow the glory cloud, who have the right of leadership and authority in Christ’s Church. 1Cor 12v28, Acts 10v38.

We can be channels of God’s love and power.

Jesus earnestly desires us to be channels of His love and power, He longs to pour His mercy, tenderness, truth, delivering power, and deep affection through us to others, but this can only happen when we abide in Christ. John 15v1-17. No one is a true minister of Christ who does not minister His love, mercy and power to others. It is not enough to preach truth; truth must minister God’s power, life and love to needy souls and bodies. 1Pet 1v12. All the ministry gifts are intended to minister the love, power and grace of God to God’s flock and to knit it together in love. The ministry of elders is particularly pastoral; however, the Lord Jesus told the young apostle Peter, that pastoral ministry was included in his apostolic ministry. John 21v15-19. **The ministry gifts should reveal Christ and the Father to people.** Gal 1v15,16. **A spiritual ministry does not just teach doctrine, it brings people into a living experience of God.**

The development, extension, and interdependence of spiritual ministries.

The ministry gifts Jesus gives are capable of development and extension. Stephen and Philip were ordained to be deacons, because the church recognised that their spirituality, godliness and love for people, proved that they had a ministry from Christ to fulfil that work. Jesus also ordained them to be fervent evangelists, and they had a double ministry. We read in Acts 13v1,2, that Paul and Barnabus possessed teaching ministries in the church at Antioch, then God made them apostles. They had received a previous call to this work, “Separate me Barnabus and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” They had faithfully prepared for this work by fulfilling a pastoral and teaching ministry, and so the call became a reality, and God sent them out on an apostolic mission. They were not sent out at

their own desire or man's direction, they were sent out by the Holy Spirit, God confirmed the reality of their call through other prophets and teachers.

In Acts 13v1,2, we see that the ministry gifts were directed by God, but they were not independent of other Christians, they worked together, as should all the parts of the body of Christ. Even apostles needed helpers, and the comfort and spiritual help of other Christians, a striking example of this is in 2Cor 2v12-14, where Paul states that he was incapacitated because Titus was not there, and so was not able to take advantage of God's door of opportunity. See also Acts 12v11,12, 21v4,11,12, 28v12-15, 1Cor 8v6, 2Cor 8v16-24, Eph 6v21,22, Phil 2v25, 1Thess 3v1,2, 2Tim 4v9-13,20,21, Titus 1v5, 3v12,13. We read in Acts 15v32, that Silas was a prophet, but when he went with Paul, God gave him the additional authority and ministry of an apostle. 1Thess 1v1 with 2v6. Peter was an apostle, but Jesus also gave him the office of Pastor and Elder as well. John 21v15-19, 1Pet 5v1-5. So we can see that one person can have several ministries given to them by Christ. God usually founded local churches through apostolic or evangelistic ministry, and then He developed ministries in this church. Every ministry working together and operating under the guidance of Christ the Lord.

E) God still sets these ministries in the Church today.

God has "set" spiritual ministries and their accompanying spiritual gifts in the Church all through this age of grace, and He still sets them in the Church today, when He can find those who love God and people enough, to desire to be channels of His power and love. The word for "set" in 1Cor 12v28, is "etheto" the third person singular aorist indicative of "tithemi," it is the same word that is used in John 15v16, which is translated "ordained." It simply means, "to put, place, or appoint." See Acts 5v25, Matt 5v15, 1Tim 1v12, 2v7, 2Tim 1v11, Heb 1v2, etc.. **God has permanently placed these gifts in His Church during this age.** Those who say that these miraculous ministries of the Church no longer exist, resist this ordination and gifting by God. The truth is that they do not have the spiritual qualifications to manifest these ministries, and are unwilling to expend the spiritual effort necessary to receive these qualifications, and to keep these ministries. They fear the opposition that comes against such ministries. **It is spiritually demanding to seek God for His plans and power, but there is little spiritual effort required to rely upon oratory, good music, and a pleasant program of services, and so men have replaced God's abilities and ministries with their own standards, abilities and ministries.** This unwillingness to follow the example of the early church, and obey God's command to desire spiritual gifts, is a grave sin, "For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry." 1Sam 15v23. It is certainly not Scriptural to say that spiritual gifts ceased after the apostolic age, as the following facts prove.

1) Peter said that spiritual gifts would continue to the end of this age.

In Acts 2v16-21, Peter confirmed the prophecy of Joel that spiritual gifts would continue right up to the great and terrible day of the Lord, the day of Christ's return. Rev 16v14-16, 6v12-17, Matt 24v29-31. Peter insists that the gift of the Holy Spirit is for all, "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." Acts 2v38,39. There is no Scripture to contradict or limit the prophecy of Joel; indeed, both Scripture and Christian experience confirm this prophecy. Those who deny that spiritual gifts are for today have looked in vain for one clear Scriptural statement that spiritual gifts were withdrawn after the apostolic age. They have wrested and distorted 1Cor 13v8-13 in an attempt to justify their unbelief, and have made the quite unwarranted assumption that the, "that which is perfect," at which the gifts of the Holy Spirit are to pass away, was the completion of the canon of Scripture. Honest theologians state that there is no justification for this interpretation. Ellicott says of the "that which is perfect," "This verse shows, by the emphatic "then," that the time when the gifts shall cease is at the end of this dispensation. The imperfect shall not cease until the perfect is brought in."

"A New Testament Commentary," edited by Howley, Bruce and Ellison, states on 1Cor 13v10, that there is no support in the Biblical usage of "perfect," or its cognate forms, for the suggestion that "the perfect" refers to the completion of the Scripture canon, and that the interpretation of "that which is perfect" as the Scripture canon, has been made to explain away the absence of certain spiritual gifts from their churches. How illuminating! An examination of 1Cor 13v10, proves that it is totally untrue to say that "that which is perfect" is the Scripture canon.

a) The subject under discussion in 1Cor 13 is love in relation to the whole of Christian experience.

Paul includes giving, martyrdom and knowledge, as well as spiritual gifts; there is no mention of the Scriptural canon. Paul's theme is love, he does not close 1Cor 13 with the greatest of these is the Scriptural canon," he says, "the greatest of these is love." "That which is perfect," occurs at the coming of the kingdom of God, when we have a face-to-face vision of the God of love. 1Cor 13v12. The Christian enjoys this kingdom at death, 2Cor 5v6-8, Phil 1v21-23, Heb 12v22-24, Rev 6v9-11, but this endless kingdom of love will not come to earth until the return of Jesus on the great "day of the Lord," at the end of this age.

b) How can it be the Scripture canon if "full knowledge" has not been given and perfected?

It is certainly inconsistent and dishonest to say that 1Cor 13v8 informs us that spiritual gifts have passed away, and yet admit that our present partial knowledge has not yet been replaced by the full knowledge of God's kingdom. This verse makes it quite clear that the "perfect day," when "that which is perfect" comes, is when God's kingdom comes to earth. It is only then that we shall have the full knowledge of ourselves and others, and "we shall fully know as we are fully known." This "full knowledge" occurs at the judgement seat of Christ, when our works and character are revealed. 1Cor 3v11-15.

The time when the gifts "pass away," is when the Church of Christ on earth exchanges its present partial spiritual power and knowledge, for the complete and perfect "face to face" experience of God and the "full knowledge" of His power, truth and love. What 1Cor 13v8, is really teaching, is that the Church on earth can expect its spiritual gifts and limited knowledge to continue, until they are superseded by, and swallowed up in the experience and knowledge of God's kingdom. When 1Cor 13v8 is really fulfilled, the Church will be glorified in Heaven and enjoying God's glory, power, truth and love to the full.

c) Paul compares his own Christian experience on earth with that of the perfect day.

Paul compares his experience of God on earth with that in heaven to a non-speaking baby's experience with that of an intelligent man. This certainly does away with the idea that Paul is referring to the Scripture canon, when he speaks of the perfect day, for Paul even knew truth outside of the New Testament canon, truth he was not permitted to utter. 2Cor 12v1-4. Paul knew by revelation much, if not all, of the truth contained in the book of Revelation, for he speaks of the trumpets, 1Cor 15v51-53; of the evil career of Antichrist and his judgement, 2Thess 2v1-12; of the two resurrections and the last judgement. 1Cor 15v21-28. The lack of the future knowledge of the condition of the churches in Revelation did not make Paul "a non speaking babe," he knew the vast preponderance of New Testament truth. Indeed, Paul knew more of God's truth in theory and experience than any person who has ever lived, except the Lord Jesus. 1Cor 15v10.

Having the full New Testament canon does not make us superior in knowledge to Paul, indeed, in comparison to Paul, we are the babes. The illustrations that Paul used of a non-speaking babe compared with a man, and a dull reflection in contrast with a face-to-face vision, only makes sense if they are interpreted in the clear sense of the context, as a comparison of our present earthly experience of God now, compared with our experience of God in His kingdom. The only things that will bear any comparison with Heaven, and are the same in Heaven as on earth, are faith, hope and love; our present knowledge is nothing compared to the knowledge of Heaven. Paul said that his partial knowledge was to cease and pass away when the complete came, so it cannot be the canon of Scripture, for we still need all of it until Jesus comes. Those who insist on interpreting, "that which is perfect," as the Scripture canon, end up with a great many contradictions and difficulties, a proof of wrong exposition.

d) Notice how Paul tells the Corinthians after 1Cor 13, to desire spiritual gifts.

Paul does not say that they did not need to bother with spiritual gifts any more because they were soon to finish; he gives them the correct teaching on the gifts, and tells them to seek them for their spiritual welfare. 1Cor 14v1-3,12,18,39. Spiritual gifts profit and built up Christians, they carry on the ministry of Christ, and meet great needs in the body of Christ. Isaiah 53v10, 1Cor 12v7,18-31. **Both Israel and the Church have always needed God's power, as well as God's truth, to meet the needs placed before them.**

e) In 1Cor 13, Paul considers spiritual gifts and the other principal aspects of our experience in relation to love.

Paul speaks of "ALL sacred secrets and ALL knowledge," the ultimate in sacrificial giving, and martyrdom for God's sake, as well as spiritual gifts. The knowledge mentioned is not just supernatural knowledge; it is "all knowledge" and includes Scriptural knowledge. Even divinely inspired truth will be nothing compared with the face-to-face meeting with God its author. There is no Scripture that gives stronger evidence that spiritual gifts will continue right up to the end of this age, than Paul's statement in 1Cor 13, that spiritual gifts will continue right up to this face to face meeting with God.

2) Spiritual gifts occurred throughout the Old Testament dispensations in periods of revival.

This was usually when there were people willing to receive them and seek God for them. **If spiritual gifts were manifested throughout the age of Law, should they not be manifested throughout the age of grace, during which the Spirit of God is said to work in greater measure and with greater manifestations, than He did in the age of Law.** Heb 8v10-13, 2Cor 3v6-18. The Scriptures tell us that the new covenant was to be more glorious and more full of the Holy Spirit's workings throughout all its duration than the age of the Law.

There is no Scriptural justification for the statement that signs, wonders and miracles could only be expected at the start of the age of grace. Acts 2v16-21,38,39. To say that we could not expect miracles after the apostles finished their ministries, would mean that the age of grace was less spiritually powerful than the age of Law, a statement the Scripture absolutely refutes. **The cause of the lack of spiritual gifts in this age of grace is the same as it was in the previous age of Law, spiritual apathy, backsliding, low or non-existent faith, and the lack of love for needy mankind.** Gideon had the sense to realise that when God was with you, miracles took place. Judges 6v13. The Jews required a sign of spiritual authority from any prophet; they knew that if God commissioned anyone, He gave them the spiritual power and authority to manifest spiritual gifts. 1Cor 1v22. All New Testament ministries, including elders, were expected to manifest spiritual gifts. 1Cor 12v28, James 5v13-19. If God manifested spiritual gifts throughout "the ministration of death," that is, the Law, how much more will He do it during, "the ministration of the Spirit?" 2Cor 3v6-11. The New Testament dispensation is promised, and possesses, more gifts from God than the Law, not less. All thirsty believers in Christ can receive the Holy Spirit's power and fullness. John 7v37-39.

3) All spiritual gifts must be here if all have not gone.

Those who insist that spiritual gifts and spiritual ministries are not for today must insist that God has removed them all, not just some, if they are to be consistent. If they believe that spiritual gifts and spiritual ministries are not for today, then they must not pray for divine healing, this is a gift of healing; they must not pray for guidance or illumination upon a problem, this is a word of wisdom; they must not pray for God's anointing upon ministry or for Satan's power to be lifted from people's lives or minds, or for people to be blessed, this is a gift of faith; they must not pray for material needs to be met, this is a working of miracles; they must not pray for a revelation of God to the soul, this is a discerning of spirits; they must not pray for an inspired utterance from God, this is a prophecy; they must not pray for inspired praying, this is the prime use of the gift of tongues.

Those who say that spiritual gifts have ceased, often actually pray for the manifestation of spiritual gifts. Christians who say that spiritual gifts are not for today are really unwilling to seek God for those gifts; they refuse to submit to the experience that God desires to give them. They are not prepared to accept the full Scriptural standard, or the Lordship or wisdom of Christ over these spiritual gifts. **Those who reject spiritual gifts completely would in reality totally remove God's influence from His Church.** If God only works through His word today, as some insist, there is no point in the ministries of the Holy Spirit at all. Paul clearly states in 1Cor 12v21, that we cannot say that we have no need of these ministries and gifts, they are all essential, if Christ's body is to function as He intends. It is only difficult for Christians to witness effectively if God's gifts and ministries are missing.

Some would say, "I believe in God's power and influence, but how can you be sure that you will get the Holy Spirit and not some evil spirit?" We answer that true Christians believe the promise of Christ, that they cannot receive any false spirit or gift, if they are seeking God for His gifts and blessing. Indeed, the Scriptures emphatically state that it is only by seeking God for His power and gifts that we can be spiritually safe, and successfully resist the Devil; we certainly can't outwit or defeat Satan on our own. Psalm 24v3-6, 27v1-14, 42v1-11, 46v10, 62v1,2, Acts 1v14, 2v42, 3v1, 4v29-33, 6v2-4, 8v14-17, 9v11,12, 10v2,9-20, 12v5,12, 13v1-4, etc. Eph 6v10-20, James 4v7-10, 1Pet 5v5-11. etc. **Those who refuse to seek God's power for fear of receiving some false spirit, have in reality already been defeated by Satan, and have shown a lack of faith in God's ability to care for His children. Satan kept Israel out of Canaan through fear and unbelief; they could not trust God to look after them. Indeed, the Scriptures reveal that it has always been those who have failed to seek God for His blessing and spiritual gifts, who have been influenced by evil spirits.** Heb 3 and 4. Let us see, then:

F) The distinguishing characteristics of God's Spirit-Filled children.

a) God's children believe God's promise of blessing for them.

God has given many "exceeding great and precious promises" that tell us that He will give us spiritual blessing and spiritual gifts, those who deny that the miraculous is for today, don't have a Scriptural leg to stand on. All the promises of God are still "yea" and "Amen" in Christ Jesus, and we can still experience God's love, gifts and power today. 2Cor 1v17-20. It is certainly not honest or consistent to believe in a Christianity that has none of the New Testament love, life, and power. Just as the body is dead without the spirit, so is an intellectual Christianity that is devoid of the movings of the Holy Spirit. James 2v26. Christianity is not a doctrinal exercise; it is an experience of God. **Those who refuse to accept that spiritual gifts and spiritual ministries are for today, make Christianity an intellectual exercise over God's dealings in the past, instead of a living experience of God and His gifts in the present.** God's children should accept God's promises to them, not try to find an excuse for not seeking or receiving them, by wresting the Scriptures.

b) God's children earnestly seek and love God's presence.

Those who have clean hands and pure hearts love to seek God, "this is the generation of them that seek Him," Psalm

24v3-6. True Christians, like David, love to wait upon and seek God. Psalm 40v1, 62v1,5. Their hearts pant for Him. Psalm 42v1-3. The last thing that heretics and apostates want to experience is the overwhelming presence of God, but true Christians long for it. The early Church loved to seek God and spent hours and days doing it. There is a vast difference between a short prayer aimed at the hearers, and the prolonged and earnest seeking of God that we see in the New Testament. False cults may say short prayers, but they will not spend time in prolonged seeking of God, for the evil spirits that influence them, will not allow them to do this. False cults are under the influence of evil spirits, and in Deut 18v9-19, we see that seeking God and true and full recognition of Christ is diametrically opposite to seeking or pursuing evil spirits. Lev 19v31, 20v6, Isaiah 8v19-20. Prolonged, earnest seeking of God is an acid test of one's source of inspiration. Heb 11v6, 1John 4v1-6.

c) God's children manifest God's character and love in their lives.

Jesus said, "By their fruits ye shall know them." Matt 7v15-23. This does not mean the size or growth of a church organisation. True Christianity does not consist of statistics or empty talk, but rather of consecration to God, purity of life, and love of people. Paul warned those of the Corinthians, who were living deplorable lives, that they had no knowledge of God. 1Cor 15v34. It is true that even godly men, like David or Peter, may fail God badly under heavy temptation, but this is totally different from the sinful wallowing in the mire spoken of in 2Pet 2v1-22, Jude v3-25 and Rev 2v13-16,20-24. **Christian love and purity cannot be truly counterfeited or imitated by Satan's children.** Hypocrites may pretend and play-act, but "agape" love is inimitable and incomparable. Christians will not only die for their brethren, but also for their enemies. 1John 5v1,2, 2v1-22, Matt 5v43-48.

d) God's children believe the truths in God's Word.

Another acid test of a person's source of inspiration is whether they conform to the fundamental doctrines of Scripture. If the Holy Spirit moves a person, their doctrines and practices will be the same as those of the early Church. When a person is taken over by an evil spirit, their doctrine is corrupted and bears no resemblance to New Testament truth. John said that those who are inspired of God believe that Jesus is the promised Messiah, and that He has come in human flesh, whereas those who are inspired by Satan reject this. The Messiah of the Old Testament is "The Mighty God," Hebrew, "El Gibbor," an exclusive title of Jehovah. Isaiah 9v6, 10v21, Jer 32v18. He is "God with us." Isaiah 7v14 with Matt 1v23. Many Scriptures state that Jesus is the eternal Creator God of the Old Testament.

A person's source of inspiration is revealed by their attitude to Jesus, those who reject His deity, humanity, atonement, and teaching, are moved by Satan, those who accept them are inspired by God. The personal appropriation of Christ's sacrifice for sin is always the cleavage point between Divine and Satanic doctrine. Rev 12v10-12. We know and rejoice in the experience of redemption by Jesus from the penalty and power of sin. False cults reject the Christian teaching about sin and judgement, and state that personal redemption by Christ's blood is unnecessary. False cults either reject completely the idea of a personal God, or so pervert the idea of God that He is unrecognisable as the Christian's God. Many false prophets address prayers to God and Christ, but they distort the doctrine of Christ, and preach "another Jesus, ---and another gospel," and are "accursed." 2Cor 11v3,4, 1John 4v1-5,15, 2v11,23, 5v1, Matt 7v15-29, Gal 1v8,9.

e) God's children desire to answer Satan's lying wonders with God's miracles.

How illogical and inconsistent it is to say that the Almighty God no longer does any miracles, and only Satan does miracles today. God is a God that only does wonders, and His children should do the same by His power. Exodus 3v20, 15v11, Job 9v10, Psalm 77v11,14, 136v4, Isaiah 8v18, Acts 4v22,43, Rom 4v2,3, Heb 2v4. God has not left all the miracle-working to Satan during this age, God has promised miracles throughout this age, and that this age will close with the greatest show of spiritual power the world has ever seen, God's two witnesses have amazing spiritual gifts given to them to answer Satan's lying wonders through the Antichrist. Rev 11v1-12, 2Thess 2v7-12. **None of the prophets or apostles vindicated God merely by talk; God confirmed the truth of their words through signs, wonders and miracles.**

G) The financially undemanding structure of the early church ministries.

The itinerant ministries enjoyed some measure of support from the churches, but the churches did not direct them, nor did they control the churches. Acts 13v1-4, 16v6,16, Phil 4v10-19, 3Jn v5-11. In the early churches there was no local church buildings, or centrally governed denomination into which funds were sent, and which kept the preachers of the Gospel with a fixed income. In the Bible we see individual faith in God, not faith in an organisation. Ministers in a modern church organisation can expect some measure of security without trusting and depending on God. Few modern ministers would be prepared to accept the financial insecurity and poverty of Christ and His early Church ministries. Matt 8v19,20, Luke 9v57,58, Acts 3v6, 2Cor 8v9. A sacrificial cross was an essential part of New Testament ministry. Matt 10v38, 16v24. The Lord Jesus chose men who were prepared to trust God over their finances, the idea of a group of Christians building a church building, and supporting their minister, was unknown in

the early Church. The pastor-elders of the early Church usually worked and kept themselves, those who had devoted themselves to study and Church responsibilities, and were financially embarrassed as a result, received gifts from the local church, but usually on the level of financial aid given to the poorest in the church. 1Tim 5v17,18, 1Pet 5v1,2. The itinerant ministries also received gifts and hospitality to meet their needs, or like Paul they worked to meet their own essential needs. 1Cor 9v1-19, 2Cor 11v8,9, Phil 4v10-19. **The vast majority of the finances collected by the early churches were for the poor, and these collections for the poor are totally different from the disgraceful and corrupt appeals for money that we often see in our day from some so-called Christian ministries.** John 12v5,6,8, 13v29, Acts.2v44,45, 4v32-37, 2Cor 8v1-9, Rom 16v17,18.

Hatch writes on page 147 and 148 of his Bampton Lectures on "The Organisation of the Early Christian Churches:"

"The funds of the primitive communities had consisted entirely of voluntary offerings. Of these offerings those officers whose circumstances required it were entitled to a share. They received such a share only on the grounds of poverty. They were, so far, in the position of the widows and orphans and helpless poor. Like soldiers in the Roman army, or slaves in a Roman household, they were entitled to a monthly allowance. The amount of that allowance was variable. When the Montanists proposed to pay their clergy a fixed salary the proposal was condemned as a heretical innovation, alien to Catholic practice. (Eusebius H.E.5.18.2.: 5.28.10). Those who could supplemented their allowances by farming or by trade. There was no sense of incongruity in their doing so. The Apostolical Constitutions repeat with emphasis the apostolic injunction, 'If any man would not work, neither should he eat.' (Const. Apost.2.62. 2Thess 3v10,12, 1Thess 4v11). Those who could supplemented their allowances by farming or trade. There is no early trace of the later idea that buying and selling, handicraft and farming, were inconsistent with the office of a Christian minister. The bishops and presbyters of those early days kept banks, practised medicine, wrought as silversmiths, tended sheep, or sold their goods in open market. They were like the non-juring bishops a century and a half ago (about 1730), or like the early preachers of the Wesleyan Methodists. They were men of the world taking part in the ordinary business of life. The point about which the Christian communities were anxious was, not that their officers should cease to trade, but that in this as in other respects, they should be examples to the flock." End of quote.

Hatch continues in his notes at the bottom of page 148, to tell how the leaders of the primitive Church usually worked, he states; - "Among the latter are the case of Spiridion who tended sheep in Cyprus, ---of a bishop who was a weaver at Maiuma, ---of one who was a shipbuilder in Campania---one who practised in the law courts, ---of a presbyter who was a silversmith at Ancyra. --- Basil, Epist.198 (263), vol.4 p.290) speaks of the majority of his clergy as earning their living by sedentary handicrafts, and Epiphanius, ---speaks of others doing it in order to earn money for the poor." End of quote.

All Christians are priests in the eyes of God: 1Pet 2v5,9, Rev 1v6, 5v10, 20v6.

The early Church Christian ministry was not looked upon as priesthood, in the sense of ministers alone having a priestly authority and power. God has made all Christians members of "a royal priesthood," and "kings and priests unto God." When two or three Christians gather together (Matt 18v20), they make up a church, even if no church ministries are present. There is only one High Priest of Christianity, our Lord Jesus. The early church at Jerusalem shows us that God intended His Church to be a voluntary fellowship of Christians, who are united by love for Christ and one another, and free from priest craft, despotism, or dictatorship.

Authority or Insubordination?

The Scribes and Pharisees challenged both John Baptist and Christ as to the source of their authority; they looked upon them as insubordinate rebels, and divisive troublemakers. The Church of Jesus has always had the same problem; Christ's heaven-sent ministries have always been looked upon as "insubordinate" and "divisive," by people who are determined to preserve their religious power structure and position. The apostles were insubordinate to men, but obedient to God; the Scribes and Pharisees were obedient to men but insubordinate to God. Dissension always comes between those who seek influence from men, and those who seek authority from heaven. Authority from Heaven is not decided by human opinion; it is proved by divine gifting and conformity to Biblical teaching and experience. The people who murdered Jesus claimed that they had been given authority from God to kill Him; this false claim to Divine authority has been repeated again and again in Church history, by those who have murdered many dear children of God, who had received a definite authority from God. Indeed, it almost seems impossible not to be called a heretic by men, when you have God's authority, and we should certainly doubt if our calling and ministry is from God, when all men speak well of us. Matt 5v10-12, 23v19-39, Luke 6v26.

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