

Christ
The Golden
Thread That Binds



This book has short chapters on many valuable subjects concerning the foundational truths of the Christian life. The hope and spiritual life of the Christian is found in these truths. The blessing of God is the reward of all persons who in faith will receive, follow and practice these truths in their daily life. The kingdom of Christ will be opened to such a person.

The Church has drifted from it's foundation to a place that some of the truths in this book have become almost unknown in this day.



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What did the Lord Jesus Christ Teach the Apostles, and
What did the Apostles Teach Concerning the Following?

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Preface

This book has an abundance of Scriptures for the subjects in each chapter. These Scriptures can be used to make each chapter more understandable to the reader. As the reader looks up and studies these Scriptures, he will have a better understanding of God's will for man. This knowledge pertains to the Christian, the Church, the Jews, and to those who are not born of the Spirit of God. This book contains 24 chapters, giving 24 distinct truths that are clearly taught in Scripture. These truths are put forth to make the Christian's pathway more comprehensible. They will also enrich the believer's life through the knowledge of God's purposes and ways for His people. The truths that the believer learns from Scripture are the pathway God desires His people to follow. The believer can only enter into these truths as he exercises a practical walk of faith.

These truths must be received into the heart, and developed into a practical daily walk, to hasten the believer's growth in the personal knowledge of Christ Jesus.

Without the knowledge of the revelation of God in Scripture, man is left to follow whatever appeals to his religious or secular nature. These diversions from God's pathway afflict many who profess Christianity today. Religious philosophies, doctrines of men, entertainments and enticements are used to compromise the headship of Christ over His people. The headship of Christ over His Church is clearly taught in Scripture (Ephesians 1:22; Colossians 1:18).

Jesus made it clear to His disciples and all who would enter into eternal life, that this life is the Word of God (John 1:1-4). Only by hearing and believing God's Word through faith will life through the Holy Spirit open up to a believer. The life of Jesus, exercised in the believer, is the purpose of God for every Christian. In this life in the Spirit, the believer will enter into

complete liberty in Christ. Jesus said in John 8:36, “Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.”

This life is built by small steps of faith as a person receives the truths of the Word of God into his heart. These steps, being heard and received by a believer, make the difference between a life in the Spirit, or the Spirit being quenched and grieved (Ephesians 4:30; 1 Thessalonians 5:19). The Adamic nature of man is content in a religious setting without exercising faith. The Apostle Paul directs us to, “Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves that Jesus Christ is in you? Unless indeed you are disqualified” (2 Corinthians 13:5).

Jesus tells us how to follow Him in this verse. “My sheep hear My voice and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone pluck them out of My hand” (John 10:27-28).

Definitions of Bible phrases used in this book

1. A Christian: One in whom the Spirit of Christ lives and has been given a new life (spiritual) (2 Corinthians 5:17), through confessing Christ as Saviour and being born again by the Spirit of God and the Word of God (Romans 10:9; 1 Peter 1:23).

2. Kingdom of God: The kingdom of God is universal, including all moral intelligences willingly subject to the will of God. This includes all heavenly and earthly beings, past, present and future; a righteous spiritual kingdom.

3. Kingdom of Heaven: The kingdom of heaven is when Christ, as Messiah, sits on David's Throne (during the Millennium), ruling over all things. He establishes the kingdom of God on the earth.

4. Millennium: The one thousand year reign of Christ occurring right after the Tribulation.

5. Kingdom of Christ: Christ is the King ruling over His kingdom. Though absent from the earth, all who receive Him (now) are His subjects (Colossians 1:13). His subjects' relationship to Him is not as King, but as "the firstborn of many brethren" (Romans 8:29). And "...He is not ashamed to call them brethren" (Hebrews 2:11).

6. The Church of God: The Holy Spirit formed and gave life to the Church on the day of Pentecost. It is made up of every person on earth baptized by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13). It has a physical expression on the earth.

7. Pentecost: Pentecost was a feast (Feast of Weeks) given of God, and kept by the Jews every year (Leviticus 23:15-22). This feast, kept in 33 A. D., was the day the promise of Jesus was fulfilled to send the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit fell from heaven on the disciples and apostles with tongues of fire seen on their heads (Acts 2:2-4).

8. The body of Christ: The body of Christ is made up of all people in this dispensation who are born of the Spirit of God

(John 1:12-13). The outward expression of the one body is seen in the loaf in the remembrance meeting of Jesus in His death (1 Corinthians 10:17).

9. The (Lamb's) Book of Life: God keeps a book in heaven, and wrote in it (before the foundation of the earth was set), the name of every person who will (from the beginning of recorded time until the end of recorded time) receive eternal life by being born again through receiving Christ as their Saviour (Philippians 4:3; Revelation 13:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12, 15; 21:27).

10. The true Church: The true or genuine Church, "...is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of truth," the truth as found in Scripture (1 Timothy 3:15).

11. The professing (apostate) Church: a. This church is in spiritual deception. It is made up of those who have made a profession of Christianity but who were never born again. Chiefly, it is made up of a group who, in the last days, depart from the truth. They do not receive the revealed nature of God in Jesus Christ (John 1:1). b. They reject Scripture as God's only revelation to man (Matthew 4:4; 2 Timothy 3:1-8).

12. Christendom: Any part of the world in which Christianity prevails. It is made up of all who profess the name of Christ, believers (saved) and unbelievers (unsaved). This includes a host of sects, cults and denominations.

13. The Church Age: The Church Age began at Pentecost (33 A. D.) at which time, the Church was formed (Acts 2:4). The Church will exist until it is caught up in the air (rapture) to meet Jesus at the sound of the trumpet of God (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). It is also known as the day of grace.

14. The catching away of the saints (rapture): Jesus will call; the trumpet of God will sound at the end of the Church Age. Every Christian, past (in the grave), and present, will rise to meet Him in the air (1 Corinthians 15:51-57; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

15. Dispensation of the Grace of God: This time began with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It will end with the

rapture. In this time period, unmerited favor of God is bestowed on all who receive eternal life through Jesus Christ. This life is a gift of God, not depending on man's works or abilities (Ephesians 2:8-9).

16. The Day of Redemption: The Day of Redemption is the day Jesus Christ will give every Christian a new body, and redeem them out of this world to be with Himself forever (Ephesians 4:30).

17. The last days: The last days began at Pentecost and will continue until the Church is caught up out of this world (the rapture) (Hebrews 1:2).

18. Day of Christ: This is the period connected with rewards and blessing of saints at the coming of Christ for His own (Unger's Bible Dictionary) (1 Corinthians 1:8; 2 Corinthians 1:14). This takes place in heaven (at the Judgment seat of Christ).

19. Judgment seat of Christ: After the Church is taken from this world and before the marriage supper of the lamb, Jesus Christ will judge the works of His saints (2 Corinthians 5:10). The works done by a believer in his earthly body, which are not of Christ, will be burned up (1 Corinthians 3:15) and the works directed by the Holy Spirit, through the believer, shall be rewarded (1 Corinthians 3:14).

20. Times of the Gentiles: The times of the Gentiles began with the Babylonian captivity of Judah in 521 B. C. (2 Chronicles 36:1-21), and will extend to the time when Gentile nations will no longer assert control (or influence) over the city of Jerusalem (Believer's Commentary, William Mc Donald) (Luke 21:24).

21. The Tribulation: The Tribulation is a 7 year time period which will take place after the Church is caught up to be with Jesus. This 7 years is seen in two 3½ year time periods, The Tribulation and The Great Tribulation (Rev. 7:14). The trouble will embrace the whole earth (Revelation 3:10). However, it will center in Israel and specifically Jerusalem and is, "the time of Jacob's trouble" (Jeremiah 30:7). This time period is recorded in Revelation chapter 5 to 11:18 and expanded upon in chapter 11:19 to 20:1-5.

22. The time of Jacob's trouble: This speaks to the great suffering the Jews in Israel endure during the tribulation (Zechariah 11:15-16; Matthew 24:15-22). Those who endure to the end (of the Tribulation) will be saved by the coming of Jesus and will go into the Millennium (Matthew 24:13).

23. Seventy weeks of Daniel 9:24-27: These 70 weeks (years) of Daniel's prophecy are in two different time periods. They are actually a heptagon, $7 \times 70 = 490$ years. The 69 weeks (483 years), started with King Artaxerxes of Persia, when he gave a proclamation in 445 B. C. (Ezra 1:6), for Israel to go back to their country, to Jerusalem to rebuild the wall and the temple. This part of the prophecy was completed with the death of Jesus, the Messiah, in 33 A. D.. The last week of the 70 weeks or the last 7 years, is the tribulation time to be fulfilled after the Church is taken in the rapture. The 69th and 70th weeks do not run concurrent and are interrupted by the 'Day of Grace' which is an undefined period of time but believed to be about 2000 years.

24. The Beast: He is a world leader who will rise up out of the Gentiles nations, the revived Roman Empire. He will institute the mark of the beast to control all buying and selling of goods (Revelation 13:11-18). His rule and power will be exercised during the 70th week of Daniel's prophecy (Revelation 13:1-8). His doom is seen in Revelation 19:20; 20:10, where he is cast alive into the lake of fire.

25. The anti-christ: This man has many names which describe him; the son of perdition, the man of sin (2 Thessalonians 2:3), the anti-christ (1 John 2:18), the false prophet (Revelation 13:11; 19:20), and the one who comes in his own name (John 5:43). During the tribulation he sits in the temple in Jerusalem and takes the place and glory of the Messiah (2 Thessalonians 2:4). He is also thrown alive into the fire with the Beast.

26. The second coming of Jesus Christ: The Tribulation will be consummated at the return of Jesus, coming to the earth the second time. He will come back in all His power and glory as King of kings and Lord of lords (Revelation 19:11-16). He will

destroy the enemies of Israel gathered at Megiddo where the battle of Armageddon will take place (Revelation 19:17-21).

27. Armageddon: The battle of Armageddon takes place on the plain of Megiddo in northern Israel. This will take place at the end of the Tribulation. World powers under the Beast and the False Prophet, will battle with Jesus. Their armies will be destroyed; the vultures will feed on them. In this battle, the Beast and the False Prophet will be captured and thrown into the lake of fire (Revelation 19:11-21).

28. Judgment of the nations: The judgment of the nations will come after the battle of Armageddon. They will be judged by Christ, the great King (Psalm 45:1-7), according to how they treated the Jews, His brethren (Matthew 25:40). The goats (the nations who mistreated the Jews) will be judged and sent into eternal punishment, while the sheep will enter the Millennium (Matthew 25:31-40, 46).

29. Shekinah Glory: The Shekinah Glory is God's glory especially shown to man in the tabernacle (Exodus 40:33-35), the temple (1 Kings 8:10-11), and in Christ (Matthew 17:1-3). It is also shown on the day of Pentecost when He established His Church (Acts 2:4). The Christian with the Holy Spirit indwelling him (1 Corinthians 6:19), manifests the glory of God in His new life.

30. The White Throne Judgment: This will be the last judgment of God for the dead (souls who have never been saved are spoken as being dead spiritually) who lived upon the earth. Unbelievers will receive eternal damnation (Revelation 20:11-15).

31. Messiah: The word Messiah means Anointed, or Christ. The prophetic promises of God in the Old Testament of a Messiah to come to Israel are in almost every book of the Old Testament. They tell of 2 comings, one as a humble suffering servant (Isaiah 52:12-15; chapter 53), and one as the King ruling over all kings on the earth (Psalms 2:1-12; Isaiah 9:6-7). The Messiah's death (cut off) is prophesied in Daniel 9:26, a detailed description of how he would die (crucifixion) is prophesied in Psalms 22:1-22.

The Messiah-ship **1** of Jesus Christ

Over many centuries, God had promised a Messiah to Israel. The question every Jew in Israel faced when Jesus of Nazareth began to claim to be the Messiah was, is this Jesus the Messiah promised in the Scriptures? Did Jesus fulfill the prophecies written in the Law of Moses, the Psalms and the Prophets? The prophecies in these books show that a Messiah would come to Israel.

The 12 apostles of Jesus who walked with Him for 3 years, lived with Him, beheld His divine nature and His works, tell us what they experienced and saw (Luke 1:1-4, Acts 1:1-3, 2 Peter 1:16). Every book in the New Testament records a portion of what Jesus said and did. The completeness of this knowledge is expressed in Acts 2. On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit fell on the disciples of Jesus. The Jews were without understanding as to what was transpiring and what it meant. The Apostle Peter spoke to them and gave full proclamation to its meaning. He told the Jews who Jesus was, His position with the Father, what He had accomplished as the Messiah and how God seated Him at His right hand. The Apostle Peter pointed out seven distinct fulfilled prophetic truths starting in the second chapter of Acts. They are:

1. Acts 2:22: "Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God."
2. Verse 23, "Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God."
3. Verse 23, "you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death."
4. Verse 24, "Whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death."
5. Verse 33, "Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God."
6. Verse 33, (we) "Having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this, which you now see and hear."
7. Verse 36, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."

The prophecies that made up Peter's message are found in the Old Testament and fulfilled as recorded in the New Testament. They are as follows:

Old Testament prophecies, (O.T.)

New Testament fulfillment, (N.T.F.)

1. Jesus, approved of God
O. T. Isaiah 11:1-3; 42:1-7; 49:5-7.
N. T. F. Matthew 3:16-17; 17:5; Acts 13:22-25).
2. Jesus predestined by the counsel and foreknowledge of God
O.T. Isaiah 42:1-7; 53:8; Psalms 69:4; 102:1-10.
N. T. F. Matthew 20:17-18, 28; Luke 24:44; John 10:11, 15, 17; 11:50-51.
3. Jesus crucified
O.T. Psalms 22:1-20; Isaiah 52:13-15, Isaiah chapter 53; Daniel 9:26.
N.T. F. Matthew 27:33-50.
4. God loosed Christ from death, Christ risen
O.T. Psalms 16:8-11; 22:22-25; 49:15.
N.T. F. Matthew 28:5-10; Luke 24:44-46; Acts 13:30-34.
5. Jesus now sits at the right hand of God
O.T. Psalms 2:1-12; 89:24-29; 110:1.
N.T. F. Colossians 3:1; Hebrews 1:3; 8:1; 10:12.
6. Giving of the Holy Spirit
O.T. Ezekiel 36:25-27; Joel 2:28-29.
N.T. F. Acts 2:4; 1 Corinthians 12:13.
7. Jesus both Lord and Christ
O.T. Psalms 110:1; Isaiah 7:14; 9:6-7; 52:13-15; Jeremiah 23:5-6; Micah 5:2; Zechariah 6:12-13.
N.T.F. Luke 1:26-38; John 8:57-58; Acts 2:36.

At the time of Peter's message, the events of Jesus' crucifixion

fifty days earlier were still fresh in the minds of the Jews. Peter's declaration that Jesus is the long awaited Messiah put the blame on the Jews for having killed their Messiah (Acts 2:23). Peter's message to the Jews was based on the prophetic Scriptures that Jesus fulfilled as Israel's Messiah. Peter laid the responsibility that led up to the death of Jesus at the feet of the Jews. The Jews, in unbelief of their own Scriptures, fulfilled them by crucifying the Man from heaven, the "King of Glory" (Psalms 24:7-10).

Salvation, a Work of man or a Work and Gift of God?

Both the Old Testament and the New Testament Scriptures show us that God created man for an eternal fellowship with Himself. Adam, the first man, fell from this fellowship with God. In his fall, he acquired a sin nature. Because all men have come out of Adam's body, they too have inherited Adam's nature. The result of this sin nature is that all men are "dead (spiritually) in trespasses and sins" (Romans 5:12; 7:17-24; Ephesians 2:1). As the violation of man's laws brings a judgment and a penalty, so likewise does the violation of God's laws. Scripture reveals that all men are under the wrath and judgment of God (John 3:36; Ephesians 2:3). Man cannot change this condition by his own works or abilities (Galatians 3:11). Man in his natural state is in the place of standing before the great white throne judgment of God, without hope of acquittal (Matthew 18:8; 25:41; Mark 9:43-48; Romans 5:18; Ephesians 2:12; I Thessalonians 4:13).

This judgment will happen at the consummation of the ages (Revelation 11:18; 20:11-15). From this court there is no appeal. The verdict of the judgment of God is final and eternal (Hebrews 6:2; 9:27).

Scripture also reveals that the nature of God is love (I John 4:8). God's love is not only in words, but also in action. God sent His own Son (Psalms 2:7; John 3:16), in likeness of sinful flesh (Romans 8:3), to take on Himself the penalty of our judgment (Hebrews 10:10, 12). His sacrifice applies to all who receive Him by faith into their heart. Jesus Christ the Righteous, on the cross at Calvary, paid the full penalty demanded of God for sin; "...the just for the unjust" (2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 3:18).

The justice of God is vindicated because Christ Jesus took God's judgment on Himself for the sins of us all (1 Corinthians 15:3; Galatians 1:4; Hebrews 1:3; 1 Peter 2:24; 1 John 2:2). With the death of Jesus, God has put the issue of sin fully away as Jesus said on the cross, "It is finished" (John 19:30; Hebrews 10:12, 14).

Jesus, being raised from among the dead, is the evidence that

God accepted the death of Jesus as the payment for man's sin (1 Corinthians 15:3-4, 17).

The great chasm of sin that separated man from God, his Creator, has been completely closed by the death of Jesus. Now, the Spirit of God bids all people to come to God through the sacrifice of Jesus. This great work of God has made the gift of salvation free and without cost to all (Isaiah 55:1; Romans 5:15, 17-18; 6:23; 2 Corinthians 9:15; Ephesians 2:8). The banquet table of God is now prepared, and all are invited to come and feast on Him who is a Life giving Spirit (John 4:10; 6:63; 7:37-38; 1 Corinthians 15:45). Men receive this gift of God by the grace of God (unmerited favor), through faith from the heart in Jesus Christ (Romans 10:9). Faith in the person of Christ, from the heart, brings one into the grace of God, and the Christian life.

Second Corinthians 8:9 gives us understanding of the love of God. "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich."

The riches that a believer receives are the very life of God brought into his spirit (Colossians 1:27; 1 John 5:11-13). This life is eternal (John 17:3), a life that cannot die, because it is God's life. This gift of eternal life is in the saved person forever (John 10:28-30; Romans 4:3-8; 11:29; Ephesians 4:30). Salvation is completely a work of God, which a believer enters into by faith from the heart (John 1:12-13; Ephesians 2:8-9). Entering into this life in Christ brings new life, spiritual life. This Christ-life in the believer makes all things become new as he learns to rest in this new life (Matthew 11:28-30). This rest is the peace of God (Philippians 4:7, 9).

Spirit Baptism

“For also in [the power of] one Spirit we have all been baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bondmen or free, and have all been given to drink of one Spirit” (1 Corinthians 12:13 JND).

Spirit baptism, like salvation, is entirely a work of God. Man cannot produce the Holy Spirit baptism by his own actions or works. When a person believes in Jesus as God the Son (God in human form) within his heart, has put his faith in the shed blood of Jesus as the payment for his sins, and believes in the bodily resurrection of Jesus from the grave, the Scriptures declare that he is saved (1 Corinthians 15:1-4; Romans 10:9-10). In this faith, the Spirit of Jesus (Holy Spirit) comes into the human spirit (Galatians 3:14; 1 John 4:13). By this action of faith, the believer is Spirit baptized into the body of Christ.

Living in the Holy Spirit

“For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit” (Romans 8:5).

Because of the completeness of the work of Christ, the believer is able to enter by faith into this gift, which is the very life of Christ living in the believer. This life is seen in the believer’s life as he yields to the Holy Spirit’s leading, and by faith crucifies the Adamic nature within (Romans 6:6). This life which the Holy Spirit brings forth in the believer is a new creation and direction of living (2 Corinthians 5:17). As the believer continues to abide in the Spirit (living by faith), God changes the direction of his life (John 8:31-32; 15:1-8).

The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye and the pride of life (Genesis 3:6; 1 John 2:16) cannot enter into this life of walking in the Spirit, which is the ‘kingdom of God’ (John 3:3-7). The believer’s old life, before he had faith, was based on the Adamic

nature. This Adamic life is lived in darkness to the love of God in Christ Jesus. As it is written, “Giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love” (Colossians 1:12-13). Occupying this position of the Spirit by faith, brings the believer into oneness with Christ. “For in Him we live and move and have our being...” (Acts 17:28). To live, move and have our being in the kingdom of Christ is to be brought into a life filled with the riches of Christ (Ephesians 1:7, 18; 3:8).

Christian Water Baptism

4

Bapto: is the noun of the root Greek word for baptism. The word means to dip. The English word baptism is the equivalent of the Greek root word baptisma. This Greek word means “of immersion, submersion and emergence.”

“Therefore, we were buried with Him through baptism into death” (Romans 6:4).

Water baptism for the believer is for the purpose of identification with Christ (Romans 6:5 JND). Only a person indwelt by the Holy Spirit can enter into the full aspects of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Any person can be baptized. However, unless that person has the Holy Spirit dwelling within them (1 Corinthians 6:19), baptism is merely a form of religious tradition or an exercise in false hope. Our old nature (Adamic) can never identify with the nature of the Holy Spirit (heavenly). Water baptism cannot make one spiritual or make them a Christian. Water baptism is an outward sign for all men to see that the disciple openly declares that his life in this world is now in union with Christ. Water baptism is reflective; it has no regenerative power (John 1:12-13; 3:16; Ephesians 2:8).

Identification with Christ includes several aspects.

First, Christ was born on earth of the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35). Every believer is born of the Spirit (John 3:1-5; 1 John 2:29).

Second, Christ died; the water represents Gods judgment of sin put on Christ. The believer was crucified with Christ and also died with Him (Romans 6:3-5). This representation is seen as the believer goes under the water in baptism. The believer is seen as one who died with Christ two thousand years ago (Romans 6:6).

Third, Christ rose from among the dead in resurrection life; the believer also, who was dead in trespass and sin (Ephesians 2:5), is seen as risen in newness of life with Christ (Ephesians 2:6). This typology is seen as the believer comes up out of the water of baptism.

Fourth, Christ is now glorified (John 12:16; 17:5; Ephesians 1:20-21). The glory of Christ is seen in the believer, in whom God has done a regenerative work. In this work of God the believer is seen as glorified with Him (Romans 8:28-30).

Fifth, Christ will reign in His Kingdom on the earth; every believer shall reign with Him (Ephesians 2:6; 2 Timothy 2:12; Revelation 11:15; 20:6).

All of these truths make known a believer's identification with Christ, and what he will experience with Christ in the age to come. These truths are all seen in water baptism. The believer in water baptism, expresses and experiences these truths in his developing walk of faith.

5 The Christian's Calling

“Therefore, holy brethren partakers of the heavenly calling...”
(Hebrews 3:1).

“For we walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Corinthians 5:7).

The Christian's calling is entirely a heavenly calling. This means as a sinner he has heard the message of heavenly origin and has responded to it. This response leads directly to the cross of Christ whereby he is made a saint of God. The cross is a place of death, for at the cross of Calvary the Savior was crucified, and the saved sinner was crucified with Him (Romans 6:6).

This heavenly calling from above is the crucified life, which means the believer, by faith, puts to death the Adamic nature within (Galatians 2:20). This calling of God is based on the revelation, which God has revealed to every Christian. It is found in Ephesians 4:5-6, and is as follows:

There is:

- A. One body.
- B. One Spirit.
- C. One hope of your calling.
- D. One Lord.
- E. One faith.
- F. One baptism.
- G. One God and Father.

A. *One Body:* This indicates the unity of all believers in Christ. This unity of the One Body in Christ is created of God (1 Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:27-28).

There are within the testimony of Christendom; denominations, parties, sects, and independent gatherings. These divisions are of man's making and not of God (1 Corinthians chapters 1-4).

B. *One Spirit:* The Holy Spirit indwells every Christian (1 Corinthians 6:19). The Holy Spirit also lives in the midst of His body, the Church (1 Corinthians 3:16; Revelation 1:13; 2:1). The

Holy Spirit creates unity among those in Christ (Ephesians 4:3).

C. *One Hope:* Every Christian has the same destiny, to be with Christ forever. This hope will be fulfilled at the coming of Jesus for His saints (the Rapture) (1 Corinthians 15:51-53).

D. *One Lord:* Satan and man have made many gods, idols and Lords in this world (Genesis 3:5; 1 Corinthians 8:5-6). God has made but one Lord and Christ whom He has set before men in this world, as the Apostle Peter declares in Acts 2:36.

E. *One Faith:* This one faith is based on the revelation of Jesus as the promised Jewish Messiah (Luke 1:26-38; Acts 13:23, 38-39; 1 Corinthians 3:11). This one faith is the whole and complete counsel of God as preserved for the Christian in the New Testament (Acts 20:27).

F. *One Baptism:* There is one baptism that finds expression in two ways. First, every Christian has been baptized into the body of Christ by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13). Second, water baptism is the outward expression of identification with the Lord (Romans 6:4).

G. *One God:* There is but one God, revealed from the beginning of creation (Genesis 1:1), whom the Christian also now knows as Father (John 20:17). 1.) Above all: He is God over all gods. 2.) Through all: the Creator of everything that exists. 3. In you all: God is in every Christian, and is omnipresent (Ephesians 4:6). The calling of a Christian is based on these truths.

Faith, the Place of God's Favor

6

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1).

“For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God” (Ephesians 2:8).

In Romans 4:16-18 Abraham is called the father of faith. We learn in Scripture that God's favor rests on anyone who will believe Him. Abraham is pointed out in Scripture as the example of a man of faith that God will honor. Abraham was from Ur of the Chaldees, a pagan country (Genesis 11:31). Genesis 12:1-3 is the first record of God speaking to Abram (Abraham). God told Abraham that He was going to bless all families of the earth through him. This blessing was to be through the Messiah who would come out of the loins of Abraham as seen in the genealogical record in Matthew 1:1-17. God spoke this promise to Abraham, a man not in the kingdom of God, but an unbelieving, unregenerate man. As Abraham listened to the promise of God, Abraham listened in faith. God tells us in Genesis 15:6, “And he believed in the Lord; and He (God) counted it to him (Abraham) for righteousness.” Because Abraham believed God, in a moment of time he went from being an unrighteous man to being fully righteous before God. This righteousness was imputed to Abraham by a work of God (Romans 4:22-23). This righteousness was given (reckoned) to Abraham not because he had done some physical act, but on the basis of his faith (Romans 4:3-5).

The illustration of these recorded events is the only pathway to God's righteousness. Favor of God through God's righteousness is made available to anyone who will believe Him (Romans 4:23-25).

This favor of God is the gift of life, eternal life. This gift, given through the grace of God, is given to all who will or have believed in His Messiah, Jesus Christ the Son of God (John 3:16; 5:24; 10:27-28; Romans 6:23; 1 John 5:11-12).

Faith in what God has said and done (sending His Son into the

world as the mediator for man), brings this full and complete blessing of God into the life of every believer. Every person who believes God from the heart has the complete righteousness of Christ in him (Romans 4:21-25; 5:19; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Corinthians 5:21). Abraham by his faith, was enabled to have an ongoing unhindered fellowship with God. Every person who believes God in faith through Jesus Christ has entered into the same relationship with God as Abraham. That relationship means a person is a friend of God, forever (2 Chronicles 20:7; James 2:23; John 15:15).

A person may ask, "Are not the good works that I do also necessary to gain God's favor?" Scripture is quite clear on this point. "But we are all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags" (Isaiah 64:6). If anyone has a relationship with God, it is because God has put the righteousness of His Son into that person's spirit. The example of the thief, who was nailed on a cross beside Jesus, represented the condition and position of every person in this world. Before a righteous God, he could do nothing and was without hope. The same is true of every human being. We are unable to contribute anything to the salvation that God offers in His Son. The thief, believing God in faith, became the friend of Jesus. In the moment of faith he became righteous, with the promise of paradise that very day (Luke 23:39-43).

In John 6:28, Jesus was asked how a person could do the works of God. His answer is found in John 6:29, "This is the work of God, that you believe on Him (Jesus) whom He (God) has sent." True faith leads the Christian to walk and live in the simplicity of the Lord Jesus. The Christian can only be brought into fullness in the kingdom of Christ as he believes and follows the whole revealed counsel of God, which is made known in Scripture (Acts 20:27; Ephesians 4:13).

Faith in Jesus Christ, and the Word of God, plus nothing of ourselves, is man's narrow road to God's large gift of life eternal (John 1:1; Romans 4:5). "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it" (Matthew 7:13-14).

The Christian's Security

“All that the Father gives Me will come to Me; and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out” (John 6:37).

The Christian's place of security in the kingdom of Christ is not based on his abilities or strengths (1 Samuel 2:9; Matthew 19:25-26; John 1:12-13; 1 Peter 1:5). The Christian's security in the kingdom of God is based entirely on the blood of Christ, which was shed on the cross, and His resurrection from among the dead. The Christian enters into this secure eternal state through the new birth, a spiritual birth (John 3:1-6, 16-18). When a person is born into a human family through mother and father, that person is a part of the blood line of that family forever. So it is with the Christian who is born of God. His spiritual birth is eternal (John 1:13). Just as a person's human birth is a miracle of life through the mother and father, so is the Christian's second birth a miracle through Christ by the Holy Spirit.

The Christian's eternal state is a work and miracle of God. If salvation were a human work, it most certainly would fail. God is an eternal Spirit (Hebrews 9:14). One born of God is born of His eternal Spirit, and has obtained eternal redemption (Hebrews 9:12).

Jesus said in John 3:36: “He who believes on the Son has everlasting life.” This is said not in the future tense, but in the present tense, and the Christian possesses that life at his second birth. In John 5:24, Jesus said that the one who has believed God has passed from death unto everlasting life. The present tense is again used in John 6:47; 1 John 5:1, 11, 13. In John 11:26, Jesus said the one who believed in Him would never die. As all men are dead in trespasses and sin (Ephesians 2:1), the one who has received life from the Spirit of God is never again to be put into that category.

God has given the Christian a free gift of eternal life (Romans 6:23). We learn in Romans 4:5 that this gift is not something he can work for or work to keep. A Christian is a work of God, a

fruit of His Spirit, and a new creation of God. This is not because of the Christian's actions, but by the action of God in Christ.

There are many ways of describing this work of God for and in the believer in the New Testament. The following are some of these important truths revealed to us:

Imputed Righteousness: In this gift of eternal life, given by grace through faith to a believer, he receives imputed righteousness from God (Romans 4:21-25; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Colossians 1:27). Without this righteousness of God, no person will enter heaven's gates. Jesus has shown us the result of not having this righteousness in the parable of the marriage supper in Matthew 22:1-14. In this future look at the marriage supper of the Lamb in heaven, the wedding garment is the righteousness of God found in the saints (Revelation 19:8). Everyone without this righteousness (wedding garment) will be cast into outer darkness.

Chosen of God: Jesus said to His disciples, "you did not choose Me, but I chose you" (John 15:16).

Just as Jesus chose every one of His disciples and apostles, so He chooses every Christian. For every one who comes to Him is His chosen (John 13:18; 15:9; 2 Thessalonians 2:13). Many are called, but few are chosen (Matthew 20:16; 22:14; 1 Peter 2:9). In John 6:44, Jesus said, "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him and I will raise him up at the last day."

Those Whom the Father has Given to the Son: The Father has given to the Son those whom He will (John 6:65). Jesus said, "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me; and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out" (John 6:37, 39). Jesus, in praying to His Father, speaks clearly of those whom the Father has given to the Son (John 17:2, 6-12, 24).

Jesus prayed to His Father not only for His disciples at that time, but for everyone in the future who would believe on Him through His word (John 17:20). Are there any who think that the prayer of the Son to the Father will not be fully answered?

Ordained or Appointed to Eternal Life: "...As many as were appointed to eternal life believed" (Acts 13:48). Here we learn that those who believe are ordained or appointed of God, to eternal life through faith.

Elect or Elected, Election: "Peter an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the pilgrims of the Dispersion... elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:1-3).

"The Elder; to the elect lady and her children, whom I love in truth" (2 John 1:1).

These Scriptures speak of the sovereignty of God and of whom He has elected. The election of God can be collectively (the Church) or individual. The former Scriptures are individual and are the elect of God's choice. Other Scriptures that give us the same information are, Acts 9:15; Romans 8:28-30; Colossians 3:12; 1 Thessalonians 1:4; 2 Timothy 1:9; 2 Peter 1:10; Revelation 17:8.

Gift of God: "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23). "Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift" (2 Corinthians 9:15).

A gift is something given without getting anything in return. Scripture most explicitly tells us that salvation is a gift of God. Romans 4:4-5, puts it this way, "Now to him that works the wages are not counted as grace but as debt. But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness." There are many Scriptures that show the salvation that God offers and gives is a free gift of God. Read, Romans 5:15-18; Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5.

This gift is received by believing God, plus nothing else. This may seem too easy to some. However, if a person has received the gift, the evidence will follow through spiritual fruit. In Romans 11:29, we are told that the gifts and callings of God are without repentance. He will not take away what He has given.

Spirit Baptism: Everyone who is a Christian has been baptized by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13).

This act is entirely a work of God. When one has been placed into the body of Christ, the Spirit of Christ is living within him. For Romans 8:9 teaches us that if any are not indwelt by the Spirit of Christ, they are not His people.

Sealed by the Spirit: As the Father has a seal on the Son of God, so also a Christian has a seal of God on him (John 6:27). A Christian has been sealed of God unto “the day of redemption” (Ephesians 4:30). In the days when the Old and New Testaments were written, authorities sealed their orders to other authorities with a seal. Only the intended receiver had the authority to open the seal. The seal was also used as the official authority of a finished transaction (Jeremiah 32:9-11). So it is with those who have been sealed of God unto the day of redemption. Only at the day of redemption of the body will the seal of God be unsealed. The earnest (guarantee) of this seal is the indwelling Holy Spirit in the believer (2 Corinthians 1:22; Ephesians 1:14). Ephesians 1:13 again shows that the believer has been sealed by the Holy Spirit. In 2 Timothy 2:19, ownership of God is proclaimed for those who are sealed by Him.

Promise of God: The promise of eternal life is God’s promise to all who believe Him (John 3:16). Any who believe God receive the promise. This promise is as sure as God’s promise to Noah that He would never flood the entire earth again. The rainbow is the sign of that promise (Genesis 9:13). The cross of Jesus is the physical evidence to the security of God’s promise. Acts 2:39 informs us who the promise is for; “For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.”

Those who believe God in faith are those that are the recipients of these eternal works of God which are found in His Son. They are foreordained, chosen, and elected of God.

“Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance unto life” (Acts 11:18). Here eternal life is given through faith unto repentance (Acts 11:17).

“The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count

slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9).

“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28).

“Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death” (John 8:51).

“If anyone keeps My word he shall never taste death” (John 8:52).

“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become the children of God, to those that believe on His name” (John 1:12).

“...If anyone thirsts, let him come unto Me and drink” (John 7:37).

The believer has these precious truths which guarantee his complete security in the cross of Christ. In this security the believer’s rest of spirit and soul is made complete (Hebrews 10:14).

Separation unto Christ

“Do not love the world, or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him” (1 John 2:15).

“... You are not your own. For you were bought with a price...” (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

The person who has become a Christian has also become a stranger and a pilgrim in this world (Hebrews 11:13). A Christian in this world is an emissary of a foreign kingdom. The kingdom he represents is a kingdom of light, where there is no darkness (1 John 1:5). God has called the Christian, living in this world, to be a reflective light of that kingdom (Matthew 5:14-16). As long as Jesus was in the world, He was the light of that kingdom in the world (John 9:5). The Christian is as Jesus in this world, as Scripture shows us: “... Because as He is so are we in this world” (1 John 4:17).

The separation of the Christian is not a separation of “touch not, taste not, and handle not” (Colossians 2:21). The Christian’s position in this world is shown to us in Ephesians 2:6, “And (God) raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” As the Christian lives in faith unto God, this “sitting in heavenly places in Christ Jesus,” becomes a reality in his walk. Jesus said, “be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). So the Christian overcomes the world by sitting in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

The Christian, in his Adamic nature, has no power to overcome the world because all that is in the world – the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life – is where the Adamic nature lives, thrives and finds fulfillment. From the day he is born into the kingdom of Christ, the Christian must continue to live in heavenly places in Christ Jesus to overcome the world. This is a dependent life, a life of believing God. The Christian’s position should be as the Apostle Paul’s position, “for I believe God that it will be even as it was told me” (Acts 27:25).

The Christian separated unto Christ is the same as a marriage.

In marriage God has said the two (man and woman) become one flesh "...and the two shall be one flesh" (Ephesians 5:31). So it is with Christ and the Church. "For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones" (Ephesians 5:30). Unfaithfulness in marriage breaks the unity of oneness. For example, if a wife has other lovers besides her husband, she becomes an adulteress wife (Romans 7:3). The professing Christian who loves the world has a lover other than Christ. The person, who states that he is a Christian, yet loves the world, is in the place of unfaithfulness before God.

A person is not a Christian or spiritual by his works or his lack of wrong activities (Ephesians 2:8; Philippians 3:6). In other words, to refrain from certain activities and direction of life does not change the heart. Separation from worldly activities without the love of Christ functioning in the heart is not separation from the world at all. A person is a Christian because he has received the love of God (Christ) in his heart. The practical application of this in the person's life is to follow after the treasure (Christ) in his heart (Matthew 12:35). If he is religious yet not a Christian, that person will still love the world. That person may love his pastor, his church, his ministry, his family, his friends, etc. If he has not allowed the Word of Christ to take preeminence in his life, he is still following the love of the world in his heart. "... If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John 2:15).

9 Ministry of Gifts

“But to each the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all” (1 Corinthians 12:7 JND).

God has given spiritual gifts to his saints (this includes every believer). Many a new believer has gone about trying to find out what gift God has given him. Many have been frustrated in this pursuit. Gifts of the Spirit are exactly what they are called, gifts. Gifts of the Spirit are not to be worked up through the soulish efforts of men, as is the practice of some. A gift of the Spirit may be evident in a new believer right away, or it may be that much time will pass before it is seen. The believer who walks in faith after the Spirit of Christ will be right where the Holy Spirit can provide the resources necessary to exercise God’s gift. A spiritual gift will manifest itself as the believer sets his mind and heart on the person of the Lord Jesus. It is the believer pursuing a life of faith toward God that gives the Holy Spirit freedom to manifest Himself in the believer, and bring forth his gift (1 Corinthians 12:6-11).

Some have separated the category of gifts into two headings, sign gifts and ministry gifts. Sign gifts are healings, gifts of knowledge, miracles, tongues, etc. Ministry gifts are apostleship, prophecy, evangelism, pastoral, and teaching. The Apostle Paul gives a priority to the gifts in 1 Corinthians 12:28. This priority list is not meant to be a complete list. However, gifts are to be in priority of importance among the saints to bring forth and make known the attributes and loveliness of the Lord Jesus (1 Corinthians 14:4, 31, 40). The gifts are to edify and bring forth growth to the assembly (1 Corinthians 14:12). The Apostle Paul instructs us that believers should have a priority of “earnestly desiring the best gifts” (1 Corinthians 12:31).

In 1 Corinthians 13:13, and 14:1, the Spirit gives the importance of order to spiritual gifts and calling. It teaches us that love is the highest and most important of all gifts. This love is the ‘Love of God’ (agape), not man’s love (phileo). We are to desire and pursue

the love of God above all gifts (1 Corinthians 12:31; 13:13). The second most important gift is prophecy, which is making known the mind of God! Prophecy can be concerning past, present or future events. Prophecy is of great importance, because through prophesy Christ is revealed to the saints, and they are built up and edified (Ephesians 4:12). Unbelievers receive the good news of Christ through prophecy.

These two works of the Spirit—love and prophecy—are to be in plain sight among the saints at all times. They shall never be put away or fail (Psalms 119:89; 1 Peter 1:23; 1 John 4:7-8). The believer's place of faith is to pursue these gifts. Faith, working in the believer, is the key to allowing the Holy Spirit freedom to bring forth the manifestation of gifts (Galatians 3:3, 5).

10 The Scriptures

“Every word of God is pure; He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him” (Proverbs 30:5).

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3:16).

“Having been born again, not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible, through the Word of God which lives and abides forever” (1 Peter 1:23 JND.).

The Scriptures (the Bible) lay claim to being the words of the Creator. These words have been given through the Prophets, the Psalms, the Law of Moses, Jesus Christ, the apostles, and by other men and methods that God has used to reveal His purpose. This purpose includes all the people of the world—the Jews, the Gentiles and the Church of God (1 Corinthians 10:32). The Scriptures declare that God made the world and everything in it (Isaiah 40:28; 42:5; 43:10, 12; 44:6; 45:12; John 1:1, 3; Hebrews 1:2; 11:3).

How can one know if these things written in Scripture are true? Scripture gives the answer to this question through specific prophecies given up to thousands of years before they are fulfilled. These prophecies are not vague, but prophecies involving specific persons, times, countries and events. For example, God gave the prophet Daniel, in the year 603 B. C., the list of ruling world kingdoms in sequence before they appeared in world history. We find them in Daniel 2:36-45 and 7:1-7. These world kingdoms were: the kingdom of Babylon, Media-Persia, Greece, Roman Empire and the final kingdom, the kingdom of Christ.

Everyone who has studied ancient history has read of these kingdoms coming into power, then being taken over by the next kingdom. The discoveries of the Dead Sea Scrolls have verified the dating of Daniel’s prophecy.

Almost every book in the Old Testament contains prophecies of the coming of the Messiah. Each book gives different information

about the person, time, place and sequence of events of the Messiah's coming. For example, in Genesis 3:15, God told the serpent (Satan) that Messiah would crush his head. When Moses was near the end of his life, God told Moses He would raise up another prophet like him (Deuteronomy 18:15-19). God gave a prophecy to Isaiah when he told him that a son would be born of a virgin; His name would be called "Immanuel," meaning "God with us" (Isaiah 7:14). The divine prophecy of Isaiah 9:6-7 informed Israel that this man-child to be born would be God in human form. He would be born into the lineage of David (Matthew 1:1-17), a past King of Israel (1000 B.C.). This Messiah will one day rule from David's throne. Micah 5:2 tells us that this God, who is the Son from eternity to eternity, would be born in Israel in the village of Bethlehem.

Isaiah 61:1 tells us what the Messiah's ministry would be at His first appearing. Isaiah 42:1 told us that the Messiah would be a servant; not only a servant to Israel, but also to the Gentiles as well. Isaiah 53:10, 12 informs us that the Messiah would be an offering for the sins of the people. Psalms 22:1-18 gives us a prophetic detailed description of His suffering on the cross, a thousand years before He came. Daniel 9:24-26 gives us the result of the cross; to make an end of sins and bring in everlasting righteousness. Daniel's prophecy tells us when this would take place. It would happen at the end of the 69 weeks (483 years), after the commandment of King Artaxerxes (444 B.C.) of Persia gave the order to rebuild the city of Jerusalem (Nehemiah 2:5, 6). We also learn that a prince would come and destroy the city after the death of the Messiah. This prophecy was fulfilled in 70 A. D. by the Roman Prince Titus. The historian Josephus gives a complete account of this event. Psalms 16:8-10; 49:15 gives us a prophecy of the Messiah's resurrection.

In reading these and many other Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah, it is evident that Jesus Christ was to be the One who fulfilled all these prophecies. The record of the Old Testament prophecies fulfilled in His life, as seen in the four gospels, is complete proof of His Messiah-ship and that the author (God) of

the prophecies can see through time. The divine authorship of the Scriptures is seen through these prophecies and their fulfillment. The main purpose of Scripture is to reveal God's Son to man as the light of the world, and the only Saviour of the world (John 8:12; Acts 4:12; 1 John 4:14). Another purpose is to reveal to mankind that in his natural state, he is in darkness and under the wrath of God (John 3:36; Ephesians 2:1-3; 1 Peter 2:9-10).

Scripture tells us that God chose the nation of Israel to make Himself known. This revelation and blessing of God was to be to all nations of the earth through Abraham and his seed (Genesis 22:18; Deuteronomy 7:6; Psalms 98:2-3; Isaiah 43:1; 44:1). Scripture leaves no question as to the coming of the Messiah, or that He would come through the nation of Israel.

The events in history validate the authenticity of Scripture, as have the archeological findings. There is not another authoritative book in the world like this book.

11

Nicolaitans (clericalism)

“But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate” (Revelation 2:6 JND).

“Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate. Repent; or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth” (Revelation 2:15-16).

These verses consummate what we learn in other truths taught in Scripture. Some have thought that the Nicolaitans were a sect within Christendom. The footnotes in the C.I. Scofield, King James Version (1909-1917), inform us that, “There is no ancient authority for a sect of Nicolaitans.”

The Lord Jesus, in addressing the assemblies of Ephesus and Pergamos, gives knowledge of two things concerning Nicolaitanism. First were the works in Ephesus, then later a doctrine in Pergamos. What started as deeds or works in Ephesus (100 A.D.), became in time a fixed doctrine at Pergamos (320 A.D.). The deterioration in the Church that started in the latter years of the apostles continued to increase after their departure. The Church’s departure was away from the Word of God, to the instituting of works and doctrines not of Christ.

We gain understanding from Nicolaitanism in three ways: 1. The meaning of the word Nicolaitans. 2. The Scriptures and what they teach. 3. The prophetic and historical use of the word Nicolaitans in relationship to its use with the assembly at Ephesus and the assembly at Pergamos.

First, the Greek word Nicolaitans is composed of two words. The first half of the word is ‘Nikao,’ meaning “to rule over or to conquer.” The second half of the word means “the people or the laity.” This sets the structure of the Church into two classes of people, one group of people over the other group of people. This clearly marks out the position of clergy as having a higher spiritual place in the Church and the world, to rule over the laity. God’s dealing with Israel gives understanding.

God gave Israel His law through Moses. The Law provided for a separate priesthood from the rest of the people. The priesthood was to come only out of the tribe of Levi, one of Israel's twelve tribes. God, desired all Israel be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation unto Himself (Exodus 19:6). Israel, desiring to follow the flesh rather than the Word of God, chose the Law of Moses and a select priesthood (Exodus 19:8; 24:3; 28:1-4; Numbers 16:10). This priesthood was ordained to function unto God and over all the people.

At the cross of Christ, the law system was fulfilled and put away (Romans 10:4; Galatians 2:16; 3:2; Colossians 2:13-17). The Christian has been totally and completely freed from the law in relationship to God. When Jesus said, "It is finished" (John 19:30), the veil in the temple separating God from the people, was torn in two (Matthew 27:51). It put away the divine order in the Law of Moses of two classes of people, through a separate priesthood. The clergy/laity system is a continuation of what was God's order for Israel under the Law of Moses. The people under this law system are practicing a system that the blood of Christ brought to completion 2000 years ago. This clergy/laity system has the effect of bringing the Christian back under the Law of Moses in relationship to God. The Spirit speaks in Galatians 5:4 that those on the ground of law in relationship to God are "fallen from grace." Is it not evident that going back to the law, or any part of the law, puts away the work of Christ? Therefore, there will be no profit of God in it for the Christian (Galatians 5:1-4). God's only way to relate with man is through His Son (Matthew 17:5).

The law is a barrier between man and God. This barrier keeps the grace of God and the fullness of Christ in a place of seclusion among God's people.

Second, is the consideration of a person's understanding of Nicolaitanism. As we have seen under the Law of Moses, God instituted a separate priesthood apart from the common people. In contrast, Jesus instituted a priesthood consisting of every Christian (Romans 9:24; I Peter 2:5, 9; Revelation 1:6). This

priesthood gives every Christian full access into the very presence of God, the Holy of Holies (Hebrews 10:19). In the Christian's priesthood there can be only one spiritual leader, even Christ, his High Priest.

Jesus taught His disciples what their position to Him and each other was to be. He said: "But you, do not be called Rabbi, for one is your Teacher, the Christ; and all you are brethren" (Matthew 23:8). Jesus set forth this truth before all believers; they were to be of an equal brotherhood of priests, serving one another, subservient only to their Master, Christ Jesus.

From this we learn that Christians are not to take to themselves 'man-made supposed spiritual positions.' These positions include the ordination of men by a sect, denomination or any religious body, to a hierarchical spiritual position. These positions come complete with names such as teacher (Rabbi), pastor, reverend, minister, father, doctor of divinity, bishop, etc. Being ordained of God by the Holy Spirit is the only ordination the Spirit of God recognizes.

Jesus said in Matthew 23:10, "And you, do not be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Christ." Jesus taught His brethren to be fully equal before Him. Nicolaitanism is a form of spiritual hierarchy which allows mastery over the Lord's brethren. To complete this separation, the clergy are paid a salary for their professional position and services. This clerical system leads the Lord's people away from what Jesus has established in the present dispensation of grace, to go back under the Law of Moses. We need to remember the Law of Moses was given to Israel, never to the Gentiles. Nicolaitanism, is another one of Satan's arrows, used to hinder God's people from exercising their priesthood.

In contrast to Nicolaitanism, God has given spiritual gifts unto men (the Church) (Ephesians 4:8). These gifts given unto the Church include apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds, and teachers (Ephesians 4:11). These gifts are given, "For the equipping of the saints for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Ephesians 4:12).

These gifts are spiritually functioning gifts, not clerical positions

created by and for man's religious systems. Other important ministry gifts, which are used in the labor of the faith of Christ among the saints are given through elders, deacons and overseers (bishops), who spiritually watch over the flock (1 Timothy 3:1-15). Those who labor among the Lord's flock are to labor from a servant's position, not a clerical, or hierarchical position (Luke 22:24-27). Those who labor by faith in full time work of the ministry, are to be supported by the grace of God through the giving of the saints (1 Corinthians 9:7-18; 2 Corinthians 9:1-13).

Third, is the historical truth of prophecy and its fulfillment. The Church, in its beginning, experienced great and wonderful things from the Holy Spirit through the apostles. Through their labors and the knowledge of Christ going throughout the Roman Empire, the Church enlarged everywhere. However, the seeds of corruption in the Church were also beginning to show up before the end of the first century (Acts 20:28-31; 2 Timothy 1:15; 2:19-22; 3 John 9-11). Jesus addresses these corruptions in five of the seven assemblies in Revelation chapters 2-3.

Revelation 1:3 reveals that the words of this book are prophecy. The seven assemblies addressed were in existence at that time. The specific conditions rebuked by Jesus were taking place at that time. Church history of the last 1900 years bears witness that the condition in each of these assemblies was a prophecy of time periods in the coming Church Age. The character of each of these assemblies (90 A.D.) is exposed in the rebuke or encouragement they received. The assemblies in the future prophetic time periods will be afflicted with the same character delineated in the rebuke. The character shown prophetically in the last 4 assemblies is now, and they go on to the end of the Church Age.

The first assembly was Ephesus, it had lost its first love. This love of the Lord Jesus Christ is the very foundation and glue of all Christianity. Losing its first love, sets the stage for every kind of evil to enter the Church. Indeed, in the centuries after the Ephesus age, every kind of evil has come into the Church. The effects of Nicolaitanism at that time were still hated in Ephesus

and by Jesus (Revelation 2:6). But the seeds of Nicolaitanism had been sown before the end of the first century (Matthew 23:8; Luke 22:24-27; 3 John 9-11). Its roots were growing deep within the Church.

The time period for the third assembly, Pergamos, was taking place in the fourth century, 316 A.D. Nicolaitanism had grown to an acceptable religious position within the church at Pergamos. The Emperor of Rome, Constantine, had made Christianity the state religion (320 A.D.). The “official bishops” from different parts of the Empire were the main attendees to the councils that were held for important issues. Their attendance solidified the clerical position.

Out of this acceptance by the people of the office of a clergyman, came a structure that somewhat later would produce the first Pope. The Church had become acceptable to the world that crucified Jesus, and the world and its ways had become acceptable to the Church. The pilgrim and stranger character of the Church was lost to the infiltration of the world, and its ways were incorporated into the Church. The world is where Satan’s seat is (Matthew 4:8-9; Revelation 2:13). Pergamos is not said to hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, for now it had become an entrenched doctrine in the “Church” (Revelation 2:15).

Christ is the foundation for the Church. He had died for His Church; there is no other foundation (I Corinthians 3:11; Ephesians 5:25). The ecclesiastical “Church” that was built upon the Nicolaitan system, set the stage for the Dark Ages that were to come, and brought much persecution to the saints of God for many centuries. The Dark Ages saw the blood of the saints spilled by this corrupt Roman Church (Revelation 18:24). The love of Christ in the saints became the enemy of this Church that was built upon the doctrine of Nicolaitanism.

A Christian who builds his life on the true Church of Christ must realize there can be no other foundation, only the cross of Jesus. It is made known by the Spirit, through the revealed Scriptures. “... which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth”

(1 Timothy 3:15).

The Church that Christ died for is the pillar and ground of Truth, which is being built by the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 2:22), and it cannot be triumphed over by any or all of the powers of darkness (Matthew 16:18).

12

The Priesthood of all Believers

“...To Him who loves us, and has washed us from our sins in his blood, and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father...” (Revelation 1:5-6, JND).

When a person becomes a Christian, he or she also becomes a priest of God. This priesthood gives the Christian access into the Holiest of Holies, into the very presence of God (Hebrews 4:16, 10:19-21). Just as Abel, Seth, Noah, Abraham, Aaron, Samuel and many other Patriarchs were priests to God, so is every Christian. By a work of God, the Old Testament patriarchs were made priests through their faith which God imputed to them as righteousness. Every Christian has been made a priest by the blood of Christ, and by the Holy Spirit dwelling within (Revelation 1:5-6). Every Christian has been chosen by God to receive this gift (2 Corinthians 9:15; 1 Peter 2:9). Priesthood is the undeniable birthright of all believers, which cannot be given or taken away by man. This gift of priesthood for the Christian is given in perpetuity, eternal, and forever (Romans 11:29; Revelation 5:9-10; 20:6). The Christian's priesthood is to be exercised in two spheres; first, individually and second, corporately in the assembly (church). The Christian's priestly functions include a multitude of exercises. The individual exercise includes:

- A. Giving full worship in spirit and truth unto the Lord Jesus and the Father (John 4:23-24; 5:23; Revelation 4:9; 5:11-14).
- B. Worshipping through the heart, and praising through the fruit of the lips (Hebrews 13:15; 1 Peter 2:9).
- C. Interceding to God for man (1 Timothy 2:1).
- D. Exercising priesthood in the ministry of reconciliation with unbelievers (2 Corinthians 5:19), and giving out the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ unto all men (2 Corinthians 5:20).

- E. Using our substance in the work of Christ (1 Corinthians 16:2)
- F. Sacrificing our bodies unto the kingdom of Christ (Romans 12:1).

Second, four pillars of gathering are seen in the gathering together of the assembly of the saints (the church). We learn in Acts 2:42, what comprises the four pillars of corporate gathering along with their purpose. The ministry of the Holy Spirit, functioning in these four separate aspects, builds up and edifies the saints. The fruit of this work of the Holy Spirit is seen in Acts 2:46-47. The four aspects remain the same today. They are seen this way:

1. The Breaking of the Bread: The breaking of the bread in the remembrance of the Lord Jesus in His death is the highest and only form of corporate worship Jesus instituted.
2. The apostles' doctrine: The apostles' doctrine is what the apostles taught to the saints, as the revelation of God. This revelation concerns the believer, the Church, the Jews, and the Gentiles. This revelation is for the Church of God and is the revelation of God's dealings with the Jews, and then the Gentiles upon the earth (1 Corinthians 10:32).
3. Prayers: The prayer meeting is to speak forth the heart of the assembly to God. This important aspect of gathering is God's method of communication for the assembly, to make known their needs and desires. It is to look for the leading of the Holy Spirit in the assembly of the saints (Acts 6:4).
4. Fellowship: Here, fellowshipping at its root is sharing joy in the person of the Lord Jesus. This joy is the strength of an assembly (Nehemiah 8:10; Philippians 1:25; 1 John 1:4).

A Christian exercising his priestly gift can enter into all of these blessings of God. All of these blessings are found in the inheritance of all those in the kingdom of Christ (Colossians 1:12).

13

Oneness of the Body of Christ

“For we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones” (Ephesians 5:30).

Every Christian has been made a member of the body of Christ, this being accomplished by a work of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13). Being a member of the body of Christ has the following result: “But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him” (1 Corinthians 6:17). One Spirit is what Jesus was with the Father, fully and completely (John 10:30; 14:10; 17:11, 21-22).

In John 17:20 we have the record of Jesus praying to His Father for every believer for all ages to come. His prayer to the Father is recorded in John 17:21: “That they may be one, as You Father are in Me, and I in You, that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that You sent me” Jesus prayed for oneness for all believers in His body – the Church (John 17:11).

The inward oneness with Christ in the believer is the work of the Holy Spirit. This was accomplished at Pentecost (Acts 2:4) when the Holy Spirit came to live in everyone who would believe on Jesus. If each believer lives in the Spirit (Galatians 5:25) and walks in the Spirit (Galatians 5:16), oneness without flesh will be a reality, outwardly as well as inwardly for the Church. The one body, (the universality of Christ) seen among believers, will be the testimony that the world needs to see, to know that the Father sent the Son (John 15:12, 17; 17:23). For unbelieving people, Jesus said this was a proof that His message was from God the Father, by the world seeing the oneness of His Church (John 17:21).

Many may get confused by the lack of physical oneness in the professing Church today. An individual Christian’s portion is shown to us in Ephesians 4:3. It reads, “Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

In the beginning of the Church Age, at the giving of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost in 33 A.D., all believers were one in the outward physical expression of the Church (Acts 2:46). This manifestation of the grace and work of Christ continued to grow,

as Christ became known (Acts 2:41, 47; 4:4; 8:4). The Church continued to expand throughout the known world as God gave the increase (Acts 8:4).

The Church was physically one. Whether it was the Christian assembly in Corinth, Ephesus, Jerusalem or Antioch, the Church was one outward physical body. This continued until about 59 A.D. At that time in Corinth, outward physical divisions began to take place as recorded in 1 Corinthians chapters 1-4. First Corinthians 1:11-13 gives us a description of the flesh or carnality coming into the assembly, and the starting of physical divisions in the one body of the Church. The Apostle Paul, as led by the Spirit of Christ, sharply rebuked these divisions (1 Corinthians 3:1-4).

Paul told the Corinthians, as believers of an assembly, they are corporately the “Temple of God” (1 Corinthians 3:16). He also told them, “If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the Temple of God is holy, which temple you are” (1 Corinthians 3:17).

This condition was not corrected, and over the centuries, the Church became divided into sects, denominations, independent movements, etc. These divisions cannot break the unity brought by the Holy Spirit into the heart of each and every believer (Matthew 16:18). These divisions however, do most certainly quench and grieve the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:30). In his work of making Christ known, the Apostle Paul was hindered by these divisions of men (John 16:12-15; 1 Corinthians 4:18-21; Ephesians 4:3). The world finds reason for not believing God as they observe these fleshly divisions (John 17:21).

The question every Christian who has knowledge of this information must ask is, where is my place before the Lord in this day of division? The Apostle Paul also had to deal with this division in the Church. Paul lived to see many in the Church reject his apostolic authority, and the revelations Christ had given him (2 Corinthians 11:26; Philippians 1:16; 2 Timothy 1:15; 2 Timothy 4:14-17). This knowledge of the “Oneness of the Body” was given to Paul by Christ through revelation (Galatians 1:12; Ephesians 2:15; 3:3-4). The Apostle Paul gives understanding about what

Christendom was becoming in his day and would continue to become in the future. In 2 Timothy 2:20, he calls Christendom the great house. In 2 Timothy 2:22, Paul gives instructions to the Christian on what his course of action should be with the knowledge of the declining state of Christendom. The Christian is called on to align himself with those who call upon the Lord out of a pure heart.

What is a pure heart? A pure heart for the Christian is to pursue the righteousness of the Lord Jesus in the oneness of His body, apart, as much as possible, from the corporate divisions in the Church. The Apostle Paul, by the Holy Spirit, teaches us that these divisions in Christendom are carnal or fleshly (1 Corinthians 3:1-4).

Romans 8:12 instructs the Christian that he is not a debtor to the flesh. Romans 8:13 teaches the Christian that if he lives after the flesh, he will die.

A work of the Spirit of God in the 1500's brought about the reformation in Europe. Freedom from the bondage of corruption in the Roman denomination was the desire of all true Christians. These two things became the foundation of the Reformation: solo scriptura, meaning only the Scripture, and faith in Christ, plus nothing (Habakkuk 2:4; Romans 1:17). These two spiritual truths are just as valid today for all Christians living in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Corporately, this means that a Christian who walks after the Spirit will desire to gather in an assembly with those who meet "unto the name of the Lord Jesus alone," gathering without the fleshly ties to the independent and sectarian divisions in Christendom. A Christian should not be under any delusion. Fleshly ties in gathering will quench the Holy Spirit and limit the freedom of the grace of God. Believers meeting to Christ as members of His body means that Christ is in the midst of His own brethren, with the Scriptures giving understanding (John 16:13). This is the work of the Holy Spirit, to build His Church on the person of the Lord Jesus (Matthew 16:16, 18; 1 Corinthians 3:11).

14 Headship and Responsibilities of the Christian Man

“And the Lord God commanded the man saying, of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat, For in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die” (Genesis 2:16-17).

“But he answered and said, it is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4).

God made Adam and put him in the garden, and gave him responsibility over the creation. God also made Adam to be responsible to His directives, His Word. This was enacted before God made the woman for Adam. When Jesus was being tempted by Satan, He quoted what God had given to Moses in Deuteronomy 8:3; specifically, that man is subject to every Word that comes out of the mouth of God (Matthew 4:4). The first man (Adam) listened to Satan’s enticing words through the woman. The result of the man heeding Satan’s word through the woman was twofold: The creation became dark, and the creation was without understanding, as seen in John 1:5.

The second Adam (Christ) did what God intended for the first Adam to do. Jesus said, “Because I always do the things that are pleasing to Him” (John 8:29). Jesus is our example of a life of total dependence on the Father. This life of dependence upon the Father and every word that He has spoken through Scripture is also the course of the Christian man who lives in faith.

Dependence for the Christian man means, making the authority of God’s Word greater than his own authority. For the Christian man, ‘obedience’ to the Lord Jesus is the issue of whether or not he is living a ‘spiritual life.’ The Greek word for obedience means ‘to hear under.’ In practical terms this just means to hear God through His word and above all other voices, including one’s own. For the Christian man who is in subjection to the Father, headship and priesthood becomes a practical and normal way of living.

Headship for the man is a place of authority over what God has given him. This includes wife, children, home, material goods, and any other place of influence that is within his domain. For the Christian man, headship is a place of authority under the authority of Christ Jesus. The man in the place of subjective authority under Christ is a steward of God's grace. This stewardship does not allow for lording it over those who are God's heritage. The man's place is to follow the example of the Lord Jesus, who became a servant to His Father and to His brethren (John 13:12-17; Philippians 2:7-8). This headship given by God to the man is a great privilege and responsibility. The man who will subject himself to Christ alone will magnify the kingdom of Christ.

This headship is not transferable to the woman or children. It is the sad commentary of this day that a great many professed Christian men prefer to give equal headship to the woman. God made no provision for a dual headship in the home or family. God gave man headship over the creation, the woman, and the family (Genesis 3:16; Ephesians 5:23-24; Colossians 3:18). Some in the Church teach that this part of the Scripture is no longer valid. Those who teach this doctrine undermine the work of the Holy Spirit, the authority of Scripture and the headship given to man by God.

Priesthood practiced in the home by the man leading his family is a very great responsibility, with equally great blessing to the man who will be in subjection to Christ and allow Scripture to give understanding. The man's priesthood in the family is to be as Abraham's. God said of Abraham: "For I know him that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord" (Genesis 18:19). The function of a man's priesthood is for the man to teach his wife and children the grace of God through the admonishment of the Lord in the Word of His grace (1 Corinthians 14:35; Ephesians 6:4). The man is directly responsible to Christ to lead and to teach his family the Word of God. Nowhere do we find in Scripture that a man is to turn over his responsibilities to his wife, the assembly, someone

gifted or anyone else. God holds the man directly responsible for the place of privilege and priesthood that He has given him.

For example, God told the fathers in Israel that teaching their children the knowledge of the Lord was their primary responsibility as a father (Deuteronomy 6:6-7; 11:19-21). We learn this by looking at Israel. When the fathers took hold of the Word of God and put into practice what they had been instructed to do, God made their nation to stand. We also see how their nation fell when they paid little attention to details in the Word of God. In the book of Judges there are recorded seven different times of failure that brought Israel into the bondage of other nations. When they repented, God recovered them to a place of sovereignty. Israel's failures were repeated over and over. Their failure is tied directly to the fathers in Israel who failed to teach the Word of God to their children. Instead their pathway was, "everyone did that which was right in their own eyes" (Judges 17:6; 21:25). Because of this lack of teaching, the Word of God became unknown (2 Chronicles 34:14-15, 21). The religion of men and demons however, was still practiced in Israel (1 Kings 12:26-33; 18:18; 26-30; 2 Kings 17:6-23; 21:1-16).

The Christian father is commanded in this way, "And you fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). How does a father provoke his children? First, one of the primary ways is when he does not pay attention to his children's spiritual welfare and involve his life personally in training and instructing them in the Scriptures. Second, is when he fails to maintain an example of a practical walk before his children which portrays the grace of God and the profound and practical truth of Christ. The example of the love of God functioning in the father, sets the foundation of learning for his children in a life of faith to the Lord Jesus. Without these examples of truth being practiced before the children, Scripture becomes only words and religion becomes the substitute.

Third, we are told in Ephesians 6:4 that a father is to personally teach his children and train them in the Scriptures. "For whatever

things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope” (Romans 15:4). This hope (Christ) made known in Scripture through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, is to be instilled in the children by the teaching of the father. The father must make his children’s learning and understanding of the love of God a primary direction. This requires the father to spend much time explaining the Scriptures to his children. As the children mature, the love and respect they have for their earthly father will be a strong influence on them. Through the faithful fathers training and teaching, the child will be more apt to trust and believe someone they know (the Lord Jesus Christ).

Fourth, the father is to bring up his children in the admonition of the Lord. Admonition means caution, rebuke, reprimand, and reproof. Accomplishing this keeps them in the pathway of faith to the Lord Jesus and the Word of God.

Watching young men and young women mature and fulfill their obligations as outlined in the second chapter of Titus is a great joy to a father who has in spirit and deed raised his children in the discipline and admonition of the Lord. The Apostle John gives his expression about those who walked in truth: “I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth” (3 John 1:4).

It can be said that many failures are traced back to the unresponsive actions of the men in an assembly and to the failures of the fathers in the home to direct their family in the word and the grace of God. This is completely true in a general sense, but not always in a specific instance. It is also true that a wife who will not cooperate with the Spirit of God in her husband’s authority sows much discord in her marriage and in her home. This does not, however, exempt the man from his obligations to carry on in the Word of Christ. Many faithful believers have lost all to follow the Lord Jesus (Luke 9:23-26; 14:26-27).

The following of Christ according to truth does not change with circumstances. As far as headship responsibility in the direct line of authority under Christ, Scripture is addressed specifically to men (1 Corinthians 11:3). There is very little in Scripture addressed

directly to women. This is because God created man to be in the place of spiritual headship. This truth is seen in both the Old Testament and the New Testament.

The life of Christ released in the family, the church, and seen by unbelievers, is tied directly to the response of the Christian man's subjection to the Word of God. The Word of the Lord reveals the fruit of a man's obedience or disobedience. The following Scripture was written three thousand years ago, to Eli the priest of God, and it conveys an eternal truth of the kingdom of God.

“Now the Lord says: Far be it from Me; for those who honor Me I will honor, and those who despise Me shall be lightly esteemed” (1 Samuel 2:30). Can we expect that this Word of God is any less true today than when it was written?

The Christian Woman's Gifts and Callings

“I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant of the church in Cenchrea, that you may receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and assist her in whatever business she has need of you; for indeed she has been a helper of many, and of myself also” (Romans 16:1-2).

In this passage Paul is sending greetings to the believers in Rome and his remembrance with affection of those brothers and sisters who had been of great encouragement and help to him. It is noteworthy that he starts the greetings to the sisters before the brothers in Romans chapter 16. It is no doubt because of the great value that sisters played in the work of Christ wherever Paul went. Lydia, for example, who lived in Thyatira, is the first woman recorded in the book of Acts to believe God in Europe. Lydia was also the first believer in Europe in whose home the brethren met (Acts 16:15, 40). Lydia's heart was set on the word of Christ and faithfulness to Him (Acts 16:15). In Philippians 4:3, Paul is sending exhortation to the Philippians so they would not forget those women who labored with him in the gospel. Priscilla was another valuable sister in the faith who is spoken of five times in Scripture.

When the Lord Jesus walked on the earth with His disciples, He fulfilled those things that were prophesied of Him (Isaiah 61:1, 3). He healed the sick, opened blind eyes, made the lame to walk and raised the dead (Luke 7:22). Jesus, in performing these works of God, had much opposition from men (Luke 4:28-30; John 9:1-41; 10:20-26, 31-39). No women are recorded as opposing Him in His ministry. Women are recorded as being in subservience to Him and serving Him. We see this in Mary of Bethany, who had a revelation (Matthew 16:16-17) that the “Jesus before her was the Christ, the Lord of Glory” (John 12:3). The woman in Luke 7:36-39 is another woman who saw Jesus for who He was. This woman took the lowest place possible before Him and before all, including the Pharisee who judged her and judged Jesus as

well. This took place in Simon the Pharisee's house where they condemned her with cause. Jesus received His rightful place from her and the woman received what every true repentant sinner-saint receives, a place at His feet (2 Samuel 6:21-22; 7:18; Isaiah 6:5; Jeremiah 1:6; John 13:2-10; Acts 9:1-6). This woman was among the few in Israel who saw Jesus for who He was and is, the eternal "I AM" of Exodus 3:14 and John 8:58. He was the only One who could forgive sin (Luke 7:48).

In the New Testament two important truths are taught to believers. First, it teaches the foundational truth that expresses the oneness of all believers in Christ (Ephesians 4:4-6). Upon further study we learn that in Christ every believer is equal before God in this oneness (Galatians 3:27-28). This includes every believer whether man or woman, bond or free, Jew or Greek. There is no difference in the kingdom of Christ between the man and the woman. Both have been baptized into Christ. Both are indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God and are priests of God (1 Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:27; 1 Peter 2:5, 9; Revelation 1:6). Spiritually all believers are, "members of His body, and of His flesh, and of His bones" (Ephesians 5:30).

The second foundational truth in 1 Corinthians 11:3, gives the order of God's government for His Church, which includes every one in every place who calls upon the name of the Lord (1 Corinthians 1:2). The government of God is a government of authority with order (1 Corinthians 14:40). This governmental authority of God is to be manifest in His Church from the day of Pentecost till the catching away of the saints at the coming of Jesus. The line of authority is shown to us in this way: "But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God" (1 Corinthians 11:3). The subjective order is God, Christ, man, woman. We learn through Scripture how this authority is to function in the family, the Church and the governments of men. The apostles spoke the very words of Christ in Scripture to make known the order of His authority (1 Corinthians 11:3; 14:37; Ephesians 2:20-22; 1 Thessalonians 2:13).

The gifts and calling of Christian women are of utmost value when practiced under the authority and government of God. We are instructed in Scripture that the Christian woman has a subservient role to the man (1 Corinthians 14:34; 1 Timothy 2:12; Titus 2:5; 1 Peter 3:6). This subservient role limits the flesh, but gives great freedom to the woman of faith to exercise her faith under the authority of Christ. First Timothy 2:12 teaches us that if the woman is to remain under the authority of Christ, she is not to be a teacher of men.

The Holy Spirit has made clear that although the woman has not been given a public role in teaching, the woman is to teach. Titus 2:3 tells us where and what she is to teach. We learn the teaching of good things is to be her purpose, and that she is to teach the younger women to love their husbands, and to love their children (Titus 2:4). Verse five gives the virtues of this teaching: “To be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their husbands, that the Word of God be not blasphemed.”

The woman has been given a special public role in making known the power of God to men and angels (1 Corinthians 11:10). For the Christian woman this role is to veil or to cover her glory when praying or prophesying (1 Corinthians 11:5). We are told in 1 Corinthians 11:15 that her glory is her hair. This glory is her natural glory in her creation as a woman. Her glory is to be covered while praying or prophesying, if the glory of Christ is to be seen. The Christian woman is told that in wearing the veil, there is power on her head (1 Corinthians 11:10). This power is God’s power, which she experiences in occupying her subordinate God given place. Covering the woman’s glory allows the government and glory of God to be seen in the Christian woman, as she submits to the headship of Christ through man’s authority (1 Corinthians 11:7).

The Christian woman, who submits in faith to the authority of Christ, will be a testimony to the loveliness of Christ and is observed by men and angels (1 Corinthians 4:9; 11:10; 2 Corinthians 2:14-17; 3:2; Ephesians 3:10; 1 Peter 1:12). These truths bring out the beauty of Christ in the practical walk of faith, and should appeal

to every Christian heart and conscience. Some may feel these truths are non-essential. However, we can rest assured that there are no non-essentials in Scripture. It is in obedience to what appears to be small things that bring sanctification into the life of the believer.

Further study in Scripture gives clear evidence of the need of a Christian woman to be a leader in faith. This faith is to show Christ's authority over her. The Christian woman who walks in faith will emit the kindness of Christ in her home and is invaluable in a Christian assembly.

The Lord's Table, Remembrance and True Worship

“And as they were eating, Jesus took bread and blessed, and break it, and gave to them and said, Take eat; this is My body. Then He took the cup, and when He had given thanks He gave it to them: and they all drank from it. And He said to them, this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many” (Mark 14:22-24).

“...Do this in remembrance of Me” (1 Corinthians 11:24).

“But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth” (John 4:23-24).

Just as God gave Moses precise instructions for corporate worship for Israel to practice, so Jesus gave His disciples simplistic, but precise instructions for corporate worship. In the breaking of the bread and the drinking of the cup, Christians enter into the highest form of corporate worship. Jesus instituted and presided over this worship on the night He was betrayed.

Now He presides over the Remembrance Meeting through the Holy Spirit. In this way Jesus is to continue to preside and take preeminence among His brethren. This Remembrance Feast is only for those who are His. For the believer to partake of the loaf and the cup is to fulfill the form of worship that Jesus instructed His disciples to fulfill, that being to remember Him in His death. In this worship the Spirit has freedom to work His work in the heart of every believer, to reverence the Lord Jesus in simplicity and adoration.

The Remembrance Feast may be a short time or a long period of time. God's structure of worship for an assembly is in meditation and recounting Jesus in the Old Testament prophecies, noting their fulfillment in the New Testament. Remembering Jesus in His oneness with the Father, His suffering, His death, and His resurrection to glory, is also seen in this worship. This is a time of remembering that Jesus took every sin of the believer upon

Himself, and suffered the full judgment of God for them. In worship we rejoice that Jesus completely fulfilled the Law, and through its fulfillment, has brought the righteousness of God into every believer (Romans 10:4; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Corinthians 5:21). In remembering Jesus, believers corporately enter into the very presence of the grace of God (Hebrews 10:19-20).

Expression of this time of worship is seen in the liberty of the Spirit. The priesthood of the believer is exercised in the prayers, hymns, praises, elevation of Jesus, and speaking forth of His glory to the Father (John 17:5, 24). With lips of praise, believers give expression to the completed work of Jesus in the giving of His body and the spilling of His blood for the redemption of His saints. This is a time of rejoicing, centered on the remembrance of Jesus in the bread and the cup. The heart of each and every saint enters into the joy and thanksgiving of all that Jesus has done. This time of remembrance is a place where the world is shut out, and saints fully enter into His rest of redemption as their hearts are set upon Him (Matthew 11:28-30; Hebrews 4:3, 9-10).

This is a time, when in the liberty of the Spirit, each brother who has something to give in worship may freely lead the assembly in praise of God (1 Corinthians 14:23-40). As the Spirit of God leads, each brother gives that which he has to give (1 Corinthians 14:31). All of the brethren of the Lord Jesus are equal before Him (Matthew 23:8-10; Luke 22:25-27). This equality of priesthood among the Lord's brethren, allows the Holy Spirit to choose any brother to give vocal expression in worship. This worship is directed to the Father and the Son, with the saints being edified (1 Corinthians 14:26).

What day and how often should the assembly come together to break the bread? Some examples follow. The day of the giving of the Holy Spirit to form the church was the first day of the week. The prophetic typology is found in the 'Feast of Weeks.' It was to be kept in this manner; 'seven Sabbaths plus a day.' It was on this feast day, the first day after the Sabbath, that the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples on the day of Pentecost (Leviticus 23:15-21; Acts 2:4). On this resurrection day, the first day of the week,

Jesus broke bread with His disciples, possibly in a meal. This is found in Luke 24:30, 35. The resurrection day is the eighth day, the day of new beginnings, the first day of the week, the Lord's Day (Revelation 1:10).

The first Adam is put away at the cross. The second Adam (1 Corinthians 15:45) is entirely the believer's new ground of relationship with God. The natural man Adam was to keep the Sabbath, and the second Adam (Christ) **IS** the Sabbath (Matthew 11:28; 12:8). Christ is the Sabbath of new beginnings. The first Adam worked 6 days then on the 7th day rested. Those that are in the second Adam (Christians), start their week in rest on the first day (Lord's day) and labor 6 days.

The first day of the week is figurative of Noah as he stepped off the ark after the flood. Everything for Noah became new in a new world; likewise a Christian is a new creation in Christ, in a new kingdom, the kingdom of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17; John 18:36).

The Christian's new life is tied up with the resurrection of Jesus. This means that every resurrection day is the Lord's Day, the day of remembering the Lord Jesus in corporate worship. The disciples of the Lord Jesus did exactly that, as seen in Acts 20:7 "Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread ..." The breaking of the bread is the only form of worship that Jesus specifically asked believers to practice. The breaking of the bread is the highest form of worship and should be the main purpose of an assembly gathering on the first day of the week, as it was for the disciples in Acts 20:7. In this time the world is shut out and the believer enters into the rest that God has provided. This rest is in the finished work of His Son, who is the Sabbath of God (Hebrews 4:3).

As with every gift of God that is given to His saints, there are responsibilities. It is so of a believer in partaking of the bread and the cup. **First**, self-judgment is mandatory for every believer to enter into the partaking of the bread and the cup (1 Corinthians 11:28, 31). **Second**, a believer is to discern (to detect if something is not of Christ) the Lord's Body before partaking (1 Corinthians

11:21, 29). This discerning of the Lord's Body is meant to keep the world, the flesh and the devil from entering, in any way, into this most reverent and precious place of remembrance of Jesus in His death. **Third**, if immoral sin is happening in the assembly, it is necessary for the assembly to judge the immoral sin in any brother or sister who will not judge themselves in their involvement in the immoral sin (1 Corinthians 5:1, 7; 8, 11-13). **Fourth**, doctrinal sin believed or practiced by any believer is to be judged by the assembly. This is taught to believers in 1 Corinthians 10:16-22. The refusal to acknowledge Jesus as God the Son is an example of doctrinal sin (Psalms 45:6-7; John 1:1; 1 John 4:1; 5:1, 5).

These are some of the primary and vital aspects of the Remembrance Feast.

The Christian's Hope

17

Who also said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into the heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven” (Acts 1:11).

“Looking for the blessed hope and the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13).

In these two Scriptures lies the Christian's knowledge of the past and his complete hope for the future. Jesus is the hope in whom there was no darkness at all. He is come into this world (John 12:46; 1 John 1:5). Jesus lived in oneness with, and perfect obedience to, the Father (John 8:29; 10:30). Jesus, having been slain by crucifixion, made complete atonement for sin (Isaiah 53:4-6, 11-12; Romans 5:6, 8; 1 Corinthians 15:3; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 9:26; Revelation 1:5). Jesus was raised from among the dead (Psalms 16:8-10; John 20:26-31; 1 Corinthians 15:4-8). Jesus ascended up into the heavens and now sits at the right hand of God (Acts 1:11; 7:56; Hebrews 8:1; 10:12).

Jesus, before His death, gave a promise and a hope to all of His past and present day disciples (John 17:20). Jesus said, “In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to Myself; that where I AM there you may be also” (John 14:2-3,).

Jesus desired that His saints be where He was and prayed to His Father thus, “Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me, may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world” (John 17:24).

In the recorded prayer to His Father, the Christian has the direct promise of Jesus for hope of His coming again. His coming is shown to us in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. Here we learn that the Christian who has departed from his body in death will get a changed body at the coming of Jesus. This changed body received

by a Christian is an eternal spiritual body (1 Corinthians 15:44, 53-54). Those who are alive in this life at the sound of the last trump at Jesus' coming will also receive a new eternal, spiritual body (1 Thessalonians 4:17; 1 Corinthians 15:51).

We learn in Hebrews 9:28 of this hope for the believer, who is looking for the Lord Jesus Christ to reappear again the second time. First John 3:2-3 teaches us that living in the hope of His coming brings purification into the life of the believer. This hope of Jesus coming brings a work of sanctification into the heart of the believer and sets the affections of the heart on the things above (Colossians 3:1-4). Only through this 'hope of Jesus' does the believer learn to do what we are taught in Galatians 5:24, "And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires."

The coming of Jesus for His own is the primary desire of His bride, the Church. The last words of the New Testament close with this promise of Jesus: "I come quickly, amen. Even so come, Lord Jesus" (Revelation 22:20).

"Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord" (1 Thessalonians 4:17). By faith, this promise becomes a reality to the believer who lives in the "Blessed Hope of His coming" (Galatians 5:5; Colossians 1:5; 1 Timothy 1:1; Titus 2:13).

18

End of the Church Age Prophecies

“For prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit” (2 Peter 1:21).

“I tell you (it) now before it happens, that when it happens, you may believe that I am (he)” (John 13:19 JND).

God gives prophecies to His people so that they may know what He is doing or going to do. These prophecies are no less than astounding to us, just as they were to the disciples of Jesus who walked with Him for over 3 years (Mark 10:24-25). Recorded of the prophet Amos (776 B.C.) are these words, “Surely the Lord God does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets” (Amos 3:7). God has always told His people the future before it happened, for their good, or in Israel’s case, their judgment (Genesis 15:12-17; Deuteronomy 28:1-68; Isaiah 46:9-10; Jeremiah 29:11).

Prophecies are recorded in Scripture for three distinct people groups. These three people groups are recorded in 1 Corinthians 10:32, “Give no offence, either to the Jews, or to the Greeks or to the Church of God.”

The Jews and the land of Israel in fulfilled prophecy are inseparable. For prophecies concerning Israel to be fulfilled, the Jews must be living in the land of Israel as a nation, as they are now.

The Gentiles are the unbelieving people on the earth at any given time in history. They are those who have not come into faith in the promises of God. Scripture teaches us that their end is eternal perdition (Revelation 20:11-15, 21:8).

The Church of God was formed in 33 A.D., on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:4). On that day in Jerusalem, the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples of Jesus to indwell each believer who in faith followed Jesus Christ. The Church has a limited time on the earth before it will be caught up to be with Jesus in the heavens

(1 Thessalonians 4:16-17). In this present time period the Holy Spirit is calling out a people to be with the Lord Jesus as His eternal bride. The present day in which we live is the “Church Age.” In Scripture it is referred to as the “dispensation of the grace of God” (Ephesians 3:2).

Prophecies that are brought to the attention of the reader in this chapter are those that are to take place at the end of the “Church Age.”

Jesus gave His apostles many prophecies about Himself and the future, for Christians living in the Church Age of grace. Many of these prophecies concern the last days of the Church Age, just before Jesus comes to take His bride from this earth, commonly called “the rapture” (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). After the Church is taken from this world, the next prophetic event to be fulfilled will be the seven years of Daniel 9:27, the last half called the great tribulation, which will be centered in Israel.

Down through the ages of time there has always been a remnant of people who believed God in wisdom and understanding. This in many cases put them against the religion of the day. The men of the Jewish tribe of Issachar were such a people in their day, “And the children of Issachar, which were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do” (1 Chronicles 12:32). When Jesus was born, a man named Simeon was such a person, in spite of the religion of the day in which he lived (Luke 2:25-35). Anna was also such a person (Luke 2:36-38). Many more examples could be cited. Those who take the name of Jesus should be just as wise to believe God in what He has shown us for our day.

Prophetically the sequence of events are seen as follows:

The Church Age - the present time ends at the Rapture; Christians meet Jesus in the air,

The seven years Tribulation - follows the Rapture of the Church; the seven years are consummated at the second coming of Jesus, who will destroy Israel’s enemies at the battle of Armageddon, then,

The Millennium - Jesus rules on David’s Throne for 1000 years in Jerusalem.

In this section we will look at some prophecies relating to the time just prior to the true Church being taken and the professing church going on into the tribulation. These prophecies will be looked at in four ways and shown in this order: **the true church**, **the professing church** (the great house of 2 Timothy 2:20), **the unbelieving world**, and **Israel**.

The True Church

All of those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of Life will be caught up at the rapture. After the rapture, the professing church of the world will consist of all who were not indwelt by the Holy Spirit and whose names were not written in the Lamb's Book of Life. They will not be caught up at the rapture, but will continue on as the church of profession into the 7 years of tribulation. Until the rapture, both those who have their names written in the Lamb's book of Life and those who do not, but claim to be part of the professing church, dwell together under the umbrella we call Christendom.

For the Christian living in this prophetic time (Church Age) we learn: "For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thessalonians 5:9). The Christian will not go through the wrath of God poured out on the world during the tribulation (Revelation 3:10).

The Professing Church

Even though the foundational and prophetic truths of Christ and the prophetic knowledge of the future of Israel have been recovered in the last 175 years, there are also many powers of decay within the great house of Christendom. This decay is the turning away from the truth of Christ as revealed in Scripture. These recovered truths, regarding the final days of the Church Age, are rejected by the professing Church.

"But know this, that in the last days perilous times shall come" (2 Timothy 3:1). These last days have these marks; "For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving,

unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness, but denying its power” (2 Timothy 3:2-5). In the Church today, it is taught that one must love one’s self before others. Charging money to receive the Word of God is a normal practice, and the boasting of one’s spiritual attributes and persuasions is common. These things have always existed in man’s nature; however, today they are being promoted falsely under the guise of being of God and under His leading.

Second Thessalonians 2:3 tells us that the day of Christ (Jesus coming at the end of the tribulation) will not come except there be a great falling away. The church of profession will not disappear at the end of the Church Age (the rapture), but will continue falling away and be estranged from Christ through its resistance to the truth. Revelation chapters 17-18 give a description of this time and judgment. The works of this church are seen today.

Revelation chapters 2 -3 show us the history of the Church in seven time periods. The seventh and last church time period is the Laodician Church that exists when Jesus comes for His bride. The prophecy that Jesus spoke to the Laodician Church is that it is lukewarm toward Christ and His word. Being rich and increased with goods, it does not need the place of humility or repentance (Revelation 3:17). This “church” is spewed out of the mouth of Christ (Revelation 3:16). This “church” doctrinally is a democracy. The people rule, not the Spirit of Christ or His Word. With the “church” putting away the truth and the simplicity of Christ, the arrogance of man’s nature shows through much that is happening in the church today.

False teachers will be part of the professing “church,” even denying the Lord who bought them (2 Peter 2:1-3). These teachers will speak liberty with swelling words of emptiness. They will live in error and they will teach spiritual corruption, and those who follow them will be brought into spiritual bondage (2 Peter 2:18-20). Even though there are multitudes following these corruptions, we are told in 2 Thessalonians 2:10-11, it is because

men did not have a love of the truth. The result of this lack of love for the truth is that God would send a strong delusion that men should believe a lie. Can any Christian who loves the truth say that in this day, false teaching does not abound, or that false teaching is not readily received by multitudes?

At the end of the church age we are told that Satan will work signs and lying wonders, (2 Thessalonians 2:9), and he will transform himself to appear as an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14). These things are most certainly happening today. For example, manifestations are seen in statues of Mary, around the world in the Roman Catholic Churches, crying tears and some are said to bleed blood. Apparitions appear to children and adults in Catholic Churches and outside of them. Some of those viewing these apparitions get messages which they say are from Mary. Some of these messages say that Mary is the advocate with the Father. Many are healed by these spiritual phenomena. People are told to honor Mary even above the Son of God.

Millions have come to believe that Mary is equal with the Father and the Son, in her co-redemptive powers. Millions of letters have been sent to the Pope to give Mary official deification. Multitudes have sought after Mary as the divine revelation from God. Scripture teaches that Christ alone is the One in whom salvation is acquired (Acts 4:10-12; 1 Peter 3:18).

The Roman Catholic Church calls Mary, 'the Queen of Heaven.' The pursuit of a false deity of the last day's "church" is called the "Queen" (Revelation 18:7). Candles are lit to Mary, prayers are said to Mary, Rosary beads of Mary are used to pray for grace, for salvation, deliverance from purgatory and for intercession. Millions pray to the statues of Mary. The Pope has said that all victory would be through Mary. Millions make pilgrimages dedicated to Mary.

Scripture shows us that the prophet Jeremiah dealt with the same spiritual deception in his day. The people's response to Jeremiah's rebuke was, "As for the word that you have spoken to us in the name of the Lord, we will not listen to you! But we will

certainly do whatever has gone out of our own mouth, to burn incense to the “queen of heaven” and pour out drink offerings to her, as we have done, we and our fathers, our kings and princes, in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem. For then we had plenty of food, were well-off, and saw no trouble” (Jeremiah 44:16-17). “Then Jeremiah spoke to all the people (verse 20); the incense that you burned in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem (verse 21) . . . so the Lord could no longer bear it” (verse 22). The practices and the queen of heaven are rebuked of God in Jeremiah 7:16-20. Revelation chapters 17 and 18:7 show us the outcome of following these deceptive signs and wonders of our day.

Some may say these things have always gone on. Deceptions and wolves in the flock of Christ most certainly have always been a power which has needed to be dealt with (for the church that would be true to Christ) (Acts 20:29). Today they are world wide and increasing.

Second Timothy 3:13 teaches us that these seductions will get worse and worse at the end of the Church Age. Seducing spirits can only work where there is spiritual darkness, and darkness can only exist where the light of Christ is not received (John 1:5).

The unbelieving world

The prophetic happenings in the world at the present time (Church Age) will continue to the end of the seven years of tribulation. Jesus said that before His second coming (before the Millennium) the conditions on the earth would be as the days of Noah (Luke 17:26-27). The days of Noah were characterized by evil and violence (Genesis 6:5-6, 11-12; Matthew 24:12). Now, in our day at the end of the Church Age these signs are becoming apparent. It is reported that in the last one hundred years, through wars and political ideology, over two hundred million people have been killed.

Jesus said that the days would be as the days of Lot, when Lot lived in Sodom (Luke 17:28-30). The days of Lot were days of open homosexuality, which was pursued openly before all men,

and accepted before men. (Genesis 13:13; 18:23-33; 19:1-29). Is not the day in which we now live a day of open homosexuality in the western world and the church? Are there not laws to promote open homosexuality in schools, in diversity training, in teaching the public, in laws against speaking out in opposition to it? In some countries it is against the law to quote the Bible's reference to homosexuality as an abomination to God. God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, with fire and brimstone for these practices of open homosexuality. Archeologists recently claimed to find the ancient remains of these two cities, identifying the rocks as fired brimstone [sulphur]. The legacy of these two cities will carry on into the Tribulation.

The First World War saw the loss of life run into the millions. The leaders said it was a war to end all wars. Out of this so-called "Great War," the League of Nations was formed (1919) to bring peace on the earth among nations. The concept of the League of Nations progressed forward to become the United Nations. The continual cry was "peace and safety." Today and for many past years there have been forty or more wars going on within and among the world's nations, with no end in sight. These plans of men to stop war and to bring peace and safety among nations have not succeeded.

In 1 Thessalonians 5:3, we are given one of the prophecies concerning events just before the Lord's second coming: "For when they shall say, peace and safety! Then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape."

"But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased" (Daniel 12:4). Two things are prophetically told us in this verse. At the time of the end days, travel and knowledge shall increase. Let the reader decide if this has not been the case in the last 100 years. A greater aspect of this prophecy is knowledge. During the last 175 years the Spirit of God, through Scripture, has brought forth truths which had been forgotten for centuries. These truths have been obscured by the darkness

within the professing church for 1700 years. These truths have now opened up the knowledge of Christ and prophetic truth on a scale not known since the first century.

Since the days of Noah it has been an accepted fact that the earth was under water by a flood. "Over 300 non-biblical, historical accounts from tribes and nations around the world claim the cataclysm was real!" (The Mysteries of Creation, Dennis R. Petersen). The flood was not questioned until the last one to two hundred years. However, geological evidence shows that the earth has been covered by water. The evidence is seen in marine fossils that abound on the tops of the highest mountains (The Mysteries of Creation, Dennis R. Petersen). Yet the secular world denies the fossil record of a world flood.

This denial was prophesied by the Apostle Peter to take place in the last days. "Knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, where is the promise of His coming? For since the father's fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation. For this they willfully forget: that by the Word of God the heavens were of old and the earth standing out of water and in the water, by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water" (2 Peter 3:3-6).

Israel

Jerusalem has lain dormant for many centuries. Now in these last days Israel has become a nation again as prophesied. "And it shall happen in that day that I will make Jerusalem a heavy stone for all peoples" (Zechariah 12:3). Jerusalem continues at the root of fighting and the reason for much of the fighting in the world today.

When the time of the end of the Church Age is near, the Jews will return to the land of Israel (Jeremiah 31:7-10; Ezekiel 37:21-22). One hundred years ago there were approximately one hundred thousand Jews living in Israel. According to the "World Fact Book," today the number is over five million.

The nation of Israel was divided into two nations (Israel and Judah) around 900 B. C. This division lasted till the nation was dissolved in 135 A. D. In the prophecy recorded in Ezekiel 37:22 we see that when the Jews return and are re-gathered as a nation, they will be one nation without division. Today they are one nation, without the division as it existed in their past history. However, all Jews are not back in the land. The rapture and tribulation will bring about the complete fulfillment of this prophecy.

Jesus prophesied that the Jews would remain in unbelief of their Messiah, till He comes again (Luke 13:34-35; 19:41-42; Romans 11:25-27). In Israel today the nation has not embraced Jesus as their Messiah and is still antagonistic toward Jesus of Nazareth. Christianity makes up approximately 2% of the population of Israel, and almost all of these believers are Palestinians.

Jesus prophesied that Israel would not become extinct, but be preserved unto the time of the end of the seventh week of Daniel 9:27. The prophecy is that God would preserve the generation (race) of Israelites unto the end as a nation. "Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words will by no means pass away" (Matthew 24:34, 35).

Can anyone say the fulfillment of this has not happened in our day, that is, that God has in His sovereignty preserved the Jews to allow them again (not all so far) into the land as a nation? Jesus condemned the Pharisees for not discerning the times in which they lived, for they lived in the time and day when prophecy was being fulfilled before their eyes (Matthew 16:1-4). Should not the Christian take heed to the fulfillment of prophecy in our day?

In 33 A.D. Jesus prophesied that, "And Jerusalem will be trampled by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (Luke 21:24). This period of being trodden down started with Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon (521 B. C.) by his taking captive the Jews. This has continued with other Gentile powers to this day. The Jews were chased away from Jerusalem in 135 A.D. in their last

revolt against Rome. This state of Jerusalem being trodden down by Gentile nations continued until 1967. Then in the six-day war with her Arab neighbors, Israel again regained control of Jerusalem. Immediately after gaining control, Israel gave back political control of the Temple Mount to the Arabs. Israel, by exercising physical control of Jerusalem, yet not the political control, is the beginning of the end for Gentile power over Jerusalem, even though Israel must still suffer another invasion before her complete liberation from Gentile power. “The Stone cut without hands” (Daniel 2:34-35, 44) (the Lord Jesus coming in power and glory at the end of the tribulation), will totally destroy Gentile power over Jerusalem.

19

The Christian's Works Judged

“For we must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done whether good or bad” (2 Corinthians 5:10).

This Judgment Seat of Christ is the first order of business when the saints are caught up to be with the Lord (1 Corinthians 3:11-15; 4:5). This judgment is not to judge the sins of the believer, because the sin issue has been put away at the cross (Romans 10:4; Hebrews 10:14). This judgment for the believer is for his works, that is, for his life whether he followed the truth in Christ, or walked after the flesh. For the believer is either believing God in what is revealed to him in the Scripture, or his life is being lived and built upon the shifting sands of human ways (Matthew 7:24-29; 1 Corinthians 3:10-11). The Day of Christ (Judgment seat of Christ) will reveal it to all, whether the believer's life was built on the flesh or the Spirit. It will be to suffer loss or to rejoice in that day (Philippians 2:16). The Christian can be fully assured that the blood of Christ, shed for him at Calvary, is fully sufficient for his eternal salvation; but the works of his life, not built upon Christ, will be burned up and he will suffer loss (1 Corinthians 3:15).

The Apostle Paul, after his conversion to the Lord Jesus, never ceased to pursue the kingdom of Christ. The world, and the religious world in particular, opposed him and the kingdom of God everywhere he went (Acts 13:43, 50; 19:23-41; 24:5). The price Paul paid for walking after the Spirit of Christ is recorded in 2 Corinthians 11:22-33. Paul paid a great price, but he could still say of his future at the Judgment Seat of Christ, “Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me at that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing” (2 Timothy 4:8).

We are taught in 1 Corinthians 3:12-13, that there are two ways of building a Christian's life. One is on wood, hay, and stubble and the other is on gold, silver and precious stones. The first three are quickly burned by fire. These things (wood, hay and stubble), present in the

Christian's life have no place in the kingdom of God. The world, the flesh, and the devil cannot stand the fire of the judgment of God (1 Corinthians 6:9-10; 11:32; 15:50; Galatians 5:19-21; Ephesians 2:2; Revelation 20:10). The Christian who builds his life on these things will certainly suffer loss. What are the gold, silver and precious stones that will stand the judgment fire? They answer to what the Spirit of God is using to build the kingdom of Christ.

First, is gold. Isaiah 13:12 shows us what God's kingdom is built on. "I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than fine gold of Ophir" Christ the Man, whom the kingdom of God is built upon, is here in type compared to man's finest gold. Gold is the foundation of all precious metals. So Christ is the foundation of all that is in the heart of God, for man (1 Corinthians 3:11).

Second, is silver. Silver speaks of redemption. Redemption through silver is seen throughout Scripture (Leviticus 27; 1 Kings 20:39; Jeremiah 32:6-9; Zechariah 11:11-13; Matthew 27:3-10). Judas was paid thirty pieces of silver for betraying the Lord Jesus, which resulted in every Christian's redemption (Matthew 27:3). A Christian's life built on the redemption of Christ will stand any fire.

Third, are the precious stones. The precious stones speak of the perfections of Christ. The work and fruit of the Spirit will build the life of Jesus in any Christian who rests, walks, and lives in the Spirit. The precious things of Christ shall never fail (Galatians 5:22-23; 2 Peter 1:4-8). These precious stones are the very nature of God, manifested in His people, who dwell in His presence through faith (1 Thessalonians 2:19).

The Judgment Seat of Christ will put an end to all that is of the first Adam in the Christian's life. This will fully free the Christian from any vestiges of this life. The nature of the first Adam has no place in the kingdom of God. Only the second Adam, Christ in the believer, will be in full enjoyment in His heavenly sphere, and that will be forever more. Every Christian can look forward to this enjoyment in great expectation and hope (Philippians 1:20).

Seven Years of Chaos (The Tribulation)

20

“And he shall confirm a covenant with the many (for) one week:and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease, and because of the protection of abominations [there shall be] a desolator, even until that the consumption and what is determined shall be poured out upon the desolate” (Daniel 9:27 JND).

Here we are looking at the last week of the seventy weeks prophesied in Daniel 9:24. It should be understood that the seventy weeks of Daniel are heptads (group or series of seven) of weeks; they are seven times seventy years. Four hundred and ninety years in all. Four hundred and eighty three years of this prophecy have been fulfilled, as can be seen from the historical record. The last one-week of seven years in this verse is yet to happen (Revelation 13:1; 17:3).

The prophet Daniel (600 B. C.) was given the history of world events. These events were in the immediate prophetic future with the rise and the fall of four Gentile nations. Daniel was shown that Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, was the first King to rule the known world. Darius, the king of the Medeo-Persian Empire came after the Babylonian Kingdom fell. The Grecian Empire was the next world empire under the conquering general, Alexander the Great. The last world empire to rule was the Roman Empire (Daniel 2:36-43; 7:3-8). The last empire, the Roman Empire would dissolve but still be there.

The image of a man in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream (Daniel 2:1) shows all of these empires. Daniel was told that the last empire, which was Roman, would be divided (Daniel 2:41). This part of the dream is revealed in the two legs of the image of the man in Daniel 2:33. Its fulfillment transpired with the Roman Emperor Constantine (316 A. D.) Constantine moved the seat of Roman power to today’s country of Turkey. Constantinople (today’s Istanbul) became the government seat of power for the empire.

The empire of Rome has never totally dissolved, only fragmented. This part of the prophecy is seen in the iron and the clay mixing (Daniel 2:41-43). By examining the future events in Daniel we can see that the Roman Empire at the time of the end

of Gentile power will come back together again, in the form of ten kings (Daniel 7:7-8). These kings correspond to the ten toes of Daniel 2:40-43. This kingdom will be under the power of the one called the Beast (Daniel 7:8; Revelation 13:4-10).

Sixty-nine weeks of the seventy weeks of Daniel 9:25-26 have literally been fulfilled in the coming of Jesus as the Messiah, and through His death. Titus the Roman General came with his armies and destroyed the Jerusalem Temple and the city in 70 A. D. as prophesied in Daniel 9:26.

In the seventieth week of Daniel 9:27, we are told that Israel will be back in their land again as a nation. This was partly fulfilled with Israel becoming a recognized nation in 1948. Israel has wandered among the Gentile nations for 1900 years in desolations as the prophecy foretold (Daniel 9:26). Hosea also prophesied of this time of desolations: “My God will cast them away, because they did not obey Him; and they shall be wanderers among the nations” (Hosea 9:17).

The one-week of Daniel 9:27 is the last week of the seventy weeks of verse 24. It is separate from the sixty-nine weeks which ended at the Cross. The fulfillment of the prophecy for this one week will take place after the Church is caught up to be with the Lord Jesus Christ (2 Thessalonians 2:7-12). The ‘He’ in 2 Thessalonians 2:7 is God who in the mercy of His grace, restrains evil in the world in the person of the Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit is taken out of the world through the catching away of the Church, the stage will be set for the last week of Daniel’s prophecy to begin. After the catching away of the Church, God will then direct His favor toward Israel and specifically the faithful Jewish remnant (Revelation 14:1-5).

Jesus gave a description of this time in Matthew 24:4-28. The disciples of Jesus asked Him these three questions concerning this time (Matthew 24:1-3):

1. When will be the destruction of the Temple?
2. What will be the sign of your coming?

3. What will be the sign of the completion of the age?
(JND).

#1. They asked the time of the destruction of the second temple, the temple of the time in which they lived (33 A.D.). Jesus answered this in Luke 21:20-24. The Roman General Titus fulfilled the prophecy of Luke 21:20-24 by destroying the second temple in 70 A.D. However, in Matthew 24:15, the “abomination of desolation” in the Holy Place is the third temple, where the man of sin sits (2 Thessalonians 2:4). A third temple not yet built, will exist at the time of the seventieth week (it has been reported that Israel is in negotiations with the Palestinians’ to allow a third temple to be built on the temple mount as part of an agreement, in exchange for agreeing to a Palestine nation).

#2. The signs of Jesus coming to the earth to rule and reign are seen in the passages recorded in Matthew 24:4-33.

#3. These same passages in Matthew also speak of the consummation of the age (the seventy weeks). Also read Mark 13:1-27. These events are the actions leading up to the consummation of the last seven years of Daniel’s seventy weeks. They are prophetically spoken of in the Revelation, chapters 4 through 19. In this seven-year period, Israel will be a nation in the land of Palestine; they will have built a third temple where the anti-Christ will sit in the last three and a half years of the seven-year period (2 Thessalonians 2:4). The revived Roman Empire of Europe will come together again in a ten-nation (there may be more for a time) confederacy. The “professing church” even today has become “lukewarm, rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing” (Revelation 3:16-17). In the church’s lukewarmness and wealth, a great falling away from the truth of Christ will have taken place (2 Thessalonians 2:3). The spirit of the day leading up to these events will be the spirit of Laodicea, (the people rule, not the Spirit of God) in the “church” (Revelations 3:14-19).

This seven-year period will be a time of great upheaval in

the world with Israel at the center of all the trouble. It will be the time of Jacob's trouble, with Jerusalem at the center of it as prophesied by the prophet Jeremiah (Jeremiah 30:7). Zechariah also prophesied of this time: "Behold I will make Jerusalem a cup of bewilderment unto all the people round about, and also against Judah shall it be in the siege against Jerusalem. And it shall come to pass in [that] I will make Jerusalem a burdensome stone unto all peoples: all that burden themselves with it shall certainly be wounded, and all the nations of the earth shall be assembled together against it" (Zechariah 12:2-3 JND). All nations will be troubled and perplexed with Israel and specifically Jerusalem. Is not the clear evidence of this seen now, and the other signs of this time fast approaching? This will be the time when a man called the 'Beast' will head up the revived Roman Empire. The Beast will have great power and will institute 'the mark of the beast' (Revelation 13:15-16; 14:9). This man will be the center of worship among the Gentiles. He will control men economically and spiritually through this mark (Revelation 13:15-17).

At the same time in Israel the "man of sin" will in deception, reveal himself to the Israelites as their Messiah (John 5:43). He will reject the God of their fathers (Daniel 11:37-38). This man of sin, the Antichrist, will make a covenant with the Jews for one week or seven years (Daniel 9:27). This false Messiah will sit in the third temple that is yet to be built and show himself to be the God of the Jews (2 Thessalonians 2:4). This is the man Jesus spoke of in John 5:43.

[Note: In the year 2002 certain Jews in Jerusalem attempted to set a cornerstone for the third temple on the former temple mount in Jerusalem. This caused a riot among the Palestinians.]

At the end of this seven-year period, God will deal with all nations that come against Jerusalem. "And it shall be in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem" (Zechariah 12:9). This will consummate with the coming again of Jesus with His saints in the battle of Armageddon (Revelation 16:14; 19:11-21). At the consummation of this battle in the valley of Megiddo (northern Israel), the Beast as head of

the last world Gentile power will be struck by the stone made without hands (Daniel 2:35).

Then all Israel will say, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord" (Psalms 118:26; Matthew 21:9). Jeremiah prophesies of that day, "No more shall every man teach his neighbor and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the Lord" (Jeremiah 31:34). This will be a day of great rejoicing for every Israelite; we may liken it to Joseph and his brothers who sold him into slavery (Genesis 37:28). Later when Joseph became second in command of power for all of Egypt, he revealed himself to his brothers as their "saviour" and benefactor from famine. At this revelation their astonishment turned to a time of intimate and unlimited joy (Genesis 45:1-15). So it will be with the Christ that Israel rejected and crucified. Zechariah prophesies of this time. "And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn" (Zechariah 12:10).

And it will be asked of Him, "And one shall say unto him, what are those wounds in thy hands? And He will say, those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends" (Zechariah 13:6 JND).

After this time the Christ, reigning as King, will judge those nations who fought against Israel, His brethren, the Jews (Matthew 25:31-46). This judgment will end Gentile power among the nations. The times of the Gentiles that started with Nebuchadnezzar will be concluded and Israel with their Messiah reigning will be the head, and no longer the tail, among nations of the earth (Deuteronomy 28:13). These events will set the stage for the Millennium to begin (Revelation 20:4).

21 **The Kingdom of God on the Earth (the Millennium)**

“For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David, and over His kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and justice from that even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this” (Isaiah 9:6-7).

“Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ and shall reign with Him a thousand years” (Revelation 20:6).

The prophets prophetically describe the kingdom of God on the earth in much detail. John the Baptist, announced that the King and the kingdom “was at hand.” Jesus, as He walked on the earth, gave all Israel a glimpse of the King and the kingdom of God and the works of the kingdom. The blind shall see, the lame shall walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf shall hear, the dead are raised, and the gospel is preached to the poor (Luke 7:19-23). In the life and ministry of Jesus we understand how the kingdom will function (Matthew 5:1-10). The kingdom will not lack, even for those without (Matthew 14:15-21). The gospel of the kingdom age was what Jesus preached, but He as the King was rejected and crucified. However, when He comes to the earth again, He will set up His kingdom and reign as its King.

To set the world stage for these events, Israel must be fully in their land, not spread all over the world as they are now. The prophets show us this:

A. God will recover the Jews back to the land of Israel in completeness (Deuteronomy 30:3-6; Isaiah 11:11; 27:12-13; 66:20; Ezekiel 37; 39:25; Micah 4:6-8).

B. The Son of David shall sit on David’s throne and rule (Psalms

110:1-2; Isaiah 9:7; Jeremiah 33:14-26).

C. The Messiah shall rule and reign from Jerusalem in righteous judgment (Psalms 2:6; 24:7-10; Isaiah 11:1-5; 62:7; Joel 3:17-18; Ezekiel 37:23-28; Zechariah 8:1-3).

D. The Messiah shall break His enemies (Psalms 2:9; 72:2; 101:7-8; Isaiah 61:2; 63:6; Zechariah 14:13-15).

E. All nations will be subject to the Messiah (Psalms 2:7-12; Zechariah 14:9).

F. A time of peace and prosperity will encompass the earth (Isaiah 11:3-5; 14:7-8; Ezekiel 34:23-31; 36:28-38).

G. The curse of sin will be abated (Isaiah 11:6-9; 65:25).

H. Satan will be bound for a thousand years (Revelation 20:1-3).

I. A fourth temple will be built (Ezekiel chapters 40; 41; 43; Zechariah 6:12-15).

J. Every Israelite will be born of God and know Him (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:24-28).

K. The Jews will make known the kingdom of God to all nations (Isaiah 11:9; 66:19; Malachi 1:11).

L. Nations shall come to the temple in Jerusalem, to worship (Isaiah 11:10; 27:13; 61:6; 66:18, 23; Jeremiah 3:17; Micah 4:2; Zechariah 8:20-23; 14:16).

These activities will take place with Christ's coming, ruling and reigning on the earth. This will be a time of enforced righteousness on the earth. For the first time since Adam's fall, the earth will know peace and righteousness. Scripture reveals that the Christian will come back to reign with Christ (2 Timothy 2:12; Revelation 5:10; 20:6). This one thousand year reign of Christ will show mankind the true nature and intentions of God for man living on the earth, as they have always been for Israel (Jeremiah 29:11). This will be a time when nations; "... shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore" (Isaiah 2:4;

Micah 4:3). Jerusalem will be a place of peace and safety (Zechariah 14:11). Jerusalem and the temple in it will be water of life to all nations (Ezekiel 47:1-12; Micah 4:2, 4-5). Israel will for the first time live in total safety. “But everyone shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree, and no one shall make them afraid; for the mouth of the Lord of hosts has spoken it (Micah 4:4). This is the time desired by those in Israel who have walked in faith, since their captivity in Babylon 2500 years ago.

At the end of the one thousand year time period of the kingdom of God, a new sequence of events will take place. We are told in Revelation 20:7-9 that Satan will be loosed from the bottomless pit where he has been bound for a thousand years. This prison will have kept Satan contained, so he could not deceive the nations and bring destruction on the earth. Upon Satan’s release he will immediately go out to the four corners of the earth to deceive (Revelation 20:7-8). We are told that he will incite men to follow him. The numbers of those who follow him are as the sand of the sea. The destruction of Jerusalem will be their objective and their purpose. This battle at Jerusalem is quickly ended with fire from heaven destroying the attackers. Satan then is taken and cast into the lake of fire, into which the False Prophet and the Beast have also been cast, as shown in Revelation 20:10. This will consummate the Kingdom Age on the earth.

Judgment on the Children of Wrath (the Unbelieving)

“Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and the books were opened. And another book was opened which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books, according to their works” (Revelation 20:11-12).

“And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire” (Revelation 20:15).

This will be the time when all things will be judged, that final reckoning of all men who had not faith. At this time unbelieving people will be judged according to their works. Revelation 20:11 informs us that there will be no place to hide. There will be no higher court of appeal for another trial. The verdict will be final for all eternity. The White Throne judgment will enact severity of penalty, for works committed while in the body (Luke 12:42-48; Revelation 11:15-19).

Those whose names are written in the Book of Life spoken of in Revelation 20:12, 15 are those whose judgment and penalty has been put on the Lord Jesus at Calvary (Isaiah 53:3-12; John 5:24; Acts 13:39; Hebrews 10:10, 12, 14; Revelation 1:5). The Book of Life contains all of those who have come to God through the sacrifice of Christ. Their full judgment was put on Christ. God accepted Christ’s shed blood as payment for every believer’s sin (Hebrews 10:12, 14). Christ’s shed blood covered Adam’s sin and everyone from that time forward who looked in faith to the future of the Messiah who was to come as their sin bearer (Genesis 3:15). The same is true of all believers, who have lived after the cross, who look back in faith on Jesus as their sin bearer (John 3:14-16).

New Heavens and a New Earth

23

“For behold I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind” (Isaiah 65:17).

“For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make, shall remain before Me; says the Lord...” (Isaiah 66:22).

“Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away...” (Revelation 21:1).

The Apostle Peter gives revelation concerning the events that lead up to this time of the new heaven and the new earth. In 2 Peter 3:7, we are instructed that the present heavens and earth are awaiting judgment. This judgment involves a cleansing by fire of everything that pertains to the present heavens and earth. Since Adam’s act of independence in the garden from God’s instruction, the whole creation has groaned under the effects of sin being brought into the creation. (Romans 8:20, 22).

At the appointed time, all that was brought into this present creation by Adam’s disobedience will be burned up by fire (2 Peter 3:10). This Day of Judgment will totally put away all vestiges of the first creation.

Peter instructs us that this will take place with the quickness as of a thief in the night (2 Peter 3:10). This fire that will devour the heavens and the earth will be a fire of such magnitude that nothing will be left (2 Peter 3:12). As the judgment of the flood in Noah’s day made a place for a new world with Noah at its head, so this fire of judgment will destroy the present creation. The new heavens and earth will have as its head the Lamb of God (Revelation 22:1, 3, 13). As the first Adam was the federal head over the first creation, so the Lamb of God will be the center of the new heavens and the new earth (Revelation 5:5-14). The new heavens and new earth will resonate only around the Lamb of God. God will make all things of this present existing creation to come to mind no more, as it is prophetically written, the former things of this creation will be totally gone, and they will be remembered no more, nor come to mind (Isaiah 65:17).

The Saints of God and Their Final Reward

24

“Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying; Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them, and be their God” (Revelation 21:2-3).

Hebrews 9:24 teaches us that Israel’s earthly temple is a figure of the true temple in the heavens. God gave Moses instructions in the law for the tabernacle, the altar, the ark, the high priest, the priesthood, etc. These were figures of the true reality in heaven.

The New Jerusalem is the eternal dwelling place of the saints of God. In the Law of Moses, the Scriptures give us a copy or figure of what is true in heaven, the earthly reveals the heavenly (Hebrews 9:7-11; 11:19). For example, in Revelation 21:16 we learn about the New Jerusalem. Its shape is a cube, being twelve thousand furlongs each way. One furlong is 582 feet. This equates to approximately 1340 miles, in height, length and width. The street of the city is pure gold (Revelation 21:21). When Solomon was building the first temple in Israel he overlaid it in gold (1 Kings 6:20-22; 2 Chronicles 3:8). So the heavenly Jerusalem is pure gold, like pure glass we are told in Revelation 21:18. This pureness of gold speaks of the untarnished city of God, the perfect perfection of the Lamb and the dwelling place of the Lamb’s wife.

The twelve precious stones of the city’s foundation wall answer to twelve precious stones that were on Aaron’s breastplate (Exodus 28:17-20; Revelation 21:19-20).

We are told that the gates of the city are twelve pearls. They speak to two important aspects. First, the pearl reminds one of the merchant in Matthew 13:45-46, who sold all that he had to buy the pearl of great price. This the Lord Jesus did. He gave all to purchase the pearl of great price, the Church, at the cost of His own blood. There is no other gate into the City of God except through the blood of the Son of God, and the pearl of great

price, the Church of God. Second, twelve is God's number for government. The twelve gates of the city speak to the government of God, in Christ's blood paying the governmental judicial penalty for sin, and suffering the full penalty of the law for every saint's redemption.

As long as the Israelites lived in the land, the temple was the center of all activities connected with God. Solomon's Temple was filled with the Shekinah Glory of God (1 Kings 8:10-11). This city of heaven, the New Jerusalem, will have the completeness of this Glory of God. For the Temple will be the Lord God and the Lamb (Revelation 21:22). That which was in part on the earth will be in full in the New Jerusalem. As a betrothed bride who has waited for the bridegroom finds total fulfillment in the consummation of marriage, so will the saints of God as the bride of Christ (Revelation 21:2). In like manner the saints of God, as the bride in waiting, will come into fullness of joy as the wife of the Lamb (Psalm 16:11).

We learn in Hebrews 12:2 that because of the joy that was set before Jesus, He went to the cross. A believer living in the Spirit knows that joy only in part now. In the New Jerusalem that joy will be complete. This heavenly state is shown to us in 1 Corinthians 2:9. "But as it is written: Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those that love Him. But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit."

The heavenly description of this time and place is found in Revelation 21:3-5. The root and the fruit of man's sin will not be in this heavenly sphere, for God will make all things new (Revelation 21:5, 8, 27).

A Christian knows the water of life now through the Spirit, but while living in this world he finds many interruptions to this divine flow in its completeness (John 7:37-39). In the coming "Day of God," this Water of Life that flows from the throne of God will be in fullness. The saints can only experience this fullness in a world apart from sin (Revelation 21:27).

Man, in this present world, found his beginning in the Garden of

Eden with two trees. They are the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and the tree of life (Genesis 2:8-9). In this garden, Satan had access to Adam through the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. In the new creation of heaven and earth, only the tree of life (Christ) will be in existence (Revelation 22:2). Man began life in this world in the garden. In the new heaven and earth, a garden will again be the beginning and center of all life for the redeemed, through the tree of life (Revelation 22:2).

In the creation of the heavens and the earth, we are told six days is the sequence of time in its coming together (Genesis 1:27). The Sun, Moon and Stars were created on the fourth day. However, on the first day, light appeared, this light is the Light of God (Malachi 4:2). This same Light is shown to us again in the new heaven and earth (Revelation 22:5). A believer now comprehends this light in his spirit (John 1:4-5). In the new heaven and earth, the saints will be in the fullness of this Light (1 John 1:5).

The Christian perceives these things in part now: "For we see through a dim window obscurely" (1 Corinthians 13:12). In the day that is coming, the glory of the Father and of the Lamb shall be fully known and entered into by all the saints of God (Revelation 5:13-14). In that day all the darkness of this world will be gone forever.

D. Neely

5-14-05

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"For behold I create new heavens and a new earth:
and the former shall not be remembered, nor come
into mind" (Isaiah 65:17).

"...And thus we shall always be with the Lord.
Therefore comfort one another with these words"
(1 Thessalonians 4:17-18).

Finale

The truths set forth before the Christian in the Scriptures are for his spiritual intelligence, so that the believer in the Lord Jesus Christ may inhabit and experience the highest spiritual place of God's provision in his soul and spirit. This is accomplished by truth received into the heart of the believer, so that he may not be ignorant of the mind of God, or His purposes for the Christian. Truths of Christ are always for the enrichment and blessing of His people. However, truths not practiced are truths not known in the heart. The heart is where the Spirit of God functions to bring out a people for His own good pleasure, and to conform a believer into the image of His Son (Romans 8:29; Ephesians 1:5, 9; 1 Thessalonians 1:11). The heart is where a person believes unto righteousness (Romans 10:10). Without a person conforming to the Word of God in both heart and practice, righteousness is only a mental exercise. This mental exercise does not bring righteousness or the life of Christ as a reality into the believer's life. Every Christian's place before the Lord Jesus is to bend the knee to Him, and His Word. "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men" (John 1:4).

Scripture versions used:

New King James Version

New Translation, Darby, John Nelson

Other booklets by this author

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