

Sound Doctrine

Mysteries of the Kingdom

By CR Hamilton

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To those in love with Jesus Christ

Introduction

This book is about helping believers understand what God, through Jesus Christ, wants for those who believe in him through the gospel. What is the main mission of believers and how they can accomplish this mission by understanding the deeper things of God. Using a microscopic look at the life and true purpose of Jesus Christ and the mission of the church, *The Mysteries of the Kingdom*, directs believers onto a path set for them by the word and spirit of God.

Chapter One

The Person of Jesus and the Christian Ministry

For people who profess to be Christians, the Bible encourages them to be like Jesus Christ himself and to think and live the same as Jesus did during his life. The scripture says: “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:” Philippians 2:5. Chapter two of Philippians describes the mind of Christ and how we as believers should think toward others and about ourselves. Verse 4 reads: “Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.”

One basic principle of being a Christian is selflessness. We should first think of others before ourselves. We must show concern for others and their well-being in life, and neither should we be jealous of others or exalt ourselves above others, but esteem ourselves lower than them. Verse 7 reads: “but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant.”

This mindset calls for humility in ourselves, humbleness and meekness, not boisterous, arrogant, or above the character of others. This is not thinking like or having the mind of Christ. This is having the mind of the world. When we exalt ourselves above others and consider them lower than ourselves, we tend to look for wrongs and faults in others and judge them, condemning them and their lifestyle.

Jesus never condemned individuals for their sins, but he forgave them of their sins instead. The only people that Jesus condemned were those who were supposed to teach the law, the scribes and the Pharisees and Chief Priest, because they were not teaching the law according to righteousness, mercy, and faith, but of tradition of men. “But in vain they do worship me, Teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.” St. Matt. 15:9.

The people who suffered under the false doctrine of the leaders were not blamed for their sins and shortcomings but were forgiven by Christ. This is shown many times in the gospels during Jesus' ministry as he walked among the people. To forgive sins, a person must have understanding of those sins and why the person became bound in the first place. If we have no understanding, there can be no forgiveness. "Charity (Love) covers a multitude of sins." 1 Peter 4:8.

Before Jesus walked the earth among the people, the prophet Isaiah in chapter 53 of his book foretold of Jesus and the type of person he would be. The characteristics of Christ in Isaiah should also be in every person who claims to be a Christian. We will walk through each verse of Isaiah 53 to breakdown those characteristics.

1. Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?

2. For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.

3. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

7. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

8. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

9. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.

Examining the above passage from the beginning, the prophet asked who among the children of Israel has believed this report about the coming Messiah and to whom would the arm of the Lord (the Lord at the time was God himself and the arm of the Lord was an extension of God reaching out to man, being his son, the person of Jesus Christ).

Once the Messiah was born, we can see that he was born a common person as described as being “as a tender plant,” and “as a root out of dry ground,” and would grow up before him (God) as new and untouched by the world; as humble and as lowly in spirit as a tender plant and from the roots of a people of a dry and earthy element, not out of earthy royalty of a rich, fertile soil.

He had to be this way in order for God to shape and mold him into what he needed him to be. A born-again Christian is the same. They are new and humble, no longer tainted by the elements of the world so God can teach them to be like his son Christ.

The verse goes on to quote, “he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.” According to the description, there was nothing physically special about Jesus and he was not considered comely, which means attractive. He was not considered beautiful as a standard of the world would consider beauty, but he was an average guy born of modest appearance.

Verse 3 states, “He is despised and rejected of men;” which means that he was not popular at all in the standards of popular culture, celebrity status or famous among men and society. He was just the opposite. Men hated him and rejected anything he said and taught. Despite the many people who followed him, there were more people who did not believe in him. He spoke to a certain group of people who followed and gathered around him, and he often traveled from place to place not remaining in any particular city or town for an extended amount of time.

It goes on to say; “a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.” There is not much documented about Jesus’ rejoicing and dancing in the spirit, he was serious about his father’s business and stayed focused on his mission. He attended a wedding and many times stopped at people’s houses to dine or heal their family members, so he was not a popular figure among the world, but only them who believed in him and sought for his presence.

Jesus did not have hundreds of friends but had a small circle of followers who were his disciples. He was acquainted with grief and sorrow because he cared so much more about the people more than himself, and he lived daily to bring peace and healing to others. Many people were jealous of him and did not like him because of who he was and because he did not project himself as the other leaders in the synagogue did, as

authoritative figures, prosperous or successful, nor did he live his life as such. In fact, people would avoid him when they saw him coming because they did not want to be associated with such a lowly, unpopular person.

Verse 4 reads: “Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.” Even though Jesus cared so much for the people as he does us now and our own sins, many still did not appreciate what he was doing for them. But because of his humbleness and lowliness, people rather considered him cursed, rejected or ignored of God. He was not a part of the culture they were used to, so they felt that God was not with Jesus because he did not have the things other church leaders had and did not practice religion and the traditions as the others did.

Verse 5 and 6 testify to the things Jesus suffered for us all as he was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities. He learned life the hard way being chastised for our sins and taking the stripes so we can be healed. We as believers must remember to pray this prayer when we need healing and deliverance from certain sins. Our sins are forgiven because he suffered for us and for the sins of the world. If we sin, we must go to him and ask for forgiveness and not return to our sins. “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” St. John 1:9.

Verse 7 says, “He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth:” Jesus did not live in the world on the side of the oppressor; he lived in the world of the oppressed. He felt the affliction of the oppressed like many people during those times (and today), who spoke against the wrongs of authority and who sought for relief and peace. Jesus would identify most with the oppressed of today instead of the rich, famous and prosperous.

“...he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb...He was taken from prison and from judgment:” Verse 7, 8. Jesus was not given a fair trial. He was imprisoned and judged based on accusations from false witnesses, but he did not complain or open his mouth. By doing nothing, he was proving the injustice of the world, so they had no excuse when the judgment of God was come. Like many people today under the government rule of injustice, Jesus faced his fate without a justifiable rebuttal that would be recognized by the courts. “...and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.”

Like many people today, Jesus was considered a misfit and a menace to society. His citizenship was revoked, and he was cut off from the privileges of society according to

the cultural standards of that day. In many ways, Jesus was persecuted simply for being born the person he was and the things he taught.

Verse 9 reads; “And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.” He died as a criminal and like the wicked of society and he died without money or riches but shared a grave with the rich who also sinned against society. He did not commit acts of violence or fight back against the courts of injustice and neither did he lie to get himself out of his situation or to cover for who he was. On the contrary, Jesus died with all his dignity and integrity, and as a preacher of truth and justice.

The New Testament Ministry

During his life and ministry, Jesus walked the land of Galilee, Jerusalem and Judea preaching the gospel of peace, love, and righteousness. Though he was anointed by God in the spirit of humility, he was also anointed with authority, truth, and power. He taught the people with love and understanding, and he did not charge money for his sermons or gatherings, and he did not have to con anyone to attend. He did not sell his teachings as books, nor did he sell holy water, scarves or cups that he owned. When he was not preaching the word of the Kingdom, he was healing people of sickness and disease by calling on their faith in God.

Though Jesus was gentle and merciful toward the crowds of people, he spoke with more authority and conviction toward the leaders of the churches and synagogues. In St. Matthew 23:2, 3 he says; “The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.” He warned the people to do what the Bible says do, but do not do what the leaders were doing because they were not practicing what they actually preached, and they were misrepresenting God in the scriptures.

He often called the leaders hypocrites, serpents, and a generation of vipers. In verse 25 he says, “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess.” Jesus taught the people that the church leaders looked like leaders but they were in fact, full of deception and crookedness, seeking after riches and wealth and to increase their profitability at the expense of the poor.

As a result, the leaders accused Jesus of heresy and sedition and even accused him of making himself equal with God, which caused them to bring him before King Herod for a trial so he could be prosecuted and put to death. His disciples tried to convince Jesus to fight against the leaders and the soldiers of the Roman army, but Jesus refused and

told them; “Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword,” St. Matthew 26:52, thus he taught his disciples nonviolence against a violent and aggressive government.

In many of his sermons and parables he taught the people to be humble, content with their wages and to not seek after riches and wealth. He did not encourage people on prosperity and financial growth. He did not blame the poor for being poor but taught them the truth of inequality, oppression and injustice, as he spoke against the self-righteous, rich men and unfair rulers of society. He taught the people to treat their neighbors fairly and to remember the poor and the sick, and the widows and fatherless children. He did not teach survival of the fittest, self-centeredness or every man for himself, but he taught community, and love toward your neighbors and toward strangers.

Most importantly, Jesus never taught that there were one race or nation of people better than any others or that one nation should serve another as slaves and servants. This concept is a lie created by a people who desire superiority over other people for the sake of greed and power. It is not condoned by Jesus and was never ordained by God as an institution considered normal by nature.

The person of Jesus’ character and earthly ministry was a man who completely exposed the lies and hypocrisy of those who called themselves religious leaders and political thinkers. He had no need of a weapon to make his point, nor did he need millions of dollars, he simply told the truth as it were written from the prophets of old in things pertaining to God. He was a man after God’s own heart so he could relate to the average person.

Jesus identified with the lowest of the people in the cities and came to them as a deliverer and savior. People needed deliverance from cruel and wicked men and nations who oppressed, afflicted, and persecuted the poor and weak of the world. Those who believed in the words and powers of Christ were and are therefore delivered from the oppressor through a lifestyle that teaches them to endure and overcome the evils of the world and fight against spiritual wickedness in high places.

He attracted the poor, the working, the sick, the homeless and all those who were oppressed by the rich. He was an outcast of normal society because he told truths that the religious church leaders were not telling the people and were misinterpreting from the Testament of the Law. They hated him for that and threw him out of the synagogues and the churches. So no, he did not attend church regularly except when he went in and read the scripture of Isaiah and when he went in and overturned their tables of capital and to undermine the teachings of the Priest.

He did not tell people to submit to masters who brutalized them or who oppressed them for their wages. He never told anyone that enslaving a certain race of people was ok. He taught liberty, not bondage and he taught love, not hate. He taught trust and honesty, not doubt and deception. Jesus was a teacher of the truth for humanity, not against humanity. Nor did he need a caravan of wagons to escort him around the world because he knew that his words of truth were powerful enough to travel and carry on through generations.

Jesus understood men's hearts and how cruel they could be. He spoke against the rich and supported the poor; and no, he did not suggest that people live in poverty on purpose; he knew that rich men would create a poor class and he told the poor how to resist the temptations of wealth and to appreciate their portion from God. He did not invent an imaginary place called heaven so that people would submit to evil men; that is a lie. He taught that if you practiced evil, evil would surely find you. He taught that his kingdom was at hand in the spiritual realm, and many can find it if only they denounced evil, otherwise, they would live in their own personal hell here in the world.

He teaches that the opposite of evil is good and that good has rewards of its own kind. If some people have not experienced those rewards, then they should check their own lives for evil. He teaches that you do not have to live under the laws and oppression of mankind because God has His own set of laws and if you live by them, you will be unbounded by man's laws, oppression, and judgment. "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." Galatians 5:1.

If a person cannot understand the message of Jesus Christ and His teachings, they have been deceived by the very evil that wants them to hate God, Jesus, and the church. "While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage." 2 Peter 2:19.

Jesus walked the streets and lived life among the people and taught them about God, not from the church pulpit. The church leaders hated it so much they complained to the Roman Empire that this man was treasonous. The Roman Empire had a trial and convicted Jesus and turned him back over to the church leaders. They condemned him, beat him, and afterward crucified him. He never opened his mouth because who was he as one man to challenge the ruling authorities? He was outnumbered by society, and many had turned their backs on him. However, he was brave enough to stand in God's will and take the persecution; all for the sake those who would believe in him for generations afterward.

Those who speak against oppression, deception, false doctrine and false gods, cultural superiority and anything that is against the purpose and will of God the creator of

humanity, carry His message. And those who teach against him teach against all that he stood for. Love is power; hate and lies are evil and are weak against the authority and power of God and his word.

The way a believer is to attain these traits and characteristics of Jesus is to allow the Holy Ghost to bring forth fruit in the soul, mind, and heart. They must submit their earthly, fleshly bodies to the spirit and the will of God and learn to crucify the lust and affections of the flesh. “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.” Galatians 5:22, 23.

Church leaders must teach believers, new and old, to bring forth fruit. They must teach them to be like Christ and walk in the spirit of love toward others in the church, and in the world. If a believer does not bring forth fruit, they will always walk in the lust of the flesh. Jesus is the only perfect one and we all, as Christian, seek to be perfected someday.

Chapter Two

Before and After Salvation, How to Prepare and What to Expect

It is no coincidence that a person begins to have a desire to know God and to change their life in the direction of salvation. The will to change is not fully the choice of the person, but a subtle pull from God himself. The scripture says: “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.” St. John 6:44.

Circumstances of life often drive a person to seek after change or a higher level of knowing, and answers to questions they have. This is the conscience at work. A person’s conscience is the presence of God within all men and works subconsciously to find purpose and to separate the bad from the good in life. Often times, people come to a point in their life when they realize the lifestyle they live is not right; but destructive to themselves, harms others, and leading them deeper to a point of no return. This is the beginning of the pull to God.

Nevertheless, many people resist the pull from God and seek satisfaction and answers by other means, such as drugs, continuous unsuccessful relationships, or sources of knowledge that attempt to denounce the supernatural and give answers on a more practical, scientific, or logical level. Others look to various religions for deliverance, wandering here and there seeking truth, purpose and relevance. Many people go years in these directions and never find the answers and end up subconsciously unfulfilled. Yet, the nagging feeling remains to find redemption.

This would be the best time to turn to God, the Bible and the salvation of Jesus Christ. Unfortunately, negative stereotypes and misinformation have tainted Christianity and people simply reject its teachings altogether without giving it a chance. They are constantly bombarded with arguments against God, religion, the Bible and Christ by naysayers and agnostics who try to logically defeat all the above concepts. It can seem impossible to navigate through all the negativity without direction. Nevertheless, the power of God can penetrate these obstacles and still draw a person to him.

God often uses one of his children to help draw another soul. People enter our lives almost on a daily bases, or sometimes that someone has been a part of a person’s life all along. It is never the will of the person or person’s that make the change, but the power of God. Basically, people do not have to put forth any efforts to know God or to become saved. They simply have to realize that something is changing in their lives and pushing them in a certain direction.

The draw of the gospel is not a fleshly journey that needs the person's physical will to complete; God begins with the conscience of the mind and works on the heart. The person does not have to prepare themselves in the flesh to meet God; they do not have to clean themselves up before they come to the Lord or go to church. They simply have to acknowledge that something different is happening and they are being driven by an unseen force.

To prove that self-will is not required to go to God, we see people change their lifestyles all the time without going to God. They quit drinking, sleeping around, doing drugs and other worldly habits on their own, so controlling the flesh is apparently not a requirement for coming to God. It is always the conscience and the heart that directs them to know more about God. They may feel different about the people they hang around or about a place they frequent or an activity they are involved in. They may feel different about their lives and the direction it is going and they have a true desire for change, and begin to search for that release. This is when God introduces someone, one of his children, into their lives.

The witness that God has placed in their lives becomes a regular. The person begins to listen and hear the Words of God and see the reality of true salvation working through their witness and into their own lives. Their faith grows as they listen and watch and they ask more questions and read the Bible more, which increases their faith and belief. "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Romans 10:17. The word and the Spirit starts to operate in their lives the more the person understands and accepts what is happening.

In addition to their belief in God, submission to the Word and will of God is required before they can come closer. This is the act of God drawing them closer. Once the person can see and understand that they are being drawn by God, they have a direct path by the witness or witnesses placed in their life. The witness can then explain what steps are necessary to enter into the Kingdom of God; and God is now waiting on them to ask to enter. Asking is the only thing a person must do to enter into salvation. What are they asking for? The Holy Ghost and becoming Born Again.

"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God... Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." St. John 3:3, 5. From this point, the person will be water baptized and afterward seek for the gift of the Holy Ghost. All it takes to receive the spirit is the faith that it is real and that it is a promise from God. Other than water baptism (which is a part of the new birth), no other physical effort is required of the person except faith. All else comes from God as he fulfills his draw of that person.

Once the person is born again, many of the physical yokes of sin, bad habits, and lifestyles will fall off the person without any effort on their part. The Spirit takes them away. The Spirit then illuminates the believers mind and they enter into another realm of reality. They can see that God was right there in their lives all the time. They can hear his voice and recognize the things he does and have done in their lives and how they reached the point of salvation. Many questions are answered from the beginning, if asked.

However, sometimes there are leftover yokes, burdens, and even relationships in the believer's life that take prayer to undo. But the ones that were holding the believer back most are the ones taken from the start. Not being delivered from all yokes and burdens does not disqualify the believer from being saved in the end, but requires them to seek further deliverance through trials of faith, prayer, fasting, and fellowship with others. It is all part of walking the walk of the gospel.

Never allow any preacher or professed teacher of the gospel to deceive with the false doctrine that everyone is perfect in the flesh or mind after they receive the Holy Ghost. This is a lie. The flesh is constantly at war with the Spirit after salvation, the difference is it is not as difficult to release the sins of the flesh as it was before salvation. Salvation is a continuous walk to grow in righteousness, faith, and the truth of the gospel and of life and to being forth fruit of the Spirit.

“For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.” Romans 7:18. The Holy Spirit is there to help in doing away with left over yokes of the flesh and any that attempt to overtake the believer after salvation. It is a constant battle between the flesh and the Spirit. “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” Romans 8:1.

The key to both, coming to God and growing in God, is having faith. Believing in the Word and his promises through the Holy Ghost. It also requires faith in the power of the Spirit and not in the word only. Many false teachers lack belief in the power and rely wholly on the word. This is not good doctrine. “For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance;” 1 Thessalonians 1:5. Trust in God and do not resist his will to draw closer to him.

Hell After Salvation: The Doctrine of Spiritual Suicide

There is a doctrinal split among preachers and pastors throughout Christianity on whether a person can lose their salvation or not after being born again, or the “once

saved, always saved or not” theory. This topic is one that requires rightly dividing the Word of truth, solid biblical understanding, and revelation of the Spirit.

There are scriptures that point to both theories, however, but is not contradictory and is left to the faith of the believer. For instance, Jesus says in St. John 10:27, 28 reads: “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 any man pluck them out of my hand.”

This passage proclaims that followers of Christ have eternal life and shall never parish and no one, not even the devil, can take them away from Christ. Another passage in 1 John 2:24, 25 says: “Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father. And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life.”

This passage promises salvation to the believer as long as their faith in Christ and God is in them, they have eternal life. We know that faith saves us, not good deeds or the works of the Law. “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.” Romans 8:2.

The difference is in the power of faith and the Spirit of life that saves a person. We know that we must be born again to enter into the Kingdom of God, and if we are born again, the only way we can lose salvation is to die under the sin of the law. “For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.” Romans 8:6.

It all comes down to whether we walk in the flesh or walk in the Spirit by faith as to whether we will die without God. If people do not have the Spirit, then they naturally walk in the flesh. Likewise, if a believer allows the flesh to control their walk in Christ, they quench the Spirit under grace, and the Spirit dies under the law of sin.

So, the question comes to scriptures in the Word that imply being lost after salvation. There are many preachers that teach that some scriptures are proof that a person can be born again and still lose their salvation and go to hell.

However, staying true to the spirit of man’s knowledge, no one on this earth can honestly say whether a person is going to hell or not. Thus, we are basically left with God’s word and our own measure of faith that we are given to understand this issue.

One such scripture reads: “For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.” Hebrews 6:4-6.

Another teaches from the book of 1 Thessalonians 2:3, which says: “Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;”

Both passages speak of a “falling away,” of believers which would denote that they have lost their salvation and are hell bound. Yet, neither scripture actually say the believer is going to hell. In Hebrews, it says that “it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance.” However, we also know that “The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.” St Luke 18:27. Jesus replied with this answer after it was asked of his followers, “Who then can be saved?”

Again, in Hebrews 10:26, 27 it talks about people who willfully sin and it reads: “For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.”

Notice that the scripture never says they who sin willfully are going to hell, but it says there are no more sacrifice for sins and they are in danger of the judgement. God forbid that anyone should continue in sin simply because they are under grace, if the believer has the Spirit, they need to walk in the Spirit.

Nevertheless, we struggle daily with sin in the flesh, especially newborn babes in Christ, and we seek for the Lord to cleanse us of our sins. “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” 1 John 2:9. “All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.” 1 John 5:17.

However, once we are delivered and cleansed of our sins we should not return to those same sins. This is the same as the Israelites returning to Egypt once God delivered them. Or Lot’s wife turning back and looking at Sodom and Gomorrah after God destroyed them, she turned into a pillar of salt. Genesis 19:26.

One of the more misinterpreted scriptures that preachers use to warn believers of losing their salvation comes from the book of Revelation 3:1-6 where the Lord is talking to the church of Sardis. He tells them he has not found their works perfect before God. “...that thou has a name that thou livest, and art dead.” Verse 1.

“He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.” Verse 5. God warns them that they needed to strengthen the things that remain because even though they were living, they were dead. How can that be?

They were dead because they had forgot how they had received and heard and had not repented. They were walking in the flesh so they were alive, but they had forsook the Spirit, which made them dead in the spirit. If they did not repent, God said he would remove their names from the book of life. Apparently, when a believer willingly cast off the spirit, they kill themselves.

In other words, it is spiritual suicide to return to the world of sin and lust of the flesh after you have received the gift of the Holy Ghost. A person would have to completely reject God and the Holy Spirit even after they have received it, much like the Israelites did and Lot's wife. This would be a consciousness effort to leave God on the part of the believer.

We know of one other follower of Christ that consciously left Christ and crucified him putting him to an open shame, and that was Judas, the son of perdition. "While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled." St. John 17:12.

The sons of perdition are those who betray the word and Spirit of Christ. They are before ordained for this falling away and betrayal. They are those who fall away and walk in the flesh and lust of the world. They love the world and the rewards of the world and never bring any fruit to perfection They were never saved but ordained to condemnation.

"Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us." 1 John 2:18, 19.

A true believer must bring forth good fruit. "Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire." St. Matthew 7:19. If a believer does not bring forth fruit, that means they are fulfilling the lust of the flesh. "and the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful." St. Mark 4:19.

Again, no man can or should ever tell a believer that they can go to hell after they have received the gift of the Holy Ghost. The above warnings are sufficient by explaining to them the importance of walking in the spirit and bringing forth good fruit. Some people may die not having brought forth all fruit to perfection. Some bring forth 30, some 60, some a hundredfold of fruit.

"But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold,

some sixty, some thirty.” St. Matthew 13:23. If the believer can only bring forth thirtyfold fruit, it stands to reason that the other seventyfold of that believer is still in the flesh. This does not mean they are going to hell. It means they died before coming to perfection and God will perfect them when it is in His time.

“Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand.” Romans 14:1. God has mercy on whom he will.

Pastors should warn believers of the misery that comes with walking in the flesh and quenching the Spirit, yes, but condemning believers to hell when they have no real knowledge of what God’s plan is, is presumptuous and a sin within itself. “If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death.” Verse 16.

Finally, it is of faith that a believer walks in salvation according to the Spirit. If they walk in the flesh, they will suffer the consequences of the flesh in this life but if they walk in the spirit, they will grow and bring forth more fruit. Faith is the key. Believe in the promises of God and the believer will die and answer to God according to his faith. No one should live in fear.

“...for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.” Romans 14:23.

Chapter Three

Spiritual Liberty: The Meat of Gospel Maturity

There are levels of growth in the gospel like there are grade levels in school and maturity levels in life as a person grows up. The Bible mentions two basic levels in scripture, but there are steps in between these levels that the believer must take as he grows in the gospel of Christ. And only the believer, and their pastor if he is paying attention, knows when they have transitioned from one level to another.

The first level the Bible mentions is being a babe in Christ that feeds off the milk of the Word. These are newly born-again believers who have received the gift of the Holy Ghost and are ready to begin their life in Christ. Like babies, they need milk to grow, which is the Word. "...as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:" 1 Peter 2:2.

The second level is the meat level. Believers are weaned off the milk and begin eating solid foods of the Word, such as meats. "For everyone that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." Hebrews 5:13, 14.

However, there are steps in between to get the believer from milk to the meats that is not particularly mentioned as a level in the Bible but is revealed to believers through the Spirit as they grow and mature in the gospel. This level is also a food group called fruit. The fruit of the Spirit, which are love, joy, peace, longsuffering etc., are needed to make the transition naturally.

Walking with God

Immediately after a person receives the Holy Ghost, they learn to walk with God. This is a step in the first stages of salvation. This step is revealed to the believer when they realize that God is working in their life every day. He is walking with them daily. They see God doing small things in their life each day such as viewing people close to them in a different light they had never seen, or maybe realizing that the job they work is not the right one for them, or some people in their lives are only there to do them harm.

Also, during this initial phase believers may have dreams and visions of what is to come in their lives, or prophecies about other people in their lives. Some may realize that they

have been given a spiritual gift by the Spirit and they want to learn to use the gift. Many dive headfirst into the Word and drink it down by the chapter or book, fascinated by the revelations they are seeing and comprehending. There are revelations about life, nature, and people unfolding every day.

This is a wonderful step to be on but to make it pass this step, the believer must be sincere about their salvation. They have to want to grow and to know God more and how to use the Holy Spirit in their lives. Most believers love this step right away because they can feel the love of God in their hearts and minds after they have received the Spirit; so, they continue the walk.

“But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.” Luke 8:15.

But this is also a step where some believers are attack right away by the devil and the word is taken out of their hearts. They become discouraged, frustrated, or doubtful about what they have just experienced. Many friends and family members talk negatively about them and the gospel and the believer become unfruitful and disbelieving. But they can always recover at any point in their lives if they want.

“When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart.” Matthew 13:19-23.

The Fruit Ministry

The reason fruit is revealed as a transitional level is because a believer must grow these fruits within their soul by trials and tribulations in their life, which would strengthen them against the lust of the flesh, attacks from the devil, and for them to understand the difference between good and evil, as it says in Hebrews 5:13.

The Word and the Spirit together along with fasting and prayer helps the believer grow to maturity during the trails in their life. As they begin to wean off the milk and start eating the fruit or experiencing the fruit ministry over the years and as the seasons change, they can handle more and more of the meat of the gospel, which means the Spirit begins to reveal mysteries, hidden wisdom and deeper things of God.

“But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:... But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.” 1 Corinthians 2:7,10.

There is also a gradual succession in the fruit ministry that develops the believer's character like there is a succession in a math course, for example, a student needs to master arithmetic before they can understand multiplication and understand multiplication before algebra.

“And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.”
2 Peter 1:5-9

Each step in the levels is gradual and are given to each believer by God in portions that they can handle. It may take some believers longer than others to walk through the steps and graduate from one level to another. That depends on how well the believer handles the trials in their life. If they fail a trial, that trial will show up again in the following season until the believer has perfected the fruit meant to develop them.

For example, some of the fruits of the Spirit are these: “love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance:” Galatians 5:22,23. But there are others such as virtue, hope, and patience. Each of these fruit have a fleshly adversary that wars against the growth of the believer, such as hate, which wars against love; despair, which wars against joy, and pride, which wars against meekness.

As the believer walks through the gospel, they must endure trials of life that attempt to replace these adversarial lusts with fruit of the spirit. This may take time and seasons as long as a few months to many years depending on the initial character and willingness of the believer. If the believer was already a patient person while living in the world, it would not take long to establish godly patience in the person. But if the person has had a problem with patience in their life and was anxious and ill-tempered, this transition could take longer. God will make them wait for things a lot longer than normal until they understand why they needed the patience.

“And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.” Romans 5:3-5.

Believers should learn to be thankful for the tribulations in life because they are there to enhance their faith and strengthen their character. Many believers fall away during times of tribulations because they cannot handle the pressure, the persecution, or

warfare against certain people in their lives or evil forces meant to distract and frustrate them. But if they understand that tribulations help, they can endure longer, which perfects hope.

Family members and friends will come against them; they will be lied on, betrayed, emotionally hurt, maybe fired from a job for no real reason, lose a car or home or some other material things they own or value. They may discover truths they never knew about themselves and family members or friends; or may feel threatened or pressured by enemies, neighbors, and even authority figures. But all these things are meant to change the dynamic of their lives so God can put them in a better place around different people. And as stated earlier, this may take time.

“But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.” 1 Peter 5:10.

Becoming Illuminated

Once the believer has learned through these experiences, they will begin to know that God can deliver them from any other trials that may come. “But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions;” Hebrews 10:32. After the believer has passed through a certain trial period, not only will the Lord place them into a better situation, but this is when the believer discovers their position or calling in the gospel and learn to use their gift for that calling.

Some believers are called to pastor, some are called to evangelize, some are called to teach, and others are called for various positions in the body of Christ, the church. “And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.” 1 Corinthians 12:5-7.

If the believer does not become illuminated, they may have to repeat a grade, or return to a step because their faith failed or they became impatience, frustrated or trapped by the devil and caught up in an old sin. Again, prayer and fasting can help in these situations and they should also return to the milk of the Word to gain more understanding. “For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.” Hebrews 5:12.

Meat of the Gospel

“And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season?” Luke 12:42

In order to perform correctly in the calling, the believer must be able to discern between what is good and what is evil, so they are not caught and trapped by the devil, and he destroy their work in the Lord. This is when believers begin to eat the meat of the gospel. Some eat small portions of meat, depending on the level of their calling, and some eat greater portions. There is a difference in portions of the meat and the level of spiritual maturity.

“For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs.” Romans 14:2. Because meat comes in levels of revelations, mysteries, and hidden wisdom, some believers can handle more than others because their faith is stronger than others. But those who get more meat than others cannot use that meat against those who do not have a higher level of faith and understanding. This causes believers to judge their brothers unjustly and is sinful behavior.

“But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died. Let not then your good be evil spoken of:” Romans 14:15,16.

Some believers become overwhelmed with the power of the Holy Ghost and have to be brought back down to the natural realm. This is because their faith tries to exceed the measure that God has given to them. Paul, for example, was brought down by God because he reached a level that was off limits to certain men. “And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.” 2 Corinthians 12:7. Too much meat can lead to arrogance.

Spiritual Liberty

Over time in a calling of the Lord, a believer reaches a level of spiritual liberty. Many people take longer to reach this level because they are lacking somewhere in the understanding of the Lord and the gospel. More prayer and fasting can get believers to this level. On this level, a believer will seem to partake in acts that other believers who are not on this level, would consider a sin, as revealed throughout Romans chapter 14.

Although according to the laws of liberty, their actions are not considered sins. “So, speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.” James 2:12. The laws of liberty are different from the law of the commandments. But this understanding can only come once a believer has reached spiritual maturity and are eating the meat of the gospel. They know and understand the difference between what is good and what is evil.

The bible also warned believers who are set at liberty to be careful using their liberty and not abuse it. “But take heed lest by any means this liberty of your's become a stumblingblock to them that are weak.” 1 Corinthians 8:9. Nevertheless, all believers are called unto liberty but only a few are able to appreciate it. In fact, the bible encourages us all as believers to reach the level of spiritual liberty. “Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.” Galatians 5:1.

Liberty comes with understanding how not to be taken again into bondage and old sins or give in to fleshly lust. Some believers outgrow temptations and can walk through a den of thieves or stand in the middle of a liquor store and not be tempted. They know how to go out and come back into the sheepfold and not be taken by the lust of the world or the pride of life. Eventually, they grow to bring forth many fruit unto perfection.

“But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.” Matthew 13:23.

As stated earlier, many believers will know when they have advanced to certain steps and levels of the gospel. It is revealed to them by the Holy Spirit. Their pastors also, if they are paying attention, know when they have advanced. Paul knew when Timothy was set at liberty and was ready for a new ministry. “Know ye that our brother Timothy is set at liberty; with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you.” Hebrews 13:23.

Conclusion

Growing in the gospel takes time, sometimes a lifetime to be perfected. No one is perfect right away and may succumb to temptations and maybe sin a sin which is not unto death. But the Lord has offered us all as believers an opportunity to repent if we do sin. But we have to never return to those sins otherwise we are threatening our growth and may have to relive seasons over and over until we are perfected in one area.

Faith is the key to each step and levels in the gospel. Our faith first brings us to the Lord when we first believe in him and the Holy Ghost. From there our faith is increased

through trials and tribulations, ministries that we work for the Lord and gifts of the Spirit that we perfect for the edifying of the body of Christ and others.

The ultimate gift for us all is love, the love of God through the Holy Ghost. This love in our hearts will help us move through the steps much easier because love wipes away many lusts of the flesh and any evil spirits and illnesses that have plagued us in our lives. It helps us develop better relationships with our brethren and our neighbors and help us win battles against our enemies. “He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.” 1 John 4:8.

Chapter Four

The Holy Ghost makes Men, Husbands, and Fathers

There is a difference between being a man of the world and a man of God. There is also a difference between being a Christian man and a Holy Spirit-filled man. Men of the world play by the rules of the world, good or bad. Christian men play by the rules of the Bible, but not all Christian men are of God.

The objective of most men expected by society, is to work hard to raise and protect his family, whether they are self-proclaimed Christians or not, or any religion for that matter. All men are vulnerable to the seductions of the world, to the pride of life and to the lust of the flesh. But not all men can withstand either or all of those tests of manhood.

The flesh is weak to many things the world has to offer, such as the lure of money, the temptress of lust, and the seduction of power. However, the Holy Spirit assist in overcoming temptation and gives victory over the flesh. It also molds a man into what God requires a man to be, not what the world makes of a man. Therefore, it is essential that men receive the gift of the Holy Ghost to meet the standards of God where it pertains to being a man, a husband and a father.

A Spirit-filled man of God who has a spouse does not allow the things of the world to disrupt his responsibility to his family, but only concerns himself with the things of the world to the point of providing for and protecting his family as a man, husband and father. "...but he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife." 1 Corinthians 7:33. He learns – though the Holy Ghost – how to overcome the things of the world. "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." St. John 16:33.

The temptations of the world consist of the same things the devil offered Jesus in his moment of weakness during his fast, such as material things, power and prestige, idolatry of things and others over God, and the transgression of seeking authority over God. If a man becomes distracted by the ideologies and material lust of the world, this obsession will become a hinderance in his life because he is consumed with things not of the Spirit, but of the flesh.

Jesus condemned the lifestyle of the scribes and Pharisees because they sought for power and prestige, upheld traditions over true worship and professed to love God but did none of the things has asked of them. Men today seek the same through the prestige

of secular degrees, positions of worldly status, increasing riches, and praises of popular culture. This is all considered the pride of life. No real man of God is concerned with these things and learns to live for God without either. Unfortunately, too many men today measure their success in God by all of the above.

If any man has the Holy Ghost and allows these corruptions to interfere with his relationship with God, the power of the Spirit is diminished and the lust of the flesh is increased. “For when I shall have brought them into the land which I swear unto their fathers, that floweth with milk and honey; and they shall have eaten and filled themselves, and waxen fat; then will they turn unto other gods, and serve them, and provoke me, and break my covenant.” Deuteronomy 31:20.

God concludes this passage by proclaiming that these type men will have many evils and troubles come upon them. Men of God are to be humble and inconspicuous while doing God’s work. They are to focus on God’s work and not become an icon in the world, or loved by the world. Men of God know how to remain pure to God and unaffected by the evils of the world and to recognize when temptation is trying to lure them away. They run from these things, not to them.

In being a husband, men of God are as Christ is to the church. “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;” Ephesians 5:25. Their life is devoted to making sure the wife is taken care of, loved, protected from the world and doing what God has for her to do. They do not subscribe to the false relationship ideologies of the world or break this covenant for anyone else. The man does not hold back love, knowledge, or money from his wife, have separate bank accounts, or use any his and hers or mines and your ideology. As Christ gives his all to the church, so does the husband to the wife.

As one flesh, the husband cannot do anything outside of the will of God because he knows that she will suffer in the flesh as well. He understands that they have to both take care of themselves in manners of health, mental, and spiritual needs. The man must at all times stay in the Spirit of God so he receives instruction from the Lord about their life and its direction. He has to encourage the wife and help increase her faith and trust in the Lord and learn to hear her when the Spirit speaks through her. He must deal with her according to her knowledge, on her level, not on his own.

He must maintain her trust and never leave doubts in her minds as to his faithfulness to her. He cannot allow her to think or believe that he would ever leave her, cheat on or betray her. He must respect her work as a wife and mother and her work in the Lord. He must understand what God has for her and help her accomplish God’s work, because he can never take lordship over her against God’s will. Studying the bible between

themselves is a must so they can both agree on and understand God's word. They should never have conflicting opinions and beliefs about God's word on any issue in life.

He learns the concept of showing passion and compassion toward his wife; and he appreciates the natural progression of intimacy throughout their life and that it is always respectable and a bond of growth between him and her over time and not to be used as a weapon of grievance, manipulation or power in their marriage. He understands the power of communication between them and how to incorporate the Holy Ghost into any disagreements they may have so they can both come away in peace.

As a father, the man of God has to learn patience. He must understand that there is a level of growth in children and he has to seek understanding of that growth. He cannot browbeat, bully, or use knowledge above a child's understanding for correction, direction or character building. He must be led by the Spirit when instructing children; for children are a blessing from God and precious in his sight. He and the wife also, must agree on this issue as well and have similar beliefs and understanding of raising children. They cannot go against each other because this will cause confusion in the children.

As a father, the man must search the scriptures for knowledge of raising a child the same as Christ raises a babe in him. He must know when to use the correct amount of discipline in every situation. He must understand the child's world around them such as school, friendships, authority figures, and entertainment. The father must know the right amount of exposure the child should have to the world and how to prepare the child's mind for what the world has to offer, whether good or bad. The father has to relate to the child through the child's eyes and not be brazen and harsh in discipline.

He has to trust in his wife to nurture the children as he provides direction to them. He cannot always look to the world for solutions on raising his children but must look to the scriptures and the Spirit for guidance. As they grow, the father has to know when to let them go and learn for themselves and also keep the spiritual connection between them when they are apart, and to understand when the child needs him or when the child needs the mother instead. The father must understand that some children may drift away farther than others from the direction before them but have trust in God that they will return in God's time. Understanding and patience is the key.

They have to understand that they are a glory to their children and their children look to the father's example when the father is not around. "Fathers are a glory to their children." Proverbs 17:6. Children draw from the past teachings and words of the father when they are in the world by themselves, thus the father has to always give good knowledge, wisdom and direction to the child while they are young and growing. He must provide positive examples of how to treat people well, take care of themselves, and

understand what things are good for them in the world and what things are not, and pray they stay on the right path.

They can never teach children dishonesty, crookedness, or ways around the system, but honesty and to always tell the truth and the benefits of both. Buy them bibles to take out into the world with them. Remind them to pray every day. Teach them to help others, stay close to one another, and avoid conflict with others but to always seek peace. Teach them to be clean, to eat healthy, and keep a job or make honest money in order to take care of themselves because nobody else will. Be an example to them by respecting them, their friends, their mother, and each other if they have siblings. Teach them that family is important and too many friends lead to trouble.

The Holy Ghost teaches men to be men of God and not men of the world. If a man does not have the Holy Ghost, he cannot ever be a man of God. A man of God does not fear death like men of the world do. In fact, a man of God looks forward to death. “For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain... For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you.” Philippians 1:21-25. Any threats of death from the world means nothing to a true man of God.

Therefore, a man of God does not need a gun or to live in fear. He does not need to fight the war with carnal devices, because he trusts in God that he will be protected from the evils of the world: “Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.” St Luke 10:19. With this mind, a man of God cannot be bought or bullied by the world but men of the world are always compromised by fear and threats. If a man of God has done nothing wrong and has a conscience clear of sin, he can trust that God will keep him from evil, and vice versa.

The Holy Ghost is a maker of men, husbands, and fathers. Many men who claim to be Christians do not have the Holy Ghost and merely have a form of godliness but deny the power of the Holy Ghost. They are vulnerable to the deceptions of the world and all the evil it offers, and are many times trapped in bondage by the world. Men of God are also vulnerable but are taught what to look out for when faced with temptation, and if they ever become trapped, they are freed of the stronghold and all yokes are broken, as long as they stay humble, in the Spirit, and true to God.

The Virtuous Woman and Natural Law of the Family

Society’s transformation of the family has negatively affected the roles of father’s, mothers, and children and their relationships toward one another along with their

God-given nature as a union. Rebuilding the family through natural law make stronger communities, and a better society.

Circumstances of society place women in the work force, but to work is the natural state of the man. God cursed man to till the ground and He cursed women to bare her child in sorrow. For women to attend to the duties of working is against God's natural plan. Working requires too much time away from the woman's natural purpose of nurturing the child.

This, in turn, creates a false characteristic in the woman that assumes a natural characteristic of the man, which is provider. Now, today, it is a social dishonor if a woman is not working. It is normal to see her with two kids and no husband, normal for her to be with no one at all, and becoming normal to see her with another woman, something society and the government forces upon humanity and that some churches have accepted.

Well, none of these things is normal by nature. They are consequences of a society gone astray. A society without a God conscience, one without a clear view of nature, and quickly denying its creator, and it trickles down to each individual in any given class of life.

With so many working women and millions of emotionally deprived children—not to mention the numerous amounts of weakened mental images of God [men] who have been robbed or bamboozled out of their natural state of provider, reduced to equal partners in responsibility—today's picture of the family looks like something from a nuclear polluted ocean.

It is scary to think that the traditional family, or even the natural purpose of God, is so easily replaced by His own creation. For a divorced or single mother to take a job because of the neglected responsibility of the man is understandable. This woman must provide for her child, but she should always seek the counsel of God. She should involve herself in a comfortable church home that will monitor her condition.

The fatherless and widows have always been a top priority with God so the leaders of the church should monitor the well-being of any fatherless and widowed family unit. The guidance and mentoring by church leaders would supplement the loss of the male role in her and her child's life.

But, instead of looking to the church for this supplement, women just assume not to need this supplement. And after the destruction of a commitment, and possibly two or three other disappointing tries at a relationship, women give up on the male figure altogether. This is one variable toward independence.

However, there is another persuasion of women coming along in society. They do not choose marriage and children—which is the natural curse of God on them—but they would rather go straight to college after high school and afterward pursue a career and once they establish their own foundation, they may seek out a family life.

By this time, the woman has become so self-sufficient that her husband (that she would choose, not God's choice for her) could never fulfill his role given to him by nature. She makes enough money to support both them and their children if necessary. He could stay home and raise the kids, and this mentality is becoming politically correct in society and in the church; a man who is sensitive enough to assume the role of the woman, and by today's standards, this is the new definition of a man. Moreover, it is sad to say that many men now believe this rendition of what he is supposed to be and many churches support this.

People would call the traditional ways of family living old-fashion. That is, man work, woman stay home and rear the children. Yet, this was the plan from the beginning. This is how each gender is equipped to perform in life.

However, the roles have reversed. Even children have added responsibilities, freedoms, and rights. They are taking care of themselves at younger ages and stripped of their childhood. To justify this default in child rearing, society accepts new scientific studies that show children are developing faster and can make decisions quicker because of new age technology.

In place of the mother, society has created learning centers that take children from early as six-weeks old so the mother can pursue a career. The times are faster so solutions are quicker and easier. Fast food replaces the home cooked meal just as day cares replace the mother figure. Child support laws replace the father's providing duties. Alimony and divorce laws replace love and marriage.

Money dictates who is in control, not only in the free-market, but also in the home, and many marriages breakup because of money problems. All this confusion because people refuse to accept the natural order of life; because they see nature as a threat to their own self-image, and the church is conforming to this image.

Men are just as much to blame in this societal mess as women. They are giving over their responsibilities to the woman. Wimps, one might say; lack of knowledge and respect for God's Word. Absence of the male role model in the home is more frequent, thus reducing the duties of the man's role. No longer passed down from generation to generation and because each generation adapts a newer and more liberal form of the family, the man's role loses its definition as time goes on.

Men in the far future will probably be full-blown women in their roles. The physical characteristics will be the same but the God-given mentalities will be feminine. The same goes for women. Eventually, the true nature of humanity will be only a joke and the church will not be able to revive it because the church laughs along with the world.

For sure, thousands of women do not want their lives this way. They would rather be with their children than on a job. Then there are women who have a husband that may be willing to provide for her, yet she chooses to work. They have been brainwashed by new age society. Blessed enough to have a man willing to provide for them (if that is so), the opportunity to stay home and rear their children with love and attention, yet they choose not to accept their role.

Their image and independence as a woman, or maybe financial troubles drive them from the home. In almost every situation of this sort, people will hear an excuse why the woman is working, such as needing extra money for the cost of high-priced private school choices. Yes, times are hard, the cost of living is higher than most wages, and a family without God in their plans will definitely be victims to society's role-reversal game.

Furthermore, the husbands who allow their wives to abandon her family have forgotten their places in nature, and their Creator. They too, are victims of society's illusions and preachers do nothing to remind them of their role.

To achieve the American dream today can be extremely stressful to a family. Expected to buy a home, have two cars and a comfortable bank account, and unless the man has a college degree making \$75,000 or more a year, the dream could become far-fetched. Statistics now show that women graduating from college have begun to exceed men. As stated earlier, eventually, women will be the providing forces in America, heading all the households.

This scenario is common even within the church, where women are the family's providing force. The reason is obvious; it is that church families must now work twice as hard as worldly ones to keep their tithing records and credit ratings up to date. The saying is, "it takes two to make it" but this saying is only an illusion planted by society.

If a family respects and practices God's plan for the family they would not live by this. If they understood their roles and abided by them, they would not need two incomes; neither would their children behave abnormally. Christians, especially, are confused; so entrenched in the prosperity movement set before their eyes that their families cannot matter anymore.

Many women feel cast down by society, and by men, and restrained to government dependency. Then, after their self-esteem is lost and their life is half over, the

government and the corporate world tells them that they do not need a man to make it; we (the government) will help in gaining a life among us.

Many women in this situation may turn to the church but the church is no better, it is just like society under government restraints, like the pastor who teaches the women in his congregation to start businesses and to be self-sufficient. This pattern destroys the family and in the mist of this indoctrinated thought process, the children see a picture of the man as the cause of their problems.

Singers write songs upholding the mother. Hollywood stereotype images of the father figure to disgrace, and the youth of America have adapted a violent demeanor. The traditional family, where the man provides for the wife and kids, and the woman stays home to raise them, is scarce in America. No matter how uncommon or eccentric this picture may be, it is still God's plan for them both, the male and the female.

If they both accept the role, a strange yet void-filling happiness captures them all. Love and morality would prevail over the material, self-centered illusions that tear our families apart. People could experience the happiness of love and morality if churches taught it.

The husband has the responsibility of supporting the family with the necessities of life and the wife is responsible for emotionally securing the family, building character in each of them. A woman's heart is equipped to care for her family in the way of comfort and assurance.

Love fuels her heart, which in turn permeates through to the souls and minds of the husband and children. This love empowers them to endure the outside forces of society, be it at work or school. If the devil attacks them while out there, they can find comfort in the arms of a loving wife and mother.

While the father instills integrity, responsibility, and discipline within the being of the family by example, the mother sprinkles in the ingredients of love, sensitivity, and kindness, which brings forth a family rich in character and morality, enabling them to contribute to society a concept begotten of God.

A woman of God should allow the natural affections of God to shape her inner beauty. This means empowering the soul with the love of God through constant prayer. Her outward appearance should be the least of her concerns, although reasonably modest. Any type of makeup used to enhance her outward appearance is only a mask to cover the insecurities of her womanhood.

Because of the standards of society, this is the only image of a woman that she knows. Lack of the knowledge of God's will for the woman in her role in life leaves many women

victims of society's illusions. Churchwomen assume that God accepts their outward beauty as a show of respect. They think that dressing up nice and decent wins extra approval of God, not realizing that this is only a standard of the world.

Looking decent and clean shows respect to oneself and others and is a personal desire. What God respects is a virtuous woman on the inside. "Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price" (1 Peter 3:3, 4).

One preacher, while he was broadcasting his radio program, made the tackiest remark probably ever made by a preacher. He was attempting to teach the congregation that the old, traditional way of worship is no longer necessary: where men wear suits and women wear dresses.

The reason he taught this was to convince the believers that there is a new church coming along, more liberal that allows new ideas, and he used the "God is doing a new thing" theory (Isaiah 43:19) to justify how he was about to alter the Scriptures. Nevertheless, he said to the congregation, and to the entire radio audience, "thank God for makeup."

The remark was irresponsible and vulgar because it insulted the women who wore makeup and possibly those who felt they needed it. Then he said "God said for women to adorn themselves," which is a scripture he paraphrased from in 1 Peter 3:3, the one above. The scripture in 1 Peter does not encourage women to wear makeup but discourages it, yet he twisted it to fit his teaching.

This is how the devil operates; he chooses words and takes them out of context to prove a lie. If any of the women or men in the congregation recognized this deception and was offended, they should have walked out. Not only was it false doctrine, but in bad taste.

In the case of women pastors, if a woman is supposed to be meek and quiet, (according to the above scripture) how can they, in good conscience, raise their voice in authority over a congregation of believers? And how can they find the time to lead a flock and assist their husbands in co-pastoring a church if their purpose is to raise the family?

"The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; that they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed" (Titus 2:3-5).

Older women in the church may have experience of life that can be shared as a testimony to others, but why are they not teaching the young women the things young women need to know as the Bible says? They are preaching to congregations of people and leading flocks because they assume that men have gone astray. Part of this is true. Men have gone astray by listening to the concepts of society.

They live up to the role that society has stereotyped them in, as negligent men and fathers, failures of being decent role models for our children. More women are assuming the roles of preachers, evangelist, and church leaders. They have incorporated society's ills and mistakes within the church world. Instead of concentrating on the younger women and their families, as they should, women are assuming the man's role.

Because of a neglect to teach the values of the traditional family to younger women, or even what the natural role of the woman is, young women feel they do not need a man and that the family is whatever, or whoever wants to be a part of it. They do not possess the affectionate qualities of the virtuous woman in Proverbs 31 because they are beginning to model themselves after the strong, independent woman image.

They are self-sufficient, authoritative, and equal to the male image of God. Taking on the responsibilities that come with rearing a child or children alone; too entangled with creating an impression of success to the world, women misunderstand what it really means to raise a child. In place of attention, comfort, and nurturing as attributes of rearing a child, they think that financially supporting them is being a good mother, or placing them in quality day cares, or sending them to expensive private schools is giving them a good life.

They believe that buying them whatever they want and feeding them whatever they want and allowing them to make their own decisions at an early age gives the child an advantage in the world.

A father figure excluded from the picture of the family instills false notions of the man to the child. If the child is a girl, then she will grow to never trust a man or will be too naive to his advances and tactics of flattery. If the child is a boy, he will never know the true characteristics of a man; the responsibility or the discipline, and either he will have no respect for women or will be forever subservient in the presence of one.

Women of God are attending to the wrong matters and the men of God are falling to the intrusion. Men have weakened to the demands of women, to where women are assuming their roles. But we know that in these last days every evil under the sun will spring forth when given the slightest opportunity.

One reason for these evils, besides the love of money, is the misconception of God's purpose for the male and female gender roles. This new illusion created by society is

strong enough to take a stand inside the churches of God. It alters the true meaning of worship and complicates the answers to many questions.

The strength and happiness of a wife and mother comes from her fulfilling her place as a woman. If she has no spouse and does have a child, she should seek support and guidance from the church. If she has no children or spouse, and desires one, then she should wait on the Lord to espouse her to the right man.

A woman should never give up on human nature and God's plan for humanity, but trust in what she sees by nature. Any woman who knows she does not have a need for a companion should give her time to teaching younger women how to love their families and at no time should any woman lose faith in the male image of God because of past experiences or because of society, but continue to trust in His perfect plan.

The family is a natural union in life and protected under the laws of love. Women are the soul of our families and their warm hearts open locked doors in our emotions that permit our dreams to run free. The heart of the woman enhances the mind of a man. If that heart is pure and fashioned after a godly sort, then any man could exceed to the full potential of his God-given gifts.

The joy of a man's heart is his children, and children who possess a mountain of love will succeed in life without any added role from society. True, the woman deserves respect for her contributions to the world, but if she receives that respect for being an equal to the man, where will she get the respect for her true role as a female?

Different situations force women into various duties in life, and many times the situation may be unfair, but to resort to the theologies of society will only complicate the situation. The best remedy for a woman in an unfair position in life, who has experienced an emotional devastation by a bad relationship, would be to seek for God's comfort.

The Lord Jesus Christ is a protector of the fatherless and the widows even when the church has neglected them. He knows the trouble women are facing in these last times and it is no wonder so many of them are stronger than most men, nevertheless, a woman is still a woman. Powered by the nurturing of God, they can make or break a man's true essence.

If a woman truly wants a good man, she must be willing to supply that man with her strongest attribute, which is love. Being honest and open with natural affections may sometimes lead to heartbreak, but holding back could hinder a blessed opportunity at love. Trust in God's love.

Many women are selling themselves short by living up to sexual reflections of their societal portrayed character. They live up to expressing their beauty through the outward appearance instead of what they have naturally and this sends negative illusions to the egotistical minds of men who do not know themselves who they are. Women are as natural as the Earth.

If society could paint the Earth purple to cause it to doubt itself, they would. But that which is natural can always be known by what is underneath the surface of deception. Women are a lovely creation and always adorned by love from the Lord, but without knowing her purpose, a woman can never be the blessing she really is.

Churches that take on the roles of society and infiltrate the body of Christ with secular mentalities do nothing but distort the purpose of Christ and God. It may seem as though the church is doing the right thing because of all the members and financial success, but in general, the inside of the heart is not right with God. If there is no natural spirituality within the hearts of the believers who make up the church, then there is no real church, but an imitation of what is in the world.

The love of money is the root of all evil and the effects of it trickles down into the smallest areas of our lives, including the woman's hearts, the man's mind, and the child's behavior. When preachers teach anything contrary to what the Bible says, simply for the sake of their own lust, they are not worthy of the blessings of God, but of a reprobate mind.

Chapter Five

The Mystery of Marriage

The union of marriage is one of God's oldest and most sacred covenants for humanity and is recognized around the world in every country and culture, even throughout time. Though ceremonies and traditions differ around the world, the union of a man and woman for the purpose of procreation is an underlying natural law. From thence comes the family of fathers, mothers, and children from generation to generation.

There are various kinds of marriages such as arranged marriages, where a young woman is saved for a specific man (and vice versa); polygamous marriages, where either spouse can have more than one wife or husband; and monogamous marriages, where there is only one spouse dedicated to the other indefinitely. Most traditions of marriage are manmade as are the ceremonies and beliefs behind the marriage. But there is only one true marriage arrangement made by God Himself that has never changed or been tampered with by man's tradition and is naturally unbreakable.

Regardless of the culture, marriage is a basic of natural law and a conception of the creator for the purpose of developing families and communities and populating the earth with nations. The concept is explained in the book of Genesis and other religious text and traditions, however for the sake of understanding, this article will follow the teachings of the Holy Bible from the book of Genesis and beyond; though the foundation of natural law remains irrefutable. In other words, the main purpose of man and woman is to get married and have children; although there are other circumstances under God's natural law that a man or woman is set aside for other purposes. We will address that later.

Nevertheless, there are basically two kinds of marriages: manmade and God created. Manmade marriages are based on manmade principles, such as arrangement, convenience, security, physical appearance and value and other such human needs and desires. According to statistics from the United States, there is a 50 percent chance these marriages will end in divorce, domestic violence or worse because they have not the foundation of God or the spiritual fulfillment God requires. A God created marriage is founded in love, which is by nature, or administered from the Holy Ghost through one or both spouses.

Since God created man and woman, he understands what each individual man or woman needs and the kind of person that would complete them as one soul, and one flesh. This is a talent the men of humanity have yet to perfect. After God created the

man and the woman in His image, he then formed man from “the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life” Genesis 2:7. Afterward, God formed women from man and said “It is not good that man should be alone; I will make an help meet for him” 2:18.

Genesis 2:21-25 explains the process and lays the foundation for the principles of marriage.

21 And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof;

22 And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.

23 And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.

24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

25 And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

From the above passages, two of them hold a powerful social truth that answers many questions and addresses many misconceptions about the relationship between a husband and a wife. Verse 22 says that God “brought her unto the man.” Meaning, God will prepare a woman for a man and bring them together to meet. A woman should not be looking for a husband but should humble herself to God and allow him to prepare her to become a wife. A man, on the other hand, should seek a wife if that is his desire. “Whoso *findeth a wife findeth a good thing*, and obtaineth favour of the Lord” Proverbs 18:22.

Verse 24 are the marriage vows taken from the Bible and used in the traditional world, “Leaving the father and mother and cleaving onto his wife,” whereas the husband and the wife are expected to leave the intimate space of their mother and father and establish their own space and family life. A couple should always keep their relationship personal and not allow interference from family members, even the closes of family members. Nor should they allow friends to interfere, and they should always keep their children close to them in spirit and physically if possible.

Becoming one flesh as a creation of God means sharing spiritual and emotional bonds to the point of knowing what each other feel and need; what makes them happy, sad, angry and other such fruits. They deal with struggles together, pain, joy, trials and tribulations together and they both learn to overcome and grow from every experience which makes them both stronger as individuals and as a couple. It also helps them live a godly life as an example to their children so the children can grow with strong character. In addition, the couple are able grow together yet maintain separate lives for personal missions from God.

With a strong enough spiritual bond, the husband and wife can also share some physical connections with one another whereby they can sense when one is not feeling well, what is causing the troubles or ailments and what is needed to heal one another. From there they learn to take care of one another by understanding what each other needs in terms of nutrition, physical health and spiritual guidance. Again, this type of bond grows stronger through a God created marriage, one consummated through the spirit and direction of God. Genesis 3 reads:

16 Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

17 And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;

18 Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field;

19 In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

A God created marriage in a traditional world remains to be a natural life. In other words, the couple will have the same problems and situations as a couple of a traditional marriage would have in the world such as work and life balance, raising children and extended family issues. The difference there however, is that God has promised and upholds particular blessings in His marriage than a couple would have in the world.

God's couple are protected against many temptations of the world unlike the traditional couple.

God's couple is brought up under the standards of spiritual guidance and discipline from the Holy Ghost whereas the couple of the world are unprotected and at risk of falling into temptation more often than not. That is because the Holy Ghost keeps God's couple in a spiritual bubble as long as they do according to His will and walk according to His word, which is to love one another.

Does God Recognize Manmade Marriages?

Yes, according to the Law. But God does not recognize the marriage of law once a believer is saved or born again; they are freed from that law. Romans 7 4 reads: "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God." Those born again are new in Christ and are dead to the law so God then only recognizes His marriages as legitimate from that point on; although He is able to use manmade marriages to bring about a true marriage.

For instance, if a woman (or man) is married under tradition and afterward receives the gift of the Holy Ghost and are born again, that woman can stay with the traditional husband by chance she can bring him along into the new birth. If he wants to stay with her, she should not leave him, but if he does not want to come to God, the woman can leave him; she is no longer bound to that man. 1 Corinthians 7 reads:

13 And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him.

14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.

15 But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace.

In the above case, if either spouse in the marriage were never married before, this would be true, but if the husband in this case were married before, the woman should leave the marriage regardless if the husband wanted to stay or not because she would be considered an adulteress. The same goes for a man or husband. St. Matthew 19 reads:

9 And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.

Many people believe and teach that the above scripture gives an out to a spouse if the other commits fornication (or infidelity), which gives them the opportunity to divorce. Nevertheless, common sense says that a person cannot commit fornication if they are married, they can only commit adultery. 1 Corinthians 7 reads:

1 Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman.

2 Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.

So, what does the reference to fornication mean in Jesus' words? In the world of tradition when couples plan to get married, they become engaged first, and the couple is not supposed to come together (have sex) until they are married. But the world no longer practices abstinence before marriage. So, an engaged person who has sexual relations with someone other than their proposed spouse while they are engaged or espoused to be married, has committed fornication, therefore the other spouse can put them away or simply choose not to marry them. But the world has no true understanding of God created marriage so they have no provisions of divorce in that manner. In a God created marriage, however, the couple is not married until they come together, they are only espoused. A good example is given to us using the birth of Jesus Christ himself. St. Matthew 1 reads:

18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.

19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily.

20 But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.

Joseph was going to divorce Mary (put her away privily) because he thought she was unfaithful before they had come together (or married). Biblically, a God created marriage is not a marriage until the couple comes together or the husband knew his wife, such as mentioned in the scriptures below. Genesis 4 reads:

1 And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the Lord

St. Matthew 1:25 reads: “And *knew her* not till she had brought forth *her* firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS.”

1 Samuel 1:19, 20 reads: “And they rose up in the morning early, and worshipped before the Lord, and returned, and came to their house to Ramah: and Elkanah knew Hannah his wife; and the Lord remembered her...Wherefore it came to pass, when the time was come about after Hannah had conceived, that she bare a son, and called his name Samuel, saying, Because I have asked him of the Lord.”

There are also biblical terms such as laying with someone or coming in unto someone, but those terms often meant merely having sex whereas coming together and knowing her meant marriage consummation or procreation. Genesis 30 reads:

1 And when Rachel saw that she bare Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister; and said unto Jacob, Give me children, or else I die.

2 And Jacob's anger was kindled against Rachel: and he said, Am I in God's stead, who hath withheld from thee the fruit of the womb?

3 And she said, Behold my maid Bilhah, go in unto her; and she shall bear upon my knees, that I may also have children by her.

4 And she gave him Bilhah her handmaid to wife: and Jacob went in unto her.

5 And Bilhah conceived, and bare Jacob a son.

Judges 16:1 reads: “Then went Samson to Gaza, and saw there an harlot, and went in unto her.”

2 Samuel 13:14 reads: “Howbeit he would not hearken unto her voice: but, being stronger than she, forced her, and lay with her.”

So then one would ask, what about people who are having sex with multiple people, are they considered married? No. They are simply committing fornication by laying with multiple people. The difference is having the Holy Ghost and a promise of marriage. Having the Holy Ghost means being born again and all sins committed before receiving the Holy Ghost are forgiven. If a believer has the Holy Ghost and sleeps around without committing to anyone in particular, they are committing fornication. Therefore, they should remain abstinent until God has prepared someone for them. Holy Ghost filled believers can stay with their unsaved spouses as long as the unsaved spouse is happy to stay with them, they should not leave them.

If a couple meet and want to get married and they both have the Holy Ghost, they will promise each other and become espoused. They can remain espoused as long as they want until they come together, and once they do, they are considered married in the sight of God.

Holy ghost filled couples can also have a traditional marriage whereby they have a wedding ceremony and a honeymoon, although these things are not required by God, but only by man in order to keep records and documents for the couple. As stated earlier, couples can marry traditionally without having the Holy Ghost but if one does receive the Holy Ghost and the other does not, they should follow the passages of 1 Corinthians 7.

Single in the Lord

Some people are not ordained to marry. Some are kept aside for the purpose of the Lord and some choose to set themselves aside for the purpose of the Lord. St. Matthew 19 reads:

12 For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.

The scriptures encourage men and women to remain single so the Lord can use them to the fulness of His purpose. But the Bible says that if a person cannot contain themselves or their desires, they should marry. "For it is better to marry than to burn" 1 Corinthians 7:9.

Widows also, are encouraged to remain unmarried if their husband be dead, but if they choose to remarry, they should only marry in the Lord (someone who also has the Holy Ghost). This goes for men too who are widowers. But the Bible still encourages men who are single to remain single and serve the Lord instead. 1 Corinthians 7 reads:

29 But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none.

32 But I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord:

33 But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife.

Divorce

With these things said, divorce is not an option in God and marriage, only by death. If the marriage is based on God and His love through the Holy Ghost, the couple will not divorce because the spirit keeps them bound to one another. The scripture says that; "Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" St. Matthew 19:6.

This means that no one – not even the couple – should try to legally disannul or breakup a God created marriage of husband and wife. "They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so" St. Matthew 19:7,8.

From the beginning it was not so. People become hardhearted and distracted by the things and lust of the world so they are drawn away from their commitment to marriage and seek out other pleasures. They do not possess the Holy Ghost, which is purposed to

keep them in the will of God and fulfill their life with love, trust and honesty. There is often anger, distrust, lying and infidelity that ends many marriages created by the tradition of men. As a result, men and women seek out other spouses to try again after getting a divorce.

“*Marriage* is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge” Hebrews 13:4.

Chapter Six

Church Commonality: The Gift Of God Ignored And Untaught

The religion of American Christianity was conceived and currently run by men who have completely ignored one of Christs' most fundamental missions for the church; and there is not one pastor or preacher in America that has ever, and probably will never, preach or teach this one concept.

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In fact, unless an individual Christian has read this concept from the Bible themselves, it is guaranteed they have never heard of this theory. The theory is plainly documented in the book of Acts when the early church first received the Holy Ghost and began to worship God as a unit.

They and the Apostles were just beginning in the worship of the Holy Ghost and marveling in the new powers and revelations of God; rejoicing and operating in a parallel realm of heavenly places on earth, seeing and performing miracles of healing, casting out of devils, speaking in new tongues and languages, and many other miraculous works of God being done by ordinary people.

Many people today ask why those same miracles are not being performed by church leaders, such as going into hospitals healing the sick, and the casting out of devils and unclean spirits from people, and signs and wonders documented in the times of Jesus and the early church. Granted, some preachers try to perform these feats and some even pretend to, but if any are performed, they are performed in deception and viewed with skepticism by unbelievers and many believers themselves.

The power of God is severely limited in the church today because they lack that fundamental condition that the early church possessed in being able to perform those kinds of miracles. The operation of all the spiritual gifts together as given in 1 Corinthians 12, which reads:

“But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of

spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:” 7-10.

Even Jesus himself told the disciples what kind of powers to expect once they believed and received the Holy Ghost; in St. Mark 16:17, 18 it reads: “And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.”

Unfortunately, the church does not perform these acts in front of the world because they do not know how to use the power of the Holy Ghost and because many lack faith and belief in the powers. As a result, the world of unbelievers simply sees the church as powerless, scam artist, and liars and they also assume the Bible is useless and just a collection of mythological tales.

Unless the church today can harness the power of God like the early church did, today’s church will never know or use the powers of God effectively and as they should be used. Regrettably, there is a difference in thinking between the two church ages that has caused today’s church to miss the ability to understand and use God’s powers. And that difference is church commonality.

The early church was bound together by a common rationale that today’s church lacks tremendously. They were not individualist like today’s church members are, they were united on all things; in what the Bible called “having all things common.” The scripture reads:

“And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.” Acts 4:32.

The mind-set of commonality is missing in the church today and have been replaced by individualism, which is a component of American capitalism, that teaches that everyone should look out for themselves in the struggle of rugged individualism and survival of the fittest. Many of today’s church leaders value this mind-set over commonality because they have submitted to American values.

Politically speaking, this form of church commonality and community living is considered by many church leaders as socialism and is frowned upon by anyone American supporter of the capitalist, free-market spirit, in which most megachurches and prosperity church pastors believe in and teach. Wealth and income inequality is rampant in America as well as in the churches.

However, the power of commonality in the early church embodied the power of God's grace, which enabled the believers and leaders to understand and use the powers of God. In other words, when commonality is practiced among a group of Holy Ghost filled believers, God's power is magnified.

Another look at this concept continues in Acts chapter 2:41-44, which reads: "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things common;"

This verse reveals that the believers remained committed to one doctrine and form of worship and were not broken into factions like today's church. It also shows how they ate together and prayed together and admiration and the fear of the Lord was upon them all, which unleashed the powers of God for them to perform miracles, signs and wonders.

Verse 46 says they also continued every day "daily" with one accord, meaning they all believed and knew the same things about God. They went from house to house in gladness and singleness of heart. There was no strife among them, jealousy, competition or sedition among them but they worshiped God as one believer, together in the spirit.

The spirit of individualism in today's church have destroyed that singleness of heart that God once gave to the church. Most people today are only concerned about what God has done for them because they are being taught by preachers who submit to individualist thinking and lifestyle. "I got mines now you get yours," and "keeping up with the Joneses," mentalities have infiltrated and corrupted the church; thus, the power of God is diminished.

In fact, the power of God's grace and singleness of heart was so strong among the early church that they had no more interest in the things they possessed from the world and began to sell those things and give the profits to the apostles, who would distribute it among the rest of the people in the church to make sure everyone had what they needed. Acts 2:45 reads: "and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need."

Verse 34 and 35 of Acts 4 reads: "Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need."

Notice the trust the people had for the leaders, the Apostles. They were willing to sell their homes and other possessions and give all the money to men who were preaching of Jesus Christ. That level of trust does not exist in today's church. People would never give everything they have; instead, they are taught to give a percentage (a tenth) of their earnings that represents their individual offering to God.

In fact, even the theory of tithing is debunked in the passages of God's grace with the early church when a Levite, the tribe of Israel that was supposed to collect tithes, converted to the mind-set of church commonality; the scripture reads: "And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus, having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet. Acts 4:36, 37.

Of course, any church today that would attempt to practice what the early church did on selling their possession and giving the profits to the church leaders would be deemed a cult, unwise and foolish, and probably flagged for an Internal Revenue audit. No one today even expects the church to act as the early church. This is unconventional thinking today.

However, all the people then had everything they needed as a result of the giving. The Apostles were honest enough to distribute to the people and were not selfish and deceiving as some leaders of today are. The people understood that the apostles were possessed with the very same spirit of God they had, as they "were of one heart and of one soul," acting as one individual in God's spirit.

Today, the people are divided by class, education and race, even within the church, which unfortunately determines who has what, which is called politics. And since many leaders today have submitted to the theories and political views of America, they run their churches the same way. Teaching individual freedoms along with a watered-down version of love your neighbor.

Contrary to today's church thinking of showing devotion to the church and honoring God with the first fruits of their earnings, the early church took the grace of God more seriously and condemned those people who refused to give all the profits to the leaders. In Acts 5:1-5, when a couple decided to keep back part of the profits from their sells, they were considered liars and blasphemers of God, and they died.

"But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, and kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou

conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things.”

Nevertheless, the early church was empowered with the grace and power of the Holy Ghost and worshiped God every day in eating, fellowshiping, and praying together. This fellowship increased the powers of God in order for them to practice the gifts of the spirit. Trust was increased in God and among themselves, and through all this, they were not touched by or affected by the world around them.

In fact, people came out of the world to join them. Acts 2:47 says the church was, “praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.” The power was so strong that, “There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one.” Acts 5:16.

The church does not see this kind of community conversion today. People are not flocking to the churches but are instead fleeing the church in search of other forms of religion and spirituality. The Christian image has been tainted so severely by the lack of faith and power, and the corruption of false preachers, that it cannot grow but is only decreasing in numbers and power.

Thank God the church today still has a chance and can resurrect this power of grace for the church to operate according to God’s plan. But if they do not, they will never reach the fulness of God’s power and will only weaken more. In order to reach the fulness, the church has to regain and exalt the oneness and strength of the Holy Ghost.

First, they have to denounce the spirit of individualism and traditions of men and return to worshiping God every day, by communing and fellowshiping together, daily. Next, they have to gain trust in their leaders who will make sure everyone has what they need, and finally, they have to conduct a sell off of their worldly goods and possessions and deposit the profits into a mutual account. Sounds crazy right?

Well God has given us the recipe for such an act coming from the book of Ephesians, which reads: “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly

joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.” Ephesians 4:11-16.

The one main, most important word in this passage is love. “...speaking the truth in love,” and “...maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.” Without love, the persona of the early church will never manifest in the church today. Everyone has to know their gift, purpose, and proper position in the body of Christ, and pray for and grow in the spirit of love, together.

There has to be leaders who understand the mystery behind the empowering of the church and how to make it grow unto itself in love, and how to use the power of the Holy Ghost to perform miracles, signs and wonders. These leaders have to be honest, faithful, and full of the Holy Ghost.

As the scripture above says, the body has to be, in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part.”

This description of the body of Christ means that every believer in the church has a gift and a purpose in the body, and they understand how to fulfill their purpose using the gift. It reveals that as a group of believers, the object is to grow together stronger by using the grace and power of God’s gifts, which operate in unison for the glory of God. Do today’s church leaders understand this? No.

Ephesians 4 goes on to explain how believers are to manifest this understanding and power, which reads: “This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. But ye have not so learned Christ;” vv. 17-20.

The unbelievers have not learned Christ because they walk in greediness – like many church leaders and members do today – and they are vain in their minds and have no understanding of God. Individualism does this to people’s minds. Unfortunately, because the church lacks the grace and power of God in its fullness, many church people are on the same level as unbelievers.

Many may wonder how the church can accomplish this task in today’s world with such opposition to this kind of commonality. The answer is that we as a people are chosen of God to overcome the world and the things of the world. Separation and sanctification

from the world is the key. “Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.” 1 John 4:4.

If the church breaks away from the world and rebuilds a community based on church commonality, yet while remaining in the world but not of the world, the church can overcome and strengthen themselves in the grace and power of the Holy Ghost. And from thence will come miracles, signs and wonders.

The Church and the Distribution of Wealth

No church member in the church today should ever lack financially. The pastor should not live in a multimillion-dollar home with no financial worries while church members live in the hood and can barely afford food, pay bills, or lack any of the necessities of life. This is an abomination to God.

The early church made sure all the followers had what they needed. In Acts 4:34, 35, the scripture reads: “Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles’ feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.”

Not to suggest that church members today sell their homes and possessions and give the money to their pastors, no, the church would be flagged by the government and society as a cult. But there is a way to practice this method of wealth distribution without being considered abnormal.

The church is a group of people (strangers and pilgrims 1 Peter 2:11), who are passing through the world and living for the Lord. They are not ordained to suffer as the people of the world suffer. Unfortunately, many church members are suffering because church leaders do not understand or practice the liberality of wealth distribution among the church and how it blesses both spiritually and financially. They are too caught up in the politics of economic capitalism.

Though it rains on the just and the unjust, the church has the divine protection of the Lord and can avoid many problems of the world and rest from their labors in Jesus. “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people.” 1 Peter 2:9.

We are taught of God to live content with the things we have and not to seek after wealth or covet riches and the things of the world. “Let your conversation be without

covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” Hebrews 13:5.

But this does not mean we have to live in poverty either. “But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4:19. We are taught that riches are deceitful and caring too much about things can hinder spiritual growth; “and the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful” Mark 4:19.

The early church and apostles understood that if the members most basic needs were taken care of, that they would not lust after the things of the world, and they could grow without the influences and corruption of the world. They were wise men who looked after the needs of the widows and fatherless, the men who worked in the gospel, and the strangers who came in from the world.

Paul and the apostles conducted an experiment in the distribution of wealth from one wealthy church (Macedonia) to a poor church (Corinth) and proved that this exchange helped the wealthy church grow in spiritual righteousness while helping the poor church, who was rich in spiritual wealth, grow financially. “For the administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God; whiles by the experiment of this ministration they glorify God for your professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal distribution unto them, and unto all men;” 2 Corinthians 9:12, 13.

This experiment is a mystery of the gospel not many pastors understand. The object is for wealthy churches to contribute funds to poorer churches. The poorer churches were rich in spiritual riches but lacked money and the wealthy churches lacked spiritual riches. The exchange worked through the power of thanksgiving and God’s grace.

Through the method of spiritual community building, any church can provide for their members and make sure no one is lacking financially. This takes a measure of faith that the church today does not have and are apparently afraid to practice. This takes a pastor that has wisdom and is not greedy of gain, covetousness, or corrupted by the economic theories of the world.

The problem today is that churches pattern themselves after the world as businesses operating on a corporate level. They have absorbed the mentality of the world, which is survival of the fittest, the bootstrap mentality - where people are responsible for their own financial success - and the “I got minds now you get yours,” mindset. But neither of these worldly theories are what the early church operated from. As the scripture reads, none of them lacked and distribution of wealth was partitioned to all and not just to those who were considered socially or credit worthy.

The apostles appointed men to look after the widows and families when the church membership began to grow. “Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.” Acts 6:1-5. The apostles needed to focus on the word so these chosen men were considered the first Deacons for the church.

Today, no young mother should go without diapers for their baby; no family should not go without lights or water, heat or air in their home. All the members should have a reliable means of transportation to and from work, school and church, and no man should be without a job either at the church being paid, or in the world. No child should be without clean clothes, school lunch or proper healthcare, and no members should ever be homeless or hungry.

Instead of spending frivolous amounts of money on the beautification of the church, television and radio production, expensive jets and trips around the world and month-long retreats for church leaders, the church should be focused on the surrounding community and members of the church, so they do not fall into lust and unneeded struggles of life.

Chapter Seven

Fruits and Gifts of the Spirit

The Holy Ghost dispenses the power of God into any believer that receives the spirit. There is power to change the human nature of a person and the power to change the nature of others. This power comes in fruits and gifts. Fruits of the Spirit are character attributes that drive our behavior daily and the gifts of the Spirit are powers that make us exceptional in the natural world.

Fruit of the Spirit

The reference to fruit in the Bible goes all the way back to Genesis as God created the heavens and the earth and the trees that bear fruit, and afterward gave man the privilege of eating the fruit from the trees in the garden of Eden.

“And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which *is* upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which *is* the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.” Genesis 1:29.

So, not only is fruit for the physical well-being of humanity, but also for the spiritual; the inner heart of man. The scriptures refer to fruit as spiritual food for the soul. Galatians 5:22, 23 reads: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.”

Jesus himself referred to fruit in many of His parables as He taught the disciples. He first spoke of fruit when referring to false prophets in St. Matthew 7:15-20. “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits.”

The fruits Jesus was referring to were their characteristics and behaviors of false prophets. If the prophets did not possess the fruit of the spirit, then they acted from the evil fruits, which was the lust of the flesh. Again, Galatians 5:19-21 reads: “Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these*; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told *you* in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

If a believer confesses to have the Holy Ghost or being saved, they must show fruits of the spirit and not lust of the flesh, or evil fruit. Their fruits are normally revealed in certain circumstances they are faced with in life, such as how they treat other people; how they react to temptation, or when under pressure from the devil.

Jesus gave examples in the parable of the sower in St. Mark 4:2-9. When He was alone, the disciples came to Him and asked Him to reveal the mystery behind the sower. Jesus answered in Mark 4:

14 The sower soweth the word.

15 And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts.

16 And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness;

17 and have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended.

18 And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word,

19 and the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.

20 And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive *it*, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred.

Verse 20 reveals that every believer has a measure of faith by which they bring forth fruit. But if no fruit is brought forth, they are hewn down and cast into the fire. "Every tree that bringeth not forth good *fruit* is hewn down, and cast into the fire." St. Matthew 7:19.

Many people cannot handle the trials and tribulations, the temptations, or persecutions that come with living life in the gospel or the instruction of the Word. And some of those people fall by the wayside and end up false brethren, false preachers and prophets. It is these men that Christ warns us about. "Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them." St. Matthew 7:20.

If they are not displaying the good fruit of the spirit, and they are bitter, angry, vindictive or any of the other lust of the flesh, you should know them, if in fact the believer is bringing forth good fruit themselves. Unfortunately, the false preachers and

brethren they lead, live alongside the true believers, which is why true believers must stay vigilant and disciplined in the Word and the spirit.

“24 Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field:

25 but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.

26 But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.

27 So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares?

28 He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?

29 But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them.

30 Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.

Jesus further explains the parable to the disciples down in St. Matthew 13:37-43. The Holy Ghost opens up the mind to understand the parables of the scriptures and helps the believer bring forth fruit to perfect the soul. Believers must always pray for the fruits of the spirit even if it means suffering for a season.

“Herein is my Father glorified, that ye *bear* much *fruit*; so shall ye be my disciples.” John 15:8. The word and the spirit work together to bring a believer through trails and tribulations and to help them stay grounded in the Word so they will not be uprooted by evil and false doctrine. Study of the Word and prayer makes a strong disciple of Christ.

But if a believer allows the devil to deceive them or persecution harm them, they will live a miserable life in the Lord until they die. Jude prophesied of this when he said: “clouds *they are* without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots;” verse 12.

However, Paul encouraged believers to avoid these people from Ephesians chapter 5, which reads:

6 Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.

7 Be not ye therefore partakers with them.

8 For ye were sometimes darkness, but now *are ye* light in the Lord: walk as children of light:

9 (for the fruit of the Spirit *is* in all goodness and righteousness and truth;)

10 proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.

11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove *them*.

Finally, fruits of the spirit are needed and are a phase of the walk in the gospel that every believer should complete until they are perfected in their own spirit. Or at least until they bring forth 30, 60, or a hundred-fold of fruits. Even a small percentage is better than no fruit at all.

Spiritual Gifts

The gifts of the spirit are given to believers after they are born again. There are different gifts of the spirit and some believers are gifted with more than one gift for them to use in their ministry in life. Depending on the strength of the believer's faith, will determine which gifts they use, if they use any at all. All believers are given the power through the Holy Ghost, but only some people actually use the power.

St. Mark 16:17, 18 reads: "And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."

The signs that follow receiving the Holy Ghost are among the gifts of the spirit. However, the signs are to confirm the believer received the Holy Ghost, afterward, through the power of the spirit they can use the signs as gifts, such as healing others, speaking in tongues, and casting out devils. Taking up serpents is not a literal reference to handling snakes but an actual power over creatures that are considered deadly. Paul for instance, was bitten by a viper but was not affected, nor died. (Acts 28:3-6). Likewise, any poisonous substance cannot harm a believer who has the spirit, but neither of these privileges are to be abused or used for showcasing. They are simply natural gifts of the spirit.

Aside from the natural gifts, there are gifts of God that are enhanced in some believers that all people have but not to the extent of the believer's anointing. Such as wisdom, understanding, and knowledge. "...and *the Spirit of the LORD* shall rest upon him, *the spirit of wisdom* and understanding, *the spirit of counsel* and might, *the spirit of knowledge* and *of the fear of the LORD*;" Isaiah 11:2.

Some people have an anointing of faith, some have judgment, and some are gifted with the discernment of other spirits. These are spiritual gifts that not many people know or talk about in the church, but they are real. And the gifts are enhanced by the Holy Ghost in some believers who contribute much to the kingdom of God but are not recognized by men.

Then there are gifts that believers are individually anointed with that are popular among men, such as casting out devils, healing others, and prophesy. In fact, the last few are over represented (and many times misrepresented) in the church world while other gifts are underrepresented. Singing is a gift of God, quoting and remembering scriptures, organizing the church band and choir, administering the front office are all gifts of the spirit that are enhanced over the normal ability of the believer.

1 Corinthians 12: 4-11 reads:

4 Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.

5 And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord.

6 And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.

7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

8 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;

9 to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;

10 to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another *divers* kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:

11 but all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

The Holy Ghost gives these gifts in order for the church to function decently and in order and for believers to worship God correctly and get the fullness of the gospel of salvation. The main purpose is to strengthen and edify the church as a whole. 1

Corinthians 14:12 reads: “Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual *gifts*, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church.”

Whatever the gift may be, if the believer uses the gift on another, the other must first believe the gift will work, otherwise, it may not. It takes faith to move God and for the gifts to work to perfection. When Jesus went home to His own land, he did not perform miracle because the people who knew Him did not believe in Him. “And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house. And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.” St. Matthew 13:57, 58. The gifts work bests under faith.

Because the disciples and apostles had strong faith in Christ and the power of the Holy Ghost, they performed many miracles among the people. They cast out devils, healed the sick, and laid hands on people who also received the Holy Ghost. Paul reminded the people that he did not win them over using words only, but by using the power of the Holy Ghost. The power convinces people that God is real. “...my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words *of man's* wisdom, but in demonstration *of the Spirit* and *of power*.” 1 Corinthians 2:4.

When the apostles spoke to the churches in their letters to them, they encouraged them to use the gifts accordingly and in order. If done correctly, a message from God will come to all the church and they can move forward in God’s will. If the church is out of order or does not understand the power and purpose of the spirit, that church will not prosper in God’s will but remain stagnant in growth and spiritual immaturity.

1 Corinthians 12:28, 31 reads: “And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues...But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.”

Paul was explaining to the church that there is a certain order in which the gifts should operate in the church if they want to receive a message from God. No one person can have all the gifts and the rest of the members have no gifts; the gifts are distributed accordingly to every man as needed by God to edify the church.

1 Corinthians 13: 26 reads: “How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying.” Neither can everyone speak at once or overshadow another while they are using their gift. The spirit uses each believer in order when it is their turn.

“Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge. If *any thing* be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace. For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted. And the spirits of the prophets are subject

to the prophets. For God is not *the author* of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.” 1 Corinthians 13: 29-33.

If a church is not practicing the gifts of the spirit in this manner, they are missing out on many messages from God. Some messages could be for a particular member with a blessing, or the message could be for the pastor with revelation of a mission for the church. There is too much confusion and false prophets and doctrine in the church today, which is why it is in the shape it is right now.

“Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues. Let all things be done decently and in order.” 1 Corinthians 13:39, 40.

Callings and Ministry

Some people are called by God and some people are chosen, but all newborns are anointed by God with His Holy Spirit. “But the *anointing* which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same *anointing* teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.” 1 John 2:27.

The only difference among believers when they are born again, is the ministry in which they are appointed. Everyone has a different ministry, or mission, from God. Regardless of how small or great it is, we are all in the faith and body of Christ together. No one should ever let any man undermine their salvation.

First, we will explain the difference between the called and the chosen and then we will go into each of the biblical offices and ministries.

The Called

In St. Matthew 22:14, Jesus says that “For many are *called*, but few are chosen.” Many misinterpret this passage to justify their claim that not all people who are saved, will be saved. They neglect to understand the entire message from St. Matthew chapter 22, which is referring to the children of Israel, whom God called but they refused Him, so He turned and gathered the Gentile nations to His wedding instead. This passage is not talking about born again believers.

Those who are called are born again with the Holy Ghost and placed in the body of Christ as His bride, being prepared for the wedding. In fact, those in the body were predestined to be there according to God’s will. Romans 8:30 reads: “Moreover whom

he did predestinate, them he also *called*: and whom he *called*, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.” So, anyone born again was called of God.

Among the millions of souls in the body of Christ, not everyone is a preacher or prophet, some are there to contribute to the physical church while here in the world and to minister to those around them. Be it singing, praying, making phone calls, cleaning the church or anything that does not require a leadership position over the flock; because they are the flock. And whatsoever they are appointed to do, they do it for the pleasure of serving the Lord, and not grudgingly.

“For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that *are* afar off, even as *many* as the Lord our God shall *call*.” Acts 2:39. “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the *called* according to his purpose.” Romans 8:28. Other references to being called of God are: Romans 1:6, 1 Peter 5:10, and Colossians 3:15.

The Chosen

Those who are chosen are called into leadership positions who are responsible for leading and teaching the flock of God. “And he gave some, *apostles*; and some, *prophets*; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:” Ephesians 4:11, 12. These positions are not to be taken lightly and those who fulfill them are taught by God himself and cannot be effectively be taught by man.

Chosen men and women of God have to go through more pressing trials and tribulations in order for them to understand their mission in leadership. They are examples to the flock so they must live the life they want to see others live for Christ.

The offices referred to in Ephesians 4 are biblical in nature and God-sanctioned. The apostles also spoke of a few other offices throughout the Epistles such as Bishops, Elders, and Deacons. Each of the offices have a different purpose, but they are all for the edification of the church.

Today’s church leaders have made-up offices and names for leadership positions that are not sanctioned by God, nor biblical. They have added degrees behind these made-up names to give themselves more weight above the flock. Such as Reverend, or Emeritus, or Dr. of Theology, yet none of these titles are biblical. But this only fulfills the scripture Christ spoke of in St. Matthew 23:15, which reads: “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the *child of hell* than yourselves.”

Then there are false prophets and teachers who claim the titles of the offices such as Apostle, Bishop, or Prophet, but they are only claiming them for show. “But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, and love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi. But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, *even* Christ; and all ye are brethren.” St. Matthew 23:5-8.

So, what are the duties of the offices? We will begin with the least of the offices and work down to the one with the most responsibility.

Prophetess

The prophetess is a woman whom God has called and anointed to bring forth edification to the body of Christ. She is given revelation and messages of spiritual things of God to pass on to the leaders of the church. She is in charge of the younger, less experienced women in the congregation and responsible for teaching them how to love their husbands, children, and maintain a holy lifestyle in the Lord.

She does not preach or have authority over the men who are chosen of God. She also ministers to widows, women and children in order to make sure they are in order. She lives a life of sanctification, sobriety, holiness, and does not meddle in other people’s affairs or fall into the trap of gossip and hearsay. This is a noble office for a woman and she should want to fulfill it and serve the Lord and the body of Christ. Her office is needed to nurture the body and keep peace.

Minister

A minister is simply a messenger of God who attends to the needs of others. The offices are all ministers of one another and to the congregation and even those in the world, regardless of what the title is, a minister is a duty, not an actual office. “But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your *minister*.” St. Mark 10:43.

Deacon

The position of the Deacon was formed in the book of Acts. As the church grew, someone had to attend to the people’s needs during the daily worship. The Disciples

could not take time away from the Word so they chose men specifically for this duty. Acts 6:1-6 explains the process.

Deacons served the widows and the fatherless, attended to families while the disciples labored in the Word and doctrine, and they also followed along with the disciples during their travels and ministered to their needs. The book of 1 Timothy chapter 3, explains the qualifications of a Deacon like such:

8 Likewise *must* the deacons *be* grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre;

9 holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.

10 And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being *found* blameless.

11 Even so *must their wives be* grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things.

12 Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well.

Bishop

Bishops are a step above Deacons. The qualifications are similar except Bishops are expected to teach (the doctrine) whereas Deacons were not. They are also expected to take charge of the church when needed and should understand how to run it. Timothy was ordained a Bishop at Ephesus during Paul's journey to Jerusalem.

1 Timothy chapter 3 reads:

1 This *is* a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.

2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;

3 not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous;

4 one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity;

5 (for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)

6 Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.

7 Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

Elder

The Elder is not an office but literally older men who had experience in the Word and operation of the sanctuary and churches. Although they could serve in the office of a Bishop. There were Elders among the scribes and Pharisees who knew the law and served in the synagogues for years. They were also expected to understand how to run the church if needed. Peter was an Elder during the days of the early church because he had experience serving under the law, but now served with the other disciples. 1 Peter chapter 5 reads:

1 The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed:

2 feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight *thereof*, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;

3 neither as being lords over *God's* heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.

Pastors

If a man is called to pastor, they are given the responsibility of leading the flock of believers and keeping the church in order. They are preachers of the Word of God and are expected to live the life they preach of and be an example of holiness to the church. There were pastors in the Old Testament and in the New, and they both have the same mission. "...and I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding." Jeremiah 3:15.

Teachers

Teachers are gifted with the ability to teach the basics of the gospel to believers whether they are new to the gospel, seeking the Lord, or need guidance, exhortation or correction. Timothy proclaimed his calling as a teacher by saying: "whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles." 1 Timothy 1:11.

He was responsible for teaching the gospel to the Gentiles who had no knowledge of the ways of God until the coming of Christ. Paul encouraged Timothy to stay strong in the faith: “preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.” 2 Timothy 4:2.

Evangelists

The Bible does not give an exact definition of an Evangelists, yet men today describe them as those who travel and teach the Word. However, that is not necessarily what they do. They are simply men who carry the Word of God to whomever it is meant for. Paul makes mention of the work of an Evangelists in 2 Timothy 4:5, which reads: “But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.”

According to the scripture, Paul warned Timothy that “...the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;” 2 Timothy 4:3. Attention to the Word and doctrine was an important task for men of God as it remains this day.

Prophets

The office of the prophet goes back to Old Testament days and is the oldest of the offices, when God would send men with a message to inform the children of Israel of God’s will. Some people were used by God once and some were used many times. A prophet is simply a messenger of God, much like a preacher is today, to bring the Word of the Lord to the people. The problem though, is that there were many false prophets in the Old Testament as there are today in the church, who claimed to be sent of God with a message but are not from God at all. Jesus warned of such men saying: “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.” St. Matthew 7:15.

Prophets are also gifted with the ability to speak of future events, however, according to scripture prophesies come in parts and not as a whole. No man can predict the entirety of the plans of God in the future and no one can know what will be until the it is completely revealed. The scripture says: “but whether *there be* prophecies, they shall fail; whether *there be* tongues, they shall cease; whether *there be* knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.” 1 Corinthians 13:8-10.

Prophecy in this age of the church of Jesus Christ is meant for the exhortation and encouragement of the church. “For ye may all *prophecy* one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted.” 1 Corinthians 14:31. Other times, God will send a messenger with a warning or vision of what is to come for the preparation of the church. When men are given these prophecies, they must be in line with God’s Word and will for the church and not out of the desires and wishes of he who prophecies.

For example, a prophecy for the church today would be a look into the distant future of the state of a city or country or even a person that God has plans to change, use, or destroy. But it has to come from the Word of God by scripture or it is not God’s message. Prophecies are rarely daily occurrences and come few and in between times. As Jesus said, beware of false prophets, you shall know them by their fruits.

Apostles

As any of the offices of the gospel, laboring for the Lord is not always glamorous. Men who are responsible for feeding the flock are put through trials and tribulations to make and mold them for the work the Lord has for them. They suffer persecution from many people and are hated by the world because they preach the truth of the gospel and Word of God. The office of the Apostle is an office not many men understand though they claim to be one.

Paul describes the struggles of the offices in 2 Corinthians as follows:

8 *We are* troubled on every side, yet not distressed; *we are* perplexed, but not in despair;

9 persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;

10 always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.

Men of God are made by God and not by man. God has set a course for their ministries throughout their lives and they are compelled to follow that course, regardless of how they feel that day. They **MUST** preach the gospel. Apostles, however have an added burden to carry and a more stringent ministry. Paul explains this in 2 Corinthians 11 where he defends his apostleship:

21 I speak as concerning reproach, as though we had been weak. Howbeit whereinsoever any is bold, (I speak foolishly,) I am bold also.

22 Are they Hebrews? so *am* I. Are they Israelites? so *am* I. Are they the seed of Abraham? so *am* I.

23 Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I *am* more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft.

24 Of the Jews five times received I forty *stripes* save one.

25 Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep;

26 *in* journeyings often, *in* perils of waters, *in* perils of robbers, *in* perils by *mine own* countrymen, *in* perils by the heathen, *in* perils in the city, *in* perils in the wilderness, *in* perils in the sea, *in* perils among false brethren;

27 *in* weariness and painfulness, *in* watchings often, *in* hunger and thirst, *in* fastings often, *in* cold and nakedness.

28 Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.

The office of an Apostle is not an easy office and not many men can endure the sufferings awaiting the Apostle. This is why God has to make an Apostle because no man would willingly become one on his own, it is a grueling ministry. However, there are men who claim this position but have not gone through God's course. Paul says: "For such *are* false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore *it is* no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works." 2 Corinthians 11:13-15.

The deepest point of the apostleship comes in 1 Corinthians 4:9-13, where Paul describes the actual characteristics of an Apostle.

9 For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men.

10 We *are* fools for Christ's sake, but ye *are* wise in Christ; we *are* weak, but ye *are* strong; ye *are* honourable, but we *are* despised.

11 Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwellingplace;

12 and labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it:

13 being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the world, *and are* the offscouring of all things unto this day.

Not many men today who claim to be an Apostle could endure such treatment from God or from the world. There is no glory in the apostleship, only pain and suffering and no fame, honor or sympathy. This is a calling that requires serious sacrifice of worldly possessions, positions, and prestige. But in the end, their works will testify of their authenticity.

Overall, callings and ministries are ordained of God and made for the building and strengthening of the church of Christ. If a person does not know or understand the purpose and will of God for the church, they can never fulfill their calling or ministry. This is why study of the Word and constant prayer is needed for anyone to answer a call from God.

Women Preachers

The once controversial issue of women as preachers and church leaders is no longer a controversy, but an accepted part of church organization. Because of society's paranoia of sexism in mainstream lifestyle and the forced hand of government policy, women have taken on many more leadership positions in the church in every denomination, despite what the Bible says on the issue. This is a classic case of the church's transformation to the standards of the world. Those who have infiltrated the church with such beliefs have twisted the words of the Bible to fit society's standards and their own desires.

The Bible gives two direct rules concerning women and their ordained positions in the church and several implications to a woman's authority in the gospel, including various concepts that clearly explain a woman's duty to Christ, to the church, and to their family. However, each of the above areas are also defined by society concerning a woman's position, authority, and duty to Christ, to the church, and to their family, and we will compare the two using both the Word of God and its concepts, and the concepts, rules, and laws of society.

First, we must understand that this new movement of women's leadership in the church erupted from society and not from within the church. The church - which includes all believers of God - did not suddenly one day decide to protest the rights of women feeling that the men in the church were sexist, no, it was the women in the world, outside of the church, who brought this mentality to the church.

For years, religion and church organization has continued as it was from the days of old concerning men's roles and women's roles. Only in the past 50 years, have these traditions changed because of the gender battles that changed society, which gave women more power in the operation of society. Therefore, this mentality spilled into the church from society and did not stem from the church thus proving that the church has conformed to the world's ways.

When this mentality seeped into the church, church leaders sought out scriptures from the Bible that would supposedly support the women's upward positioning in the church. They not only used scripture, but they used concepts and theoretical reasoning to back their positions. To argue these theories, we will use scriptural and biblical reasoning that will uphold God's will: beginning with scripture.

The most popular scripture used by the women's movement and supporters to convince church-goers that God has no problem with women preachers comes from Galatians 3:28, which reads, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."

This scripture supposedly proves that it does not matter what race, status, or gender a person is if they believe in God that determines what a person can do for God. They argue that this scripture gives women the right to occupy any position in the church they want so long as they believe, and that it makes no difference to God. Along with this scripture they use Romans 2:11, which reads, "For there is no respect of persons with God."

Neither scripture directly says that women can take authoritative positions in the church, yet the scriptures are the only two in the Bible that the women's movement use as solid doctrine to support their claims. The scriptures are mere implications because neither scripture directly speak about the position of women, but about anyone concerning anything.

For instance, if the subject were race these scriptures would serve to integrate discriminated people into the gospel of Christ and into the kingdom of God. Furthermore, if the issue were on master-slave relationship the scripture would apply, as far as the slave being permitted the right to seek after the salvation of God and of His kingdom. God does not have respect of persons where it pertains to anyone being included into the gospel of Christ and His kingdom.

The scripture in Galatians 3:28 follows a concept of the Bible that discusses judgment against certain people, not about church position. The concept is a broad general statement that speaks on the rights of people to have access to the kingdom of God. If read from the beginning of Galatians chapter two, one would see that the discussion is

about judgment and not church organization, therefore, no one can rightly and justly conclude that the scripture supports the women's rights to take authoritative positions in the church. As so, with the scripture explaining God's respect of person's in Romans, God does not discriminate against who can enter the kingdom and who cannot. If every scripture were read about God's ability to be fair towards people, none would refer to a woman's position in the church, but as a general statement period.

However, the Bible does directly address church organization where position is concerned and it speaks about women in particular, not in general. Unlike the above scriptures of Galatians and Romans that make broad statements, the following scriptures distinctly apply to women's positions and roles as doctrine, or biblical law.

Furthermore, more often than not, church leaders will ignore the following scriptures and place more emphasis on Galatians and Romans. The first scripture reads, "Let your women keep silence in the churches; for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church" (1 Corinthians 14:34, 35).

To silence the mouths of foolish and cynical people, understand first, that the scripture means exactly what it says and there is no other interpretation or hidden concept. Some will argue that Paul wrote the scripture and that it was only his opinion, however, the scripture also says, "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).

Any person who attributes any of the Bible's concepts to the credit of the author of that concept is attempting to escape what the Bible teaches. God gave all words of the Bible to the men by revelation of the Holy Ghost and the men recorded the words in a book. The scripture of Corinthians means what it says.

Women should keep silent in the church, as in not talking, questioning, or preaching. The scripture does not mean that women should help in keeping people from talking during the sermon - many would attempt this deception - because the scripture refers back to whom it is talking about when it says, "it is a shame for a woman to speak in the church."

The scripture also exerts the fact that this rule of church worship comes from the law of the Old Testament, which is the only law carried over from the Old Testament. Preachers will carry over from the Old Testament the law of tithing but they will not adhered to the law of the submission of women, which again confirms that the church has conformed to the world.

When the scripture in Corinthians talks about women asking their husbands at home, it also means just that. Submission to the head of the marriage is a part of the gospel and this rule should remain in force. Society has equalized the marriage now so that the wife has as much authority as the husband, which they enforced with written law by way of the government: however, the Bible does not recognize man's law if it interferes with what He says. The man is still the head of the relationship and if God says that the woman should ask questions at home and not raise her voice in church, then that is what the church should obey.

The next scripture that directly confronts the authority of women is in 1 Timothy chapter 2, which reads, "Let the women learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in transgression" (vs. 11-14).

The scripture distinctly says that women are not suppose to teach or usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence, which confirms the scripture in Corinthians. Teaching and being in authority over men means preaching to, leading, or pastoring men or a man. Though the Bible says that women should not take authority, it is the reason why God does not allow it that confuses people.

Why, people ask. Why should not a woman pastor churches and preach the gospel of Christ. Then they get theological and suppose God is not like what we think and that he is a liberal or progressive God, and He understands. So, they ignore the Word and become presumptuous about what the scripture means. They have long forsaken the Word of God and any reasons why God would say that women should not preach. No church leader has explained to people why God disallows women to take authority over men and people take advantage of this lack of knowledge and impart their own rules.

As the scripture above states, "Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived being in transgression." The point of the scripture is to make plain that women are the weaker vessel and are more vulnerable to the attacks of the Devil and his scheme to destroy the church, believers, and humankind. When the woman ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, she caused an unchangeable curse that lasted thousands of years, which was the curse of death, Had Satan tempted the man, the story may have ended differently, but that is not what the Bible wants us to know.

God wants us to acknowledge His plan and perfect will by accepting the absolute that God did not create woman equal to man but women are, in fact, created for man. "Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man" (1 Corinthians 11:9). This is how God planned life to be and this is how the world, especially church leaders, should live. Each species has their God-given role in life and

we should respect that role and not attempt to change it for our own benefit or in subservience to the world. The essential reason why women are not suppose to take leadership roles over men is that it is against what God has created.

The next obvious reason is that women are equipped for life differently than men. God gave women the natural ability to nurture the child, He did not give that ability to men and men should not take it upon themselves to assume the role of a nurturer if they are not equipped with what is natural. On the other hand, because women are not equipped with what men have naturally, which is the responsibility of leadership over the earth, society, his wife, and children, women should not attempt to take on that responsibility but should concentrate on what God ordained.

The above reasons are not Biblical but naturally obvious. If biblical sense is to be made for why women should not lead men, or flocks, then believers must believe and obey the two doctrinal requirements for women, which are to keep silence and not usurp authority over the man.

However, the Bible does justify the weaknesses of women compared to men in 1 Timothy 3:7, which reads, "Likewise ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife as the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered." The Bible says that in a marriage, the woman is the weaker vessel and that the husband need relate to her with that as a consideration. The concept of the scripture is clear, God created men stronger than He did women: physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

Yet, the above still does not convince those who are adamant in their beliefs that women have rights to leadership positions in the church. Once they ignore the doctrine in the scriptures, they move on to various examples in the Bible that supposedly show that women can preach the Word. For instance, in the parable of the woman at the well in St. John chapter four, they justify that Jesus ordained the woman as an evangelist because she carried the Word into the city and preached to the religious leaders. It reads "The woman then left her water pot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men, Come see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is this not the Christ?" (St. John 4:30).

From this act, people say that the woman went and preached to the city about Jesus, and many preachers teach this to people and the people take this as true. They then go a little further to prove that the people believed the woman, therefore, she brought forth the Word and that means she is a preacher. They quote, "And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did" (vv. 39).

However, the preachers never point out the part in the above scripture that says the woman "testified" not preached, and they never go any further to see what the scripture says after that, and what the people said about her message.

In verses 40, and 41, the scripture says "And many more believed because of his [Jesus] own word; And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him for ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world."

In other words, even after the woman came and testified about Jesus, the people (and the Bible) says that they believed in Christ but not because of what she said or because of what today's liberal church-goers would have unlearned folks to believe, that the woman preached and people believed, but the people believed because they heard Jesus for themselves. Therefore, the woman was not a preacher.

People today attempt to use many other concepts of the Bible to prove that woman can preach and lead flocks of God but the Bible is always in defense of itself. God does not contradict His own Word and neither has He not done a new thing - another concept of the scriptures they use - and called women to preach and lead His flocks. The truth is that women have roles and those roles are to nurture and raise children to be loving and faithful believers of Christ and of God: to be virtuous women and wives and to be in submission to their own husbands and to the male leadership of the church.

Because the churches today are under the influence of the world, and have a hard time obeying the doctrine of God, the church is falling to the seduction and deception of the Devil. The natural order of life and of the church is in total opposition to what God desires and it is getting worst. First, the office of an evangelist was at one time the only office women dared to assume because of the "woman at the well" concept, but when they saw that men fell for the intrusion, they went a step further. Women became deaconess, the female version of the deacon, and then they became ministers, recognized by secular institutions of religious learning. Then when there was no opposition to that, church organizations began ordaining women as assistant pastors, and co-pastors, and now they are Bishops and Apostles, the highest offices in the church and no one is opposing the moves.

Because today's Christendom world has become caught up in the secularism of society, church leaders teach contradictory doctrine to unlearned believers which will eventually lead thousands of souls toward the darkness of Hell. One main contradiction of these teachings is the church's ordination of women as Bishops, which is a definite contradiction of the Holy Bible.

If there is anyone in the Christian world who can make sense of this evident contradiction, please do. How can a woman be ordained a Bishop if the Bible says otherwise? "A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach;" (1 Timothy 3). The same applies to Elders and Deacons.

Explain, with any and all reason and common sense, how a woman can be the husband of one wife. Without going into any modern-day man-made sexist laws, or using politically correct reasoning, justify how this can be so. If this explanation is not justified reasonably, then all church leaders who teach this are contrary to the Bible and should not teach the concepts thereof. If there are any women in Christianity that have been ordained as Bishops, according to the Bible, they should not be there and should obey the Word of the God they profess to love and worship.

In all of the above, no church has yet to biblically justify the ordainment of women as either leadership authorities. The facade has snowballed into an illusion of what the world has implanted in the church. Despite what the Bible says about the qualifications of a deacon, elder, or bishop, which refers to each as men and husbands, the church world today will enforce what they believe to be acceptable to God. This abomination and disrespect of God's Word will ultimately consume the church to the point that nothing in the Bible will have authenticity, but religion will be what man believes it should be.

A woman who follows the concepts of the Word of God will live blessed of God and would better understand her calling. Women may prophesy, testify, and attend to their biblical duty which is to, "teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands" (Titus 2:4, 5). God equipped women specifically for the above purposes and only a woman can attend to this duty successfully. When a supposed servant of God veers from what God has ordained for them naturally, then the course of nature and the purpose of the church, falls to the scheme of the Devil.

Prayer Life

The prayer life of a believer is extremely important to their growth as a born again Christian. Prayer manifests the Holy Ghost in the presence of the believer and makes intercession to God on behalf of the believer. This means that prayer without the presence of the Holy Ghost are prayers going unheard by God.

“Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should *pray* for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.” Romans 8:26.

People who are not born again are considered by God as unbelievers because they have not received the gift of the Holy Ghost, mainly because they do not believe in it or have not learned about it. Born again believers are true children of God, therefore, those who are not born again are children of the devil.

“In this *the children of God* are manifest, and *the children of the devil*: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.” 1 John 3:10.

Righteousness and love are New Testament commandments of God and comes through the power of the Holy Ghost to convert the believer into the image of Christ. If the believer refuses to submit to righteousness and love, they can never serve God correctly. “...because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.” Romans 5:5.

“Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.” 1 John 4:7,8.

Once born again, the believer should pray in the power of the Spirit for God to increase their righteousness and the love in their hearts. Praying for anything else would be in vain simply because love is the fulfilling of the Law. “Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is *the fulfilling of the law*.” Romans 13:10. Every time the believer goes down in prayer, asking God for love means asking God to fill their soul, heart and mind with himself.

The Lord also gives instruction to the believer as to how to pray and by what means. “But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, *pray* to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.” Matthew 6:6.

This message is meant to keep the believer humble in their walk with Christ. Praying in the privacy of the home or in any private place is better than praying out in the open so people can see and believe they are a “good Christian.” This is called hypocrisy.

“And he said unto them in his doctrine, Beware of the scribes, which love to go in long clothing, and *love* salutations in the marketplaces, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and the uppermost rooms at feasts: which devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers: these shall receive greater damnation.” Mark 12:38-40.

The above passage describes the arrogance of the religious leaders and followers in public. God wants His children to be humble and in accordance with the righteousness of the Word. The Lord also gives specific instructions on what to pray for when the believer prays. The following prayer covers tremendous ground for the walk of the believer and is effective during anytime of their ministry.

“After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as *it is* in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.” Matthew 6:9-13

This prayer has it all. Honoring God as the Supreme and All Mighty, asking for His will to be done instead of our own; taking daily care of our every day needs and those around us; forgiving us of debts, trespasses and sins against others, protecting us from the temptations of the devil and sin, and keeping us protected against all kinds of evils in the world. It ends with once again acknowledging God as the ultimate power and glory forever, so be it.

The believer should pray for godly and heavenly things, not earthly things. God already promises to take care of our earthly needs if we trust and depend on him. What He wants is for us to get to know Him and His will so we can walk upright and righteous in the world. “But *seek ye first* the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.” St. Matthew 6:33.

After we pray, we cannot expect to receive an answer right away, no matter what the situation; whether it’s an emergency or a simple request. However, God answers prayer in His time and according to the believer’s circumstances. Things happen according to His will for the believer’s life.

In other words, God knows what’s best for the believer and what will work in their life and at what period of their life. God will not answer a prayer on anything that a nonbeliever can get by working at a job or earning on their own. Nor will He answer a prayer based on an unethical desire on the believer’s behalf. If it is not God’s will, He will not answer. “The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD: But the *prayer* of the upright is his delight.” Proverbs 15:8

“And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in *prayer*, believing, ye shall receive.” Matthew 21:22. This passage is true as long as the believer ask according to the will of God. Be it deliverance, protection, strength, security, love, trust or anything that comes from God, the believer should receive as long as they believe it.

We should also have patience that God will deliver according to His will if we pray. Trust also is the key to receiving an answered prayer. In times of weariness and frustration, we need to trust Him and wait. “And we know that all things *work together* for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” Romans 8:28. So the believer must love God over all things for their prayers to be answered.

In addition to prayer to help strengthen the believer, they should always pray for others of their brethren and born again believers, whether they know them or not. Believers need each other’s

prayers as they grow together as one in the body of Christ. “Confess your faults one to another, and *pray* one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent *prayer* of a righteous man availeth much”. James 5:16.

The church prayed for Peter when he was in prison and He was delivered because it was God’s will that Peter be free to carry on the gospel. “Peter therefore was kept in prison: but *prayer* was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.” Acts 12:5

It is God’s will also that we assemble and pray together so the church can stay strong against the evils of the world. The apostles’ and many of the believers came together daily to pray and learn about the Lord. They ate together, studied together and prayed together. “And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.” Acts 2:42.

As the church grew larger, members came to the apostles with personal problems and quarrels but the apostles’ found they did not have the time to handle all the smaller problems and expand the church at the same time. They knew it was important that the church had powerful and dedicated leadership so they created the office of the deacon to handle every day issues among church members while they attended to prayer and the study of the Word. “But we will give ourselves continually to *prayer*, and to the ministry of the word.” Acts 6:4.

The devil gained strength in persecution of the church and many false prophets rose up who also preached Jesus Christ. This began heresies in the church and the apostles had to learn to fight off the false prophets while keeping the gospel of Christ true. Prayer along with fasting helped them gain strength for spiritual warfare against the devil and his false prophets.

Jesus taught the disciples about warring against the devil after a disciple tried to cast out a devil but could not; and they came to him and asked him why, and he said: “Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by *prayer* and fasting.” Matthew 17:21. The apostles taught the church about spiritual warfare and how to keep their prayer life strong against the devil. In Ephesians 6:10-18, Paul encouraged the church saying: “praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;” verse 18.

Prayer is vital to the life of a believer if they want to stay in the will of God. There is no set time or place to pray because we should always pray without ceasing. Our earnestness is what counts and whether the prayer is God’s will or not. In the end, prayer brings peace, patience, and the strength of God’s love, which is power, to the believer. “And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to *pray*, and not to faint;” Luke 18:1.

Chapter Eight

The Next Time Age is a World Without God

History tells stories of different time ages, such as the age of the dinosaurs, the age of early man, the old, ancient world of Kings and princes; the time of the warlords, Greek gods and gladiators. There are periods of time that we as a generation cannot comprehend such as far back as the Dark Ages, the Renaissance, or the Industrial Revolution.

These blocks of time are spaced so far apart that we cannot imagine what it would be like to live in any other age other than this one, the age of technology, modern medicine and global mobility. So, image for a moment what the next time age will be like.

As history reveals, time ages shift and build upon one another after a major advancement in human discovery or sometimes a geological or even climatical fluctuation in nature. Regardless of how and when the shift occurs, humanity adapts either willingly or by force. Depending on humanity's imagination and intents, the technology used by man at any given period in time, gives a peek into the next age.

The technological stage of humanity today is gauged using a dire method called the Doomsday Clock. *"The Clock has become a universally recognized indicator of the world's vulnerability to catastrophe from nuclear weapons, climate change, and disruptive technologies in other domains."*

Given man's state of mind today, scientist have basically concluded that humanity is at death's door. This theory could be completely accurate considering the level of satisfaction man is enjoying juxtapose to the lack of innovation where human progress is concerned, i.e., man does not have any ideas left to advance humanity, and instead, have began to spiral backwards toward a primitive state of mind engulfed in pleasure. Because *apparently*, today's technology has outpaced human intuitiveness.

This lackadaisical mentality fused with his most basic instincts; greed, power, and violence, leaves humanity at the mercy of a handful of bored world leaders with deep-seated grievances and itchy trigger fingers. With an arsenal full of his most accomplished scientific feat - nuclear missiles –created as a defense and deterrence against his most feared enemies, the world sits at the doorstep of a devastating image of the next time age.

Aside from a nuclear catastrophe misunderstanding or another climatical shift of the earth, what is more fearful is the possibility that man is hastening along the next age out

of sheer boredom or a form of psychopathological curiosity. With his finger on the button, the earth and humanity are looking at a new age real soon. Unfortunately, man has no idea what he is beckoning for.

Acknowledging the psychosis of man, we will withdraw the concept of Divine intervention and Bible prophesy, or the percentages of an asteroid slamming into the earth, which leaves us with man alone. Based on this being, it is inevitable that man will destroy himself and the earth. Whether it be by polluting the earth beyond repair until it coughs up the poison man has dumped into it, or if man ignorantly decides to launch bombs at one another, the end is near.

Once it happens, a large portion of the earth will become uninhabitable. The aftermath of nuclear explosions will block the sun light for months maybe years, which will cause the trees and grass to die, oceans, rivers, and lakes to dry up and corrode, and animals to die and rot on the ground. This will bring disease, pestilence, and sickness to the people who were not affected by the nuclear blast.

No more electricity, except in certain parts where wealth resides. No more world-wide Internet, no more weekend shopping, dining, or vacations. Work and employment will transform into what the people need right away as opposed to what they want. People will seek endless comfort in drugs, sex, alcohol and other forms of revelry. At least until order is restored.

What is left of man's state of mind will retreat into tribes and survival mode, which will unleash the most heinous kinds of cultural and racial warfare in history. Think crime is high now? What is left of the governments of the world will scramble to reorganize and rebuild and a police state and Marshall law will reign. People will no longer believe in or even look to any Divine inspiration or type of God; they will curse the heavens and wish to die instead of living in this new hell.

But in man's new world, there is no need for God because man will become the ultimate answer for humanity. Whoever rises first with the best answer to the world's problems, will become the new god, and he will require all on earth to view him as such. No longer will religion be a burden to the mind or any of the newly formed nations. There will be only one to believe in, and that will be the man or nation that saves the world.

This being, however, will require allegiance in case of any other uprising from another. It will need to know who is who and since technology will no longer be a viable asset in recognizing people by face, it will require a physical mark on the outward parts of the body or a card to carry on the person ready for immediate display, in order to roam free in this new world.

People will die gruesome deaths every day. Murdered, beaten, stolen, enslaved, raped and exploited by people who were once their neighbors. This will last for years as the world rebuilds from another form of primitivity. However, all those who died on impact and who never see the devastation and evil that this world brought, or those who died with the hope of God in their hearts or right before they were killed, will be those living in the peace of God's heavenly kingdom. This is called the Second Coming, and all those that believed will be saved.

Now, let us look at what the Bible says about the last days and the time age of the tribulation period.

The Second Coming and the End of the World

In St. Matthew chapter 24 verse 3, the disciples ask Jesus, "what *shall be* the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" Jesus then answered them in the next 2 chapters. In His answer, He first warns of what things to look for that would signify the beginning of the end. Then He describes a time period of great tribulation, which would trigger His next coming, and finally He goes on to talk about the end of the world.

The signs include wars and rumors of wars; nation rising against nation, famines, pestilences and earthquakes, which are all the beginning of sorrows. Verses 5-8. These are the days of the present in which we live now. Verses 9-14 is a summary from the beginning of sorrows to the actual end of time.

And again, in verses 15-28, He describes a time period of seventy weeks spoken of by Daniel the prophet, which spans "from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince *shall be* seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off:" Daniel 9:25, 26. And he ends with how the eagles will be gathered together for the dead carcasses after Armageddon, verse 28.

So, in the above passage, Jesus is actually describing three different time periods which lead to the end of the world. In the next passage, verse 29, He gets more specific and reverts back to today's times and warns of what will soon come. The following passage is the next age of time that humanity will face. Since no one actually knows when that time or year or particular day will be, we can suppose it could be from now or within the next 100 years. But for sure, the next time age will surely change over and be a lot different than the way we are living today.

“Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.” Verses 29-31.

This is what humanity is in store for as the next time age. Right now, we live in the age of the grace of God, i.e., He is giving all humanity an opportunity to know Him and have their souls saved from the time of great tribulation, which is to come. He said that “And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.” Verse 14.

Since the birth and death of Christ, humanity has lived in the grace of God. Before that was the time age of the Law, or the Ten Commandments. Now we have the gift of the Holy Ghost given to us by God’s grace, which helps us keep the Laws. But as other ages, this time age must come to an end in order to fulfill the rest of Bible prophecy and God’s will for humanity.

In the past 2000 plus years, we have seen world wars, famines, pestilence, earthquakes, false Christs’, and many abominations against humanity by other humans. But as Jesus said, “for then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be;” verse 21.

The tribulation period will begin with a world incident or natural disaster that will bring devastation, destruction, and human suffering to the world like we have never seen. It will be so devastating that it will cause a blockage of the sun and cause the elements of space such as asteroids and fragments of stars to fall to the earth.

This event could be an asteroid itself slamming into the earth, a nuclear fallout from world war, a great earthquake that sets off unground volcanoes, who knows, but it will bring about a massive amount of fire and searing heat according to the Bible. The aftermath will cause one-third of the earth to become uninhabitable.

“...and the third part of trees was burnt up... and the third part of the sea became blood; and the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed... and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters... and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise... And the four angels were loosed, which

were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men.” Revelation chapters 8, 9.

With no sun light, life on earth will dry up in a matter of weeks and months. Trees, animals, and humans will die. The water will be tainted and food production will cease. Disease will spread rapidly along with pestilences, new famines and desolation will set in where fruitful grounds once were. Desperation will take hold of humanity and as Jesus said: “And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.” Verse 12.

No one actually knows how fast this will happen or how long it will last, but when it happens, it automatically opens the door to the Second Coming of Christ. “and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven.” According to scripture, (St. Matt. 24:30) every eye will see Him and that is when He will gather together all those who are Born Again, to save them from the time period of tribulation.

Other scriptures verify the conditions of the tribulation period; in 2 Peter 3:7,10, which reads: "but the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men...But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."

And as the earth and the elements of this world are being burned, the people of God will be transformed at the same time: “Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.” 2 Corinthians 15:51, 52.

In other words, when tragedy strikes the earth and humanity, although many people will die, including Born Again believers, their bodies will be changed and not burned like those who are not believers. Believers will die physically because we are all flesh and blood, but our spirits will live on as we take on the likeness of a new body. Believers will become incorruptible and immortal. “For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on *immortality*.” 1 Corinthians 15:53.

Those left on earth and who live through the devastation of the tribulation will become subject to a new world system of life. This starts the next time age. This age is without God’s grace or the Holy Spirit. It is a time of suffering, despair, and lovelessness. There will still be people who believe in God and Christ, but they are the ones who never actually Born Again. They were deceived by false prophets and doctrine only to believe they were saved but were not, and who took God’s name in vain.

These believers can still reign with God in His kingdom at the end of time, but they must not take the mark of the beast during the tribulation period. They have to have strong enough faith to continue to believe in Jesus while many professors will be persecuted and killed for their acknowledgement of Jesus Christ.

“And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes?...These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” Revelation 7: 13, 14.

Many others left on earth, particularly unbelievers, will look to the next world leader or leading country for survival and will soon become desperate enough to submit to their new authority and rules. This is when the next leader will reorganize the world and distribute the mark of the beast so people know who will be chosen to buy and sell goods.

Many believe the mark will be a card or a microchip or something of a technological nature, but if the world is brought to ruins and there is little to no electricity for months or years, the world leaders may have to resort to a more primitive form of a Mark, such as an actual mark, or tattoo or branding on the skin of some sort. It could very well be anything that distinguishes those who can participate in the market of goods and those who cannot.

Again, the world will revert back to an almost primitive state of being whereby people also, will revert back to the same. Murders, robberies of desperation, roaming bands of vigilantes and mobs searching for food and any other lust or pleasure they need. The world will definitely become brutal like no other time in history.

No one knows, nor does the Bible say, how long this period will last. Some interpret the scriptures of Daniel within the seventy weeks of time he spoke of, leaving the last week, equaling 7 years, to the time of the tribulation. However, the scholars who study the time ages never account for the years (weeks) between Christ’s death, and the tribulation age.

Revelation chapters 8 and 9 describes the horrors of the tribulation age, when judgment is taken against people who refuse to repent and worship God and those who worship idols of stone, gold, and wood. They are murderers, idolators, thieves, adulterers and fornicators and all manner of evildoers. People will hide themselves in caves to escape the evil on earth and they will seek for death but will not be able to kill themselves.

As a result of the judgment of evil men and the chaos on earth, the nations will become angry with God and gather together to destroy all who believe in him, all places of worship and anything that resembles religion or worship. Finally, they will gather in the Holy Land to war against the people of God. This is when Christ will return with his

bride, the believers of every time age, the Law, grace, and the tribulation, and He will set up a camp and a holy city.

Then time enters another age called the millennium. It is a time of peace because God will imprison Satan, the false prophet and the beast for one thousand years. After the thousand years is finished, he will loose Satan for a short time and Satan will deceive the nations and gather them together for the last battle of Armageddon against God and His people, all believers.

“Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.” Revelation 20:6-9.

“...Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, *even* as many as the Lord our God shall call.” Acts 2:38, 39.

Why, and how to be Saved

Being saved is the same as being born again. The reason for salvation is to be sure your soul goes to God after you die. All people are given a choice to believe in God or not and those who do believe are drawn by God throughout their life to become saved. Once saved, the person knows beyond a doubt their soul is safe with God after death. This is the power of salvation, and salvation is not a hard task. The instructions are given in the Bible in St. John 3:3-5 and it reads;

3. “Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

4. “Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?”

5. “Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”

The book of Acts explains it a different way using different words. It reads:

38. “Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”

Both passages say the same thing by requesting a person must be born again by water and Spirit. Jesus himself gave an example of the new birth in the book of St. Matthew 3:16, and it reads:

“And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:”

The new birth is the way into the kingdom of God for all people of the world. God speaks to all nations in their own native language and explains this. Once a person is born again, after they die, their soul will go to God and lay wait in heavenly places until the end and judgment of the world. If they are not born again, after they die their soul will lay and wait in Hell, a place where the Spirit and grace of God is not present. Hell literally means, “a place separated from God.”

To become saved, a person must first believe in God, repent of their sins, be water baptized, and ask for and receive the Holy Ghost.

Belief and faith

First, believe in God. Belief and faith are the same things, so a person must believe and have faith in God for their salvation to come. The scriptures says:

“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Heb. 11:6).

Repentance

Next, a person must repent of their sins. Repentance is a sincere apology to God for all the conscious and unconscious sins that a person has committed throughout life.

“For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of...what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge!” (2 Cor. 7:10, 11).

Water baptism

Then, we must be water baptized to wash away all old sins of the flesh as a symbol of being buried in death. *“Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Ro. 6:4)*. Thus, the water baptism begins for a person the start of a sinless life.

Receiving the Holy Ghost, or Holy Spirit

The Spirit baptism, the Holy Ghost, and the Holy Spirit is all the same thing. To be born of the Spirit is to receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost is the actual presence of God inside of the believer—if they receive it. It is real, only to those who believe, but to those who do not, it can never exist.

The Spirit not only saves your soul after death, it changes your life and who you are as a person. This miracle of God is that you can change who you are: your identity, your lifestyle, traditions and knowledge of the world, even your environment. You can be Born Again. Some people may love their current life and see no reason to change and there are some who vehemently desire change.

Once you are Born Again, the Spirit will change you from within and you will see the world as a different place and you will desire different things. Your understanding will become deeper and many questions will be answered with simplicities. Physical and emotional pains will begin to disappear and anger, hate, and misery will be replaced with an inner peace, happiness and a deeper love in the heart. Not only a love for people, but for God.

Chapter Nine

Heavenly Places and the Spiritual World

We live everyday parallel to a spiritual world we cannot touch; but we can see and hear when given the revelation of Jesus Christ. Because we cannot actually see this realm, many simply cannot believe it is there and this is only logical thinking. Our minds are programmed to believe and comprehend only what we can see and not believe or understand what we cannot see.

Although, there is realm within our consciousness that we can see but many times cannot understand where it comes from or how it relates to us in reality. Dreams, premonitions, memories, and phenomena we experience yet cast away as coincidence or some strange thing, are all a reality we do acknowledge.

There is no explanation as to why some people know and experience spiritual things and glimpses of the parallel realm, yet others never do. There is also no full proof way to convince those who never see the realm that it exists, seeing we are programmed to believe and comprehend only what we can see and to disregard those things we cannot see or understand.

Human awareness may be partitioned out in measures of who can handle certain realities and who cannot. Therefore, the burden of proof goes both ways. No one can prove there is a parallel realm and no one can prove there is not. Some people are fashioned and fixed to a more concrete reality than others, or we can conclude that some people are a bit more detached from reality and more spiritually aware and gifted than others.

Regardless of either truth, the parallel realm has had witnesses throughout time who have claimed to have seen things no living being has ever seen and probably never will. Proving its' existence is equally impossible because the spiritual realm is random and unpredictable. It cannot appear at a beckon call of the seer to make others realize its reality. So, to request its proof is similarly illogical. Likewise, no one can disregard what others have seen or experienced simply because they chose not to believe.

As pertaining to God's kingdom, this spiritual realm consists of everything within his kingdom. Nothing exists outside of the kingdom on its own. Within this realm are all things good and evil and all things metaphysical and celestial. Inversely, all things scientific, mathematical, biological, and natural work in harmony to uphold all that we see in reality. For instance, the mind can comprehend each of the above but cannot actually see these things working together.

Nevertheless, the spiritual realm exists right beside us every day. We walk through it, sometimes sense it, and if we are highly spiritually aware, we can see and hear things that manifest itself from it. God is a spirit and his children who have received his spirit are given a higher level of awareness of this realm than others; and they can seek higher levels of it if they choose.

Many things in the realm cannot be explained with any concrete examples that any one else could comprehend. It is not designed that way. Experiencing the spiritual realm can only be comprehended by those who actually do. Whether it be spiritual beings we come in contact with, visions of things to come or things past, or unexplained happenings and fleeting moments gone undocumented; they are all things not meant to be explained or comprehended by the natural mind.

Angels, demons, places, aromas, sightings and sounds and many other spiritual phenomena live right along side us occupying a world that operates independently of our own, getting things done that effect our reality each day. If we tap into the realm, we can see and understand things that happen around us much better, helping us cope with day-to-day happenings in our lives.

Apostle Paul talked about reaching the point of a third heaven in the book of 2 Corinthians 12:2, 4, which reads: "I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven... how that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter."

Apostle John was suspended in a dream state and saw things no one could see or hear in Revelation 1:9, 10; "I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,..."

Of course, cynics of the Holy scriptures have already cast off the Bible as fairytales and myths, and many people around the world have disregarded religion as a hoax, yet these views do not mean these things do not exist, it simply means those people have yet to have a spiritual experience. By keeping with the spirituality of the scriptures, believers must understand that getting a firm grasp of the spiritual realm helps them defeat the evils of unbelief in the world.

Through faith, a believer can conjure up the spiritual realm at their request and enter into heavenly places whenever they want. This ability takes an extreme level of faith and power of the Holy Spirit. Heavenly places is the realm of heaven right beside and above us every day. Reaching it is as simple as stepping up one step in the spirit. In all honesty,

entering this realm can be mentally exhausting and physically dangerous at the same time.

The reasons behind this, is that if a believer were to grasp a hold of the ability to enter in everyday, they are liable to see, hear, and do things that they would not normally see, hear or do, and dangerous because they could not keep these things a secret and would have to tell everyone they could, which would make them seem strange and a bit insane, requiring help from the outside medical field. So, advising against this access is recommended.

Another reason a believer may not want to step into the spiritual realm every chance they get is because there are things too powerful for our frail bodies and minds to handle. Some have proclaimed that they would rather stay in reality than live in the spiritual realm every day. Though it is glorious, mysterious and amazing, the power behind these things can take a person too far away from reality when they decide to return, and their mind might not return whole.

There are stories from believers such as seeing demonic spirits standing in certain places, angels visiting them in dreams, images of God in natural things such as clouds, trees, and within the stars. Many sightings are fleeting and cannot be captured on video or in photographs, those some have tried. Believers have definitely heard God's voice in their minds, seen Jesus as a bright light, and have felt a sense of power beyond any normal human feeling.

Other examples include hearing and recognizing prophesy while among other believers, hearing and interpreting tongues while praying with others, witnessing people being healed of illnesses after negative medical diagnosis were claimed, receiving unexpected material things without asking, commanding and communicating with animals, being controlled and physically moved around by God's spirit without effort of the believer, and so many other examples that many people find hard to believe and refuse to.

Again, reaching the spiritual realm takes faith, first of all believing that it is real. Then the believer must fast and pray and ask the Lord for revelation of the realm. They must sincerely dedicate themselves to the cause and prepare for anything. Not all people experience the same things as others but are given a measure of faith by God and for his purpose for their lives. It is a gift that must be learned, understood thoroughly, and practiced consistently.

Spiritual Warfare

In spiritual warfare, believers are fighting against demonic spirits that roam the earth seeking to destroy people, communities and societies. Demons can be as small as a mouse and as large as a mountain. Their existence and activity are based on what they are working to destroy, either an individual or an entire city. They are evil characteristics, illnesses, and lies that wander the spiritual realm seeking physical vessels and minds to occupy. They can possess the smallest of living things and the largest of governments, including animals, individual people and groups of people of like minds.

They are many in number, in the millions, but do not outnumber the angels and messengers of God. They have no power despite what many preachers teach, Jesus said he has all power. "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, *All power* is given unto me in heaven and in earth." St. Matthew 28:18. They operate effectively through lies, lying signs and wonders, things that people think they see but is actually not there or is true. They are antithetical to the truth of God which is why truth is the one thing that can defeat them. A believer must know and speak the truth when confronting a demon.

Most believers envision casting out devils using loud prayer and laying on of hands like we see in the movies, but a demon can be cast out that way or by simply talking to the thing, individual or group of individuals. The word of truth cast out lies and the light of righteousness overshadows darkness. Love also, is a power that demonic forces fear. They have no love, nor appearances of peace, joy, or any of the other fruit of the spirit, so a believer can defeat a demon with any of the fruit that opposes the works of the flesh.

"There is no *fear* in *love*; but *perfect love* casteth out *fear*: because *fear* hath torment. He that feareth is not made *perfect* in *love*." 1 John 4:18. Once a believer has perfected the fruit and power of love, they have no fear when confronting or being confronted by a demonic force. If they have love for others; brethren, family members, neighbors and friends, or even a cause that helps society, they can war against the demonic forces by seeking the will of God for that reason. Desiring the will of God in all our lives helps in combating the forces of evil.

A believer's main fight against evil is man's effort to eliminate God from the world. Those who doubt God and his power and the things of the spiritual world would just as well kill God (in a sense) than allow the idea and concept of God to enter their minds and hearts. They seek to destroy the belief and faith of others who do believe and they are relentless in their efforts. So, they do everything they can to distort the truth with lies, which would diminish hope and faith in others.

This demonic force works in everything from children telling lies and being dishonest to politicians and governments lying about the activities it is involved in. If the lie is successful, this causes people to disregard any truth on whatever subject and resist people who choose the truth over the lies of the demon. Once they have chosen the lie

over the truth, they will defend their choice even if it means dying for that lie. As a result, they choose the physical weapons of war instead of the spiritual because they do not believe in the spiritual realm.

People who chose to believe a lie because they hate the truth, have entered into a state of perdition or disillusionment. Anger against anyone who challenges them with the truth are now considered enemies and worthy of death. The purpose is to eliminate truth (God), and force other people to believe the lie. If more people believe the lie over the truth, then society has entered a state of apostasy; or godlessness.

"Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God" (2 Thessalonians 2:3, 4).

"...*even him*, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." 2 Thessalonians 2: 9-12.

When the time comes that God will be completely eliminated by man and he shows the world that he is now God, many who resisted the truth will worship the demon who claims to be God (the false prophet and the beast). They will not and cannot comprehend that they have been deceived because of their adamant belief in the lie and hatred of the truth. They can no longer see truth or comprehend it. God has blinded them with the same delusion they wanted to believe.

The way the devil deceived these people is that he presented them with an alternative truth and reality. In actual reality, however, there is only one truth, there cannot be two; in the face of two opinions of what is true, only one can be right. For instance, there are only two genders, male and female, there cannot be more than that and no one can change their God-given gender no matter how many laws they write or how many times they tell themselves they are something other than the way they were born.

Likewise, no one can lie about their past behavior when they continue to do the same things in the present they did in the past. This is a form of denial that has spread throughout society in these last days called cognitive dissonance. When people have reached this level of deception, they are not only lying to others who see the truth, but they are lying to themselves. As a result of cognitive dissonance, people seek hard to

defend their position of the lie and in the process lose their conscience and cannot cover or perceive their own shame.

“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;” 1 Timothy 4:1, 2. Most unbelievers become bound by these evil spirits and have compromised with them to resist any truth, ever. These are those who were preordained to condemnation by pride and hatred for the truth.

Some unbelievers can be delivered because they are merely angry at God for something that has happened in their lives or because they associate with people who have them bound by something they value. Persistence with these type people sometimes payoff if a believer has been ordained to help them become free. Only God can deliver them, however, but the believer must follow the guidance of the Lord. As stated earlier, simply talking to people can free them from bondage.

To understand more about the process of salvation, please enroll in our Bible course Beginning Salvation. Visit: foundationgospel.com