

ABIDING

A Series of Articles by Keith Mason

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ABIDING

Hang in there in His love. Stick around whatever the difficulty, in His life. Reside under His grace, continuing in Christ. Stay focussed. Why should we abide? It is the essential bridge between pruning (John 15 : 2) and the faith that produces the fruit of answered prayers (John 15 : 7). The enemy will relentlessly attack the abiding, which is our perfect state between the “yes” of our prayers and their concrete manifestation or “amen”. We abide in the true vine, because a branch cannot bear fruit of itself. The enemy seeks to entice us out of our position to receive God’s blessing. He will bombard our mind with fear, worry, regret, self-condemnation, and countless things so that the peace of God seems a distant memory. Remember the grace of abiding falls upon those who are open to God’s pruning knife. Jesus was flayed open like a fish by whips and nails, and looks for the disciple who will be opened up in true repentance. He looks for the contrite heart that trembles at His word. Believers who refuse the knife of pruning, fail to become disciples.

Pruning

Hebrews 11 : 24 – 27 is the glory of true discipleship because we glimpse at what pruning meant for Moses. He had to refuse the pleasures of sin to identify with the reproach of Christ. Strong quality decision to separate himself from the world, the flesh and the devil ultimately made him the meekest man on earth, dependant, and face to face with God. We can be used of God if we are meek. God loves you but is not satisfied with you. The challenge of fruit, more fruit and much fruit lies before you. So you come into a season of shaking and disturbing and changing. We must give God permission to prune us. If we refuse the knife we will always tend to fall away and backslide. Neutrality and losing momentum is an insidious curse when we fail to fight for what we believe in. *Hebrews 6 : 12* challenges us all :

“that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.”

To imitate is to act skilfully the part. Did you see Dirk Bogarde as Mahler in “Death in Venice”? He lived on one piece of broiled fish per day for a month to lose weight and act convincingly an older man near to death. Pruning for the believer may include a long partial fast from food or TV or sleep or anything else we see as legitimate. Or God will initiate a pruning season when He shakes those unfruitful things off of our lives.

Abiding

Fruit comes to those who reside in Christ and know that the Word of God has found a home in their hearts. John 15 : 7-8 is a key principle in Christian living,

“Abide in Me and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit, So that you will be My disciples.”

Notice the two conditions for answered prayer,

- (a) unclouded fellowship with Jesus
- (b) the implanted seed of God’s word in our heart. The richest place in town

is the graveyard because it contains all the unfulfilled dreams of sinner (because they know not the inheritance) and the saint (because they have missed the inheritance by disobedience or casualness.) Spurgeon said “Lord make me a big receiver”. Without that heart-cry we can never get to the place of abiding where much fruit exists. The great men of God knew how to abide before they received the Kingdom wealth. To abide in the Son, the disciple must hear and take in deeply the Word of God. Faith awakens when we hear the anointed Word of God. 1 John 2 : 24 states :

“Therefore let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides IN you, you will also abide in the Son and the Father.”

Those who are governed by God’s Word in their actions and thoughts will be disciples who living by faith abide in the Son and the Father. Believers are not governed by God’s Word. Disciples ARE! The resolute guide of the Scripture is our source of prudent advice. When the Holy Spirit anoints that counsel, it will stay with the hearer. That counsel of the world, outside the will of God, will deflect and distract the mind bringing pressure not peace, confusion not comfort. The old paths of ancient wisdom must instruct each new generation to abide. Despite his pain and his worthless physicians, Job could abide because he know his integrity. Read Job 12: 13 to Job 13 : 19 and marvel at the high standard of abiding when everything around Job was going so wrong. The pruning was very severe, but the reward glorious!

Abiding is not resting in soulish inactivity but SOWING seeds of love, counsel, finance, mercy, wisdom, helps. The disciples, except Judas, sowed and gave, as they resided for three plus years in the Jesus mobile bible college.

Sowing

Read Galatians 6 : 6 – 10 and check out the law of compensation. What you sow you will inevitably reap, either to the flesh or to the Spirit. IF WE FAINT NOT, a harvest will manifest in God’s appointed season. What are the causes of fainting?

- (a) People in the church who speak against you (Galatians 5 : 15, 1 Corinthians 11 : 29 – 30) ;
- (b) A brother or sister who prays unadvisedly for you. (i.e. not in God’s will) ;
- (c) Prolonged warfare against demon forces. God appoints seasons of non-involvement for the deliverance minister. (Mark 6 : 31) ;
- (d) Looking at the prosperity of the wicked (Psalm 73). Fretting because of it (Psalm 37 : 7) ;
- (e) Activity consciousness (Isaiah 40 : 29 – 31) ;
- (f) Jealousy, conspiracy, no trust, a climate of suspicion. (Song of Songs 8 : 6, Isaiah 54 : 17, Micah 7 : 5, 2 Samuel 15 – 17) ;
- (g) Sudden loss (1 Samuel 30 : 1 – 7)

The temptation of faint, to lose momentum, to go to bed on your faith is between the sowing and reaping. Remember the harvest God wants to give you is greater than your sowing. Life is a reflection of what we give out. Yet the God of all grace is abundant. What do you sow?

Mercy? Then you will receive mercy. Check out Psalm 41 : 1 – 3 and the great rewards of mercy if you consider the poor ;

Teaching? Then you will receive revelation and counsel in times of need ;

Songs in the Spirit? Then you will enter the river of the Spirit and find joy, security, and the seeds of greatness in your new creation life. God’s gentleness made David great.

Abraham was called to be great. (Genesis 12 : 2). That offends our religious mind, but it is true for the worshipper in spirit and in truth.

Finance? Do you tithe, and give gifts? The windows of heaven open for givers.

Proverbs 11 : 25 says,

“The generous soul will be made rich, and he who waters will also be watered himself.”

If we faint not, and hold faith, a financial breakthrough comes in God's perfect timing. Love? Do you sow practical love by babysitting or mending a poor brother's car? Think about it, and ask the Father to show you ten practical ways of loving the brethren. You can love some people and only get trouble back, because there is a demon that repays evil for good. So ask for discernment, so you don't throw your love away. No one lives in a cocoon. If you love the brethren you have a right to receive love.

Remember HUNGER cannot produce HARVEST. Desire plus sowing plus obedience WILL every time produce the fruit of discipleship.

Reaping

We live between the yes and amen (let it be so) of our prayers. The obedient life is truly blessed and experiences the reaping of rewards. Here is a wonderful reward Scripture in **Matthew 10 : 41 :**

“He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall RECEIVE a prophet's reward.”

Bless the prophet, and we will prosper with the grace and truth he imparts to our spirit. If we say “yes” to prophetic ministry then the “let it be so” will manifest in our lives. The enemy, however, has driven inroads here, by releasing false prophecy, and words to accommodate the desires of individuals and congregations. The fruit, the more fruit and much fruit of John 15 is the reaping new creation realities.

2 Corinthians 9 : 6 – 11 reveals the grace of giving and reward of reaping. Verse 8 is the most comprehensive promise in all Scripture, and needs serious meditation. Verse 10 says :

“Now He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness.”

That is more than prosperity reaping! It's first application is surely evangelism! A wise man wins souls. God wants to make certain men into combine harvesters to reap multitudes to Christ Jesus. When you read their biographies always notice it began with pruning. On their wedding day Morris and Theresa Cerullo had a tin of cold baked beans! Moses went through 40 years of pruning, but got the spiritual rewards of the burning bush. The sanctifying, undying fire in the common bush of his life, made him a leader who talked to God face to face. He took 1 ½ million people to a burning mountain. TESTIMONY precedes MINISTRY. What is sown in our life can be sown in another's life....that is the real reaping for us. The pleasure of seeing others live by the truths that set us free. Exodus 19 : 10 tells us that the Israelites had to wash their clothes and prepare for two days. Verse 11 says : “let them be ready for the third day.” We are moving into the third day, i.e. 2000AD to 3000AD. “For in the third day the Lord will come down, upon Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people.” Then the reward will come to the obedient ones who have been washed with the water of the Word of God and become the remnant church, without spot or wrinkle. The Lord Jesus will do the reaping because He sowed every good thing into our lives. He reaped on the Cross all the flesh – sins of the world, despite having sowed grace,

love and wisdom. At the end of the world He comes to inspect His bride :

***“And I looked and behold, a white cloud, and on the cloud sat One like the Son of Man, having on his head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle.....
“Thrust in your sickle, and REAP for the time has come for you to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe.” ” (Revelation 14 : 14 – 15)***

Those who abide, sow and reap; those who have been pruned will not be disappointed. Jesus Christ our Lord has the right to REAP all the good works performed by grace. Grace empowers us to achieve the demands of truth. Through pruning, abiding, sowing and reaping our obedience will discover His eternal rewards.

Come Lord Jesus, and reap all that originated with God.

DON'T LOSE HEART

Whatever the devil throws at you, don't lose heart. We lose heart when we look at things seen; when we fail to focus on the unseen things of glory and the new creation. Be objective in times of pressure and face the fact that the Lord of the heavenly armies reigns.

Hannah went yearly to offer sacrifices to the Lord God of hosts (1 Samuel 1:3). She never lost heart during the demonic provocation from Peninah. She never lost heart at the corrupt religious system of the Eli priesthood. She never lost heart when the old, backslidden priest thought her drunk, a daughter of the devil (1 Samuel 1:14-16).

In days of degeneracy, discernment fades from the ministry which heaps sin under the carpet. "Play with sin and sin will win" is especially true for ministers, elders, indeed anyone in a Kingdom office of responsibility. Yet God found in Hannah an inner graciousness that her very name implies; a purity that could stand against frequent attack. Are you in a situation of intense trial from another believer?

Will you endure hardship in a vile thing for the sake of the name of Jesus that the Spirit of glory may rest upon you?

2 Corinthians 4 is the great ministry chapter where we see maturity coming from the work of the Cross. We have ministry AS we receive mercy, is the amazing precept. It's not our IQ or head knowledge or business acumen or fame in the world that credits us with spiritual capability. Paul said he didn't lose heart because he based his life and ministry on the covenant mercy of God. Therefore his life was a manifestation of the truth. He never watered down the word of God with reason. He never came to any conclusion by virtue of reason alone. He never lost heart because he knew by experience that "all things were for his sake by grace" (2 Corinthians 4:15,16). In other words, Jesus never claimed exemption on anything that Paul went through. God was in all, through all, and behind all. We get disappointed and in despair because we often cannot locate God in our body circumstance. 2 Corinthians 4:8,9 tells us:

"We are hard pressed on every side, yet not crushed, we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed."

This is where the rubber hits the road. These apostolic conflicts reveal the treasure of the new creation within as we react to problems with the excellency of God's power. That word "excellency" (verse 7) means to overreach the target, to overstretch beyond the imagination. When we live in the excellency of the power of God we find it impossible to lose heart. Don't live in the body circumstance; walk and live in the Spirit who intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.

The preparation of prayer stops the losing heart mentality. Nehemiah didn't lose heart when the enemies of God came because he knew vital time interceding before he inspected the broken walls of Jerusalem. Jesus said the parable of the persistent widow so that men always ought to pray and not lose heart (Luke 18:1-8). The early church were deeply exercised in prayer for Peter and released angels into action (Acts 12:1-5). The children of Israel were beaten on the legs and feet until ligaments were broken by their Egyptian taskmasters (Exodus 5:16). This produced groaning to God - a divine protest ministry of prayer - which God answered by mighty signs of judgement,

releasing His chosen with great prosperity and joy.

Wherever you turn in the word of God, God's people don't lose heart when they pray through to God, beyond the circumstances. **DON'T LOSE HEART IN THE PAIN before the GAIN.** The enemy knows his time is short, and that **GOD is DOING A QUICK WORK TODAY** (Romans 9:28).

This is why prayer is paramount.

This week two couples, all four Christian, are going to divorce court. The root problem: they never prayed deeply for the right mate they lost heart because the preparation of daily prayer had never built the true foundation for marital success.

The most intimate thing a husband and wife can do is pray together in the Holy Spirit, flow together in the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and receive revelation and answers. When two spirits join together, the soul area, then the body area will join the way God wants. Thousands of Christian marriages are on the rocks today because there is no deep satisfying devotion with the Lord Jesus.

Check up on King David, in 1 and 2 Samuel. Three crises: Ziklag, Bathsheba, Absalom. See how he recovered himself by encouraging himself in the Lord, by real repentance, and humility. 2 Samuel 15 comes to every believer who is determined to press on to full stature in Christ.

There is an Absalom in the wings, ready to take over and steal the people from their pastor. He is charming, eloquent but soulish. He seduces your friends in the conspiracy. How you react is what you really are. Will you, like David, yield and refuse to lose heart by giving yourself up to the faithful witness? We live in desperate days where there will be more opportunity to lose heart in the 1990's than any other decade since the church began. Will you look at the things unseen? Will grace make your affliction light as a feather? Will we be fully persuaded that those things working **AGAINST** us are in fact working **FOR US**, a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory? (2 Corinthians 4:17,18).

The spirit of faith won in the prayer closet brings us up to God's level of purpose, where we don't lose heart. Remember in a crisis that the enemy wants to accuse God's word to your heart by causing you to look at circumstances rather than unseen promises. After bankruptcy, ill-health, or a divorce, the devil wants you to rewrite your theology of victory.

I lost a wife and a small church within three weeks in April 1981. It all happened so quickly and was the plan of the enemy to ruin my life and ministry. 2 Corinthians was the epistle that delivered me. After eighteen months of prayer, my refusing to allow the circumstances to dictate, I entered the most successful phase of ministry I've experienced. The mercy of God is a powerful motivator to bring forth ministry. In the days of loss, I didn't go to everyone asking for the comfort of their prayers, but battled it out alone in prayer. Encouraging myself in the Lord I knew what it was to endure the cross for the joy that is set before us.

This experience has been used by God to help others going through perplexity.

There are times of deep rejection in a believer's life when the demons wait to cause you to backslide through losing heart. Unbelief in fellow-believers can cause this malady that leads to self-pity, sloth and defeat. See the word of God. Jesus Himself encountered unbelief in Mark 6:1-6. How did He react? He multiplied His ministry in Mark 6:7-13. Then the enemy came again with a losing heart situation as John the Baptist was beheaded (Mark 6:14-29). Check out the rest of this chapter; supernatural life flowed out with a new intensity. That's how we are to be. Never lose heart, for we have this promise:

“And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.” (Galatians 6:9).

Reaping days are here again. As the light of God fades from church to church; as the hatred from the world rises; as confusion marks the end of the twentieth century, A NEW STRENGTH OF GOD'S MERCY WILL MANIFEST IN THE DISCIPLE WHO REFUSES TO LOSE HEART.

Let's pray together:

“Heavenly Father forgive me for looking at the temporary, seen things of this world. Cleanse me in the precious blood of Jesus that I may know refreshing times again. I yield to the revelation of the Holy Spirit in my life. I believe, Father that I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Give me the spirit of prayer and faith to be like a Hannah, to be like Paul, so I refuse to lose heart. Amen.”

GOD'S REMOVALS

“He takes away the first in order to establish the second.”

(Hebrews 10:9)

God removes in order to establish something better. The context of this great principle is the covenants. The first covenant was wholly of God yet removed by Him in order to establish a better covenant based on a better promise. That better covenant was brought into being by His death on the Cross because Jesus rose as High Priest of a new covenant. It would no longer be curse and what not to do, but blessing and what Christ can and will do. No longer a striving to keep the Ten Commandments, but the law of agape love written in the heart and mind by the Holy Spirit (compare Hebrews 8:7-13 and 2 Corinthians 3:3).

The New Covenant was to be written on the softest thing, a human heart, rather than the hard stones of the Law. God through the redemption obtained by His Son would dwell in His people by the Holy Spirit. The tabernacle and temple would no longer be His home, but the hearts of His children, who through repentance and faith enter a new agreement.

Imagine two warring tribes who continue to murder, steal, and plunder one another. The two chiefs come together and made a blood agreement, a pact to ratify the cessation of conflict. They slit the little bunch of blue veins at their wrists, exchange blood, and live in harmony. God's new covenant is a blood agreement with rebellious man. God took the initiative by sending His Son in likeness of human flesh to die as an offering for sin (Romans 8:3). He died once and for all.....a full, sufficient and perfect sacrifice. Man is brought together with God only through the holy blood of Jesus Christ.

The law of the Old covenant is impotent to bring man to God. The law cannot set you free from condemnation, and keeps you under Satan's dominion. (Romans 8:1, Colossians 2:14 -16). The *law* stirs up sin and strengthens sin (Romans 7:17; 1 Corinthians 15:56). Under law sin strengthens its dominion over you. (Romans 6:14.). Law produces transgression (Romans 4:15), bringing about God's wrath.

The Law brings a curse (Galatians 3:13), and produces a double enmity (Ephesians 2:14-16). Praise God that His Son brought in a new covenant of grace and was the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. (See Romans 10:4). Belief is always repentance and faith....the change of thinking at the Cross and the change of living because of the resurrection. We must remember we are not saved by His death, but by His life (Romans 5:10).

Right standing with Father is only because of the blood of the Lamb.....God sees the blood covering the believer, and the power of the holy blood purges our sin so that God cannot remember them. Our sins are destroyed. What a redemption! What a release from the handwriting of ordinances written against us (Colossians 2:14). This is the greatest removal man can experience...that he is no longer under the curse of law, but a partaker of the blessing of the Abraham. Jesus is our burden-bearer and burden-remover in order that He may establish through us His eternal life, love and light.

We can only experience this by the new birth. Something very radical must happen to man for him to forsake his system of trying to please God and live in a new atmosphere of faith. He has to be delivered out from the kingdom of darkness and death and pass into the kingdom of the Son's life (contrast John 5:24, Colossians 1:13).

The context of the principle of God removing then establishing is the matter of two covenants and the glorious improvement of the new covenant which every born again child of God can enjoy. However, in this study I would like to show this principle is at work in our Christian experience in special relation to God's will.

Old Testament examples

The place of removal, separation and death, is the Cross. Old Testament saints knew this. God moulds His servants by a work of removal. The attitude of “we’ve arrived” in a saint or an organization is certain death. God shakes and removes those things that can be shaken (Hebrews 12:27).

Consider Abraham living in Ur, a developed civilization with central heating, education to university level, but God told him to get out and trust Him for a mystery tour. He was removed from his pagan country and family (Genesis 12:1). Although he took Lot with him there came separation, (Genesis 13:11) and then God re-affirmed His promise of possession. Part of the blessing of Abraham is material prosperity and God had to test Abraham concerning his greatest possession, the miracle son, Isaac. Scripture’s first mention of “love” is found in Genesis 22:2.....yet God wanted no rival for His affections so had to wean Abraham’s emotions away from his only son.

In his heart he went through with it. Here is a tremendous type of the Cross - where God exposed His love to the flames of hell. After the “sacrifice”, Abraham unbound the cords that held Isaac down and saw something of the resurrection. God removes in order to establish something better. By exposing Isaac to the knife, by jettisoning Hagar and Ishmael, Abraham experienced the process of removal in relationships. Removal was the constant feature of the pilgrim character... ..geographically he kept moving on because he knew he was not here to stay - heaven was his home. He didn’t think of going back to Ur, but pressed on to the better country. (Hebrews 11:15,16). If our thoughts do linger concerning a previous place or mode of existence we get the opportunity to return. The temptation will surely come to go back and pick up the pieces. God removes the first to establish something better, may we recognize this principle in the pilgrim pathways.

Moses is a classic case of the principle. Forty years of training to be somebody, forty years of unlearning and becoming a nobody, then forty years of learning what God could do with a nobody. God removed the Egyptian education and taught him much more through his mother-in-law and countless sheep! The period of solitude preceded the time of service - loneliness before leadership. Life is a series of links and stages - God removing our first service for him which like Moses, was in the flesh; then establishing the something better.....serving Him in the power of the Spirit. Moses had glanced this way and that, furtively murdering the Egyptian. After the Midian wilderness, he was ready to use the staff of God and deliver the chosen people from the house of bondage. In our ministry let us recognize the point of failure, experience the period of relearning, take up the challenge of deliverance in the wisdom of His timing. After the removal of the first, the teaching Spirit will come to us and reveal why we failed and how to succeed.

The excuses of Moses reveal what had been going on. He now had no confidence (Exodus 3:11), no faith (Exodus 4:1) and no speech (Exodus 4:10). He was conscious of the bankruptcy his natural life and that his only sufficiency would be of God. God removes the reliance we have upon our abilities and talents and establishes a dependence upon the Holy Spirit. The tragedy with most Christians is that we begin in the Spirit and try to perfect that in the flesh. This is because the work of removal by the Cross has not been radical and devastating in the dealing with our satanically inspired self-nature. (See Romans 8:13). Moses was the meekest man on the face of the earth, his strength broken-in and harnessed for work. He was ready to bring the sons of Israel out of Egypt because he learnt of God in the solitude, out of the public eye.

Job is perhaps unique in this principle of removing the first in order to establish the second. Drastic removals crashed on the upright, perfect man who went through an astonishing pregnancy of sanctification. (There was a nine month time-gap between chapters 2 and 40). Removal of family, property, health, livelihood put him in a spiritual spin of circumstances few could endure. By chapter 9 Job tries to rescue the situation by talking theory. But head knowledge could not deal with this and the downward drift from complaint (10:1) to presumption (13:1), from deception (19:6) to arrogance (31:37) forces Job into a war of words. He didn't know God had allowed Satan to make a battleground for his soul. God couldn't get through, but was waiting. The removal of our tenacious creed of who God is and how He works, in order for God to establish the revelation of a new aspect of Jesus, is much needed truth today. God always has to raise new voices and ministries because denominations and organizations stop in yesterday's counsel.

David served the purpose of God in his generation (Acts 13:36) by going beyond the tradition of the day. He saw beyond the system of offerings to the opened ear, attentive to the Holy Spirit (Psalm 40:6). Job had to get beyond his view of God. After chapter 38, a sense of majesty, awe and glory shine into Job, imparting humility. We only grow in maturity as God makes us see the cancer cells of consecrated self.

We cannot bring the proud man low if we have pride. (Job 40:11-14). This book is the story form of death to self doctrines taught by Paul (Romans 6, 2 Corinthians 4, Philippians 3). Removal of ego must occur if God is to establish the Spirit-filled personality. See **Galatians 2:20**: “*yet no longer I (ego), but Christ lives in me (personality)*”.

For David, the caves Adullam were a place of removal. God could not establish him as king until he had learnt to see the kingdom in higher terms. Removed from the palace, the music, Jonathan, the prosperity and the esteem, David was brought low, down; and out with a bunch of worthless marauders. The distressed, the discontented, those in debt gathered round the future king. 1 Samuel 25:1 tells us that Samuel, the intercessor dies. The removal is complete, so God teaches David concerning the things of the Kingdom. The teaching Spirit is at work in this great chapter (1 Sam. 25).

- (a) The Kingdom of God is not based on compulsion but affection. Notice v. 8 “please give”;
- (2) The Kingdom of God is not based on revenge but mercy. Notice v.13 “Each gird on his own sword.” Vengeance is the Lord's and but for Abigail's wise interception, David would have had a massacre on his conscience, which would not be the Lord's anointed.
- (3) The Kingdom of God is not based on pride but humility. Notice v.21, David full of hurt pride.
- (4) The Kingdom of God is not based on folly but wisdom (v.24-31). The folly of Saul was to fight his own battles and here David was going to do the same. Abigail's wisdom was immediately acknowledged by David (v.32-35).

After removal, the Lord will teach us, will meet that part of us that has caused failure. The valley between removal and establishment of the something better is a precious time. God desires to remove the old nature in us and establish the new. The Holy Spirit leads to the Cross, that death sentence of the old man, and leads us also to the word of God that by faith and patience we may inherit the promises, being partakers of the divine nature.

The prophets knew this principle of removal and establishment. Ezekiel lost his wife and was not allowed tears, but after chapter 24 the glory returns. Removals may be in the sphere of tenderest relationships. The Cross can cut our sweetest ties. The discipleship demanded of Jesus is emphatic:

“If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father, mother, wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes and his own life, he cannot be My disciple.”

(Luke 14:26).

That means “hate by comparison of our love for Him.” Love for Jesus must be dominant. If we profess discipleship He is able to remove in the area of relationship. Our love for Him is not based in the emotions, but the will, we must keep His commandments to prove our love. (John 14:15,21). We must be doers of the Word.

Jeremiah constantly kept faith with the revealed Word of the Lord. It cost him his leisure, bank balance, chances of friendship, and even his sanity at times (see Jeremiah 20:14-18). The something better, the glorious second for him was the glimpse of the New Covenant and the reality of a better resurrection (Hebrews 11:35). The prophetic office brings corrective teaching to the body of Christ, and persecution remains the mark of the prophetic succession. Prophets invariably have to take the misunderstandings and insults of other believers. All esteem was removed from Jeremiah, but one man with God is a majority. Only men of God who have been through the Cross escape the snare of receiving glory from one another. Jeremiah’s commendation came from God only.

Prophets pay the price of removal so that the establishment of “well done you good and faithful servant” may usher in rewards of eternity. Trace removal in the lives of Isaiah and Daniel or the minor prophets.....God surely removes the first in order to establish the second.

In The New Testament

The principle is seen with force concerning the disciples, who had enjoyed three years of mobile bible college with the greatest teacher the world has ever known. He was going to leave them (see John 16:5-7); the one thing they didn't want to happen was declared to them.

Yet this removal would trigger off a new relationship with Him. They would begin to know Him after the Holy Spirit, rather than after the flesh. If He didn't go, the Holy Spirit would not come, the New Covenant would not become functional. He had to die, rise, ascend and be the High Priest of the New Covenant. He had to be removed from His friends. They had to let Him go in order to enter into the blood bought realities of eternal redemption. Greater works would be done when Jesus went to Father and poured out the Holy Spirit on the church (John 14:12). What are these greater works? Works done in the spirit realm.....during His earth walk Jesus did works in the physical realm.....He spoke gracious words, raised the dead, healed lepers etc.

The Church is to be responsible for the manifold wisdom of God in the heavenly places against evil powers (Ephesians 3:10). Setting our minds on things above is not dreaming of heaven, but active wrestling in the good fight of faith. May God remove the materialistic vision amongst us in order to establish the something better.....the fight of prevailing prayer (Ephesians 6:18). The taunt “you are so heavenly minded you are no earthly good” should be dismissed. The evangelical church today is so earthly minded it’s no heavenly use. Life in the heavenlies dictate what we are here.

The Apostle Paul had the radical reality of removal in his experience:

“But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ.....” (Philippians 3:7,8).

Removal is the first part of sanctification, of gaining Christ. Every forward move to know God more is marked by losing something. Gain in the natural area (wealth, nobility, education, culture) must be counted as loss. More than that, all things must be counted as loss. There is a time to lose our grip on things that pull us down into the world. See I John 2:15 -17. The only way these verses can be real in us is that we know:

“But may it never be that I should boast except in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.” (Galatians 6:14)

The Cross is the devastating death sentence to worldly allurements. It's a good day when the young believer removes his rock music collection, enters the discipline of tithing, says no to cinema and dubious novels, begins to remove his thoughts from career so that the Lord may establish the cardinal ethic of christianity: self-renunciation. We have to take up our cross (Luke 9:23), a path of self denial, a counting of all things lost so that we may gain Christ. We are Christ's, under the same anointing as Jesus. That anointing only breaks forth from our spirits as the Cross is applied, to our self-life. In the life of Jesus we can see this self-emptying process, the desire to make Himself of no reputation, the constant process of removal. His birth was in a manger for animals (Lk.2:12), after amazing the teachers in the temple he became subject to Mary and Joseph (Lk. 2:51).

At the Baptism He submitted to John (Matthew 3:13), during ministry He allowed His family to call Him insane (Mark 3:21). He counted all things loss and endured the Cross for the joy that was set before Him. Jesus lost everything at the Cross, even fellowship with Father. But through the drastic removals there came the establishment of the second, the exaltation:

“And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore also God highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name” (Philippians 2:8, 9).

What a glorious, triumphant second! Jesus made His name the greatest name over things in heaven, earth and under the earth by going through with the Cross. The removal was followed by the establishment of all things put in subjection under His feet (Ephesians 1:22).

In the life of Paul this principle is clearly at work. As a servant of God he faced the perpetual crisis of removal (2 Corinthians 6:4-10) of health, liberty, sleep, food, comfort, companion-ship. Through the Cross there is a profitable sequel, a prosperous succession. Paul knew purity, kindness, genuine love, the word of truth, weapons of righteousness. In the affliction he knew the comfort of God. He could encourage believers that experience of removal and loss was not primarily for them, but for others. Ministry is proving God in our adversity, going through, and being a blessing to those similarly afflicted. (2 Corinthians 1: 4-7).

In this letter we get Paul on Paul - an expose of the Cross in ministry. The vital principle of death in us and life in you is the basis of ministry (2 Corinthians 4:12). The more marked the Cross-life is in the pastor's experience, the greater will be the flow of unfettered blessing from his ministry.

HOLINESS

We live in a filthy world, breaking apart at the seams. The early church had such a standard of holiness, those not born again, “dared not join them” (Acts 5 : 13). The call of holiness in today’s church has been suppressed by the blessing, quick-fix gospel. Read Oswald Chambers, Watchman Nee, Norman Grubb, A.W. Tozer, Andrew Murray, Jessie Penn-Lewis and you will begin to desire to be holy. You will see that 1 Peter 1 : 15 -16 and Matthew 5 : 48 are not impossibilities, but glorious Him possibilities.

Explanation of Holiness

The holiness of God is the essence of ethics, and permeates all His other attributes. This essential prosperity of God demands that sin be dealt with. Our sin saturated minds cannot grasp the pure crystal stream of God’s holiness : it is foreign to human nature at even it’s best and most exalted. Confronted with the Holy One man can only tremble, and be silent as Isaiah’s awesome, prostrating vision. Holiness means ‘to be well’ and ‘to be whole’ in the Anglo-Saxon language and we need to start here in attempting a definition. That happy state is reserved for those who know God’s righteousness DEMANDED the Cross and His love PROVIDED the Cross. Righteousness, God’s self-preserving attribute was the sentinel or guard. Love, God’s self imparting attribute was the guide. Holiness = Righteousness + Love + Glory. We are to obtain glory said Paul to the Thessalonian church. God’s holiness begins by impartation through the blood of the Lamb to the humble and honest heart. The seed of sanctification begins at the new birth as we are separated from the guilt of sin. The Cross of Calvary then must do a work to deliver us from the power of indwelling sin. When Jesus returns we are transported from the presence of sin. Holiness will be the great theme of the millennium age! (See Zechariah 14 and Isaiah 35). So we need to desire holiness now more than life itself, to be prepared for the ages to come.

Essentially, holiness is the character of Jesus as revealed in the fruit of the Holy Spirit. We begin to partake of this divine nature after the new birth. He is looking for the fruit of holiness and will return for a Bride without spot or wrinkle.

1. Holiness is commanded.(Leviticus 19 : 2)

Peter amplifies the O.T. injunction by saying “in all manner of living” – be holy (1 Peter 1 : 15). Paul links holiness with glory in **2 Corinthians 3 : 18** (RV version) :

*“But we all with unveiled face,
reflecting as in a mirror the glory of the Lord,
are TRANSFORMED into the same image
from GLORY to GLORY even as from
the Lord the Spirit.”*

Paul also warns the Corinthian church of God’s judgement if holiness is not pursued. 1 Corinthians 3 : 16 – 17 needs to be memorised because the word hidden in our hearts will sanctify our memory. We are the new covenant sanctuary of God in our spirits. When David placed the Levites around the ark of the covenant to worship for 36 years there was an open heaven. His tabernacle had no division between holy place and holy of holies. God does not want a wall between your soul and your spirit. The soul should be a pure vehicle for God’s life to come through your spirit and influence your world. We are God’s temple

and any attempt to defile or destroy it inevitably leads to the wrath of God unless we repent.

2. Holiness commends Jesus in the World

We are the salt of the earth and light in the world. We must mirror Jesus Christ and power only comes through a clean vessel. It's our life that speaks to others, not so much our words. People are moved by radiations more than exhortations. I knew a holy Bible teacher who through a smile and a simple handshake could impart a holy anointing that blessed your soul. John 17 : 15 says we are in the world, implicated in it's trade, discussion, politics, education, work and so on, but we are insulated from the spirit of the age behind the world system. When we sin we ever feel our need in this life of the daily cleansing of 1 John 1 : 7 – 9.

3. Holiness is communicated through the Son of God

Luke 1 : 35 describes the holiness of the Incarnation, the birth of Jesus Christ. His holiness comes to us through redemption and Pentecost. Galatians 4 : 6 wonderfully exclaims :

“And because you are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, ‘Abba, Father’.”

The degree of our salvation is the degree we see Jesus. We progress through discipleship and obedience from forgiven sinners to free sons!

FORGIVEN	SINNERS
FOLLOWING	SERVANTS
FELLOWSHIPPING	SAINTS
FREED	SONS

Experiencing sonship is evidence of maturity. You can be prominent in your church, but a lightweight. Are you significant because you want holiness more than anything else? The degree of real success in leadership is not because we follow the right strategy or have the right church structure, but **HOLINESS!** Is Jesus having His way with us? Are you living as a freed son?

THE EXPERIENCE OF HOLINESS

Reading : ISAIAH 6 : 1 – 8

A real vision humbles you. The counterfeit vision exalts you and leaves you with a smug feeling of pride. Ezekiel and Daniel were debilitated by the honour of beholding the glory of God. Isaiah received the awesome prostrating vision which brought the impact of conviction, ***“woe is me, I am undone!”*** Undone equals dumb in the Hebrew. He was frozen in the mouth. When revival is impending, the saints speak a lot less and tend to whisper. Once a word is spoken it can never be retrieved – our words are in the ether. The concentration of sin was on Isaiah's tongue. His wrong speech was cleansed by the fire of the living coal. The holy experience of glory elevated

Isaiah from seventeen years as a local pastor to becoming an international prophet. Isaiah 6 was his Acts 2 experience – a sanctification by fire which brought him to hear divine intercourse. God trusts the holy man or woman with His inheritance. Obadiah 17 reveals the divine order :- deliverance, holiness and inheritance. In past generations, deliverance did not need to be emphasised because society still had moral foundations. Since 1950, deliverance has become an essential precursor to real holiness. The experience of having demons cast out from our lives quickens the hunger for holiness. Many believers think the new birth alone makes them holy and delivered, but experience and a close look at God’s work tells another story. The difference between justification, and sanctification can be seen in this summary chart :

<u>JUSTIFICATION</u>	<u>SANCTIFICATION</u>
1. COMPLETED	CONTINUAL
2. IMPUTED (put to my account)	IMPARTED
3. DONE <u>FOR</u> US	DONE <u>IN</u> US
4. GOOD WORKS EXCLUDED	GOOD WORKS ESSENTIAL
5. OBJECTIVE – in Him (position in Christ)	SUBJECTIVE - condition through Christ
6. BY DECLARATION OF THE FATHER	BY OPERATION OF THE SPIRIT
7. FORGIVENESS – GUILT OF SIN REMOVED	FREEDOM – grip of sin broken

The experience of holiness is IMPARTED so the powerful grip of sin is broken. This must not be confused with sinless perfectionism, but a state of abiding, where we need not sin, becomes our privilege. My life is only what the Holy Spirit makes it.

Isaiah had to see the ascended Lord surrounded by the burning, incandescent ones who cried, “Holy, Holy, Holy.” Leaders of throne worship, the seraphim, were also guardians of His holiness by fire. He saw a bright heaven in the year King Uzziah died. There may be calamity on earth, but there is always consolation in heaven when the eyes of our heart are flooded with light. In the year, when my husband committed adultery; in the year we went bankrupt; in the year the floods took away your house; in the year I lost my job – heaven’s holy resources are still available for you! God orders catastrophe that we may receive a deeper revelation of Himself, of ourself, and a lost world! He will bring us to the place again and again where we know that human life cannot live the Christian life, so that we may experience holiness.

ENTRANCE TO HOLINESS

Reading : ROMANS 6 : 1 – 8 : 17

This logical sequence contains the keys to entering in. The holiness principle is found in Romans 6 : 14.

***“For sin shall not have dominion over you (Romans 6),
for you are not under law (Romans 7) but under grace.” (Romans 8)***

The link between sin and law is found in 1 Corinthians 15 : 56, ***“the strength of sin is the law.”*** The law showed our guilt before the new birth in Romans 3. The law shows our helplessness and hopelessness after the new birth in Romans 7. The great truths of Romans 6 and 7 must be “obeyed from the heart”. The word “form of doctrine” in 6 : 17 means the imprint of doctrine. The word for “form” is the same as the imprint of the nails on His hands! If God is going to brand “HOLINESS” into our spirits, the Roman letter, vital to our understanding must be meditated upon again and again.

Let every distress, trial, temptation, defeat and disappointment drive you to the place of allowing the light from the Cross to show you how God sees it all. He will use these things to break from us the self - delusion that thinks we can live the Christian life by our own ability. The law in Romans 7 helps us to come to the end of ourselves. Moses in Midian knew it, and so did Jacob with Laban, which is perhaps the clearest picture of the breaking of a believer. We are meant to feel our INABILITY, and the blessed schizophrenia of Romans 7 : 14 – 18. The new man is trying to do good, but messing up and missing out on the resurrection life of the Spirit.....this is the carnal man. In Romans 6 we have the picture of the natural man or Satan in us, as the spirit of disobedience doing evil. Remember Jesus to the unregenerate disciples in Luke 11 : 13.....

***“If you, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts
to your children....”***

In Romans 8 we see the spiritual man, the new man succeeding in the power of the law of the Spirit of life.

Just before that wonderful release we reach the great despair of Romans 7 : 24 ***“O, wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?”*** The temporary uprising of the dominion of sin was allowed by God to stop from our self – reliant self that keeps acting in independence of God. The law in Romans 7 accelerates the sinfulness of sin and it’s antagonism to God within the new creation believer. Most of God's children do not go through Romans 6 and 7 because some form of covetousness (7 : 7) still reigns. “What’s in it for me?” questions Peter in Matthew 19 : 27. So it is today. To the believer dead to sin, and dead to the law, the law can no longer say “You shall” or “You shall not”. We have passed into a new sphere, in Christ Jesus, where we contain, as a vessel, the precious treasure of the life that God lives. The condition is to choose to be slaves of righteousness by departing from every known sin. This becomes an easy yoke for those who have seen their funeral nailed to the tree with their crucified Lord! (See Romans 6 : 6). This co – crucifixion with Christ is the basis of victory over self and demons. Preaching must revive this truth, so clearly seen in Galatians 2 : 20 (a).

***“I (the old self) have been crucified with Christ,
nevertheless I (the new self) live, yet not I, (self - assertive self)
but Christ lives in me (the liberated personality of the new creation.)”***

We placard our horizon with “Not I but Christ” and enter the holy life of the Spirit.

Legalistic holiness centres on TRY HARDER in :

GIVING	READING BIBLE
PRAYING	SERVING
SUBMITTING	TITHING
WITNESSING	GOING TO MEETINGS
etc, etc.	

The Cross in my life for God stops all that nonsense and causes me to know the leading of the Lord in all matters. The big secret of Jesus was that the Father LIVED IN HIM. (See John 14 : 10). Now CHRIST LIVES IN ME. I don't have to come apart at the seams. Only Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit can do the Sermon on the Mount. As we die daily to self, He in us can live righteously through our thoughts, emotions, actions and even motives. This holiness is the Christian's vital desire.

EXORTATION TO HOLINESS

Reading : 2 CORINTHIANS 6 : 11 - 7 : 1

Holiness teaching is never external law threatening you with "you shall" and "you shall not", but internally received truth that convicts and comforts. Truth must hurt before it heals, and it hurts by being applied to the heart. The Corinthian heart was restricted (v.12) by the kind of city they had grown up in. We are conditioned by the preconceptions of our past, culturally, environmentally. Corinth was a tourist and trade city with much sexual licence. Aphrodite, the goddess of erotic sex, desired her male and female prostitutes to make love in front of her massive naked statue. This would excite her to have sex with other gods and confer blessing upon the copulators. Paul, who lived in great strictness even before his conversion, was called to Corinth! As an apostle! Not a calling he would naturally have chosen. So he speaks often to the church about holiness. Verses 14 to 16 emphasise the difference between the redeemed community and the seething world of the heathen.

An idol is anything we draw strength from apart from the Lord Jesus Christ. Corinth was full of idols, and demonic power. That's why Paul forbade meat to be sacrificed to idols, because the average Corinthian gave meat to Aphrodite, Apollos and Zeus in order to receive the demonic 'blessings'! Paul was drawing a line between :

BELIEVERS	UNBELIEVERS
LIGHT	DARKNESS
CHRIST	BELIAL
TEMPLE OF GOD	IDOLS
CUP OF THE LORD	CUP OF DEMONS
	(1 Corinthians 10 : 21)

Young believers at Corinth were under a great temptation to be lured back to the world value of promiscuity and idolatry. The way of escape in 1 Corinthians 10 : 13 is the way of the Cross. To die daily, to deny self, to reckon oneself to be dead to sin so that the power of Cross - death could be a present, living reality in them.

The Father welcomes saints who desire the separation of holiness. Are you desperate for real change? Is the Word of God governing your life, your attitudes and motives? Are you washed

in the blood of Jesus to the extent you are ANOINTED to see your home town and the streets you live in AS JESUS SEES? Do we have meaningful fellowship with other believers? Is prayer an adventure? How do we value one human soul? Is that unsaved soul more precious than owning all the world? (See Matthew 16 : 26).

WASH yourself with HOLY BLOOD! Are you sick of yourself? Sick of the world's values? Tired and sick of a Christianity that has no heart for holiness?

We need FIRE for our lips, the CROSS of CHRIST for our self - life and the BLOOD of the LAMB to cleanse us from the defilement of the world. It's the only way we keep our eyes on Jesus. Do you remember your first time out in a car? You must keep your eye on the road. If you look at people walking or shop windows you will veer over to what you are looking at. If our gaze is on the things of the earth we will become worldly, and deny the precious birthright of being born again. So, come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean. In our culture that is TV - and then receive the promise :

***“ I WILL RECEIVE YOU I WILL BE A FATHER TO YOU
AND YOU SHALL BE MY SONS AND DAUGHTERS.”***

Holiness is the highway to practical sonship. Without holiness we shall not see the Lord. Plead with God for holiness like the saints of old –

“ Lord, make me as holy as a saved sinner can be by your grace.” Then our Christian lives will spontaneously reflect the image (the inner branding) of the Lord Himself, and people will be drawn to God as Jesus is lifted up through you and me, from WITHIN YOU AND ME. (See Romans 8 : 9, Colossians 1 : 27). NOW we can LIVE A LIFE WORTH CHRIST DYING FOR!

KINGDOM LIFESTYLE

In the battle before Agincourt 300 excellent English archers had their first two fingers of the right hand cut off by the French. At Agincourt the English bowmen lifted their two fingers to the French and the V-sign was born. Every believer has two fingers – authority and anointing so that we can cast out demons. The supremacy of the English over the French was the result of having their two fingers so they could use their bow and arrows to full effect. We must use our authority in the name of Jesus by the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Luke 11: 20 says, concerning our authority as the finger of God:

“but if I cast out demons with the finger of God; surely the Kingdom of God as come upon you.”

Matthew 12: 28 substitutes “the Spirit of God” for the finger of God. I am not telling you to do V-signs to the enemy, but using the illustration to stir up a zeal within your spirit to go to war, and use God-given authority and anointing.

The Kingdom of God is Within you (Luke 17: 21). The sphere or habitat of where Jesus rules is within your spirit, that safe place of retreat which has been regenerated when you were born again. Notice that deliverance and Kingdom go together. All miracles Jesus did are in the Old Testament, except exorcism. Casting out demons are the distinctive mark in the New that the Kingdom has come. All pastors, all elders, all church planters, all missionaries, all evangelists should have the two fingers of authority and anointing to set the captives free.

The scope of deliverance

The beginning of Kingdom lifestyle is the breaking of the power of the enemy over our lives. To gain greater capacity for God, curses must be broken, strongholds pulled down, spiritual warfare against principalities and powers pursued, soul-ties broken, generational sins dealt with. The head of the home must overcome strife in relationships. The preacher must inspire others to wage warfare against the strong men of antichrist, jezebel and death followed by Hades. Every believer has the daily battle against strongholds, those power grips that swing the mind’s thinking toward the adversary’s agenda. All fears, anxieties, rejections, tempers, regrets, must be overcome for Kingdom lifestyle.

a) Strongholds

Read 2 Corinthians 10 3—6.

The stronghold does not easily let go of your mind. It grips because a reason in your spiritual history allows the enemy a place. Sin has a consequence. Play with sin and sin will win by placing a stronghold over the mind. The other grounds can be generational weaknesses or curses and victimization, intimidation or domination by another person. In praying for the removal of strongholds we need to handle the blood of Jesus as a separating force that cuts the sufferer off from all kinds of torment. For example when disease or sickness is to be healed in His glorious name you need to discern a tormenting fear of that disease in the mind. Fear and rejection always produce a level of torment. Tormentors are those who bring out information by torture. The enemy stronghold

can cause us to say death words, a negative cycle of speech that gives further ground to the operation of evil spirits. This area brings faith teaching and deliverance as partnering truths to set the captive free. Many of God's precious children are hindered from receiving precise instruction from the head of the church because strongholds have not been pulled down by spiritual weapons. Keep the stronghold, and His grip on your life will become weaker. How many believers grow in grace throughout their lives? How many after 20 or 30 years in the Kingdom fail to produce fruit?

Check these strongholds:

1. Saul	envy, jealousy	1 Samuel 18:7—11
2. Job	hopelessness	Job 6: 2,11; 10: 15,18
3. Peter	deception	Galatians 2:11 _21 Matthew 16: 22,23
4. Timothy	intimidation	2 Timothy 1: 7
5. Elijah	fear	IKings 19: 1—10
6. Hannah	sorrow	1 Samuel 1: 15
7. Gehazi	greed	2Kings5: 20—27
8. Nebuchadnezzar	pride	Daniel 4: 37
9. Cain	murder	Genesis 4: 1 _10 (Notice in verse 7 there was a demon crouching by the door-This was more sinister than a sin problem.)
10. David	revenge	1 Samuel 25: 13

Do your own study and see how these Bible characters got free or remained in the bondage.

b) Curses

Curses always look for a reason to descend on us, and unconfessed sin and unguarded words provide the ground. Here are twelve reasons or causes for the curse to do the enemy's work:

1. Laziness	Judges 5: 23
(especially a refusal to take spiritual warfare seriously)	
2.Pride	Psalm 119: 21
3.Flesh _dependant	Jeremiah 17: 5
4.Negative talk	Proverbs 18 21
5.Soulsh talk	James 3:15
6.Evil eye	Galatians 3: 1
7.Disrespect for parents	Ephesians 6: 2,3
8.Robbing God	Malachi 3: 8— 10
9.Immorality	Proverbs 6: 32; Lev. 18: 22
10.Theft	Genesis 31: 25 35:16 Zechariah 5: 1-4

11.False gods

Exodus 20: 1 —5
(false gospel included: see
Galatians 1:6—9)
Isaiah 54: 17,18

12.Self— imposed curses

How do I know a curse may be active? Deuteronomy 28 22—65 lists the serious indicators of mental or emotional breakdown, repeated or severe sickness, barrenness or miscarriage, accident – prone, financial problems, divorce etc. The power of a curse can separate even the Spirit –filled believer from the favour of God and the blessings that are listed in Deuteronomy 28:

1 –14. Notice there is three times the Scripture devoted to the curses, because curses are far more common!

BLESSING comes when we pass from under the curse by deliverance and faith. Curses must be broken because the evil spirit attaches itself to them. Faith in Galatians 3: 13, 14 is also required. Curses of slander can be very successful, and divert the accused from the path of God. Jezebelic control must be cut away for divine favour to flow again. Here are some of the blessings that make rich and add no sorrow to you:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| a) Favour | Luke 1: 28,30; 1Thess.2: 4 |
| b) More than enough | Phil.4:15—19; 3John 2 |
| c) Victory | 2 Corinthians 2: 14
God does not give up on you until he leads you in victory. |
| d) Healing | Acts 10: 38
The word ‘oppressed’ is speaking of a torment spirit that impacts the disease in the body |
| e) Promotion | Deut. 28: 13; Proverbs 18: 16 |
| f) Positive divine optimism | Phil 1: 12
Paul was up to his knees in excrement, in darkness in the Imperial prison, but hope still spoke in his spirit. Romans 8: 35—39 |
| g) Joy | Psalms 30: 5; Jeremiah 31: 13 |
| h) Fruitfulness | Hebrews 6: 7,8; John 15: 8 |
| i) Love | 1John3: 1; Deut.23: 5 |
| j) Obedience | Deut.28: 1, 30:1—3;
Psalms 126: 1—3;
Romans 12: 14; Luke 6: 28 |

How do we appropriate them? Simply, by walking in the Spirit and refusing to walk in the flesh. The revelation walk brings revolution Kingdom living. Why do God’s people love conferences? Because after a few meetings God’s concentrated power lifts away the curses. They will return if we fail to obey His Word.

The curse of fatherlessness needs to be addressed today. Even when you have experienced parents without the trauma of divorce, the lack of godly love can lead to many problems. A disconnectedness is common among post World War two children. The emotional scars of grief and pain bring a wounding in spirit where many cannot function properly. Loneliness, lack of approval, depression, produces a sense of exile, which for some ends in insanity. The

fatherlessness has been exaggerated by a matriarchal rule of cruelty and control. In the last 40 years of the twentieth century this curse increased rapidly with the demasculizing of men and the masculinizing of women. The church is desperate for men and women to break curses with the warrior anointing.

c) Soul - ties

Godly soul -ties in friendship and family can become ungodly. The transference of depression or fear spreads sometimes in close relationship either at home or work. Any sexual relationship outside marriage will produce an ungodly soul -tie with a sense of emotional longing or mystic union.

Proverbs 6 32 says:

“Whoever commits adultery with a woman

Lacks understanding; he who does so destroys his own soul”

In other words you become partly the property of another, and part of your soul enters the other. God wants to keep sex in marriage, so intimacy and union can be enjoyed. We possess our souls in patience, bearing up in a heavy pressure situation. God looks for maturity in all marriage. Divorce is admitting you cannot share your real self with your mate at the expense of the old self. The church was soul -tied in Acts 4: 32. Godly marriage is a godly soul -tie when God initiates it and there follows the gluing together of two spirits, two souls, and two bodies. Godly soul -ties are very precious but often rare. David and Jonathan were knit together in a love covenant. (1 Samuel 18:1).

However, what can start out godly often ends up confused because the enemy inroads have not been discerned. I remember two Christian ladies who became very close, but when one was embarking on a relationship with a man she felt could be her husband, her friend flew into a controlling rage of temper, a spirit of fear was released, and damage was done. The insidious relationship of ungodly soul -tie prevents God's purpose. The Cross of Christ is central to the will of God in our big decisions and must cut the tenderest of ties, or the purpose will be thwarted. Jezebel's use of flattery, sentimentality and control savages much church progress. The **Living**, active Word of God must divide soul from spirit, or we will experience the draining and paralyzing work of evil spirits attacking our desire to please God. Watch out for Jezebel in women and Nimrod in men, that spirit that would unlawfully possess what is not rightfully his. Kingdom lifestyle uses Psalm 118: 11,12 to cut away those demons that infiltrate ungodly soul -ties.

Up to now, I've highlighted the negative side to Kingdom lifestyle. The bad news forever precedes the good! Even before eternity we get one final rebellion from Satan after the thousand years of Christ reigning! The positive power of Kingdom life is to love as Jesus was loved by the Father. The love of God is deep commitment, true motive, and heart relationship. The question we need to ask is, “Can I share my real self to benefit another at my expense?” If you answer in the affirmative, the love of God IS IN YOU! This unselfish, sacrificial love reaches out; when God so loved the world; when Jesus hung on the Cross in the hardest labour imaginable, bearing away our sin; when millions of believers act with compassion. We are delivered from the power of darkness into the Kingdom of the Son of His love.

2 God calls the Christian to love cold bloodedly.

Agape love is much more than a feeling because it puts iron in the soul. There comes a season in a marriage when all the romance has been forgotten. This winter season means God wants you to love from your will, coldbloodedly. Are you a proactive or reactive person? The proactive make choices upon deeply held values – ‘I determine’, ‘I will’, ‘I choose to’, according to ethics. The reactive person empowers the circumstances to control their life, by saying, for example, ‘he made me mad’, ‘she ruined my life’. The proactive Christian says ‘he or she hurt me, but I choose to forgive from my heart.’ Loving is rejoicing in the truth and SUBMITTING our wills to the authority of the Word of God.

A flea looks to a dog or cat for life. Dependancy is vital for progression of life. A battery unilaterally gives life –our supercharger is the Holy Spirit. Yet countless Christian marriages and relationships are two fleas! Are you merely a puppet at the end of a string reacting to what others say or do? The problems we face are never out there for the proactive, but internal, i.e. our response to the choices of others and the circumstances. Strong godly love comes out of godly response to difficult circumstances. Read Romans 5: 3 –5 and see the progress of the apostolic mind.

3 God calls the Christian to love compassionately.

Jesus was moved in His will with white –hot divine compassion. The product of hating sin and loving the sinner equals compassion. Tough love confronts sin, and brings the needed discipline of the Father. Avoid the sin issues and sentimentality invades with it’s soul –based counterfeit. Fire relates to compassion: we must be ignited in holy love. This possibility emerges out of the gripping love of Christ that makes us see that He died for all and all died in Him. These twin facts of Calvary; His unconditional love and our old man killed off in His death comes from the focus and heart of His compassion. He loved us enough to crucify that in us that was incapable of love, the sin –spirit we inherited from Adam. Compassion flows from Calvary so we grow in grace and godlikeness. Another Jesus cannot achieve it. The drop –out hippy Jesus of the 1960’s has no backbone of righteousness. The prosperous yuppie Jesus of the 1980’s has no heart of sacrificial compassion. Do we surrender to the hard sayings of Luke 14? 26 –33? Only compassion can live in those verses.

4 God calls the Christian to love communicatively.

We communicate God’s love in many ways: –

a) More than words 1 John 3: 18

Look at Dorcas in Acts 9. Her good deeds seemed to have qualified her for resurrection! Our love for one another is the essential mark of conversion.

b) Allows freewill and is never controlling John 6: 67

He let them go if they wanted. Beware leaders who control your will –they are leading you into a cult.

c) By giving quality time

The world does not know us by our going to meetings, by dancing, or doing carpet time, by glorious testimony or by tithing or preaching, but by our love for one another. That means giving quality time. Fellowship is rare even in a charismatic culture.

d) By touch

Never touch anyone without being granted permission first. However, when agree, God's anointed love can flow through a hug, a handshake, the laying on of hands and a holy kiss.

e) By commitment

Read 2 Corinthians 8: 1 – 5 and see that the double commitment of “they gave themselves to the Lord and then to us by the will of God” involves prayer agreement and a listening to His will.

f) By believing in the person when no-one else does

Acts 9: 10 – 16 is a cameo of great fellowship between two believers because the Lord orchestrated it, beyond the caution of Ananias. If we fear man we cannot honour God.

4. God calls the Christian to receive Father's love consistently

Distortions concerning love can halt any reception of the kind of love that always heals, refreshes and brings the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Some say:

- (a) Love doesn't last and cannot help me survive.
In some homes love has been a forbidden word.
- (b) Love always produces pain.
- (c) Poor relationships with our parents, especially, father.
- (d) Programmed to conditional love.
- (e) Love means giving up freedom and identity.
- (f) I'm suspicious; what do they want out of me?
- (g) Love leads to guilt, because I've failed so many times.
- (h) Love dominates the real you and suppresses your personality.
- (i) Is love more than sex or receiving gifts?
- (j) I'm frightened of any wrong motives.

Here are many strongholds and imaginations or reasonings that must be demolished by praise, the Word of God, the blood of the Lamb, and the name of Jesus Christ. We must come to a place of acknowledging our need to be loved by Father, and to see that intimacy with Him will help us grow as real people. The fear of receiving his eternal, warm, personal love must be bound in Jesus name! The spirits of bondage must be broken. (See Romans 8: 15). Then we can ask the Holy Spirit to love us with the Father's undying love. We knew a tiny speck of His love at the new birth, and perhaps again when He baptized us in the Holy Spirit. We need to bask in Father's love consistently to be used in a loveless culture that is looking for the real thing. To be containers of agape love we find we must maintain a walk of being delivered. Kingdom lifestyle is where deliverance and love meet.

STYLES OF MINISTRY

In the current emphasis on the presence of God and the hunger for glory, many of God's famishing children are seeing change and liberty. God can sweep through meetings with a tangible sense of His holy presence. The Kingdom of God has COME UPON YOU. There is still, however, the need for counseling and deliverance ministry privately. Why? The ground that evil spirits work on; the uncrucified flesh must be recognized and put to death. Today we need to be open to different styles of ministry. Often believers will be advocates of one type of emphasis — Toronto, or Word of faith or Shepherding or Inner Wholeness or Ellet Ministries. Each have their place in the economy of God. Each have areas of extreme or counterfeit teaching. How leaders need to humble themselves and learn from one another. Some leaders in these movements are godly and balanced. Others are not. The job of the congregation is to weigh the prophetic word and

discern the spirit behind what is being said. Please pray for local church leaderships – they are often confused with the recovery of truth from heresy that has entered the body of Christ since the 1960's.

Each individual member of the body has the responsibility to be led of the Spirit into the green pastures. Cry out for discernment. Desire kingdom lifestyle so the indwelling Christ can manifest Himself through you, whatever the situation. After all, success is simply BEING for JESUS. Without personal deliverance ministry the LOVE of GOD cannot flow to others.

The policy of prevention

An unusual but increasingly common policy of prevention to Kingdom lifestyle is the messenger from Satan. For Paul it was a legalist intent on spoiling the gospel of grace. He buffeted Paul like a slap on the face, or an uppercut to the stomach. This thorn in the flesh was a crucifying element given by God. Paul pleaded three times that 'he' might depart, but God answered that 'My grace is sufficient, because My strength is made perfect in weakness.' To know our frailty is to be the vessel that can contain the glory that follows grace. Too often the gospel is laced with legalism. Our religious mind prevents true Kingdom lifestyle. Grace becomes cheap when we refuse to link the grace of God with obedience. Grace is not the license to do what I want to do, but the **LIBERTY TO DO** what **HE TELLS ME TO DO**. The enemy seeks to devour grace and glory by certain people who enter our lives to do damage. For Samson it was the lack of a holy valuation in submitting to the sensual Delilah. For Abel it was Cain. For David a jealous King Saul! All through the Bible there are messengers of Satan, people directly inspired by the evil one.

Recently a man told me of how his wife changed dramatically in character by joining a satanic ring. He had escapes from death, but God used it all to redeem his soul. He lost his business, family, home, and car in a sequence of terrifying supernatural evil. His wife had become the messenger of Satan. In the devastating destruction is there instruction from the Word of God that can heal and redeem? Can Kingdom lifestyle be a reality in our brokenness? One passage I've used hundreds of times to provide a solid base to such distressed lives in 2 Corinthians 1: 3 –6. Read it prayerfully and see this liberating secret: **OUR EXPERIENCES** are **NOT** primarily **FOR OURSELVES**. 99% of people just don't know this great truth, but God is able to touch us where we are afflicted, and give us comfort that, at a later date, we can give to the distressed. Kingdom lifestyle can overcome the policy of prevention, that has power to continue in our lives long after we are born again. Authority must be exercised and anointing of the Holy Spirit experienced so that the rulership of the Lord Jesus can emanate through His Sons and daughters. When authority and anointing are released in the agape love of God, we know the Kingdom of God has come. An army of prayer warriors are urgently needed to intercede for the blessing of this supernatural reality.

MOVE ON WITH THE CLOUD

The Israelites had a cloud by day and a fiery pillar by night to guide and protect them. Salvation doesn't add up to much if there's no guidance. To continue in the Word, to continue steadfastly in doctrine, fellowship, breaking of bread and prayers, to go on to perfection are New Testament exhortations for us. God guides a moving object. You have to recognise the move of God in your day and keep moving with it. God starts a movement, and only man makes it a monument. There is motion only where the Holy Ghost is working. The Lord Jesus is saying to the church today: "Move on with the cloud!"

God has a door of opportunity for you. Your gift can bring you before great men as you are faithful and grow what God has given you. 2 Kings 2:1-18 is very instructive about moving on with the cloud of glory. Elijah was the movement of God in his day. His total concern was the will of God. A man of like passions as we are, was certain of origin and future because he heard and obeyed the living Word from God.

Valedictory was vital. Ministries die, but God doesn't. He prepares the successors. Elijah had to be translated for Elisha to be transformed. God was acting in heaven by sending a chariot of fire and was working on the earth by exchanging the mantle. Elisha made his daring request: he wanted a double portion of the Spirit's power. God was glad to do it. Elisha had to fulfil two conditions:

- (a) desire the will of God and nothing else;
- (b) concentrate on the essential in order to discern the moment of exit.

A wholehearted desire to do the whole will of God is a precious thing in the sight of God, angels and demons. Apostles and prophets are an open theatre or spectacle before the unseen world. There are many side-tracks for the diligent disciple. The enemy waits to distract and divert. Our concentration on the will of God may waver in three ways:

1. Wrong relationship

Look at Samson whose choice failed to have a holy valuation. The Lord left him because of Delilah. The choice was on the surface and had no depth. Anyone who diminishes our love for God is a wrong relationship. The sensual superceded the spiritual and Samson's vision of God was obscured. The enemy still seeks to prostitute desire so we lust after things for our own benefit. Then we cannot move on with the cloud, but like Samson, face impending disaster. Is the relationship increasing the spiritual life?

2. Materialism

Sacrifice has been almost eliminated from the Christian vocabulary. The "Jesus has done it all, I don't have to sacrifice and take up a cross" teaching has brought an avalanche of apathy and passivity upon the church. Take just the issue of money. Tithing is obligatory: we give the tenth to God. Real giving begins at that point with our nine-tenths. Many of God's children are robbing God and fail the test of stewardship.

3. Living by Feelings

Easy roads to spiritual success are a lie. High emotions at conference tend to deceive. We live by acting on the facts of the Word. Beware triumphal, exultant feelings because the devil usually strikes when you are riding high. Living by feelings will produce a yo-yo Christian, unstable and

unusable. We need to come to the point of spiritual recognition. Elisha got the essential mantle because he saw the chariot of fire take Elijah away. Elisha did not want to miss anything. We should be like that with God's will. There is a concentration on the essential that comes through prayer. What is the thing God is getting through to you about? Perhaps it is something to do with the spiritual geography Elijah takes through Elisha. The will of God is a progressive journey for us, symbolically from Gilgal to Jordan.

THEY BEGAN AT GILGAL

That was where the dirt of the world rolled away. A place of renunciation of sin. Many believers stay with salvation and never move on. They get stuck with evangelicalism, daily reading notes, the creed, disputing Calvinism or Arminianism, and remain babes in Christ, largely under the law, full of division, strife and envy. They may go to a conference or two, but remain unchanged. Born again believers who don't move on can be a serious blockage in church life. You cannot have fellowship with some carnal babes in Christ.

ELISHA WENT ON TO BETHEL

It means house of God, and was the place where Jacob had the outstanding open communication with heaven. The place of revelation provided him with the dream of reality. The baptism of the Holy Spirit can be like that. We see the great potential of a life, surrounded by power and surrendered to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Like Jacob we have to move on to Peniel, where the dream of reality became the reality of the dream. The cycle of self-will has to be broken. No doubt Elisha had received a cross-centred training for the prophetic office. Do we stay with gifts or move on to the Giver? We must do the revelation if we want to move on with the cloud.

THEY WENT ON TO JERICHO

This represents victory and warfare. The walls were 30 feet thick! Obedience, worship and order won the day. You've got to fight for the victory: it is never automatic. Everything that God was to Joshua, David, Abraham, Elijah, Peter and Paul HE IS TO YOU TODAY. He cannot change, lie or fail. If we do not believe in victory we diminish the power of the blood of Jesus Christ. Last year's victory is no use for today. Today is a new battle and a new victory. What Jericho faces you? Determine to be more than conqueror. Don't be lazy and quote Exodus 14:13, thinking you only have to wait for God to intervene. In the covenant God has given us weapons of spiritual warfare: the blood, the Word, the Name, the gifts, praise His holy name! To win at Jericho is never automatic - we have to fight for it!

THEY WENT ON TO JORDAN

Jordan was the door to inheritance and the land of promises. It was also a place of fire (Deuteronomy 9:3). It also signifies Romans 6:6 - death to the old life so the new may emerge. Jordan was the threshold of the new anointing, and the prophets knew that fire was the most important adjunct to the work of the Holy Spirit. Without fire we consume the Baptism of the Holy Spirit on our lusts. Luke 3:16 properly understood will put most believers at a distance. We see in England today, many congregations keep at a distance from what God wants to do. A withdrawing spirit prevents the new obedience. Few believers have experienced the fire. May we, like Elisha, concentrate on the essential aspect of Holy Ghost ministry. God wants to burn out all that in us would appease the enemy. He desires a new zeal in the church. The sons of the prophets stood at a distance (2 Kings 2:7). Do we?

To feel a keen need for more of God and a move of God, to desire an increase of the anointing, is what God wants for us. There is a stillness in worship where knowledge and revelation flow. The sons of the prophets didn't see the exchange of power; they looked for Elijah; they failed to discern the point of recognition. Let's cry out for insight, discernment and wisdom in the purposes of God. Only then can we move on with the cloud.

Elisha carried on the work of God; the movement of the Holy Spirit. He believed on the God of Elijah and the miracles flowed.

On 29th July at 5.00 am in 1985, God spoke audibly to my spirit these words, "don't entangle yourself with less than I want to give you." He is a big, big God and wants to raise our faith level to His own.

We so easily settle for less than our unlimited God wants. Blinkers of unbelief need to be cast off. His purposes for anointed ministry are far reaching. We have such a small doctrinal, local vision. We fail to see the great forest of eternal truths in the Word of God. We fail to see the masses without Christ.

Keep free to do the will of God. Preserve your relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ at all costs. Progress in the vision God has given you. Be daring and concentrate on the will of God, like Elisha. Beware an enemy who seeks to pervert desire so we lust after things for our benefit. Allow the training of the Holy Spirit to curb wrong ambitions and ego satisfying impulses. Don't lose the prayer life. Continue in earnest prayer, knowing as you pray for others it will accomplish much. The essence of our strength is obedience to God, and being and living in His Word.

Have a big vision: a WORLD-WIDE VISION. Begin to give to foreign missions. Get acquainted with them and pray for missionaries and evangelists. As you are faithful God will open your door of opportunity.

Confess your sins and weights that so easily hinder you in the race. Experience the foolproof purgative of Jesus' holy blood. Know the baptism of the Holy Spirit, with fire. Live in the Bible. Covet the anointing of the Spirit. Do the revelations.

Step out from Gilgal and Bethel to Jordan and Jericho. Concentrate on the essential: fulfilling life's most exciting adventure: the will of God.

THE NEGATION OF THE PROPHETIC

Peter's cultivated heart in Old Testament prophecy brought forward Joel 2 into the Pentecost sermon. Now, THIS IS THAT you can hear the apostle say!

When the creative word is found in the cultivated heart, prophecy inspires us because the Holy Spirit is the author. Much will challenge the living anointed Word. Even the disobedience of the prophet. Remember Jonah. How good of God to refuse to allow him to be alone, because the salvation of Nineveh was on God's agenda.

We all know how an anointed prophecy stills the meeting with a sense of awe and the presence of God fills the room. However, we also have witnessed how a soulish or flesh-inspired word has then come to counter, to dull, to negate the true word from God's mouth.

The very basis of true prophecy is death to self in the life of the prophet. The IMPARTATION of the anointing comes to the humble. Three examples: -

- a) JESUS Matthew 3:14-16;
- b) DAVID 1 Samuel 16:1-3,18;
- c) ELISHA 1 Kings 19:19;

All three came under the attack of mockery. All three, in different ways, IMPARTED something of the anointing. Take the example of Elisha. In 2 Kings 9:1,2 Elisha anointed Jehu through a son of the prophets, who had to look for him. There was no high visibility! It was an INCOGNITO meeting with impartation of true prophecy, and the reaction of mockery by some who were close to Jehu. (Verse 11).

Are we pregnant through prayer with something to impart? It may be the counsel of judgement as given to Jehu. It may be a miracle and direction as given to Ananias for Paul.....again notice it was a meeting of no high visibility. In matters of true prophecy, God often moves in limited company or in privacy!

In fraternal we know leaders want the prophetic to say something favourable to their situation. Church history tells us differently. Throughout, there has been a prophetic-pastoral tension. Each of these five-fold ministries need each other. Are we aware of God's agenda when pastoral needs swamp our church life? Will the prophets submit to the pastoral and be healed of their isolation, rejection and sometimes depression? Has the church gone through a dry spell of de-edification and cries out for the prophetic to lay the axe at the root of the tree that fails to produce fruit?

Sadly, the negation of the prophetic can be leaders and fraternal. I know one fraternal who hearing the word of the Lord from Ezekiel 22 made no steps to search God's heart concerning it. Judgement begins at the house of God when leaders fail to apply the prophetic word and prefer to dismiss it. Three elders died in two months because of self-interest and self-importance in those men who collectively failed in the prayer closet. Doctrinal debate and sharing problems militates against the urgency of the prophetic obedience.

If God is not moving we get depressed. Opposition to the true prophetic stops the river of the glory of God.

OPPOSITIONS

- (a) The jealousy of the older prophet toward the younger prophet who had a word of the Lord. The problem of diversion. 1 Kings 13 and Song of Songs 8:6.
- (b) Charismatic prophesying from their own spirit (often in line with the word of God but NOT the rhema for the specific situation.) Acts 21:4 and Ezekiel 13:2-7.
- (c) A false authority that lacks repentance and humility. False authority refuses to come near Jeremiah 2:30,31 and 5:30,31.
- (d) Materialism in God's people. The true seed cannot be sown among thorns. Those who are selfish among riches and wealth are unable to find direction. Jeremiah 4:3 and Hosea 2:6.
- (e) No vital intercession or groaning. The sovereignty of God is experienced by the faithful praying remnant. Romans 8:22-28. The prophetic releases the joy of Romans 8 living. Intercession comes first. Ezekiel 22:30.
- (f) No identification of taking responsibility. Note the humility of Daniel 9:10,20.
- (g) A refusal to see the whole counsel of God, particularly the judgement of God, so that prophecies have no prohibition, no conditions or no warning. Luke 19:27, 41-44.
- (h) Very few can recognize true, balanced prophecy. So few will wait with the prophets for the answer of the Lord in crises times. Prophets see the historic, political and cultural background to a situation and then see the present church life foreground of the situation. This double focus leads into a clear strategic grip of future grace and the appropriate purifying power of His promises. Amos 3:7, Psalm 74:9; Ezra 6:14. Only God and Jehoshaphat knew that only Micaiah could discern accurately. 1 Kings 22:7,8,14-28.

There are many other oppositions including the spirit of fear, but those might have contemporary significance.

THE NATURE OF THE LEOPARD

I remember once having an anointed time of prayer in a car park in the Outer Hebrides. No one was around. A VW transporter turned up and several Muslims appeared - the anointing quickly lifted and I sensed the operation of heaven and the simple event on earth were connected.

Islam, whether the fundamental or nominal strain, is a deception and possesses a hatred for historic Christianity and Judaism. On 11 September 2001 the world saw its true face, but our politicians hastened to draw a line and say terrorism was not Islam, and vice versa. God allowed Islam huge success in 650 - 800 AD conquering N Africa and S Europe. It was God's tool of judgement on an apostate Christianity, which had elevated Mary to the Trinity to the exclusion of the Holy Spirit.

The leopard of Jeremiah 5:6, Daniel 7:6 and Revelation 13:2 is probably Islam with the crushing feet of the bear and the devouring, roaring mouth of the lion. Inter-faith movements will come under its dominion. The Antichrist system is a skillful mixture of religion and politics (Revelation 17). Islam will be part of this system and possibly a dominant partner.

However, the believers' attitude to these end-time realities should never be that of cowardice. Remember, God Himself PERMITS AND CONTROLS the catalogue of catastrophes that come to the world. HE IS SOVEREIGN! Check **Revelation 17:17**:

“For God put it into their hearts to fulfill His purpose, to be of ONE MIND, and to give their

Kingdom to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled.”

The EU is rapidly moving to this point. The leopard is swift and the EU with Islam will probably become the system and geography of the Antichrist. Between Europe and the Islam world lies Israel! The theme of the Bible is found in the post-Exilic books:-

- | | | |
|----|--------|------------|
| 1. | TEMPLE | (Ezra) |
| 2. | CITY | (Nehemiah) |
| 3. | PEOPLE | (Esther) |

The focus is Jerusalem and the Jew. Only America and Australia at this time (2002) are positive about Israel's right of security. One hundred and fourteen nations, including UK and EU have signed up to NEGATE THE CLEAR PROPHETIC statements of Scripture.

The Sovereign Lord allows it all. Islam is rising again to judge apostate Christianity where countless millions in the West profess Christ through infant baptism but do not know Christ through the new birth and the mighty baptism of the Holy Spirit. Look at history:-

600 BC	“The Chaldeans are coming”, warns Jeremiah.
650 -1000AD	Huge Islamic advances.
1980' s - ?	Communism falls and Islam rises, with an aggressive agenda for world dominion. ‘Holy’ Jihad has returned to Muslim leaders as a legitimate weapon against a) Israel b) western civilisation.

Interestingly there was a shift in world powers from Assyria (without God) to Babylon (instead of God) in Jeremiah's day. The same shift occurs today from an atheistic system without God to a religious opposition that supplants the true God. Politicians are failing to grasp this because there is no prophetic input at Westminster or Brussels. The leopard will not change her spots. Terror and the suppression of truth are to increase in the twenty-first century.

THE PROBLEM OF FEAR

The setting of the “spirit of fear” on 2 Timothy 1 contains the gift of prophecy (verse 6 and 1 Timothy 1:8). When your gift is exposed to the church, you will be attacked. We need the keeping power of God as we commit our lives “until that day”, i.e. of His return. As you keep your life right at the source (John 7:37,38) then God will protect, even if you are relentlessly attacked. Don't let the words of your accusers breakdown your faith. The word ‘keep’ in 2 Timothy 1:12 means that God is marching round my mind to keep me in peace. Too often we look at the attack negatively by seeing it as an attack on ourselves. The enemy opposes the carrier of the gift because he hates the living word being manifest. A paraphrase of 2 Timothy 1:7 could read: ***“God has not imparted to you a spirit of cowardice or intimidation, but of capability, committed love (to the body of Christ) AND CLEAN, DELIVERED THINKING.”***

The word “fear” in this verse is “deilia” and is also found in John 14:27. We must refuse this demon in the all prevailing name of Jesus, because it prevents the outworking of John 14:26 where we note the work of the Helper, as teacher and one who brings to remembrance.

These two aspects are vital in prophecy.

- a) Our prophecy is proportional to the depth of our grasp of the word of God.

- b) A pure mind, free in the peace of God, and stirred up to remembrance, helps the precision of the prophecy.

The testimony of Jesus IS the spirit of prophecy. Fear of man, fear of rejection and fear of making mistakes assault the believer who comes in the power of the Holy Spirit to prophesy.

CHARISMATIC COUNTERFEITS

To know the true workings of the Holy Spirit prevents the counterfeits that negate true prophecy. The exaltation of ministries and manifestations in the charismatic movement has brought about a situation where discernment is essential. A real word from the Lord can be attacked by spurious gifts of supernatural power NOT from the Holy Spirit. This assertion leads us into difficult territory.....to say something is not the Holy Spirit when in fact it has the Paraclete as its source, is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.

Another problem is the manifestations can have one of three sources:- divine, human or satanic. Take laughter for example. I have heard the mockery of Jezebelic laughter, human laughter, and laughter in the Holy Spirit in christian meetings. The issue is not whether the laughter is of God or not, but which source it is coming from. Again we feel our need of discernment. Most quality discernment of spirits comes from those engaged in deliverance ministry and spiritual warfare.

Can we discern the true presence of God from the counterfeit?

The true is known in the believer's spirit through the Holy Spirit when He fills the atmosphere. Our Spirit is tender, pliable to the will of God and conscious of God's presence. The actions of this believer will be in harmony with holiness and grace, agape love and heart forgiveness. The counterfeit presence is felt upon the body as "fire" "thrills" with the mind becoming passive. The believer locates God as a person within, then turns and prays to the One within. This results in fear through the insistent voice of the evil spirit driving to sudden action.

Counterfeits will bring great manifestations but little real fruit, and inevitable division, passivity of mind, vain journeys, elations followed by crushing and a life of confusion and contradictions.

The reality of the prophet stands on the foundation of receiving thoughts from God. We have to stop our mind-set, our traditional understanding, very often before we receive from God. The Queen of Sheba disqualified her set mind when she saw the conduct of the people around Solomon and testified that half had not been told her. Joseph of Arimathea had refused to consent to the death of Jesus in the council and then asked for the body of Jesus. That thought had been planted in his mind by God for scripture to be fulfilled. The KINGDOM comes when we hallow our lifestyle with holy living. Joseph took the holy line by standing among the council and not consenting. He then became truly prophetic. If we don't speak out for truth and keep things bottled up in our hearts it stops God from moving. In converse with God, Habakkuk approached with:

His mind	(Chapter 1) - QUESTIONS
His will	(Chapter 2) - INTERCESSION
His heart	(Chapter 3) - WORSHIP

By 3:8 he was talking to God in the second person because a passion and intimacy marked his relationship. We get there through the illumined mind and the liberated will (i.e. obedience). Too

many in charismatic circles are attempting to get there by feelings of exterior manifestations coming upon the body. May God raise a new breed of charismatic evangelical whose foundation is the reformed faith and whose heart longs after a God who wants to share secrets with His servants, the prophets.

HOW LEADERS NEGATE PROPHECY

The strength of many leaders is based on gifts rather than wisdom and love. Set thinking and covering up sins in the life produce unreality. But God gives grace to the weak, to the humble, to those who know they need the help and contribution of the Holy Spirit. Leaders often prefer DIGNITY to being channels of DEITY. Paul preferred to boast in his weaknesses and his fighting writing to the Corinthians was to prove authenticity of his apostleship.

There was no DIGNITY in Paul! Check out Philipians 3:7,8 and 1 Corinthians 4:8-13 and 2 Corinthians 6:4-10. His method of making disciples was always effective. Today the stamp seems to be in the travelling ministry to add as many names as possible to the mailing list. These false apostles gradually become detached from the believers under them. The intervention of DEITY, however, through the apostolic team will bring responsibility. Confusion reigned in Corinth because of false apostles' teaching stealing Paul's converts to their way of thinking. Paul waived his right to full-time ministry! Check 1 Corinthians 9:6, feeling he had no right to refrain from working. His willingness in this financial matter would give him a KINGDOM REWARD (1 Corinthians 9:17). The Cross of enduring all things in this matter (1 Corinthians 9:12) would keep his ministry pure in motive. The mind of Paul was never to give unnecessary offence so he would be a channel of deity, an imparter of the true prophetic word! True grace in prophecy will come through the cultivated heart. You see it again and again in scripture and less and less in western christianity.

Look at Josiah the child king who fulfilled a prophecy at least 300 years previously. Check 1 Kings 13:2 with 2 Kings 23. Josiahs'cultivated heart of zeal would be safe in the days of trouble and judgement. God holds those leaders who negate the prophetic word, responsible for the days when prophetic vision is rare. Those who truly walk by faith like Abraham will know the precise secrets of the Lord in judgement times:

"Shall I hide from Abraham what I am doing?" (Genesis 18:17)

Prophecy is the new creation shining through you in word, deed, sign and motive. Lifestyle character speaks more than feelings orientated charisma. God wants a generation of true:

**Spirit filled
Word obedient
Cross-centered
PROPHETS**

Intercession alone will cause the imprisoned Josephs to emerge and rule in the anointing of God.

OVERCOMING SHAME

When Jesus became sin for us He accepted into Himself all the shame of mankind. All our unacceptability, unworthiness, disgrace came into the glorious Son of God at the Cross, where the public ridicule, public nakedness, mockery and torture was painfully endured. He had contempt for the shame, he looked down on it, disdaining it, and despising the humiliation of it, but endured it for the joy set before Him. He fixed his gaze on the future joy of angels rejoicing when sinners accept the royal pardon, when sufferers are healed and delivered in His name. He was not sidetracked by the sheer hard work and ugliness of the stark Cross. He could have asked for 72,000 angels to release him from the shame, but tasted the eternal separation, that was for us, as a perfect Redeemer. Shame entered the world at the fall of Adam and Eve when the talking serpent removed their glory clothing and they saw that they were naked. When Lucifer fell from the heavens, was excommunicated from the inexpressible glory of heaven, he felt an immense shame, guilt and rebellion, which he injected into the paradise garden couple when they disobeyed the clear prohibition of God. In simple terms, Satan cursed their identity as beings made in the image of God, producing the self disgust, low self-worth and insecurity with fear. Shame, the ancient game of Satan, can be defeated in the anointing of the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and the virtue of the cleansing blood of the Lamb.

What are the causes of shame?

1. Sin

The hidden sins of the believer will always cloak the image of Christ to the unbeliever. Paul tells the Corinthians he renounced (or spoke off himself) the hidden things of shame. The power of sin clings to us unless we confess and repent. The new creation cannot be manifest unless we make a claim on the precious blood of Jesus Christ for cleansing. The shame of unconfessed sin makes us walk round in a fog, prevents us from being real, and causes us to hide behind “fig-leaves”. Adam and Eve knew they were naked, the knowledge gave them shame, and so they sewed together the fig leaves of low self-worth, withdrawal, fear, self-pity, anxiety and so on in order to cover up. We attempt to flee from sin in a hundred and one ways. In marriage today, men flee from sorrow, renege on responsibility, fantasize about another woman. Women flee from being ruled and often end up in feminism. The shame of divorce centers round the struggle for control – the woman wants to be in charge and the man does not want to be accountable. Marriage can never be perfect until Christ Jesus returns, but until then it is a laboratory of love, an opportunity for total openness with the one, who means more to you than your previous family.

Jeremiah 3 : 24 – 25 links shame and sin among Israel’s farmers. The diminishing of the herds brought disgrace through sexual sin: “...*we lie down in our shame.*” Sin has the consequence of lowering status and wealth.

2. Abuse and violation

Read 2 Samuel 13 and feel the shame of Tamar, whose kingly robe could no longer be worn, whose virginity was robbed by the lustful Amnon, and whose honour of being a wife and possible future queen was no more. All sexual sin brings deep shame. Verse 19 speaks of deep loss of fruitfulness. Victims of sexual abuse know the pleasure of one’s body has become the basis of a hatred of one’s soul. Tamar for the rest of her life endured confusion and the dissociation of thoughts and feelings. Self-contempt, said Dr. Dan Allender, is Satan’s counterfeit for the conviction of sin.

Jesus died naked at Calvary in order to restore glory to your spirit. He became my shame, so I can rise up in the convincing splendour of the character of His name.

3. Poor self-image

Read 2 Samuel 9 on Mephibosheth, whose name means “bearing shame”. He lived in Lo Debar which means “no communication”. People with shame are usually passive, reactive folk who empower the circumstances rather than take a determined approach to life. Shame is the result of ridicule, rejection, and unjust punishment and is rooted in a deep-seated fear of abandonment. Mephibosheth had the wrong perception of WHO HE WAS – A DEAD DOG. David’s plan was to restore inheritance to Jonathan’s son, who sensed he was a mistake. Remember guilt is the God-given emotion that I’ve made a mistake. Shame never appreciates true identity of being a new creation but breeds the cursing of worthlessness, uncleanness and a sense of illegitimacy.

One way out of shame is the renewed mind in relation to who we are in Christ Jesus our Lord. Give yourself to the ‘in Him’ Scriptures in Ephesians, Colossians and Philippians. Declare them aloud. Give the Holy Spirit opportunity to assure your heart you are DNA distinctive, uniquely made person; re-made in the image of the Son of God!

4. Carnality

The flesh-lifestyle of the Corinthians was a ground for shame. Intense focus on self will produces shame in the believer. How must Peter have felt when the Lord rebuked him for superimposing his own will on the true pathway of the Cross? The disrespect and undermining of the critical wife is like rottenness in the bones, says Proverbs 12 : 4.

Paul warned the Philippians concerning gluttony, (3 : 19), as a carnality directly opposed to the laid down life of true service.

Ezekiel 16 is a key O.T. chapter on carnality (or giving in to the flesh). Verse 27 says :

***“Behold, therefore, I stretched out My hand against you,
diminished your allotment and gave you up to the will
of those who hate you, the daughters of the Philistines,
who were ASHAMED of your lewd behaviour.”***

Carnality in the church shocks the world. God must judge! (See 1 Corinthians 5: 5). We either REPENT or will be JUDGED. You can enter a house of God and sense whether there is a clean atmosphere of anointed love and fear of the Lord, or whether there is confusion, self-ambition, instability and a sweeping of sin under the carpet. The great antidote to shame, FEAR of the LORD, must be actively chosen daily by leadership and flock. The elder’s main job is to keep the church flowing together in the confidence of Christ, so we may not be ashamed at His coming. (1 John 2 : 28).

5. Humiliation

The Prodigal Son parable in Luke 15 has millions of modern applications. Generations since 1950 have come under the curse of fatherlessness either by open rebellion or by the lack of godly parenting. Fathers should be a source of life and training in righteousness with correction and love, but some children refuse to submit or have no adequate role model. Most children feel tolerated rather than chosen, valuable, unique. The headlong dive into the shame of alienation has been emphasized by every decade.

1950's	-	teddy boys, beat generation (USA) ;
1960's	-	mods & rockers, hippy, flower-power. (beginnings of drugs, rock n'roll, promiscuity) ;
1970's	-	punk (which means rebellion) ;
1980's	-	dance and drugs epidemic ;
1990's	-	rise of homosexuality, lesbianism.

All this points to a deep-seated shame that has been covered over by wrong core beliefs and thought patterns, an atheistic evolutionary system that has no concept of sin. The prodigal son returned by coming to an awareness of his futile predicament. The restoration of identity was threefold :

- a) **ROBES** - **righteousness to cover the body ;**
- b) **RING** - **eternal life in his spirit ;**
- c) **SHOES** - **shoes of inner peace. Healing and deliverance to his soul.**

The father killed the fatted calf, and the outpoured blood of the Lamb seals the covenant for us as believers. The breach of covenant with the family was the responsibility of the prodigal and the orphan spirit, the sense of exile and loneliness will always follow. The shame of rejection excludes us from the anointing. The name of acceptance includes us when the shed blood is experienced by the contrite heart.

Humiliation can be our bitter experience via character deficiencies. Check out Peter in Luke 22 : 62. We must be careful what we confess positively. Will the enemy of souls be able to mock us? The slanderer succeeds with souls who are proud.

Humiliation also comes to those who live in the disappointment of unmet needs. **Isaiah 54 : 6** says :

***“For the Lord has called you
like a woman forsaken
and grieved in spirit
like a youthful wife when you were
refused, says your God.”***

If you go on reading to verse 10 you discover the wonderful promises of God. We rescue ourselves on the promises of peace from the Prince of peace who wants us to enter His programme of peace. The waters of Noah swept away all shame and demonized humanity. The blood of Jesus is just as powerful today because it contains His glorious, overcoming, heavenly life, and comes freshly slain from heaven.

THE PATH TO FREEDOM

1. Repentance Acts 3 : 19; Lamentations 5 : 21; 2 Corinthians 12 : 20,21;

I will arise and go to my father!

2. Forgiveness Mark 11 : 25; Matthew 6 : 14,15;

If we cannot forgive we will not live in His life and also imprison those who have hurt us.

3. Know your identity in Christ Jesus 2 Corinthians 5 : 17; 1 Peter 4 : 16;

Romans 10 : 11;

We are not designed to carry shame, either through our own sin or through suffering from someone else's action.

Bless your new creation identity by proclaiming the "in Him" truths.

Remember in the ordering of the armour of God it's :

- | | | |
|-------------------------|---|------------------------------|
| 1. TRUTH | - | for the sexual area ; |
| 2. RIGHTEOUSNESS | - | for heart ; |
| 3. PEACE | - | for the walk ; |

This order is also seen in **Psalm 85 : 10-12; Isaiah 32 : 17,18**. The truth declared, believed and obeyed will establish righteousness as a reality, beyond the positional truth. Those who believe (or be and live in Jesus by the power of the Spirit) will not be ashamed.

4. Deliverance ministry Psalm 74 : 21

The word "oppressed" means a demonic weight falling upon. Jesus came to set free those oppressed by the devil. Discerning of spirits in the wisdom of the Father is vital for this stage. A healing to the damage in the human spirit will be necessary for those who feel defiled, especially by sexual sin.

(2 Corinthians 7 : 1). Although Psalm 69 : 19, 20 applies to our Lord at Calvary, we can apply these verses to many who are alienated, lost, lonely, and living under the curse of illegitimacy or identity cursing. Our pain avoidance society (and church!) must open up to true deliverance ministry. The church is a hospital BEFORE being a barracks, a lover of humanity BEFORE being a militant army.

Many think everything is achieved at the new birth in our wonderful privilege of being in Him. Pentecostals, charismatics and even Calvinists stress our standing in Christ Jesus. What about the state of your heart? What is going on in the REAL YOU? Positional truth emphasis can become a very convenient fig-leaf. Those who oppose deliverance and inner healing are guilty of a partial gospel yet pretend to be those preaching a full gospel.

The balance between our legal status and our vital state is needed as never before in today's pulpit.

5. Renewal Titus 3 : 3-7; Romans 12 : 2; 2 Corinthians 10 : 4 – 6

Distorted images of God, wrong core beliefs learnt previously to the new birth, and false religious teaching must be corrected by the word of God, and the experience of comfort and rest to your soul.

The path to freedom is never instant fix exorcism, but all these five steps coming together over a period of time. The renewing of the Holy Spirit is shed upon us to cleanse and invigorate from the shame list of Titus 3 : 3. We must also pull down strongholds, which I deal with in the chapter, Kingdom lifestyle.

WHY DO WE NEED INNER HEALING?

Mephibosheth was lame in both feet and could not walk into the future, although he ate at the King's table.

Three Christians in four are like that according to the parable of the sower and the seed. So why do we need inner healing?

a) Our make-up is tripartite 1 Thessalonians 5 : 23; Hebrews 4 : 12; John 3 : 6

We are born again in our spirits. Our souls take many years to be an adequate vehicle for the expression of the new life. Any casual reading of Watchman Nee's 'The Spiritual Man' (one of the top ten classics of all time), should convince us of the need to sanctify our souls and bodies. Those are the arenas where we work OUT what God by regeneration HAS WORKED IN to our spirits. Discipline and counsel are the brackets around inner healing and deliverance. These four areas produce mature sons and daughters. To neglect any of the four cannot bring true discipleship.

b) A hurting and hating environment Ephesians 2 : 2; 1 John 18,19; Matthew 2 : 11

As believers we swim against the stream. The world hated Jesus and it will hate those loyal to Him. The whole world is in the lap of the wicked one. Take the incident of the wise men bringing their gifts, which were God's provision for the next two years of exile. Gold represented prosperity and poverty is linked very strongly to shame. Frankincense represents worship and no one is emotionally free unless they can worship in spirit and in truth. Myrrh represents death to self. Inner healing is never permanent unless we die to our own plans, self-reliance and self-ambition. God provides where he guides in times of persecution.

Think of this scenario. If I trap my finger in the door, the body says 'ouch'. If I have been caned at school, the body hurts and the emotions will feel disgrace. If I am continually victimized my body and soul will feel it, but also my spirit will be overwhelmed and damaged. Inner healing removes the blockages so we can experience Jesus spirit, soul and body. Without inner healing, the knowledge of Jesus will be severely restricted to mind, emotions or will-power. This produces a breed of believer who cannot fellowship deeply with their Lord.

a. Jesus healed inner damage Luke 5 : 20; Luke 8 : 43 – 48; Luke 24 : 18 – 32; Luke 4 : 36

Being made well is wholeness, which is beyond just physical healing. The healing ministry of Jesus touched the whole person in it's sanctifying power. He brought sanity and sanctity. The inner torments that plagued mind and body were healed by His creative words :

*“ ‘What is this in His mouth?’ the Pharisees asked,
‘For with authority He uses the power to command evil spirits, and they come out.’ “*

With laser discernment Jesus knew what was IN man, because he was the micro-surgeon of the soul. He knows our spirit, soul, body inter-relationship and how we react to an evil world. Whatever we go through he is able to save, heal, deliver to the uttermost. Those who don't spend time knowing the true heart condition of their flocks are irresponsible shepherds who omit 40% of Jesus' earthly ministry. Praying for revival is no substitute for the hard work of service in counselling and inner healing. If you study revivals, God came down on a prepared people, who were enabled to breakthrough beyond the second veil to the most Holy Place. Inner healing is never the goal, only the pathway to His glorious presence.

b. To experience the Father's intimate love Romans 5 : 5; John 17; 2 Cor 1 : 3 – 6

Our experiences are not primarily for ourselves. We go through adversity and trials in order to receive God's comfort so we possess His love to give to others, who go through similar affliction. To grasp this truth means we begin to shatter focussing upon ourselves, our desires and the gratification of the flesh. Inner healing and deliverance should have the wonderful fruit of ENLARGING OUR CAPACITY to move forward into a higher dimension of KNOWING GOD.

Our greatest JOY

Our deepest PURPOSE

Our biggest SATISFACTION

is **KNOWING** the **FATHER** and **SON** intimately. Our greatest loss is the failure to press on and know the Lord.

Take an hour with John 17 and see the fellowship between Father and Son. Enter the secrets of the most Holy Place. Enjoy the sanctuary stillness where revelation awaits you. God is moved by hearts that have fallen in love with His Son. Such are led by the Spirit into all truth. The glory, rest, perfection (union with His will) and inheritance are within the veil. The majority of believers never get there because they refuse to

1. discipline the flesh on a regular basis;
2. take inner healing and deliverance seriously;
3. will not open up to their secret sins of the deceitful heart;
4. change their distorted images of a severe, legalistic, taskmaster God;
5. come out of performance orientation

God is looking for a new breed upon whom His fullness of power can come.

PRINCIPLES OF BIRTH

The Christmas story contains six wonderful principles of birth. They are true guides whenever God does a new thing. Luke 1 : 26 – 38 deserves our meditation because the Holy spirit surrounds the Incarnation. The third person of the trinity is intimately involved in everything God purposes on earth. When God moves he highlights these six principles and brings a glorious seventh, the inner witness, to prove that the new holy thing is of God.

1. God moves on the ground of spiritual virginity

The intervention of the heavenly messenger came to a virgin. Repentance unto the forgiveness of sins remains the only route to spiritual virginity. Preachers today minimize sin, diminish the word, and omit the severity of God. New things filled with the glory of God cannot emerge upon the wreck of the old man. Too often the new creation is grafted onto the old man which is still growing corrupt even after the new birth. Note the tense in Ephesians 4 : 22 :

“.....that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man, that GROWS CORRUPT according to the deceitful lusts.”

According to = dominated or conquered by. The lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes contribute to encourage the sin-spirit of the old man. We actively put off by switching off TV, by walking away from gossip, by refusing to listen to innuendo. This daily discipleship helps to preserve spiritual virginity. The strong desire of lust can dominate the new creation and activate the old man. Carnal Christianity does not have the inner power to bring God's new thing to birth. When we put on the new man and see the new creation realities we are GOOD ENOUGH to stand in His holy presence by the blood of Jesus Christ. Spiritual virginity means maintaining our position of privilege that the blood has bought for us, by putting on the new and stripping off the old man! All lies, fears, and all the bombardment of the enemy must be driven off our minds. Renewal of mind is the activity for believers who accept their virginity. Righteousness by the blood of Jesus is the forever foundation of our position in Christ. We work out what He worked in by continuing to renew our mind by the word of God, and purify our hearts by the blood of Christ.

2. God works on the basis of grace

*“And having come in, the angel said to her,
‘Rejoice, highly favoured one, the Lord
is with you; blessed are you among women!’”
(Luke 1 : 28)*

The word ‘favour’ means grace. God never saves, heals and delivers those who think they deserve it. The mind of pride always produces the leprosy of sin. (Check Uzziah's story). Repentance comes before grace. God only lives in two places : highest heaven and a broken, contrite heart. Grace connects heaven with

humility when we admit our spiritual bankruptcy. Grace is never merely a cover-up job, but will teach us to deny ungodliness, and worldly lusts. Be in a place to receive favour, the gospel of the grace of the glory of God. God never gives you anything on a plate. He chose Mary, a submissive, young virgin who knew the presence of God. Grace blesses us with a power from on high to communicate the gospel. The evidence of grace is the anointing of the Spirit. When you are born again you are highly favoured and blessed with every spiritual blessing in Christ Jesus. What a position grace puts us in! However, faith then determines how much grace we can draw on. We are saved by grace through faith. Faith is not alone when we are Christians – it has works. Grace is never the license to do what I want to do, but the liberty to do what Jesus tells me to do. Grace is God’s handshake from heaven wanting our hand of faith to slip into his! Mary’s hand finally touched and gripped the grace of God when she obeyed :

“Then Mary said, ‘Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word.’” (Luke 1 : 38)

Consent. Submission of heart. Yielded to the grace of the Holy Spirit’s operation.

3. God builds faith by His proceeding word

“Then the angel SAID TO HER, ‘Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God.’” (Luke 1 : 30)

The personal, anointed word to our hearts enlarges our capacity to believe for God’s new thing. God enters our visible world with an invisible seed to eradicate the lies we believe about ourselves. Don’t fear is found 365 times in the Bible, everyday for a year. God wants you to have delivered brains, saved thinking, a new core belief system. How a man thinks, so is he. Christianity is not a mental religion, however, our thinking and perceptions are based on revelation. We don’t live from the attics of our minds, but the basement of our spirits. The seed of God impregnates our spirits when the anointing sends it forth! Faith comes by the anointed word. Churches move into stagnation when there is no anointing on the teaching and preaching. The first sense of call in a God-sent preacher remains total inadequacy for the task. The word preached and taught must be alive to do spiritual surgery in dividing soul from spirit. The listeners must be prepared to change their belief system, form cold, critical intellectualism to the passion that revelation from the heart alone produces. The angel spoke to Mary’s heart: consoling fears and calling into being the prospect of carrying the Son of God for nine months in her womb. God wants to speak great things into your spirit, because now Christ is IN US! Deliverance brings the Kingdom of God within. The word of deliverance precedes the prophetic word! Without “do not fear” we cannot have yes to the years God has planned for us.

When you listen to the anointed word take a notebook, write those things down that the Spirit ministers to you. Fix the revelation! Then pray it into your heart. Soon you will be pregnant.

4. God underlines the priority of “Jesus is Lord”

He will reign over the house of Jacob forever. In the birthing of the supernatural power of God Jesus must be Lord before He is Christ. (See Acts 2 : 36). He

REIGNS as LORD before He RAINS as the ANOINTED ONE.

In Luke 1 Zacharias had to come to obedience (verse 63) by writing down his son's name should be John. Then he was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied (verse 67 – 79). Lordship comes before the anointing. The Pharisees would not have this Man rule over them. (Luke 19 : 27). All religious people seek to execute their own will and use God's word to back up their rebellion. The typical example is King Saul who ended up with Satan as his Lord. Even in ministries today that appear charismatic may be operating in a wrong spirit that refuses the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord’, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in your name, cast out demons in your name...” (Matthew 7 : 21,22)

The Lord Jesus replies He NEVER knew them. The Jewish exorcists in Acts 19 fulfil this stern warning – they used the right Jesus and the right name, but did not have the power of the Holy Spirit. There are wolves in charismatic sheep's clothing today. When we do signs in His name the key to being true servants is, “the Lord working with them.” (Mark 16:20). This signifies fellowship of inner knowing.

If Jesus is to be Lord over our broken Jacob-like lives we have to first draw up lines of communication with an indwelling Lord. Are we led by the Spirit into fellowship with Jesus? Do we obey revelation? Objectively, the Lordship of Jesus relates to the omnipotent sovereignty of God. He is Lord of all in heaven and earth. Only as we are healed within are we able to trust his rulership in and over our lives. It will take the millenium for Jesus to be deeply, truly Lord of our lives. Even in the thousand year reign of Christ some refuse His Lordship and join the satanic rebellion, at the very end. Here and now, the more Jesus is practically Lord, the deeper and greater new thing God will work through us.

5. The Holy Spirit is God's 'How He does it.'

God's “How He does the new thing” is the Holy Spirit (Luke 1 : 35). The Holy Spirit intercession links the Lordship of God in the world to the Lordship of Jesus Christ within the believer. The third person of the trinity comes together with us AGAINST the lack of insight and lack of foresight that as humans we so often display. In Romans 8 : 26 – 28 the connection is between this holy activity within the Spirit-filled believer and all things working together for good for those who love Jesus and are called to the Father's purpose. Intercession encourages sensitivity to the sovereignty of God.

The word of God will return to us void without our active involvement in faith and intercession. The vitality of the Holy Spirit makes the word of God a creative force for those who believe. Evangelicals who tend to live out of the attic of their minds cannot believe for the reality of the creative word that is Spirit-born as a divine seed into the heart. The Spirit of God creates an environment for the spoken word to be creative. We see this principle in Genesis 1: 2,3. He incubates, prepares a climate for the seed of the word of God to create instantly. In Luke 2: 25 – 27 we see three operations of the spirit in creative prophetic power.

- 1 invocation of clothing (v.25) ;
- 2 inspiration of revealing (v.26) ;
- 3 intuition of leading (v.27) ;

What are we believing and knowing God will allow us to do for him before the return of our Lord Jesus Christ? Have you revelation in the Spirit concerning His purposes? The Holy Spirit is God's "How?" but He cannot reveal and clothe and lead if sin and self continue to have their way in our lives. The quenching and grieving of the Spirit kills the new things God desires for you. If we go on sowing to the flesh corruption follows. How many individuals and churches are in a rut of following dry routine and fail to go on sowing to the Spirit so they live life to the maximum?

6. God looks for the obedient, submissive heart

"Let it be to me, according to your word." ***(Luke 1 : 38)***

According to means dominated by, and conquered by. The word of Gabriel was Lord of her young heart. In the moment of obedience there was the holy conception. When the servants at the wedding feast at Cana obeyed the words of Jesus, the water supernaturally became wine – Our obedience completes His miracle. Let it be to me as I am dominated by the words of the new covenant. The word of the Lord is YES (it's true) and AMEN (a creative force) to the submissive heart. God loved David because he unquestioningly obeyed. Saul kept using the word of God to back up his own agenda, and so his heart ultimately strayed into the occult. Listen again to Simeon's prophecy to Mary in **Luke 2 : 34, 35** :

"Behold this child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against (yes, a sword will pierce through your own heart also), that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed."

The issue of obedience goes down to the basement of our heart condition. People fall by disobedience or rise through obedience in relation to the words of Jesus. The obedient life will be spoken against because persecution is against the word itself (see Mark 4 : 17). The word reveals our inner thoughts. (Hebrews 4 : 12). The word will finally judge our lives. (John 12 : 48). A life of obedience brings unfettered blessings to most who come into contact with us. As Saul, we will play the fool if disobedience marks our walk.

The six principles of birth lead to the wonder of the inner witness. Mary had gone up to the hill country to enjoy sweet fellowship with her cousin. John the Baptist leaped in Elizabeth's womb at the greeting of Mary. There should be this inner witness when true believers meet in His name and under the precious anointing of the Spirit. When God is birthing a new thing the inner registration of the Spirit becomes an essential accompaniment. Without it, we should not move forward. Without it, there is no blessing from the Lord.

When Jesus came into the world, the Father spoke to his spirit in **Hebrews 1 : 5** :

"You are my Son, Today I have begotten you."

And in **Hebrews 10 : 5** the son spoke back : -

“Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you have prepared for Me.”

We, too, must live in the internal regions of our human spirit, where the Holy Spirit lives in us.

Give yourself the Lord Jesus. Surrender and abandon your desires to His Lordship. Travail in the Holy Spirit given prayers. Become addicted to the word of God and prayer like the apostles of old. Only then can God take us out of the stagnant rut of observances into the elixir of eternal life and into His gracious new designs.

As soon as Zion (the church) travailed (did the work of prayer), she gave birth to her children.

PROPHETIC MINISTRY

The message of repentance will take us through the impending judgement to the vision of glory. Prophetic ministry is threefold: the message of repentance we hear, the burden of judgement we feel, and the vision of glory we shall see. Prophets have ears that hear the counsel of God, hearts that feel his purposes, and eyes that see the future. Prophets see the end from the beginning and know the ways of perfect love to get there! So great, so needed their ministry, that GOD CAN DO NOTHING EXCEPT HE TELL HIS PROPHETS (Amos 3:7). Churches are founded upon apostles and prophets (Ephesians 2:20), men who flow in the mother river of revelation - the new, now words of a living God. Who can awake the church today out of the spirit of deep sleep in England? A stupour, a mental and spiritual blindness that has come upon preachers as well as congregations (see Isaiah 29:9,10). Who can bring a fresh revelation of Jesus Christ and him crucified? Who can correct the flood of charismatic heresies of the past ten years? Who can build the wall of our Lord's testimony and travail with weepings? There is only one answer. Prophets.

Before we go any further I must tell you where I am coming from. Born again, all of grace in a Wigan "Coronation Street" bedroom in 1973 I was quick to embrace evangelical doctrine, until God broke the mould in 1975, the second week in August, and filled me with the Holy Spirit. Tongues gushed forth, but I knew the dove had come to rest on me, and had a sense Christ actually was indwelling, within my spirit. Soon after this I needed deliverance ministry, and the demons departed in his mighty name. My desire for truth took me to the Bible college of Wales where Arthur Neil and Ieuan Jones lay the foundation of teaching ministry while the example of Samuel Howells in prayer spoke deeply to my heart. I am convinced, then as now, that praying goes beyond preaching, in the sense that spiritual breakthrough has to happen *before* we behave what we believe. After a painful two years as an evangelical curate with charismatic leanings, God had to break the mould again. In 1981-2 I discovered a discipline in intercessory prayer through praying in other tongues and the vital importance of the word confirmed with signs.

Increasingly I see the sense of holiness teaching in Romans 6, 2 Corinthians 4 and Philippians 3. So, in short, I'm a mongrel, but going on, thirsting for the word of the truth of the gospel. That is not the evangelical word (although our foundations must be there!).

It's not the charismatic word because there will come a day when those truths will not carry you on, because they usually deny death to self teaching by paying only lip-service to it. Truth you know by intimately experiencing it, will set you free from doctrinal prejudice, and your particular church mould. Who can cause us to experience truth? Apostles and prophets of the Paul, Barnabas, Apollos, Agabus kind. God is restoring those of the rare kind in the church today. We hold fast to the Head, Jesus, by joints (Ephesians 4 Ministries) and ligaments (Romans 12 gifts), as Colossians 2:19 exhorts.

1. AGABUS

Prophetic ministry comes on three levels. Firstly, Agabus (Acts 11:27-30, 21:10-14), the Ephesian 4 prophet. God makes a man a prophet. Elijah. Isaiah. Ezekiel. John the Baptist. Very few are called to this hard road of power, purity and persecution - "Some prophets". We know that gift of prophecy doesn't qualify you to the ministry of prophet. Philip's daughters prophesied with sweet voices of encouragement, comfort and edification. Agabus came to Paul out of the blue, with no etiquette, to blow the cobwebs away with a THUS SAITH THE LORD. He was sent by the Spirit to bring a surprise reminder to Paul, to light up the reality of a past encounter. The Spirit had already spoken to the apostle concerning persecution and crisis in every city. He was not to return on

furlough to Jerusalem. He was going to come to the worse crisis. The human element in God's people (Acts 21:4) was beginning to confuse Paul. They prophesied not to go to Jerusalem because their emotions were not yet cross-centered (21:12,13). How much prophecy today in guidance is incorrect because the living word has not divided soul and spirit? Soulsh gifts cause havoc. That's why Agabus was needed to stir up memories in the background of Paul's mind.

How easy it is to forget revelation when many dear saints in need press upon you. Agabus quickened Paul in the expedition and execution of the will of God. There was an abrupt end to fellowship (Acts 21:13). Sheltered fellowship is a false refuge when the Lord wants to thrust us out. Ties of human sympathy are the strongest in preventing us from doing the will of God. Paul said "What do you mean by weeping and breaking my heart?" He loved them but it was time to go and face the prospect charged with hazard. Prophets like Agabus, help us to face the cross. The criterion for the will of God is the cross - the surrender of yourself wholly for God. May we renounce our self-leading, and depend on the Holy Spirit through true prophets.

2 Chronicles 20:20 is a great principle - believe HIS prophets and prosper. Did Paul prosper in going to Jerusalem? Yes, because it took him to Rome to write the most sublime epistles - Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians - the apex of divine revelation. Agabus proved to be God's prophet; in establishing the purpose of God. His prophetic THUS SAITH THE LORD seemed to bring everything to an end for Paul at Jerusalem. But no, his room in Rome became an anteroom of heaven. The prophet brings the principle of the Cross before the resurrection in our experience.

2. PHILIP'S DAUGHTERS (Acts 21:9)

The gift of prophecy is to do five things.

- (1) **Edification** this means to build up or charge up like a battery. From edification we get the word "edifice" of a building. Anointed prophecy will strengthen you in your inner man. (1 Corinthians 14:3).
- (2) **Exhortation** calls you nearer the holy standards of the word of God. It measures our behaviour against the plumbline of the word. It includes warning and correction, not in terms of doctrine or emphasis of a particular set or group, but the balanced word. Truth must be spoken in love. Jesus was full of truth and grace. Truth is one arm looking for another. Truth and trust.....etc.
- (3) **Comfort** is speaking tenderly to. Here is prophecy coming to you from the Spirit of counsel. God's people need comfort when they suffer so they can minister comfort to those who also suffer. (2 Corinthians 1:3-6). These verses say something very profound. YOUR EXPERIENCES ARE NOT PRIMARILY FOR YOU!
- (4) **To convict of sin** (1 Corinthians 14:25,26) How we need meetings where we fall on our faces convinced that God is speaking straight into our hearts! The glory of God as the perceptible presence of Jesus must enter in. We need the spiritual breakthrough of repentance today. Prophecy from Father's heart is one way toward this.
- (5) **To learn** (1 Corinthians 14:31) When certain people function under the unction of the Spirit we learn. Those deep in prayer, deep in doctrine, who know the Cross work in their lives will prophesy anointed truth so we learn the words and ways of God. Shallow prophecy always follows shallow teaching. Where groups hear meat as well as milk, the depth of prophecy will deepen. Prayer fellowship with the risen Lord must occur for true prophecy. Also remember that

better Christian books will contain new, now words of prophecy to teach us.

3. SIMEON (Luke 2:25-35)

The third level of prophecy is that God made man a prophet. God's nature is to come through the new creation man. Even Moses in the old covenant lamented:

“Oh, that ALL the Lord's people were prophets and that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them!” (Numbers 10:29).

Simeon was a prophet in a general sense because the Holy Spirit clothed him, gave him revelation, and led him into the temple in perfect timing. He had a revelation that before he died he would handle the Lord's Christ. Every one born again is a priest - someone through whom God can come, and a prophet - someone through whom God can speak. Has your calling been revealed to you? What will you see or handle of the Lord Jesus?

Fulfillment came to Simeon in old age and then he spoke a personal prophecy to Mary:

“a sword will pierce through your own soul also”.

When THE SPIRIT COMES UPON THEN THE SWORD WILL PIERCE THROUGH. The Holy Spirit leads to the Cross. Mary knew many crosses. Her heart must have felt Joseph's indecision, whether to go through and marry her. She suffered the years in Egypt as a refugee. She knew the personal stigma of her pregnancy after leaving Elizabeth in the hill country. (Luke 1:56). She knew the sword enter her emotions at the beginning of his ministry at Cana on a wedding day when he seemed to be saying - “woman, don't presume to tell me what to do”. She must have heard the insults of the Pharisees who believed Jesus was born of fornication (see John 8:41,48). The natural ties were severed in Matthew 12:47-50 when Jesus proclaimed that anyone could be his mother, brother, sister by DOING the will of God. Proximity to Jesus will cost you - the sword will go through your heart if you obey the revelation God has given you.

So the Simeon kind of word was fulfilled many times. Anyone with a prayer life and filled with the Holy Spirit can be used in this way. Perhaps unwittingly. If it is from God the fulfillment will be real. Paul wanted all to prophesy (1 Corinthians 14:5). God will make some a prophet in the Ephesians 4 sense. And God made man a prophet....to show forth the present mind of God, or to speak like Simeon did. There are mysteries here, for even a man's tragedy can be a parable of how Jesus feels about the church. I remember a brother who married a beautiful believer, but they couldn't have sexual relations, due to previous sexual abuse. It seemed to him a parable of how Jesus could not penetrate his bride with his Lordship. Even in intense personal suffering there is a parallel in the spirit realm. Are we aware of the sword that pierces our heart for the purpose to refine us and annihilate self? True prophecy is to make God's people learn the way of the Cross.

TWO TENDENCIES

The church either accepts or rejects prophetic ministry, which has been sent by God. The mark of prophetic succession is persecution. If the local body INCLUDES the prophet then RESTORATION will be the result. If the local body EXCLUDES the prophet, the tendency will be toward DESOLATION. However, the prophet sent by God will face some forms of persecution. He comes to bring the message of crucifixion of self, new areas of the work of the Holy Spirit, to develop ministries particularly prayer. He will be an automatic target of the

enemy!

(a) EXCLUSION (Luke 13:31-35)

Herod killed John the Baptist, and after that Jesus would not speak to him. Those who throw stones of criticism, stones of opinion, stones of resentment against true prophets will not hear from God. Jesus answered Herod not a word, because he beheaded John. A fox is cruel, cunning and works at night. Evil spirits have similar characteristics and will come against the prophet. Today the prophetic voice that convicts of sin in the camp is being spurned. The end result will be desolation for certain evangelical and charismatic and holiness churches. Prophets who are true to the heart of the Father want to gather God's people into the name and nature of Jesus. They want the bride to make herself ready, to become a perfect man, the full stature of Christ. But some are unwilling to come under the wings of healing and righteousness.

Prophets are usually excluded when they approach rulers. Zechariah was stoned for standing for the truth (2 Chronicles 24:20,21). God sent a prophet to Amaziah who did the most amazing act of schizophrenia in the Bible (2 Chronicles 25:14-16). The Bible has ample evidence of exclusion, and the resulting desolation.

(b) INCLUSION (Acts 3:18-26)

When the message of repentance is obeyed, restoration will come. God wants to restore, to bring back all things to their original purpose. The phrase "restoration of all things" really means the born again universe. The land will no longer mourn for sin in the millenium. The new heaven and new earth will be Eden restored, an age of innocence, harmony, total security and love. The Old Testament prophets share this vision of glory, a new golden age, a spiritual honeymoon with Jesus reigning from Jerusalem for a thousand years. Hallelujah!

"Him you shall hear" (Acts 3:22). That's the focus of the prophets to get us to hear the Master. We are sons of the prophets and the covenant. A covenant is a legal, binding pact between two parties. God writes the terms or the conditions to every covenant. As we obey the conditions of the promise we enter the inheritance, the blessing. Prophets get God's people to pray and to obey. The first blessing (Acts 13:26) is the conviction of sin as a revelation of the Holy Spirit.

These two tendencies are seen in the life of Josiah. 2 Chronicles 34 and 35 (most of it) are a great testimony to the king who humbled himself to hear God speak, taught the words of the covenant and purged Judah of occultism. But the end was a strange destruction because he didn't recognize the voice of God through a foreign King (2 Chronicles 35:20-24). From the chariot of rebellion he went to the chariot of death. Most of Josiah's life was restoration but the end was desolation.

DANGERS

Several dangers need to be mentioned because false prophets are in the church displaying their charisma but not their character. See Matthew 7:15-20. The fruit of the life must be right living. Sometimes prophets can use their charisma as a cover to conceal defects in character.

1. **Propheying logos.** Prophecy to be anointed must come as a river, bubbling up from the central depths of the spirit of man or woman. To speak in the form of prophecy as mental truth is exhorting - the Romans 12 gift. We often fail to make the distinction. True prophecy is an operation of the Holy Spirit, flowing forth like an artesian well. You cannot stop it. The words

have to be uttered. Speaking logos truth is not true prophecy. The word is not being highlighted by the Holy Spirit.....therefore it is knowledge and not life.

2. **No inner witness.** True prophecy will have an inner registration. Luke 1:39-41 is a beautiful example. The babe John leaped in Elizabeth's womb at the greeting of Mary. Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. True prophecy will quicken your mortal body or clarify your mind or bring liberty to your will or will purify your emotions. There is inner witness (Romans 8:16).
3. **Loquacity.** Sometimes people utter "prophecy" from a talkative spirit. Check the prophets life. Do they know the dealings of God? Have they been to a personal Cherith? Elijah was a solitary man, not driven to the loneliness of the wilderness, but enjoyed being alone with God, proving his provision; supernaturally given. We prophecy according to faith (Romans 12:6), and not because we enjoy the sound of our own voice.
4. **No conditional back-up.** Beware of prophecy with no conditions. God is not an automatic blesser of mankind. Too many prophecies contain grand visions of glory, love, comfort, dominion. Remember Ecclesiastes 5:3 - a dream comes through hard work. Only the diligent will rule and be rich says Proverbs. Every promise has a condition. True prophecy will mention repentance and judgement as well as love and glory.
5. **No submission to husband / elders.** To submit is to yield up your preference (not your principle) in loving self sacrifice. Beware of women with dominating, manipulating schemes. The Jezebel spirit will attempt to teach through prophecy. It will draw away disciples after itself, causing havoc, immorality, and occultism. God's order is important. What is the priority for a married person? GOD - MARRIAGE - FAMILY - CHURCH - MINISTRY. If the ministry has taken second place to God (or in some cases become of first importance), the seeds of desolation are being sown. We must be wise. This is why the single status should be elevated in our churches, because much more scope for ministry can occur. It is easier being a bond slave to Jesus, laying your life down for the church, performing and perfecting your holy calling when you are single.

DEVELOPING PROPHECY

1. **Love. (1 Corinthians 13:2)** Without it we are nothing. Love is not dreaming up nice things for people, but active compassion. Love is the ability to make the problem you encounter come to the cure of the Cross. That was the great demonstration of love. Do we identify with the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ? Prophecy that is only truth uttered can be hard, cold, lifeless. Righteousness and truth demanded the cross. Love and mercy provided the cross. Love is not sentiment, but an allegiance to the cross. After Pentecost, Peter flowed in agape, a self sacrificial love. Before Pentecost it was phileo, a fondness, preference, a hero worship for Jesus where Peter himself was in support of the Lord. After Pentecost the love of God came through him without self-effort, but in the power of the Holy Spirit. The word must divide soul and spirit. (Hebrews 4:12). Soul love cannot bring the purposes of God into another life. Sentiment has no energizing power, no moral urgency. Agape never fails.
2. **Faith (Romans 12:6)** Our faith is extending our life to prove the loyalty of God's word. God has given us all the measure of faith.....the kind of faith that he operated when he spoke Pluto, Neptune, Earth into being. The worlds were equipped and furnished by the word of God. (Hebrews 11:3). The creative power of the God kind of faith set the stars in their courses, produced the Himalayas, made night and day. NOW FAITH is the substance, the undergirding of things hoped for. We hope for the fulfillment of the promises. Faith is certainty the word of God

will work for us personally. NOW FAITH IS the evidence, the confirmation of things not seen. What evidence? The evidence is the title deed. The property you own becomes yours when you sign the title deed. When we were born again and filled with the Holy Spirit, Jesus gave us all the promises in Christ Jesus. They are YES (true) and AMEN (a creative reality) for the believer. Jesus signed the title deed when he voluntarily shed his blood on the Cross. He gave you the confidence to own all the promises of God. The words of spirit and life belong TO YOU! As soon as we obey the condition of the promise and believe; the seed of that promise in our hearts will produce; things not seen will happen. The unseen promise will materialize through faith. The prophet must believe the prophecy, and so must the person receiving it. To believe is to be and live in that prophecy. Our faith level will determine the outworking of prophecy.

3. **Fire (Jeremiah 5:14)** How can words burn into the hearts of God's people unless the prophet has experienced the fire of the Holy Spirit? . . . a burning spirit (Isaiah 4:4), is needed to extract the precious from the vile. HE SHALL BAPTIZE YOU IN HOLY SPIRIT IN FIRE preached John. Fire is the most important part to Baptism of the Holy Spirit and in England the least known. A new zeal and new perfect love can only be in our hearts as the blood and the fire do a work of cleansing and purging. Malachi 3:1-3 is for those last days, so that we as priests may offer praise, thanks, and good works in righteousness. When we know fire, then prophecy will take God's people higher. The fire burned Isaiah's lips; there was a WOE and a LO before the commission of GO. God forgive us if we attempt mission by any other method.
4. **Humility (2 Kings 5)** Namaan was angry that Elisha had not personally seen him, but the word has gone forth to bathe seven times in the Jordan. His pride didn't like that one either! To obey the living word, we may have to lose our dignity to receive our deliverance. Humility is before honour (Phil 2:5-10).
5. **Obedience (James 1:22)** To hear only is to build on sand. Obedience will be blessed. The most tragic story of disobedience is found in 1 Kings 13 where we read of the danger of an older prophet bringing advice contrary to the revealed will of God. Disobedience to the logos word is sin. Disobedience to the rhema, specific word of God to you personally is rebellion. When God leaves a prophet he is worthless.
6. **Patience (Hebrews 6:12, James 5:10)** Abiding under trials with consistency is vital for the prophet and for those who receive prophecy. Sometimes God's presence will leave us, so he can see what is in our heart. If we suffer for doing good we must take it patiently. Character is formed through patience, and the promise of God comes to us when we are ready to handle its responsibility. Look at the patience of Jeremiah, Ezekiel - both men viewed as failures in the world, but through the suffering of patience saw their prophecies come to pass.

DISCERNING PROPHECY

There are seven tests to judge the source of prophecy.

- (a) **Deuteronomy 18:22** - does it come to pass? The word of wisdom related to future events *within prophecy must come to pass. Acts 11:28 is a good example. Now there is an area of difficulty. Say, a prophecy with a clear condition is disobeyed by the one receiving it. Then the fulfillment is certainly hindered until the obedience.*
- (b) **1 John 4:2, Luke 1:44** Inner witness. The demons did know Jesus had come in the flesh (Mark 1:24). Scripture is not contradictory. A free translation of the verse in John's letter reads...

..“*every spirit that goes on confessing that Jesus has come in your sense realm is of God.*”

You see mediums can nod and agree with the message of salvation, without it touching their heart. A minister can pray eloquently an evangelical kind of prayer and yet not be born from above. Inner witness, the Holy Spirit bearing with our spirit, will bring a release to our thoughts, wills and emotions. True prophecy will have a quickening effect upon us.

- (c) ***I John 4:4*** Does the prophecy have the effect that you want to overcome the world spirit, that refuses to acknowledge Jesus as Lord? Does it cleanse you?
- (d) ***Revelation 19:10*** The testimony of Jesus is the spirit behind the prophecy, not the prophecy itself. Know the gentle, Lamb spirit that refuses to retaliate. Also know the Lion spirit of boldness and challenge. Prophecy must have the comfort of the Holy Spirit and the challenge of the Lordship of Christ.
- (e) ***Revelation 22:18,19*** Is the prophecy adding or taking away from Scripture? True rhema will back up the principles of the logos word. Sadly, much charismatic prophecy fails this simple test. Obviously prophecy from someone soaked in Scripture carries more weight than utterances from a novice. Yet this may not always be the case. Freshness in the Spirit is vital and some mature believers have lost the spontaneous anointing.
- (f) ***I Corinthians 14:29-33*** The time is upon us when we must obey this clear teaching. There is safety in a multitude of counsellors and a few prophets! Do other gifted members in the body witness to the prophecy?
- (g) ***Matthew 7:15-20*** If the fruit is right, the roots are in the Lord Jesus. Does the man or woman display charisma only? The supernatural alone is NOT the attestation of something coming from God. Note James and Jambre (2 Timothy 3:8,9 Exodus 7:11,12,22 and Exodus 8:7,19). Beware of the prophet who continually draws attention to himself. The annihilation of self brings a greater infilling of the Holy Spirit.

DEALINGS

In the eyes of God the success of any believer, any group, any mission, any church is NOT eloquent preaching, charismatic gift or natural sagacity or manipulative skills, but the depth of God's dealings in the heart. Your heart is a garden of flowers and weeds.

“UNITE MY HEART, O LORD, TO FEAR YOUR NAME”, cried the Psalmist. Make it your prayer today, tomorrow for the next year! Unite, bring into one focus all the discordant elements of your personality. God is single, one God (Deuteronomy 6:4) we are double...flesh and Spirit (John 3:6). There is the battle of Romans 7:15-25 which we all have to encounter and win if Jesus is to be Lord. We can be like Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. The Gadarene demoniac had 6000 personalities! We may have quite a few.

We need the dealings of God to drive out demons. Mary had seven cast out and was the first evangelist. We need the dealings of God in the sin area and with the angry, jealous, critical, lustful, ambitious self-life!

Whatever level of prophecy we operate on (ministry, gift or general), we must have the dealings of God. Isaiah had dramatic dealings. The concentration of sin on his tongue had to know the purging fire. Ezekiel did not grumble over the food arrangements (4:15) nor did he shed tears over the

removal of his wife (24:16). The sufferings of Jeremiah were a continual dealing by the hand of God. The Cross principle “so death works IN us, but life IN you” must be at work for the purity of anointing to flow.

There is no ABC of how to be a prophet. The dealings will be different with all of us. Both Jeremiah and Ezekiel were priests and failures. Both Isaiah and Daniel were aristocratic figures who knew success while they lived. All four, however had dramatic dealings.

Daniel serves as a good pattern. He lived through four reigns: Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Darius and Cyrus. He outlived them and OUT THOUGHT them! When the church is corrupt you overcome in Christ. Israel was corrupt, in captivity, but Daniel overcame. The power to overcome came because he had successfully overcome the battles of body, soul and spirit. Daniel won the first round - the desire of his body to eat good food. The basis for victory is to break habits. You must conquer your appetite. If there is plain living there will be high thinking. The second round was the battle for the mind. Daniel knew alertness and discipline in prayer despite busy schedules in court life. God gave him the interpretation. The third round was the battle for the spirit. Everybody had to prostrate themselves to worship the king. True believers will answer in accordance with Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego (Daniel 3:16-18). The ultimate test of history is worship: who will you serve: Satan or the Lord?

Are you brave enough to withstand the evil day? Can you face the wrath of the antichrist? Yes the Holy Spirit can give you wisdom and a mouth to answer the accusations that will come against you. We need the dealings of God AS NEVER BEFORE. Without them, we will betray the Lord Jesus. The pursuit of the human race is either to be abased by worshipping Satan or purified by worshipping God. Prophetic ministry will come back in these last days to make the Bride ready for this glorious return. Seek, desire, covet earnestly the gift of prophecy. Come to the Cross. Be being filled with the Holy Spirit. Submit to your redeemer and resist the devil! Through repentance and judgement we will come to glory.

Readings on Prophecy

DAY 1 1 Cor 14:1 :

“Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy.”

What is a prophet? What are his qualifications? Can everyone prophesy, or should it be the spiritual few? Is a prophet simply one who prophesies? In the next few days we will be considering these questions.

Our attitude to this gift of God should be evident from 1 Cor 14:1, quoted above. We are to earnestly desire to prophesy, to track down this gift like a missile after a Mirage jet. Paul did not rebuke the Corinthians, despite all their carnality, for seeking manifestations of the Spirit. But in verse 12 of chapter 14 he says, “let it be for the edification of the church that you seek.” So long as our desire is God-centred and not self-centred, the blessing will come from prophecy, and so we must encourage ourselves to seek.

Verse 39 (KJV) exhorts us to COVET the gift. The unusual Greek word used, zeloo, gives us our words ‘zealous’ and ‘zealot’ and means to strive after with a holy jealousy. We perhaps understand ‘covet’ to mean the unhealthy desire to possess what others have, but this is not the sense of the

Greek word. God would have us set our heart on the best, and part of that best is the gift of prophetic utterance.

Before Pentecost, the followers of Jesus were set apart to seek the Lord and to wait on him for the 'power from on high'. But this waiting was not a passive lounging about. It involved zeal. The disciples were concentrating all their attention and energies on the promise of the Spirit. They were 'earnestly desiring'. So, with our seeking. The Lord cannot bless indifferent, casual enquiries.

Though the concept of 'tarrying' for the Spirit has fallen out of fashion, the need for dedication, soul-searching and a process of submission to the will of God is still with us, and no spiritual gift comes without it. Gifts do come by grace but God rewards the diligent. The diligent in prophecy will have spiritual richness (Proverbs 13:4), and will know spiritual rulership (Proverbs 12:24). Are you determined to humble yourself in fasting, seek God's face, and pray in the Spirit as never before?

DAY 2 Rev 19:10 :

"I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God. For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

True prophecy always exalts Jesus. The inspirational breath behind an utterance from God is one of testimony to the One who is Truth, and it will speak of the Lamb spirit of Jesus or the Lion of Judah, our Lord. As well as this, true prophecy opens our eyes and hearts along with our ears to more of Jesus. No matter how obscure the content; no matter how particular it is to a certain situation, the underlying truth of it will be rooted in the person or work of God in Jesus.

Any manifestation of the Holy Spirit will tend to draw us closer to God, and this should be applied as one test of true prophecy. The Holy Spirit's work, according to the words of the Lord, is to guide us into all truth, to glorify Jesus, to convict of sin, of righteousness and of judgement, and to take what is of Jesus and declare it to us (Jn 16:8-15). Thus, we can expect prophecy, which is of the Holy Spirit, to do these very things.

He leads us again and again to the work of the Cross. Repentance and agape love are the foundations of this manifestation of the Spirit. It is an abuse of prophecy to point the finger, to accuse or to condemn, and a harsh word which leaves no room for mercy is often the product of a judgemental mind, not the Holy Spirit. Even when secrets are revealed to believers concerning the state of their hearts, there should always be a way out, an escape to mercy at the throne of grace. The problem with harsh prophecies is often a hardness of heart in the one who is speaking. All prophecy is a mixture of the pure word of God and the expression of the human heart, and the purity of a word from God will be proportional to brokenness of the heart before God. Oddly, we can only have a broken heart if we are whole-hearted! If our devotion to the Lord is half-hearted, then our prophecy will be impure. HE IS LORD (1 Corinthians 12:3) is the basis for all true manifestations. Are we obedient up to the light we have received? If so, our utterances will know the dew from heaven. The Spirit of truth testifies to that which is under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

DAY 3 Cor 14:31 / 12:29 Eph 4:11 :

***"For you can all prophesy one by one..... Are all prophets?.....
And he gave some to be prophets."***

Confusion often arises from the seemingly contradictory statements of Paul about prophets and prophecy. In one place he encourages ALL to prophecy, and then seems to say that only some have this gift. What is the answer?

There is a difference between a prophet and one who prophesies, between the MINISTRY of a prophet, and the MANIFESTATION OF THE GIFT. The gifts of the Holy Spirit are available to all, whereas the specialist ministry is the product of a time of training in the things of the Spirit, and is a calling to a life-style.

The major prophets of the Old Testament were men who experienced, through deep prayer-lives, something of God beyond normal perception, and placed it in contrast to the character of man.

Isaiah:	saw GREATNESS of God (<i>Isaiah 6</i>)	SMALLNESS of man (<i>Isaiah 40:22</i>)
Jeremiah:	saw GOODNESS of God (<i>Jer 31:31-4</i>)	WICKEDNESS of man (<i>Jer 17:9</i>)
Ezekiel:	saw GLORY of God (<i>Ezek 1:43</i>)	SHAME of man (<i>Ezek 16:23</i>)
Daniel:	saw GOVERNMENT of God (<i>the visions</i>)	FOLLY of man (<i>Nebuchadnezzar</i>)

These men were experienced in the discerning of spirits, the word of wisdom and the word of knowledge. Isaiah saw the Lord; Daniel had great wisdom and perception; Jeremiah had great knowledge. Their lives demonstrated their ministry. This is not so for one who simply uses a gift of prophecy. The four major prophets were all men of the Cross. Isaiah was concerned with the condescension of God. This is the clearest revelation of the Incarnation. Ezekiel, the prophet of hope, because although Israel was taken captive, God still showed them glory. Jeremiah was the prophet of contradiction. A holy God can meet you in wickedness and sin. Daniel was the prophet of the second coming: God's Kingdom will be established.

DAY 4 Acts 21:9,10 :

“Now this man (Philip the Evangelist) had four virgin daughters who prophesied. And as we stayed for many days, a certain prophet named Agabus came down from Judea.”

Agabus is an example in the New Testament of a man who had the calling and ministry of a prophet. Note that, although Philip's four daughters prophesied, they were not prophets. Agabus is one of the prophets from Jerusalem mentioned in Acts 11:27, who “showed by the Spirit that there was going to be a great famine.”

The word of the Lord by Agabus was (1) predictive, and (2) demonstrative. He, by his actions, demonstrated what would befall Paul in Jerusalem, as the Old Testament prophets before him had demonstrated the events leading up to the exile. Isaiah walked naked and barefoot for three years for “a sign and a wonder against Egypt and Ethiopia” (Is 20:3); Ezekiel lay on his left and right side according to the number of years of judgement (Ezek 4:4-6); Hosea demonstrated Israel's spiritual adultery by taking a “wife of harlotry” (Hos 1:2-9). These men were not occasionally prophesying, but living lives of prophetic meaning.

The content of the demonstration of Agabus was a confirmation of all that the Spirit had been saying to Paul. (Acts 20:23). But there was a difference in his delivery and intention. The purity of his prophetic word shows that he had erased all sense of self-interest from his ministry, and learnt how to quell his own emotions. By contrast, the Tyre believers who also spoke 'through the Spirit' counselled Paul not to go up to Jerusalem. The moving of the Spirit was indeed upon them to prophesy, but they mixed their own feelings with the word, and tried to reason with Paul. They were all too aware of their own sorrow and sense of loss.

Every prophecy is a mixture of the human spirit and the spirit of God; We cannot prophesy purely, unless we have crucified our emotions. Agabus spoke the word of God and left Paul to exercise his power of choice. Those who, by their prophesying, seek to influence and dictate the actions of others are power-hungry. They have mixed the word of the Lord with a spirit of domination.

DAY 5 1 Cor 14:29 :

“Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge.”

There is never an indication in scripture that we are to accept prophecies without question. However bold, thrilling or powerful they appear, they are to be 'judged'. This word, DIAKRINO in Greek, is made up of DIA - 'right through, throughout', and KRINO –

'to separate, choose, pick out, estimate, distinguish and discern'. So, the process of judging a prophecy is to discern the good from the bad, picking each word over thoroughly to separate the meat from the bones. In the course of one prophecy, there may be sentences, passages, whole sections belonging to the class of human exhortation rather than the 'rhema' word of God, and we must sharpen up our spiritual senses by practise to distinguish the prophetic from the merely human.

The verse in 1 John 4:1,2 tells us to "test the spirits, whether they are from God". There are three spiritual areas, the satanic, the Godly, and the human, and we are exhorted to distinguish between them. That which is of God confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh. The indwelling Holy Spirit is unique to Christianity, and only true prophecy will manifest Jesus in the midst. His presence changes us, challenges us, consoles us. True prophecy effects a wonderful transformation from fear to faith, from dullness to expectation, by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The presence of the Redeemer will cause some contemplation of the Cross, a fresh appreciation of the atonement. The presence of 'another Jesus' however (2 Cor 11:4) will exalt the flesh and titillate the senses. There are those in the Church who are prophesying in a 'different spirit' of a 'different gospel'. The Bible calls these 'false prophets'. Their power comes from a deceiving spirit and their aim is to entice unwary believers into bondage and error. Jesus says of them in Matt 7:23 : "I NEVER knew you." These false prophets have never known Jesus as Redeemer, never submitted to the Cross, never denied self, nor come willingly into the service of God. They have power, but it is not the power of God. Only believers who are constantly 'judging' will be able to spot the difference, and so escape deception. If you love the truth you will escape deception (2 Thess 2:10). Our discernment must always be in line with the word that will judge everything (see John 12:48).

DAY 6 1 Cor 14:3 :

“He who prophesies speaks edification, and exhortation and comfort to men.”

The gift of prophecy can easily be turned on, but does it fit in with the flow of the meeting or does it disturb, confuse, divert? Let the Body of Christ be the judge.

Paul rebuked the Corinthians for being undiscerning:

“Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you, not even one, who will be able to judge between his brethren?”

(1 Cor 6:2-5).

Now, Paul was here expecting the Christians to make wise decisions on matters that affected the lives of believers. When a man or woman stands to prophesy in the church, is that church able to judge the effect this person will have on the fellowship as a whole?

Sensitivity to the spirit is essential. Just as vital is sensitivity to each other and to the general trend of the meeting. We are members of Christ and of one another. If we are ‘in love’ with one another and concerned for each other’s welfare, we must apply the test of fellowship to prophecy. There are those who make use of a gift of prophecy - even a genuine one to dominate a church. This person gathers followers for himself, being in love with his own personality instead of the family of God. What does the scripture say?

***“If anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet” (1 Cor 8:2);
“For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing,
he deceives himself” (Gal 6:3);***

***“Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” (Eph 4:3);
“Submitting to one another in the fear of God.” (Eph 5:21).***

Satan is a master of division. True prophecy will not scatter but gather saints into the purpose of God. The Holy Spirit is ONLY ONE SOURCE. There is no second opinion. True prophecy edifies the Body of Christ, comforts, challenges and cheers. It flows in the same directions as the fellowship, making God’s work there a harmonious whole. Beware the Jezebel spirit that flatters and teaches via prophecy (Rev 2:20-22). It will ruin unity and always seek to divide leadership, and usurp man’s authority. Jezebel said to Ahab “I will give you Naboth’s vineyard.” Women can prophesy and teach. The real meaning of 1 Timothy 2:12 is that a woman cannot teach from her self-working authority.

DAY 7 1 Cor 14:30-33 :

“If anything is revealed to another who sits by, let the first keep silent. . . the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets, for God is not the Author of confusion, but of peace.”

There is often a mistake made by young Christians moving into the realm of prophecy. This is to confuse demonic mediumship with prophetic utterance. Many who have had no experience of the supernatural but the occult, think that the movement of the Holy Spirit is just like that of a demonic spirit, which speaks through a willing mouth.

Some, believing this to be the way of prophecy, have opened themselves up to spirits of deception, and led others astray. Others, more cautious, have avoided danger, but have also missed the gift of prophecy by misunderstanding the means by which God works. They think that, because God has

not moved upon their tongues to speak through them, that they have failed.

But the Word of God says, “the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.” In other words, the human spirit, through which the anointed word flows, is under our control at all times. No word of God is so urgent that it just **MUST** be voiced there and then. Any sense of compulsion is of the devil, not of the Holy Spirit. God guides, prompts and inspires, with our full co-operation; the devil drives, urges and usurps, taking control of the faculties for himself.

So, the word of God requires that we are in full use of all our faculties - mind, body and spirit, whereas a demonic word given through a medium requires just the opposite, complete passivity. The Holy Spirit quickens our mortal body, but the devilish spirit seeks to bind our faculties and take them over for his own use. A prophet is not a robot. He does not go into a trance. He is using his own brain, tongue and emotions at the same time as he speaks the word of God. This means that he can hesitate, stop, re-start, interject his own thoughts, or even abandon the prophecy altogether, at his own volition. And, if he does not open his mouth and use his tongue in obedience to the prompting of the Spirit, the prophecy will pass from him.

Prayer preparation before the public meeting is the priority for all prophets, so they may be sensitive in heart.

DAY 8 Rev 22:18,19 :

“If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life.....”

There are serious consequences for anyone tampering with the word of God. The warning above specifically covers the Book of Revelation, but it reminds us how careful we must be not to wander out of God’s spoken word of prophecy into the realm of the flesh. It also provides a further test of true prophecy: God’s spoken word will never contradict God’s written word. Genuine prophecy is always based on scripture; we need a good factual knowledge of the Bible, therefore, to be able to ‘judge’ correctly.

Prophecies illustrate and illuminate what God has said before. Their freshness or seeming ‘newness’ is just because our minds were previously dull to the voice of God. They do not reveal ‘new’ doctrines. So many destructive heresies could have been nipped in the bud if believers had ‘judged’ the enticing new revelation being presented in a prophetic format. Anything startling or unexpected should be considered most carefully, and it is best to pray for confirmation before accepting such a word, though God sometimes catches us unawares. But anything plainly contrary to scripture must be rejected, however powerfully - or perhaps, humbly - spoken.

We live in an age of deceitful charm. Recently, a religious leader said that, “war is a tragic record of the past, and is not on the agenda for the future.” A Christian politician called this statement ‘prophetic’. Yet any student of the Word knows this is false by turning up such passages as Matthew 24:6-8 or Luke 21:20-24. Whatever scriptures are interlaced with a prophecy must be appropriate, spontaneous and full of the quickening power of the Spirit.

The balance of Scripture is vital. Did you know the pre-tribulation view of the rapture came from a prophecy in 1830? J. N. Darby endorsed it; George Mueller refused it. Most today accept escaping before the reign of the Antichrist, but the balance of Scripture has been broken. The depth of

prophecy is proportional to the depth of Bible truth in the prophet.

DAY 9 Gal 5:22 :

“The fruit of the Spirit is.....goodness”

Prophecy is the fruit of the prophet's walk with God. The content of a genuine prophecy, therefore, should demonstrate the Spirit of goodness, but we must discern what is good and what is a mere parading of a benevolent personality. False prophets APPEAR good - they wear the clothing of sheep, that is, of believers. But inwardly they are ravenous wolves seeking to devour the flock. One small point of interest here: the disguise of the false prophet is the clothing of the SHEEP, not of the SHEPHERD. This is not to say that our leaders cannot lead us astray, but a reminder that we should exercise the same Christian caution towards our fellow believers as towards our pastors and teachers.

Jesus counsels us to ***“know them by their fruit. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles?.....a bad tree cannot bear good fruit.”*** (Matt 7:15-20). Some of the rotten fruit that falls from the tree of deceivers is described for us in the Bible:

Persuasive heresies (Matt 24:11) false signs and wonders (Mark 13:22) heretical doctrines which bring the truth into disrepute (2 Peter 2:2) secrecy and hypocrisy (2 Tim 3:6 / 2 Pet 2:1) covetousness - desire for money, power, influence, popularity etc - (2 Pet 2:3) vanity, pride and foolishness (2 Tim 3:7-9 / 2 Pet 2:18,19) worldliness (1 Jn 4:5) and the end result - bondage (2 Pet 2:19).

Paul knew that after he had gone, from the fellowship of believers men would rise up, speaking misleading things, to draw away the disciples after themselves (Acts 20:30). These are men who dominate the flock and teach slavish submission. Teaching which exhorts the Christian wife to participate in the ungodly practices of her unbelieving husband does not come from the Holy Spirit of goodness. Beware such leaders who lack the fruit of the Spirit and prophesy to boost their ministry. The greatness of leaders is to be found in their relationship to Jesus and the holiness of their personal lives, not in their ministry. So we need to discern the source and the life behind each prophecy, looking for the good fruit of the Spirit. Esteem GOODNESS of character above GIFTING of charisma. One test is always the logos word. Rhema must NEVER contradict the logos principles of the written word. If it does, then pride.....the very curse of hell has entered the mind or heart of the one who has prophesied.

DAY 10 1 Cor 13:2 :

“Though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.”

The sort of love Paul spoke of here was the sacrificial love of God which is showered into our hearts when we are born again. Emotional love, affection, sentiment, sympathy - these are the loves of the soul of man, and sexual love is of the body. But the love of God is spiritual love, pure and without selfishness. Since God IS love, everything he does is based on his love. Without it, we fall very short of his intentions.

Prophecy is of no lasting value without God's love, for that love seeks to build up the Church, bind up its wounds, bring forgiveness and healing, and do good to all around (Acts 9:36-42). Love is goodness in action, the Word of God in DEED as well as in TRUTH. Prophecy that flows from a heart of Agape love deserves our close attention, because it will minister Spirit and life. Many

prophecies seek to arouse emotional reactions of awe, respect, even fear, or they stimulate only the soulish aspects of love, such as fondness towards the Word of God or affection for the fellowship. True prophecy, spoken out of a heart of love, goes like an arrow to the heart of the matter and breaks down all the barriers we erect against God.

The letter of 1st John is full of the practical use of Agape love. When we are moving in God's love, we know him, we obey his commandments, we discern error, we love the brethren, we lose all fear of judgement. The prophecies which come forth out of a heart of love demonstrate these qualities. Even a sharp word or rebuke, spoken in love, carries the mark of authenticity, for we instinctively recognise the Spirit of Jesus behind those words of chastisement. We know that God's love sent Jesus to the Cross, and in his Body that same love chastens and disciplines us. False prophecy, on the other hand, is incapable of conveying the tenderness of God's love, because the enemy is incapable of agape love. The Father heart of love in a prophet will pray the purposes of God into being for other lives. This is turning a knowledge of mysteries into a real ministry.....getting others to go for Jesus Christ.

IF YOU KNOW YOU ARE DEAD, YOU CAN HOLD FAST TO THE HEAD.

The Cross of Jesus Christ deals with every problem. There law, sin, self, the world, the devil are finished forces. He descended to deal with every human problem. He ascended so we may finish his heavenly ministry here on earth. These are twin pivots of Paul's letter to the Colossians. The cross of Jesus Christ is the route to glory, the road to ministry, the rendezvous of all testimony.

JUDAISM

Helping grace with law. Not
resting wholly on work of
Christ. FINALITY of the
CROSS.

DESCENDED

to deal with law (2:14)
self (2:11, 3:3,5)
devil (2:15)
world (2:20)

C
O
N
F
L
I
C
T

ASCENDED

therefore not capable of carrying out all his ministry
(1:24)

GNOSTICISM

Angels as links in a chain (Christ as a link). ALL FULNESS of Godhead bodily in him. Contemporary Gnosticism is the New Age heresy. Heresy is skilful intermingling of truth with error.

The cross is God's NO to man's YES. God says NO to the devil by Jesus spoiling the principalities and powers. In effect this was more than stripping them of their rank, but actually tearing them off his body as it hung on the cross. He had been made sin, giving the demons a legal access to his very person. HE SPOILED THEM because his spirit was still pure, spotless as the lamb of God.

Because man has a satanically inspired nature before he comes to be born again, he will always say yes to the enemy, the self-life, the world and the law as a means to approach God. The Cross finished this massive deception. The Cross also says YES to man's NO. We are unable to fulfill the words of Jesus without a radical change of inner disposition. We need a new heart, a new spirit. If we know we are dead to law, self and the world, we can hold fast to the head of all things to the church, the Lord Jesus Christ.

These cross truths are vital when we come to the matter of ministry. For testimony (what Christ has done in us) precedes ministry (Christ through us in the power of the Holy Spirit). Testimony is allowing the cross to overcome our problems so that Christ is in us the hope of glory. Christ is not an outside adviser to the Spirit filled saint, but an inside advertiser.

So TESTIMONY precedes MINISTRY (we can only minister what we are by grace). MINISTRY is proportional to TESTIMONY (we cannot go beyond what we are in him, we minister according to our proportion of faith).

Today many ministers of the gospel are on the brink of serious disease, emotional fragmentation elements of doublemindedness, because the cross of Jesus Christ is not seen as the very back bone to all ministry. When the cross deals with I (human personality) and flesh (natural affections) then you can have a ministry. But flesh as Luther said always wants to be exalted before it is crucified. The heresies of Judaism and Gnosticism invade the church today in subtle forms. Legalism atrophies much reformed church practice while licence has shared much charismatic experience. Heresies take away from the completeness of Christ. We insult God if we think the cross is not enough to bring ministry out of testimony. We disgrace Christ if we add law to grace, or see grace as license. Jesus went through the Cross to be the federal head of a new humanity, of a new breed, a new creation. So we must live in the death of Christ to the old man (Colossians 3:5).

A new revelation of the cross will salvage many ministries. Hundreds of preachers today need a new repentance before refreshment can come again from their ministry. We are coming to a dead end in this nation. Big names are played out from schedules so busy that flesh (the old life) has fulfilled them. The word must be manifest, shown forth as life from heaven by preaching. (Colossians 4:3,4; Titus 1:3). Listen to Paul. He asked the church at Colosse to pray also for us, the apostolic team. Epaphras prayed for the church that they have full conviction concerning the will of God. He laboured in prayers poured out from the heart (Colossians 4:12). God grant the Holy Spirit give to ministers fresh revelation of the Cross. Prayer DOES NOT CHANGE THINGS. IT CHANGES YOU FIRST by leading to Calvary so wrong attitudes, strong desires of the flesh and opinions can be removed, so the Spirit of Christ may birth more of the beauty of the new creation.

We are COMPLETE IN HIM, positionally, by our standing in Christ. We must realize our position, our legal status, by entering the vital reality of it. A key is shown in Colossians 2:9,10. The performance of our completeness, wholeness, security only happens as we enter the spiritual warfare and overcome unseen principalities and powers. Too many sermons overemphasize what we are in Christ, without showing the route to how this be a reality in our lives.

Colossians 3:3 “FOR YOU DIED” — that's our position. Colossians 2:20 “IF YOU DIED...” — that's judging us whether our position is our performance. Have we died from the world-spirit that refuses to acknowledge Jesus as Lord? The world may talk of him as Saviour, but never as Lord. We cannot say we are complete in him if the world is still an attractive force to us. God hates hypocrisy and is coming to judge the church with the plumbline of his word.

The persuasive words of the world-spirit can anchor our souls in deception (Colossians 2:4). Those rudiments or orderly, fundamental spirits of evil are waiting to hold us down to views and opinions detrimental to the advance of the gospel. We must cast DOWN and pull DOWN from our minds the strongholds of thoughts instigated by evil spirits. Win the battle of your mind. How are we rooted and built up in him? (see Colossians 2:7). by a preprogrammed mind full of the word of God. Words in conflict with the word of God will bring unbelief. Philosophy, psychology and humanism will cheat the believer of their inheritance. We are nourished by the sincere milk of the word. Faith knows no other foundation than the word. The word will WORK if those who believe (1 Thess.2:13). If you believe you will be established (Isaiah 7:9) so we are rooted in Christ by HEARING, READING, STUDYING, MEMORIZING and MEDITATING the word. We are transformed in a process of metamorphosis. Like a butterfly emerging from the chrysalis, we change from the basic principles of the world to the renewed mind. (Romans 12:2 and Colossians 2:8). “Reasonable service” in Romans 12:1 is really our service of the word in the Greek., We must be renewed in our minds in order to prove the GOOD ACCEPTABLE and PERFECT will of God. Grasping the word includes meditation.

Through meditation we will experience Colossians 3:16 — “let the word of Christ dwell IN you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.” That is our private responsibility — to be built up in him. Take a word break not a tea break! Make much of the word of God.

Publicly, to be joined to the Head, to hold fast to Jesus in these days of mounting pressure and deception we are nourished by JOINTS and LIGAMENTS (see Colossians 2:19). From Ephesians 4:16 we can see that joints are the five fold ministry of apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, teacher. These men as gifts to the body of Christ build up the inner life. God brings increase to the body through such men and women. Its important to ask God to show you who to listen to. I have personally found Derek Prince, G.W. North and Morris Cerullo a great strengthening. We don't hold fast to the Head by listening to one man every week, We don't hold fast to the Head by listening to amateurs who work five days a week, have a busy family life, then stand up on a Sunday thinking their sermon is doing God a favour.

If you want to be a preacher it takes the whole life. Any Ephesians 4 Ministry worths its salt is FULL TIME for God.

Now ligaments must hold the joints together, and the ligaments are local Romans 12 gifts in the church that cement the truths with love. We cannot live exclusively on a diet of meaty Ephesians 4 Ministries. There is a need for local believers to develop their Romans 12 role. So the increase comes. Colossians 2:20, the next verse, says “therefore IF YOU DIED.., from the basic principles of the world. . .Are you dead to worldly ideas?

A recent Christian magazine had an article called The Winners' Edge. The seven points revealed no cross, no openness to the Spirits leading and no love, “Dress and look your best at all times” is often good advice, but sometimes we need to dress according to the occasion. Rees Howells had to become a tramp to win tramps. The second slogan was “take inventory of your triumphs and positive attributes”, which will tend to pride. “Volunteer your name first when meeting people” is self sufficient psychology not biblical Christianity. “Never compare yourself with others. Set your own standards”.., perhaps neglects the truth we always are to compare our performance with the laws of the Kingdom (Matthew 5-7). “Use encouraging words when describing yourself to others”

is hardly bearing one another's burdens so fulfilling the law of Christ. "Look people in the eyes" can become a fixity of gaze which can bring mediumistic conditions". "Always plan your work, and work your plan" tends to doing something FOR GOD rather than, doing something BY GOD.

Are you dead to the basic principles of the world? If you know you are dead, you can hold fast to the HEAD. That means the mother river of revelation can come to you. Jesus brings freshness to the crucified life. Believer, repent of possibility thinking; repent of the extremes of the faith gospel. Repent of not making repentance the first word in the gospel. Pray "unite my heart O Lord to fear your name." No longer be doubleminded by being a man pleaser. Do whatever you do AS TO THE LORD and NOT TO MEN, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance for you serve the Lord Christ. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. Accept the annihilation of self, because if we are not dead in his death in areas of our lives then the enemy still has a hold on us.

IF YOU KNOW YOU ARE DEAD YOU CAN HOLD FAST TO THE HEAD. Hallelujah! Then our testimony will be preserved and our ministry will deepen.

THE HOLY CALLING

The holy thing about you and me is our calling. Most believers know they are saved, but don't know they are called. 2 Timothy 1:9 gets our thinking straight. We are saved and called in the grace and purpose of God. It's a calling before time began. Once a surgeon, an architect and a politician were arguing who had the oldest profession. The surgeon said he was there when Adam was cut open and produced Eve. The architect said he was there when God created order out of chaos. The politician declared he made the chaos! But you and me have the oldest profession — the holy calling.

In 1 Peter calling has five facets. They illustrate perfectly the true grace that Peter is underlining in his epistle.

1. PURITY. 1 Peter 1:13-15

Our first calling is holiness, not by works but through the cross. There is grace at the revelation of

Jesus Christ. Romans 6:6 is a revelation. It speaks of co-crucifixion, the body of sin being done away with, once and for all. This unit of evil, or Mr. Indweller Sin is not temporarily put out of action, not repressed, but severed by an instantaneous act of God's power. The same tense of the verb is used in 2 Corinthians 3:14, where the veil of religious blindness is lifted completely away. In Christ, under the anointing of the Holy Spirit the veil is taken away. How we need all the Catholic, Anglican, Pentecostal, Baptist, Restoration and Faith veils TAKEN AWAY, so that clarity of mind in seeing truth and liberty of will in doing the truth can happen.

True grace deals drastically with the old man in the believer. To be pure AS HE IS, to be righteous AS HE IS, to be in the world AS HE (WAS) is declared by John to be possible. Impossible we think! By grace it's HIM POSSIBLE. By grace alone we will win the battle of our minds and stop conforming ourselves to the strong desires of the old man along wrong lines. So often we need deliverance from evil spirits before the truth can renew our minds.

John 8:31,32 are great truths. As we continue in the word of God, the Holy Spirit can bring us into the reality of truth. The connecting conjunction between these two verses "AND" is a key. YOU SHALL KNOW (or intimately experience) the truth (or reality of Jesus Christ). Its one thing being in it! Its one thing looking at the word, being fascinated by it and enthralled, quite another dimension for the truth to act in you. The word of truth has SANCTIFYING power (John 17:17). That is power to separate you from the world-spirit and separate you unto the Lord. We are holy in our ~ndu~t as we think holy. The word must find place in our heart, dwell richly

~ with wisdom, be truth in our inward parts. Deuteronomy 6:4-9 reveals If you put value on God's word, it will put value on you! That's the of Mark 4:24, 25.

Remember bees in the summer. They don't fly over flowers enjoying their colour to get honey. They come into the flower, bypass the stamens, and extract the pollen. The word has divine power once it is in our spirits. There it will build holiness. To know the TRUTH setting FREE, we (or most of us) need to be delivered from evil spirits. You cannot be holy, if other personalities are restless within. Deliverance is not the goal, but the gateway to holiness.

Obadiah 1:17 has the order. DELIVERANCE, HOLINESS then God can trust us with the INHERITANCE. We are called to be holy, without blame before him, in love.

2.PRIESTHOOD 1 Peter 2:9

We are a chosen generation, picked out for God's own interests. Priesthood is being someone whom through God can come. We are ministering priests, with two callings. We minister unto the Lord so he can minister through us. We come through the precious blood to receive the precious promise so that the precious faith can be tested by fire. Precious is a key word in 1 Peter and describes our function as priests beautifully.

We are a royal priesthood. Many believers think they are just worms. They take this idea from Psalm 22:6. Here the word for worms is special because it was a worm used by kings to dye their garments scarlet. These worms were squeezed to produce the scarlet dye. When pressure and affliction come to us, allowed by a Sovereign God, then do we act with royal dignity? Even if you think yourself just a little squirming worm, then get Isa 41:14,15 behind your ribs!

"Fear not you worm Jacob,
you men of Israel (or N.T. equivalent "the church"),
I will help you, says the Lord...
I will make you into a new threshing sledge
with sharp teeth.

God can change a worm into a combine harvester. Some worms need to become world wide evangelists! Get a big vision from the Holy Spirit. Fast and pray. Prepare yourself before you go that anointed conference. God will speak if your heart is submissive and you will pay the price for Holy Ghost ministry. We need to be poured out ones ~Philippians 2:17), priests who lay down their lives for the brethren and the lost.

The job of priests is praise, that weapon that imposes silence on the enemy. The counsellor must move in praise before the problems are spoken. Praise makes God the centre of the situation. By exalting the character of God and by mentioning his names we give the Lord the opportunity to speak. Four stages in true priesthood in counselling or teaching or praying together:praise; mention the problem briefly; find a relevant promise of Scripture;

prayer. Prayer is pouring out of the heart, a reflex reaction to the problem shared. Prayer should bring us to the sanctuary stillness, where revelation can come. Prayer can be based on a promise, but if no leading to Scripture, just pray. The Lord may bring a passage or verse or perhaps a prophecy. This is a practical path to priesthood. We are priests when born again. To realize it takes time.

3. PERSECUTION 1 Peter 2:20,21

Pure priests shall be persecuted! Look at the spheres of persecution in the life of Jesus. (1) **PILATE** (world) washes hands, doesn't want to be bothered. (2) **CAIAPHAS (religion)** if loses the argument, will start a riot. (3) **JUDAS** (disciple) abuses the intimacy the Lord Jesus gives. When we do good and suffer for it we are to take it patiently. Christ left us an example. The word example here is the same word as in Romans 6:17 "delivered" or entrusted." The Romans had the form of doctrine that was cross-centered. Another word is "moulded." In Romans 6 they were moulded by the truths of co-crucifixion, making the death of Jesus their own.

Again, the word "example" is also used in John 20:25, where it denotes "nailprint", or the "print" of the nails. The godly shall suffer persecution. Vengeance is the deepest rooted sins of the old man. God watches our reaction in times of persecution. A strange thing may be happening to you.

Something new to you (1 Peter 4:12). Our reaction as priests is to rejoice..

(1 Peter 4:13). We must suffer according to the will of God (1 Peter 4:19). That is not poverty, nor sickness. . . but the scope is huge. Jesus is not our example, but praise God, our substitute, in the areas of health and provision.

4. PRODUCING THE PROOF 1 Peter 3:8,9

We are called to inherit and be a blessing. We will produce the proof of resurrection life as we go through the testings and trials. Satan may be afflicting you, but in that very thing, God is testing our hearts. He removed his presence from Hezekiah to see what was in his heart. Under pressure we can still go on showing love. This is the radical superiority of true Christianity. The blood of martyrs is the seed of the church. This is where some of the mystics prove that they were not mistakes. Read Guyon's autobiography. Read St. John of the Cross "Dark Night of the Soul." Read Molinos "The Spiritual Guide." They pursued their Lord although they were reviled, imprisoned, scorned. You sense with Madame Guyon she knew a perfect love that could not return evil for evil.

Here is the place of Stephen, whose face shone like an angel when the stones started flying. The rapture spirit was in Stephen. He knew and his opposers knew that the words of Jesus came from his lips. John 17:8 is alarming and will be more and more true as the end of the age comes nearer. The same words Father gave Jesus, our Lord can give to you and me. They will hate us, but his word will be a blessing that can never pass away.

5. PARADISE 1 Peter 5:8-10

The devil has two jobs. He goes to third heaven to accuse us before Almighty God. He comes down to earth to tempt, to hinder, to deceive, to lie, to murder, to divide, to devour. We are TO RESIST HIM. This is part of our holy calling. We are not on the defensive by passive resistance. We attack with weapons of our warfare: praise, binding and loosing, the spoken word, the blood of Jesus, prophecy (1 Timothy 1:18), intercession which means literally “to impinge by violence.” We resist Satan offensively so the God of all grace can settle and establish us. If you fail to enter the warfare, you will not know the welfare. As Rutherford said “we can’t steal into heaven without a conflict or a cross.” We have to suffer for a while. This includes coming under the wrath of the antichrist. The order in Matthew 24 is very clear —the rapture comes after the desecration of the holy place and the cosmic blackout. The worldwide reign of antichrist will have to be encountered. Don’t panic. The God of all grace will strengthen you. A NEW STRENGTH in the inner man is coming to the wise virgins. God will prepare the church for the coming onslaught of persecution. True grace comes from the Cross. Cheap grace misses out Calvary. Our path to paradise is through suffering. Here is a true grace statement. Say it aloud:

PURE PRIESTS WILL BE PERSECUTED BUT TAKE IT PATIENTLY, PRODUCING THE PROOF OF JESUS PEDIGREE ON THE PATH TO PARADISE.

All the P’s in 1 Peter, including precious. God’s way to peace is through tribulation (Acts 14:22). He cannot wave a magic wand over the world and bring harmony. The fall of Satan and the fall of man are real. God lives in only two homes: highest heaven and a broken contrite heart (Isaiah 57:15).

Check out Joel 2:31 and Matthew 24:29, and be aware we have awesome things to go through before the rapture. Come out of passivity and into priesthood.

It’s the last minutes of the last hour of the last days. Know your holy calling and do the job God gave you to do.

Cheap grace never tells you of your cross and your conflict and true picture of end-times. For an excellent survey of the last days I recommend Paul Tan’s book “In power and Glory.” We come to paradise through many perils, but as you discover your calling He will help you and take you home.

HOW TO BE A PREACHER

Preaching is more than sharing a word. It is the great divine call of God and needs a revival in England. It is still the divine method of winning souls to Christ, edifying the body of Christ and the precursor to signs and wonders ministry. I’ve just been talking to two young men about their future in Christian work. God has called them both: One to preach, one to pastor. How do we become a preacher? What are the steps to be taken to impart words of spirit and life and change the thinking of a spectrum of humanity?

Divine call is the first and almost only essential. Seeing Christ in the Word of God to become a knower of spiritual things means that the author of God’s Word, the Holy Spirit is having His way with you in your life. This is beyond theological seminary and most evangelical Bible Colleges. We need men to be Spirit-taught, and to walk and live in the Spirit. They must overcome the devil with the Word of God before they can preach to others the unsearchable riches of Christ. Ministry is proportional to receiving mercy.

“Therefore since we have this ministry as we have received mercy, we do not lose heart” 2 Cor 4:1

When we receive from Jesus what we never can deserve; the gifts of repentance, faith and the Holy Spirit, then our ministry begins. So preaching the gospel begins at the same point. We impart only what we have experienced of Jesus Christ. We may preach true light beyond our experience from

time to time but it will never impart the reality of truth which sets free. So the call of God on a life is of prime importance. Our only wise God sees the end from the beginning. He knows the origin and future even if to us it all appears hazy. The call of God to preach is confirmed by the body of Christ. As soon as a vicar said to me it's a case of woe unto me if I didn't preach the gospel, I knew that God had spoken months before. The way the call works out may not be what we have in mind, but God, rich in mercy, equips once that call has been settled in our spirits by the Holy Spirit. Practical steps must follow the supernatural quickening. What are they? Bible college? A lively fellowship? Part-time courses and conferences? Remain in my job? There is no prescribed way, only a step-by-step walk in faith. Whatever way, there are certain guidelines:

- 1 Keep close to the Word of God. Meditate it, pray it
- 2 Avoid talkativeness, gossip, criticism
- 3 Exercise forgiveness and walk in love
- 4 Be part of an Ephesians 4 ministry (financial and prayer support, go to conferences, read their material Etc.)
- 5 Join a local fellowship that knows how to move on with the cloud (i.e. doesn't get stuck year after year with the same revelation)
- 6 Develop your personal devotion with intercession in tongues, praying for missionaries, and worship in spirit and truth
- 7 Be willing to do the first works, (deeds of love and caring in the community.) People will listen to a man who exhibits compassion.

Remember these steps don't give you a call or even produce a call in you, but will develop your calling.

Now what sets a preacher apart is an experience of the Holy Spirit with fire. Luke 3:16 must be known. And to know for oneself what deliverance ministry is will certainly benefit the man who in the very nature of preaching has to face the demonic. There is no substitute for a mighty baptism in the Holy Spirit. Afterwards you will see things in a new way. You will see something of the difference between the character of God and the conduct of man. Yes the preacher must observe human nature as well as know the content of the Bible. The preacher must be aware of a vast range of literature, newspaper cuttings, film, politics Etc... because he has to find illustration and make the message live in a relevant manner. The baptism of the Holy Spirit releases personality and we need to be liberated in order to be a blessing to different kinds of people. I'm more and more convinced that this experience is essential to all forms of ministry. This plunge into the life and power of God has so many ramifications. The prayer life is deepened, the gifts of 1 Corinthians 12 open up, sonship rights can be realised, the authority of the believer is deepened, God's love begins to reach out to others, as well as the rivers of joy, peace, self-control.

A wise Puritan said three things made him a preacher: the Word of God, prayer and temptation. The Word of God must work in him the holy and faith hereditary of Jesus. The dispositions of the Son of God must flow from the preacher. How is this achieved?

- (1) By study of the Word : 2 Timothy 2:15
- (2) By reading of the Word : Ephesians 5:26, 27
- (3) By hearing the Word : Romans 10:17
- (4) By memorising the Word : Psalm 119:11
- (5) By meditation : Psalm 1:2, 3 Joshua 1:8

Think of your hand. Four fingers cannot grasp a Bible. You need your thumb. The first four ways of getting into the Word are incomplete without the thumb of meditation. Meditation will cause the Word to grow and incubate in the garden of your heart. These five disciplines will make a

man or woman a preacher of the Word of God.

Secondly, prayer. Without it our words lack unction, our messages will be second-hand or lifeless letter. We live in strange days of paradox and irony.

I personally know well certain Christian groups who believe in the power of prayer and yet will spend more time in discussing the possibilities that lie before them. There is a great need for praying leadership rather than committees and elders who merely discuss then ask God to bless the latest idea. After ten years varying ministry I am more convinced than ever that God only blesses the Word He speaks to our hearts. The rest is the water of human self-effort rather than the wine of a joyfilled, implicit obedience.

The greatest labour of any preacher is the intercession. To intercede means to be violent against the enemy and situation. He or she must go exceedingly above the situation to confer with the Lord Jesus. We wrestle against demons

— we must overthrow unseen forces of darkness. Some use Scripture as an excuse not to fight, like the popular text of Exodus 14:13, not understanding the context or the new covenant. The Lord has to intervene supernaturally and make the Red Sea deliverance for the Israelites; doom for the Egyptians. The chosen ones had nothing to fight with. In the new covenant God has prepared weapons to combat the enemy and it's up to us to use them. We bind and loose, we resist the devil, we cast down imaginations, we do the wrestling. The victory has been GIVEN by the Lord Jesus paralyzing the death dealing power of the enemy but it IS APPLIED by spiritual warfare. Any preacher who does not make preparation against the enemy is a waste of money, time and sermons!

Thirdly, temptation. How can the enticement of a pull from the enemy to make us live like the world make a good preacher? Jesus won the battles of the wilderness before He preached the Sermon on the Mount. When every temptation known to man was at an end He went forth in the power of the Holy Spirit. There is a difference between the wilderness as a place and wilderness experiences. It was unbelief, worry, mumblings that prevented Israel from getting into Canaan in God's ideal timetable. The wilderness experience is due to our sin and Satan's counterfeiting voice. However there is a wilderness place: A Midian for Moses, a Cherith for Elijah, an Arabia for Paul — and every preacher needs one or two of those in his earthly pilgrimage. The temptation to go back to a previous type of existence can come in the wilderness to the Christian worker. But we desire a better country, a better resurrection, a better covenant based on better promises. The sovereign God allows temptation to test where our heart and treasure are placed. God tests, the devil tempts. The temptation to make a name for yourself comes to experienced ministers of the gospel. The devil is no fool, but wise; he's not ugly but can appear attractive right and proper. The temptation to sin is different for all of us. We overcome by the Word of God in order to prove Him so that we may preach under the anointing of the Spirit.

Preachers need the revelation of the Cross in their lives and visions of Cavalry:

•Death works in me but life in you' 2 Cor. 4:12

There is life for a look at the crucified one because the life of Jesus is released at the Cross. We also need the cross to penetrate its working power into our lives. I remember the bitter pain of failing to enter Anglican Orders in 1975 as a young believer. Yet that loss was necessary. In the next few months I began to speak in tongues, times of fasting and prayer opened up, that all led to a deeper revelation of God. The one thing I didn't want to happen triggered a relationship with Jesus that was better. The calamity of failure was a necessity of fulfilment. Count all things loss that you may gain Christ. The Cross is the only way to glory. All men of God had born to them what God breathed out. It's not a matter of holy preachers with beautiful thoughts. The reality of the truth was lived out in the life. Only the Cross produces this and our cry at the throne of grace can only be: who is sufficient for these things? Only by grace we can share His glory, and grace comes from the poverty of the Cross. The more we enter grace the more we know the glory. Glory has the personal price of death working in us. The preacher must know the 2 Corinthians 4 Cross principle if the

anointing is to remain on his ministry. Do you remember the case of Gary Gilmour who claimed the death sentence although life imprisonment beckoned as the easier choice. We must accept the death sentence of Romans 6. If we refuse the death position with Christ and the outworking of that position in our actual lives, two things follow:

(a) doctrinal error possibilities. Among charismatic ministries look at the extreme doctrine positions Satan pushes some into. Certain submission teaching went too far in the early 1980's. A lot of deliverance was over the top. Some took faith line on healing and insisted the flock shouldn't go to doctors with real casualties. Signs and Wonders have occasionally gone out of control with the transference of evil spirits. A huge lack of spiritual discernment has attended much that has begun in the Spirit but then ended in the flesh. The church stays fresh, vibrant and steadfast through doctrine first, then fellowship (Acts 2:42).

(b) a dead ministry. Look at the preachers who refuse the death-working power of the Cross in their lives. They cannot raise the spiritually dead to regeneration. They exhibit soulishness and use their personalities to sway the people, or advertise themselves to the detriment of the glory of God. Jesus will never push the sanctifying work of the Cross: we must echo John "I must decrease, He must increase." Saul sat on the throne for 40 years, but only reigned in his first year when still under the anointing of the Spirit. How many ministers lead churches in the Spirit for a period then sadly fall away! Preachers, more than anyone else need the revelation of Cavalry and a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the full knowledge of Jesus to live in the daily freshness of heavenly reality. God has to ruin us before He can release us in relation to ourselves. I'm glad God ruined me after two sterile years as a curate. Out of the hurt and bewilderment came a ministry in the Holy Spirit. May we all be open enough to have new dealings with God so that He may graciously lead us on.

The death of Christ is not a dead entity or tragic cul-de-sac. It works. The glory of the indweller Christ can emerge from our spirits. We are persecuted; people are against preachers, but we are not forsaken. We preachers are a workshop where death works. We see a sovereign Lord and that "all things are for our sakes" (2 Corinthians 4:15). There is no situation where Jesus claims exemption! Everything is for our benefit provided we see the circumstances and environment as God-planned. There is a divine reason for the mental, social, spiritual suffering. Grace makes the affliction light as a feather. The thing that seems to work against us is really working for us. And this affliction, or employee is very profitable, there is a tremendous return. O come Holy Spirit reveal the truth of 2 Corinthians 4:17 to my heart. Whatever the preacher goes through he will not give up God or the vision that was given to him. May we know the elevation of spirit Stephen experienced when the stones were flying! His face shone like an angel — that grace and glory may flow through us when preaching the Word of God! Stones of accusation, doubt and under-cutting fly to-day against the Spirit-filled preacher. The identification in Christ's death is the only answer. Your congregation can kill your ministry with evil report. The preachers sent from God has a rod, and can use it in the Spirit, to bring order and humbling. Preachers must give life to the congregation through words of spirit and life in counselling, in the teaching class, in prayers and in preaching.

One last word. A director of a huge company recently amazed people by declaring the number one quality he looked for in managers was toughness. The same is true for preachers: mental and physical toughness is vital. The ministry is long hours; fairly unhealthy sitting for most of the day; decisions to be made quickly and with discernment; the need for a clear mind; the constant ability to communicate in speech or writing; the need to discern; the power to concentrate on the essential. There are many parallels. God grant England a new generation of diligent, determined disciples who will spend the time in training, who will heed the divine call, who will be filled with the Holy Spirit in order to be poured out for a needy world.

COMMANDMENTS

Ezekiel prophesied as he was commanded. (Ezek. 37:7). The living word has the authority of a commandment. Jesus spoke personal instruction through the Holy Spirit to the sent ones in the forty days. (Acts 1:2). The preachers must have ears to hear the living, creative word. Obedience to these words will bring glory; the perceptible presence of Jesus Christ will come. (Leviticus 9:6). All prophetic ministry must hear words of revelation, mission, church life and deliverance. We are strengthened and equipped by the commands of the living word. This is beyond all mental knowledge that merely puffs up.

1 REVELATION John 15:9-17

Abiding in Jesus is the abounding life. “Conscious communion with Him will result in unconscious communication of Him” said a great teacher. We make our home in God’s love by keeping the commandments. We obey the words of spirit and life. We are not straining the brain to keep obeying the ten commandments of the old covenant. They are to bring us to Christ; they cannot produce Christ-life; they are for the immoral, unrighteous, ungodly, the sinner before conversion. (1 Timothy 1:9,10).

The motivation of our service is love not law. We are to love one another as Jesus loved. We are to lay down our lives for the brethren. Our friendship to Jesus is tested by our obedience to the commands we hear in the Spirit. Will we do the revelation? In John 15:15 we get a big surprise. God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit are no longer mysteries... “for ALL THINGS I heard from my Father I have made KNOWN, to you.” Ministers of the gospel are mystery revealers! (see Ephesians 3:8-10), But revelation has a price — it is always attacked, because it does the devil harm. John 16:1 in one version says “these things of the Holy Spirit GUARD against the breakdown of your faith. The Holy Spirit knows Jesus perfectly. The words of John 14, 15, 16 guard us against enemy attack. We must receive rhema revelation in order to relay it in the power of the Holy Spirit. The Thessalonians were a young church who needed to be kept from the evil one. It was the word that did the work in those who believed. (1 Thess 2:13).

(a) The word was RHEMA (1 Thess 1:5)

Peter said “heed my rhema” (Acts 2:14). Its the specific now word of a living God for a specific situation. Rhema cannot be destroyed (1 Peter 1:25), has creative power (Luke 1:37), can easily be remembered (Acts 11:16), brings faith (Romans 10:17), is a sword to defeat the enemy (Ephesians 6:17). The word in the Holy Spirit can achieve much. These rhema words act as new testament commandments. Obedience brings blessing.

(b) The word was RECEIVED (1 Thess 1:6)

Despite the context of outer conflict (Acts 17:1-5), the seed was received. Resisting truth will stop our love for Jesus. Teachable spirit is important today. Too often we become clones of a certain line of truth and close our minds to revelation that doesn’t come from a certain group. Inner joy was the sign that this church were receiving progressive revelation. The traditional set of mind or the rocky heart refuses to accept the word on a deep level. The wayside heart that has been rejected, manipulated or dominated cannot receive the word. Deliverance and inner healing must often come before the word is received.

(c) The word was RELAYED (1 Thess 1:8)

All the saints do the work of ministry! (Ephesians 4:12). The apostles were excited that the

Thessalonians had done the number one job of evangelism. Paul was pleased they didn't need special ministries. People witness best when they are under three years old in the Lord. Zeal is when the revelation is fresh. The commission of the church is mission. Don't grab the phone for the evangelist. Every believer should sound forth the gospel.

2 MISSION Matthew 10:5, 28:20

Failure to fulfill the commission, the command to go, is bringing many churches into the perimeter of cursing. Key word in Acts is GO. Jesus makes His selection of those who are to go. He does not call for volunteers. We are to respond to the command according to His predestined purpose. Here are some key thoughts on the command to go and fulfill the great commission.

(a) MAKING NEW ROADS

We need revelation knowledge to know the new adventure (Isaiah 43:18,19). Don't look back to the former things. Living commands from Jesus equip us for the future. God can make a road where there seems to be only wilderness. Go on His creative word to your heart. This is faith risking —the meat and drink to true missionaries.

(b) INVENTING NEW SOLUTIONS (Acts 13:1-3)

The command for teamwork separated Paul and Barnabas to the Holy Spirit. Sometimes people will not appreciate the new departure in your life. They don't see the wisdom of God in inventing a new solution. Between Acts 10 and Acts 15 there was a nine year delay for the vision to Peter to become corporately verified! If the thing is of God, others will come round to it... but it may take time!

(c) SOWING NEW SEEDS (2 Timothy 3:14-17)

New areas of truth must be taught. Longer we stay in ministry, the greater the danger of losing vision. Are we aware of God's emphasis..., the will of God to our generation? (see Acts 13:36). Deliverance; Death to Self; The Renewed Mind; Apostolic outreach; Five-fold ministry; Intercession; Body ministry and many other seeds must be sown for maturing churches.

(d) SUPPLYING NEW FINANCE (2 Corinthians 9:6-14)

The command to give is missed by many saints. We are TO LIVE TO GIVE. Joy in the divine loan of Proverbs 19:17. Be blessed by your current account of tithing opening the windows of heaven. To give one tenth to God is a command (Malachi 3:6-10). Invest in your deposit account by giving to Christian work. (Matthew 19:27-29). The Macedonian church were poor, but by the principle of giving and receiving they reached the great promise of Philippians 4:19. Cornelius gave and was spiritually blessed. Ananais and Sapphira took back part of the price and were cursed. Our attitude to money determines far more than we realise in the spiritual realm.

(e) INSPIRING NEW PRAYER (Romans 8:26,27)

If you want God to be in sovereign control of your life you must intercede in the Holy Spirit. These great prayer verses come before Romans 8:28. There is a strong link. The Holy Spirit must be given place to come together with us AGAINST our weakness. Prayer begins with weakness, or our inability to produce a result. Mission succeeds or fails according to our response to God's command to pray. Epaphras knew the burden of God to pray that the Colossians would stand complete in all the will of God. Perhaps he prayed Colossians 1:9-12 for them like the apostle. Make those verses a new prayer for your friends.

(f) OPENING NEW DOORS Acts 16:6-10

The imposition of the Holy Spirit was like a command *not* to preach the word in Asia. God can

close some doors we by ourselves would have walked through, in order to open new ones. Prayer opens up doors of utterance (see Ephesians 6:19 and Colossians 4:3). When Peter and Cornelius both got praying, revelation came and a new door opened. Acts 10 was a great pivot in the early church. Cornelius knew Peter had received “things commanded you by God,” and could receive them because his heart has been prepared by prayer. Sharing the right word at the right time is a great blessing for all. The church changed course from

(a) Jerusalem to Antioch as its centre.

(b) Jews to all men.

(c) One man ministry to teamwork.

The new door is often opposed to the old doors we have, gone through. Notice the contradiction in Peter’s first sentence to Cornelius (Acts 10:34 “in truth I perceive that God shows no partiality”). For ten years after Pentecost, despite the success of his soul winning, Peter had respect of persons and a Jewish mentality. How many Spirit-filled believers today get stuck to old prejudices, outmoded conventions, and unrenewed thinking. After the stirrings of the Spirit, we need to do the commands of revelation. After Paul was converted, he had to know God’s geography to meet up with Ananias and receive God’s message (Acts 9:10-19).

(g) NOURISHING NEW SOULS

Evangelism in the New Testament never stopped at new birth (Acts 14:26-28). The nurturing of new souls is vital. The implanted word takes months to save the soul (emotions, thoughts, decisions). I had a two year battle after conversion to get to the truth and for the truth to grip me... the loneliness and confusion of those days could have been avoided if a born again believer had taken an hour a week in giving me Bible studies. The apostles strengthened the disciples in teaching (Acts 14:22).

3 CHURCH LIFE (2 Thessalonians 3)

True spirituality is not how many sermons we hear or conferences we attend. Even good meetings can keep us away from really knowing God in the depths. What really counts is our obedience to the commands (2 Thess 3:4). We must withdraw from disobedient believers (v6), admonishing them but not keeping company with them (v14, 15). Preservation of holy church life is an issue today because carnality ruins church life. The great determination of God is Jesus Christ and Him crucified. The dilemma of the church is carnality. A little leaven leavens the lump. I’ve known charismatic churches lack discipline and fall into deception and immorality. Commandments are God’s way forward to making Jesus Lord. The purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, good conscience and sincere faith (1 Timothy 1:5). Motives outside Jesus Christ are unclean. The Holy Spirit broods over the fellowship that knows and teaches the pure heart. Unite my heart to fear Thy name is schizophrenia’s prayer. (Psalm 86:11). The Lord your God is one. But we are double — flesh and spirit, the two factions warring and lusting against each other. The annihilation of self, of the angry, jealous, critical, ambitious, worldly self, must begin to occur if church life is to be safe. The destiny of your church is dependant on the dealings of God in the inner recesses of the human heart — in the leader’s heart AND in your heart. Unite my heart is the prayer for today. O Lord bring into ONE FOCUS all the discordant elements of my heart, my personality.

Carnal believers enjoy remaining double personalities. We could go further and say many believers also suffer from demons, which add to the turmoil and confusion of their lives. 1 Corinthians 5:9-13 is a strong and neglected passage. We cannot eat with certain believers — the sexually immoral, the covetous, the extortioners, the idolaters, the drunkard, the reviler. We don’t keep company with those who are greedy for money, those who secretly worship at the shrine of TV, those who are Freemason believers those who practise sexual uncleanness. Romans 16:17 includes the divisive, and those who bring offenses to your spirit, who hurt you inwardly by the abuse of their mouth. 2 Timothy 3 verses 1 to 5 catalogue 18 characteristics of the church goer who denies the power of

God. Note believers who resist the work of the Holy Spirit continually. Self is on the throne of their lives. Avoid them. Withdraw from believers who are still caught up in permissiveness, who love money, self, and pleasure. Beware ministers who want to make merchandize out of God's flock. Be a Timothy and follow Paul's doctrine and manner of life (2 Timothy 3:10). Don't fear the commands of Jesus Christ. Rejoice in their wisdom. Obey 1 Thessalonians 4:11.

4 DELIVERANCE Mark 1:27, 9:25

Here is a very practical area of commandments. "For with authority He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him." Authority is related to many areas — the word of God, the anointing of the Spirit, death to self, and especially our walk. Jesus never wasted a word or an action but was 100 per cent dependant on Father. That's why the demons had to come out.

We need divine preparation in deliverance ministry to get results. We need to fast and pray. The person needing help must walk in forgiveness, confess sin and be desperate to be delivered. God allows the teaching Spirit and the Spirit of counsel to attend deliverance sessions, because ideal preparation is rare. With Jesus they came out WITH A WORD. With us its usually some counselling and some shouting! Why the difference? Firstly, the Master came to the frontlines of battle already prepared in prayer. He had been in glory before the command of Mark 9:25. After the vision can we take the verity (the truth) into the demon possessed valley? Blessing lives next door to responsibility. Deliverance is successful if we are prepared, knowing the word the Lord Jesus puts in our heart for the situation. Secondly, because of the normalcy of sin in the camp today, counsel must usually precede prayer. Sound ministry follows sound teaching, whether in public or private deliverance.

THE X's of EXORCISM

(1) EXPOSURE: We must know what the demon is. We beat against the air if we are not specific. Sometimes the degree of exactness has to go to unfamiliar names when dealing with the occult. To command out the spirit of ouija or divination may not be enough in some cases. After a 3 day fast in 1987 the Lord began to give me occult names, and as the word of knowledge was applied these spirits were exposed and expelled. Deliverance should be relatively straightforward when the conditions are right. There is a ripeness about ministry — the knowing of those who minister, and the spiritual commitment of those who need the help. The binding of strong men: Antichrist, Jezebel and Death and Hades may have to be done in the name of Jesus before a demon will manifest. Let the Lord Jesus guide you. Sometimes demons will manifest and shake the head or shout "no" to the command of expulsion. That's a good sign — they are on their way out. Just keep pressurizing them. If they remain, check sin, self, and occult renunciation areas, also unforgiveness. Demons will not expose themselves unless they have to. Always deal with the ground they are on. Lead people in prayers based on 1 John 1:7-9 and Romans 6:6-11. You may have to command it to be exposed in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

(2) EXPLANATION: There is no substitute for a real working knowledge of Scripture. We have to explain the Cross to stubborn demons. If passivity is addressed, then the Scripture "He set His face like a flint toward Jerusalem" may have the effect of loosing its grip. I say "may" because there are no hard and fast rules here, we must be open to specific leading of the Spirit. Get to know the basic Cross words of victory like Colossians 2:15, Hebrews 2:15, 1 John 3:8, Revelation 12:11. Remind the demons of their utter defeat and the final irrevocable victory of the Lord Jesus. Its sometimes right to explain where they are going to as well! However, command ministry to principalities and powers must be done by the spiritually mature. This is not a ministry for novices, but for those sensitive to the sword of Scripture the Holy Spirit appoints.

(3) EXPULSION Acts 16:16-18: We command in the name of Jesus sometimes by a loud voice, sometimes with a whisper. There are two ways of blowing up a bomb — by exploding or diffusing it. We must have the childlike spirit of humility to be constantly used in this ministry. Pride will come before destruction. I knew a minister in deliverance who admitted to erections when he laid hands on women. That is a ministry headed for destruction. We need to acknowledge the blood of Jesus Christ and experience its cleansing power. Virtue leaves us when demons leave through the name of Jesus. We need cleansing and quickening. Demons may leave through a concentration of pain in the mind or body, by yawns, through stiff fingers, shrieking or coughing or perhaps silently. There will be an inner registration of peace in your spirit if they have been expelled. If they don't come out check self centeredness, failure to break with occult, curses, and soul-ties.

(4) EXHILARATION Romans 8:11: The indweller Holy Spirit wants to exhilarate you with joy or rest. Sleeplessness, depression, apathy can easily follow deliverance ministers. After ministry a time of praise or worship is beneficial. Make God the center of your thoughts and emotions. Make Jesus central to your being. Always be teachable and listen to Bible teaching from the ministries. Live in the word of God to keep free yourself. Submit to God and resist the devil by praise and prayer. Come under discipline of the local body of Christ. Itinerant exorcists without a home church are in great danger... increasingly they will find it difficult to put on the garment of praise. We are commanded to praise as a duty; it imposes silence on the enemy (Psalm 8:2). Encourage the one who has been delivered to show gratitude to God. Its surprising how few really thank Jesus from their own will.

So the command of deliverance is needed today as never before, because Satan knows his time is short. God commands everyone to repent and believe the gospel. We need to be delivered from curses and evil spirit activity if we are to hear Holy Ghost revelation. As we obey, church life and mission can be entered so the Kingdom of God increases as more enter new life. May God give wisdom to see the sequence of the Holy Spirit. Church life will remain carnal if there is no deliverance. Mission will never be fruitful unless they are the commandments through the Holy Spirit to the sent ones. (Acts 1:2). God grant a new inner obedience because Jesus knew the commandments from Father were eternal life! (John 12:50). We are to speak LIFE, the words we hear in the ear should be declared publicly. May we know the open ear to hear the life in His voice.

LOVE'S BODY

The Bride is making herself ready to be a comparable helpmeet for the coming King. The slowly maturing process is taking centuries amid the onslaught of the enemy and an increasingly selfish society. Whatever the circumstances of your church, BELIEVE the body of Christ is becoming STRONG IN FAITH and BEAUTIFUL IN LOVE. Always see that as God's ultimate purpose.

The central problem at the end of the twentieth century is that we have a spastic church. We hear the Head, our Lord Jesus Christ, but fail to obey His directives. Messages pour out through Ephesian 4 ministries, but the arms, and feet and hands do something else. We were born rebels and after being born again still have that unit of evil, the monster of the old man lurking within. Our head is in heaven and we do not let Him rule over us. Where Jesus is Lord the Holy Spirit can move. Is He slowly leaving the capitalist world of Europe and North America and coming in power to the third world? Love's body is stronger and more beautiful in parts of Africa, Asia and South America than in England.

Why?

The gospel of God has been adulterated, watered down by human reason, psychology and many heresies. The cure of the Cross is not generally applied in charismatic circles. Holy Ghost praying is rare, so the mother river of revelation has almost dried up. Check Acts 4:24-33... the lifeblood of the early church. Three steps are clear.

1. the disciples moved God (v24-30)
2. God moved upon the disciples (v3 1)
3. the church moved the people (v33)

There is no other path to revival than this principle. The result was economic balance in the redeemed community (v34, 35). We are a long way from that in England.

We need the Holy Spirit to give us travail and tears (Acts 20: 19, 31). . . a real influx from the Spirit of God to give us the Father's heart. Where is the travail Meeting? We need God to break up the fallow ground in us. Where is the meeting when we are truly led of the Holy Spirit to discover Jesus Himself? To gather together in His name is to be drawn by the Spirit into the nature of Jesus. We need to seek God for Himself. The answer is not more celebrations, more marches, more conferences, more crusades, more magazines, more sermons, but MORE of GOD! Our prayers are often unanswered because we have been full of our ambitions, our requests, our desire. Look at Acts 4 praying by the corporate church... YOUR servant David, YOUR holy servant Jesus, YOUR purpose, YOUR word, YOUR hand to heal! May God permeate our spirits with worship so He can be the center of our prayers.

1. Corinthians is a letter to a carnal church from a spiritual man. The man of suffering who EXPERIENCED 2 Corinthians could tell the church of God's interest: Jesus Christ and Him crucified. It took fifteen chapters for Paul to get from the cross to the resurrection. In his letter to the Ephesians only fifteen verses (1:7 to 1:22). To Corinth Paul keeps saying "now concerning this" and "now concerning that". The church was self—manufactured, charismatic, like a building on sand unable to stand against the storms. They were not much further on than the disciples at the Cross who forsook the Lord, and refused to believe the resurrection. Despite the gifts of the Holy Spirit, self was still on the throne at Corinth. Dilemma of the church now as then: CARNALITY. The determination of God was CRUCIFIXION. Only the Cross could transform them. We need to repent of charismatic hero-worship (1 Corinthians 3:1-4). We are to seek the Lord's face and humble ourselves. We have not got it. Prayer begins by admitting our weakness (Romans 8:26). Let's get back to the cross. Faith will attend to the word of God and intend to do it only when we have repented of our carnality.

Just because we cast *out* demons we think we are right with the Lord Jesus and moving on with God. However the disciples could cast out evil spirits (Luke 9:1) and yet were evil (Luke 11:13). The monster of self, the doubleheartedness of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde had not yet been destroyed. The outer mantle of anointing can fall on servants of the Lord without deep dealings of the Holy Spirit within. This is happening everywhere today. Outer power and ministry, but little or no inner character and life. The Cross in the life of the believer can change all that. Study this map of the key issues in 1 Corinthians.

WISDOM

AGAPE (13~
GLORY

RESURRECTION (15)
YOUR
BODY
(4-10)
POWER

(SPIRITUAL)

MYSTIC
BODY

PHILEO	(10-14)	
BREAKING BREAD (11)	BAP TISM (10)	(CARNAL)
EROS		
CROSS (1)		
FOLLY		
(NATURAL)		
SHAME		
WEAKNESS		

P.S. Figures in brackets denote the chapter.

(A) THE MYSTIC BODY.

The church is weak because the natural mind has been ascendant. The church is powerful when the mind of Christ has been revealed and obeyed. Too often there is mixture — carnality, doing something for God, but not doing through God. Love's body, the church, the mystic body moves in power only when gifts of the Holy Spirit are seen in the context of holy communion (chapter 11) and love (chapter 13). The church will be spiritual and full of power when the gifts and character come together! Charisma and character will be beautiful together. Spiritual beauty means feeding on Jesus (communion) before functioning in the gifts. Check the charisma and fruit lists of 1 Corinthians 12 and Galatians 5.

WISDOM	LOVE
KNOWLEDGE	JOY
FAITH	PEACE
HEALING	LONGSUFFERING
MIRACLES	KINDNESS
PROPHECY	GOODNESS
DISCERNING of SPIRITS	TRUSTFULNESS
TONGUES	MEEKNESS
INTERPRETATION	SELF-CONTROL

Do you see a balance in these orders of gift and fruit? If you have wisdom but no love you cannot have a pastor's heart. If you operate words of knowledge but no joy, your teaching will become second-hand and gradually lack revelation. If you have faith but no peace your striving will bring times of stress in the family and domination of others. If you move in healing but fail the patience test you will probably make merchandise out of God's flock. Note 2 Corinthians 12:12 its signs and perseverance. Some hide their lack of character behind charisma. If there are tongues but no meekness, no dependance upon the Holy Spirit either passivity or deception will creep in. God wants a spiritual church of power. True power comes from a foundation of holiness and obedience. The charisma minus intercessory prayer is self-indulgence. We all want resurrection life. There's a price to pay. We must know Jesus as Lord (1 Cor. 12:3) as Love (chapter 13) and as Logic (chapter 14). We need to learn these truths together.

(B) YOUR BODY

Paul warns about trouble in the flesh for those who marry. To the mature Ephesians he rejoices in marriage as a parable of Christ and the church. Yet in 1 Corinthians 7:4 he puts the principle of agape in an eros context, "the wife does not have authority over her body, but the husband. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife". We are not free to please ourselves. We are not free to squander money or take believers to court! We are to glorify

God in our bodies by fleeing fornication and refusing to be brought under the power of the appetites. When the body is for the Lord, then the Lord's overcoming power will be for the body! (1 Corinthians 6:13).

Have you ever consecrated your body, presenting it in the presence of the Lord for Him, for God's own interests? Our bodies are a mixture of dust and divinity..., they were formed by a sovereign act of the Holy Spirit. How much more is our body the Lord's property by right of redemption! He bought us out of the market place of sin, never to be sold there again! Let's pray together.

O heavenly Father, through the blood of Jesus I come to present my body as a living sacrifice. I thank you that the altar sanctifies the gift — and your love and presence now sets me apart to serve you. I want to prophesy your life through me. Meet with me in my spirit and reveal the self-love that stops the gospel of God through me. Turn me and I will be turned back to you. Show me my sins, examine my heart, and come with your cleansing soap and quickening fire. Burn all my dross. As I wait I know you will act. I decide to flee sexual immorality. Give me strength to cast down imaginations. Teach me to discipline my body in Jesus name. Amen”.

The consecration of our bodies is part of the Lordship of Jesus. He needs our eyes to see need, our hands to do the works of God, our mouths to speak prophetic truth and our feet TO GO.

There is a great battle or tension WITHIN the church today. Flesh versus Spirit, soul versus spirit, ego versus true humility. The work of the Holy Spirit is greatly hindered in love's body. Carnality must be exposed. True spirituality can only come through new revelations of the Cross of our Lord Jesus. Prophets are needed as never before. The stones will fly against them.

Yet, they will be strengthened by the Holy Spirit to denounce sin in the camp. The Lord waits to refine and purify the church. The judgement of the Lord is upon the church before it comes upon the nation.

***God says to leaders and congregations everywhere — “Your prophets have seen for you False and deceptive visions They have not uncovered your iniquity To bring back your captives, But have envisioned for you false prophecies and delusions
Lamentations 2:14.***

If you are going to heal love's body you must bring a message of repentance today. Many true ministries are being forced out of the church. Many false ministries have risen to places of power and pre-eminence. Before the true anointed gifts of the Holy Spirit can come and correct us and heal and guide us, sin must be dealt with. Self must be annihilated, for God's love to flow again. Prophetic ministry is the call of the 1990's to the church of England. Many will refuse it, just like the dismissal of Enoch's preaching. SEEK HIS FACE. BE ONE OF THE RARE KIND. DO THE REVELATION. Then the Lord Jesus will make you strong in faith and beautiful in love. Hearts of faith and love will keep following Jesus to the end of this age.

“Move ME my children says the Holy One. And I will move upon you, again by My Spirit. You were born again to pray. You were filled with the Holy Spirit to worship in spirit and truth and prophecy. You were set free from demons in order to enter the spiritual warfare. You were healed of rejection, sorrow and many things, to love the lost and teach the truth in My love. Come to the Cross where all sin, all self, all precepts, all laws, all demons were forever finished. Break up the fallow ground and I will rain righteousness upon you. Then My Father heart of care and prayer will be in your hearts as you repent and you will go forth in My name to the people and places I appoint

to you. Move me by prayer and I will move upon you to move others to Me.”

PROPHETIC PRAYING FOR OTHERS

Shocking damage stalks the church because too many ‘amateur providences’ have prayed for others without the Lord’s permission and authority. The bogus word from ‘the Lord’ has been more evil spirit than Holy Spirit revelation. Correct prayer that respects the sanctity of the individual will bring the sanity of His peace and wisdom. What are the ingredients of true prayer from the heart in the Holy Spirit? Firstly, we must be aware of the tripartite being of man, and allow the word of God to be a living scalpel to divide soul and spirit, to reveal what originates in man’s flesh and what is of divine purpose. Read Nee’s ‘The Spiritual Man’ and you may be on the road to true Christian counsel as you live in those truths. The intellect is NOT the shrine where the Holy Spirit lives in the believer. Jessie Penn-Lewis predated Nee in this liberating discovery, of the great principle found in **1 Thessalonians 5:23**:

“Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely, may your whole spirit, soul, body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

I am convinced that those ministries who cling to the traditional view of merely soul and body have been left behind by the God of truth. To keep in step with the Holy Spirit involves a careful application of truth being rediscovered. The twentieth century was a hundred years of rediscovering vital church and mission truths.

So what has this to do with prophetic praying for other people? If we understand the word ‘prophetic’ correctly - everything! To prophesy means to live out as well as speak out God’s character. The outshining of His love, His wisdom, holiness, mercy and so on has to come through His vessels - us! Most christians have trapped treasure deep down in their spirits. Praying for others has one redemptive aim: to liberate the real you in the new creation so others may see Christ IN you, the hope of glory. In our spirits there is the new creation. It must permeate our affections, to feel.

It must penetrate our thinking, to see. It must provoke our will, to do His will, and pulse through our bodies, for His glory alone. Prayer for others is to make them truly prophetic....a God coming through kind of person. A generation of priests.

The Relationship between the Word of God and Prayer

Now to be a prophetic prayer warrior a very strong relationship with the Word of God is essential. Here are some avenues of enquiry, and experience.

John 15:7, 8 states the two conditions for answered prayer.....

1. the indwelling word;
2. abiding in Christ

Something of the Book must be IN you actively at work in your life.

Something of the Blood must be OVER you bringing unclouded fellowship with the Lord Jesus.

We know from 1 John 5:14,15 that confidence comes from praying in His will, which is always found within His word. This simple truth is underlined in

Romans 10:14,15 where five key words form the link between word and prayer. Tracing the keys backwards we have five steps:

1. the preacher is sent by God;
2. the preaching (of the word of God);
3. hearing;

4. believing;
5. calling on Him (praying).

The conclusion is that people cannot pray unless a preacher with the word of God is sent.

Again in Ephesians 3:8-10 we see the relationship between word and prayer. To preach the unsearchable riches of Christ leads to fellowship of the mystery (which is the corporate sharing of Christ IN you) and to spiritual warfare where the church exhibits the power of the Cross to nullify the purposes of evil spirit agencies behind the scenes!

To pray for others prophetically we see two essential truths:

- (a) Understand spirit, soul and body in order to recognise the blockages of self, sin and evil spirit power;
- (b) Be aware of the power of the preached word in the power of the Spirit so your prayers have the proper faith foundation. When a sermon is anointed you are wise to realise God is speaking to you - so fix the revelation by taking notes or getting the tape! PRAY into the anointed word so it becomes LIFE to your spirit and soul. The anointed word is faith fuel for prayer. To pray the word of God as a sword of the Spirit is to take Satan's prey from him! So Ephesians 6:17 works to set free in a ministry of command over evil spirits in the name of Jesus Christ, our victor. This only attacking piece of God's armour means using a specific word or sword given by revelation to destroy a specific satanic situation in someone's life. A general sword like Revelation 12:11 or Psalm 118:11, 12 may not be enough. Here we have to wait on the Lord's direction, to give the rhema word.

Prophetic praying for others begins by detecting the hindrance or roadblock Satan has manufactured that prevents the believer from becoming a disciple. Even the apostle Paul was hindered! (1 Thessalonians 2:18). Our desires from God can be thwarted and here we need encouraging prayer from the beloved! We destroy enemy wiles and methods by the sword of the Spirit before we can speak into an agreed future plan that the Father has revealed. There are so many dashed hopes in the body of Christ because of a lack of spiritual warfare! We take the Kingdom of heaven by extreme exertion! We press into the Spirit realm led by the Lord, our Man of war who has already defeated the devil. Our task is to overcome the one, who at the Cross was vanquished. A knowledge of the full panorama of the Word of God is required to move in aggressive warfare.....anointed by the Spirit it is our greatest weapon.

Deliverance is not an end in itself

Personal deliverance from evil spirits should open the heart door for the intentions of God. What are the safeguards in prophetic praying for other lives, who are individually responsible to do the will of God?

- 1** Do not emphasise personal prophecy. So much of horizontal words from God are minus His character, that what is being uttered is soul-power. See Watchman Nee, 'The Latent power of the soul'. Sometimes an Agabus may intervene with a 'thus saith the Lord'but it is exceptional in the New Testament.
- 2** We need to experience the inner registration of the Holy Spirit in determining His future path. Refuse worry and fear and experience His peace or the name of Jesus will have no effect in your life. After true deliverance ministry the effect of righteousness will be peace.

(See Isaiah 30:15; 32:16,17).

- 3** Be aware of timing in a life. Our past is preparation for His future.....and counselling is to stop the past (sin, self or evil spirit) influencing the future. Many of God's children are not in a place to receive the fulness of Father's love-plan. We need great wisdom as prayer-warriors and counsellors to know when to impart a revelation. Big prophecies have wrecked little believers. Can the revelation be properly handled?
- 4** Never see deliverance joy as 'I've arrived'! You have just started out the journey of faith. When Nehemiah cleared away the rubbish he could start rebuilding the walls. The recovery of the testimony of the Lord lasts a lifetime and beyond. See deliverance ministry as part of the salvation package, and related to inner healing processes.
- 5** Know where the believer is in the Lord Jesus. Our journeys and pasts are all unique. Some get big deliverances and are pushed into a ministry prematurely. The prayer-warrior must slowly get a full picture of the person they are praying for. We must be watchful but never controlling. There came a time when Jeremiah could NOT pray for God's backsliden people. Sometimes we have carried a person in our prayers - we are to help, but God carries us from the womb to tomb. Beware of the ministry-dependant sponge. You have to know when to call it a day with certain lives. Sometimes Calvary love is tough.
- 6** Be aware you may not be God's appointed channel of deliverance to a specific sufferer. Sometimes our job is merely pass them on to someone else, who we feel has the appropriate anointing to bless.
- 7** See deliverance as a basic foundational doctrine and not a higher truth. See it in the context of mentoring a disciple. When self, sin, and evil spirit interaction issues are cleared up the way is open for God's INITIATING particular word to describe the future INTENTION. Deliverance, like forgiveness of sins, is never and end in itself. Our goal is **Revelation 3:21** :

"To him who overcomes, I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne."

Will we walk the way of the Cross in order to overcome sin, self and Satan and finally take our place in the glorious future of reigning with Him? We need to pray for the Joseph remnant to come out of prison and for the obedient Esther church to move in holy boldness.

Seeing Negatives as part of God's plan

In **1 Samuel 1** we see the birthing of the heart of the prophetic. Hannah's domestic tragedy becomes Israel's national triumph.

Check out her three griefs of soul:

- v.7 provocation from Peninnah at the house of the Lord;**
- v.10 anguish over her barren state;**
- v.14 misunderstanding from Eli, the backslidden priest;**

In the mercy of God she experienced three graces:

- v.5 a special love from her husband;**
- v.11 a vow to the Lord concerning a Nazirite;**
- v.15 an ability to pour out her soul;**

Out of these six aspects so beautifully linked and balanced, a prophetic heart is born -the one who hears God, and begins 400 years of prophets to Israel and the world. Samuel, the originator of universities, came out from heartache that turned to a heartcry. Before the faithful priest emerges, we see three spheres of failure:

- a) Failure of worship - 1 Sam 2:16,17;
- b) Failure of word - 1 Sam 3:1;

2. Failure of word - 1 Sam 4:2.

God has to thoroughly DISILLUSION His people before the TRUE PROPHETIC arises. God is at work in the negatives among individuals, churches, and nations. The prayer warrior must discern this strange and unusual work.

In the New Testament the same principle emerges in **2 Corinthians 1:8-10**. The sentence of death is the particular work of the Cross that was cutting away self-reliance....so the God of resurrection could do a deeper work in the apostolic team. Some believers confuse a sentence of death with a spirit of death, which must always be resisted and expelled in the all-prevailing never failing name of Jesus Christ our Lord. In the very next verse, Paul writes ***“you also helping together in prayer for us” (v.11)***. God carried Paul through the heavy pressure situation, but the local church prayer meeting helped.

True prophetic praying sees the Cross in the will of God for others. Too often we see negatives in our lives as disqualifications for service. As we surrender them to a sovereign God our valleys can actually be essential steps to becoming vessels unto honour. Habitual sins will have an effect to hinder the purpose of God, but the valley of adverse circumstances so often hides a personal Cross so that death can work in us in order that eternal life may flow to others. The prayer warrior must carefully discern this, and not be wanting the removal of things that seem to obstruct a soul's progress. I remember once a keen and diligent lady feeling hindered by her once-born husband - a good man but not spiritually alive. My counsel was for her to abide and see the cross at work in the domestic situation rather than strive for ministry. She came to the place of peace.

We sometimes forget the Spirit-filled life will make us an automatic target of the enemy. The sovereign Lord permits the assault that we may learn to abide under the shadow of His wing, knowing our life is hid with Christ in God. **Job 13:15** says :

“Though he slay me, yet will I trust Him.”

Do we have courage to accept his acceptance even when things appear to go wrong? God allows the enemy to go far sometimes, and those who pray for others must cry out for a continual supply of discernment, and for the trust of the sufferer to stand firm.

Prophetic praying the Word

The Word of God is the way out of every trauma and difficulty the counsellor hears. We have to find a Psalm to comfort, a verse to direct thinking, or a prohibition or command. The beginning and end of all true ministry is Scripture as a seed, anointed by the Holy Spirit, and obeyed, so the seed may enter our innermost being. There is a time to boldly proclaim the truth over our lives, **(A)**; There is a time to sense what is happening through the given word and then find a sword of the Spirit to use in the conflict, **(B)**; Thirdly, there is a time when God may bring a prophecy to encourage the sufferer toward God's love-plan for their lives, **(C)**.

(A) DECLARATION

To minister encouragement is often the vital pre-requisite because lives are so often broken, with low self-esteem, abuse etc. Declare who they are in Christ Jesus. This begins to release the

necessary faith in order to receive from God. Good procedure begins with the establishment of faith because,

“If you will not believe, surely you shall not be established.”

(Isaiah 7:9)

Here is a quick A-E of who we are in Christ Jesus, in the wonderful new creation realities, planted in us by the new birth and the Holy Spirit infillings:

A	Adopted Accepted Anointed	Galatians 4:4-6; Ephesians 1:6; 1 John 2:20,27;
B	Blessed Babe	Ephesians 1:3; Luke 10:21;
C	Chosen Called Cleansed	Ephesians 1:4; 2 Timothy 1:9; 1 John 1:7-9;
D	Delivered Dreamer	2 Corinthians 1:8-10 ; Joel 2:28 (old men, but not as a derogatory term) ;
E	Elect Evangelistic Eternal	1 Peter 1:2; Matthew 28:18-20; John 6:40, 17:2 .

Once could go on to F to Z, but the essential step to healing and deliverance is to know your heavenly citizenship, your status of being in Christ. Of course, sin and self stops us from abiding in Christ and realising our status. Declaration, confession, and repentance of sin areas or unforgiveness must precede true Holy Spirit ministry. The depth of repentance corresponds to the realities of deliverance and prophecy.

(B) DELIVERANCE

The blessed relief and release in the Holy Spirit comes through a knowledgeable use of the sword of the Spirit to cut away demonic interaction. Through a family member, a boss or colleague at work, through relatives or church friends the enemy attack can paralyse the will, torment the mind, confuse the emotions. Deliverance ministry is not just casting out demons, but standing in active opposition against evil with the armour that God fully supplies to make us heavily-armed soldiers.

(C) PROPHECY

Getting words for others can be devalued to a hazardous game of fortune-telling. The guidelines are found in “Prophetic ministry” chapter. Let us have a holy caution before we take it upon ourselves to lead a life by directional, horizontal prophecy. Lives have been shipwrecked by trusting a “word from the Lord.”

True prophecy will accurately assess where a life is actually at; what have been the prevailing problems, and what level the resources are at to live in the good of the prophecy. Can the person rise to God's level of faith? Are they deceived about some sin or self issue? Will they yield to the Lordship of Christ Jesus? ASSESSMENT of CHARACTER should undergird the ambition of charisma.

Sadly hundreds of Christian workers and thousands of Christians are disillusioned and frustrated because they have gone ahead of the Lord, working out some prophecy or idea of service, in their own resources. The first step in Christian service is to be a love-slave of Jesus, a bond-man with no rights, no recourse when wronged, and no reward for their labours. This call is for every Spirit-filled believer because if the Cross does not penetrate our lives we will fail to be a faithful follower and representative of the Father and the Son.

Prophetic praying for others sees the heart-state of the believer now, and the glorious goal of Sonship in Revelation 3:21.

THE STRONG MEN

1. DISCERNING ANTICHRIST

Jezebel and Antichrist are the two strong men whom the deliverance minister must bind if he or she is going to effectively set the captive free. Every demon is related to the strong men.

“Or else how can one enter a strong man’s house and plunder his goods, unless he FIRST BINDS (tethers, ties up, renders ineffective) the strong man? And then he will plunder his house.” (Matthew 12: 29)

Jezebel usually comes through women; antichrist usually through men. When a believer has a Jezebelic mother and an antichrist father we see the combined power of the strong men deliver such a sufferer into the prison of death followed by Hades. Such a person finds it very difficult to overcome sins, because the sins give death its grip over the life.

What are the evidences of antichrist at work?

1. Pride.

Pride is the primal sin of Satan; the very curse, birth and gate of hell. Pride desires to usurp... (Isaiah 14:12-14). Absalom was an antichrist man, proud in his appearance and counsel desiring to replace the anointed King David. Some wear a necklace of pride. (Psalm 73: 6). They think of themselves more highly than they ought to think of themselves. Antichrist himself opposes and exalts. (see 2 Thessalonians 2: 4). The antichrist man gets a position he does not rightly deserve, and deceives the hearts of the simple. (Romans 16: 17,18).

2. Rebellion.

Delusion makes people think they can succeed against God. The heart of rebellion has the aspect of self-deception. There is a refusal to accept genuine delegated authority. Diotrephes is a classic case of this in the church.

“I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes who loves to have the pre-eminence among them, does not receive us....” (3 John 9,10)

The spirit of error was on such a man (1 John 4: 6). This refusal to listen was common in the history of Israel. (See Nehemiah 9: 29, Jer 17: 23)

3. Stubbornness.

To be stubborn is to have one’s mind made up before the facts are spiritually revealed (Jeremiah 13:10, 16 :12). Ezekiel had to confront such a people and there is an increasing stubbornness among God’s people, particularly men, in the church today. At the back of it, there stands the strong man of Antichrist. He has legal access to thousands of Christian men because of freemasonry. Even repentance from the heart IS NOT ENOUGH to avoid the satanic yoke of this idolatrous religion that mixes heathenism with the Old Testament. Such men find it very difficult to get the real baptism with the Holy Spirit.

4. Anger

The anger of man never works the righteousness of God. The anger goes beyond the limits God has set because it wants what is not his. Cain was angry (Genesis 4: 5). People use anger as a mask to hide their own inner hypocrisy. We sometimes spiritually kill one another by the things we say. ***“Raca”*** means ***“you no good rebel”*** or ***“Blockhead”***.

The world hated Jesus (John 7: 7). With the antichrist anger.

5. Mockery

This damage must be cast out of church life (Proverbs 22: 10), or else contention will divide the brothers. Laughing with mockery will strengthen the grip of evil. Notice mockery is linked with pride (Proverbs 21: 24), and you can discern the mocker by actions as well as words. If the joker male is married to the Jezebelic female and the leaders do not deal with it there will be a split in the church.

6. False Teaching

2 Peter 2 is the definitive commentary. Cain, Korah and Balaam spirits need to be defeated or bondage will enter via unbalanced presentation of the Scripture. The Cross is our master key to preserve the integrity of Scripture and paralyze the intrigues of Satan. The Sadducees knew the word of God minus the supernatural power of God. (see Mark 12:24). They could not understand the Cross or the resurrection. Many believers today fail to receive revelation in the central truths of the faith. Mental teaching begets mentally orientated believers. Discipleship becomes an impossibility. We must BIND antichrist; all that is against and in the place of the revelation anointing, the Christ.

7. Warrior.

Nimrod was a classic antichrist man and we have some such in the pulpit today who terrorize and lord it over the flock. Paul had a different spirit: —

“Not that we have dominion over your faith, but are fellow workers for your joy: for by faith you stand.”
(2 Corinthians 1 : 24)

Domination, intimidation and manipulation from preachers is a work of the flesh i.e. witchcraft. Some men love to be number one and gradually leads to a desire to be worshipped. (Luke 4: 7). Such leaders fail to meet the needs of the flock, rather scatter them. (Ezekiel 34: 21).

Jesus taught the opposite to potential leaders. The life laid down is the hallmark of true leaders.

“You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it SHALL NOT BE among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant”.

(Matthew 20: 25,26)

If there is no servanthood spirit there will be a crusading spirit that conceals a hatchet or else a leadership of passivity and no pastoral care.

DEFEATING ANTICHRIST

1 JOHN 2: 18-20 tells us the road to victory. Under the anointing you can overcome the antichrist tendencies in your church or in your marriage, or over your life. We need the supply of fresh oil until our cup runs over. David could defeat the antichrist in Absalom because he was anointed (Psalm 23:5, 89: 20, 92: 10). The anointing is the power of God smearing and rubbing over and in you so you can do things beyond the limits of natural man. I remember having to confront two men who were operating the antichrist spirit against the anointing in a meeting. God gives the unction to those who function in true leadership. We fan into flame the gift of God within us by refusing fear of man, fear of rejection and fear of making mistakes. We travail in our prayer language of intercessory tongues in order to release the anointing that abides within us. THE ANOINTING ALONE DESTROYS antichrist. To flow in the supernatural we must believe to receive the infilling of the Holy Spirit. May we recognize the traits of the antichrist and warfare against them, so that the harmony and unity of church life is maintained. WARFARE comes before WELFARE. Always remember the Holy Spirit gives discernment to recognize the nature of the mountain (Zechariah 4:7) and He gives the faith to enable the mountain to become a plain!

2. DISCERNING JEZEBEL

Jezebel insinuates, lies and curses the godly in Christ Jesus, especially leaders. The goal of the principality is to undermine marriage through a potent mixture of sexual immorality and the occult. God ordained marriage as a commitment to partnership so that the power of agreement can be expressed. Through two, ten thousand are put to flight. Jezebel hates the Holy Spirit filled couple who are walking in the will of God. The church is being formed into a weapon to fight, overcome and destroy this terrible spirit. At Thyatira, God knew that this battle to be so important that there was no other burden given to this particular church (Revelation 2:24). So how do we discern the characteristics of this terrible spirit of control and domination? Before victory we are called to discern and recognise what the enemy is doing. We need a focus of “no other burden” to deal with Jezebel effectively.

1. Wicked Works

Division is the name of her game and she will strike against the prophetic often by counterfeit gifts, flattery, or soulish prayer. When a church is coming under Jezebel manipulation and factions start appearing always remember **1 Corinthians 11: 18,19 :**

“For first of all when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it. For there also must be factions among you, that those who are approved may be recognised among you.”

Division may appear suddenly, but the leaven of malice and manipulation has been working for some time... **Isaiah 47:10**

“no one sees me; your wisdom and knowledge have warped you.” Hidden occult works and words have been going on, but the Sovereign Lord allows it all so that the genuine leadership is recognised. Unrighteousness suppresses truth, but the leader builds his life on the truth, and so will be commended by God. The idolatry (Jeremiah 7:18), immorality (Revelation 2: 20-22), and greed (1 Kings 21:7) are the wicked works that hold down the

truth, and integrity of the gospel. If division and splits come, as they will, God allows it to test the hearts of the people.

2. Sexual Immorality

Potiphar's wife was a Jezebel who got righteous Joseph in prison. Herodias and Salome were deeply Jezebelic, who beheaded John the Baptist. They oppose the purposes of God by powerful sexual attraction. Jezebel herself painted her eyes as Jehu was coming, hoping to seduce him and prevent her own death. Our society is saturated by filth, uncleanness, pornography, sexual deviancy, masturbation, etc. Behind it all is the certain interaction of the strong man, Jezebel. Incubus and succubus demons of the night have sex with their victims on a widening scale. Isaiah 34: 14 speaks of Lilith, a female monster of the night, seeking male genitalia. The New Age advertises deep secrets of occult sex. Counterfeit charismatic women enter our best Spirit-filled churches and pass themselves off as prophetesses, but will begin secret sexual liaisons with deacons or elders or preferably the pastor. The idolatry is often depicted in the bible (Proverbs 7:13-14 and 9:13-17, Ezekiel 16:26-29, Hosea 4:11-14), but we think we are immune because we have had an experience of the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 5: 3-7 warns that sexual sin prohibits us from enjoying our inheritance in Christ. The condemnation includes jesting, innuendo and gossip concerning fornication.

3. Witchcraft

Jezebel gets her power from demons. Whether it is false charisma being a snare to God's people (Ezekiel 13:18) or the direct curse, (1Kings 19:2) she consistently desires to manipulate, dominate and intimidate. Recently I had a strong desire to drive my car into oncoming traffic, never before have I experienced suicidal thoughts. After worship and acting in accordance with the love of God, the Lord slipped in the knowledge that a spiritualist had put a curse of death over my life. Idolatry, sorcery and hatred are works of the flesh with powerful demons behind them. This area of witchcraft – influencing people by occult power – prevails in the Jezebelic man or woman who seeks to divide and conquer genuine leadership from God. (2 Kings 9:22).

She attacks family headship (Nahum 3:4), hates the reality of 1 Corinthians 11:3 by either usurping the male or holding the woman in such deep terror she cannot respond to her husband as the head of the family. Only an Elijah ministry can produce family harmony and oneness, (Malachi 4:5-6). That is why her work of witchcraft is particularly aimed at church leaders, especially the prophetic. Jezebel will infiltrate the leadership usually by the method of having her occultic gifts endorsed by them. She will enjoy praying for problem people, and getting them 'healed', apart from the recognised leaders. She loves to prophesy and teach what at first appears to be in line with the word of God, but there is no cross, no death to self, no condition for the promise to be fulfilled. Some of the knowledge will be extremely accurate, but coming from the wrong source. In Acts 16:16-18 the divination spirit spoke the truth, but Paul was agitated in his spirit and cast out the demon. The aim of witchcraft is to elevate women ahead of men in matters of discernment and wisdom.

Always check the source.... the will and wisdom of God always contains the Cross, and has a practical outcome of the resurrection life.

4. Violence

Venomous words and acts of violence like biting or temper tantrums are a part of the reign of terror. Jezebel will produce fear in its victims and then seek to bring protection. There is

the strong love – hate syndrome between a Jezebelic mother and her children. She hates the loss of her children to the Lord Jesus Christ, (Isaiah 47:8). Her pride stops her from even contemplating defeat in spiritual matters. Pride, the very birth, curse and gate of hell is found in the first born of Satan and wherever Jezebel is working, out of pride comes contention, (Proverbs 13:10). When Jezebel operates through physical violence in a young born again believer, prayers of peace in the power of the Holy Spirit are vital to bring sanity to a situation where things can get out of control. Many women murderers were inspired by Jezebel. The threat is turned to action unless the victim decides to fight spiritually or take to flight. Elijah in 1 Kings 19 chose the latter course of action. In Ezekiel 8 we see the conclusion of verse 17 to all shocking idolatry – “for they filled the land with violence”. Violence fills the living rooms of the western world in order to blunt sensitivity to sin and the need of repentance. At the back of this strategy there stands the strong man of Jezebel. She will also attack any woman who is fulfilling a genuine ministry in the Holy Spirit. Fiery arrows of wrong words will attack relentlessly. Jealousy, as cruel as the grave, can stop gifts of the Holy Spirit from their function under the unction - sometimes making a genuine manifestation stop abruptly or not even begin the utterance. To take authority over Jezebel before meetings is vital if the spirit is operating.

OVERCOMING

Some keys to overcoming this wicked spirit are as follows: -

- 1 Recognise your precise enemy.
- 2 Prayer with fasting and knowledge of spiritual weapons.
- 3 Declaration of her judgement from Scripture.
- 4 Confronting the person when the issue has become clear.

Recognising Jezebel in prayer helps because in the natural we are prone to mistakes. Real discernment must function because Jezebel seems so zealous, helpful, openly gifted and able to impart knowledge. At Thyatira she was called a prophetess. This kind does not come out of the church except by prayer and fasting. A small select band of warriors who are trustworthy may be used, especially if the pastor and his wife are under direct attack. Psalm 137: 8-9 is a great sword of the Spirit against Jezebel and her children. So is 1 Samuel 15:3, when it is used in the timing of God. Remember God gives time to repent of her sin before judgement falls. Hosea 13:16 again shows the severity of God’s precise retribution because all her children will be killed with death (Revelation 2:23). This means that those who have come under Jezebel, and not overcome her, get separated from the blessings of God in the power of the Holy Spirit. God gives according to our works says the Son of God whose eyes are like flames of fire searching the minds and hearts. We must remove Jezebel from our charismatic fellowships or else we will share in the plagues God will pour out upon the false church. Revelation 18:4 is the cry of the Spirit to all true Christians still caught up in the church structures and leaders who deny the power of God. Babylon, the false church, has become a habitation of demons and the word of the lord is COME OUT OF HER, MY PEOPLE. You overcome Jezebel by first of all leaving Babylon. Leave Catholicism, Anglicanism, Methodism, the United Reformed Church and all those denominations who stray from the truth. God hates the false system of Babylon, but loves sinners. We are to love, love and love again our brothers and sisters still enmeshed in Babylon. Love them with the truth of separation. Speak in love 2 Corinthians 6:6-18. Pray fervently that those who love the Lord within the denominationalism will discern Jezebel in the midst. This is the strong man who will even seemingly prosper and grow churches, but on a mental foundation

of easy believing rather than a spiritual foundation of repentance and regeneration. In a Spirit-filled church where Jezebel is operating, you as a leader, will have to confront. Beware her flattery and inordinate affection. Beware her ability to direct you rather than the Holy Spirit. Do not be a Saul, fearing the voice of the people and missing obedience, (see 1 Samuel 15:24). Be a Jehu, prepared in his heart, knowing what must be done to Jezebel (2 Kings 9:30-37). Even then Jezebel by painting her eyes attempted seduction. The time to stop her wickedness is when defilement has begun in the church. If confrontation fails to take place the men become like weak-willed Ahab's unable to rule in integrity. When Jezebel is overcome, the Elijah ministry can impart life to God's children. I remember warning a pastor about a young woman joining his flock. She had certain "gifts", joined him in counselling and were sleeping together within weeks of a God given warning. The secret adultery went on for months until the time of exposure. It devastated a church that this man had built up under God, to over 300 people. The sequel was that the church reverted to an evangelical mould. Jezebel is successful today. We need the Jehu's and Elijah's to preserve the work of the Holy Spirit.

The rewards are great for leaders who overcome Jezebel. Revelation 2:26-28 mentions the double blessing of power over the nations and the morning star. This means a divine ability to break demonic strongholds over geographical areas, and a deep, zealous expectancy for the return of the Lord in power and glory. The evangelistic urgency will belong to the spirits who overcome Jezebel. Hallelujah! Our God is a consuming fire. He will answer by fire for those who pray, discern and obey. If we allow Jezebel to operate in church life, a famine of the true word of God will follow.

3. DISCERNING DEATH FOLLOWED BY HADES

If Jezebel has been over your mother and Anti-Christ over your father, there is a strong possibility Death and Hades is operating over your life. We must first render inactive the strongman, if we are to plunder the goods. Death is not merely the cessation of human existence by ceasing to correspond with this environment, it is a personality and a power. The sting of death is sin by which we give place to death as a power. The last enemy to be destroyed is death because sin continues with great accumulation until Jesus Christ returns. However, right now, death need not separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. What are the features to look for if the strong man of death is operating?

1. Guilt

God gives guilt when we do something wrong, but the enemy adds to it with a religious demon. A powerful bondage is established in certain lives when a demon disguises itself as the Holy Spirit and admonishes the sufferer. Legalistic believers especially are marked out for condemnation. The Holy Spirit convicts us of sin by leading us to the love and blood of Christ. Hatred of a brother brings death (1 John 3: 14) and guilt will fester unless forgiveness is found for him and ourselves.

2. Torment of Hell

A spirit of hell brings torment for past sins, but this demon never says "enough". (Proverbs 30:16). The tongue is set on fire by hell says James, and this "restless evil" predicts we are concerned with an evil spirit behind the sin. Death and life are in the power of the tongue and death can, along with criticism, negative words, hopelessness, be a spirit on the tongue as well as in the mind. Torment (Mark 5: 7 and Acts 5: 16) does not easily give up, and a

knowledge of the blood of the Lamb in the sufferer's life is essential before successful deliverance.

3. Prison, Entrapment Spirits

In the reason for gospel ministry Luke 4: 18 proclaims freedom for the prisoners. Many previous saints can come into a prison through antichrist disdain and wrong expectations so the yoke of the Lord is not functioning and an entrapment demon holds the sufferer back from spiritual progress. Psalm 107 verses 10 - 20 need careful examination and often we need to cry out loudly for real release. Fasting, too is usually essential, see the relevance of Isaiah 58: 6, that every false yoke be broken!

4. Sickness and Infirmary

God will use death to punish disobedience (1 Corinthians 11: 30-32), particularly sickness and infirmity. Spiritual warfare is very difficult to initiate in a church that keeps sweeping sin under the carpet. All creation is bound by decay and corruption and our bodies are particularly susceptible, being next to the physical world. Cancer moves in families, epidemics in certain geographical areas, and their source is always demonic. Sin has physical consequences in the word of God (James 5:14-16, 3 John 2). Our health can be linked to how our soul is prospering in the will of God. If our spirits are strong in faith we can resist disease. But only Enoch and Elijah have resisted death! Acts 10: 38 and Luke 13:10-17 show clearly how Satan is the source of sickness.

5. Shock

Car accidents, divorces, bereavements, murder in the culture (400 on TV most weeks) all produce shock. The blood of Jesus can soothe frayed nerve endings so the poise of peace can enter our consciousness again. All shock should be revoked with the laying on of hands. Funeral services, war, theft, broken engagements can be ground for spirits of shock.

6. Sleep

The angel of death brings euthanasia, exhaustion, burn out and the shroud of sleep that makes Europe so slow spiritually. Arise from the dead in Ephesians 5:14 is preceded by "awake you who sleep". Passivity is ground for evil spirit activity, and sleep problems can afflict even an apostle! (see 2 Corinthians 11: 27). Anxious concern for the churches gave Paul nights of turning and tossing. We are to be alert and self-controlled in our use of sleep; over-indulgence brings the shroud of death. Stupor will block the anointed word and desire to pray. (Isaiah 29: 10, Romans 11: 8). We must never let a sense of failure prevent a new initiative by spiritual sleep (see Matthew 26: 46; 1 Kings 19: 5). If we are exhausted by sorrow, frustrated continually or in deep despair, God's word is for us to arise to a new sense of purpose. Guard your nights with the blood of Jesus and BIND back death so you'll stay under the shadow of the Almighty.

7. Nostalgia

Worldly sorrow invites death (2 Corinthians 7: 10). The great law of spiritual warfare is "don't look back". The curse of memory lane entraps many believers and they need the

power of His goal. Dirt, grime, neglect, broken down things, dust in the home is a sure sign. Ecclesiastes 7: 10 warns us, “do not say - why were the former days better than these? For you do not enquire wisely concerning this.” Memories can grip us to the fabric of natural life certain allegiances to people and places need to be renounced in the name of Jesus. A place that used to spell death can be transformed.

***“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me, Your rod and your staff they comfort me.”
(Psalm 23 : 4)***

The power of death will be thrown into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:13,14) In the here and now we can be free from the death dealing power of the enemy. Let us overcome!

WHERE ARE THE JEREMIAHS ?

The one book in the Bible that prepares the preacher's heart and moulds the man of God is the tear-stained ministry of Jeremiah. Very few prophets exist today, yet arguably, Jeremiah remains a tract for the times, a classic auto-biography of deep psychology, and a theology of sin, judgement, wrath and repentance. Fifty two chapters for fifty two weeks in the year present a record of his own lonely experience of failure.....a personal crucifixion comparable to Job, a mortification of the flesh only paralleled in the life of Jesus, a protracted martyrdom that dwarfed the imprisonment of Joseph. Jeremiah was the weeping prophet.....and like Baruch we must become his disciples in these end-time days. Reading the prophecy once a year with study will sharpen the preacher's art of exposing sin and imposing Jesus as Sovereign Lord of our lives. Sovereign means God will do what He wants, when He wants, using whom He wants, without asking our permission. He took Israel into Exile for seventy years to cure them of idolatry. Jeremiah for the previous 40 years had been using the word of the Lord as a hammer to break their hard, stubborn hearts, but all to no avail. God judged by a process of scattering His people; put the clock back; the Jews went back to bondage, in an alien land. The end of the history of Israel became the beginning of world history and the times of the Gentiles. After Babylon, Israel never had a king in Jerusalem. After the 70-year exile, they were allowed to resume the kingdom. The tension within Jeremiah's heart is mirrored today within every faithful preacher of the Cross. A faithfulness to God's word and a compassion for God's people brought Jeremiah to the point of cursing the day of his own birth. By tracing how he saw himself we see why there are so few, if any, Jeremiahs today.

HIS SELF CONSCIOUSNESS AND IMAGE

- 1 : 6 *I am but a youth;*
- 1 : 18 *Behold, I have made you this day a fortified city and an iron pillar,
and bronze walls against the whole land;*
- 6 : 27 *I have set you as an assayer and a fortress among My people;*
- 9 : 2 *Oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging place for wayfaring men that I might
have my people, and go from them!;*
- 15 : 10 *A man of strife and a man of contention;*
- 15 : 17 *I sat alone because of Your hand;*
- 15 : 20 *And I will make you to this people a fortified bronze wall;*
- 17 : 16 *As for me, I have not hurried away from being a shepherd who follows you nor
have I desired the woeful day; You know what came out of my lips.....;*
- 23 : 9 *My heart within me is broken because of the prophets. All my bones shake. I am
like a drunken, like a man whom wine has overcome, because of the Lord, and
because of His holy words.*

The great dejection of Jeremiah 20:7-18 sums up this extraordinary paroxysm of inner agony.....
.these verses are the private psychological record of failure and the spiritual record of success
because he did not commit suicide, but remained faithful to the call of God. His indomitable spirit
underlined at personal cost the promise of protection: ***“for I am with you to save you and deliver
you” says the Lord.***

The success amid failure is found in **Jer. 45:5:**

“I will give your life to you as a prize in all places wherever you go.”

In human terms the only success was the preservation of his life. Does this parallel the tribulation
of the Antichrist, and the preservation of the remnant?

Night is coming to Western Europe. The remnant will hide and survive the wrath of the Antichrist
in the great tribulation. The sense of impending doom through Jeremiah is parallel to the spiritual
climate of these days. The Chaldeans are coming!

The Antichrist is coming! We are soon to enter into the reality of Revelation 12:14-17.

Let not the rapture before the tribulation preachers fool you into false peace.

Sense God's now heartbeat in Jeremiah 45:5. God will preserve an obedient, radical remnant.
Everyday in England crime costs £14 million, 435 babies are aborted, 20 commit suicide, and
people spend £300,000 on pornography. Night is coming! The inevitable judgement of sword,
famine and pestilence is coming in Jeremiah and in the twenty first century.

Jeremiah is essential reading because he repudiates the biblical objectivism of positional truth, and
looks into the actual state of the human heart. His own heart had to be tested for him to be a faithful
assayer - a man who would test the quality and strength of the metal (or mettle?) of Israel.

(Jeremiah 12:3). This verse does not proudly parade the prophet as self-justified but shows the gap
between the people and the true man of God.

All the prophets saw the gap between the character of God and the conduct of man.

For Jeremiah God gave him the first glimpse of the new covenant when the Spirit would sow the
word into repentant hearts and put God's law in the mind and heart.

Then God's people, and only then, DO THE DESIRES OF GOD FROM THE HEART. Self-effort
is banished when we live in the promises. During his prophecy the reality was sin engraved in the
heart (17:1). Judah continued to play with sin, but a time would come when they would pray for
revelation. (33:3). The weeping prophet saw the contradiction between the good purpose of God
and the wicked playground of man. The huge gap brought this lonely man to despair the day of his
birth.

THE GOODNESS OF GOD IN JUDGEMENT

1 God reminds Israel and Judah of their sinfulness. Two evils are found in
Jeremiah 2:13:

- (a) The root sin: ***“they have forsaken Me”;***
- (b) Resultant sin: **making substitutes for God.**

Although fashions change and sin changes it's camouflage, the root sin is always leaving God.
Jeremiah does not move on much in terms of history and action, but he goes deep into the nature
of sin. Judgement begins at the house of God therefore the word of the Lord continues to show
what is blessed and what is cursed, so Jeremiah painstakingly has to extract, “the precious from

the vile.” Praise Him for this goodness in our lives now.

- 2** God gives them time to repent. Forty years represents a limit to God’s patience, (and Jeremiah’s!). From 626 BC to 586 BC the man who wanted to be a hotel keeper was calling them back to God. In the days of Josiah there was a revival (outwardly), a Passover celebration, greater than anything since the days of Joshua. He was the last good king of Israel, but could not avert the impending doom from the east. God allowed Pharaoh to kill Josiah, to take him out of the explosion of God’s wrath. Jehoahaz, his son, only lasted 3 months. Then Jehoiakim was put on the throne by the king of Egypt for an eleven year reign, during which the king of Babylon had been quietly plotting. Jehoiakim is cut out of the genealogy of Matthew 1 because he cut to shreds the word of the Lord from Jeremiah. His burial was like an ass - just left by the roadside. His son, Jeconiah reigned for 3 months. Then Zedekiah became the last king of Judah for 11 years. Jeremiah prophesied to them all, and consistently kept to the word of judgement. **Jeremiah 8:7** says:

“The stork in the heavens knows her appointed times; and the turtledove, the swift and the swallow observe the time of their coming. But my people do not know the judgement of the Lord.”

- 3** God limits judgement to seventy years. The parallel is to God shortening the last days for the sake of the elect. Not only does God modify and limit punishment but He blesses those who submit to chastisement. The first batch of captives were the good figs who went to Babylon to settle down, accepting their punishment straightaway. In wrath, God remembers mercy. God gives to everyone according to his actions, and submission to judgement is necessary for full repentance. He gives us time to repent and promises to bless us if we are willing to go through His disciplines. We cannot repent by our ways because our hearts are too hard. Jeremiah, the prophet of Calvary, foresaw it is the Cross that remains forever as God’s instrument to bring repentance, to bring His people to a place where they can receive forgiveness. This will often occur during the season of His judgement when He judges us with the same measure we have judged others. He will discriminate between what is of faith and what is presumption, what is true grace and what is not, what is revelation and what is false charisma. Jeremiah goes deep deep down in revealing how sin strangles the true function of believers. A forgotten law of life today is retribution. Where are the Jeremiahs to bring clarity of mind and purity of heart on these issues?

ANOTHER VESSEL

The faithful Father, knowing the supernatural options for our lives, is putting us on the wheel of His circumstances to make us another vessel. (Jeremiah 18:4) AS SEEMS BEST TO HIM! God is Sovereign and will do what HE wants, when HE wants, how HE wants without asking us His permission. There is a process in making a pot. You have to throw the clay onto the center of the wheel after pounding it to make it pliable. The punch of God is the chastening after sin we need while centering the vessel is saying “Lord, I submit to Your counsels spirit, soul, and body, for the sake of Jesus’ name.” To be another vessel, a vessel of gold or silver unto honour, we have to be dissatisfied with having been a vessel unto dishonour. We are to cleanse ourselves (2 Timothy 2:21) dealing with the marring of sin and self and the demonic. Only when we deal with the past can we look at His future, His gracious designs for our lives. We are distorted in our viewpoints, disfigured in our conscience, broken emotionally, erratic and bound in our wills, chaotic in our imaginations until the miracle of regeneration when a

seed of the highest quality is born into our spirits. The law of degeneration has to be replaced by the life of regeneration from the atonement.

Salvation is more than being recycled.....it's the inception of an undiluted, unchanging, undefiled eternal life.

After the new birth we discover "our times are in his hands", so that time becomes a friend not an enemy. He spins us on His wheel sometimes slow, sometimes fast, fashioning our hearts to live and abide in Jesus Christ. The moulding of our souls takes years of discipline, love, testings, fellowship and prayer, as God patiently works for eternity. God sovereignly arranges days of boredom in work as well as inspiration, days of sorrow as well as joy, times of refreshing in His presence and the dark night of the soul when His presence cannot be sensed. We are on His wheel of sovereign providence, turning, turning, turning at His will, so that everything of the old nature is ultimately overthrown. Each one of us is a one off, an individual vessel with a path in God only we can fulfill. Each one is an individual member of the body of Christ with an individual gifting.....but we develop character and gifting only by our Gethsemanes; the regular personal cross. The pot must be baked in the fires of persecution and left on the shelf before it's function as a container. We contain heaven's treasure which flows from us only as we co-operate with the Father, believing He is in control even when we fail to understand the circumstances.

How do we react when things suddenly go wrong? Will we hang on to His sovereignty when things seem against us? Why did Peter get 3000 souls, but Stephen get 3000 stones? God is the potter, we are the clay. He will mould us into another vessel as seems best to Him. Jeremiah wanted Israel to become another vessel, but his advice was disregarded. Believers now desire change; but will they submit to a path that will horribly disappoint the flesh life and the carnal aspirations? God knows what is in the darkness, so we must fully trust Him with ALL our hearts, as He reveals His plans for our good. In our distress we must cry out to the Lord from the depths because change only comes from true repentance. Jeremiah shows us the true spirit of personal religion.....to refuse his message will cause many to walk the broad way of superficial tradition where we hear words of "peace, peace" but there is no peace. Where are the Jeremiahs that courageously reveal the narrow way that leads to the reality of the indwelling Christ? He, the Lord of glory will enter our hearts when we cease the sins of feigned obedience and rejoice in the eating of His holy word.

WHY THE WILDERNESS ?

The wilderness is not a romantic holiday, but where God wants to get you, on your own. Desert is mentioned 266 times in the Bible, about few of us really experience the drastic dealings of God alone. We don't go to the desert by choice. Remember Jesus was impelled, driven there, to be tested by the devil. The power of the Spirit was the fullness of the Spirit TESTED. God tested His children in the wilderness years to humble them, to see what was in their heart, to cause them to live by the proceeding word out of His mouth (Deuteronomy 8:2,3).

Power is for Purpose

God gives the power of the Holy Spirit when His people pursue His purpose. The purpose of the howling wilderness for the children of Israel was to prepare them for promotion, for inheritance, to possess His possessions. Jesus was filled with power to deliver the oppressed (Acts 10:38), to heal (Luke 5:17) to demonstrate Satan's defeat. Philippians 3:12-14 is a great encouragement for those who are gripped with a sense of God's purpose. A free translation could go like this: -

"Not that I have tackled it cleanly or am complete or mature, but follow after the vision God gave me, that I may grip that which God has gripped me for. Brothers, I've added up my figures and the total is not what it should be in terms of God's purpose, but the priority is to forget the past and reach out to the future. I press on, like a long distance runner with my mind on the prize of the upward call in Christ Jesus."

The wilderness experience will break us AND make us into what God wants. Then we can follow after the vision of God. Today many Charismatics, Pentecostals, word of faith followers etc. realise they are in a spiritual limbo. The freshness has gone, expectations often dashed and doubts emerge. God calls us to the wilderness so we find the power of the Spirit, that we may know it is not of us, but of God.

2 Corinthians 4:7 tells us the truth about the treasure in our fragile, earthen vessels. The word "excellence" means outreachingness. The treasure is inexhaustible, and cannot be fully investigated in this transient life. Yet today the church is often restricted in vision, inward looking, and paralysed by a fear of evangelism. We need an outside-IN mentality that proclaims the church exists for its non-members, the lost who fail to come to its meetings. The wilderness can break the mould of our opinions, our failures, our narrow thinking. The desert experience may have its temptations, but the infilling of the Spirit will be turned to real power as we faithfully go through the testing. Will we go through God's route of wilderness?

There comes a season in a saint's spiritual journey when God confronts us with the place of obscurity and nothingness. Will we remain faithful? Will we allow God to prepare us for promotion? Will we enter the Promised Land of our inheritance?

Those Who Went Before

Think chronologically of those who passed through the desert as an essential stage of spiritual learning. Abraham left civilisation in Ur of the Chaldees, left his father's home and the prevailing moon worship for the desert wanderings. Not knowing where he went, he lived most of his life in tents. It was a mistake to take Terah and Lot. God called him alone, says Isaiah 51:2. We hate being alone so much, we will do anything to contrive a little fellowship, to be in that

meeting, to talk to this one or that one. But God is waiting until we wait; then He will act for us. Abraham eventually got alone in the horror of a deep darkness and God cut the covenant of promises with the father of the faith.

Isaac, Jacob and Joseph were all supremely alone in their deep encounters with God. Joseph had at least 12 years unjustly in prison, where the word of God tested him. Alone. Forgotten by the baker and butler. Forgotten by his brothers. Rejected just like Jesus, yet the work of the Holy Spirit was producing character via an immense patience. Joseph had staying power, the hang-in-there attitude that any world leader would need in a crisis.

In Jacob's life we see most clearly what every Christian today has to confront, self-life. God has to take His children to school in the desert. We have to learn what is flesh and what is spirit and not to refine the flesh. The liberating secret is knowing when He died, I died. The positional truth of Romans 6:6 and Galatians 2:20 must be balanced with the vital truths of 1 Corinthians 15:31, *"I die daily"*, and

Philippians 3:10. God touched Jacob at the strongest point where the leg joins the body. If there is no knowing in experience of Romans 6:6 we are hindered from the throne. The lonely night in Genesis 32 was the pivot when the dream of reality for Jacob became the reality of the dream, and a price with God emerged. Today, this education of the desert will bring maturity to leaders. Is it that so many leaders fall because they have never been broken in the strongest part of their flesh-life? When there is no desert there can be no dimensions of the width, length, height and depth of the gospel. Some mock at preaching on the wilderness, but it's there we feel keenly our obscurity and nothingness.

The list of Bible characters must include the O.T. giants, Moses and Elijah, David and Jeremiah, and many more. The children of Israel experienced 38 years of the wanderings, but failed to learn the lessons. In the desert, our flesh-life is exposed that it might be put to death. Egypt was to be replaced by a land flowing with milk and honey, but only the young generation under Joshua qualified for entrance. Our inheritance cannot be enjoyed unless there is deliverance and holiness, says Obadiah 17. In Egypt, God's people could blame Pharaoh.... a type of Satan. In the early wilderness experience they could blame circumstances – no water, nowhere to stay, no certain food. The mercy of God provided a table in the wilderness. At Mount Sinai and after, God was shut in with His people. They had no excuses. They needed to see the state of their own hearts. The resistance in their hearts was exposed, and the writer to the Hebrews uses this to warn new covenant saints:

"For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses? Now with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness?" - Hebrews 3 : 16,17

For 14 months God lead Israel from Sinai to Kadesh Barnea, which was only 11 days from Canaan. But they went to Edom and the plains of Moab for 38 years. The wilderness is not supposed to take that long! But unbelief and disobedience delays the people of God.

God takes us out of the way, into the wilderness to learn things of the Spirit. In the New Testament, John the Baptist and Paul learned the lessons. One great lesson to stand in awe of the ineffable name. To learn we are the reverse of what Almighty God is. To learn how holy God is. How corrupt we are. This has to be a revelation and not the condemning power of the law, which only inspires self-effort. Some Christians have formed an image of God that is wholly false; they see Him as a tyrant. We should serve Him out of joy and gratitude. Do we enjoy or endure our religion? The wilderness will test our image of God. If we are obedient we discover a fresh revelation of God. I'm so glad God is not like me! The Holy Spirit can reveal the gap, and prompt our hearts to praise and worship. He can convict us of our rebellion, pride and unforgiveness. The desert is where we get right with God, where the power of brokenness makes us new.

Revelation of the Word

“... The word of God came to John, the son of Zechariah in the wilderness.” - Luke 3:2

“Therefore behold, I will allure her, will bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfort to her.” - Hosea 2:14

It's not gospel for God to free us from sin, in order to please ourselves. To fulfil His purposes we must hear His voice and obey. To hear accurately the proceeding, prophetic word from the mouth of God takes time. We are in a keen contest against principalities and powers, which is associated with the desert period of our lives. Lilith, the female monster of the night will come to those deeply seeking God, and we must know our victory in Christ Jesus (see Isaiah 34:14). The prophetic word is precious and the enemy will resist and attack you on this crucial point. That's why so many think God has spoken, obey, and yet no lasting fruit remains. Deception is an epidemic in charismatic circles, especially among leaders, who have failed to repent. That failure has led some to premature death. Are we going to spend time in the wilderness or risk a ministry with no death to self, doctrinal error, and possibly disgrace?

The word of God came to John in the wilderness. The power of that word drew Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the region to him (Matthew 3:5). The trouble over Jerusalem (Matthew 2:3) was evidently a spirit of fear that closed in on Herod at the news of Jesus' birth. The prophet's intercession set that city free to come to hear the living word of repentance. People today talk of revival in Lewis in 1949 – 51, but it never touched Stornaway! Perhaps there was no prophetic intercession discerning the knowledge of specific evil spirits over the town.

The supply of the Spirit quickening the word of God must sustain those who are going through the wilderness season. The Hebrew church needed Hebrews 10 : 35 – 39. They had gone through a wilderness of suffering and bewildering loss. Paul says to them, ***“Don't discard your outspoken statement because your salary is coming.”*** Your strong declaration of faith has a great payday! The temptation in the desert is to throw away your faith as something that cannot help you. Unbelief, the worry-power that the devil will succeed stalks everyone who walks in the God-appointed wilderness. Or think on the words of Hebrews 10:23-24 where we are exhorted, ***“... to hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering for He who promised is faithful.”*** ***“And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works.”*** To hold fast is to embrace tightly the downward revelation of God. Our confession is to say the same thing as God is saying to you personally, for to feel the same way as God does, or the thought life corresponding to the mind of Christ.

The revelation of the word, line upon line, precept upon precept, is to bring us into union with God. The true mystic desires to be joined to the Lord to be one (or the same) spirit as Him (see 1 Corinthians 6:17). In the wilderness sway from the pressure of normal living we have our most precious commodity – time – to hear, study and meditate upon the word of the Lord. We have 1,440 minutes a day and about 1,000 are taken up with work and sleep! Add to that travelling, eating, family life, TV, and the phone, on average most believers give less than 60 minutes to God. No wonder Western Europe has the shadow of the Antichrist falling across its nations! Know the time spiritually! Get awake, and be prepared, and BUDGET your time. The lost live for the weekend – that's how eternal they are! Lovers of God must live for something more than church on Sundays. Consider wilderness and the drastic dealings of God where precious souvenirs of solitude will adorn your lifestyle as you exhibit deep-seated peace, love, and joy to those around you.

Remember God does nothing except He tells His servants, the prophets! Will you pay the price to be a prophetic person? When the Lord God HAS SPOKEN, says Amos, who can but prophecy? The revelation word must be spoken back to God by prophecy; and this becomes our

confidence in the trial, the danger, the long difficult period of waiting upon God. Come to the rendezvous of rest, where God will speak tenderly to your heart, where the Holy Spirit will be your daily coach training you in righteousness, where the word of God will yield new secrets.

Drastic Dealings

The wilderness for David was the realm of the really real. At the cave of Adullam the two questions for his ragamuffin followers were:

do you like the captain?

do you mind living in caves?

For 8 years David would now flee from Saul. God would teach him the Kingdom of God in higher terms. 1 Samuel 25 is the pivotal chapter, where Abigail intervenes and prevents a massacre, with an astounding word of wisdom (vs. 28 – 31):

“Please forgive the trespass of your maidservant.” (The humility here in stark contrast to David’s hurt pride and revenge of verse 13). ***“For the Lord will certainly make for my Lord an enduring house, because my lord fights the battles of the Lord,*** (he was just about to fight a Saul-type battle), ***and evil is not found in you throughout your days. Yet a man has risen to pursue you*** (Saul is no more than a mere man), ***and seek your life, but the life of my Lord shall be bound in the bundle of the living with the Lord your God, and the lives of your enemies He shall sling out, as from the pockets of the sling. And it shall come to pass, when the Lord has done for my Lord, according to all the good that He has spoken concerning you, and has appointed you ruler over Israel....”***

She goes on to imply that stopping the projected bloodshed will cause God’s people to see that King David is different in character from Saul. This matter of the Kingdom has essential relevance today. God puts spirit and flesh kingdoms together so His people can choose the better way. In the wilderness, David began to see the Kingdom in higher terms. No longer revenge but mercy. No longer the folly of haste but wisdom. No longer pride but humility. Abigail is a wonderful example of women’s ministry, and David recognised it, later, taking her as wife. Bracketing this chapter 25 are two instances where David has opportunity to destroy Saul. He refuses to touch the Lord’s anointed, allowing God to take the ultimate issues for both men: Ziklag and Endor. David gets to his lowest point before the Kingdom where his men mutiny. Saul goes into the occult. The last nine chapters of 1 Samuel are the desert teachings of Christ to the future King. Moses had his Midian, Paul the Arabian desert, Elijah knew Cherish and Zarephath, and most prophets know the wilderness of drastic dealings from God.

Jeremiah was still a teenager when the call of God came bringing such an area of conflict... a message that would be hated and refused, no wife to share his melancholy, imprisonment, a protracted martyrdom. The desert prophet experienced the wilderness of not being listened to. The political, social reforms of Josiah could not prevent the Captivity, because the inner heart change failed to materialise. Heart repentance is the route for living waters to flow again. Israel did not ask for the ancient (timeless, eternal) paths, but rather feigned obedience. God had to deal drastically by exiling them for 70 years. Jeremiah was an assayer, testing the quality and strength of God’s people, but declaring them ***“rejected silver”***. Where are the Jeremiahs today? Men who will pay the price in the desert for the burning power of God’s word to make religion vital, victorious and valid to a materialistic society again. The tension in this great book for preachers, is his fidelity of God’s Word with the feelings of his own heart because he was a lover of men (Jeremiah 17: 16). The desert is the place where the dealings of God marry us to the purpose of God and life us beyond our emotions, our ideas, and our will power.

Temptation in the Wilderness

The wilderness season includes temptation because our faithful Father tests our faithfulness. What the Father tests, the enemy will tempt in that area of our lives. In the wilderness know that Jesus Christ is the merciful High priest able to succour us. The pattern was appetite (body) in Luke 4:3, ambition (soul) in Luke 4:6 and advertisement (spirit) in Luke 4:9.

In two of the temptations Satan ruthlessly attacked the identity.... If you are the Son of God. With us also the enemy hates the privilege of our position in Christ Jesus. Our new creation identity is a threat to the Kingdom of darkness – and in the wilderness more than anywhere else – the enemy comes to destroy our dignity. Tied up with our identity is our destiny. The purpose of Jesus was to win the world, but not by the fatal compromise of Satan's method by submitting to worship him. Much work for the Lord today fails to go the crossroad to resurrection. God cannot improve me, He must remove me for a fuller receiving of the divine life. The wilderness is where this action begins.

The third temptation concerns lifestyle - will I use spiritual gifts to conform to public expectation? Jesus walked as a DEAD MAN

to self interest (the bread)

to compromise with Satan (the nations)

to popular demand (the temple).

To know the abiding love of the Father we must die to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.

In John's Gospel there is no mention of temptation because the writer is proving the deity of the Son of God. The difference between Matthew and Luke are consistent with their portrayals of Jesus – in Luke, Jesus is priest, the temple concludes the temptations; while in Matthew Jesus is King therefore the mountain and kingdoms completes the order. He was tested as the Son of God and therefore the magnitude of the temptation was much greater for him than for us. However, the essential pattern of being lured away from the Word to follow the spirit of the world is the same. Remember, the devil is never, never, never in control of the situation. To preach or write about his methods is to know the enemy, not glorify him.

Many teachers today disregard the wilderness teaching, but without its cleansing and purifying under the hand of the Lord, these very same leaders can fall into pride, immorality or financial sins. There is wisdom in a stop – start ministry where the leader leaves for an exile to seek the Lord, or takes a simple job outside preaching to listen again the ordinary people. Allow God to speak to you about the barrenness of a busy life and the busyness of a barren life and set your heart to wait on the Lord.

After our Lord's temptations – including “every temptation” (Luke 4:13), He was conscious of the mighty anointing to set the captives free, to preach the gospel to heal the broken-hearted. In driving the car we sometimes have to reverse in order to move forward. To fast from telephone, TV, friends and even church life can do wonders when the Lord has authored it.

A Place of Dependence

In Revelation 12:14-17 we glimpse the refuge God provides of the remnant Church in the days of Tribulation. Yes, in the end-times, there will be a desert for His hidden ones. Nourishment and protection are promised for those who resist the adversary steadfast in the faith. The “**adversary**” literally means anti-righteousness, the enemy who hates and opposes all righteousness, with violence, rage and destruction. Hence the word, “**enraged**” with the woman. A recent prophecy welled up in my spirit along these lines, while spending time in Lewis.

“The times are coming when My people will no longer be free to fellowship on Sundays. As the shadow of the Antichrist spreads across Europe My people who are in the liberty in the Spirit will be directed as Joseph who preserved the holy child by dreams. You will learn of Me in the night seasons and will need your minds, imaginations and heart cleansed by the power of My blood. For I see into the minds of My people and there is filth, unbelief and many things against My kingdom. Those who repent, abandon themselves on My mercy, and surrender their lives to My Lordship, will dream dreams and be led to fellowship at night. I will preserve those who repent. In the days of the Antichrist, know there is a place of safe retreat, your spirit, where My Kingdom dwells.”

Being in a wilderness; whether an actual desert, or boring workplace, or Broken marriage through betrayal, or financial loss, or bedridden sickness; it is the place of a new dependence on God. Jesus could not do what He wanted! He could do nothing of Himself.

The wilderness period in our lives is where we learn a new dependence, being Abba’s children, certain of the Father’s voice, but uncertain of everything else. This critical inner knowledge must be developed NOW in the Body of Christ....we need to know the good Shepherd’s voice and be spiritually sensitive. Our destiny is vested in a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ through His Word. The desert is refusing to rush in; refusing to listen to good advice when it’s dark, i.e. no personal revelation; refusing to produce an Ishmael. Isaac was born of “*dead parents*”. Embrace the desert discipline of dependence, and our own nothingness. Perceive the El Shaddai God, the All-Sufficient One who alone can produce the Son of God in you!

Salvation Comes Out Of The Desert

“The wilderness and the wasteland shall be glad for them, and the desert shall blossom like the rose....” - Isaiah 35:1

A modern fulfilment concerns Israel, who by transforming the desert, has become the second greatest world exporter of citrus fruit.

There are many applications of this principal. The most striking is the children of Israel leaving the wilderness for the promised land. Deuteronomy 8:11-16 sketches their 3-stage development as God’s people. This chart helps us to see the essential transitional zone of the wilderness.

Egypt	-	Slavery	-	Victims
Wilderness	-	Sanctification	-	Validity
Promised Land	-	Service	-	Victors

Modern preaching attempts to persuade us we go from victims to victors at the new birth or baptism in the Holy Spirit. The wilderness period is given by the God who will test us. Even Jesus knew it in the temptations. He went to the desert in the power of the Spirit (Luke 4:1), and returned in the fullness of the Spirit (Luke 4:14). We gain our validity in the desert. The children of Israel had to learn holiness and the law pointed to the need to be a separate people. Holiness was taught in Leviticus in three ways: sanctuary, sacrifices and Sabbath (including feasts). There are two religions in the world:

(a) Making God like man (idolatry)

(a) Changing man that he becomes like God (Christianity).

We must be born again, redeemed from the market place of sin never to be sold there again, BEFORE WE BEGIN to appreciate the character of God. In the desert of a boring job, a broken relationship, or serious sin, if we are faithful to the truth, we will grow in grace towards maturity. The desert truth of what I am has been crucified to the Cross and gains power in our lives when we realise the depths of the old man. When we are born again the first Adam life does not automatically die. Some rejoice in the positional truth of Romans 6:6 and Galatians 2:20, but will we go through what it means to die to self? Will we embrace the wilderness? Those who are willing and obedient will eat the good of the land.

In the desert, the great principle is WARFARE before WELFARE.

In Deuteronomy 7:1 the names of the nations in Canaan that were to be conquered are filled with meaning:

<i>Hittites</i>	=	<i>terror, fears</i>
<i>Girgashites</i>	=	<i>strangers, occult spirits</i>
<i>Amorites</i>	=	<i>talkativeness</i>
<i>Canaanites</i>	=	<i>dealers, deceivers</i>
<i>Perizzites</i>	=	<i>squatters</i>
<i>Hivites</i>	=	<i>pleasure seekers</i>
<i>Jebusites</i>	=	<i>crushers, tread down</i>

The desert experience is where we get set free from self and demonic bondage, in order to be victorious in the promised land, where we must use the sword of the Spirit, in aggressive warfare. Remember in the three stages of development of God's people, now as then, that the divine method of redemption and warfare differs: the blood cleanses us from sin, but the word of the Cross applies His victory over evil spirits.

Egypt	-	the blood, the Red Sea
Wilderness	-	the Cross or Judgement
Promised Land	-	the name of Jesus under the anointing of the Spirit using the sword of the Spirit

The blood of the Lamb cleanses from all sin and sets us free from the curse of being in Satan's Kingdom. In the desert, however, it is the power and wisdom of God, the Cross that does the holy work of subduing the flesh as we yield to God. After the river of Jordan we use the sword of the Spirit, the living word of God, to overcome the principalities and powers. For victory we must enjoy our state of being in the character of Jesus Christ our Lord – the essence of using His name. Secondly, we must be anointed, refusing to rely on the flesh. These essential lessons of warfare are learnt in the desert. Truly, salvation comes out of the desert, where character is formed by the leading of the Spirit. Rivers in the wilderness can spring forth speedily!

Let God Love You

Psalm 23 has the context of the desert. The testimony of trust and triumph comes beside still waters, without fear, lying down in green pastures, being led in paths of righteousness. The valley of the shadow of death is literally the lengthening shadows in the Dead Sea canyons at 5pm

when leopards, snakes and scorpions come out of hiding. Accepting His acceptance often comes when we are laid aside, with time to examine our hearts and meditate His Word. Let God's presence come and love you again in this rendezvous of rest. Come apart, before your nervous system comes apart and health fails. Clarity of mind and deepening conviction comes to those who make the desert a priority.

“He found him in a desert land and in the wasteland, a howling wilderness; He encircled him. He instructed him, He kept him as the apple of His eye.” - Deuteronomy 32:10

God's love for His children is white-hot passion, a gut reaction that lurches toward his children. The matrix or womb of Calvary love reaches out. He takes us to the desert to love again with His deep love – but first we must be loved by Him. I remember being cast aside in solitude for several weeks in the Outer Hebrides and one afternoon after a week of tearful desperation I put on a tape by Bernard Hull. It restored my soul and up from the central depths I poured out a prophecy, which was encapsulated by the presence of Jesus. That was the turning point – back to usefulness, with a new use of destiny to serve God's people. He will encircle you and make you know you are precious. The Bible became alive again – so vital for the preacher who must hear and obey and minister the creative word.

By duty, by work we become so easily the centre of our universe. But the earth goes round the sun. The believer must orbit the Son of God and never the other way around. He is not a God to fulfil your expectations. The desert training, God's spiritual boot camp, teaches us to see the man-centred gospel as superficial. As a mystic of old said: ***“So many walk in the path of what Jesus purchased for them at Calvary; but He is looking for those who walk the path of the Cross.”*** Present risenness of Jesus Christ IN you and THROUGH you depends on that narrow path that leads to life. The internal kingdom must be established for the external victory in the promised land. God, create a new breed of Christian worker! Men and women who know their identity and security in Him alone, and walk the path of self-renunciation. Let God love you amid the souvenirs of solitude in the desert.

Will you go and experience:

Drastic dealings?

Encircling experiences of God's love?

Souvenirs of solitude?

Exorcism of enemies?

Rendezvous of rest?

Tender talkings of Christ?

When God appoints the desert in your life, let Him love you enough to kill you. This is the central reason for the wilderness. In Song of Songs 3:7,8 we read, in the context of Christ and his church about the sixty valiant ones who surround Solomon's bed. That bed is the place where the Kingdom is within you, your spirit, where Jesus rules. These soldiers are armed to fight and slay all aspects of self-praise, self-righteousness, self-defence, self-interest. Flesh must be killed off as an active force that plans our Christian life. All our presumptions and soulish expectations must be destroyed. He abases and humbles you in the desert. The “fear of the night” is the darkness of flesh activity. God wants His Bride to have no part dark. His love wants to enter our weakness to kill off self. He is calling the remnant to desert dealings. Before the great and glorious victories in the Promised Land, where we fight the ites in His power and strength. Will you be prepared for promotion by accepting the wilderness?

WISDOM'S MERCY

We all need to experience the wise interventions of God.

The most beautiful example of wisdom's mercy is the intervention of Abigail, a mother in Israel, who lived up to her name in bringing joy. If she had not ministered wisdom to David, he would have become another Saul. (Let's see 1 Samuel 25 in historic context.) In verse 1, Samuel dies, the intercessor has gone! No one is praying for the future king.

The wilderness wanderings of David before the Kingdom, a period of 7 or 8 years, foreshadows the great tribulation. David has to hide and survive from the envy and murder spirits of Saul. We will have to hide and be willing to stand for The Faith against the wrath of the Antichrist. This period before the Kingdom (both in David's case and ours) will teach us to view the Kingdom in higher terms. A lot of flesh motive gets sorted out in David's heart as a result of a wise woman's prophetic counsel. We see this pivotal chapter in a series of four contrasts. God teaches David to see the Kingdom in higher terms. Young believers must cry out for wisdom.

a) Compulsion and Grace of Giving

In verse 8, David's young men said *"please give... we come on a feast day."* Most christian workers make the same mistake with their postal demands for money, money, money. The kingdom of God is never based on compulsion, but the grace of giving prompted by the indwelling Lord. Abigail brought a present of 200 loaves of bread, 2 skins of wine, 5 dressed sheep, roasted grain, figs and clusters of raisins. Her initiative, no forcing or control. We first purpose in our hearts what to give, without being pressurized or manipulated. Then we are free to give to the Lord, rather than horizontally give to man.

In Christian meetings avoid the pressure appeals and get quiet to pray (usually after the hype) - the Lord Himself is able to speak to us about our giving. Remember the "storehouse" of Malachi 3:10 is beyond your local church, to the body of Christ worldwide. Now most of your tithe will probably go to your local church, but sometimes missions, the poor, or a special project need the tithe or part of it. Let the Lord guide, and enjoy obeying Him. If you plant your seed in the right ground, He will bring a harvest; Abigail's harvest was a new husband, the future King of Israel. Choice of wife determines a man's ministry, and by heeding Abigail, David made a wise choice.

b) Revenge and Mercy

Vengeance has a deep root in the old nature and it is a stubborn abomination in the heart - unyieldingly arrogant. In verse 13, David was about to fight a Saul kind of flesh battle and not a battle of the Lord. Vengeance belongs to the Lord exclusively:

"Vengeance is Mine, I will repay" says the Lord" (Romans 12:19)

We love our enemies, and pray for them if they use us spitefully. Sometimes your best friends can emerge from your worst enemies, provided we are scriptural in our reaction. (See Luke 6:27-36). Contrast David's sudden anger of revenge, an exasperation of being forsaken in the wilderness, a frustration in the apparent slowness of entering God's purpose - with the sweet mercy of Abigail's wisdom in verse 31. She ministers to David's God consciousness and lifts his faith to

grasp the big picture of the Kingdom. Wisdom's mercy speaks through her so that David as King will not be confused with the self-seeking of Saul's flesh. God puts flesh and spirit together so we, His people, can make a choice. In church life congregations are held responsible for their choice of leaders - are they men of the flesh or men of the Spirit? Mercy intervened to stop David from taking the flesh road.

c) Hurt Pride or Humility

The outburst of verse 22 is hurt pride, a curse conceived out of a wounded heart that knew accolades, but now felt itself rejected and forgotten. Contrast verse 24 the position of humility, being small in one's eyes, and finding the future king's respect (v 35). The humility of accepting her husband's meanness and identifying with it revealed having nothing in herself, but everything in Him because she knew if she had been approached by the young men, the love of God would have responded through her. Humility is the place of spiritual bankruptcy - nothing in ourselves, but everything we need found in the unsearchable riches in Christ Jesus our Lord. Without Him we can do nothing. God only dwells in two places - highest heaven and a broken, lowly contrite heart. God revives the lowly, and will perfect that which concerns them. Abigail knew the completion of all her prayers and longings the day she married David. The only mystery is how she ever got so self-deceived as marry Nabal. Beautiful women can be deceived now as in ancient times. In this age of paramount deceit, demons can cling to us, obscure the voice of the Good Shepherd and bring a wrong valuation of a relationship. It is sad that many married couples secretly long to be single again because they know in the inmost recesses of their heart they made a wrong choice. Lack of humility and dependence on the Lord Jesus produces the wrong choice of partner and years of bitter fruit.

d) Folly or Prophetic Wisdom?

Abigail knew Nabal was folly and lived in folly (v.25, v.36). Just when he should have fasted and sought God, he had a feast, got very drunk and abusive, no doubt recounting the day's events and how he sent David's men packing. His folly of castigating David as a servant who broke away from his master, caused him to side with the flesh-kingdom of an occult inspired murderer of priests. Our words ultimately speak of our lifestyle, and make it clear to others where we really stand. Watch a person's words, it will help weigh their motives. Verses 28 to 31 are pure, peaceable wisdom opening David's heart to the entreaty of God Himself. This summit of women's ministry is a gift that makes room in the spirit realm and brings the right woman before a great man.

The consolations of protection and victory over David's enemies must have ministered a deep anointing of fresh oil to his troubled mind. The counsel of a woman that embraces the gifts of the Spirit collaborates in wisdom's mercy. God came through, and David instantly recognised it (v.32, v.33). Today we need as never before women of bold faith who will announce the wise counsel of God - without it, pressures can push even good men to extreme actions that will live on as a indelible blot on their testimony. Like David, marry wisdom, and call her your sister, for it will preserve every other blessing.

Never elevate gift over wisdom and love - most ministries have done that and their spiritual progress has been halted. Cry out for discernment and read 1 Samuel 25 over and over until the lessons become part of your life. In the twentieth century character has taken second place to charisma. We are taken in by the glamour of football stars and pop stars, film stars etc. The church is in danger of going the same way.

In 1 Samuel 26 David proves he had learnt the lesson. He passed God's test "are you another Saul?" Which are we? David had the opportunity to kill Saul but refused to touch the Lord's anointed. He understood the sovereignty of God in dealing with Saul in His own timing.

The Wisdom of Timing

The time of your life is not a Saga holiday but the underlining of the Holy Spirit in Ecclesiastes 3. Is it a time to heal, to build up or break down, to gain or to lose? A wise man's heart will know the time (Ecclesiastes 8:5), the spiritual kairos time when God intervenes and does the supernatural. The time of your lift comes through discernment of the season God has put you in, and obedience to the specific times within that season. Today we see much malfunction and damage in the body of Christ because there are no Abigails or no interventions of God that stop the godly from acting or reacting in the flesh.

Remember time is never an enemy if you are in the Holy Spirit, but a friend. Jeremiah's lament was that God's people did not know the judgement of the Lord. They failed to recognize the critical moment of God's appointed time. We need to pray for a heart to gain wisdom by the numbering of our days. (Psalm 90:12).

WRESTLING WITH GOD

We are supposed to wrestle with evil spirits face to face, eyeball to eyeball, shoulder to shoulder and assert the victory of our Lord Jesus. Jacob, like everyone of us had to wrestle with God, to enter the prophetic school of maturity. From a split family of tensions, through the 21 year cycle of self-will struggle, he came to Peniel, an isolation corner, to come face to face with the living God. Of all the patriarchs he is the most instructive for us; revealing the way of discipline, and the struggle we all have with self-will. If we wrestle with God we are not fully committed to Him and have areas in our life contrary to His will.

Jacob was a schemer for his own ends, in order to preserve himself from the demands of self surrender. God is concerned with the root of sin, our selfish will that refuses to have the Lord Jesus reign over us. The Lord has to touch us at the self-willed points so we may surrender without struggle. When we insist on our own way it breeds a lack of harmony and a lack of trust. Wrestling is a close quarters contest, like Moses killing the Egyptian. The future leader put the clock back 40 years in his life, because he precipitated the Lord's will, by his own agenda. The enemy seeks to deceive us by causing us to put on a show. Few believers today are honest and real before God and men. We wrestle with God rather than against principalities and powers.

A SPLIT FAMILY

Romans 9 : 13 bluntly shares the divine verdict :

“Jacob I have loved, Esau I have hated.”

The division was deepened by Isaac loving Esau for his delicious game, and Rebecca loving Jacob, who stayed nearby rather than going off to hunt all day. However, Jacob was no wimp, but a “complete man, dwelling in tents”, involved no doubt in animal husbandry. Here was a distinction. Esau looked upon the wealth of the field, game to be hunted, but will not process what he gained to make it marketable. Jacob had resources close at hand and made farming efficient rather than daily hard labour. Proverbs 12 : 27 says :

“The slothful does not roast what he took in hunting, but diligence is a man's precious possession.”

The word 'slothful' is a poor translation and should not be equated with laziness. It means the inability to see a profitable end product. Jacob, however, had a long-term plan. Look at nations today. USA has been a leader in marketing resources. Russia has the same amounts of oil, forest, minerals, but has endured long years of human poverty. You could also contrast S. Africa and Congo, who have similar gold deposits. Jacob and Esau were very different : the younger a schemer, fraudster, a supplanter having grabbed the heel of his brother when arriving into the

world. Esau was a greedy, sensuous man, a fornicator, marrying a woman outside the covenant, displaying a contempt for the things of heaven. In Jacob, however, there was an inner fire to meet with the living God, which was never extinguished. The dysfunctional split family experienced mounting tension when Isaac blessed Jacob and not Esau, the firstborn. When the ageing, blind father knew his mistake he trembled exceedingly, knew a shaking of his soul but came from disobedience to faith. He knew it had been Jacob's voice, so of his five senses only his sense of hearing was not deceived. Faith forever comes from hearing the word of God and Hebrews 11 : 20 reports that "by faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come."

Rebecca's promoting of Jacob can be seen as helping God out, rather than true faith. In the rest of faith God orders the circumstances. Some believers are always scheming, pushing, restlessly doing, never resting in the character and sovereignty of God. However, Esau hated Jacob and with murder in the air, Isaac commanded him to go to Laban his uncle to find a wife. This is where Jacob met his match.

BETHEL Genesis 28 : 10 – 22

Jacob ran away but the Lord was waiting for him. Constant communication with heaven. Angels from the realm of glory. The awful stone pillow and the awesome presence of the Lord. The ministry of heaven was directed to the man who thought God was not with him. What an encouragement for us! We are assured by experiences because we believe God has a long term purpose for our lives. Here for Jacob was the DREAM of REALITY. There are two doors for every believer – the word of God door and the experience door. Each door has a voice (see Revelation 4 : 1) that beckons us. The charismatic church is roughly divided at this point, some preferring the experience door and only using the word of God casually. The word of God door is the sure word of prophecy and those who go through it will know God in a deeper way. Remember Adam and Eve walked with God everyday in the cool of the evening and were edified by His words of conviction and comfort. The experience door was the serpent's voice that immediately caused Eve to add to and doubt the spoken word of God. Deceit began at the fall of man when the talking serpent misrepresented God by slander. Too many charismatic believers today walk through the experience door, and fail to test the spirits. Remember the baptism in the Holy Spirit opens us up to the unseen spiritual realm, and is not a hotline to the holiness of God! We need a deeper love of the truth if we are charismatic than even our evangelical friends! The experience door alone will always give the believer a sense of unlimited potential (the very snare that Eve fell into!) Now God does want us to find and live in our inheritance.....but through the word of grace.

Acts 20 : 32 in the context of false leaders tells us :

***"And now, brethren, I commend you to God
and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up
and give you and inheritance among all those who are sanctified."***

Sanctified! This was on God's agenda for Jacob, for him to be set apart for God's purpose. God is revealing the pre-eminence of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph over the people of Ur and Canaan, over Ishmael, over Esau, and over Joseph's brothers. God has chosen Jacob to inwardly change his character. This radical change occurred at Peniel, where the reality of the dream became objective and subjective fact. Between Bethel and Peniel a 21 year cycle of self-will, the struggle for maturity, was the environment where finally Jacob could say "Not I, but Christ." Jacob met his match in sly Laban, who changed his wages ten times, and gave Leah as wife instead of Rachel. How often, the breaking of the believer comes through relationships. There may be miracles on the

way (see Genesis 30 : 37 – 39), but Jacob was unbroken and couldn't see it! How often today we see evangelists with outer clothing of the Holy Spirit, but have inner areas of attitude untouched by the Lord Jesus Christ.

PENIEL

From the house of God (Bethel) Jacob came face to face with God (Peniel) alone. No one else can go through the isolation corner for us. This experience was a real inner character change similar to Exodus 3 or Isaiah 6 or Acts 2 or 1 Samuel 30 : 6, when in the dark night of the soul, David encouraged himself in the Lord. Chapter 32 begins with the angels of God meeting the man who was in fear of meeting his brother, Esau. Jacob had left Laban – a type of man in combat with us. Now it was Esau – a type of evil spirit, who could strike “me and the mother and the children” (Genesis 32 : 11). The mother, Madame Guyon points out, is Jacob's righteousness, the mother of all virtues, and the children, the fruits of the Spirit that are evident in the working out of our position as the righteousness of God. Jacob feared losing his very foundation in his relationship with God, and that somehow Esau could regain birthright and blessing. God is bigger than our fears, and our deep sense of unworthiness (verse 10). After Laban and Esau, the third battle as with God Himself, which is typical of the Man who wrestled with him until daybreak.

He had sent over the brook all that he had possessed (verse 23), which speaks of entire and full surrender. The wrestling with God. Produced a twin permanent change in Jacob. First, God touches the strongest part of our natural life whether it be our loins, our physical life, our intellect, the area of human feeling or sympathy, and so reduces our reliance on the old life inherited by Adam. Secondly, the name change elevates us to a new position in God, walking up Jacob's ladder to know a new vantage point, by seeing life from heavenly perspective. From Jacob (the supplanter) came Israel (a prophetic prince with God, who is strong in the strength which God supplies). This soul, now no longer fears the wrestling with men (Laban) or with demons (Esau), but was capable of wrestling with God. Out of Abram came Abraham – the ha means Holy Spirit. Out of Simon came Peter. Out of Saul came Paul, the master builder of the church!

The length of the struggle is dependant on ourselves. Rees Howells surrendered fully very quickly as a believer, most of us stubbornly take a lifetime, because of fears and inner anxieties and the selfish will. If we truly surrender there is no necessity to wrestle. To come to a genuine Gethsemane is not easy. To proclaim “I am and have been crucified with Christ” will soon be tested by the powers of darkness. God understands our failings, our wrestlings and is the God of Jacob who is our refuge. (Psalm 46 : 11). Will we go through the Cross for real character change? God loved Jacob because he was willing to go through the struggle of self-will and enter the school of maturity. The secret of Peniel was to focus no longer on sin-holiness issues, but on the Lord Himself who is our sanctification. He in me is GREATER than he is in the world! I am a vessel, perhaps with the mark of a limp in some natural area that was still controlling my life as a believer, but a clean container through whom God can come to bless others!

JACOB THE PROPHET

In Genesis 49 we glimpse the outworking of the new name and character of Jacob. Ministry is what we have really become in Christ Jesus, not merely our position as new creations but our performance, abiding in the Holy Spirit. The anointing authority sits in the liberated will, purified heart and clear mind of those who have been changed by the power of the Cross. Jacob knew which of his sons would wrestle with God, like himself, and prevail. Reuben would be unstable as water because he still relied on natural life proceeding from himself. He never got to the place of

wrestling with God for the exchanged life! In Jacob's valedictory service Joseph would be the fruitful bough because he had been separated by cruelty and separated by character. He knew the disciplines that were vital to the fruitful issue in his life. Wherever the cross is present in a life, what appears to the natural mind is a disaster, but in reality is the root of blessing. Joseph as far as his brothers were concerned was lost to oblivion. Verse 26 declares heaven's perspective :

***“The blessings of your father have excelled the blessings
of my ancestors up to the utmost bound of the everlasting hills.
They shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him who
was separate from his brothers.”***

Wherever the cross is absent in our lives we will flounder and go astray. The cross of separation issues out in blessing. Can we perceive the purposes of our sovereign God who always means what we go through for ultimate good?

True prophecy has Peniel at the centre of it's operation – a channel who has known the reality of the unveiling of the Son of God IN me. Waves of false prophecy in recent years has not known this essential grounding and rooting in empirical experience of the Christ within the heart. The Christ who is able to make sense of “blessings of the deep that lie beneath” – the interior hells that the abandoned souls must pass through. The Christ, who will nourish other souls through you – the blessing of the breast being the spiritual milk given to babes in Christ. The Christ, who in regeneration and evangelist, speaks the gospel as the blessing of the womb. The linking of pastor, teacher and evangelist is needed today as never before. Jacob's prophecy is still speaking.

YOU WILL NOT MOVE ON TILL GOD MOVES IN

The transfer of the anointing in 2 Kings 2 was in the context of two simultaneous actions in heaven and earth. Elijah was translated and Elisha transformed. Elijah had already escalated the heights by the Carmel victory, by stopping and opening the heavens and will return to earth as one of the two witnesses in Revelation 11. (See Malachi 4:5 where the contest is immediately prior to the return of the Lord Jesus). The prophetic farewell was so unusual – a whistle stop tour of Gilgal, Bethel, Jericho and Jordan – on the very day of his departure. As Elisha followed the man of authority a deep silence and solemnity distilled as dew upon them. Often God does the deepest things in our lives when we say nothing. Glibness, flippancy, much talk over trivial things spoil our walk with God. Pray to the place of breakthrough into the sanctuary stillness, where revelation flows. Stillness precedes knowledge and knowledge precedes revelation precedes the mantle of the anointing. The will of God cannot be achieved without the anointing, that makes us do what we cannot do by human means.

How did Elisha receive the mantle?

- (a) He concentrated on the essential will of God refusing to be diverted.....choosing to be fixed on the condition of spiritual discernment (v.10);
- (b) He didn't stay at Gilgal, Bethel or Jericho, but pressed on to the perfect will of God. He didn't want to miss the full benefit of the relationship with the older man;
- (c) He refused to live in the emotions of excessive sorrow in losing his mentor. As a true prophet he lived by the word of the Cross.

Valedictory was vital for Elijah, but God prepares his successor, for the prophetic office. Everyone used by God in the Bible had an experience of holy fire. We cannot move on in the purposes of God unless God moves in with FIRE. Luke 3:16 is as essential for the church as John 3:16 is for the lost. John the Baptist said "He shall baptize you in Spirit, Holy in fire." That's the order of the Greek grammar. The fire destroys the vermin in the forest, the sins concentrated on our lips, the confused thinking of a pre-Pentecost condition. After Moses went to the burning bush, he could take nearly two million Israelites to the burning mountain. We move on only after God moves in our lives that as common and useless as that desert bush, where the sanctifying flame arrested Moses.

What do the places signify?

GILGAL

That was where the filth of the world rolled away and you became born again, washed in the blood of Jesus. Also a place of renunciation of sin and the world-spirit that refuses to acknowledge Jesus as Lord. So many believers stay here with the basic truths of salvation and never move on. They argue doctrine or enjoy entertaining services or refuse the call to discipleship, remaining unchanged, untamed, untrained. Elisha could pastor the flock! He could introduce them to some liberating truths, but he must concentrate on the essential and travel on to

BETHEL

Here was the house of God, where Jacob got the dream of reality. The Bible college students seemed to be in the know of the momentous event. The youths, however, verbally abused him there (v.23 – v.25) by wanting him to disappear into heaven. Here is a picture of an apostate church refusing new truths and a fresh move of the Holy Spirit. How painful the persecutions, when believers refuse to enter more fully into their inheritance. I have suffered this and rather than wipe the dust from your feet and move on, the temptation is to stay and prove you are right. Elisha was a prophet not a teacher-pastor, so he had to travel on to

JERICHO

Jericho means fragrance and charismatic renewal can be very lovely.....the presence of God, people falling down, and doing “carpet time”, healings and deliverances and gifts of the Holy Spirit. However, what begins well can end badly with barrenness (v.19 – v.22). The salt of holiness must be branded on our spirits if blessing is to be permanent. Elisha could be a conference speaker spellbinding crowds to displays of power, and full of mind-boggling teaching, but he must travel on in together guidance to

JORDAN

Here they crossed on dry ground, reminding them of Joshua when the waters were heaped up as far as Adam. Jordan means “descent” and death to self changes a person from functioning in the gift of prophecy to a prophet or prophetess. Here is the threshold of the new anointing where Elisha made the daring request

“Please let a double portion of your spirit be upon me.”

I want to be used for the glory of God twice as much as you. God was pleased to answer “yes.”

Elisha was of double significance. If you are over 50, and really love God, you will want to prepare the next generation and be a FACILITATOR. You will not feel threatened or envious. They want to be used twice as much as you!

At Jordan there is the exchange of the mantle – that equipment in relation to the will of God. The sons of the prophets dissipated the sublime moment with chat (v.15 – v.17). The facilitator is a man of God, dead to self, delivered from the diseases of his mind, determined to pass on the anointing.

Is there nothing else in your life except the will of God?
Do you discern what God is doing in your life?
Are you fixed on the conditions that surround the anointing?

Remember the lack of spiritual discernment today prevents God’s people from victory. Be one in a thousand and seek God’s face for discernment of spirits. The gift usually comes after a period of suffering...so we can distinguish the soulish area from the truly spiritual. Don’t miss the point of recognition. Elisha SAW it (v.12) and the eyes of our heart can be enlightened to live in the unseen. He saw the fiery chariots in Elijah’s farewell. Faith bets your life on the unseen and turns dreams into deeds. Now Elisha would prove the prophetic anointing with double significance. God raise a younger generation today who are zealous for the works of God.

MENTORING

When I read biographies of AW Tozer and Watchman Nee recently it amazed me how two much older women took their young charges and daily encouraged them with Bible study and prayer. This became a solid foundation in their lives. Elijah nurtured Elisha and in 1 Kings 19 : 19 we read the younger man was humble – in the twelfth position with the plowing oxen. Today pride pushes many young ones too far forward too quickly, and pride brings shame and destruction. Sodom was destroyed because of pride (Ezekiel 16 ; 49), and this abomination always links to self – idolatry; the very sin that caused Satan to fall.

Look for humility in a young believer and give your life for such in discipling. After humility, honour comes as day follows night.

The modern stamp of getting saved in order to get, will never produce a prophetic people. Moses mentored Joshua for 40 years. Timothy was under Paul for many years. Who will be submissive and learn? Who will humble themselves to receive the mantle of a proven ministry? Who will be faithful in what belongs to another man? Who will submit to authority with a humble heart? Only the Elisha generation who desire to be mentored, who desire beyond anything else the purpose of God, and who desire to govern their lives by the living Word of God. The yearning ambition to be of double significance in the Kingdom than the older generation comes at a cost of being pruned for leadership and promotion.